



Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan 2022-2032

January 2022



HYNDBURN
The place to be
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Foreword



I am proud to present Accrington's Town Centre Investment Plan as Interim Chair of the Town Centre Partnership Board. It is the culmination of months of hard work yet marks the beginning of a new chapter for Accrington in the years to come.

We want Accrington to be a vibrant, bustling and proud market town underpinned by the many strengths that it already has to offer and the new ones yet to be built. We are surrounded by beautiful Pennine countryside with outstanding architectural highlights and a rich industrial history. We want to tap into the visitor economy as the quickest way to improve the town, opportunities for local people and wealth coming into the local economy.

We want to provide a strong anchor and focal point for the town centred around the existing heritage assets of our Grade II listed Town Hall, Victorian Market Hall and the newly redeveloped town square. The people of Accrington deserve a town that they are proud to call home and that offers a wide range of local restaurants, independent shops, green spaces and activities for all the family, not only to them but to attract the visitors that will make our town a destination once again.

This Town Centre Investment Plan also encompasses many lessons learned. We have approached this plan with the seriousness that it deserves working with experts and consultants and in collaboration with a diverse range of partners. Most importantly we have worked hand-in-hand with the community, residents and stakeholders across the public and private sector to really understand our town, the residents who live here and the visitors who pass through.

From interviews and polling to visits and meetings we have distilled a wide range of diverse views to develop our vision for Accrington Town Centre - a statement of how the people of Accrington want their town to be now and for future generations to come. It is underpinned by a set of guiding principles and forms the basis for the strategy we have deployed to produce the well thought through and specific interventions our town needs. Importantly this plan is heritage-led, focussing on the rich, unique

and engaging architectural and cultural assets that Accrington has, from its ornate Victorian buildings to outstanding visitor assets such as the Haworth Gallery. We must protect and preserve our heritage, repairing and regenerating so that it is fit for the 21st century and beyond.



We want to provide a strong anchor and focal point for the town centred around the existing heritage assets of our Grade II listed Town Hall, Victorian Market Hall and the newly redeveloped town square.

Realising the ambitions of this plan will take many years and we are committed to the vision and realising the interventions over the long term, seeing Accrington's prospects transformed and by working together, restoring pride in the town.

David Sanderson MBE DL
Interim Chair of the Town Centre Partnership Board

Executive Summary





Accrington has many of the essential ingredients required to be a thriving and successful modern market town. From its proud local industrial and cultural heritage and a strong sense of community to its grand historical architecture. Like many Northern towns, it also has a number of challenges that need to be overcome.

This Town Centre Investment Plan (TCIP) sets out potential investments totalling around £70m that we believe will radically transform Accrington's prospects for the future and improve the lives and opportunities of local residents. It is important to note that this TCIP builds on the more than £55m of public and private investment secured locally since 2010.

In creating this TCIP we engaged regularly with the Accrington Town Centre Stakeholder Group and the Accrington Town Centre Partnership Board which represent a diverse range of local sectors and interests. We also engaged Survation to undertake representative polling of Hyndburn residents who were asked a range of 15 questions between the 10th and 23rd of August 2021.

The Vision

We created a new vision for Accrington Town Centre to drive its regeneration, together as a whole community:

We are a vibrant, bustling and proud market town steeped in industrial, cultural and architectural heritage. Visitors and locals come together to sample the best of Lancashire's homegrown produce and diverse mix of local eateries, browse our thriving independent shops and cultural venues and relax in our family-friendly and green spaces.

Surrounded by beautiful Lancashire countryside, **Accrington is the gateway to the Pennines, Lake District, Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland making the most of its unique landscapes and ample cycling and walking routes.** Our attractive, inclusive and accessible town hosts numerous popular events, has diverse leisure facilities for all ages, and supports its flourishing business community to prosper and grow.

We have a **remarkable legacy built on the hard work, dedication and entrepreneurship of the people of Accrington** - we made bricks for the Empire State Building, revolutionised the textile trade by inventing the spinning jenny and mechanised cotton printing, and house the largest collection of Tiffany glass in Europe. **We are proud of our history and look forward to a renewed and exciting future.**

Key facts & figures

- The population of both Hyndburn and Accrington has been broadly stable over the past five years. However, the population of England as a whole is predicted to increase by 10.3% between 2018 and 2043, yet Hyndburn is forecast to rise by just 4.3%¹.
- In common with almost every other local authority in England, Hyndburn has a growing older population in both absolute and relative terms. The share of its older population – those 65 years old or over – was around 14% in 2001 and 18.5% in 2020.
- Hyndburn is currently the 16th most deprived out of 317 local authority districts in England, according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)². Deprivation has increased steadily over the last 20 years.
- Skills levels in Hyndburn are below the average for the North West. The proportion of residents aged 16-64 with NVQ level 4 qualifications and above is 31% in Hyndburn, compared with 39% in the North West and 43% in Great Britain³.
- Life expectancy in Hyndburn is 77 years for men and 81 years for women - around 3 and 2 years lower than the national averages for men and women, respectively⁴.
- Hyndburn has a low wage economy. With a high proportion of the workforce in low-skilled jobs, the average gross weekly income for full-time workers is £471.5, which is 16% lower than the average for the North West and 20% lower than the national average.
- The dominant workforce sector in Accrington Town Centre and Hyndburn overall is retail and wholesale, accounting for 24% of local jobs, substantially higher than the national proportion of 15%. Human health and social work also constitutes a significant portion of the local workforce, with 23% of jobs in Accrington and 17.2% in Hyndburn.
- Around 1-in-4 retail premises in Accrington are vacant which reflects not just a substantial lack of demand, but also a significant oversupply. There is 3.7 square meters of retail

space per resident in Accrington Town Centre compared to 2.5 in Hyndburn and 1.8 in England.

- Hyndburn - including Accrington - has good average broadband speeds and is in the top 50% of local authorities in England and Wales for download speeds specifically. Over 70% of premises in Hyndburn have access to ultrafast broadband, which is very good.⁵

Challenges & opportunities

1. Economy and visitors

There is a high level of economically inactive people in Hyndburn and those who are working have low income levels when compared to national averages. Yet, there are opportunities to diversify the local economy to provide more and higher paying jobs in existing and higher value-added sectors.

2. Living standards and housing

Accrington has severe pockets of deprivation – particularly around employment, income and living environment - which has been getting worse during the last 20 years. There is also an oversupply of retail space which contributes to the high number of vacant units in the town centre.

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1. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/hyndburn-district/#People>
 2. English Indices of Deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019
 3. Labour Market Profile, NOMIS, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157094/report.aspx>
 4. Public Health England, Local Authority Health Profiles, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/gid/1938132701/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/101/are/E07000120>
 5. Connected Nations 2020 - Ofcom

This TCIP should create new jobs that will provide an opportunity for local people from disadvantaged backgrounds – including young people and those on benefits - to work in Accrington.

There is also an opportunity to improve health outcomes by encouraging cycling and walking in Accrington and creating new green spaces or 'greening' existing ones. The Local Plan includes new employment land allocations and a large-scale housing development, Huncoat Garden Village.

3. Education and skills

Hyndburn sees a significant divergence from the national average of those having A-level qualifications or above. The 2011 Census data (most recent available) also shows that around 20% of Hyndburn's residents have no qualifications versus around 15% nationally.

Turning to enterprise, significant economic growth comes from new start-ups and SMEs. In 2019, business start-up numbers were broadly in line with the Lancashire and national averages. However, it is observed that business failures in Hyndburn are much higher than the national average.

Extra adult learning provision could be an 'quick win' to lift the educational attainment of higher-potential disadvantaged young people.

Strategic objectives

Over a 10-15 year timeframe we will measure the overall success of this TCIP against the following objectives for Accrington Town Centre:

- Increased visitor and tourist numbers
- An improved and diversified the retail offer
- Reduced dependency on retail sector for jobs
- Fewer empty shops and other empty commercial premises

- Improved living environment and diversity of household types
- More residents enjoying green spaces and walking/ cycling regularly
- More adults from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining good qualifications

Assessment & development of potential interventions

An expression of interest process was run between June and September 2021 seeking ideas for possible TCIP interventions. Bradshaw Advisory established a rigorous and evidence-led assessment process for all schemes that were put forward which was based on the HM Treasury 'Five Case Model'. More than 30 schemes were put forward with 18 - at various stages of development and detail - being included within this TCIP.

Potential interventions

1. Market Hall

It is proposed that the Market Hall and town square would form the centre of the 'Accrington Acre'. We propose the Market Hall is refurbished and transformed in whole or in part into a higher-end eating, drinking and cultural venue with more modern facilities for small independent traders.

2. Town Hall façade improvements

A programme of facade improvements to restore worn and defective aspects of the building will further improve the exterior appearance of the Town Hall building and protect this cultural asset for future generations and visitors alike.

3. Transformation of properties at 43-59 Blackburn Road and 2-18 Church Street

There may be potential for transforming the upper floors into co-working space or higher quality, modern commercial space to support Hyndburn's entrepreneurs, independent traders or public sector providers. Alternatively a museum or arts and cultural space could be created.

Facade improvements should take place to bring properties up to a standard in-keeping with the vision for Accrington.

4. Transformation of Burton's Chambers

We would like to see this important Art Deco heritage building brought back into full use by potentially repurposing its ground floor premises into independent cafes, restaurants and higher-end retailers which would include improving the facade of the building.

Our analysis does not support the creation of additional residential units within the town centre, however there may be potential for transforming the upper floors into co-working space or higher quality, modern commercial premises to support Hyndburn's entrepreneurs, independent traders or public sector providers.

5. Transformation of the Victorian Arcade

We would like to see the Victorian Arcade renovated to attract higher-end independent retailers and traders that complement those already operating on Warner Street.

6. Improved streetscapes

Important gateways and streets linking into the Accrington Acre should be aesthetically improved in a style in keeping with a historic market town. This could include more sympathetic street lighting and the cobblestoning of selected streets in whole or in part.

7. Improved shop fronts (supporting the Accrington Acre)

To improve the visual appeal of streets, it is proposed that the council will work with shop owners and landlords to provide upgraded, more historically sympathetic and aesthetically appealing shop frontages. In the first instance, shops that are in close proximity to the Accrington Acre will be prioritised for investment.

8. Improved signage

Signage on major roads could be improved to raise awareness of the Accrington Acre and draw in and direct visitors to attractions. Within the town centre, improved signage (done in a historically sympathetic style) at street level would aid those navigating the town either by road or on foot.

9. Upgrade the Town Hall Extension

The proposal is to make facade improvements and renovate the interior of the building, bringing it up to a standard suitable for rent on the open market.

10. Junction access improvements

Proposed improvements would see the creation of a boulevard along Eastgate, with the removal of some of the existing barriers to improve the experience of transport users particularly pedestrians. Additional alterations at several gateway junctions around the town centre are proposed to improve access by car and those on bicycles. The operation of the one way system around St James's church should be reconsidered. Improvements should be made at the junction of Paradise Street and St James' Street to aid crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.

11. Warner Street footway

It is proposed that a full highway-width footway on the street could be created to improve the shopping experience and

increase the capacity of the street to accommodate growing numbers of shoppers and visitors.

12. Repurpose old Yorkshire Bank building

The former Yorkshire Bank building sits in a prime location adjacent to the town square and Accrington Acre and is another example of Accrington's high quality architecture. We would like to see that building brought back into use potentially as the location for a restaurant or cafe, a community space, museum or commercial office.

13. Greening of the Town Centre

There is potential to create or improve green spaces at several sites around the town centre which should be explored and progressed further.

14. Development of Charlie Brown's site

Redevelopment has been suggested for the former Charlie Brown's site on the corner of Abbey Street and Stanley Street. A proposal is for the demolition of the old Charlie Brown store on the site, to be replaced with the creation of a car park, and a small amount of green space replacing the disused buildings on Abbey Street.

15. Park and ride scheme

Achieving the vision set out for the town centre will see visitor numbers to Accrington increase. With this in mind, it may be that a park and ride scheme needs to be established in the future to bring people easily and conveniently into the town centre. Clearly this would be dependent on demand, the success of realising the vision and technology and usage patterns at that time.

16. Restoration/renovation of old police station

The former Accrington police station is a Grade II listed building on the edge of the town centre which closed in 2016. We would

like to see this asset restored and repurposed for hospitality and/or another visitor attraction such as an escape room.

17. Platts Lodge Waterpark

Platt's Lodge, to the south-east of Accrington, contains a small body of water on a former industrial site. It is proposed that this site could potentially become a waterpark and visitor's centre/ cafe.

18. Accrington Arndale

Accrington suffers from an oversupply of retail units. Additionally, the Arndale has been identified through engagement work as being extremely unpopular. While there are no firm proposals at this time, there may be potential for that site to be repurposed - in whole or in part - to support the vision within this TCIP. To be clear our analysis does not support the addition of residential units within the town centre within the medium term timeframe.

The Impact

While it is impossible to determine what the impact of the TCIP investments will be in driving up footfall, GVA and jobs with any real certainty, we can make some high-level assumptions to illustrate what might be possible by drawing comparisons with other similar regeneration investments from around the country.

Illustrative modelling suggests that an investment around the size of the Levelling Up Fund could see an additional +73,000 to +821,250 visitors a year in Accrington (depending on the success of the investments) a £9.6 million per year economic boost to the town centre economy and between +250 to +275 created and supported through higher demand.



An Introduction to Accrington



Surrounded by beautiful Lancashire countryside on the western edge of the Pennines with the Forest of Bowland to the North, Accrington is a large market town, with even larger potential.

Its location, between the four major towns of Blackburn (4 miles) and Preston (13 miles) to the west, Burnley (6 miles) to the east and Manchester (20 miles) to the south, makes Accrington a prime location for day trips and as a base to explore nearby outstanding natural beauty. The town has impressive architectural prowess and an important cultural legacy.

