



SEDBERGH FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH

SEDBERGH ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

FEBRUARY 2021

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The Sedbergh Framework for Growth Plan sets out the vision for the future sustainable growth of Sedbergh and the immediate hinterland. This document has been produced by Sedbergh Economic Partnership. It will be used to make the case for further investment into Sedbergh and for economic growth. It will also be submitted to the Yorkshire Dales National Park, as part of the local plan process and to local authorities for strategic planning and services support.

Formed in 2017, the Sedbergh Economic Partnership exists to bring together public, private and third sector organisations to work together and lobby to increase the economic prospects of Sedbergh. It has representation from key local organisations, local authorities, Parish Council, National Park Members, business representatives, local employers and others. This growth framework, a first for a town within the National Park, has also been endorsed by each individual organisation in Sedbergh, all agreeing with one voice that Sedbergh supports growth.

Sitting behind this framework is an evidence base that has been developed in preparing this document. The available publications include the Sedbergh Economic Appraisal, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Economic Case for More Housing, together with regular liaison with local community representatives, a key worker survey, and evidential support from the local authorities.

It is recommended that all local organisations should continue to encourage, lobby and support new projects, programmes of investment and a positive planning approach for more new dwellings in Sedbergh and surrounding environs. This is to improve the sustainability of this community, attract working families and new businesses to the area, support school roll numbers and local services and tackle the rapidly ageing population profile of the national park.

When defining the vision for Sedbergh, the starting point is to recognise the overall vision for the National Park, of which Sedbergh is the largest settlement.

“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 part of it”.

In supporting this aspiration, Sedbergh’s vision, collectively agreed by Economic Partnership members, is:

- ***A prosperous market town well served with economic infrastructure including superfast broadband, good transport connectivity, vibrant shops and services, education excellence, a good supply of housing and quality visitor accommodation.***
- ***A destination place that enjoys a distinctive natural environment and celebrated cultural heritage together with an envied quality of life for residents and an offer of hospitality excellence for its visitors.***
- ***A sustainable (and viable) Dales town that supports growth of community and business from within, a town where people of all ages enjoy opportunities to learn, to work and to be active.***

The National Park and our public agencies including the District and County Councils have a commitment to sustaining local communities and local economies. Sedbergh is already the biggest settlement in the Yorkshire Dales and is therefore a key location in accommodating a significant proportion of the housing and employment development targets as set out in the next Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan for the period of 2023 to 2040. Sedbergh has sufficient capacity in its schools, health and highways networks to accommodate new dwellings and business space.

Within this next Local Plan timeframe (2023-2040), Sedbergh has the infrastructure, land and capacity in its community services to exploit its strategic location - perfectly placed in the beautiful Yorkshire Dales yet within touching distance of the magnificent Lake District, close to the M6 and the west coast mainline - for the purpose of sustainable growth. Promoting and developing the town as the National Park's primary residential and economic hub should be the goal; **Sedbergh offers an outstanding location to accommodate the increasing demand for rural locations to live and work in**, is well placed to attract new enterprise and commercial activity (particularly those businesses able to operate remotely) and is underpinned by the more traditional and fundamentally important sectors of agriculture, education and hospitality.

To support the growth of the Yorkshire Dales economy it is important to protect the existing industrial (employment) and services base (schools, retail etc) in towns such as Sedbergh by providing affordable homes and a good allocation of housing. The town has land which can deliver a range of dwellings that will provide for the existing and future needs of the local community, including affordable housing and key worker housing. Development in Sedbergh would support and benefit facilities such as the health centre, retail, hospitality and schools - all have capacity for growth.

As well as seeking further residential development, the town is well placed to support new and existing businesses who need good connectivity, a local workforce and room for growth/ expansion. According to local agents, local buyers represent only a small number of sales due to limited stock available, which has forced local couples and families to look to larger and more affordable locations, such as Kendal, Penrith and Kirkby Stephen. **This needs to change.**

Sedbergh wants to be the place within the Dales that is given **priority status for development**, the place that the planning authority looks to first; the place that can accommodate growth and continue to thrive. The new Local Plan should reflect the aspirations of the communities in its area.

