

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Spennymoor Town Board** held at Whitworth Park Academy, Whitworth Lane, Spennymoor on **Wednesday 05 June 2024 at 3.30 pm**

Present:

A Boddy, Chief Executive Livin' (Chair)

Board Members:

J 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
D Stone	Whitworth Park Academy
B Graham	Community Representative

Officers:

G Wood	Economic Development Manager, DCC
J Anson	Community Economic Development Manager, DCC
K Monaghan	Project Manager, DCC
S Oliver	Urban Foresight (Consultant)

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from D Davison, A Harhoff, A Kerr and Revd Canon M Tarling.

1 Chair Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the second Spennymoor Town Board meeting and introductions were made.

Prior to the meeting commencing the Chair thanked the Economic Development Manager and his team for all the support and hard work they had undertaken to establish the Spennymoor Town Board.

The Chair mentioned that he had been invited to Downing Street to meet with the Minister Jacob Young for an update on the government's Long-Term Plan for Towns. At the meeting Adam Hawksbee, the Government's appointed Town Tsar had suggested that the Spennymoor Town Board should be renamed as it was too officious and there was a need to identify across the whole town to emphasis working together. It was suggested that Board Members think of any suitable names. The Community Economic Development Manager agreed to take this forward.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

It was noted that all declaration of interest forms had been completed.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

4 Matters Arising

The Economic Development Manager updated the Board that a more definitive map of Spennymoor requested by Councillor L Maddison would be circulated when the graphics had been checked.

The Economic Development Manager confirmed that a definitive response was being awaited from the Deputy Monitoring Officer in relation to the circulation of information. He would ensure that the Town Council Clerk was copied into any papers for the Spennymoor Town Board. The Board were required to sign the Terms of Reference to ensure a single message was portrayed across the town. He agreed that the decision note would be circulated with any actions that were needed to be closed off following the meeting.

5 Programme Update

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth which provided a progress update of the consultation period for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme (LTPT) and set out the activities initiated and consultation feedback to ensure a Town vision and accompanying 3 Year investment plan could be submitted to Government by 1 August 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

The County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner mentioned that she was also a member of the Darlington Town Board which may be helpful for information sharing. The Chair revealed that a survey had been carried out by Zen City across different towns. The results were expected to be published on 20 June 2024 and may be useful for the Spennymoor Town Board's consultation programme.

The Economic Development Manager provided a detailed presentation which focused on the governance structure for the Spennymoor Town Board for when the submission was made on 1st August 2024, how the money would be spent and how to identify future investment. He highlighted that there would be three working groups:

- i) Transport and Connectivity;
- ii) High Street, Heritage and Regeneration; and
- iii) Safety and Security

The working groups would pull together ideas that would feed into the investment plan. They would run a month in advance of, and feed into board meetings. The Project Manager would sit on all three working groups and the DCC Technical Officer Group would consider any issues arising from the three working groups. The working groups aimed to identify projects to link together to distinguish what other people did to establish what could be improved for quick wins before the submission deadline. The importance of obtaining feedback from the working groups to show what was being done and respond to what had been raised by people in the town was noted.

The County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner mentioned that the next police and crime panel would look at heritage and cultural crime. The office dealt with issues that included off road bikes, road safety, and drink driving campaigns. They were also involved in a national campaign that dealt with drug abuse by drivers which led to offenders having their licenses confiscated and vehicles seized. This linked into ongoing work around young people who used nitro oxide (laughing gas) and the risk of vapes that had been adulterated with synthetic drugs and naloxone for drug overdoses. They wanted more involvement with children and young people and funded a Friday night club to divert young people away from negative activity.

The Chair suggested that a scoping exercise be carried out to create a stakeholder map of activities, who had similar interests, what influence they had and any decision makers identified to share information. The Community Economic Development Manager commented that this work had already commenced and agreed to link in with the County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to seek working group representation from the police for the working groups. It was also suggested that a subgroup be established for young people to share their views that could be incorporated into the business statement to provide for a holistic view on regeneration.