Accrington's history began when four waterways met along the road from Whalley Abbey - one of the country's richest monasteries in the 14th century - to Manchester. These waterways, and the hills that surround Accrington, became the catalyst for the burgeoning textile trade first driven by the mills fed by these streams. The fabric being manufactured here brought with it the invention of the world-changing spinning jenny in 1764 and later, the mechanisation of calico printing in the 1840's, transforming the industry across not only the town and region, but the UK and the world.

The grand and imposing architecture of Accrington's town centre, including the historic Town Hall and Market Hall, are reminders of the significance and wealth of the local textile industry which brought with it huge prosperity. The streets, houses and buildings in the town centre lay testament to the rising populations of Accrington during the 19th Century. The people of Accrington served the textile trade as well as the local coal mining and engineering industry during the Victorian era right up until the 1950's.

The Town Hall was previously named the Peel Institute, after Sir Robert Peel, and it was his grandfather Robert Peel who first used the spinning jennies in his Accrington mills. Sir Robert Peel became our 29th Prime Minister serving twice from 1834 to 1835 and 1841 to 1846. The famous 'Accrington Nori' (iron spelt backwards) bricks were manufactured in the town from the 1880's to the present day. Nori bricks are known as the hardest and densest bricks in the world, used in the construction of famous architectural structures such as the Empire State Building in New York and Blackpool Tower.

The First World War put Accrington on the map once more when Kitchener called for volunteers: Accrington and surrounding towns and villages raised a battalion of men in only 10 short days. The recently restored town square proudly recognises the Accrington Pals' patriotism and showcases new commemorative benches and bespoke artworks which allows the community to both remember and celebrate their lives. These sculptures also celebrate Accrington's other ambassadors and achievements.

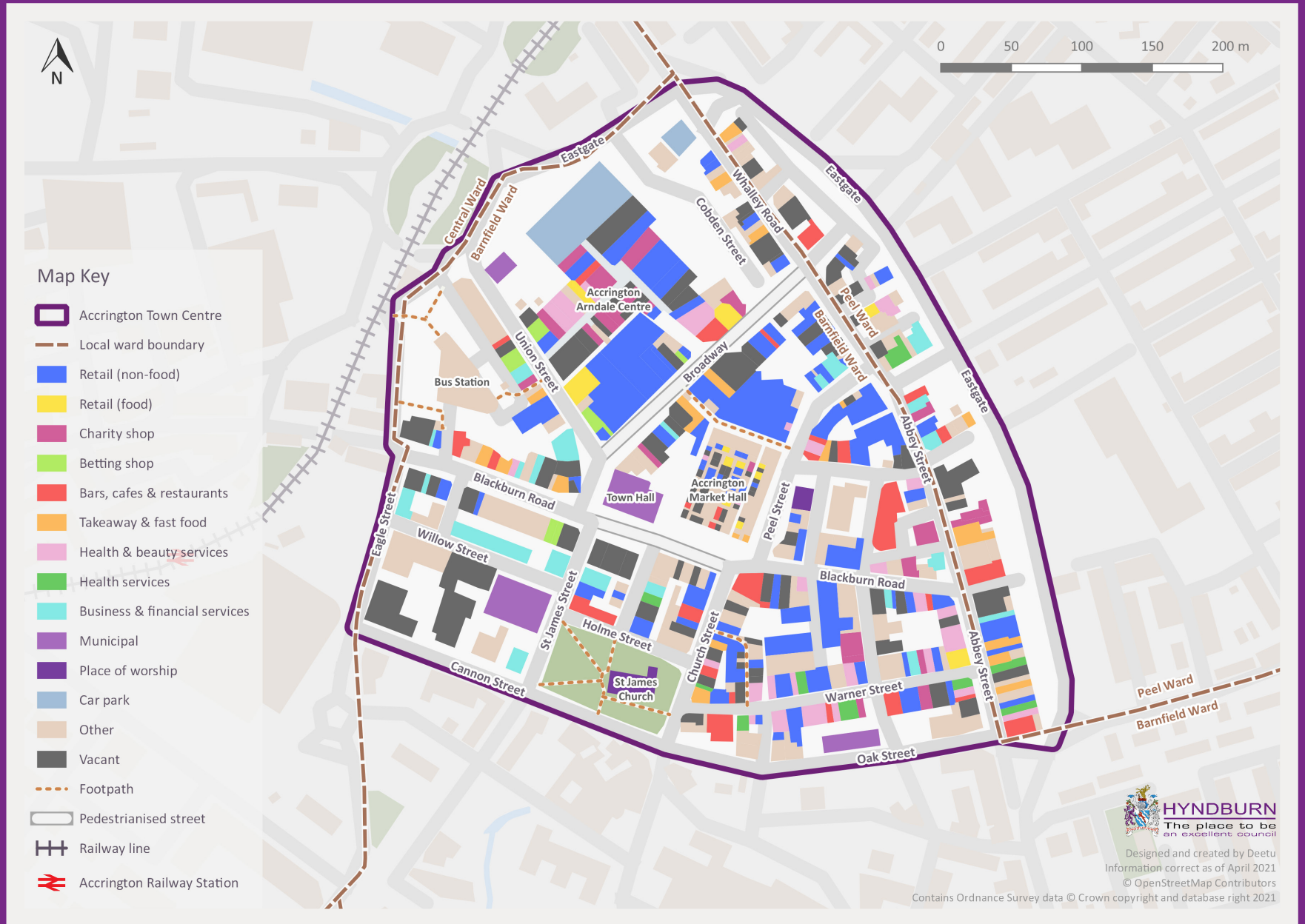
The Haworth Art Gallery, bequeathed to the people of Accrington in 1920 by brother and sister William and Anne Haworth, now displays the largest collection of Tiffany glass outside of New York. Gifted by Joseph Briggs, he began his career as a Tiffany's errand boy and finished up as the President of the Tiffany Glass Company. He moved his beloved Tiffany glass collection back to his hometown of Accrington in 1933.

The original town football team, Accrington F.C. was founded in 1876 with Accrington Stanley F.C. being later established in 1891. The club was one of the 12 founding members of the Football League which the team played in between 1921 and 1962. In 1968, the team was reborn and brought back the glory of its distinguished history, competing in League One.

Since 1974, Accrington has formed part of the larger Borough of Hyndburn together with the former districts of Oswaldtwistle, Church, Clayton-le-Moors, Great Harwood and Rishton. Like a lot of post-industrial areas in the North of England, more recent history paints a picture of a town in decline. Accrington has struggled to adapt to the rise of online shopping, out of town retail, a lack of investment and rising levels of deprivation. With the added impact of Covid-19, jobs and future prospects for local people have suffered.

Accrington is a town rich in industrial and cultural history shaped by hard working local people. With the right mindset, leadership and actions it can have an exciting future ahead.

Figure 2: Occupation of town centre units by use



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Recent investments in Accrington Town Centre

In 2010 the **Market Hall** refurbishment was completed. The works included repairs to the roof, the conversion of storage space at balcony level into an 'enterprise haven' and refurbishment of the main sales floor and existing stalls. The balcony was extended with a mezzanine floor to provide a new café and exhibition space. The £2.4 million project was jointly funded by owners Hyndburn Borough Council (£1.8 million) and the [then] Government's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (£600,000).

In the same year the new '**Eco**' **Accrington Railway** station opened as part of a £2.5 million investment (£400,000 for the station and £2.1 million for a new bridge and car parking facilities). The station achieved an 'excellent' BREEAM rating. It was built using locally sourced and/or recycled 'green' materials, solar panels to generate its electricity and the station toilets are flushed with collected rainwater.

In 2012 the new £32 million **Tesco Extra store** opened. The store, next to the train station on Eagle Street and just off Blackburn Road, and the investment was estimated to have created 450 jobs. Hyndburn Borough Council received around £1.4 million from Tesco from two Section 106 contributions. This included £450,000 for schemes in the Accrington Masterplan, £385,000 for public realm, and £365,000 towards public transport (including improvements to the railway station and a new bus interchange).

In 2016 the new modern purpose-built £5 million 'George Slynn' **bus station** (interchange) near Accrington Railway Station opened. This was part of an £11.4 million investment in Hyndburn (mostly Accrington) including the £6.4 million land assembly necessary for the bus station and bus lanes on the rapid transit route. This in turn was part of the £40 million Pennine Reach public transport scheme which aimed to improve transport links between Accrington and Blackburn. It was funded by the Department for Transport.

2016 also saw work commence to renovate the historic Grade II* listed **Town Hall** in a £1.5 million investment to develop it into a

conference, events and wedding venue. The works included the full restoration of the ballroom, new bars including the feature cocktail lounge, improvements to catering facilities, stage facilities, and refurbishment of the second-floor balcony including access.



In total, the THI scheme was funded by £1.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a £1 million Transition Grant by Hyndburn Borough Council, £816,000 of Section 106, and £482,000 from Lancashire County Council for the highway works.

2016 also saw the new £500,000 **police station** on Broadway opened, with the police moving from the Grade II listed Spring

Gardens building on Manchester Road. The new station provides a front counter for the public as well as a base for local officers. The Spring Gardens building is now used as business premises.

In 2017 the old Grade II-listed **fire station building** – purchased a year earlier by Totally Wicked E-Liquid – was refurbished and repurposed to accommodate new offices, a warehouse distribution facility, small shop, roof garden and a gym. This investment was privately funded and brought the building back into use after 15 years of being empty.

In 2018 the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) to transform the **Town Square** – outside Market Hall and the Town Hall – was completed. Under the initiative, the square was redesigned and pedestrianised (by landscape architects) and resurfaced using locally-sourced York stone and designed to allow for a wide variety of events and activities. The restored Town Square also commemorates the sacrifice and bravery of the Accrington Pals with bespoke benches that incorporate granite artwork and paving that represent the trenches of the Somme, as well as bespoke sculptures to engage people young and old.

The THI also offered grants to building owners in the western half of the THI boundary. This was part of the **Blackburn Road building facade improvements**, to help fund the reinstatement of lost architectural and historic features such as period shop fronts and windows, as well as structural and external repairs. In addition, the highway and public realm along Blackburn Road have been greatly improved by levelling off the pavements, laying York stone paving, improving street lighting, street furniture, landscaping and parking.

This included reversing the direction of travel and **opening up St James Street** to divert traffic into the town centre.

In total, the THI scheme was funded by £1.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, a £1 million Transition Grant by Hyndburn Borough Council, £816,000 of Section 106, and £482,000 from Lancashire County Council for the highway works.

In 2019 the final phase (phase 4) of the renovation of the Town Hall was completed. This comprised the transformation of under-utilised office and storage into an attractive additional bar area,

function rooms and conference space which can be used in addition to the main ballroom. There is also a small exhibition space in the entrance area that houses a bespoke, interactive installation dedicated to the Accrington Pals. The cost of phase 4 was £286,000.

In 2020, the Council improved two **vacant shops on Broadway**, investing over £80,000. One of these was let almost immediately and terms have been agreed on the second. This range of shops also provides the Constituency Office of the local MP and the Accrington Police Station.

Globe Enterprises acquired Castle House next to the viaduct on Eastgate in 2020. The former tax office building provides the potential for a c.20,000 sq ft redevelopment. Plans are yet to be formulated but Globe has a strong track record in regeneration.



This amounts to total investment - public and private - of over £55 million since 2010, much of this stemming from the Accrington Area Action Plan.

The Context





Accrington has many of the essential ingredients required to be a thriving and successful modern market town. From its proud local industrial and cultural heritage and a strong sense of community to its grand historical architecture. Like many Northern towns, it also has a number of challenges that need to be overcome.

It is important that this Town Centre Investment Plan not only looks to build on the positive ingredients and strong vision that exist, but ensures that there is a clear picture of issues the town centre faces now. It is also important to discuss both the challenges and opportunities, so that the interventions and schemes proposed in this Plan, can deliver the greatest benefits for the people of Accrington. It is vital that any plan for Accrington's town centre is built upon its strengths, a realistic assessment of the current opportunities and a shared vision for its future, making sure that it is both viable and sustainable.

The Context is broken down into two sections 1) Facts and Figures and 2) Challenges and Opportunities.

The following pages detail the key characteristics of Accrington Town Centre. Using official data, quantitative local context is provided in terms of **population demographics, deprivation, skills and education, health and wellbeing, income and employment**, and the **structure of the local economy**.

Facts & figures

Population demographics

Hyndburn is one of the smallest local authorities in Lancashire, but its population of around 81,000 makes it one of the most densely populated in the county¹. Of the 81,000 residents, approximately 35,000 people (44%) live in Accrington - Hyndburn's largest town and the administrative centre for the local authority.

The population of both Hyndburn and Accrington has been broadly stable over the past five years, as has the proportion of younger adults aged 18-29 at around 14% to 16% of the general population, similar to the national proportion of 15%. Hyndburn's population, however, is not expected to increase in line with the national figures. While the population of England as a whole is predicted to increase by 10.3% between 2018 and 2043, Hyndburn is forecast to rise by just 4.3%².

In common with almost every other local authority in England, Hyndburn has a growing older population in both absolute and relative terms. The share of its older population - those 65 years old or over - was around 14% in 2001 and 18.5% in 2020 (England 16% and 18.5%). The share of older residents in Accrington Town Centre is lower than in the surrounding borough, with 13% of residents aged 65 years and over.

The ethnic mix in Hyndburn is similar to other authorities in East Lancashire, with 88% of the population being White. Pakistani is the largest minority ethnic group, representing just over 9% of the population. Data from the 2011 census show that Accrington Town Centre was more ethnically diverse than the wider borough. Just over 60% of the town centre population in 2011 was White, and 21% was Pakistani. There was significant variation in the ethnic mix between different wards in the town centre. For example, in the Central ward, 34% of the population was White, and 58% was Pakistani. In comparison, in Milnshaw, 92% and 6% were White and Pakistani, respectively.

1. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/population-and-households/population/area-and-population-density/>

2. <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/hyndburn-district/#People>

Deprivation

Hyndburn is currently the 16th most deprived out of 317 local authority districts in England, according to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)³. Deprivation in the area has increased steadily over the last 20 years. In 2004, Hyndburn was ranked as the 58th most deprived local authority. Since then, there has been a consistent rise in the level of deprivation to now.

