Poulton Regeneration Framework - FINAL VERSION Accessible Version

Submitted To Wyre Council

By IBI Group

Tram

Train

Motorways & A roads

B Roads

Morecambe Bay

Irish Sea

Furness

Morcambe

Heysham

Lancaster

Halton

A683

Bailrigg

M6

Fleetwood

Knott End-on-Sea

Piling

Stake Pool

Cabus

Garstang

Nateby

Catterall

Cleveleys

Hambleton

St Michael's on Wyre

Bilsborrow

M6

Bispham

Poulton-le-Fylde

Great Eccleston

A585

Elswick

Barton

Normoss

Inskip

Lewth

Staining

Catforth

Woodplumpton

Broughton

Blackpool

Weeton

South Shore

Kirkham & Wesham

Clifton

Fulwood

Wrea Green

Pres

Lytham St Annes

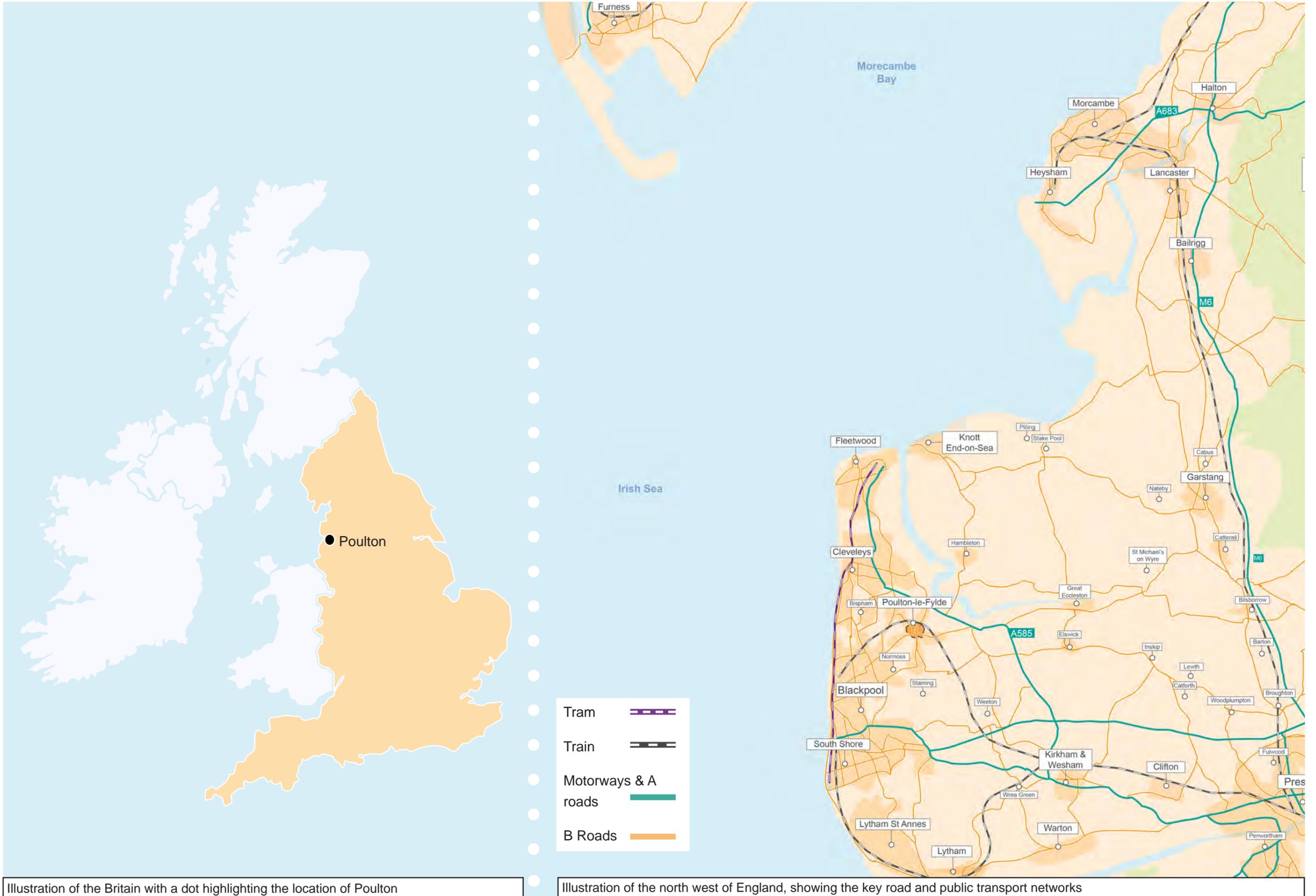Warton

Penwortham

Lytham

Poulton

Illustration of the Britain with a dot highlighting the location of Poulton

Illustration of the north west of England, showing the key road and public transport networks

Contents

Executive Summary

This framework is a guide to the development of Poulton Town Centre over the next 10 – 15 years and will commence in the short term. It is the culmination of a process of public and stakeholder engagement, baseline context review, and the subsequent development and refinement of The Vision, objectives, and project interventions.

The overarching objective of the study is to assess how Poulton can sustain being a thriving town centre. Plus, how to best support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity. By doing this, improve quality of life for the residents, as well as productivity of local businesses.

This report evaluates the social, economic, and spatial context of the town centre before reviewing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It establishes a future vision and a set of guiding objectives.

Vision Statement

"We are Poulton. We are a contemporary shopping experience and a thriving evening economy with a strong community spirit. We have a vibrant calendar of events giving us a distinctive identity as a prosperous market Town."

Wyre Council's objectives for the town centre are:

1. To deliver high-quality public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.

2. Make Poulton a sustainable, low-carbon town - aiming for best practice solutions to tackle energy and sustainability.

3. Encourage greater activity and events during the daytime and evening.

4. Build on Poulton's localism, enhancing its current independent retail offer.

5. Actively manage and programme Poulton's Town Centre spaces and places.

6. Promote Poulton's strong community and local heritage.

A total of 17 'interventions' are recommended – these are the projects or actions that must be undertaken to secure "Poulton's" future. These relate specifically to the Town centre, but others are not place specific. These are practical and realistic measures that are grouped under eight theme headings, each of them is a necessary area of focus for a healthy and economically sustainable place.

Findings

Poulton Town Centre is already thriving 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 the weekend/evening offers keeping in step or exceeding with competition in other similar places?

There are high street and transport issues to address, and a range of non-urgent issues, yet still important. These will require attention if Poulton is to ensure a thriving future.

Poulton must define its future by finding the right balance of changes that will meet the needs of residents, local businesses, and visitors. The key word is 'balance' as "Poulton's" vision for the future must carry broad local support.

This Framework has been commissioned at what appears to be an opportune moment for Poulton to assess its future. The results of the Covid-19 pandemic have fundamentally changed the 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 Poulton Town Centre Regeneration Framework represents an opportunity to undertake this 'post-pandemic reset' in a 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.

Addressing 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. 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 Poulton to consider its response.

Town Centre Recommendations

With specific regard to the town centre, Poulton must:

- Define a unique and attractive offer as a market town, building on its unique heritage and cultural identity, and enhance its built environment in the process of exploring ways to position Poulton as an exemplar tourist and retail town.

- Improve the high street environment and link this to wider strategies, improving the pedestrian experience, making it inclusive for all, and integrating new market offers.

- Develop an improved food and drink offer and a vibrant evening economy.

- Celebrate and promote the town's location, making 'localism' an integral part of the offer, and at the same time promote Poulton as outward-facing and engaged with regional/national issues, strategies, and partnerships.

- Explore and address issues of strategic connectivity, both as active travel options and improvements to its existing road infrastructure.

- Embrace the prospects 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 future development beyond the town centre boundary that meet the framework objectives.

- Put in place appropriate structures and resources to ensure that the regenerating town centre is actively managed and promoted. Including more programming of places and spaces, and an increased emphasis on value over volume.

- Improve the daytime offer, by providing activities to attract both locals and visitors and to increase dwell time and spend.

Localism & The Sense of Belonging

Localism is about giving more control and a say to the people of Poulton, to local groups or individuals who would help Poulton thrive. Importantly, it is about a place becoming the best version of itself, with distinct local markets and events, strong social connections, and local support.

The sense of belonging is about feeling at home within the town centre, feeling at ease and confident to move, spend, and speak. A common issue in other towns can be isolated to the clone town affect, as every other place feels and has the same shops and high street. Breaking this pattern involves both the community and local authority working together. The framework provides interventions that tackle community issues and provides a structure that allows local groups to influence Poulton's future.

The framework objectives also aim to give community groups and leaders a chance to influence and shape the town centre. It can mean influencing what happens to key buildings and what local events should be put on, and improving community support. Overall, this enables greater social interaction, providing opportunities for people to meet and connect.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Brief

1.1 Introduction

This report summarises activities and findings of the baseline work for the Poulton Town Centre Regeneration Framework. It is prepared by Arcadis IBI Group and includes input from BE Group, as well as members of the Poulton Partnership Board and officers from Wyre Council.

The Vision statement and Objectives are for consideration and includes an initial list of town centre 'Interventions' or projects and identifies some potential opportunity sites - all for discussion.

Images of the consultants logos (IBI Group and BEGroup respectively)

Key points from the Wyre Council Brief

Defines a strategic approach to the regeneration of Poulton Town Centre and identifies a series of project opportunities that support this.

- Establishes a 'baseline' understanding of Poulton Town Centre, including review of previous relevant reports and policies. It provides a 'pen pic' summary of Poulton from a social and economic perspective.

- Review contextual issues and extant town centre initiatives, including a wide-ranging spatial review.

- Summarises a process of public and stakeholder consultation before identifying key issues/opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses.

- Identifies a vision for the future development of Poulton, defines a set of strategic objectives, and a high-level approach to meeting these.

- Analysis and recommendations are set out within a framework in eight overlapping 'themes' i.e., areas of interest. Under each theme, the report identifies a number of 'interventions' such as projects or action items.

- Also discusses the management of the Regeneration Framework process and concludes with a summary delivery 'tool kit'.

1.2 The Brief

Wyre Council's brief for three town centre regeneration frameworks including this one, called for the creation of bespoke strategies to help kickstart post-Covid-19 recovery and guide Poulton for the next fifteen years and beyond. Parallel studies for Cleveleys and Garstang 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 the Poulton's potential to stimulate investor confidence and guide the town's economic future.

The overarching aim is to assess how Poulton Town Centre can sustain and grow itself and how best to support the delivery of economic growth and prosperity in the town. By doing this, drive improvement in the quality of life of our residents and productivity of businesses, now and into the future.

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

2. Understanding Poulton Town Centre

2.1 Poulton Summary Description

2.2 High Level Regeneration Context

2.3 Summary Baseline Analysis

2.4 Consultation

2.5 Summary of Key Issues - Strengths and Weaknesses

2.1 Poulton Summary Description

Poulton is a significant settlement that lies close to the middle of the Fylde Coast Peninsula. It is bounded by the Wyre Estuary to the north-east, Blackpool to the west, and the borough of Fylde to the south and east. The town centre has a Grade II* listed Church of St Chad at its heart. As well as an historic core, the town consists of a large area of post-war housing, with commercial uses largely confined to peripheral industrial estates.

According to the 2021 Census, Poulton contains some 16.7% of the borough's dwellings, the majority of which are 3-bed (44.1%) with a relatively low level of 4 or more bed properties (22.6%). At 10.7%, Poulton contains a relatively high number of flats compared to most settlements. The number of dwellings increased by some 9.9% between 2011 and 2021.

Poulton is the third most populous settlement (18,567) in Wyre, accounting for 17% of the borough's total. Between the 2011 and 2021 Census, there has been a 4% increase in the number of households. The population is slightly younger than the borough average, with 36.2% aged over 60, compared to 36.5% for Wyre. The proportion of younger people (aged 0-19) is relatively low at 18.4% compared to the borough figure of 19.7%. There is, however, a greater proportion of the economically active population (aged 16-74) in Poulton (55.4%) than in Wyre (53.3%).

Illustration of the Wyre borough showing the locations of other town centres with key road and public transport networks
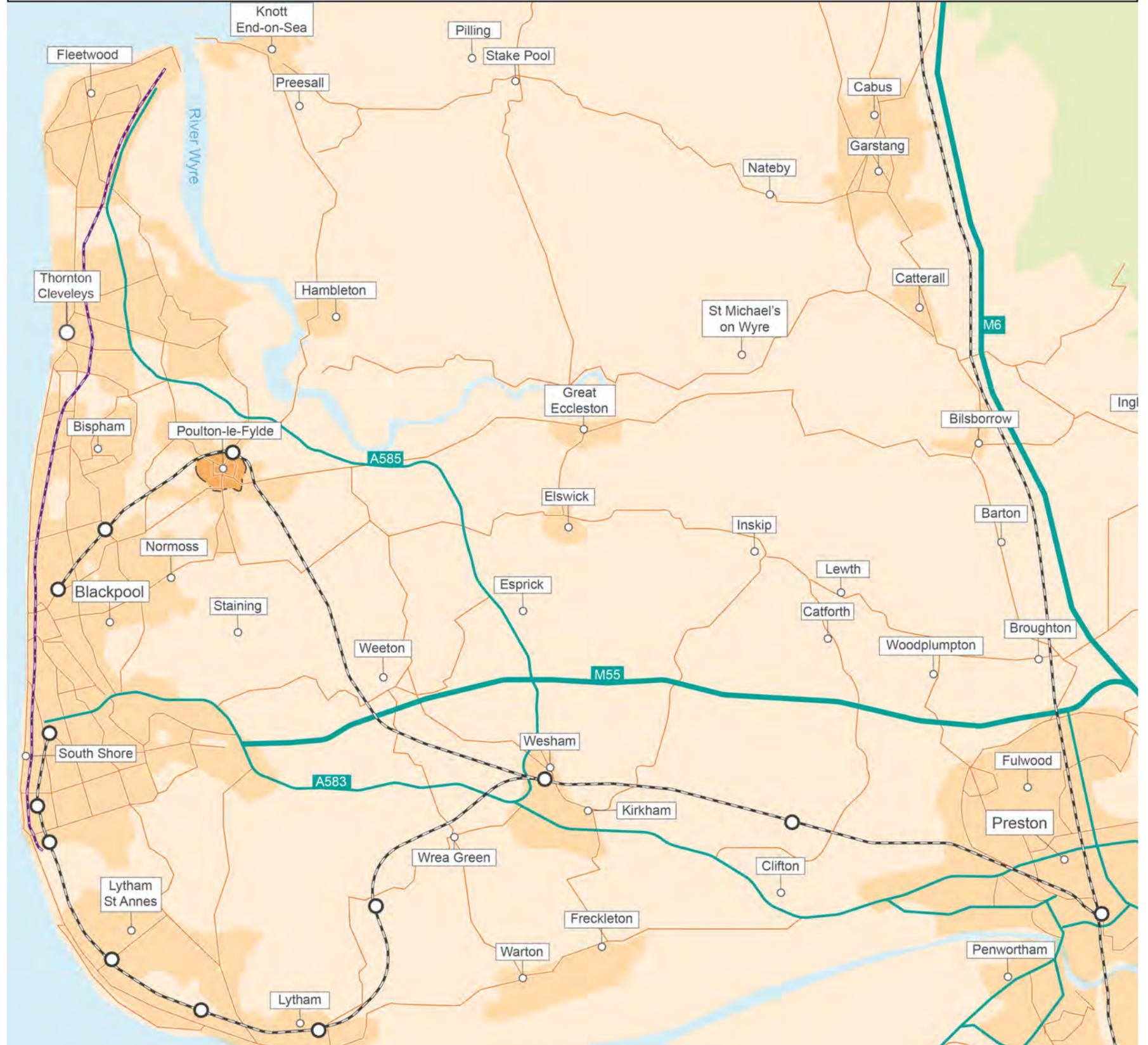
Key   Motorway/ A roads   B Roads   Tram Network   Train Network

The town is a key employment area within the borough, hosting some 5,000 jobs. The settlement contains two main commercial areas; the largest being the 35ha Poulton Industrial Estate, located on the eastern edge of the town, and Robson Way Industrial Estate located on its western edge on the boundary with Blackpool (3.6ha is located within Wyre). Both estates are popular and provide a range of units. Other major employers include those in the education, local government, and retail sectors.

Poulton demonstrates the greatest level of connectivity for bus users in the borough. It is the only Wyre settlement that hosts a train station which provides a regular connection to Blackpool (to the west) and Manchester via Preston (to the east). There are more limited direct services to Liverpool, Leeds, York, and London.

The A586 provides the main connection out to the wider sub-region and beyond, giving direct access to the M55, via the A585, and also to the A6 in the east of the borough, although there are notable "pinch-points" in the network that are currently congestion hotspots.

Poulton Town Centre

Generally, Poulton Town Centre has a strong convenience goods sector, benefiting from Booths and Aldi along with independent stores. However, the comparison goods offer is more limited. The service sector is strong, benefiting from a large range of restaurants, cafés, and bars alongside other professional services, and the weekly market is popular for selling a range of goods. However, all banks have closed and the expansion of the evening and night-time economy has been detrimental to footfall in parts of the town during traditional opening hours (9-5). Vacancy rates are also starting to increase and currently stand at 7% (Springboard July 2020).

Generally, the public realm and pedestrianised area are positive and provide ample opportunities for the weekly market. The centre has a number of attractive and historical buildings that are architectural significant and a strong anchor for visitors.

