

SEDBERGH ECONOMIC STUDY

FINAL REPORT

To

South Lakeland District Council
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business
Sedbergh Parish Council
Cumbria County Council
Sedbergh School

The logo for Douglas Wheeler Associates, featuring the company name in white text on a dark green square background.

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CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Review of Strategies & Stakeholder Consultations | 5 |
| 3. Local Economic Profile: Changing Economic Context & Sedbergh's Influence | 10 |
| 4. Sedbergh Business Interviews & Partners Workshop | 14 |
| 5. Consultations Overview: What Are The Economic Challenges & Opportunities? | 19 |
| 6. 2027 Vision: Emerging Economic Themes & Economic Action Plan | 24 |
| 7. Conclusions, Next Steps & Recommendations | 37 |

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Sedbergh with a population 2,765 in March 2011, is a historic town situated at the north-western edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Sedbergh is the largest town within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and also situated within the administrative area of Cumbria and in the far east of the South Lakeland area, approximately 11 miles from the South Lakeland's largest town of Kendal. Sedbergh has benefitted from being on the trading routes between Lancashire, Cumbria and Yorkshire. The town has good regional/national access by road and Junction 37 of the M6 motorway is under 5 miles away (approximately 10-minute drive). The town of Kirkby Lonsdale is a 20-minute drive (11 miles) south along the A683 from here the A65 east is the main link into North and West Yorkshire. The nearest West Coast Mainline station is located at Oxenholme/Kendal.

The transport infrastructure has helped Sedbergh position itself as a functional service centre and Sedbergh has evolved as a **more traditional 'working' market town**. Therefore Sedbergh, is perhaps more typical of a commercial centre outside the Yorkshire Dales National Park, with less of a focus on the visitor economy and stronger inter-dependent economic linkages with places such as Kendal and Lancaster. Sedbergh is the largest settlement within the park. Sedbergh School clearly has a dominant influence on the town and remains the largest land owner and employer supporting more than 470 jobs in the local economy.

There are a variety of businesses, shops, pubs and accommodation services in the town and surrounding areas. Sedbergh was designated as England's Book Town in 2003 and although momentum has waned there is still a number of book shops. Sedbergh holds a market on Wednesdays and Artisan markets on some Saturdays, as well as a series of events and festivals during the year. To the north of Sedbergh are the Howgill Fells which provide numerous opportunities for walks and trails for cyclists. Sedbergh has also been recognised as a 'Walkers are Welcome' town.

South Lakeland District Council (SLDC), Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business (SDCT&B), Sedbergh Parish Council (SPC), Cumbria County Council's Local Committee (CCC) and Sedbergh School commissioned Douglas Wheeler Associates Ltd (DWA) in early January 2017 to assess how the local community and the public, private and third/community sectors can work together to undertake specific actions to improve the economic performance and long term viability of Sedbergh.

BRIEF: SCOPE OF WORK & KEY OUTPUTS

The Brief highlights the following specific aims, namely to:

- Prepare a robust understanding of the services that Sedbergh provides, the service catchment areas and the key sectors which underpin the economy.
- Identify key economic challenges for the town and advise on how these might be addressed by interventions of the community.
- Assess the current challenges faced by businesses already located in the town and actions that could be taken to better support them.
- Identify actions that the community can undertake to attract new business to the town, through an improved marketing strategy.
- Explore mechanisms for developing greater links with the schools and the business community to encourage young entrepreneurs.
- Identify how the community can best support, work together and promote business growth in this rural area.

The key outputs are:

- An **Action Plan** of deliverable projects/project activity and advice on implementation and funding sources for the stakeholders.

- **Advise on co-ordination & delivery:** identify who could lead on project development and funding bids within the community.

DWA APPROACH

The DWA approach was to undertake the following tasks over a six-lapsed week programme and the tasks are summarised in the chart below.

| Task |
|---|
| 1. Commissioning Meeting: 10 January |
| 2. Review Strategies & Stakeholder Consultations |
| 3. Economic Baseline |
| 4. Business Interviews |
| 5. Partners Workshop: 15 March |
| 6. Draft & Final Reports |

FINAL REPORT: STRUCTURE

This Final Report is presented in the following six chapters:

- Review of Strategies & Stakeholder Consultations
- Local Economic Profile: Changing Economic Context & Sedbergh's Influence
- Business Interviews & Partners Workshop
- Consultations Overview: What Are the Economic Challenges?
- 2027 Vision: Emerging Economic Themes & Economic Action Plan
- Conclusions, Next Steps & Recommendations

2. REVIEW OF STRATEGIES & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

A desk review of eight relevant strategies and policy documents has been undertaken and is summarised below.

1. *Building Our Industrial Strategy*’ Green Paper (January 2017)

The UK Government regards the vote to leave the European Union, as an instruction to the Government to change the way the country works - and the people for whom it works. ‘The Building Our Industrial Strategy’ Green Paper (January 2017) is a critical part of the plan for post-Brexit Britain. It will help to deliver a stronger economy and a fairer society - where wealth and opportunity are spread across every community in the United Kingdom.

Since 2010, the UK Government has delivered record employment while reducing the deficit by almost two-thirds and the aim is to return the public finances to balance at the earliest possible date in the next Parliament. The Government is also committed to setting the UK on a path to fiscal sustainability by reducing the structural deficit to below two per cent of GDP and ensuring debt as a proportion of GDP is falling by the end of this Parliament. This means continuing to make tough choices, delivering value for money in public spending and maintaining fiscal discipline.

‘The Building Our Industrial Strategy’ will:

- build on strengths and extend excellence into the future
- close the gap between the UK’s most productive companies, industries, places and people and the rest; and
- make the UK one of the most competitive places in the world to start or grow a business.

The Strategy identifies 10 pillars that are important to drive forward the industrial strategy across the entire economy namely: science, research and innovation; skills; infrastructure; business growth and investment; procurement; trade and investment; affordable energy; sectoral policies; driving growth across the whole country; and creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places.

There is also a continuing strong commitment to devolution, localism and customer choice in public services. The financial constraints place significant responsibility on public sector agencies to find new, more innovative ways of working and to develop strong partnerships so that effective interventions are made by the right organisations at the right spatial level. This requires a continuing new relationship between citizens and public sector agencies where agencies adopt a facilitation role to ensure and enable, rather than ‘do’ as in the past. This has significant implications for investment in the Sedbergh economy in the future.

2. The Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2024

The **Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** was established in 2011. Cumbria LEP’s 10-year Strategic Economic Plan concentrates on FOUR strategic priorities with intervention through FOUR economic drivers. This ‘four by four’ approach aims to deliver the maximum benefit for Cumbria and drive economic growth at a county, national and international level. Cumbria’s business, public and voluntary sector partners, working through the Cumbria LEP, have identified the following priority themes:

- Advanced manufacturing growth
- Nuclear and energy excellence
- Vibrant rural and visitor economy
- Strategic connectivity of the M6 Corridor

The FOUR economic drivers are business support, skills development, infrastructure improvements and environmental sustainability. The LEP has identified Cumbria Business Growth Hub as the focus of business support across the county. The Growth Hub provides a one-stop-shop, making it simple to access the support business needs. The LEP’s Regional Growth Fund programme is also in place and provides support to promote private sector investment, with a focus on manufacturing and SME businesses within the county. Local workforce skills and supply chain growth will also be vital to fuel and support the ambitions of advanced manufacturing companies. The Strategic Economic

Plan highlights the vital importance of infrastructure investment in order to maintain the current momentum.

The visitor economy, including business tourism, is also highlighted and although already the highest value sector in rural Cumbria, it nevertheless presents significant growth potential. *'The Lake District: Cumbria'* is an international brand thanks to the unique combination of cultural heritage, landscape and adventure opportunities it offers. The Strategic Economic Plan highlights that currently only 8% of Cumbria's 38 million visitors come from overseas. Critically the brand needs to be strengthened to be recognised in the rapidly expanding tourism markets of South America, China, Japan and India. Overseas visitors are worth £68 per person per night compared with £54 for a domestic visitor. If the Lake District National Park's world heritage bid is successful this may also have an effect on the number and type of visitors to the area.

The Strategic Economic Plan highlights the strong correlation between successful economies and places with a diverse and vibrant cultural, education and leisure offer.

3. Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2013-18 (revised March 2016)

The National Park Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park and sets out the vision, strategic policies and outcomes for the National Park over the long term. The Vision is:

'Through their passion for this special place, local people and businesses will keep the Yorkshire Dales National Park a thriving area. Its unique cultural landscape will be treasured for its stunning scenery, exceptional heritage and wonderful wildlife, and every year millions of people will be inspired to be a part of it'.

By 2040 the Park will be:

- A distinctive, living, working, cultural landscape that tells the ongoing story of generations of people interacting with their environment.
- Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England.
- Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy.
- A friendly, open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.
- Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces.
- Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need.

4. Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan 2015-30

The Local Plan was adopted in December 2016 and is the document that will guide new development in the National Park over the next 15 years. The objective is to help deliver sustainable development for the benefit of people who live and work in the area and to deliver the development aspects of the two National Park purposes of conservation and enjoyment of the National Park by the public. The Local Plan shares the same vision for the area as the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan. The Local Plan points towards areas of development opportunity and areas that will be protected from development. Its detailed policies cover a range of topics from historic buildings to wildlife and community facilities to quarrying.

The Plan **responds to the national growth agenda** and is a step change in policy that will extend the scope and flexibility for new development that is needed in the Park, or which would otherwise be beneficial to it. The Plan is for more development over the next 15 years than the last 15. The Plan permits new building and the change of use of land and buildings that will support people

living and working in the area. It is also intended to encourage new families and new businesses to move into the area to help sustain local communities.

The Plan continues a long-term strategy of focusing new development in towns, villages, farmsteads and rural estates and attempts to make better use of existing assets, such as the large supply of under-used traditional farm buildings. It also encourages specific new development such as a widening in the range of visitor accommodation to increase overnight stays. It provides a flexible approach to facilities to encourage a more rounded visitor experience to keep people returning and to attract new visitors. The Plan will, however, continue to safeguard the Special Qualities that make the National Park distinctive. Not only do these provide the basis for a multi-million-pound tourism industry, they are part of the cultural fabric of the area, and what makes the National Park such a high-quality place to live, work and visit.

Sedbergh is defined as a **local service centre** where the objective is to enhance the role as a business location and support the centre as a hub for the rural economy and social infrastructure. Relevant Sedbergh policies include:

- **SP 3 Spatial Policy:** To maintain footfall and viability, retail and commercial development will be allowed in four primary retail high streets identified on the Policies Map including in Sedbergh subject to the requirements of Policy BE5 and Sedbergh ‘high street’ service frontages are identified on the Policies Map.
- **Housing sites** are identified at West of Shaldon (30-unit capacity) and East of Rawthey Gardens (6-unit capacity)
- **BE1: Business Development:** Three sites are allocated as opportunity sites in Sedbergh namely: Toll Bar, Baliol School, and Farfield Mill

5. Strategy for Economic Growth (SLDC) 2014

In April 2014, South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) committed to a **new Strategy for Economic Growth** that has been developed in response to SLDC’s adopted **Local Plan**. The Strategy for Economic Growth has been prepared in parallel with Cumbria LEP **Strategic Economic Plan** (SEP: see above). Through its **Strategy for Economic Growth** SLDC is committed to working with employers, partners and investors to deliver high quality jobs, development and economic growth and promoting training opportunities in South Lakeland.

