

Berwick's Future Action Plan 2009

Produced January 2009



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Strategic Context
4. A Picture of Berwick
5. The Partners
6. Vision
7. Progress to Date
8. Engagement
9. Regeneration Strategy
10. Market Town Welcome
11. Action Plan
12. Governance and Delivery
13. Communications
14. Information

This Action Plan identifies a range of actions to deliver the Berwick's Future Vision and Regeneration Strategy. Whilst in some instances, with Local Government Review, the lead partner organisation will change the commitment to deliver the plan by the partnership remains strong and active.

1. Introduction

This action plan sets out the issues facing Berwick as a border market town and actions that will provide positive interventions to achieve sustained regeneration in Berwick. Whilst looking to achieve a vision for Berwick over the next 20 years the actions proposed respect and build on Berwick's unique heritage, and aim to secure sustainable development in Berwick's economy and society.

This plan is written at a time of change locally and nationally. Locally a new unitary Council for Northumberland will be created in April 2009 including a North Northumberland Area Partnership. Nationally, and globally, we face an economic downturn. It is too early to identify what the impact of the economic downturn will have on the existing employment base within Berwick and on our ability to address some of the challenges we have identified. However partners have identified clear actions and priorities to achieve a long-term vision for Berwick.

2. Background

Berwick-upon-Tweed is the northernmost town in England, located in the county of Northumberland at the mouth of the River Tweed. The town, including Tweedmouth and Spittal, is approximately equidistant from both Edinburgh and Newcastle, historically the town was an important strategic asset and today is an important market town acting as a service centre for a wide rural hinterland between the Edinburgh and Newcastle city regions. Berwick is unique in Northumberland in having close links with Scotland and the market opportunities emanating from Edinburgh, where economic growth has exceeded forecasts and is projected to continue in the medium term.

It has a strong and distinctive historic character based on the surviving town walls, castle, and a high concentration of good quality historic buildings (many of which are listed). Located just off the A1 road and on the East Coast Mainline Railway, it has excellent infrastructure links, which together with an active Berwick Port and its heritage provide a range of potential economic opportunities.

Regional, sub regional and local partners have recognised that Berwick-upon-Tweed is a unique place, which has tremendous potential but there is general agreement that the town is currently underperforming economically. The rich historical and cultural assets could be exploited much more vigorously to develop the tourism market but there is also potential for more heritage-led regeneration. In order that its real potential can be realised it was identified that a 20 year vision and plan would provide a valuable framework to consider and develop opportunities.

3. Strategic Context

Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

A key objective of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is to increase the region's Gross Value Added (GVA) from 80% to 90% of the UK average by 2016 through improvements in productivity and participation. In 2005, for the UK as a whole, average GVA per head of population stood at £18,051 per head, in contrast to the North East region which was £14,048 per head. Berwick's GVA per head was £13,150. The comparatively low GVA in Berwick (at only 94% of the regional GVA) is not assisting the North East in meeting its RES objective and is therefore compromising the region's overall competitiveness.

The RES identifies Berwick as a market town, performing an important role as a hub for employment, business and

services and as such it plays an essential role in supporting a sustainable rural economy. The RES also identifies the need to create new opportunities for those parts of the region suffering disadvantages, including Berwick district. Given this position the RES identifies the need for a targeted approach to supporting 'priority' market towns and the need to foster the renaissance of key rural settlements as drivers for regional economic growth.

Sustainable Community Strategy for Northumberland to 2021

The strategy acknowledges that Northumberland is striving for a competitive and vibrant future, and is built around two fundamental principles: recognising the importance of place-making and working in partnership. The strategy recognises that rural towns such as Berwick need to address the following:

- access to services and sustainability of the towns;
- low pay and access to learning;
- tourism and economic diversification;
- access to affordable homes;
- retaining young people; and
- protecting and enhancing the environment.

The Berwick's Future proposed initiatives seek to address many of the above challenges and needs that the town is currently faced with.

4. A Picture of Berwick

Whilst Berwick has many positive attributes physically and culturally there are a range of socio-economic issues that need to be tackled if Berwick is to have a successful future.

Low overall population growth rates characterised by an ageing demographic structure

In 1991, 42.1% of Berwick's population were aged under 35 years of age. This

decreased to 35.6% in 2001 and 32.8% in 2005, compared with 38% in Northumberland and 44.3% nationally. Berwick represents an ageing demographic structure, with 23.3% of its population aged 65+. This is over 7% greater than the national average and higher than the 18.3% seen across the county of Northumberland. Furthermore, this proportion increased by 1.3% between 2001 and 2005, faster than any growth rates at county, regional or national levels.

