

# Future High Streets Fund

## Call for Expressions of Interest

### Application Form



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

#### **Applicant Information**

**Bidding authority: Rossendale Borough Council**

**Area within authority covered by bid: Bacup Town Centre**

**Bid Manager Name and position: Guy Darragh, Economic Development Manager**

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**Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.**

Applications to the Fund will be assessed against the criteria set out below. Further information on the scoring criteria and their weighting will be published by the department before the end of January 2019.

#### **Submission of proposals:**

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday 22 March 2019**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to [highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk](mailto:highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk).

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to [highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk](mailto:highstreetsfund@communities.gov.uk).

## **SECTION 1: Defining the place**

This section will seek a definition of the high street or town centre to be covered within the bidding authority. Places should:

- Explain the high street/town centre geography
- Indicate the population of those living and travelling to this centre, how this links to the wider economic area and its role in the lives of those within the catchment area

### **1.1 Geographical area:**

*Include information setting out the extent of the high street/town centre area covered in the proposal and a description of this centre.*

*Please include maps and supporting evidence as annex documents if required.*

*Please limit your response to 500 words.*

### **Bacup's Location and History:**

Bacup is a traditional mill town in Rossendale, Lancashire, North West England and is in need of investment, redesign and a new vision in order to meet the challenges faced on today's high street **ANNEX A Population Statistics and Catchment Area**. This map indicates the location of Bacup in the context of Rossendale and Lancashire. It also indicates Bacup's position in relation to Greater Manchester and other large urban conurbations and also the primary transport network indicating its potential to connect with a much wider audience.

Originally a thriving cotton mill town Bacup has declined systematically over the years due to deindustrialisation. Situated on the eastern end of the Rossendale Valley the town sits in the centre of the South Pennines. It is seen as a remarkable survivor and despite its decline; it has been described by English Heritage (now known as Historic England) as the best-preserved cotton mill town in England. However, its needs go far wider than that of heritage as with 26% of shop premises vacant, the town centre needs new purpose.

### **Understanding the Place:**

Bacup has a population of around 22,599 **ANNEX B Map of Wards** with 11,310 living in the inner core town centre wards of Irwell and Greensclough. The town centre incorporates:

**Inner Core:** The inner core of the town centre is where four major arterial routes merge linking West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Pennine Lancashire. Each road has a parade of retail offerings interspersed with vacant and derelict buildings. The hub of the retail offer centres along St James Street and Union Street. Core retail hours are inconsistent and the traditional market is located in the very centre of the town on Tower Street in a hidden and closed off location. The town centre architecture ranges from the Weavers cottages, expansive stone built Mills, Civic Buildings and Public Houses and streets of compact terraced houses. The retail offer is limited but with a range of well-established, independent businesses.

**Outer core:** Due to the topography of the valley, the town has expanded up the steep valley sides and in a linear fashion along the road network. The housing in Bacup changes from

densely packed Victorian terraces to larger properties. These estates are more modern. House prices in Bacup are low in comparison to other areas and therefore make it desirable for buyers and investors. There is little in the way of retail offer or facilities within these outer east Rossendale communities.

Bacup has a designated Conservation Area which was originally designated in 1981; it was subsequently extended to include a wider area. The recent Townscape Heritage Initiative has seen a halt to a decline in some of the historic fabric seen in the town centre however; there is a strong need to re-purpose much of the town centre which has fallen into vacancy or dereliction. For example, 92% of respondents to the town survey **ANNEX C Consultation Survey and Feedback Results** stated that they wanted an increased restaurant and entertainment offer.

Future High Streets investment will focus on the town centre core which reflects the highest areas of dilapidation and support the aspirational growth ambitions of the Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision**.

**1.2 Population and links to wider economic area:**

*Information on the population living and working in the town centre area, how the area acts as a centre of social and economic activity and its links to the wider economic catchment area.*

*With supporting evidence to include:*

*Resident and workplace population, travel to work catchment area, town centre footfall, commercial space, retail activity, cultural activities, diversity of uses and social/ historical importance of the centre*

*Please limit your response to 750 words.*

**A Place to Live:**

The inner core comprises of two wards which straddle the town centre area, these are: Greensclough and Irwell with a population of 11,310. Both cover an urban area of Bacup **ANNEX B Map of Wards**.

Inner Core Bacup Wards	Population
Irwell	5,505
Greensclough	5,805
	11,310

The outer core includes other wards that make up the wider Bacup area, their populations are as follows:

Outer Core Wards	Population
Stacksteads	3,789
Facit & Healey	3,586
Healey & Whitworth	3,914
	11,289

**This gives Bacup a combined population of 22,599.**

Finally there are two wards that serve as wider hinterland catchment areas for Bacup. Despite being a rural area, these wards are geographically close to Bacup town. Their populations are:

Wider Catchment Wards	Population
Todmorden	12,117
Coal Clough with Deerplay	5,122
	17,239

**The wider population covered across the Bacup hinterland is 39,838.**

Greensclough ward covers part of the urban area of Bacup; as of 2011 there were 5,805 inhabitants in Greensclough of which 2,865 are male and 2,940 female **ANNEX E (NOMIS) Greensclough Ward LMI**. Of the total population of Greensclough 71.2% are economically active making a total of 64% in employment.

Irwell Ward covers the communities of Greave, Rockcliffe and Britannia and has a total population of 5,505. The figures depict a balanced split between 2,729 males and 2,776 females **ANNEX F (NOMIS) Irwell Ward LMI**. In Irwell ward 67.5% of the total population are economically active and a lower percentage than Greensclough, 59.2% are employed.

Bacup is a desirable commuter town with good links to the motorway network. Rails links from Todmorden mean that the Manchester - Leeds route is accessible to commuters with access to a car. Currently use of a private car is high.

The main form of public transport for residents is bus, and taxi, which is becoming increasingly common. Bacup is linked to the cycle infrastructure by the Sustrans routes 91 and 92 with routes 66 and 6 being within 5 miles of the town. The expected travel to work is up to 15 minutes for those traveling into Bacup for their employment. In terms of the wider economic area, almost 40% of Rossendale's work force commutes out of the borough for work.

