

## **Report of**

### **Amy Harhoff Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The Purpose of this report is to provide Board members with an overview of the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme and to set out the actions and activities initiated to ensure a Town vision and accompanying 3 Year investment plan can be submitted to Government by 1 August 2024

#### **Background**

- 2 The Long-Term Plan for Towns was formally announced by Central Government on 1st October 2023, with Further guidance following just before Christmas. The detailed Guidance can be found [here](#).
- 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. The full funding profile was provided in early 2024 and is included at Appendix 2.
- 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 The Fund is an acknowledgement by Government that towns across the country (as opposed to cities) are struggling because of a number of factors.
- 6 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 by 1 August 2024.
- 7 The funding is directed at three investment themes, with each focussing on creating a resilient town for people and investment. The themes are:
  - Safety and Security

- High Streets, Heritage and Regeneration
- Transport and Connectivity

8 Within each theme are several ‘interventions’ the Town Board is expected to select for investment. Each area has the flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions for its town but must involve local people in the shaping of these decisions.

### **Geography**

9 The Fund is limited in its scope to Spennymoor only. The boundary for this will be determined by Government as part of the investment planning process. As a default, the programme is based on the boundary defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Built Up Area 2022 (BUA) for Spennymoor but a change to this can be requested as long as the change includes the town that was originally selected and is contiguous. A map showing the Built-Up Area of Spennymoor is attached at Appendix 3.

### **Preparing the Long-Term Plan**

- 10 An initial £50,000 in capacity funding has been made available to each Local Authority, with a further £200,000 to be made available from 1st April, subject to a Long-Term Plan Board being in place, to prepare the Long-Term Plan. This should include community engagement activity.
- 11 Programme guidance is clear and consistent in the desire to see the LTPT programme developed and delivered using the principles of Co-design. Part of the submission required by Government in August will be the demonstration of the level of engagement with Communities across the town and their role in identifying priorities for investment.
- 12 Given the short timescales through to Programme submission, there are a number of strands of activity which have been initiated these are;
- Launching a Perceptions and Priorities consultation
  - Commencing a programme of face to face consultation opportunities in community centres and at major town events.
  - Procuring specialist consultancy support for the co-design process.

### **Perceptions and Priorities Consultation**

- 13 The initial consultation went live at the end of March and is scheduled to run through to mid may, concluding after the proposed Family fun day in the town centre. The consultation delivered online and through face to face events (paras 14-16 below) will provide a broad response from different age groups and the various communities across the town.

### **Face To Face Consultation Programme**

- 14 Commencing 8 April officers will be available across several community venues in the town to discuss the LTPT programme and to seek views on the potential interventions which need to be explored.
- 15 Following the first round of engagement the number of residents engaging will be assessed with the potential for a further programme of engagement to be undertaken once the vision and initial investment plan is drafted.
- 16 The programme of community venue face to face opportunities will be supplemented by attendance at large scale events in the town. This includes the Family Fun Day scheduled for May and could also include the Spennymoor Gala day.

### **Specialist Co-Design Consultancy Support**

- 17 Following a recent procurement exercise, Urban Foresight a Newcastle based multi-disciplinary consultancy have been appointed to provide specific co-design support to the development of the Vision and Investment Plan.
- 18 Urban Foresight will engage with stakeholders, including community members, experts, and end-users, in collaborative design processes, to ensure that the solutions we develop are not only relevant and responsive but also inclusive and empowering.
- 19 A five-phase approach has been proposed for this programme as set out in figure 1 below.

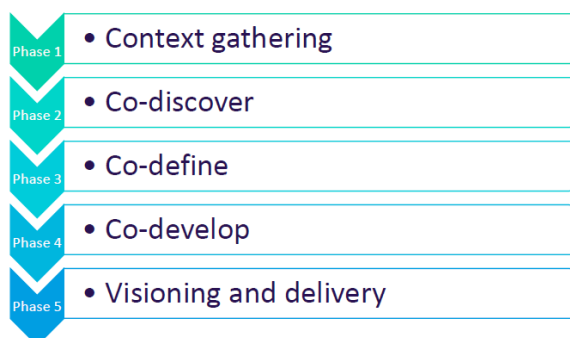


Figure 1: Urban Foresight: Proposed methodology for Spennymoor LTPT programme

- 20 These five phases link to a project timeline providing a comprehensive backdrop to the town vision and the potential solutions to help achieve it. The Urban Foresight project timeline is attached at Appendix 4
- 21 Details of forthcoming engagement opportunities will be updated on the [programme webpages](#) as well as being circulated using social media channels. Board members / Stakeholder organisations are encouraged to share social media content / updates to ensure the widest possible reach and involvement across the town.

### **Next Steps**

- 22 Progress with the various consultation and engagement events will be reported to the next Board meeting linking with the Forward Plan focus on beginning to define the Vision for Spennymoor.
- 23 Fortnightly meetings with Urban Foresight have commenced in line with their proposal with regular feedback from engagement events informing the project report scheduled for w/c 24 June.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 24 Board is recommended to:
- i. Note the progress with launching a range consultation and engagement events to underpin the LTPT programme submission.
  - ii. Endorse the Appointment of Urban Foresight providing specialist co-design capacity to the programme.
  - iii. Receive regular reports highlighting the scope and feedback from consultation returns and early stage co design sessions.