At a more granular level there is a wide disparity in deprivation across the local authority. According to the IMD, while some parts of the district are relatively affluent, others are amongst the worst-performing areas in England. The most deprived wards in Hyndburn are found in Accrington, some of which are among

England's poorest performing.

The ward level results from the IMD for Accrington show that five of the six wards covering the town centre (Central, Barnfield, Peel, Church and Spring Hill) are amongst the 5% most deprived in the country⁵.

Table 1 shows IMD rankings across the various domains of the index for each ward in the town centre. These statistics highlight the relatively high levels of deprivation across all domains, with the exception of 'barriers to housing and services'.

Table 1: IMD domain ranks for the six wards covering Accrington Town Centre

	IMD domains						
	Employment	Income	Education	Health deprivation and disability	Crime	Barriers to housing and services	Living environment
Barnfield	237	409	1,895	127	376	7,111	1,026
Central	143	60	30	106	663	7,134	4
Church	145	106	331	51	483	7,072	436
Milnshaw	722	1195	2,537	488	1,527	7,159	1,430
Peel	320	338	1,290	100	144	7,177	30
Spring Hill	105	152	117	73	382	7,131	293

NOTE: Rankings in this table are out of 7,180. 1 = most deprived, 7,180 = least deprived

The IMD domain rankings for the Central ward in Accrington highlight some exceptional challenges. The ward ranks in the bottom 2% nationally for income, employment, education, health and living environment. In the domain of 'living environment', which measures the quality of both the 'indoors' living environment (i.e. the quality of housing) and the 'outdoors' living environment (i.e. air quality and road traffic accidents), the Central ward is ranked the 4th most deprived in the country.

3. English Indices of Deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019
5. Bradshaw Advisory, 2021

Table 2: Share of residential population aged 16-64 with NVQ level 2 or above, 2011⁷

Skills & education

Skills levels in Hyndburn are below the average for the North West. The proportion of residents aged 16-64 with NVQ level 4 qualifications and above is 31% in Hyndburn, compared with 39% in the North West and 43% in Great Britain⁶. However, the share of the population holding NVQ level 2 qualifications as a minimum is broadly in line with the regional and national rates. Around 76%

of residents in Hyndburn are qualified to NVQ level 2, compared to 77% and 78% in the North West and Great Britain, respectively.

The Census 2011 data suggests that Accrington Town Centre overall had a lower level of qualifications than Hyndburn, with significant variation from one ward to the next (Table 2).

Hyndburn	Accrington Town Centre					
	Barnfield	Central	Church	Milnshaw	Peel	Spring Hill
63.6%	64.8%	46.8%	55.2%	62.4%	58.4%	49.4%

Although educational outcomes in Accrington fall below national and regional levels, there have been some significant improvements in the town since the turn of the century. In the year 2000 there was no provision for sixth form education in Accrington, whereas now, there are a number of schools and colleges providing this level of education.

Now measured at Key Stage 4 by 'Attainment 8' scores, educational outcomes in Hyndburn also fall below the average level for England. The average Attainment 8 score in Hyndburn was 42.4 in 2018/19, the second-lowest in Lancashire. The average score in the Lancashire County Council area was 46.7, and nationally the average is 50.2⁸.

Health & wellbeing

People in Hyndburn and Accrington suffer from various health and wellbeing issues that affect life expectancy and quality of life. Life expectancy in Hyndburn is 77 years for men and 81 years for women - around 3 and 2 years lower than the national averages for men and women, respectively⁹.

Lifestyle factors also contribute to poorer overall standards of health in Hyndburn. For example, there is a higher than average prevalence of smoking in the district - 15.5% of the population are smokers, compared with 10.4% in England. In addition, almost 69% of adults are classified as overweight or obese compared with 62.8% in England. People in Hyndburn are also significantly less physically active than the rest of the population, with just 59% physically active compared to 66.4% in England.

6. Labour Market Profile, NOMIS, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157094/report.aspx>

7. Census, 2011

8. Lancashire Local Authority, Local Area Profiles, <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/hyndburn-district/>

9. Public Health England, Local Authority Health Profiles, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/gid/1938132701/pat/6/par/E12000002/ati/101/are/E07000120>

Income & unemployment

Hyndburn has a low wage economy. With a high proportion of the workforce in low-skilled jobs, the average gross weekly income for full-time workers is £471.5, which is 16% lower than the average for the North West and 20% lower than the national average.

Unemployment in Hyndburn is slightly higher than the national level, with 5% of people unemployed compared with 4.6% in

Great Britain overall. However, this figure is subject to fluctuation and depends quite heavily on when it is measured.

The 2011 Census suggests that labour market weakness is more acute in most parts of Accrington Town Centre than Hyndburn - aligned with pockets of deprivation - and worse there overall (Table 3).

Table 3: Economically active share of working age population by area, 2011¹⁰

Hyndburn	Accrington Town Centre					
	Barnfield	Central	Church	Milnshaw	Peel	Spring Hill
74.7%	72.4%	55.5%	68.8%	72.4%	75.3%	62.5%

There is also a high level of economic inactivity in Hyndburn - 26% compared to 21% in Great Britain. Of this proportion of economically inactive residents, 86% do not want a job, almost 10% higher than the average national percentage.

Reliance on out-of-work benefits is higher in Hyndburn than the averages for the North West and Great Britain. In the borough 7.4% of the population are currently benefit claimants. Younger people are significantly overrepresented amongst those claiming

benefits. The most recent data shows that 12.8% of people aged 18 to 21 claim out-of-work benefits, compared with 7.7% nationally¹¹.

Of the different types of benefits the working-age population receives in Hyndburn, ESA and Incapacity Benefit are particularly prevalent. Over 9% of working-age residents claim these benefits, compared with just 6% overall in Great Britain. This higher rate is likely reflective of the health and wellbeing issues highlighted above.

10. Census, 2011

11. Labour Market Profile - Hyndburn, NOMIS

Local economy

Despite Accrington’s manufacturing heritage, recent years have seen the reliance on manufacturing decline as service-based sectors grew. However, the town and the wider Hyndburn district maintains a strong bias towards manufacturing. Just over 11% of the workforce in Accrington Town Centre is employed in manufacturing jobs, and in Hyndburn overall the proportion is just over 17%, making this the second-largest employment sector

in the borough. This proportion is significantly higher than the national manufacturing workforce, which stands at 8%¹².

As Table 4 indicates, the majority of manufacturing jobs are outside the town centre, with Milnshaw being the only ward in the town centre that has a higher proportion of manufacturing jobs than Hyndburn overall.

Table 4: Manufacturing workforce in Accrington Town Centre¹³

Accrington Town Centre						Hyndburn	North West	Great Britain
Barnfield	Central	Church	Milnshaw	Peel	Spring Hill			
5.7%	5.0%	11.1%	35.0%	11.1%	6.7%	17.2%	9.3%	8.0%

The dominant workforce sector in Accrington Town Centre and Hyndburn overall is retail and wholesale, accounting for 24% of local jobs at both the town and borough level, substantially higher than the national proportion of 15%. There is considerable

variation in the size of the retail and wholesale sector workforce across Accrington. Table 5 shows the percentage of workers in the industry for the six wards covering the town centre.

Table 5: Retail and wholesale workforce in Accrington Town Centre¹⁴

Accrington Town Centre						Hyndburn	North West	Great Britain
Barnfield	Central	Church	Milnshaw	Peel	Spring Hill			
28.6%	11.7%	55.6%	11.2%	25.0%	6.7%	24.1%	16.3%	15%

Human health and social work also constitutes a significant portion of the local workforce, with 23% of jobs in Accrington and 17.2% in Hyndburn within this sector. Again, the distribution of

workers in this sector is unevenly spread across the town centre, ranging from just under 8% in the Church ward to over 53% in Spring Hill (Table 6).

12. Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey

13. Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey

14. Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey

Table 6: Human health and social work in Accrington Town Centre¹⁵

Accrington Town Centre						Hyndburn	North West	Great Britain
Barnfield	Central	Church	Milnshaw	Peel	Spring Hill			
11.4%	30.0%	7.8%	30.0%	19.4%	53.3%	17.2%	14.2%	13.1%

Higher-skilled jobs make up only a small proportion of the workforce in Accrington and Hyndburn. Less than 4% of jobs in the town centre and the borough as a whole are in professional, scientific and technical activities, compared with 8.8% nationally.

Hyndburn's distribution of workers across the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) hierarchy is skewed towards lower-skilled groups. The SOC hierarchy contains nine major groups of occupations¹⁶ ranging from managers, directors and senior officials in group 1, to low-skilled workers in group 9.

Over one in five of the workforce is employed in the major groups 8 and 9, covering low-skilled jobs such as machine operatives, building caretakers, street vendors and cleaners. By comparison, in the North West overall just over 16% of workers are employed in these groups.

There is a dearth of senior professionals in Hyndburn, with just under 35% of workers employed in SOC major groups 1-3, covering managers, directors and professional occupations. In the North West, 47% of workers are employed in these groups, and in Great Britain, the proportion is half of the workforce¹⁷.

In addition to the analysis above of the local workforce structure in Accrington and Hyndburn, it is important to consider the business start-up rate. New businesses and SMEs help to drive economic growth and create jobs. Table 7 shows that the rate of business start-ups in Hyndburn in 2019 (measured as a percentage of existing businesses) was broadly comparable with the average rates in Lancashire and England.

Table 7: Business counts and start-ups by area, 2019¹⁸

	Existing business count	Business start-ups (% of existing business count)
Hyndburn	2,570	320 (12.5%)
Lancashire	46,790	5,390 (11.5%)
England	2,639,250	349,675 (13.2%)

15. Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey

16. SOC hierarchy: Group 1 - Managers, directors and senior officials; Group 2 - Professional occupations; Group 3 - Associate professional and technical occupations; Group 4: Administrative and secretarial occupations; Group 5 - Skilled trades occupations; Group 6 - Caring, leisure and other service occupations; Group 7 - Sales and customer service occupations; Group 8 - Process, plant and machine operatives; Group 9 - Elementary occupations

17. Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, Apr 2020 - Mar 2021

18. ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register, 2019

Challenges & opportunities

This section sets out the main challenges and opportunities that this Town Centre Investment Plan will both address and build on - the challenges are the things that need to change and the opportunities are avenues we can use to try to change them.

The content has been grouped into the following three themes:

1. Economy and visitors
2. Living standards and housing
3. Education and skills

Economy & visitors

Challenges

The relatively high level of economic inactivity of the working age population in Hyndburn and the high level of economically inactive people who do not want a job, compared to national averages, is a definite challenge in the borough. In Accrington Town Centre overall the situation is even more extreme, with approaching half of all working age people in Central ward economically inactive, according to the 2011 Census (latest published). Economic inactivity – as opposed to unemployment – is more a structural issue than a cyclical one, and unlikely to have moved on significantly in the last ten years.

The disproportionately high number of inactive people on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and its predecessor Incapacity Benefit (IB) suggests a correspondingly disproportionate number of disabled people and those furthest from the labour market. Getting significant numbers of economically inactive people into work is a difficult task. It is also likely that there are low levels of aspiration as another key challenge, especially where it is intergenerational.

High concentrations of economically inactive people are resident in large parts of Accrington Town Centre, which is not only a social problem but also an economic one. Accrington's economy suffers due to a lack of spending power and low demand. Put simply, average disposable incomes are not high enough to support the everyday spending in the town necessary for it to be a vibrant place.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a larger impact on Accrington's economy than other areas because of its larger retail and manufacturing sectors. Accrington's workforce have faced greater disruption than other sectors including less scope for home working, unlike office-based professions, meaning they have faced greater disruption compared to other parts of the country.

Accrington's economy being dominated by retail is problematic on many levels. The first problem is that retail is a relatively low value-added sector, which means lower levels of average pay, in turn reflective of lower levels of productivity (economic

output per worker). As with high levels of economic inactivity, lower average earnings of residents also contributes to a lack of spending power and lower demand in the town.

The second problem is that the fortunes of Accrington are effectively leveraged on the fortunes of physical retail more generally. Given the decline of physical retail nationally with the advent of online shopping, and the adverse impact on the sector of the Covid-19 pandemic, Accrington Town Centre has suffered more than most.

The challenge therefore is to rebalance Accrington's economy, diversifying it away from retail, making it less dependent on the relative success or failure of physical retail (likely to continue declining over the next decade) and less susceptible to economic shocks.

One sector that Accrington could potentially grow is its **accommodation and food service activities** sector, that is most associated with tourism and the visitor economy. Although there is no data for Accrington specifically, Hyndburn's visitor economy is relatively small - it struggles to attract visitors - suggesting a relatively high proportion of spending locally comes from its own residents. This is clearly an issue when resident demand itself is low (as a result of low disposable incomes) and contributes further to the lack of demand in the town's economy.

Hyndburn's population accounts for 6.6% of the Lancashire population. Yet, of an estimated 68.7 million visitor days to Lancashire in 2018, only 2.1 million visitor days (3.1%) were in Hyndburn, hence visitors to Hyndburn per head of population are under half the Lancashire average.¹⁹ The visitor spending figures are even less encouraging, with only £93.5m spent by visitors to Hyndburn of the £4.41bn spent by visitors to Lancashire overall (2.1%).²⁰ In other words, if visitor spending in Hyndburn was in line with the Lancashire average it would be over three times higher and demand in its economy higher.

These findings are consistent with Hyndburn's sectoral make-up: only 4.3% of employees are in the accommodation and food service activities sector, compared to 7.7% nationally. The lack of a visitor economy in Hyndburn - including Accrington - is a significant challenge.

Access to the town by car is reportedly difficult - complicated one way systems abound and people cannot get to where they want to go without some effort and much patience. This is likely to constrict trade throughput and footfall in the town centre and contribute to the ailing fortunes of the town's retail.

