

Bellingham

Borderlands Place Programme Board

Meeting Report

2nd February 2022

18:00

Teams

Attendees

Board Members	Organisation
Tony Kirsop (Chair)	NCC
Cllr John Riddle	NCC
Cllr Martin Dickson-Green	Bellingham Parish Council
Ben Dickson-Green	North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership
Lindsay Davidson	Bellingham Schools Partnership
Brian Tilley	Bellingham Town Hall
Steve Gibbon	Bellingham Heritage Centre
Peter Lloyd	Churches Together
Vince Walsh	Karbon Homes
Officers	Role
Anne Lawson	Senior Programme Officer (Town Regeneration)
Chris Walker	Community Regeneration Officer
Iain Hedley	Community Regeneration Officer

Apologies

Board Member	Organisation
Cllr Anthony Kirkbride	Bellingham Parish Council
Amanda Corbett	Bellingham Cooperative
Officers	Role



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Governance

The following documents have been circulated amongst board members and have been placed on the publicly available [Borderlands 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



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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.

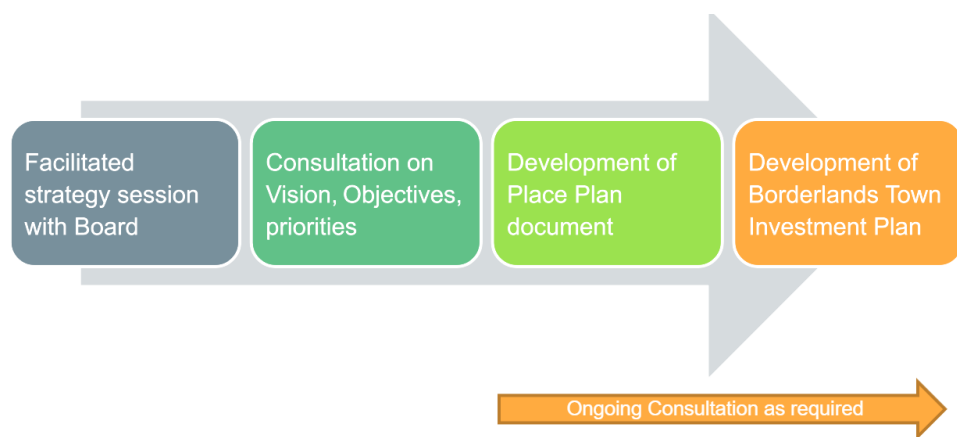


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- Property development and enhancement, including schemes to encourage private, public and third sector investment in improving buildings, re-modelling business premises, and conversion of buildings to new uses to support the repurposing of towns (e.g. 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.





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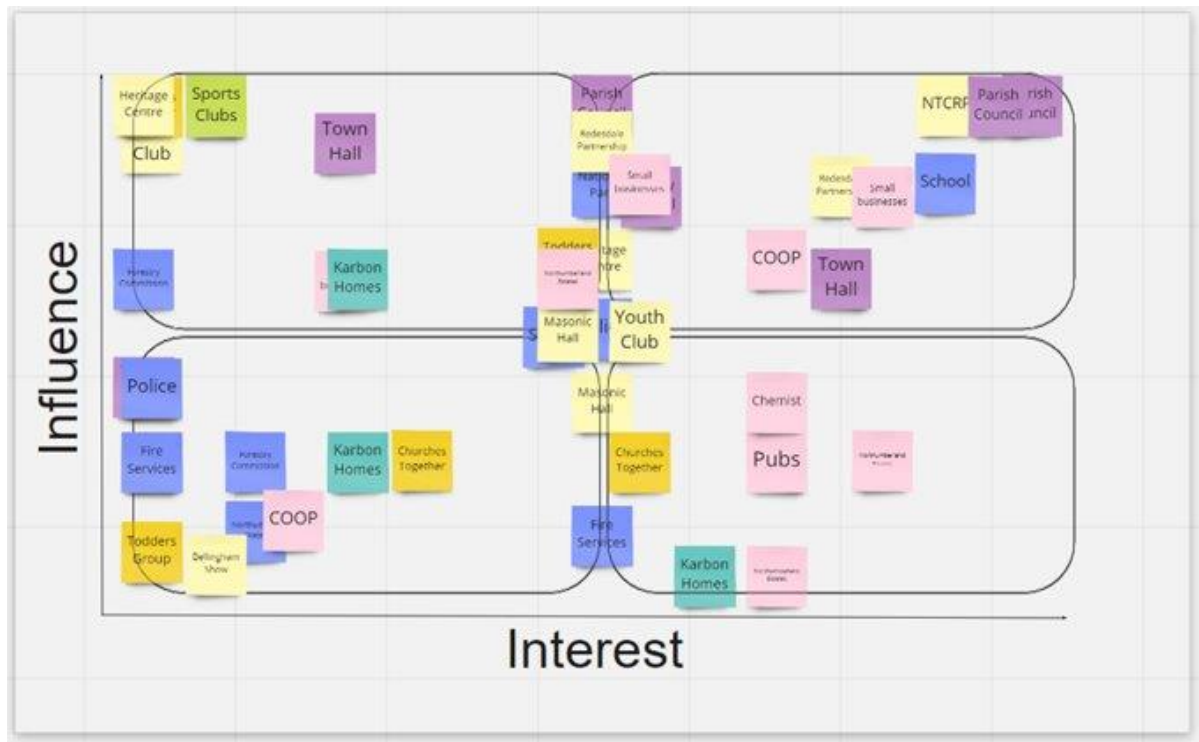
Stakeholder Mapping and Board Development