### **A Place to Socialise:**

As one of the Boroughs key towns, there is a strong link to the Economic Development Strategy Priority 1: "to establish thriving Town Centres of Rawtenstall, Bacup and Haslingden, each providing its own unique offer and a destination for shoppers and visitors" <https://investinrossendale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Economic-Development-Strategy-2018-6-Nov-2018-ME.pdf>.

Bacup was, historically, a busy market town, with a range of traditional, local shops and various leisure opportunities. A generation ago the town centre had a range of big high street names such as Boots, Woolworths, Norweb showrooms, Morrison's and the Co-op with a thriving market that drew people from far and wide. Several large entertainment venues were established such as the Royal Court Theatre, which holds 500 people and a massive bingo hall and cinema complex holding 960 people. To date the only leisure facility that remains in Bacup is the Theatre which is just out with the town centre core. The full range of banking facilities were evident in the town with big names such as Nat West,

Barclays, Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank all holding prestigious offices in the town. This demonstrates that a thriving Bacup can sustain wider services for the greater catchment area. Our **ANNEX C Consultation Survey and Feedback Results** stated that 86% of people wanted a better entertainment offer.

Over the years there has been a progressive decline and sadly many of the once thriving venues have fallen into disrepair. This decline has resulted in high vacancy rates of 26% and a number of large derelict buildings. The town centre has continued to underperform and as such perception of the town by residents and visitors is poor. This is demonstrated by our public survey, **ANNEX C Consultation Survey and Feedback Results** which stated that the 62% of shoppers thought that the range of shops didn't offer what they wanted.

There is a limited night time economy offer in Bacup, the town centre has one café operating limited days of the week, and there is no other café offer within the town centre. The evening economy is also severely limited. In a recent town centre survey, 86% of respondents said they would like to see improvements to the evening, leisure and entertainment economy in Bacup with 93% indicating eating establishments were the most desirable **ANNEX C Consultation Survey and Feedback Results**. This shows that there is significant potential if businesses can be encouraged to invest in the town centre.

Evidence indicates an experience is now an essential part of a town centre visit. In order to create an experience, Bacup will need to reinvent itself with a range of commercial to residential conversions, the introduction of a leisure offer, repurposing the vacant and derelict buildings within the town centre and developing in line with the Bacup 2040 Vision.

There is a proactive Bacup Business Association and a number of engaged community groups working within the town centre. These organisations work to improve the business and community outlook for the town to achieve a resilient and holistic approach to making Bacup an energised and thriving place.

Footfall surveys were taken over several time and days at specific locations within the town centre. **ANNEX G Footfall Counting Data**.

## **SECTION 2: Setting out the challenges**

Clear description of the issues and challenges facing this area.

This section will seek a description of the issues and structural challenges facing the high street or town centre area to be covered within the bidding. Places should:

- Describe the key challenges facing the area
- Provide evidence to support this argument (additional sources can be included in annexes). Set out why this place would benefit more from moving forward to co-development than other places within the area

**We will not accept bids covering town centre areas that are not facing significant challenges.**

### **2.1: Challenges**

*We recognise that each place will see different challenges. Supporting evidence on the challenges facing areas could cover the following:*

- *Proportion and/or number of vacant properties*
- *Openings/closures of commercial units*
- *Diversity of uses in the town centre area*
- *Resident/customer surveys*
- *Pedestrian flows and footfall trends*
- *Evidence of congestion and air quality*
- *Perception of safety and occurrence of crime*
- *State of town centre environmental quality including provision of green spaces*
- *Accessibility*
- *Housing demands*

The challenges identified as being most pertinent to Bacup and the Bacup 2040 Vision synch with the objectives of the Future High Streets Fund. After consultation with the community and businesses **ANNEX C Consultation Survey and Feedback Results**, to make Bacup's vision deliverable, there needs to be:

- Repurposing and restructuring the use of buildings throughout the town centre;
- Creation of a new and resilient shopping and visitor offer and experience in the town;
- Significant improvements to the public realm.

This reflects the four core challenges of:

- High levels of vacant shops and poor retail and residential stock quality
- Limited reasons to visit the town centre, which is spread out with lack of identity and a poor visitor experience
- A poor quality street scene, connectivity and sense of safety
- Poor socio-economic performance

The evolution and transformational changes proposed for the town centre will naturally establish an increase in footfall trends – coupled with a strong promotion and brand to advertise the town as a destination. The challenges that Bacup faces can be split between social challenges and physical challenges relating to the town and its infrastructure.

## **ANNEX H – Challenges, Future High Street Actions, and Objectives Table**

### **ANNEX I – Bacup Masterplans.**

#### **High Levels of Vacancies and Poor Retail and Residential Stock Quality**

##### **Evidence reveals:**

Vacant property rate: Bacup has a high retail vacancy rate of 25.86% which is significantly more than the national average of 9.9% reported by Springboard. This relates to ground floor retail units. Vacancy rates are a useful tool in determining the success of a town centre and with its high vacancy rates it is evident Bacup is in decline. Please see **ANNEX J Vacancy Rate Data** which shows the vacancy rates over the last 3 years. A transient retail population also means that despite having a few well established family businesses there is a regular turnover of businesses within the town centre. There are also a high number of similar and identical businesses and little variety. Consumers do not have the choice and selection available to them, a recent town centre survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results** revealed 76% of respondents visited Bacup to shop. By repurposing empty properties to residential, leisure and community uses and condensing the retail quarter to Union Street and St James Street, establishing a core area for a food and drink, there will be more opportunities for consumers to increase their spend.

Densifying the town centre will create a new purpose for many vacant properties and have a positive impact on the vacant property rate. Converting to residential, introducing more dining establishments, and leisure and cultural facilities will directly address vacancy rates. It will also act as an incentive for new businesses to establish themselves in town.

Derelict buildings: Bacup has two completely derelict buildings, the Bingo Hall/ former Regal Cinema and the locally known former Woolworths building and 3 other large semi-derelict buildings, former Barclays bank, former NatWest bank and the former Lancashire & Yorkshire bank within the town centre. Both of the two completely derelict buildings are in a very poor condition and occupy large footprints. The buildings both have potential to be restored to a fully viable mix of commercial and residential premises from which a number of services could operate.