Opportunities

There is the opportunity to significantly diversify Accrington's economy away from physical retail, boosting employment opportunities with improved earnings prospects for local residents.

There is an opportunity to support retail through greater trade throughput and footfall with some quick wins around access from out of town, particularly by car, including the reversal of one way systems and junction improvements.

There is the potential to create entry level jobs by diversifying the town's economy not only into higher value-added sectors such as manufacturing, but also into other lower value-added sectors such as accommodation and food service activities. Diversifying the economy in this way could provide a potential first rung on the employment ladder for young and/or disadvantaged residents moving into the labour market.

There is a big opportunity to rapidly grow the visitor economy drawing on the town's heritage assets and beautiful surrounding countryside to bolster demand in the town's economy in the near term. Starting from a low base means even greater potential.

Manufacturing can be a moderately high value-added sector and this is a strength. With the significant manufacturing concentration in Milnshaw ward, where 35% of the workforce is employed in the manufacturing sector, there may be an opportunity to grow this cluster and create high value-added jobs in the town, building on its industrial heritage.

19. <https://www.marketinglancashire.com/app/uploads/2019/10/Lancashire-STEAM-Infographic-2018.pdf>

20. *ibid*

Living standards & housing

Challenges

Accrington has severe pockets of deprivation – five of its six wards are amongst the 5% most deprived wards in England. The situation has been getting worse during the last 20 years. Life is tough for a very significant proportion of residents living in the town and the situation has worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Deprivation is a key overriding challenge, but it is also symptomatic. Digging beneath the surface of overall deprivation, **employment** deprivation and **income** deprivation are particularly acute in Accrington. These are indicative of labour market weakness there, with structural (supply-side) issues, such as low levels of skills or educational attainment, as well as lack of demand for employees from local businesses. The latter is underscored by the fact that Hyndburn has a much lower than national average ‘jobs density’ of only 0.68 jobs per working age resident, versus 0.87 in England.

Income and **education** deprivation in Central ward (amongst the 1% most deprived wards in England on this measure) suggests a concentration of disadvantaged people living there with deep-seated challenges. This includes a lack of qualifications and years of economic inactivity meaning many are far removed from the labour market and dependent on benefits, often because of disability or long-standing health issues.

Specific challenges for residents include:

1. creating employment for local people (creating new businesses, growing those existing) – this in turn rests on getting more demand into the town centre’s economy
2. improving the educational outcomes of school children from disadvantaged backgrounds for the long term, as well as equipping older disadvantaged people for work, giving them a second chance where possible

There is severe **living environment** deprivation in Central and Peel wards – Central being the 4thmost deprived ward in England (of which there are over 7,000) – and this is likely to reflect challenges around the quality of the housing stock. Living

environment deprivation could also reflect traffic accidents and air quality, though this seems unlikely.

Information held by Hyndburn Borough Council suggests poor conditions in the private rented sector pervade and more recent improvements in the selective landlord licensing scheme may not yet have filtered through into the deprivation data. The age and nature of the existing housing stock are likely contributory factors. The living environment therefore registers as another key challenge but more pertinent to these two wards than others in the town.

The town centre is experiencing increasing problems associated with vulnerable single people with ‘chaotic lifestyles’ who are constantly failing tenancies, having been thrown out of their parent’s home with nowhere else to go. This is having an increasingly visible impact in the town which is becoming ‘the destination’ for this vulnerable group. There has been an increase in town centre accommodation through conversions to flats taken up by poorer unemployed single people more generally.

Bringing more demographic diversity to the town and community mix generally is therefore a further challenge.

The town has a high number of vacant dwellings – the share in the housing stock being around 4% is around double the national average. There is also a high number of vacant shops, with around a quarter empty in the town centre, partly reflecting the problems facing physical retail nationally, but still around double the national average.

The high number of vacant buildings has contributed to a ‘hollowing out’ of the town centre. These vacant buildings are also contributory factors to a decline of the built environment and fraying urban fabric over recent decades, leading to dereliction and blight.

There is an oversupply of retail space – whether judged on the number of shops or retail square footage contributing to the high number of vacants, and a dearth of alternative uses for these.

Housing is cheap in Hyndburn, amongst the cheapest in the country, and it is cheaper still in Accrington where house prices

are half the Hyndburn average in the cheapest ward of Barnfield. This cheaper housing attracts a certain demographic and is reflected in low market desirability, including in terms of amenity value.



There is an oversupply of retail space – whether judged on the number of shops or retail square footage contributing to the high number of vacants, and a dearth of alternative uses for these

It has been noted already that health outcomes for people living in Hyndburn overall are much worse than the national average with, for example, more of them smokers and fewer taking regular physical exercise as contributory factors. The deprivation data strongly implies that the health outcomes for the residents of Accrington are far worse than for Hyndburn overall, with a high prevalence of those with longstanding health conditions. Health and disability deprivation in the town centre is amongst the most severe and it is widespread there – all six wards are doing badly; 5 being in the 2% most deprived wards and the sixth in the 10% most deprived wards in England in this respect.

The prevalence of poor mental health of residents in the town, as well as the lack of green spaces in the very centre is an issue in terms of health and wellbeing as well as the aesthetics of the town.

Opportunities

Accrington Town Centre has a broadly stable population and the younger population is not declining, in contrast to many 'left behind' places. Whilst the vulnerable nature of many of these young people is undoubtedly a challenge it could also present an opportunity if they can be turned around and equipped to thrive.

Encouraging more local people from disadvantaged backgrounds – including young people – into work in Accrington more generally could be an opportunity, particularly under current labour market conditions nationally and the shortage of workers. Supporting people into work and off benefits, where possible, is the only way to significantly bolster their incomes, in effect 'killing two birds with one stone' (no employment, low incomes) when it comes to tackling overall deprivation.

There is an opportunity to vastly improve health outcomes with relatively cost-effective interventions, getting more people physically active by encouraging cycling and walking in Accrington. Cheap land is relatively abundant: there is scope to create new outdoor green spaces and improve existing ones. Increased provision of outdoor **green** spaces is linked to better health and wellbeing outcomes.

Cheap housing is an opportunity as it raises the prospect of a 'tipping point' where more affluent first-time buyers and young families priced out of other markets could be attracted to the town, should its fortunes and attractiveness be turned around sufficiently.

The Local Plan review provides a framework to facilitate new housing and employment growth. This includes new employment land allocations and a large-scale nearby housing development, Huncoat Garden Village.

19. <https://www.marketinglancashire.com/app/uploads/2019/10/Lancashire-STEAM-Infographic-2018.pdf>

20. *ibid*

Education & skills

Challenges

There is a strong link between educational attainment and raised productivity (and lifetime earnings), with a premium from having 5 good GCSEs, which is in turn linked to going onto study at A level.

As already described, Hyndburn is similar to the national average when it comes to the educational attainment of residents to NVQ level 2 or above – having 5 good GCSEs or equivalent. However, there is a significant divergence when it comes to NVQ level 3 or above – having A-levels or more.

Some stakeholders have commented that there is a lack of A-level schooling provision in Hyndburn although others highlight that there has been some improvement in recent years. The lack of educational attainment beyond GCSE level, both for older adults and young people going through school now or recently, is a clear challenge and one that is likely just as relevant to Accrington as to Hyndburn, if not more so.

There is significant polarisation of educational attainment in secondary schools in and around Accrington specifically, with attainment at half the secondary schools significantly below the national average, and two judged to require improvement by Ofsted. Again, this polarisation is likely to reflect the gap between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those not, to a significant degree. There is therefore a clear challenge around encouraging more of Accrington's young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to stay on at school, partly around gaining better GCSE results. And whilst A-level provision may have improved, there is more to do in this respect as an additional challenge.

Arguably the more serious challenge is the high concentration of those with no qualifications living in the town centre. The Census 2011 data (most recent available) shows that around 20% of Hyndburn's residents have no qualifications versus around 15% nationally, not massively dissimilar. Yet taken on aggregate across half of Accrington's wards – namely Central, Church and

Spring Hill - around a third of residents have no qualifications. This is a major challenge and labour market barrier for these people.

Turning to enterprise, significant economic growth comes from new start-ups and SMEs. Start-ups are also an indicator of entrepreneurship. Business start-ups (as a percentage of existing businesses) in Hyndburn in 2019 were broadly in line with the Lancashire and national averages, according to the ONS Inter-Departmental Business Register. However, it is observed that business failures (again, as a share of existing businesses) in Hyndburn and Lancashire are much higher than the national average. So there is a challenge for Hyndburn, including Accrington as its administrative capital, around arresting failures and improving the longevity of start-up businesses.

Opportunities

Extra adult learning provision could be an 'quick win' to lift the educational attainment of higher-potential disadvantaged young people. This could be through GCSE retakes for those that have left school recently, or within the last 5 years, and targeted elementary adult learning for disadvantaged people with no qualifications living in the most deprived wards of the town, giving them a 'second chance'.

There is an opportunity to build on the recent expansion of A-level course provision - with the precedent set - throughout Hyndburn including in Accrington, to plug the gap in A-level attainment with the rest of the country.


An abundance of cheap commercial premises (including retail) in Accrington may enable a better provision of shared office space and business incubator hubs to support start-ups.

Hyndburn - including Accrington - also has good average broadband speeds and is in the top 50% of local authorities in England and Wales for download speeds specifically. Over 70% of premises in Hyndburn have access to ultrafast broadband, which is very good.²¹ Combined with cheap office space, this may present an opportunity to grow Accrington's digital economy.

21. Connected Nations 2020 - Ofcom



The Approach



Addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities that Accrington has to offer requires a considered and systematic approach. In order to help build a long-term and sustainable future for Accrington we ensured that a broad and diverse range of views were taken into account from a wide range of stakeholders.

We conducted polling of Hyndburn residents to find out what they thought of the town in which they live, what is good and bad about it and what they think could be improved to make Accrington a better place to live and work for them and future generations. We set out and agreed on some guiding principles to help us in our decision making.

We took all the feedback, views and information from this process, and directed by the guiding principles, created a new vision for Accrington Town Centre.

The Approach is broken down into:

1. Engagement
2. Views of Hyndburn residents
3. Guiding principles
4. Our future vision for Accrington Town Centre.

Engagement

Accrington has many passionate local business owners, volunteers, stakeholders and residents who want to see it become a more prosperous and thriving place once again. Stakeholders also possess a huge wealth of knowledge, expertise and ideas that were crucial in helping to shape the direction and content of this Town Centre Investment Plan.

In March 2020 a team of experts - including Professor Cathy Parker, Dr Steve Millington and Dr Chloe Steadman - from the High Streets Task Force undertook some diagnostic work and interviews with a range of stakeholders from the town. Their report identified that the main obstacle to improving the town for businesses and residents was the lack of collaboration and structures to encourage joint decision making and discussion.

As a result of the work of the High Street Task Force a Town Centre Stakeholder Group was created, meeting quarterly and consisting of 24 members from a diverse range of sectors, backgrounds and perspectives important to the town (full list of members can be found in Appendix A).

In June 2021, following an open competition Hyndburn Borough Council appointed Bradshaw Advisory as consultants to assist in further diagnostic work, data gathering, stakeholder engagement and advice on decision making processes in the creation of this plan.

As a result, it was advised that a smaller board would be formed as a subset of the wider Stakeholder Group to expedite decision making as well as a small core team which would form a Delivery Group, meeting weekly. In June 2021 a Town Centre Partnership Board was established consisting of 13 members (full list of members can be found in Appendix B). The Delivery Group consists of Bradshaw Advisory, the Chief Executive of Hyndburn Borough Council and other senior council officers. The Partnership Board has met monthly to constructively and robustly discuss the strategic direction of this plan, its structure, background data and analysis, modelling and intervention proposals as they arose.

Collaboratively, this group created and decided on the new vision for Accrington, accepted the findings of the diagnostic work

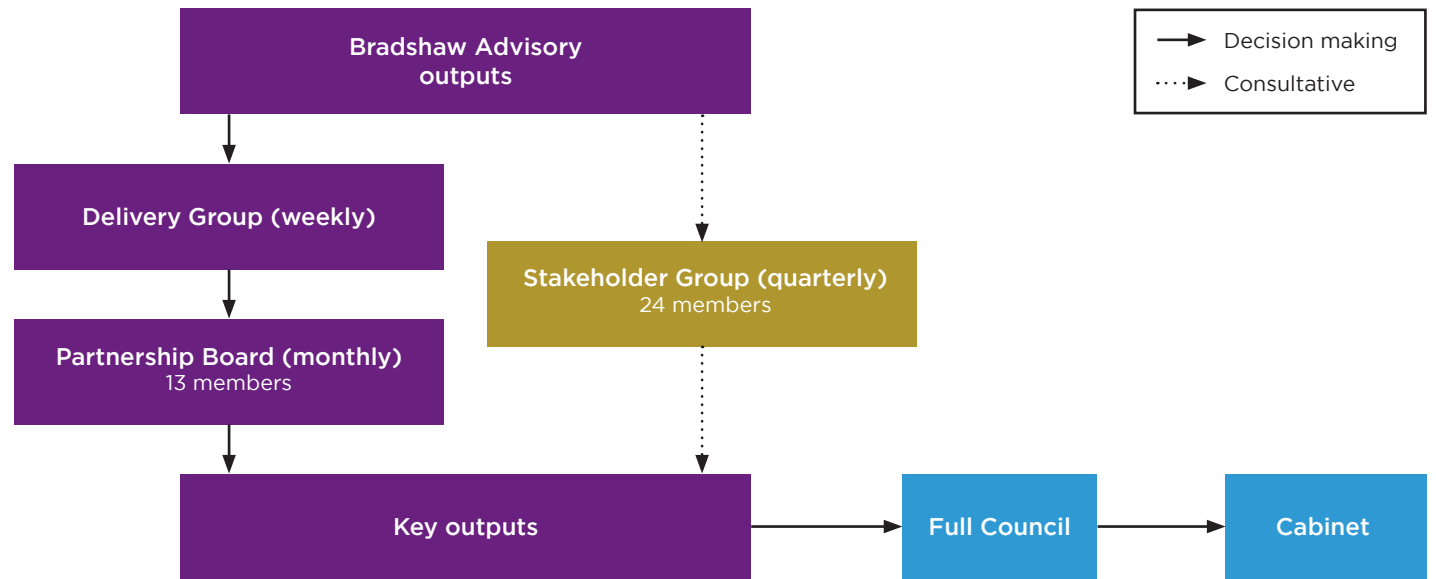
undertaken by Bradshaw Advisory (summarised in the context section of this document) and the guiding principles which were used to filter and select schemes for inclusion in this Town Centre Investment Plan. These groups will continue to meet on a rolling basis to oversee the implementation of this plan and the application process for various grants and funding packages.