Image of the Church of St Chad facing West

Image of a local food store

Image of bus stops outside Booths facing West

Image of Market Place facing North
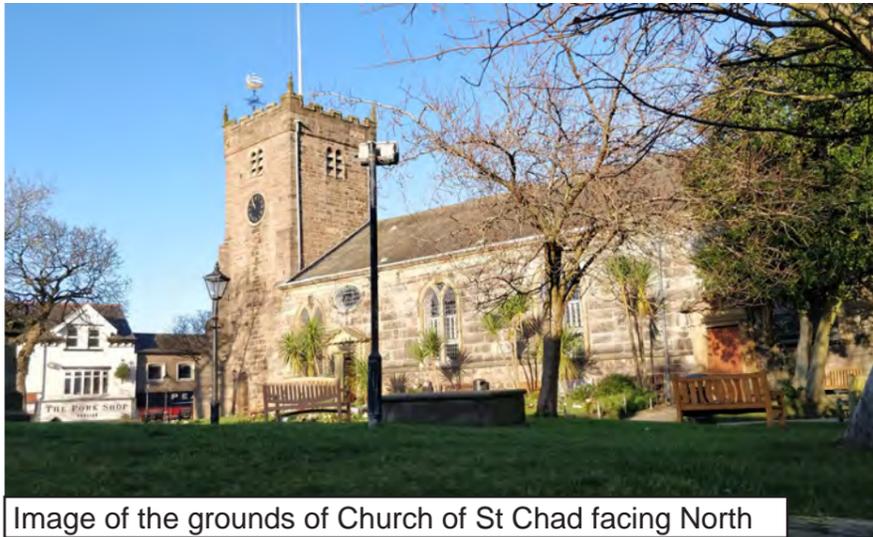
Image of a bus stop along Ball Street, facing South

Image of the grounds of Church of St Chad facing North

Image of the 'Thatched House' facing South

Town Centre Boundary

Illustration of the Town Centre Designation from Wyre Local Plan

2.2 High Level Regeneration Context

Poulton'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. 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 the 10 to 15 year time frame of the Framework and so Poulton's community groups and Wyre Council will need to keep this under review so that Poulton can respond to be best positioned for new opportunities.

Northern Powerhouse

The 'top line' regeneration context remains the Northern Powerhouse – a collective 'brand' grouped under 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 a 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 reshape 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. Poulton must remember that connectivity is not just physical but also digital and 'thematic' (i.e., clusters or corridors of economic investment or complementary economic activity).

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 move 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-19 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 – i.e., the cancellation of the cancellation of the HS2 Manchester link has opened a conversation around government commitments to major projects. The funds will now focus on local lines enhancing connectivity between towns and, suburbs and cities. From the perspective of Poulton, future funding and investment opportunities should be monitored to improve its existing transport issues.

2.3 Summary Baseline Analysis

High Street Retail Issues

Poulton is defined by its shopping centre and historic core. Whilst, as noted later in this report, the town centre is performing well, the general challenges in retail should be acknowledged so that any arising negative impacts can be recognised early and mitigated. These include:

- **The growth of online shopping.** The Office of National Statistics notes that online purchases accounted for 25% of retail sales in March 2023 – the Covid-19 pandemic increased this percentage, which has continued to stay high post lockdown. 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 Poulton has only a 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 Poulton, these retail formats can be found in places like Blackpool.

- **Business rates.** The British Retail Consortium wrote that retail sales will grow between 2.3% to 3.5% in 2023. As the recent year has seen low sales growth, which remains below inflation. With the energy costs expected to rise by £7.5 billion, this put additional pressure on businesses. However, consumer confidence and sales growth are expected to improve in the second quarter of 2023.

- **Changes in consumer behaviour.** The article by Forbes 'How will consumer behaviour change in 2023' suggests that despite the doom and gloom of economic uncertainty, people will continue to spend. It mentions that consumers gravitate towards a blended experience, combining digital fluidity with old-fashioned familiarity.

- **The Covid-19 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 (i.e., 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 daily. The pandemic has also placed a premium on outdoor spaces associated with retail and leisure retail – Poulton must respond to this where it can.

- **Cost of Living Crisis.** Businesses have felt the impact of increasing prices for energy, food, petrol, and other essential items. The crisis is a huge risk to independent stores, but recent data shows that smaller businesses are reinventing the high street with more openings than closures. With more favourable lease prices and terms when the retail property sector dealt with the collapse of so many chains, Poulton will need a series of measures to support its many independents stores and improve its consumer confidence as this crisis also directly affects its residents and visitors.

Market Assessment

The Market Assessment is to be used to inform the development of a regeneration framework for the town centre through identifying potential market opportunities. The assessment will be used as part of Wyre Council's Town Centre Regeneration Framework study.

- The report considers the local property market for retail, residential, leisure, office, industrial, and food and drink use. This assessment includes:

- 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 premises type.

Poulton is a town located slightly inland from the Fylde coast, performing a variety of different roles to the surrounding population. The town is located just off the A585 and is within the wider Blackpool/Wyre urban settlement corridor. Its proximity to Blackpool means that its commercial uses would be secondary to that offered in the larger Blackpool Town Centre, with residents using higher-order facilities and recreation. Poulton's position is providing localised services and facilities.

The Poulton Town Centre has been reviewed from a property market perspective as input into the broader assessment of Poulton. This has been based upon a detailed inspection of the town centre, supported by analysis of available commercial data on the performance of Poulton.

Retail Market

The current retail property market in Poulton is analysed in this chapter based on a critique of recorded information on commercial property transactions concluded in the area, inspection of the town centre, a review of currently marketed commercial property, and discussions with locally active property agents.

The Poulton retail market is performing well, particularly in the context of the considerable pressures facing the high street at the national level (Covid-19 pandemic, high levels of competition, on-line retail). The strength of the retail sector is its good array of independent, local operators, complemented by the key anchor branded supermarkets, Booths and Aldi, which drive the day-to-day footfall. It is noted that the volume of retail transactions has been lower in recent years, consistent with wider UK trends, which suggests some constraints in the market, though with retail vacancies remaining moderately low, the centre's retail function is still operating well.

The town centre benefits from it serving a relative affluent catchment, with higher-than-average levels of disposable income. This supports the retail function of the centre. The Poulton Town Centre has a clear retail function and point of difference to the nearby Blackpool Town Centre, thereby not being overly impacted by being in the shadow of the larger centre. Poulton does not have a significant comparison or destination shopping function that is provided by Blackpool, rather its focus on convenience and local, independent shops, providing a market niche.

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.

- Poulton historically is an old market town, initially hosting a cattle market.

- The town centre is very desirable for retail businesses. When a retail unit comes available there tends to be plenty of bidders, with the value often exceeding real value due to desirability.

- This is reflected in the rents achieved, with units in zone A of the Teanlowe Centre reaching up to £45/sqft, while units in the Square can achieve around £30/sqft.

- The Teanlowe Centre has seen investment in it over the last decade which has helped to maintain good occupancy levels.

- The town centre is in a very up-market area and benefits from serving this affluent catchment.

- The town centre is dominated by small independent retailers with very few national operators. The fact that many of the retail units are small means that they are affordable to independent retailers.

- At the time of writing, there is one retail unit available in the Teanlowe Centre, with number 9 formerly being a Sayers available for £32,000 per annum.

Key Themes and Implications for Town Centre Development Framework

- The Poulton centre is performing its retail function well. Anchored by Booths and Aldi, and supported by a range of independent retailers, the retail mix is well-positioned for Poulton's function as a local grocery and convenience centre.

- It is noted that the centre has a relatively high reliance on charity shops and beauty outlets.

- Vacancy levels are low in the town centre, and it has performed well during the pandemic and stresses on the retail sector.

- Higher-order retail functions are provided in Blackpool, and while Poulton is in the shadow of this larger centre, their differing functions mean that Poulton is not being unduly impacted by the relative proximity of Blackpool.

- Development of any further retail is likely to only 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.

- 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 shopping by consumers and less reliance on high street retailers.

Office Market

The office market in Poulton is small and is evenly split between the town centre and Poulton Industrial Estate. The town centre's offices are largely consumer facing or located above retail units, providing basic office space. The consumer-facing offices play an important role in attracting footfall to the town centre as the solid range of professional services provided in Poulton include legal, financial, and property requirements.

Wyre Council have their Civic Centre around 300 metres north of the town centre and have traditionally been one of the largest employers in and around the centre. However, employment in these buildings has shrunk over recent years.

Poulton has also seen a small number of larger office units transacted (>1,000 sqm), reflecting its more central location along the Fylde Coast, relative to other locations in Wyre.

However, overall demand for office stock is for small units driven by local SME requirements. The larger occupiers are either public sector or community services (i.e., Wyre Borough Council, Seniors North West).

Comments from Agents

- Poulton's population generally commute out of the area for work, especially for office-based jobs, with very few living and working there.

- The largest employer in the town centre have traditionally been Wyre Council, though its workforce has decreased in recent years. Poulton is not known particularly for its office market; business parks such as the Whitehills Business Park near Blackpool offer strong competition as they have the advantage of being near to the M55.

- There are a few small professional firms in Poulton, 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.

Key Themes and Implications for Town Centre Development Framework

- The office market is very small, both in terms of transaction volumes and demand for spaces.

- The rent levels are modest and would not be at a level to make an investment into new office stock attractive.

- A small number of larger units are present in Poulton, occupied by public sector or community organisations. It is unlikely that further requirements for such occupiers would emerge in the local market, with opportunities in Blackpool (Whitehills Business Park, Blackpool Town Centre, Blackpool Airport EZ) likely to provide for larger requirements.

- The presence of small, consumer-facing office units in the town centre provide for local SME uses such as legal services, accountants, or property services. These should continue to be supported in the town centre.

- The former police station is unlikely to return to an office use.

- It is unlikely to be a market demand for the development of new office space in Poulton Town Centre.

Leisure, Food and Drink, Hotel Market

The food and drink market in Poulton is strong, especially given the size of the town centre. There is a strong presence of cafés to service daytime visitors, while it also has a number of bars and restaurants to create an active evening economy.

Overnight accommodation is largely made up of guest houses, without any hotels present. Breck Apartments provides the main supply of overnight accommodation in the town, offering 12 luxury self-catered apartments. The nearest hotels are found in Blackpool where there is a large variety of hotels and B&Bs available. Consequently, visitors to Poulton will likely stay the night in Blackpool and travel into Poulton. The food and drink provision appear to be primarily serving a residential clientele, rather than a visitor market.

In terms of sports leisure outlets, these facilities are not located in the Poulton Town Centre. Figure 4 shows the options available around Poulton. Three gyms are located within Poulton Industrial Estate – The Hard Knocks Gym, Fortitude Fitness and Gym. Meanwhile to the east of the town, Poulton Karate Academy can be found, while to the north is YMCA Poulton, which includes a gym and a swimming pool. Fortitude Fitness is home to Blackpool Gymnastics Club.

Map of Poulton Leisure facilities, Google Maps 2022

Comments from Agents

- Poulton has an active daytime and evening economy for food and drink. There are lots of bars and restaurants with the main concentration being in the northern area of town.

- This makes Poulton a popular destination for residents of the Fylde coast, bringing in visitors from further afield than other uses (i.e., retail) within the town centre.

Key Themes and Implications for Town Centre Development Framework

- The food and drink sector is a key strength of the town centre, adding to its diversity and vibrancy. This sector should continue to be supported through the framework process.

- Proposals for further food and drink opportunities such as the redevelopment of the former police station should be supported to reuse underutilised buildings.

- The food and drink sector, particularly the evening economy, should be supported through appropriate all-hour transport links, placemaking that supports safe spaces, and opportunities to diversify the offer through events, festivals, etc.

- It is unlikely that a hotel development opportunity would be forthcoming in Poulton, with a market preference for Blackpool and other coastal locations.

- There is an appropriate level of gym facilities for the Poulton community within the wider town, though opportunities to provide in-centre gym facilities could be supported to add to the diversity of uses in the town centre.

Industrial Market

The industrial market in Poulton is based around the Industrial Estate approximately 2 kilometres east of the town centre. It has seen more activity and floorspace transacted than both Garstang and Cleveleys over the past decade.

The uses are local to Poulton and the connections to the highways network. The industrial estate is 5.5 kilometres from the nearest motorway junction, off the M55, and consequently industrial businesses that are reliant on excellent motorways access would not consider Poulton as a business location.

Access to Poulton's Industrial Estate is likely to be improved in the future with the construction of a new bypass, stretching from Windy Harbour to Skippool that will include a Poulton junction, however the problem of being so far away from the motorway will remain. Therefore, the function of the Industrial Estate would remain as it is today, providing a range of local manufacturing and production businesses for the local economy.

Comments from Agents

- Often there is not a clearly defined line between 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.

- The Industrial Estate contains a series of PVC window suppliers and installers, Bri-Met (specialise in fabricating steel) and Glasdon UK (provide road signs across the country).

- The market on Poulton Industrial Estate is for smaller sized units with transactions for large units less common.

- Older units often go for around £4.50/sqft while new units go for £6.50/sqft.

Key Themes and Implications for Development Framework

- The Industrial Estate is at high levels of occupancy, with only limited choice of units on the market. This is limiting the churn of stock in the market.

- There are some office units within the estate, with some businesses taking advantage of cheaper industrial units for hybrid spaces. This is not detrimental to the function of the estate at current levels.

- There is greenfield land to the east and south of the estate, which potentially could represent areas of expansion, this is likely to be a long-term proposition and would require planning consents.

- Larger requirements are likely to be realised in larger industrial estates in the broader region, such as Hillhouse EZ.

Residential Market

Poulton is a relatively affluent and attractive residential location in Wyre. It is well supported in the market and commands strong price points for residential stock.

Residential market activity within Poulton has been reviewed looking at past sales, trends, and prices paid for all property types, along with current values of properties being marketed. This information has been collected using Land Registry data drawn from property websites such as Zoopla, Rightmove, and LandInsight.

Past Market Activity

The average price paid has risen in the last five years for all residential property types in Poulton apart from flats. This is for the most part on trend with what has been seen across Lancashire and England, where the average price paid for all residential property types has risen. Detached and semi-detached house prices both rose at a higher rate over the past 12 months than that seen across Lancashire, rising by 17% and 12% respectively compared to 14% and 12%. Terraced housing rose at a slower rate than the rate seen across Lancashire, rising by 7% compared to 12%. The greatest disparity is seen in the market for flats, where prices fell by 7% over the period in Poulton despite growing by 9%.
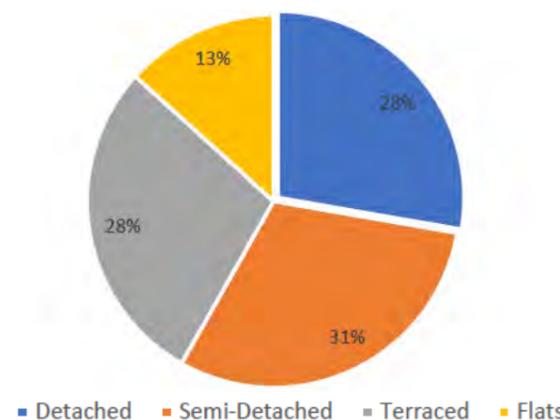
Graph of the proportion of Dwelling Sales by Type in Poulton-le-Flyde, last 12 months

Comments from Agents

- Poulton is a very desirable place to live and is very upmarket.

- It is popular with commuters working in larger employment centres and as a place where people can retire.

- There has been lots of residential development in the last 5 years with Jones Homes and Persimmon all building homes on Garstang Road.

Key Themes and Implications for Development Framework

- Poulton is an upmarket residential area and can command strong values in new-build residential products, thereby making schemes attractive to developers.

- It is attracting strong family and empty-nester markets for new-build developments.

- The affluent surrounding residential community is supporting Poulton, encouraging businesses to invest in the town centre. The higher levels of disposable income in the residential population means that a more diverse evening economy can be supported.

- Higher density, town centre residential products are relatively untested in the market. The good residential values and vibrant town centre suggests residential products would be supportable and successful.

Conclusions

For retail, this sector has demonstrated resilience in recent difficult economic times. The overall provision of retailing is appropriate, with larger comparison shopping uses not appropriate for this 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 is undertaken, given the uncertainties in the broader retail market in the UK. Further retail could be part of a mix-use development (i.e., ground floor of apartment building), but is unlikely to be a lead component of a development in Poulton in the foreseeable future.

The office market in Poulton is modest and only achieves moderate rent levels that would be insufficient to encourage further development. The focus of any interventions in this sector should be in supporting the existing provision of office spaces to limit further losses of space to other uses. This can be achieved through linking potential occupiers to landlords and helping landlords to access funding support to maintain their office units.

The leisure, food and drink, and hotel market has a range of local enterprises in and around the town. One of the key strengths of the town centre is its food and drink sector, and interventions for the town centre for this sector are unlikely to be development led, rather they should support the sector through appropriate all-hour transport links, placemaking that supports safe spaces, and opportunities to diversify the offer through events, festivals, etc.

The provision of gyms is sufficient for Poulton, and other entertainment uses are likely to be provided in Blackpool. Smaller, residential-focused entertainment venues (as opposed to those targeting the visitor market) could be supported in the town centre. It is unlikely that a hotel development could be supported in this location.

The industrial market in Poulton appears to be performing well with high occupancy levels, though this appears to be constraining take-up. The Poulton Industrial Estate could expand to adjacent greenfield land (with appropriate planning support) though this is likely to be a longer-term proposition requiring cross-authority discussions and significant infrastructure to unlock.

The Poulton residential market is performing strongly and is attractive to developers, including larger house-builders. 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 much more limited market; however, the underlying fundamental – strong residential market and vibrant town centre – suggest that an in-centre residential product could be supported and successful.

Spatial Review

Photographic Survey

Poulton Town Centre is defined by a number of key roads. These are Breck Road, Vicarage Road, Queensway, and Wheatsheaf Way. The road network loops around what is considered the core town centre, which includes Market Place and Teanlowe Shopping Centre. The town also has a number of independent stores located to the edge along Breck Road.

Market Place and St Chad's are a part of the historic core, as other spaces such as Booth and Teanlowe shopping centre have a more modern character.

The satellite image shows Poulton Town Centre and the overlayed 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 Poulton and relate to the 'photographic survey' map. The images cover areas along the Breck Road and Ball Street to better understand the current condition of local shops, public realm and connections around the Town Centre

Urban Structure

Poulton Town Centre has two anchors, these are Market Place and Booths in the centre. Teanlowe shopping centre acts as a bridge between these key spaces as both contrast with each other in terms of footprint, architectural style, and shop uses.

The grain of the town centre can be seen on the next page 'figure ground' plan. It shows the pattern and scale of building footprints. The dense dark areas in the town become looser towards the suburban housing leading outside the boundary.

