

Report Title:	Lanehead Lane Heritage and Biodiversity Project, Bacup		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	23 rd September 2026
Report of:	Director of Operations	Cabinet Portfolio:	Environment and Corporate Services
Cabinet Lead Member	Councillor Lythgoe	Wards Affected	Whitewell and Stacksteads
Key Decision:	☒ Forward Plan	☒ General Exception	☐ Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment: Required: No Attached: n/a			
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Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	☐
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	☒
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	☒
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	☐

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has been working in partnership with Bacup Pride and Proffitts CIC on a project to celebrate the heritage of Lanehead Lane, Bacup whilst improving the biodiversity in order to make it an enjoyable and educational place to visit.
- 1.2 Numerous headstones were discovered laid flat on the site dating back to the 1800's and are among the oldest in the Borough. Certain capital works as detailed below are to be undertaken following a compliant procurement process.
- 1.3 This report seeks Cabinet's approval to add the project to the Capital Programme and delegate to officers the procurement and appointment of the contractors necessary to deliver the scheme.
- 1.4 Cabinet is also asked to note a further grant application to the Heritage Lottery which, if successful, will provide revenue funding to deliver events including a launch event, ecological and topographical surveys, educational visits and classes for children, time of local historians and artists, additional physical works on the site, and professional fees for delivering the activities. The Constitution provides that in the event this application is successful, the Council's Corporate Management Team is authorised to accept the grant in consultation with the lead member.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet authorises acceptance of the capital grants totalling £70,000.**
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the addition of the scheme to the Capital Programme.**
- 2.3 That Cabinet approves and delegates the tendering and acceptance of the works to the Director of Operations in consultation with Lead Member.**
- 2.4 That Cabinet notes the application for revenue funding via the Heritage Lottery.**

3. BACKGROUND & REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 The Council has been working in partnership with Bacup Pride and Proffitts CIC on a project to celebrate the heritage of Lanehead Lane, Bacup. Numerous headstones were discovered laid flat on the site dating back to the 1800's and are among the oldest in the Borough. Work was carried out in 2025 by Bacup Pride volunteers with the support of the Green Spaces Team to clear overgrown vegetation and to reveal the memorials. This has led to the development of a project to celebrate this heritage, whilst improving the biodiversity of the immediate area which includes a small woodland.
- 3.2 The project aims to improve the biodiversity of the area and improve access to the nature and heritage of this site. Biodiversity here is currently poor so it will improve the opportunities for a diversity of wildlife to flourish; from bugs, butterflies, and birds to small mammals, all attracted by the wildflowers, hedgerows and brash hedging. The area of woodland adjacent to the memorials will be managed by removing any dead or diseased specimens, along with any thinning compliant with industry standards. Native bulbs, plugs and shrubs will be planted in the woodland. To the north of the site on Earnshaw Rd additional bulb planting will take place on the grassed area.
- 3.3 Planned works include improving the existing path around the site, clearing moss from surfaces and extensive scrub clearance, along with a new path leading to the gravestones. New seating areas on the site will see increased community use of the area. In anticipation of an increase in visitors litter bin provision is included.
- 3.4 Access improvements are a key element of the project. The existing path network will be upgraded through surface repairs and vegetation clearance, and a new accessible path will be constructed to enable visitors to reach the historic gravestones. This will significantly improve accessibility for all users, including those with limited mobility and wheelchair users, who are currently unable to visit due to uneven terrain and overgrowth.
- 3.5 Safety will be enhanced through the installation of post and rail fencing along key boundaries, and litter bins will be provided to maintain the quality of the environment as visitor numbers increase.
- 3.6 External grant funding from the following sources has been secured from the following sources:

£30,000- Lancashire Environmental Fund
£20,000- Derbyshire Environmental Trust
£20,000- Awards For All

- 3.7 Technical designs for the project will follow to allow the project to be put out to tender which is anticipated to be published in November 2026, with a view to physical work commencing in Early 2027.
- 3.8 The project will provide an educational experience for visitors and enhance the biodiversity of the immediate area.
- 3.9 The enhance the project, a revenue grant has been applied for to the Heritage Lottery by Bacup Pride for the sum of £92k. It is proposed that the Council will act as accountable body for this fund in the event that the application is successful. This grant will deliver the activities outlined in the executive summary.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Loss of grant funding – the external funding obtained has provided an opportunity to improve a council asset with no call on Council funds. Officers will monitor and comply with grant terms to ensure compliance with the terms.
- 4.2 Unsuccessful revenue grant application – the Capital works will continue to be delivered by officers via the grants detailed herein.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 There is no financial impact to the Council beyond officer time spent on the project. The project will need to stay within the constraints of the external funding available

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 The Constitution provides that Cabinet may approve expenditure up to £100k on a new scheme provided it is funded by new external funding and there is no additional cost to the Council.
- 6.2 All necessary grant agreements will be signed in accordance with their requirements.
- 6.3 All procurements will be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and the Procurement Act.
- 6.4 In the event that the Heritage Lottery grant is successful, the Constitution provides that the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Lead member may accept the grant. Any resulting procurements relevant to the revenue expenditure will again be undertaken in accordance with the Constitution and legislation.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As this is a contract for works there are no equality implications.
- 7.2 The design includes accessible areas so all can visit and use the site.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The improvements to the area will increase the biodiversity of one of the Council's sites.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The improvements will contribute towards the legacy of Rossendale Borough Council as being committed to providing first class facilities for residents.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.