

The Sedgefield Plan

'A place to do business'

Planning period 2015 to 2034

Section 2.

Business support strategy and policies

Business strategy

Sedgefield a place to do business (ref; 21001)

1. Sedgefield hosts a strong business sector that generates wealth, investment and employment that contributes to the gross value added (GVA) of the local economy. The sector provides employment in a wide range of activities and industrial sectors, ranging from high technology science based companies, through general engineering, to services, mass merchandise and traditional retail businesses. Operational support for these businesses is successfully provided by Durham County Council, which is the conduit for advice and guidance, and funding sources from government and the EU. The community of Sedgefield wishes to do its part in supporting its business and industry. For example, the town council is actively engaged in on-going dialogue and initiatives with the management team at NETPark. Other ways in which the links between local industry and the community can be strengthened are captured in the policies in this section.
2. The business community of Sedgefield is broadly distributed in three locations;
 - The High Street
 - Trading Estate
 - NetPark
3. **The High Street** is at the centre of the community and its shops and offices are an intrinsic part of the character of the community, providing vital amenities including a pharmacy, dentist, undertaker, opticians and nursery. There is office accommodation for a range of businesses and a wide variety of retail premises serving the community and the many visitors that are attracted to Sedgefield. In total, the High Street and its immediate environs supports about 60 businesses, which employ a large number of permanent and part time staff, and provide work for young people and those who wish to work shorter hours.
4. The High Street is a busy location where car parking is a major issue for retailers because the lack of spaces and adequate controls, that restrict access to their premises. Local residents, especially the elderly and infirm who rely on their vehicles to access amenities such as health, pharmacy and dentistry (as well as to do their shopping) have difficulty finding parking spaces.

- 5.. Sustaining the vitality of the commercial centre of Sedgefield is critical to its future and to the community that it serves, so it is important that the community, led by the town council, has a business support strategy.

High Street - business support strategy (BSS);

6. **BSS 1; identify an area at both ends of the High Street where bicycle racks can be erected with the aim of encouraging the use of sustainable transport.**
7. **BSS 2; identify an area at both ends of the High Street where disability buggies/scooters can be safely parked.**
8. **BSS 3; extend the area of marked parking bays, introduce enforceable disc parking scheme and restrict parking..**
9. **BSS 4; enact a local ordinance to encourage responsible traders to discourage unsightly littering and drinking on the street with the aim of reducing broken glass and bad behaviour that discourages residents and visitors.**
10. **The Trading Estate** is located to the north of the community and supports a wide range of businesses that include service and distribution, manufacturing, mass merchandise retailing, equipment hire and builders merchants. A large number of people are employed on the estate, a significant proportion of whom are resident in the designated parish of Sedgefield.
11. The trading estate is an important commercial centre that contributes to the long term economic sustainability of Sedgefield. The creation and success of two major retail businesses there has improved the estate's vitality but has caused traffic flow and access problems. There is also a considerable flooding problem on the estate at times of high rainfall. The community, led by the town council, will adopt the following business support strategy.
12. **BSS 5; Work with DCC highways department to permanently restrict parking on the roads at the entrance to the estate adjacent to the major retail premises.**
13. **BSS 6; Work with NWL to implement a long term action plan to reduce flooding.**
14. **NETPark – the North East Technology Park** – is a world class location for science and technology companies in the UK providing a dynamic and supportive environment to accelerate the growth of ambitious, innovative, high tech companies into global markets. NETPark encourages collaborative multidisciplinary links, driving innovation, enterprise and economic prosperity. It focuses on supporting companies in materials integration that are developing technology and products, particularly printable electronics, microelectronics, photonics and nanotechnology, and

their application in the fields of energy, defence, and medical-related technologies.

15. NETPark is the driving force that will underpin the economy of Sedgefield and its place in the global economy. Businesses there are already making an impact nationally and internationally with breakthrough technical and scientific innovations that are serving customers around the world. DCC has approved plans to expand the site to provide premises that could employ up to 10,000 people working in high value jobs. The companies that locate to NETPark will generate wealth and international investment. They will provide jobs for graduates who are currently at Sedgefield's schools, on a 'campus' populated by globally networked companies.
16. Young people face increasing competition for jobs in the evolving economy and industry needs to be able to recruit suitably qualified and motivated people. Therefore, it is sensible to promote stronger and more active links between companies and potential employees through local mechanisms such as those described in the policy above.
17. **BSS 7; work with the Governors and Faculty of Sedgefield Community College, Sedgefield Primary School and Hardwick Primary School to provide direct links with industry and to encourage the provision of work placements, mentoring, open days and talks to inspire potential recruits.**
18. **BSS 8; maintain an on-going dialogue with the management team at NETPark, to ensure that information about developments on the site is shared with the community in a timely manner.**
19. **BSS 9; collaborate with the management team at NETPark to ensure that, as the park grows, it also contributes to the wider community that it is physically located next to.**