Bedlington

Borderlands Place Programme Board

Meeting Report

1st December 2021

18:00

East Bedlington Community Centre

Attendees

Board Members	Organisation
Tony Kirsop (Chair)	NCC
Alex Wallace	County Councillor
Rebecca Wilczek	County Councillor
Malcolm Robinson	County Councillor
Christine Taylor	County Councillor
Bill Crosby	Town Council
Keith Grimes	Town Council
Victoria Thompson	Parish Council
Adam Hogg	Parish Council
Dennis Fancett	Senrug
Tracy Machnicki	BV FutureGen Foundation
Officers	**Role**
Anne Lawson Peter Mawer (Town Lead)	Senior Programme Officer (Town Regeneration) Community Regeneration Officer

Apologies

Board Member	Organisation
David Fellows	TT Electronics
Michael Black	Advance

Chris Johnson	Leading Link
Officers	**Role**
Chris Walker	Economic Regeneration

Virtual Catch-up Meeting 15 December 2021 for those unable to attend 1 December 2021

David Fellows	TT Electronics
Chris Johnson	Leading link

Contents

Governance

The following documents have been circulated amongst board members and have been placed on the publicly available Borderland Place Programme [webpage](#) for the town, they are also attached as appendices to this report.

- Governance and Terms of Reference - see appendix 1
- Code of Conduct - see appendix 2
- Pen Portraits – see appendix 3

Declaration of Interests have been completed by each board member and are held at NCC.

The board may refer to NCC Policies, links to these are available on the Place Programme webpage for the town.

- Whistle blowing
- GDPR
- Complaints

Briefing on the Place Programme

Growth Deal commitment

Through the Borderlands Place Programme, we will target investment in places that will help boost economic activity across the region. Recognising the importance of our smaller rural market and coastal towns to the local economy, this programme will provide £50million of funding across the Borderlands area with UK Government committing up to £30 million in Cumbria and Northumberland and Scottish Government £20 million in the South of Scotland to support the revitalisation of towns across the Borderlands region, subject to full business case approval. A series of Place Plans will be developed for the region's priority towns and town centres. Towns will only enter the Place Programme should their Place Plan contain projects eligible for Borderlands investment.

Borderlands Approach to Economic Recovery

- Help to re-start local economies and towns as they emerge from the pandemic, focusing on repurposing towns and town centres and safeguarding and retaining as much as possible of the current business, employment, and population base.
- Supporting towns to return to pre Covid-19 levels of activity by investing to increase footfall and spending in town centres, improve the attractiveness of towns, and encourage visitors to return.
- As towns complete the recovery phase, the focus will shift over time towards delivering long-term inclusive and sustainable economic growth, increasing employment, growing businesses, and boosting wealth and productivity. This will include investing in infrastructure for growth, such as new industrial and commercial developments, housing, transport infrastructure, and visitor attractions.
- The investment approach will vary between towns, depending on how each place has been impacted by Covid-19, and the types and scale of intervention needed to support their recovery, resilience and return to growth.

Supported Capital Interventions

The Place Programme will support a range of capital interventions targeted at enhancing the economic infrastructure needed to ensure the sustainability and growth of our towns. This includes:

- Purchase and assembly of land and buildings.
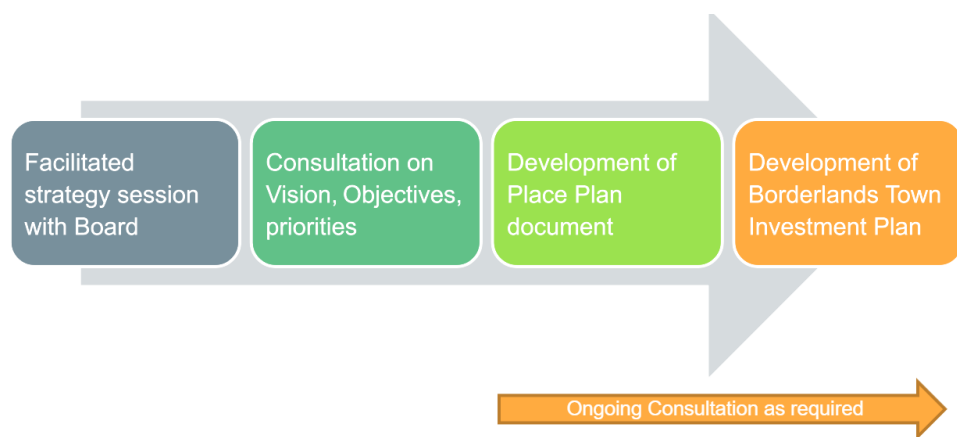- Remediation of vacant and derelict sites.