The ability for the Poulton to grow is constrained by the existing urban development on all sides of the town. The railway line to the north prevents any new development beyond Aldi.

Market Place clearly represents the historic town centre with a linear structure and long building footprints, with clearly defined block frontages either side, predominantly 2 to 3 storeys, and a large area of public space.

Watch Point

Poulton and the wider urban areas are concentrated with low density residential development. There are large areas of green space beyond the edge of the town, but little in terms of spare land or clear opportunity sites that would be important for any future economic development. Any interventions must work within the existing grain and work with existing buildings.

Image of Breck Road facing North

Image of the River View Commercial Development, facing north

Image of Ball Street facing West

Image of Teanlowe Shopping Centre facing East
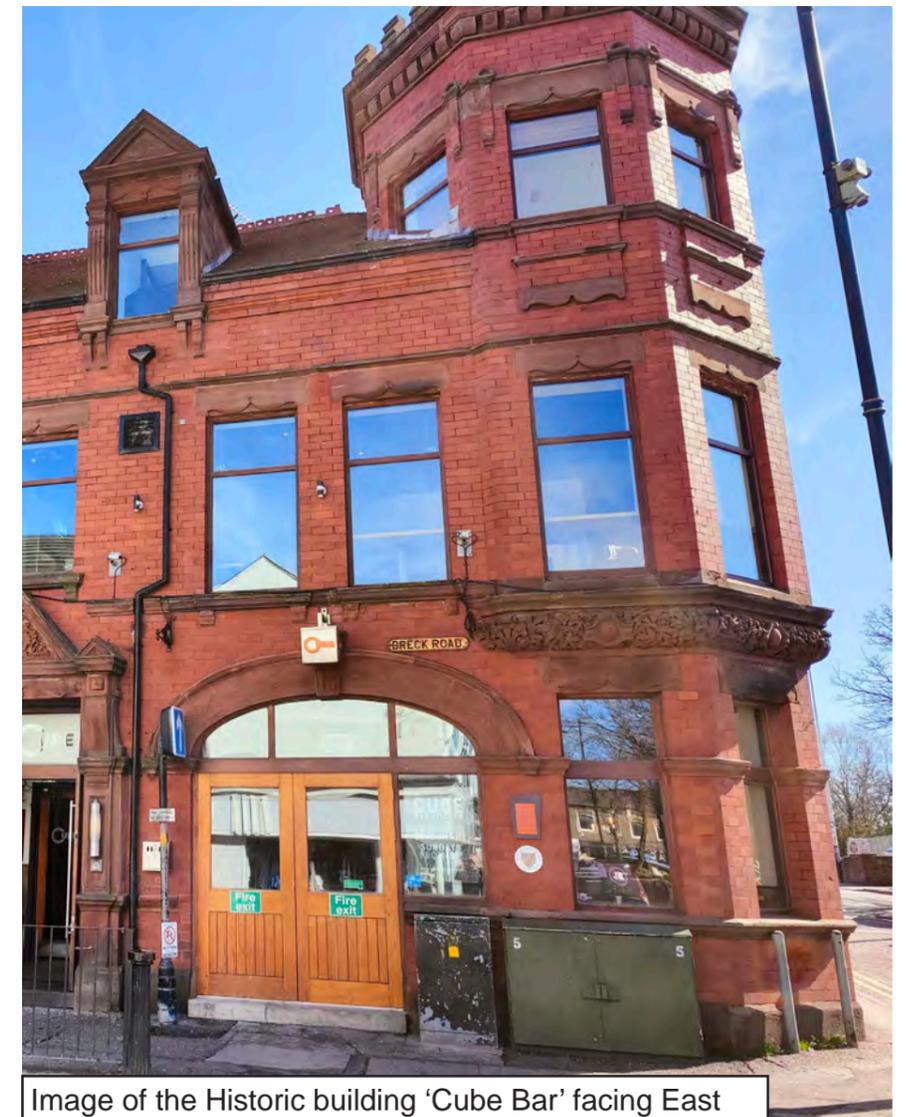
Image of the Historic building 'Cube Bar' facing East

Poulton United Reformed Church

Poulton Methodist Church

Poulton Pre School & Toddler Association

Poulton Train Station

Aldi

Post Office

St Chad's

Poulton Community Hall

Teanlowe Centre

Booths

Jean Stansfield Vicarage Park

Poulton Library

Market Place and Market Cross

Poulton St Chads CE School
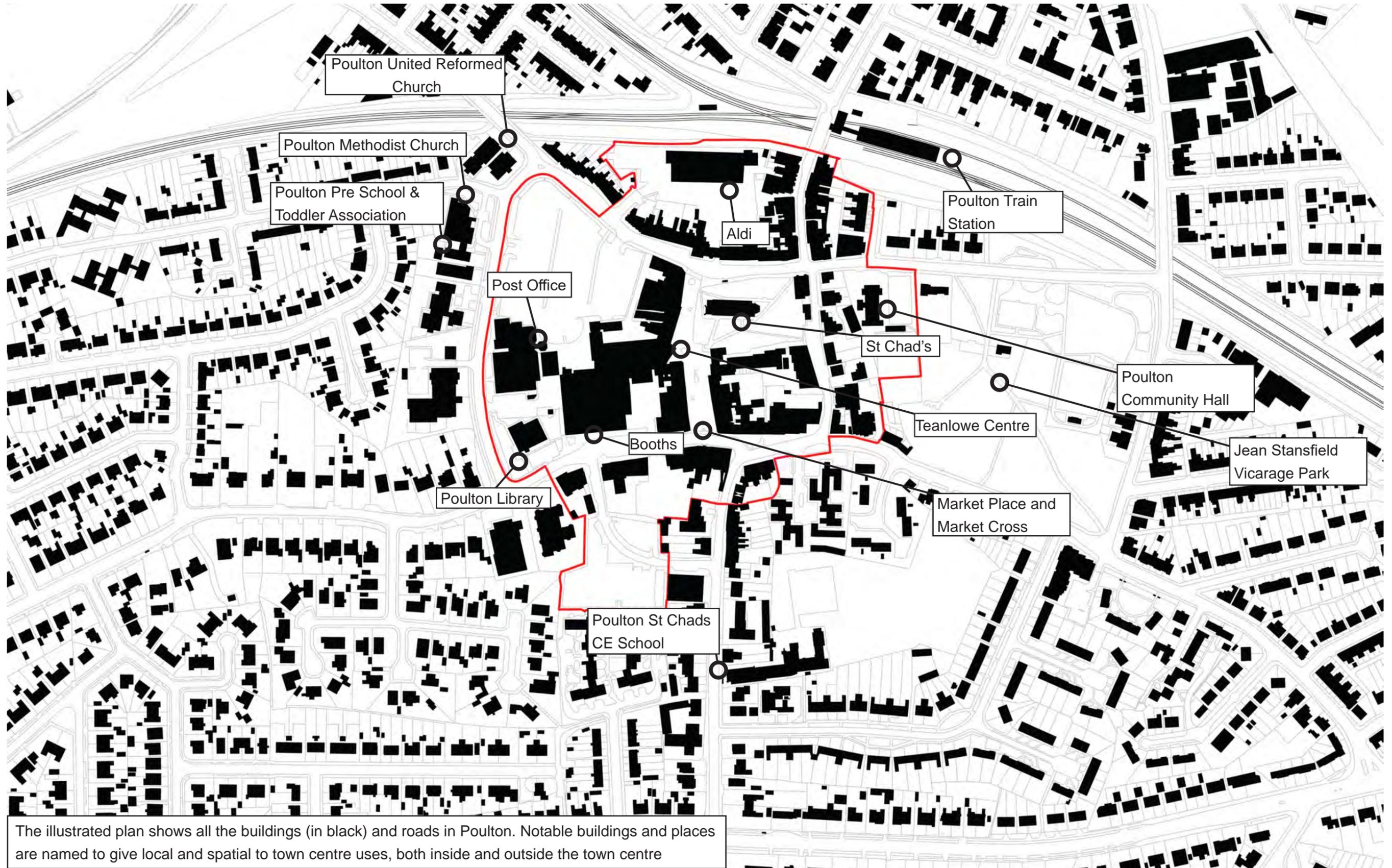
The illustrated plan shows all the buildings (in black) and roads in Poulton. Notable buildings and places are named to give local and spatial to town centre uses, both inside and outside the town centre

Transport and Linkage

Accessing Poulton
Car

The A588 is Poulton's main north - south road. The A586 leads further west to Blackpool and the coast. It also runs east to the A585 connecting to Preston and beyond.

Rail

Poulton train station sits outside of the core town centre where it connects to Blackpool and Preston, thereby linking commuters to wider areas and making Poulton an ideal location for a 'working from home' town.

Bus

There are regular services (such as the 2C, 12, 42, 74, 75, 76) which connect to Blackpool, St Annes, Garstang, and Preston. There are also a number of services that accommodate school trips.

Cycle / Walking

There are good quality pedestrian spaces around Market Place, Teanlowe shopping centre, and St Chad's Church. These have strong connection to other spaces around the town centre helping shoppers link to Blackpool Old Road and Queen's Square.

While there are no designated cycling routes, there is plenty of cycle storage. This presents an opportunity to expand the cycling for the town and connect cyclists to wider areas.

Poulton's Road Network

Poulton is known for its road issues, these can cause congestion and disruptions to drivers and pedestrians alike. The road network circles the town centre with the flow of traffic moving in a single direction. These roads typically intersect with other main roads and loading bays.

There are a mix of lanes and wide roads that can be confusing to drivers, and a hindrance to cyclists and pedestrians. Most notably around Blackpool Old Road, the two lanes are much wider than other roads in Poulton, and the 3rd lane is a layby servicing 3 bus stops. These represent one of the many barriers that prevents people from exploring the whole of Poulton.

Wide roads can mean cars will overtake and can be a danger for other vehicles. Old Blackpool Road is the widest of the roads having two lanes, vehicles will undertake and overtake in order to get into the correct lane for where it bifurcates, proposed changes will need to assess onward routing.

For pedestrians, this can mean a greater travel time when crossing, and is more dangerous for people with disabilities.

The entrance points from Tithebarn street, Blackpool Old Road, Breck Road, and Hardhorn Road bring a continuous flow of traffic to the town centre. They contribute to the congestion as vehicles enter the town centre to find a parking space and leave either via Higher Green, Breck Road and Tithebarn Street. This can mean more traffic is entering Poulton than leaving it. Any interventions to reduce traffic should carefully assess the impact on the economy too, and its potential to displace, understanding of the local demographic and population needs. Signs for new visitors could be improved to ensure they are directed to car parking provision removing conflict with local users.

At the time of writing, there have been several collisions around intersections on Blackpool Old Road and Queensway. The framework should aim to address road safety in all areas and consider how to put pedestrians first.

Any proposal needs to be redesigned so that it is readable by all intended users and clear on expected vehicle/ pedestrian / cyclist interactions and facilities.

Poulton's Parking Capacity

There is a substantial amount of parking in the town centre, the largest being Teanlowe Shopping Car Park which takes up a quarter of the town's overall footprint. Other parking areas include Wheatsheaf Way car park with 117 spaces and electric charging points, and smaller areas located along arterial roads such as Tithebarn Street.

Smaller areas of parking along the high street are not only visually poor but are blind spots for drivers. This is notable along Ball Street, which has a zebra crossing and parked vehicles that block the view ahead, hiding anyone that might be crossing.

The high street is the biggest reason people visit Poulton. The on-street parking can become a barrier for local businesses to expand outdoors. There is clear demand post-Covid-19 to ensure that there is enough outdoor seating that can be accommodated in case of another pandemic. Plus, it provides additional revenue to local businesses. Poulton has opportunities and space, however, there are many on-street parking sites embedded across the high street. These can be removed or decanted under the public realm improvements strategy.

Poulton-le-Fylde Highway Mitigation Strategy

The strategy identifies a number of transport improvements to support the highway network in and around Poulton. This will deliver a series of works to support the population growth and residential development. This regeneration framework does not influence the report nor any proposed highways development.

The strategy includes the delivery of a new car park with access onto Poulton Road/Tithebarn Street to serve Poulton Town Centre. The location of the car park is safeguarded within the Blackpool Road Masterplan as part of the wider residential development. This identifies approximately 1 hectare of land for the provision of car parking for 200 vehicles. An outline planning application has been approved for the car park's location with access from Tithbarn Street, demonstrating how 100 spaces could be provided and then an additional 100 spaces if required.

Image of the Chapel Street, facing West

Image of the Tithebarn Street, facing East

Image of the Blackpool Old Road, facing West

Legend:

▬▬	Town Centre Boundary
▬ ▬	Public Right Of Way
▬ ▬	Cycleway
📍	Bus Stop
🚉	Train Station
┃┃┃┃	RailwayTrack
▬▬	Dissused Railway
P	Parking
▬▬	Bus Route: 42 74 2c 75 76 400 523
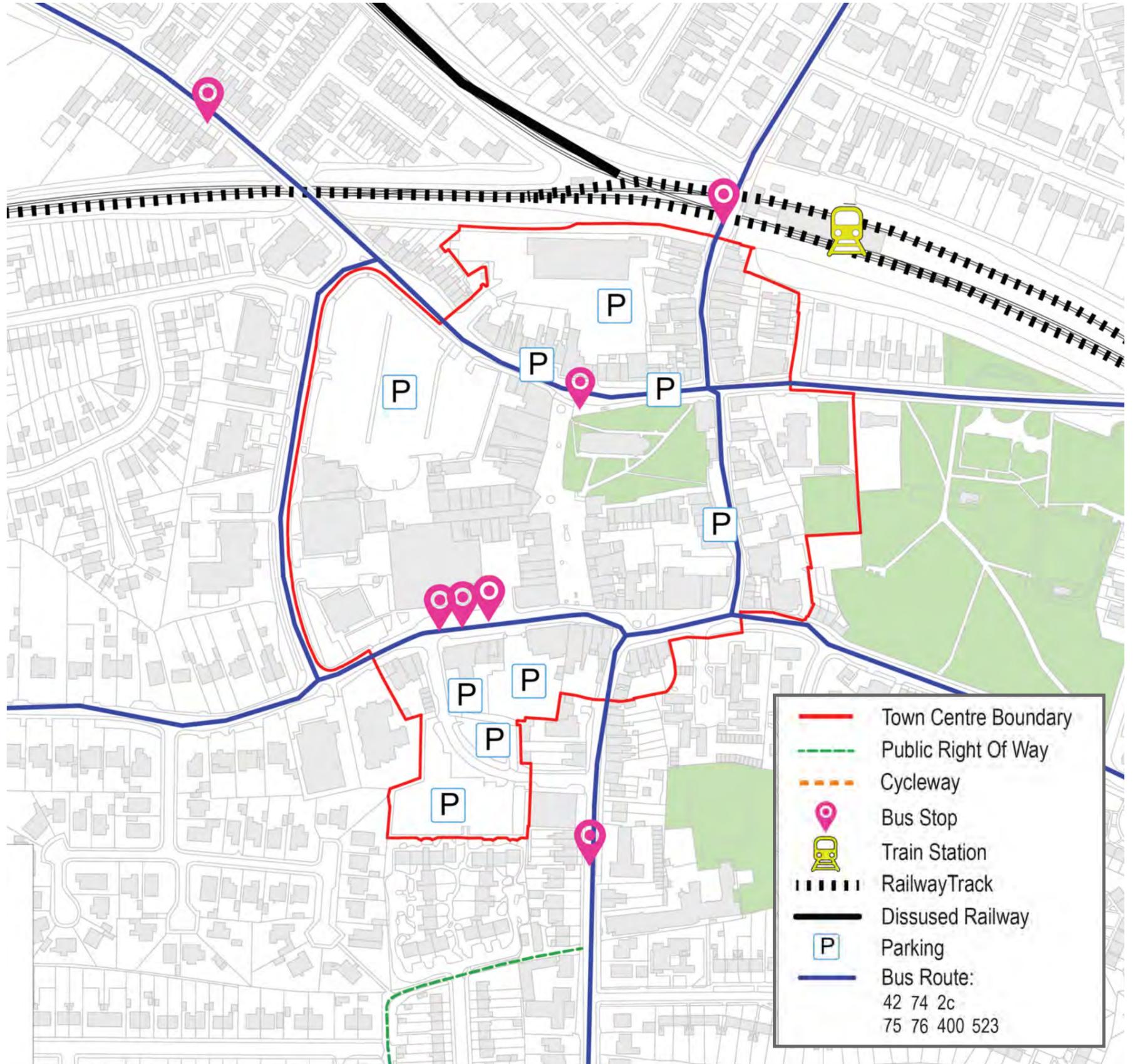
This map shows the key transport and linkages around Poulton including key train and vehicle routes

Land Use

The primary shopping frontages focus on the recent development around Booths Teanlowe shopping centre and the historic core along Market Place. With a second primary frontage along Ball Street, it has most independent stores.

Poulton has a number of secondary shopping frontages, these are spread out across the town centre i.e., along Breck Road, Market Place, Blackpool Old Road, and Chapel St Ct.

It is evident that St Chad's Church creates a void around the shopping areas, concealing routes such as Chapel St Ct.