Low wage rates

The Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (2006) indicates that full-time workers in Berwick earn, on average, £7,540 per annum less than the average full-time worker nationally. The average weekly earning of £309 in the district is considerably less than the £454 figure seen nationally and the £431 average for Northumberland County. This has economic implications for the district and is linked closely with the occupational profile.

High proportion of low skilled workers in elementary occupations

Over a quarter of all residents in Berwick are employed within elementary occupations or as process, plant and machine operatives. These are typically low paid and low skilled occupations which contribute to the low wage rates set out above. Comparatively, only 18.6% of all workers nationally are employed in such occupations, with 19.2% in Northumberland and 21.2% in the North East.

Housing affordability issues

In terms of affordability in relation to property, the Regional Housing Strategy (2007) produced by the North East Assembly (NEA) outlines that Berwick is one of the most expensive and difficult areas within the region in which to buy a property. Much of this is attributable to the high rates of market exclusion due to second homes and holiday homes, which account for 8.5% of all

dwellings in Berwick (2001 Census). The lack of affordable housing within Berwick potentially encourages the out-migration of existing residents as well as acting as a barrier to in-migrants.

Dominance of wholesale/retail and hotel/restaurant sectors but a need to further expand the service sector economy with high growth/high value-add employment

The latest data suggests that there are 1,265 businesses operating within the Berwick district (ABI, 2005). 82% (1,036) of these employ between 1 and 10 employees, 16% (208) employ between 11 and 49 employees, 2% (19) employ between 50 and 199 employees and only 2 businesses employ over 200 employees. As would be expected of such a traditional market town, this highlights the dominance of small businesses within the local economy. The public sector is also a large employer in the borough, with provisions such as the hospital and schools acting as significant employers.

Only 14.3% of Berwick's residents are employed within associate/professional occupations, compared with 27.4% nationally, 26.6% in Northumberland and 24.1% in the North East. These are typically higher paid, more highly skilled occupations and this further demonstrates the rationale behind the low wage rates evident in Berwick.

Skill levels are relatively poor, particularly at the higher-end levels

Overall results indicate that Berwick is characterized by higher proportions of people with no formal qualifications and low proportions of people with higher level skills and/or educational qualifications. In terms of educational provision, whilst there is satisfactory provision of pre-16 education there appears to be a lack of good quality post-16 education facilities within the area to improve these higher end skill levels.

Relatively uncompetitive local economy

with a severe lack of knowledge-based businesses

The proportion of knowledge-based businesses in Berwick increased from 7.5% in 1997 to 8.1% in 2003 to 9% in 2004. This, however, is still significantly below the UK average of 20.4% and places Berwick 403rd out of 408 in the UK rankings of knowledge-based businesses, highlighting the distinct lack of a knowledge base cluster within the district.

As well as addressing socio-economic issues there are thematic and physical issues that need to be tackled to ensure the town is well-functioning and welcoming for residents, businesses and visitors.

Capitalising on Location and Connectivity

Berwick is well positioned on the England/Scotland border as a gateway between Northumberland and the Scottish Borders to capitalise on the economic prosperity of the Edinburgh and Lothian's city region in Scotland. Berwick is also excellently positioned when compared with other rural market towns throughout the UK as the town lies on the East Coast Mainline Railway, is adjacent to the A1 road and two international airports are within 1 hour reach.

Berwick was one of the first towns to benefit from the broadband enablement project which involved upgrading BT exchanges in the region and take up rates were relatively high. Connectedness is a strong selling point for Berwick which must be promoted to both tourism and business markets.

Meeting visitor expectations

Berwick's strength is its sense of place and its heritage but there is much work still required to present an attractive town centre and visitor offer. In Berwick, despite the town's historic assets and good rail accessibility, the 'tourism offer' is lacking - the range of activities and attractions in the area

along with the bar and restaurant offer in the town restricts the potential for attracting a higher quality hotel development at the present time.

There is a need to develop the image and identity of Berwick as an attractive and sustainable town for all.

Addressing traffic management and car parking

These are key outstanding traffic management and car parking issues that need to be addressed in the short term to deal with current problems and in the longer term to ensure that they do not inhibit the Berwick's Future plans. Traffic management and parking issues are also identified in the Berwick Tourism Destination Plan that need to be tackled to improve the visitor offer. This Plan identifies that although Berwick is not a large town, visitors do not find their way to key areas hence the visitor experience and expenditure is minimised. It also identifies the need for visitor parking to be integrated with the parking needs of the working and residential community into an overall strategy.

5. The Partners

Partners from a regional, sub regional and local level have come together to achieve a vision for Berwick through Berwick's Future. The partners are:

- Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council
- Berwick Community Trust
- Berwick-upon-Tweed Local Strategic Partnership
- Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
- English Heritage
- Government Office North East
- Northumberland County Council
- Northumberland Strategic Partnership
- One North East.

