



Northumberland County Council



LAC Presentation – Bedlington Place Plan and Town Centre
Regeneration Update

22 November 2023

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Agenda

- Introduction – Town regeneration in the wider area and Borderlands
- Bedlington Place Plan Development overview, context and work to date
- Bedlington - key interventions and current delivery
- Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment
- Place Plan emerging project pipeline and next steps



Introducing the Borderlands

The Borderlands is a diverse, predominantly rural area at the heart of the UK with an important hub in Carlisle.

Representing the five local authorities along the English-Scottish border working together to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth.

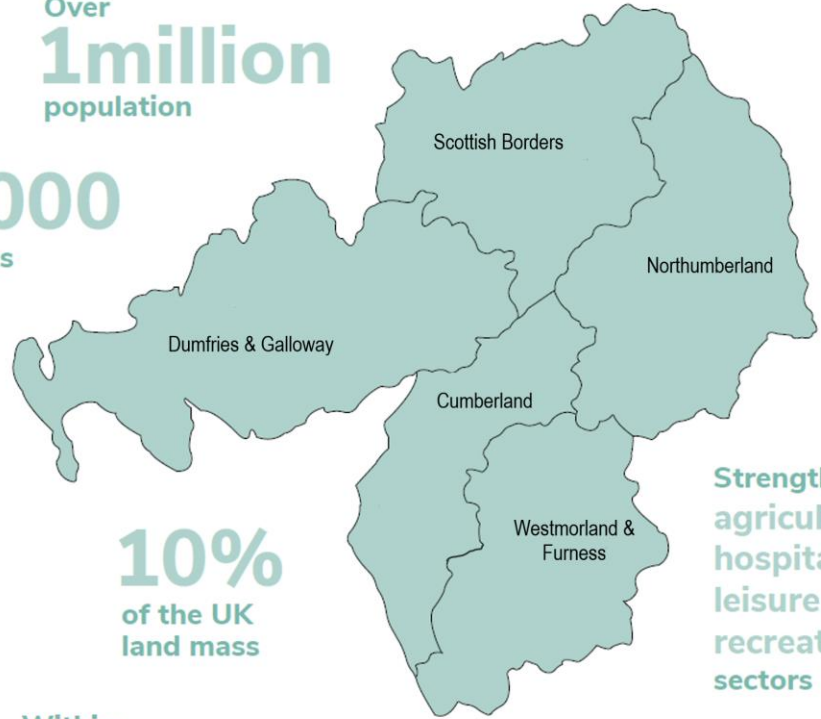
The Partnership is unique in being cross-border and rurally-based, focused on shared opportunities and challenges.