Image of Chapel St Ct facing East

Image of Teanlowe Shopping Centre facing East
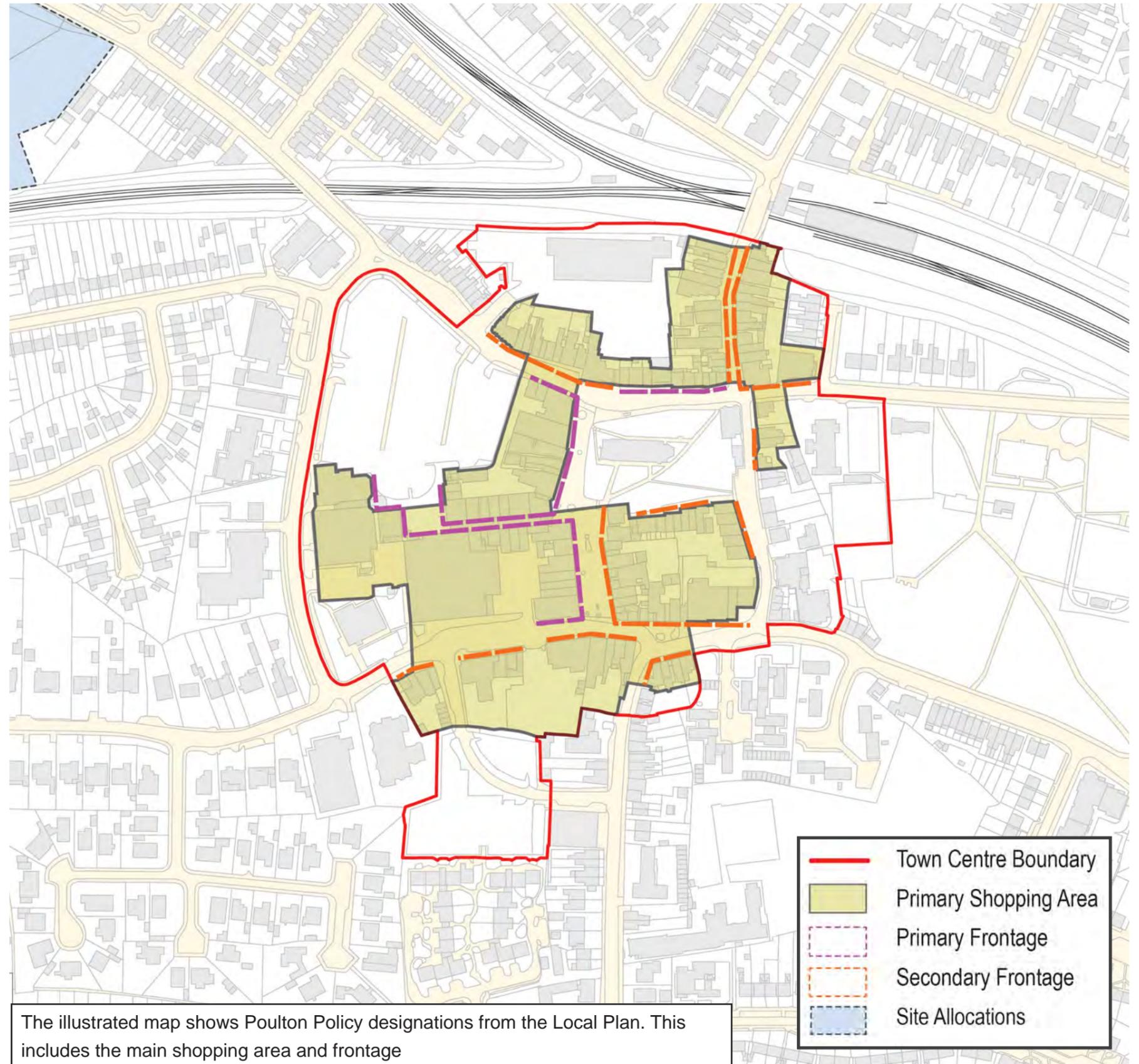
The illustrated map shows Poulton Policy designations from the Local Plan. This includes the main shopping area and frontage

Legend:
- Town Centre Boundary
- Primary Shopping Area
- Primary Frontage
- Secondary Frontage
- Site Allocations

Heritage

Poulton's Conservation Area includes ten listed buildings. One of these is the Church of St Chad (Grade II*) is the most prominent historic building in Poulton, with the remaining situated along Market Place, Queen's Square and Vicarage Road.

Poulton has two distinct character areas, the historic area where most listed buildings reside in the east. In contrast, the western area of the town which contain the most recent developments. These are linked by Ball Street, Blackpool Old Road and the Teanlowe Centre, acting as a bridge between the two-character areas.

Image of Market Place facing South

Image of Church of St Chad facing West

The illustrated map shows multiple listed buildings in the centre of the town centre boundary

Legend:
- Town Centre Boundary
- △ Listed Buildings
- Historic Landscape Classification
- Conservation Area
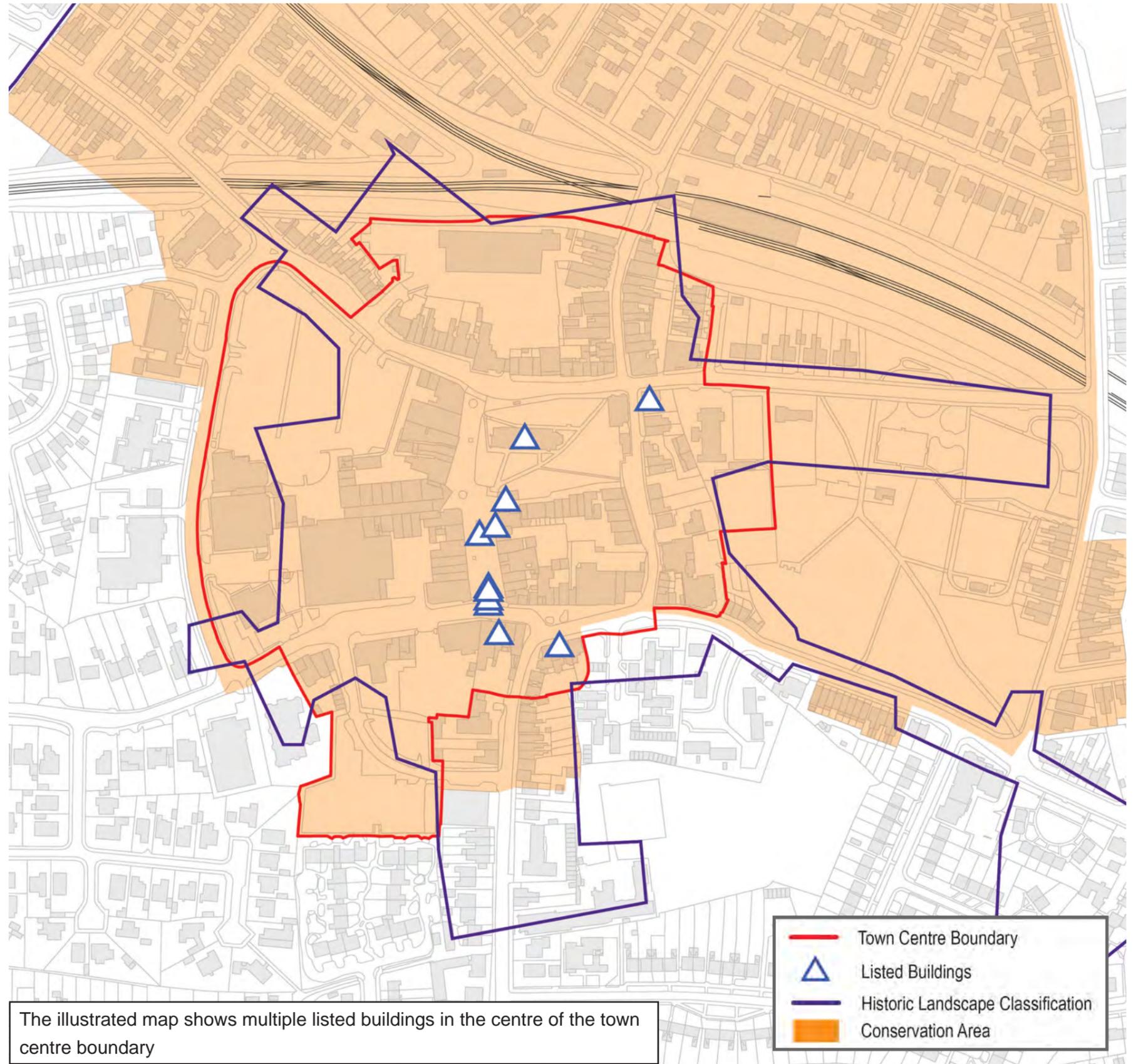
Environment

There are several green / open spaces in Poulton, such as St Chad's, the Church of St Chad Tennis Club, Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park, Queen's Square, Cottam Hall, and the Civic Centre Grounds north of the town centre.

Poulton's spaces are of good quality, it should be an objective to link these places with health and welling improving the livelihood of residents. Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park for example could better connect to the town centre as it sits behind a row of residential properties out of view from the passers-by. Queen's Square is another opportunity to attract more people to the south of Poulton as it has little function or appeal.

There is space to introduce more street trees (greening the town and reinforcing the street hierarchy) with a more consistent pallet and approach. Similarly, street furniture and signage comprise a diverse range of elements inconsistently applied. A consistency of approach, with subtle adaptations to reflect the different characteristics within the town centre should be adopted.

Image of Jean Stansfield Vicarage Park, facing south

Image of the grounds at St Chad's

Image of Queen's Square

This illustrated map shows the green and blue infrastructure around the town centre
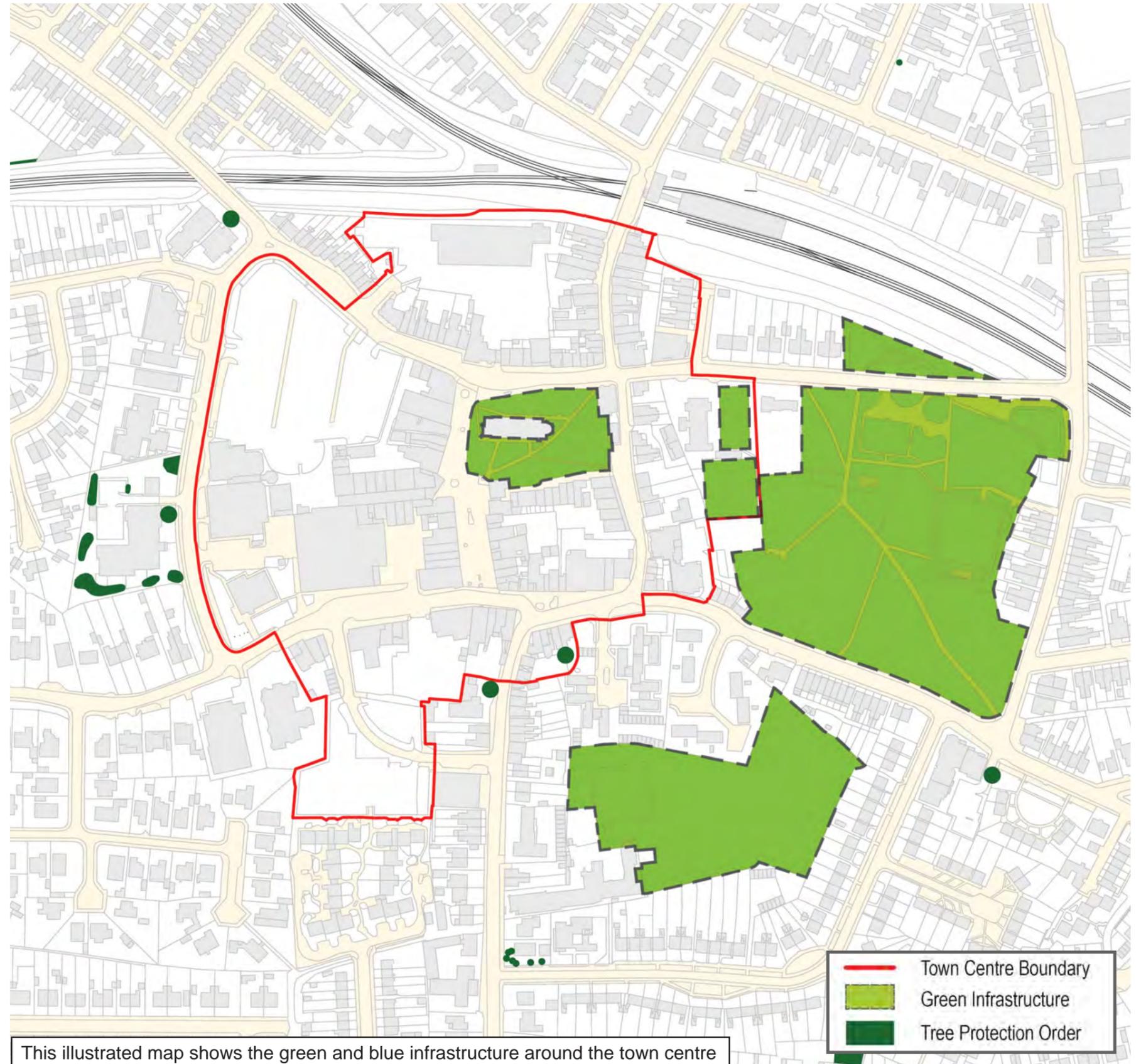
Town Centre Boundary
Green Infrastructure
Tree Protection Order

2.4 Consultation

First Public Consultation - Initial Options

A day-long exhibition was held outside St Chad's Church and at the Civic Centre in June 2023. This was staffed by members of Wyre Council officers and consultants. It was hosted online for a further two weeks (this includes written feedback with surveys). Information panels were then situated at Poulton Library for the remainder of the consultation period.

The exhibition presented an overview of the proposed interventions for the town in the near future and asked that people give their view. A series of questions were included, looking at the respondent views and opinions, summarising and analysing responses, offering a range of insights and recommendations for the interventions. There were a range of activities used to establish this, including conversations and dialogues with the Poulton Partnership Board, stakeholders from the perspective of heritage, tourism, and business support. Additionally, public in-person and online surveys were conducted, producing a wide range of feedback.

Responses

The consultation responses provided an interesting narrative about how respondents felt about the proposed interventions but also their opinion of Poulton as a whole. A series of questions was posed to the public to understand whether they supported or opposed the interventions. Alongside, understanding people's feelings about how the town centre was performing at the time of the consultation.

Nearly 90% of respondents live locally with over half visiting the town centre on a daily basis. This shows that the majority of comments contain first-hand experience of Poulton's issues.

More than 50 of respondents % were over the age of 60. By comparison, respondents aged 18-29 represented only 6% of the overall comments. This reflects the current demographic of Poulton, but also suggests more could be done to capture data from younger people, depending on location and time of day.

In terms of the chosen words that respondents felt reflected the town centre, a majority highlighted Poulton's beauty and traditional architecture and feel. This clearly speaks to Poulton strengths:

"Historic"

"Attractive"

"Community"

Some pointed out more critical points which reflect many of the issues facing the town centre to date. Such as:
"Cars"
"Declining"
"Drink"

Strong factors that came through the analysis:

- Respondents considered road safety and the volume of vehicles a top priority for Poulton. This suggests the existing road network does not feel safe to cross, or to explore. Other comments iterated the need to re-work the town centre road network and flow of traffic. This follows previous analysis that the roads are too wide, and the one-way system creates congestion making it dangerous for drivers and pedestrians alike.

- Respondents gave strong support for the public realm improvement strategy, many suggested 'pedestrianisation' to strengthen 'pedestrian travel' across the town centre. A large majority want the public realm intervention to 'enhance the pedestrian experience' and be safe for all.

- Another major topic from respondents is to include a greater diversity of shops and strengthen the support for independent retailers. Local stores are at the heart of Poulton, and it's clear from the consultation the community felt they need more diversity and space to grow. Some suggested a 'cafe culture' and 'artisan markets' to improve the shop and market offer. Respondents felt this would create an anchor, attracting both locals and visitors. This would support new businesses who could use the market to test the water.

- Other comments called for a reduction in the number of bars, as respondents feel they contribute to the anti-social behaviour that is well documented in the town centre. Many highlighted certain streets which have a local reputation for disorder. These suggest that a targeted approach to the public realm improvements should be used to distribute footfall and help get people home safely.

- People felt that a greater police presence in the town centre is needed to tackle the anti-social behaviour during both the day and night. It can be assumed the easiest solution is more policing, but the issues are often more complex and should be tackled using a variety of strategies. The proposed interventions aim to improve the quality of the high street to encourage greater activity throughout the day and night; providing more eyes on the street and, therefore, reducing the number of incidents. This would be used alongside coordinating shop owners to manage opening hours and activity levels in the town to reduce the number of nightly disruptions. Early-stage sceptics can often become fierce advocates and agents of positive change as they see it delivered.

- The role of the Monday Markets in Market Place has been mentioned as an issue for many with its limited offer. There seems to be an opinion that favours more arts and crafts, or an artisan food offer. It should be noted Market Place is the only pedestrianised space in Poulton, making it an ideal location for any potential new markets. With many moving towards experience-based activities, local markets would play a key role in attracting out-of-town visitors. Particularly for new businesses, there is an opportunity for them to test the water before moving to market.

- Housing was another noted topic from respondents, raising concerns that there was a lack of new infrastructure, such as school places and GP surgeries provided to support new housing development coming forward. Concerns were also raised over highway capacity and congestion created by new housing. This framework does not influence or decide where new housing developments are allocated, however the regeneration framework will be a material consideration for the council when preparing its new local plan, which will set out where new housing will go, alongside the supported infrastructure needed.

Consultation Feedback

The written comments contained general support for the proposed interventions, and particularly:

- HS1 Public Realm Improvements Strategy;

- VE1 Enhancing the events calendar and strengthening links with local groups;

- VE2 Initiatives to Improve the Monday Market;

- TL3 Implementing Cycling and Walking Initiatives.

Common themes were a desire to improve the offer of the market and introduce a food offer to support this, and the need to explore these projects in more detail – particularly the potential impact of more pedestrian spaces.

Other comments included:

- Expressing a desire to see improvements to Cottam Hall facilities.

- Most respondents agreed more can be done to improve the Market Place street furniture.

- Support for community groups to lead events and become more active within the town centre.

- Retention and enhancing heritage assets, making them a key part of Poulton's identity.

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

First Public Consultation Panels

Welcome!

Wyre Borough Council have commissioned a study to consider how Poulton 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, businesses and visitors for the next 15 years and beyond.

This exhibition sets out:

- Progress on the wider study including the definition of a Vision and set of Objectives to guide Poulton's development;
- Previews the key interventions that could deliver the Vision and;
- Confirms next steps, including the publication of a Regeneration Framework Report in late 2023 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 exhibition or via the link below if you are viewing online.

Email: regeneration@wyre.gov.uk

www.wyre.gov.uk/Poultonprojects

A number of proposed interventions will be delivered by community stakeholders, alongside public and private sector support. If you are interested in contributing or becoming a partner to help deliver these interventions, please get in touch.