To formalise the early arrangements the partners have signed up to a Memorandum of Agreement which sets

out a way of working.

6. The Vision

The partners are working together to deliver an economic transformation and achieve the vision for Berwick of *'a competitive, distinctive and well-connected Border town that is enterprising, ambitious and inclusive'*.

This vision will be achieved by retaining and enhancing Berwick's unique character and identity and by sustaining and growing Berwick's economy and society. The transformation will be gradual, over a period of 20 years and is based on better use of the existing assets, sensitive infill development and creating opportunities for development sites. Delivery of this vision should lead not only to rejuvenation of the town but also the wider area.

7. Progress to Date

Berwick's Future partners have engaged in a variety of pieces of work to develop an appropriate way forward.

The first phase of work focussed on drawing up a 20 year vision and development framework for Berwick-upon-Tweed (often and previously referred to as the Berwick Master Plan) and this was concluded in October 2006. A document, The Future of Berwick: Vision and Development Framework was produced by Gillespies which set out some illustrative proposals for development.

Following completion of the masterplanning the partners embarked on further consultation to build on the consultant's community visioning events using this as an opportunity to consult on The Future of Berwick Vision and Development Framework (Master Plan), the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the three Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Strategies that had

been completed. All three documents were launched at one event in early December 2006; this was followed by a programme of consultation events in January and February 2007.

Capacity has been an issue in achieving the delivery of previous regeneration initiatives that have been mooted in Berwick so consultants (Kevin Murray Associates) were employed to work with partners to improve capacity and partnership working in 2007.

Partners commissioned, in 2007, a team led by Urban Initiatives (UI) to produce a Berwick's Future Regeneration Strategy for the study area. This work tested out the 54 site propositions identified by Gillespies and narrowed these down to 10 priority projects for investment and proposed key non physical themes that needed to be taken forward to deliver the 20 year vision. For each site a vision and design parameter was prepared.

8. Engagement

The partners have shared the key issues that have arisen from the UI work with businesses, organisations and the community during Summer 2008. To assist in sharing information on the proposals a further newsletter was published and a new website dedicated to Berwick's Future was launched together with a series of exhibitions and meetings. Information about the Berwick's Future Regeneration Strategy can be found on the Berwick's Future website at:

www.berwicksfuture.com

9. Regeneration Strategy – A Summary

Introduction

Urban Initiatives recognised that there were a range of issues and opportunities presented by the town with regards to its urban form and

character. Berwick is one of only a handful of walled towns in the UK. Berwick has the potential to become an attractive and thriving destination. UI identified a distinct range of key assets that Berwick has to offer, including the relationships between the town and the river, Spittal and Tweedmouth, as well as the many other natural and historical assets.

As part of the Regeneration Strategy the consultants identified 4 regeneration objectives listed below.

1 - Enhance Competitiveness

Berwick exhibits poor competitiveness, the area has a low proportion of knowledge sector based businesses, a high level of jobs within the manufacturing / agricultural sector and is a low value / low wage economy. The objectives relate to enhancing Berwick's economic position and strengthening its role and function as a market town in rural Northumberland. Key issues include the following:

- to promote Berwick as a destination for business and investment, through the enhancement of skills;
- to enhance the range of business accommodation types and sizes;
- to regenerate existing employment sites and develop new sites to attract private sector investment;
- to enhance Berwick as an attractive destination for visitors, raising the profile and perception of the town centre and the promotion of its cultural and heritage offer;
- to improve Berwick's position as a retail service centre within the sub-region, particularly as a centre renowned for specialist and niche retail;
- to build on Berwick's strategic location between the Edinburgh and Newcastle city regions to capture flows of people and investment from both.

2 – Promote Renaissance and Place-Making

Berwick has a unique heritage and cultural offer and the overall objective of this theme relates to developing Berwick's image, brand and identity as a place where people wish to live, work and visit. Specific objectives include:

- promoting Berwick as a cultural and leisure destination through the provision of strategic and local cultural and leisure facilities in key locations across the town, enhancing existing natural / heritage assets where possible;
- to ensure the long term viability of the cultural, tourism and leisure offer in the town through synergies with relevant organisations and strategies e.g. English Heritage with regards to the heritage assets;
- to enhance Berwick's offer as an attractive shopping destination through improvements to pedestrian and traffic flows, car parking amenities and public realm, particularly in the town centre;
- to ensure that any development is not only sensitive to, but enhances the key assets of the town such as its urban form and character and the complex relationships that exist within it e.g. the relationship between the character areas and the riverside.

