

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.