In addition to the Town Centre Stakeholder Group and Partnership Board meetings, Bradshaw Advisory has undertaken over 25 stakeholder meetings and interviews and presented and

discussed findings with all elected members from Hyndburn Borough Council. Representative polling was also commissioned with British Polling Council member Survation to understand the views and wishes of the residents of Hyndburn (discussed in detail in the following section).

A diagram explaining the decision making process and how the Delivery Group, Town Centre Stakeholder Group and Town Centre Partnership Board interact with each other and make decisions is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Governance structure and sign off process



Polling result from Hyndburn residents

British Polling Council member Survation was commissioned to undertake representative polling of the residents of Hyndburn. A representative poll (i.e. a sample which mirrors the demographics of the local area) of 15 questions was conducted by telephone between the 10th and 23rd of August 2021 of all residents aged 18+ with a sample size of 505 people.

Because only a sample of the full population was interviewed, all results are subject to margin of error, meaning that not all differences are statistically significant. For example, in a question where 50% (the worst case scenario as far as margin of error is concerned) gave a particular answer, with a sample of 505 it is 95% certain that the 'true' value will fall within the range of plus or minus 4.4% from the sample result. That means that, in simple terms, when results are within $\pm 4.4\%$ of each other they should be treated as registering the same level of response.

Full data tables of all 15 questions can be found in Appendix C, but in the following paragraphs we discuss some of the key findings and conclusions that can be drawn.

Around half of Hyndburn residents visited Accrington Town Centre weekly or daily (including to work) with the other half visiting once or twice a month (26%), a few times a year (14%) or never (12%).

A significant majority of residents felt that the provision of shops and retail, restaurants and cafes, pubs and nightlife and green and communal spaces were all poor. The range of 'leisure' activities such as music and food festivals, children's activities or public art works were also rated very poorly. 85% of residents did not feel proud when they visited Accrington Town Centre, with 77% of people thinking it was a poor place to visit and 65% thinking it was poor for job opportunities.

On the more positive side, 68% of residents liked Accrington's historic buildings and architecture, with around a third of people highlighting the Market Hall, good transport links, the Town Hall and sense of community as things they liked.

Only 13% of people liked the Accrington Arndale, with only 6% liking the range and choice of shops in Accrington Town Centre.

A majority of residents felt that there were too many discount, pound shops and charity shops as well as too many betting shops and takeaway food venues. Conversely, a majority of residents felt that there were too few small/independent shops, shops selling locally sourced goods and produce, independent cafes/restaurants and large chain stores. A large proportion (75%) of residents said they felt there were too few venues for entertainment (other than betting shops).

90% of residents felt Accrington is in need of regeneration and investment with a majority thinking there was a strong sense of community and that they felt safe when they visited (50% and 64% respectively). In terms of what needs improving, the top five suggestions were shopping (68% of respondents), restaurants and cafes (36%), nightlife (27%), aesthetics and how the town looks (27%) and finally events and activities (19%).

Approximately as many Hyndburn residents choose to shop in Blackburn or Manchester as Accrington, with Manchester selected as the first choice of residents (24%) for eating or socialising.

In summary, a large number of local people are rarely visiting Accrington Town Centre as they feel that the Arndale, choice of shops, cafes and restaurants are poor, instead choosing to go to Blackburn or Manchester. When they do visit, people like the historic buildings, architecture and heritage of the place - highlighting the Market Hall and Town Hall in particular - and would like to see investment that improves the shopping, eating and drinking experience moving away from 'too many' betting, charity and discount shops. There was particular fondness for small independent traders and those selling local produce and goods.

Guiding Principles

The Partnership Board agreed on a set of guiding principles to help to realise the vision and guide decision making. These were:

- Data and evidence-led in our decision making (where possible).
- Heritage-led regeneration that makes Accrington's heritage assets fit for the future and uses them as a catalyst for wider economic growth.
- Interventions (taken together) will seek to reduce the total retail unit provision.
- We will seek to increase the quality and choice of cafes, restaurants and bars both during the day and evening.
- Interventions will align with our vision including the aesthetics of a traditional market town.
- We will seek to reach new audiences, particularly targeting the 2.7 million people (with more than £30bn of disposable income) within a 40 minute drive of Accrington that will help to boost economic growth and opportunities for local people.
- We will be prepared to take tough decisions and act in the best interests of the people of Accrington which may not align with the interests of individual stakeholders, but has the support of wider stakeholders.
- Where appropriate we will seek external organisations and individuals with the right skills and expertise to run, manage or deliver interventions.
- We will keep the 'visitor journey' at the forefront of our minds throughout Accrington's transformation.
- Interventions will seek to improve the connectivity, accessibility and flow of the routes into and around our town centre.
- We will diversify our housing stock to attract and cater to a wider range of demographics and income levels than are currently provided for.

- We will champion and encourage local independent businesses, especially start-ups and those set up and run by a new generation of Accrington entrepreneurs.
- We will hold a "can do" mindset and look for solutions and ways forward rather than blockers.
- We will aim to secure and maximise investment funding from the right blend of private, public and voluntary sectors.
- As the transformation of Accrington will take time, we will commit to working together collaboratively and in a constructive manner for the long term.

Our future vision for Accrington Town Centre

Through our wide ranging engagement with a variety of diverse stakeholders and specific feedback on Accrington, including from the above polling, we created a new vision for Accrington Town Centre to drive its regeneration, together as a whole community.

This vision represents the future Accrington that residents and visitors, young and old want to see. It underpins and guides the strategy and interventions presented in this Town Centre Investment Plan, detailed in the following chapter.

The Vision

We are a vibrant, bustling and proud market town steeped in industrial, cultural and architectural heritage. Visitors and locals come together to sample the best of Lancashire's homegrown produce and diverse mix of local eateries, browse our thriving independent shops and cultural venues and relax in our family-friendly and green spaces.

Surrounded by beautiful Lancashire countryside, **Accrington is the gateway to the Pennines, Lake District, Ribble Valley and Forest of Bowland making the most of its unique landscapes and ample cycling and walking routes.** Our attractive, inclusive and accessible town hosts numerous popular events, has diverse leisure facilities for all ages, and supports its flourishing business community to prosper and grow.



We have a remarkable legacy built on the hard work, dedication and entrepreneurship of the people of Accrington - we made bricks for the Empire State Building.

We have a **remarkable legacy built on the hard work, dedication and entrepreneurship of the people of Accrington** - we made bricks for the Empire State Building, revolutionised the textile trade by inventing the spinning jenny and mechanised cotton printing, and house the largest collection of Tiffany glass in Europe. **We are proud of our history and look forward to a renewed and exciting future.**


We will do this by:

- Creating "The Accrington Acre" (to be known as "The Acre") by transforming the area around the Town Square and nearby architectural highlights into the town's 'anchor' and central food, drink, shopping and leisure hub and establishing a range of specialist markets to cater to the people of Accrington and visitors alike.
- Revamping the Market Hall into an independent food and drink destination - recognised across the North - that showcases the best of our local produce and provides a hub for the night-time economy, independent retailers and local entrepreneurs.
- Improving the facades of outlets in "The Acre" creating a welcoming feel and more engaging image in-keeping with existing heritage assets and historic market town.
- Creating a more sustainable and healthy environment with new green spaces for visitors, locals and families to play, meet, eat, relax and spend time together, as well as an engaging programme of town centre culinary, cultural and community events.
- Improving the connectivity, accessibility and flow of the routes into and around our town centre to boost footfall and promote trade, with a revamped 'Acorn Trail', improved parking and vintage signage.
- Modernising and diversifying our housing stock to attract and cater to a wider range of demographics and income levels.
- Championing and encouraging local independent businesses, especially start-ups and those set up and run by a new generation of Accrington entrepreneurs.
- Partnering with a range of organisations who have the skills, expertise and focus to deliver or operate local events and assets.

The Strategy

Hyndburn
BOROUGH COUNCIL





This section sets out a way forward for Accrington having set out the context - including the challenges and opportunities. The Strategy brings together an agreed future vision for Accrington over a ten year period, sets out how we gathered information and selected interventions for the town centre to meet the vision and what outcomes we would like to see.

To ensure these outcomes are reached, a range of town centre interventions have been proposed in order to realise the vision. This process is detailed in a 'logic model'.

All our findings were assessed rigorously to ensure that only the best interventions for Accrington were taken forward for inclusion in the Town Centre Investment Plan schemes and for consideration in future proposals. We have put forward a range of interventions for Accrington Town Centre to achieve these outcomes.

This chapter includes 1) strategic objectives 2) accrington town centre - logic model 3) assessment and development of potential interventions 4) proposed interventions 5) logic and rationale of the proposed interventions 6) strategic alignment with Local Plan and Accrington Area Action Plan.

Strategic objectives

We will measure our overall success against the following objectives. These are SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic, timebound) and 'outcome-based', linking to the outcomes in the logic model presented later and to realising the vision.

Within a 10-year timeframe of the Town Centre Investment Plan being adopted:

- Increased visitor and tourist numbers to Accrington Town Centre and commensurately increased footfall in the primary shopping areas, and increased spending per head
- An improved and diversified the retail offer, including more independent shops and retailers than currently
- Reduced dependency of Accrington on the retail sector for jobs - with commensurate growth in jobs in other sectors, including in food and drink, manufacturing, and office-based professions
- Fewer empty shops and other empty commercial premises in Accrington
- Improved living environment and diversity of household types living in Accrington Town Centre
- More of Accrington's residents enjoying green spaces, and walking and/or cycling regularly
- More of Accrington's residents from disadvantaged backgrounds - including young people - gaining a qualification for the first time, and more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining 5 good GCSEs

Outcome 1: Increased visitor and tourist numbers

Aggregate demand in Accrington Town Centre (i.e. spending by people) is low as a result of too few visitors and the generally low spending power of residents, impaired further by a lower than average economic activity (and employment) rate. Significantly improved disposable income of residents may take many years to achieve, even decades. Attracting visitors and their spending power into the town centre is the quickest route to increasing aggregate demand in the town's economy. Visitor spend is only 1/3 of the Lancashire average which suggests huge potential.

To do this, we need to:

- provide a clear draw and focus to the town centre and a reason to visit Accrington supported by an effective marketing and tourism strategy
- improve access to the town centre by car
- create a more joined-up town centre

Outcome 2: An improved and diversified retail offer

The quality of the retail on offer in Accrington needs to rise as well as decreasing the number of retail outlets, many of which are left vacant. This will both improve the town's image and reputation as a retail destination. This will encourage more of the town's residents to spend there and help increase its draw to visitors.

To do this, we need to:

- actively encourage existing higher-end retail to remain and discourage lower end retail
- improve the appeal of the existing building stock and make retail premises - and the public realm generally - more attractive to retail tenants
- build on existing successful retail clusters and try to establish new ones

Outcome 3: Reduced dependency on the retail sector

Again, a key reason Accrington's fortunes have declined so much over the last two decades is because it is intertwined with the fortunes of physical retail, which has been hit by the rise of online shopping and out of town retail parks since the early 2000s. The local economy needs to be diversified away from retail not just because of this trend, but also to increase its resilience - physical retail has been impacted enormously by COVID-19. Retail is also low value added, meaning that it locks in lower-than-average earnings for those working in it, contributing to the low wage/low demand local economy. Nearly 1-in-4 employee jobs in Accrington Town Centre are in the retail & wholesale sector.

To do this, we need to:

- grow under-represented sectors e.g. create a significant high quality food and drink offer in the town centre
- boost high potential/growth business sectors
- ensure better survival rates of business start-ups

Outcome 4: Fewer empty shops

Around 1-in-4 retail premises in Accrington are vacant (around 50% of the Arndale Centre is vacant or charity shops) and this reflects not just a substantial lack of demand, but also a significant oversupply in the demand-supply equation. There is 3.7 square meters of retail space per resident in Accrington Town Centre compared to 2.5 in Hyndburn and 1.8 in England. Addressing this significant imbalance will require both increased demand (and enticement of the right types of retail tenants), reduced supply of retail space, and more productive and imaginative use of our spaces more generally.

To do this, we need to:

- reduce supply of retail premises - make better use of land and buildings that serves the public interest, which includes reducing the number of retail premises via changes of use or demolition
- increase demand for retail premises by increasing footfall and spend (links to outcome 1)

Outcome 5: Improved living environment and diversity of household types

Hyndburn has become much more deprived relative to other English local authorities over the last 20 years and this trend looks set to continue. Deprivation is concentrated in and around Accrington with all but one of its wards within the most 5% deprived in England.

To do this we need to:

- tackle head on the issues related to the living environment (indoors and out) in the most disadvantaged wards, poor housing conditions in existing properties, including housing renewal
- reduce the number of empty residential properties
- increase the appeal of Accrington to more 'middle' income groups of different tenures - e.g. first time buyers, to increase community mix and reduce social ghettoisation

Outcome 6: More residents enjoying green spaces and walking / cycling regularly

Accrington's health deprivation is the worst of its deprivation metrics. Health deprivation measures the risk of premature death and impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. Being physically active helps to improve physical and mental health outcomes and proximity to green spaces also supports mental wellbeing.