Centre
of the
UK



Over
1million
population

45,000
businesses



10%
of the UK
land mass

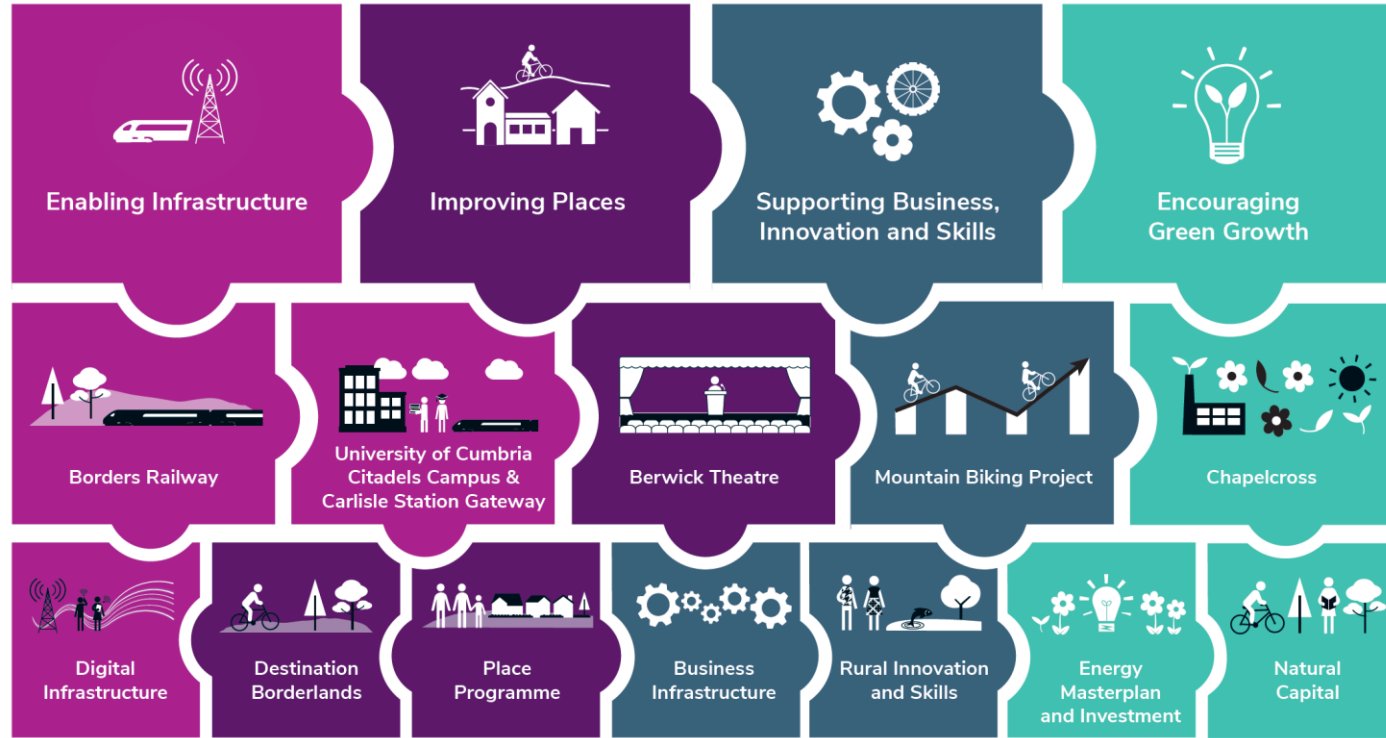
Strengths in
agriculture,
hospitality,
leisure &
recreation
sectors

Within
2 hours drive of
14 million people

Contributes
£23bn
to the UK economy

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal

Is made up of a series of interlinked investment programmes and specific projects.



Borderlands – Improving Places Theme

“Our places matter. They are where we live and work and it is important that this Deal helps improve the economic performance of our towns. Increasing the working age population in the Borderlands region is dependent on the region’s towns being able to attract and retain residents. To help achieve this, funding will be invested in projects and programmes which are designed to increase the vitality and sustainability of our towns and raise the profile of the Borderlands as a destination to visit and as a place to live and work.”

Made up of two elements:

- Destination Borderlands – 8 activities worth £77.5m
- Place Programme - £50m

Borderland – Place Programme

“Through the Borderlands Place Programme, we will target investment in places that will help boost economic activity across the region. Recognising the importance of our smaller rural market and coastal towns to the local economy, this programme will provide £50 million of funding across the Borderlands area with UK Government committing up to £30 million in Cumbria and Northumberland and Scottish Government £20 million in the South of Scotland to support the revitalisation of towns across the Borderlands region”

Borderlands Place Programme

Vision

Through the Borderlands Place Programme, we will target investment in places that will help boost economic activity across the region. Recognising the importance of our smaller rural market and coastal towns to the local economy, this programme will provide £50 million of funding across the Borderlands area with UK Government committing up to £30 million in Cumbria and Northumberland and Scottish Government £20 million in the South of Scotland to support the revitalisation of towns across the Borderlands region.

Ambitions



Economically vibrant
and resilient to change



Places where people of
working age choose to live



Attractive for enterprise
and business



Places that appeal to
visitors as a destination



Recognised for their quality

Objectives

SO1:

Empower local communities to imagine and then build a long term future for the towns they live in.

