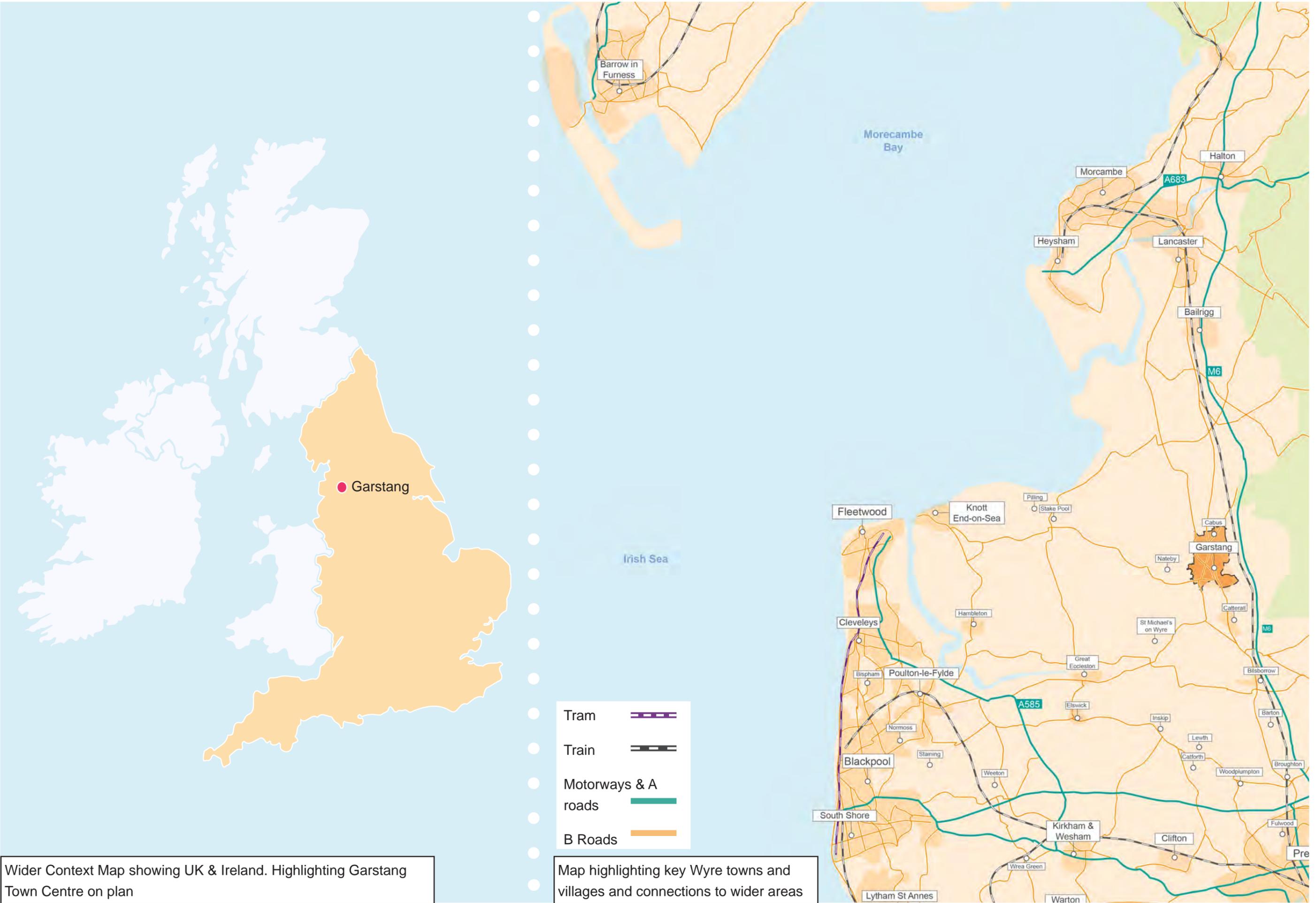




# **Garstang Town Centre Regeneration Framework - FINAL VERSION Accessible Version**

Submitted To Wyre Council and the Greater Garstang Partnership Board  
By IBI Group



Wider Context Map showing UK & Ireland. Highlighting Garstang Town Centre on plan

Map highlighting key Wyre towns and villages and connections to wider areas

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# Executive Summary

This report sets out a framework to guide the development of Garstang Town Centre over the next 10 – 15 years. It is the culmination of a process of public and stakeholder engagement, baseline context review and the subsequent development and refinement of vision, objectives and project interventions.

Garstang Town Centre, as defined by planning policy, is broadly the extent of High Street and Park Hill Road together with the leisure centre and supermarkets to the west. Whilst this report is focussed on the town centre it considers wider areas of the town to which it is linked, both by physical proximity and by shared constraints and opportunities. The report also acknowledges the town centre as the social and service hub for a number of surrounding villages and the Greater Garstang area.

The overarching objective of the study is to assess how Garstang can sustain a thriving town centre and how best to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity in the town, and in doing this, drive improvements in the quality of life of the residents and productivity of businesses.

This report reviews the social, economic and spatial context of the town centre before reviewing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints. It establishes a future vision for Garstang:

“Garstang will be a contemporary market town – a friendly and welcoming place with both a rich heritage and a vibrant future.

It will be known for its canal and river; as a focal point for its surrounding communities, and as a gateway to Lancashire’s great outdoors; but most importantly as a town with a huge community spirit.”

It then sets out a series of objectives that must be met in order to deliver the vision:

1. Protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre whilst promoting active uses within the town’s historic buildings and spaces.
2. Deliver public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.
3. Identify sites with opportunities for future change that will support the Vision.
4. Provide more effective links to areas outside the town centre, including the river and the canal.
5. Encourage a stronger town centre food and drink offer and an evening economy.
6. Promote a strong sense of localism, an economy that provides opportunities for local people, and be an attractive location for new models of flexible working.
7. Develop an ethos of partnership working both within the town and between the town and wider stakeholder organisations.
8. Be known as a place with community strength and social values.
9. Be a place that is digitally connected and sustainable.
10. Promote improved health and wellbeing.
11. Develop a quality visitor economy based on heritage, town centre experience and access to the surrounding countryside.
12. Improve access from and to the surrounding villages and suburbs, focussing on sustainable, active travel.
13. Ensure a diversity of town centre uses so that it is an attractive destination for all user groups.

Over 30 ‘interventions’ are recommended – these are the projects or actions that must be undertaken to secure Garstang’s future. Some of these relate specifically to the town centre, but others cover a wider area including the surrounding villages. These practical measures are grouped under nine ‘theme’ headings, each a necessary area of focus for a healthy, successful place.

## Findings

Garstang Town Centre and the Greater Garstang area is not underperforming when measured against the usual metrics of a town centre health check – vacancy rates, values, footfall etc. However, a number of consultation responses suggested that this may mask a slow, relative decline. For example, shop vacancy rates may be low, but does the type and quality of the offer always match customer expectations? Are trading hours, or the weekend/evening offers, keeping step with competition in other places?

There seem to be no ‘burningly urgent’ issues to address, rather a range of non-urgent, yet still important ones that will require attention if Garstang is to ensure a thriving future.

This view of the town was endorsed by over two thirds of the respondents to a public consultation exercise.

In response Garstang must define its future by finding the right balance of changes that will meet the needs of residents, wider hinterland communities, and visitors. The key word is ‘balance’ as Garstang’s vision for the future must carry broad support.

This Framework has been commissioned at what appears to be an opportune moment for Garstang to assess its future. The Covid pandemic of 2020 – 2021 has resulted in fundamental changes to patterns of work, retail, and leisure. Working remotely from home is now a normal part of many previously office-based jobs whilst a concern for social distancing has impacted on travel choices and placed a premium on access to outside space for cafés, restaurants and bars. The pandemic has rapidly accelerated trends towards on-line retail and the delivery of services, including healthcare.

The impacts of these changes have varied substantially between different locations and different parts of the economy. Most places are, to some degree, in the process of assessing impacts and their responses. The Garstang Town Centre Regeneration Framework represents an opportunity to undertake this ‘post-pandemic reset’ in an holistic and comprehensive manner.

Also, at the time of writing, Central Government appears to have an appetite for investment in town centre and area regeneration, wrapped in commitments to ‘levelling up’ and the delivery of a Northern Powerhouse. The challenges faced by town centres have been widely recognised and grant funding streams established to address these.

The imperative to address climate change is now a mainstream concern and is firmly embedded in political and planning policies as well as the commitments of most organisations of any scale. This Framework provides an opportunity for Garstang to consider its response.

Finally, the energy of the newly formed Greater Garstang Partnership (GGP) and its capacity to encourage and enable change provides a mechanism to ensure that the aspirations of the Framework are delivered.

## Town centre recommendations

With specific regard to the town centre Garstang must:

- Define a unique and attractive offer, building on its heritage and better connecting with its surrounding natural environment and surrounding settlements, in the process of exploring opportunities to position Garstang as an exemplar sustainable town.
- Improve the high street environment and link this to wider strategies for more coordinated trading hours, and an improved market offer.
- As part of this develop an improved food and drink offer and evening economy.
- Celebrate and promote the town’s location, making ‘localism’ an integral part of the offer, but at the same time promote Garstang as outward-facing and engaged with its surrounding settlements and regional/national issues, strategies and partnerships.
- Explore opportunities to address issues of strategic connectivity both as active travel options and community led transport connections.
- Embrace the opportunities that digital technology offers, focussing on local networks that add to the personal experience, not removing human contact from services.
- Ensure that the town centre benefits from development opportunities beyond the town centre boundary that meet the GGP’s objectives.
- Put in place appropriate structures and resources to ensure that the regenerating town centre is actively managed and promoted, including increased programming of places and spaces and an increased emphasis on value over volume.

# 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.2 The Brief

## 1.1 Introduction

This Town Centre Regeneration Framework has been produced for the Greater Garstang Partnership Board and Wyre Council by IBI Group with Stantec, BE Group and CT Consults.



**'Greater Garstang Partnership Board'**

Images of the consultants logos (IBI Group, Stantec, BEGroup, CTconsults and the Greater Garstang Partnership Board respectively)

In summer 2020 Garstang Town Council set up a Market Town Working Group to look at re-opening the High Street and supporting businesses and to consider the long term future of the town and its surrounding villages. This led to the establishment of the Greater Garstang Partnership Board (the Board).

The purpose of the Board is to drive the development of a Regeneration and Investment Framework for the town and its surrounding area.

The Board has a number of core members, including the local Lancashire County Councillor, one of the Wyre councillors for Garstang, a representative of parish councils and 3 Garstang Town councillors, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, Lancashire County Council Economic Development, Lancaster University, Lancashire Constabulary and Wyre Council's Economic Development and Planning Policy teams. It also has the support of Ben Wallace MP's office.

The Board is also supported by additional 'Theme Leads' for each of the regeneration themes identified in this report. The Theme Leads will be responsible for working with others to identify projects under their theme for consideration by the Board and for driving forward and co-ordinating the work required to develop and implement those projects in the future.

- The report defines a strategic approach to the regeneration of Garstang Town Centre and identifies a series of project opportunities that support this.
- The report establishes a 'baseline' understanding of Garstang Town Centre including review of previous relevant reports and policies. It provides a 'pen pic' summary of Garstang from a social and economic perspective, and reviews contextual issues and extant town centre initiatives; and includes a wide ranging spatial review.
- The report summarises a process of public and stakeholder consultation before identifying key issues/opportunities, strengths and weaknesses.
- The report identifies a vision for the future development of Garstang and defines a set of strategic objectives and a high level approach to meeting these.
- Analysis and recommendations are set out within a framework in nine overlapping 'themes' i.e. areas of interest, and under each theme the report identifies a number of 'interventions' i.e. projects or action items. Some of these relate specifically to the town centre, but others cover a wider area including the surrounding villages.
- The report also discusses the management of the Regeneration Framework process and concludes with a summary delivery 'tool kit'.

## 1.2 The Brief

Wyre Council's 2021 brief for three Town Centre Regeneration Frameworks of which this is one, called for the creation of bespoke town centre strategies to help kickstart post-Covid-19 recovery and guide the future of the town centres for the next fifteen years and beyond. Parallel studies for Thornton-Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde are also part of the brief. A similar Town Centre Regeneration Framework study for Fleetwood, delivered during 2019 – 2020 established the basis for the format and approach to be used. The intention is to create a coordinated suite of complementary reports for each of the four towns.

This Framework is to provide a deliverable vision and sound understanding of Garstang's potential to stimulate investor confidence. The Framework will be a guide to the town's economic future.

The overarching aim of the Framework is to assess how Garstang Town Centre can sustain and grow itself and how best to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity in the town, and in doing this, drive improvement in the quality of life of residents and productivity of businesses, now and into the future. Whilst the focus of the brief is the town centre it is recognised that the issues and opportunities of adjacent and surrounding areas of Greater Garstang must also be considered and, in the case of Garstang, this includes a high level consideration of its surrounding village settlements.

Consultation with key stakeholders and the public is an important element in the preparation of the Framework – Garstang's Vision, Objectives and strategy for the future must have public endorsement.

## **2. Understanding Garstang Town Centre**

2.1 Garstang Summary Description

2.2 Regeneration Context

2.3 Report/Policy Review - Key Points

2.4 Summary Baseline Analysis

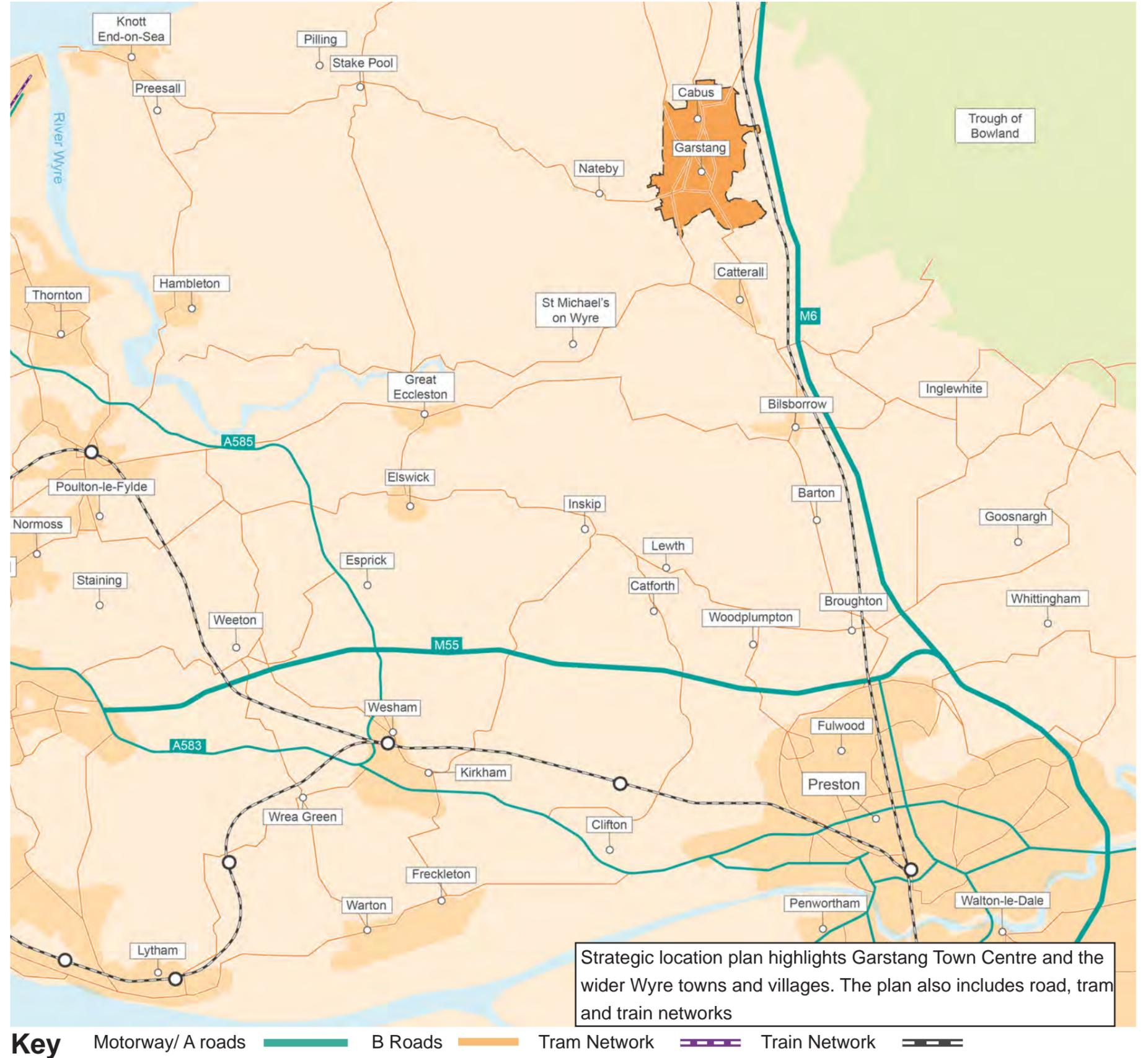
## 2.1 Garstang Summary Description

Garstang is set within the rural coastal plain in the east of Wyre Borough. Originally formed as a nucleated settlement on the west bank of the River Wyre, it sits along the main road between Preston and Lancaster (A6) and west of the M6 motorway. It is the largest settlement in the rural part of the borough. The historic town centre, most of which is a conservation area, has kept its eighteenth century character and later buildings have been retained within the medieval layout. The mix of buildings outside of the Conservation Area is dominated by later twentieth century suburban housing, with some related infrastructure such as schools and a library, and pockets of earlier residential development.

To the south of the River Wyre lies Bonds and further beyond are Bowgreave, Churchtown and Catterall. To the north is Cabus. Whilst these settlements are separate and distinctive in their own rights, Garstang acts as a hub for many social, educational and economic activities.

The Garstang population, which accounts for approximately 6.3% of the borough total, grew by 7.7% between 2001 and 2011. The population has an older age profile than Wyre as a whole with 41% aged over 60, compared to 32% for the borough. Garstang contains approximately 7% of the borough's households with growth of 10% between the two censuses. The proportion of those aged 16-74 in employment is just under the average for the borough, whilst there is a notable retired population.

Garstang contains 6.5% of the borough's housing stock although this grew by 13% between 2001 and 2011. The majority of dwellings are 2 and 3 bed (69%) with a relatively low level of 4 and 5+ bed properties. Garstang contains a relatively high number of flats (10%) compared to most settlement whilst 8% of the stock is formed by mobile homes/caravans.



Garstang is a key rural employment area with local businesses typically associated with small scale enterprise. The settlement contains one industrial site of significance in the town – Green Lane West. Longmoor Lane Industrial estate is located just outside the western boundary of the town. Key employment sectors include retail, manufacture and construction industries with key employers including Collinson Ltd, E H Booths & Co Ltd, Sainsburys Supermarket Ltd and Dewlay Cheesemakers Ltd. The settlement is also located close to other industrial areas, including Brockholes Way (Catterall), Riverside Industrial Park (Catterall), and The Creamery Industrial Estate (Barnacre).

Garstang has a regular bus service that operates throughout the week but does not benefit from a rail station even though the West Coast Mainline Rail line passes to the east. Garstang is connected to Preston and the motorway network (M55 and M6) in the south and to Lancaster in the north via the A6. There are two B Roads (B6430 and B5272) which run through the town, the former providing a connection to Bowgreave and Catterall.

### Town centre

Garstang town centre (in both functional and planning policy terms) runs north-south along the line of High Street – the main shopping street and focal point of the town’s historic character. This street used to be part of the main north west highway between London and Edinburgh and Garstang grew as both a local market town and staging post north of the point where this route crossed the River Wyre. The separate parish of Bonds sits immediately to the south of the crossing, though in practical terms this has now become part of Garstang.

Park Hill Road developed parallel to High Street approx. 75m to the west with a number of connecting alleyways or ‘weinds’ running between the two. Expansion of the town centre to the east being constrained by the River Wyre.

The Lancaster Canal, completed in 1826, runs approx. 300m south west of the town centre before heading to the north west. At this point there is a small canal basin and moorings next to an historic public house though links to the town centre, along Church Street, are not strong. The west coast main line runs past the town approx. 1 mile to the east. This section opened as the Lancaster and Preston Railway in 1846 though Garstang had no rail station itself until a branch line heading west to Knott End was built 200m north of the town centre, opening in 1870.

Historic maps and photographs show that Garstang’s layout and scale remained largely unaltered until the 1960s. During the 1960s and 70s the town expanded substantially with residential development surrounding the historic town core, primarily to the west and north. Further periods of residential led expansion have occurred up to the present day.

The town centre has expanded to the west where Booths and Aldi supermarkets, and the leisure centre and library now sit.

Key spaces within Garstang town centre include High Street, the area around the historic market cross, the weinds, and a small landscaped area on the northern edge of the town centre to the east of the high street. There is a pleasant walk along the bank of the river to the east, though somewhat concealed from the town centre. The western side of the town centre is characterised by larger retail, leisure and religious buildings with their attendant surface car parks. Cherestanc Square is a large space adjacent to the Booths supermarket off Park Hill Road, though its definition and use as a public space could be improved.

There are a number of attractive heritage buildings along High Street including the old Town Hall, the Market hall and a number of shops, pubs and one or two houses. The former grammar school, now an arts centre, lies at the northern end of town, opposite former council offices now converted to residential use with retail on the ground floor. Other buildings of note include St. Thomas Church and St Mary and St Michael’s Church in Bonds.

Immediately north of the town centre Garstang Sports and Social Club occupies a large site with sports pitches running along the edge of the river. Other key assets include the Free Methodist Church and hall opposite the library.



Image of the north end of the High Street, looking north



Image of the High Street, looking west



Image of the South end of the High Street, looking north



Image of the Royal Oak Hotel, High Street



Image of the Garstang Market Hall



Image of Cherestanc Square



Image of Thomas's Weind



The illustrated map shows the designated Garstang Town Centre boundary from the Wyre Local Plan. Alongside, land boundaries and road names

— Town Centre Boundary

## 2.2 High Level Regeneration Context

Garstang's Regeneration Framework must take account of a series of different contexts. The local planning context is covered in the next section of this report, but that sits within a broader regeneration context. The broader regeneration context, i.e. the bigger national picture, is less policy specific and can be somewhat conceptual – derived from thematic 'initiatives' and political 'messaging' that point to Central Government priorities which may, or may not, crystallise into firmer initiatives and funding packages. Priorities change over the political cycle and funding opportunities come and go. The big picture regeneration context is likely to change over 10 to 15 year timeframe of the Framework and so GGP and Wyre will need to keep this under review so that Garstang can respond to be best positioned for new opportunities.

### Northern Powerhouse

The 'top line' regeneration context remains the Northern Powerhouse – a collective 'brand' under which to group regeneration ambitions, policies and initiatives.

Conceived in 2015 by the then Chancellor George Osborne the Northern Powerhouse groups the circa 15 million population of the North of England into conceptual entity that would be "a collection of northern cities sufficiently close to each other that combined they can take on the world".

The domestic aim is to redress the country's north/south economic imbalance through investment in northern towns and cities, and in particular, the connective infrastructure that links them. Better connecting an E-W string of core cities (Hull, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, and Liverpool) and the areas that feed into them is a key strategy – allowing towns and cities to compete together on a bigger stage. Importantly for Garstang it must be remembered that connectivity is not just physical but also digital and 'thematic' (e.g. clusters or corridors of economic investment or complementary economic activity – often over a wide geography).

Since 2015 there has been much debate about the Northern Powerhouse's impact in delivering actual benefits on the ground but, unlike predecessor initiatives for The North, it has established wide political traction and support from the region's businesses and communities.

Many commentators considered that, post 2019 election and Brexit, the momentum for investment in the North would increase, under the Northern Powerhouse banner, linked to factors that would reinforce this such as the imperative to pivot to a greener economy and the growing strength of the North's creative, media, digital and tech sectors. This anticipated direction of travel may well be impacted by the economic effects of the Covid pandemic the longer-term results of which are unknown at the time of writing. Recent events suggest a mixed picture for investment in the Northern Powerhouse – for example the cancellation of the eastern leg of HS2, but also the choice of Salmesbury as the location for "more than £5 billion of investment" in the National Cyber Force. From the perspective of Garstang the latter may have far more significance than the former.

## High Street Retail Issues

Garstang's town centre is defined by its high street. Whilst, as noted elsewhere in this report it is reasonably healthy, the general challenges to town centre retail should be acknowledged so that any arising negative impacts can be recognised early and mitigated. These include:

- **The growth of on-line shopping.** The Office of National Statistics notes that on-line accounted for 21.3% of retail sales in December 2019 – a proportion that has subsequently increased as a result of the Covid pandemic. In December 2006 this figure was only 2.5%.
- **The national trend of decreasing national chain retailers and chain leisure (food and drink).** In response to changing patterns of retail a high proportion of high street retailers are reducing their store count, concentrating on a smaller number of key locations. At the same time a number of high street chain restaurants and bars are also reducing the number of outlets in response to aggressive expansion, overreach and market saturation during the previous decade. It is noted however that Garstang has few national chain brands and is therefore little impacted by their wider decrease.
- **The impact of edge of town and out of town formats.** Whilst not immune to retail challenges themselves, out of town shopping areas have had a detrimental effect on many town centre high streets; offering larger floor plates and consequently greater ranges, longer opening hours, easy free parking and a safe, managed environment. In the context of Garstang these retail formats lie on the outskirts of larger surrounding towns.
- **Business rates.** The British Retail Consortium wrote to the chancellor in August 2019 urging a solution to “the broken business rates system” in order to help save the high street. The retail sector accounts for 5% of the economy but pays 25% of all business rates. The rates disproportionately affect high street retailers over on-line competition. At the time of writing The Government is considering changes to the system.
- **Changes in consumer behaviour.** An article in the Financial Times in October 2019 asked “Is it simply that we have reached ‘peak stuff’?” This suggests that many people feel “maxed out” on durables, and even some experiences such as dining out.
- **The Covid pandemic.** This has had a significant impact on patterns of retail and leisure consumption but, at the time of writing, the longer-term impacts are not yet clear. Many commentators believe that there will be marked divide with some centres seeing much reduced activity ( e.g. city centres and towns reliant on daily inward commuters for customers), whilst other centres could benefit from transferred spend if people working from home can easily access them on a daily basis. The pandemic has also placed a premium on outdoor space associated with retail and leisure retail – Garstang must respond to this where it can.

## 2. 3 Reports and Policy – key points

### Adopted Wyre Local Plan

The Wyre Local Plan, adopted in February 2019, is a principal planning management document which will shape Wyre borough for the period up to 2031. Implementation and the five year review cycle of the Local Plan ensures future infrastructure provision is considered, which is often the concerns of local residents on matters such as rail, health care and highways. The GGPB will continue to take an interest in such provision and support improvements where appropriate. In the instance of railway connection, the potential for a new railway station at Garstang has been explored as part of the Local Plan but it was concluded to have feasibility constraints (see Section 6).

Section 2, which is entitled ‘Spatial Portrait and Key Issues’, explains that the main urban areas (Fleetwood, Thornton and Cleveleys as well as the market town of Poulton-le-Fylde) are situated on a peninsula to the west of the River Wyre, with a large expanse of rural area to the east. Garstang is situated within the Borough’s rural area, between the A6 to the west and the M6 motorway and the West Coast Mainline to the east. The Borough’s geography is shown by the following plan, which is extracted from the Local Plan.

Section 2 of the Local Plan also highlights significant inequalities between the urban and rural parts of the Borough, with the more deprived areas being exclusively within the urban areas and especially Fleetwood. In contrast, other places across the Borough – such as Garstang and parts of Poulton-le-Fylde, Thornton and Cleveleys – are ranked within the least deprived areas of England.

Local Plan Policy SP1 defines a six-tier settlement hierarchy and apportions the Borough’s growth requirements accordingly. Five ‘Urban Towns’ (Fleetwood, Poulton-le-Fylde, Cleveleys, Thornton and Normoss) comprise the first tier of settlements, and they are collectively earmarked to receive just under half of all housing and employment growth (4,285 homes and 23.6 hectares of employment).

Just over 10 per cent of the Borough’s housing and employment growth (1,036 homes and 4.8 hectares of employment land) is directed to Garstang, which is the only settlement within the second tier of the Policy SP1 hierarchy (‘Key Services Centres’). Below Garstang in the hierarchy are four ‘Rural Service Centres’; ten ‘Main Rural Settlements’; five ‘Small Rural Settlements’; and ‘Other Undefined Rural Settlements’.

- Local Plan Policy EP4 (Town, District, Local and Neighbourhood Centres) states that retail, leisure and other main town centre uses will be directed towards the Borough’s existing centres including Garstang Town Centre, along with Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde.
- Policy EP5 (Main Town Centre Uses) requires a sequential test to be undertaken in support of proposals for new retail development outside the Primary Shopping Areas of town centres.

Paragraph 2.5.1 explains that Garstang Town Centre serves a number of rural settlements within the central and eastern part of the Borough.

The illustrated map shows Wyre’s spatial characteristics, including the Wyre boundary, built up areas and Greenbelt zones. It also includes, road, train, tram and ferry infrastructure routes



Paragraph 2.5.7 refers to the 2015 Commercial Market Review, which identified three separate sub-markets within the Borough – the A6 Corridor (Garstang and Catterall), Wyre Peninsular (Poulton-le-Fylde, Thornton-Cleveleys and Fleetwood) and Rural Areas (Rural West, Central Rural Plain and Rural East and Uplands). The economies within each of the identified sub-markets are said to specialise in very different functions and occupiers are often geared towards those specialisms. The Local Plan explains that the rural areas continue to thrive and retain their character, with farming being a dominant characteristic, and Garstang is described as a vibrant market town servicing surrounding rural areas.

The Heritage and Built Environment section of the Local Plan states that there are seven Conservation Areas in Wyre, one of which is in Garstang (focused on the town centre), as well as seven Scheduled Monuments. Two of the Scheduled Monuments are in Garstang, namely the Market Cross (first erected in 1754) at Market Place in front of the Royal Oak Hotel within the town centre, and Greenhalgh Castle (dating from 1490), approximately one mile to the east of the town centre.

## Fylde Coast Retail Study

The Fylde Coast Retail Study, which was published in August 2011, covered the three local authority areas of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre and assessed the health of 11 study centres (Bispham, Blackpool, Cleveleys, Fleetwood, Garstang, Kirkham, Lytham, Poulton-le-Fylde, Thornton, South Shore and St Annes). The study outputs ran to many hundreds of pages but headlines findings in relation to Garstang Town Centre can be summarised as follows:

- Garstang Town Centre contained 14,400 sq.m of floorspace, making it the eighth largest of the study centres and the third largest in Wyre, behind Fleetwood (37,140 sq.m) and Poulton-le-Fylde (15,800 sq.m).
- The town centre was found to have a strong convenience retail offer, anchored by Booths and boasting a healthy range of independent food operators such as butchers and bakers (2022 note: bakers no longer present), in addition to a Sainsbury's store outside of but close to the southern boundary of the defined town centre.
- The comparison retail offer in Garstang was more limited in terms of diversity and representation from national retailers, but there was found to be a healthy representation by good quality, smaller independent retailers.
- Garstang Town Centre accounted for £11m of the £664m of comparison retail expenditure 'retained' within the defined overall catchment area ('OCA'), from a £961m of comparison retail expenditure available to residents within OCA, equating to a market share of 1.16 per cent. Cleveleys Town Centre and Fleetwood Town Centre captured £52m and £43m of the available comparison retail expenditure, respectively, giving them higher market shares than Garstang, of 5.45 per cent and 4.45 per cent. In contrast, Poulton-le-Fylde Town Centre accounted for £10m of comparison retail expenditure available to residents within the OCA, giving it a market share of 1.08 per cent.
- Service sector provision was found to be healthy, with a selection of good quality family restaurants and cafés and a wide range of professional services such as banks, estate agents, hairdressers and beauty parlours.
- The popular weekly market was also identified as a positive element of the town centre offer.
- There were thought to be limited opportunities for expansion of the town centre, over and above recent development in the town centre such as the Booths foodstore on the western side of the centre.

- Overall, Garstang was found to be a vital and viable town centre, with high levels of footfall, a strong offer in the convenience retail and food & drink sectors, a low unit vacancy rate of just 4.7 per cent, adequate car parking availability and an attractive historic town centre environment.

## Fylde Coast Retail Study Update

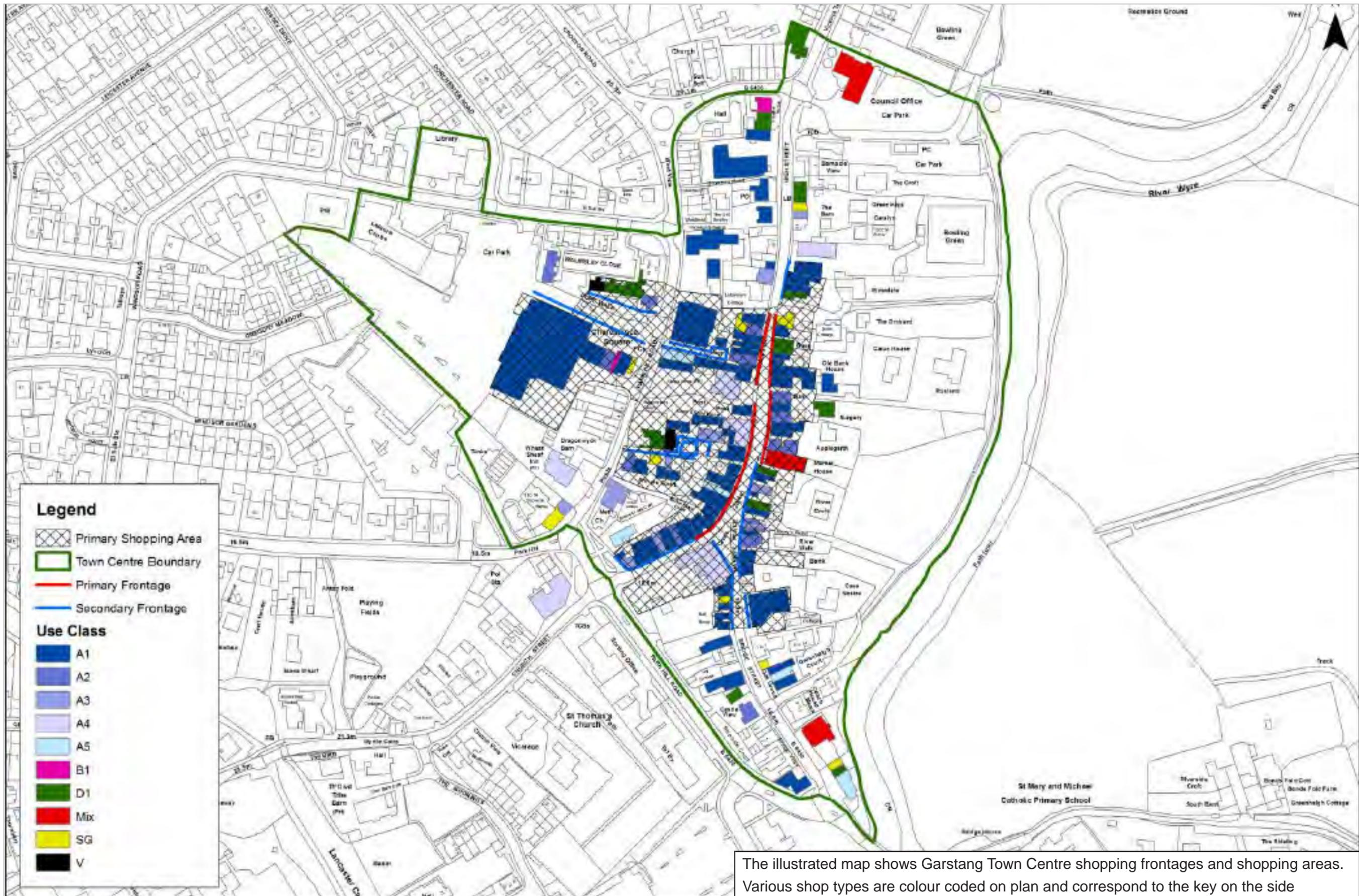
An update of the Fylde Coast Retail Study was published in February 2014, which focused on the boroughs of Fylde and Wyre only and did not cover Blackpool. The 2014 study provided updated quantitative retail capacity forecasts, utilising the latest population and expenditure data. A new household survey of expenditure patterns was not commissioned given the relatively short period of time that had elapsed since the 2011 study, and new health checks were not undertaken given the quantitative focus of the update.

## Town Centre Boundary Review

Wyre Council published this evidence base paper in September 2017 to provide an overview of the process it had undertaken to review and define town centre boundaries as well as primary and secondary frontages, and primary shopping areas.

Paragraph 4.18 explains that the existing town centre boundary has been contracted to the south west to remove an area of mixed-use development which also includes residential development and a Sainsbury's foodstore. The reason is because the Sainsbury's foodstore is not connected to the main retail core.