Author(s)

Graham Wood, Economic Development Manager

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

None associated with this report.

### **Finance**

The details of the financial profile for the programme as set by Government is set out at Appendix 3. 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 set to be released this month, linked to commencing Board meetings and confirming initial governance requirements are in place.

## **Consultation**

The LTPT programme has co design and extensive consultation at its core. A range of consultation and engagement events will be bolstered by an additional Co-design programme being delivered by sector specialists.

## **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**

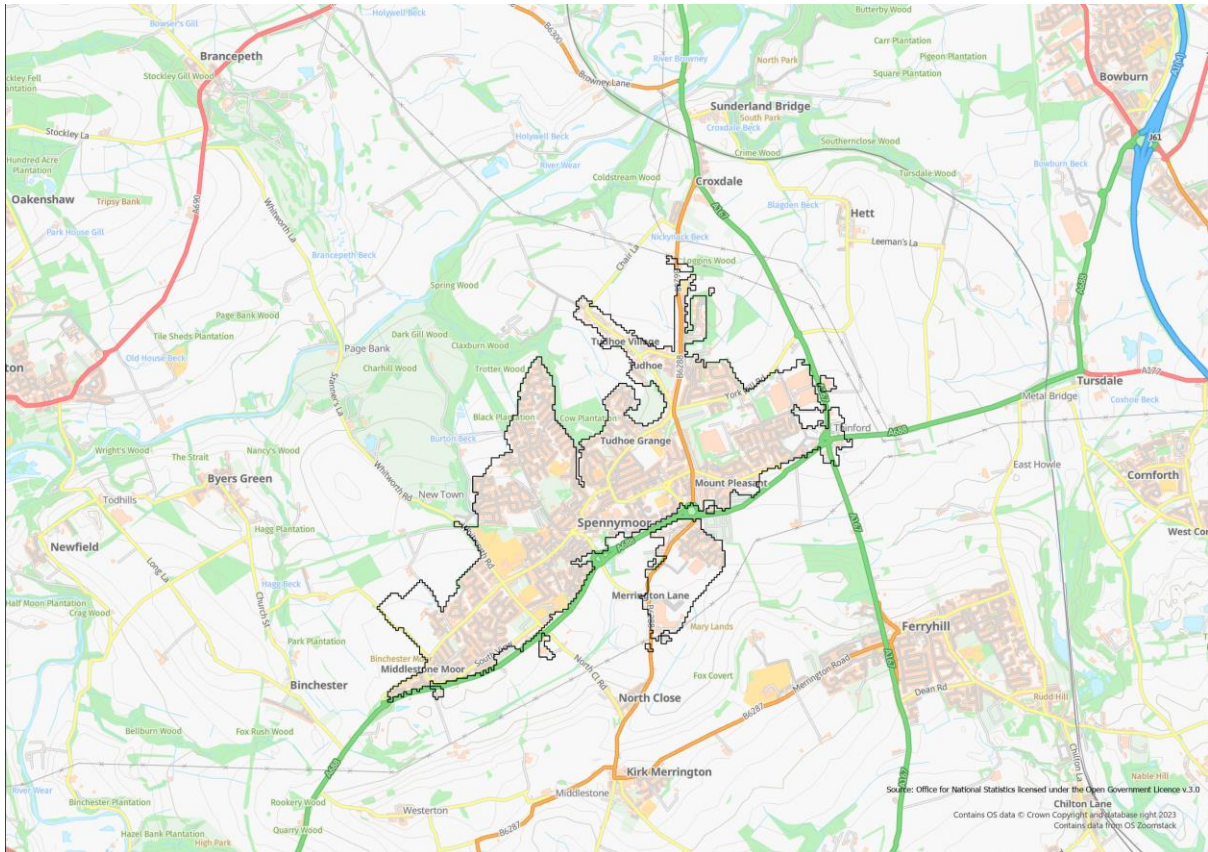
Specialist Co-design capacity has been procured following the Council's established procurement methodology.



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## Appendix 3: Geography- extent of the LTPT Boundary

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Source: ONS Built Up Area Boundaries (2022)

## Appendix 4: Urban Foresight Project Timeline

Programme Activities (week commencing)		March	April					May				June			
		25-Mar	01-Apr	08-Apr	15-Apr	22-Apr	29-Apr	06-May	13-May	20-May	27-May	03-Jun	10-Jun	17-Jun	24-Jun
Project management	Inception meeting and programme outline Project update calls	M1													
Context gathering	Initial meetings with internal stakeholders														
	Desk based review			M2											
	Create co-design timetable			M3											
Co-discover	Embed within community Street-wise														
	Initial workshops									M4					
Co-define	Organising														
	Focusing														
	Defining														
Co-develop	Develop (creating proposals/tools/vision)														
	Create action plan														
Visioning and delivery	Draft Report														
	Final report (indicative)														M7

M1	Inception meeting and kick-off
M2	All desk research complete
M3	Produce and supply a co-design timetable
M4	Complete public engagement / co-design sessions
M5	Project themes and roadmap forward
M6	Developing draft report / list of interventions and framework
M7	Final report