



# Spennymoor Long Term Plan – Community Engagement Report

PREPARED FOR  
Durham County Council

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Community engagement .....	4
Methodology.....	4
Results.....	4
Engagement with children and young people .....	12
Business engagement .....	15
General observations from engagement work .....	15
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis .....	17
Strengths.....	17
Weaknesses.....	17
Opportunities .....	18
Threats .....	18
Leveraging strengths .....	18
Addressing weaknesses .....	19
Taking opportunities .....	19
Managing threats.....	20
Conclusions and recommendations.....	20
Appendix 1: Summary of Engagement Activity .....	22

# 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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>279</b>

### Gender demographic

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

### 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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>279</b>

## 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>

**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.

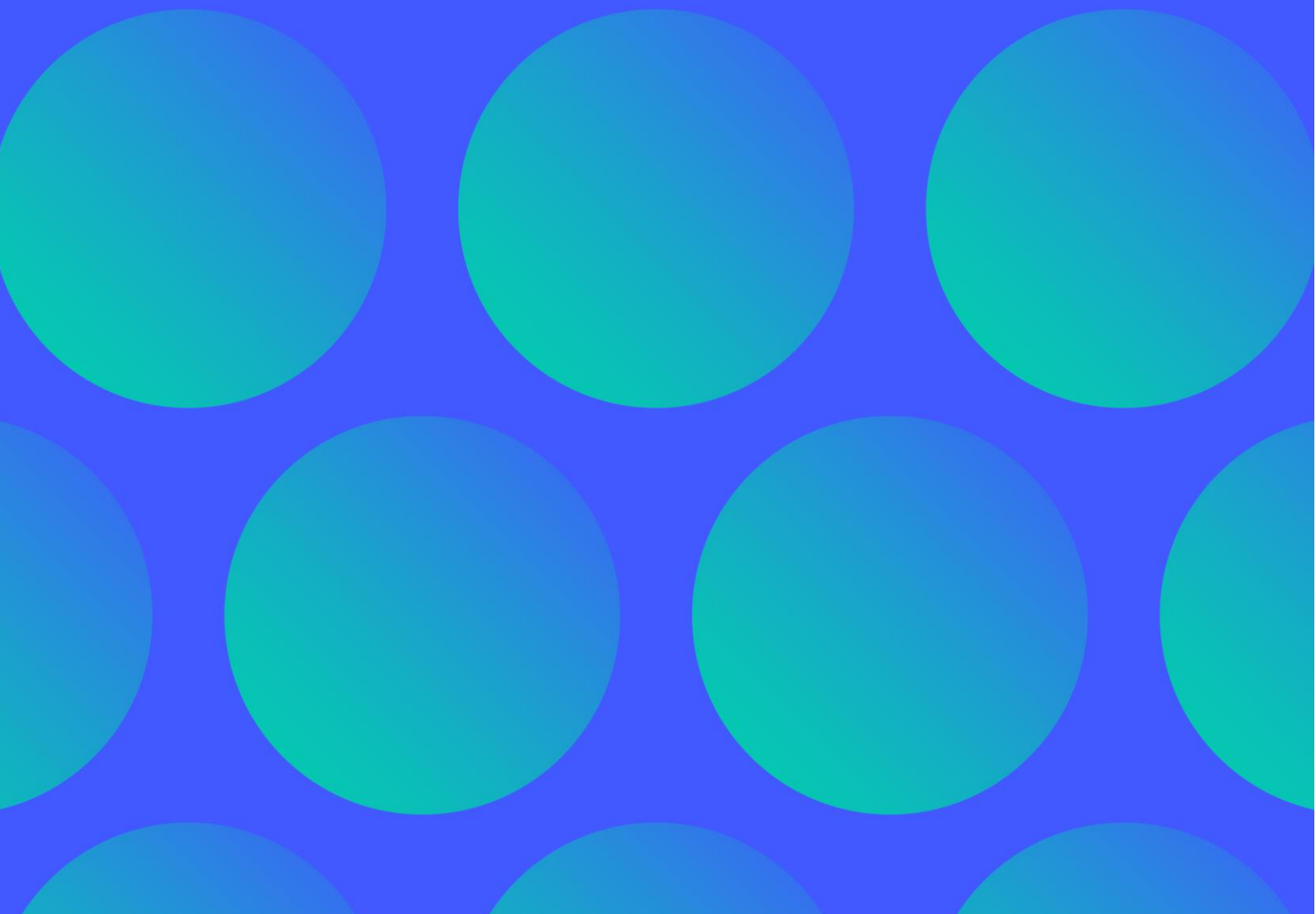
In particular, there is a huge opportunity for Spennymoor to become a showcase for how children and young people can be pivotal and influential in shaping the development of the town. The size

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



Urban  
Foresight

© Urban Foresight Ltd, 2024

The Catalyst, 3 Science Square  
Newcastle Helix  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5TG  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0)191 814 2210

30 City Quay,  
Camperdown Street,  
Dundee, DD1 3JA  
Scotland  
+44(0)138 254 9946

[urbanforesight.org](http://urbanforesight.org)  
[hello@urbanforesight.org](mailto:hello@urbanforesight.org)