

# **Berwick Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Tourism Background Paper**

**Tourism Topic Group  
Draft 27 February 2017**

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# 1. Background

1.1 This document is one in a series of background papers prepared by the Berwick Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups. It sets out the relevant national and local policy and guidance that will inform the Berwick Neighbourhood Plan. The background paper also identifies and explains the relevant evidence base, feedback from early engagement and identifies a series of options for planning policies and community actions to address the issues that have been identified.

1.2 Tourism is a vital part of the local economy. Visitor numbers are growing in the region as a whole and it is believed that there is an opportunity to grow the local tourism economy significantly due to the town's historical and military background as well as its natural environment. To exploit this potential, infrastructure and services need to be developed to cater for a market of visitors with medium to high disposable incomes.

1.3 The Tourism Topic is highly dependent on other topic groups in particular, Transport in order to ensure the infrastructure can cater for increased visitor numbers, the Built Environment to ensure that the historical features and buildings in the Town are maintained and enhanced and the Natural Environment to ensure that we sensitively exploit the Berwick's natural assets, including its coast, beaches and river.

1.4 The term 'tourism' has been defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation as:

*'... the activities of persons identified as visitors. A visitor is someone who is making a visit to a main destination outside his/her usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose [including] holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education or other purposes....This scope is much wider than the traditional perception of tourists, which included only those travelling for leisure.'* (UNWTO statistics Guidelines: 2010)

1.5 The Oxford Dictionary defines leisure as the '*use of free time for enjoyment*'. In planning terms, the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order classifies leisure uses within the D2 'assembly and leisure' land use category. Cinemas, gymnasiums and areas for indoor and outdoor sports are amongst some facilities recognised as leisure uses.

1.6 The main areas covered by this background paper are:

- The national and local policy context for tourism and leisure uses;
- An overview of other relevant documents and evidence;
- Consideration of feedback received as part of the early engagement on the Plan;
- Draft vision and objectives for the tourism and leisure elements of the Plan;
- Planning policy options; and
- Options for community actions

1.7 The Tourism Topic Group welcome feedback on this background discussion document, it is important to articulate our vision on how we believe Tourism can benefit the town, to understand the reasoning and evidence to support our view and in order to generate thought, discussion and further ideas within the local community.

## 2. Strategic Planning Context

### Background

2.1 In order to pass an examination and proceed to referendum, Neighbourhood Plans must meet a number of 'basic conditions', to ensure they are legally compliant they must:

- Have regard to national planning policy and guidance;
- Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan;
- Contribute to sustainable development; and
- Be compatible with European obligations.

### National planning policy and guidance

2.2 National planning policy and guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) respectively.

2.3 Paragraph 23 of the NPPF requires that: *'Planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.'* It also states that Local Plans should *'allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres'*.

2.4 Paragraph 24 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. This means that Local Planning Authorities should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge-of-centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out-of-centre sites be considered. When considering edge-of-centre and out-of-centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.

2.5 The glossary of the NPPF provides a definition of main town centre uses. Amongst other things, these include leisure and entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses (such as cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls) and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities). Most leisure uses fall within the D2 land use class, whilst hotels are commonly classified as a C1 use.

2.6 When assessing proposals for leisure uses outside of town centres and not in accordance with the Local Plan, paragraph 26 of the NPPF requires applicants to submit an impact assessment if the proposal involves more than 2500m<sup>2</sup> of additional leisure floorspace. The impact assessment must consider the impact of the proposal on

existing, committed and planned investment in a centre or the proposal's catchment area and the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability up to five years (or ten in the case of major application) from the time the application was made. Applications which fail to satisfy the sequential test or which would have a significant adverse effect on one of the above factors should be refused.

2.7 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF identifies the importance of tourism to the rural economy, requiring Local and Neighbourhood Plans to: *'support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.'*

2.8 NPPG provides additional advice regarding tourism development: *'Tourism is extremely diverse and covers all activities of visitors. Local planning authorities, where appropriate, should articulate a vision for tourism in the Local Plan, including identifying optimal locations for tourism. When planning for tourism, local planning authorities should:*

- *Consider the specific needs of the tourist industry, including particular locational or operational requirements;*
- *Engage with representatives of the tourism industry;*
- *Examine the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism;*
- *Analyse the opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment; and*
- *Have regard to non-planning guidance produced by other Government Departments.'*

## **Local Plan**

### Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan

2.9 Currently the Local Plan for Northumberland consists of the saved<sup>1</sup> policies of the former Local Planning Authorities that made up Northumberland before Local Government Reorganisation in 2009. For the Berwick Neighbourhood Plan Area, these are the saved policies of the Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan (1999). Given the time that has elapsed since the preparation of the Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan and as it was prepared to cover the period up to 2006, some elements of it are out of date, therefore it does not provide a wholly appropriate strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.10 One of the objectives of the Local Plan is to 'develop the role of tourism in the local economy' (paragraph 5.0.1), with paragraph 5.0.4 recognising the importance of tourism to the local economy, and the importance of the quality of the landscape, its buildings and its wildlife to the tourism economy.

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[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/WAMDocuments/C7737F00-2738-43F3-9D25-681033B85351\\_1\\_0.pdf?nccredirect=1](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/WAMDocuments/C7737F00-2738-43F3-9D25-681033B85351_1_0.pdf?nccredirect=1)

2.11 The overarching Local Plan tourism policy was not 'saved' in 2007, therefore tourism proposals within the Plan area currently rely on the following area/ topic based policies. Those policies shown in bold have been identified by NCC as the strategic policies, which the Neighbourhood Plan must comply:

- W9 – supporting proposals for the change of use of hotels to other uses, provided the change of use would not materially diminish the range and diversity of the provision of hotel accommodation across the Borough;
- W13 – supporting proposals for new hotels and guest houses within the Coastal Zone, subject to specific criteria;
- W14 – supporting development at Berwick Holiday Centre;
- **W35 – supporting the development of new hotel and guest house development within Berwick upon Tweed;**
- **R9 – supporting the development of new and the expansion of existing sites for touring caravans or camping, static caravans, chalets, log cabins or other purpose built holiday accommodation. Subject to the following criteria: the site is largely enclosed; it will be able to be integrated into the wider landscape; provides a high standard of amenity; development will not result in the irreversible loss of the highest quality agricultural land; the highways network can accommodate the development;**
- R12 – supporting the development of new and the expansion of existing sites for camping, caravans or purpose built holiday accommodation within the Coastal Zone. Development is required to accord with policy R9 and other criteria, including: not adversely impacting on the coastal landscape and it should be adjacent to and compatible in scale with a settlement offering local facilities and services.