The derelict buildings also add to the sense of deprivation and are visually negative for the town centre both for the local community and visitors. There is potential again for these to be repurposed to create residential, community and leisure opportunities.

Our bold and innovative Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision** and engagement with has proven that we are willing to change and all avenues to create an end use for these buildings that will directly benefit Bacup will be explored.

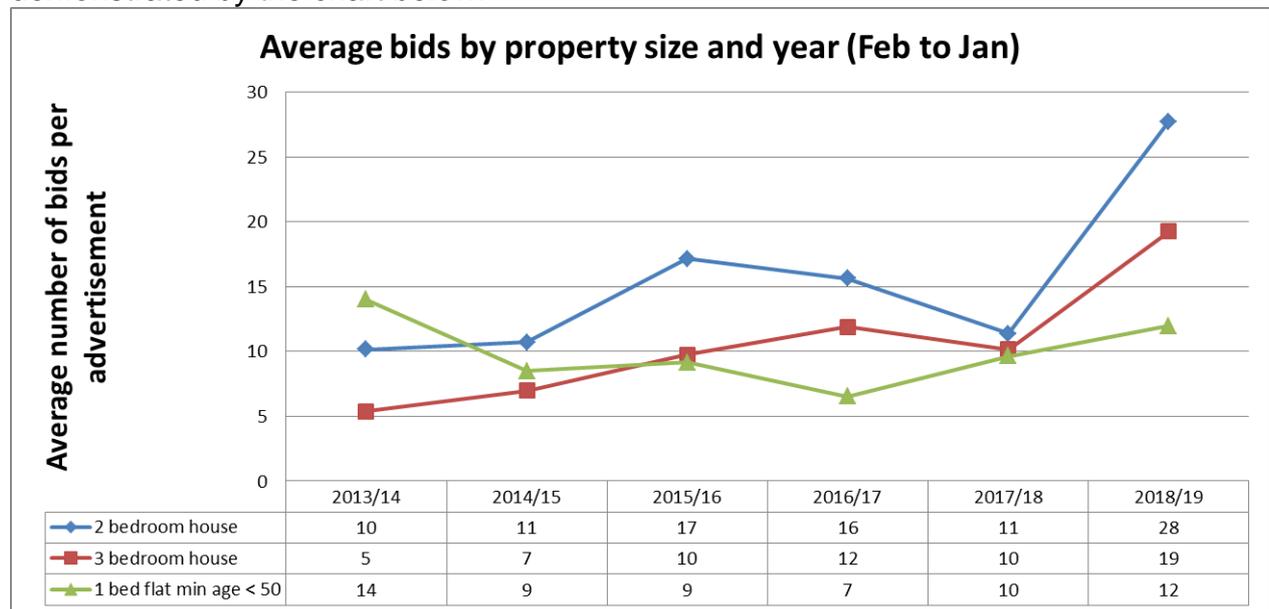
Low quality town centre housing and unaddressed housing needs: Increasing demand for housing in Bacup and Rossendale as a whole can be demonstrated using house price information and housing register data. For the housing register, the OL13 postcode is used which represents the settlement of Bacup. Property types needed by bedroom size are known for Rossendale residents as below:

Bedroom Need CBL	Rossendale	%
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1	687	54.7%
2	393	31.3%
3	151	12.0%
4	22	1.8%
5	2	0.2%
Grand Total	1255	100.0%

Source: B-with-us Housing Register Data

Whilst the need above is highest for one bedroom properties, the demand is different and the amount of bids per property is a good indication of demand. The general trend indicated by bids for the main 3 property types is upwards, in particular, in the last year as demonstrated by the chart below.



Source: B-with-us Housing Register Data

Demand for social housing is particularly caused by a decreased supply of lets, due to reduced turnover and less new affordable homes being delivered. However the growing unaffordability of the Private Rented Sector is also pushing up the demand for social housing. The area is on the fringes of the regional city centre of Manchester which has been pushing up house prices in the borough, particularly in the last 6 years. The Local Housing Allowance rate for the majority of Rossendale uses the East Lancashire BRMA, also covering Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn council areas, where properties and rent are significantly cheaper also. Between June 2013 and December 2017 house prices in Rossendale rose by 26.7%, and this reflects the increase in demand in the private rented sector also.

The median house price from ONS sold data for the year to June 2018 (most recent available) shows the average house price on £129,975 which is 11% and 21% of Blackburn and Hyndburn who have the BRMA which skews the LHA rate down and increases the need for social housing to fill the need that the private sector does not meet.

The Irwell ward, which forms a large part of Bacup, had median house selling price of £127,000 in June 2018, an increase of 95% from £65,000 in December 2015, which indicates demonstrable growth in demand for the area, and an increased need for affordable housing. The gross household median earning in Rossendale is just over £23,000 with Bacup being relatively disadvantaged compared to the rest of the borough, affordability issues are the most acute there.

The population of Rossendale is made up 18.1% of people who are over 65 years of age and 2.1% aged 85 or over, which is under the Lancashire averages of 20.4% and 2.6% respectively for 2017. The population of older people is expected to increase in Rossendale, which is typical of the whole country, however there is projected to be a 44.1% increase in the next 18 years in the borough of people over 65. The table demonstrates that the projected older people's increase in Rossendale is much higher than the Lancashire average, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest of the 12 Lancashire districts. The topology of Rossendale is not ideal to build housing for an ageing population, which existing provision largely situated on the side of steep hills which form the valley. If suitable properties were built in a flat town centre location, with close access to facilities and bus routes such as Bacup, it would be conducive to meeting the growing housing need for older people.