The amended town centre boundary is shown in green on a plan within the September 2017 document, which is reproduced on the next page for ease of reference. We note that the town centre boundary as shown on that plan does not include the Aldi store to the west of Booths, but the latest version of the interactive online Policies Map does now include the Aldi store, as shown on the extract from the Policies Map, provided as the second graphic on the next page (the town centre boundary is delineated in red and the Primary Shopping Area is depicted by yellow shading).





Illustrated map of Garstang Town Centre Boundary and primary shopping area

## Wyre Monitoring Report, 2019-2020

Wyre's latest Monitoring Report assesses performance against the development plan. The report runs to some 123 pages and covers numerous indicators, most of which are not relevant to this study. Section 6 of the report assesses performance of those Local Plan policies that relate to Town, District and Local Centres. Whilst many of the required data were not available when the Monitoring Report was produced, Table 6.1 of the report does note that the level of ground floor unit vacancy in Garstang Town Centre improved slightly between January 2019 and January 2020. Garstang's vacancy rate in January 2020 was approximately half of the average for Wyre's defined town centres, and it was also the lowest.

## The High Street Report (Timpson Report) 2018

High streets in the UK are undergoing unprecedented changes and facing significant challenges. These issues are well documented in the media and the subject of current Central Government focus. The Government sponsored 'High Street Report' is the output of an expert panel or "High Streets Task Force" set up at the request of the High Streets Minister in 2018.

The report (written pre-pandemic) notes that:

"Town centres are evolving, and retail will not return to the high streets that existed 10 or 20 years ago. A combination of internet shopping, the convenience of out of town retailing and an exceptional number of well-established retail formats reaching the end of their commercial life cycle, has led to a marked increase in empty shops and a decline in footfall"

It goes on to recommend that town centres must be re-imagined with a strong emphasis on local initiatives and leadership.

" Local initiative is an essential ingredient for success."

The report states that towns must find their own brand, local distinctiveness and USP. Successful town centres will promote opportunities for face to face interaction and meet consumers increasing demands for experiences. Since the Covid pandemic there has been a flurry of reports and opinion pieces about its impact on towns and their future. Whilst some opinions vary, the common message is that the quality of customer and visitor experience is the key to attracting customers and spend. Garstang is well placed to respond.

## 2.4 Summary Baseline Analysis

### Town Centre Performance Analysis

This section assesses the performance of Garstang Town Centre against key measures of vitality and viability. The assessment is informed by data from various sources, including Experian Goad plan data from June 2021. The Goad definition of the town centre broadly reflects the town centre boundary as defined in the Wyre Local Plan (see above), but any figures in this section relate to the Goad definition of the town centre. The observations of the consultant team from visits to the town are also factored in.

Garstang is an historic, relatively compact centre which is focussed around High Street, Market Place, Park Hill Road, Church Street and Bridge Street. In more recent years the town centre has grown outwards to the west, with the development Cherestanc Square. The east of the town centre is constrained by the River Wyre. For those and other reasons, any aspirations to significantly expand the town centre would realistically not be achievable.

#### Diversity of Uses

Garstang's convenience retail offer remains strong, with Booths now complemented by an Aldi store which opened approximately five years' ago. There is also a Sainsbury's store close to the south west of the defined town centre, and whilst Co-operative Food is no longer represented in Garstang, it has been replaced by another convenience retailer (One Stop). The town centre also hosts several independent food retailers.

As was the case at the time of the Fylde Cast Retail Study in 2011, the only national multiple comparison retailer in Garstang Town Centre is M&Co, with the centre's comparison retail offer primarily comprising independent traders across the clothing, gifts and cards, interiors, homewares, and pet sub-sectors.



Use Class (Equivalent Use Class Today)	Key		
	Colour	No. of Units	%
A1 - Retail (E)	Cyan	86	50
A2 - Services (E)	Orange	17	10
A3 - Food and Drink (E)	Green	8	5
A4 - Drinking establishments (SG)	Magenta	7	4
A5 - Takeaway (SG)	Blue	7	4
B1 - Office (E)	Yellow	5	3
B8 - Storage (B8)	Dark Green	3	2
D1 - Non-residential institutions (E or F1)	Red	13	8
D2 - Leisure (E or SG)	Brown	5	3
Vacant	Purple	6	3
SG - Other (SG)	Grey	1	1
Dwellings	Light Yellow	15	9

Illustrated map showing Garstang Town Centre shopping frontages and shopping areas. Various shop types are colour coded on plan and correspond to the key on the side

Garstang's service sector offer comprises a range of professional services such as hairdressers and beauty parlours, as well as banks and estate agents. A number of banks (RBS, HSBC, Barclays and Lloyds-TSB) have closed down since the 2011 Fylde Coast Retail Study, Nationwide, NatWest, Marsden Building Society and Yorkshire Building Society are still represented in the town centre.

The town centre contains six public houses – Eagle and Child, Farmers Arms, Kings Arms, Royal Oak, The Crown and The Wheatsheaf – some of which serve food. The restaurant offer comprises Pipers Restaurant (which opened Pipers Garden in 2020), Cobblers Bar and Bistro, and V12 Bistro & Bar, as well as Chinese and Indian restaurants (Ken Ma and Sabza). The town centre's remaining food and drink offer comprises a range of fast food and takeaway outlets and a handful of cafés/coffee shops.

Garstang's long-running street market continues to take place on Thursdays along the High Street. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the market is of middling offer and quality. We are also aware that many of the town centre shops and cafes close early on certain days, and few are open on Sundays.

Whilst the recent addition of Pipers Garden signals confidence in the town, the offer could perhaps be broader for an attractive town centre close to the Forest of Bowland.

Garstang Town Centre - Diversity of uses				
Sector	No. of units		% of units	
	2011	2021	2011	2021
Comparison	52	43	48.6	36.4
Convenience	14	7	13.1	5.93
Services	35	60	32.7	51.9
Miscellaneous	1	2	0.9	1.7
Vacant	5	6	4.7	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table showing Garstang's shop uses in figures over a ten year period

Based on the Goad definition of the town centre, the proportion of vacant units (5.1 per cent) is significantly below the national average, of 14 per cent. In total there are only six vacant units within Garstang Town Centre and whilst most of them are located along High Street, we do not consider this to be a concern because the five vacant units represent a small proportion of the total units along High Street, which is where the majority of the 118 units within Garstang Town Centre are located.

### Retailer Representation

There are a few national multiple comparison retailers within Garstang Town Centre (e.g. M&Co), assuming that Timpson is treated as a service sector outlet. Whilst local residents will therefore have to travel to higher-order centres such as Lancaster and Preston to access a broader offer, relatively few centres of Garstang's size boast a wide range of national multiple outlets and there appears to be a healthy mix of independent comparison retailers in Garstang.

The town centre contains three convenience goods retailers (Aldi, Booths and One Stop), in addition to Sainsbury's just outside of the defined town centre boundary, which we consider to be a healthy provision.

### Accessibility

Garstang Town Centre gently undulates from a high point around the Market Cross whilst lowering towards the crossing over the River Wyre at the southern end of the town centre, and also a gentle slope down to the northern end. Over all this does not have a significant impact on town centre accessibility. Pavements within the town centre are generally narrow and this does have some impact on circulation, and on the ability of businesses to 'spill out'.

Garstang Town Centre is located on the B6430 and approximately 700 metres east of the A6. There are two car parks in the town centre, one linked to the Booths foodstore at Windsor Road and the other run by the Borough Council at High Street.

The car parking area linked to Booths is free to use and accommodates 190 spaces; however, the car park is limited to three hours and is for the use of customers only. The car park located on the high street is not restricted and parking is reasonably priced at £3.50 all day, albeit the number of spaces is limited to 81.

The availability of long stay car parking was often raised as an issue during the consultation stage of this study and whilst overall town centre capacity may meet most current demand the lack of more longer stay spaces does deter longer visits to the town centre and leaves little headroom for further economic growth. The lack of long stay parking also affects staff working in the town centre who park on the surrounding streets.

### Perception of Safety and Occurrence of Crime

According to UK Crime Stats data, there were 41 reported crimes in the Garstang and Calder Vale ward (which covers the town centre and the wider area) in June 2021. This is lower than the 68 reported crimes in June 2020 and similar to the 38 reported crimes in June 2019. Over the period this is an average of approx. 1 reported crime in the Garstang Town Centre per week, which indicates that it is a relatively safe place.

During consultant team site visits most areas of the town centre felt safe and secure, thanks to active frontages and largely open walkways, though some consideration should be given to improving the lighting along the alleyways between High Street and Park Hill Road. The town centre also suffers from a lack of footfall in the evening, which may lead to people feeling less safe. A stronger evening economy may increase people's perception of safety.

## **Town Centre Environment**

Much of Garstang Town Centre is located within the Garstang Conservation Area and it contains a range of Grade II listed and locally listed buildings. The town centre retains an historic character and the public realm is of reasonable quality.

Most of the retail units within Garstang Town Centre are well maintained and in a good condition, albeit a few would benefit from general cosmetic improvements and one or two some guidance to deter inappropriate use of street frontage.

## **Evening / Night-time Economy**

The evening economy is largely focussed towards the southern end of Garstang Town Centre around a traditional drinking pub offer. Most of the restaurants are advertised as being open until 10pm; however, we have anecdotally been informed that some of the restaurants close earlier and therefore people are effectively discouraged from visiting Garstang Town Centre during the evening.

## **Summary**

Garstang is an attractive, historic town centre with a strong convenience retail offer and a low vacancy rate. The centre's comparison retail offer is more limited, although it does have a range of good quality independent retailers. There is also a healthy mix of professional services within the town centre, and a good selection of public houses, reflecting Garstang's historic role as a stopping off point for coaches.

Whilst the town centre also contains several restaurants, and the recent opening of Pipers Restaurant signals confidence in the town, the offer could perhaps be broader. The weekly street market could also be bolstered, and the early closing of some shops midweek – and the lack of shops open on Sundays – are other apparent weaknesses.

Overall, Garstang remains a healthy town centre but a package of targeted interventions should be considered in order to avoid relative decline compared to other town centres.

## Market Assessment

As part of the IBI led team BE Group undertook a market assessment of the town centre. It considered the local property market for retail, residential, leisure, office, industrial and food and drink use. It assessed:

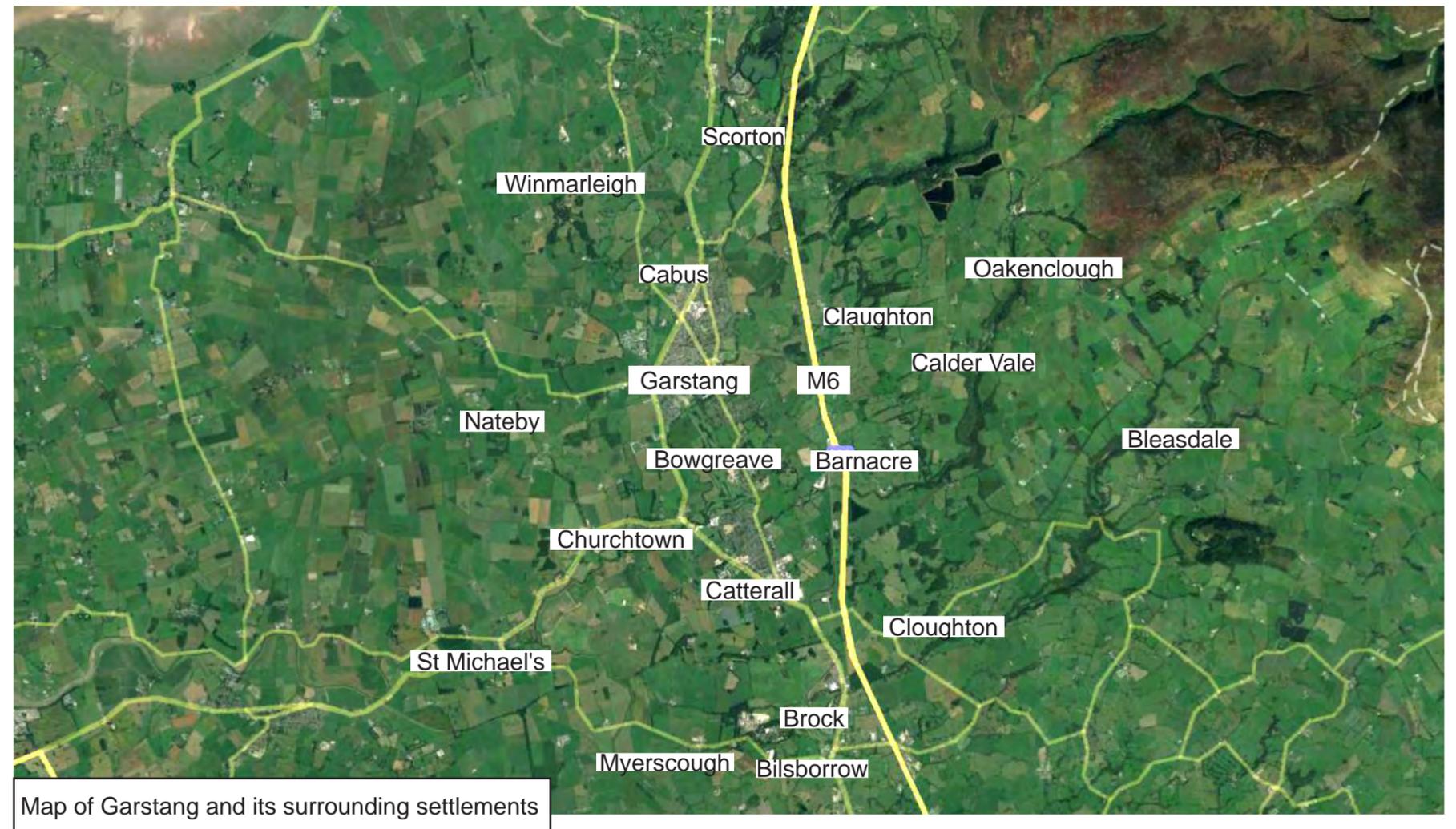
- Recent transactions
- Current demand for premises
- Vacant space and availability
- A review of current prices, rents and house sales to consider the current market position for all premise type.

For the purposes of the assessment it is useful to define an area that is encompassed by Greater Garstang. In order to define this we will use the parishes or villages that are covered by the Greater Garstang Partnership Board as the definition, which includes:

- Bilsborrow
- Myerscough
- Brock
- Cloughton
- Catterall
- Churchtown
- St Michael's
- Nateby
- Winmarleigh
- Cabus
- Forton
- Barnacre
- Calder Vale
- Bleasdale
- Scorton

These areas, shown below, are part of Garstang's Functional Economic Market Area and consequently Garstang's Town Centre relies on individuals travelling in from these locations in order to buy goods and services. A large factor motivating people to visit Garstang is the Town's strong offering of large supermarkets with Aldi, Booths, and Sainsbury's all being present. Smaller convenience stores can be found in Scorton, Catterall, and Churchtown however if residents require a greater selection than what is available in these stores, they will have to travel into Garstang's Town Centre to do their food shopping.

However, a broader array of facilities within Garstang would provide further incentives for residents in these outer areas to travel to the Town Centre.



## Retail Market

Garstang is a well functioning retail market, servicing the residents of Garstang, as well as the rural communities and villages surrounding the town. As shown in the previous chapter, the town centre provides a range of retail types, predominantly servicing the convenience and grocery shopping needs of the local community. A small number of comparison retailers (clothing, homewares) are located within the town and these are generally independent operators, rather than national brands.

Garstang has a good range of supermarket options for a town of its size, being Booths, Sainsbury's and Aldi, which service different market niches and supported by One Stop convenience store. This is considered an ample supply of grocery shopping facilities for this market.

The performance of the town centre appears to be relatively resilient to the economic shock brought about by the pandemic, with continued high levels of occupation of units.

Opening hours of some businesses in the town centre are limited, including late opening times in the morning and limited Sunday trading.

Outside of the town centre retail options are limited, with some small units within villages in the Greater Garstang area providing very localised functions. Barton Grange Garden Centre at Brock, south of Garstang is a large garden centre offering not only nursery retailing, but also a farm shop, restaurant/café, homewares, pet supplies and gifts. It provides a function as a leisure/comparison retail option for this corridor, which is not adequately provided for in the town centre.

## Comments from agents

A range of commercial property agents were contacted to gain their views of the local property market. The following list the statements from the agents in relation to the retail market.

- Garstang is a separate market from all the other towns on the Fylde Coast. It is a very old town that was originally a major stagecoach station for people travelling through the country.
- The town centre is in a very up-market area.
- Booths supermarket came to Garstang about 20 years ago. They target desirable places to live with growing populations and identified Garstang as fitting their profile.
- The town centre is predominantly smaller enterprises (independents) in small retail units.
- Typical demand for retail units is about 100 sqm. An agent has reported a unit of about 250 sqm has been more difficult to lease.
- Rent values are about £16/sqft in Garstang, though one agent reported a recent transaction of a 130 sqm unit at £19.20/sqft.
- Most retail unit demand is for food and drink enterprises or for services, rather than for a traditional shop, which reflects the changing dynamics of town centres more broadly.
- Leasehold units are the most common units coming to market, though agents consider that if freehold units to become available that they would be taken up.
- Volume of transactions is limited by the supply of units, with agents reporting no or limited number of units on their books at present.

## Key themes and implications

- Garstang town centre is performing its retail function moderately well, with a good range of retail operators providing convenience and grocery shopping options, with a more limited range of comparison retailers. In particular, the town and surrounding areas are well supplied with supermarket choices. However, it is noted that the centre has a high reliance on charity shops and beauty outlets.
- Vacancy levels are low in the town centre and surrounding villages.
- Vacancy rates do not seem to have risen in the wake of the pandemic and associated lockdowns.
- Higher order retail functions are provided in larger centres such as Preston, Lancaster and Blackpool and there is no realistic prospect for such higher order retailing in Garstang in the foreseeable future.
- Development of further retail is likely to be modest in scale to provide further choices of smaller units in the town centre. The function of any further retail would also be for convenience and local needs. While vacancies are low, indicating that further retail floorspace could be absorbed, a cautious approach is recommended due to the structural changes in the broader retail market in the UK.
- Development of retail in the town centre would need to be cognisant of a pandemic and post-pandemic economic environment, with higher use of online retailing by consumers and less reliance on high street retailers. However, good quality retail that meets market expectations can still be very successful in the current economic environment. Garstang is an affluent area with an increased ability for discretionary expenditure and residents would be attracted to good quality leisure or comparison retailing (e.g. the success of Barton Grange Garden Centre).

## Office Market

The office market in Garstang is very small and limited to providing locations for micro-businesses and local operators serving the Garstang community. The occupiers of office stock in Garstang are those services found on town centre high streets (e.g. solicitors, financial services, businesses services) serving both a residential and a business clientele.

Other organisations occupying office stock, including police office, Royal Mail sorting office, and British Telecom office, reflecting Garstang's role as the services town for this corridor along the A6.

Demand for office stock is generated through local businesses requiring stock, rather than businesses looking to relocate from elsewhere. The demand is for small premises to serve SMEs. A significant proportion of employees in profession services commute outside of the area to larger centres to access larger office-based employment options.

## Comments from agents

- Garstang's population generally commute out of the area for work, especially for office-based jobs.
- There are a few small professional firms in Garstang and these serve a local office market.
- There is overlap with the industrial/warehouse market and the office market as some small businesses in the area have acquired small warehouse units and fitted out with office equipment. This can mean that rent values can be a blend of office and warehouse price points.
- There is very limited availability of office stock in Garstang, it is a very small market.
- Office units are often mixed with retail units on the high street. One unit that the agent had on the market was a 200 sqm unit for office space within the Riverside retail complex. This unit is on the market at £16/sqft but this price point could be a little high for the market.
- Other recent lease agreements that agents were aware of were priced at £10-15/sqft for less than 100 sqm and £7.50 for a 160 sqm unit.
- Most of the demand is for units up to 200 sqm, though often significantly smaller. However, overall demand is low and sporadic.

## Key themes and implications

- The office market is very small, both in terms of transaction volumes and demand for spaces.
- The rent levels are moderate and reasonable for a small market (£10-15/sqft), though would not be at a level to make an investment into new office stock attractive (needing >£20/sqft).
- Hybrid spaces that could be fitted out for small workshops or office spaces could be an appropriate development option for Garstang and surrounding areas. Flexible spaces that support remote working would be appropriate as the proportion of remote working in the economy is likely to remain above pre-pandemic levels, especially in more affluent areas with older working populations.
- Garstang's office property market could promote itself on the basis of its position between Preston and Lancaster, providing an attractive town centre location without the inconvenience of a city centre location (e.g. car-parking costs, congestion, etc.).

### Leisure, Food and Drink, and Hotel Market

The leisure and hotel market in and around Garstang is a small sector, and is a mix of pubs, cafés, restaurants servicing the needs of local residents and day visitors and a small number of overnight accommodation venues, largely serving a domestic clientele.

As seen in the Goad information summarised earlier, the food and drink provision in the town centre is a modest mix of cafés, restaurants and pub/restaurants serving a local market. There is not a sufficient mix of outlets to act as a significant evening economy, with only one bar and limited diversity of dining options.

There is also a moderate range of leisure outlets in the town centre. North of the High Street Garstang Sports and Social Club hosts rugby, football, bowls, tennis and cricket. Garstang has an offering of gyms including Acresfield Health Club and Spa, which is an upmarket option, as well as JG Fitness, a smaller slightly less expensive gym found on Pringle Court in the Town Centre. Outside the town centre, Catterall offers two gyms, however there is an absence of the large national operators such as PureGym or Xercise4Less. There is a YMCA Swimming Pool as well as a YMCA leisure centre with martial arts classes on offer. 'The Flower Bowl', adjacent to the Barton Grange site 3 miles south of Garstang is the nearest destination leisure offer, with a cinema, bowling alley, bars and other attractions.

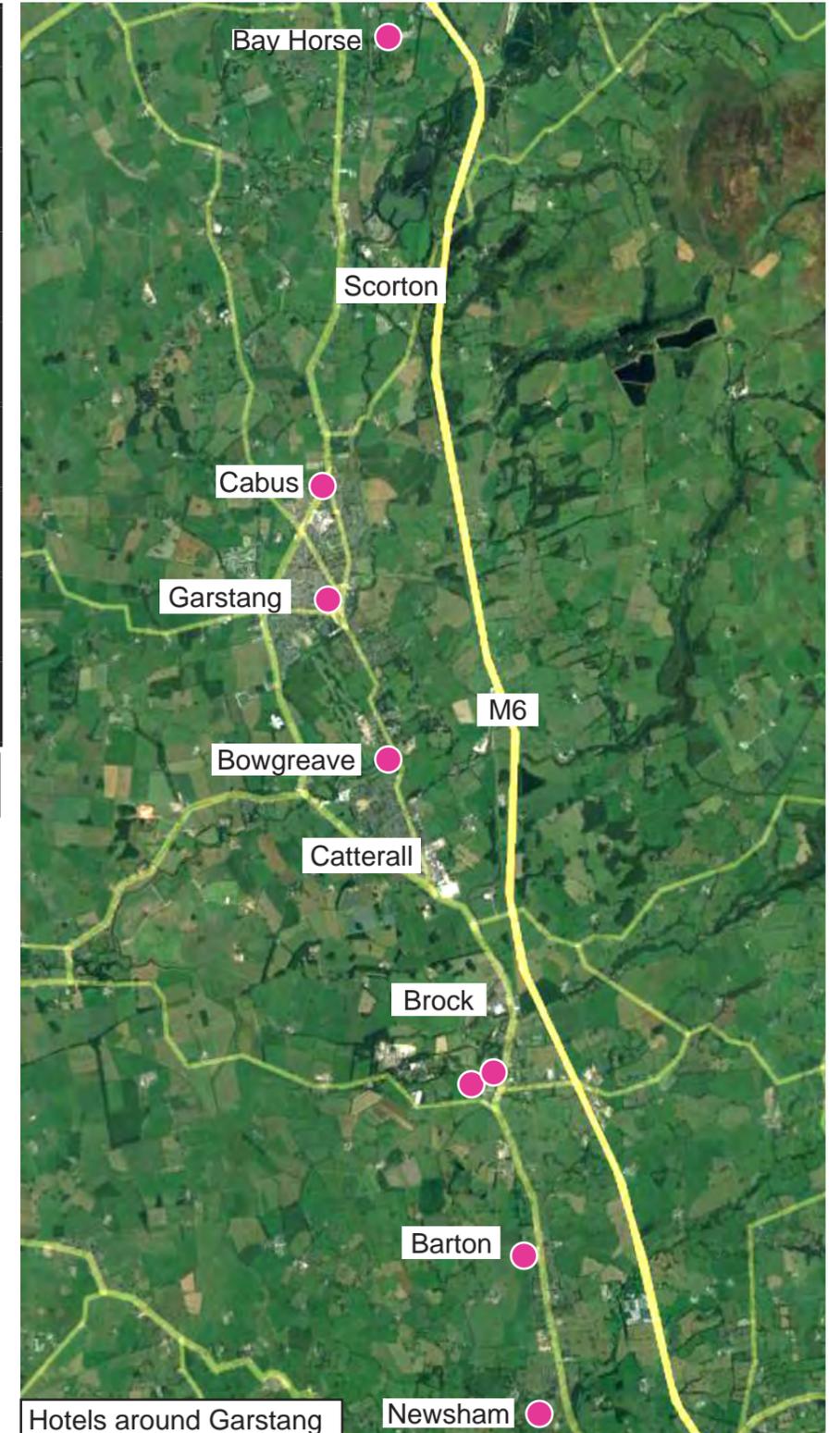
The choice of hotels in and around Garstang is listed in the table below. This includes budget brand name options, as well as independent hotel/pub options. The two accommodation options in Garstang are small, independent hotel/pubs at Royal Oak Hotel (9 rooms) and The Crofters Hotel (25 rooms). Therefore, the total quantum of accommodation in the town is small in terms of bedrooms.

The map on the right illustrates the locations of the hotels in relation to Garstang.

Location of Hotels around Garstang

Name	Location	Rooms
Royal Oak Hotel	Market Place, Garstang	9
The Crofters Hotel	Preston Lancaster New Rd, Garstang	25
Best Western Garstang Country Hotel & Golf Club	Garstang Rd, Bowgreave	33
Barton Manor Hotel	Garstang Rd, Barton	51
Travelodge Lancaster M6	White Carr Ln, Lancaster	53
Premier Inn, Preston North	Garstang Rd, Bilsborrow	N/A
Guys Thatched Hamlet	St Michael's Road, Bilsborrow	65
Premier Inn Preston North hotel	Garstang Rd, Preston	N/A

The table shows the name and addresses of hotels near Garstang



## Comments from agents

- There is little activity for leisure units in and around Garstang at the moment or in recent years.
- Only when a pub comes to the market is there any units available.
- Leasehold units would achieve rents of about £20/sqft, though depends on the operation.
- A gin bar was leased in Catterall recently, this achieved £16/sqft.
- Garstang is a relatively affluent area and thus would have the ability to spend on leisure facilities, such as food and drink enterprises.

## Key Themes and Implications

- Within the town centre there is only a modest food and beverage sector, with a mix of cafes, restaurants and pub/restaurants. There is a gap in the market for more diversity in the evening economy, including quality restaurants, good quality family restaurants and a more diverse range of bars and pubs.
- The level of hotel accommodation rooms in the town centre is small, with only one small facility in the town centre. However, there is broader range of facilities surrounding Garstang, that also rely on other attributes to attract customers (e.g. M6 location, golf course or near larger population centre), which would be required to help support a larger hotel facility. As such, there is unlikely to be sufficient demand for a larger hotel facility (or branded hotel facility) in Garstang. Any proposal for such a use would need to demonstrate a market niche/opportunity that would be exploited by the facility.
- A hotel facility within the town centre would have broader benefits, including for food and beverage outlets and retail, bringing in additional expenditure into the town centre. Thus if a boutique hotel proposal emerged for the town centre, these broader town benefits should be considered in evaluating the proposal.

## Industrial Market

The industrial market in Garstang is based around the Leachfield Industrial Estate on Green Lane West, approximately 1 km north of the town centre. This industrial estate is fully occupied and comprises local business operations, such as auto servicing, building and trade suppliers, small engineering operators and small warehousing.

Leachfield Industrial Estate is fully surrounded by residential dwellings, with no room for further expansion of this estate, though some potential for consolidation or regeneration of older uses.

The uses are localised due to its geography and highways network. While less than a kilometre in a straight line to the M6, access to a junction is several kilometres away and not conveniently accessed. Therefore, industrial businesses that are reliant on excellent motorways access would not consider Garstang as a business location.

## Comments from Agents

- Often there is not a clearly defined line between the office and industrial as much as is seen elsewhere in the country as some firms have acquired warehouses for cheap prices and fitted them out for offices. This can lead to a blending of values between warehouse and offices for those warehouse units that could be used for both purposes.
- Current demand for industrial premises is for smaller units (less than 200 sqm).
- Generally industrial units are about £3-5/sqft.
- Smaller units that could be used for hybrid purposes could achieve higher rents at about £9-10/sqft for 150 sqm while 200 sqft units are quoted at £8-£9/sqft.

## Key Themes and Implications

- The Leachfield Industrial Estate on Green Lane West is at capacity and has no opportunities for expansion given it is surrounded by residential.
- Demand for premises is at the smaller end of the scale (e.g. less than 200 sqm and some demand 200-500 sqm). Units at the size are unlikely to be built on a bespoke commission basis as occupiers of such units generally do not have the capacity to commission such construction. Rather the demand would be for built premises. Therefore, there is a need for the development of such units on a speculative basis to service demand in Garstang and surrounds.
- For the industrial sector, the Garstang and Greater Garstang markets would be relatively homogenous and thus it would not be necessary to develop such units in Garstang itself, with Catterall and other nearby locations also able to adequately provide for this market. The allocated site SA7 – Brockholes Industrial Estate Extension at Catterall would be the main focus of industrial growth in this corridor. At 32.5 ha, it is of sufficient scale to provide for many years of growth of industrial uses.
- Flexible, hybrid workshop units would be the most appropriate and provide a higher rent value.

## Residential Market

Garstang is seen as an attractive residential location in the district. It provides a location within a comfortable commute of larger urban centres, while providing a semi-rural lifestyle.

Residential property in Garstang consists of mostly semi-detached dwellings and, to a lesser degree, detached and terraced homes. Currently, demand for residential property in Garstang and surrounding areas is strong. Demand stems from first-time buyers looking for family homes with two/three bedrooms and well as those looking to upgrade their dwellings.

## Comments from Agents

- Garstang is an upmarket residential area. It is separate from other towns on the Fylde Coast and has its own identity. It was a former stagecoach station and retains some of the character from that time.
- It is an out-commuting town, with significant amounts of workers commuting to larger urban areas for higher-level jobs than are generally available within Garstang.
- A town such as Garstang can take advantage of the trend of people relocating from major cities for lifestyle reasons. Being a high amenity town in commuting distance of major employment nodes means that it is a desirable residential location. This market is looking for 3-5 bedroom detached and semi-detached dwellings.
- Some high-end products in and around Garstang have taken some time to sell in recent years but have now been bought.
- There is strong demand for housing in this location, with the bulk of the demand for detached and semi-detached products.
- Town centre housing is a relatively untested market in Garstang.

## Key Themes and Implications

- Garstang is an upmarket residential area and can command strong values in new-build residential products, thereby making schemes attractive to developers.
- It is an out-commuting town and the professional market commuting to key employment centres is a major residential market sector for Garstang and surrounding areas.
- In a post-pandemic work environment, with higher levels of home-working, locations with high amenity attributes, such as Garstang, will be attractive residential destinations.
- Higher density, town centre residential products are relatively untested products in the market, though it is noted that the Envidia Homes scheme on River Walk is reportedly attracting strong interest. Price points of £280-350/sqft for these 1-2 bedroom apartments suggest a strong market in this location.
- The Envidia Homes scheme could provide a catalyst for further in-centre residential schemes in Garstang.

## Conclusions

For retail, while this sector is performing well at present and shows resilience in difficult economic times, it is unlikely that there would be a demand for a significant increase in the overall quantum of retail floorspace in the Garstang town centre. Any further development of retail is likely to be of a modest scale, providing small retail units. It is recommended that a cautious approach to retail development is undertaken, given the uncertainties in the broader retail market in the UK. However, it is noted that Garstang and surrounding areas have affluent populations with significant capacity for discretionary expenditure and thus a good quality retail offer that meets market expectations can still be successful in the current economic climate.

The office market in Garstang is very small, both in terms of transaction volumes and demand for spaces. While a small scheme for hybrid space, providing flexible office and workshop could be supportable from a demand perspective, it is unlikely to be viable if developed by the private sector given current rent levels.

The leisure, food and drink and hotel market has a range of local enterprises in and around Garstang. The town centre itself has only a modest range of cafes, restaurants and pub/restaurants and further enterprises in this sector would help to diversify the evening economy. While there are only two small hotel accommodation facilities in the town centre, given the small market and further choice in the wider area, it is not considered that there is sufficient demand at the moment to add to this accommodation stock in Garstang. However, it is recognised that an increase in the accommodation offer would have broader benefits to the town centre in terms of footfall and expenditure and thus any hotel proposal that emerges should be considered in this context.

The industrial market in Garstang appears to be performing well with high occupancy in Leachfield Industrial Estate. This estate has no capacity for expansion, though some regeneration of older stock could occur. There is demand for further smaller premises (e.g. less than 200 sqm and some demand 200-500 sqm), which is likely to be needed to be built on a speculative basis. This could be located in Garstang itself or in the wider Greater Garstang area. Such units should be flexible to accommodate a range of small employment types. It is likely that the employment allocation SA7 for the Brockholes Industrial Estate expansion would provide the main focus of additional industrial unit growth in this corridor.

Garstang is a strong residential market and is attractive to developers, evident by the range of current and proposed schemes in and around the town. The bulk of residential types being developed is for detached and semi-detached products, which has the largest demand in the area. Town centre residential is a significantly smaller market, though the current Envidia Homes scheme is reportedly attracting strong interest and has price points that would suggest an attractive scheme for developers. This scheme could provide a catalyst for further town centre residential products in Garstang.

## Spatial Review

Garstang Town Centre, is defined by the High Street, Park Hill Road, the public path that runs along the River Wyre and the two supermarkets (Aldi & Booths) to the west. The High Street contains most of the social and economic activity, and the highest concentration of small independents shops. The High Street is considered the core of the town centre as other spaces around the large retail units and Garstang Library have a more peripheral character.

## Photographic Survey



The satellite image shows Garstang Town Centre and the overlaid town centre boundary. The photo survey route (in blue) is numbered to indicate the location of each site photo



The photos on this page and the previous page are the site photos taken around Garstang and relate to the 'photographic survey' map. The images cover areas along the High Street and The Booth Square to better understand the current condition of local shops, public realm and connections around the Town Centre





Image of Cherestanc Square, facing north



Image of Cherestanc Square, facing north east



Image of Park Hill Road, facing south



Image of Southern gateway to the town centre where Park Hill Road splits from Bridge Street  
credit Google Images



Image of the Southern edge of the town centre looking north along Bridge Street



Image of the High Street towards Church Street



Image of the town centre gateway from the north of High Street



Image showing the Historic Townscape, Garstang High Street

## Urban Structure

Garstang was formed as a nucleated settlement on the west bank of the River Wyre, it sits along the main road between Preston and Lancaster (A6) and west of the M6 motorway.

The town centre has a simple structure of two main streets with buildings closely spaced along them. The majority of the buildings are terraced with a few 'pocket' buildings behind the High Street. The buildings around the Town Centre core are 2 to 3 storeys in height, with range of small cottages and tall properties.

The Royal Oak, which is situated at the southern end of the High Street, is a focal point in front of which sits the Market Cross that splits the road into two leading to Church Street and Bridge Street. Following Church Street south leads to a mooring basin on the Lancaster Canal around which is an historic pub 'The Old Tithe Barn'; a new residential development 'The Moorings'; and 'Wyrebank' a venue and banqueting suite.

The location of the town core, and the number of sites available around it are limited by suburban development and the River Wyre. Any future development will need to find opportunity sites in the town centre or sites outside of the town centre boundary.

The town centre 'grain' can be viewed on the Figure-Ground Plan opposite. This shows in dark, the scale and pattern of the building footprints. The grain around the historic core is compact but becomes looser towards the north and south. The roads and housing patterns become more linear and structured leading out to the surrounding suburban housing.

The most recent / modern developments such as Aldi and the River View commercial hub north of the High Street sit on the edge of the town centre boundary. The River View development connects the wider public paths along the River Wyre and Garstang's sports facilities. These facilities link to the national cycleway that extends north to the Millennium Green.



