



Spennymoor Town Board

Date Thursday 15 August 2024
Time 3.00 pm
Venue Livin', Farrell House, A2 Arlington Way, Spennymoor,
DL16 6NL - Meeting Room

Business

- 1 Welcome and Introductions
- 2 Apologies for Absence
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 (Pages 3 - 10)
- 5 Spennymoor LTPT Comms Update
- 6 SWOT Analysis, Logic Chain and Vision Mission Statement
- 7 Update from "you said, we heard" Feedback Sessions
- 8 Programme Update: (Pages 11 - 54)
 - a) Submission
 - b) Feedback from Working Groups
 - c) Y1-3 Investment plan
 - d) Project longlist / prioritisation progress
 - e) Proposed investment allocations
 - f) Future consultation feedback sessions
- 9 Spennymoor Town Board name change
- 10 Any Other Business
- 11 Date of next meeting and future meetings

Helen Bradley
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
7 August 2024

To: The Members of the Spennymoor Town Board:

J Allen, A Boddy (Chair), D Davison, I Geldard, B Graham, A Harhoff,
L Maddison, D Ranyard, E Scott, D Stone and Revd Canon M Tarling

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Spennymoor Town Board** held at Livin', Farrell House, A2
Arlington Way, Spennymoor, DL16 6NL on **Wednesday 10 July 2024 at 3.00 pm**

Present:

A Boddy, Chief Executive Livin' (Chair)

Board Members:

A Petty (substitute for Joy Allen)	County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner
Councillor E Scott	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships, DCC
Councillor L Maddison	Local Member, DCC
Councillor D Ranyard	Spennymoor Town Council
I Geldard	Spennymoor Town FC
B Graham	Community Representative
M Tarling	Faith Representative

Officers:

A Kerr	Head of Economic Development, DCC
G Wood	Economic Development Manager, DCC
J Anson	Community Economic Development Manager, DCC
K Monaghan	Project Manager, DCC
C Harwood	Participation and Engagement Officer, DCC

1 Chair's Welcome / Introductions

The Chair welcomed Catherine Harwood, Participation and Engagement Officer, Children and Young People's Services to the Board meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Allen, A Harhoff, D Stone and J Gilroy.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The Chair referred to Item 8 paragraph 3 of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2024, noting an error which should read 'people did not realise historically that Spennymoor had a train service'.

With the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- The Town Board name would be discussed under Any Other Business;
- A Definitive Map of Spennymoor had been circulated to Board Members;
- With regards to the circulation of information, a definitive response from the Monitoring Officer had been requested and the issue regarding Spennymoor Town Clerk receiving reports would be picked up;
- Zen City Survey – waiting for a revised date when the results of the survey were expected to be published. The Consultation comparative work had been carried out, however they were awaiting further details to work through following the election of a new Government;
- The date of submission had not changed and the Team were still working towards the 1 August 2024 deadline, however a notification was expected for the deadline to be deferred to 1 September 2024;
- Stakeholder Mapping – ongoing piece of work to share information and align activities with wider stakeholders which would demonstrate support and ownership;
- The Visioning Workshop was very useful and everyone involved was happy with the visioning statement.

5 Update from the Visioning Workshop Session held on 1 July 2024

The Economic Development Manager advised that to assist with the submission, a town vision had been discussed at the visioning workshop session and proposed the following town vision:-

“Spennymoor will unlock its full potential as a premier destination to live, work, and visit. It will become a vibrant and inclusive town, boasting a thriving economy, a strong sense of community, and an exceptional quality of life for all residents”.

The Chair thanked Board Members for their valuable contribution at the session.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

6 Programme Update:

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth which provided an update on the initial project submission following the consultation period for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme and confirmed the vision statement to accompany the three year investment plan to be submitted to Government by 1 August 2024.

The report also provided the project prioritisation tool for project interventions within Spennymoor Town Board (for copy see file of minutes).

The Economic Development Manager advised that they had revisited the guidance and produced the draft narrative for the various section headings working on the draft visioning document.

With regards to the Youth Council representation, C Harwood's role supported the Youth Council and was invited to attend the Board meeting to obtain a feel for the level of discussion to then progress local engagement activities to appoint a Youth Council representative to the Board and the three cross cutting Working Groups previously discussed.

It was noted that recruitment for the three Business representatives had paused due to the pre-election period. Further discussions regarding Business representation recruitment would take place after the submission date.

The Economic Development Manager, Community Economic Development Manager and Project Manager provided a detailed presentation which focused on the proposed logic chain, submission requirements, consultation update, Working Group feedback and project prioritisations, which link to the community priorities and areas of intervention.

It was proposed that the vision statement be incorporated into a logic chain model demonstrating the link between key data outlining long term aims, opportunities, potential investment and challenges in Spennymoor and how the vision and associated mission statements for each thematic programme area would help deliver change and necessary outcomes.

With regards to submission requirements, the Co Design Consultants had collated the consultation feedback and provided a consultation report that provided further clarity for the 1 August 2024 submission. An analysis of all available town data is included, data provided by the DLUHC and results of the community engagement work. A SWOT analysis had been undertaken to help the Town Board inform the long-term town plan for Spennymoor.

The Project Manager provided feedback from the Working Groups advising that funding was directed at three investment themes, and in line with previous Board discussions. Working Groups had obtained available data, consultation feedback and local knowledge to design and develop interventions in support of the emerging vision.

Working Groups had highlighted the following issues within their specialist areas to assist in creating a resilient town for people and investment as well as identifying potential projects across the three themes:

Safety and Security

- changing the perception of ASB so that the community feel safe.

High street, Heritage and Regeneration

- Lack of business space restricting economic development and job opportunities for residents;
- New housing putting pressure on existing infrastructure;
- New housing, commuter town image and ASB could severely impact community pride.
- Challenging economic climate could exacerbate problems such as ASB, high street vacancy and job opportunities;
- Ongoing development of neighbouring towns could impact on footfall and economy.

Transport and Connectivity

- Developing cycle and walking routes to change people's travel habits;
- Tackling challenging circulation routes especially the area of the new school on Durham Road;
- Combatting difficult crossing areas in the town;
- Improving internet connectivity in areas within the town.

With regards to Safety and Security, it was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner was in the process of developing a new Police and Crime Plan with more focus on drug and alcohol and anti-social behaviour. The Project Manager added that he would follow up on police representation for the Working Groups.

Responding to a query regarding commuting, the Economic Development Manager advised that they had commissioned Place Informatics to gather information on where people in the town were traveling from and dwell times, frequency etc, a better understanding would be provided once the data had been collated.

In terms of consultation feedback, it was noted that people who were new to Spennymoor had a very different view to the views of longstanding residents, therefore different solution targets were required such as tackling negative perception with accurate information, positive messaging and providing a cultural offer that would draw people into the town.

The Chair queried if the Working Group had discussed the two-way nature of transport connectivity in terms of attracting people to Spennymoor and the transport implications. The Community Economic Development Manager confirmed that the Working Group had discussed the matter and further development work was required in relation to people with commuting issues.

The Economic Development Manager added that the outcome of the Zen City Survey would identify the gaps in relation to the retail and leisure offer and provide comparative data with other towns that would help steer and target specific project areas and create better development opportunities.

It was noted that some children had never travelled outside the Spennymoor area therefore it was important to be mindful that the offer provided for all demographics. Flexibility and early wins would help build positive perception and demonstrate that the Town Board was a catalyst that delivered results.