The vision and economic purpose is to make ‘South Lakeland the best place to live, work and explore’. Activities to deliver these strategic outcomes are grouped into five strategic priorities for action namely to:

- Secure improvements in productivity and employment through business growth and new enterprise
- Achieve a more flexible and highly skilled workforce
- Ensure that investment in infrastructure stimulates growth
- Promote a low carbon sustainable economy
- Attract and promote business investment in South Lakeland.

6. SLDC Council Plan: Updated February 2015

SLDC’s vision remains for South Lakeland to be the best place to live, the best place to work and the best place to explore. The four priorities to achieve this are:

Economy:

- support the development of higher paid jobs in South Lakeland
- help towns and villages to thrive commercially whilst retaining their distinctive character

Housing

- help deliver new affordable and open market housing through private sector led developments across the district
- improve the quality and condition of private sector housing and reduce the number of empty homes
- work together to significantly reduce the risk of homelessness

Environment

- help residents to reduce the total amount of household waste and extend the range of recycled materials from the kerbside
- make progress in reducing carbon emissions and become more energy efficient
- support communities to become more energy efficient
- SLDC and its communities will enhance and protect the district's high quality environment

Health and Wellbeing

- SLDC and its partners will support health improvements and reduce health inequalities
- build upon the area's cultural reputation as a place for nationally and internationally recognised arts, events and festivals

SLDC will also work in partnership with the third sector to deliver public health initiatives and continue to explore opportunities with community groups, parish and town councils to **devolve services and/or council assets** where there is an appetite to do so. SLDC also aim to encourage people to recycle more so that the amount of waste sent to landfill is reduced. SLDC are also **actively promoting cycling** in South Lakeland and working in partnership with key organisations across the district, to help deliver safer routes to work and school and encourage people to take up cycling as part of their leisure activity. SLDC are also actively supporting the regeneration of town centres by doing more to encourage festivals and events, which also contribute to the wellbeing of our communities.

7. South Lakeland District Council: Economic Profile June 2016

The Profile highlights that South Lakeland is on many measures an exceptionally high performing economy located in an area which offers, for the tastes of many, an enviable quality of life. The area has virtually no unemployment and the population works in more senior roles and holds higher levels of qualification than the wider North West region. The area is sufficiently attractive that there has been steady inbound migration from other Local Authorities in the UK and the economy of the area attracts a net inbound flow of commuters.

This summary only tells half the story, however. Whilst the economy is performing well at these headline levels, the economy has some significant challenges. South Lakeland is experiencing a decline in the working age population which is amongst the most severe in the UK and is set to continue. The population as a whole is not expected to grow over the next 20 years. The economic output of the area (the wider East Cumbria) has been growing but that growth has been outstripped by the wider region and England as a whole.

The demographic trends are the most significant issues affecting the South Lakeland economy. The ageing population is likely to result in increasing difficulties for companies finding staff as well as a general reduction in the discretionary expenditure made within the area. Reversing the decline in the working age population is not easy to achieve. Declining household sizes in the UK mean that, in fact, areas need an increased number of houses just for the population size to remain the same. South Lakeland has a growing issue with the affordability of homes for the less well paid and this is compounded by a low proportion of housing provision in the social rented sector.

The performance of the different sectors in the economy has been mixed over the last few years. The sectors which employ significant people and have declined in terms of employment are construction, transport & storage and retail. Conversely there has been strong growth in employment in tourism related sectors and health activities.

Manufacturing has performed reasonably strongly in South Lakeland with an increase in employment over the last 5 years - a position which is the reverse of national trends. The level of employment in

the agricultural sector is also significant and locally has been resilient to the national trend of reducing employment. There is a high proportion of micro businesses rather than large employers. There is also a difficulty in the viability of delivering further employment sites with rental levels and yields below the level likely to attract investment.

Overall, South Lakeland can be viewed as a traditional and relatively affluent area. An extremely high proportion of the population is white and was born in the UK. Home ownership is high and there is a greater proportion of the housing stock in the upper Council Tax bands.

To many, therefore, the economic issues of South Lakeland are invisible, but the demographic pressures and the limited availability of lower cost housing in an area where the largest sector providing employment is the relatively low paid tourism sector represent challenges for the area now and increasingly in the future.

The Profile identifies a number of opportunities however the provision of further housing is key - and may also help regenerate a declining construction sector. Further opportunities are thought likely in the transfer of agri-tech advances into the agricultural sector and the provision of small scale flexible workspace for smaller owner managed businesses. Tourism, given the areas location, is likely to attract further investment and the ageing population itself could be seen as an opportunity for the area to showcase telehealth investments.

8. Parish Council, Community Trust, Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade & Business: Vision for Sedbergh

The recently drafted 'A Vision for Sedbergh' includes the vision of:

'Prosperous and sustainable market town'

The vision includes three key themes namely:

- Delivery of economic infrastructure: broadband, local business hub, improved roads/services, affordable housing, visitor accommodation.
- Development of Visitor Economy: Destination: visitors eat, sleep, explore & discover: local centres of excellence.
- Promotion of Community Enterprise: Social capital & enterprise of volunteers, use skills in the community & promote/increase community ownership.

Review of Strategies & Stakeholder Consultation

The policy review sets a high level but consistent context for a consideration of the future of Sedbergh local economy. The new YDNPA Management Plan and the recently adopted Local Plan share the same vision and aim to help **deliver sustainable development for the benefit of people who live and work in the area**. The Local Plans aim to deliver the development aspects of the two National Park purposes of **conservation and enjoyment** of the National Park by the public. The Local Plan responds to the **national growth agenda** and is a step change in policy that will extend the scope and flexibility for new development that is needed in the Park, or which would otherwise be beneficial to it. SLDC is also committed to a **new Strategy for Economic Growth** that has been developed in response to SLDC's adopted Local Plan.

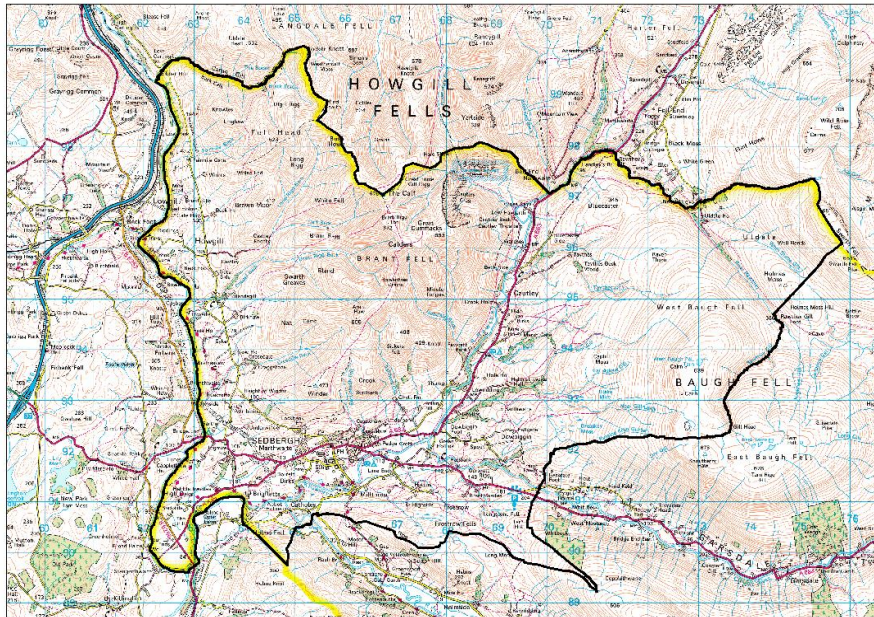
Therefore, the policy review and the stakeholder consultations highlighted the commitment to a **managed growth agenda**. Emerging opportunities were also identified to use funding and investment from new development (e.g. Community Benefit Agreements, Section 106, New Homes Bonus) so that for example Sedbergh Parish Council working with partners could have more scope to develop new innovative approaches to facilitate local economic development. Overall the policy review and consultations highlighted the clear commitment to sustainable economic growth in Sedbergh in particular support to encourage businesses to start up and grow, continue to improve the visitor offer and to deliver high quality jobs and to promoting training opportunities.

3. LOCAL ECONOMIC PROFILE: CHANGING ECONOMIC CONTEXT & SEDBERGH'S INFLUENCE

ECONOMIC PROFILE

The 'Sedbergh Economic Profile: March 2016' was prepared by the Research and Information Officer, Policy & Partnerships at SLDC and is available as a separately bound document. The analysis used mostly parish level data. The area that the parish of Sedbergh covers is shown on the map below. This section briefly highlights the main conclusions from the Profile.

Map 1: Sedbergh Parish



Population

According to the 2011 Census, the population of Sedbergh stood at 2,765 persons in March 2011. Just over half of residents were male (52.1% male vs 47.9% female) which is opposite to the district and national averages. Overall, the town's population has increased by 2.2% since 2001 which is over a third the rate of increase for England & Wales (7.8%). Sedbergh's population however, grew faster than that of South Lakeland as a whole and Cumbria.

Figure 3.1: Population Change by Age 2001-2011



Figure 3.1 shows that the overall population growth has not been distributed evenly by age. There were 60 fewer 0-15 year olds in 2011 in Sedbergh compared to 2001, a decline of 10.2%. This is the same level of decline as seen in South Lakeland and Cumbria and contrasts with a slight rise of 0.9% nationally.

There has been a small growth of 42 persons of working age (16-64) in Sedbergh between 2001 and 2011 (2.7%), in contrast to a slight fall of 0.7% in the district, but similar to the increase seen at county level. Nationally the working age population rose by 9.1%.

The major change in population for all areas has been in the over 65 age group, with Sedbergh seeing a 14.3% increase between 2001 and 2011 (a growth of 78 residents). This percentage increase is slightly lower than at district and county level (16.6% and 15.2% respectively), but higher than the national rise of 11%.

Economic Activity & Unemployment

Economic activity rates in Sedbergh are lower than nationally with 66.7% of 16-64 year olds classed as economically active in 2011 compared to around 70% at district level and nationally. Females are more likely to be economically active than males with 67.5% of females in Sedbergh economically active at the time of the Census compared to 66% of males. This is the opposite to what is seen at district and national level, where the proportion of economically active males is higher than females.

Analysis of the Census data shows that there is a slightly higher proportion of part-time and self-employed workers in Sedbergh (16.8% and 15.6% respectively) compared to South Lakeland and nationally. This results in a slightly lower proportion of full-time employees (31%). It is also noticeable that 15% of 16-74 year olds in Sedbergh are students, which is three times higher than the district figure and also higher than the national average. Live-in students at Sedbergh School are likely to account for this.