2.12 The Berwick Local Plan does not contain any specific leisure policies however there are a number of policies which relate to supporting the provision of recreation facilities, as above, the policy identified by NCC as comprising one of the strategic policies, has been identified in bold:

- **R2 – which supports the development of new recreational facilities as well as the improvement or extension of existing facilities;**
- R3 – seeks to protect existing outdoor playing space/ sports facilities;
- R14 – supports development of quiet recreational activities in the Tweed Valley Area of High Landscape Value.

### Emerging Northumberland Core Strategy

2.13 Northumberland County Council (NCC) is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will replace the existing saved planning policies. The Core Strategy is the first Local Plan document and it will set out the strategic policies, with the subsequent Northumberland Delivery Document adding detail to the Core Strategy. Whilst the emerging Core Strategy is not an adopted planning document the strategic policies and associated evidence base are helping to inform the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.14 Section 5 of the emerging Core Strategy highlights the importance of tourism to the County, it is identified as a key economic sector. Paragraph 5.86 identifies that:

- Tourism accounts for 11% of the County's businesses, with over 1,000 enterprises in operation;
- In 2014 9.3m million people visited the County, a 4.6% increase on 2013 figures. The number of days' visitors spent in a destination also increased by 3.5% to 14.1 million;
- These recent changes resulted in a 2.3% increase in value of the sector against 2013 levels to £765 million.

2.15 The Northumberland Long Term Employment Forecasts undertaken by St Chad's College, Durham (2014) identifies that tourism employment is expected to experience high growth over the Core Strategy plan period (2011-2031). Employment in hotels, restaurants and recreation is forecast to expand by 35%, adding around 4,100 jobs to the Northumberland economy by 2031.

2.16 The emerging Core Strategy recognises that the tourism industry still faces a number of challenges, particularly that employment continues to be characterised by part time and seasonal work. It also acknowledges that tourism development differs from other forms of economic development in that:

- Whilst a specific attraction can be accessible by public transport, car travel is often essential as visitors often visit many attractions which would be difficult to achieve on public transport;
- Tourism proposals can be directed to certain locations but allocating specific land can be counterproductive as continuously directing development to a site which the market sees as unsuitable can prevent growth occurring elsewhere; and
- Tourism development can also have a positive association with landscapes and biodiversity, although conversely by its nature it draws visitors and development to environmentally sensitive parts of the County.

2.17 Policy 9 of the emerging Core Strategy supports the development of new visitor attractions and facilities, accommodation and the expansion of existing tourism businesses in sustainable locations in accordance with the following principles:

- *Tourism development is encouraged to locate in the Main Towns and Service Centres;*
- *Where new hotel, guest house or bed and breakfast accommodation is proposed within the Main Towns and Service Centres priority will be given to proposals within the centre, then edge of centre, then those on the edge of towns and villages;*
- *The development of accommodation and attractions in other settlements and adjacent to existing development in the countryside is encouraged to be provided through the re-use of buildings and development on previously developed land before new build development. Accessible and appropriate scaled new build will be supported where it is appropriate in design and character, located as close as is practicable to existing development and would improve the County's tourist offer;*
- *In the countryside, away from existing settlements and development, new tourist attractions, facilities and permanent tourism accommodation will only be*



*supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that the proposed location is required to meet the needs of businesses and it would improve and diversify the County's tourist offer;*

- *New or extensions to existing sites for camping, caravans, and chalets will be supported in accessible locations provided the development: Is adequately screened by existing topography or vegetation or new good quality landscaping compatible with the surrounding landscape; and the site layout and scale, and the appearance of the accommodation, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character of the surrounding land and townscape, considering short and long range views.*
- *Tourism development proposed as part of a farm diversification scheme should ensure that the agricultural function of the farm is retained;*
- *Developments that enhance the environment or bring neglected or underused heritage assets back into appropriate economic use will be strongly supported;*
- *Large-scale, new tourist development will be assessed on the potential economic gain weighed against any possible harmful impacts and other plan policies. Comprehensive master planning should accompany such proposals;*
- *All tourism development should adhere to the policies on landscape, biodiversity, historic and built heritage, transport, and the water environment and should be located and designed to minimise visual impact;*
- *Development within or adjacent to the North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Northumberland International Dark Sky Park, and adjacent to Northumberland National Park will only be supported where the landscape, special qualities and statutory purposes of the designations are conserved and/or enhanced.'*

**2.18** Regarding leisure development, Policy 14 of the emerging Core Strategy supports the provision of large scale leisure facilities in Main Towns and Service Centres.

## **Summary**

2.19 The NPPF and NPPG require planning policies to take a positive approach to tourism development which considers the specific needs of the tourism industry, including location and operational requirements as well as examining the broader social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism. They also highlight the importance of engaging with the tourism industry and considering opportunities for tourism to support local services, vibrancy and enhance the built environment.

2.20 The saved Berwick upon Tweed Local Plan policies are supportive towards new tourism development, provided the development does not: adversely impact on amenity, the environment, highways. Within the Coastal Zone additional considerations are also included regarding impact on the coastal landscape and the need for development to be adjacent to and compatible in scale with a settlement with local services and facilities.

2.21 The emerging Core Strategy recognises the importance of tourism to the local economy, but also that there is a need to ensure that development does not impact on what makes the County attractive to tourists. It seeks to focus tourism development in Main Towns and Service Centres. Where development is proposed in smaller settlements and adjacent to existing development, the Core Strategy seeks to focus new development on previously developed land before new build development, it should also be accessible and of an appropriate scale and improve the County's tourist offer. In the open countryside, the Core Strategy identifies that isolated new development will only be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that the proposed location is required to meet the needs of the business. The Core Strategy also supports: camping, caravan and chalet developments; tourism developments as part of a farm diversification scheme; and developments that enhance the environment, including bringing back into use heritage assets.

2.22 With regard to leisure developments, both national policy and guidance and the emerging Core Strategy require the application of a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. This requires applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge-of-centre locations and only if suitable sites are not available should out-of-centre sites be considered. When considering edge-of-centre and out-of-centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre.