The Community Economic Development Manager provided a summary of the consultation feedback advising that a further programme of community and Stakeholder feedback sessions would be held at Spennymoor Gala, Spennymoor Brass Festival, Spennymoor Youth Festival, Spennymoor Park Run and Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre. The programme offered face to face opportunities and would be supplemented by attendance at other community venues in the town.

The Board discussed the consultation feedback and the impact and perception of anti-social behaviour around the town, links to youth service withdrawal, vacant buildings, additional outreach provision, challenges and solutions. The team are undertaking further detailed work to better understand the concerns around antisocial behaviour and whether concerns were in relation to safety, damage caused or historic perception.

A balanced view and the need to be mindful of reality and interpretation was highlighted as anti-social behaviour was an easy response for people when asked about their views on the town and covered many different issues. Signposting and increased community group communication was very important as communication had been disjointed in the past.

With regards to the retail offer, it was highlighted that a variety of shops were missing from the town. Many retailers were exiting town centres due to the change in direction with online shopping and retail parks. It was suggested that the barriers for independent and branded retailers be explored to ascertain whether there were any underlying issue that could be addressed to provide sustainability and create a fully occupied environment.

The Participation and Engagement Officer added that she was not familiar with the area, however she was familiar with the issues of young people which were echoed throughout the County. She agreed that additional outreach workers were needed across the County who were training and equipped to deal with groups of young people causing issues. She highlighted that Spennymoor were very fortunate to have an outreach programme as many towns were not as fortunate. It was suggested that outreach programme information be collated and circulated to the Board.

With regards to project prioritisation, the Community Economic Development Manager advised that a project prioritisation tool had been implemented that detailed community priorities summarised, investment theme links, estimates costs, geography, vision and strategy, timescales amongst other scoring criteria in order to identify whether they come forward as development projects in line with interventions. Work on the draft document to populate information had started and was shared with the Board.

The Board discussed the tool and agreed the principles and the drafted document to date.

The Board discussed building opportunities, providing sustainability and developing a package that could help drive annual and signature events to Spennymoor linking in with Durham County Council's Events Team and Community Groups which in turn would create activity throughout the year and attract people, corporate sponsorship and potential retail to the town.

With regards to retention of existing business and growth, it was noted that some support was already provided to business to help develop and improve their offer, however forming new business forums or strengthening existing groups could be a potential project. It was highlighted that the Bank had given notice to close its facility in Spennymoor and expand their online service and mobile banking hubs which would create another prominent vacancy in the town.

The Board recognised the need for a mix of retail, leisure and hospitality incentives fund as detailed.

It was proposed that the Co Design process continue with stakeholders and further detail be populated including capital and established funds which would be provided to the Board before the launch.

Resolved:

- i) That the update, consultation progress and consultation feedback events to underpin the LTPT programme submission be noted;
- ii) That the Spennymoor Town Board Vision be approved.

7 Any Other Business

Town Board Name

The Board discussed possible names and suggested Spennymoor Together. The Head of Economic Development advised that he would check there would be no technical issues regarding replication of the Horden Together project. It was noted that Spennymoor Together would link with the County Durham Together Partnership branding and provide consistency.

8 Date of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting would be held in August with the date to be confirmed. An additional Teams meeting would also be arranged prior to the 1 August 2024 deadline, providing there was no change to the submission date. The draft submission document would be circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the Economic Development Manager would provide a briefing to the newly elected MP and future meeting dates would be arranged shortly.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and added that the culture and positivity of the Board was wonderful and demonstrated that everyone understood the issues in Spennymoor and were passionate about working together for the benefit of the community.

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Spennymoor Town Board

15th August 2024

Programme Update



Report of

Amy Harhoff Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The Purpose of this report is to
 - (a) provide Board members with a progress update of the draft initial project submission following the consultation period for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme and
 - (b) to confirm the 3 year investment plan and project prioritisation tool for project interventions for initial proposed areas of investment

2 Background

- 3 The Long-Term Plan for Towns was announced as an endowment-style approach. This means that funding, of approximately £20million, will be released against a profile to the Accountable body and the Board has the flexibility to spend it over 10 years.
- 4 The Fund will be a mixture of capital and revenue, including capacity funding to support the set-up and ongoing management of the fund by the council, as well as support provided centrally from Government.
- 5 To access their allocation, each Town is being asked to submit a Long-Term Plan to Government, for approval. This will comprise of a 10-year vision and 3-year investment plan required initially by 1 August 2024. The Programme update report to June's Board meeting identified the section headings for the vision document. To date a pro-forma template for setting out the investment plan breakdown has not been received.
- 6 The consultation period ended 31st May 2024 and via the consultation results and working group meetings several initial projects have been identified and will go through a project prioritisation process.

To assist with the submission a town vision has been discussed in recent workshops. This is *"Spennymoor will unlock its full potential as a premier destination to live, work, and visit. It will become a vibrant and inclusive*

town, boasting a thriving economy, a strong sense of community, and an exceptional quality of life for all residents”

- 7 To assist with conveying the town vision to the public an intention of each theme has been created with the intention of how each theme will deliver against the vision detailed below;

High Street, Heritage, and Regeneration

This theme focuses on revitalising Spennymoor, and its town centre in particular, by supporting local businesses, building on the town’s heritage, and supporting new social and economic development. There will be a focus on enhancing the appeal and functionality of the town centre, encouraging more footfall and increasing retail and leisure opportunities. By blending the town’s heritage and existing offer with new and enhanced infrastructure and amenities, this theme aims to create a vibrant, economically prosperous town that attracts both residents and visitors, thus contributing to the town's thriving economy and inclusive community spirit.

Safety and Security

Ensuring the safety and security of all of Spennymoor’s residents is critical to fostering a strong community spirit and ensuring a high quality of life. This theme encompasses initiatives aimed at reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. This will be done by enhancing public safety infrastructure and supporting new programmes and initiatives. By creating a secure environment where people feel safe to live, work, and visit, the town can build community pride and encourage greater social cohesion, thereby supporting the overall vision of a supportive and inclusive community.

Transport and Connectivity

Improving transport and connectivity is essential for linking Spennymoor’s residents to opportunities and services within and beyond the town. This theme addresses the need for more efficient public transportation, improved road networks, and enhanced walking and cycling. By facilitating easier access to employment, education, and recreational activities, these initiatives will help integrate the community, attract visitors, and support economic growth, thereby ensuring Spennymoor is a well-connected, thriving place to live and work

- 8 A logic chain model (set out in **Appendix 2** demonstrates the link between key data outlining issues across Spennymoor and how the vision and associated mission statements for each of the thematic programme areas, has been designed to help deliver change and the necessary outcomes.
- 9 To further assist with project delivery, a 3 year Investment Plan which details an expenditure profile for year 1 and subsequent years has been developed in draft to show the annual allocation expenditure against the Spennymoor LTPT to further enhance the project prioritisation approach. A summary of the proposed investments by theme across the first three years and beyond (set out in **Appendix 3**)

Governance - structures

- 10 Technical officer and working group meetings have continued to take place in line with programme guidance to identify and align current and planned activity across the LTPT area.
- 11 Working groups have continued to provide highlighted issues within their specialist areas to make Spennymoor vibrant and inclusive as it can be in line with the vision statement and also of the consultation summary and have been providing costings and areas of priority which help to facilitate project prioritisation.
- 12 Youth Council representation has continued to be sought and this is now likely to be addressed in the next academic year. However, discussions with Spennymoor Youth and Community have taken place to arrange a meeting with young people interested in becoming involved in the Project. This presents an opportunity to strengthen young people's voices and involvement, creating a fourth working group.
- 13 The final element of Board recruitment – Business representatives, was paused once we entered the pre-election period. Some initial expressions of interest were received and a range of potential representatives reflecting small and large employers as well as town centre based businesses have been identified to progress through to informal discussions. The process for confirming these will recommence once Government provide certainty around submission timescales.
- 14 Alan Strickland MP has been appointed as MP for Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor and as such will be invited to join Spennymoor Town Board in line with the published Guidance.