- Property development and enhancement, including schemes to encourage private, public and third sector investment in improving buildings, re-modelling business premises, and conversion of buildings to new uses to support the repurposing of towns (e.g. residential, leisure, community uses).
- Development of arts and cultural, visitor economy, community, and skills and education facilities.
- Enhancement of shop, business and commercial public facing fronts.
- Development of the upper floors of buildings for affordable housing and other uses.

Place Programme Development

The Place Programme in the town will take the following path during its development, supported by NCC officers at each stage. The programme is a ten-year program to 2031 and there is no pre-prescribed timeline for each stage.

| Facilitated strategy session with Board | Consultation on Vision, Objectives, priorities | Development of Place Plan document | Development of Borderlands Town Investment Plan |

Ongoing Consultation as required

Stakeholder Mapping and Board Development

A stakeholder mapping event was held on the 26th October 2021 with elected members. The results are shown below with summary analysis provided to understand those stakeholders with significant influence and interest in the future of the town

Named by one group	Named by two groups
SENRUG Influential Individuals Development Trust Public Transport Leading Links Rutherford Cancer Centre EBCC/WBCC Trustee Police/Emergency services Social Services Welwyn Factory PTAs Local farms and landowners Medium/Large local businesses Karbon Bernicia Golf Club Churches Together Local Charities Pubs and restaurants Community Centres	Britishvolt Advance Northumberland Local traders Port of Blyth Education providers
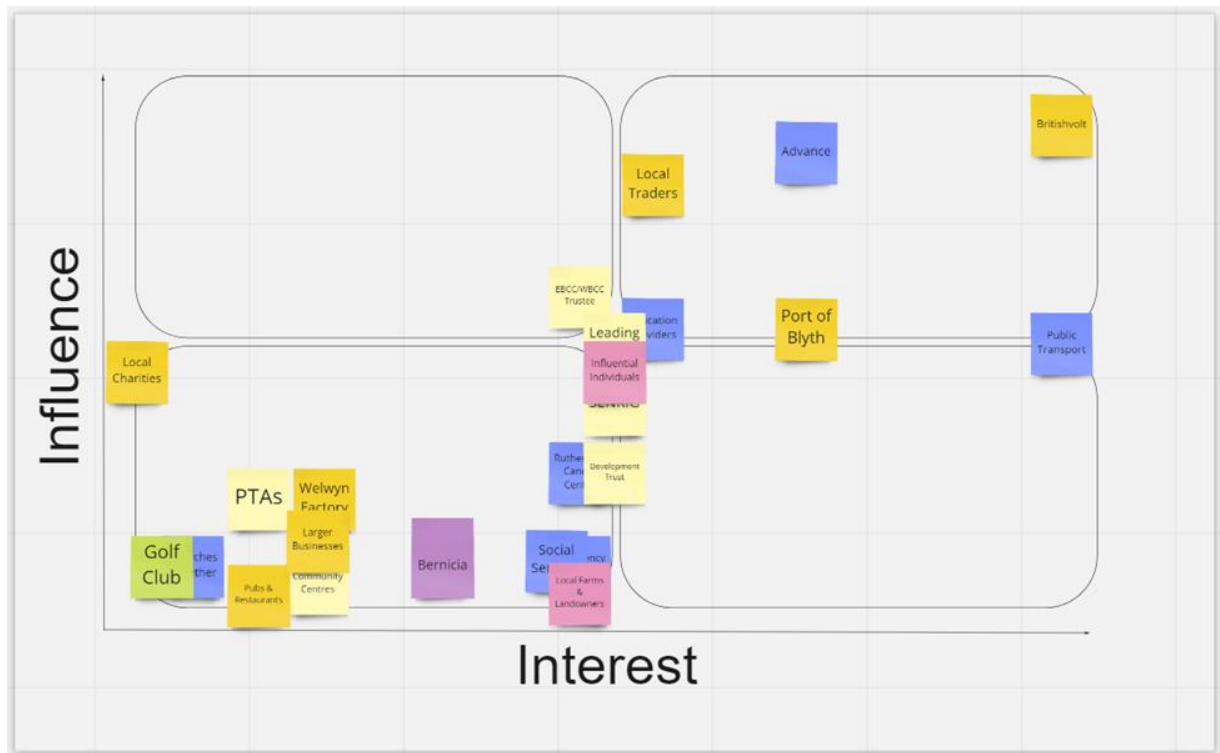
From the above mapping activity, the accountable body; NCC, identified those organisations it felt were eligible and appropriate to participate in the Borderlands Place Programme Board. NCC elected Members were invited directly, Town and Parish Councils and other local stakeholders were invited to nominate suitable named representatives.

All organisations identified in the stakeholder mapping activity will be invited to participate in consultation and engagement activities as the programme progresses.