Why Sedbergh supports growth

All economies, small or large, urban or rural are reliant on the wealth-generating capabilities of those who are currently in work.

Population tables show that there has been a decline in the number of young people in Sedbergh in recent years which will impact on the potential working population in the future. It is therefore important to support measures to maximise the proportion of people who are economically active and this includes delivering more housing in Sedbergh.

A sustainable market town should enjoy a good support infrastructure and local access to public services such as schools, health services, banks, public halls, shops, eateries and accommodation providers. Currently, **Sedbergh relies on its ability to attract visitors alongside residents to help support and sustain its local shops, services and cafes. To be the sustainable and prosperous market town it wants to be, Sedbergh needs more permanently occupied dwellings.**

A positive factor for Sedbergh and its future prospect as a prosperous and sustainable town is the number of “destination” services and facilities it offers, such as the vets, solicitors, hairdressers and estate agents, pharmacy, GP and dental surgeries which draw people to Sedbergh from a wider hinterland. The capacity table in the appendices highlights the current ‘**room for growth**’. All Sedbergh’s service providers and infrastructure enablers have indicated that there is capacity for growth. To maintain the good level of current services the resident numbers need to be sustained at the very least - a decrease in population will have a detrimental impact. Also, new homes could help assist the local environment further by reducing the need to commute.

As a recognised safe, active, social and healthy town, Sedbergh must look at placemaking, community and social cohesion, education, and health as well as employment opportunities, attracting businesses and developing connectivity. Sedbergh has an active local population with many organisations and facilities that volunteers support, so a growth in residential population will help these various organisations to keep delivering vital community services. As the number of second home or holiday home numbers grow, the numbers of active participants at a local community level decreases which will in turn affect local groups, community events, fundraisers, sports teams and other activities including volunteering at the Information Centre or supporting efforts to bring B4RN (Broadband for the Rural North) to the area. Sedbergh and similar market settlements will continue to rely heavily on (ageing?) volunteers and local organisations for community events, activities, support groups and project delivery. An increase in the number of permanently occupied houses helps sustain volunteer numbers.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITY

1. Be adaptable and resilient in maintaining a vibrant community and availability of services. New businesses and the expansion of existing companies supports growth and stability in rural settlements like Sedbergh.
2. Support enterprise and entrepreneurship. Allocated employment sites in Sedbergh should not prevent proposals for small-scale enterprises in or adjoining small rural settlements.
3. Push for a co-location of public services to a key site in Sedbergh involving CCC, YDNP, Police, NHS, SLDC and others to keep Sedbergh on the radar for public service support, resource and investment.
4. Deliver an 'extra care facility' in Sedbergh by continuing to pressure delivery authorities. Employment creation would be welcomed and will help drive housing demand. Care workers are now key workers and the pressure on the availability of affordable and open market homes to encourage workers into the area will increase.
5. Recognise the changing face of Main Street, support new fledgling retail businesses, promote and encourage more above-shop living, meeting space and services that will encourage footfall onto the high street.
6. Provide early years provision and wrap around childcare in Sedbergh to support its own resident working families and if it wants to help employers attract young people and working families to move to the area.
7. Continue to maintain a clean environment and good access to healthy lifestyle assets for residents so Sedbergh continues to enjoy above average health and longevity.
8. Support and protect local services through improving accessibility - additional car parking, electric vehicle charging points, more reliable and regular improved public transport network.

HOUSING FOR THE FUTURE

1. Support the YDNP in identifying more land to support more new dwellings in Sedbergh to improve the sustainability of the town and surrounding communities. This need is evidenced by a key worker survey, letters of support, (a forthcoming parish housing needs survey) and Strategic Market Housing Assessment.
2. Work with local landowners and housing developers to deliver new key worker, affordable and open market housing in Sedbergh - always promoting good design.
3. Deliver a minimum 10% growth in housing stock of mixed classification for the town by 2040 to meet the needs of local people and local employers; support community organisations and local services and, critically to allow managed growth in the population and to achieve a significant re-balancing of the ageing demographic profile.
4. Provide 'preferred allocations' maps for Sedbergh to highlight ideal sites, (including those currently unavailable) to show what has been considered. This would give the community confidence in the land allocations procedure and would identify land not yet available for market that could be suitable for development should a change in circumstance be forthcoming before 2040 (thus avoiding 'exception site' viability issues).

