

# Strong opposition to 2,000 homes plan

A VISION to create 2,000 homes in Sedgefield will face strong opposition after a survey revealed only one per cent of residents are in favour of a large-scale development.

The survey, by the Sedgefield Plan steering group, found many residents believe the town is under attack, with 81 per cent of the 665 respondents identifying the importance of the town's rural atmosphere.

Fifty-five per cent said they would accept no more than 50 homes and concerns were expressed about the impact vast developments would have on schools, doctors' surgeries and traffic.

The results come in the

**By Lizzie Anderson**

[lizzie.anderson@nne.co.uk](mailto:lizzie.anderson@nne.co.uk)

wake of a vision to create 2,000 homes, plus new industrial units, shops, schools and leisure facilities, on land to the east of the town.

The proposals, drawn up by Gradon Architecture on behalf of an unnamed property developer, also recommend that Sedgefield is reclassified as the 13th main town in County Durham, rather than one of 23 smaller towns and villages.

This week, more than 240 people attended two public meetings to discuss the survey results and how they will

have an impact on the future Sedgefield Plan – a statutory document that Durham County Council must consider when determining planning applications.

The plan also covers economy, community and environment, but it was housing that dominated discussions.

David Bowles, chairman of the Sedgefield Plan steering group, said: "The 2,000-home proposal has caused enormous concern in the community. It would effectively double the size of the town in the next 15 years.

"People simply do not want it and this came across very clearly in the meeting and through the survey results."

Durham County Council, which is preparing a county-wide plan to guide development until 2030, has identified a site south of Eden Drive as suitable for up to 450 new homes.

Plans have also been drawn up for 220 homes near Beacon Lane.

Mr Bowles said: "There is a strong feeling that Sedgefield is under attack. That is why the Sedgefield Plan is so important. It gives the community a voice."

Gradon Architecture, based in Ryton, near Newcastle, declined to comment.

For more information on the Sedgefield Plan, visit [thesedgefieldplan.co.uk](http://thesedgefieldplan.co.uk)