A stakeholder mapping event was held on the 17th of November 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	Named by (all) three groups
NTCRP	Redesdale Partnership	Parish Council
County Council	School	Small local businesses
National Park	COOP	Town Hall
Chemist	Masonic Hall	Northumberland Estates
Pubs and Clubs	Heritage Centre	Churches Together
Northumbrian Water	Youth club	Karbon Homes
Cadets	Police	Toddler's Group
Bellingham Show	Sports clubs	Fire Service
	Bus/Transport providers	
	Forestry Commission	



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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
Cllr John Riddle	NCC
Cllr Martin Dickson-Green	Bellingham Parish Council
Cllr Ant Kirkbride	Bellingham Parish Council
Ben Dickson-Green	NTRCP



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Lindsay Davidson	Bellingham Schools Partnership
Brian Tilley	Bellingham Town Hall
Steve Gibbon	Bellingham Heritage Centre
Peter Lloyd	Churches Together
Vince Walsh	Karbon Homes
Amanda Corbett	Cooperative

The board will be supported by the following officer group:

Officer	Role
Anne Lawson	Senior Programme Officer (Town Regeneration)
Chris Walker	Community Regeneration Officer
Iain Hedley	Community Regeneration Officer



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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 Miro Boards in breakout groups to brainstorm ideas. These are shown below:

Group 1



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- Reliance on visitor economy - increase and get economic impact
- More business parks?
- Insufficient disabled parking (2 places)
- Local artists / crafts network
- Parking needs review
- Keep business in the area without the need to move out
- Making sure that there is affordable housing for those who need it and the services to support that
- Cycle hub - increase visitor spend
- Upskill the community - put on courses locally so that people don't have to travel
- New scheme 60 plus houses - purchase / rental / shared ownership / rent to buy / supported housing - need services to support that
- Thriving environment for businesses and business retention
- Old Border counties railway track to Falstone Dam - cycle track opportunity?
- Things to do in Bellingham - gym - increase recreational facilities
- Mentoring system for people to help them access opportunities
- Retain retail offer
- Market opportunities
- Relocate the grit pile?



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Group 2



- Lack of local jobs for young people - Hexham and Newcastle
- High quality jobs will attract younger, skilled employees
- Events - need to be driven by leaders
- Need some small, rural business units - none available to rent in Bellingham
- Rural exemplars - crafts etc
- Industrial heritage is included in the heritage centre - could signpost but the centre can lead tours from the heritage
- Public transport - difficult to get from one place to another
- Microbrewery at ambulance station
- Ground things in reality for sustainability - how do we make it sustainable?
- Industrial heritage could be developed further but needs a driver
- Business is generally good - reasonable route out of COVID
- Tourism/gift shops - no need for additional capacity
- Limited public transport - not integrated
- Quite a mixed business base - not much capacity left
- Plenty of hikers/walkers in the town
- EC points - another 6 going in
- Plan for shops that may be vacated – COOP



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- Participation/group sports
- Needs to be an innovative way of meeting transport needs
- Facilities and support for businesses
- Unemployment is very low although many need to travel
- Car Parking - a need for additional parking
- Lots of innovation - people want the opportunity to grow their business
- Sports facility - nearest is Otterburn
- Lots of visitors by bus to the heritage centre



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.

Proposed **Bellingham** Borderlands Place Programme Vision

By 2031 Bellingham will have grown its visitor economy, increasing high quality jobs in the sector and the economic impact of visitors on the village. It will be a thriving environment for business startup, growth and retention across all sectors with access to local mentoring and skills development.



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Capitalising on its strong retail offer and rich industrial heritage, the town centre environment will be improved, and parking arrangements made fit for purpose.

Cycling and public transport connectivity will be reviewed and enhanced.

The board will work with housing providers to ensure that supply and services meet the needs of the community.

Recreational, fitness and wellbeing facilities for both residents and visitors will be enhanced.



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Bellingham 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 at least **four** of the above that could be tailored to suit the needs of the local community in their view. Those that the group favoured are demonstrated in yellow highlight above.

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

Proposed **Bellingham** Borderlands Place Programme Strategic Objectives

1. Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses into Bellingham.
2. Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in Bellingham.
3. Safeguard existing employment and deliver quality new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation for Bellingham residents.



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4. Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in Bellingham.



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Appendix 1 Governance and Terms of Reference

[Webpage link](#)



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Appendix 2 Code of Conduct

[Webpage link](#)



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Appendix 3 Pen Portraits

[Webpage link](#)