

Taken from the Themes discussion paper (SEP, Sept 2023)

The Growth Framework was published in 2021 and featured details on capacity, aspiration, areas for priority and measures that would help Sedbergh to meet its vision as a prosperous and sustainable market town. The Framework is due to be updated together with actions needed to help deliver change. Below are updates and key points covering a variety of priority areas.

This note provides a brief overview of the current situation and will help SEP to formulate ideas/ targets/ milestones for the months ahead.

## **Better Connectivity**

### Key issues:

Sedbergh has no regular public transport provision. Local transport volunteers operate in the town but limited. No connection to the main line station at Oxenholme. Employees cannot get to Sedbergh from neighbouring towns, businesses suffer trying to recruit. Restricted opportunity for residents to travel out of Sedbergh using local transport. Broadband delivery may have stalled with lack of additional funding support for B4RN to continue into town and no start date from the funded provider, Fibrus.

### Latest:

Work underway via Council, MPs Office and local organisations to investigate transport options/ secure funding to identify new provider to deliver a regular service. Information Office playing an important role in collecting/ distributing information. Funding has been ringfenced to support sustainable transport projects but subject to Locality Board application.

Fibrus plans to commercially fund new broadband connections in addition to the Project Gigabit funded connections using wireless technology (poles rather than underground cabling like B4RN) – however no start date given. B4RN looking to deliver to more homes across the town centre but has not received government funding to help continue the rollout.

### Lead person:

Hazel Hodgson, WFC councillor

## **Extract from the 2021 Sedbergh Growth Framework**

**Sedbergh stands at a tipping point.** The opportunity to achieve long term sustainability of the town population has never been greater. The importance of quality environments to work and live have become more apparent following the recent worldwide pandemic. Sedbergh is well placed to meet existing and new demand in housing and take advantage of incoming economic opportunities which will help the sustainability and resilience of this town.

**Sedbergh cannot stand still for fear of stagnation.** Roll numbers in schools are falling, the average age of residents is increasing, the burden on volunteers who organise and support community action is growing and high street vacancy numbers may go up.

**Sedbergh has capacity for growth.** Education and employment are vital for the health and wellbeing of this community. The schools have capacity for more students, the medical centre has space for more registered patients and the utilities infrastructure will have capacity for more homes and more businesses. Hospitality and tourism represent a real growth prospect.

To support sustainability and growth **Sedbergh needs to proactively address a shrinking workforce** by attracting working age residents. All roads lead to more new housing which is needed to support the future health and prosperity of Sedbergh, its residents, its services and its businesses. It is important that any new housing supports local needs and that employment space for artisans, fledgling and established businesses is forthcoming.

**Sedbergh needs to promote itself** to relocating families, bringing their own businesses to town from the Northwest and further afield. Now is a good moment to highlight Sedbergh to policy makers and decision takers at the new unitary authority to help it develop as a prosperous and sustainable market town.

**Sedbergh needs the support of the planning authority, housing authority and the economic development agencies to help deliver growth, both in economy and in housing to help sustain Sedbergh's services and assist a prosperous economic future.**