To do this we need to:

- create more opportunities for people to cycle and/or walk
- provide a greener town centre environment and proximate open accessible green spaces for residents to enjoy

Outcome 7: More adults from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining good qualifications

More of Accrington's young people need to be getting 5 'good GCSEs' - again, this is one of the most important determinants of going onto further education and a key determinant of increased life-time earnings (and productivity). But disadvantaged older residents, too, need opportunities to participate in training and work, especially those with no qualifications.

To do this we need to:

- support and encourage more disadvantaged adults, especially those who have underachieved at school, including recently, to undertake further learning which could include: GCSE retakes; further education studying for A-levels or T-levels; or
- other training and skilling (including apprenticeships/flexible apprenticeships)

Accrington Town Centre - Logic model

The logic model for Accrington links the context of the problems this Town Centre Investment Plan is trying to address, to the proposed policy interventions to address them, or the inputs, and then to the envisaged outputs from these policy interventions, and then onto the outcomes - i.e. what we are trying to achieve. Again, the outcomes are the same thing as the Town Centre Investment Plan's objectives, because the objectives are outcome-based. Finally, the impacts are on the standard of living, quality of life or wellbeing, generally at the societal level.

CONTEXT	INPUTS
Decades of relative economic decline but stable population	Consultation and strategic planning, stakeholder group, expert consultants
Heavy economic dependence on retail sector	Engagement with community groups / voluntary sector & harnessing of social capital
Low employment rate, high economic inactivity	Investments to acquire empty buildings by consent
High proportion of disadvantaged people with low or no qualifications, poor aspiration	Partnerships to refurbish / repurpose and bring buildings back into use
Low average earnings	Changes in land and property use for the needs of the present day
Loss of footfall and business: shops, cafes, pubs	Partnerships with, and support for, businesses in marginal sectors to grow (food & drink)
Significant oversupply of retail space compared to other town centres	Investment to demolish / green
High proportion of vacant shopping premises: 'Hollowed out' town centre	Investment in historic building facades
Relatively poor night-time economy	Investment in public realm and public open space (e.g. cobblestones)
High proportion of vacant dwellings	Review and improve traffic management arrangements to improve car access to town centre
Decline of built environment / urban fabric / dereliction / blight	Investment in cycle routes, pedestrian routes, signposting
Impeded access to town centre, especially by car	Investment in better access roads and car parking for out-of-town visitors
Increased deprivation since 2000 and significant concentrations of severe deprivation (especially health)	Investment in / design a '2nd chance' education signposting, prep and bursaries scheme for disadvantaged residents

OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<p>Improved urban fabric, including conservation of historic buildings, focussed around the 'Accrington Acre'</p> <p>Refurbished premises available to let, including some for a different use class</p> <p>Revamped Market Hall as a well-known food and drink destination</p> <p>More open green spaces in the town centre</p> <p>New user-friendly cycle routes and pedestrian crossings</p> <p>Improved road junctions and one way systems (better 'gateways') to increase access to the town centre by car</p> <p>New additional car parking spaces for visitors</p> <p>Greened urban landscape and cobbled streets and signage for an historic market town aesthetic</p> <p>'2nd chance' reach out programme - to disadvantaged adults / young people who underachieved at school - for further learning with funding for x places a year</p>	<p>Improved visitor (tourist) numbers and footfall</p> <p>Increased demand / spend from visitors, and people stopping off</p> <p>More demand-induced job opportunities for town residents, including in food and drink and growth sectors</p> <p>Increased demand / spend from Accrington's residents</p> <p>Increased and more diverse retail offer, especially independent shops and retailers</p> <p>Increased and more diverse food and drink operators</p> <p>Accrington is a well-known town centre destination steeped in industrial, cultural and architectural heritage</p> <p>Fewer empty shops and premises and blight</p> <p>More diverse, modern and high-quality housing offer</p> <p>More people enjoying and relaxing in green spaces</p> <p>More people walking and cycling and taking exercise</p> <p>More disadvantaged adults young and older gaining better qualifications or qualifications for the first time</p>	<p>Higher economic growth and economic output, including per head</p> <p>Higher proportion of people, including disadvantaged adults, in work and economically active</p> <p>Improved mental and physical health of town residents, improved wellbeing</p> <p>Enhanced civic pride, with a stronger sense of community and purpose</p> <p>A diversified local economy less susceptible to economic shocks</p> <p>Reduced deprivation in the town's deprivation blackspots</p> <p>Reduced health, living environment, and employment deprivation</p> <p>A happier, healthier and fairer place to live and work, for those of all ages and backgrounds</p>

Assessment & development of potential interventions

An expression of interest process was run between June and September 2021 seeking ideas for possible interventions to improve the town centre of Accrington from Hyndburn Borough Council, the Town Centre Stakeholder Group and Town Centre Partnership Board. Some ideas for potential schemes had already been put forward following the High Street Task Force work prior to June 2021.

Bradshaw Advisory established a rigorous and evidence-led assessment process for all schemes that were put forward, including gatekeeping criteria, to which schemes must receive two 'yes' ratings in order to be considered further. This process was based on the HM Treasury 'Five Case Model' which looks at the strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management cases of each proposal. In each sub-criteria of those five cases, interventions were given a score from 1-5 with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest (see tables below). The Town Centre Partnership Board approved this approach, as well as the vision for Accrington and a set of guiding principles to assist decision making on the 7th September 2021.

Figure 4: Assessment process



The gatekeeping criteria were set to ensure interventions aligned well with the adopted vision and guiding principles as well as being likely to provide more benefits (both economic and social) to the town than the cost of the intervention.

A total of 26 schemes or possible interventions were put forward with significantly varying amounts of detail and information. All schemes went through the assessment process and were scored independently by Bradshaw Advisory and their team of experts. The results of the interim assessments were presented to the Town Centre Partnership Board and scheme promoters were given an additional two weeks to provide supporting information or do further work. Assessment scores were finalised and presented to the Town Centre Partnership Board on the 4th November 2021.

In addition to this assessment process, schemes were placed into one of four categories to indicate their future potential if further scheme development work was done:

1. Strong fit with vision and principles/strong (or likely to be strong) benefits case
2. Strong fit with vision and principles/weak (or likely to be weak) benefits case
3. Weak fit with vision and principles/strong (or likely to be strong) benefits case
4. Weak fit with vision and principles/weak (or likely to be strong) benefits case

Schemes that were assessed to fit into categories 1 and 2 are set out below.

Proposed interventions

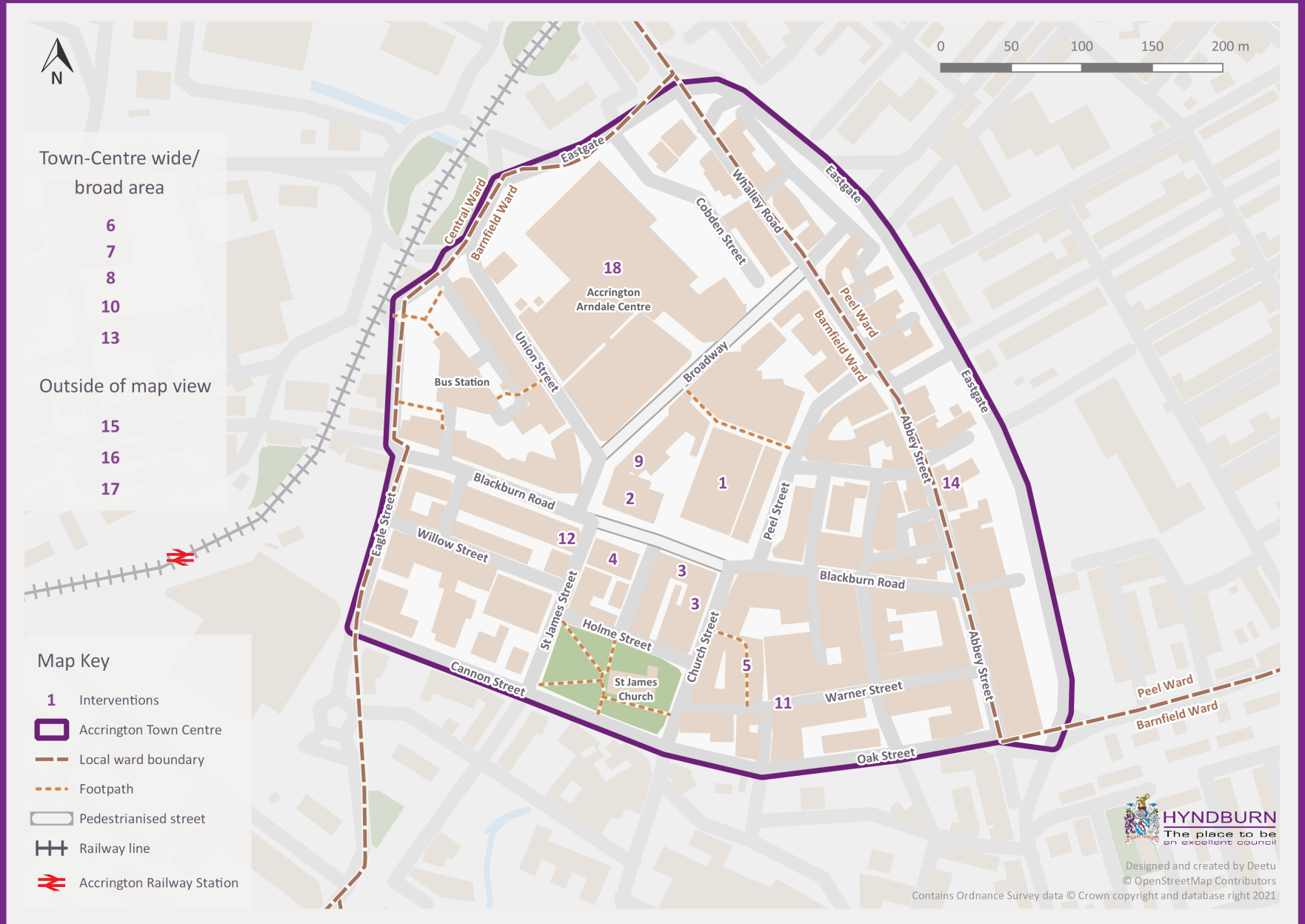


Figure 5: Locations of proposed interventions in the town centre

Achieving the vision for the future of Accrington Town Centre requires a coherent package of interventions right across the town. These interventions - whether delivered by Hyndburn Borough Council or third parties - will improve the quality of life and experience of the town for residents and, at the same time, boost visitor numbers and help create a thriving visitor economy.

Below we have set out a series of potential interventions which can and will fulfil our vision for the future of Accrington. Some interventions are at the conceptual and aspirational stage and others are a more detailed proposal of how they may be delivered and implemented. A summary of the ideas, irrespective of who would deliver them and the stage they are at, are described in the following pages.

1. Market Hall

Accrington's Market Hall is one of the town's most prized historical assets yet demand for market stalls within the hall has fallen dramatically over the last few years. In 2015 the ground floor was 89% occupied, whereas in 2021, occupancy has fallen to 52%. What's more, the Market Hall has been consistently losing money with combined net losses of £836,000 over the last three years.

The scale of the Market Hall means that it is impacted by the same oversupply of retail units that affect the Arndale and other parts of the town centre. As a result, occupancy as of August 2021 is just 65%, and the majority of retailers provide lower-end offerings. Occupancy rates differ substantially between the two levels of the Market Hall - the ground floor is currently 52% occupied, while the upper-level balcony is operating at 91%.

Accrington Town Centre itself suffers from a lack of high-quality eating and drinking establishments. Key to regenerating the town centre will be establishing an 'anchor' or 'Accrington Acre' to draw people living outside of Accrington in, to visit the town.

It is proposed that the Market Hall and town square would form the centre of the Accrington Acre. We propose the Market Hall is refurbished and transformed in whole or in part into a higher-end eating, drinking and cultural venue with more modern facilities for small independent traders.

2. Town Hall façade improvements

The Town Hall is an architectural highlight of Accrington. The recently completed £2 million project to create a town square in front of the hall has begun to rejuvenate the area. With these improvements the town square is beginning to work as a focal point for people visiting Accrington. The next stage will require facade repairs and lighting to the Town Hall to enhance this historical building and increase the aesthetic appeal of the wider town square and Accrington Acre.

A programme of facade improvements to restore worn and defective aspects of the building will further improve the exterior

appearance of the Town Hall building and protect this cultural asset for future generations and visitors alike.

3. Transformation of properties at 43-59 Blackburn Road and 2-18 Church Street

Despite being in a prime location, many of the shops on the section of Blackburn Road adjoining the town square/Accrington Acre and Church Street are vacant, in a poor state of repair or do not encourage the visitor economy. This 'run-down' look in what is a prominent part of the town centre detracts from the aesthetics of the Town Hall, Market Hall and recently developed town square. We would like to see properties on these streets renovated and repurposed with the ground floors ideally suited to independent cafes, restaurants and higher-end retailers.

Our analysis does not support the creation of additional residential units within the town centre as part of Accrington's transformation however there may be potential for transforming the upper floors into co-working space or higher quality, modern commercial space to support Hyndburn's entrepreneurs, independent traders or public sector providers. Alternatively, it could form part of an arts, culture and heritage offer.

If facade improvements were carried out on these buildings it could bring them up to a standard in-keeping with the vision for a high-end and vibrant town square and complement the heritage assets located on or near the town square.

4. Transformation of Burton's Chambers

Burton's Chambers, situated immediately opposite the Town Hall is currently completely unoccupied apart from a betting shop (Betfred) on the corner with St James' Street. We would like to see this important Art Deco heritage building brought back into use by repurposing its ground floor premises into independent cafes, restaurants and higher-end retailers which would include improving the facade of the building.

Our analysis does not support the creation of additional residential

units within the town centre as part of Accrington's transformation however there may be potential for transforming the upper floors into co-working space or higher quality, modern commercial premises to support Hyndburn's entrepreneurs and independent traders or public sector providers. Alternatively, it could form part of an arts, culture and heritage offer.