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

Existing Poulton Town Centre Boundary

Vision

"We are Poulton. We are a contemporary shopping experience and a thriving evening economy with a vibrant calendar of events giving us a distinctive identity as a prosperous market town."

Objectives

In order to deliver The Vision, the objectives for the town centre are to:

1. Deliver high-quality public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.

2. Make Poulton a sustainable, low-carbon town - aim for best-practice solutions to tackle energy and sustainability.

3. Encourage greater activity and events during the daytime and evening.

4. Build on Poulton's Localism, enhancing its current independent retail offer.

5. Actively manage and programme Poulton's town centre spaces and places.

6. Be known for its strong community and local heritage.

Interventions

Wyre Council and its consultants have defined a set of 14 'interventions', or actions that will positively impact the town's future.

A summary of these interventions are set out below.

The High Street

1. Adopt a Public Realm Improvements Strategy

Currently the design of the road network in some areas of the town centre prevents pedestrians moving easily and exploring. A phased approach to improve public realm and pedestrian safety could look at options for projects on Blackpool Old Road, Ball Street and Chapel Street.

Integrating bespoke digital and physical signage to improve navigation around the town centre and promote events. The design of the signage would reflect Poulton's localism and distinctive character.

Introduction of bespoke street furniture and surface treatment to bring a sense of heritage to the town centre. These would include engravings about local history and seek to integrate thoughtful references into the public realm.

Visitor Economy

2. Develop the visitor economy

Strengthening links with local community groups to enhance the events calendar. The aim is to grow the number and diversity of audiences using and, more importantly, spending time in the town. With collaboration and sharing ideas with key stakeholders to keep the events calendar refreshed.

Encourage high-quality, engaging events for young people. This would expand Poulton's event offering, creating a series of targeted festivals for young people. These can be different types of festivals including music, dance, food and drink, clothing and craft fairs, and technology and digital events.

Actively supporting creative arts within the local community by working alongside local groups, schools, and community groups to develop content for locally-curated projects. This places emphasis on local artists and talent, and community participation.

3. Introduce a new variety of outdoor markets with a focus on food, arts and crafts. The town centre has pedestrianised areas suitable for responding to this trend and can complement the current offer by improving the look, feel and overall quality of experience.

These are the consultation panels that show Poulton's vision. This includes a maps, site photos, and aspirational images with key topics and interventions that could improve Poulton's high street

Panel 1

Transport & Linkage

4. Support the development of the Poulton-to-Fleetwood Rail Line to better connect commuters to the train station and beyond. This intervention would look to respond to the recommendations of studies by Network Rail which are currently in progress.

5. Improve visitor infrastructure including exploring the provision and distribution of electric charging infrastructure for vehicles.

6. Improve cycling and walking infrastructure in and around the town centre. This would achieve safer routes that are better connected to key local services and transport nodes. This would also better position Poulton to attract leisure cyclists and improve its visitor offer.

Community

7. Support local projects and initiatives.

Make Poulton a Purple Flag town centre—an international accreditation programme which recognises places that have shown they are a safe, as well as thriving environment at night-time.

Incorporating community-led greening projects around Poulton, to improve the look and feel of the high street. This can create more beautiful spaces for town centre activities.

Develop a town centre awards scheme. The awards are meant to highlight local individuals, businesses and community groups for their service and dedication to the wider Poulton community. The types of awards can include Civic, Sustainability, Youth and Community awards.

Development of Cottam Hall Playing Field so as to provide better facilities and sports pitches. Ideas include improving the playing pitches, new or updated pavilion facilities, installing outdoor gym equipment and a circular path or track for walking, cycling and wheeling.

Sustainability & Low Carbon

8. Explore the establishment of a Community Energy Trust. This will be a forum through which to explore responses to a range of energy-related issues. This could involve supporting energy-saving measures such as better wall insulation, windows, and doors for selected buildings.

Panel 2

Health and Wellbeing

9. Social Prescribing is already established in Poulton and is provided by the NHS Wyre Integrated Network. There is an opportunity, however, to develop and incorporate a referral scheme aimed at people who are inactive or have long-term health conditions.

10. Support Wyre Moving More - developing and promoting initiatives for improved physical activity, sports and leisure facilities.

Technology and Digital

11. Develop a strategy to use existing and future technology to plan and run Poulton, better guiding policy, and investment. Consider all digital opportunities and trends holistically, and in a manner that is coordinated with other parts of Wyre. Including collaboration with a range of local stakeholders.

Business Support

12. Support the owners of high street buildings to implement measures to improve energy efficiency through advice and potentially grant funding.

13. Provide tailored advice and training for local businesses to improve their digital skills.

14. Recruit more Enterprise Advisors from the local public and private sector. Industry professionals would support career programmes and create opportunities for young people.

Panel 3

Your Views

Thank you for reviewing this exhibition.

We would like your views on the suggested ideas. You can leave comments using the printed feedback forms at the exhibition or via the survey at *wyre.gov.uk/poultonprojects*

Contacts

If you have any queries about the information displayed here or about the process described please email regeneration@wyre.gov.uk

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

Next Steps

We 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 late 2023.

The final report will be a plan for Poulton'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 to enable the delivery of Poulton'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

These are the consultation panels that show Poulton's vision. This includes a maps, site photos, and aspirational images with key topics and interventions that could improve Poulton's high street

Second Public Consultation

A consultation was held in November 2023 with drop-in events 13, 15 and 18 November at the Teanlowe Centre and Poulton Library to give the public the opportunity to view the interventions for the town and speak to Wyre Council officers and consultants. It was hosted online for four weeks (this includes written feedback with surveys).

Participants were give an overview of the purpose of the consultation and background to the regeneration framework. A series of questions were included, looking at the vision, objectives and interventions, so as to identify key priorities and inform the approach of future implementation.

Responses

The majority of participants lived or worked in Poulton.

51% agreed with the vision, 30% disagreed and 19% neither agreed or disagreed. Comments showed a desire for a bigger and more varied retail offer and an improved town centre experience in terms of events and café culture in Market Place – moving the emphasis away from the night time economy as the sole attraction or offer. Some of the respondents didn't agree that Poulton has the offer described in the statement, which suggested that they may not have appreciated that the vision was looking toward the future.

Of the six objectives participants were asked which they thought were the key ones. The top 3 responses were improving the public realm, building the independent retail offer and encouraging greater activity and events in the town.

Participants were asked whether they agreed with the interventions for each framework theme. The table below shows the responses received and broad agreement of the majority of projects for each framework theme – except for the Smart Place Strategy, which suggests the need to ensure that this is made relevant to people who live and work in Poulton.

The feedback received at the drop-in events focused on:

A graph showing the results from the public consultation
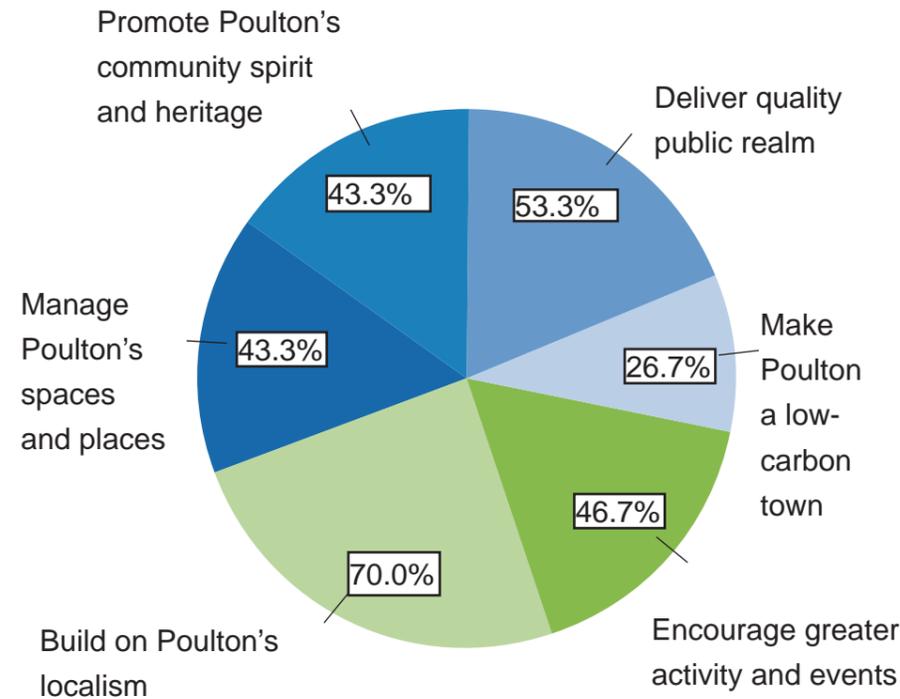
improving the Monday Markets; increasing the number of town centre events; reducing traffic and congestion in the town centre; improving Cottam Hall Playing Fields and developing the Fleetwood to Poulton Rail Line.

Residents were quite focussed on wanting to see a greater variety in retail offer and suggested a need for books, gifts, craft, and clothing. There was a feeling expressed that the night time economy of bars, pubs and restaurants dominates the town centre and a desire to limit any further growth in preference for seeing retail use.

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

Panel 1

wyre council

Welcome!

We are seeking your views on ideas to improve Poulton Town Centre.

This exhibition is a follow up to a previous exhibition and consultation event in June. This public consultation intends to:

- provide feedback on the previous consultation;
- explain progress on the wider study including an updated 'Vision' and 'Objectives';
- invite the community to join the Poulton Partnership Board to help deliver projects;
- confirm 'next steps', including the publication of the Regeneration Framework Report.

Feedback on the June 2023 Consultation

In the previous consultation people expressed how they felt about the proposed regeneration framework. Those comments were collated and analysed to understand what topics people felt strongly about and what was a priority for the town centre. The following quotes, word clouds, and graphs illustrate the data collected from the previous consultation.

"Provide activities for young people"

"Encourage daytime activities"

"New pedestrianised areas and bespoke street furniture"

"Provide a good quality market, enhance Market Place and make links with the history of the town"

"Improve the local road network – there's too much traffic"

"Improving local transport would help massively"

Age group · **Visiting the town centre** · **Connection with Poulton**

Issues

BANK HOUSING VAPE CARS DRINK HIGHWAYS CONGESTION QUIET NIGHT BANK SAFETY POLICE WORSE POOR TRAFFIC BORING RUNDOWN DEVELOPMENT EMPTY ROAD TRANSPORT NIGHTLIFE POLLUTION SAD BLACKPOOL MARKET

Opportunities

VISITORS POTENTIAL LOCAL COMMUNITY DIVERSITY INDEPENDENT MIX HERITAGE DIGITAL ALDI BARS FRIENDLY PEACEFUL PRETTY MARKET ART COTTAM HALL ST CHAD'S SHOPPING CYCLING VIBRANT CREATIVE HISTORICAL BOOTHS POULTON IN BLOOM LOCALISM VICARAGE TOWN CENTRE HISTORY ATMOSPHERE ACTIVITIES HIGH STREET TRADITIONAL PARKING WALKING SIGNAGE FOOTFALL HUB

Panel 2

wyre council

The Vision

"We are Poulton. We are a contemporary shopping experience and a thriving evening economy with a strong community spirit. We have a vibrant calendar of events giving us a distinctive identity as a prosperous market town."

Interventions

We have defined a set of seventeen 'interventions', or actions that will positively impact the town's future.

The list reflects comments from the previous consultation, taking into account key issues and concerns from the public. The study is structured around eight 'themes' or areas of interest that are important to the success of the town centre.

1. The High Street
2. Visitor Economy
3. Transport & Linkage
4. Community
5. Sustainability & Low Carbon
6. Health & Wellbeing
7. Technology & Digital
8. Business Support

Poulton Town Centre

The High Street

Improvements to Key Streets and Public Spaces

The majority of people highlighted traffic as an issue, with concerns around vehicle flow and pedestrian safety. People also told us they strongly supported greater diversity of local businesses – achieving this would involve enhancing the street quality and expanding the amount of usable space outside for new businesses to grow.

A phased approach would target certain areas of Poulton that are unsafe or typically do not attract footfall. The intervention would see improvements to key public spaces in terms of materials and furniture. Plus, it would address the traffic management along key streets, by redirecting vehicles, slowing down vehicles, and reducing the overall congestion.

Wayfinding & Information

People mentioned that wayfinding should be clear and effective and in keeping with the town's historic look and feel.

Adopting appropriate signage will help visitors orientate and explore more of the town centre. This ensures longer dwell times and connects them to nearby venues and activities in Poulton. The use of digital signage can also support businesses with promotion and sales.

Incorporating Street Details and Playfulness

Comments demonstrated strong support for retaining and enhancing Poulton's historic built environment. Typically, people mentioned they seek out places that are unique and have local distinctiveness.

This intervention would use public art to celebrate Poulton's heritage and character. Street details would include engravings, subtle motifs that take people on a historical trail, and upgraded street furniture that is in keeping with Poulton's historic town centre. These would be placed in key public spaces and be delivered as part of a Public Realm Improvement Strategy.

Panel 3

wyre council

Visitor Economy

Enhancing the Events Calendar and Links with Local Groups

The majority of comments called for more activities throughout the day to better animate the town centre. For example, community-curated events along Market Place to help bring new life to the area attracting residents and visitors alike.

This project intends to create strong links with local education and religious groups, getting input from people who live/work in the town centre. The aim is to grow the number and diversity of people attending these events and increase spending. This intervention also aims to attract a wider demographic of local people and provide an arts and culture programme.

Improvements to the Monday Street Market Offer

The Monday Market was mentioned repeatedly, especially about the current offer and activity it brings to Market Place. People suggested introducing a food market and an arts and crafts offer to make markets a strong anchor for the town centre.

This intervention would support an experience-based approach to markets, for locals and visitors alike, examples being an 'artisanal' market, and a strong focus on local provenance and street food. Alongside, the potential development of the former police station as a food hall and other proposed events, such as Foodie Friday, this could grow Poulton's reputation as a vibrant market town.

Transport & Linkage

Fleetwood to Poulton Rail Line

The reopening of the axed Fleetwood-Poulton railway line received good support in the consultation. People felt it would provide greater connectivity to wider areas outside the town centre and help reduce vehicle dependency.

This intervention supports and recognises the potential benefits for commuting to neighbouring towns, increasing overall footfall, and more importantly reducing traffic within the town centre. Improved accessibility could support the local markets, open local businesses to more revenue, and give younger generations another reason to stay and work in Poulton. The project also supports the aim to be carbon zero by 2050 and reducing the overall carbon footprint of the town.

Improving Transport Facilities for Visitors

Many people felt more could be done to ease the high demand for parking, and where people park during the day. There is good support for green solutions to tackle issues like climate change and supporting the need for more facilities like electric vehicle charging stations.

This intervention would investigate installing more electric charging stations and rapid charging capabilities, supporting making Poulton a low-carbon / zero-carbon town. This intervention would support accessible methods of transport like a shuttle service to Cottam Hall to host live events, which would reduce the demand for parking in the town centre.

Implementing Cycling and Walking Initiatives

There was overwhelming support for more cycling and walking opportunities in Poulton. Many people expressed concerns around the dangers on Poulton's roads.

The main objective of this intervention is to deliver safer, more connected routes that would lead to key local services and transport stops, and provide an enjoyable and leisurely ride for users, which would have clear health and well-being benefits and would improve activity levels. The proposed cycle experience should also tie in with local community activities. An effort will be made to expand the cycle network outside the town centre and to connect to existing routes.

These are the second consultation panels that show Poulton's proposed inventions. This includes case study images and site photos, with key topics and public feedback that could improve Poulton's high street

Community

Community-Led Planting

Many people felt more planting should be adopted across Poulton. People wanted more vibrancy to core public spaces to make areas feel welcome and attractive for all.

This intervention looks to support planting schemes in and around the town centre that create attractive spaces that would attract visitors and enhance biodiversity. The work would have a positive impact on the town's image as a beautiful and healthy place to live and work.

Achieving Purple Flag status

Many people raised concerns about the safety and impact of Poulton's nightlife, voicing that it detracted from the charm of Poulton and the image they wanted for their town.

Achieving Purple Flag status would mean managing and coordinating the town centre's nightlife. This is done by having both public and private sector bodies working together to ensure the town meets a high standard of safety and is welcoming for all sectors. Measures to ensure public safety during late hours is a key part of the assessment.

Support for Local Sport Clubs

The development of playing fields in the town is widely supported by the public, especially around the development of better facilities and sports pitches.

This intervention looks to support sports clubs and the improvement of sports pitches and facilities at Cottam Hall Playing Fields and the Civic Centre. A masterplan for Cottam Hall is being developed and ideas to expand on the offer on the site include improving pedestrian, cycling and wheeling access and enhancing wildlife habitats and biodiversity.

Sustainability & Low Carbon

Establish of a Community Energy Trust

There is wide support for sustainable approaches to tackle issues about the environment and the cost-of-living crisis. There was a concern for local businesses struggling with costs.

This intervention will aim to reduce, purchase, manage and generate energy (using sustainable methods e.g., solar, wind farms, biomass, etc.). This would involve energy-saving measures such as improved wall insulation, windows, and doors. A Community Energy Trust would be a chance for Poulton to understand the energy issues and opportunities in the area before setting an action plan.

Health and Wellbeing

Develop an Exercise Referral Scheme

There was broad support for health and wellbeing initiatives with many people keen to see activities to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of residents.

This intervention looks to build upon the existing social prescribing offer by developing an exercise referral scheme aimed at people who are inactive or have long-term health conditions.

Wyre Moving More Priorities

Many people felt this intervention would not just support community activities but could expand to include outdoor events.

Specific details are to be confirmed in partnership with the Wyre Moving More Board but projects will likely include developments at Cottam Hall Playing Fields (playing pitches and community garden), playing pitches at the Civic Centre and other initiatives that involve and have the support of the Poulton voluntary and community faith sector.

Technology and Digital

Development of a Smart Place Strategy

Comments suggested this intervention would have a strong impact for local businesses. However, many people feel any new technology should be used appropriately.

It would make use of existing and future technologies, to improve various sectors in Poulton. The focus will be on the needs of the local community and understanding how new and emerging technologies can make the town centre more economically successful. This would include digital technology, transport, utilities, health and wellbeing, energy, sustainability, environment, and employment. This would add weight and evidence to investment and funding applications.