Image of the New Residential Development, The Moorings



Image of River View Commercial Development, facing north



Image of Cottage Houses, High Street facing east

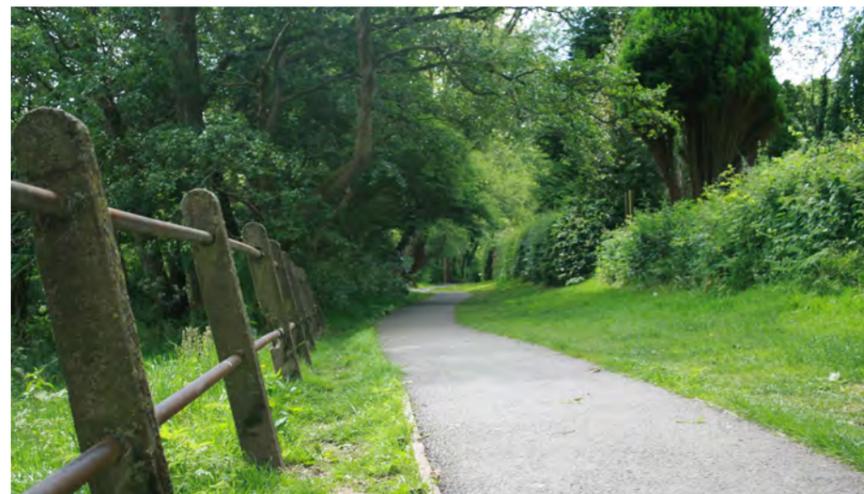
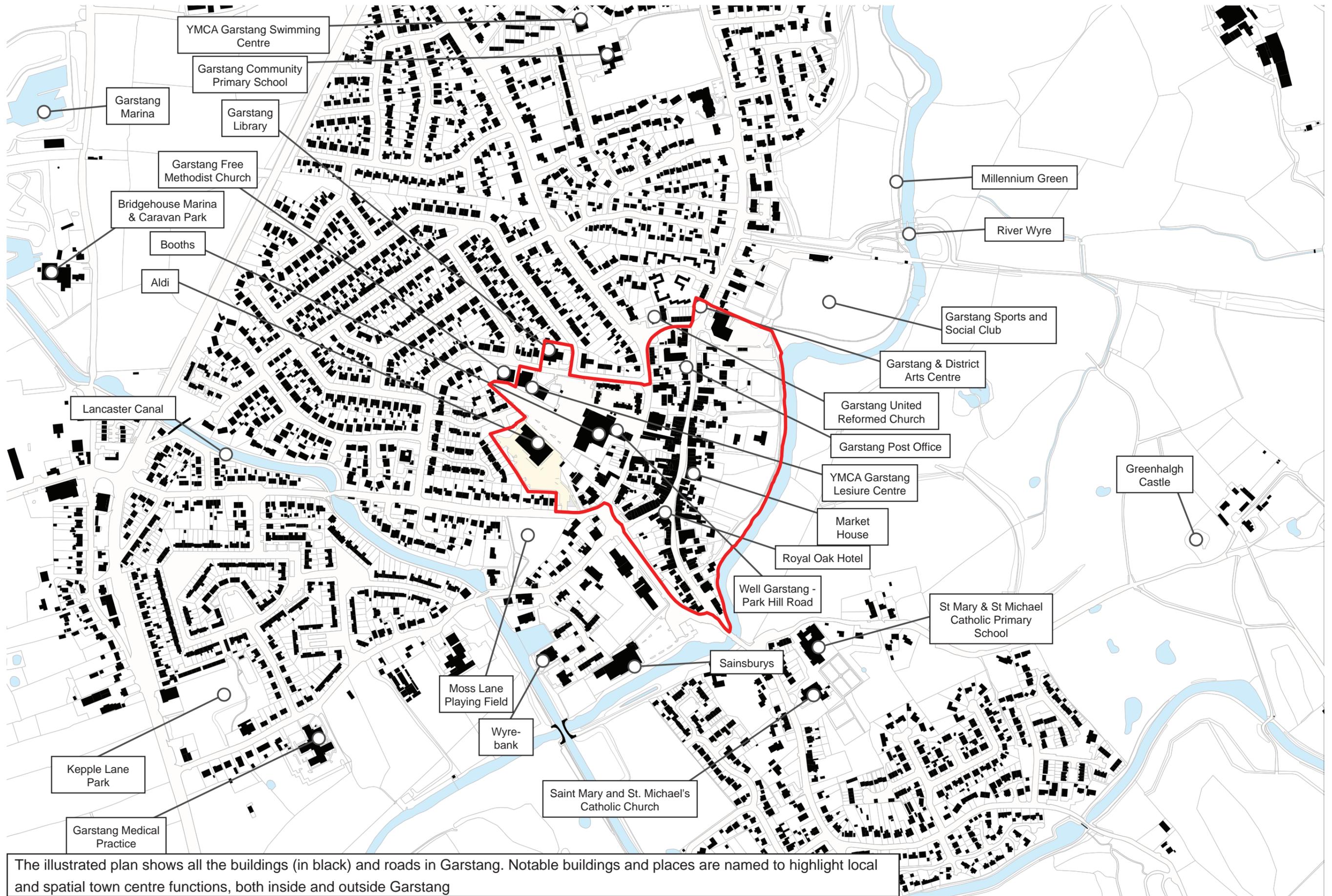


Image of the Public path along the River Wyre, facing south



Image of Booths Supermarket, facing west



The illustrated plan shows all the buildings (in black) and roads in Garstang. Notable buildings and places are named to highlight local and spatial town centre functions, both inside and outside Garstang

## Land use

Refer to the Wyre Local Plan area designations in the plan opposite. The designated 'primary shopping area' covers half of the town centre with a clear focus on the High Street, Market Place, Bridge Street and Church Street. The shopping area also covers the Weinds and parts of Park Hill capturing a significant proportion of local shops and the Booths supermarket. The northern area of the High Street is not included in the shopping area due a number of residential properties situated close by and a lower concentration of local shops.

All designated 'primary shopping frontage' is along the High Street as this defines the centre of Garstang with its historic character and local shops. The secondary frontages contain more recent developments, these are along Bridge Street and most southern end of the High Street.

### Site Allocations

The plan overleaf shows three sites that are designated as residential development sites within the Local Plan and are now in the process of development.



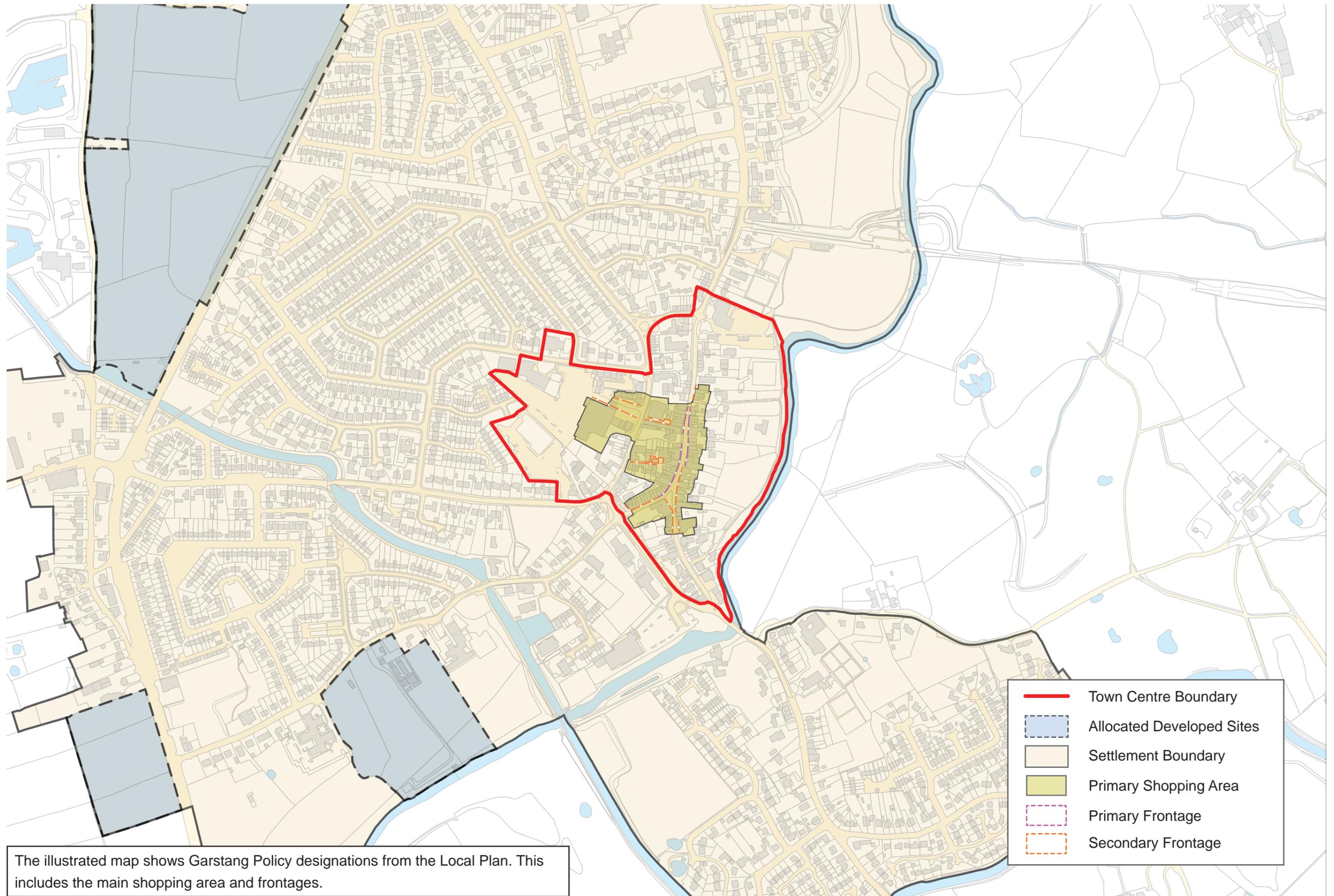
Image of Thomas Weind, facing north



Image of the Old Tithe Barn



Image of the Moorings at the Lancaster Canal



The illustrated map shows Garstang Policy designations from the Local Plan. This includes the main shopping area and frontages.

- Town Centre Boundary
- Allocated Developed Sites
- Settlement Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area
- Primary Frontage
- Secondary Frontage

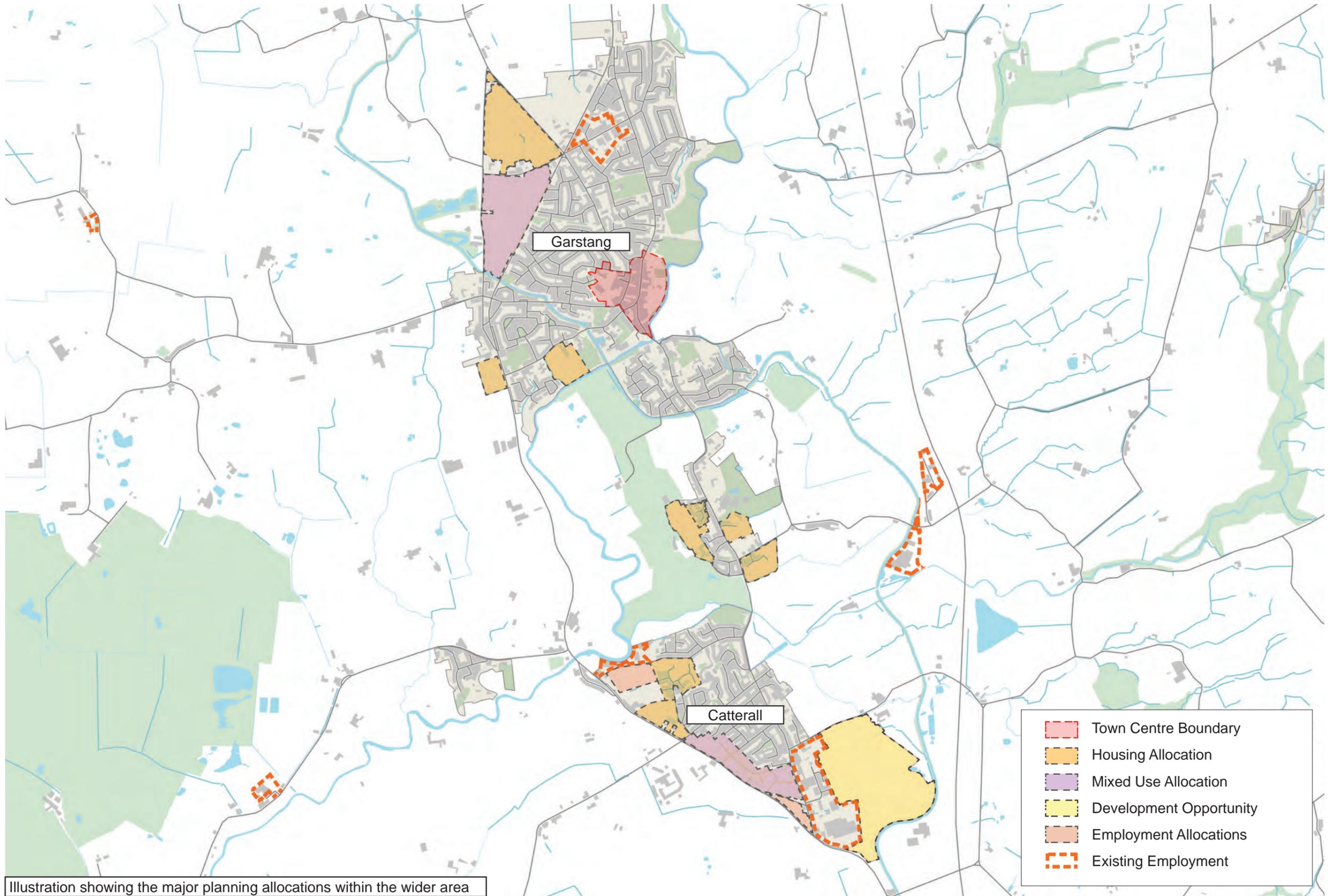


Illustration showing the major planning allocations within the wider area

## Transport and Linkage

### Strategic Linkage

#### Road

The A6 and the B6430 are Garstang's main north - south roads. Longmoor Lane leads west and connects to wider Wyre Towns such as Fleetwood. Due to Garstang's location between Preston and Lancaster a large volume of traffic flows through the Town Centre.

#### Bus

There are regular services (such as the 40,41 and 42) to Garstang from Preston and Lancaster City Centre. The bus routes go directly through the High Street and Park Hill Road. A key bus stop is outside Booths where a large proportion of visitors arrive and leave. Lancashire County Council's Bus Strategy considers future options for this rank.

Following an incident between a bus and one of the market stalls, a decision was taken to divert buses on market days. The buses are diverted away from High Street, along Windsor Road and Moss Lane. Lancashire County Council does not have any plans to change the current arrangement.

#### Cycle / Walking

There are good quality off road routes that run along the River Wyre and Lancaster Canal extending out into the open countryside. A key cycle route runs along Lancaster Canal connecting to Lancaster City Centre and the planned Bailrigg Garden Village.

There are no national cycle routes that directly connect to the Town Centre, but Sustrans Route 6 that runs alongside the M6 can be reached by heading north of Cabus along Gubberford Lane. Connecting to this route via the public paths along the River Wyre would allow cyclists to reach the Preston and Lancaster.

### Town centre linkage

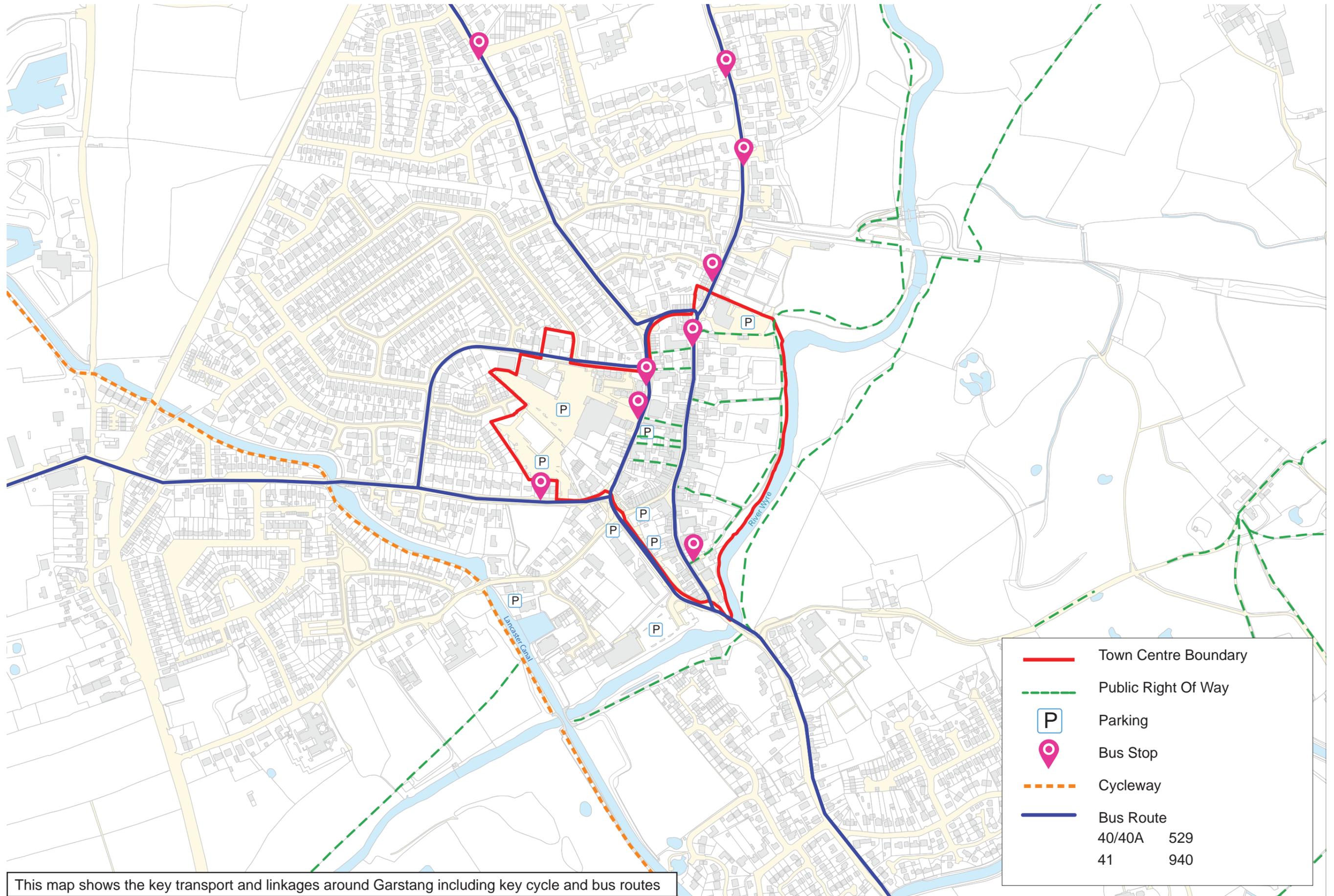
#### Road

The primary town centre movement structure is defined by the High Street and Park Hill Road. The principal road access from the south (B6430) enters the town centre at the bridge at the southern end of Bridge Street. From here the road becomes a one way street, leading north up to Booths along Park Hill Road where the main car park for visitors is situated and loops around down the High Street.

The geometry of the residential secondary and tertiary roads to the west that connect to the town centre via Windsor Road and Moss Lane follow a more gridded pattern. While on plan these residential roads clearly connect to the town centre, on the ground the connection to the High Street is not clear nor provides clear signage.



Image of Bus 42 along Bridge Street



This map shows the key transport and linkages around Garstang including key cycle and bus routes

## Heritage

Garstang first appears in the Domesday book of 1086, and was mentioned as 'Cherestanc', then was later known by many names including; Geresteng or Grestein (1203), Gayrestan (1236), Gayerstang (1246). The first mention of Garstang is from the 'manor of Garstang' owned by the Lancastres, then in 1314 Garstang was incorporated by a charter, allowing it to become a trading town. Around the 16th and 17th Century a weekly market and two fairs were held each year, during this time Garstang traded "corn, cattle, yarn and fish". During this period the first town hall was built of which there have now been three on the same site.

In the 18th Century a number of key structures were developed such as the Market Cross and Grammar School. Garstang growth in the area came due to the 'coaching era' where it became an important stop in journeys from London to the North West and Scotland. These were stage and mail coaches which stayed at hotels and inns on Garstang High Street, mainly the Royal Oak Hotel. Economic prosperity led to the opening of the Lancaster Canal in 1797.

The prosperity brought by the Lancaster Canal was short-lived as a result of competition from the railway line which bypassed the town from the 1840s onwards. This ended Garstang's reputation as a stopping point for travellers. By the 20th Century the Garstang manor was sold off to existing tenants and the Grammar school shut down and was known as an Arts Centre in 1928. The 1932 map of Garstang shows relatively little new development compared to the 1847 map.

The introduction of the A6 consequently ensured the town was left alone with little noise or development however there is still significant car travel through the town centre to reach Preston and Lancaster City Centre.

In April 2000 Garstang's residents voted to become the world's first Fairtrade town which has since renewed its Fairtrade title three times (last vote took place in 2008).

Notwithstanding the success and issues throughout Garstang's history it contains a significant number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and green open space. Together with its trading, fairs/festivals and hotel history and strategic location between two cities, the River Wyre and Lancaster Canal there is much to celebrate in Garstang's heritage. Opportunities to further develop this story, with links to Garstang's built environment and future role, should be explored.

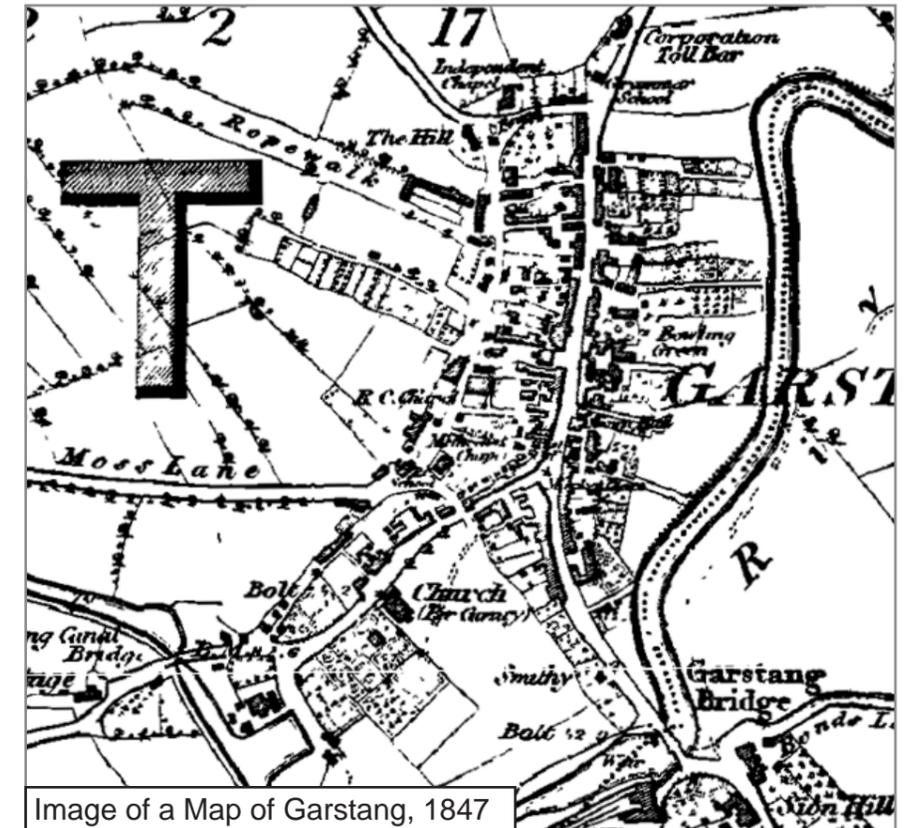


Image of a Map of Garstang, 1847



Image of John Speeds Map of Lancashire 1610

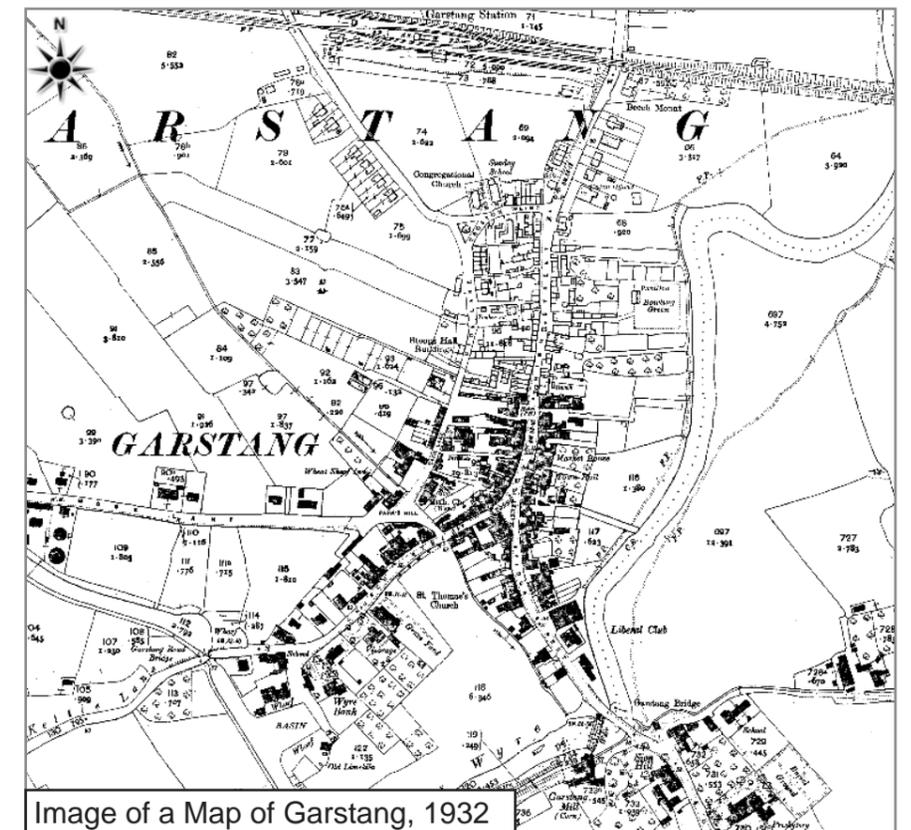
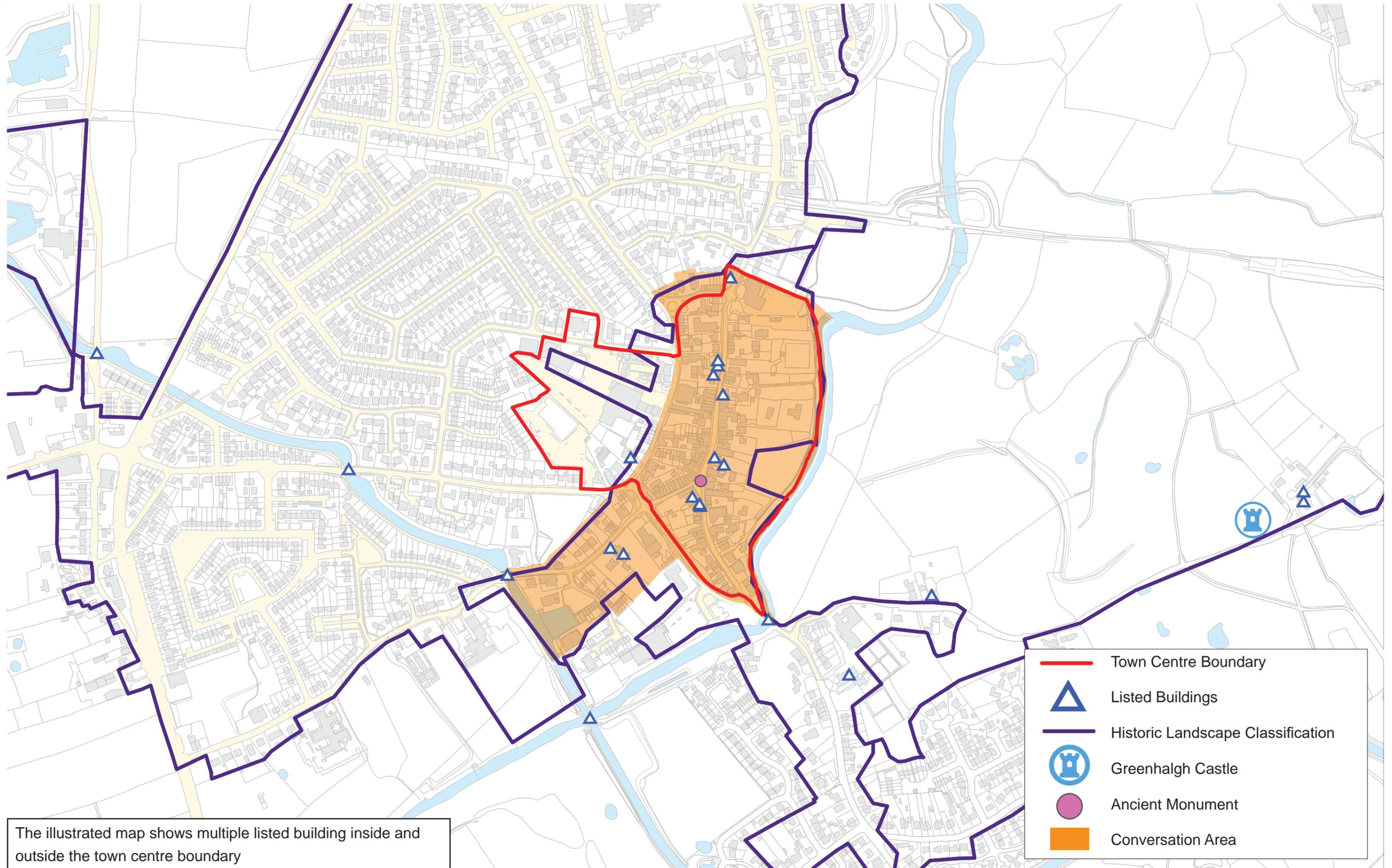


Image of a Map of Garstang, 1932



The illustrated map shows multiple listed building inside and outside the town centre boundary

- Town Centre Boundary
- ▲ Listed Buildings
- Historic Landscape Classification
- 🏰 Greenhalgh Castle
- Ancient Monument
- Conversation Area

## Garstang Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The Garstang Conservation Area Appraisal states the 'Conservation area is of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve and enhance'. Garstang's Town Centre boundary is mostly covered by the Conservation Area which retains an eighteenth century character with some modern developments.

### Listed Buildings:

- 2 Bridge Street;
- 4 Bridge Street;
- 11, 12 and 13 Bridge Street;
- 43 High Street;
- 44 and 45 High Street;
- Market House, High Street;
- Outbuilding behind Market House, High Street;
- Arts Centre, Lancaster Road;
- Canal Bridge (No. 62);
- Church of St Thomas;
- Cross Base, Church of St Thomas;
- Garstang Bridge;

### Unlisted Buildings of importance:

- The Council Offices, Victoria Terrace; United Reformed Church;
- Croston Road; 81-85 Church Street; Myrtle Cottages, Church Street; School;
- Cottages, Church Street; 70-72 Church Street; 63-67 Church Street; Laburnum;
- Cottage, High Street; Th'owd Tithebarn; Stables behind the King's Arms, High Street;
- 3 High Street (former Antiques Shop, adjacent Kings Arms); and 8-12 (even) Bridge Street;



Image of the Kings Arms, High Street



Image of Market Cross, High Street



Image of Arts Centre, Croston Road



Image of Market House, High Street



Image of the old Town Hall, High Street



Image of Royal Oak, High Street

## Environment

In relation to the town centre issues around 'environment' can be considered as:

The quality of the environment within the town centre itself

- Quality of townscape / streetscape
- Quantum/type of public space
- Light and air

The connection between the town centre and its surrounding environment

- Connections with the River Wyre and Lancaster Canal
- Connection with the wider countryside
- Wider connections



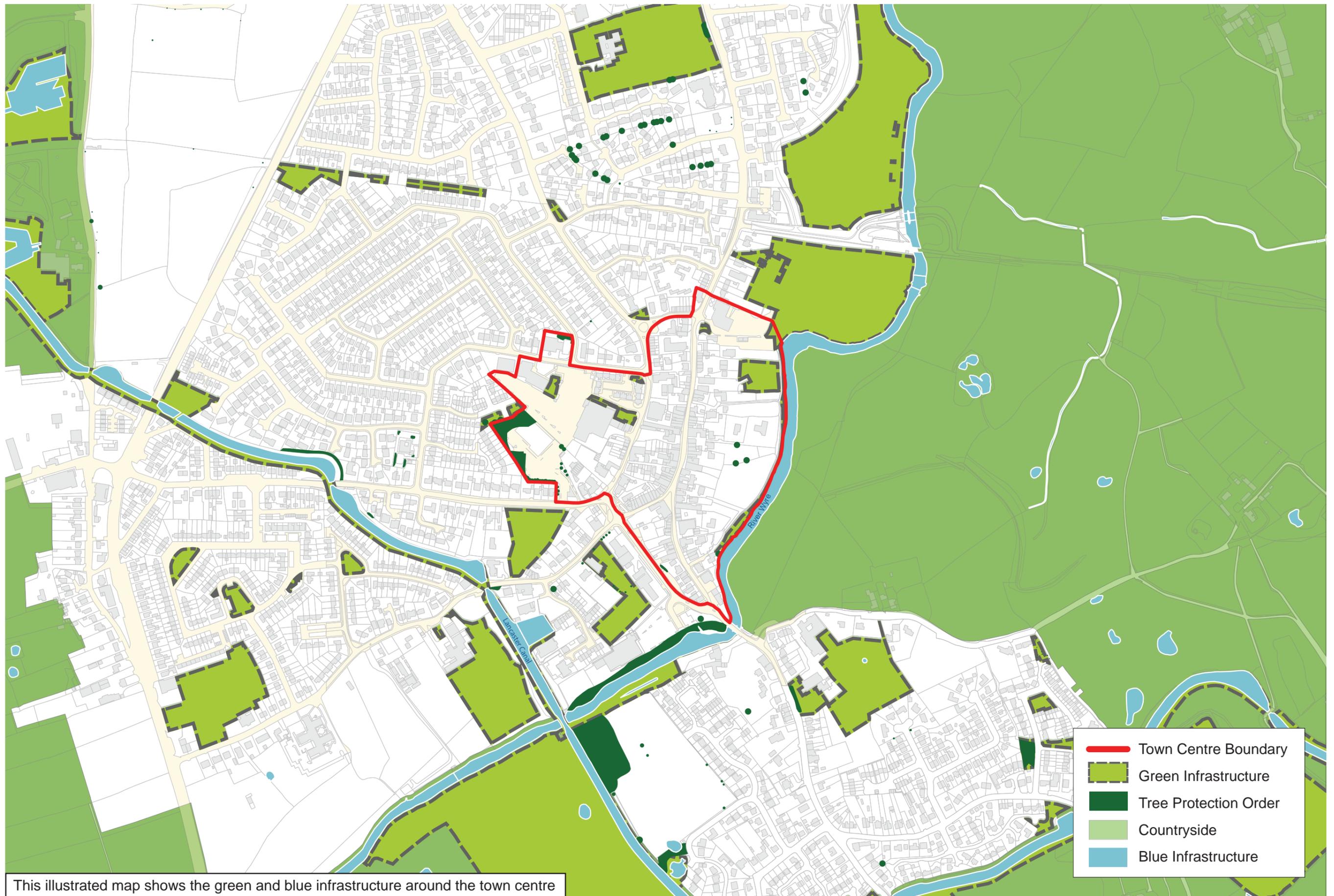
Image of the River Wyre, facing south



Image of Garstang FC, facing north



Image of a Public Path along River Wyre, facing west



This illustrated map shows the green and blue infrastructure around the town centre



Image of a Public Path, adjacent to River Wyre



Image of the Public Realm to the entrance outside Booths



Image of the River Wyre, facing East



Image of Garstang's Local Stores along Thomas's Weind

## 2.5 Consultation

It is a requirement of the brief and a key objective of the framework that the people of Garstang and the surrounding villages have the opportunity to shape the future development of their town. In support of this the regeneration framework process included for extensive consultation with stakeholders and with the public.

### Stakeholder consultation

Key stakeholders were agreed in consultation with The Greater Garstang Partnership Board and Wyre Council, and included members of GGP, Garstang Town Council, Wyre Council officers, health organisations, education establishments, local heritage and amenity groups and high street businesses. Stakeholder's views were canvassed via a mixture of workshop sessions, one to one meetings and telephone/video consultations.

### Stakeholder workshop

A half day workshop session with members of the GGP and officers from Wyre Council was held in July 2021.

The session opened by establishing a common understanding of the brief, a summary analysis of opportunities and constraints and a review of initial findings from the consultant team. From this base, attendees were asked to consider what the town centre could be like in the future and then, divided into 2 teams, describe their vision through sketches, notes and marked up plans. Each team 'pinned up' and explained their ideas to the whole group. Attendees were then invited to comment on proposals and to identify the ideas or initiatives that they rated most highly by allocating a notional budget.

