

The Sedgefield Plan

Shaping the future of our area

The Development and Growth of Sedgefield

An opportunity to influence planning decisions and economic development

You may be aware that the Government has decided to enable the building of more houses and economic infrastructure, through legislation that is designed to encourage developers to invest in and around communities such as Sedgefield. In response to this, Durham County Council is in the process of producing a county wide plan that will potentially give the green light for the construction of an additional 470 homes in Sedgefield.

The same national planning legislation also gives communities the right to develop what are called 'Neighbourhood Plans' which, once completed, become legally binding documents that must be taken into account in the planning process. These plans focus on land use and have to accept the overall developments outlined in the county wide plans, but can influence key details (e.g. the type and spread of housing). Instigated by the town council, Sedgefield has resolved to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the area within its parish boundary.

The Sedgefield Plan will be developed by a steering group made up of people who together aim to represent the whole community. During its first full meeting, I was asked to chair that group and we have started to assemble a team to get the programme underway. Together, we have defined four topic areas that will be included in our Neighbourhood Plan - they are **Housing, Local Economy, Community and Environment, and Infrastructure**. Each of these groups is to be led by an independent local resident and they are tasked with the job of gathering evidence, facts, opinions and statistics that will inform the writing and publication of our final plan.

However, to achieve our goal we need to gather **your views and opinions/contributions** and before we can publish we need to carry out a **referendum** to ensure that the plan is supported by the majority of residents.

This is a very big project that has the potential to establish a clear community view of how Sedgefield should develop. We will have more homes, but what type and where should they be built? Can our current infrastructure support development and if not, what needs to be done to improve it? Can the schools and doctors cope? And what about jobs, community facilities and youth provision? These are some of the major

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challenges that face Sedgefield in the future and the Neighbourhood Plan is our opportunity to influence and shape our community over the next few decades.

Please get involved. We need people with expertise and interest to join the topic teams, and we need people to contribute their views through the website that will be live soon, and in other ways. In short, we are determined to make this process as inclusive as possible. We have a lot of ideas about how to gather opinion and general input from throughout the community, so one way or another you will be hearing from us soon. When you do, please respond. Ultimately, the Sedgefield Plan will belong to you and we really need you to be part of its development.

For the moment, you can contact me through the town council offices (call 01740 621273 or email comments@sedgefield.net) and I will reply.

David Bowles

Chairman

Sedgefield Neighbourhood Plan – Steering Group