There are real opportunities to use the existing natural and heritage assets to enhance and encourage regeneration in Berwick to promote its competitiveness as a high quality place to live and work.

3 - Achieve a Sustainable 'Long life' Community

Berwick has demographic challenges and needs to identify interventions to retain and increase the capacity of its residents. The town needs to ensure that the population is retained and that the varied and diverse needs of the town's community are met. Specific

objectives include:

- Berwick to be a 'long life' neighbourhood, through the provision of a range of housing opportunities that meet the various and changing demands of a diverse local demographic structure;
- to improve the demographic structure of Berwick, particularly addressing the loss of younger generations, through the provision of a range of housing types and tenures, taking account of affordability requirements;
- to support local communities with excellent community facilities;
- to enhance the provision of educational and vocational training opportunities post-primary level;
- to promote the use of sustainable methods, technologies and management at all stages of the development processes on all sites.

4 - Delivery and Management

A key issue for Berwick has been the lack of delivery resources and capacity to support previous regeneration strategies. UI identified that delivery and management is a key issue to be addressed and several objectives have been identified as follows:

- to promote a comprehensive delivery structure which co-ordinates the various initiatives and strategic actions in a holistic manner, ensuring that all partners and stakeholders are aligned to similar objectives for the town;
- to set out a series of priorities and funding requirements to promote the long term regeneration of the town;
- to promote capacity building and resource development in the decision making structures at local and strategic levels;

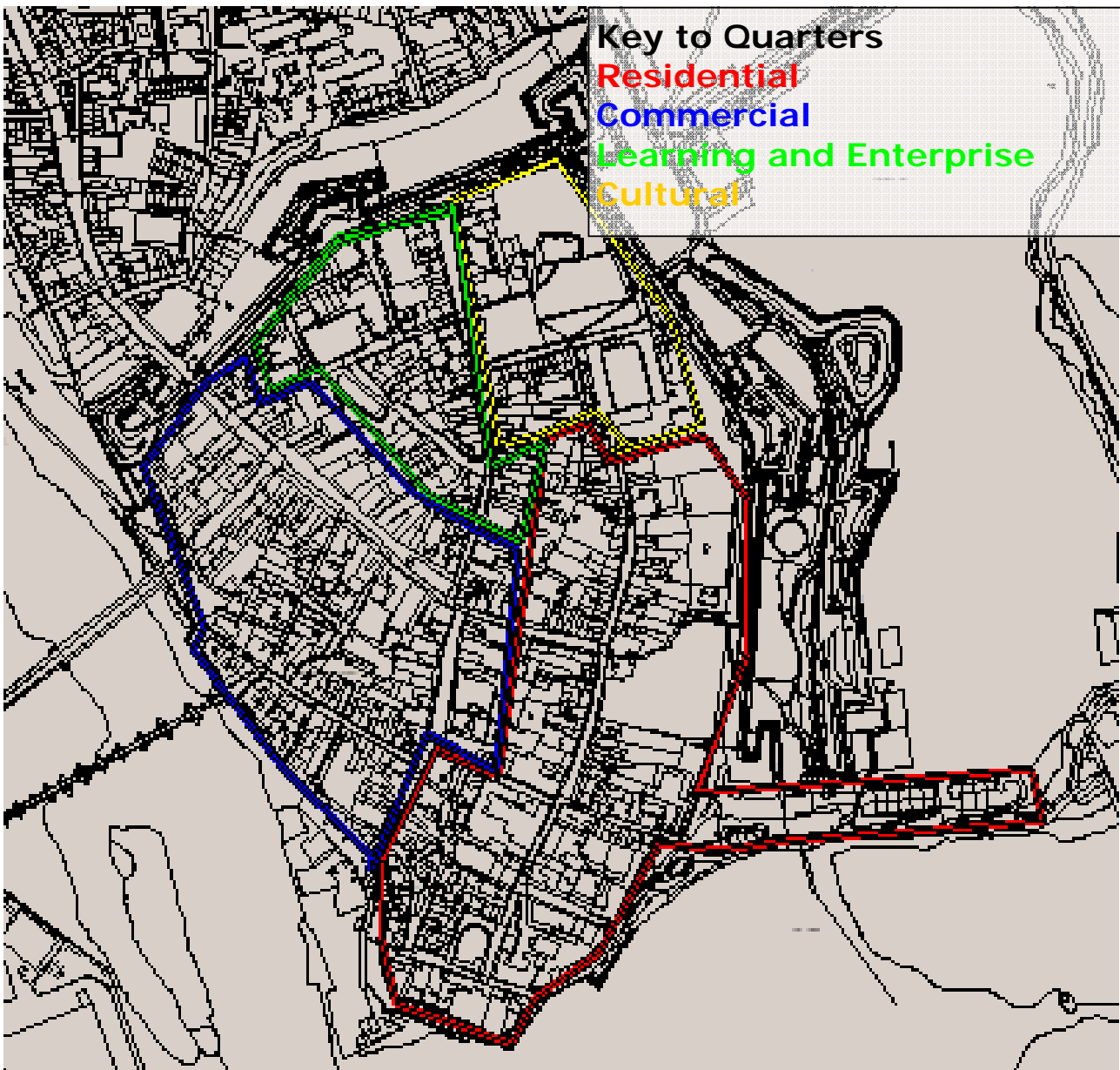
- to promote a method of management and delivery that enables strategic synergies with the Scottish Borders and Northumberland to develop.