The proportion of retired residents in Sedbergh is lower than the district average (16.3% compared to 20.4%), but still slightly higher than nationally. As with South Lakeland overall, the number of unemployed and those on long-term sick/disability is considerably lower when compared to other areas of the North West and nationally.

Education

The over 16 population in Sedbergh has above average qualification levels with 31.1% qualified to level 4 or above compared to the national average of 27.2%. There is a lower than average proportion of the adult population with no qualifications (20.8% in Sedbergh compared to 22.7% in England and Wales).

Sedbergh School, an independent boarding school, educating pupils from 4-18 years old. It is the major employer within Sedbergh, the largest employer in the National Park and an important part of the economy within the region. An *Economic Impact Assessment* prepared for the School in 2010, identified that the School contributes gross additional annual expenditure locally within, and immediately surrounding the town of Sedbergh of £3.6m gross expenditure, equivalent to £1.4m GVA. This equates to the support of 371 jobs locally, about one third of the total workforce in Sedbergh, highlighting the scale of the School's importance to the economy of the town.

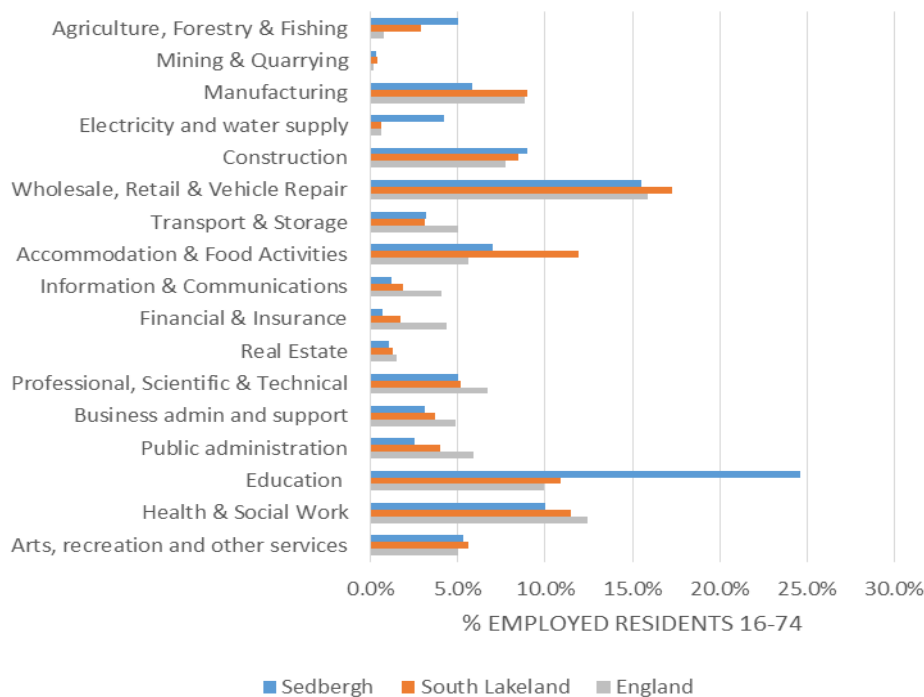
Within the wider sub-regional area (County of Cumbria, the County of Lancashire, Craven District and Richmondshire District and the Unitary Authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool) the scale of impact rose to almost £10m of additional expenditure equating to £3.4m GVA or the support of 437 jobs within the sub-regional economy.

Employment By Sector

The 2011 Census revealed that there were 1,265 employed residents in Sedbergh (inc. self-employed). The biggest sector of employment for residents is the education sector, which employs 311 residents (24.6%). The second most common industrial sector is wholesale and retail (inc. vehicle repair) which provides employment for 196 residents (15.5%).

Figure 3.2 shows that when compared to South Lakeland and nationally, Sedbergh has more than double the proportion of residents employed in the education sector (24.6% compared to 10.9% and 9.9% respectively). This will be due to Sedbergh School and also the other two schools in the town (Settlebeck and Sedbergh Primary). This statistic demonstrates the importance of the education sector as a provider of employment opportunities for local residents of the town and surrounding area. Sedbergh also has a significant proportion of residents working in the retail, construction and health sectors. On the other hand, there is a lower than average proportion of employees in other sectors in Sedbergh, namely IT and finance.

Figure 3.2: Employed Residents: Occupation By Sector



Occupation is driven by the sectors in which jobs are available and it is therefore not surprising that a significant proportion of residents work in professional occupations in Sedbergh (17.5%). This is not the biggest occupational group for residents - that group is skilled trades, which accounts for 251 employed residents (19.8%). There is also a significant proportion employed in elementary occupations (13.4%) and as managers, directors and senior officials (11.2%)

Income & House Prices: Affordability

According to PayCheck, Sedbergh has a median household income of £26,137. This is slightly lower than the average for South Lakeland which stands at £27,495 but 10% lower than the national average, where median household income is £28,696.

According to StreetValue, the median house price in Sedbergh (and the surrounding area) was £227,897. This is considerably higher than the average for South Lakeland where the median house price was £201,828, Cumbria (£139,877) and the national average house price of £175,143.

Combining data from the CACI StreetValue dataset with CACI PayCheck data provides a house price to income ratio; known as an affordability ratio. Based on median data, the average house price in Sedbergh is 8.7 times the average household income. This affordability ratio is one of the highest in the district (average house price is 7.3 times average income) and county (6.4), and also the national average, where the ratio is 6.1.

Sedbergh Business Base

Using National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) data from South Lakeland District Council gives a picture of the different types of rate paying businesses operating in and around Sedbergh. There are approximately 170 NNDR paying businesses in Sedbergh and the surrounding area. Businesses operating out of workshops and warehouse (i.e. those in the construction and manufacturing

services) make up around 30% of the total NNDR paying businesses in Sedbergh. Non-serviced accommodation businesses (in the majority, self-catering holiday lets) make up around a quarter (24%), while those in retail premises contribute about 20%.

Summary Sedbergh Economic Profile

The important economic statistics from the Economic Profile are summarised below with South Lakes, Cumbria and England & Wales comparisons.

- Population 2,765 persons in 2011: increased by 2.2% since 2001: England & Wales 7.8%
- Decline 10.2% in 0-15: a small rise in 16-64 (2.7%) & significant rise in 65+ (+14.3%)
- 65+ comparisons: 16.6 % in South Lakes: 15.2% in Cumbria & +11% in England & Wales
- Economic activity rates (16-74) lower 66.7% compared to 70% in South Lakes / England
- Slightly higher part time 16.8% & self-employed 15.6%
- Slightly lower full time employees 31%
- 15% of 16-74 year olds are students: 3 X district figure
- % retired residents (16.3%) is lower than South Lakes 20.4%
- 16+ age population has above average qualification levels: 31.1% qualified to level 4
- 2011 Census 1,265 employed residents in Sedbergh (includes self-employed)
- Education sector employs 311 residents (24.6%) 10.9% SLDC & 9.9% England
- Skilled trades 251/19.8% : professional occupations 221/ 17.5%
- Sedbergh average house price is 8.7 times average household income (South Lakes 7.3)
- Around 170 NNDR paying businesses: construction manufacturing 30 %

SEDBERGH: ECONOMIC SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

As a small town (population 2,765) Sedbergh and Sedbergh business has significant local, sub regional and national economic spheres of influence. In particular:

- Sedbergh is the largest town located within the Yorkshire Dales National Park yet within the Cumbria County jurisdiction and has traditionally resulted in a **'confused identity' for visitor marketing and promotion for smaller businesses**. The extension to the National Park in August 2016 to include Great Asby Scar, northern Howgill Fells, Wild Boar Fell, Mallerstang, Lune Valley and the settlements that surround them **cements and strengthens Sedbergh's position as a north western 'gateway' to the National Park**.
- Employee in-migration from towns on the periphery to the Sedbergh schools suggests that connections between Sedbergh and **local centres on the periphery of the National Park** are likely to be stronger than other service centres in the National Park.
- Sedbergh School impacts on the **wider sub-regional area** including County of Cumbria, the County of Lancashire, Craven District and Richmondshire District and the Unitary Authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. The school also **hosts international pupils** from for example Mainland China, Hong Kong, Germany, Russia, Spain and Nigeria.
- Sedbergh businesses like Roof Box Company and Bath House have customers **throughout the UK**.

4. SEDBERGH BUSINESS INTERVIEWS SUMMARY & PARTNERS WORKSHOP

This section summarises the candid/confidential responses to the structured interview/questionnaire and should be used to inform the Sedbergh Economic Study only.

The face to face and telephone businesses interviews undertaken in late January/early February focussed on retailers, café/restaurant, services providers, manufactures and distribution in order to reflect the different types of businesses currently operating the Sedbergh area. The business questionnaire addressed three themes:

i. Company Details: factual data on type of business, date of establishment, number of employees and property details (e.g. size, lease or owned).

ii. Business Prospects and Customers: specific data provided on customer base, customer spend, business prospects etc.

iii. Perceptions of the Sedbergh economy: Qualitative data on retail and services provision and the quality of the town centre environment, quality of facilities and marketing and promotion.

SCHEDULE OF BUSINESSES INTERVIEWED

Ten completed interviews were held with the business summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Business Interviews Schedule

| Name | Business Name | Sector |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| James Ratcliffe | Three Hares | Bakery/Café/Bistro Restaurant |
| Mark & Evelyn Westwood | Westwood Books of Sedbergh | Secondhand Bookshop |
| Peter Dawson | Dawson Fuels | Fuel Supplies |
| Pauline Marshall | Bath House | Bathing/Beauty Care Manufacture/Retail |
| Jacky Baines | No 6 Finkle St/Mad Hatters Tea Room | Lifestyle Gifts & Tea Room |
| Margaret Brooks | Sedbergh Mini Market | Convenience Retail |
| Jane Pearson | Farfield Clothing | Clothing Design & Retail |
| Carol Nelson | Sleepy Elephant | Outdoor Gear & Books Retail |
| Martin Gray | Roof Box | Distribution/Repair/Serviceing |
| Suzan Sedgwick | Howgill Fellside Ice Cream | Ice Cream Manufacture/Sales |

COMPANY DETAILS: BUSINESS PROSPECTS & CUSTOMERS

The company details of the business who were interviewed were as follows:

- **Three Hares:** Established 2.5 years ago, (Oct 2014) as a business at current premises. Independent
- **Westwood Books of Sedbergh:** Established +11 years ago, (2005) as a business at current former cinema premises. Independent
- **Dawson Fuels:** established 1895 (fifth generation) at current premises since 1920's. Independent
- **Bath House:** Established in 1995 in Toll Bar Estate, relocated to current premises in 1997. (20 years) Retail outlets in Kirkby Lonsdale, Ambleside, Bowness & Knutsford. Independent
- **No 6 Finkle St/Mad Hatters Tea Room:** Established in 2014 at current premises. Independent
- **Sedbergh Mini Market:** Established 10 years ago. Independent.