Business Support

Business Support Focused on Energy

People have shown strong support for local businesses and have mentioned a need to help local stores with the current energy crisis.

There is a need for dedicated support and awareness around the issues that local businesses face such as providing shop and business owners with advice to improve overall building energy efficiency and access funding to implement energy saving measures.

Digital Training for High Street Businesses

People felt there is a need to skill, re-train and support local people with a focus on digital training to tackle the current issues on the high street.

Training courses that focus on digital skills such as content creation, website development, or learning different software applications. A comprehensive training programme should also give insight into industry standards and exemplar case studies. Developing digital skills can open doors to expand and trade online, and potentially lead to a town centre app to sell goods and services.

Recruit Enterprise Advisors

Education was mentioned by people wanting to give the younger generation opportunities to improve their skills and gain meaningful work experience.

Enterprise Advisors are industry professionals that have years of experience in the public and private sector. Advisors volunteer their time to help local schools develop a strong career programme, helping raise student aspirations and awareness. This intervention looks to increase the number of professionals volunteering from local organisations and would support the development of the future workforce.

Engage and Attract Businesses to Invest in Poulton

While many support local stores people felt the type of new businesses coming into Poulton matters. Plus, the type of offer ensuring it fits with the independent spirit of the town.

Comments suggested that more could be done to attract investors. This intervention looks at collating information about the town centre to help investors understand Poulton's market and demand before investing.

We Need You!

We are asking if you or someone you know is interested in joining the Poulton Partnership and taking part in shaping Poulton's future. This is an exciting opportunity to support community priorities, drive forward new innovative ideas, and be involved with the projects in the Regeneration Framework.

If you are interested in joining the partnership, please email regeneration@wyre.gov.uk

Your Views

We welcome your feedback. Complete our consultation to let us know what you think, to make suggestions, and let us know your priorities. You can do this:

- Online at wyre.gov.uk/haveyoursay
- By filling out a printed consultation form and posting in the box provided

Next Steps

The final report, considering feedback from the consultation, will form the basis for working up detailed project plans and funding bids in the months and years ahead.

These are the second consultation panels that show Poulton's proposed inventions. This includes case study images and site photos, with key topics and public feedback that could improve Poulton's high street

2.5 Summary of Baseline Issues - Strength and Weaknesses

The analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats below is drawn from a review with officers from Wyre Council, public and stakeholder consultation, and consultant team analysis.

It points to the issues that Poulton should address within its built environment, alongside what opportunities can be developed to improve the town centre.

There is clearly a recognition that Poulton needs to address several issues noted. However, there are a good number of strengths and opportunities highlighted which can translate into a broad range of actions that will secure a positive future.

Strengths

- Respectable number of local supermarkets within the town centre, including Booths and Aldi
- Teanlowe Centre is a high-quality shopping centre, with links to Market Place and supermarkets
- Sufficient parking capacity with a distributed number of potentials sites across the town centre
- Nearly all key facilities are within a 10-minute walk from the centre of the town
- Good sports/recreation facilities to the east of the town centre, including the Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park and Poulton Community Hall
- Good quality public transport with a local train station and multiple bus stops (outside Booths) that connect to Blackpool and Preston
- Market Place creates a seamless connection to the market stalls and the shopping centre
- Majority of footfall flows around Poulton's historic centre situated to the east of the town centre
- There are a few national multiples across the clothing, gifts and cards, health and beauty, and homewares sub-sectors. These are complemented by a range of independent retailers
- A number of historic buildings, along Breck Road, Market Place, and south of Blackpool Old Road are well maintained with key building materials and features restored

Weaknesses

- A one-way road loops around the town centre, which can cause traffic disruption and pollution
- Lack of workspace/flexible workspace – multi-functional buildings
- Limited visitor holiday accommodation
- Weak outdoor market offer, majority of footfall sits around the shopping centre and supermarkets
- Ease of movement is poor around certain areas of the town, with narrow pavements and wide roads
- Parking sites are along main roads, causing disruptions
- Poor-quality buildings to the south of Blackpool Old Road, along Chapel Street, and a few outside Booths Supermarket, are not in keeping with the local townscape character and building materials
- Ample cycle storage with no dedicated cycle lanes or road markings to segregate cyclists
- Poor building quality that reduces the townscape quality along the back alley behind Market Place
- Poor views on arrivals from the bus stop outside Booths along Blackpool Old Road
- Poor connections and legibility to shops concealed behind Market Place
- Poor sense of arrival into Poulton from Hardhorn Road, Blackpool Old Road, and Higher Green
- Inconsistent quality and poor connections along Chapel Street compared to the rest of the town centre

Opportunities

- Create opportunities for pop-up events / markets
- Create flexible spaces for education / teaching
- Create a workshop to teach younger people key skills
- Provision of a designated cycle lane
- Improve outdoor market offer, introduce a food / artisan market that serves both residents and visitors
- Improve Queen's Square with better surface treatment and green infrastructure
- Improve surface treatment along Breck Road and Ball Street
- Enhance the existing surface treatment along Market Place
- Integrate digital services (app, wayfinding etc)
- Improve wayfinding and signage
- Apply pedestrian priority around the town centre to improve pedestrian crossing and safety
- Remove parking spaces outside of store fronts and replace with public open space
- Opportunity to add to the key draws which bring people to the town each week
- Cycling clubs already meet in Poulton - opportunity to build on the appeal of Poulton to leisure cyclists
- Strength in being able to catch the train from Poulton is a significant draw
- Opportunity to better understand how people get to and from the town
- Weakness in attractive pedestrian routes between the parks/green spaces and the town centre
- Opportunity to make better use of the pedestrianised area for performances
- Strength in the village style and feel of the town centre, this could be built upon as a character
- Explore opportunities in the new local plan for retail policy to support café culture and outdoor seating during normal daytime retail hours
- Opportunity to look at creating safe walking routes to local schools
- Build on Poulton's biodiversity
- Provide greater education and teaching spaces

Threats

- Gradual decline of the town centre current offer in terms of retail / food offer
- Reduction in town centre visitor numbers due to better visitor offer in nearby Blackpool
- Increase in use of post-pandemic online shopping, reducing the number of shoppers to the main high street stores
- Shopping units becoming vacant in the town centre due to increasing leasehold rentals
- People / Younger People moving away from the local area, reducing the amount of town centre use from local residents
- Lack of employment opportunities within and close to the town centre, making local population commute to nearby town / city centres for employment
- Reduction in the provision of local independent shops within the town centre due to competing offers in other town centres, out-of-town shopping centres, and the growth of online shopping
- Reduction in the townscape quality with the introduction of new developments not in keeping with the historic building materials, form, and density of the town centre
- Reduction in the cultural heritage value of the town due to the amount of through traffic running through Ball and Breck Street and on-street parking making the visitor / shopping experience less attractive
- Lack of planning control on changes to shopfront building façades and boundary treatments, reducing the historic townscape quality of the town

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 Strategic Objectives

3.1 Vision and Strategic Objectives

The Vision for Poulton summarises its future identity and 'offer' is the next step. This must be backed up by a series of Objectives and then a set of Interventions defined – practical measures to take the town forward.

The statement defines a consensus view of how Poulton will be developed over the next 15 years. This will be the reference point against which to show individual ideas and initiatives – i.e., do they help to build The Vision?

3.2 Vision

"We are Poulton. We are a contemporary shopping experience and a thriving evening economy with a strong community spirit. We have a vibrant calendar of events giving us a distinctive identity as a prosperous market town."

3.3 Review of Strategic Objectives

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

Objectives:

1. Deliver high-quality public realm improvements, including a focus on reducing the impact of traffic in order to enhance the pedestrian experience.

2. Make Poulton a sustainable, low-carbon town-aim for best-practice solutions to tackle energy and sustainability.

3. Encourage greater activity and events during the daytime and evening.

4. Build on Poulton's localism, enhancing its current independent retail offer.

5. Actively manage and programme Poulton's Town Centre spaces and places.

6. Promote Poulton's strong community and local heritage.

3.4 High Level Approach To Meeting The Strategic Objectives

The proposed projects start on the day this framework is published. The 10 to 15 years is a long period to programme and deliver a series of interlinked and overlapping interventions that will help Poulton to thrive. The interventions set out later in this document are each described as 'short', 'medium', or 'long-term' actions. 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 hence the possibility of more investment. It is important that the community is involved in the first-phase projects and that the early wins deliver benefits for all parts of the community, importantly including younger people whose commitment and energy will be needed for future phases.

Projects in the first phase should be achievable, 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, and so the groundwork for some of the second phase projects must be laid in the initial phase. This should encourage all parties to '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 complementary 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 - i.e., 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 The Components

4.3 Projects

4.1 Introduction - Overlaps and Synergies

This section considers the different elements or 'components' that combine to create a framework that responds to the town centre regeneration objectives. Each component is a theme, and each has a series of issues and opportunities which are examined. These are then outputted as a series of potential interventions or 'projects'.

However, this approach is simply an organising structure. In practice, the issues and opportunities that effect Poulton do not fit into distinct, separate areas. They are often complex and overlapping. In response, the review of each component therefore highlights key overlaps, and overlaps between different projects are similarly identified. The framework should be considered as a holistic plan for Poulton's future.

Eight components are identified through which the requirements of the brief can be collectively identified. They are:

4.2 Framework Themes

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

Objective	HS1: Public Realm Improvements Strategy	HS2: Wayfinding and Information	HS3: Incorporating Street Details and Playfulness	VE1: Develop the Visitor Economy	VE2: Improve the Monday Street Market Offer	TL1: Fleetwood to Poulton Rail Line	TL2: Improving Transport Facilities for Visitors	TL3: Implementing Cycling and Walking Initiatives	C1: Supporting Local Projects and Initiatives	SLC1: Establishment of a Community Energy Trust	HW1: Develop an Exercise Referral Scheme	HW2: Wyre Moving More Priorities	TD1: Development of a Smart Place Strategy	BS1: Business Support Focused on Energy	BS2: Digital Training for High Street Businesses	BS3: Recruit Enterprise Advisors	BS4: Engage and Attract Businesses to Invest in Poulton
	The High Street			**Visitor Economy**		**Transport & Linkage**			**Community**	**Sustainability & Low Carbon**	**Health & Well-Being**		**Technology & Digital**	**Business Support**			
Deliver high-quality public realm improvements	●	●	●	◐	●	◐	●	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐			◐
Make Poulton a sustainable, low-carbon town	◐	◐		◐	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	◐		●	◐		
Encourage greater activity and events	●	●	◐	●	●	●	●	◐	●		◐						◐
Build on Poulton's localism	●	●	●	●	●	◐		◐	●			◐		◐	◐	◐	◐
Actively manage and programme Poulton's spaces and places	●	●	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	●	◐			◐				◐
Promote Poulton's strong community and local heritage.	◐	◐	◐	●	●		◐	◐	●	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	◐

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 Poulton where the town centre is scattered across multiple places, such as Breck Road, Ball Street, and Market Place.

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

- Cost of living crisis – rising utility costs for businesses that reduces local spending power. This can lead to an increase in vacant stores.
- The growth of online shopping (significantly accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic).
- The reducing presence of national multiples, though this has little or no impact in relation to Poulton.
- The impact of Blackpool City Centre, which is not directly in competition but removes potential footfall from the town.
- Increased car dependence and lack of active modal transport options.
- The pressure of business rents and rates.
- Changing consumer behaviour – shoppers now seek a personalised experience and convenience.
- A move towards the use of more outdoor space in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Breck Road is a focus for the evening and night time economy. Limited day time opening detracts from Breck Road as a key gateway from the railway station into the town centre.
- Shoppers/ visitors using residential roads to park or pass through citing safety issues as a concern.

Responses

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

- Focus on and promote Poulton's unique selling points - its community spirit and local heritage. Build on the existing and make the town special and distinct.
- Encourage regeneration from grassroots groups, building local community capacity and supporting local initiatives.
- Improve the Monday Market offer – localism should be at the heart of this, supporting even more independent retailers, creating more outdoor food and drink offers to encourage people to stay longer and spend more.
- Create memorable experiences - plan a mix of unique and attractive offers and events that align with the best that Poulton has to offer.
- Explore new town centre uses – while Poulton has a lot of space in the town centre, any opportunities should be seized where possible to keep them active and lively.
- Seize new technologies – using these to connect people, not remove human contact from transactions and service delivery.
- Actively manage and programme Poulton's Town Centre, ensuring events are frequent and catered to locals and visitors.
- Maximise opportunities within Market Place, a pedestrian area, for outdoor seating / café culture to support active street.

Poulton should build on what makes it unique and attractive learning from other successful town centre regenerations, including places that have developed a destination food/drink and event offer, with a strong evening economy founded on the re-imagining of a market offer.

Alignment with the Framework Objectives

Independent shops are the essence of towns like Poulton. This framework is proposing growing the local economy, 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 quality of the high street. This will develop momentum to help deliver other interventions within this framework.

The Poulton Partnership Board and local people (such as shop owners and young people) must be involved in the process, with many of the initiatives focused on the high street, which will contribute to making Poulton a more economically active and a sustainable town.

Image of Market Place facing north

Image of Breck Road facing north

4.2.2 Visitor Economy

Challenges

Poulton Town Centre has a strong visitor economy, with people regularly visiting its local markets, events, bars, and restaurants. It is also the only town in Wyre with an active train station, which leads to Blackpool and Preston. While not in direct competition, Poulton should aim to have a distinctive offer and identity to other neighbouring towns.

Poulton also has several local assets such as St Chad's church and Market Place, which provides an attractive opening to the town. However, are these spaces active throughout the day to keep people in the town for longer?

Poulton has a distinctive historic and modern character that helps differentiate itself from other places. However, some areas are difficult to access with narrow pavements and wide roads that stop people from exploring.

The local people value the unique, the characterful, the local, and the 'experiential', - if they are authentic. Poulton has all these qualities; however, it must raise its game in identifying, packaging, and promoting them as a foundation for its future success.

In response to these challenges, and the messages from review of Poulton's baseline position, Poulton's visitor economy should:

- Build upon existing assets – the market, independent traders, historic assets, 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 – i.e., greening the town centre and re-imagining the market offer.

- Pro-actively develop signature events, build relationships with existing local groups.

- Explore options to create more community / social spaces and facilities.

- Ensure that the cultural and tourist economy is supported by excellent digital infrastructure – marketing, skills, and social networks by supporting and promoting digitally.

Alignment with the Regeneration Framework Objectives

Poulton's heritage and culture is central to its objectives around 'encouraging greater activity and events' and to 'actively manage and program Poulton's spaces and places', but more than this, it is a fundamental aspect of the town's self-image and essential for Poulton to be defined as a distinct, differentiated, and attractive town.

The key point is to better capitalise on the town's physical assets i.e., its public spaces, and historical 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.

Image of Poulton station facing north

4.2.3 Transport & Linkage

Challenges

Poulton is well connected (by bus, car and rail) to its surrounding settlements; and as a town centrally located and readily accessible by car to Blackpool, Lytham St Annes, and the Fylde Coast.

Poulton like many areas suffers from a high reliance on private car use, this is one of the reasons why the road network is congested. Focusing on interventions that reduce vehicle dependency should be looked at first as this will be visible to residents.

Liaison with Lancashire County Council as the highway and transport authority could be improved. This is particularly important 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 streets (Ball Street and Blackpool Old Road) to the detriment of the pedestrian / customer experience.

Car parking within the town centre is plentiful, however, many areas of the town are overflowing with vehicles. There is also a shortage of affordable long-stay parking and an over reliance on time-limited supermarket car parking. This prevents longer stays in the town centre and other linked trips, limiting the visitor offer. Overall capacity for events is also a frequent concern.

There are no cycle lanes or dedicated routes within the town centre despite a number of cycle storage facilities dotted around local supermarkets.

Plans for transition to more sustainable, low-carbon forms of travel should also be a consideration, which could include options to re-open the disused rail line that runs to Fleetwood.

Responses

Considering these challenges and the messages from the review of Poulton's baseline position, Poulton's transport and linkages response should include:

- Improving both the strategic connectivity and road issues must be priorities for the Regeneration Framework. This is closely linked to the public realm improvement strategy which would tackle road alignments and road widths.

- The disused rail line provides an opportunity to scope out potential uses such as cycleway / tram line / rail line. Any option would reduce car dependency and provide a sustainable mode of transport for residents.

- In addition to community-led measures, there is an opportunity for Poulton to promote active travel, potentially including new cycle and walking routes and facilities.

- Explore the development of a 'pedestrian priority' approach to key shopping areas (also considered under 'High Street' theme).

- Undertake a town centre car parking study to explore options for low-cost, long-term parking, including car charging points.

Alignment with the Framework Objectives

Improved strategic connectivity, including community transport and sustainable, active travel is central to meeting objectives for a low-carbon town. This is important if Poulton is to maximise its role as a local area service centre and be an inclusive community offering access and opportunity to all.

Reducing 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.

4.2.4 Community

Challenges

Poulton is a relatively affluent town with a mix of different age groups. The town is relatively safe with a strong sense of community; this can be seen with Poulton Community Hall which provides a number of activities for a variety of age groups and disabilities. These groups play a key role in keeping the town active, providing a place where individuals can exercise and receive support for their physical and mental health.

Both Poulton 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 Poulton, 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 therefore not as engaged in the community.

There is a long-term problem with Poulton's younger generation who are likely to leave for further education and not return. There are skilled workers who understand Poulton and could provide training and support for the local community. It important to retain talent and younger people who could become the next generation of community leaders.

Poulton is also starting to attract first-time homeowners who are generally used to working from home. This trend has accelerated since the end of lockdown as workers can now operate further out from the city centre.

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

- In light of these challenges, and the messages from the review of Poulton's baseline position, Poulton's community response should include:

- For Poulton Town Centre to thrive the town must harness its evident community spirit, find new opportunities for 'grassroots' interventions as well as channels for local influence on other projects. Achieving a high standard of safety during the evening will help change the opinion of local people who see Poulton's night life as a negative. This requires good coordination and preparation between shop owners and the local authority to reduce the number of disturbances and change the perception of Poulton's night life economy.