In terms of physical development the Regeneration Strategy proposes that the preferred development option should be to concentrate on the town centre and enhance the urban core, focusing on the unique character areas of the walled town centre, Spittal and Tweedmouth. Recognising and celebrating the town's heritage, this should act as a driver for growth and regeneration.

The aim is to create:

- a town for living
- a town for business and enterprise
- a town for leisure and tourism
- a town for people
- a town for connecting
- a town for shopping and retail.

The development of these concepts organise the town into a number of distinct quarters linked by a network of public spaces. These are set out in the map below.



The strategy has been prepared to ensure that the projects set out are not developed in isolation, but are supported by other interventions to ensure that there is scale and quality and that there is a coordinated/connected approach to regeneration in Berwick. The Berwick Masterplan originally identified 54 potential sites that could contribute to Berwick's regeneration. UI narrowed these down to ten turn key projects. The ten sites/projects identified are:

- Dewar's Lane Granary/Drivers Lane
- Marygate Property Enhancement
- The Barracks
- The Quayside
- Walkergate
- Sandstell Road
- Spittal Point
- The Parade
- The Maltings
- Dock Road

Delivery of these sites/projects together with work on specific themes will provide new employment opportunities, new residential units with affordability provisions, commercial and leisure opportunities, public realm enhancements and the reclamation of brownfield sites. A key principle in this approach is the need to maximise the heritage assets and cultural value which is a clear strength of Berwick, to enhance visitor opportunities and support the growth of a 'high value', tourism offer and enhancing the town's competitiveness as a high quality place to live and work.

10. Market Town Welcome

A tourism destination plan was prepared for Berwick (known as Market Town Welcome) by Millers in 2008. In summary the report concluded that the broad offer in Berwick was disappointing for many visitors. However both the tourism plan and regeneration strategy identified the potential role for Berwick to provide a wide cultural offer, with the Barracks to be at the heart of this. Work is now

ongoing to bring forward priority projects from the action plan that was prepared.

11. Action Plan

The partners have considered the ten priority sites/projects on the basis of the technical information provided by the consultants, local feedback, current market conditions and practical issues relating to the delivery to draw up this action plan. The sites have been considered together with proposals on key themes to ensure that the actions planned lead to long term sustainable regeneration in Berwick.

Movement Strategy

There are clearly a number of interdependencies between some of the projects and themes. A further study to examine traffic management and parking issues was commissioned in 2008 and will conclude early in 2009. The aim of the study is to understand and quantify transport problems in the context of the historic town, and then develop a strategy, consisting of desirable outcomes and a programme of short, medium and long-term interventions that will complement the Berwick's Future Regeneration Strategy. This will result in a Movement Strategy which will support the sustainable economic growth of the town and its rural hinterland.

Partners have recognised that until there is a plan to address traffic management and parking issues and a public realm strategy it will not be possible to clearly identify the proposals for Driver's Lane and the area around the Maltings. In addition The Parade Ground is also dependent upon the outcomes of these pieces work and the future plan for the Barracks. For these reasons specific proposals for these 3 sites are not provided at this stage.

The priorities identified over the next five years are set out below.

Dewar's Lane Granary

Overview

The scheme provides for conversion of a derelict Grade 2 listed granary between Berwick Quayside and Bridge Street. Ownership of the granary has now passed to Berwick Preservation Trust (BPT). The scheme will convert the structure into Youth Hostel Association (YHA) accommodation and Museums Libraries Archives Grade 1 exhibition



space.

The ground floor will consist of the YHA reception and a Bistro operating internally and externally, and the associated kitchens. The first floor will provide small meeting rooms and an office facility for BPT and the company operating the exhibition space. The second floor will be the exhibition space, which will be seeking a MLA Grading of 1 and will also have direct access to the historic Quay Walls. The third, fourth and fifth floors will be the YHA accommodation. Externally the courtyards will be developed to allow external seating for the bistro, encouraging access from Bridge Street to the Quayside.