The stakeholder mapping and subsequent review process has resulted in the following Borderlands Place Programme Board:

Board Member (Name)	Board Member (Organisation)
Tony Kirsop (Chair)	NCC
Alex Wallace	County Councillor
Rebecca Wilczec	County Councillor
Malcolm Robinson	County Councillor
Christine Taylor	County Councillor

Victoria Thompson	Parish Council
Adam Hogg	Parish Council
Bill Crosby	Town Council
Keith Grimes	Town Council
Tracy Machnicki	BV FutureGen Foundation
Michael Black	Advance Northumberland
Chris Johnson	Leading Link
David Fellows	TT Electronics
Dennis Fancett	Senrug

The board will be supported by the following officer group:

Officer	Role
Anne Lawson	Senior Programme Officer (Town Regeneration)
Chris Walker	Community Regeneration Officer
Peter Mawer (Town Lead)	Community Regeneration Officer

Vision for the Town

The board was asked to consider the elements that might be incorporated into a Borderlands Place Plan Vision for the town. They were reminded of the Borderlands overall programme core principles when they did this:

The five core principles that underpin the Place Programme:

- Place-based: Assessing investment needs and solutions for each place on its own terms: what the place wants to be in the future, what it needs, and what it offers.

- Collective: Looking at the contribution of each part to the whole: the added value to the place, the area, the region, and the country.

- Systemic: Bringing public, private, third sector, and community assets together as part of a single, integrated system supporting communities, services and the economy.

- Community-led: Putting communities at the heart of decisions about the solutions that the Place Programme brings to the challenges facing their towns and town centres.

- Prevention and future proofing: Investment and action directed towards preventing further deterioration in our towns and town centres.

The group used flip charts in breakout groups to brainstorm ideas. These are shown below:

Group 1 (Dennis, Adam, Christine & Rebecca)

- Job opportunities (green jobs)
- Joining the two halves of the town together (one Bedlington)
- Promoting Bedlington's industrial/railway heritage
- Capitalising on the strength of community
- Encourage independent businesses and a variety of businesses
- Further education
- Leisure offering
- Footpaths connecting parks and cycle routes
- Connectivity to other settlements
- Youth leisure opportunities inc mother & toddler groups, soft play etc
- Affordable housing

Group 2 (Alex, Keith, Bill & Tony)

- Improved quality of life
- Increased jobs
- Health
- Reduction in ASB
- A vibrant, safe community
- A destination
- Accessibility to transport for employment
- Improvement to the environment – green economy
- Retention/attraction of high paid jobs
- Housing meeting the demographic needs
- Improved infrastructure links
- Improved retail offer – more varied choice
- Develop our unique heritage

Group 3 (Vicky, Malcolm and Tracy)

- Connectivity within the town
- Transport
- Connecting 'strengths'
- Connectivity to wider area
- USP for Bedlington – a reason for people to come
- Put Bedlington on the map – arts, education, business
- Futureproofing
- Leveraging assets
- Attracting businesses

Group 4 (David & Chris – virtual meeting 15/12/21)

- Build on community spirit
- Pride in the town and its heritage
- New developments
- Make town relevant to now
- Improved parks and open spaces
- More accessible
- A destination
- Activities for young people
- Attract visitors
- Service provision for growing workforce
- Infrastructure for growing businesses
- Build skills base