<b>Projected % increase in over 65 Population 2017 - 2035</b>	
Chorley	49.1%
<b>Rossendale</b>	<b>44.1%</b>
Fylde	41.2%
Ribble Valley	38.8%
South Ribble	36.5%
<b>Lancashire (all 12 districts)</b>	<b>36.0%</b>
Preston	35.2%
Pendle	33.7%
Lancaster	33.3%
West Lancashire	31.8%
Hyndburn	31.3%
Wyre	31.0%
Burnley	28.4%

**Source: ONS subnational population projections**

Rossendale is comprised of around 44% small terraced housing stock which is much higher than compared to Lancashire, regional and national figures, and the homes were mainly built prior to 1919 and more likely to experience Cat 1 Hazards. The last stock condition survey found 36.2% of all private sector stock would not meet the Decent Homes Standard, slightly higher than the national average for the tenure, and 20.3% of the properties were estimated to have Cat 1 hazards. High quality stock is needed, particularly in Bacup which is the "best preserved" cotton town in the country, but also means significant measures are needed to ensure the stock a good degree of thermal comfort can be obtained in the properties, as well a good stock condition over all.

**Limited reasons to visit the town centre, which is spread out with lack of identity and a poor visitor experience**

### **This theme is supported by:**

Limited evening economy: there are limited activities in the evening in Bacup town centre from a food and drink and cultural perspective. There are a number of clubs and groups who meet in town centre locations. Within the town, there is one restaurant which is out of the town centre boundary. Of the people who do access the town in the evening, 30% visit the town centre to attend clubs and activities, but there are very few bars and restaurants or evening cultural entertainment readily accessible for residents and visitors.

There is a huge demand for evening and leisure facilities; 86% of respondents from the town centre survey, which was completed by 255 people between the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 see **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results** said they wanted improvements to the evening economy. The town centre is undesirable at night due to poor lighting, lack of open venues, infrequent bus services and anti-social behaviour. Respondents to the town centre survey stated they would come into town if there were evening opportunities to access.

No core centre: The town centre of Bacup covers a vast area with one central retail area of Union Street and St James Street. The four main routes into the town also shops, many vacant, in particular on Burnley Road, and with low footfall. There is no facility for start-up businesses or for hot desks. Creating a condensed retail area will establish a greater perception of a 'town centre' and the repurposing of the vacant and derelict buildings will increase the options available. The survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, showed that 44% thought the existing public realm to be poor or below average. The footfall survey **ANNEX G Footfall Counting Data** shows that Union Street in the centre of the core area has the highest footfall during the day and in the evening, which makes this the ideal location for creating quality public realm that links into the new market square for future events and activities.

Traditional market: The traditional market is in a closed off part of Bacup with only limited opening days. Our survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results** showed that 66% thought that the market atmosphere was poor or below average; whilst 83 % of wanted more themed markets and events.

There is a great opportunity to repurpose this area to maintain the current offer through a designed indoor multi space as well as outside pods set within a new market square that will be able to accommodate specialist events and markets.

The market is open on limited days of the week and there are no pop up markets or other themed markets on a regular and consistent basis to encourage people to visit the town. There is a proactive community group called Bacup Now who has recently started a range of annual events in the town centre to establish the town as a place to visit for diverse and interesting community events.

Lack of range of retail establishments: The range of retail in Bacup is limited. The town has several well established family businesses with loyal shoppers but there is little in difference in the types of shops and there is little choice and options for browsing. The lack of choice

has caused residents and visitors to shop in other towns where there is the possibility of browsing, shopping, cafes and microbreweries on offer. The survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, 52% thought the range of shops to be poor or below average.

Low core centre accommodation: Bacup has the potential to be a hub of outdoor experiences due to the surrounding countryside and links to trail bike riding, horse riding, walking and cycling. Holiday accommodation is limited within the town centre and is lacking in the surrounding wards. This limits the expansion of the tourism and overnight visitors who are a potential income stream for the town.

Low footfall: The challenges above lead to our footfall data in **ANNEX G Footfall Counting Data** currently showing that the town has little footfall but there is a lot of potential to increase this. Our data was captured on Bacup market days, which clearly shows that this area is underused and requires significant redevelopment. Encouraging people to park and walk throughout the town through improvements and changes to the public realm, changing street uses to one way and creating a café culture will naturally increase footfall. Condensing the retail quarter to a specific area and having a central food and drink quarter will give the town a sense of shape and structure which people will be able to explore easily and readily using improved signage in a coherent and consistent manner. Our footfall survey **ANNEX G Footfall Counting Data** shows that the town centre attracted low footfall levels during the day and evening with the outer core areas showing very low rates.

Lack of secondary expenditure: The lack of town centre food and drink offer and the limited leisure opportunities mean that there is no opportunity for secondary expenditure within the town and consumers are not staying long enough. There is also opportunity for Bacup to have a series of free activities, like town centre trails, which would bring people and encourage spend. Our survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results** shows that 63% come just to shop.

Lack of promotion: There is little promotion of the opportunities in Bacup. With careful and managed promotion, as stated in the Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision**, it will be possible to attract a wide ranging consumer base or a more targeted consumer base. Using specific mediums to target particular groups on a regular basis helps establish the brand image and name. Currently Bacup does not have a brand and has not established itself as a destination. Bacup has been described by English Heritage (now known as Historic England) as the best preserved cotton mill town in England and is a place of historic and architectural interest— this is a strong proclamation that the town would like to establish as part of its branding, along with its excellent links to the countryside and stunning location. The Council are working with the Bacup Business Association to deliver a range of workshops to help and support the businesses in Bacup to become known, reputable and trusted. A central coordinating body is essential to oversee the management of the promotional activity and to adapt and evolve with consumer needs and demands.

## **A Poor Quality Street Scene, Connectivity and Sense of Safety**

**This is illustrated in:**

Poor connectivity: Linked to the public realm, poor connectivity throughout Bacup isolates the community and visitors. Bacup is surrounded by excellent walking and cycling countryside with a number of cycle route and bridle ways passing the town. The town is not proactively using the proximity of these routes and the links they have to other towns. Signage and interpretation is limited and people are unengaged from these opportunities. Bacup also needs to create better connected routes into the town from the outer residential areas to encourage residents to walk into town rather than use their cars. The town itself would benefit from better links into the centre, for example a covered promenade from the long stay car parking to the centre would create atmosphere, a welcoming feel and it would direct footfall to the centre.