- In the short term, Poulton must focus on achieving goals that are within the town's control – i.e., create a town centre award scheme to highlight individual contributions that have supported the community. Demonstrating some 'quick wins' will be important to establish community confidence and engagement.

- Poulton Community Hall is a key venue where local activities are held. These are important to the community and therefore should be enhanced where appropriate to sustain events in the long term.

- At the time of writing, Cottam Hall is looking to improve its facilities to provide a better leisure offer. Cottam Hall is one of the largest open spaces in Poulton and it should look to maximise its potential by hosting events and improving people's physical and mental health.

- Visible changes to the public realm can be the clearest sign that Poulton is improving. Small improvements such as greening the high street, can alter how a place feels and how people behave in that environment. Greening streets can also affect where people travel, and for how long. The first impressions of Poulton matter to first-time visitors ensuring the high street looks appealing.

- 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 Poulton. Championing individual or group contributions, 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 & 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 27 held in Egypt in November 2022 brought this into sharper focus.

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

''Wyre target is to rapidly reduce emissions to 78% by 2035, before achieving net zero 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 and businesses

•   Proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net zero carbon new development.

Poulton's future development plans must consider what contributions they can make in response.

Domestic energy use in Poulton 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 relatively poor public transport and rural nature of Wyre places a high reliance on private car use.

Responses

Energy

•   Focus on building retrofit (insulation and energy-saving measures).

•   Promote a shift to more low-carbon energy sources, including solar photovoltaic on suitable domestic and commercial roofs.

•   Promote a shift to domestic heat pumps, in addition to solar PV, in lieu of gas- or oil-fired boilers.

•   Establish net zero/low carbon goals for all new initiatives.

Transport

•   Infrastructure investment for electric, and possibly some hydrogen, vehicles.

•   Make Poulton a location of choice for remote working (thereby reducing travel) and promote the co-benefits of this.

•   Promote low-carbon 'active travel' (also noted under the 'Transport and Linkages' theme).

Other

•   Promote the environmental, economic, and social 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 and water etc).

Alignment with Framework Objectives

It is a strategic objective that Poulton becomes a sustainable, low-carbon town. This is not just an environmental objective (which includes a response to the ever-growing challenge to climate change), but also encompasses social and economic issues. There is a strong overlap with the opportunities provided through business support 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 (Business Support). However, whilst the response to many of the themes will influence the future success of Poulton Town Centre, responses to sustainability will have a much wider resonance.

4.2.6 Health & Well-Being

Challenges

The Regeneration Framework is an opportunity to properly consider the role that health and wellbeing plays in the success of a town. It's a theme 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, with measures to improve health outcomes through spatial planning 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 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 three priorities that include:

1. Planning and designing a healthy built environment (public spaces)

2. Creating innovative models of healthcare, and

3. Encouraging strong and connected communities

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 management of good health is moving from treatment of illness to prevention, without it our healthcare system is at risk of becoming unsustainable with the ever-growing waiting lists. This, together with Poulton's growing older demographic, provides the need to identify and implement new ideas that will not only impact individual wellbeing, but help evolve Poulton as a healthy and active community.

Success will be characterised by:

- Healthy environments that promote active living;

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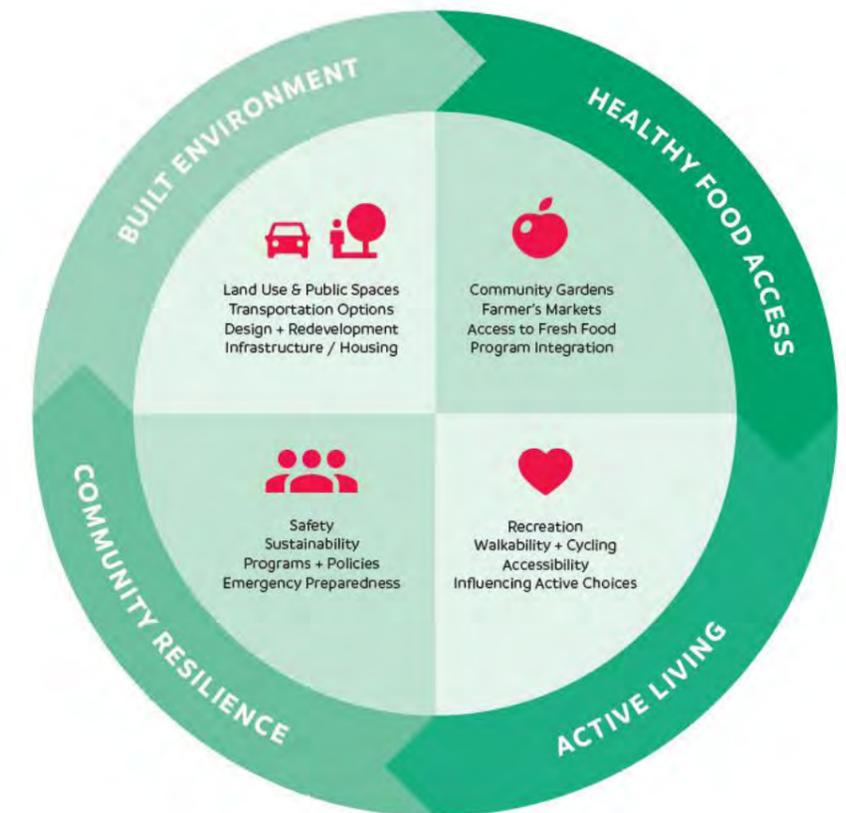
NHS England publication 'Putting Health into Place' - The images illustrates the components of a healthy community

4.2.7 Technology & Digital

Challenges

Digital technology is now a fundamental part of so many aspects of life and the trend is continuing. However, access is not always evenly distributed, and some groups are often more digitally disadvantaged than others – older people and lower income groups 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 Poulton as a location for post-pandemic flexible working, making it attractive for young families.

The move to digital has been mixed. Positive impacts include better-managed traffic, parking, or utilities. However, in many places there have been negative impacts also (as seen in Poulton's high street); i.e., the loss of retail functions and the moving online of services such as banking, insurance, travel agency and post office counter transactions. The effect has 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. Poulton Town Centre is coping well with these changes as other high street names have taken up vacant store quickly. The focus will be on the positive opportunities for technology to help Poulton thrive.

The location or 'geography' of many digital initiatives will thus be wider than the town centre. It may be appropriate to consider a consistent response to the digital agenda at a borough-wide level.

Responses

In response to these challenges, and the messages from review of Poulton's baseline position, Poulton's technology & digital theme should:

- Ensure that Poulton has excellent digital infrastructure and connectivity. Opportunities to build this into all town centre interventions should be considered.

- Promote a comprehensive programme of digital skills and training.

- Support to be offered to link businesses/ residents with digital skills offers.

- 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 across the short and longer term, across a borough-wide level.

Alignment with Framework Objectives

Digital technology will have an influence on the town's ability to meet all its objectives. It will support the local community to plan future events, achieve a level of sustainability with new technologies, and provide data-driven solutions. It is important therefore that this theme area is considered in a strategic manner, with reference to all other Framework themes.

Watch point

It should be noted that the pace of change in digital technology is accelerating and so opportunities for new technology 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 Support

Challenges

While many of Poulton's businesses are performing well, over recent years businesses have faced a mix of challenges such as the pandemic, a rise in rents and business rates, cost of living crisis, and the growth of online retail; all of these have hindered economic growth and affected the day-to-day footfall in the town centre. This is hampered by the fact Poulton's building stock is old and inefficient and needs improvement.

This section will consider opportunities for businesses and how the benefits of other interventions can strengthen the local economy. Review of previous framework themes has considered how Poulton can leverage its community greening strategy, strong independent retail offer, historic assets, and market opportunities.

Poulton has a moderately-sized town centre compared to other neighbouring areas such as Blackpool. This doesn't significantly affect Poulton's economic performance as many local businesses thrive. However, this does affect certain sectors such as hotel and accommodation.

Compared to other areas, Poulton lacks strong digital infrastructure and local skills, which are increasingly important to all businesses. Additionally, the lack of employment space means skilled workers are likely to move elsewhere. Any potential sites should be carefully considered to maximise employment and ensure it benefits the local area.

Reviving Poulton's reputation as a market town (or similar emphasis) could be a valuable differentiator.

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

Responses

In response to these challenges and messages, the business support theme should focus on:

- Providing a series of measures to support businesses with their energy needs. This is necessary as the cost of the living crisis has forced some stores to close due to higher utility costs, alongside renting old buildings that have a high maintenance costs.

- Digital training for the high street, can help support their services and brand. This could involve training to create new digital content, such as web pages or digital applications.

- Mentoring young people with essential skills to give them real-life expertise with Enterprise Advisors.

- Enticing businesses to move and invest in Poulton, providing open-source information on the town's economic performance.

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.

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

5. Framework Projects

What

A phased strategy, implementing a high-quality public realm and pedestrian priority scheme, targeting local spaces around Poulton (see map overleaf). The boundary of works would extend to other key spaces such as Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park and Poulton Community Hall. Road improvements should aim to expand the pavements along the high street, removing on-street parking. Allowing businesses to move outdoors and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Works will include new surface materials and low kerb edges, blurring the designation between footpath and highway, to encourage greater use of the space and slowing vehicle speeds (or redirecting traffic). Works also include improved road alignments (i.e., along Blackpool Old Road, Ball Street and Chapel Street), improvements to local infrastructure, additional green features, and street furniture.

Queen's Square and the public realm outside Booths are both important public spaces that function as a bridge between key roads and other town centre facilities. By introducing new surface treatments, street furniture, and diverse types of green infrastructure, will improve the attractiveness and overall pedestrian experience in the town. By introducing new surface treatments, street furniture, and diverse types of green infrastructure, will improve the attractiveness and overall pedestrian experience in the town.

Improvements to Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park could include more sustainable and biodiverse planting and trees, surface treatment works, seating, Multi Use Games Area and play area.

Other area of works include:

- Placement of digital screens and new signage that should reflect Poulton's character and heritage.

- Enhancing the landscape and paving around the Rail station along Breck Road, and adjacent bus stops. These would include new landscaping and street furniture and should be incorporated in parallel with the other public realm works.

- Improvements to gateways/entrances, improving the appearance of the town centre when first entering.

Why

Taking a phased approach means the local authority can target areas of the town centre that need improvements rather than applying them to other areas that are already thriving. An assessment to fully understand how certain spaces perform will help prioritise which areas to target first. This assessment can be based on spending, vacancy rate, quality of space, and local opinion. This approach can help bring new uses along areas like Market Place, increasing footfall in the area which would attract pedestrians to other areas of Poulton. This assessment would also help form a long-term strategy for Poulton's public realm.

Poulton already has a well performing night-time economy. However, different areas perform better than others. For example, Breck Road has a stronger retail offer and night life. This intervention looks to connect spaces and to distribute people around the town centre during all hours. It aims to encourage exploration, improve spend and dwell time.

The road network around Poulton currently discourages people to cross and explore. This issue can be isolated to Poulton's loop road network, turning vehicles from Queensway onto Blackpool Old Road holds up traffic on Queensway and those attempting to enter or leave the Townlowe shopping centre.. This intervention aims to enhance Poulton's roads and crossings, by creating seamless connections to improving pedestrian confidence. Short stay waiting provision are important and relevant for local businesses therefore any changes should consider local needs first.

The areas of works should include local facilities such as the Poulton Community Hall and Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park. This would encourage people to explore beyond the core town centre and venture further out.

Some roads such as Ball Street and Old Blackpool Road are intrinsic to the provision of public transport and should be considered when making future changes.

Image of Queens Square - facing west

Image of Blackpool Old Road - facing west

How and Who

Improvements will require collaboration with Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council, any detailed design work requires consultation with, amongst others, officers from Wyre Council, local transport groups, local businesses and residents, utilities companies and companies and disability groups. New highway schemes will require full Road Safety Audit, early engagement on TRO's, Equality Impact Assessment and alignment with Lancashire County Council Palette of Materials. Lancashire County Council would maintain the public realm the public realm and assets.

Relevant Landowners should be consulted on any planned works such as the public square by Teanlowe car park. Engagement with young people should be explored early on, with design exercises to see how the future generations would use the town centre.

Timescale

Target design and delivery in the 'short term'. This intervention is an important statement of intent for the regeneration of Poulton Town Centre. It is the most visible sign of improvement as it can deliver immediate economic and social benefits as it can deliver immediate economic and social benefits.
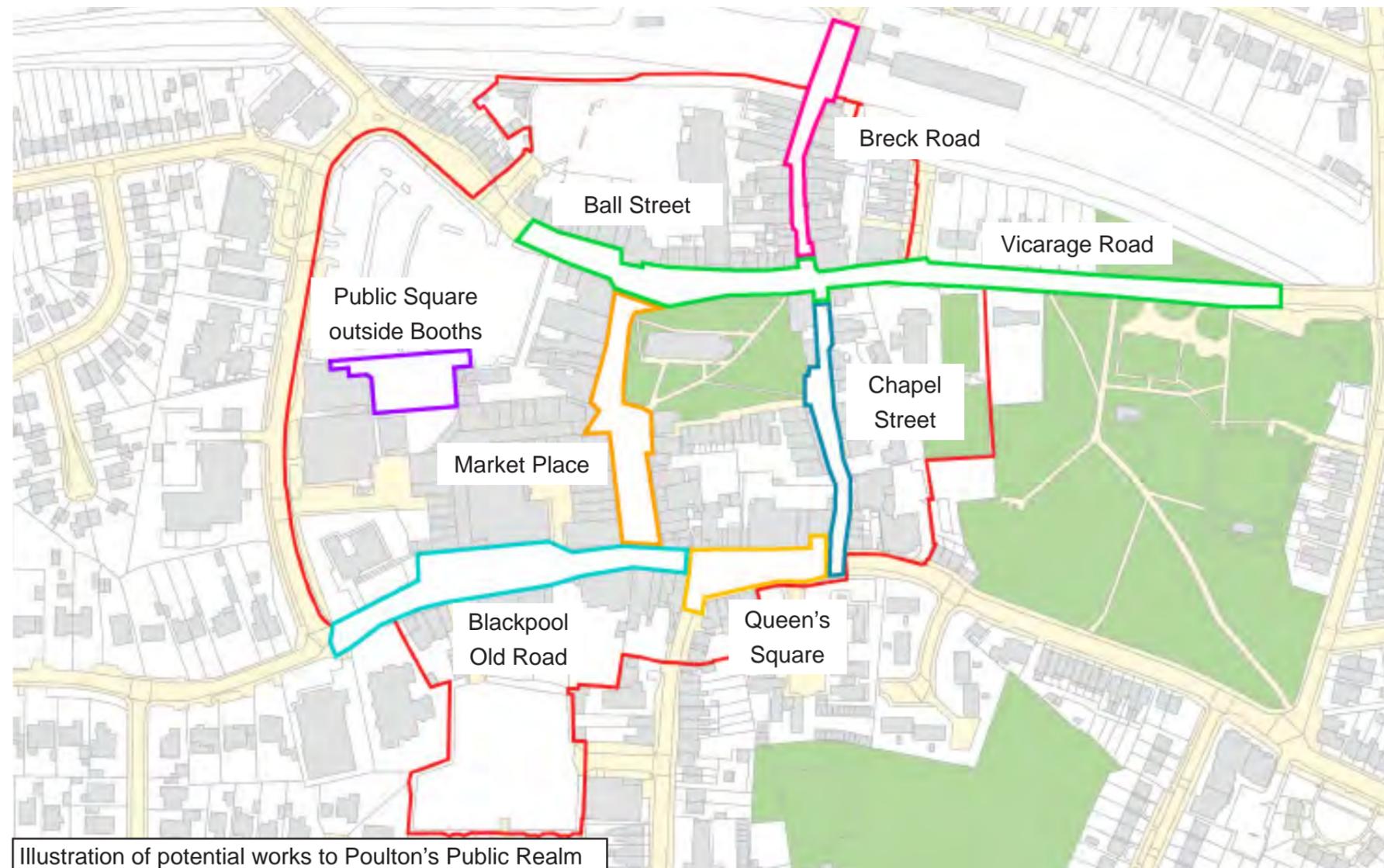
Precedent

Frodsham Street, Chester – their public realm improvement included the removal of carriageway designation and a move to a 'pedestrian priority' environment. This turned a very secondary trading street into a much more vibrant public space, with consequent improvements to economic activity.

Image of Exchange Place - Kidderminster

Image of Frodsham Street - "before"

Image of Frodsham Street - "After"

Breck Road

Ball Street

Vicarage Road

Public Square outside Booths

Chapel Street

Market Place

Blackpool Old Road

Queen's Square

Illustration of potential works to Poulton's Public Realm
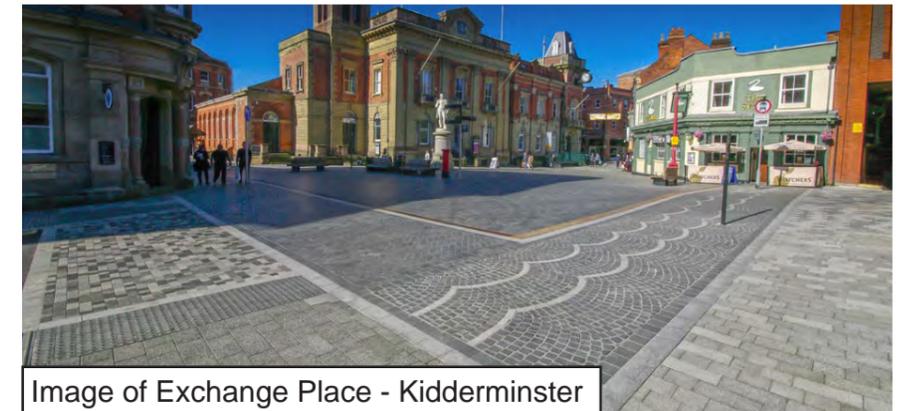
1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm
1) Public Realm Improvements Strategy - Improvements to Market Place

What

This intervention seeks to review the current quality of Market Place and whether there is a need for improved surface treatments, alongside, event infrastructure and new street furniture such as benches and planters. This can include historical and wayfinding features such as totems and historical trails (see intervention overleaf).