Project status

Approved and on site December 2008.

Timescale

To be completed autumn 2010.

Lead

Berwick Preservation Trust

Partners

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, English Heritage, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East, Youth Hostel Association.

Funding

The project has a total value of £5.1 million and has been supported through a variety of funding routes including Single Programme, Heritage Lottery and Local Authority funding.

Outcomes

The project will create new businesses and jobs and the restoration of a major historic building.

Marygate Property Enhancement

Overview

As the main commercial area in the town Marygate, and its adjacent streets, was identified within the regeneration strategy as a key site. The commercial heart of the town is in need of revitalisation. The town has a mix of local and national retailers housed in a variety of styles and sizes of accommodation. The quality and upkeep of the premises also varies as does the utilisation of the floors above the commercial premises. Overall it is intended to develop a shop front and property improvement scheme to enhance the key commercial areas of the town centre. The schemes will consider all aspects of the streetscape and will seek to improve the architectural and historical aspects of the premises as well as supporting the development of their economic functionality.

Specifically a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is being developed with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Focussed on the 'Super Block' comprising the eastern side of Golden Square, the southern side of Marygate, the western side of Hide Hill and the northernmost section of Quay Walls. The block includes Bridge Street which is linked to Marygate principally by West Street. The THI focuses on building

repair issues which need to be addressed to secure the heritage assets and the redesign of the Eastern Lane Car Park.

Wider conservation issues will be addressed through English Heritage Area Partnership Schemes for the areas of Castlegate and Bridge Street. An associated Shop Front Improvement Scheme is also being developed to complement this activity.

Project status

Projects in development. THI submitted for Heritage Lottery Funding in November 2008. If successful scheme will be implemented in 2010. Area Partnership and shop front improvement scheme in development. Area Partnership Scheme application to be submitted to English Heritage in February 2009, if successful schemes will start to be implemented in 2009.

Timescale

If the Area Partnership and Shop Front submissions are successful these will be operational from April 2009. If the THI bid is successful the scheme will be operational in 2010.

Lead

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

Partners

English Heritage, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East

Funding

A cocktail of funding is being brought together including Heritage Lottery, English Heritage and from the private sector. The scheme has been included within Northumberland's bid for Single Programme resources 2009-14.

Outcomes

Essential repairs to historic buildings, increased use of redundant and underused buildings, conservation management and enhancement of the town centre. Improved town centre

vibrancy, economic activity and increased footfall and visitor numbers.

The Barracks

Overview

Berwick Barracks is home to the Berwick Borough Museum and Art



Gallery, (including the Burrell Collection), the welfare administration offices of the Kings Own Scottish Borderers and their military museum, and the English Heritage museum 'By Beat of Drum', The Gymnasium Contemporary Art Gallery, programmed and managed by English Heritage is also a part of the property.

Visitor numbers to the three museums have dropped from around 35,000 in the mid '90's to 10,000 a year in 2008. The current Barracks offer is clearly in decline (although this is not the case with regards the Gymnasium Gallery of contemporary art).

There has been a lack of recent investment, both capital and revenue, in the Barracks offer and whilst installing new interpretation is much needed it will not on its own turn around the fortunes of the property in terms of increasing visitor numbers.

English Heritage is preparing a Conservation Statement for the Barracks which identifies what changes could be accommodated without undermining its historic interest and what is significant and needs to be retained.

UI identified that the Barracks could be redeveloped to provide a high quality boutique hotel fronting onto a refurbished courtyard. They recommended that an improved Museum and Art Gallery could be provided and consideration could be given to providing additional commercial development to accommodate small-scale cell based commercial activity.

However despite the studies completed there are many uncertainties about the market and offer in Berwick and specifically the market for the proposed solutions for the Barracks. To this end it is proposed that further specific studies to look at the Berwick cultural offer and the Barracks in particular are commissioned. Following the outcome of this work it will be possible to reassess what might be the appropriate routes to consider for the Barracks. This development could then be brought forward using the expertise of Woodhorn, which will also tie in with proposed local government restructuring in Northumberland.

Project status

Concept being developed.

Timescale

Studies to be commissioned and completed in 2009.

Lead

Northumberland County Council.

Partners

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, English Heritage, Museum Group, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East, The Gymnasium.

Funding

Single Programme funding for the studies has already been secured.

Outcomes

'Culture' is a significant contributor to the local economy, investment in local

cultural development and activities could improve employment prospects in Berwick and generate business for other local activities; for example, visitors to cultural events also visit local restaurants, cafes and shops. It is also recognised that the current cultural infrastructure in Berwick is uncoordinated and weak. Clarity on the Berwick offer will enable informed development of solutions to tackle the Barracks.