5. Transformation of the Victorian Arcade

The listed Victorian Arcade connects the Market Hall, Blackburn Road and Church Street with the successful independent retailers of Warner Street. It is uniquely positioned as a potential gateway from the heart of town (Accrington Acre) to Warner Street. The Grade II listed building is an architectural highlight in the town and is thought to be one of the first indoor shopping arcades of its kind in the country.

As with other previously vibrant and successful shopping destinations in Accrington, the Victorian Arcade has declined and with years of neglect has seen parts of the building fall into disrepair. It now suffers from the similar low occupancy and footfall seen elsewhere in the town.

We would like to see the Victorian Arcade renovated to attract higher-end independent retailers and traders that complement those already operating on Warner Street.

6. Improved streetscapes

At eye level a number of streets are unpleasant and unappealing to look at. As we are aiming to gain a larger share of the visitor economy, create the Accrington Acre concept and capitalise on our assets as a Northern market town, improving their visual impact forms an important element of our interventions.

Important gateways and streets linking into the Accrington Acre should be aesthetically improved in a style in keeping with a historic market town. This could include more sympathetic street lighting and the cobblestoning of selected streets in whole or in part.

7. Improved shop fronts (supporting the Accrington Acre)

To improve the visual appeal of streets, it is proposed that the council will work with shop owners and landlords to provide upgraded, more historically sympathetic and aesthetically appealing shop frontages within this area.

The council will also develop a 'style guide' for any upgrades accessing the support of public funds. In the first instance, shops that are in close proximity to the Accrington Acre (Church Street, Warner Street, sections Abbey Street and the stretch of Blackburn Road between Church and Abbey Street) will be prioritised for investment.

8. Improved signage

Navigating into and around Accrington is reportedly difficult for locals as well as non-local visitors. If the town centre vision for it to become a visitor destination is to be realised, it would benefit from improved signage for pedestrians and car users. Signage on major roads could be improved to raise awareness of the Accrington Acre and draw in and direct visitors to attractions. Within the town centre, improved signage (done in a historically sympathetic style) at street level would aid those navigating the town either by road or on foot.

9. Upgrade the Town Hall Extension

The Town Hall Extension is a listed building extending from the rear of the Town Hall and down along Broadway. It is currently largely unoccupied and in need of renovation both internally and externally to protect it and make it fit for modern day occupation and needs. The proposal is to make facade improvements and renovate the interior of the building, bringing it up to a standard suitable for rent on the open market.

10. Junction access improvements

Eastgate is a main arterial road in Accrington, linking the town centre to the east and north. As a heavily-used road it is often the first view of the town centre for people travelling into Accrington, and therefore, its appearance along with its functionality is important. Proposed improvements would see the creation of a boulevard along Eastgate, with the removal of some of the existing barriers to improve the experience of transport users and particularly pedestrians.

Additional alterations at several gateway junctions around the town centre are proposed to improve access by car and those on bicycles. The stretch of Whalley Road between Broadway and Peel Street would be opened up to two-way traffic and the bus lane removed. Improvements at the junction of Burnley Road and Eastgate to open the carriageway would allow vehicular and pedestrian access through to Whalley Road. Direct road access would be provided via Abbey Street into the town centre from Manchester Road. The operation of the one way system around St James's church would be reconsidered. Finally, improvements would be made at the junction of Paradise Street and St James' Street to aid crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.

11. Warner Street footway

Warner Street is currently one of the most popular and successful shopping streets in the town centre. Its continued success is a vital part of the vision for Accrington. It is proposed that a full highway-width footway on the street could be created to improve the shopping experience and increase the capacity of the street to accommodate growing numbers of shoppers and visitors.

12. Repurpose old Yorkshire Bank building

The former Yorkshire Bank building sits in a prime location adjacent to the town square and Accrington Acre and is another example of Accrington's high quality architecture. The building

has potential to complement the town square and the other transformed properties on it. We would like to see that building brought back into use potentially as the location for a restaurant or cafe, a community space, museum or commercial office.

13. Greening of the Town Centre

A lack of green space in Accrington has been identified by stakeholders and the work of the High Street Task Force. Improving existing green spaces or creating new ones will not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of the town centre, but can also provide benefits to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike. There is potential to create or improve green spaces at several sites around the town centre which should be explored and progressed further.

14. Development of Charlie Brown's site

Redevelopment has been suggested for the former Charlie Brown's site on the corner of Abbey Street and Stanley Street. A proposal is for the demolition of the old Charlie Brown store on the site, to be replaced with the creation of a car park, and a small amount of green space replacing the disused buildings on Abbey Street. The redevelopment would provide a more welcoming entrance to the town centre and additional parking capacity.

15. Park and ride scheme

Achieving the vision set out for the town centre will see visitor numbers to Accrington increase. With this in mind, it may be that a park and ride scheme needs to be established in the future to bring people easily and conveniently into the town centre. Clearly this would be dependent on demand, the success of realising the vision and technology and usage patterns at that time.

16. Restoration/renovation of old police station

The former Accrington police station is a Grade II listed building on the edge of the town centre which closed in 2016. We would like to see this asset restored and repurposed for hospitality and/or another visitor attraction such as an escape room.

17. Platts Lodge Waterpark

Platt's Lodge, to the south-east of Accrington, contains a small body of water on a former industrial site. It is proposed that this site could potentially become a waterpark and visitor's centre/cafe. The facility would act as a visitor centre for the Woodnook Vale and Peel Park Nature reserves (the two largest local Nature reserves in Lancashire) and provide a hub for organised walks and activities. The waterpark could feature facilities for a variety of activities, such as kayaking and paddleboarding.

The waterpark would serve the dual purpose of improving the quality of life for residents and young people, and at the same time, providing a visitor attraction to stimulate Accrington's visitor numbers and economy. It could also promote healthy lifestyle activities, such as walking and cycling, acting as a hub based at the gateway to the two local nature reserves.

18. Accrington Arndale

Through the analytical work conducted by Bradshaw Advisory it is clear that Accrington suffers from an oversupply of retail units. Additionally, the Arndale has been identified through stakeholder conversations and the representative polling as being extremely unpopular and what many refer to as a 'white elephant'. While there are no firm proposals at this time there may be potential for that site to be repurposed in whole or in part to support the vision within this TCIP, add to green space provision within the town centre and through potential demolitions reduce the supply of retail units. To be clear our analysis does not support the addition of residential units within the town centre within the medium term timeframe.

Logic & rationale of the proposed interventions

The interventions detailed above all align with the vision for Accrington and the guiding principles we have set out. Several interventions, such as the Market Hall redevelopment and the creation of the Accrington Acre, will not only improve the retail and catering offerings available to residents in the town, but will work towards making the town a visitor destination and tap into the significant disposable income of the surrounding populations within easy reach of Accrington.

Within a 10 mile radius of Accrington (~20 min drive), there are approximately 500k people, with a combined disposable income of over £5 bn. Expanding this radius to 20 miles (~40 min drive), captures around 2.7 million people with approximately £31 bn of total disposable income. Attractions such as the redeveloped Market Hall only need to tap into a small fraction of this potential market to flourish.



Within a 10 mile radius of Accrington (~20 min drive), there are approximately 500k people, with a combined disposable income of over £5 bn. Expanding this radius to 20 miles (~40 min drive), captures around 2.7 million people with approximately £31 bn of total disposable income.

Sadly, many of the architectural highlights in the town centre have been neglected for years. Some are currently unoccupied, and others are in varying states of disrepair. Our vision for the town is one of heritage-led regeneration. A number of interventions are intended to restore and revitalise these historical buildings to their past glory. Doing so will raise the sense of pride in the town amongst local residents, as well as increase the appeal for outside visitors, and hence boost the visitor economy.

Residents in Accrington and Hyndburn generally have poorer general health compared with the regional and national picture. Offering facilities in the town to increase physical activity, and promote better health and wellbeing are a key rationale behind the proposed interventions to increase greening and the creation of a Waterpark at Platt's Lodge. Not only will these interventions bring benefits to improve the quality of life for residents, but they also add to the appeal of Accrington to outside visitors.

A successful future for Accrington will depend on both improving the quality of life and experience of the town for residents, as well as stimulating visitor numbers and the visitor economy. The interventions proposed have been considered in this dual context. Navigation and access interventions, such as the proposed improvements to Eastgate and town centre gateway junctions meet these two ambitions to ease navigation and access for both local residents and visitors.

Strategic alignment with Local Plan & Accrington Area Action Plan

The proposed interventions have all been carefully considered within the context of the strategic priorities of Accrington and Hyndburn. At the heart of the Core Strategy of Hyndburn's Local Plan is the ambition for the borough to be a "distinctive, prosperous and vibrant area of Pennine Lancashire" by 2026. There is an expressed desire for local and specialist shopping, community services and facilities to be readily accessible.

Although the Local Plan is approaching nearly a decade since its adoption, and a revision is currently underway, our proposed interventions have been designed to align with the high-level objectives stated in the plan. The Accrington Acre and Market Hall redevelopment will turn stagnant areas of Accrington into distinctive and vibrant locations. In turn, they will provide a platform for higher-end local and specialist shopping and food and drink offer.

The proposed interventions also align strongly with the Accrington Area Action Plan (AAAP), adopted by Hyndburn Borough Council on 19th January 2012. A cornerstone of the vision outlined in the plan is for Accrington to become a visitor destination, a vision shared in this document.

The Accrington Acre proposal aligns well with the AAAPs noted need for a patchwork quilt of diverse experiences such as shopping, eating and drinking to draw in visitors. In further alignment with the vision for the Accrington Acre, the AAAP concludes that a compact cluster where a village-like distinctive and intimate environment can be created is most likely to prosper.

Several policies outlined in the AAAP show alignment with the interventions proposed in this plan. These are detailed in Appendix D.



The Accrington Acre and Market Hall redevelopment will turn stagnant areas of Accrington into distinctive and vibrant locations. In turn, they will provide a platform for higher-end local and specialist shopping and food and drink offer.



The Impact



This TCIP has established that Accrington town centre is suffering from a lack of demand and spending power but has some of the key ingredients necessary for its transformation. The interventions set out in it are chiefly about tackling and bolstering aggregate demand in the town centre by attracting more visitors from outside of the town, including tourists. Most of the short-term impact on demand will be through raised visitor numbers and footfall – impacting chiefly on the retail and tourism sectors²². That is because supply side measures, such as improving the skill levels of residents or diversifying the local housing stock, will take many years, if not decades, to manifest.

As with any impact assessment (and subsequent evaluation), establishing a baseline is important. During the course of summer 2021, Hyndburn Borough Council conducted a footfall count at several key retail locations throughout the town centre, including the Market Hall and the Arndale Centre amongst others. This count only allows us to produce broad range estimates of annual footfall in the town centre, because of issues around coverage (meaning potential gaps in data) and double counting (one shopper may have been counted at two or more different count locations meaning over-estimates). Other uncertainties include seasonality.

However, the results suggest that there are a minimum of around 4,000 shoppers a day (1.5 million a year) in Accrington town centre, though this excludes the Tesco store near the railway station which is not included in the count or as part of the town centre here. This would be around 28,000 a week – roughly the equivalent of 80% of the residents of Accrington (children included) going to the local shops each week, with no visitors from outside. This is probably on the low side.

Equally, there could be as many as around 15,000 shoppers a day (4.5 million a year). This would be the equivalent of all the residents of Accrington town going to the local shops twice a week, plus half as many visits from outside which is likely on the high side.



Equally, there could be as many as around 15,000 shoppers a day (4.5 million a year). This would be the equivalent of all the residents of Accrington town going to the local shops twice a week.

22. Namely the retail and wholesale sector, and the accommodation and food services sector

Table 8: Accrington town centre count results²³

	Number of shoppers observed at all count locations, per day	Number of count locations included, per day	Maximum number shoppers observed at one count location, per day	Average number of shoppers observed across all count locations, per day
Tuesdays & Thursdays	14,804	7.9	4,262	1,877
Saturdays	15,718	8.1	3,808	1,783

Hyndburn's gross value added (GVA) is around £1.5bn a year²⁴, suggesting GVA per job is around £41,000. GVA data for Accrington town centre are not available but a simple apportionment of the jobs data (in Table 9) and assuming GVA per job in Accrington town centre is similar to that of Hyndburn suggests GVA there of around £450 million to £500 million a year. Readers should note that in reality the figure is likely to be lower than that estimate given the relatively higher levels of deprivation in the town centre compared to the wider local area, but insufficient data currently

exists to provide a more accurate estimate.

There are currently around 36,400 people in work in Hyndburn, according to the latest ONS data.²⁵ This is very similar to the census 2011 data which showed around 34,700 in work.

The latest data combined with the census suggest between 10,000 and 11,000 people in work in Accrington town centre - as proxied by six wards:

Table 9: Labour market profiles by local area, census 2011

	Economically active	In work
Barnfield	2,127	1,927
Central	1,887	1,575
Church	1,969	1,679
Milnshaw	1,920	1,764
Peel	2,224	1,966
Spring Hill	2,045	1,706
Accrington Town Centre	12,172	10,617
Hyndburn	39,118	34,663

23. Results for count locations covered throughout the day only

24. ONS regional gross value added (balanced) by industry: local authorities by NUTS 1 region, 2018 data (latest) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossvalueaddedgva/datasets/regionalgrossvalueaddedbalancedlocalauthoritiesbynuts1region>

25. ONS Annual Population Survey, July 2020 to June 2021, available via NomisWeb Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)

Impacts

While it is impossible to determine what the impact of the TCIP investments will be in driving up footfall, GVA and jobs with any real certainty, we can make some high-level assumptions to illustrate what might be possible by drawing comparisons with other similar regeneration investments from around the country. As with all economic illustrations, models and forecasts, the numbers that follow should not be treated as facts that will happen but more of an indicative reflection of what might be achievable through the delivery of the investments and interventions we have outlined.