Transport isolation: The only form of public transport in Bacup is a bus service that links the town to Accrington and Rochdale as well as Todmorden, Burnley and Blackburn. A large number of HGV's and farm vehicles pass through the town centre on a daily basis and a high number of private vehicles. The town has seen congestion in the past at peak times. In addition, the bus service at night time is limited, which makes the town hard to access and difficult for people working shift patterns.

Anti-social behaviour: The crime statistics in Bacup are within a 1 mile radius of the chosen postcode of Union Street - OL13 0AA. The Police are proactive in Bacup and various community organisations work closely with local PCSO's to deter potential anti-social behaviour. In December 2018 there were 77 reported incidents of crime in Bacup covering the town centre and wider residential area; this is in comparison to 93 reported crimes covering the same area in December 2017. Antisocial behaviour is known to fluctuate within the town and the Police work hard to support locals and businesses. Converting vacant commercial premises within the town centre into residential will help tackle antisocial behaviour due to the increase in activity. A number of premises within the town centre are suitable for conversion and their locations will increase footfall in low footfall areas. The survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, showed that 60% of respondents thought that the level of anti-social behaviour was poor or below average.

Source: <https://crime-statistics.co.uk/postcode>

Anti-social behaviour an important issue in developing Bacups evening economy. Many comment in the town centre survey on feeling unsafe and unwelcome in the town. Having residential properties in the core area will change these perceptions. Bacup Business Association work as a network to support each other and other organisations within the town. The Bacup Community Partnership – led by the Council – also has a senior Police representation who report back on crime and safety in the town, what is being done from a Police perspective to tackle it and how best Bacup's community can address crime and safety.

Lack of youth provision: There is limited youth provision in Bacup. There are also no designated spaces for people under the age of 18 to go. The Future High Street Funding would consider in Stage 2 to repurpose an empty building to create a suitable place for under 18s, providing the opportunity to them to access other support.

Public realm: the public realm in Bacup lacks structure and purpose. There are very few areas that encourage social interaction. Recent works completed through Heritage Lottery

Funding has made tangible changes to the gyratory. The majority of people accessing the town, 85% **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, do so by private car and an overarching aim is to get people to use the existing car parks and create an eye catching, safe and accessible number of routes for people to navigate the town centre and the new Market Square. The hard standing and paving is disjointed and a mix of modern and heritage materials have been used throughout the town centre and the main retail core. To improve the aesthetics there would need a consistent approach to materials and palettes used and like for like replacement of materials in the event of excavations. Consistency throughout the town centre will bring cohesion and create easily identifiable zones.

Currently the public realm in Bacup is not interchangeable for different users and does not cater for the 24 hour window of potential use due to the lack in evening and night time economy. The lack of consistency in building repairs and materials used also detracts from the visual amenity of the public realm. The Conservation Area also requires robust management to prevent unnecessary street clutter. There also needs to be more benches, public art and greenery to encourage people to use the space for longer and promote inward investment. In the survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, 57% wanted more benches and public space.

Green space: Rossendale Valley comprises of a characteristic heather moorland habitat which supports a diverse range of flora and fauna. Progressing down the valley sides into the peripheral residential areas of Bacup, then further into the dense urban environment of the town centre green space opportunities are limited. Within the town centre setting wildlife is supported by a small number of bedding areas and planters. The provision and quality of green and open spaces are linked to the promotion of well-being and mental health and increased levels of physical activity. They also help instil a better sense of civic pride and community cohesion reducing the fear of crime and misconception on safety, engage with residents and visitors to the town and also provide sensory relief from the urban backdrop.

Well managed green and open spaces within an urban environment have the benefit of increasing the feeling of safety and wellbeing and particularly if they are areas of activity, will increase footfall and natural surveillance of the area. An additional benefit of well managed green spaces is the positive impact they have on residential stock through increase in prices and making areas more desirable to live. Greenspaces also provide sensory places for children, families, individuals and those with additional needs to engage with one another. For a child or young person to have access to greenery and its attached species allows them to develop a greater sense of stewardship for their community and a more holistic sensory approach to their own personal development.

## **Poor Socio-Economic Performance**

**This challenge is evident in:**

Poor health profile: the health profiles for Greensclough **ANNEX K Health Profile Greensclough Ward** and Irwell **ANNEX L Health Profile Irwell Ward** wards are either in line different to the national average or in many indices, significantly worse, than the national average. Bacup is in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged places in the UK and the income for both Greensclough and Irwell are significant worse than the national average at 17.3% and 23.9% respectively. Child poverty is a major issue in both wards with both significantly worse than the national average and 23.2% of under 16's in Greensclough and 32.7% of under 16's in Irwell living below the poverty line. This means that there are large numbers of residents within Bacup that are unable to afford basic living expenses and are also excluded from activities and opportunities that a person living above the poverty line would be able to access.

Living with bad or very bad general health and a life long illness or disability is also significantly worse than the national average in both wards. Incidents of mental health and substance abuse are both significantly worse than the national average. Life expectancies for both males and females in Greensclough and males in Irwell are significantly worse than the national average. Numbers of older people living in deprivation are high significantly worse than the national average in both wards. Loneliness and isolation are prevalent.

The Future High Streets Fund will address health issues by repurposing the large derelict buildings as leisure facilities working with Rossendale Leisure Trust. Introducing leisure facilities will fill the gap in provision within the town. Introducing town centre leisure provision will provide access to physical activity for local residents – offers and subsidised fees will also be included to make it accessible to all.

Income statistics indicate that Greensclough and Irwell are significantly more disadvantaged than the UK average and the Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision** identifies that the changes and development in Bacup need to cater for all incomes and residents. Making changes to the public realm will also improve the opportunities for social interaction, 62% of people visit Bacup on their own **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**, having suitable and welcoming places to socialise retains people within the town centre longer and also improves connectivity and reduces social isolation and improves mental health.

**Source: Public Health England**

In 2018 the Council was approached by 204 individuals, of which 15 were listed as homeless/rough sleepers. All were re-housed in Bacup. Of that figure 42% required 1 bed properties, 37% required 2 bed properties, 21% required 3 or more bed properties. The main reason people were seeking accommodation was their tenancy ending in privately rented accommodation. The changes proposed within the Bacup 2040 Vision will mean more affordable housing will be available to people with a number of services and opportunities on their doorstep **ANNEX M Homelessness Statistics**.