SO2:

Safeguard existing businesses and attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.

SO3:

Maintain and increase the number of visitors spending money in our towns and town centres, increasing spend per visit and extending the visitor season.

SO4:

Safeguard existing employment and deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation, including education and training opportunities.

SO5:

Maintain and increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.

SO6:

Retain and increase the working age population in towns.

SO7:

Maintain and raise the quality of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.

Outputs

22
Place Plans



60+
projects

Outcomes



Attract additional
visitors



New businesses
created



Businesses
supported



Improved
housing offer



More people
into training or
employment



Increased GVA

Stages

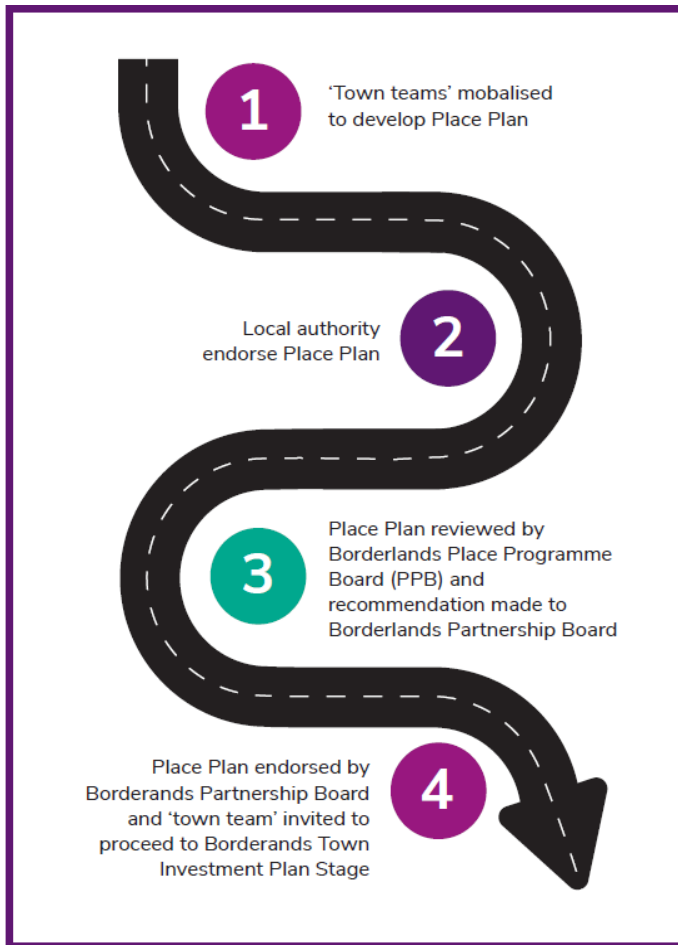
- **Place Plans** - developed by the community, once endorsed by relevant local authority these will be reviewed by the Place Programme Board for recommendation to the Borderlands Partnership Board for endorsement to proceed to Town Investment Plan stage
- **Town Investment Plans** – Includes the specific projects to be funded by the Borderlands Deal these will be appraised by the PMO before being brought to the Place Programme Board for recommendation to the Borderlands Programme Board for approval. A GFA will then be put in place with the relevant Accountable Body.
- **Post approval** – claims will be received and verified by the PMO on a quarterly basis and paid through the relevant Accountable Body. Reported to the Boards. Where a notable or significant change is required the Programme Board will be asked to endorse the recommendation.

Stage 1: Developing a Place Plan

This is a community owned and led strategy. The Plan should:

- Set the long-term vision for the regeneration, resilience and growth of the town.
- Use a clear evidence base.
- Put forward the needs, opportunities and challenges of a place.
- Identify a series of activities and indicative projects to respond to these e.g. development of business space, public realm improvements, town centre regeneration, flood defence, housing developments, skills delivery, events and festivals to attract visitors, development of sustainable transport infrastructure.
- Plans will cover a period of 10 to 20 years.
- Be wider than the Borderlands funding and criteria.