- **Farfield Clothing:** Established in 1985 (32 years) at Farfield Mill moved to current premises in 1999. Independent
- **Sleepy Elephant:** Established in 2002 (15 years) & moved to current premises in 2005. Independent
- **Roof Box:** Established in 1997 (20 years), now operate from 10 buildings in 4 locations in the wider area
- **Howgill Fellside Ice Cream:** established in 2011 at Lock Bank Farm as part of diversification, operates as a separate business.

Three (30%) out of the 10 businesses were established and have been operating for over 20 years. Four have been operating for around 6-10 years and two were established in 2014. Four of the 10 businesses are members of Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business

Customer Base

Three (30%) of the 10 businesses say that more than 70% of their custom is from regulars. Three of the business serve clients from a much wider geographic area using internet, telephone sales and whole sale.

Customer Spend

4 of the businesses maintain that average customer spend is +£50 and four say average customer spend is £10-25 and two report less than £10.

Employees

Total employment FT/PT over the 10 businesses is 62.5 FT and 33PT.

Turnover

Five (50%) said turnover had gone up, three said turnover had remained static and two said turnover had gone down. The picture emerges of businesses in the Main Street/ Finkle Street **struggling** not only because of the challenging retail climate but also due to variable levels of footfall/passing trade and the ‘less inviting’ feel of Main Street.

Intention to grow the business

7/10 of the businesses (70%) intend to grow. Key issues are how to:

- Increase footfall in Sedbergh town centre: shop local targeted at residents
- Promote Sedbergh as a destination to encourage more visitors to stay longer and spend more

BUSINESS CHALLENGES: DEVELOPMENT ADVICE

Responses: Have you a requirement for business development advice in the following?

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| 1-1 Advice: ‘Shop Doctor’ | 4 | 6 |
| Information Technology/Internet/E -commerce | 7 | 3 |
| Marketing & Networking: other businesses: events | 9 | 1 |
| Customer Service: World Host Welcome to Excellence | 2 | 8 |
| Employees: Skills Funding Agency: Kendal College | 0 | 10 |
| Financial book-keeping skills | 1 | 9 |
| Energy Efficiency | 1 | 9 |
| Retail/Makers Incubator | 7 | 3 |
| Interest in principle on Business Improvement District | 6 | 4 |

Promisingly 9 business were interested in marketing & networking with other business, 7 business supported the principle of establishing an incubator space in the town centre for start-up retail/service businesses. Six businesses were interested in exploring the Business Improvement District idea. Four business were interested in 1-1 ‘shop doctor’ type advice.

Otherwise the majority of the businesses are well established and stated they have limited requirements for business development advice.

Other Issues raised were:

- Some have reported issues recruiting staff on account of the lack of affordable accommodation & poor public transport: holding business back & additional costs of recruitment if staff don't stay,
- BID is worth exploring as a way of getting businesses to actively work together on joint initiatives
- Encourage more volunteering: older/retired individuals with real skills/experience
- The Hub was a good facility but wasn't promoted to businesses: 'nobody told us what was available'
- The Book Town initiative should be revisited/reinvented with a PT coordinator & some resourcing; some frustration that its 'underplayed' & in danger
- Vacant upper floors on Main Street
- YDNPA could be more proactive as planning authority
- Manage parking better

PARTNERS WORKSHOP

The Partners Workshop was held at Sedbergh People's Hall on Wednesday 15 March 2017 and attended by around fourteen people with a good representation from the private, third and public sectors. After a welcome from Councillor Nick Cotton (SLDC) there was a presentation on the brief & approach, strategic context, baseline 2015 economic profile, summary of business interview and consultations, emerging themes: challenges & opportunities. The presentation included contributions from the floor from:

- Andy Cobb: Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business
- James Ratcliffe: Three Hares: Café Bakery Bistro

After the presentation, the attendees went into three smaller groups to identify specific positive and negative aspects of the local economy now in 2017 and what the Sedbergh local economy could be like in 2027.

1. ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE: MANAGED GROWTH

Positives

- + Local post office
- + Properties that are vacated are let e.g. Bank to accountants
- + Three Hares is award winning, destination & set new quality standards (Malabar has done the same for B&B)
- + Westwood Books is a 'national draw'
- + Community Trust operated & managed Information & Book Centre
- + Sedbergh School is important in the local economy
- + Charity Shops are a draw & put £20k back into the economy
- + Fantastic place to live

Negatives

- Lack of economic opportunities: need to diversify the local economy: promote enterprise
- Banks closed & two prominent vacant Main Street properties: Bull & The former Hub
- Main Street dated basic infrastructure e.g. public realm, signage & parking
- Sedbergh School & town relations: have improved but more to do
- Farfield Mill has significant potential & needs better links to the town
- Built (e.g. St Andrews Church & Sedbergh School) & cultural heritage (e.g. wool) is not promoted
- Ladder of space for entrepreneurs would be beneficial
- Housing for young families is crucial
- Effectiveness of broadband infrastructure

2027 Vision

- Encourage managed economic growth
- Need more entrepreneurs like Roof Box so appropriate buildings/sites: broadband & promote quality of life
- Sedbergh School will play a key role
- Diverse economy/area/population: opportunities for young people to stay in the area
- High quality & well maintained public realm
- Unlock & develop allocated business & housing sites
- State of the art: care home
- Self build & custom build housing on appropriate sites
- Sedbergh has 26 community organisations: strong supportive community: excellent civic health.
- Need accessible info. on community activities. *Lookaround* has to continue
- Farfield Mill playing a stronger role: promoting arts/creative sector & links to visitor economy & wider built/cultural heritage
- Increase visitor spend & retain spend in the local area: Maximise potential of Howgills: low level walking & cycling
- New model for bus transport provision: private/third sector collaborating
- Improved broadband infrastructure

Coordination

- Business buy in is essential: Sedbergh is 'open for business'
- Strong leadership key
- Focus on delivering connected projects

2: VISITOR ECONOMY: DESTINATION SEDBERGH

Positives

- + Sedbergh School is significant in the local economy: employment & spending
- + Landscape: Howgills are distinctive
- + Support from YDNPA & SLDC
- + Location: proximity to M6 & NW Gateway to Park
- + Superb walking & cycling: visitor economy potential
- + Booktown: needs to be relaunched

Negatives

- Sedbergh School: estate 'stifles'/constrains rest of the town
- Ageing population
- House prices & lack of affordability
- Cumbria V Yorkshire Dales: 'split personality'
- Poor state of Main Street
- Lack of broadband
- Low wages & higher cost of living

2027 Vision

- 'You are a visitor not a tourist': look to repeat visitors
- Authentic & genuine
- Improved accommodation & food offer: more choice
- Improved Main Street: remove/improve pavements & bollards
- Diversify the type of visitors attracted
- Improve navigation: signage/way finding/interpretation on the ground
- Wool & textile heritage: not just Farfield
- Cycling/walking on Lune Valley Viaduct: former rail line
- Balance of start-ups & traditional established visitor economy businesses
- 12-month holiday destination: More planned events/festivals
- One portal: social media and marketing to promote Sedbergh
- Accommodate coaches: good & bad
- Better broadband provision

Coordination

Who

- Business
- South Lakeland District Council
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
- Sedbergh Parish Council
- Sedbergh CIC
- Sedbergh CIO
- Sedbergh United Charities

How

- Needs a resource FT/PT: funding?
- Clear Action Plan

3: TOWN CENTRE & COMMUNITY & THIRD SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

Positives

- + Location: Howgills, National Park, M6
- + Natural beauty & opportunities that come from that
- + Low cost base
- + Very strong community spirit: 26 community organisations
- + Biggest town in YDNP
- + Less visible non-tourism businesses

Negatives

- State of Main Street & public realm
- Empty premises
- Quality & quantity of visitor accommodation
- Town doesn't speak with one voice
- Public transport: tourists, 16-18 year olds & workers
- Missing young/family visitors staying over: next generation
- Resistance to change

2027 Vision

- A Town 'Council' with townscape, CIC/CIO, Chamber, Parish Council, Schools, other organisations & business represented
- Business cooperating: benefits all business
- Joint projects to strengthen unity
- More/diverse employment/careers opportunities for young people: education/skills to move to a more 'sustainable local population'
- Sedbergh 'open for business': families, investors & newcomers
- Localism in action

Coordination

- Review the existing arrangements: understand who is doing/proposing what: clear on roles & values
- Promote one community/one voice: all three sectors: community playing a key role

The outcomes of the Partners Workshop have been reflected in the economic themes and opportunities that are presented in the next Chapter (5).

5. CONSULTATIONS OVERVIEW: WHAT ARE THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES?

Based on the review of economic policy documents, economic profile, business interviews and the consultations that have been undertaken, the following eight key economic challenges have been identified and the potential economic development opportunities that have emerged are also highlighted in *italics*.

1. Economic Infrastructure: Responding To Declining Working Age Population & Ageing Population

Sedbergh like South Lakeland is experiencing a decline in the working age population which is and is set to continue. The Economic Profile shows a decline 10.2% in 0-15 age group: a small rise in 16-64 (2.7%) and significant rise in 65+ (+14.3%). The demographic trends are the most significant issues affecting the Sedbergh economy. The ageing population could result in increasing difficulties for companies finding staff as well as a general reduction in the discretionary expenditure made within the area.

Declining household sizes in the UK mean that areas need an increased number of houses just for the population size to remain the same. Sedbergh like the rest of South Lakeland has a growing issue with the affordability of homes for the less well paid and this is compounded by a low proportion of housing provision in the social rented sector.

There are a number of very successful business like Bath House and The Roof Box Company who have established and grown in Sedbergh. Sedbergh School is the major employer within the town and the second largest employer in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and an important part of the economy within the wider region. Therefore, the School's continued investment in its site and facilities should be encouraged to help strengthen its competitive position in the private education sector. Over the years, the 'town-gown relationship has been fraught although this has improved recently. A new sports and recreation centre is currently under construction and could offer some opportunities to the town by way of improved sports facilities.

Overall the Sedbergh local economy is under achieving and with the assets available (identified in Chapter 3) the local economy can and should 'punch above weight'. *Clearly encouraging enterprise, start-ups and growing stronger existing and new business is vital. Here the future provision of small scale flexible workspace for these kinds of smaller owner managed businesses and micro businesses will be crucial. There is also a difficulty with the viability of delivering further employment sites with rental levels and yields below the level likely to attract investment. Broadband speed and availability is still patchy although B4RN, registered as a non-profit community benefit society, is delivering a competitive fibre optic broadband network.*

Sedbergh has an ageing population partly due to its popularity for retirement. As well as being a challenge for the future provision of health and social care facilities this also means that there is a considerable wealth of 'social capital' in terms of active 'semi-retired' people with specific skills and time to volunteer. *The ageing population itself could be seen as an opportunity for Sedbergh to showcase a 'state of the art' care home and telehealth investments.*

2. Higher Value & Higher Wage Employment Opportunities: Promote Enterprise/Entrepreneurs

Given Sedbergh's location as a north-western gateway to The Yorkshire Dales National Park, the latent visitor potential of the Howgills, the scope for promoting walking/cycling and outdoor activities, the visitor economy is likely to attract further investment. Under employment and lower wages however are still issues.