### 3. Other documents

3.1 In addition to the strategic planning framework, there is a lot of other documents and evidence available to inform the preparation of the tourism and leisure elements of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### National level

##### Tourism Action Plan (2016)

3.2 The Tourism Action Plan was published in August 2016, it sets out how the Government is working to rebalance the tourism sector, boosting jobs and growth right across the country, through action on:

- **The tourism landscape:** strengthening coordination and collaboration by:
  - Creating an overarching industrial strategy to ensure that departmental action to grow tourism is coordinated;
  - Engaging through the Tourism Industry Council;
  - Coordinating action on international events;
  - Being clear on the roles and responsibilities of VisitEngland and VisitBritain;
  - A new £40m Discover England fund – to incentivise destination organisations and businesses to join up to build world class tourism experiences and products;
- **Jobs and Skills:** boosting apprenticeships and attracting more people to careers in tourism by:
  - Continuing apprenticeship scheme which recognises the seasonal nature of tourism and enables apprentices to complete their training over 16-18 months, instead of 12, with a break in the middle to undertake other activities;
  - Supporting a range of projects through the Coastal Communities Fund which aim to improve and retain skills in the tourism sector;
  - Working to improve perceptions in the tourism industry and encouraging more young people to consider it as a career option, through the #mytourism job campaign;
  - Reviewing how the Government supports SMEs to succeed and grow;
  - Continuing investment in broadband and digital skills;
- **Common sense regulation:** examining the scope for deregulation by:
  - Seeking to deregulate an element of Private Hire Vehicle licences to allow owners of hotels/ attractions to collect visitors from train stations/ ports of entry without needing to apply for a licence;
  - Introducing a new 'light touch licensing notice' which will allow small quantities of alcohol to be sold by small accommodation providers to their guests and by community groups at local events;
  - Looking at how the government can modernise and digitise the retail export scheme to make it easier for tourists to claim back VAT on eligible purchases;
- **Transport:** making it easier for visitors to explore by rail, bus and coach by;

- Working to develop a 'Great Rail Offer' to give visitors the confidence in getting from the train station to the entrance of some of Britain's most popular attractions and back again;
- Modernising transport connections to the countryside;
- Roll out of smart ticketing infrastructure and the development of route planning apps;
- **A Great Welcome:** driving continuous improvements in our visa service by:
  - Improving the availability of visitor information through the UKVI website and in Visa Application Centres;
  - Working with partners through the Tourism Industry Council and Events Industry Board to raise awareness of the visa offer and improve the welcome that visitors receive on arrival to the UK.

## Regional level

### North East Strategic Economic Plan (2014)

3.3 The North East Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identifies tourism as a major growth sector with the coast and rural areas underpinning a strong offer. In particular, the plan identifies tourism as a route to achieve the strategic objective of increasing the economic benefits from external markets. It sets out a £22 million investment package to 2021 with the aim of adding over 2,000 additional jobs in the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area.

3.4 As a result of the changing economic climate and in light of the UK's decision to leave the European Union, the NELEP is now looking to refresh parts of the SEP, reflecting on new evidence relating to the region's economic position and evolving public policy environment. Initial engagement highlighted the need for a coordinated regional approach to tourism and that tourism and culture should be treated as cluster or priority sector.

## County level

### Northumberland Destination Management Plan 2015-2020

3.5 Northumberland Tourism's 'Destination Management Plan' 2015-2020 sets out a strategy to develop the County's tourism sector. Its vision is for a sustainable visitor economy which supports, not damages, our core values and environment. To achieve this, the Management Plan proposes three key targets to be achieved by 2020:

- Increase visitor numbers by 5%;
- Increase visitor spend for 6%; and
- Increase employment in tourism by 10%.

3.6 It seeks to sustainably develop Northumberland's attractions and activities, ensuring a wide range of authentic experiences for visitors throughout the year, as well as developing opportunities for visitors to appreciate and understand the County's landscapes, natural heritage and wildlife.

### Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015)

3.7 The Northumberland Economic Strategy (2015-2020) identifies tourism as a key growth sector for Northumberland and supports a strengthened tourism offer focusing on key towns and their hinterlands. The strategy identifies that tourism, culture and related leisure, arts and heritage activity are a big part of the Northumberland and regional economy; the North East Growth Review (2013) found it's the fourth largest part of the LEP economy. The strategy acknowledges the importance of this, as the tourism sector is 13% of the Northumberland economy.

3.8 The Strategy highlights that tourism sector has grown as a proportion of the economy in Northumberland by 18% overall in the last five years. Tourism is inter-related to other activities like retail, culture, events, food and drink, heritage and land based industries. But whilst this growth is welcome the sector also has major issues to contend with in terms of the underlying performance trends which affect much of the wider service sector in the county. Issues of low pay and seasonality are long standing issues. The Economic Strategy identifies the need to promote the County to be business friendly and create conditions for growth, leading to higher levels of year round visitors and spending.

3.9 Being on the Border with Scotland creates opportunities and challenges that are unique. Our history with Scotland, its many battles, its natural beauty all make Berwick a very good place to attract visitors in order to explore the many assets of the Border Region. However, the level of collaboration between Northumberland the Scottish Borders Region is very limited and the problem seems to be worsening. Engagement, cooperation and collaboration is required, what form this takes is not being proposed in the document. But we believe that if it is achieved then the benefit will be significant and mutual to both Berwick, the wider County of Northumberland and to Scotland.

## **Local level**

### Market Town Welcome: Destination Plan for Berwick upon Tweed (2008)

3.10 The Destination Plan was prepared by Miller Research Evaluation Consulting for the former Regional Development Agency One NorthEast, Northumberland Tourism and the Northumberland Strategic Partnership. The purpose of the plan was to drive action by the partnership of organisations that are involved in tourism, town development and the visitor economy within Berwick and its immediate hinterland. It covers the period 2008 to 2018. The vision described in this plan is still relevant today, it is in the main supported by the Tourism Working Group but highlights the real issue of Berwick's failure take a vision and a plan and to execute its delivery. This issue remains true today and action is required to ensure that the risk of this recurring is reduced significantly.

3.11 The Plan includes a vision for Berwick as a visitor destination, which is:

- By 2018 Berwick will have an international profile as the destination where England meets Scotland and the River Tweed meets the sea;

- Visitors will come to learn about its rich heritage as an ancient crossing place with three dramatic bridges and unique Elizabethan walls built to protect this much fought-over town;
- Visitors follow in the footsteps of Lowry, attracted by the special quality of the light, to enjoy the stunning views of the river, estuary and sea and the distinctive skyline of the town itself;
- A thriving artistic community and distinctive retail and food and drink sectors enliven the well maintained historic environment, which together give Berwick the feel of a mini Mediterranean principality.