The Place Plan is reviewed by the Place Programme Board (to endorse, consider ineligible or request additional development - It is not expected that Place Plans will be 'rejected' as they are locally owned but may be considered to be 'ineligible' for Borderlands funding on the basis of actions proposed.), PMO and Borderlands Partnership to offer critical friend advice and will ultimately be 'endorsed' however this is deliberately light touch and is not about 'approval' of the Place Plan. Through this process the Scottish and/or UK Government are engaged to offer advice.



Bedlington Place Plan Update

Bedlington Place Plan Development -

- Place Plan now finalised following community and business engagement.
- Establishes a vision and objectives to improve the town and identifies a future pipeline of projects that could benefit the town, subject to further development.
- Following this groups endorsement, it will then be presented to Borderlands Board in Dec 2023
- Having a Place Plan is a **key gateway** to progress into a project development stage to build up the project pipeline and determine which may be eligible for Borderlands Place Programme funding and other sources.
- This group will continue to meet and the involvement of all stakeholders will be important in the next stage moving into 2024 as project concepts are developed further.



Borderlands Funding process

- Borderlands Place Programme is in scope as a key funder of activity identified in the Place Plan
- Once the Place Plan is endorsed and further project development is undertaken the process for developing a Borderlands Town Investment Plan (BTIP) and applying for Borderlands funding for priority eligible activity will then develop in 2024.
- The BTIP is much more detailed and requires well developed projects with detail to seek this funding. The Place Plan provides the starting point for this.
- Running parallel to project development, the council is developing the next stage of the process which is the development of a Borderlands Town Investment Plan to seek support for priority projects which fit with the funds criteria eligible for up to £3m of this funding. The process includes a process to further prioritise projects that can go forward for Borderlands funding. This process is anticipated to be undertaken in 2024.
- Projects that may be eligible for Borderlands funding which is capital expenditure targeted at economic regeneration are being supported to define deliverability, value for money and impact.
- Projects not being taken forward to BTIP but which are priorities for the town and potentially viable will be signposted to other development support and funding sources where applicable

Project Map

Bedlington Place Plan Projects Map

Key

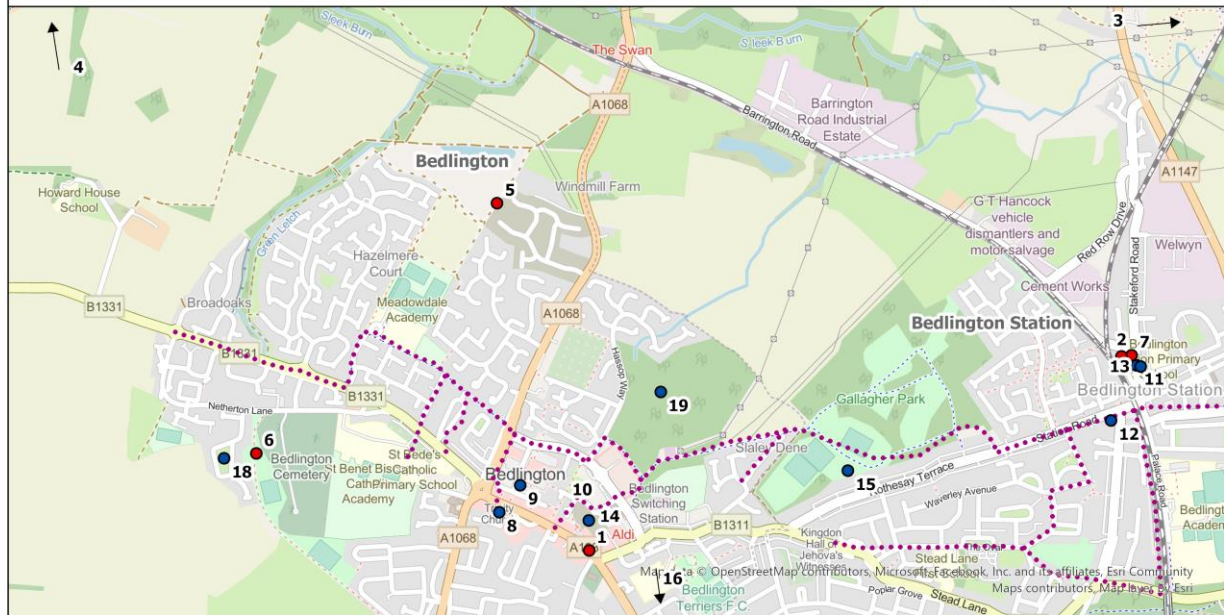
- Current Projects
- Project Proposals
- ⋯ Bedlington Active Travel Corridor