Submission

- 15 There is still no formal template for submission, however the document is expected to follow the structure set out in guidance. Towns are being encouraged to make use of diagrams, maps, and charts to support the narrative and may make use of relevant sub-headings where required.
- 16 Work on project prioritisation to provide information for the template has not paused at any period during the pre-election period or since with working groups continuing to provide information and input to projects.
- 17 From an analysis of all available town data, including that provided by Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and from the results of the community engagement work, a SWOT analysis has been undertaken to help the Town Board inform the long-term town plan for Spennymoor which has been relayed to people during the consultation feedback exercises.
- 18 The Guidance builds on previous documentation setting out in more detail the 'on menu interventions (set out in **Appendix 4**) already tested and accepted by MHCLG as providing good value for money. Investment plans containing Interventions from the on-menu list will receive more rapid assessment.
- 19 Due to this the initial tranche of projects has focused on menu quick wins that will deliver against the communities priorities. A business case is not required for on menu projects and will progress quickly during the first year of investment.
- 20 From an analysis of all available town data, including that provided by the MHCLG, and from the results of the community engagement work, a SWOT analysis has been undertaken to help the Town Board inform the long-term town plan for Spennymoor (set out in **Appendix 5**). The consultation summary report is (set out in **Appendix 6**).
- 21 Investment will then be prioritised across the three themes and intervention categories which will be included in the investment Plan based on the feedback results of community engagement. To assist with this a project prioritisation tool has been implemented to assist with projects to be brought forward. The tool utilises priorities, investment themes, costs, geography, vision fit, strategy, "on menu" and timescales amongst other scoring criteria in order to see whether or not they come forward as an intervention and if so the year in which this is planned.

Face To Face Consultation Feedback Programme

- 22 An important aspect of the Co-design process is the ongoing dialogue and feedback with communities. Commencing 6th July officers have been available across several community venues and events in the town to discuss the LTPT consultation programme results and advise how the identified priorities have been used to shape potential interventions.
- 23 Initial Community and Stakeholder feedback sessions have been held at:
- Spennymoor Gala , Jubilee Park
Saturday 6th July 1:00pm- 3:00 pm
 - Spennymoor Brass Festival ,Spennymoor Market Place
Monday 8th July 6:00pm – 8:00pm
 - Spennymoor Youth Fest Spennymoor Youth & Community Centre -
Saturday 20th July, 11:00am – 2:00pm
 - Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre
Monday 22nd July 10am – 2:00pm

 - St Pauls Centre
Thursday 25th July 11:30 – 2pm
- 24 The programme of community venue face to face opportunities will be supplemented by attendance at other community venues in the town as well as attendance at Spennymoor Park Run.
- 25 Urban Foresight will also be holding consultation events at the local schools to demonstrate how pupils' opinions have been taken into consideration. This schools based programme may provide further opportunities to identify and progress recruitment of a Youth Council representative to the Board and this will commence in the new academic year.
- 26 Additional information gathered or commissioned through the early stages of the programme is being used in support of the consultation responses. A series of car park surveys have been undertaken to assess car park usage across the town which took place 9th -11th July. Aldi have confirmed they will share data on their car park usage. This will provide information potential areas for interventions, and if issues regarding car parking that were highlighted in the public consultation are an issue.
- 27 Town Centre survey – annual vacancy assessment has been provided.
- 28 Retail and Leisure Gaps and Capacity Study has been provided which compares against national statistics. This has provided potential areas for interventions, and identified issues regarding vacant buildings that were highlighted in the public consultation as an issue.

- 29 Asset Mapping of DCC Land and Buildings has been undertaken, including Industrial and Commercial Land.

Next Steps and Ongoing Activity

- 30 Further background data is currently being collected to support the investment plan. This includes:
- 31 Asset & investment mapping of Partners Town Council, Livin– identifying public assets and known planned investments to support the vision submission.
- 32 Aligned/proposed investment – details of recent and proposed expenditure across the area which supports Programme priorities is being developed and will continue until submission date confirmed.
- 33 Continued face to face public consultation events at various community centres.
- 34 Press releases, media coverage and social media communication have been used to inform the public of the current position of the submissions. This informs of the delay in submission but also be used to focus on the high level of work provided by working groups, other officers and town board members.
- 35 Pre- arranged Spennymoor Town Board meeting is Thursday 3rd October 3-5pm at Livin offices

Recommendation(s)

- 36 Board is recommended to:
- (i) Note the continued progress with consultation and consultation feedback events to underpin the LTPT programme submission.
 - (ii) Approve the proposed investments.
 - (iii) Approve the 3 Year Investment Plan.

Author(s)

Graham Wood, Economic Development Manager

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None associated with this report.

Finance

Government have confirmed the ability of local areas to carry forward unspent allocations in line with their Investment Plans.

An initial £50,000 Capacity funding allocation was received in 2023/4 with a further £200,000 released in April, linked to commencing Board meetings and confirming initial governance requirements are in place. It is understood Spennymoor was one of the first Town Boards to pass the governance checks and receive this further funding.

Consultation

The LTPT programme has co design and extensive consultation at its core. Co-design programme being delivered by sector specialists with feedback sessions commencing in July and continuing into August with schools to be visited in the new academic year

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

As a publicly funded programme activities in developing and delivering this programme are required to support the public Sector Equality Duties

Climate Change

None associated with this report.

Human Rights

None associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder

None associated with this report. Safety and Security are a core theme for the programme and the subsequent investment plan.

Risk

None associated with this report.

Procurement

Specialist Co-design capacity has been procured following the Council's established procurement methodology.

Appendix 2: Spennymoor Logic Chain

Our Challenges

- Perceived Anti-social behaviour issues, particularly in the town centre.
- Lack of available commercial property, both industrial and commercial.
- No well recognised business network or organisation.
- Average weekly pay is well under the national average.
- Significant growth in housing and population without the requisite additional infrastructure and services.
- No defined and agreed identity for the town.
- No defined development strategy for the town.
- Not enough shopping variety
- Lack of community events

Our opportunities

Development of a unifying business network.