There is not data held by the Council for air quality in Bacup town centre due to there being no ground floor residential premises within the town centre and therefore there is no obligation to record the data. Air pollution monitors can be installed and fitted for 12 months to monitor levels in the event of ground floor conversions.

Unemployment: In Greensclough a total of 77.9% are economically active, with 72% in employment whilst 7.6% are unemployed; this is higher than the national average of 4%. The majority of people working, are in full-time roles 72.4%, with the remaining 27.6% working in part-time (<16 hours per week) positions. In total 24.8% of people are educated to Level 4 or above **ANNEX E (NOMIS) Greensclough Ward LMI**.

In the Irwell ward, 74.5% of the population are economically active, 67.1% of the population are employed, 9.1% are self-employed and 9.9% unemployed. There are 70.6% in full time employment (31+ hours per week) and 29.4% in part time employment (<16 hours per week). The highest percentage, 17.9% work in the personal services. In total 19.6% were educated to Level 4 or above. In comparison, 21.3% of the population hold no formal education qualifications. See **ANNEX F (NOMIS) Irwell Ward LMI**.

Changing the market area into an enterprise quarter and making provision for employment, training and volunteering activities will engage with long term unemployed, those looking to change employment and those looking to upskill. There will be business support and a start-up hub which will create a safer financial environment for people to set up their own businesses.

A selection of Bacup photos **ANNEX O Bacup Photographs** demonstrates many of the challenges highlighted in this section.

## **2.2: Rationale for selecting town centre area**

*Set out your rationale for choosing this town centre area as opposed to other centres within your local authority, and why this area is most in need.*

*Please limit your response to 500 words.*

Rossendale has a population of around 70,365 **ANNEX A Population Statistics and Catchment Area** and is one of smallest boroughs in terms of size and population in England. It has three main town centres that could benefit from the Future High Streets Fund, these are Rawtenstall, Haslingden and Bacup. Assessment of each town centre was undertaken internally with the area in most need of investment and potential opportunity selected as the Rossendale candidate. Each town centre was also scored against the published scoring criteria, this assessment showed that Bacup was our strongest applicant both in terms of need and future potential.

Bacup stood out due to the large number of challenges facing the town centre, demonstrated by the 26% vacancy rate **ANNEX J Vacancy Rate Data**, derelict buildings and low footfall counts (see challenges question and **ANNEX G Footfall Counter Results**). It is a town that needs a clear vision and grant support in order to ensure a prosperous future and has a very strong correlation with much of the narrative contained within the guidance notes as it has a strong need for modernisation and repurposing. The Future High Streets Funding, if successful, would address the market failure evident in the town and support the new Bacup 2040 Vision that sets out to bring investment, vibrancy and pride back to the town centre.

In contrast to the challenges faced in Bacup, Rawtenstall is the central town and the heart of Rossendale. It could be described as flourishing with low shop vacancy rates on the main Bank Street shopping area. It has a growing and vibrant food and drink offer with a strong night-time and leisure economy. Significant redevelopment of the bus station and new retail

and leisure hub within the Spinning Point development is underway to create a new square and attractions. There are some issues in the town such as traffic flow and derelict buildings on the edge of the town centre but these were much smaller in scope and potential compared to the chosen candidate. It is intended that lessons from the success of Rawtenstall will be applied to Bacup.

Haslingden sits just to the west of Rawtenstall. Upper Deardengate is the main shopping area which has a diverse mix of retail offer reflecting its diverse communities. It also has an attractive cobbled area and a strong heritage theme. There was some potential for the Future High Streets Fund to tackle repurposing of buildings on Lower Deardengate, which has seen a decline in retail offer in recent years. However, the scope and potential was much less than the chosen Bacup town centre.

## **SECTION 3: Strategic ambition**

This section will seek evidence of the level of ambition from the local authority, support from stakeholders and evidence that the local authority is well-placed to use the Future High Street Fund to tackle these challenges in a way that will fit with wider existing plans. Local authorities should:

- Set out a high-level vision for improving their area and how this links with need expressed in Section 2
- Demonstrate how this ambition will align with other funding streams (public or private)
- Cover how investment from government will support the area and help overcome these challenges
- Demonstrate engagement with and support from local stakeholders including other tiers of local government, if applicable (supporting evidence of this support such as letters should be attached as an annex)
- Show how this will link to wider strategic plans, including the Local Plan and Local Industrial Strategies e.g. around housing and local growth
- Provide an estimate of how much revenue funding they would need to support the development of their strategic vision and business case for a specific proposal

This phase relates to defining places and challenges and we therefore are not asking for specific project proposals at this stage.

**However, if a local authority has been working on a specific project that they feel is deliverable in the short term if they were to receive capital funding at an early stage, we invite them to make that clear here. While the details of the project will not be considered in our decision-making at this stage, we may consider fast-tracking these projects during co-development.**

We will not accept bids that do not provide sufficient evidence of support from local stakeholders.

### **3.1 Town centre vision and ambition for change**

*Set out your vision for regenerating your high street and how this links with the challenges outlined in section 2.*

*Please limit your response to 750 words.*

The Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision Document** is an ambitious yet achievable strategy formed by a community led partnership also including local businesses and stakeholders and the Council. At the forefront is the recognition that community, business and investment are fundamental in delivering the vision. The aim is to make Bacup a town which retains its traditional charm and authenticity but evolves into a 21st century hub of enterprise and a place where residents have a good quality of life, with access to the facilities and services they need and a bustling and vibrant visitor economy.

The Vision document is split into four key themes; Enterprise, Place, People and Vibrancy and addresses the many challenges faced by Bacup. Each challenge is identified with a clear action and long-term vision in order to make Bacup a thriving town centre.

## **ANNEX H Challenges, Future High Street Actions and Objectives Table.**

**Enterprise:** Bacup will evolve as a centre for enterprise through:

- Refocussing the core retail area to address the high number of vacant premises
- Using commercial to residential conversion there will be an increase in densification within the town centre
- Increasing the density to drive footfall up
- The limited variety in retail offer and lack of food and drink opportunities will be challenged by creating specific quarters that uses are channelled towards, making them accessible and identifiable for people
- The lack of connectivity throughout the town and its surrounding area will be addressed by proactively promoting our countryside, the cycle routes and bridle paths and champion the picturesque Rossendale Valley
- Repurposing the market into a prosperous place of business start-up, volunteering and appreciated opportunities, events and enterprise with a great reputation.