Current Projects:

1. Bedlington Town Centre Regeneration – Advance Northumberland
2. Northumberland Line - NCC
3. Northumberland Energy Park
4. Solar Farm – Bluefield Renewable Energy Developments
5. Residential development - Miller Homes, 500 houses
6. Playzone – The Football Foundation and NCC
7. Northumberland Line Economic Corridor – North of Tyne Combined Authority

Project Proposals:

8. Town Centre Strategic Sites/Public Sector - Wansbeck District Council Building
9. Town Centre Strategic Sites/Public Sector - Vacant public toilet behind Front Street
10. Town Centre Development Opportunity Sites,
11. Station Gateway/Public Sector
12. Library Hotel/Public Sector
13. Industrial Heritage Centre/Public Sector
14. Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Centre / Private Sector
15. Sport for All / Public Sector
16. Bedlington Country Park Paths / 3rd Sector
17. Bedlington Enriched Environment (BEE) / 3rd Sector
18. West Lea Community Centre and Sports Facility / 3rd Sector
19. Activate Bedlington/Public Sector (town wide)



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Existing Project Delivery Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment

Phase 2 Construction started in April 2022, following successful completion of Phase 1 in late 2021 (Aldi + Car Park)

Tolent Construction entered administration in February 2023 and work was suspended.

The project restarted in April 2023 with Advance acting as Principle contractor, this was to ensure that the retail unit was handed over to Greggs in accordance with their lease.

The Greggs unit opened in September 2023 which saw the completion of Stage 2a.



Existing Project Delivery Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment

Stage 2b was retendered in August 2023 to secure a new principal contractor.

This phase sees three further retail units and six apartments to rent

Surgo construction started work on 20 November 2023.

The former Greggs unit will be demolished by Jan 2024

The retail units are expected to completed by September 2024

The external works and retail lane link from market place to the car park completes October 2024



Existing Project Delivery Bedlington Town Centre Redevelopment

Advance continue to market the 3 remaining units in the terrace and three development plots.

Renewed interest has been received for the development plots from two national retailers.

Interest is at a very early stage.



Existing Project Delivery

Bedlington Cycle corridor

- The Council has already secured Government Levelling up Funds (LUF) to provide new and upgraded active travel infrastructure in Bedlington which will enhance the east to west link across the town.
- This dual use pedestrian and cycle route scheme will connect the western extent of Bedlington, key residential and employment areas with the proposed Northumberland Line train station and the eastern coastal area.
- Additional benefits to this route include a connection towards schools across the town to facilitate active travel. The estimated cost of this scheme is £7,716,000.
- The aim of this scheme is to improve multi-modal transport options to better connect local people to employment, education and transport hubs.

Existing Project Delivery

Parks Enhancement Programme

There are also several capital investment schemes in development within the Council's Parks Enhancement Programme. These include:

- improvements to the café and internal and external seating areas and the provision of a 'bouldering course' to significantly improve the visitor experience and offer at Plessey Woods Country Park;
- woodland replanting and parking improvements at Gallagher Park, and;
- Creation of QEII Memorial rose garden, paths and seating area with decorative ironwork entrance archway within Bedlington Cemetery.