- Development of space to support start-ups, business growth
- Development of Spennymoor as a cycling and walking-friendly town
- Development of a destination marketing identity and offering for the town.
- Development of a stronger events programme for the town.
- Opportunity to formalise relationships with the town and schools to support civic, social and economic participation
- Development of Heritage

Our Vision will be:

Spennymoor will unlock its full potential as a premier destination to live, work, and visit. It will become a vibrant and inclusive town, boasting a thriving economy, a strong sense of community, and an exceptional quality of life for all residents

Built upon Three Themes:

High Street, Heritage and Regeneration

Safety and Security

Transport and Connectivity

Our propositions

Visitor Destination with tourist infrastructure

- Heritage walking and Cycling routes
- Business growth with springboard to employment within town
- Thriving economy
- Thriving market town
- Thriving Community

Outcomes:

- Alignment with national clear growth, visitor, industrial housing and skills policies
- Increased visitor numbers
- Expansion of town heritage assets
- Enhanced digital capability to ensure connectivity for all
- Inclusive growth
- High class visitor infrastructure and offer
- A diversified town centre and visitor offer
- Opportunity to formalise relationships with the town and schools to support civic, social, and economic participation.
- Proximity and connectivity to major urban centres offers opportunities to attract visitors.
- More variety of shops meaning more options for shoppers and more employment opportunities

Appendix 3: Spennymoor 3 Year Investment Plan

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SPENNYMOOR LTPT HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

INVESTMENT THEME	COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	FUND / PROJECT	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY / STRANDS	TOTAL COST (ESTIMATED)	TIMESCALE
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	VACANT PROPERTIES RUN DOWN BUILDINGS LACK OF RETAIL OFFER LACK OF BUSINESS SUPPORT	RETAIL, LEISURE & HOSPITALITY INCENTIVES FUND	NEW START UP SUPPORT SHARED RETAIL SPACE MEANWHILE USES CAPITAL GRANT SUPPORT TO PREMISES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INCLUDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY EQUIPMENT PROPERTY AND LAND RE USE FUND INTEREST FREE LOAN SCHEME REVOLVING RENTAL PROPERTY AUCTION SCHEME	£2,000,000.00 estimate to be reviewed as schemes launch and interest received	Year 1 - 10
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	LACK OF JOBS/GROWTH FOR INDUSTRIAL UNITS	INDUSTRIAL ESTATES AT TUDHOE AND KIRK MERRINGTON	Update Study on Industrial space availability and existing sites Grant Support, Job Creation, Growth, Expansion to industrial office/manufacturing	£ TBC	TBC
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	LACK OF BUSINESS SUPPORT LACK OF BUSINESS ADVICE	SPENNYMOOR BUSINESS SUPPORT GROUP	SET UP SPENNYMOOR BUSINESS GROUP OR STRENGTHEN EXISTING	£10,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	RUN DOWN AESTHETIC SITES UNFINISHED	HIGHSTREET IMPROVEMENTS FUND	INITIAL PROJECTS IDENTIFIED FURTHER MAPPING AND IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED	£850,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	COMMUNITY CAPACITY STRENGTHEN VOLUNTARY SECTOR PROVIDE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES SUSTAIN AND GROWN COMMUNITY RESOURCES	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND	CAPITAL GRANT SUPPORT Co Design & Co Develop Fund ACCESSIBILITY SUSTAINABLE VENUES CONNECTIVITY DIGITAL	£1,500,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 10

HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	LACK OF YOUNG PEOPLE ACTIVITIES - DANCE, SPORTS, BASKETBALL, CRICKET ASB MITIGATION	SPORT AND LEISURE DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES FUND	AUDIT EXISTING OFFERS PROMOTE CURRENT ACTIVITY PLAN EXPANSION TASTER SESSIONS OF ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITY VENUES SUCH AS BOXING ETC	£925,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	CAR PARKING	CAR PARKING AND CIRCULATION	AUDIT OPTIONS OF EXISTING SITES OPTIONS FOR ACQUISITION DESIGN AND DELIVER AND CONSTRUCT	£1,280,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	MORE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES, MARKETS	SPENNYMOOR TOWN VIBRANCY FUND	PART TIME DEDICATED OFFICER TO COORDINATE AND PLAN EVENTS DEVELOP, DELIVER AND PROGRAMME OF EVENT STREET DRESSING	£282,650.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	STRENGTHEN AND PROMOTE HERITAGE AND CULTURE	HERITAGE & CULTURE FUND "PAST AND PRESENT"		£1,049,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 3
HIGHSTREETS, HERITAGE & REGENERATION	IMPROVING AESTHETIC	ENHANCING CLEAN AND GREEN PROJECTS AROUND TOWN		£1,360,000.00 estimate	Year 1 - 10
SAFETY & SECURITY	ILLEGAL BIKES CCTV OPEN DISCUSSIONS ASB STREET LIGHTING DAISY FIELD	SAFETY AND SECURITY FUND		£ TBC	TBC
TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY	ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL	ACCESSIBILITY ROUTE FUND	Accessibility audit and walkaround to identify areas that require improved accessible measures. Create accessibility audit report. Develop designs and costs	£200,000.00 estimate	Year 1 -3

TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY	WALKING AND CYCLING	WALKING AND CYCLING FUND		£1,603,000.00 to £4,603,000.00 estimate	Year 1 -3
TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY	UNSAFE CROSSING POINTS WALKING AND CYCLING	A688 CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS MERRINGTON LANE DURHAM ROAD		£ TBC	Year 1 - 3
ESTIMATED COSTS				£11,059,650.00 to £14,059,650.00	

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Appendix 4: 'On Menu' interventions

Safety and security interventions

- S1: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.
- S2: Engage with Police Force and together consider interventions to focus on visible crime prevention in defined areas places.
- S3: Measures to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime and reduce reoffending.
- S4: Measures to reduce repeat burglary.

High streets, heritage and regeneration interventions

- H1: Funding for place-based regeneration and town centre and high street improvements.
- H2: Funding for new or improvements to existing, community and neighbourhood infrastructure projects and assets including those that increase communities' resilience to natural hazards, such as flooding, and support for decarbonisation of facilities, energy efficiency audits, and installation of energy efficiency and renewable measures in community buildings.
- H3: Creation of, and improvement to, local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments.
- H4: Enhanced support for arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities, projects and facilities and historic institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer.
- H5: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
- H6: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.
- H7: Funding for impactful volunteering and social action projects.
- H8: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues.

- H9: Investment in capacity building, resilience (which could include climate change resilience) and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups.
- H10: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.
- H11: Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector infrastructure, with wraparound support for small businesses.
- H12: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.
- H13: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors.

Transport and connectivity interventions

- T1: Support for active travel enhancements in the local area.
- T2: Funding for bus infrastructure and connections to speed up journeys.
- T3: England and Scotland Only: Additional revenue funding added to the Bus Service Improvement Programme Plus (BSIP+) funding model from June 2024.
- T4: Funding for new, or improvements to road networks to improve access within and to the town.
- T5: Funding to improve rail connectivity and access.
- T6: Reducing vehicle emissions.
- T7: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.

Appendix 5: Spennymoor SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Strong internet coverage across the town.</p> <p>The majority of schools in Spennymoor rated as exceptional or good.</p> <p>Good level of private sector investment in areas such as Durham Gate and Thinford.</p> <p>A recent programme of regeneration work in the town centre.</p> <p>£20m of funding received through LTPT fund.</p> <p>A good number of independent shops.</p> <p>Close proximity to larger urban centres Good transport links to the larger urban centres of the North East.</p> <p>Good range of sports facilities and clubs.</p> <p>Some good leisure services, particularly the leisure centre and new library.</p> <p>Good number of green spaces including an excellent main park (Jubilee Park).</p> <p>An interesting heritage relating to mining.</p> <p>Several very active third-sector community organisations.</p>	<p>Anti-social behaviour issues, particularly in the town centre.</p> <p>Lack of available commercial property, both industrial and commercial.</p> <p>No well recognised business network or organisation.</p> <p>Average weekly pay is well under the national average.</p> <p>Significant growth in housing and population without the requisite additional infrastructure and services.</p> <p>No defined and agreed identity for the town.</p> <p>No defined development strategy for the town.</p> <p>Social trust level is significantly below national average.</p> <p>Town footfall level is over 50% lower than the national average.</p> <p>Commercial vacancy rate is above the national average.</p> <p>More than half of the LSOAs in the town are among the worst 20% in England when it comes to job opportunities.</p> <p>About 13.3% of the LSOAs in the town are among the worst 10% in England when it comes to crime rates.</p> <p>Lack of accommodation for visitors will restrict the impact of any development of the tourism offering in Spennymoor.</p>