A useful first stage of analysis is looking at what may happen if Accrington is successful in securing funding through the Levelling Up Fund which would total around £22m if we include the necessary local match funding requirements. Benefits are clearly dependent on the package of projects selected, the quality of the projects delivered, how a who operates them and the broader programme of marketing and cultural events that help to drive footfall.

A useful benchmark which can inform our assumptions is the refurbishment and transformation of the Grade I listed Piece Hall in Halifax. Halifax has severe pockets of deprivation and underwent economic decline following the loss of the textile industry placing Calderdale (in which Halifax sits) in the bottom 25% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. To try and act as a catalyst for the town's regeneration the Piece Hall was the focus of a major regeneration investment in that town of £22 million. That figure is similar to the amount of funding available through the Levelling Up Fund although, of course, the totality of all the investments set out in this TCIP are likely closer to £70-80 million.

The Piece Hall's regenerative effect on the town's economy - in terms of demand and job creation - was also largely through driving up the visitor economy and increased retail footfall, both within The Piece Hall and in the shops nearby. It was estimated, through a high-level microeconomic evaluation, that The Piece Hall achieved a footfall increase of up to 1 million people per year, or proportionately +10% and broadly a similar proportionate increase in GVA.

However, this increase may be towards the upper end of what may be achieved through a heritage regeneration of that scale, because the investment leveraged a large and unique heritage asset - The Piece Hall being the only remaining example of an 18th Century Cloth Hall - and has a unique blend of possible uses including being able to host large music concerts.

On the other hand, that was a £22 million investment in a town over twice the size of Accrington; other things equal a similar scale of investment might achieve a bigger proportionate increase in a smaller place.

As alluded, the increase in footfall is likely to be equally as uncertain, with a scale of investments in the order of £20 million to £30 million (via the Levelling Up Fund for example) increasing footfall by perhaps 5% to 15% if successful.

The double hit of uncertainties around (i) footfall currently and (ii) its % uplift means the footfall uplift numbers are even more uncertain and should be treated with suitable levels of caution.

Table 10: Estimates of town centre footfall uplift from LUF investments

Current footfall position	+5%	+10%	+15%
4,000 p/d	+200 p/d	+400 p/d	+600 p/d
15,000 p/d	+750 p/d	+1,500 p/d	+2,250 p/d

In other words, hopefully the first tranche of investments outlined in this TCIP (which would hopefully be funded through the Levelling Up Fund) could see an additional +73,000 to +821,250 visitors a year, depending on the success of the investments and how they are delivered and operated.

The retail sector currently contributes £168 million a year in GVA to the Hyndburn economy and the accommodation and food service sector contributes £24 million a year or £192 million combined.²⁶ Around half of Hyndburn's retail space is in Accrington town centre and assuming it is as productive as Hyndburn more broadly (an uncertain assumption) then the retail and the accommodation and food service sectors contribute around £96 million p.a. in GVA to the town centre economy.

A 10% uplift in footfall could therefore contribute £9.6 million p.a. in GVA to the town centre economy, and +2% to overall GVA there. These are low value-added sectors but the flipside is a bigger proportionate impact on jobs with perhaps +250 to +275 supported through higher demand – up to +2.75% jobs in the town centre economy overall, ignoring any possibly spurious multiplier effects.

Finally, whilst these are increases in Accrington town centre GVA and jobs, they would not represent an increase nationally as they would simply be fully displaced from outside of the town centre, with some of that displacement potentially from Hyndburn more broadly.



A 10% uplift in footfall could therefore contribute £9.6 million p.a. in GVA to the town centre economy, and +2% to overall GVA there. These are low value-added sectors but the flipside is a bigger proportionate impact on jobs with perhaps +250 to +275 supported through higher demand – up to +2.75% jobs in the town centre economy overall, ignoring any possibly spurious multiplier effects.

26. ibid



Appendices

Appendix A

Full list of members of the Town Centre Stakeholder Group

Purves Ali
Accrington Stanley Community Trust

Miranda Barker
East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

David Berman
Accrington Arndale

Sara Britcliffe MP
Member of Parliament for Hyndburn and Haslingden

Paul Brown
Hyndburn Chamber of Trade

Craig Buck
Intelligent Design Centre

Sharon Burch
YnotAspire

Damian Cunliffe
The Tiger Lounge

Cheryl Duffy
Hyndburn Independents Group

Jen Hill
Hyndburn Chamber of Trade

Cath Holmes
Local Volunteer / Accrington Pals

Mark Hoyle
Hyndburn Borough Council

Cllr Marlene Howarth
Hyndburn Borough Council

Majid Hussain
Globe Enterprises

Julie Hyatt
Barbara Kays

Shaheed Mahmood
Home Run

John McDonald
Bees Knees

Amanda Melton
Accrington & Rossendale College

Eddie Mills
Lancashire County Council Highways

Richard Ogdin
Lancashire Police

Cllr Miles Parkinson OBE
Hyndburn Borough Council

Steve Riley
Hyndburn Borough Council

David Sanderson
Deputy Lord Lieutenant and The Rank Foundation

Lyndsey Sims
Hyndburn Leisure

Victoria Tindall
Hyndburn Borough Council

Stacy Walsh
Accrington Hub

Dave Welsby
Hyndburn Borough Council

Michael Whewell
Whewell's Timber

Appendix B

Full list of members of the Town Centre Partnership Board

David Sanderson (Interim Chair)
Deputy Lord Lieutenant and The Rank Foundation

Miranda Barker
East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

David Berman (on the Partnership Board until September 2021)
Accrington Arndale

Sara Britcliffe MP
Member of Parliament for Hyndburn and Haslingden

Paul Brown
Hyndburn Chamber of Trade

Cheryl Duffy
Hyndburn Independents Group

Cath Holmes
Local Volunteer / Accrington Pals

Cllr Marlene Howarth
Hyndburn Borough Council

Majid Hussain
Globe Enterprises

Amanda Melton
Accrington & Rossendale College

Cllr Miles Parkinson OBE
Hyndburn Borough Council

Lyndsey Sims
Hyndburn Leisure

Dave Welsby
Hyndburn Borough Council

Q2. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
I feel proud when I visit Accrington town centre	57
	11%
I do not feel proud when I visit Accrington town centre	431
	85%
Don't know	17
	3%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q3. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Accrington town centre is a good place to visit	77
	15%
Accrington town centre is a bad place to visit	391
	77%
Don't know	37
	7%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q4. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Accrington town centre is in need of regeneration and investment	454
	90%
Accrington town centre is not in need of regeneration and investment	44
	9%
Don't know	7
	1%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q5. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Accrington is good for job opportunities	61
	12%
Accrington is poor for job opportunities	329
	65%
Don't know	114
	23%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q6. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Accrington has a strong sense of community	251
	50%
Accrington has a weak sense of community	184
	36%
Don't know	70
	14%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q7. Which of the following statements do you feel most closely represents your views?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
I feel safe in Accrington town centre	323
	64%
I do not feel safe in Accrington town centre	159
	32%
Don't know	23
	5%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q8. How often do you visit Accrington town centre?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Daily	40
	8%
Weekly	203
	40%
Once or twice a month	130
	26%
A few times a year	73
	14%
Never	59
	12%
Don't know	0
	-
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q9. When you visit Accrington what is the usual reason for your visit?

BASE: Those who visit Accrington Town Centre

Unweighted Total	449
Weighted Total	446
Food shopping	285
	64%
Everyday services such as banks, hairdressers, opticians, healthcare, council services	277
	62%
Non-food shopping	185
	41%
On my way to somewhere else (e.g to get to the train or bus station)	126
	28%
To visit restaurants or cafes	83
	19%
To socialise	78
	18%
Evening entertainment	41
	9%
For work	33
	7%
Events	20
	4%
Other	8
	2%
Don't know	0
	-

Q11. When you leave Hyndburn what is the normal reason for you to do so?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
To socialise	304
	60%
Non-food shopping	290
	58%
To visit restaurants or cafes	257
	51%
Food shopping	247
	49%
Evening entertainment	241
	48%
For work	196
	39%
Everyday services such as banks, hairdressers, opticians, healthcare, council services	177
	35%
Other	18
	4%
I do not leave Hyndburn	23
	5%
Don't know	6
	1%

Q12. Where do you usually shop?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Accrington	119
	23%
Blackburn	117
	23%
Manchester	73
	15%
Great Harwood	56
	11%
Online	45
	9%
Burnley	22
	4%
Preston	14
	3%
Clitheroe	12
	2%
Rawtenstall	11
	2%
Oswaldtwistle	10
	2%
Haslingden	2
	0
Other	14
	3%
I do not shop	3
	1%
Don't know	6
	1%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q13. Where do you usually go out to eat or socialise?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Manchester	123
	24%
Accrington	66
	13%
Clitheroe	64
	13%
Blackburn	59
	12%
Burnley	28
	5%
Great Harwood	27
	5%
Preston	27
	5%
Oswaldtwistle	21
	4%
Rawtenstall	7
	1%
Haslingden	2
	0
Other	28
	6%
I do not go out to eat or socialise	46
	9%
Don't know	7
	1%
SIGMA	505
	100%

Q14. Which of the following do you think MOST needs improving in Accrington Town Centre?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Shopping	346
	68%
Restaurants/cafes	181
	36%
Nightlife	158
	31%
Aesthetics/how it looks	139
	27%
Events and activities	98
	19%
Cleanliness	97
	19%
Car parking	79
	16%
Safety	76
	15%
Green space and parks	62
	12%
Social/community space	43
	9%
Access to the town centre	30
	6%
Public transport	29
	6%
Events	28
	6%
Congestion	10
	2%
Other	39
	8%
None of the above	12
	2%
Don't know	16
	3%

15. Which of the following things do you like about Accrington Town Centre?

Unweighted Total	505
Weighted Total	505
Historic buildings/architecture	181
	36%
Good transport links	179
	35%
Accrington Market Hall	177
	35%
Accrington Town Hall	133
	26%
Sense of community	95
	19%
Outdoor spaces	92
	18%
Good value for money	64
	13%
Cleanliness	31
	6%
Accrington Arndale	28
	6%
Range and choice of shops	24
	5%
None of the above	87
	17%
Don't know	17
	3%

Appendix D

Alignment of the Town Centre Investment Plan with the Accrington Area Action Plan

This appendix details where this Town Centre Investment Plan and its proposed interventions align with the Accrington Area Action Plan and include the following aspects of specific policies:

Policy ATC1:

- The enhancement of the retail offer/quality and improve the vitality and viability, meeting the needs of retailers and catchment area shoppers to maintain Accrington Town Centre's role and status as a key centre in Pennine Lancashire.
- The support for existing and future retailers.
- The maintenance and enhancement of the character of shopping streets.
- The creation of clearer pedestrian retail circuits.

Policy ATC2:

- Shopping frontages and the use of floors above shops.
- In order to protect and strengthen the retail offer in the town centre the Council will control the use of ground floor premises in shopping streets through the exercise of its planning powers to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Policy ATC3:

- Retain and enhance the Victorian Market Hall and associated Pavilions through its role in managing and licensing of the markets.

Policy ATC4:

- The redevelopment and improvement of the existing office floorspace.

Policy ATC6:

- Support proposals which enhance or diversify the range of arts, culture, entertainment, leisure and recreational facilities, subject to an assessment of the scale, character, location and impact of the proposal on existing facilities and residential use.

Policy ATC7:

- Support apartment development within or in proximity to Accrington Town Centre where this would be returning existing buildings into use or where the regeneration benefits of apartment development can be demonstrated.

Policy ATC9:

- Improve signage and street furniture within the town centre and reduce streetscape clutter with the removal of inappropriate street furniture and unnecessary signage.
- Improve the quality of public spaces and require the provision of new public spaces, including destination spaces as part of major development proposals.
- Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment, ensuring that routes are clear, legible, safe and convenient.
- Improve the environment of the road network and crossings as identified through the Quarters.
- Create attractive 'gateways' to mark and enhance the main approaches to the town centre to achieve a sense of arrival and identity.
- Require environmental improvements and landscaping in association with new development.
- Enhance the quality of public spaces, streets and passageways into the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Policy ATC10:

- Increasing the amount of green spaces overall in the town centre.
- Improve opportunities for cycling and walking in the town centre.

Policy ATC11:

- Where appropriate, enhance the town centre's character and historic environment
- Make best use of redevelopment opportunities.

Policy ATC13:

- Enhance or replace buildings/structures which detract from the appearance and character of the area.

Policy ATC14:

- Opportunities to secure regional and national funding for the preservation and enhancement of statutory listed buildings, locally listed buildings and other historic buildings and features within the conservation area will be actively pursued.

Policy ATC15:

- Review signing and implement an integrated signing strategy for vehicles, buses, freight, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Seek to balance competing needs on the town centre road network, including the need to maintain traffic circulation and minimise congestion with opportunities to give greater priority to pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users.

Policy ATC18:

- The Council will improve the walking environment by continuing the programme of pedestrian priority schemes and improvements to pedestrian routes identified through the masterplanning process.

Policy ATC21:

- The Council will work with partners to provide a clean, safe, friendly, well managed and well maintained town centre in the daytime and at night.
- Key Partners include: Local businesses, private land and property owners, the police and local community.

Policy ATC24:

- All planning applications for development of sites of 1 hectare or more in flood zone 1 and all proposals for new development located in flood zones 2 and 3 on sites identified in this plan and other sites which may come forward for development shall be accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment (FRA) to be undertaken by the developer. The assessment should include measures to be taken to manage and mitigate the risk.
- All proposals for development on sites which include sections of culverted main river watercourses or its 8 metre

easement must include details of the exact location of the culvert and its easement, the presence of which must be taken into account in the development of the site.

- Consideration should be given in the design and layout of sites to the opportunity to open up and naturalise the culverted river watercourse.

Policy AQ1:

- Restoration of the Victorian Arcade and introduction of new cafes, restaurants at ground floor and residential in upper floors to create a focal point linking Blackburn Road area to Warner Street and the Grange.



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