49 ideas generated at the workshop are scheduled opposite, grouped by study 'themes'.

Table of ideas / proposed interventions

	Idea / Initiative	'Budget' allocation by the workshop attendees	Comment
<b>Character of the High Street</b>			
1	Promote more of a 'café culture' and an evening (as opposed to night time) economy	8	This was the most highly 'budgeted' idea on the day.
2	Get the overall town centre offer right – including space for new businesses, "interesting" retail	5	This was a common workshop discussion point – a recognition that the town centre has to be provide both an attractive environment and an offer that appeals to its potential users – locals, the wider hinterland, and visitors.
3	Ensure shops open to suit customer needs	3	This point also much raised in one to one consultations.
4	Improved family food offer		These points link to the idea 1. The lack of a strong offer for families (both the offer itself and the fact that much of the town centre closes early, on half days, and on Sundays) was felt to be a barrier to 'new residents' using the town centre more. This theme was also raised frequently in one to one consultations.
5	Destination family restaurant		
6	Restaurant in the new development at north end of High Street – opportunity of views towards the river?		
<b>Public space</b>			
7	Consider a 'pedestrian priority' / 'shared space approach to town centre streets	7	This was the second most highly 'budgeted' idea on the day, but it was recognised that this initiative may be considered detrimental by some.
8	Better use of Cherestanc Square	5	Also a theme was also raised frequently in one to one consultations.
9	Better use of space along the "back and front" of the current High Street	1	
10	Better use spaces that connect the High Street and Park Hill Road that are currently used as pub car parks		
11	Better link the High Street and the river		
12	Improved signage / wayfinding		
<b>Canal and River</b>			
13	Improve connectivity to the canal	5	There was a common recognition that whilst both an attractive river and an historic canal edge the town centre, visibility, awareness and connection to these assets could be much stronger.
14	Improved use of the 'waterside' – canal and river	1	
15	Potential for watertaxi service along the canal?		
16	New footbridge over the river		
17	Kayaks / boats on the river?		
<b>The Market</b>			
18	Improve the market offer	3	Whilst this did not score particularly highly on the day, the need to 'rethink' the market offer and make more of this as a core asset for the town was a very strongly expressed theme in one to one consultations.
19	Improve the market offer – artisan, local food, crafts		
20	A 'Young Peoples' Market'		
<b>Community facilities</b>			
21	Consider an improved, integrated pool and leisure centre offer	3	
22	Better community facilities – with a focus for both older and younger people	1	Whilst this did not score particularly highly on the day, the desire for some sort of 'community hall' type of facility was very widely expressed in one to one consultations.
23	"Update" the sports and social club	1	
24	Opportunities for 'social prescription' i.e. links to health and wellbeing		

<b>Car parking</b>			
25	Expand car parking to the south east of the town centre with a bridge link over the river connecting to the High Street via existing rights of way.	4	Getting car parking right – both the amount, location and parking duration was widely recognised on the day and in one to one consultations, as essential to unlock current barriers to the way that people currently use the town centre.
26	Improve parking	1	
27	Park and ride	1	
<b>Transport and access</b>			
28	Improved connectivity to outlying villages (community led solution)	2	Potentially a community bus on the model of the 'Little White Bus' at Hawes - but could start with a community lift share scheme. Improving connectivity to the outlying villages is recognised as an important issue for the Greater Garstang Partnership Board.
29	Improve public transport	1	
30	Improve transport links		
31	Improved access for all – both those with, and without cars	1	
32	'Green' public transport		
<b>Visitor economy</b>			
33	Improve visitor accommodation offer	1	
34	Improve / promote access to the surrounding countryside / outdoor offer	2	There was common agreement that Garstang is well positioned to be a connecting point to the outdoor offer that surrounds it and has a good range of active leisure opportunities on its doorstep. Better positioning of these and stronger supporting infrastructure will pay dividends.
35	E – bikes hire	1	
36	Promote cycling and the visitor opportunities around it – additional trails/loops, cycle rental, connecting to the canal towpath		
37	Cycle hub		
38	Better promotion of walking offer		
39	Town centre hotel offer		
<b>Business economy</b>			
40	New business opportunities in the creative / digital sector	1	Other than retail and tourism/leisure the wider business economy was not strongly discussed on the day. There was also a recognition that the town centre itself is very constrained and offers few 'opportunity sites' or areas for business/employment expansion. That said, the potential expansion of the Brockholes site at Catterall offers significant potential nearby, as does potential links to FE/HE (Myerscough College), and it was recognised that the area could offer as an attractive 'lifestyle location' for remote working entrepreneurs / start-ups.
41	A digital hub	1	
42	Micro breweries	1	
43	Promotion / support of entrepreneurship		
44	A 'Business Enterprise Centre'		
45	Creative industries in the Old Post Office building		
<b>'The offer' and promotion</b>			
46	Promoting the town centre offer more/better to the existing local population	1	Discussions in the workshop and also during one to one consultations included not only specific initiatives or ideas, but also the more general question of how these can be better packaged and promoted.
47	Ensuring a "balanced economy"	1	
48	Improved offer for older people		
49	Identify town centre 'opportunity sites'		

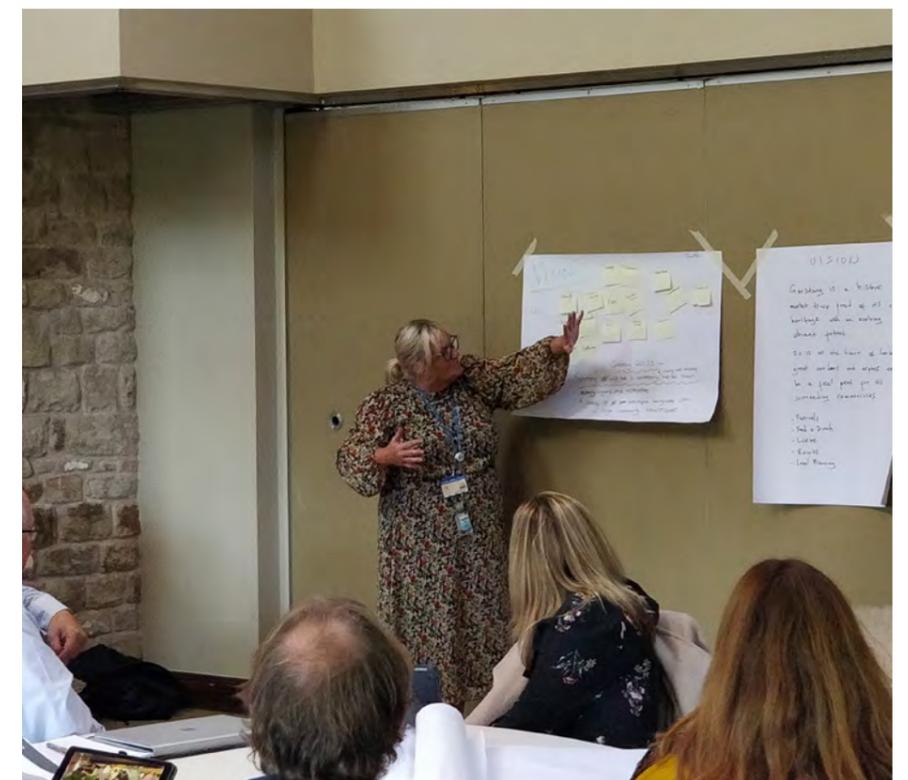
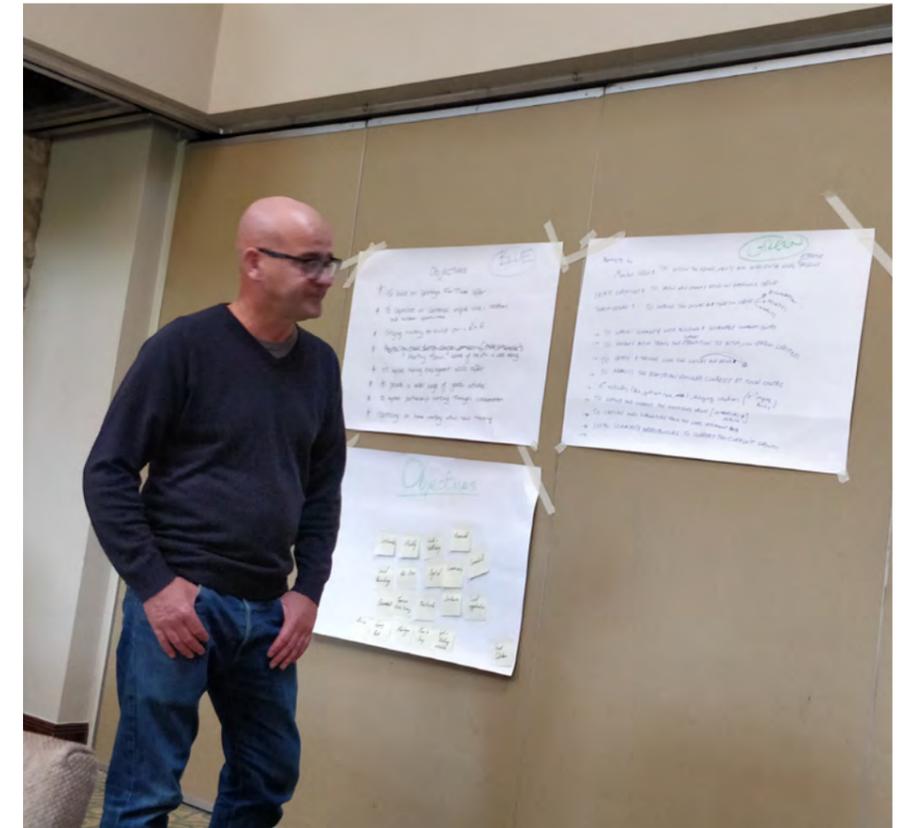
This table is a Schedule of ideas from the stakeholder workshop

Ideas that were most highly rated on the day included:

- Promotion of a 'café culture' and evening economy
- Improving the town centre offer – a combination of a good range of businesses and an attractive environment
- A 'pedestrian priority' / 'shared space' approach to town centre streets
- Better use of Cherestanc Square
- Improved connectivity to the canal and river
- An improved market offer
- An improved, integrated leisure and swimming pool offer
- Improved car parking
- Better connectivity to outlying villages

## Public Engagement

Public engagement has a number of functions. It is about both informing and asking; uncovering local knowledge and 'good ideas'; and identifying issues and points of potential resistance. But most importantly involving people in the development of proposals can lead to a sense of local ownership and create opportunities for further involvement through the life of the project. The development of the Regeneration Framework included two rounds of formal public engagement: the first to ask for public views on the future direction of the town; the second to provide feedback and to ask for comment on a range of emerging ideas and interventions.



These photos are from the vision workshop with key stakeholders and consultants engaging in a design exercise

## Event 1 – Initial options

A day long exhibition was held at St. Thomas's Church Hall on 24th August 2021, staffed by members of the GGP, Wyre Council officers and consultants. The exhibition was then located in the Garstang Tourist Information Centre and was hosted on-line for a further two weeks.

The exhibition presented three alternative future development scenarios for the town and asked that people indicate their preferred scenario, together with any other comments that they may have.

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### Scenario 1 – Modest Incremental Change

The starting point for this scenario is the belief that Garstang Town Centre is fundamentally “doing alright” as it is: Issues to be addressed are relatively ‘non-threatening’ in nature and a desire not to change the current character of the town should be heavily weighed against the benefits of any new investments or initiatives.

This ‘business as usual’ scenario would focus on improvements to the town centre that minimised any disagreement between town centre users, with modest improvement/growth in the town centre economy.

The exhibition highlighted some points to consider in relation to this scenario –

- Is the town centre “doing alright”? Or is there a slow, relative decline in some areas?
- Is this scenario sufficiently ambitious to support bids for potential funding?
- Will this scenario sufficiently engage the next generation of Garstang residents?

### Scenario 2 – Balanced ambitions for future economic growth

The starting point for this scenario is the belief that without sufficient ambition Garstang Town Centre risks relative decline. It recognises the need to address a range of issues but also sees that the town has many opportunities that can be taken. It sees Garstang as a place with both heritage and forward thinking that balances the needs of residents, surrounding communities and visitors - but without radically altering the nature or role of the town.

The exhibition highlighted some points to consider in relation to this scenario –

- Can changes to a pedestrian focussed public realm be designed to be positive for everyone?
- Will an evening economy bring issues? (or is an ‘evening’ economy different to a ‘night-time’ economy?)
- Can Garstang develop its visitor economy?
- What is the right way to manage a town centre?
- Could Garstang position itself as a location of choice for post pandemic remote working?

### Scenario 3 – More significant growth and better connectivity

The starting point for this scenario is the belief that Garstang would benefit from better transport connectivity and the more significant development that would accompany it. The goal would be to set out sufficient development ambition to justify new rail and motorway connections, thereby improving connectivity and raising the town in the borough’s development hierarchy. This would attract further inward investment and significantly boost economic activity.

The exhibition highlighted some points to consider in relation to this scenario –

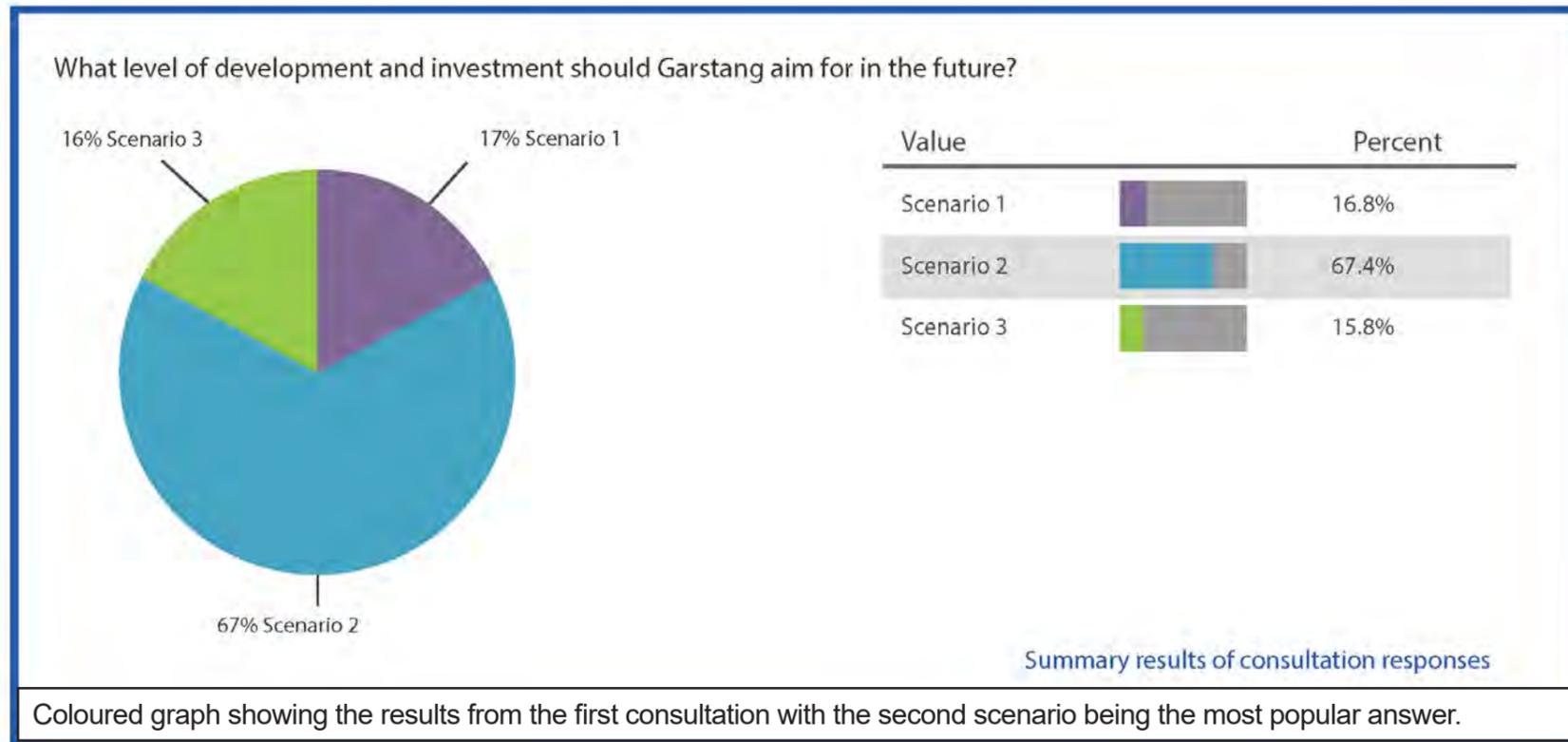
- Would the impacts of this scale of development outweigh the benefits?
- Would expansion of the town see it merge with adjacent settlements?
- Is the town centre sufficiently large to serve an expanded population?
- Would community and social infrastructure develop in step?
- Can significant change be delivered whilst retaining ‘local’ control?

## Feedback

The consultation responses indicated a clear majority in favour of Scenario 2 – Balanced ambitions for economic growth.



This image is from the first round of public consultation with members of the public giving feedback and speaking to staff



## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Welcome!

The Greater Garstang Partnership and Wyre Borough Council have commissioned a study to consider how Garstang Town Centre might be improved to address future challenges and opportunities. This is to ensure the economic wellbeing of the town so that it can better meet the needs of its residents, surrounding communities and visitors for the next 15 years and beyond.

The study is at an early stage and we are asking for your views on what sort of town Garstang should be and what its key issues and opportunities are.

The study is focussed on the town centre, but will include consideration of the wider area. It will be structured to consider 10 overlapping 'themes' of town centre economic wellbeing.

We would like your views on the information presented, including:

The level of ambition that you feel is appropriate, and any further comments in relation to the future health and success of Garstang Town Centre that you would like us to consider



The Greater Garstang Partnership is a group of individuals and organisations who, together, have the expertise needed to develop and deliver a Regeneration and Investment Framework for the town and its surrounding villages which will ensure the area thrives in the coming years.



Existing Garstang Town Centre Boundary

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Garstang  
Thrive



## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Context

Originally a small settlement on the west bank of the River Wyre, Garstang sits along the main road between Preston and Lancaster (A6) and west of the M6 motorway. It is the largest settlement in the rural part of Wyre Borough.

The historic town centre, most of which is a conservation area, has kept its eighteenth century character and later building has been retained within the medieval layout.

Garstang acts as a hub for a number of surrounding villages and is a visitor destination.

Garstang's population accounts for approximately 7% of Wyre's total and has an older age profile than Wyre as a whole and a notable retired population.

Garstang is connected to Preston and the motorway network (M55 and M6) in the south and to Lancaster in the north via the A6. It has a regular bus service that operates throughout the week but does not benefit from a rail station.

Key employment sectors include retail, manufacturing and construction industries.



Garstang Town Centre from the air, 1920



High Street looking south towards the Market Cross



High Street looking north



Market Cross and Royal Oak pub



River Wyre walk looking south towards St. Mary and St. Michael's Church

On the three panels that follow we have identified three potential scenarios for Garstang Town Centre's future. They range from modest to substantial change. No option is presented as better than the others or "the right answer" - we want to understand your opinion on this matter.

It would be helpful if you would let us have your feedback using the forms provided or via the website or contacts shown on the final panel.

Help  
Garstang  
Thrive



## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Future Garstang - Scenario 1:

'Modest, incremental change'



The starting point for this scenario is the belief that Garstang Town Centre is fundamentally "doing alright" as it is: Issues to be addressed are relatively "non-threatening" in nature and a desire not to change the current character of the town should be heavily weighed against the benefits of any new investments or initiatives.

This 'business as usual' scenario would focus on improvements to the town centre that minimised any disagreement between town centre users, with modest improvement/growth in the town centre economy.

They may include:

- Aesthetic improvements to public realm
- Community based transport initiatives (car share/ community bus)
- Improved digital connection
- Incremental improvements to events and marketing
- Better co-ordination of current community groups
- A modestly expanded 'circular economy' with an ethos of localism at its heart
- Improved east-west linkages (Weinds) and linkages to the river - surface, access, lighting and wayfinding improvements

- Better use of Cherestance Square, located outside Booths
- Ensuring shops open to suit customer needs
- An improved market offer - artisan, local food and crafts
- Improved access to the surrounding countryside/ outdoor offer

Some points to consider:

- Is the town centre "doing alright"? Or is there a slow, relative decline in some areas?
- Is this scenario sufficiently ambitious to support bids for potential funding?
- Will this scenario sufficiently engage the next generation of Garstang residents?

Help  
Garstang  
Thrive



These are the consultation panels that show Garstang's proposed vision. This includes a maps of Garstang, and aspirational images with key topics and interventions that could improve Garstang town centre

## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Future Garstang - Scenario 2: 'Balanced ambitions for economic growth'



The starting point for this scenario is the belief that without sufficient ambition Garstang Town Centre risks relative decline. It recognises the need to address a range of issues but also sees that the town has many opportunities that can be taken. It sees Garstang as a place with both heritage and forward thinking that balances the needs of residents, surrounding communities and visitors - but without radically altering the nature or role of the town.

This might contain some initiatives from Scenario 1 but might also include:

- A more pedestrian focused (but not fully pedestrianised) town centre
- A '21<sup>st</sup> Century Market Town' offer
- A stronger 'café culture' and development of an evening economy
- Interventions to address town centre car parking issues
- New initiatives to strengthen the visitor economy - particularly outdoor leisure
- An amended approach to some events to focus on quality over quantity
- New initiatives in town centre management
- A (post pandemic) 'remote working' location of choice for families, professionals and business entrepreneurs
- Improved connectivity and use of the canal and river

- Reassessment of the current leisure, library and swimming offer - potentially combining facilities and incorporating additional community spaces
- Better community facilities - with a focus for both older and younger people
- More significant promotion of the surrounding countryside/outdoor offer

#### Some points to consider:

- Can changes to a pedestrian focussed public realm be designed to be positive for everyone?
- Will an evening economy bring issues? (or is an 'evening' economy different to a 'night-time' economy?)
- Can we develop the visitor economy?
- What is the right way to manage a town centre?
- Could Garstang position itself as a location of choice for post pandemic remote working?

Help  
Garstang  
Thrive

wyre council

Garstang Town Council  
The Historic Market Town of Garstang

Greater  
Garstang  
PARTNERSHIP BOARD

## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Future Garstang - Scenario 3: 'More significant growth and better connectivity'



The starting point for this scenario is the belief that Garstang would benefit from better transport connectivity and the more significant development that would accompany it. The goal would be to set out sufficient development ambition to justify new rail and motorway connections, thereby improving connectivity and raising the town in the borough's development hierarchy. This would attract further inward investment and significantly boost economic activity.

This scenario could contain initiatives from scenarios 1 and 2 but in addition may include:

- A new rail connection
- Potential new motorway junction
- Significantly expanded new residential and employment development
- Improved local transport services (triggered by an increased population demand)
- Significant town centre inward investment

#### Some points to consider:

- Would the impacts of this scale of development outweigh the benefits?
- Would expansion of the town see it merge with adjacent settlements?
- Is the town centre sufficiently large to serve an expanded population?
- Would community and social infrastructure develop in-step?
- Can significant change be delivered whilst retaining 'local' control?

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The Historic Market Town of Garstang

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## Public Consultation on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Your Views

Thank you for reviewing this exhibition.

We would like your views on the ideas presented. If printed feedback forms are available where you are viewing this exhibition you may leave your comments now.

You can also leave comments via the web address below, where the information presented here can also be accessed:

[wyre.gov.uk/gretergarstang](http://wyre.gov.uk/gretergarstang)

Alternatively, you can also post your comments to the address below:

Future Garstang, Wyre Council,  
Economic Development, Civic Centre,  
Breck Road, Poulton-le-Flyde,  
Lancashire, FY6 7PU

#### Questions

- What level of development and investment should Garstang aim for in the future - Scenario 1, 2 or 3?
- Are there any issues, opportunities or other ideas that you would particularly like to raise?
- Do you have any other comments that you would like to make?

Comments can be made up until  
Sunday 5th September 2021.

#### Next Steps

The Greater Garstang Partnership, Wyre Council and consultants will consider all comments received as a result of this consultation process and also comments received from a range of conversations with other stakeholders. From this the team will produce a draft 'preferred vision' for the future of Garstang Town Centre.

This will be presented at a further public consultation in December 2021. Following this a final version of the town centre vision will be produced, taking account of comments received during the public consultation. A final report will be offered to the Greater Garstang Partnership Board, Wyre Council and Garstang Town Council for endorsement. This work will also support potential funding bids for monies to enable delivery of the vision.

#### Contacts

If you have any queries about the information displayed here or about the process described you can email:

[regeneration@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wyre.gov.uk)

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These are the consultation panels that show Garstang's proposed vision. This includes a maps of Garstang, and aspirational images with key topics and interventions that could improve Garstang town centre

## **Event 2 – Ideas and interventions**

A second day long exhibition was held at Garstang Free Methodist Church Hall on 1st December 2021, staffed by members of the GGP, Wyre Council officers and consultants. The exhibition was then located in the Garstang Tourist Information Centre and was hosted on-line for a further two weeks.

The exhibition explained the results of the public consultation held in August; presented a Vision and set of Objectives for the future development of the town; summarised a range of 'key interventions' proposed for Garstang, in order to deliver the Vision; and invited comments.

## **Feedback**

Over 60 written responses to the exhibition were received. Respondents were asked for their general comments to the Vision, Objectives and Interventions proposed and these contained a number of common themes:

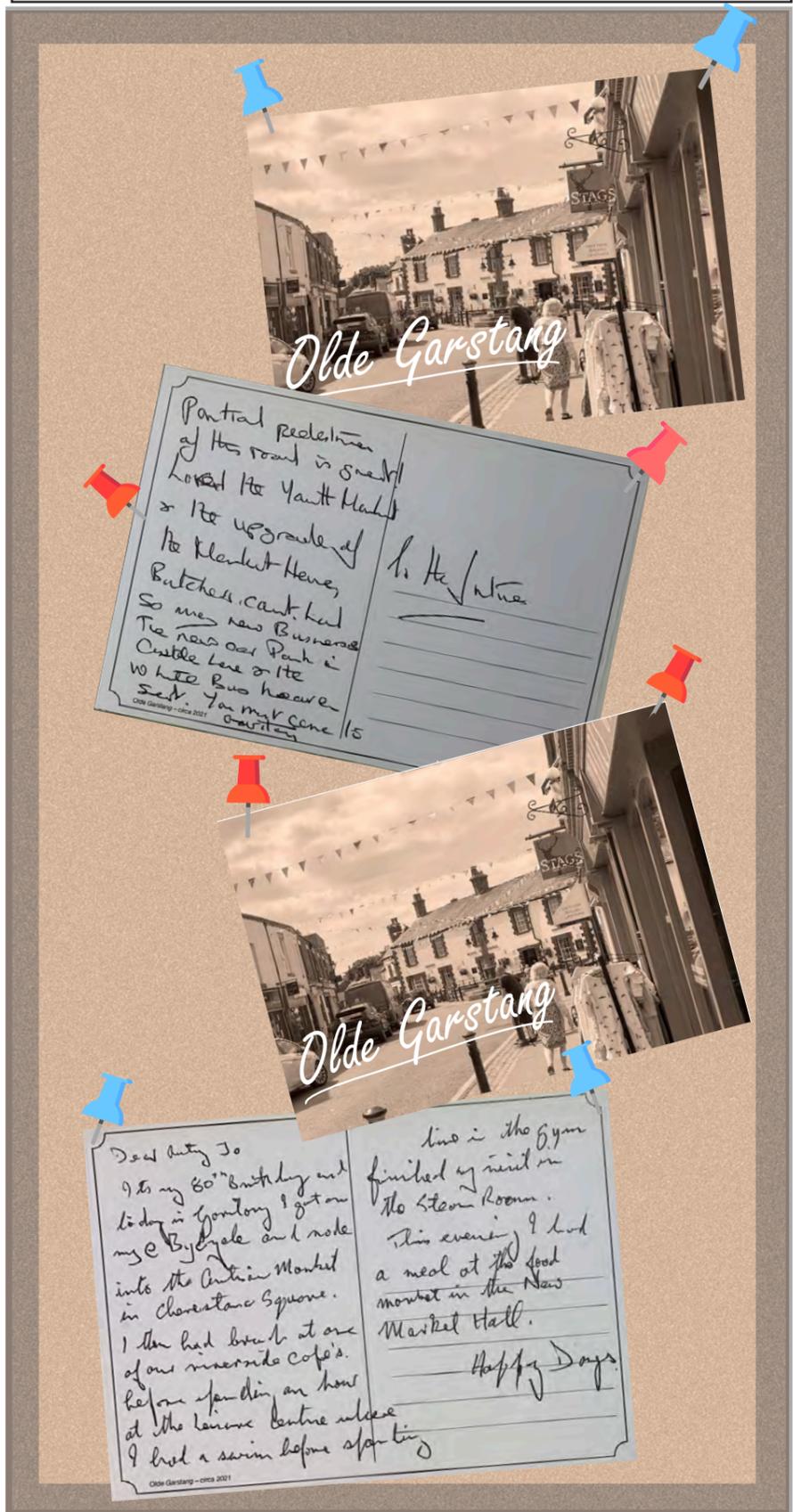
Over one third of respondents highlighted the importance of sports facilities and support for the plans of Garstang Sports and Social Club. This suggested a coordinated effort by the club to encourage responses.

Other themes which were well represented included general support for pro-active intervention in the town; support for an updated / improved market offer; support for a reduction in traffic / pedestrian focus along High Street; and a desire to see car parking issues addressed. Other common themes included a desire for a community centre; more focus on young people; and improved transport - particularly to the surrounding villages.



These images is from the second round of public consultation with members of the public giving feedback and speaking to staff

These images are from the public writing their thoughts on a postcard



# Second round public consultation panels

## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

**Welcome!**

The Greater Garstang Partnership and Wyre Borough Council have commissioned a study to consider how Garstang Town Centre might be improved to address future challenges and opportunities. This is to ensure the economic wellbeing of the town so that it can better meet the needs of its residents, surrounding communities and visitors for the next 15 years and beyond.

This exhibition is a follow up to a previous exhibition and consultation event held in August. This exhibition:

- provides feedback on the August consultation;
- explains progress on the wider study including the definition of a 'Vision' and set of 'Objectives' to guide Garstang's development;
- previews the key interventions that could deliver the Vision and;
- confirms 'next steps', including the publication of a Regeneration Framework Report in early 2022 which will be made publicly available.

If you have any questions or views about the information presented we would like to hear them via the feedback forms available at the physical exhibition or via the link below if you are viewing online. [greatergarstangpartnership.co.uk](http://greatergarstangpartnership.co.uk)



The study is structured around ten 'themes' or areas of interest that are important to the success of the town centre.



Landmap Studios, Town Centre Boundary

**Help Garstang Thrive**



## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Feedback on the August 2021 Consultation

At the August Consultation we presented three future scenarios and asked: "What level of development and investment should Garstang aim for in the future?"

**Scenario 1: 'Modest, incremental change'**  
A "business as usual" approach with only modest improvements and growth.

**Scenario 2: 'Balanced ambitions for economic growth'**  
A more ambitious approach to address a range of issues and opportunities, but without radically altering the nature or role of the town.

**Scenario 3: 'More significant growth and better connectivity'**  
An ambitious plan for growth to justify investment in new rail and motorway connections.



Temporary user materials forms available at the consultation event and on-line below the exhibition site available to view for a further 2 weeks

What level of development and investment should Garstang aim for in the future?

Scenario	Value	Percent
Scenario 1	16.8%	16.8%
Scenario 2	67.4%	67.4%
Scenario 3	15.8%	15.8%

Summary results of consultation responses

The consultation responses indicated a clear majority in favour of Scenario 2 - Balanced ambitions for economic growth. Responding to this, the Greater Garstang Partnership Board and its consultants have defined a Vision Statement for the future of the town and a set of Objectives that underpin this Vision. The Vision and Objectives can be seen on the next panel.

**Help Garstang Thrive**



## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Vision

"Garstang will be a contemporary market town – a friendly and welcoming place with both a rich heritage and a vibrant future. It will be known for its canal and river; as a focal point for its surrounding communities, and as a gateway to Lancashire's great outdoors; but most importantly as a town with a huge community spirit."

### Objectives

In order to deliver The Vision, The Greater Garstang Partnership's objectives for the town centre are to:

1. Protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre whilst promoting active uses within the town's historic buildings and spaces.
2. Deliver public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic, in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.
3. Identify sites with opportunities for future change that will support The Vision.
4. Provide more effective links to areas outside the town centre, including the river and the canal.
5. Encourage a stronger town centre food and drink offer and an evening economy.
6. Promote a strong sense of locality, an economy that provides opportunities for local people, and be an attractive location for new models of flexible working.
7. Develop an ethos of partnership working both within the town and between the town and wider stakeholder organisations.
8. Be known as a place with community strength and social values.
9. Be a place that is digitally connected and sustainable.
10. Promote improved health and wellbeing.
11. Develop a quality visitor economy based on heritage, town centre experience and access to the surrounding countryside.
12. Improve access from and to the surrounding villages and suburbs, focussing on sustainable, active travel.
13. Ensure a diversity of town centre uses so that it is an attractive destination for all user groups.

**Help Garstang Thrive**



## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Interventions

The Greater Garstang Partnership and its consultants have defined a set of over 50 'interventions' or actions that will positively impact the town's future. The full list can be seen here: [greatergarstangpartnership.co.uk](http://greatergarstangpartnership.co.uk)

A summary of the "Top 20" interventions is set out below.

**The High Street**

1. Explore options for improved public realm, including removing/reducing traffic from the High Street.
2. Consider how Christens Square could be better used for a wide range of pop-up events and activities, potentially in combination with nearby spaces on Park Hill Road.
3. Improve connections between the town centre and the river / canal.

**Heritage and Culture (inc. the visitor economy)**

4. Make more of Garstang's market offers.
5. Encourage a food and drink offer and an evening economy.
6. Explore the potential for a Heritage Centre.
7. Promote a town-centre 'outdoors' hub - cycle café, walker-friendly, bike-hire, attract outdoor enterprise businesses. Linked to this, explore the potential to create a new (funded) signature outdoor arts event for families.

**Help Garstang Thrive**



These are the consultation panels from the second consultation that show feedback from the previous consultation and revised interventions

## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre



### Transport and Linkage

8. Explore options for community led transport services to connect to the surrounding local villages.

9. Explore options for improving town centre car parking.



### Community

10. Explore the potential of a new multi-functional community facility in Garstang Town Centre (potentially linked to a Heritage Centre – see previous panel).



### Sustainability and Low Carbon

11. Explore the re-establishment of a Community Energy Trust. This will be a forum through which to explore responses to a range of energy related issues.



### Health and Wellbeing

12. Establish a Carers' Support Group.

13. Explore measures to make Garstang a dementia friendly town.







## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Health and Wellbeing cont.

14. Link other interventions recommended across the Town Centre Regeneration Framework to opportunities for social prescribing. (Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services to support their health and wellbeing).



### Technology and Digital

15. Development of a 'Smart Place Strategy' to consider all digital opportunities and trends holistically, and in a manner that is coordinated with other parts of Wyre.

16. Promote improved Wi-Fi connectivity within the town centre, but also within the surrounding villages.



### Business and Economy

17. Explore the establishment of a business and tech support hub (possibly as part of a new community facility).

18. Develop a plan for the land near Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall to explore how development of this land can support the local economy in a range of ways.



### Education and Skills

19. Develop a forum/digital space to link local schools/colleges and local businesses.

20. Explore opportunities for a Garstang Digital Hub (potentially part of a new community facility) linked to schools/colleges to disseminate skills training opportunities.







## Public Engagement on a Future Vision for Garstang Town Centre

### Your Views

Thank you for reviewing this exhibition.

If you have any questions or views about the information presented we would like to hear them. If printed feedback forms are available where you are viewing this exhibition you may leave your comments now.

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 Future Garstang, Wyre Council,  
 Economic Development, Civic Centre,  
 Breck Road, Poulton-le-Flyde,  
 Lancashire, FY6 7PU

**Comments can be made up until Sunday 19th December 2021.**



**Next Steps:**

The Greater Garstang Partnership, Wyre Council and consultants will consider all comments received as a result of this engagement process. From this the team will make any appropriate refinements to the vision, objectives and interventions. These will be incorporated into a Town Centre Regeneration Framework Report which will be produced in draft for public comment in early 2022. Following review, a final report will be offered to the Greater Garstang Partnership Board, Wyre Council and Garstang Town Council for endorsement.

The final report will set a plan for Garstang's future, containing recommendations for the interventions and actions that will position the town to address future challenges and opportunities. The report will also support potential funding bids for money to enable the delivery of Garstang's future vision.