DIVERSIFICATION TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMY

1. Adopt a positive approach to diversification. Planning and licensing authorities should support diversification requests from, for example, renewable energy generation, local farming families for new accommodation units (for farm workers and/or visitors) and leisure uses on farms, especially in the growth of staycations and for post-Brexit planning.
2. Rural diversification and the establishment of new enterprises will strengthen the local economy and bring additional employment and prosperity to Sedbergh and its hinterland.
3. Encourage the remodelling of unused business space and buildings for small incubator units and hub working to support small and fledgling businesses.

VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Capital investment to increase (temporarily or permanently) car parking from the current 110 car parking spaces, which are insufficient to meet demand, especially during market days and events.
2. Increase the overnight visitor market in Sedbergh by introducing an area for Motorhome parking. This has worked effectively in other market towns to the benefit of local businesses, the high street and the evening economy.
3. Support the introduction of new visitor accommodation types that meets the needs of visitors and reduces the demands on 'normal' housing stock. Encourage the YDNP to review local policy restrictions and identify sites for a new low-cost hotel, more conversions of traditional farm buildings for regular holiday use and licence year-round holiday parks for touring units of all types.

CONNECTIVITY

1. Digital infrastructure should be prioritised and delivery assisted in Sedbergh to facilitate home working, community cohesion, online education and reduce the need to travel.
2. Support the continuing roll out of B4RN connections across the town and maintain pressure on mobile coverage providers for reliable 4G coverage at minimum.
3. Better transport connections between Sedbergh and other service centres to support workers and students, restoring free school transport for 16-18yrs and improving the local public transport across the town and neighbouring hinterland.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

1. Provide a series of electric charging points for motor vehicles. As more car manufacturers move to electric cars and e-bikes are rising in popularity it is vital that Sedbergh provides the supporting infrastructure.
2. Connect Sedbergh's tourism assets, the natural environment and visitor destinations to sustainable forms of transport, with easy access by walking, cycling, Dales Bus and a better public transport offer.
3. All new housing developments should include energy efficient buildings, renewable energy and resource efficient infrastructure. Help support carbon neutrality by being built in good proximity to employment and services.

LOCAL RECREATION PROJECTS TO DELIVER PUBLIC BENEFIT

1. Deliver a series of access friendly waymarked circular walking routes starting and ending in the town centre and showcasing the surrounding countryside. This will build the range of activities for residents and visitors and provide potential customers to high street businesses.
2. Enable Sedbergh's growth as a cycling destination through provision of cycle friendly cafes and accommodation, family friendly routes, electric bike charging points, cycle repair points, cycle equipment shops, bike racks and others.
3. Launch an outdoor recreation manifesto for the residents to connect them with outdoor pursuits on their doorstep. Encourage more use of Sedbergh's natural assets through running, walking, climbing, sailing, orienteering, canoeing etc for mental health benefits.
4. Create a recreational multi-user route on the former Garsdale Head to Hawes railway track and the former Tebay line, supporting good linkages to Sedbergh.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

1. Champion Sedbergh as a place to live and work to the regional business sector and budding entrepreneurs with the message that businesses can operate within beautiful surroundings and enjoy good connectivity and local services on their doorstep.
2. Promote Sedbergh, its environs and businesses to existing second homeowners, holiday-let owners and permanent residents, encouraging them to stay more and support the local service and retail economy. The future of local businesses, leisure industries and the High Street will depend on all people residing in Sedbergh (on a full and part-time basis) to shop local, use nearby trades and services and explore local activities, amenities and experiences.
3. Maintain a sustainable market town that enjoys a good townscape, good infrastructure and local access to public services such as schools, health services, banks, public halls, shops, eateries and holiday accommodation provision.
4. Currently, Sedbergh relies on tourism and Sedbergh School to sustain retail businesses, core services and hospitality. It is therefore vital that amenities and services are open to all when they arrive in the town, so uniform business opening hours should be embraced.