Opportunities	Threats
<p>Growth in housing and population offers the opportunity for increased town centre footfall and demand for new facilities.</p> <p>Development of a unifying business network.</p> <p>Development of space to support start-ups, business growth and entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Employer engagement forum to connect education and industry.</p> <p>Good civic and green spaces for further investment.</p> <p>Development of Spennymoor as a cycling and walking-friendly town and destination.</p> <p>Development of a destination marketing identity and offering for the town.</p> <p>Development of a stronger events programme for the town.</p> <p>Opportunity to formalise relationships with the town and schools to support civic, social and economic participation.</p> <p>Proximity and connectivity to major urban centres offers opportunities to attract visitors.</p>	<p>Lack of business space is restricting economic development and job opportunities for residents.</p> <p>New housing is putting pressure on existing infrastructure.</p> <p>New housing, commuter town image and ASB can severely impact community pride.</p> <p>Challenging economic climate can exacerbate problems such as ASB, high street vacancy and job opportunities.</p> <p>Ongoing development of neighboring towns can impact on footfall and economy.</p>

Appendix 6: Spennymoor Consultation Summary

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Spennymoor Long Term Plan – Community Engagement Report

PREPARED FOR
Durham County Council

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Introduction

In October 2023, Spennymoor was identified as one of the beneficiaries of the UK Government's £1.1b Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) fund. The programme is designed to support sustainable growth, improve infrastructure, and create thriving communities in towns.

As part of the programme, Spennymoor has been given £20m of funding over the next ten years to support local priority activities focussed on reviving high streets, tackling anti-social behaviour, improving transport and growing the local economy.

The funding must be used for projects which fall under the following three themes:

- High streets, Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport and Connectivity
- Safety and Security

The basis of the LTPT programme is that local people are at the heart of deciding what the town's priorities are.

To ensure all of the people in Spennymoor had the opportunity to have their say, Durham County Council commissioned Urban Foresight to undertake a programme of community engagement work to help shape the development of the town's long-term plan.

During April and May 2024, Urban Foresight have worked with Durham County Council to undertake a range of activities designed to engage the people of Spennymoor and record their views.

This report presents:

- Community engagement results.
- A SWOT analysis of Spennymoor.
- Recommendations based on that work.

This report provides a strong foundation from which the Spennymoor Town Board can build the long-term plan for the town and decide upon investment priorities.

Community engagement

Methodology

Our approach sought to ensure as many residents of Spennymoor as possible had the opportunity to be heard. An online survey was produced and promoted via Durham County Council and through the networks of key community organisations and businesses.

A programme of in-person engagement events was also delivered. This ensured those who wished to express their views directly, or who had issues or challenges with digital participation, had the opportunity to do so.

Direct engagement with both secondary and primary schools took place to ensure that the voices of the children and young people of Spennymoor were also heard.

The engagement programme yielded 280 survey returns and approximately 1300 people's views were recorded face to face. The level of return makes the findings statistically relevant.

Full details of the programme of engagement can be found in Appendix 1. This demonstrates the effort made to ensure the people of Spennymoor were aware of the programme and of the opportunity to have their say.

The survey return equates to 1.4% of the population of Spennymoor. When you add the number of surveys to those people engaged directly then the percentage increases to 3.4% approximately.

The number of returns is sufficient to provide a robust and credible representation. The number of returns, lack of variation in responses and strong spread of returns across demographic groups, means that statistical analysis safely conclude that the results would be broadly similar even if there had been a 100% return. This gives assurance that the results of the community engagement are representative of the population of Spennymoor as a whole.

The results of the community engagement work are therefore appropriate for the Town Board to use as the voice of the community when deciding on investment and intervention priorities for the future of the town. However, establishing a mechanism for ensuring the continued input and engagement of the people of Spennymoor as the long-term plan develops will be a priority.

Results

The survey used for the engagement work asked questions based on the three key themes, as specified by DLUHC, of High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration, Transport and Connectivity and Safety and Security.

The observations under each question come from a review of the survey data and from the direct conversations had with the public during engagement sessions.

Demographic information

Location demographic

Location	Count of
Durham Gate	8
I don't live in Spennymoor	12
In the town centre	93
Middlestone Moor	43
Mount Pleasant	7
Tudhoe Colliery	13
Tudhoe Grange	24
Unknown	79
Grand Total	279

Gender demographic

Gender	Count
Female	119
Male	92
Prefer to self-describe	1
Unknown	67
Grand Total	279

Age demographic

Age range	Count
Under 18	42
18-24	2
25-34	19
35-44	47
45-54	30
55-64	32
65-74	26
75+	9
Unknown	72
Grand Total	279

Survey questions

Question 1: What do you like about the high streets of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Variety of independent shops	66
The regeneration of the town centre	21
Cleanliness	15
Free parking	16
Pedestrianised	16

Observations: Residents recognise Spennymoor has a good number and range of independent shops, more so than many other towns of comparative size. Residents also expressed satisfaction with the recent regeneration work to improve the public realm in and around the town centre. The amount of free parking was highlighted as a real positive that should be maintained.

Question 2: What don't you like about the high streets of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Vacant shops	48
Lack of high street variety	59
Aesthetic of town – run down	29
Anti-social behaviour (ASB)	55
Litter	29

Observations: Residents of all ages expressed their wish to see a more diverse range of shops in Spennymoor to cater for their tastes. In the main, this is related to clothing retailers.

The number of vacant shop units was highlighted as an issue by a significant number of people. This is supported, to a degree, by the DLUHC data (appendix 2) which states Spennymoor's commercial vacancy rate is several percentage points above the national average.

However, the Durham County Council Annual Vacancy Survey paints a positive picture when comparing Spennymoor against the North East, reporting a 9.6% rate against the regional average of 15.4%.

The report also states that there are, net, 4 fewer vacant units in 2024 than there were in 2023. The report further highlights the main areas where vacancies are found with High Street (8), Whitworth (6) and Cheapside (5) being the top three.

From the data and the on-site review therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that vacancy rate is not a major issue for Spennymoor.

The aesthetic of the town and littering can be taken together and represent a significant number of mentions during the engagement. As will be seen later in the report, litter was also one of the main issues raised by the young people of Spennymoor.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was highlighted throughout the engagement process as one of Spennymoor’s most significant challenges, particularly in the town centre. However, there were a lot of people who expressed the view that they felt the scale of the issue is overstated. Whilst ASB is undoubtedly an issue for the town, and one which needs addressed, it may be the case that the problem is being overstated and perception may be significantly worse than reality.

Question 3: What do you like about the heritage of Spennymoor

Answer	Count
Town hall	13
Norman Cornish	42
Mining history	46
The Gala	8
Art Gallery	21
Jubilee Park	15

Observations: Respondents highlighted Norman Cornish and the heritage of mining in the area as positive aspects of Spennymoor’s heritage and as things that more could potentially be made of. The Art Gallery in this context also refers to Norman Cornish. However, it is interesting to note that neither Norman Cornish nor mining heritage received a single mention during the school engagement work.

