



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

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 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 with a date of submission to be confirmed.

5 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.

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 To further assist with project delivery, a 4th Working group has been set up which will have a youth focus. This will ensure that the views of local young people are taken into consideration and with the long term nature of the programme, that projects developed with their needs in mind.
- 9 This was following the consultation period when local youths were consulted with and it was highlighted that there was a need for more projects and opportunities for local youths in the area.
- 10 The working group has been created to provide expert information and in line with programme guidance to identify and align current and planned

activity across the LTPT area. Membership of this working group is set out at **Appendix 2** with the first meeting taking place Thursday 26th September.

Governance - structures

- 11 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.
- 12 Working groups have continued to provide highlighted issues within their specialist areas to make Spennymoor and 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.
- 13 Youth Council representation has now been concluded with a youth rep who attends Whitworth Academy due to attend the next board meeting subject to availability. In addition Spennymoor youth and community will work with the youth council representative to strengthen young people's voices and involvement. creating a fourth working group.
- 14 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.
- 15 Alan Strickland MP has been appointed as MP for Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor and as such has been invited to join Spennymoor Town Board in line with the published Guidance.

Submission

- 16 There is still no further update following the pause in submissions announced in July. 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.
- 17 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 aid project development.

- 18 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.
- 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 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

- 21 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.
- 22 Community and Stakeholder feedback sessions have now concluded following six events across the town:
 - 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

 - Spennymoor Family Fun day ,
Saturday 7th September 10-3pm

- 23 The programme of community venue face to face opportunities has been supplemented by attendance at other community venues in the town.
- 24 Urban Foresight will also be holding consultation events at the local schools to demonstrate how pupils' opinions have been taken into consideration.
- 25 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. This has provided information potential areas for interventions, and if issues regarding car parking that were highlighted in the public consultation are an issue.
- 26 Town Centre survey – annual vacancy assessment has been provided.
- 27 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.
- 28 Asset Mapping of DCC Land and Buildings has been undertaken, including Industrial and Commercial Land.

Next Steps and Ongoing Activity

- 29 Further background data is currently being collected to support the investment plan. This includes:
- 30 Asset & investment mapping of Partners Town Council, Livin– identifying public assets and known planned investments to support the vision submission.
- 31 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.
- 32 Continued face to face public consultation events at various community centres.
- 33 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.

- 34 The next scheduled Spennymoor Town Board meeting is Thursday 5th December 3-5pm at Livin offices. Subject to government announcement confirming timescales / next steps for the programme, a further special Board meeting may be required in the intervening period.

Recommendation(s)

- 35 Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the continued progress with consultation and consultation feedback events to underpin the LTPT programme submission.
- b) Agree to hold a special Board meeting once programme timescales are confirmed.

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 Youth Working Group

Michael Fishwick – Spennymoor Youth and Community Association

Claire Bissett - Holiday Activities with Healthy Food Development • Children & Young Peoples Services

Cllr Liz Maddison – County Councillor

Cllr Billy McAloon – County Councillor

Cllr Pete Molloy – County Councillor

Catharine Harwood - Participation and Engagement Officer
Children & Young Peoples Services

Andy Coulthard – Community Regeneration Manager - Livin

Julie O'Connor - Livin

Ian Morris - Spennymoor Town Clerk

Jeanne Trotter - Police and Crime commissioners office

Katherine Ward – Senior Safer places officer

Julie Anson – Community Economic Development manager

Karl Monaghan – Project Manager - Community Economic Development