**Contacts**

If you have any queries about the information displayed here or about the process described you can email:  
[regeneration@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wyre.gov.uk)







These are the consultation panels from the second consultation that show feedback from the previous consultation and revised interventions

## 2.6 Summary of Baseline Issues - Strength and Weaknesses

The picture that emerges from the study of Garstang's baseline position is that of a town that is 'doing all right'. However this can be read as both a strength or a weakness, depending upon the response to this position. "Doing alright" is a good starting point, but it must not be allowed to become a platform for complacency allowing issues to go unaddressed and for opportunities not to be taken.

Garstang Town centre is not underperforming when measured against the usual metrics of a town centre health check – vacancy rates, values, footfall etc. However this may mask a slow, relative decline - for example shop vacancy rates may be low, but what of the type and quality of the offer? There seems to be no 'burningly urgent' issues to address, rather a range of non-urgent, yet still important issues and opportunities. This position is highlighted in the SWOT analysis below which is a combined summary of separate SWOT analyses produced by the GGP and consultant team.

The following sections of this report set out the response to the issues and opportunities revealed from the baseline study, following an approach that found substantial majority support during public consultation.

### Strengths

- Garstang is doing alright. Analysis of headline economic and high street metrics points to a town that rates above average on most national and regional comparisons.
- Attractive, historic town centre and market town character.
- Good core of independent high street businesses and a weekly market.
- Good provision of convenience retail within a broad town centre supermarket offer.
- Attractive rural context and well located as an access point/hub for areas such as the Lake District, Trough of Bowland, Lancaster and the NW coast.
- A friendly place with community spirit and many active clubs and societies.
- Attractive canal and river.
- Well attended events.
- Compact and walkable town centre.

### Weaknesses

- Garstang is doing alright. There is no immediate imperative for change yet 'doing alright' may mask a slow decline relative to other comparable towns and establish a level of complacency that makes positive change more difficult.
- Lack of a common vision for the future.
- The range of high street businesses on offer does not match the expectations of many consultees – e.g. too many charity shops; not enough contemporary, family friendly food and drink outlets.
- The market offer needs rethinking.
- High street opening hours are restricted and don't meet contemporary customer expectations – late opening, early closing, half day closing and no Sunday trading.
- A perception of poor public transport and connectivity with Garstang's hinterland communities.
- Narrow town centre roads and pavements with too much through traffic.
- Poor sense of arrival from Church Street to the south and from the northern end of the High Street.
- Limited options for town centre parking and parking period time restrictions have knock on consequences for town centre uses, and the visitor economy more widely.
- Lack of available land in the Town Centre to allow for new ventures.
- Lack of things for young people.
- Local community action is not coordinated or always aligned. There is overreliance on the same volunteers and younger voices / opinions seem underrepresented.
- Existing opportunities and initiatives are not always 'pitched' to maximise benefit – e.g. events may generate visitor numbers but does this translate into spend?

## Opportunities

- To be a hub from which to explore the surrounding area / countryside, inc. an outdoor active / health offer.
- To be a gateway to larger 'marketed destination areas': Trough of Bowland, Morecambe Bay (Eden Project), Fylde Coast, Lake District.
- To combine a great local environment, improved town centre environment and access to 'space' and countryside with the right facilities and town centre offer, as a (post pandemic) 'remote working' location of choice for families, professionals and business entrepreneurs.
- To improve the sense of arrival and legibility of the town centre by rationalising and enhancing the key gateway areas to the north and south of High Street through public realm improvements and reducing through traffic.
- To readily increase town centre user base by 'better connecting' with immediate local population. This will require an improved offer, better marketing of that offer and improved transport / connectivity.
- To create a circular, sustainable town economy with an ethos of localism at its heart, rekindling the spirit and innovative ethos that was evident in the 'Fairtrade Town' initiative.
- To reassess the current leisure, library and swimming offer – potentially combining facilities and incorporating additional community spaces.
- To rethink the market offer.
- To promote an evening economy and extended weekend offer.
- To improve the local transport offer, together with active travel and leisure options.
- Improve the town centre offer for young people, including access to (digital) skills training and better links to local businesses.
- To bring together health / social care / third-sector agencies and charitable organisations to promote a Healthier Garstang model.
- Improve the positioning of the town as a hub for healthy, outdoor, active leisure (cycling, walking, canal).

## Threats

- Garstang does not take the opportunities in front of it and, trying to operate a 'business as usual' model will suffer slow, relative decline as a town centre.
- If the town centre doesn't adapt it risks a 'tipping point' whereby changes in retail patterns will have a sudden, detrimental effect.
- Mis-aligned local agendas and interests could hamper / prevent progress.
- The town fails to maintain a sufficiently cohesive and enthusiastic organisational structure over the long term.
- Lack of space within the town centre constrains new business opportunities.
- Failure to embrace digital trends.

# **3. Strategic Objectives**

3.1 Vision and Strategic Objectives

3.2 Vision

3.3 Review of Strategic Objectives

3.4 High-Level Approach To Meeting The Objectives

### 3.1 Vision and Strategic Objectives

An important part of the brief for this Regeneration Framework was the requirement to set a new deliverable Vision that stimulates investor confidence and provides a sound understanding of the town's potential.

The Vision for Garstang is set out below. It was developed by GGP with input from the consultant team. It is informed by the baseline work, including consultations, and represents the GGP's view of the town that Garstang will be in the next 10 to 15 years.

This Town Centre Regeneration Framework sets out a strategy for delivering the Vision, and meeting the overarching aim of the Framework brief i.e. *to assess how Garstang Town Centre can sustain and grow itself and how best to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity in the town, and in doing this, drive improvement in the quality of life of our residents and productivity of businesses, now and into the future.*

### 3.2 Vision

"Garstang will be a contemporary market town – a friendly and welcoming place with both a rich heritage and a vibrant future.

It will be known for its canal and river; as a focal point for its surrounding communities, and as a gateway to Lancashire's great outdoors; but most importantly as a town with a huge community spirit."

### 3.3 Review of Strategic Objectives

In order to deliver The Vision, and meet the overarching aim of the brief, The GGP has established thirteen objectives. Interventions and investments in the town must be measured against their ability to meet these objectives, and in doing so to contribute to Garstang's future success.

#### Objectives

1. Protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre whilst promoting active uses within the town's historic buildings and spaces.
2. Deliver public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.
3. Identify sites with opportunities for future change that will support the Vision.
4. Provide more effective links to areas outside the town centre, including the river and the canal.
5. Encourage a stronger town centre food and drink offer and an evening economy.
6. Promote a strong sense of localism, an economy that provides opportunities for local people, and be an attractive location for new models of flexible working.
7. Develop an ethos of partnership working both within the town and between the town and wider stakeholder organisations.
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11. Develop a quality visitor economy based on heritage, town centre experience and access to the surrounding countryside.
12. Improve access from and to the surrounding villages and suburbs, focussing on sustainable, active travel.
13. Ensure a diversity of town centre uses so that it is an attractive destination for all user groups.

### 3.4 High Level Approach To Meeting The Strategic Objectives

10 – 15 years is a long period within which to programme the delivery of a series of interlinked and overlapping interventions that will help Garstang to thrive. The interventions set out later in this document are each described as ‘short’, ‘medium’, or ‘long-term’ actions but this will be subject to flux. A high level, conceptual approach to the overall Regeneration Framework is required. This is shown below:

#### First Phase - Short Term

In the first phase of the delivery of the Regeneration Framework, it is important to achieve some ‘early wins’, i.e. visible improvements that signal intent and build positive perceptions of progress. Early demonstrations of success build confidence, engage people in the process and attract positive attention, and hence the possibility of more investment. It is important that the community is involved in early stage projects and that the early wins deliver benefits for all parts of the community including, importantly, younger people whose commitment and energy will be needed for future phases.

Projects in the first phase should be achievable i.e. not too ambitious and have a clear funding strategy.

#### Second Phase – Medium Term

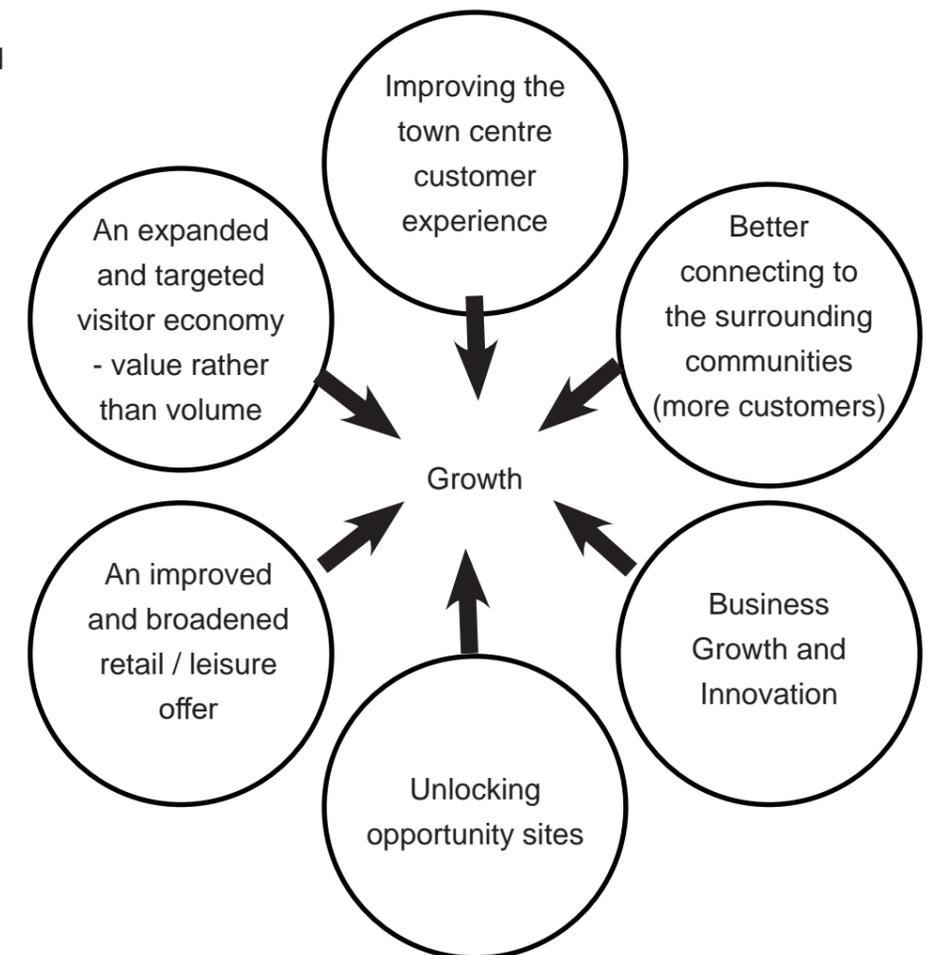
The second phase is about building upon first phase success, ensuring that momentum is maintained and the benefits of regeneration are felt throughout the town centre. It is important that a successful first phase does not become an end in itself and so the ground work for some of the second phase projects must be laid in the initial phase. i.e. all parties ‘buy in early’ to pursuing longer term, more ambitious second phase projects.

Second phase projects could focus on delivering new infrastructure (including transport and digital), unlocking town centre sites and other complimentary development opportunities. This could include experimenting with temporary ‘meanwhile uses’ on sites ahead of more permanent redevelopment which provides a relatively low cost opportunity to raise the site’s (and hence town centre’s) profile whilst testing the viability of new uses.

#### Third Phase – Longer Term

A third phase of activity is about re-focusing on earlier phase interventions that have become stuck; delivering the more challenging long term projects; and reviewing the overall direction and impact of the Framework in relation to changing circumstances over time - e.g. new constraints, opportunities, or changes to policy / funding contexts.

#### Where will growth come from?



# 4. Framework Components

4.1 Introduction - Overlaps and Synergies

4.2 Framework Themes

## 4.1 Introduction - Overlaps and Synergies

This section considers the different component areas, or 'themes' that combine to create a Framework that responds to the town centre regeneration objectives. This section considers a number of issues and opportunities of relevance to each theme before setting out recommended interventions – actions or initiatives to move Garstang forward.

Whilst this provides an organising structure for this Framework Report, in practice the issues and opportunities that pertain to Garstang do not fit into distinct, separate silos. They are often more complex and overlapping and it is important that the Framework is considered as an holistic plan for Garstang's future. In response the review of each theme area therefore highlights key interrelationships, and these are similarly identified in relation to the recommended interventions.

Ten themes are identified under which the study and report have been collectively organised. They are:



## Table of Project Interventions

This table schedules all of the recommended interventions that are considered in more detail in Section 4.3, together with their relationship to the Framework Objectives.

-  Strongly aligned with
-  Aligned with

	The High Street			Heritage & Culture						Transport & Linkage		
	HS1: Pedestrian Priority along High Street	HS2: Public Realm Improvements	HS5: Cherestance Square	HC1: Develop shared brand narrative/values to guide interventions and collaboration	HC2: A Heritage Centre / Archive	HC3: Update the Market offer	HC4: Develop the town centre Food and Beverage offer	HC5: Develop an 'outdoors hub'	HC6: A signature arts events / review of events calendar	TL1: Promote active travel	TL2: A community led transport service that connects to the surrounding villages	TL3: Town Centre parking strategy
Protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre whilst promoting active uses within the town's historic buildings and spaces.	●	●	●	◐	●	●	●	◐	●	◐		◐
Deliver public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.	●	●	●			◐				◐	◐	◐
Identify sites with opportunities for future change that will support the Vision.	◐		●		●	◐	◐	◐		◐		◐
Provide more effective links to areas outside the town centre, including the river and the canal.	◐	◐	◐					●	◐	●		◐
Encourage a stronger town centre food and drink offer and an evening economy.	●	●	◐	●	●	●	●	◐			◐	●
Promote a strong sense of localism, an economy that provides opportunities for local people, and be an attractive location for new models of flexible working.	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	●	●	◐	●		◐	
Develop an ethos of partnership working both within the town and between the town and wider stakeholder organisations.	◐	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	●		◐	
Be known as a place with community strength and social values.		◐		●			◐		●		●	
Be a place that is digitally connected and sustainable.		●	◐	●				◐		●	◐	◐
Promote improved health and wellbeing.	◐	◐	◐	●				●		●	◐	
Develop a quality visitor economy based on heritage, town centre experience and access to the surrounding countryside.	●	●	◐		●	●	●	●		●	●	◐
Improve access from and to the surrounding villages and suburbs, focussing on sustainable, active travel.								●	◐	●	●	●
Ensure a diversity of town centre uses so that it is an attractive destination for all user groups.	◐	◐	●			●	●	●	●	◐		◐

Community		Sustainability & Low Carbon	Health & Wellbeing	Technology & Digital	Business & Economy	Education, Skills and Employment
C1: A Multi-Purpose Space for Community Use						
C2: Support for the development of Garstang Sports and Social Club	●					
C3: A 'young people's market'	●	●				
SLC1: Explore establishment of a Community Energy Trust	●	●				
SLC2: Low Carbon Strategy	●	●				
SLC3: Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy	●	●				
SLC4: A High Street Sustainability Calculator	●	●				
HW1: Establish a Carer Support Group	●	●	●			
HW2: Measures to make Garstang a more dementia friendly town	●	●	●			
HW3: Wyre Moving More Priorities	●	●	●			
HW4: Promote opportunities for Social Prescribing	●	●	●			
TD1: Development of a 'Smart Place Strategy'	●	●	●	●		
TD2: Improving Digital Connectivity	●	●	●	●		
TD3: Town Centre Digital Support Hub	●	●	●	●		
BE1: A "plan" for the land near Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall	●	●	●	●	●	
BE2: Support for key 3rd party projects	●	●	●	●	●	
ES1: A digital forum to link schools, colleges and businesses	●	●	●	●	●	●
ES2: Raise future aspirations of primary school children	●	●	●	●	●	●
ES3: Garstang and Greater Garstang Local Business offer	●	●	●	●	●	●



## 4.2 Framework Themes

### 4.2.1 The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

#### Challenges

In the context of this report 'the high street' is considered in its widest sense i.e. as a synonym for 'town centre'. This is particularly apt in the case of Garstang where the town centre, in policy designation, is almost entirely focussed along High Street and Park Hill Road.

The challenges faced by Britain's high streets are reviewed in section 2.2 of this report. These included:

- The growth of on-line shopping (significantly accelerated by the Covid pandemic)
- The reducing presence of national multiples, though this has little or no impact in relation to Garstang.
- The impact of edge of / out of town formats. In relation to Garstang this may mean users being drawn to rival centres, or outlying leisure (inc. food and drink) offers.
- The impact of business rates.
- Changing consumer behaviour – in particular a move towards 'experiences' rather than simply a need for transactions.
- A move towards the use of more outdoor space in response to the Covid pandemic.

#### Responses

In response to these challenges, and the messages from review of Garstang's baseline position Garstang's high street should:

- Focus on and promote Garstang's unique identity – the USPs that make the town special and distinct.
- Encourage regeneration from the grass roots up; building local community capacity and supporting local initiatives.
- Improve the town centre offer – localism should be at the heart of this, including even more independent retailers, a good quality family friendly food and drink offer, and extended trading hours to encourage people to stay longer, enjoy the town, and spend more.
- Create experiences – a combination of a unique and attractive environment, a great offer, and programmed events that align with the best that Garstang and the surrounding area, have to offer.
- Explore opportunities for new town centre uses – including pop up and 'meanwhile'. Whilst space in the town centre is tight, some opportunities do exist.
- Seize opportunities presented by new technologies – but use these to connect people, not remove human contact from transactions and service delivery.
- Actively manage and programme Garstang's town centre, in particular reaching out to the wider area's new residential communities.

Whilst every town must find its own unique formula for success, Garstang should consider the lessons from successful town centre regeneration elsewhere, including places that have developed a destination food/drink offer with a strong evening economy founded on the re-imagining of a historic market offer.

#### Alignment with the Framework Objectives

The high street is the essence of towns like Garstang. This Framework is purposed towards growing the economy of the town centre and through this improving the quality of life of residents. Implementing early and visible interventions will therefore be key to build enthusiasm and engagement, including improving the environment along the high street and using this to help define and reinforce the character of the town.

Local people can and must be involved in the process, including young people, and many of the initiatives focussed on the high street will contribute to making Garstang as a whole, a more vibrant, healthier, and more sustainable town.

### Watch point – the economic value of public realm

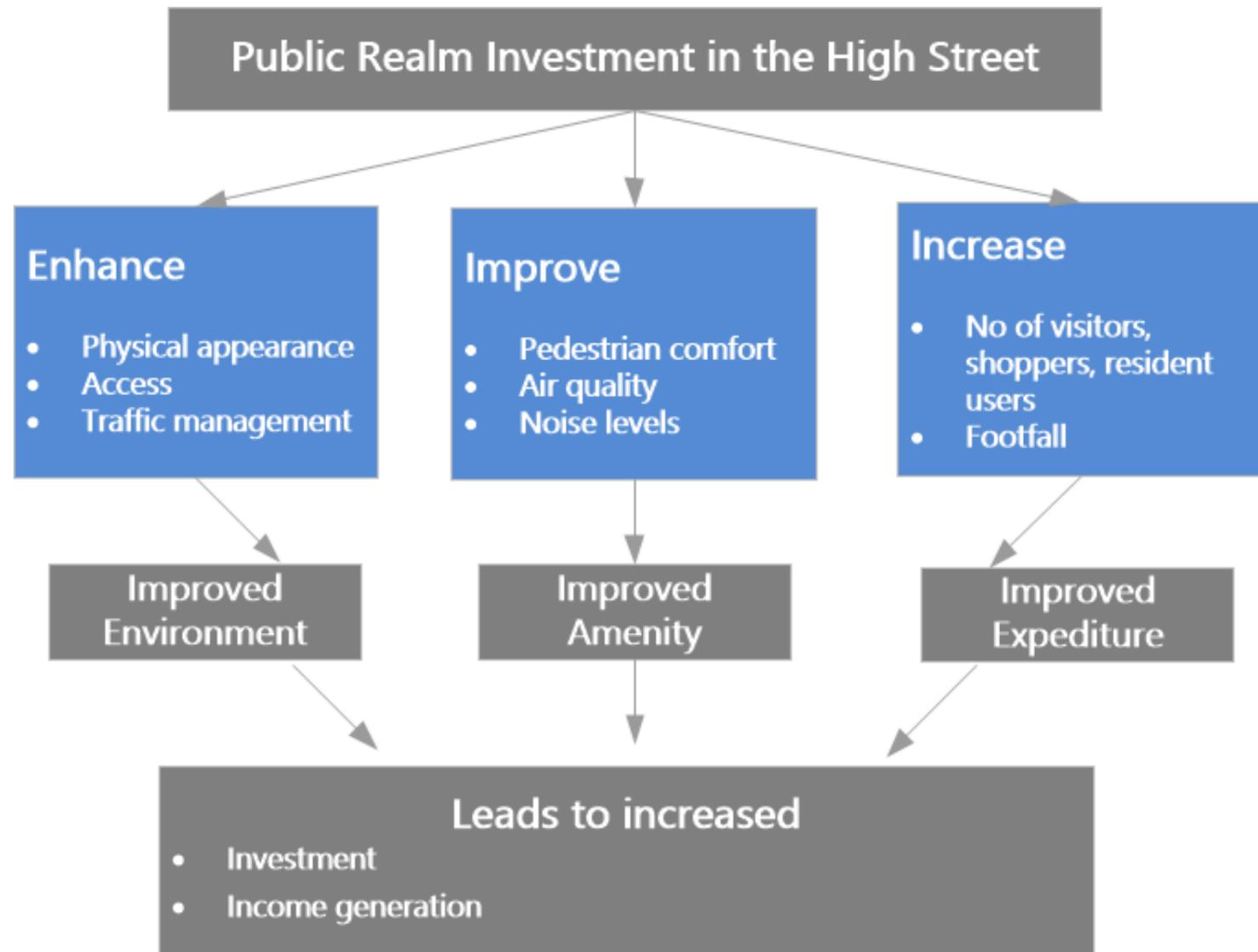
This Framework suggests substantial investment in improved public realm, largely focussed along High Street and Cherestanc Square. It is important to recognise that these are not aesthetic improvements for their own sake but are measures integral to the future economic success of the town centre - interventions which can directly improve visitor numbers, dwell time, and high street spend. i.e. it is investment to deliver economic benefit.

### Public Realm as a setting for investment and innovation

For Garstang to thrive the current quality of visitor experience along High Street must be improved, together with the ability of businesses to use limited outdoor space where possible. Public realm improvement including a 're-engineering' of High Street to become a more pedestrian priority space are integral to this.

### Investment in public realm drives economic benefit

In 2018 IBI jointly funded a piece of work to assess the economic impact of public realm improvements that IBI designed for Kidderminster Town Centre. This referenced evidence from the UK and internationally which identifies significant economic benefits of public realm schemes. The report concluded an economic cost: benefit ratio for public realm investment of 1:7.6 over a 10-year period. This makes a compelling case that the right investment in public realm delivers strong, measurable economic returns.





## 4.2.2 Heritage and Culture

### Challenges

Garstang town centre has a distinct 'heritage quality'. It is an historic market town with many attractive, historic buildings; a history as a key coach staging post on the main North West route between London and Edinburgh; and the ruins of Greenhalgh Castle dating back to the late 1400's.

This heritage combines with the town's rural surroundings; connection to both the River Wyre and Lancaster Canal; and location as a gateway to the Trough of Bowland, Morecambe Estuary (Eden Project) and Lake District presents a unique set of marketable assets. The result is a distinctive character that differentiates Garstang from other places, however does the town sufficiently celebrate and benefit from its heritage?

People value the unique, the characterful, the local, and the "experiential", provided that they are authentic. Garstang has all of these qualities; however, it must raise its game in identifying, packaging and promoting them as a foundation for its future success.

### Responses

- Build upon existing assets – the market; independent traders; access to an active 'outdoorsy' leisure offer; a sense of localism.
- Focus the cultural/visitor offer on value rather than volume.
- Identify quick wins where there is an evident supply-demand gap – e.g. consistent trading hours and a reimagining of the market offer.
- Proactively develop the outdoor / wellbeing / healthy lifestyle leisure offer.
- Explore options to create more community / social / creative spaces and facilities as the resident base and tourist market grows.
- Consider the development of a Garstang Heritage / Arts Centre – initially identifying potential locations, capital investment, delivery and revenue models.
- Explore the potential to encourage more cultural / creative businesses to locate in Garstang e.g. co-working spaces, studio or workshop spaces.
- Ensure that the cultural and tourist economy is supported by excellent digital infrastructure – marketing, skills, and networks.

### Alignment with the Regeneration Framework Objectives

Celebration of Garstang's heritage and culture is central to its objectives around 'protecting and enhance the historic character of the town centre' and 'developing a quality visitor economy', but more than this it is a fundamental aspect of the town's self-image and essential for Garstang to be defined as a distinct, differentiated and attractive town.

The key point is to better capitalise on the town's heritage assets. A place that has a clear sense of its own cultural identity and pride in its heritage is also a place that is more likely to engage in plans for its future.



## 4.2.3 Transport and Linkage

### Challenges

At a strategic level Garstang can be considered in two contradictory ways:

As a 'self-contained' place slightly off the beaten track and not well connected (by public transport) to its surrounding settlements; or as a town centrally located and readily accessible by car to Preston, Lancaster and the Fylde Coast conurbation.

Whilst Garstang acts as a service hub for a wide hinterland and a number of smaller settlements its transport connections to these are considered to be poor. There is therefore a high reliance on private car use and for those that don't have access to a car there is a risk of isolation – perceived to be a somewhat hidden issue.

Liaison with Lancashire County Council as the highway and transport authority could be improved. This is particularly important in order to lobby for improved public transport as part of the National Bus Strategy - ref. 'Bus Back Better', the Government's strategy to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.

At a town centre level, the main streets are narrow and easily congested - service vehicles and buses struggle with constrictions and traffic dominates the main shopping streets (High Street and Park Hill Road) to the detriment of the pedestrian / customer experience.

Car parking within the town centre is a widely noted issue. There is a shortage of (affordable) long stay parking and an overreliance on time limited supermarket car parking. This precludes longer stays in the town centre and linked trips and limits the visitor offer. Overall capacity for events is also a frequent concern.

Cycle infrastructure in both the town centre and wider hinterland is poor, although the opportunity to connect to the surrounding countryside is substantial.

The Lancaster Canal skirts the western edge of the town centre. It operates as a leisure waterway with 42 lock free miles including all the way north to Lancaster and south to Preston, yet connectivity with the town centre area is poor. Ditto the River Wyre which runs to the east of the town centre. The canal towpath could be upgraded to provide an enhanced walking / cycling offer – potentially connecting north to the new 'Garden Village' planned at Bailrigg.

Plans for transition to more sustainable, low carbon forms of travel should also be a consideration.

### Responses

- Improving both strategic connectivity and town centre issues must be priorities for the Regeneration Framework.
- Calls from some parties for rail and motorway connections are not considered in this Framework – these ideas were tested, but largely rejected at public consultation due to the significant expansion of the town that would be required to justify such investment. Instead, community led measures to improve connectivity to the surrounding communities are recommended, together with the development of regular contact with LCC.
- In addition to community led measures there is an opportunity for Garstang to promote active travel for both leisure and low carbon local transport needs – potentially including new and improved cycle and walking routes and facilities. (The sustainability aspects of active travel also noted under the 'Sustainability and Low Carbon' theme).
- Explore the development of a 'pedestrian priority' approach to town centre street (also considered under 'High Street' theme).
- Undertake a town centre car parking study to explore options for low cost, long term parking.

### Alignment with the Framework Objectives

Improved strategic connectivity, including community transport and sustainable, active travel is central to meeting objectives for improved access to and from the surrounding village settlements. This is important if Garstang is to maximise its role as a local area service centre and be an inclusive community offering access and opportunity to all.

Improving connections, traffic impact and addressing parking within the town centre is central to meeting objectives for an enhanced town centre environment; improved pedestrian experience; and improved visitor offer.

Finally considering how to promote sustainable travel is important in meeting objectives to become a sustainable town.

### Watch point

There may be an opportunity to link community transport to low carbon and digital initiatives to research programmes at Lancaster University, Myerscough College or elsewhere.



## 4.2.4 Community

### Challenges

Garstang is a relatively affluent town (compared to the NW average) with a relatively older, retired population that is on the whole not as diverse as many other areas. Garstang is noted as a relatively safe town with a strong sense of community (although a common report was that community action and leadership in different areas often relied on the same group of people).

In percentage terms, Garstang's resident population grew more significantly over the 2011 to 2019 period when compared to the corresponding growth in population across Wyre and the North West region. There has also been a significant increase in over-64s living in Garstang over the same assessment period.

Both Garstang and Wyre have a high proportion of residents aged over 64 when compared to the North West region. The over-64 population is projected to increase significantly across both Wyre and the North West region over the coming years. The population in Garstang, Wyre and the North West is ageing, and that trend is projected to continue over the next couple of decades.

Challenges include addressing the needs of an ageing population whilst also meeting those of other groups, especially younger people whose engagement with the town is key to its future success. There is also a sense that residents of some of the newer housing developments (including young families) do not use the town centre as much as they might and are not as engaged in the community.

Overall, there is a lot to build on at a local level and promoting a common sense of direction and 'ownership' (i.e. the intent of this Framework) will be important in realising the opportunities that this presents.

### Responses

- For Garstang Town Centre to thrive the town must harness its evident community spirit, build greater community capacity (involving all age groups) and find new opportunities for 'grassroots' interventions as well as channels for local influence on other projects.
- In the short term Garstang must focus on achieving goals that are within the town's control – for example addressing trading hours, Sunday opening, a better market offer and 'young persons' market. Demonstrating some 'quick wins' will be important to establish community confidence and engagement.
- Support initiatives for new community facilities and infrastructure.
- Monitor and nurture 'community capacity' to ensure continued strong involvement and leadership into the future.

### Alignment with Framework Objectives

The production of this Framework is ultimately about improving the lives and opportunities of the people of Garstang and the surrounding villages. The growth of community capacity and the involvement of local people in the delivery of the Framework is intrinsic to its success. 'Localism', 'partnership', 'community strength', 'opportunities for local people', and the inclusion of 'all user groups' are all to be found in the Framework Objectives.



## 4.2.5 Sustainability and Low Carbon

### Challenges

The issue of climate change has steadily increased in importance over the last few years, both in public consciousness and in political and policy terms. COP 26 held in Glasgow in November 2021 brought this into sharper focus.

Wyre Council declared a ‘climate emergency’ in 2019, amongst other things committing to:

“support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire Wyre area zero carbon by 2050”.

The council statement also recognised that:

“strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, well-being and economic benefits”.

The council committed to a target of net carbon zero in relation to council activities; the setting up of a Climate Change Policy Group and including young people in the process. Specific considerations to include:

- Renewable energy generation and storage
- Electric vehicle infrastructure
- Encouraging alternatives to private car use
- Building efficiency, including housing
- Proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net zero carbon new development.

Garstang’s future development plans must consider what contributions they can make in response.

Domestic energy use in Garstang and the surrounding villages still relies upon ‘traditional’ supplies linked to fossil fuels, including heating oil – whilst this is largely replaced as a fuel in areas with a natural gas grid it is still common in off grid, rural areas. Much of the existing housing stock is also relatively old and built to low standards of energy efficiency – though this provides opportunities to upgrade.

The dispersed nature of the surrounding settlements and relatively poor public transport places a high reliance on private car use.

### Responses

#### Energy

- Focus on home insulation and energy saving.
- Promote a shift to more sustainable energy sources including solar PV and hot water on domestic roofs.
- Promote a shift to domestic heat pumps in lieu of gas or oil-fired boilers.
- Establish sustainability goals for all new initiatives.
- Explore opportunities to link to low carbon initiatives at Lancaster University.

### Transport

- Infrastructure investment for electric, and possibly some hydrogen, vehicles.
- Make Garstang a location of choice for remote working (thereby reducing travel) and promote the sustainability benefits of this.
- Promote low carbon ‘active travel’ (also noted under the ‘Transport and Linkages’ theme).

### Other

- Promote the sustainability benefits of a move towards a more ‘local’ economy – locally sourced produce, local traders reinvesting profits within the area.
- Monitor and promote environmental quality (air quality, water quality, etc).

### Alignment with Framework Objectives

It is a strategic objective that Garstang becomes a sustainable place. This is not just an environmental objective (which includes a response to climate change), but also encompasses social, and economic issues. There is a strong overlap with the opportunities provided through skills and education, and with health and wellbeing. Understanding how the digital agenda can help to meet sustainability objectives is also key.

Like many of the component areas, or ‘themes’ that combine to create the Framework the theme of ‘Sustainability and Low Carbon’ is inseparable from others – particularly Health and Wellbeing; economic development (High Street and Business); Transport and Linkage; and improved opportunities (Education, Skills and Training). However, whilst the response to many of the themes will have a focussed effect on the future success of Garstang Town Centre, responses to sustainability have a much wider resonance.



## 4.2.6 Health and Well-Being

### Challenges

Establishing a Town Centre Regeneration Framework is an opportunity to properly consider the role that health and wellbeing plays in the success of a town. Its an area that deserves focus not just for the direct benefits that it brings to people, but also because there is a proven link between the health of a population and its economic performance.

The link between well designed environments and wellness is now well researched and understood and measures to improve health outcomes through spatial planning are now embedded in Central Government thinking, the NHS's priorities and local planning policies.

### NHS Healthy New Towns

Launched in 2015 the programme sets out to rethink how we live, how health and care services can be delivered, and takes an ambitious look at improving health through the built environment. The learning from the Healthy New Town (HNT) programme resulted in the NHS England led publication 'Putting Health into Place', which defines 10 principles for healthy place-making. This provides a template for development of Garstang as a healthy town and a useful 'standard measure' to benchmark against.



NHS England publication 'Putting Health into Place', defines the 10 principles for healthy place-making

Designing in wellness starts with an acknowledgement of the complexity and diversity of the population within and around the Regeneration Framework, and then has evidence based features that make a place become "SASSI".

Sustained

Active

Supported

Salutogenic (focussed on 'wellness' as opposed to 'illness')

Independent

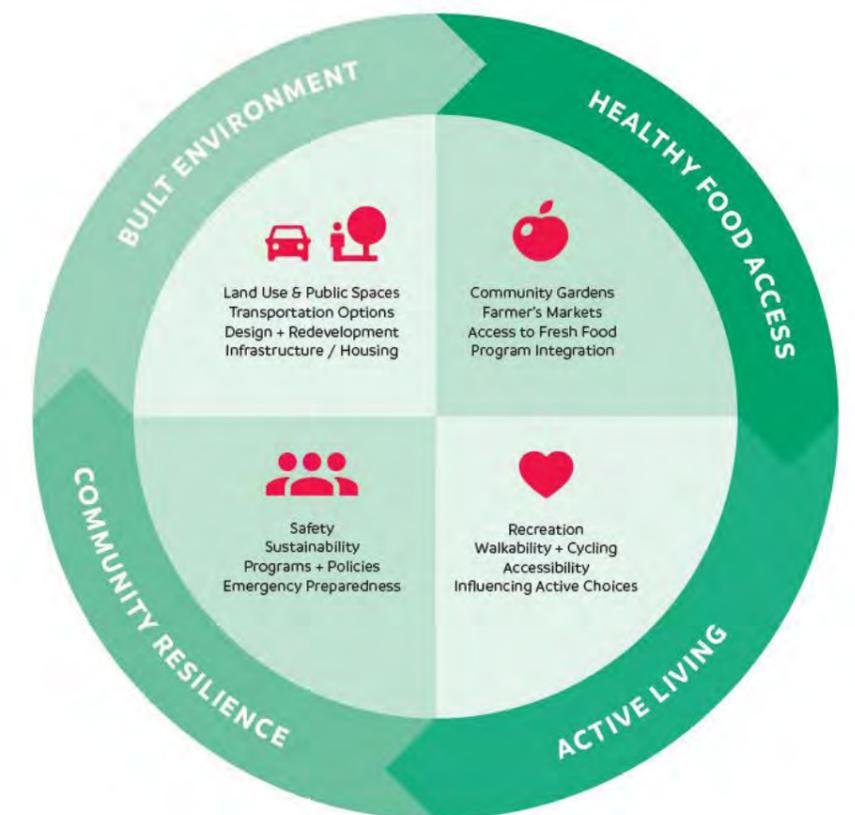
The drive to make places SASSI is linked to the recognition that the management of good health is moving from treatment of illness to prevention, partly because this is a good idea but also because without it our healthcare system is at risk of becoming unsustainable. This, together with Garstang's older demographic, provides the imperative to identify and implement progressive and innovative ideas that will not only impact individual wellbeing, but help evolve Garstang as a healthy community.

Success will be characterised by:

- Healthy environments that promote active living;
- Connected neighbourhoods, strong communities and inclusive public spaces;
- Healthy workplaces;
- Flexible physical and digital infrastructure that links people and enhances service delivery;
- Healthier and more flexible homes that support their occupants continuously through their lives.