Question 4: What don’t you like about the heritage of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Lack of promotion/advertising	17
Lack of jobs	4
Focus on past shadows present	10
Restore old high street buildings	4

Observations: Here, the top results are related to a sentiment suggesting Spennymoor’s heritage is not well promoted to either residents or potential visitors.

The second top result was expressed by several respondents and relates to a feeling that the Norman Cornish and mining heritage are overplayed in importance to the town and that the focus should be on developing a new offering to attract visitors.

Question 5: What do you like about any regeneration that has taken place in Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
The leisure centre	13
Improved aesthetic	42
Regeneration of precinct	20
Installation of Aldi	19
Development of parking	10
Festival Walk regeneration	20

Observations: Respondents expressed positive views about the recent physical regeneration around the Spennymoor town centre. People were particularly pleased with the public realm works in the town centre.

Question 6 What don't you like about any regeneration that has taken place in Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Inadequate infrastructure...to support growing commuter population (doctors, schools etc)	17
Unfinished and untidy	27
Lack of shop variety	15
Wasted space	6
Lack/destruction of green space	6

Observations: There were several respondents who raised concerns about the growth of housing. This was felt to have a significant impact on the availability of certain services for residents, particularly medical.

Unfinished and untidy related primarily to the development of the community garden which is prominent in the town centre at the moment, making it front of mind when people were asked about things they don't currently like in this respect.

Question 7: Are there any projects or activities regarding high streets, heritage, and regeneration you would like to be explored?

Answer	Count
Market/festival - food	24
Youth clubs/youth orientated activities	21
Wider variety of shops – independent and popular	15
Young child play areas	13
Cinema/entertainment complex	12
Entry level sports	23

Observations: Markets and events were mentioned a lot as something that people would like to see more of. The town centre and Jubilee Park were the places most mentioned as good venues for such activity. Sports and youth clubs/youth-orientated activities were highlighted as something people would also like to see more of. Within the survey data youth clubs and youth-orientated activities were often mentioned as a potential solution to the ASB issues in the town.

Question 8: What do you like about the transport, walking, and cycling facilities, and connectivity of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Well-connected public transport routes	36
Buses and routes - many and plentiful	50
Good walks and footpaths	45
Good cycling routes	13

Observations: The positives expressed around bus links and transport links related mainly to the ease of access to Durham and the other larger towns in the region.

Good walking and cycling routes featured prominently and this an area that could be built on to improve residents' experience and to attract visitors.

Question 9: What don't you like about the transport, walking, and cycling facilities, and connectivity of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Lack of cycling routes and cycling lanes	26
Too much traffic	13
Not enough bus links to surrounding areas (unreliability, not enough bus stops around town, poor connections to surrounding towns)	23
Not enough parking	15
Potholes	9

Observations: There was a feeling throughout the engagement that Spennymoor has strong potential to be a cycle-friendly town with good potential cycle links to surrounding towns and villages. However, the feeling was also that the current road network and infrastructure was not well geared to supporting this.

Concerning the bus links, this is related to connections to the closer proximity towns and villages. It was also felt that some areas of Spennymoor were neglected concerning where bus stops were. Many expressed they had to walk a considerable distance to the nearest bus stop.

Not enough parking was also highlighted, however visual observation and assessment of parking provision in and around Spennymoor did not indicate an obvious issue in this regard at the time of monitoring.

Question 10: Are there any project or activities regarding transport, walking, cycling, and connectivity you would like to be explored?

Answer	Count
Traffic calming measures	15
Safer/new walking areas/routes	18
More cycling routes	32
Train station	14
Better bus links	24

Observations: This reflects the prior answer with the top response to this question being the wish for more and safer cycling routes. It was mentioned by many across the demographic spectrum that there are issues with traffic, speeding and safe crossing spaces across roads in some parts of the town and that this made walking around the town challenging at some points.

Question 11: What do you like about the safety and security of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
Town centre CCTV	20
Feels safe	29
Feels unsafe	58

Observations: Respondents were pleased with the CCTV in the town centre (although many of those we spoke with directly expressed concerns as to whether they were being properly monitored or not).

There was a bit of a split between those who highlighted that the town felt safe to them and those who stated it felt unsafe although “Feels Unsafe” was the most popular overall statement given. The responses concerning “Feels Unsafe” included references to both ASB and other types of crime.

Question 12: What don't you like about the safety and security of Spennymoor?

Answer	Count
ASB	100
Not enough police	62
Crime	35
Bikes/quad bikes	16

Observations: ASB was highlighted by a significant number of respondents. This reinforces ASB as one of the biggest issues in the minds of residents at the moment. The lack of police was primarily highlighted in relation to the ASB issues and the fact that the police station closes at 5pm was believed by many to be a significant contributory factor.

Question 13: Are there any projects or activities regarding the safety and security you would like to be explored?

Answer	Count
More police	65
More CCTV	38
Target quads and off-road bikes	7
More security at Jubilee Park	7
More youth clubs/activities	23

Observations: The most popular suggestions for this theme were for a stronger police presence and more CCTV around the town. Positively, many people recognised that more sustainable solutions are required to tackle ASB issues relating to young people and highlighted more youth clubs/activities as priorities.

Engagement with children and young people

Secondary school

As part of the engagement process, the Urban Foresight team did a presentation to most year groups of Whitworth Park Academy during their assemblies. This presentation explained the background to Spennymoor receiving this money, highlighted the importance of the students having their say on how the money should be spent and directed students to where they could record their views.

Following the presentations, we held a drop-in session over lunchtime where students could come and speak to us about their thoughts on the town and what they would like to see the money spent on. 30 students from across the different year groups came and spoke with us during the session.

From these conversations, and by stripping out the data from the under-18s who filled in the survey, we were able to record a good indication of priorities for the improvement and development of the town.

It is positive to note that the under-18 age group is the second biggest demographic engaged when it comes to survey returns. It is also positive to reflect on the fact that prior to the direct engagement with the school there had been zero survey returns from under 18s. This illustrates the power and value of speaking directly to younger age groups to encourage participation.

Headlines from engagement:

- Students felt generally positive about the shops in Spennymoor.
- The public transport links were generally good - although issues around the reliability of services and the infrequency of routes to some of the areas and towns in most immediate proximity were raised.
- Whilst there wasn't a marked negativity towards the town, there was less engagement from this group on what they currently liked about Spennymoor.

Responses and focus from this demographic focused more on things they would like to see.

In line with the overall results from the engagement work, this group highlighted the desire for a wider variety of shops in the town, particularly retail shops that cater more to their specific age groups.

Other prominent views during the engagement were; to see more equipment and facilities in Jubilee Park aimed at older children and young people, more events happening around the town and more sports clubs.

Too much litter around the town and not enough things to do were the most expressed negatives during the engagement. ASB (particularly vandalism) was mentioned often enough to note but was not recorded as such an issue for this age group compared to the older demographics surveyed.

Primary school

The Urban Foresight team delivered workshops for primary-aged children in Middlestone Moor and Ox Close Primary Schools. Over two days we worked with ten classes across all year groups to gauge the children's views on what they felt needed to be improved about Spennymoor and what they would like the money spent on.

Each session followed the same format. In small groups, the children first discussed and then wrote down what they think needs to be improved about Spennymoor. They then did the same for the things they would like to see the money spent on. The worksheets were collected and then analysed.

Along with what was written down by the children, the Urban Foresight team spent time visiting each table and listening to the children's discussions. These discussions offered further rich information about the children's perception of Spennymoor today and what they feel they need from the town.

Primary school engagement results

Question: What would you spend your money on?

