

Towards a Vision for Sedbergh

A “Vision Statement” is needed to bring all parts of the community together. It can help to secure Sedbergh’s future as a prosperous and sustainable market town with a thriving local economy. This document, prepared jointly by the Parish Council, The Community Trust and The Sedbergh and District Chamber of Trade and Business, is offered as a contribution towards achieving the “Vision”. It identifies Sedbergh’s strengths and challenges and proposes three Key Themes through which the “Vision” can be approached and realised, underpinned by specific initiatives that the Community may support. It is intended that the document is submitted to public comment and visited each year to be updated to reflect current challenges.

1 OUR STRENGTHS (OR WHAT WE HAVE TO OFFER)

- A beautiful, peaceful and clean landscape as a setting for the town
- An attractive town centre with heritage assets
- A multi-faceted rural economy
- A positive visitor experience
- A vibrant and distinctive local community
- Excellent local schools
- England’s Booktown
- Good transport links to the M6 and rail services

2 OUR CHALLENGES (OR WHAT WE HAVE TO DO TO)

These can be summarised in Three Key Themes:

Delivery of Economic Infrastructure

(Including broadband, local business hub, improved roads and services, affordable housing, accommodation for visitors)

Secure superfast broadband and enhanced mobile phone connectivity

- Lobby the providers to provide better services for Sedbergh and District

Enhance business skills and business development opportunities

- Support the Sedbergh Hub at a new location
- Encourage the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) and South Lakes District Council (SLDC) to be proactive in their support of enterprise through the planning process
- Encourage the development of both the Wednesday Market and the Saturday Artisans Markets
- Chamber of Trade and Business to continue to provide support for local businesses
- Attract new businesses

Improved safety for roads and footpaths

- Progress proposals for the management of pedestrians and vehicles in the centre of town through the use of a ‘shared surface’
- Develop proposals with the Highways Agency for traffic calming measures and/or the introduction of lower speed limits

Investigate parking issues

- Identify places for the better parking of coaches
- Improve the appearance and functioning of the Joss Lane car park
- Periodically review parking charges and explore the possibility of some measure of free parking to encourage visitors

Secure affordable housing for young families and the elderly

- Identify opportunities to promote self-build affordable housing
- Investigate the possibility of additional care housing for the elderly

- **Generate employment opportunities for disadvantaged people**
- Investigate local business that would be willing to provide apprentice positions and employment for young people with learning difficulties

Support initiatives for the development of the farm economy

- Support farm tourism and the promotion of local farm produce
- Support initiatives for cost-effective and sustainable farming methods that benefit the wider environment

Promote the improvement and modernisation of accommodation to attract visitors

- Encourage YDNPA and SLDC to prevent further decay of the fabric of the Bull Hotel
- Investigate the possibility of finding a developer/hotelier for the Bull Hotel
- Encourage accommodation providers to develop marketing initiatives that coordinate with sporting and cultural events

Development of the Visitor Economy

(Sedbergh as a destination where visitors eat sleep, explore and discover; promote local centres of excellence and importance)

Promote Sedbergh as a desirable tourist destination

- Support Sedbergh stakeholders and organisations to promote events that attract visitors
- Support the Information Centre to extend its advertising of Sedbergh regionally as well as locally
- Produce on-line guides for aspects of Sedbergh’s history and culture
- Produce on-line guides for a craft tourist trail and a food trail
- Support Farfield Mill as a tourist destination
- Encourage more bed and breakfast businesses
- Support the further development of “Sedbergh Book Town”

Promotion of Community Enterprise

(Capitalise on the social capital and enterprise of volunteers who are central to the community; identify and use the skills in the community and promote/increase community ownership; develop partnerships with local authorities and the National Park.)

Secure investment in infrastructure in the town centre and improve public transport

- Seek to extend the Dales Community Bus Service for Day Tours based around the Howgill Fells
- Continue to support the Sedbergh and District Community First Responders

Promote activities that are accessible to all

- Support organisations promoting indoor and outdoor sporting activities
- Provide support for the People’s Hall and its associated activities
- Provide support for the Cycling, Food and Music Festivals
- Provide support for the ‘Walkers Are Welcome’ initiative
- Promote cultural activities
- Support “Flicks in the Fells” and similar initiatives

Provide additional recreational facilities for young people

- Encourage facilities for young people, such as a youth centre, BMX track or skate boarding area
- Identify appropriate sites and buildings for these facilities

Care for an ageing population

- Continue to support initiatives such as Meals on Wheels, and Care in the Community
- Seek a care provider to encourage the provision of purpose-built accommodation to meet identified needs
- Support SLDC to improve the facilities at Gladstone house and its environment
- Establish Sedbergh as a Dementia Friendly Community

3 THE PROPOSED WAY AHEAD

A “Town Coordinating Committee” is proposed to adopt the “Vision Statement”, that is published on the Sedbergh.org.uk website. This should reflect the interests of all Sedbergh organisations. The Committee is

envisaged as an independent forum which would meet not less than twice yearly to review progress and focus on:

- Representing the key stakeholders – The Parish Council, The Community Trust and The Sedbergh and District Chamber of Trade and Business;
- Lobbying, influencing, inspiring politicians and fund holders;
- Championing Sedbergh and working to a prioritised Action Plan of projects and objectives that are identified to realise the “Vision”.

Revision dated 12-07-2016, amended by Andy Cobb, incorporating comments of other organisations