The Economic Development Manager added that further programme guidance for the LTPT had been published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in May 2024 in relation to the submission on 1 August 2024 reaffirmed a co design alignment along with a ten year vision and three year investment plan.

There was still no template available for the investment plan and DLUHC had encouraged the use of diagrams, graphs, logic chains and a summary in the submission rather than words. There was clarity on the way the government would sign off on the programme for spending the money that needed to be demonstrated with evidence.

The Chair advocated for a clear vision to be established that could be used to look at how the town could be changed to encourage other businesses to set up in Spennymoor to provide a more diverse shopping offer. There was a requirement to reduce the vacancy rate as low as possible and support established businesses to increase sustainability. There was a need to change the perception of Spennymoor's reputation to be a great place to visit, building on the family fun day that had been a huge success in bringing people into the town. It was suggested that specialist markets and events could be introduced which could become a legacy like Bishop Auckland Food Festival. It was proposed that potential subsidies could be given to the private sector to make it financially viable to encourage further investment to increase money for the town.

Resolved:

That the progress with consultation and engagement events to underpin the LTPT programme submission be noted.

6 Communications

The Economic Development Manager acknowledged that the Board was limited as to what could be communicated due to the upcoming elections in July 2024. However consultation events to establish public engagement had already taken place. These included a family fun day, on street engagement, engagement with children from the primary school and Whitworth Park Academy, business drop ins and various community engagement events in community venues and the leisure centre and online surveys.

7 Forward Plan Dates / Focus for Board and Working Group Meetings

The Economic Development Manager gave details of future working group meetings dates and it was agreed to invite police representatives on to each of the working groups. He added that the working groups were open to anyone who could provide further support.

8 Feedback from Consultation and Co Design Sessions - A Vision for Spennymoor 2034

The Urban Foresight Consultant gave a detailed presentation that highlighted feedback from the consultation exercises and Co design sessions. He gave a summary of the results of the engagement activity carried out with businesses, the community, youths and the primary school.

It was suggested that the consultant engaged with members of the Spennymoor Town Council Facebook group as this voiced concerns and issues of the community that set the perception of Spennymoor. There were negative comments, however, it was noted that if issues were not reported then no action could be taken. Engagement was vital in terms of showing the community that their views were being listened to.

Discussion took place around the activities referred to in the youth engagement. It was highlighted that leisure centres, 3G football pitches, various sports and youth clubs were already on offer. It was observed that these offers were not being accessed to their full potential due to financial constraints for families in areas of high deprivation, lack of awareness or the lack of confidence in either the young person or parent to sign up to activities. It was mentioned that people were unaware that there was a train station within the town centre that provided transport links to larger towns and cities. It was agreed that sign posting was very important and both young people and the elderly community should be included. It was suggested that all activities should be mapped out of where people could go.

The Board agreed that work was required around people's perception of safety to help them feel safer in the town centre. The County Durham and Darlington Police and Crime Commissioner noted that work was ongoing with Durham County Council around CCTV to address anti-social behaviour issues in the town centre which impacted on the perception of the town. Cameras were more advanced to allow Inspectors to log into them on their mobile phones. All incidents were required to be reported for the police to identify hotspots and direct the relevant resources. She added that there was to be a soft launch of a new reporting mechanism to help residents report crime that allowed them to download video footage. Once the system was tested it would be rolled out. This would generate more intelligence to be acted upon. It was suggested that local newspapers like the Spennymoor News could be used to distribute information.

The Urban Foresight Consultant stated that a full report on the survey was due with a full analysis that included a SWOT analysis along with recommendations as to where investment could be made.

9 Visioning Workshop

This item was not discussed due to time constraints of the meeting but it was agreed that the Urban Foresight Consultant would develop a suggested vision statement to be discussed at the visioning workshop.

10 Any Other Business

There was no further business discussed.

11 Date of Next Meeting

10 July 2024 at 3.00 pm.