Northumberland
County Council
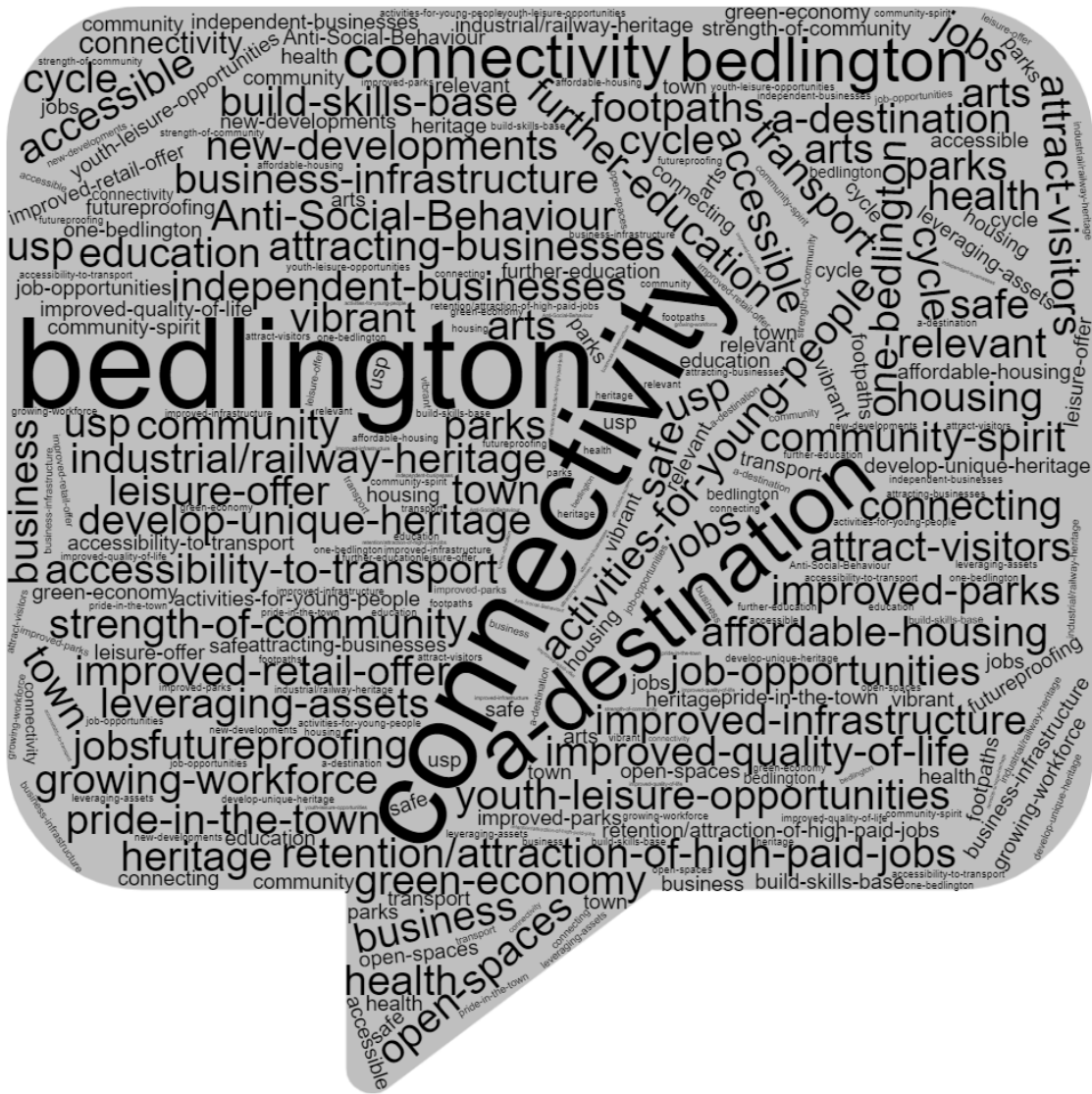
The NCC Officer group used these ideas to draft the following proposed Borderlands Place Programme Vision for the town. This will be reviewed, and a draft vision confirmed at the next board meeting, ahead of community consultation.

By 2031 Bedlington will be a cohesive and thriving centre for businesses, residents and learners. Providing quality jobs in low carbon clean growth industries supported by outstanding skills and education opportunities for young people and adults alike, Bedlington will be a growing town with housing options to meet the

local need. Bedlington will find innovative ways to celebrate the town's rail and industrial heritage, whilst delivering a new and vibrant offer for all ages, which attracts residents and visitors alike, making Bedlington a destination and an attractive town to live, work and learn in.

Bedlington Borderlands Place Programme Strategic Objectives

The board were asked to consider the overall Borderlands Place Programme. The Programme has seven investment objectives, focused on addressing regionally identified challenges and opportunities:

- **SO1**: Empower local communities to imagine and then build a long-term future for the towns they live in.
- **SO2**: Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.
- **SO3**: Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in our towns and town centres.
- **SO4**: Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation.
- **SO5**: Maintain and increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.
- **SO6**: Retain and increase the working age population in towns.
- **SO7**: Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.

The board were asked to identify <u>four</u> of the above that could be tailored to suit the needs of the local community in their view.

The groups identified:

Group 1 – SO4, SO3, SO7 and SO6

Group 2 – SO1, SO7, SO2 and SO3

Group 3 – SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4

Group 4 – SO3, SO4, SO5 and SO7

When scored as 4pts for 1st choice, 3pts for 2nd choice etc this gives a combined priority order of

SO3 (10pts), SO1 (8pts), SO4 (8pts), SO7 (6pts), SO2 (6pts), SO5 (3pts), SO6 (1pt)

The following draft strategic objectives for the Borderlands Place Programme in the town were identified, for further consideration following community consultation.

Proposed Bedlington Borderlands Place Programme Strategic Objectives

Northumberland
County Council

1. Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in Bedlington on retail, leisure and culture.
2. Empower the local resident and business community to imagine and then build a long-term future for Bedlington.
3. Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation for residents of Bedlington
4. Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in Bedlington.

Appendix 1 Governance and Terms of Reference

Held on the Bedlington Borderlands webpage

Appendix 2 Code of Conduct

[Held on the Bedlington Borderlands webpage](#)

Appendix 3 Pen Portraits

[Held on Bedlington Borderlands Place Programme webpage](#)