The Sedbergh School Foundation are actively looking to establish an Education Centre for Advanced Technology and Science (CECATS) to coordinate, proactively communicate and complement Cumbrian efforts around the demand for STEM ((science technology engineering & mathematics) skills. The Centre would be a focus for STEM engagement education and inspiration co-ordinating,

promoting and complementing stem initiatives for 5-18 year olds, parents and teachers in Cumbria and the North West. The Centre would include incubator units, advance technology workshops, meeting and conference facilities and could have a significant impact on the Sedbergh economy.

The Defra Rural growth network fund (RGN) provided through Cumbria County Council and Cumbria LEP, part funded the Sedbergh Network Hub at 37-39 Main Street, as part of a pilot scheme of network of hubs across Cumbria. The aim of the hubs was to help deliver business support, network opportunities and training facilities to help local businesses and worked in conjunction with the Cumbria Growth Hub ERDF initiative, provided by Cumbria Chamber of Commerce. This was a 3 year grant funded package. Sedbergh Network Hub closed in May 2016 at the end of the trial. Sedbergh Network Hub was used by over 184 businesses including many local businesses, growth hub advisors, Parish Council, Literary Society, Sedbergh Chamber of Trade. The community aim now is for some of the functions to be accommodated in the People's Hall.

Encouraging higher value, higher wage employment opportunities to complement the growing visitor economy/tourism sector is required. Exploring the potential for appropriate alternative employment for example; using STEM skills, bespoke/specialist manufacturing, cultural and creative industries and heritage related opportunities, environmental technologies, and small scale renewable energy installations will be necessary. There is scope for infrastructure investment and to develop /allocated employment land/sites for expanding local businesses to encourage more business to start up, create more jobs and help sustainable local businesses expand. Explore opportunities to promote enterprise/entrepreneurial activity possibly focussing on CECATS as an enterprise hub: incubator/accelerator.

3. Town Centre: Main Street: Maintaining A Range of Independent Local Shops & Services & Place making

Sedbergh has evolved as a 'market town' and more typical of a commercial centre outside the National Park, with less of a focus on the visitor economy. Local residents and business continue to raise concerns about the quality of the town centre environment and particularly Main Street. Main Street is an integral part of the Sedbergh Conservation Area that was declared in 1969 and the boundaries revised in 1988 and 2010. Competition from supermarkets however like the relocated Spar/Station Road and in nearby towns, the internet has also reduced the viability of independent convenience shops. There is an opportunity however to increase the choice of authentic independent retail and professional service business in Sedbergh town centre. Maintaining a range of shops and services to meet local needs as well as visitor demand is an issue for Sedbergh.

There is a clear recognition that financial constraints mean that the **pace of investment in the public realm** has moved away from large 'signature' public realm schemes and there now has to be more emphasis on smaller, more local-scale interventions. Therefore, it will be essential to present evidence and a strong business case for investment in Main Street and the Conservation Area based on the local impacts and the immediate benefit at the Sedbergh /surrounding area level. Crucially, a highly strategic approach to public realm investment decisions is essential with investment is focused on:

- Locations which are highly-visible and will be well-used by both residents and visitors - such as Main Street.
- Locations or facilities which support other strategic objectives - for example where local business will directly benefit for increased footfall/dwell time and therefore spending in the local economy. The burgeoning café culture in Windermere as a result of the public real improvements in 2008 is a good Cumbrian example. Kirkby Lonsdale has altered its offer to meet changing consumer shopping habits and now attracts increasing number of visitors.
- Interventions which have a high level of impact, but are cost-effective both in terms of initial outlay and long-term management and maintenance costs.

- Opportunities where ownerships and interests can be pooled for maximum impact and benefit, including those of both other public bodies and the private sector and to assist in promoting additional private investment e.g. Bull & Former Hub in Main Street.

High quality public spaces can reinforce Sedbergh's sense of place, and underpins the mantra of '*rehabilitation, rejuvenation and regeneration*'. The quality of the public realm is widely acknowledged as being essential to the creation of environments that people wish to live, visit and work in. High quality public realm can produce measurable benefits to the local economy, health, social well-being and safety, as well as enhance the value of adjacent real estate and encourage greater economic activity. Research has shown that there is a positive, significant and consistent value added to private business by maintaining and improving the public realm. Research has also confirmed the health and social benefits of public realm improvements, particularly pedestrian-oriented environments. The provision of high quality public space has a fundamental role in supporting other local Economic Action Plan priorities, notably attracting and retaining more residents, businesses and jobs, and improving environmental performance.

Aim to improve the quality of the Sedbergh Conservation Area's public realm, promote a concerted building maintenance'/spring clean', protect the vitality of Sedbergh town centre and promote a proactive/simplified planning approach to ensure a balanced mix of sustainable local and visitor uses.

4. Housing Affordability & Change of Use of Land & Buildings

High house prices have led to a distorted housing market in Sedbergh and the wider area. Open market housing is unaffordable to some local people and there are limited opportunities for people to access affordable housing. The limited opportunities for new development in the National Park combined with the very particular and acute pressures on local housing markets (due to the popularity of the National Park for second homes and retirement for instance) means YDNPA need to ensure every new dwelling contributes towards counteracting these pressures. To ensure that this housing remains available for local people and does not become a second home, holiday or retirement home the YDNPA policies require the developer of some new dwellings approved under the policies of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2015-30 to enter into a legal agreement, to restrict the occupancy of the new dwellings to persons satisfying a 'local need'.

The YDNP Local Plan (2015) also permits new building and the change of use of land and buildings that will support people living and working in the area. It is also intended to encourage new families and new businesses to move into the area to help sustain local communities.

Providing local affordable housing to help redress the housing imbalance in Sedbergh is essential. This will enable people to live closer to their jobs and assist recruitment. This could be achieved by unlocking development of allocating sites in Sedbergh, using exception/'wind fall' sites and promoting individual opportunities to reuse buildings in the Conservation Area, including distinctive small scale development.

5. Need To Diversify The Visitor Offer & Continue To Improve Quality of Visitor Experience

In some cases, the facilities and accommodation offered to visitors, including the public realm in Sedbergh is looking tired and does not offer the quality of experience that some visitors expect. As a response, there is significant economic development potential to promote Sedbergh as the **Western Yorkshire Dales cycling/walking hub** that includes:

- a range of good road and some off road/MTB cycling routes to venture out from (see *Cycle Tours Guide* 2011)
- cycle hire opportunities (or car parking for cyclists with their own bikes)
- café/bike shop opportunities (e.g. Wilfs Café at Staveley): private or third sector opportunity
- a good range of other businesses welcoming cyclists both in the town and along the routes

- additional route maps/an App showing range of challenges/suitable for families
- links to Dentdale and Dent Station
- cycling tours on offer
- cycle racks & safe storage
- cycle events building on the Sedbergh Cycloportive
- a pilot project for 'Quiet Roads' in the vicinity.

This would also provide the opportunity to progress long standing proposal for the proposed **Multi Use Trail based on the old railway** which passes close to the west of Sedbergh. The longer-term proposal would include the Lune Valley Viaduct as part of a trail for use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with limited mobility and/or disabilities. The Sedbergh Multi-User Trail: Economic Benefit Analysis was undertaken in December 2008 to assess the likely local economic benefits that would arising from the development.

Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2013-18 (revised March 2016) includes an objective to maintain the National Park as a place where a true sense of tranquillity, remoteness and solitude can be found, and, over the period of this Management Plan, implement a range of measures to enhance and promote enjoyment of its **dark skies**. Sedbergh and the Howgill Fells, and the lanes and farms round about, are fantastic places to **enjoy the night sky** because there is little light pollution - even in town, where street lamps were changed in 2016 to spill less light. Therefore Sedbergh should be promoted more actively as a base to explore the dark skies and enjoy stars, planets, the Milky Way and meteors.

Farfield Mill arts, craft and heritage centre is housed in the restored Victorian woollen mill and has gone through some challenging recent management issues. The Mill has been underperforming with visitor numbers down to around 14,000 per annum. A new board of trustees has just been established and are now preparing an ambitious five-year business plan that includes establishing a new visitor destination base on the 'Story of Wool'.

Sedbergh was designated as **English Book Town** in 2003 and although the town still has eight shops selling books the momentum has waned. The impressive Westwood Books (with more than 70,000 books) has a national reputation drawing significant number of repeat customers. In contrast to Sedbergh the well-funded Wigtown Book Festival has gone from strength to strength with attractions for adults and children, including not only literature, but also music, theatre, and performing arts. There is clearly an opportunity to relaunch the Book Town initiative particularly at a time when research commissioned by the London Book Fair in 2017 showed that sales of printed books had increased by +7% while e-books had declined by -4%.

UK Government's Tourism Action Plan has also been launched, setting out a comprehensive set of actions to drive growth in inbound tourist spend across the whole of the UK. In Sedbergh therefore there is an significant opportunity to provide more and a wider choice of accommodation to ensure more visitors stay overnight and therefore spend more money in the local economy. There is also a need to recognise the facilities and requirements of the rapidly expanding Post Brexit tourism markets of South America, China, Japan and India with particular 'ethnic' and other language/dietary requirements.

Overall there is a requirement to continue to address some of the under-investment in the tourist sector and in the public realm, to ensure that Sedbergh remains attractive to visitors and meets the twenty first century standards expected. There is a significant risk that Sedbergh gets 'left behind' as a competitive visitor destination. The opportunity to promote events/festivals and continue to improve and promote the network of visitor attractions is essential, especially to the wider area as well as the local community.

6. Place Marketing

Over the last decades, there has been a sharp increase in the competitive drive of towns, cities and regions to attract tourism, business and investment. 'Place Marketing' is being used to offer up the most realistic, competitive and compelling strategic vision for a place. Getting the collective story straight is particularly important in overcoming potential negative connotations about an area - instead nurturing the assets it holds such as natural, cultural and built heritage, local sourced

food/drink, and the warmth of local welcome. This includes making even stronger links and more effective promotion and marketing with Dentdale and YDNPA. *In the future, it will be crucial to ensure that the Sedbergh gets deserved applause for its real strengths and positive attributes, by demonstrating the vibrancy and ‘energy’ by shouting about Sedbergh’s assets from the rooftops. Social media can play a significant roll in the promotion of the area.*

7. Community & Third Sector Opportunities

In South Lakeland, there is also now strong commitment to localism, devolution of delivery to communities, and third sector organisations. The current financial constraints mean developing strong partnerships with communities and third sector organisations is essential. In Sedbergh the extensive social capital and civic infrastructure includes more than 26 community groups. Therefore, third sector organisations like the Community Trust, who already own and manage 72 Main Street as an Information & Book Centre could be well placed to develop innovative approaches to providing other local services and facilities.

The 2011 Localism Act gave powers to local communities to produce their own, locally distinctive Neighbourhood Plans to guide development decisions in their localities. There are also new opportunities to use funding and investment from new development (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy, Community Benefit Agreements, Section 106, New Homes Bonus) and this means for example that Sedbergh Parish Council and partners could have more scope to develop new innovative approaches to facilitate local economic development, invest in improving infrastructure and other projects.