The Quayside

Overview

The site lies entirely within the Quay Walls sub area of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Conservation Area and is currently in the ownership of One NorthEast and a private owner. The design parameters identified in the Regeneration Strategy for this site



recognised the high quality views of the Quayside and that these all contribute to the town's distinctive sense of place and image.

This is a sensitive site and there is a need to ensure that there is a high quality design for the Quayside. It is therefore proposed that this is taken forward through a design competition. As managing a design competition is time intensive it is intended to do this through a dedicated project manager from a professional organisation with relevant experience that will ensure fairness and promote the event.

Whilst a design competition is the preferred route, market conditions have changed in recent months. As the site does not currently present any obstacles or difficulties with regards Berwick or the vision it is considered

prudent to hold off the launch of a competition until the conditions are right. However the design brief which has been started will be completed.

Project status

Design brief in development.

Timescale

Design competition launch to be timed to coincide with optimum market conditions.

Lead

Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council

Partners

English Heritage, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East, Private Sector

Funding

The scheme has been included within Northumberland's bid for Single Programme resources 2009-14.

Outcomes

New residential development, active frontages and potential new destination for the town bringing businesses and jobs

Walkergate - Skills Centre

Overview

Access to further and higher education for Berwick residents is an inhibiting factor in terms of skills development, economic regeneration and growth. A range of partners have come together to address these issues. Potential options have been explored and the analysis has identified that there is sufficient quantifiable demand to support a skills centre in Berwick.

The aim is to provide a new physical centre to support skills for life, vocational skills and higher level skills in the Berwick area and beyond. The Centre will be delivered through a partnership arrangement led by Northumberland College, Northumberland Adult Learning Service,

and Berwick High School working closely with Berwick Family Centre, Connexions, Business Link and others. Development and delivery of services through the centre will be via a formal partnership and managing arrangement between Northumberland College, Northumberland Adult Learning Service, and Berwick High School.

Following consideration of the various potential sites the partners preferred option is the Kwik Save site on Walkergate in particular due to its town centre proximity.

The current vision proposes that the Berwick Skills Centre will provide:

- Specialist training facilities (training labs/workshops) to meet the learning and skills needs of Berwick area and beyond
- Public and commercial outlets for work-based learning, placements and apprenticeship (examples might include food outlets, hair and beauty salon, retail)
- Generic learning spaces available to learning providers,
- Meeting spaces and business solutions to support the learning and skills needs of businesses and business sectors
- Appropriately equipped ICT provision configured to offer online and blended learning solutions
- Dedicated Independent Advice and Guidance spaces
- Public and community spaces which encourage easy access and which may include crèche/child care, heritage and tourism
- Enterprise support to supplement Workspace, or complement specific sector skills provision
- Quality of building which will attract users.

Project status

Project in development.

Timescale

LSC application in principle to be

approved in spring 2009 and application in detail to be approved by December 2009. Commencement on site January 2010 and completion by August 2011.

Lead

Northumberland College

Partners

Berwick High School, Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council, Learning Skills Council, Northumberland Adult Learning Service, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, One North East.

Funding

Partners are seeking significant funding from the LSC and are in discussions with ONE about the site and abnormal costs.

Outcomes

The development of the Skills Centre will assist in addressing the issues of low aspirations, low wages and low skill levels. The development of the Centre would also enhance the learning and enterprise quarter of the town.

Sandstell Road and Spittal Point

Overview

The area is in multiple-ownership although a considerable part of Spittal site is owned by one private sector owner, two sites are owned by One North East. The major private sector owner has commissioned a masterplan which covers the wider area. However more detailed design work that has been carried out purely looks at land in their ownership.

Project status

Plans in development.

Timescale

Planning application for part of the area submitted December 2008.

Lead

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council

Partners

Private Sector, One North East

Funding

The potential for land purchases has been included within Northumberland's bid for Single Programme resources 2009-14.

Outcomes

New residential development well connected to and integrated with the existing area. Key historic features will be retained.

Dock Road

Overview

The land at Dock Road was identified as a key linkage between Spittal and Tweedmouth in the Regeneration Strategy and that more could be made of this area. During the engagement programme local residents expressed a range of views about the usage and potential of the site. It was agreed that time was required for options to be developed by local residents working with Berwick Community Trust and that these should then be considered in the context of Berwick's Future by the local community and the Steering Group. Until this exercise is completed during 2009 it is unclear what project will be developed at Dock Road but its importance as an open space and its linkage continue to be recognised.

Project status

Concept development.

Timescale

Potential options to be considered and developed during 2009.