GROW THE TOURISM SECTOR

1. Channel Sedbergh's identity and use it to promote the town to visitors and to potential residents. The PR work currently being undertaken by a specialist journalist is producing good coverage for town and more specialist markets can now be targeted (business relocation, cycling, fishing, walking, books, sport, moving home, weddings, history).
2. Encourage more Electric Vehicle Tourism which encourages drivers of electric vehicles to plan their trips and routes around the availability of charging stations.
3. Push Sedbergh as a principal location for Cumbria Tourism's 'attract and disperse' policy to help highlight Sedbergh as a visitor destination. Lobby Welcome to Yorkshire to promote the town as part of all Yorkshire Dales marketing campaigns.
4. Promote Sedbergh, the venues, the accommodation and the range of opportunities in-front of event management businesses to benefit from the business and corporate client market.
5. Increase visitor numbers by using 'Gateway to Dark Skies', 'Largest Town in Yorkshire Dales' and 'Booktown' status to Sedbergh's advantage.
6. Invest in existing hospitality businesses and support the development of an additional hotel in the town which will provide economic benefit through, job creation, more bed spaces and increased tourism spend. This will help the success of corporate tourism, key events, new markets such as weddings or sporting events and could help reduce the demand for second homes.

SEDBERGH'S FOOTPRINT IN A REGIONAL SETTING

1. Pursue active links with the Cumbria LEP, Cumbria Tourism, Welcome to Yorkshire, the proposed Bay unitary authority and the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region project. Improved visibility will help keep Sedbergh relevant to potential growth investment projects.
2. Use Sedbergh Economic Partnership to deliver economic influence for Sedbergh, capture funding opportunities, direct project initiatives and avoid any duplication of activities. This will help Sedbergh to speak with one voice.
3. Provide a recognised platform for young people to be involved in local decision making and project delivery.

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

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

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

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

Sedbergh needs to promote itself to relocating families, bringing their own businesses to town from the Northwest and further afield. Now is a good moment to also link Sedbergh with the Morecambe Bay economic area, (potentially a new unitary authority) and become a fully-fledged prosperous and sustainable market town.

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

APPENDICES

1 Capacity in Sedbergh

Developments in information and communications technology mean that activities previously requiring a city/town office can now be done almost anywhere and many people, especially in light of the pandemic, are choosing to both live and work in rural areas. Broadening the economic activity in Sedbergh provides job opportunities and creates a more balanced and stable economy.

This table shows the key services within the town of Sedbergh and indicates whether there is capacity for growth. This data was provided in winter 2020.

Service	Current capacity	Room for growth?
Settlebeck Secondary School	192 pupils	✓ 210 pupils
Sedbergh Primary School	156 pupils	✓ 240 pupils
Sedbergh Medical Centre	3929 patients	✓ capacity confirmed, up to 10% more patients
High street shops/ cafes	39 units	✓ 42 units
Sedbergh School	530 pupils / 352 employees	✓ 575 pupils / 370 employees
Car parking spaces	110 spaces	✓ More needed, especially peak season + events
Electric charging points	0 points	✓ Town needs to offer charging asap
Dentist	Full	✓ Confirmed capacity, subject to NHS agreement
Early years childcare providers	No full time or day provision	✓ Suggest 40 spaces
Housing units	1323 addresses + holiday lets	✓ Suggest minimum 10% growth of 132 before 2040
Adult extra-care facility	No provision	✓ Much needed, subject to CCC support
Road network	Operating within capacity	✓ Capacity available, minor amends
Drainage and utilities	Operating within capacity	✓ Capacity, additional water run-off measures
Rural transport	Infrequent poor service	✓ Capacity, room for significant improvement
Broadband and 4G	Many operators plus B4RN	✓ Capacity, subject to B4RN rollout

2 Population and housing stats

The population of Sedbergh in 2011 was 2,765 (an increase of 2.2% since 2001). 21.8% of residents in Sedbergh were aged between 0-15, 58.1% aged 16-64, and 20.1% over 65. Compared to South Lakeland, the proportion of 0-15 were higher, while the 16-64 and over 65 age ranges were both slightly lower. The 2019 YDNP Housing Assessment included a demographic analysis of the Park and population forecasting. This has shown that the population in the Park has not increased since 2009 (the South Lakeland part of the Park has seen a decrease). The table below shows the ONS population estimate of 2691 in 2018 and the age split comparisons.