The new context raises a number of opportunities for third sector organisations in Sedbergh to actively contribute to the local economy and unlock funding from sources like the Big Lottery (Investing in Ideas/Awards for All), Historic England, Heritage Lottery Fund (Heritage Enterprise and Trusts like Esme Fairbairn).

8. Establishing A Coordinating & Delivery Vehicle

In the current economic context (Chapter 2 above) with tough choices, delivering value for money in public spending and maintaining fiscal discipline there is a need to **explore new and different approaches to coordinate local economic development priorities**. The overall aim should be to coordinate, focus and align business (small, medium & large), community/third and public sector strategic economic development initiatives in Sedbergh. This would improve communications across then three sectors, champion a sustainable economic development agenda and deliver on agreed priorities. South Lakeland District Council, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business and Sedbergh Parish Council all engage in local economic development but within their existing structures.

Is the time right to establish a neutral ‘Council’ with expertise, commitment and some resources to focus on a longer-term vision/ brand for Sedbergh, agree strategic priorities across the emerging economic development opportunities, provide leadership and become a proactive partnership vehicle, co-ordinating economic investment, especially given Sedbergh’s location in Cumbria and the YDNP.

The next Chapter summarises the vision and values for the Sedbergh economy and the themes and Action Plan that has emerged to respond to these eight challenges and opportunities.

6. 2027 VISION EMERGING ECONOMIC THEMES & ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN

TOWARDS A 2027 VISION

Sedbergh has evolved as a more traditional 'working' market town with less of a focus on the visitor economy and stronger inter-dependent economic linkages with places such as Kendal and Lancaster. Sedbergh School clearly has a dominant influence on the town.

The Parish Council, Community Trust, Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade & Business: Vision for Sedbergh (Chapter 2) is:

'Prosperous and sustainable market town'

The consultations, business interviews and the workshop have identified a series of values that could underpin this vision, namely to recognise the importance of:

- The distinctive natural environment and cultural heritage of Sedbergh and the high quality of life that the area offers and the opportunity to move to a lower carbon economy
- Managed economic growth from within Sedbergh as a means to create wealth and well-being for young people, existing and new residents and businesses
- Ensuring a diversified local economy that attracts and retains higher value-added activities and jobs underpinning long term economic success
- Celebrating and promoting enterprise, creativity and innovation
- The private, public and community in Sedbergh working much more closely together and looking forward to build a consensus and get behind delivering priority projects

Four themes have been identified and refined based on the economic development policy review, socio economic profile, research, consultation, business interviews and the workshop. The four interrelated themes are:

- **Delivering Economic Infrastructure & Promoting Managed Growth**
- **Visitor Economy: Destination Sedbergh**
- **Town Centre: Placemaking & Unlocking Economic Potential**
- **Community Enterprise & Third Sector Opportunities**

The main objectives of the Economic Action Plan are to:

- Provide an evidence based business case to support action
- Provide an economic focus for local investment
- Demonstrate the fit with Cumbria LEP/YDNPA/SLDC/SDCT&B,SPC strategic priorities:
- Ensure a thorough, authoritative & tactical Plan
- Support funding bids e.g. HE/HLF/BIG/Trusts
- Identify priority joined up/linked projects to maximise benefits
- Build consensus on priority actions that are capable of delivery

The next section summarises the **Sedbergh Economic Action Plan** based on the first four themes. The four themes and indicative priority opportunities/projects were reviewed at the Partners Workshop on 15 March and are also summarised below.

THEME 1: DELIVERING ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE & PROMOTING MANAGED GROWTH

To facilitate managed economic growth and investment in infrastructure to encourage start-ups and growing stronger new business, continued economic diversification in Sedbergh.

Clearly encouraging enterprise, start-ups and growing stronger new business is vital. Here the future provision of small scale flexible workspace for these kinds of smaller owner managed businesses and micro businesses will be crucial. Continuing to diversify the local economy and encouraging a stronger entrepreneurial business base in Sedbergh are essential.

Promoting **new uses in vacant and underused buildings and sites** are necessary components in sustaining economic development. Investment in the delivery of **high speed broadband through B4RN and 4G** will be crucial for Sedbergh. Sedbergh School is the major employer within the town and an important part of the economy within the wider region. Therefore, the School’s continued investment in its site and facilities should be encouraged and this includes the proposed Cumbria Education Centre for Advanced Technology & Science.

In this context projects that diversify uses in Sedbergh and promote enterprise, business /start-up/incubation/acceleration in conjunction with the CECATS Incubator Units and Enterprise Centre and appeal to young people will be crucial. A **ladder of business accommodation** for start-ups including at Toll Bar and growing local businesses and targeted particularly at the creative industries (e.g Farfield Mill) will also be required. **Affordable housing** for young people and families will also be essential.

Continuing to improve bus services is very important since a recent SLDC Survey showed that nearly 14% or 1 in 7 households in Sedbergh have no private transport. Buses run three times a day to / from Kendal and unfortunately do not arrive in Sedbergh until after 9am making it difficult for people to arrive at work before 9am. There is no bus service in the evenings and only one bus a day to Kirkby Lonsdale.

Figure 6.1: Delivering Economic Infrastructure & Promoting Managed Growth: Priority Projects

The priority projects in the Action Plan under this programme are:

| Project | Actions | Lead Agency/ Key Partners | Timescale Priority Impact | Next Steps |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 1.1 Supporting Growth Orientated Businesses In Sedbergh | <p>Workspace targeted at the start up/growing business and creative industries to include low rentals, live-work space, broadband/WiFi/B4RN, flexible rental terms, supportive shared services, rooms with good natural light including in existing vacant space in Sedbergh. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CECATS enterprise centre aiming to enthuse, motivate, educate, support and above all raise enterprise aspirations in Sedbergh. - Provide the right working conditions, ‘maker space’, office accommodation and infrastructure to support digital & creative enterprises -Target ‘footloose’ digital & creative enterprises -Encourage innovation and enterprise with the growth and development of new start-up companies. Support business planning by new business entrants -Improve broadband provision throughout Sedbergh and the surrounding area. | <p>Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum</p> <p>Cumbria LEP/ Cumbria European Structural & Investment Fund</p> <p>Sedbergh School</p> <p>Cumbria Chamber of Commerce/ Cumbria Business Growth Hub</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>YDNPA/ Sustainable Development</p> | <p>Medium term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles with key partners</p> |

| | | Fund | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.2 Sedbergh School: Strategic Plans: CECATS: | Cumbria Education Centre for Advanced Technology & Science (CECATS) will improve, education, training & career outcomes of young people (3-18) in Cumbria by coordinating, promoting & complementing STEM (science technology engineering & mathematics) initiatives. Includes incubator space, technology workshop, conference at the proposed Bush Lane site. | Sedbergh School Foundation University of Cumbria Cumbria LEP/ Cumbria European Structural & Investment Fund | Short term High | Refine vision & outline plans & capital & revenue costs. Secure capital & revenue funding |
| 1.3 Self-Build/Self-Design & Build: Local Builders Micro Sites: Family Housing & Live-Work | To raise the awareness and promote self-build and the custom build sector and live-work as a means of delivering an alternative approach to housing provision in Sedbergh. Self-build projects are where someone directly organises with a group of likeminded individuals the design and construction of their new home. Custom build homes tend to be those where the individual works with a specialist developer to help deliver a specific type and specification of home. Aim is also to promote small/micro sites to local builders. | YDNPA SLDC Owners Private Sector | Short/ medium Term High | YDNPA/SLDC to assess the local interest by test marketing. Actively target particular sites. |
| 1.4 'State of Art' Care Home: & Affordable & Adaptable Housing | Prepare a prospectus (market evidence, opportunity, facilities) to promote the opportunity for a 'state of the art' care home on a YDNP Local Plan allocated site. The project could showcase telehealth and other investments. Also, assess the potential demand from an ageing population and 'downsizers' who would prefer an adaptable town centre location close to community and other facilities. Based on the assessment target key sites and buildings. | YDNPA CCC Housing Assoc. Owners Private Sector | Short term High | Prospectus to assess private sector interest Actively market allocated sites & buildings Discuss with Local Planning Authority Approach potential developers to secure |
| 1.5 Bus Transport: Collaboration Private/Third Sector Operators | Initiate discussions with the network of private and third sector operators to test the possibilities of a new delivery model that ensures sustainable bus services that meet the needs of employers, employees, community and visitors. | Woofs of S. Braithwaites Western Yorkshire Dales Bus Stagecoach North West | Short term High | Initiate discussions |

THEME 2: VISITOR ECONOMY: DESTINATION SEDBERGH

To proactively develop the existing visitor economy and target younger and higher spending visitors to stay longer with a focus on cycling/walking/kayaking, local cultural and built heritage and locally sourced food/drink. Improve broadband provision throughout Sedbergh and the surrounding area.

Sedbergh needs to evolve as a more **distinctive and compelling destination** where outdoor activities, arts/cultural, enterprise, commercial, retail, public, and social functions overlap with a diverse range of uses. A more diverse range of facilities is fundamental to appeal to local residents, young people, professionals, families and visitors. Very clearly local competitors like Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale and Kirkby Stephen are investing in short, medium and long term projects to make them much more competitive places, Sedbergh cannot afford to fall further behind and complacency is a real threat.

There is a definite opportunity in Sedbergh and an emerging willingness among existing tourist businesses to work even more closely and encourage more collaboration between businesses to help themselves. The aim should be to drive the visitor economy even more effectively and develop as forward looking destination. This would focus on promoting Sedbergh as a cycling/walking hub and book town, with a distinctive built and cultural heritage and in the future also looking to environmental/wildlife tourism.

The aim should be to promote Farfield Mill and the proposed new visitor attraction: 'Story of Wool' including sheep farming, history, role in the landscape and products as a 'centre of excellence' and reinforcing the nationally important exhibitions. The Mill would be part of a network of small attractions and facilities with significant visitor potential. The town centre attractions like St Andrews Church and Sedbergh School need to be better connected to Farfield Mill with a river trail. There is also an opportunity to collaborate and explore opportunities for joint initiatives and promotions including marketing and events. It will be essential to target the next generation of visitors aged 18-24 and look to appeal to younger people, across generations an overseas visitor.

In this context Sedbergh can be promoted as an overall destination 'where the visitor eats, sleeps, discovers and explores' with a network of attractions that encourages visitors to stay longer overnight/s and spend more. Sedbergh needs to invest in the appropriate infrastructure, choice and quality offer, facilities and programme of events. Local accommodation, locally sourced food and drink, independent retail and transport sectors need to work even more closely together and to actively develop and promote the visitor economy. The objective has to be to increase income generation and improve the resilience of the tourism businesses.