3.12 The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Strengthen Berwick's identity and profile as an attractive and uniquely interesting visitor destination;
- Broaden Berwick's visitor market and attract more upmarket, higher spending visitors, to complement the more traditional budget holiday market which will continue to be an important part of the visitor economy;
- Establish Berwick as a year-round destination encouraging short breaks throughout the year;
- Develop a sustainable visitor economy offering excellent service, customer care and value for money;
- Increase visitor satisfaction levels which will extend their length of stay, encourage repeat visits and recommendations;
- Better promote and enable visitors to enjoy the natural and built heritage in and around Berwick;
- Widen the range and improve the quality of the retail and food and drink offers in the town;
- Encourage more visitors to walk, cycle and use public transport;
- Encourage new business investment; and
- Encourage and support collaboration between local organisations and businesses to enable joint delivery of the actions.

**3.13** The strategy of the Destination Plan is to focus on Berwick's strengths and unique selling points and to develop and promote these to meet the expectations of more upmarket visitor segments. It is identified that Berwick should broaden its appeal, attract higher-spending visitors and make its visitor economy much more sustainable for the future. With most effort and action focused on areas where there will be most impact. The priorities identified were:

- **The walls and ramparts** are at the core of Berwick's heritage and identity. They create dramatic views into and out of the town and form an attractive, easily accessible, traffic free, walking route circling the historic core of the town;
- **The Border and the town approaches** - Berwick is famous for being on the English-Scottish border and having changed hands many times through history. However, crossing the border from Scotland is an underwhelming experience. New information should be installed welcoming people to Northumberland, telling a little of the history of the border and attracting people into Berwick;
- **Heritage** - Berwick's walls and historic townscape are a great attraction for visitors. The Barracks is currently disappointing for many visitors, yet has the

potential to be the anchor attraction for Berwick at the heart of a wider cultural quarter with an enhanced parade area outside. A strategic approach to all the heritage stories of the town - the river, bridges, industries and communities - is required to give focus and interest visitors. The town archives deserve housing in a more accessible location for visitors to use to research family history. Maintenance of historic properties throughout the town is vital to sustain its attractiveness as a place to live and visit;

- **Art** - Berwick has always attracted many well-known artists drawn by the special quality of the light and the many stunning views. Berwick already has a thriving artistic community and several galleries including the well-established Gymnasium Art Gallery at the Barracks and the Lowry Trail. There is scope to build on this activity and better co-ordinate promotion of the artistic offer for visitors. This can include the proposed gallery at the Granary, art based events and special breaks, links with art outlets in the Scottish Borders and Northumberland and a closer relationship with the Burrell Collection in Glasgow;
- **Food and drink offer** - There are opportunities for improving both the retail and catering food and drink offer through encouraging shops to sell fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood and more local food and drink market stalls. Existing cafes, restaurants and pubs could upgrade their food offer, promote local sourcing and recipes and ensure that the quality of the service is excellent. New shops, pubs and restaurants could be established. The Food Festival, Slow Food movement and food awards will all build confidence, enthusiasm and profile for local food and drink;
- **Car parking, signing and traffic strategy** - Visitor parking provision needs to be integrated with the parking needs of the working and residential community and an overall strategy is required. The strategy should encourage more people to use public transport, cycle or walk. Options for visitors include looking at park and walk facilities and scope for a hop-on hop-off bus route around the town. Once the strategy is agreed a comprehensive signage scheme must be implemented with simple and clear signs for visitors directing them to just one or two parking locations;
- **Linking the town's quarters** - Promoting the retail, cultural and (potentially) eating quarters of Berwick will encourage visitors to explore more of the town on foot, stay longer and spend more. The town map will illustrate the town's quarters. Improving the appearance of the emptier stretches of street between quarters will help join up key streets and locations;
- **Marketing and promotion** - Marketing will bring all the strengths of the town together to communicate messages to target markets. Website information can be improved and better co-ordinated. The new map will help visitors understand the town's layout, walk the walls and visit all quarters of the town. Events need better promotion and can raise the town's profile significantly. Specific promotions could target visitors in nearby cities for short breaks and there could be joint promotions with Scottish Borders or other Northumberland towns.

### Market Town Benchmarking – Berwick (2013)

3.14 The Market Town Benchmarking work measures the performance of town centres and compares this with other towns across the country. When businesses were

asked what the positive aspects of having a business located in Berwick town centre, 85% identified that potential tourist customers were a positive aspect, with only 5% identifying it as a negative aspect. A shoppers' origin survey was undertaken to track to area that town centre visitors from, 48% of visitors to Berwick were identified as being tourists, which is significantly higher than the NE small towns average (11%) and the national small towns average (16%).



## 4. Feedback

### Early engagement – local community

4.1 As a means of starting the process of collecting information and opinions that would influence the content of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council arranged five community engagement drop-in sessions across the Plan area which took place during February 2016. The purpose of the events was to raise awareness of the opportunities presented by neighbourhood planning and to engage as broad a range of people from the local community as possible from the start of the plan making process. Engagement sought to help the Steering Group to define those issues of greatest importance to the local community.

4.2 Each drop-in session sought views from the community using a variety of techniques, each of which looked to determine local opinions about life in Berwick. These techniques included:

- Feedback display boards seeking opinions about the topic areas that should be covered in a neighbourhood plan;
- Feedback display boards which allowed people to identify, by using ‘Post-it’ notes what is good and not so good about life in Berwick;
- Feedback postcards inviting people to identify the 3 things they would change about Berwick-upon-Tweed; and
- A mapping exercise which allowed people to highlight specific locations of concern and where opportunities exist for improvements.