Age Range	Sedbergh	Cumbria	England
Persons aged 0 - 15	17.4%	16.5%	19.2%
Persons aged 16 - 64	55.8%	59.4%	62.6%
Persons aged 65+	26.8%	24.1%	18.2%
<i>ONS June 2018 - LSOA South Lakeland 009C</i>			

Sedbergh parish has 1323 households (registered for Council Tax), of which 115 are understood to be second homes plus an additional 60 holiday lets, and only one main local housing agent although some others do cover the area. There are 9 establishments offering serviced accommodation providing 140 bedspaces and 267 self-serviced bedspaces in 52 holiday lets advertised as self-catering cottages, Airbnb apartments etc.

The Council Tax information shows the mix of household values within the town. Compared with the national averages, Sedbergh has a higher mix of band D, E and F properties and significantly fewer band A properties. The feedback from estate agents suggest current buyer demand is mainly for band D & E properties.

Council Tax Range	Sedbergh	England	Council Tax Range	Sedbergh	England
Band A	12.3%	24.2%	Band E	11.4%	9.6%
Band B	21.5%	19.6%	Band F	7.3%	5.1%
Band C	23.4%	21.9%	Band G	3.8%	3.5%
Band D	20.2%	15.5%	Band H	0.1%	0.6%
<i>VOA and SLDC February 2021 - Sedbergh Parish</i>					

3 Vitality stats

Vitality Analysis for Sedbergh – October 2020							
Services		Retail		Leisure		Infrastructure	
Doctor Surgery	✓	Grocery	✓	Pub	✓	Bus public	✓*
Dentist	✓	Petrol	✓	Restaurant	✓	Train	✗
Optician	✗	Pharmacy	✓	Function space	✓	Taxi	✓
Vets	✓	Butcher	✓	Takeaway	✓	Bus private	✓
Chiropodist	✓	Baker	✓	Coffee Shop	✓	Car Park	✓
Audiology	✗	Greengrocer	✓	Exercise gym	✓	Coach Park	✓
Library	✓	Cash Point	✓	Playground	✓	Electric Charging	✗
Community Centre	✓	Post Office	✓	Public Garden/ Park	✓	Fire Station	✓
Church	✓	Fishmongers	✓			Ambulance Station	✓
Nursery	✗	Hairdresser	✓			Undertakers	✓
Primary School	✓	Off Licence	✓				
Secondary School	✓	Dry Cleaners	✓				
Market	✓	Gift Shops	✓				
Bank	✗	Hardware	✓				

Name of school	Roll Count 2014	Roll Count 2019	Change	Capacity
Dent CofE VA Primary School	38	30	-8	60
Sedbergh Primary School	170	160	-10	240
Sedbergh Preparatory School	164	198	+34	200
Settlebeck Secondary School (11-16yrs)	164	197	+33	220
Sedbergh School (11-18yrs)	480	547	+67	575

Area	Day nurseries	0-2 yrs provision	Wrap around care - primary	Wrap around care - secondary	16-18 yrs provision
Kendal	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sedbergh	0	No	No	No	No
Kirkby Stephen	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kirkby Lonsdale	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hawes	1	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a

4 Key issues

The key issues for Sedbergh, as the largest settlement within the Yorkshire Dales National Park are:

- Growing proportion of infrequently-used second home ownership
- A gap between local incomes and house prices (rent or purchase)
- Inflated price of land where development is permitted
- An increase in homes being bought by retirees or those working away
- Shortage of land available for development
- The need for quality design and use of materials sympathetic to the national park environment
- An increase in demand for both affordable and open market housing
- Infrequent, irregular public transport
- Lack of social infrastructure in early years childcare and ‘extra care’ support for the elderly

The Author

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All images via Cumbria Tourism/ Sedbergh School/ Cumbrian Homes/ Sedbergh.org