Tourism Business Improvement Districts (BIDs): have been developed and managed by local tourism business in other locations in the UK (e.g. Uniqueness/Loch Ness & Torbay Retail & Tourism BID). In Sedbergh and the wider area the aims could include:

- Improve visitor experience; environmental/wildlife tourism, outdoor adventure, culture & heritage, food & drink, events
- Increase visitor numbers/target markets
- Increase length of stay/spend
- Deliver economically sustainable business & jobs

Therefore, there could be an opportunity to explore establishing a **Tourism Business Improvement District (BID)** in the wider western Yorkshire Dales to ensure local tourism business work even more closely together. This would include developing as a destination through a series of agreed additional marketing activities, initiatives and services. The BID could provide a sustainable financial model to deliver the agreed key Action Plan programmes and priority projects.

SLDC have looked into the viability of a BID just for Sedbergh. A BID is based on the business rates within a specific area and even widening the BID area to include Kirkby Lonsdale may not generate sufficient funds due to the relatively small number of businesses across the area. The area is also covered by different governance structures (YDNPA/CCC/SLDC) and will need to be carefully considered before going forward.

For further details on BIDS please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/business-improvement-districts>

Figure 6.2: Visitor Economy: Destination Sedbergh: Priority Projects

The priority projects in the Action Plan under this programme are:

| Project | Actions | Lead Agency/ Key Partners | Timescale/ Priority Impact | Next Steps |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 2.1 Sedbergh Cycling Town / Cycle Hub | <p>Explore the possibilities of promoting Sedbergh as a cycling town and establishing a cycling hub possibly located in an existing building (ideas The Bull outbuildings/car park, Joss Lane Car Park). The hub could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Café e.g. Wilf’s/Staveley & cycle shop - Range of road/MTB graded & family friendly routes: including multi use trail - Focus for maintaining a choice of cycle routes and facilities - Establishing improved links into the wider YDNP/LDNP & Sustrans’ National Cycle Network with a Sustrans & locals volunteer base - Refurbishing bikes project and regular mass cycling participation events - Generating regular income for the local economy; - Active travel & promoting modal shift: local people, as well as visitors, to cycle more and - Electric bikes and charging points - Contribute to local tourism plans and regeneration strategies. | <p>Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum</p> <p>Private or Third Sector</p> <p>YDNPA</p> <p>Sustrans</p> <p>Businesses</p> <p>SLDC Locally Important Projects</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> | <p>Medium term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles: physical/virtual or both</p> <p>Establish private sector interest.</p> <p>Feasibility study & formal agreement with YDNPA/ Sustrans</p> <p>Confirmation of preferred site/building</p> |
| 2.2 Farfield Mill | <p>Support the new visitor attraction: ‘Story of Wool’ as a ‘centre of excellence’ with significant visitor potential and reinforcing the nationally important exhibitions.</p> <p>Look to better connect the town centre and the Mill and actively explore opportunities for joint initiatives including marketing and events.</p> | <p>Farfield Mill Trustees</p> <p>Heritage Lottery Fund</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>Arts Council England</p> <p>Esmee Fairbairn Foundation</p> <p>Sponsorship</p> | <p>Medium Term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles, outline design, costs and proposals to link to and collaborate with Sedbergh Town Centre facilities.</p> |
| 2.3 Improving Choice of Visitor Accommodation & High Value Visitor Packages: | <p>Opportunity to review the existing provision of visitor accommodation in Sedbergh to ensure sufficient choice of accommodation (e.g. self-catering, Airbnb ‘bolt hole’, bunk house,</p> | <p>Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum</p> <p>Local Property</p> | <p>Short/ Medium term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles</p> <p>Develop a business case</p> |

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| <p>International Markets</p> | <p>camping/glamping, budget/boutique hotel) of the right quality appropriate for today's markets. Depending on the outcome of the review actively use a prospectus to promote specific opportunities in Sedbergh</p> <p>Work with tourism & cultural organisations (Farfield, Sedbergh School, Three Hares) and local accommodation providers, restaurants and key local venues to develop co-ordinated, high value visitor packages and to increase the local economic impact of visitor and cultural/built heritage to the local Sedbergh economy.</p> <p>Promote higher value visitor packages and tasters (Farfield Mill) targeted at international markets: e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cycle tourism (See Project 2.2) - dark skies events - accommodation, arts tasters, dark skies events, restaurants, venues & local guides | <p>Owners</p> <p>YDNPA</p> <p>Accommodation providers, restaurants & key local venues</p> <p>SLDC Locally Important Projects</p> | | <p>& identify priority demonstration project</p> |
| <p>2.4 Sedbergh Events & Festivals: Strategic Development</p> | <p>Work to unlock support to establish an Sedbergh Festivals co-ordinating 'organisation' to lead on joint strategic development, establish a programme, unlock longer term corporate sponsorship and maintain a competitive edge. Key objectives would include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertake an audit to assess local interest, skills/capabilities and capacity building requirements - Consolidate the existing programme of events (Dark Skies/Stargazing, Food Festival, Cyclefest, Sheepfest) and act on behalf of and represent the collective strengths of the different emerging events/festivals - Explore the possibilities for longer term corporate sponsorship and more secure funding - Develop and deliver collaborative projects and initiatives which support creative industries growth, product development & audiences - Help sustain events/festivals in Sedbergh and establish its role as a 'creative events' destination. - Stronger links between businesses and events - Better links, promotion and marketing with Dentdale/surrounding areas and YDNPA | <p>Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>YDNP Sustainable Development Fund</p> <p>Arts Council England</p> <p>Sedbergh Parish Council</p> | <p>Short term: 1-2 years</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles</p> |

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| 2.5 Marketing Branding & Promotion Initiative | Improve the marketing and promotion of Sedbergh by identifying and promoting an improved brand. To include quality visitor, offer, marketing/availability of accommodation and authentic experiences including: - cycle hub (See Project 2.3) - dark skies - heritage & cultural offer: Farfield Mill & river- town trail - activities: walking/cycling: kayaking & canoeing - relaunched Book Town - events & festivals: coordination - nature: wildlife & outdoors | Private sector Dales Tourism Network YDNPA SLDC Sedbergh Parish Council | Short term High | Draft brief & ITT. Appointed design agency to produce 'brand manual' for Sedbergh include brand identity and how visuals will be used in comms. materials, apps, signs, web site etc. |
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THEME 3: TOWN CENTRE: PLACEMAKING & UNLOCKING ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

To invest in placemaking and actively unlock the economic regeneration potential of Sedbergh Town Centre so as to significantly improve the quality of the Main Street.

Sedbergh has evolved as a 'market town' and is more typical of a commercial centre outside the National Park, with less of a focus on the visitor economy. Local residents and business however continue to raise real concerns about the poor quality of the town centre environment and particularly the poor first impression of Main Street public realm. Sedbergh and the Conservation Area compares well with other town such as Kirkby Lonsdale in terms of natural and built assets and attractions for visitors but the strongly held local view is that Sedbergh will always be 'second best' so long as the Main Street (and the car park) give a poor first impression for visitors and would-be inward business investors.

Certainly, recent experience demonstrates that high quality public spaces reinforce a town's sense of place. High quality public realm can also produce measurable benefits to the local economy, health, social well-being and safety, as well as enhance the value of adjacent real estate and encourage greater economic activity. The public realm improvements in Windermere in 2008 are a good Cumbria example of the change in feel of the town and the resulting flourishing café culture with measurable local economic impact.

The aim therefore is to continue to protect the vitality of Sedbergh town centre and ensure that the prominent vacant properties like the Bull Hotel and the former Sedbergh Network Hub are brought back into active business use by private investors. There could also be an opportunity to promote a proactive/simplified planning approach to ensure a balanced mixture of local and visitor goods/services in the town centre.

Figure 6.3: Town Centre: Placemaking & Unlocking Economic Potential: Priority Projects

The priority projects in the Action Plan under this programme are:

| Project | Actions | Lead Agency/ Key Partners | Timescale / Priority Impact | Next Steps |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3.1. Place Making Improvements In Main Street Incorporating a | Ambitions place making improvements in Main Street to extend beyond just the repair and maintenance. The aim is to promote a transformative | Parish Council YDNPA SLDC | Medium term High | Agree principles Discuss funding eligibility criteria with |

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| <p>Shared Surface</p> | <p>effect on the appearance and functioning of Main Street. Using sympathetic quality design & careful use of materials, to reflect the historic traditions of a northern market town with a modern twist. Includes a strong sustainable transport component: improving walking & cycle network, electric vehicle charge points & managing car parking.</p> <p>The project would also include developing and launching an app to focus primarily on buildings/streets/lanes/places and to explain the rich built/cultural heritage back story of Sedbergh in an imaginative way.</p> | <p>Historic England</p> <p>Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas (PSICA)</p> <p>HLF</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>Settlebeck School</p> <p>Sedbergh School</p> <p>CCC Highways</p> | <p>Basic app would to be developed by end of school year June 2018.</p> | <p>Historic England & HLF</p> <p>Undertake a short sharp Feasibility Study using the Sedbergh Townscape Initiative 2011 report.</p> |
| <p>3.2 Business Masterclass & 1-1 Visits</p> | <p>Aim to offer, as part of integrated package, advice to shop owners in terms of business planning, merchandising, window display, stock control, social media marketing, etc. Could take the form of retail masterclass. Issues to be covered could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - raising awareness of the need for continuous improvement, overcoming apathy & complacency and renewing enthusiasm - making the most of good customer service - using social media to market more effectively: Promote Internet/ & Facebook / Social Media Marketing - Increasing customer spend - Maximising display space and layout - Promoting Sedbergh as a destination, using events & coordinating opening hours | <p>Town centre & other businesses</p> <p>Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business</p> <p>YDNPA Sustainable Development Fund</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Confirmation of scope of scheme during 2017</p> |
| <p>3.3 Shop Sedbergh</p> | <p>Independent businesses & shops are the bedrock of Sedbergh Town Centre and when they thrive they create real jobs, a cohesive town centre and a strong local economy. The aim is to ensure Sedbergh people rediscover the town centre and are reminded of the differences between the online retailers, large chains and the</p> | <p>Town Centre Businesses</p> <p>Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business</p> <p>YDNPA Sustainable</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles & secure funding.</p> |

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|---|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| | independent shops and businesses on their doorstep. Town centre businesses would share their ideas, support each other and work together. The more you put in, the more you get out! | Development Fund Cumbria Tourism | | |
| 3.4 Town Centre Planning Protocol: Proactive Planning Initiative | In Sedbergh Town Centre this could involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly identifying uses that should be encouraged including professional services - Contacting landowners and encouraging them to bring their property back into use & market allocated sites - Helping owners to source grants/loans and to navigate through the consents that they need, particularly for historic buildings. -YDNPA could also submit planning applications for key sites/buildings to gain planning consents for speculative proposals which can then be used to market sites as part of a prospectus | YDNPA Private Owners | Short Medium | Agree & formalise principles |

THEME 4: COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE & THIRD SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

To actively exploit the tremendous social capital available in Sedbergh, strengthen community enterprise and actively develop third sector organisations to unlock economic regeneration opportunities.