Lead

Berwick Community Trust

Partners

Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council, Local Residents including St Boisil's Residents Association.

Funding

To be determined based on the emerging proposals.

Outcomes

To be determined.

Market Town Welcome including the Cultural Offer

Overview

A tourism destination plan was prepared for Berwick (Market Town Welcome) in 2008. In summary the report concluded that the broad offer in Berwick is currently disappointing for many visitors. As identified in the section about the Barracks the partners have identified that there is a need for a better understanding of what the Berwick offer could be in the future.

Notwithstanding this work there is recognition that there is scope to better co-ordinate promotion of the offer for visitors. A key outcome from the Cultural Offer Group was to map planned cultural activities to aid planning, avoid duplication, gain synergies and provide a base of information for marketing. Additionally through the Market Town Welcome Group investment priorities have been identified and are being developed these include proposals for:

- Marketing
- Training
- Signage through maps
- Stephenson Bridge Illumination

Project status

Projects in development.

Timescale

First round of projects to start in 2009.

Lead

Berwick Community Trust

Partners

Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council, Berwick-upon-Tweed LSP, English Heritage, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland Tourism, One North East, Private Sector.

Funding

Funding will be sought from Single Programme, RDPE and the Private Sector.

Outcomes

The projects will assist in developing the Berwick offer and thereby attracting additional visitors and additional spend.

12. Governance and Delivery

Steering Group

The Berwick's Future Steering Group has in the last year been augmented with the addition of two representatives from the new Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council. Membership and governance will need to be reviewed in the light of the implications of local government reorganisation in Northumberland.



The work of the Steering Group is supplemented by a Communications and an Operations group. A Memorandum of Agreement sets out the Steering Group's means and modes of operation.

Delivery

Interim delivery arrangements, through the NSP, have been in place to support the Partnership and to assist the initiative reach this stage. New arrangements, which tie in with the Northumberland local government reorganisation will be put in place in 2009.

13. Communications

The Partnership has a Communication Strategy and associated Action Plan that is reviewed on an annual basis.

Issues are taken forward through a Communications Group with the assistance of a PR consultant. To keep stakeholders informed of Berwick's Future progress newsletters are produced on approximately a 6 monthly basis. Further engagement with the community is planned, on a project by projects basis. Updates on progress, press releases and newsletters are also available through the dedicated Berwick's Future website.

www.berwicksfuture.co.uk

Briefings and presentations for specific groups and stakeholders are also held to make linkages, identify synergies and possible opportunities.

14. Information

In preparing the Regeneration Strategy a substantial amount of baseline information about Berwick has been gathered. To ensure that partners continue to be able to benchmark performance a town centre performance system has been developed for Berwick, and other Northumberland towns by Northumberland InfoNet. The system is designed to assess the town's economic prosperity its vitality and viability.

Data has been gathered from databases and primary data collected through footfall surveys and a shopper satisfaction surveys during 2008. In 2009 InfoNet will produce a report on the performance of the town, establishing a baseline from which future trends and issues can be identified and activities and investments determined.

Recently Northumberland Tourism and InfoNet have developed a visitor

survey that can be undertaken as part of the town centre performance system. It is intended to carry out visitor surveys in the market towns, including Berwick, during 2009 to set the baseline for visitor information.

Whilst delivery of specific projects identified within the Berwick's Future Regeneration Strategy is just starting the work to get to this stage has provided other positive impacts. Firstly it has assisted in raising the profile of Berwick within the region and wider. Additionally Berwick's Future has input to and informed other developments that were in the pipeline when this work first started such as the Ramparts Business Park, the Berwick WorkSpace and some public realm improvements.

Berwick's Future Plan for 2009

January – March 2009

Submission of Area Partnership schemes for Castlegate and Bridge Street
Design brief for the Quayside completed
Berwick Eastern Arc Area Action Plan commissioned
Movement Strategy completed
Market Town Welcome projects endorsed
Berwick's Future Newsletter
Completion of Barracks Conservation Statement

April – June 2009

Barracks brief prepared
Consultation with owners on THI scheme if Stage 1 successful and preparation
Launch of Area Partnership schemes and shop front improvement
Delivery Team in place
Dock Road development of options
Submission of LSC in principle application for Skills Centre
Public Realm Strategy started

July – September 2009

Development of detailed THI programme of repairs
Berwick's Future Newsletter
New governance arrangements in place and revised Memorandum of Agreement
Berwick Eastern Arc Area Action Plan commission completed
Market Town Welcome Programme approved for 2010/11

October – December 2009

Tendering of THI contract for critical buildings
Review of Communications Strategy
Submission of LSC application in detail for Skills Centre
Approval of Action Plan for 2010