4.3 A full report on the engagement activities is available on the Neighbourhood Plan website<sup>2</sup>.

### Tourism issues identified through early engagement

*Key themes the Plan should cover:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
Need for signage to promote and encourage circulation of visitors around the Town’s attractions	Policy re advertisements/signage	Plan required. Possibly use Facebook page to collate ideas.
Potential of the quayside as a space for activities and as a valuable visitor asset.	Identify area on policies map/land allocation – evidence? Policy to describe preferred uses	Support initiative for more pontoons for leisure craft, encourage boat trips and promote quayside for events.
Need to develop the	Positive policies to support	Review use of

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
Town's tourism potential	tourism development	Northumberland Tourism resource. Establish regular contact with NT. Consider nominating a Town Cllr with Tourism responsibility. Review Destination Plan.
Need for development not to impact on historic assets	Linkages with Built Environment policies re appropriate development	
Need for more play parks	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Push for improved maintenance and improvements of existing facilities.
Need for coach parking	Linkages with transport policies Land allocation – is there evidence? Policy to support provision of new coach parking	No action in short term. Review use and success of Coach Park to be introduced in 2017. Consider coach parking in Spittal.
Need for Tourist information to be centrally located – where people are.	Land allocation – is there evidence? Policy to support future development	Lobby NCC and NT. Develop justification for improved location.
Need to increase tourism funding	N/A	
Need for improved leisure facilities	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Provide support for Heritage Hub Development.

#### 4.4 Aspects of the Town regarded as positive

##### *Good issues:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
Wide selection of independent shops	Link to employment/ retail policies which support town centre vibrancy	Investigate rent issues on Marygate. Consider introducing rate incentives to fill empty shops.
Very friendly place	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	
Fantastic local food offer	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop idea of Food Heritage Trail.
Lovely parks and areas for walking	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets

The Walls	Link to the Built Env. policies – also good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
The Estuary	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
The Sea	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
Low crime rate – feel safe	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
Access to river/ coast/ countryside	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
Good and expanding cultural mix	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	
Geographic position between 2 cities	N/A – but good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
Very beautiful and historic town	Link to the Built Env. policies – also good context to the Plan area	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets
Beautiful place – a tourist heaven (or should be).	Positive policies to support tourism development	Develop Marketing Plan and protect assets

#### 4.5 Aspects of the Town regarded as not so good

##### *Not so good issues:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
More/better play facilities for children	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Support current bids to provide improved facilities
Lack of parking spaces for visitors	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future parking provision	Lobby NCC and BTC for parking policy changes to ease problems.
The town is dirty and does not invite tourism	N/A	Establish Community Groups to address issues.
Need for coach park, tourist info and toilet facilities	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Coach Park planned to be introduced in 2017.
Need for more shops on	Link to employment/ retail	Consider whether there is a

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
a larger scale like Serendipity – perhaps some ‘artisans’ could show how they make their wares.	policies which support town centre vibrancy	case for a Town Centre Manager role.
Tourist Information should stay where it is	Can’t do this through planning policy but could include a policy on supporting facilities for tourists	Covered elsewhere

#### 4.6 Postcard Feedback

##### *Feedback postcard – three changes:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
More children’s play parks	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Covered elsewhere
Provide coach parking facility (and ideally toilets) in part of the former Kwik Save site in the old car park areas adjacent to Coxons Lane	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Covered elsewhere
Develop the quayside area for leisure use and as an attraction or visitor	Identify area on policies map/ land allocation – evidence? Policy to describe preferred uses	Covered elsewhere
It would be great to have an Ice Rink (use kwik save site).	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	
Lack of big impact Tourist Attractions	Policy to support future provision	Covered elsewhere
Need more for tourists	Positive policies to support tourism development	Covered elsewhere
Build a marina, possibly around the location of the Old Lifeboat Ramp.	Identify area on policies map/ land allocation – evidence? Policy to describe preferred uses	In hand through other initiatives.
More houses – Fewer Holiday Caravans	Linkages with housing policies – could include policies on future tourism accommodation provision	
Take back the Barracks and develop it as a	Identify area on policies map/ land allocation – evidence?	Covered elsewhere

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
tourism 'hub' and centre for events and heritage	Policy to describe preferred uses	
Promote the town walls and Berwick is rich history more via themed packages – i.e. activity holidays linking with accommodation providers	N/A – useful context to Plan area	Discuss with NT
The Leisure facilities are inadequate for town centre of this size	Policy to support future provision	

#### 4.7 Opportunities

##### *Areas of opportunity:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
Quayside and riverside: Supporting property development for leisure uses	Identify area on policies map/land allocation – evidence? Policy to describe preferred uses	Covered elsewhere
New play park	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Covered elsewhere
New marina – new development tourism	Identify area on policies map/land allocation – evidence? Policy to describe preferred uses	Covered elsewhere
Well signed viewpoints	Policy re advertisements/signage	Instigate a review of signage. Investigate innovative use of technology such as Augmented Reality
Greens area – opportunity for a Lumiere event	N/A	Review success of previous Luminiere events
Skate Park (& Wheeled Park) for Berwick	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Review progress of initiative presented at Small Investors Conference
New park (muga) multi purpose – football pitches etc. Aimed at older children age 10+	Land allocations – is there evidence? Policy to support future provision	Discuss with Youth Working Group
Opportunity for bowling and cinema at Tesco	Land allocations – is there evidence?	Instigate a demand analysis

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
	Policy to support future provision	

#### 4.8 Problem areas

##### *Problem areas:*

Issue identified	Potential Planning response	Potential Community Action
Tourist information centre – needs to be in vision.	Policy on supporting facilities for tourists	Covered elsewhere

### **Early engagement - key stakeholders**

4.9 Following the early engagement with the local community, initial discussions were held with several key stakeholders around a number of issues identified through the early engagement:

- Need for up to date tourism data – Northumberland Tourism;
- Cycle and walking tourism;
- Opportunities at the Quayside/ river;
- Opportunities for the Barracks to become a 'Heritage Hub';
- Parking and Signage
- Accommodation

## **5. Tourism data/ trends**

The report below summarises the Economic Impact of Tourism across the whole of Northumberland in 2015. Although data is not collected for specific areas of Northumberland, it is believed that Berwick will be typical of the wider County. In fact, from a growth perspective the opportunities in Berwick are likely to be higher when some of the actions and opportunities identified are delivered.

## **6. Cycle tourism**

Cycle Tourism is big business and Berwick has a hub of national cycle routes going through it:

- Coast & Castles Route (part NCN1)
- North Pennines Cycle way (NCN 68)
- Round the Forth (NCN 76)
- Sandstone Way (Mountain bike route Berwick to Hexham)

Most of the current Cycle Tourism in Berwick is based on visitors using the national cycle routes that go through the town. So, there is an opportunity to develop a Cycle Tourism strategy based on circular routes starting and finishing in Berwick and promoting more cycling events where groups would stay in Berwick.