**Place:** Determining the public realm and creating a functional, sustainable and attractive place:

- Will encourage greater accessibility for users, connecting Bacup and its residents
- By condensing the core, the public realm will become more structured, with consistent materials and a discerning street scape, footpaths and avenues to draw pedestrians
- Signposts, benches, expressive art and enhancements to existing features will all encourage social interaction by creating places people will spend more time in
- Bacup will also have accessible and well managed public facilities, vital for people to enjoy the new food and drink and cultural experience.

**People:** Linking to the people challenges:

- Where anti-social behaviours, a lack of youth provision and poor health and entrenched worklessness are significantly worse than the national average
- Establishing community hubs with access to courses and skills will enhance employment prospects and enable people to upskill.

Community hubs will also act as:

- A brief intervention point to access services to help with physical and mental well-being
- A focal point for volunteering and apprenticeships
- A point to engage with the Bacup Business Association and local businesses
- Local partners and businesses will be engaged to tackle low level crime such as fly tipping and anti-social behaviour
- More will be done to enforce against perpetrators and encourage community members to report where necessary without fear of reprisals
- Linking the community to the wider countryside and also creating a leisure offer within the town centre will positively affect the health indices for Greensclough and Irwell wards
- Delivering a range of healthy eating, substance abuse courses and cookery courses from community hubs will also support and help people to eat and drink healthily

- Short courses on budget management and finances will also be delivered from these premises.

**Vibrancy:** Bacup has all of the hallmarks of a town that can have the atmosphere and experience and vibrancy of a market town.

- Being able to trade mark itself as the best preserved example of an industrial town
- Brings Bacup up alongside other well-known attractive town centres
- Better serve as a visitor draw and a destination.

The Bacup 2040 Vision is a holistic overview involving both capital and revenue aspirations. The Future High Streets Fund offers transformational capital changes to Bacup; the revenue funding aspirations will be subject to additional match funding being secured 2020-40.

### 3.2 Engagement and alignment of vision

*Set out how your town centre vision aligns with other funding streams, both public and private, including details of partnership working with the private sector in this area.*

*Show how your vision fits with wider strategic plans such as housing, transport and Local Industrial Strategies.*

*Please limit your response to 750 words.*

The Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision** that supports this application has been developed very much in partnership with the local residents, stakeholders and businesses in Bacup. The Bacup Business Association has strong ties with the Economic Development team and a mutual close relationship exists with their members who have inputted extensively into this process. Stakeholders have been consulted at a specialist workshop that we organised with all views considered. The public has played a leading role in developing proposals for Bacup through an online and street survey and a community led partnership engagement event to understand challenges and aspirations **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**. These different views have been represented in the Bacup 2040 vision and this funding bid.

The town centre has been chosen as its challenges are well known to the Council and addressing these needs has been central to our priorities.

Rossendale Council has a corporate strategy [https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/homepage/10159/council\\_priorities](https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/homepage/10159/council_priorities) that identifies 3 key themes:

- Clean and green
- A connected and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth
- A proud healthy and vibrant Rossendale

All of the Council's corporate priorities link with this funding bid and Bacup 2040, which aim to create a thriving town centre.

Supporting these themes is the Council's Economic Development strategy, which was published in 2018 <https://investinrossendale.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Economic-Development-Strategy-2018-6-Nov-2018-ME.pdf>. The strategy for the directorate which

includes the Economic Development Team who have written this bid and the Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision**; also includes the Planning Team who's input in the implementation of this Vision will be crucial. The strategy identifies 5 key themes:

- To establish thriving Town Centres of Rawtenstall, Bacup and Haslingden, each providing its own unique offer and a destination for shoppers and visitors
- To establish the Invest in Rossendale brand, promoting and increasing inward investment in Rossendale by attracting growth sector businesses and bringing quality employment
- Creating a strong and thriving business base, supporting new and existing businesses
- Developing our visitor economy, active leisure and Adrenaline Valley brand and cultural offer
- Ensuring residents and communities reach their full economic potential; enhanced employment, skills and educational opportunities

These themes strongly relate to this application and the Bacup 2040 Vision **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision**. It is worth noting in the narrative for priority one states: "It is the Council's ambitions to revitalise Bacup and create the conditions for further investment".

The Bacup Vision 2040 **ANNEX D Bacup 2040 Vision** is pivotal to this bid. Its mission statement is that by 2040, Bacup will be a place where people will want to go, whether it be to work, live or explore, whilst at the same time embracing its unique location heritage and historic legacy, so that old is at ease with the new. Bacup will be a hub for socialising, cultural experiences, work opportunities leisure and living.

The Council, subject to a full business case and financial appraisal, will be willing to support these policy intentions with the use of statutory powers where applicable, officer support and financial match funding.

We have been successful in recent years in attracting match funding to support Bacup's regeneration. We received £1.5m in Heritage Lottery Funding 2013-19 for new shop fronts mainly on St. James Street and public realm enhancements.

We have engaged with many of the landlords and private owners of buildings within Bacup who have signed in-principle match funding letter of support. The Bacup Business Association Members are keen to see progress made in the town and many of their members will invest further in their businesses if the right conditions are created **ANNEX N Letters of Support**.

We have had positive feedback from several large and specialist housing providers such as Calico, St. Vincent's and Together Housing whose involvement will be crucial in bringing many of the vacant and derelict buildings into a new purposeful life. They are in-principle willing to invest their funding into the area.

We have also received support from Rossendale's main leisure provider – Rossendale Leisure Trust and the Boo Theatre who again are willing in-principle to offer investment for a new leisure venue. We have therefore made a start on the journey but further resources are needed to transform the town centre.