In South Lakeland, there is a strong commitment to devolution of delivery to communities, and third sector organisations. The current emphasis on fiscal sustainability, and public sector financial constraints place significant responsibility on local authorities to develop strong partnerships with communities, and third sector organisations, so that effective local interventions are made by the right organisations. There are already more than 26 **community groups** in Sedbergh as well as a significant base of retired/semi-retired population with a wealth of experience and particular skills. Therefore, this **extensive social capital** means that third sector organisations in Sedbergh could be well placed to develop even more innovative approaches to providing local services and facilities. This will require a focus on encouraging more volunteering particularly among younger people, empowering and building further capacity within the community. The aim is to enable individuals' and groups to do more themselves, by working in partnership with each other and delivering projects that Sedbergh.

The Community Trust, who already own and manage 72 Main Street as an Information & Book Centre could be well placed to develop other innovative approaches to providing local services and facilities. Sedbergh & District CIO are also active. The Community Trust could look to explore opportunities for the community to acquire local 'public assets' through asset transfer and exploit their economic development potential in partnership with private sector investment.

This new context raises a number of opportunities for third sector organisations in Sedbergh to actively contribute to the local economy and unlock funding from sources like the Big Lottery (Investing in Ideas/Awards for All) and Heritage Lottery Fund (Heritage Enterprise).

Figure 6.4: Community Enterprise & Third Sector Opportunities: Priority Projects

The priority projects in the Action Plan under this programme are:

| Project | Principles & Justification | Funding & Enabling Agencies | Timescale Likely Impact | Next Steps |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|------------------|
| 4.1 Health & Wellbeing: Key Component Of Economic Growth: Prevention & Early Intervention | Health and well-being are fundamental components in a competitive Sedbergh economic growth offer for existing and new business, residents and visitors. Actions include: - Ensure resources devoted to prevention & early intervention - Using sports & arts development to promote pathways & hubs - Promote successful health and wellbeing outcomes including increasing physical activity levels to increase life expectancy & decreasing health inequalities - Support further investment and improved facilities at for example: e.g Information & Book Centre, 'Flicks in the Fells': Outdoor Summer Film Programme | Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum Parish Council Other community organisations Sedbergh Medical Centre Cumbria Community Foundation YDNPA Sustainable Development Fund Sedbergh School | Medium term High | Agree principles |

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| <p>4.2 Strengthening Third Sector Organisations: Maintain Community Networking</p> | <p>Use capacity building to maintain community networking & further strengthen collaboration between groups, based on the existing community networks and social capital in Sedbergh. The opportunities to deliver specific projects should be explored. Other opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using LEADER funding to establish volunteer “community animateurs” who will act as a catalyst to and resource for development of community projects and initiatives - Ensure <i>Lookaround</i> continues & regular biannual information exchange & networking events using the ‘Pecha Kucha’ quick fire presentation style - Promote more volunteering in Sedbergh to include an initial audit/database of existing skills in the local community. - Focus on improving the capability & sustainability of third sector organisations in Sedbergh & widening membership among young people. -Look to increase the level of social entrepreneurship in Sedbergh and support individuals to adopt an enterprising approach to social opportunities. | <p>Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum</p> <p>Cumbria Community Foundation</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>BLF Investing in Communities</p> <p>BLF Awards for</p> <p>All</p> <p>BLF Investing In Ideas</p> | <p>Short 1-3 years</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Agree principles</p> <p>Make business case for funding</p> <p>Identify specific opportunities</p> <p>Provide start-up and business start-up advice through Cumbria Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Aim to retain income and spending in the very local economy.</p> |
| <p>4.3 Arts & Heritage: Social Enterprises & Third Sector Opportunities</p> | <p>Look to establish social economy organisations and increase the level of social entrepreneurship in Sedbergh and the surrounding rural area. Support individuals to adopt an enterprising approach to social opportunities.</p> <p>E.g. cycle hub: local guides; bicycle hire/maintenance: locally sourced food: energy reduction/tackling fuel poverty.</p> <p>The initiative could also include the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities events & festivals | <p>Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum</p> <p>Cumbria Community Foundation</p> <p>Cumbria Fells & Dales LEADER</p> <p>Cumbria Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business</p> | <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> | <p>Identify specific opportunities</p> <p>Provide start-up and business support advice through Cumbria Chamber of Commerce</p> |

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| | (see Project 2.5); - Marketing programme; - Digital infrastructure to make industrial/cultural heritage more accessible; - Activities to ensure wider community involvement & engagement. | Community Organisations BLF Investing in Communities | | Aim to retain income and spending in the very local economy |
|--|--|---|--|---|

7. CONCLUSIONS: NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMIC ACTION PLAN: CONCLUSIONS

Sedbergh has evolved as a more traditional ‘working’ market town and although now situated in the park today is more typical of a commercial centre outside the National Park, with less of a focus on the visitor economy and stronger **inter-dependent economic linkages** with places such as Kendal and Lancaster. Sedbergh School has a dominant influence on the town and remains the largest employer supporting more than 470 jobs in the local economy. Overall however the Sedbergh local economy is **under achieving** and with the assets available (identified in Chapter 3). Therefore, a **fundamental objective** should be to challenge complacency and the resistance to change and commit to the vision, values and Economic Action Plan summarised in Chapter 6. As a result, and with real ambition, the Sedbergh local economy can **and should ‘punch above its weight’**.

Clearly however these are very challenging times for towns like Sedbergh. YDNPA, SLDC and CCC along with the rest of the public sector in England, is continuing to face up to a very tough financial climate. For the public sector this means continuing to make tough choices, delivering value for money in public spending and maintaining fiscal discipline. Public sector budgets are likely to continue to reduce and Brexit will increase uncertainty for investors across the public and private sectors. At the same time, public sector costs are rising while funding is reducing, making it harder to balance public sector budgets and protect services. Overall the Economic Action Plan for Sedbergh that has emerged from the Study is a **Plan for all public, private and third sector stakeholders** and not just the public sector. The main objectives of the Economic Action Plan are highlighted in Chapter 6.

DELIVERY CONTEXT & COORDINATION

Sedbergh is one very small part of much larger local, regional, national and international economy. The economic development landscape however, is also a crowded one and there are a range of different agencies like YDNPA, SLDC, Cumbria LEP, CCC and Cumbria Chamber with interests that extend beyond Sedbergh. In addition, Sedbergh School is a significant stakeholder and essential to the local economy. Over the years the town-gown relationship has been fraught although this has improved recently. A range of other businesses, developers and commercial agents, housing associations, voluntary/third sector organisations, all have roles in supporting the development and growth of the Sedbergh economy. The Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade and Business should also be acknowledged as having taken a lead in preparing a ‘Vision for Sedbergh’ and in securing funding for a project manager who is progressing various events, marketing and social media initiatives.

Therefore overall therefore, there are considerable existing risks of duplication, confusion, fudged priorities, lack of transparency and wasted resources if relationships are not carefully managed. In Sedbergh there are a number of other local groups and agencies like the Sedbergh Parish Council, Sedbergh CIC, and Sedbergh CIO, Sedbergh United Charities whose remit includes economic development among a wider range of other responsibilities and who tend to operate within certain ‘comfort zones’. In this context in Sedbergh there is perhaps a lack of focus and a tendency for the **‘town to not speak with one voice’**.

At this crucial time, the local economy stakeholders need to establish a new understanding based on good leadership that can challenge complacency and work to provide a strong consensus based on transparency, trust, mutual respect and above all an ambitious ‘can do’ attitude. At the same time a number of significant infrastructure investments are under consideration including: CECATS/Sedbergh School Foundation, Farfield Mill/Story of Wool and The Bull Hotel/new investment. There is now a tangible opportunity to support and build on these proposed investments.

A new robust local commitment to managed economic growth is required to effectively address these and other issues identified in this *Sedbergh Economic Study* report. A transparent approach that builds trust, with a real focus on delivering agreed priority projects will be essential. A clear conclusion based on the research, business interviews, consultations and the Partners Workshop is

that there is now a specific requirement for action based on coordination, strong leadership and a consensus on priorities. Sedbergh needs 'one local economy team'!

DELIVERY PROPOSALS: 'SHORT LIFE' COORDINATING COUNCIL

Experience elsewhere has shown the importance of a respected 'neutral Council' to discuss emerging economic development opportunities, challenge the status quo, provide leadership and act as a proactive partnership vehicle to co-ordinate economic investment.

SLDC/YDNPA/Sedbergh Parish Council and Sedbergh & District Chamber of Trade & Business has to move quickly and decisively so as to keep up the momentum that has been built up. Effective leadership and a tangible commitment to delivering sustainable local economic development will be essential. As a consequence, the following delivery arrangement is recommended:

- In the short term a focussed group, *Sedbergh Economic Council/Forum* should be established, with a clear commitment to further develop and deliver the Economic Action Plan.
- The membership of the Forum would include representatives of local businesses/Chamber of Business & Trade, community/Sedbergh Parish Council alongside YDNPA/SLDC/CCC & other public sector partners. The group should also include representatives from key employers and tourist attractions. The townscape group already in operation includes many of these representatives - this group could form the basis of the Sedbergh Economic forum.
- The group would have an independent chair and monitor progress on delivering Action Plan projects and continue to build consensus around strategic programmes and projects. This principle of establishing a short life Delivery Group was discussed at the Workshop on 15th March.

The 'short life' Economic Council/Forum is the most appropriate agent to coordinate local economic development and lead delivery of the Sedbergh Economic Action Plan. The Group need to be committed to ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of different agencies and groups involved in supporting economic development in Sedbergh are clear, to use existing structures and agencies to deliver priority projects where it can and focus on accountability for delivering projects.

The coordinating Economic Council/Forum cannot grow the local economy alone, but in leading the delivery of and working with private, public and third sector partners; it can help support Sedbergh towards a more resilient and therefore sustainable economic future. An important role for the Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum would be to lobby, influence and inspire local and national politicians and other public, private, third sector agencies with an interest in Sedbergh. The other main roles of the Coordinating Group would be to:

- Act as an independent Forum with a clear economic focus for private public, & third sector representatives
- Use limited resources and work through other agencies with a focus on progress and accountability
- Explore funding a staff resource to help delivery
- Deliver the Economic Action Plan based consensus on priority projects
- Champion the Sedbergh economy
- Coordinate project delivery formal/informal structure
- Continue to lobby for improved infrastructure (highways, broadband, housing, drainage etc) to support the needs of Sedbergh as a 21st Century town

The Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum should meet four times annually in the first two years and then review progress and agree whether to continue.

NEXT STEPS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The main next steps and recommendations are as follows:

- SLDC/YDNPA/SPC/S&D Chamber of Trade & Business to formally approve the Sedbergh Economic Study and the Economic Action Plan vision, strategic themes, priority projects and delivery proposals as the basis for future investment decisions in Sedbergh over the next ten years. *Summer 2017*
- SLDC/YDNPA/SPC/S&D Chamber of Trade & Business to establish a 'Short Life' coordinating Sedbergh Economic Council / Forum with an early first meeting. *Autumn 2017*
- Progress towards delivering the Sedbergh Economic Action Plan to be reviewed at an annual event to encourage public, private and third sector partners to discuss the state of the Sedbergh economy and suggest new ways of responding to emerging challenges and opportunities. *Summer 2018*

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