Opportunities include:

- Growing our market share of cycle tourism by developing and promoting circular routes.
- Develop new paths where possible, such as south of the River Tweed, and improvements to the coastal route north of Berwick.
- Any development of new routes automatically creates benefits for walkers too.
- The cycling infrastructure also provides benefits for residents.

Issues include:

- Maintenance of cycle routes is an issue and are in a poor state of repair in some places
- Crossing the A1 is a safety issue and plans to address this should be considered.

To clarify the sense of opportunity with the growth of cycle tourism, the Scottish Government estimates that Cycle Tourism had a gross value of £58.5 million in 2013. With our relatively quiet roads, our beautiful natural landscape and our infrastructure puts Berwick in a strong position to be able realise the potential of cycle tourism.

## 7. **Quayside/ River**

The River Tweed is the most famous salmon fishing river in Europe and Berwick was once the biggest commercial port in Scotland. It was known as the Alexandra of the North. Berwick fishermen still catch salmon on the river estuaries south bank using traditional century old netting techniques.

The south bank of the river estuary is home to a sailing club and upriver a grassed riverbank separates it from the commercial harbour. Opportunity exists for development of land adjacent the harbour. A hotel located here, and overlooking the town walls on the north bank, would boost tourism and provide substantial benefit to the towns economy and employment provision. The commercial harbour will hopefully benefit from much needed investment that is expected to attract additional trade. Traditional net fishing takes place from the fishing shiel located between the harbour and the 400-year-old bridge.

From the breakwater on the north bank visitors to Pier Road are afforded wonderful views across the estuary where wading birds and migrant flocks of swans make the area a photographer's favourite. From Pier Road, the famous walls of the town track the north bank of the river past the old lifeboat station to the bridge.

From between the old lifeboat station and the old bridge there is considerable scope for development. The area is a natural magnet for visiting tourists but it currently provides the visitor with a degree of disappointment as, unlike quaysides around the coastline of the country, it has not benefited from development and is greatly underutilised. People visiting the seaside expect to visit a vibrant quayside with interesting river activity. At present, there are none except when it bursts into life once a year on the Mouth of The Tweed (MOTT) market day.

The land between the old lifeboat station and the chandlery is private and Home and Community Agency owned and is ripe for development offering opportunities for 'low rise' construction, parking or landscaped recreational use.

Boats and yachts on the quay are attractive to visitors and provide for one of the key ingredients of a vibrant quayside. This is evident at seaside destinations all around our coastline. The benefits of attracting yachts to the River has been recognised for many years and was last considered in 2007 when very detailed and comprehensive plans for a substantial 100-200 yacht marina were commissioned and considered by The Port of Berwick Harbour Commissioners. A report was produced and it was concluded that there was unlikely to be demand for a £15-25m project of the size and scope suggested. It was too ambitious and unlikely to attract sufficient demand.



However, a modestly priced berthing facility for around a dozen visiting ocean going yachts on the quayside is widely regarded by local experts as the ideal catalysts for the regeneration of the quayside, neighbouring businesses, and the town generally. The current lack of provision has given Berwick a reputation amongst the yachting fraternity as being 'unfriendly'.

In recent years there has been increasing awareness of the value of attracting wealthy yachters that sail around the coastline of Britain. There are some 300 locations around the country where councils have recognised that temporary pontoon berthing facilities during the tourist season provide a financial benefit to the economy.

The RYA 2014 report on the Economic Contribution of the Recreational Boater estimated very significant benefits to the economy. The 2007 report also evidenced the perceived economic benefits. Over the last two years' local experts, including experienced ocean-going yachters sharing considerable knowledge of facilities around our coastline, have been meeting at The Harbour Commissioners Office to examine the feasibility of placing pontoons along the quayside. Their conclusions are that there would be a significant economic benefit to the development of the quayside, the surrounding area and indeed the profile and reputation of the river as an attractive and appealing tourist destination.

Pontoons situated to the front of the chandlery and downriver from the old bridge would enable 12-20 visiting yachts to berth and give opportunity for wealthy people to spend a night or two in Berwick, freshening up, taking on provisions, eating out and sightseeing. That the visits would be short is because these visitors would be in transit to the western Isles.

The major output from the development is likely to be the creation of a high quality waterside residential or tourist development, which Berwick currently does not possess. Given the setting of the pontoons it is considered likely that significant residential and tourist activity would be stimulated.

Given the premium for waterside residential units it is assumed that low rise domestic units will have a waterfront aspect. With a tourism focus development of the private and HCA land would provide for improved profile and improved image as a destination.

A pontoon facility, a vibrant quayside with market stalls, events and activity would be a relatively low cost catalyst for private investment in the immediate vicinity and indeed the length and breadth of the town and outlying areas. This low-cost pontoon project should justify a significant level of public funding. Private 'city' and local private investors have already made off record declarations of interest and voiced support for the project. As a money spinner, all agree that it is a positive 'no brainer'.

An investor failing to see the bigger picture would view any £300,000-400,000 pontoon facility attracting a mere £30 per night berthing charge during a limited 4/5-month seasonal window as ridiculous. In terms of the associated financial return to the immediate area and the wider economy it would be regarded as a very small investment with very little risk. What is required is the judgement of an entrepreneurial eye to recognise that to accumulate it is necessary to speculate. What is required is vision.

An experienced yachter and recent visitor to the town stated, "Berwick is regarded amongst yachters as unwelcoming "and added, "I come from a very similar town, Willemstad in Holland. The town is rich and vibrant. What is wrong with you people, you are sitting on a gold mine?" This individual, and those experts that have been meeting over the last two years have the vision and understanding necessary to promote the quayside and river offering.

The regeneration of the quay by the provision of adequate facilities for wealthy yachters can only be seen as a cog in a larger tourist regeneration initiative, that is to say, as part of a bigger picture. If the bigger picture is recognised, in terms of the massive potential for investment in the town's economy and the knock-on opportunities for job and wealth creation for the wider community, then you cannot fail to see the benefits of a pontoon project as just the catalysts required.

## **8. Spittal**

Spittal located south of the River Tweed adjacent to Tweedmouth developed itself in Victorian times as a small seaside holiday resort. With a fantastic beach, an attractive promenade with great transport links being on the A1 and the main East Coast railway line.

In its prime Spittal was a thriving small seaside town and the challenge faced is to turn the assets Spittal has to offer into an attraction to meet the Tourism needs of the 21st Century.