Answer	Count
More shops	41
Upgrade Jubilee park	35
More events	22
More restaurants	21
More clubs	19
More sports facilities	19
Water park	19
Arcade/games	19
Better swimming pool	18
More parks	16
Farm/zoo	13
More soft play	12
More schools	11
Upgrade skate park	10
Cinema	10
Total	285

Observations: More shops was, again, the main wish coming forward with the top choices being, in order of prominence, ice cream, sweet shops, toy shops and clothes shops. The closure of the ice cream shop in Spennymoor was a particular topic of conversation amongst the children.

Given the age groups engaged, it is no surprise to see these types of shops listed as desirable. The significant mention of clothes shops however tallies with the wider engagement results.

The wish for more restaurants is quite an interesting one for this demographic although this included establishments like McDonald’s and KFC. When discussing this point further however, many of the kids expressed specifically that there was nowhere in the town to go for a meal except for Wetherspoons.

More clubs and more sports facilities were prominent wishes amongst the children with football and dance being the most cited. Gymnastics, Basketball, Art and Cricket were also highlighted.

More events happening in the town was another high-scoring answer, with many of the children expressing that they really enjoy the events that currently happen in the town (gala, family fun day) but would like more of them.

The children were very engaged and generally very positive about the town. Their hopes and wishes were not extravagant or unrealistic and this presents positive opportunities to demonstrate that their voices have been heard during this engagement.

Question: What don’t you like currently?

Answer	Count
Litter	28
Traffic	15
The new library	11
ASB	10
Not enough shops	10
Not enough for kids to do	10
Dog fouling	9
Public toilets	7
Potholes	6
Not enough restaurants	5
Total	111

Observations: Positively, the children had much less to say in terms of anything they didn’t currently like about the town. From the things that were highlighted, a significant amount of the children flagged litter around the town as an issue. Traffic (too much of it, speeding and not enough safe crossing places) was also highlighted as a concern. A number of the children mentioned that the new library was smaller and had fewer books than the old one and they preferred the old one for those reasons.

ASB was mentioned enough times to be worth highlighting given it came from young children. Listening to the discussions happening between the children on this though it is likely that much of their awareness of this comes from hearing conversations on the subject from older demographics.

Business engagement

To gather a range of views on the business environment in Spennymoor several activities were undertaken. Desk research and analysis of Spennymoor's economic makeup was undertaken, the online survey was sent out to businesses, a drop-in session for businesses was held in Spennymoor Leisure Centre and discussions were had with Business Durham and South Durham Enterprise.

The key challenges identified were:

- A lack of business space (both office and industrial) to support start-up, growth and relocations.
- Skills shortages for local businesses
- Employers not joined up with education providers
- Lack of formal business network(s)
- Lack of a joined up and easily navigable business support landscape

Observations: It was clear from the research and engagement work that Spennymoor does not currently have an infrastructure that best supports business start-ups and growth. People wishing to start a business in Spennymoor face challenges in terms of accessing physical space and business support services. Further, existing businesses also reported difficulties in accessing business support and advice on several issues including; commercial property, planning and general business support.

The lack of a formal business network in Spennymoor was flagged as a missed opportunity to promote local supplier relationships and opportunities for collaboration. There is a Business Club through Spennymoor Town FC, but the perception of several businesses was that this was a commercial enterprise with a fee for participation. This is not actually the case, but the perception exists and has perhaps prevented the club from fully filling this gap.

As with many other towns across the UK, skills shortages were flagged as a real issue for local businesses. University, College and proximity to larger urban centres means there is a large outflow of people from Spennymoor for many different reasons and more needs to be done to offer meaningful opportunities for those who wish to stay and work in Spennymoor the chance to do so. The lack of formal engagement between employers and education was flagged as an issue and an opportunity.

Spennymoor needs to think strategically and long-term about its future economic make-up, and the long-term plan is the ideal opportunity to do so, however there are a range of fundamental building blocks that can be put in place relatively quickly which could begin making a significant difference.

General observations from engagement work

In many respects, the overall results of the engagement work are what you would expect to see from most towns across the UK. By this, we mean the results indicate the desire for a town offering the classic "20-minute neighbourhood" ideal, whereby everything you would want to buy, do or access is available more or less on your doorstep.

Certainly, the request for a wider variety of shops was the major wish across all groups whilst more events and leisure activities was another common wish across age groups.

Similarly, the issues highlighted as those most marked for the town are again those that would be found in many towns across the UK. There was general agreement across demographics that ASB is a key issue for the town and one that people wish to see addressed as a priority, whilst vacant shops and litter were also main concerns.

The people we spoke to directly were generally passionate and engaged and keen to see Spennymoor realise its potential. In particular the children and youths we spoke to were positive about the town and keen to play a part in developing the town in the future.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

From an analysis of all available town data, including that provided by the DLUHC, and from the results of the community engagement work, a SWOT analysis has been undertaken to help the Town Board inform the long-term town plan for Spennymoor.

The elements highlighted within the SWOT are what we consider to be genuine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats based on our rounded view after research and engagement, but it is not exhaustive. From our engagement work within the community and on the ground in Spennymoor the genuine picture is sometimes at odds with the published national data and local perception, and this requires careful consideration when deciding upon interventions.

This analysis provides a solid foundation for assessing where the most impactful investment and interventions should be made for the future development and prosperity of Spennymoor.

Strengths

- Strong internet coverage across the town.
- The majority of schools in Spennymoor rated as exceptional or good.
- Good level of private sector investment in areas such as Durham Gate and Thinford.
- A recent programme of regeneration work in the town centre.
- £20m of funding received through LTPT fund.
- A good number of independent shops.
- Close proximity to larger urban centres
- Good transport links to the larger urban centres of the North East.
- Good range of sports facilities and clubs.
- Some good leisure services, particularly the leisure centre and new library.
- Good number of green spaces including an excellent main park (Jubilee Park).
- An interesting heritage relating to mining.
- Several very active third-sector community organisations.

Weaknesses

- Anti-social behaviour issues, particularly in the town centre.
- Lack of available commercial property, both industrial and commercial.
- No well recognised business network or organisation.
- Average weekly pay is well under the national average.
- Significant growth in housing and population without the requisite additional infrastructure and services.
- No defined and agreed identity for the town.
- No defined development strategy for the town.
- Social trust level is significantly below national average.
- Town footfall level is over 50% lower than the national average.
- Commercial vacancy rate is above the national average.
- More than half of the LSOAs in the town are among the worst 20% in England when it comes to job opportunities.

- About 13.3% of the LSOAs in the town are among the worst 10% in England when it comes to crime rates.
- Lack of accommodation for visitors will restrict the impact of any development of the tourism offering in Spennymoor.

Opportunities

- Growth in housing and population offers the opportunity for increased town centre footfall and demand for new facilities.
- Development of a unifying business network.
- Development of space to support start-ups, business growth and entrepreneurship.
- Employer engagement forum to connect education and industry.
- Good civic and green spaces for further investment.
- Development of Spennymoor as a cycling and walking-friendly town and destination.
- Development of a destination marketing identity and offering for the town.
- Development of a stronger events programme for the town.
- Opportunity to formalise relationships with the town and schools to support civic, social and economic participation.
- Proximity and connectivity to major urban centres offers opportunities to attract visitors.

Threats

- Lack of business space is restricting economic development and job opportunities for residents.
- New housing is putting pressure on existing infrastructure.
- New housing, commuter town image and ASB can severely impact community pride.
- Challenging economic climate can exacerbate problems such as ASB, high street vacancy and job opportunities.
- Ongoing development of neighbouring towns can impact on footfall and economy.