### Healthy People

The principal focus of healthy communities is 'healthy people', since the ultimate objective must be to achieve the quality of life that healthy places bring. This focus covers all ages, from new-borns to young people and seniors, as well as the needs of specific demographic and economic groups.



NHS England publication 'Putting Health into Place' - The images illustrates the components of a healthy community

Healthy Garstang will be:

**Active** in mind, body and spirit, encouraging physical and mental exercise - not just at a designated time or place but throughout our everyday routines. This includes active travel – walking and cycling but also sport and recreational activity such as gardening. Mental stimulus is also important – from learning and skills to jobs (paid and voluntary);

**Sustained** through the air, food, water and light healthy bodies demand. Healthy people also need to be economically sustained through rewarding employment;

**Independent** to age in place and remain connected to friends and family, and empowered to make decisions in the care they receive and the choices facing their communities;

**Supported** – through health and social care, education and training, multi-cultural spiritual support, and financial services.

Garstang has a higher than average, elderly, care dependant population and a large population of unpaid carers that helps to meet needs.

## Responses

- Health professionals in Garstang are aware of the 'Integrated Care Community' approach that has been successful in nearby Fleetwood. Work at a local level has already been undertaken to define initiatives to improve local health and wellbeing, however this has been interrupted by the Covid pandemic and many of these need to be 're-booted'.
- Garstang Medical Practice is part of a group of practices under the 'Wyre Rural Extended' (WREN) banner and good data from patient surveys in 2019 and 2020 is available with most headline metrics reporting above national average. There is a desire to use the establishment of The Greater Garstang Partnership Board as an opportunity to rebuild momentum in Garstang, noting that the area already has the supportive infrastructure.
- Given the dispersed nature of some of the surrounding communities there is an opportunity to make more of digital services, however this must be seen in the context of access to, and comfort in using, the technology. Links between health and well-being and the 'Smart/digital' agenda is a key area to explore.
- Health must be considered in the round with other social and community issues.
- Support the network of careers.
- Consider the specific needs of an elderly population, including living with dementia.
- Focus on social prescribing / Health and Wellbeing (Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services to support their health and wellbeing).

## Alignment with Framework Objectives

Promoting health and wellbeing is one of the GGP's objectives for the town's residents. Improving the health of Garstang is also linked to objectives for sustainability, support for young people and creation of a strong community. It is also fundamentally aligned with the overarching Framework objective to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity. This works in both directions: a more prosperous town is likely to be a healthier town, but also a town that supports a healthy community is more able to provide a healthy workforce and a healthy environment which will support investment.



## 4.2.7 Technology and Digital

### Challenges

Digital technology is now a fundamental part of so many aspects of life and the trend is continuing. However, it must be recognised that access is not evenly distributed and some groups are often more digitally disadvantaged than others – older people and the less well-off for example. Good quality infrastructure and connectivity is a starting point.

The trend to digital has had a significant impact on the way in which high street businesses generally promote themselves, sell goods and services, and run their enterprises. However, the level of digital engagement and skills varies significantly between businesses.

Being recognised as a ‘digitally connected’ town will be important in promoting Garstang as a location for post pandemic flexible working.

For town centres the results of the move to digital are mixed - positive impacts include the ability to better manage traffic, parking or utilities but, in many places, there are also very noticeable negative impacts: for example as retail functions and the delivery of services such as banking, insurance, travel agency and post office counter transactions move on line the effect is reduced town centre footfall and, ultimately, the disappearance of these businesses from the high street. The result is not just a reduction in economic activity, but also a noticeable reduction in the vibrancy and attractiveness of town centres and reduced levels of social contact and individual activity levels i.e. wider impacts on health and wellbeing. Garstang Town Centre appears to be coping well with these changes and so the focus will be on the positive opportunities for technology to help Garstang thrive.

The health and success of the town centre is intrinsically linked to that of the wider town and surrounding settlements. The location or ‘geography’ of many digital initiatives will thus be wider than the town centre. Indeed it may be appropriate to consider a consistent response to the digital agenda at a borough wide level.

### Responses

- Ensure that Garstang has excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity. Opportunities to build this into all town centre interventions should be considered.
- Promote digital skills training.
- Promote initiatives that allow all groups access to the benefits of the move to digital.
- Build links between local businesses and education organisations that focus on digital opportunities.
- Think holistically and across the short and longer term, and across a broad (borough wide?) geography.

### Alignment with Framework Objectives

Whilst there is a stated objective that Garstang should ‘be a place that is digitally connected’ digital technology will have an influence on the town’s ability to meet all of its objectives. It is important therefore that this theme area is considered in a strategic manner, with reference to all of the other Framework themes.

### Watch point

It should be noted that the pace of change in digital technology is significant and accelerating and so opportunities for new areas where technology could benefit should be under constant review. Development of an overarching digital or “Smart Place” strategy (beyond the scope of this report) is the suggested response to understanding and responding to this agenda.



## 4.2.8 Business and Economy

### Challenges

All of the opportunities and initiatives discussed under the previous Framework theme headings are collectively purposed to promote growth in Garstang's economy either directly, or indirectly by being part of a thriving town centre eco-system that underpins and supports growth.

This section will consider opportunities for direct business / economic interventions and how these, together with the benefits of interventions in other areas, can strengthen the local economy and position Garstang as a place for investment. Review of previous framework themes has considered how Garstang can leverage its community capacity, unique location, and considerable assets and opportunities.

As noted under the theme heading 'Transport and Linkages' Garstang is both a 'self-contained' place slightly off the beaten track and a town centrally located and readily accessible to (by car) Preston, Lancaster and the Fylde Coast conurbation. Whilst this limits location for some business types it can be a positive for others including:

- The visitor economy.
- Niche professional services.
- Local food and drink manufacturing – trading off the sense of local 'provenance'.
- The post pandemic 'blended working' economy.

Good digital infrastructure and local skills are of increasing importance to all businesses.

As the central service centre for a wider rural economy Garstang's plans for the future should also take account of likely significant changes in post Brexit rural policy, potential accelerating a need for diversification away from agriculture.

Land designated for employment is in short supply in Garstang and so land identified in the Local Plan for the extension of Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall is a significant opportunity. Potential uses should be carefully considered in order to maximise employment and benefit to the area.

Reviving Garstang's reputation as a Fairtrade Town pioneer (or similar emphasis on social purpose) could be a valuable differentiator.

Maintaining links to the wider regional business economy is important – awareness of opportunities and trends; network synergies; political positioning for future funding.

### Responses

- Development of the visitor economy – see Heritage and Culture theme.
- Support for local professional and manufacturing businesses, inc. service support and digital infrastructure.
- Awareness of changes in the rural economy and how development in other areas can help diversification.
- Development of a strategic plan for land at Brockholes Employment Area at Catterall.
- Development of a locally supportive business network and an economy with a strong sense of 'localism' (identity, provenance, support, circular trade).

### Alignment with Framework Objectives

As previously noted, the overarching objective of this Regeneration Framework is to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity. A thriving business economy (in its widest sense) is therefore a key measure of success. Whilst the business economy encapsulates activities considered under other theme heading it is useful to also consider this as a stand-alone theme, providing an opportunity for more focussed monitoring and support.



## 4.2.9 Education, Skills & Employment

### Challenges

Garstang Community Academy provides secondary schooling up to age 16. Beyond that the nearest 6th form offer is 10 miles away in Lancaster (although Myerscough College does offer some A level courses).

Myerscough College is 3 miles south of Garstang. It is associated with the University of Central Lancashire and specialises in courses in land based and sports industries. It has 6,000 students of which 2,000 are part time and up to 1,000 in residence.

Despite its proximity, Garstang Town Centre is not a significant offer for students and connection between the college, the town centre, and Garstang's business community could be stronger.

There is an opportunity for the Myerscough College to play a role in the development of any future community / digital 'hub' (a commonly reported desire in public consultation) and for greater coordination with local businesses in order to both benefit students and better align education and skills with the labour market.

Initiatives such as the 'Lancashire Skills Pledge' and the LEP 'Growth Pillars' are important reference points.

### Responses

- Better coordination between education providers and local business.
- Better promotion of the skills and education offer that is already locally available.
- Development of a stronger town centre offer for young adults.
- Support primary school children to raise aspiration for their futures by linking businesses with primary schools.

The Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2021 Refresh informs and directs the activities of the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and is available here [https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/LancashireSkillsFramework\\_2021.pdf](https://www.lancashireskillshub.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/LancashireSkillsFramework_2021.pdf)

The Framework is structured into 4 themes: Future Workforce, Skilled & Productive Workforce, Inclusive Workforce and An Informed Approach and articulates the skills and employment priorities for Lancashire.

In delivering the strategic priorities, the LEP's Skills and Employment Advisory Panel and other strategic partners also work with employers to leverage greater levels of employer engagement with schools and other educational settings

We want employers across Garstang and surrounding areas to use all options of training to develop and increase the skills of their staff, including available funded training and apprentice training, and can sign up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge, where knowledgeable professionals will contact businesses to discuss how these projects will benefit their business.

Future Workforce objectives of the Framework include:

- Raise the breadth and quality of careers provision across secondary schools and post-16 education, inspire young people through engagement with business and enable informed choice.
- Implement the Lancashire Technical Education Vision in collaboration with providers and business including rolling out T Levels and progression pathways to higher technical qualifications.
- Develop a Digital Careers Journey through secondary education and post-16 education which embeds digital skills and careers provision.
- Support young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET to positively reengage with learning and work.

### Alignment with Framework Objectives

A town that provides access to good skills and training with strong links between its education providers and its business community has invested in the essential 'human capital' for its future success.

## **5. Framework Projects**



# 1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

## Project No. 1: Pedestrian Priority along High Street

### What

High Street is the historic focus of the town and main shopping street. Its width varies along its length but in the main it is narrow for its current function as a one-way route for all vehicles (including service vehicles and buses), on-street parking, and pedestrian footways. Opportunities for high street businesses to use outdoor frontage are limited and the general visitor / pedestrian experience is compromised in order to prioritise the space for vehicles.

The proposal is to switch the focus along High Street so that it becomes a pedestrian priority environment. This is not to say full pedestrianisation, rather a limiting of access to essential traffic such as buses, taxis and service vehicles with space for on-street disabled parking alongside the opportunity for allowing greater use of the space by pedestrians and businesses. Reduction in traffic speed is the key to a successful pedestrian priority environment. This will be achieved through appropriate design including adoption of a 'shared space' approach where the distinction between carriageway and footways are blurred. This will be complemented by other measures to lift the quality of the environment including seating, lighting, planting and signage.

### Why

This proposal drew strong support during public consultation. Focussing activity along High Street on people rather than vehicles will improve the customer / visitor experience which is the foundation of success for town centres. Businesses will have greater opportunity to use outdoor space – important in response to post-pandemic changes in customer behaviour; opportunities for street markets and events are increased, and the environmental quality and 'healthiness' of the town centre will be improved.

This change in the nature of the town centre is particularly important in a place like Garstang where space is limited, and expansion constrained. As the main space in the town, High Street must offer the best experience, best environment and best trading opportunities. It must become a public space, rather than a highway.

### How and Who

Moving this proposal forward will require a lead from Lancashire County Council as the highway authority. Early steps will involve an initial scoping/feasibility study, together with concept proposals and some early stakeholder engagement. The impact on other areas of the town if town centre traffic is reduced will be considered during work at this stage.

Detailed design work will require consultation with, amongst others, officers from Wyre Council, Lancashire County Council as the local transport authority, local businesses and residents, disability access groups and heritage groups.

Project lead and commissioning - Wyre Council working with GGP. Support from Lancashire County Council as transport authority.

### Timescale

In the context of Garstang this is a significant intervention but it would have important benefits. Early commissioning of a feasibility study should be prioritised – this would send a positive message about the delivery of GGP's vision.



Image of the traffic impact on High Street

### Precedent

Frodsham Street, Chester - public realm improvement including removal of carriageway designation and a move to a 'pedestrian priority' environment at Frodsham Street turned a very secondary trading street into a vibrant public environment with consequent improvement in economic activity.



Image of Frodsham Street



# 1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

## Project No. 2: Public Realm Improvements

### What

A review of and improvements to the town centre public realm. If feasible this should be linked to a pedestrian priority approach along High Street. Proposals should include improved surface treatments, seating, lighting, planting and signage. Opportunities for tree planting, or other permanent landscape features, should be considered.

The 'gateways' into the town centre are from the south (at the roundabout where Bridge Street and Park Hill Road split) and the north (the area around the Croston Road roundabouts), and the west (the area around the Moss Lane roundabout) should be a particular focus.

Design proposals should consider how they can contribute to making the town centre more sustainable. This may include specification of materials, opportunities to incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SuDs), selection of planting to encourage biodiversity, etc. Lighting should be low energy, with potential for PV charging.

### Why

As noted in the description of the previous intervention, the creation of a distinct and attractive environment is the foundation for town centre success. The intention of this proposal, together with other measures, is to attract more people to the town centre, encourage them to stay longer and to spend more in the local economy.

Whilst it can be argued that Garstang's town centre environment is not in poor condition the town must still strive to have better if it is not to be left in a position of relative decline – other places are improving. Section 4.2 of this report discussed the value of investment in public realm and its ability to deliver strong, measurable economic benefits.



Image of the town centre gateway from the north of the High Street



Image of Southern gateway to the town centre - credit Google Images

### How and Who

The Public Realm Improvements project (with potential sub-projects noted on subsequent pages) will require a lead from both the GGP and Wyre Council and potentially Lancashire County Council working in close partnership. A scoping study will be required to identify detailed works which will also require consultation with, amongst others, officers from Wyre Council, Lancashire County Council as the local transport authority, local businesses and residents, disability access groups and heritage groups.

Project lead and commissioning - Wyre Council working with GGP and potentially LCC.

### Timescale

(see sub projects overleaf)

### Precedent

Altrincham in Cheshire has been notable in transforming its economic fortunes from a low point in 2010 when it was labelled 'Britain's biggest ghost-town'. Much of this success has been underpinned by steady, phased investment in public realm in different parts of the town: pedestrianisation of areas round its market; refurbished public spaces; re designed routes through the retail core; works along the main highway to improve pedestrian experience; works to announce arrival at 'gateway' locations.



Image of gateway feature – Altrincham



Image of highway redesign – Altrincham



Image of town centre space – Altrincham



# 1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

## Project No. 2: Public Realm Improvements a) Celebrate heritage through public realm

### What

Garstang town centre has an historic charm. In the central area the original pattern of the High Street and weinds is intact and the town has many buildings of heritage interest.

However the 'story' of Garstang is somewhat underplayed and the town does not have a museum of heritage centre.

The proposal is to signal Garstang's heritage through the design and detail of new public realm (see previous intervention proposals). This could be in the layout of spaces, for example, or in the design of bespoke street furniture, or through subtle details or motifs in surface materials. In either case the implementation must be of high quality and should be subtle in its approach.

This initiative builds on the previous work of the Garstang and District Partnership which included pavement wayfinding disks, directory boards, heritage signage and designation of a heritage trail.

### Precedent

There are numerous examples of this approach – the images opposite highlight a few.

Kidderminster – surface treatment of new public square reflecting the design of the Penny Black stamp, referencing Kidderminster as the home town of the originator or the postal service.

Accrington – bespoke street furniture illustrates key elements in the town's history inc. The Accrington Pals regiment, Accrington Stanley FC, and associations with the textile and art glass industries – themes chosen through public engagement.

Altrincham – subtle details included in surfaces and street furniture reference the town's historic market and Goose Green (goose feet).

### Why

Garstang has a history as a market town, a coaching stop, a link on the main London to Edinburgh highway, a canal and railway town, a place that played an important role in the English Civil War, and the world's first Fairtrade town. These stories and others are the layers of history that make Garstang unique and interesting – a place worth visiting and spending time to explore and understand. A sense of this heritage can be provided by building thoughtful references into the fabric of the town i.e. its public realm. This can spark interest and help to build an identity, providing Garstang with a unique selling point.

### How and Who

This is a potential Public Realm Improvements sub-project - refer to main Public Realm Improvements project description.

### Timescale

This could be a 'quick win' within a more comprehensive Public Realm Improvements project.



Image of Penny Black Square - Kidderminster

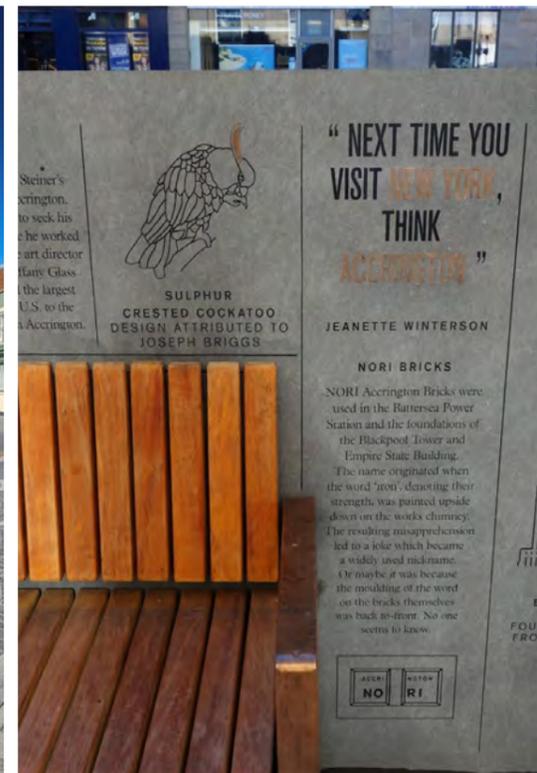


Image of bespoke seating – Accrington

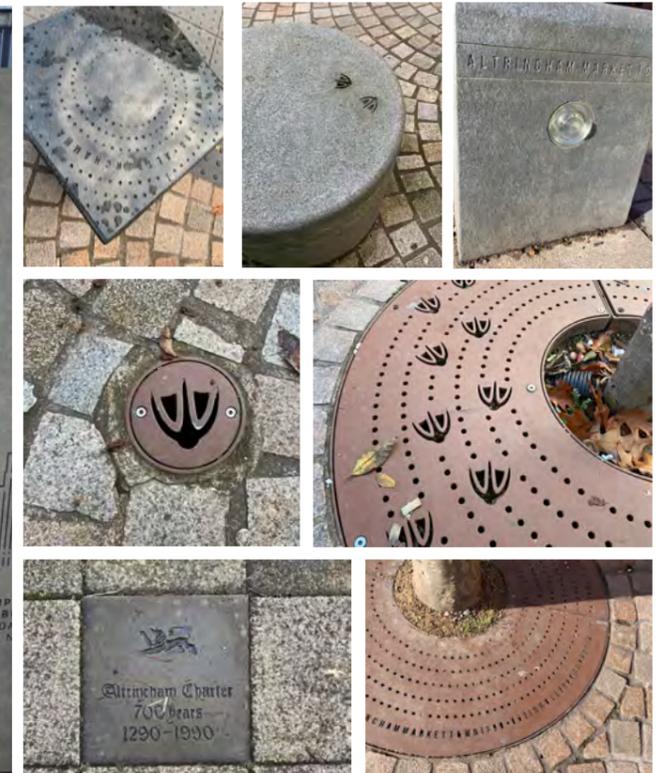


Image of Altrincham – market town details



# 1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

## Project No. 2: Public Realm Improvements b) Wayfinding and information

### What

A package of measures to help visitors orientate themselves, navigate the town centre and its surroundings and connect with key attractions/offers.

This can take the form of physical signage (traditional wayfinding), digital signage providing opportunities to convey real time information, and elements designed to provide more detailed information / interpretation of specific parts of the town centre. There is also potential to deliver wayfinding, town centre information and interpretation digitally via a town centre app.

### Why

Wayfinding in Garstang is limited to physical signage which itself is hard to locate and does not show all of what the town has to offer. This is apparent with the public path along the River Wyre and Lancaster Canal as multiple routes can lead there but with little signage to guide visitors.

In principle, good wayfinding helps people get the best out of the town centre experience. Crucially this links to Garstang's identity as visitors can explore what is on offer and be made aware of key attractions and places of interest. Potentially this could also link to sales and promotion as implementation of digital signage can direct people to key events and festivals.

Appropriate wayfinding and signage can improve safety and health and well being (dementia friendly) helping visitors discover more of Garstang's natural beauty and guiding people back to the town centre safely.

### How and Who

This is a potential Public Realm Improvements sub-project - refer to main Public Realm Improvements project description.

At the time of writing it is understood that development of a digital wayfinding / heritage interpretation app is being developed by Wyre Council. It is also understood that there are plans to install two digital information signs in the town centre. This intervention should build upon these initiatives and ensure that they are shaped and managed with the input of the GGP.

### Timescale

A Wayfinding and information strategy could be a 'quick win' within a more comprehensive Placemaking Improvements project.

### Precedent

Winchester City Council and the Wildlife Trust implemented a series of display boards. These are located at a number of entrances and around the main trail to guide first time visitors safely around the Moors.

The displays include information regarding the wider context, helping guide people to local transport in the city centre, local pubs and parking areas. Trails are available online for users to understand the length and terrain conditions.

The signage illustrates key information about the area such as types wildlife and plants.



Image of high quality bespoke signage in Sadler's Yard, Manchester



Image of Winchester Winnall Moors signage and information



# 1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

## Project No. 3: Cherestanc Square

### What

Cherestanc Square is a public space on the north eastern side of the Booths supermarket development with a usable area of approximately 700 sqm (excluding access lane and parking area). In the context of Garstang Town Centre this is a substantial space – Garstang’s largest. By comparison the usable area around the market cross is only about 175 sqm for example.

Cherestanc Square is used for events and as a location for mobile services – mobile banking for example, and the town’s Tourist Information office is located on its northern edge. However the space currently lacks either the character of a ‘civic space’ or that of a place for socialising with cafes, bars etc. Consultation feedback suggested that it could be better used.

The proposal is that Cherestanc Square is ‘reimagined’ as a space, potentially in combination with elements of frontage along Park Hill Road. The aim would be to create a more civic space with a clearer identity as part of the town centre, and more opportunity for commercial leisure uses.

### Why

In a town centre with very little space it is important that the spaces that do exist ‘work hard’ and maximise benefits for the town. Spaces should also be seen as a cohesive part of an attractive town centre environment that encourages people to visit and to stay longer.

A strong message from consultation was a desire to have some sort of community hall and potentially a heritage centre. A reimagined Cherestanc Square could perhaps be an option for the accommodation of these uses.



Image of Cherestanc Square location



Image of Cherestanc Square

### How and Who

Project lead to be GGP, working with Booths. The willingness of controlling land parties will be essential to move this proposal forward and a small working partnership of interested stakeholders may be an appropriate structure to progress.

The adjacent car park area to the north (Rope Walk) could be incorporated within considerations.

### Timescale

Enhanced use of the square as it stands could be a short-term project – for example trialling a new market offer. This would require little or no modification of the space. A more ambitious rethinking of the square would be a longer term project, but some ‘market testing’ of ideas to test support could happen quickly.

### Precedent

Goose Green in Altrincham, roughly the same size as Cherestanc Square, has been recently repurposed as a focal area for cafes and bars and a new space in the town’s evening economy.



Image of Goose Green – Altrincham



## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 1: Develop shared brand narrative/values to guide Interventions and collaboration

#### What

A place brand is the mental image someone holds about a place. It's not about a logo, it's not about marketing. It's a set of shared values and common goals that give focus to a place and its people. It's about shaping people's perceptions of the place by sending a united message. The crucial factor in the success of a place brand is understanding that its focus is internal - target audiences won't 'see' it, they will experience it through what Garstang is and does.

A shared set of 'values' for Garstang will create a useful and practical framework for interventions and investments to ensure that Garstang develops in the desired direction, with consistency and coherence. The more local partners work together to adopt the brand values in what they say and more importantly in what they do/how they behave - the more it will amplify the place's message and influence how the town's target audiences sees it - encouraging them to invest, live, work and visit.

#### Why

Places can't and don't stand still. Residents and stakeholders have suggested that they want to see the town build on its historic purpose and location and retain its rural hub strengths and identity - but at the same time to contemporise to meet the changing lifestyle expectations of consumers/businesses and residents. Managing the town's development therefore needs to be balanced. There is a need for a narrative framework and checklist of 'place values' which will help ensure that planned investments are appropriate and 'on-brand'.

#### How and Who

Through the work on this Framework GGP has already undertaken some public consultation into what residents and stakeholders think of and want from the town. There is a shared understanding of the assets and features which make Garstang an appealing market town.

This now needs to be developed and then distilled into an honest (but aspirational) story for the place – what the place and its people stand for, what its values are, what sets it apart from other places. It doesn't need to be complicated, but it needs to:

- a) Be values not asset driven. They need to express why places are like they are and less about what they have, the physical and material aspects of a place.
- b) Stand up to scrutiny, with clear evidence backing up any statement of special value or distinctiveness.

GGP needs to develop this in open collaboration with other stakeholders and partners such as traders' associations, hospitality, businesses, events organisers and Wyre Council. It may need facilitation support from place brand consultants if the expertise doesn't already exist in the town or needs neutrality.

The narrative values will need to be produced, articulated, tested and then adopted. Adoption isn't about adding a logo or strapline to marketing collateral - but is about developing the brand through shared actions and behaviours. Helping partners understand what this means and what they can and should do will be a key part of the process - as will identifying who will manage roll-out going forwards - to ensure on-going understanding, consistency and coherence.

#### Timescale

This needs to be an early piece of work as the 'values' should be the criteria against which to assess Framework investments and interventions.



## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 2: A Heritage Centre / Archive

#### What

A project to develop a purpose built space as a Heritage Centre and / or Archive for Garstang. This project should support and build upon work to-date by Garstang District Heritage Society which has been exploring the development of a Heritage Centre to collect, preserve and display artefacts, documents and photographs relating to Garstang and the surrounding villages. It is also intended that this would link to on-line hosting. The Society's plans include substantial use of the facility by schools and learning groups.

An initial piece of work should define the purpose and business case – clarifying the difference between an archive and a visitor centre, and understanding requirements for location/visibility, size, offer, staffing and revenue costs, as well as the potential market / user groups and educational potential.

#### Why

Garstang has a rich and interesting history including that of a market town dating back to 1310; a coaching and post stop on the main north west London to Edinburgh highway; a canal and railway town; a place that played an important role in the English Civil War; and the world's first Fair Trade town. The town centre has an historic charm but the threads of Garstang's heritage are not strongly represented in its urban fabric (see High Street intervention No. 3), and it has no museum or visitor centre to celebrate and explain its history. A facility that does this could raise the profile of the town as a visitor destination, encourage longer stays, help to build community interest and pride, and become a valuable educational asset – all factors that tend towards growth in the local economy.

#### How and Who

Garstang District Heritage Society has already made progress in promoting this project. GGP should engage and lend support, helping to draw in the support of other such as Wyre Council. The project could link to other proposed Framework interventions such as the development of a community hub, and these opportunities should be explored.

#### Timescale

Scoping work has already started but the future development timescale will depend upon funding availability.

#### Precedent

Penrith and Eden Museum is a small local heritage centre holding a collection of objects, documents and paintings through which visitors can “explore the archaeology, art, social, cultural and natural history and geology of Penrith and the surrounding area”. The museum is linked to Penrith Tourist Information Centre with direct frontage onto the high street. It is highly rated on Trip Advisor.

Co-location with Tourist Information or other facilities may be worth exploring in Garstang.



Image of Penrith Museum



Image of Penrith Museum c Stephen Craven



## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 3: Update the Market offer

#### What

Market trading in Garstang dates back to the 14th century when King Edward 2nd granted the town its first market charter. Elizabeth 1st and Charles 2nd granted further charters.

Currently a street market operates on Thursday, with a small indoor market hall open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The offer is a mix of 'traditional' food and convenience goods.

The proposal is that the market trustees and operators (both indoor and outdoor) explore opportunities to update both the appearance of the markets and the offer available. Furthermore, opportunities should be explored to supplement the current offer – potentially an artisan, craft or 'local produce' market on Sundays in Cherestanc Square. This could incorporate a 'young persons' section to encourage a younger customer base, and also participation from younger traders.

#### Precedent

The refurbishment and repositioning of Altrincham Market as an artisan offer with street food was a catalyst for wider town centre regeneration and has become a case study in how to 'fix towns'. Altrincham's market quarter, once largely dead outside of limited market trading hours, is now a thriving seven day-a-week area with a strong evening economy and local food and drink offer.



Images of Altrincham Market

#### Why

Consultation revealed that whilst many people like the traditional market offer, many also wanted Garstang's market offer to be updated, to offer a more interesting range of goods and a better shopping experience. Towns across the UK are recognising the value of their markets as a differentiator from 'clone town' retail and rebuilding their offers around them. Within this process many are shifting the nature of the market offer to be more experience based and 'artisanal' with a strong focus on local provenance and street food.

Garstang is well placed to respond to this trend and can do so by supplementing its current offer rather than replacing it, whilst improving its look, feel and general quality of experience. Without this response the market risks slow, relative decline and the town centre will miss an opportunity to grow its customer base around a new market offer – a formula that is proving very successful elsewhere.

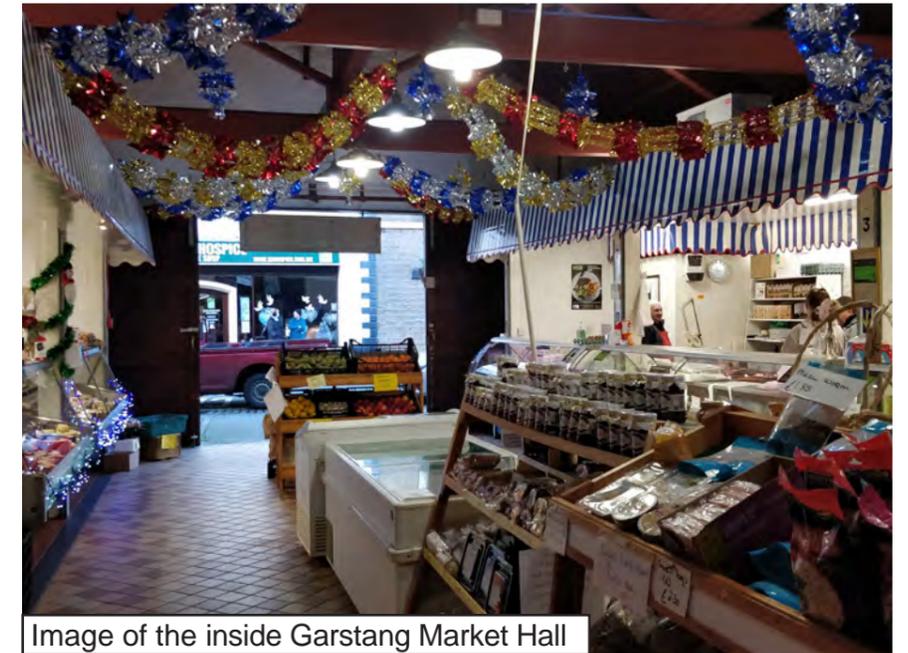


Image of the inside Garstang Market Hall

#### How and Who

Proposals for the indoor market and the current street market should be led by the Town Trust and market operators. Input from external advisors would be beneficial in recognising the full potential of the opportunity and developing proposals, and the support of GGP and Wyre Council – particularly in co-ordinating proposals with other Framework interventions. Proposals for a new, supplementary, market offer (potentially at Cherestanc Square) should be led by GGP, with support from Wyre Council, but should be endorsed by the Town Trust.

#### Timescale

Improvements to the current market can happen quickly. Ideas for additional market activity elsewhere in the town could be rolled out relatively quickly on a 'temporary 'test' basis subject to agreement of location and associated permissions.



## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 4: Develop the town centre Food and Beverage offer

#### What

A project to encourage and enable a better town centre food and drink offer in Garstang Town Centre (also referred to as Food and Beverage – ‘F&B’). During the Framework consultation stage a significant number of people highlighted the need for a more diverse offer including something more family friendly, a stronger ‘café culture’ and opening hours that extended into the evening, Sundays and some earlier ‘breakfast’ opening.

Whilst Garstang has a number of traditional pubs, most serving food, the offer could include more with a café/bar atmosphere and a stronger ‘gastro pub’ food offering. Similarly, consultees felt that the town could accommodate more cafes, bars and restaurants with a generally more up market offer.

There is also an opportunity for Garstang to offer more ‘street food’, perhaps in conjunction with an updated and extended market offer (see Heritage, Culture and the Visitor Economy – 3).

A pedestrian priority High Street creating usable space to the front of properties and a rethinking of the uses along the weinds would support the development of a food and drink offer.

#### Precedent

The nearby market towns of Poulton le Fylde to the west and Clitheroe to the east have both established themselves as evening economy destinations. Both have larger populations than Garstang and thus larger local markets to draw from, but their transition from a traditional ‘drinking pub’ offer to a broader, more contemporary evening economy mix is worthy of note.

#### Why

As discussed earlier in this report the future success of retail, and town centres generally, is increasingly tied to their ability to offer an attractive environment and an ‘experience’. Visits to town centre high streets are now less about the purchase of goods, rather more about enjoying the visit as an experience, often linked to a drink or meal as part of the package. The purchase of goods need not be part of the visit at all – indeed these are often ‘browsed’ in bricks and mortar shops only to be later purchased on-line.

A strong food and drink offer is a draw in its own right – witness the recent popularity of local ‘food courts’, artisanal food markets and the ubiquitous ‘wood fired’ pizza. It is also a mechanism to encourage linked trips and longer dwell times, and also an opportunity to extend trading hours in the evening and at weekends. The right offer can cater to different market segments at different times of the day – shoppers during the day and families late afternoon to early evening, with more adult customers later on.

The risk is that if Garstang does not improve its food and drink offer people will gravitate to places that have, taking the potential for further spending with them.

#### How and Who

Success will depend upon traders’ ability to see an opportunity and willingness to engage. Garstang Chamber of Trade will be instrumental in promoting this. GGP, Wyre Council and others can signal the aspiration, help to create the right environment for investment and help to remove any barriers (having supportive town centre policies for example). There may also be opportunities for small scale ‘seeding’ of appropriate businesses – dedicating market stalls to street food or designating locations for pop-up coffee pods for example.

#### Timescale

Many places are successfully growing their food and drink offer as part of a package of more general improvements. This usually happens organically, and sometimes with a little support and direction. A timescale is therefore difficult to predict but, at the time of writing, there are already signs that Garstang has started the process with a new micro-brewery opening on the high street.



## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 5: Develop an ‘outdoors hub’

#### What

As GGP’s Vision statement notes Garstang is the “Gateway to Lancashire’s great outdoors”. It is surrounded by beautiful countryside including the River Wyre, the picturesque Lancaster Canal, adjacent Trough of Bowland and the town centre is perfectly positioned as a start / end point for great walks and bike rides. Improving access to, marketing of, and supporting infrastructure for ‘all of this’ will boost the visitor economy and help to move the offer to one of ‘value’ rather than ‘volume’.

The proposition is that Garstang develop a building, or recognisable cluster of outlets that become the town’s ‘go-to’ point for information about the outdoor offer, outdoor clothing / equipment, bike hire /support (and sales), kayaking/canoeing (on the canal), cycle / walking cafés, etc. and, potentially, accommodation aimed at the ‘active outdoor’ market – see precedent below.

#### Why

GGP’s objectives include “developing a quality visitor economy based on heritage, town centre experience and access to the surrounding, countryside”; “encouraging a stronger town centre food and drink offer and an evening economy”; “providing more effective links to areas outside the town centre, including the river and the canal”; and “promoting health and wellbeing”. Measures that encourage and support access to the outdoors meet all of these objectives. Many will also be commercial enterprises and so directly support local economic growth whilst adding diversity to the mix of town centre uses – meeting another of GGP’s objectives.

#### How and Who

This could be a new, bespoke facility with a curated offer, potentially linked to a community building, tourist information centre or heritage centre. This approach would require a GGP / Wyre initiative to identify the opportunity and thereafter facilitate delivery by the private sector.

An alternative approach would be to actively promote a site or unit(s) for uses linked to the active outdoor market and offer support to suitable businesses.