A small town on the North Northumberland Coast with an extensive range of large Victorian buildings many of which were the classic B&B / Guesthouses many of these buildings offer an opportunity for investors to turn them back into accommodation for today's visitors exploiting the assets that the Town has to offer. Namely:

- Great beaches
- Fantastic views
- Good transport links, but located at the end road providing a peaceful environment free from traffic passing through
- A pavilion providing entertainment and a small amusement arcade.
- An ideal place to stay to explore the delights of North Northumberland and the Scottish Borders.

### **Opportunities**

The opportunity for Spittal as part of the wider area of Berwick-Upon-Tweed is to exploit its unique coastal position, its heritage as a small seaside town, its proximity with the AONB and its locality of being next to the Mouth of the River Tweed.

The opportunity is to exploit the assets that the town has to offer but without affecting its uniqueness.

- Invest in the current buildings and turn into high-end B&B/Small Hotels
- Invest in the Pavilion to provide an up-to-date central entertainment complex
- To create an economy to encourage business growth in services such as Coffee Houses, Tea shops and restaurants.
- Development opportunities exist close to Spittal Point providing fantastic river and sea views and views of Berwick.
- Main Street Spittal with its wide road and pavement provides an opportunity to create a social hub of coffee shops, cafes, bars and restaurants.

## **9. Barracks 'Heritage Hub'**

A project to develop a business case to create a Borders Heritage Hub is already underway. The project is a collaboration between English Heritage, Woodhorn Charitable Trust, Kings Own Scottish Borderers Association and Berwick Visual Arts.

The aim is to build a case to invest in the current Berwick Barracks to create a combination of visitor attraction, a public service and facilities to create commercial income.

The initial plan assumes that the attraction would bring in to Berwick in the region of 30,000 paying visitors per year and up to 60,000 using the wider facilities.

The Tourism Working Group fully support this initiative as it will create a single visitor attraction that will bring people into Berwick and generate some significant economic benefit to the Town and will act as a catalyst to achieve the growth and opportunities identified in this document.

## 10. Parking

There is ample evidence that like most towns there is a serious parking problem in Berwick. This is evidenced by several initiatives by various bodies to take views via public consultation and plans by the local authorities.

In the 2008 Urban Initiatives Berwick report the Council proposed building a multi storey car park on the Kwiksave site thus recognising the lack of sufficient car park spaces.

The more recent including the Community Parking Plan, Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Nov 2013 and The Berwick-upon-Tweed Chamber of Trade and Commerce (CoT) Parking Survey Aug 2016.

The Community Parking Plan stated that there was no evidence that the pattern of short or long stay car parks needed changing. It supported the view that parking charges should be dropped to both encourage more visits bringing trade to the town centre and to align with free parking in other local authorities in Northumberland. An additional issue is the subject of very short stay parking for quick shop visits in Marygate.

Free parking has now been implemented; short stay parking was made available in Marygate but caused traffic jams and disruption and has now been suspended.

The CoT survey of 2016 takes the views of traders on the results of these changes.

The free parking is welcomed and considered to be successful. One downside is that much of the long stay is taken up by early in the day by commuter and local employees and people, restricting its availability for visitors.

There is a strong opinion that there is a need for more parking close to the town centre. Moreover, it is stated, less strongly, that there are not sufficient parking spaces for residents.

There is suggestion of placing some time restrictions on some of the long stay places coupled with a view that residents should be excluded from the restrictions using permits.

### **Park and Ride**

Any fully walled town Like Berwick-upon-Tweed will suffer from spaces for car and coach parking within its walls, which is where visitors want to be. Use by locals is somewhat alleviated by out of town retail facilities but the issue of insufficient places remains.

In Berwick, there is a favoured option of extending the Castlegate car park further as this is adjacent to the walls and very close to the centre.

There are sites on the edge of town and close to the A1 which could be used for park and ride. There is no evidence of what usage this would attract. One view is that Park and Ride is only extensively used where users have a strong reason to want to visit the town centre and some concern that the tourist attraction for Berwick –upon-Tweed may not yet be at this level.

### **Coach Parking**

This is crucially important for tourism and has a large impact on tourism in towns where facilities are good.

Berwick once had a bus park /coach park in the centre.

Many coaches were once parked on the 'new 'bridge before it was narrowed. Coaches currently drop off passengers at the Leaping Salmon Public House at the end of the bridge, but cannot park nearby. They also stop at Morrison's, and at the Garden centre in Ord, both out of town sites.

90% of town centre retail businesses expressed in petition form a preference for a coach park on the Kwiksave site, close to the town centre and good facilities.

In the 2010 Tweed and Silk Public Realm report the Highways department of NCC emphasised how vital a coach park was to the Berwick economy. This document recommended the use of Parade as the preferred NCC solution.

There has been a long-standing debate involving both NCC and the local council on the need for and siting of coach parking. This is currently completely inadequate resulting in extremely few visits by coach tours to the town.

A coach park needs to be close to the centre, toilets and refreshments. There is an NCC project commencing now to provide 4 coach parking places in Chapel Street. This does not adequately meet all the requirements above but is a significant improvement on the present lack of coach parking facilities.

There are many arguments about this provision around its capacity, siting and the routes coaches will need to take for access and departure. Thus, there is a need to consider this subject again when the success or otherwise of this provision can be evaluated.

### **The longer-term future**

There are some social and technological developments which may have an impact on car parking.

Car sharing schemes (there are several differing models) would reduce the need for spaces, as less cars need to be owned.

Better provision for cyclists routes, electrically powered bicycles, bicycle hire facilities (particularly close to the railway station), safe cycle parking etc. would, with extensive promotion, reduce the number of visits to the centre by car.

Driverless cars would be able to deposit their occupants at a convenient place and park themselves elsewhere until summoned when needed later.

## **11. Accommodation**

TripAdvisor report the following accommodation profile in the Berwick area.

66 Accommodation providers

- 3 Hotels + Planned Premier Inn
- 52 B&B/Inns
- 50 Holiday Rentals
- 11 Speciality Providers - Hostels, caravans etc.

To attract more visitors with medium to high disposable income, then the need to provide quality accommodation suitable for these visitors is fundamental. During peak periods Accommodation Providers are full, forcing visitors to stay outside of Berwick. So, if we are to attract more visitors, we must increase our accommodation provision.