Leveraging strengths

By promoting and developing existing strengths, Spennymoor can begin to see some immediate results in areas that it wishes to improve.

Spennymoor's proximity to larger urban centres can be both a strength and a weakness. As a strength however, it places a significant population within an hour's drive of the town. So, there is a strong potential catchment of day visitors should a stronger offering be developed, and then articulated and promoted well.

The recent investment in the public realm, combined with a strong presence of independent shops offers a strong foundation for a more attractive and visited town centre.

There are good sports and leisure facilities for a town Spennymoor's size and residents enjoy easy access to green spaces. Matching the development of this offer to the results of the community engagement work offers a positive opportunity for widening access and participation.

The town has undergone rapid growth in population and housing over the last ten years. This growth presents both opportunity and challenge for the town but if considered carefully then this can be harnessed to better support the positive development of the town centre and its amenities.

The quality of the schools, the engagement of the ALP and the size of Spennymoor means that education is a real strength of Spennymoor. This offers significant potential to develop an exciting and productive relationship between the school-aged children of Spennymoor and the civic decision-makers. Spennymoor has the potential to be a case study for other areas of how to ensure the voice of youth is involved in every aspect of the social and economic life of the town.

On the back of a positive recent programme of regeneration in the town, this £20m funding and the development of the Town Board offers a genuine opportunity to strategically develop the town. Ensuring the Town Board has the correct focus and make-up will be critical to ensuring Spennymoor's current strengths are built on.

Addressing weaknesses

The key to mitigating and addressing the weaknesses of Spennymoor lies in collaboration. Through the Town Board and associated sub-groups, key partners and networks can be brought together to take focused and collaborative action on key issues, whether short, medium or long-term.

Establishing sub-groups around the key themes of Safety and Security, Transport and Connectivity and High Street, Heritage and Regeneration would be positive.

Further, establishing a sub-group for business and economy which brings industry together with key business support agencies and education providers, would allow for a concentrated plan of action to tackle some of the economic issues facing the town and its residents.

The community engagement work has highlighted the danger that when Spennymoor is being highlighted it is increasingly for the wrong reasons. People talking the town down and highlighting issues (whether real or perceived) can impact significantly on community pride and on the social and economic health of the town.

Strong communication of the ten-year plan and town vision, along with a focussed programme of positive communication about the town and its developments, is key therefore to beginning to see more community pride and people talking up the town. Consideration should therefore be given to a communications sub-group of the Town Board being established to support this.

The additional housing, and resulting out-commute, can potentially threaten to dilute and diminish community spirit and identity and there were some expressions of this from enough people during the engagement programme to make it significant.

Attention should be given therefore to how the additional population and housing can be used to strengthen the town economically and socially.

Taking opportunities

The £20m brings an exciting opportunity to start a new chapter for Spennymoor. There is an opportunity to use the £20m to leverage significant additional funding. Spennymoor is a town with many positives and potential strengths and so that level of money has the potential to do significant things for the town and its people.

The community engagement work has demonstrated that there is real love and passion for the town from many residents across all demographics. Building on this by strengthening community pride and more positively promoting the town is a real opportunity.

The community engagement work has drawn out clear priorities for the residents of Spennymoor and this offers a genuine opportunity to develop a long-term plan that has the voice of residents

clearly identifiable within it. Building on this and working hard to retain community interest and involvement in the town, across all demographics but particularly with children and young people, is a big opportunity for Spennymoor.

Positively, the data, research and engagement show that a strong plan can be developed which allows for short- and medium-term interventions to be made which will directly support the wants and needs of the community whilst also building the foundations for long-term change.

Managing threats

Ensuring that the wider economic and social context is fully considered when developing the ten-year plan will be critical to managing the wide-ranging threats facing the town.

Equally, establishing the Town Board and its sub-groups and ensuring the right make up of participants, will also be the strongest safeguard against the slings and arrows of social and economic turbulence. Through fostering a spirit of collaboration and pooling resources as all work towards a single vision, Spennymoor can successfully navigate the challenges.

Focussing on the sustainable and inclusive economic development of Spennymoor will help protect the town against the worst of any economic shocks that come. Strengthening local supply chains, creating an environment for new businesses to start and scale, creating pathways into local jobs through working with education, and supporting and promoting networking and collaboration between businesses are all areas of focus which can contribute to this goal. A business sub-group of the Town Board should consider this as part of the ten-year plan.

A clear vision, a strong ten-year plan and a highly functioning and collaborative town board is Spennymoor's best defence against the ongoing economic and social uncertainty facing towns and cities across the UK.

Conclusions and recommendations

The community engagement work undertaken during April and May has given the people of Spennymoor a wide range of opportunities to express their views. The body of work undertaken by Urban Foresight and Durham County Council has seen the opportunity to do so communicated widely.

The number of surveys returned, combined with the number of people spoken to directly during the engagement, gives a strong enough sample to be confident that the results generally represent the views of the community of Spennymoor as a whole. Confidence in this respect is further enhanced by the lack of significant variation in results and views and by the positive and equitable spread of responses across demographic groups.

The Spennymoor Town Board now has, therefore, a solid base of information on which to build the long-term town plan for Spennymoor in a way which will reflect the needs and wishes of the town's population.

Ongoing resident and business engagement and participation in the development and delivery of the town plan should be considered a priority. This engagement work has provided a positive start to what could be a positive ongoing relationship between the residents of the town and the key decision makers and decision-making bodies.

In particular, there is a huge opportunity for Spennymoor to become a showcase for how children and young people can be pivotal and influential in shaping the development of the town. The size

of the town, spirit of the Town Board, the positivity of the ALP and the schools in Spennymoor and the enthusiasm of the students engaged in this work, all combine to offer that opportunity. Consideration should be given therefore on how to establish a mechanism that allows for the ongoing involvement and participation of children and young people as the long-term plan for Spennymoor is shaped and delivered.

Spennymoor is a town with strong foundations for realising its potential and addressing its challenges. Some locations receiving this funding will face huge challenges in using it to make a genuine and noticeable difference. The nature of Spennymoor and its existing strengths and positive attributes means that this money could be genuinely transformational for the town and its people if used effectively. This is an exciting time for Spennymoor.

Using our experience from working across the UK and beyond on place development projects and programmes and combining this the results of our research and engagement work in Spennymoor, we offer some recommendations for potential interventions that can help Spennymoor deliver on its vision for the town. These recommendations are found in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1: Summary of Engagement Activity

Activity	Numbers Engaged
8 Public engagement drop-in events at locations across Spennymoor. (Spennymoor Youth and Community Centre, Tudhoe Community Centre, St Paul's Centre, Middlestone Moor Community Centre and Spennymoor Leisure Centre).	80
Engagement Table at Spennymoor Family Fun Day. Over 1100 attendees at the event had the opportunity to engage.	50
On-Street Engagement	40
Whitworth Park Academy – presentation to most year groups and lunchtime drop-in session.	Approx. 900 students presented to. 30 students engaged at drop-in session.
Primary School Activity – Approx. 200 children engaged across all year groups at Middlestone Moor and Ox Close Primary Schools.	200
Online Survey – Promoted via available online channels and via key partners and community organisations. Sent directly to every parent/guardian of school children.	280 surveys received
Business Drop-In Session – A session specifically for businesses in Spennymoor Leisure Centre	11 attendees representing 7 businesses/organisations



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