#### Timescale

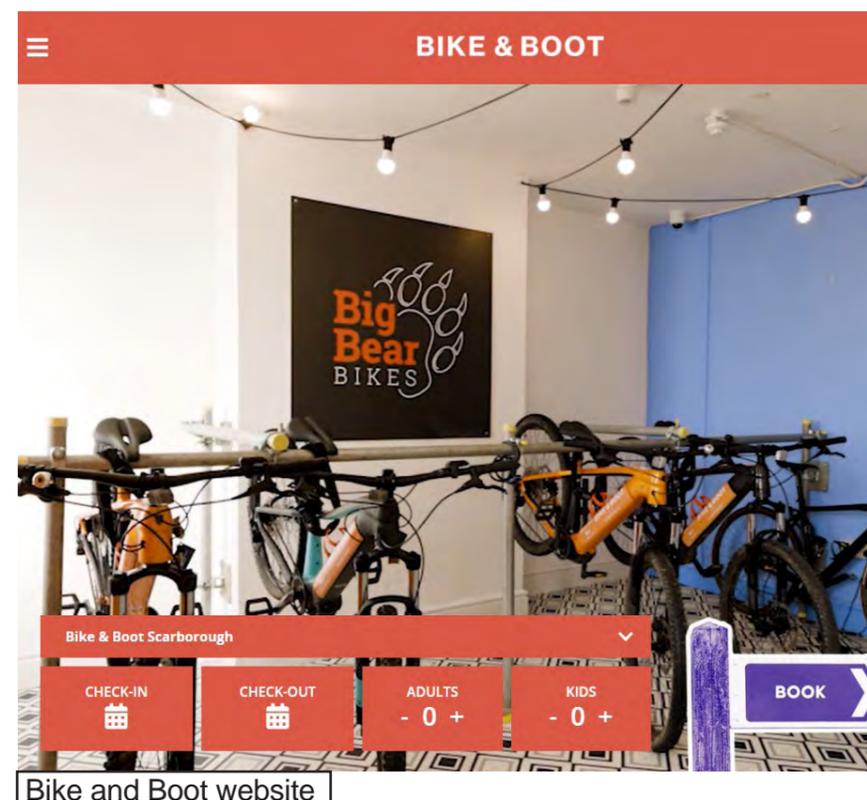
Probably a medium to long term project, but could happen quicker with an interested developer / operator.

#### Precedent

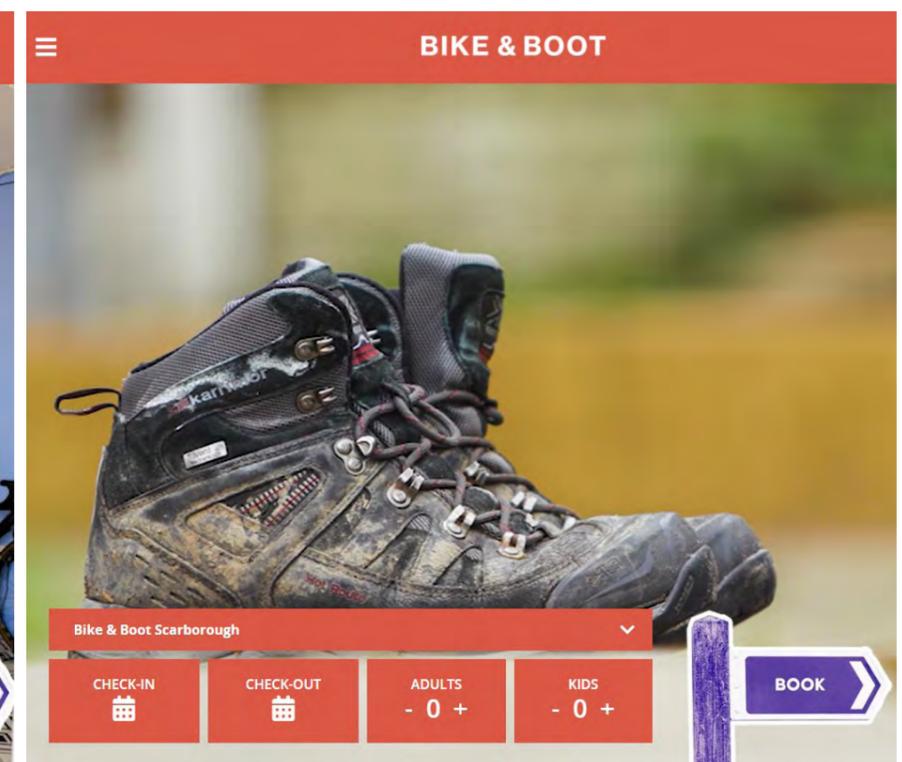
‘Bike and Boot’ is a new hotel concept targeted at the active outdoor market. Its first site opened in Scarborough in 2020 and the business has four further sites in planning, including one in the Peak District set to open in 2022.

“ We set out to create a new kind of hotel for the 21st Century leisure consumer – offering facilities that no one else is providing. Relaxed, fun, free hot drinks, free movies, power showers and super-fast wifi. Your dog is welcome and so is your bike and your surf board. We’re the place for quiet relaxation or active escapism – all at price that makes sense.”

<https://bikeandboot.com/about/>



Bike and Boot website





## 2. Heritage and Culture and the Visitor Economy

### Project No. 6: A signature arts events / review of events calendar

#### What

Garstang's events calendar should be periodically reviewed to ensure that events remain relevant and respond to changing circumstances and expectations. The development of a Regeneration Framework is a good point for such a review and also an opportunity to consider how existing and potential new events align with and support the Vision and Objectives set out in the Framework.

The proposal is to add a new 'signature arts event' to the calendar i.e. something that enhances the current range of events by having a specific cultural focus. This should be distinctly different from the current events offer in order that it appeals to new groups of people for whom Garstang may not be on the radar, thereby broadening the town's visitor demographic. The aim should be to develop an event that highlights Garstang's position as a gateway to "Lancashire's great outdoors", promotes Garstang's social values, appeals to young people (amongst other age groups) and, importantly, drives spend into the local economy.

Garstang is a small town centre that could be overwhelmed by a large number of visitors focussed into a short timeframe. An event that is scheduled over 2 or more days, or alternatively uses Garstang as a base for activity outside the town centre may therefore be more appropriate. This will also generate opportunities for overnight stays that would support development of more town centre accommodation and an evening economy. The general focus should be on the 'value' rather than 'volume' of visits. An event that capitalises on Garstang's relationship to the River Wyre and the Lancaster Canal would align with further Framework objectives.

#### Why

The current calendar includes events such as the Walking Festival, Scarecrow Festival, Ice Cream Festival, Victorian Christmas and Garstang Show. These are well established and popular though, as noted above, they should be periodically reviewed and updated to maintain their relevance. These events know their audience and provide a "reliable", traditional market town experience. This still leaves space in the calendar for something that could be more arts / culture focussed which would have a different appeal and connect more people to the town. These may include both visitors to the area and new local residents. The objective is to grow the number and increase the diversity of people using and, importantly, spending in the town. This proposed intervention is also an opportunity to make a visible statement about how Garstang is developing to meet its stated Vision and Objectives for the future.

#### Precedent

The 'Just So Festival' is an annual, commercially run, family arts festival established in 2011 on the Rode Hall Estate in Cheshire. This is a 'long weekend' event targeted at young families with the option of camping or visiting on a day basis. "It showcases the best arts, music, literature, comedy and theatre for families in a wondrous landscape of woodland clearings, rolling parkland, arboreal amphitheatres and lakeside spots in the stunning Rode Hall Estate".



Images of Just So Festival

<https://justsofestival.org.uk/>

#### How and Who

This proposal will need an enthusiastic champion and require the GGP work in partnership with key officers from Wyre to establish a brief, scope project objectives and identify funding opportunities and wider supportive stakeholders. Events may require public subsidy, but there is also space for commercial delivery, or a blended approach. Specialist input is likely to be required at the planning stage.

#### Timescale

Initial planning and scoping of opportunities could happen quickly. Further design and development of the event will need to align to meet target dates within an annual calendar. i.e. the ability to hit a target date will drive the ultimate timescale, but once established the timescale to deliver further events will be more predictable.

The Dark Skies Festivals are annual events held in a number of National Park locations throughout the country with programmed events tailored to suite each, including specifically commissioned art installations, and backed up by fringe festival events.



Dark skies web page

<https://www.darks skiesnationalparks.org.uk/>



### 3. Transport and Linkage

#### Project No. 1: Promote active travel

##### What

Developing a strategy for the introduction and promotion of improved cycling and walking infrastructure.

Facilities will include:

Demarcated cycle routes; dedicated signage; facilities for secure cycle storage (both local to specific buildings or attractions and also at key 'hub' location); cycle repair and hire; app-based information on routes, facilities, events and offers.

A further part of the strategy will be the active promotion of active travel for both leisure and commuting. As well as better use of waterways/routes i.e. canal footpath.

Garstang is already on the radar for leisure cyclists and walkers but current town centre facilities are limited. Improving these facilities and addressing associated issues such as time limited town centre car parking (see High Street intervention – 6) would encourage greater use.

##### Precedent

Many towns and cities have cycling strategies in place with locations such as Cambridge, Bristol, Edinburgh (very hilly), Newcastle and Southampton all scoring highly in cycle user surveys.

Liverpool introduced its 'Cycling Revolution' in 2014 as a 12 year plan. Greater Manchester has appointed Chris Boardman as the region's first Cycling and Walking Commissioner. His 'Made to Move' report is an ambitious vision for cycling and walking over a ten-year period.

##### Why

Garstang's cycle infrastructure is poor which cannot be acceptable for a town with sustainability ambitions, a visitor economy and easy access to attractive leisure routes. A commitment to improved active travel would:

- Improve local connectivity – providing options to better access the town centre and other locations.
- Reduce reliance on private car use – improving the environment and helping Garstang to position itself as an environmentally aware town, reduce its carbon footprint, and contribute to Wyre's carbon reduction targets.
- Improve activity levels with consequent health and well-being benefits.
- Better position Garstang to attract leisure cyclists and more general tourists for whom cycling would be part of an attractive visitor offer.

##### How and Who

Lancashire County Council to be project lead in partnership with GGP. Opportunity for engagement and participation by a wide range of transport (e.g. Sustrans), community and environmental groups.

##### Timescale

A cycle/walking strategy should be a short-term project with implementation of recommendations also starting in the short term as it is expected that the strategy would identify a number of low cost, 'quick wins'. Full delivery of the strategy is likely to be a mid – longer term ambition, linked to the delivery of other interventions.

More locally Cleveleys has managed to integrate some cycle lanes into its town centre, connecting to an attractive cycle route along the seafront.



Liverpool cycling strategy logo



Image of Transport For Greater Manchester cycle hub



### 3. Transport and Linkage

## Project No. 2: A community led transport service that connects to the surrounding villages

#### What

An initiative to explore how perceived short comings in public transport linkage between Garstang and its surrounding village communities can be overcome through community initiative. The intent is to establish a transport service ‘from the grass roots up’ run by volunteers from the community.

This could take the form of a managed car sharing project or, at a more ambitious level, a community mini bus service running scheduled services. As well as providing an amenity to local residents there is an opportunity to run day trips to visitor attractions and specialist trips for particular events.

#### Why

Garstang Town Centre is a service and community hub for a number of surrounding villages and more isolated settlements. A number of bus services run through or to Garstang connecting to Blackpool, Cleveleys, Preston and Lancaster, however these tend to run along main routes which don’t always connect with the villages. They are also not always frequent or late running.

It is an objective of GGP to improve access from and to the surrounding villages and suburbs. There is a wide view that current public transport arrangements do not meet the needs of many people. This encourages reliance on private car use, with associated issues of sustainability, quality of town centre experience and car parking. There is also a concern that isolation is an issue for some people without access to a car.

#### How and Who

GGP, working with partners, should initially scope options, working in partnership with Wyre Council and examine the development of precedent schemes elsewhere. See example from the Upper Dales below.

It is important that Lancashire County Council are involved from an early stage - LCC is working on proposals to improve Lancashire's bus services and any locally led initiative must compliment, rather than compete with or duplicate proposals.

#### Timescale

A community scheme based on car sharing could be a shorter-term project. Establishment of a minibus service would likely be medium term and may well build from an initial car based service.

#### Precedent

The ‘Little White Bus’ is a community service providing scheduled travel to the residents of, and visitors to Upper Wensleydale and Swaledale in North Yorkshire. It was founded in 2011, has a team of paid and volunteer drivers and has a fleet of 16-seater minibuses. It runs scheduled services, day trips and home to school services for North Yorkshire County Council. It carries 60,000 passengers per year and has its own ‘friends off’ support group.



Little White Bus web page



### 3. Transport and Linkage

#### Project No. 3: Town Centre parking strategy

##### What

Due to its location, role as a service centre and visitor destination for a wide area, and limited public transport links, private cars will remain as a significant means of accessing the town centre for the foreseeable future. Car parking is therefore an issue, especially in a small town centre with limited space. Current reliance on a main supermarket car park with limits on length of stay deters dwell time in the town centre and will restrict plans for economic growth.

This proposal is, initially, for strategy that considers future requirements for vehicle parking in the town centre including private cars and, potentially, visitor coaches. Provision and distribution of electric charging infrastructure must also be considered. The strategy should develop scenarios of anticipated patterns of development and increased economic activity based on the delivery of this regeneration framework. This should be considered over a 10 to 15 year period, factoring in anticipated changes to national transport behaviours over this period – for example the move to electric vehicles. This may suggest requirements to identify / safeguard areas of land for increased or displaced vehicle parking, and consideration of new policies, restrictions and management.

##### Why

Whilst at an authority level the view is that the town centre has sufficient parking capacity, stakeholder and public consultation revealed considerable frustration with current arrangements. There is a long stay council run car park at the northern end of the town centre, but consultation feedback revealed that many people rely on the centrally located Booths car park (the largest in town), but this is limited to a 3 hour stay. Anecdotal evidence suggests that people limit their stay in the town centre accordingly – even countryside walkers plan a return within 3 hours and then leave.

Many people reported that peak capacity is insufficient for busy days and events; town centre employers reported difficulty for staff and the Sports and Social Club has concerns about capacity when a number of its matches / sports coincide. Car parking issues must not be allowed to constrain Garstang's plans for economic growth.

Initial consideration suggests that options for improved car parking are available, but these must be considered in the round and set with in a long-range strategic plan.

##### How and Who

This project must be promoted by GGP and Wyre Council in collaboration with Lancashire County Council as the highway authority. Proposals should be consulted on by stakeholders including local residents, businesses, and amenity groups.

##### Timescale

The Town Centre Parking Strategy should be an early piece of work in order that its outcomes can inform other initiatives and future development. The recommendations of the strategy should be addressed so that they can be phased to meet requirements.



## 4. Community

### Project No. 1: A Multi-Purpose Space for Community Use

#### What

An accessible, multi-purpose space which is capable of hosting a wide range of events and activities, initiated by different community groups or individuals. It may potentially have other ancillary spaces to allow the delivery of other specific services – I.T. training or non-clinical primary healthcare advice for example. Ideally it would be located within the town centre.

Activities in this space must be additional to and compliment, not compete with, other town centre facilities. As a starting point it will be important to establish the need for this facility, particularly in relation to the use of existing spaces in the town (including St. Thomas Church Hall, Free Methodist Church Hall, Garstang Sports and Social Club and Garstang Library).

Activities focussed towards young people should be prioritised as should evening events to extend town centre use and footfall over a longer period. These might include: dance / exercise classes, pop up café, indoor bowls, adult education, community group use, pop up cinema, music and drama, etc.

#### Why

This project idea was raised a number of times in public and stakeholder consultations. A common point made was that Garstang did not have a community hall, whereas most of the surrounding villages did. Whilst this narrative should be tested in relation to the capacity of existing facilities (see above) it is clear that there is a will to explore the development of a new community facility.

#### How and Who

This project will require a partnership approach, but with a key promotor – GGP or Lancashire Libraries for example. Delivery will require a key investor / funder and the project will need to demonstrate a business case. Operation and management could be through a Community Interest Company structure with largely volunteer staffing, a charity, or a more commercial structure.

Alternatively this facility could be delivered as part of the expansion plans of Garstang Sports and Social Club. (See following intervention).

#### Timescale

Work to further scope requirements and sense check against current town capacity could happen quickly. The outcome of this exercise, together with the identification of a suitable location and funding will determine the further programme.

#### Precedent

Fearon Community Association in Loughborough runs an Urban Village Hall with a strong social purpose ethos with future planning informed by sound monitoring and impact evaluation. A stakeholder group meets quarterly to discuss performance, plans, and to make recommendations for the future.



Poster of Fearon activities



Image of Fearon social impact



## 4. Community

### Project No. 2: Support the Garstang Sports and Social Club's Expansion Plans

#### What

Garstang Sports and Social Club occupies a site immediately to the north of the town centre along the west bank of the River Wyre. A number of different sports clubs use the facilities which include rugby, football, cricket, tennis and bowls. The site also contains a limited amount of car parking and a club house with changing and social facilities.

The Sports and social club are developing plans to expand the changing and social facilities on site. This is to accommodate increasing demand for use as the individual sports clubs push forward their own agendas to grow participation and play at higher league levels.

The proposal is that GGP engage with the Sports and Social Club offering in-principle support, but also to see if development plans could accommodate space to deliver any of the GGP's wider objectives.

GGP could support Sports and Social Club funding bids; offer support during the statutory planning process; and work with the Sports and Social Club in the development of detailed proposals - e.g. identifying complimentary uses/activities (NB proposals under the Health theme in this report for 'Social Prescribing').

#### Why

The aims of the Garstang Sports and Social Club to promote and expand involvement in a range of sports are complementary to GGP's objectives to promote health and wellbeing and community strength and social values. The club's expansion plan may also be able to meet or complement one or more of this Framework's intervention proposals – for example provision of a new community space.

#### How and Who

GGP to liaise with Garstang Sports and Social Club and establish a support agreement whilst exploring potential for complementary use of facilities.

#### Timescale

It is understood that discussions with the club have already started.





## 4. Community

### Project No. 3: A ‘young people’s market’

#### What

A project to encourage the involvement of young people in the commercial and cultural activities of Garstang Town Centre. The proposal is that GGP promotes a young persons’ or ‘teenage market’, potentially associated with an expanded and enhanced market offer (see Heritage, Culture and the Visitor Economy intervention 3). This may just be one or two stalls but could also grow to become a larger section of a broader day market, or an occasional themed market in its own right.

This initiative also links to the idea that successful retail is about ‘experiences’ – i.e. young people including musicians, bands, dancers, etc as part of their market offer.

Similar initiatives in other locations have proved very successful, attracting national media attention, and support organisations have grown up around this to help young people with the process of establishing and running markets.

#### How and Who

This project should be linked to the more general updating and enhancement of Garstang’s market offer (see Heritage, Culture and the Visitor Economy intervention 3). GGP should lead, working with Garstang Youth Council. A partnership with Myerscough College and Garstang Community Academy should be established. Support organisations include The National Market Traders Federation (Young Traders Market section) and The Teenage Market <https://theteenagemarket.co.uk/>

#### Why

GGP’s objectives include ensuring that the town centre is diverse and attractive for all user groups. Feedback from a number of consultees suggested that it currently lacks much of an offer for young people. Engaging young people in the activities of the town is also important in building community capacity – essential to support the future work of the GGP.

A young persons’ market can better link local schools and colleges with the life of the town centre and create opportunities to link to local businesses. It will increase footfall, particularly from a younger demographic, help to animate the town centre, and drive spend.

From an economic perspective this is an opportunity to attract the next generation of entrepreneurs and traders to the town by giving them the space to learn and experiment.

#### Timescale

Project timescale will be subject to identifying a willing group of young traders and location within the town centre (Cherestanc Square?). Otherwise there is no reason in principle why this could not progress quickly.

#### Precedent

A selection of media releases covering teenage markets in Bolton, Stockport and Barnet



Webpages of the Guardian articles showing young people success stories



## 5. Sustainability and Low Carbon - Energy

### Project No. 1: Explore establishment of a Community Energy Trust

#### What

From the Government's gov.uk website Community Energy Guidance:

"Community energy covers aspects of collective action to reduce, purchase, manage and generate energy. Community energy projects have an emphasis on local engagement, local leadership and control and the local community benefiting collectively from the outcomes.

Community-led action can often tackle challenging issues around energy, with community groups well placed to understand their local areas and to bring people together with common purpose.

There are many examples of community energy projects across the UK, with at least 5000 community groups undertaking energy initiatives in the last five years. Examples of community energy projects include:

- Community-owned renewable electricity installations such as solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, wind turbines or hydroelectric generation.
- Members of the community jointly switching to a renewable heat source such as a heat pump or biomass boiler.
- A community group supporting energy saving measures such as the installation of cavity wall or solid wall insulation, which can be funded wholly or partly by the Green Deal.
- Working in partnership with the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to pilot smart technologies.
- Collective purchasing of heating oil for off gas-grid communities.
- Collective switching of electricity or gas suppliers.

#### Why

As the list above illustrates there are a number of different issues and opportunities to consider in relation to energy use and provision, linked to wider issues. A Community Energy Trust would be a forum for Garstang and its surrounding settlements to come together, understand the issues and opportunities in the area, consider responses and organise action.

#### How and Who

As an initial action GGP/Wyre Council should establish contact with supportive organisations such as 'Community Energy England' in order to scope an action plan and review suitable organisational and leadership structures.

In constituting the membership of the community energy trust consideration should be given to:

- which organisations are key stakeholders in the town's future?
- what value can member organisations or individuals bring?
- how to attract organisations that see investment opportunities in community energy projects.

#### Timescale

Initial scoping work could be a short-term project. This will help to identify a number of community energy projects with a likely range of medium to longer term delivery programmes.

Early actions might include:

- Ensuring that Garstang is well positioned to benefit from grant funding for domestic energy upgrades.
- supporting borough wide 'retro-fitting' initiatives.
- establishing mechanisms to gather data for future energy decision making, or support for funding applications.

#### Precedent

Community Energy England was founded in 2014 as a not for profit organisation to help activate community energy organisations implement new projects, innovate, improve and grow. CEE's 2030 Vision contains a number of case studies from community projects across the country focused on 'smart grid' distribution; heat distribution; home energy saving; renewable energy generation and cutting energy costs.



Community Energy England 2030 Vision front cover



## 5. Sustainability and Low Carbon - Energy

### Project No. 2: Low Carbon Strategy

#### What

A strategy to transition Garstang to become a low carbon / zero carbon town.

This would include measures to be incorporated into Framework Interventions and new development together with measures to improve the sustainability of Garstang's existing building stock - improving energy efficiency and reducing energy consumption. Building related measures may include super insulation, low carbon construction, intelligent services controls, and incorporation of 'biophilic' features.

Other initiatives could include:

- Engaging with the public to reduce energy consumption.
- Promoting active travel and public transport to reduce car use.
- Encouraging the purchase of locally grown / locally sourced products.
- Projects to measure and report against locally derived sustainability objectives – possibly in conjunction with academic research programmes (Lancaster University?).

The collection of data will be important for effective decision making and to provide supporting evidence for future funding applications.

#### How and Who

Wyre Council lead – ideally as a borough-wide initiative potentially linked to Wyre's emerging Climate Change Strategy. GGP should consider links to other interventions. Stakeholder consultation, especially with business and transport organisations is essential.

#### Why

Wyre Council declared a 'climate emergency' in 2019. Amongst other things this committed the council to "support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire Wyre area zero carbon by 2050". The authority must now consider how to meet this target. A low carbon strategy could be developed at a borough-wide level with reference to the specific challenges and opportunities within different settlements.

Developing a low carbon strategy would demonstrate that Wyre, and Garstang, are serious about the climate and the health of the community.

This project has strong overlaps in other Framework areas:

- High Street / Economy – transitioning to low carbon will become an increasing requirement for economic competitiveness. This will be important for both town centre businesses and employment areas like the land near Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall that wish to attract high-value companies.
- Transport & Linkages – key link with low/zero carbon transport.
- Community – housing stock with good environmental performance will make life more comfortable and affordable for residents.
- Health & Wellbeing – links to a more active/healthy lifestyle, better air quality and an improved town centre environment.
- Tech & Digital – lots of opportunities for monitoring and management – potentially linked to Higher Education research.

#### Timescale

The development of a Low Carbon Strategy should be a short-term target in order that low carbon initiatives can be developed to meet zero carbon by 2050 targets.

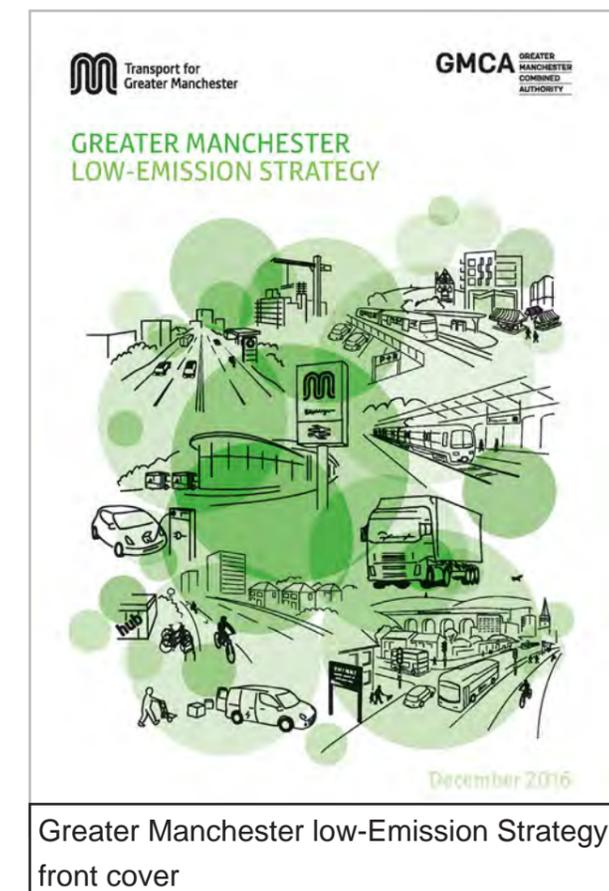
#### Precedent

Greater Manchester Low Emission Strategy -The report aims to reduce Greater Manchester's carbon footprint and improve air quality and hence health outcomes, focussing on changes to transport. It sets out a long term, high-level strategy.

Proposed measures fall under the headings:

- Changing travel behaviour;
- Managing emissions;
- Greening vehicle fleets; and
- Awareness-raising.

As well as a focus on addressing climate change the report highlights the economics of poor air quality, health dis-benefits and environmental damage. All pertinent to Wyre.





## 5. Sustainability and Low Carbon - Transport

### Project No. 3: Electric vehicle charging strategy

#### What

A project to define the strategic understanding of the measures that Garstang will need to implement – what, where and by when, to meet the needs of future electric car users. This should be produced in parallel with a ‘Smart Place’ Strategy (the EV strategy could be part of the Smart Place Strategy), Town Centre Parking strategy, and a strategy to become a low carbon / zero carbon town – all interventions noted in this section of the report.

The electric charging strategy will integrate into proposed and existing car parks, parking bays and potentially on-plot facilities. This would provide rapid charging capabilities to charge electric vehicles (EV’s) quickly and affordably. The infrastructure could be used in conjunction with an app that would allow users to track availability, nearby facilities, charging time and cost.

Car charging points in appropriate locations could be linked to renewable energy generation.

#### Why

Central Government has advised that sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles will be banned by 2030 and the country is now transitioning to electric vehicles. All places will need to consider how the infrastructure required will be provided. This is particularly important in Garstang whose location is slightly off the beaten track – i.e. somewhere that visitors might be fearful of running out of charge.

Garstang should aim to be ‘ahead of the pack’ in the provision of charging infrastructure and promote this as a reason to come. It seems logical that there will be a ‘tipping point’ in consumer behaviour ahead of 2030 and places that do not have good charging infrastructure in place will be left behind.

This project has strong overlaps with:

- High Street / Economy – providing suitable infrastructure is essential for economic competitiveness.
- Transport & Linkages – good, early provision of electric charging infrastructure can help to reinforce the message that Garstang is connected.
- Community & Residential – will make the town more attractive as a location for developers and purchasers. Health & Wellbeing – links to better air quality and an improved town centre environment.
- Tech & Digital – a good opportunity for management and monitoring. Customer usage can be guided by a ‘Garstang app’ that links drivers to other town centre data and offers.

#### How and Who

The initial strategy should be commissioned by Wyre Council, but ideally as part of a borough-wide brief. A broad range of stakeholders will need to be consulted including highway / transport authorities, utility companies, vehicle manufacturers (i.e. bespoke charging point installers), local businesses, local people and amenity groups.

There are opportunities to link to (Lancaster?) university research projects. Potential for partnership with major car trip generators such as Booths or Barton Grange who will also need to address the issue.

#### Timescale

Production of the strategy should be a short-term goal. Enabling infrastructure should be delivered alongside other interventions where sensible to do so. (Garstang currently already has 8 charging stations within Booths car park) and a further 6 outlets are scheduled for installation at the High Street Car Park in 2022.

Delivery of the strategy can be applied in stages to meet demand as it increases over time, however, the aim must be to always be just ahead of demand.



Image of Garstang EV Charging Stations

#### Precedent

Dundee is regarded as a leading ‘smart town’. Dundee introduced a new charging hub in 2019, with the city having one of the highest numbers of electric vehicles in the UK. The new hub can accommodate 20 vehicles, with further opportunities to add coach services.

This hub includes battery storage and energy supplied by the grid and solar panels. Excess energy is stored and then released when needed at peak time or during the night.



Image of Dundee charging hub



## 5. Sustainability and Low Carbon

### Project No. 4: Develop a ‘High Street Sustainability Calculator’

#### What

The intention of this intervention is gather and display data relating to the town centre’s sustainability. This could be a wide-ranging measure of ‘sustainability’ including:

- Energy use – and hence a simple measure of carbon footprint.
- Potentially energy generation – (see Sustainability and Low Carbon theme intervention no.1).
- Water use.
- Recycling, against targets.
- EV charging use.
- Produce miles (i.e. a measure of local produce v ‘imported’ produce’).

This could be gathered through a network of interested businesses and organisations, anonymised and aggregated to provide a broad indication of town centre performance that can then be measured over time. There is an opportunity for this information to be interpreted and displayed within the town centre.

#### Precedent

The Transition Town movement is worth reviewing in relation to ambitions to become a more sustainable place, and to demonstrate the process. The Transition Network is a global movement with over 300 community led groups in the UK. [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org) provides a wealth of information and resources.

#### Why

Taking this intervention forward would be a sign of Garstang’s firm intention to meet GGP’s objective to be a sustainable place. It would be a statement of Garstang’s values and commitment to the environment and a low carbon future, whilst also being a mechanism for ‘nudging’ behaviours and reinforcing need for action.

Being a sustainable town with a strong environmental and community ethos is an important part of Garstang’s future and this intervention allows the town to showcase that ambition – making it distinct and interesting.

#### How and Who

This intervention will require an interested lead organisation or individual with knowledge of the sustainability agenda. This could come from local schools, Myerscough College, Lancaster University or from within the GGP / Wyre. All of these organisations could play a part in a task group, together with interested local businesses.

There is an opportunity to link this to a Smart Place Strategy and the digital collection of data.

#### Timescale

This intervention could begin as a small-scale initiative with just a few participants measuring a limited range of sustainability criteria, with an ambition to raise interest and grow in scale from there. It could therefore begin relatively quickly.



Webpage of Transition towns



## 6. Health and Wellbeing

### Project No. 1: Establish a Carer Support Group

#### What

At 29.6% the proportion of older people (over 64) in Garstang's population is slightly higher than the average across Wyre, but significantly higher than the average across the North West (18.7%). This skew towards an older population brings particular challenges in healthcare and social care. Many people in the health and social care system (not just the elderly) rely upon largely voluntary carers. A larger than average population of older people does however tend towards a larger group of carers.

This Framework Intervention proposes the establishment and support of a dedicated community group to provide support and advice to carers.

#### Why

Our health and social care system relies upon the support of largely unpaid, often unseen carers. A support group can provide connection with peers and personal support but also direct practical help with day to day issues and connection to essential services and resources. This provides benefit to the carers, the people that they care for, and ultimately to our wider society.

#### How and Who

Wyre Rural Extended practice network may be a suitable initial lead, together with support from Wyre Council. This initiative may be better developed as a borough wide initiative. GGP should look for opportunities to support.

#### Timescale

Establishment of a carers support group could happen relatively quickly and should be targeted as a short term project.

#### Precedent

Carers UK, a national charity to help, connect and campaign for carers would be a good early reference organisation.

<https://www.carersuk.org/home>





# 6. Health and Wellbeing

## Project No. 2: Measures to make Garstang a more dementia friendly town

### What

As noted in the description of the previous intervention, at 29.6% the proportion of older people (over 64) in Garstang's population is slightly higher than the average across Wyre, but significantly higher than the average across the North West (18.7%). This skew towards an older population brings particular challenges in healthcare and social care.

One such is caring for people living with dementia. This issue is already 'on the radar' at community level with the 'Garstang Memory Café' providing a twice monthly, free drop in centre for those living with dementia and their carers. The Memory Café maintains a Friends Forum, encourages volunteering and fundraises for projects such as the building of a 'Community Garden' next to Garstang Library.

This Framework Intervention is concerned with supporting existing initiatives such as The Memory Cafe, the new senior living facility at Bowgreave Rise, and identifying what other things the town could do to become a more informed, caring and inclusive place in relation to dementia.

### Why

GGP's objectives for Garstang include promoting health and wellbeing, and being an attractive town centre for all user groups. This must include consideration of people with existing health issues, including dementia. Considering how the town can adapt to meet these needs will not just improve the lives of people suffering with the disease, but also those indirectly affected as relatives, friends, and carers. Measures that can help maintain independence, or facilitate local support, will also help to relieve pressure on healthcare services.

There are good opportunities to link this intervention with that of promoting social prescribing.

### How and Who

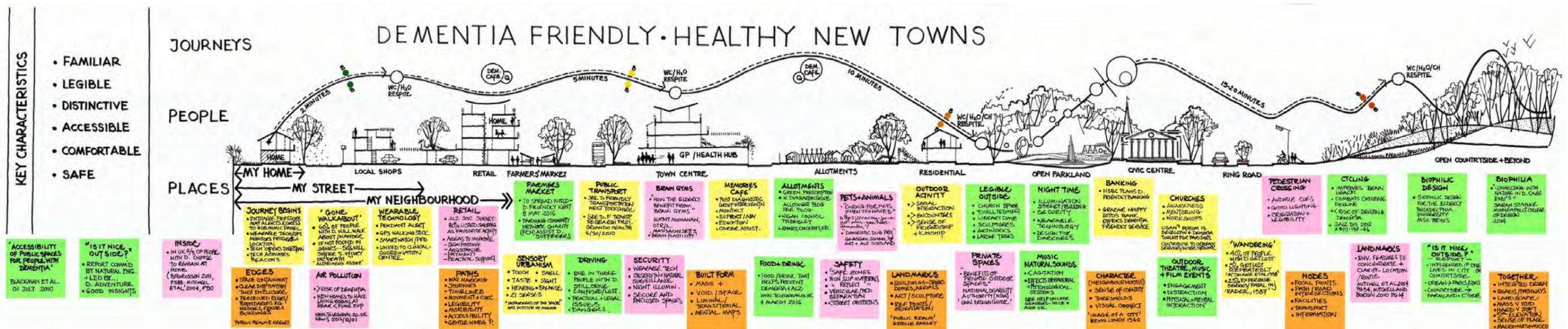
An initial discussion bringing together GGP, Wyre Council, the Wyre Rural Extended practice network, and Garstang Memory Café could provide an initial frame of reference. Further discussions may loop in other professional inputs to identify opportunities and actions. One such should be a standing commitment to review other Framework Interventions or development proposals for the town to identify if/how they could make Garstang a more dementia friendly town – especially interventions in public realm, High Street, wayfinding and the use of digital technology.

### Timescale

Initial scoping work could happen quickly with timescales for further actions / projects to be determined.

### Precedent

The sketch below considers some of the issues to be addressed and ideas that may be incorporated within a dementia friendly town.





## 6. Health and Wellbeing

### Project No. 3: Wyre Moving More Priorities

#### What

To implement the recommendations of the Wyre Moving More framework and facilities strategy.

- Reducing health inequalities
- Addressing the prevention agenda
- Creating healthy and sustainable places
- Developing a long term strategy for sustainable leisure and wellbeing provision across Wyre.
- Delivering a programme to promote healthy choices and healthy lifestyles to keep people well.

#### Why

Providing the most appropriate built leisure facilities alongside a broad range of options to promote physical activity in response to the low rates of physical activity in Wyre and the large gap in healthy life expectancy experienced in parts of the borough.

#### Overlap and synergies with other framework initiatives

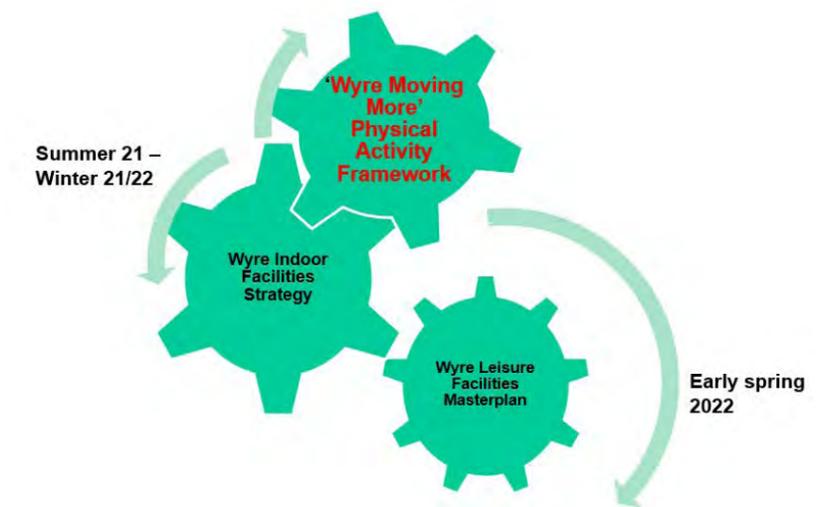
Developing and promoting initiatives for improved physical activity, together with the development of improved facilities and infrastructure has direct synergies with other initiatives around Community, Health/Wellbeing and, potentially Heritage and Culture.