The profile of visitor accommodation in Berwick in 2017 is as follows:

### **Hotels**

Hotel accommodation is limited in Berwick to small hotel businesses, a Travelodge and in 2017 a new 60 room Premier Inn. Quality hotel rooms are in short supply and although the proposed Premier Inn will increase capacity significantly, this is likely to attract in the main overnight or short stay visitors. There are no hotels in Berwick that are accredited with a 4\* or 5\* rating.

### **B&B /Guesthouses**

There are a small number of B&B's in Berwick that are accredited with a rating above 4\* but the total number of rooms offering this standard is very small. There a reasonable number of properties in Berwick, that have the style, size and character to become high quality B&B/Guesthouse accommodation and this should be encouraged.

### **Lodgings**

The recent redevelopment of the old Dewar's Granary has been a great success, what is now the Granary Youth Hostel provide high quality, budget accommodation that attracts a wide range of clientele including, walkers, cyclists, school parties and families. The mixed accommodation provides traditional shared dormitory rooms as well as private accommodation. This investment has proven to be a great asset to the town.

### **Holiday Rentals**

Berwick is well served with a good stock of properties available for holiday rentals and this includes a good number of high-end, quality accommodation, ideally suited to attract visitors with high disposal income. The continued growth of this area should be encouraged and many of the large older properties in Berwick are well suited for this type of use.

### **Caravan Parks**

Berwick and the immediate area is well-served with Caravan Parks from the large Holiday Parks in Berwick and further south at Haggerston Castle to the smaller sites such

as those in Spittal, East Ord and at Marshall Meadows. Although, developments and improvements to the sites within the plan area should be encouraged, we don't believe that further capacity is required.

### **Camping**

There is very limited provision in the area for camping facilities and for the higher-end facilities known as 'Glamping'. Glamping is becoming increasingly popular with families that want to experience the true outdoors but with few home comforts. We should encourage the growth in this market.

### **Summary**

- Caravan accommodation is well provided for at Berwick Holiday Park and at Haggerston Castle, also a large proportion of the visitor spend is kept within the holiday park
- The YHA provides good provision for large groups of walkers, cyclists etc.
- The Travelodge is currently the only hotel with a large number of rooms and the proposed Premier Inn will provide 60 rooms
- Although there are a good number of B&B, these tend to have a small number of rooms (typically 3)
- There is a shortage of high quality accommodation to attract people with a high disposable income
- There is limited provision for speciality camping accommodation (e.g., Glamping) which is increasingly popular

## **12. Tourism and leisure vision and objectives**

### **Background**

12.1 The early engagement with both the local community and key stakeholders has informed the preparation of a vision and objectives for the tourism and leisure elements of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Vision

Berwick-Upon-Tweed is a border town that capitalises on its unique location and its history. A thriving market town, popular with tourists and a town with growing industrial and commercial resources. A busy transport and tourism hub providing easy access to North-East England and as a gateway into Scotland.

#### Objectives



To establish planning policies that will facilitate substantial sustainable growth of the tourism industry in Berwick over the period of the plan by:

- Encouraging the establishment of the required infrastructure necessary to ensure that the planned growth in tourism is sustainable, that is to include accommodation provision, coach parking, entertainment and recreational facilities
- Facilitating the creation of a 'Tourism Hub' by making Berwick a natural place to stay when exploring Northumberland and the Scottish Borders.
- Supporting the provision of visitor facilities and services to encourage an increase in mid to high earning Tourists to stay in Berwick.

To establish policies to encourage investment and development in current and new tourist and visitor assets within the Town.

12.2

## 13. Planning Policy Options

### Background

13.1 Early engagement has identified a number of potential planning issues for the Neighbourhood Plan to seek to address:

- A policy approach which supports appropriate future tourism development across the Plan area – that does not damage what is special about the area but builds on the uniqueness of the town and its offer;
- The vital link between the historic and natural environment on tourism across the Plan area;
- Identification of key tourism areas/ hubs – the Quayside and the Barracks;
- A policy approach which supports the provision of vital tourist facilities (TIC, parking, vibrant retail offer);
- A policy approach which supports the provision of appropriate tourist signage;
- Supporting approach to new leisure provision – including facilities for younger people;
- A policy approach to support the growth of cycle tourism, supporting high quality accommodation provision and attractions with their associated infrastructure requirements.

### Issue 1: Supporting appropriate future tourism development

13.2 Possible options:

- 1a. **High level policy statement which supports appropriate future tourism development which balances this against the need to protect and enhance the distinctive and valued environment which attracts tourists in the first place;**
- 1b. **Option a plus principles to guide the future location of tourism development e.g. focus on particular types of tourism development in the town centre etc.;**
- 1c. **Option 1b plus identification of the key parts of tourism that the plan is looking to support e.g. high quality accommodation, accommodation/ facilities to support cyclists;**
- 1d. **Inclusion of separate policies on different types of tourism accommodation/ development.**

### Issue 2: Vital link with the built and natural environment

13.3 Possible options:

- 2a. **No specific policy – make reference in supporting text to the built and natural environment policies;**
- 2b. **Specific policy statement on the importance of the built and natural environment to tourism/ the economy.**

### Issue 3: Identification of key tourism areas/ hubs

13.4 Possible options:

- 3a. Allocation of specific sites for tourism
- 3b. **Allocation of areas where a focus would be supporting new tourism development – but this would not be the only land use in the broad area. This would be supported by a policy which identifies the key principles of future development in the broad area (e.g. could include criteria to cover the built environment, public realm etc.);**
- 3c. No allocation of specific areas on the policies map – reliance on a criterion based policy to guide future tourism development.

#### **Issue 4: Supporting the provision of vital tourist facilities**

13.5 Possible options:

- 4a. No specific policy – rely on other policies e.g. overarching tourism policy that refers to supporting the provision of vital tourist facilities and retail policy regarding town centre vibrancy;
- 4b. **Policy that highlights that tourist facilities will be supported, listing any areas where there are key gaps.**

#### **Issue 5: Signage/ advertisements**

13.6 Policy options:

- 5a. **Policy to support the provision of appropriate signage/ advertisements – where this requires planning permission;**
- 5b. No policy – rely on community actions to address the issues identified through engagement.

#### **Issue 6: New leisure provision**

13.7 Policy options:

- 6a. **High level policy statement which supports appropriate future leisure development;**
- 6b. **Option a plus principles to guide the future location of leisure development;**
- 6c. **Option b plus identification of the key leisure development that the plan is looking to support;**
- 6d. **Inclusion of separate policies on different types of leisure development.**