Other strategy links are evident with a large focus of our housing team's prevention of homelessness strategy [https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/14633/prevention\\_of\\_homeless\\_strategy](https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/14633/prevention_of_homeless_strategy) which focuses on bringing empty properties back into use which links to the aims of this bid. Lancashire County Council as the highways authority have confirmed in writing that they are willing to support the objectives.

The Lancashire LEPS, Lancashire local industrial strategy <http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/media/8856/LEP-strategic-economic-plan.pdf> supports business growth and enterprise as well as the UK's industrial strategy, prosperous communities chapter <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-foundations/industrial-strategy-the-5-foundations#places>.

Marketing Lancashire as the tourist agency state and a partner agency to the Council, in their visitor economy strategy <https://www.marketinglancashire.com/lancashire-story/visitor-economy/visitor-economy-strategy/> shows a clear willingness to further this part of the economy which links to our aim of attracting further visitors to the town and making Bacup a destination through specialist town centre walks and events.

### **3.3 Support for town centre vision**

*Provide details, including letters of support, for your vision from (where applicable):*

- *Other tiers of local government including Mayoral and non-Mayoral Combined Authorities and county councils where applicable*

*Other local stakeholders including:*

- *Local Enterprise Partnerships*
- *Business Improvement Districts*
- *Private sector*
- *Community groups*

*Please limit your response to 500 words and include evidence of this support as an annex where appropriate.*

The Economic Development team at Rossendale Council are an experienced team who have built effective partnership links with a range of organisations, community groups and major stakeholders. Bacup is highlighted as the town and community most in need within Rossendale, due in part to the progress and opportunities available to the other town centres. Many of the challenges that Bacup faced have been entrenched for a number of years and though sincere efforts have been made historically to tackle these challenges, it requires a transformational vision to make the changes happen.

Consultation with the community and partners has been through a town centre survey and engagement sessions. The aim of the engagement is to ensure that the community are at the forefront of the vision and also have input into how their town will work and function and the expectations that they have for their town in 2040. The consultation feedback from the town centre survey has been engaged, positive, enthusiastic and a vision for Bacup has been developed.

The town centre survey **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results** – securing responses from 255 residents and 28 businesses – has been a useful tool to capture that needs and demands from the local and wider community.

Senior Officers and local Councillors are fully supportive of the Bacup 2040 Vision and the Economic Development team have been supported by letter from the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council have been in receipt of a number of letters of support from building owners, businesses, voluntary organisations, housing providers and Jake Berry MP for Rossendale and Darwen who wholeheartedly supports the 2040 Vision and selection of Bacup to be in receipt of funding **ANNEX N Letters of Support**.

The Economic Development Team that has a strong track record of delivering large town centre regeneration projects such as Spinning Point Rawtenstall £8.5m, Futures Park Bacup £6m and Bacup THI £2.5m. The experienced team is led by the Director of Economic Development, supported by the Economic Development Manager, and several core officer staff as well as clear links to the Planning Manager and Planning Team, which are also part of the directorate. If successful this project would become one of our flagship projects and be treated as a corporate priority with regular progress reports to senior management and elected Members and would follow project management good practice.

The success of this project will be determined by supporting and encouraging the private sector to invest in Bacup's opportunities as well as maintaining the support of stakeholders and the community. Regular meetings and workshops will be held with partners throughout the process, coordinated by the Economic Development Team.

The Council will use its statutory powers where applicable to bring about the Bacup 2040 Vision including potentially compulsory purchase orders.

The Bacup 2040 Vision has captured the community's interests and also acts as a framework for the Council's projected development. The Bacup 2040 Vision recognises that the consumer trend is towards digital and that less people are using the traditional bricks and mortar shopping opportunities. The 2040 Vision will bring development with confidence and certainty. The Council's strong and decisive track record in delivering high profile and demanding projects is proven and the benefits that the Bacup 2040 will bring will be transformational **ANNEX C Consultation Feedback and Survey Results**.

### **3.4 Estimate of revenue funding needed**

*Provide details of how much revenue funding you need to develop project plans for capital funding (including detailed business cases).*

*Include estimated breakdowns of how you would spend this revenue funding*

*Please limit your response to 500 words.*

The Bacup 2040 vision which supports this application is an exciting community led strategy to transform Bacup. The Economic Development Team at Rossendale is very experienced in managing large complex regeneration projects but has a limited number of core funded staff who work across the 5 priority areas.

**Staff Costs:** A vision of this size and involving multiple stakeholders, landowners and the public will require an additional Project Manager and supporting Project Officer to bring together the next stage business plan, financial costings and consultation required for the stage 2 application. If this process was to run from the start of Summer 2019 to the end of Spring 2020 (12 months) we would require £96,000 in revenue costs for x2 new posts; grade 6 and 7. These will be overseen and managed by the Economic Development Manager.

**Market Square and new flagship buildings:** To bring this element of the project forward; feasibility, professional reports, RIBA 1-4, planning permission and financial appraisal funding for the new market square project and two new associated central flagship buildings; this is estimated at £175,000.

**5 Derelict buildings:** Five significant derelict and vacant properties that are key to transforming the town are: Bingo Hall, Barclays, Woolworths, Lancashire and Yorkshire bank and Nat West Bank. Considering future opportunities for these buildings / sites will require architect, feasibility and professional reports. A budget of £100,000 has been estimated to progress these works to consider options for repurposing.

**Public Realm:** £70,000 will be required to support the public realm enhancement designs, consultation, modelling and professional fees.

**Miscellaneous:** £45,000 is requested for miscellaneous funding to support the assessment of the remaining buildings and other Future High Streets elements of the Bacup 2040 Vision. This will consist of technical and professional reports, CGIs, consultation activities and economic GVA assessment.

The total estimated revenue cost of the phase 2 business case stage is therefore as follows:

• Staff	£96,000
• New Market Square & buildings	£175,000
• Derelict building professional fees	£100,000
• Public Realm development	£70,000
• Miscellaneous	£45,000
• <b>Total revenue request</b>	<b>£486,000</b>

This revenue funding would enable us to put a fully costed business plan and phase 2 application forward to support the implementation of the Bacup 2040 Vision which would generate significant match funding contributions from landlords, housing providers, businesses, stakeholders and the Council. On approval of the business case, we would then be in a strong position to start works on site.