#### How and Who

Network of partners with an interest in promoting physical activity in Wyre.

#### Timescale

Implementation of a programme in the medium term following the 2022 recommendations of the Wyre Moving More Strategy.



Graphic of Wyre Moving More Sequencing



Graphic of Wyre Moving More addressing 5 Big Issues



## 6. Health and Wellbeing

### Project No. 4: Promote opportunities for Social Prescribing

#### What

From the Kings Fund, an independent health care charity:

“Social prescribing, also sometimes known as community referral, is a means of enabling health professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. The referrals generally, but not exclusively, come from professionals working in primary care settings, for example, GPs or practice nurses.

Recognising that people’s health and wellbeing are determined mostly by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address people’s needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.

Schemes delivering social prescribing can involve a range of activities that are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.”

This Framework Intervention proposes that GGP works closely with local healthcare professionals to identify and support opportunities for community based social referrals.

#### Why

Social prescribing is part of the NHS’s plan to move to a model of more personalised care with an emphasis on measures to improve ‘wellness’ rather than treatments to cure ‘illness’. For Garstang it is an opportunity to promote health and well-being – one of GGP’s objectives. It can also help to meet further objectives around partnership working and community strength and social values.

#### How and Who

The initiative should be led by Wyre Extended rural practice network practice network in partnership with GGP and Wyre Council.

#### Timescale

Initial scoping of service and organisational structure should be an early action. The timescale for further development will be subject to funding availability.

#### Precedent

See the Local Government Association publication ‘Just What the Doctor Ordered’ – Social prescribing – a guide for local authorities – case studies.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/just-what-doctor-ordered--5c4.pdf>



Just what the doctor ordered front cover



## 7. Technology and Digital

### Project No. 1: Development of a ‘Smart Place Strategy’

#### What

A strategy for the coordinated use of existing and future technology to deliver better outcomes for the community whilst guiding policy and investment. The focus should not be on technology for its own sake but should instead start with the needs of communities and the conditions required to ensure a successful, thriving town and surrounding communities. It should cover a range of economic, social, and environmental outcomes to achieve a higher quality of life and a more sustainable town.

There is no single definition of ‘Smart’ but comprehensive Smart Place Strategy would likely include digital technology; transport; utilities; health and well-being; energy; sustainability; environment and employment. A comprehensive strategy may be best developed at a local authority or a wider area scale. A less comprehensive strategy may, however, be built up from a number of separately considered elements, over a town-wide scale, with links to key local settlements.

At either scale, preparation of the strategy will involve collaboration with a range of stakeholders.

#### Why

Wyre Council’s brief for this Development Framework calls for consideration of the digital agenda. Digital technology is already a central part of the planning, monitoring and delivery of most ‘place functions’ and so it is sensible to consider potential synergies within an overarching ‘Smart Place Strategy’.

Benefits of a strategy include:

- Adding weight and evidence to investment decisions.
- Adding weight and evidence for funding applications.
- Sending a positive signal to business and investors.
- Built-in potential for private sector collaboration and links Higher Education research.
- Efficiencies and resilience in the alignment of service delivery.
- Better governance.

Digital technology has quickly become a fundamental aspect of so much of our lives. It is no surprise that this project overlaps strongly with other Framework themes:

- High Street / Economy – leveraging the synergies of digital technology will be important in growing Garstang’s economy. Opportunities for digital enhancement of visitor/customer experience.
- Heritage & Culture – digital opportunities for marketing, booking, cultural exploration and interpretation.
- Transport & Linkage – e.g. real time transport information, parking/EV charging, strong links to transport management/control etc.
- Community – opportunities for local environmental monitoring and smart control, also individual property monitoring and control.
- Sustainability & Low Carbon – opportunities for environmental monitoring and control, enhances the potential for links to HE research.
- Health and Wellbeing – lots of opportunities for ‘digital first’ health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Education, Skills and Employment – Garstang must ensure that all age groups have access to the benefits of the digital economy.

#### How and Who

Political ‘buy-in’ and understanding of the benefits is important as the recommendations will change patterns of service delivery and budget allocations. The strategy must be able to operate over a number of different political cycles. For these reasons the Strategy should be championed by a well recognised, senior figure.

The strategy should be embedded within existing statutory frameworks in order to ensure the strategy’s implementation and funding. A public-private partnership will be important – plan for private sector collaboration.

#### Timescale

Commissioning of a strategy should be a short to medium-term goal: “short” for a geographically smaller, less comprehensive strategy - “medium” for a more comprehensive one.

#### Precedent

The Future Cities Catapult ‘Smart City Strategies – 2017 Global Review’ considers what ‘Smart’ means in relation to cities and places; it discusses how the concept is evolving (developing from a simple focus on digital technology); how different places have developed different types of smart strategies; how strategies should be put together; and how they should be implemented.



Front cover of the Smart Cities Strategy - Capapult Future Cities



## 7. Technology and Digital Project No. 2: Improving Digital Connectivity

### What

An increasing part of everyday life now depends upon the digital world. Access to information, commerce (including retail), homeworking and the delivery of services are all increasingly digital events. Good digital connectivity is fundamental and places that are not well connected will be left behind.

The proposal is that Garstang actively works to promote excellent connectivity within the town centre, but also in the surrounding villages, including early integration of 5G.

5G is the fifth-generation wireless technology providing super-fast data transfers with low latency i.e. the time between sending and receiving data. 5G speeds and capacity are impressive but its range is limited and so a dense network of transmitter/ receiver nodes is required for good coverage – hence significant new investment.

One route to improving connectivity may be to work with partners such as ‘Broadband for the Rural North – B4ARN’.

### Why

Good connectivity is important to underpin the economy generally, but also the digital delivery of essential services such as healthcare – this is significant in the context of the rural villages where physical access is sometimes an issue.

Being known as a place with good connectivity is an attraction for investment, new businesses and people looking for a location suited to new patterns of remote/blended working. Strong digital connection can help to overcome perceptions of weaker geographic connection.

This initiative has strong overlaps with other areas of the Framework:

- High Street / Economy – early adoption of 5G could be a significant attraction to higher value-added businesses
- Transport & Linkage – improved opportunities for real-time monitoring and network management
- Sustainability & Low Carbon – opportunities for environmental monitoring and control, enhances the potential for links to Higher Education research.
- Health and Wellbeing – lots of opportunities for ‘digital first’ health and wellbeing initiatives, including links to initiatives at the new senior living facility at Bowgreave Rise.

Other benefits include:

- Enables businesses to use the internet for online /contactless payments.
- Gives locals access to online training/education to help develop their skills & businesses.

### Precedent

Broadband for the Rural North (B4RN) is a non-profit community benefit society dedicated to installing high speed, fibre optic networks in rural communities.

<https://b4rn.org.uk/>

### How and Who

Improving connectivity, including 5G would will need investment to fund, install and maintain the network. Promotion of Garstang as a connected place will need a ‘champion’ (potentially from the GGP) with strong support from Lancashire County Council, Wyre Council, business, transport agencies and (ideally) Lancaster University as a potential research partner.

### Timescale

Project scoping and frames of reference could be an early action. Improving connectivity should be a mid-term goal, but with an earlier focus on Garstang Town Centre.





## 7. Technology and Digital Project No. 3: Town Centre Digital Support Hub

### What

A physical location dedicated to helping people understand, access, and use digital technology and information. This is a facility for all ages and can link to other groups and organisations from schools to OAPs. It can offer both training and provide access to digital services, potentially in partnership with organisations such as Citizens Advice.

This facility can also provide specific resources and support for business, address training needs around employment skills, and link to education priorities.

It is unlikely that this will be a stand-alone facility, but rather a part of, or space within, another – for example a community building, library, wider business support facility.

### Why

This directly supports GGP’s objective to be digitally connected and also those to provide opportunities for local people and be an attractive location for new models of flexible working.

This initiative recognises that ‘being on-line’ is becoming a necessity, but access is not universal or equal, often due to a lack of skills, equipment or connectivity.

The hub will provide digital access to, and support with, essential everyday functions - such as benefit applications, paying council tax and utility bills via the internet, and setting up an email address. It will provide training to ensure that all local businesses can access the full benefits of being digital, and that local people are digitally skilled – to the benefit of the wider town and villages. Local schools and colleges can use the hub to forge stronger relationships with the town – for example to deliver training packages specifically tailored to local need. The hub can also be a touch point for home workers where they can connect with peers and access support.

### How and Who

Led by a partnership of GGP, Lancashire County Council's Library Services and potentially Citizens Advice, with support from Myerscough College and local schools and businesses. This intervention must also be coordinated with the Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership - an initiative of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.



### Timescale

Whilst the initiative is about establishing a physical support hub, it need not be fixed to one place and so need not wait for other interventions to deliver a new space. i.e. it could initially operate from an existing space (e.g. community space, shop unit, library) and subsequently relocate. Short to mid-range intervention.

### Precedent

Fleetwood established a digital help centre within Fleetwood Market in 2018.

A new library has recently opened in Barnsley Town Centre incorporating a purpose built digital hub. This offers computer access, training, free wifi, charging, 3D printing, VR, coding, printing and scanning – all with support and advice.

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/libraries/find-a-library/library-at-the-lightbox/>



Image of Barnsley Library digital hub



## 8. Business and Economy

### Project No. 1: A “plan” for the land near Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall

#### What

The Wyre Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted February 2019) identifies major site allocations and development opportunities, the policies that apply to them and the council’s expectations of development on them in policy terms.

The plan identifies 32.5 hectares of land next to Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall as land for E(g), B2 and B8 employment (site SA7), although it also notes that the site is heavily constrained and therefore there is no certainty of its delivery. Amongst other things it also notes that “ Other non-retail commercial development will be acceptable if it is demonstrated that it would support delivery of B-class uses”; and “ the extension site is to be brought forward in line with a masterplan to be produced covering the whole of the site. The masterplan must be agreed by the local planning authority prior to the granting of planning permission for any part of the site.”

The recommendation is that the masterplan for the Catterall site is developed to align with the objectives of this Regeneration Framework - considering the opportunities that the site has to support Garstang's Vision and future direction.

#### Why

The Catterall site is approx. 2.5 miles south of Garstang town centre, along the B6430. It also enjoys direct frontage onto the A6. Garstang town centre is itself tightly constrained with few development site opportunities and, as noted in Section 2.4 of this report, employment sites directly connected to the town are at capacity whilst in market terms land at Catterall is seen as a contiguous part of Greater Garstang’s offer.

Appropriate development of this land would provide an opportunity for employment growth for many years and support Garstang’s wider economic development. It could also provide space for enterprises currently situated within the town to expand / relocate, potentially releasing land in the town centre for other uses.

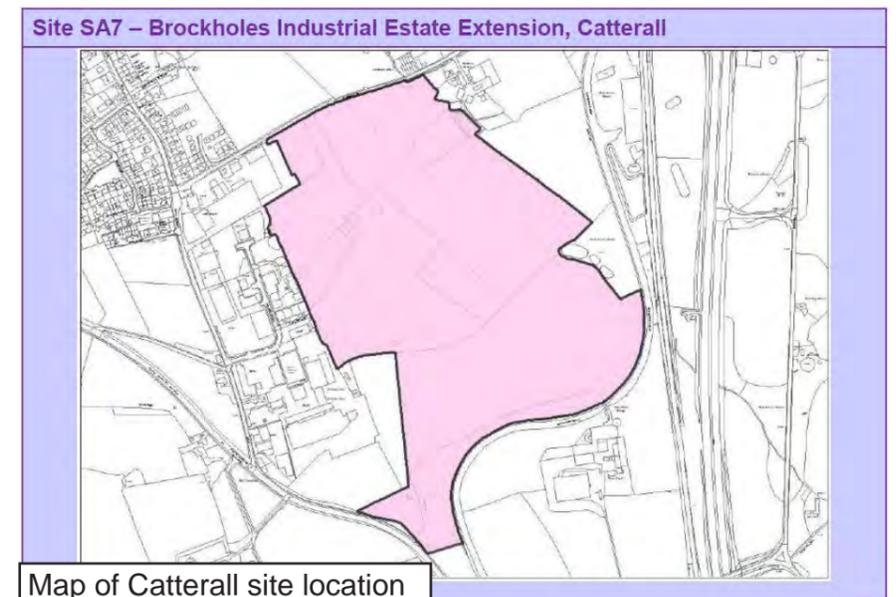
The opportunities that the site presents and the Council's policy ambitions for employment growth on it, supported by other appropriate commercial development, should be explored holistically with reference to wider Framework objectives.

#### How and Who

This will require a partnership of landowners to develop proposals for the site, working closely with Wyre Council. GGP should seek an influencing role, with the prospect of GGP support for an appropriate masterplan for the site.

#### Timescale

Initial discussions could happen quickly, subject to landowner interest. Development of a masterplan is a short to medium term activity, with development mid to long term and subject to the mitigation of site constraints, funding, planning approval etc.





## 8. Business and Economy

### Project No. 2: Support for key 3rd party projects

#### What

The recommendation is that GGP monitor development proposals and business initiatives in the Greater Garstang area to determine which are aligned with and can help to deliver the GGP's Vision and Objectives. Appropriate 3rd party projects should be considered for formal or informal support. There may also be opportunities for collaboration, or for 3rd party projects to directly deliver against GGP objectives – opportunities for community space, or social prescribing for example.

#### Why

This initiative directly addresses one of GGP's objectives to 'Develop an ethos of partnership working both within the town and between the town and wider stakeholder organisations.' It is an extension of that under the Community theme to 'Support Garstang Sports and Social Club's expansion plans' and seeks the benefits of similar synergies elsewhere.

#### How and Who

GGP review, with support from Wyre as a planning authority to provide a 'heads up' on initiatives of potential interest.

#### Timescale

Could begin quickly but will require a watching brief for the duration of the Framework.



## 9. Education, Skills and Employment

### Project No. 1: A digital forum to link schools, colleges and businesses

#### What

Local schools and colleges regularly 'reach out' to businesses in order that they can meet expectation for good career guidance set out in the Holman Report commissioned by Gatsby and adopted as statutory guidance by Government. At present this is on a somewhat 'ad hoc', individualised basis resulting in the same employers getting the same request multiple times from different education establishments, or employers with a specific offer / requirement finding it difficult to efficiently connect with the right school or college.

This intervention proposes the establishment of a connecting hub or forum that would act as a posting site and 'clearing house' – a broker between employers and education providers to streamline process and build relationships.

This could operate at a very local level to make connections within a specific geography – the businesses within Garstang and its surrounding villages for example, or it could operate at a borough wide level.

#### Why

This initiative would strengthen the relationship between employers and their potential labour pool to the benefit of both. It would also help to strengthen community connections and social values and promote an ethos of partnership – all GGP objectives.

At a wider level charitable foundation Gatsby notes that " Every young person needs high-quality career guidance to make informed decisions about their future. Good career guidance is a necessity for social mobility: those young people without significant social capital or home support to draw upon have the most to gain from high-quality career guidance."

Better connections between employers and young people help to meet a number of the eight Gatsby benchmarks for good career guidance:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

From an employer perspective engagement with the 'hub' would contribute to corporate social responsibility objectives as well as identifying and preparing the employees of tomorrow.

#### How and Who

This may be best led from within the local education community, but with support from Wyre and the backing of GGP which could act as the important bridge to local businesses. Setting this up over a wider geography would require more of a Wyre lead – possibly in conjunction with the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub (ref. the 'Lancashire Skills Pledge') and existing network group whose interests include Education and Skills should be consulted at an early stage.

Blackpool and Fylde College may be another key development partner with a track record of connecting business to skills initiatives.

#### Timescale

Initially the concept requires refinement and a sense check against IT requirements (including GDPR) but could move forward quickly.



Lancashire Skills Pledge Logo



Wyred Up logo



## 9. Education, Skills and Employment

### Project No. 2: Raise future aspirations of primary school children

#### What

The Raising Aspirations programme is aimed at pupils in years 5, 6 and 7 to help children build resilience, increase confidence, develop self-belief, and open them to the world of work. As part of the Raising Aspirations programme, schools hold a Career Carousel event, where businesses come into the classroom to answer pupil's questions and to show them what careers are available and how staff came to work there.

The programmes work as an 'out of box' fully resourced, careers-led learning programmes which allows teachers to receive the programme and start teaching the modules right away with no additional training required.

There are 12 lessons in the Raising Aspirations programme and each lesson takes one hour to deliver. As the programme is completely flexible, these can be delivered at a time to suit teachers and their class

#### Timescale

This intervention is already developed and operational across primary schools and can be rolled out in the short-term dependent upon funding.

#### Why

Children as young as seven make career decisions based on people they know. They also begin to form stereotypical opinions around certain careers. For some children, this can have a huge impact on their future aspirations, and they rule out certain careers before leaving primary school. The Raising Aspirations programme will aim to change that.

The Raising Aspiration programme believes that everyone has the right to do what they love and should be given every opportunity to succeed, so the programme provider worked with government bodies, the education sector and industry and business leaders to produce careers-led learning programmes that enable children and young people to discover their potential, build resilience, develop employability skills and explore the world of work.

The Raising Aspirations programme has been designed to support the national curriculum, with obvious links with upper key stage 2 through language and literacy skills, oracy skills, music, listening skills and teamwork. Other key areas of development are recognising and understanding qualities, skills, talents, and positive behaviours.

Ultimately this programme will increase skills and confidence within Garstang and the local labour market, benefitting its employers and economy.

#### How and Who

The Regenda Group are a group of companies across different sectors who deliver regeneration programmes to improve outcomes for people. They are Northwest Based with offices across Lancashire (Fleetwood), Merseyside, and Greater Manchester. Their businesses operate across the Housing and Construction sector, Care and Support, and Education, Training, and Careers.

One of their businesses is Positive Footprints Home - Positive Footprints who work with primary schools and businesses to inspire aspiration in young people across the UK.

The company develops personal development programmes to be delivered in schools with the aim of allowing children and young people to explore the world of work and raise their aspirations.

Since Positive Footprints began in 2012, 438 schools have delivered Positive Footprints learning programmes, to over 34,000 children and young people, enabling 171,320 encounters between businesses and young people. Businesses can get involved and attend career carousels as an easy way to make a difference to young people's lives. Businesses that become Aspiration Partners are free to choose which schools or areas they work with so that they can work in the communities where they think they will provide the most benefit. This is significant as young people who encounter four or more employers are 86% less likely to be Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

The Regenda Group launched its first ever Positive Footprints programme in FLEETWOOD, Lancashire which was recognised as a sustainable model of best practice at the National Career Development Institute Awards.

With the support of Wyre Council, other schools across Wyre already participate in the programme including Garstang Community Primary school and the aim is to offer this programme to all primaries in the borough, including greater Garstang.



Positive Footprints logo



## 9. Education, Skills and Employment

### Project No. 3: Garstang and Greater Garstang Local Business offer

#### What

This intervention seeks to create a Local Pledge made by Garstang and Greater Garstang business to support education, skills, and employment in their community

It is a directory of businesses who wish to commit as little or as much as they can to support schools, colleges, and the wider community to become employable in the future.

#### Why

- The aim is to help employers to give something back to help their community to prosper in the future by:
- Mentoring young people, inspiring young people to work for their business or inspire young people to become apprentices.
- Shaping and informing schools and colleges curriculum so that the future workforce is being trained with the skills and knowledge Garstang and greater Garstang businesses need
- Work with students on live projects, offer work placements, work experience and internships.

Business benefits of signing to the Pledge include:

- Build a future pipeline of talent
- Provides evidence of meeting social value outcomes for the business
- Opportunity for businesses to engage with their local community
- Personal development for employees by giving something back
- External validation of businesses Corporate Social Responsibility activity
- Positive publicity for your business

#### Timescale

This is a short term intervention to be led by the Greater Garstang partnership board theme leads for Education, skills and Employment.

#### How and Who

The Lancashire skills Hub have a ready-made framework for employers to pledge their commitment. The Garstang Directory will hold information of all local businesses which can be shared with local schools and colleges. Examples of business pledges include:



##### Give an hour

Volunteer an hour or more to inspire young people in schools and colleges in your local community. Your unique industry knowledge and experience can make a difference to the options a young person considers for their careers.



##### Be an Enterprise Adviser

Volunteer and get matched to a school or college, to support their Senior Leadership Team to create inspirational and meaningful encounters for young people within the world of work.



##### Work Experience and Industry Placements

Offer industry placements and other work experience opportunities to college-students.



##### Take on an Apprentice

End to end impartial advice and support to help you recruit an Apprentice or support existing staff to become an Apprentice, and make the Apprenticeship a success.



##### Become an Apprenticeship Ambassador

As either a current or former Apprentice, or manager of Apprentices, you will be supported to champion the benefits of Apprenticeships and market your Apprenticeship opportunities to future applicants.



##### Employ people who are out of work

Tailored training programmes based on your recruitment needs where the candidates put forward are already equipped with job specific skills required to excel in the role, saving time and money on recruiting new staff.



##### Upskilling your workforce

Funded bespoke support and training for your staff, with a flexible approach to delivery and a wide range of options to choose from.

# 6. Development Tool-Kit

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Design Principles

6.3 Implementation

## 6.1 Introduction

This Regeneration Framework has set out a high-level approach to the regeneration of Garstang Town Centre. Whilst the focus has been on the town centre the Framework recognises that the health of this narrowly defined area is inextricably linked to that of other areas around it and also to themes that are not limited to any particular area.

Wyre Council currently has no specific urban design or placemaking policy to guide and control Garstang Town Centre's regeneration in line with this Framework. Under the heading 'Design Principles' this section provides advice on creating an appropriate design policy.

This section also provides advice on organisational structures and partnerships which may be suitable to deliver the specific initiatives or 'projects' identified in this document, and also on an approach to the management of the delivery of the town centre regeneration.



National Design Guide front cover

## 6.2 Design Principles

### Why?

#### National importance

National level planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised in 2019) states that "The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make the development acceptable to communities". There is specific mention of the vitality of town centres and conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

The Government's 'National Design Guide' published in 2019 sets out 'ten characteristics' of good design and explains the relationship between the National Design Guide and local design guides. It identifies a series of built 'good practice examples' and references 29 other examples of good practice design guidance including:

- The Urban Design Compendium, Homes and Communities Agency, 2000.
- Home Quality Mark, BRE, 2018.
- HAPPI Principles, Housing Learning and Improvement Network.
- Manual for Streets, Department for Transport and Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007 (and vol. 2 2010).

In summary, good design matters to government and is embedded in planning policy.

A number of Design Guide front covers including Compendium for Design, Happi 4 and Manual for Streets



## Local importance

Being distinct i.e. identifying and celebrating local identity is a key criterion for successful towns. Most of Garstang's town centre is designated a Conservation Area which recognises the importance of its historic layout and buildings. Preserving and enhancing this design significance will be central to Garstang's renaissance.

## Economic importance

Good design has economic value. For example in 2018 IBI jointly funded a piece of work with KADA Research to assess the economic impact of public realm improvements that IBI designed for Kidderminster Town Centre. This referenced evidence from the UK and internationally which identifies significant economic benefits of public realm schemes. The report concluded an economic cost: benefit ratio for public realm investment of 1:7.6 over a 10 year period. This makes a compelling case that the right investment in public realm delivers strong, measurable economic returns.

## How?

Ensuring that development aligns with good design principles will require these to be defined (with specific reference to Garstang) and then set out and explained within a design policy document – a Garstang Town Centre Design Guide.

## Overall Structure

The National Design Guide (NDG) provides a structure that can be used for the content of local design guides and addresses issues that are important for design codes where these are applied to large scale development on single or multiple sites. It notes that "All local design guides and codes will need to set out a baseline understanding of the local context and an analysis of local character and identity. This may include (but not be limited to) the contribution made by the following:

- the relationship between the natural environment and built development;
- the typical patterns of built form that contribute positively to local character;
- the street pattern, their proportions and landscape features;
- the proportions of buildings framing spaces and streets;
- the local vernacular, other architecture and architectural features that contribute to local character."

The NDG then sets out 10 principles for a well-designed place, explaining each in detail.



Diagram from the National Design Guide - 10 principles for a well-designed place

## Define the design principles that are appropriate to Garstang

NDG sets out ten principles for a well-designed space but the starting point for the Garstang Town Centre Design Guide should be a more practically focussed set of principles that are of specific relevance to Garstang.

Development proposals should be measured against these principles and developers asked to explain how their proposals respond positively to each.

Many of the good practice guides referenced above contain their own checklists of good design and are a useful reference and starting point. An example for consideration is the list of 8 Elements of Form (i.e. the physical expression of urban design consisting of the relationships, shape and size of buildings, structures and spaces) contained in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's (CABE's) 'The Councillor's Guide to Urban Design'

# 1

## Urban structure

The essential diagram of a place showing:

- The relationship between new development and nature, land form and existing buildings
- The framework of routes and spaces that connect locally and more widely, and the way developments, routes, open spaces and precincts relate to one another

# 3

## Density and mix

The amount of development and the range of uses this influences, to include:

- The intensity of activity relative to a place's accessibility
- The place's vitality relative to the proximity and range of uses
- The development's viability

# 5

## Building type

- The size of the building floorplate its storey heights and means and location of access
- The relationship of the building to adjacent buildings and how it relates to external space at ground floor level
- The nature and extent of the building's setback at upper floors and roof treatment

# 7

## Details and materials

The appearance of the building in relation to:

- The art, craftsmanship, building techniques and detail of the various building components true to local context
- The texture, colour, pattern, durability and treatment of its materials
- Materials sourced from local and/or sustainable sources, including recycled materials where possible
- The lighting, signage and treatment of shopfronts, entrances and building security

# 2

## Urban grain

The nature and extent of the subdivision of the area into smaller development parcels showing:

- The pattern and scale of streets, blocks and plots
- The rhythm of building frontages along the street as a reflection of the plot subdivision

# 4

## Height and massing

The scale of a building in relation to:

- The arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings in relation to other buildings and spaces
- The size of parts of a building and its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person
- The impact on views, vistas and skylines

# 6

## Facade and interface

The relationship of the building to the street:

- The rhythm, pattern and harmony of its openings relative to its enclosure
- The nature of the setback, boundary treatment and its frontage condition at street level
- The architectural expression of its entrances, corners, roofscape and projections

# 8

## Streetscape and landscape

The design of route and spaces, their microclimate, ecology and biodiversity to include:

- Paving, planting and street furniture
- The integration of public art, lighting, signing and waymarkers
- The treatment of parks, play areas, natural features and recreation areas
- Consideration of long term management and maintenance issues

## **Embedding Good Design into Garstang**

In addition to the development of policy and good practice guidance to promote good design, other measures should be considered to ensure that a positive approach to good design and placemaking is embedded into the delivery of this Regeneration Framework.

These could include:

- Developing an integrated approach to design, planning function, construction and town centre management / maintenance. This may involve a different approach to the structuring of local authority teams and functions.
- Investing in design training for the members of the Town Centre Partnership and others who will be involved in the redelivery of the Framework – elected members and key officers for example. Different approaches and levels of time commitment for different groups should be considered. This need not be onerous or expensive.
- Encouraging the use of design advisors (possibly at key points in the process) and the use of design review panel input to key projects – PlacesMatter, the standing NW region design panel for example.
- Considering the establishment of a ‘Town Centre Design Panel’ as a sounding board for proposals and a consultee to the planning process. This could be a coordinating / collating body for the input of existing amenity and community groups.

### Implementation matrix

The table explains how the various projects could be developed with partners and how much investment and time is required for each project.

		The High Street			Heritage & Culture						Transport & Linkage		
		HS1: Pedestrian Priority along High Street	HS2: Public Realm Improvements	HS3: Cherestance Square	HC1: Develop shared brand narrative/values to guide interventions and collaboration	HC2: A Heritage Centre / Archive	HC3: Update the Market offer	HC4: Develop the town centre Food and Beverage offer	HC5: Develop an 'outdoors hub'	HC6: A signature arts events / review of events calendar	TL1: Promote active travel	TL2: A community led transport service that connects to the surrounding villages	TL3: Town Centre parking strategy
Priority - High / Medium / Low		H	H	M	M	M	H	H	M	M	H	H	H
Timescale / Planning - Short, Mid, Long		S	S	S	S-M	S-M	S	S	M	S-M	S-M	S-M	S-M
Timescale Implementation - Short, Mid, Long		M-L	S-L	M	S-M	M	M	S-M	M-L	S-M	S-L	M-L	M
Delivery Partnership	LA = Local authority LCC = Lancashire County Council GGP = Greater Garstang Partnership C = Community H = Health authority T = Transport authority U = University	LCC*	GGP	GGP*	GGP*	A*	B*	B*	D*	GGP*	LA*	GGP*	LA*
	B = Business A = Amenity Group HA = Housing Association D = Developer Lead*	LA T B A	LA* LCC T A	B	B C LA	GGP	GGP LA	GGP LA	GGP LA	LA B	LCC GGP	LA LCC C	LCC GGP
Potential Funding	CGF = Central Government Funding LA = Local Authority LCC = Lancashire County Council	CGF/LA/LCC	CGF/LA	Private/LA	LA	Private/LA	Private/GGP	Private	Private	LA/Private	LCC/CGF	Private/LA	LA
Key Next Steps		Feasibility Assessment	Scoping & Concept	Dialogue with stakeholder, Scoping & concept	Dialogue with stakeholder, Develop brief	Clarify Scope & concept, Feasibility Assessment	Dialogue with stakeholder, Develop concept	Dialogue with Stakeholders, Develop Action Plan	Develop concept of market the opportunity	Establish a working group, develop concept	Establish working group, Develop action plan	Establish a working group, scope options	Scope study, Develop Brief

Community			Sustainability & Low Carbon				Health & Wellbeing				Technology & Digital			Business & Economy		Education, Skills and Employment		
Dialogue with stakeholders, Scoping of concept	CCF/LA	GGP* LCC LA C	M-L	S-M	M	M	S-M	M-L	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M
Dialogue with GSSC		GGP* C	S-M	S	M	M	S	M-L	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Develop action plan	CGF/LA	GGP* C B	M	M	M	M	M-L	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Dialogue with Stakeholders, Action plan	CGF/LA	GGP* LA	M-L	M	M	M-L	M-L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Scope study, Develop brief	LA	LA*	M-L	S-M	M	M	M-L	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Scope study, Develop brief	LCC/LA	LA* LCC B	M-L	S-M	M	M	M-L	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Dialogue with stakeholders, Develop concept	CGF/LA	GGP* C B	M-L	S	M	M	M-L	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Develop action plan	H/LA	H* LA GGP	S-M	S	M	M	S-M	M-L	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish working group, Scope opportunities, Develop action plan	H/CGF/LA	GGP* H C LA	M-L	S-M	M	M	M-L	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish action plan	CGF/LA	LA* C H	S-M	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Develop action plan		H* GGP LA	M	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Scope study, Develop brief	LA	LA*	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Dialogue with stakeholders, Develop action plan	Private	GGP* B LA	H	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Dialogue with stakeholders, Scoping of feasibility assessment	LCC	GGP* LCC C	H	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Scope study, Develop brief	LA	LA* GGP LA	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Monitor & respond as necessary		GGP* LA	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish working group. Scope & action plan	LA	C* GGP LA	H	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Dialogue with stakeholders inc. Positive Footprints	Private/LA	HA* LA	H	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	
Establish a working group, Dialogue with stakeholders	Private	B* GGP	H	S-M	M	M	S-M	M	M	M	M	S-M	M	M-L	S-M	M	S-M	

## 6.3 Implementation

The Implementation Matrix overleaf is designed to act as a point of reference and a call to action for all organisations, both public and private sector, involved in the future development of Garstang Town Centre. The identified interventions form an interlinked package of development and improvement actions.

For each intervention, the Implementation Matrix identifies the lead organisation responsible for its delivery, along with other organisations that will be involved, so that it is clear who is responsible for driving forward each project and who will work alongside them.

The Implementation Matrix also identifies potential sources of funding for the investments proposed and the likely timescales for implementation. Clearly, not every intervention will be delivered in the near term. Several interventions face complex challenges in terms of ownership, viability, funding and other issues. The timescales set out in the Implementation Plan take account of these challenges in identifying which projects are likely to be delivered in the short, medium- and long-term periods.

Similarly, given constraints on the availability of funding, there is a need to prioritise the interventions identified through the framework process. The Implementation Matrix therefore also seeks to identify those projects that are most critical to the delivery of Garstang's vision and strategic objectives. The purpose of this is to assist when decisions on how to allocate resources are being made, so that the available resources can be channelled into projects that will have the greatest impact and make the greatest contribution to the delivery of the framework vision.

### Managing Implementation

The means of delivering and managing the framework interventions will require a variety of approaches, depending upon their nature. These are likely to include:

- Delivery led by the Greater Garstang Partnership – for example an initiative to develop a shared brand narrative.
- Delivery through an existing local organisation – for example initiatives to promote social prescribing might be best led by the existing 'Wyre Rural Extended' practice network.
- Delivery by Wyre Council (and partner organisations if necessary) – for example in developing a 'low carbon strategy', potentially coordinated at a borough wide level.
- Formulation of bespoke delivery bodies/partnerships (as opposed to agencies that already exist) – an example here could be the establishment of a Community Energy Trust.
- Collaboration with private owners of land/property – for example plans for improvements around Cherestanc Square.
- Delivery that could be guided by design or development briefs for specific, discrete sites – e.g. land near Brockholes Industrial Estate at Catterall.

### Town Centre Management

This Framework focusses on the delivery of physical interventions and social programmes to help Garstang and its surrounding areas to thrive, but good management of places and spaces is also important. The promotion and development of UK town centres and the management of their 'visions' and future development can be delivered through a variety of structures – both formal and informal. Historically these have often been voluntary in nature (GGP and Garstang and District Chamber of Trade for example) but other, arrangements are available, and options should be periodically reviewed. Town centre management structures include:

#### Town teams / partnerships

Informal grouping of organisations (sometimes individuals) representing different private and public sector interest – for example Local Authorities, major retailers, trade associations, amenity groups and community groups. They are often run on a voluntary basis, with/without a dedicated budget.

#### Town Centre Management Companies

These tend to be more formal versions of the above, constitutes as legal entities with a defined remit and business plan and usually employing dedicated staff overseen by an advisory board or management group. Long term continuity of funding can be an issue, as is "free riding" of non-contributor organisations.

## **Business Improvement District companies**

A legally constituted body that comes into being as the result of a ballot of local businesses choosing to constitute a BID with a specific remit and business plan for a fixed period. Funding is through a levy on top of business rates within a defined area (eg town centre). BIDs are often seen as the lead structure for place management/marketing and often destination management/marketing. Where a destination marketing lead already exists (e.g. Visit Wyre) the close working of the two organisations is important.

Successful BIDs require greater engagement with business than the previous structures but have a more secure funding base. At the end of their fixed term they can renew their remit through a further ballot of businesses. The majority are set up through the actions of property occupiers to improve the attractiveness for business of a specific location. Though retail is the core business base the more successful ones are inclusive of all business types (eg tourism/leisure) and are networked with other important groups such as residents' groups, housing associations, community groups etc.

## **Case study: Altrincham – from partnership to BID**

Altrincham in Cheshire is seen as a successful model of town centre regeneration. In 2010 the town faced vacancy rates of 30% - amongst the worst in the country, yet in 2018 won the 'Great British High Street Award'. This turn around was started by the establishment of a partnership of public and private sector 'Altrincham Forward' initiated and supported by the local authority. This legally constituted body was initially a forum for landlord and tenant engagement leading to small but significant 'grass roots' improvements. The partnership was able to bid for funding through which it developed an action plan for the regeneration of the town centre beginning with the remodelling of its market offer and environmental improvements around it.

Other initiatives included Town Centre Loans – Trafford Council set up an initiative where businesses could borrow up to £20,000 to set up in Altrincham. The loan could be applied for by anyone who will bring a vacant ground floor premises back into use. Since 2013, in excess of 20 loans have been awarded in Altrincham, to the value of several hundred thousand pounds.

In 2015 Altrincham Forward was dissolved and a town centre BID set up – "Altrincham Unlimited" with a 5 year remit and professional staff including a BID Business Manager. This was subsequently re-balloted and renewed in 2020.