Existing Project Delivery

Northumberland Line – Bedlington Station

- Good progress is being made on the station restoration project, with Network Rail offering a long term lease for the North station building at a peppercorn rent.
- East Bedlington Parish Council would be the organisation to take on the lease and the Railway Heritage Trust would be part of the project and they can offer significant funding for this type of project.
- Design works on the station are progressing, following the approval of the demolition of the South station building. The removal of the South station building will allow for a much more spacious station entrance which connect the cycling and walking projects with the Northumberland Line.



Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Town centre strategic sites	<p>Optimising the use of NCC buildings and development sites in the town centre to meet user and market demand. Improving the Public Realm and connectivity in the town centre.</p> <p>Proposed uses of the assets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heritage Centre• NCC information• Library• Tourist information• Doctors' Surgery• Retail – Retail training – Retail incubator units – Retail Pods• Office space - Hot desks Office Pods• Residential (on 1st and 2nd floors)• Sport provision• Cultural provision• Children's Day Centre• Café• Adult Education• Centre for EOTAS• Transformable space for all-age day and night-time activities• New marketplace/community space with amphitheatre• Community Space• Arts Space	Town Centre Demand Study – tender brief in development and procurement process started.

Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Station Gateway	Improvements to the Public Realm on Station Road to provide an inviting Gateway to the town for rail users	Officers coordinating with AECOM to develop designs building on their designs for the station entrance public realm

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Library Hotel	A new hotel with restaurant and bar to serve the new rail passengers and the growing workforce on the Energy Park	NCC funded feasibility study completed. Land/Building being marketed to hotel/bar/restaurant operators to test the market demand.

Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Heritage and Innovation Centre	A celebration of Bedlington's industrial heritage sitting alongside the newly reopened train station in an original train station building	Sponsors invited to redefine their project in light of the decision to demolish one of the buildings they had intended to occupy

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Physiotherapy centre and hydrotherapy pool	Physiotherapy and rehabilitation centre	NCC and Advance Northumberland have agreed a 1:1 business support package with the sponsor to further develop the project. This support has now commenced.

Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Sport for All	A multipurpose sports facility in East Bedlington	

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Bedlington Country Park Paths	Upgrading the pathways in Bedlington Country Park to improve accessibility and connectivity throughout the park	Town Regen officers in discussion with Countryside Manager

Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Developments
Activate Bedlington	A programme of initiatives supported by a sports coach and an apprentice to encourage residents of all ages to participate in physical activity	

Project Title	Initiative	Developments
Morpeth to Bedlington Train Line	Extending the existing train service onto Bedlington, linking Bedlington Station to key sites and creating better access to job opportunities, retail, leisure and medical service	To be considered by Transport once Northumberland Line completed and open.

Place Plan Project Pipeline

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Bedlington Enriched Environment	Creation of a team of environmental practitioners to address long standing and acute environmental issues	

Project Title	Initiative	Progress Update
Community Centre and Sports Facility	A small community centre, sports facility and café in West Bedlington	West Lea earmarked to host the 1st Playzone in Bedlington. Discussions with sponsor regarding a complimentary 'sports shed' ongoing.

Next Steps

- **Place Partnership Group** – Place Plan endorsed locally Sept 23
- **Project Development stage begins** – Winter 23 onwards, NCC take forward commissioning of studies, development work committed to and keep in touch with other sponsors on next steps and progress.
- **Place Plan LAC update** Nov 2023
- **Borderlands Place Partnership Board** – Borderlands endorsement of Place Plan (Dec 2023)
- **Place Partnership Group next meeting** – early 2024 TBC – update on progress and more detail on Borderlands BTIP process
- **BTIP Process** - TBC in 2024 subject to project development and commissioning of BTIP support.

Thank you – any questions?



BEDLINGTON PLACE PLAN

2023-2033



EAST BEDLINGTON
Parish Council