In addition, a set of well designed stalls that are moveable would be placed in a coordinated arrangement to allow people to flow. These outdoor stalls would continue to support Poulton's independent brands/local produce, subject to review of improving the layout and surface treatment along Market Place.

Market Place is an appropriate setting for a food market and use of existing premises for a café and restaurant provision. It was highlighted throughout the public consultation that a strong food offer in Market Place should be an anchor for locals and visitors. The space is the only other pedestrianised space within Poulton, which means there are opportunities for daytime activities that can be supported by community groups; bringing life and activity to a key space within the town centre.

Why

Improvements to Market Place, its surface materials, street furniture, and planting quality have been highlighted through the consultation as one of Poulton's declining places and is in need of a refresh. It's a major area that sees the largest footfall flow through the town, therefore, any improvements will be the first visible sign of regeneration.

Throughout the public consultation, many strongly voiced a need for a strong food offer along Market Place. There is clearly a gap in the market in Poulton for such an outdoor food market as mentioned previously in the analysis. Permanent use of existing premises for a day and evening café and restaurant offer that maximise opportunities for outdoor seating without compromising the market is an opportunity. Market Place would become an anchor for locals and visitors making it a lively and active space.

At the time of writing, the former police station along Market Place has submitted a planning application proposing a new food hall. This would support the framework's proposals.

How and Who

Improvements to public realm will require collaboration with Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council. This intervention would also be supported by Wyre Council Markets team, market operators, and Poulton Partnership.

Timescale

Improvements to Market Place would be a medium-to long-term project. The timetable of these improvements would align with the 'Public Realm Improvements Strategy'. 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.

Precedent

Wythenshawe's pop-up food market serves a number of cuisines, with space for local bands. It attracts visitors from outside Manchester, building upon existing offers bringing something new to the town.

Image of Wythenshawe's pop-up food market

Image of Wythenshawe's pop-up music event

1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

2) Wayfinding and Information

What

Measures to help orientate visitors around the town centre, connecting users with key events and offers. This can take the form of digital signage providing opportunities to display real-time information and advertising for local businesses. Digital signage can also help visitors discover new local shops, find nearby parking, show public transport information, and highlight key events.

Other forms of signage and detailing could include bespoke physical signage with traditional/historic pictures displaying Poulton's heritage. These come in a range of colours and materials that can complement Poulton's historic townscape. A physical and interactive map (one for the day and one for the night) of Poulton can help highlight venues and places of interest that are open till late. Another feature to improve the look of the high street could include temporary imagery on vacant shop windows to animate the space.

How and Who

At the time of writing, Wyre Council is working on the installation of a digital sign to be located at Market Place. This intervention should build upon these initiatives ensuring that they are shaped and managed with the input of the Poulton Partnership and other local stakeholders. In addition, any digital signs on the highway would require relevant licences from LCC.

Why

At the time of writing, wayfinding in Poulton is limited to directional signage. This is sometimes hard to find, missing completely in some areas, or does not show all of what Poulton has to offer. Good wayfinding helps people with exploration, discovery and encourages longer dwell time. The use of digital signage can highlight local events and help business with promotion and sales.

The design of the wayfinding signs should tie-in with Poulton's identity and localism, helping people discover new offers or new places of interest. Locally distinctive signage can also show that the town is improving. Additionally, providing new features to the public, can help generate interest in the town's development.

Timescale

A wayfinding and information strategy could be a 'quick win' within the public realm improvement strategy.

Precedent

Manchester City Council implemented a series of display boards around Sadler's Yard. These are located at a number of entrances and around the area to guide first-time visitors. The displays include information regarding the wider context, helping guide people to local transport in the city centre, museums, public squares, and parking areas. Trails are available online for users to understand the length and terrain conditions.
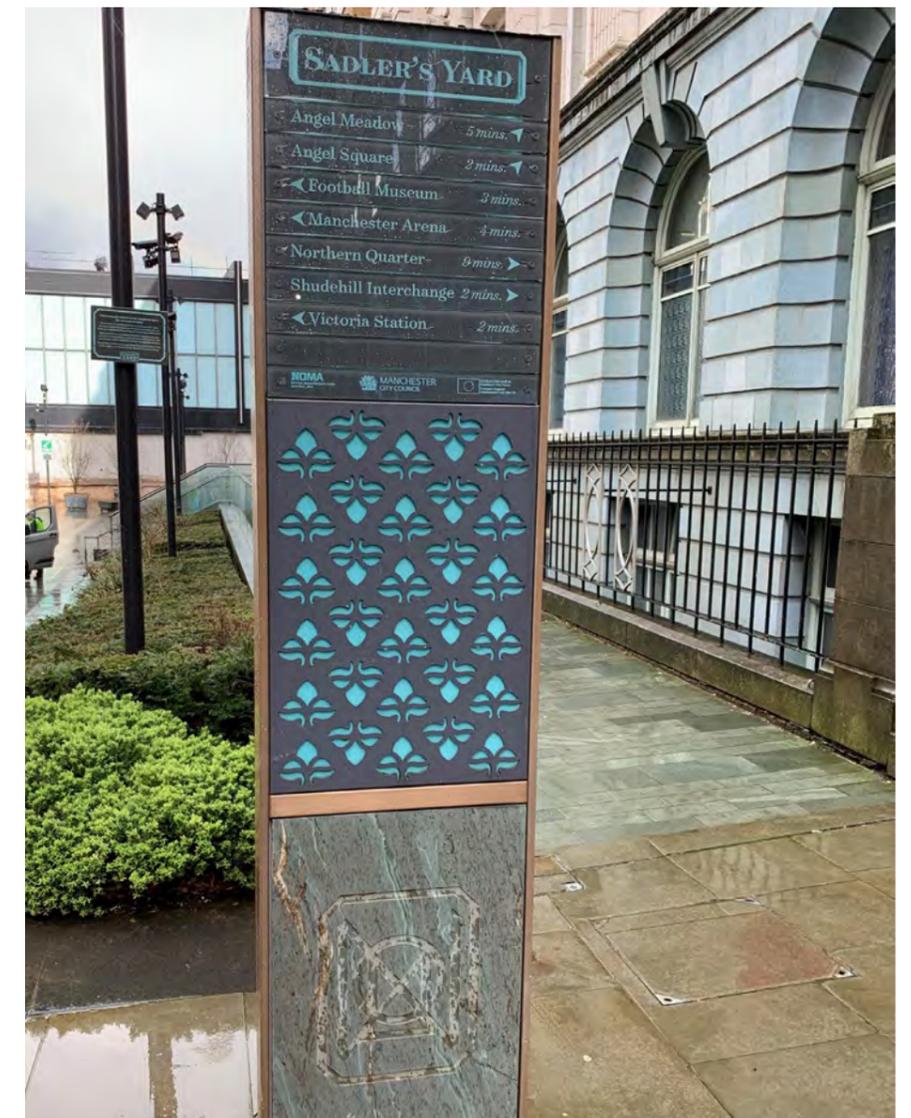
Image of high quality bespoke signage in Sadler's Yard, Manchester

1. The High Street - Environment and Public Realm

3) Incorporating Street Details and Playfulness

What

Celebrating Poulton's character and heritage with bespoke street furniture and details. These can include street art and details with engravings to explain Poulton's history. Other features could include subtle motifs in the surface materials that lead users on a heritage trail to key buildings. Implementing these designs must reflect Poulton's historic features and should be subtle in its approach.

This intervention links to the public realm works (see previous proposals) ensuring Poulton's heritage is secured through design.

Why

Visitors seek out places that are unique and special, that have 'local distinctiveness.' These designs would tell Poulton's story about its history as a market town. This intervention also looks to build on Poulton's existing historic plaques around the town centre that explain the history of that place.

Poulton already has a strong focus on history. However, there is a lack of historic detail with most spaces not fitting within the historic built environment. 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 Poulton with a unique selling point.

The majority of the town centre is covered by a conservation area. Therefore, any new historic details should be in-keeping with the current townscape.

How and Who

The Public Realm Improvements Strategy (with potential sub-projects noted on subsequent pages) will require collaboration or partnership with Lancashire County Council as highways authority and Wyre Council, and local groups 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, local businesses and residents, disability access groups and heritage groups.

Project lead and commissioning - Wyre Council working with Lancashire County Council.

Timescale

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

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 hometown of the originator of 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).
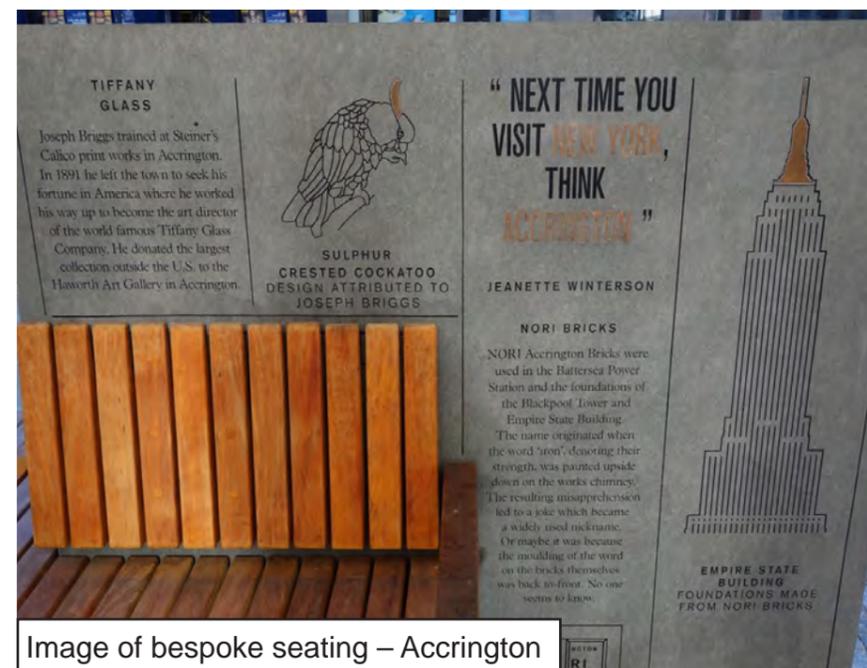
Image of bespoke seating – Accrington

Image of Altrincham's market town details

2. Visitor Economy

1) Develop the Visitor Economy - Enhancing the Events Calender and Links with Local Groups

What

The proposal is to review Poulton's existing events calendar and strengthen links with local community groups. This ensures local events remain relevant and respond to changing circumstances and expectations. It is also an opportunity to consider how existing and potential new events align with and support The Vision and objectives set out in the framework. These events would target younger people ensuring inclusion for all age groups.

Poulton already hosts a number of large and small events year-round. These smaller events are held at places such as Poulton Community Hall, while larger events take place at Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park. This intervention would build on the existing event offer and proposals for a new 'signature event' that could have a family focus. Improving the event offer regionally to attract local people and visitors on a regular basis. This should be different from the current event offers to appeal to new groups, particularly from outside Poulton. It should appeal to young people and importantly drive spending in the local economy.

An arts and culture programme working alongside local groups, schools, and community groups to develop content for locally curated projects. This would create a strong relationship with Poulton Community Hall and Poulton Library. This would make use of public spaces to give more life and activity; ideally along Market Place which sees the majority of footfall in the town centre.

Precedent

Out There Arts performs annual events that include street arts and circus and regularly attracts audiences in excess of 60,000 people. There are classes that include young people who perform at the events. They deliver an arts development function for Great Yarmouth Borough Council, developing the town as an International Centre of Excellence for circus and street arts creation, training, and delivery.

Why

The current calendar includes events such as 'Poulton Christmas Festival' and 'Poulton Gala', alongside local events at the Poulton Community Hall such as 'Street dance for kids' and 'Community Pilates'. These are popular, but as noted they should be periodically reviewed, updated, or in some cases expanded upon. There is still space in the events calendar for something that could be theatre and culture focused. The aim is to grow the number and diversity of people attending and more importantly increase spending in the town.

While there are number of large events in Poulton that have huge local support, there is potential to identify a new site (outside the town centre) to accommodate a large number of people. This could potentially be Cottam Hall, which has the capacity for large-scale events. However, any new site should be near to the town centre to redirect car and foot traffic to reduce the number of conflicts. It is important that any events are effectively managed and can cope with high demand.

Strengthening links with local groups is essential for this intervention to succeed in the long term. This can be achieved through collaboration and sharing ideas with key stakeholders to keep the events calendar refreshed. There is potential for a joint promotion/partnership (i.e., pubs with 'Foodie Friday') to help with repeat visitors, giving them a reason to return to Poulton.

An arts and culture programme can help support Poulton to be a place that people can live, work and visit. It strengthens community cohesion and give it a sense of belonging. There are obvious economic benefits to attracting visitors to the town, and running the programmes annually and keeping them constantly refreshed should ensure repeat visitors.

How and Who

Led by Wyre Council working closely with local groups and young people to establish a brief, scope project objectives, and identify funding opportunities and supportive stakeholders. Collaboration with groups like Marketing Lancashire can help with marketing and communications, and place marketing to grow the visitor economy. 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 with relevant community groups and scoping of new events 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.

Image of the 'Out There Arts' performances and on site events

2. Visitor Economy

2) Improve the Monday Street Market Offer

What

Introducing a variety of market offers, with focus on food, and arts and crafts. Explore opportunities to update both the appearance of the markets and the offers available, including a a young traders section.

Expanding the number of specialist markets held through the year should be explored, to attract repeat visitors. Additionally, the incorporation of a moveable shelter along Market Place would help expand the number of stalls and provide cover for customers in adverse weather.

Tie in with the events calendar, so markets are open during this period to capture the footfall and increase revenue. This could include an outdoor event along Market Place, making use of the pedestrianised space and creating a signature local event.

Why

Poulton market is known for its offer of mixed of retailers, such as fruit and vegetables, homewares, clothes, and accessories. Current Market opening times are restricted to Monday morning till late afternoon, and are situated outside along Market Place and outside Booths. Poulton has a good pedestrian space to grow. Focusing on a food market would thrive in Poulton, this can supplement its current offer rather than replacing it, whilst improving its look, feel and general quality of experience.

Poulton has a strong customer base which supports the local market and its local traders. Market Place already has a strong social environment with stall's providing good value for money. More recently people now spend more time in café's and eat out, it is sensible to invest and amend the current market offer. Ensuring it remains relevant and adaptable to changing consumer demands.

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 'artisan' with a strong focus on local provenance and street food.

How and Who

The improvements to the markets should be led by the Wyre Council Markets team . Input from external advisors would be beneficial in recognising the full potential of the opportunity and developing proposals – particularly in co-ordinating proposals with other Framework interventions.

Engagement with young people should be explored early on, with design exercises to see how the future generations envision Poulton's market offer.

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 and restrictions of the Market Charter.

Precedent

Stockport Old Town Food Friday is a distinctive and popular outdoor market event. It hosts a number of food and drinks venues with live entertainment. The event is popular and appeals to all ages, the event helps populate the area with activity and life.

Images of the Stockport Old Town Foodie friday in an outdoor setting with tents and vendors

3. Transport & Linkage

1) Fleetwood to Poulton Rail Line

What

The intervention aims to support the reopening of the disused Fleetwood-Poulton railway line, options currently being heavy rail, light rail, or a tram system. Any of these options would significantly improve connectivity, reduce car dependency, and lower emissions.

Adopting a new environmental mode of transport for the line would connect commuters to neighbouring towns using a sustainable and affordable mode of transport for local people.

Options could include a new heavy rail or a light rail network, or a tram system. Any of these options would significantly improve connectivity and reduce car dependency. Therefore, more work should be undertaken to explore options for low-cost, long-term parking (see next intervention).

Why

The impacts of this intervention are wide ranging. Making Poulton and the surrounding areas easier to access for commuting would be of local and regional appeal. Existing commuters choosing to access Poulton by the reopened rail line would have indirect benefits of reducing car use and congestion at peak hours and improving air quality.

This intervention also supports the aim to be carbon zero by 2050 by moving towards alternative solutions that reduce Poulton's overall carbon footprint.

This intervention has overlaps and synergies with other framework initiatives, such as:

- Health and Well-being – improving accessibility and activity.

- Environment – reduction in vehicle use and improved air quality.

- Visitor Economy – improved links to the Poulton retail will also benefit the wider economy including improving visitor numbers to 'Monday Markets' and, therefore, supporting a 'local' economy.

- Public Transport – Creating more low-carbon modes of transport that provides connection to the wider area.

- Business – Better connections increase attractiveness for investment and employment opportunities.

How and Who

Scope and feasibility study to understand costs and issues. Network Rail will lead this in consultation with Lancashire County Council, Wyre Council, and other key stakeholders.

Timescale

This intervention will be a long-term project, subject to external funding decisions and priorities. Its promotion and initial supporting studies should be a shorter-term target.

Precedent

Oldham West and Royton developed two extensions connecting to the Manchester Metrolink system. The project aimed to connect Rochdale to the Middleton Town Centre and the Ashton Loop to extend beyond into Oldham Mumps. These two extensions increased employment and economic activity and brought new sites into use, and enabled people to connect to other education and healthcare services.

3. Transport & Linkage

2) Improving Transport Facilities for Visitors

What

This intervention aims to attract visitors to the centre by improving car access to parking and out of town sites.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points & Parking

This section intends to explore the addition of new sites for parking to meet increased visitor demand. Alongside this, would be the provision and distribution of electric charging infrastructure. These sites would include vehicle charging points to meet the move to electric vehicles.

The strategy would place Poulton as a low-carbon / zero-carbon town. This would apply to existing and proposed car parks and parking bays, supplying rapid charging capabilities. Potential to link any future renewable energy generation to car charging points.

Shuttle

There is currently no shuttle service within Poulton Town Centre. However, there are opportunities at Cottam Hall to host live events.

Using a shuttle service to transport visitors to and from the event would reduce the demand for parking.

The intervention should be considered over a 10 to 15-year period and with long-term data collection to predict pattern of development and increased growth.

Why

Poulton has several large parking sites such as Teanlowe car park, Aldi, and around Wheatsheaf Way, with more on-street parking along key shopping areas. These are often full at peak time causing drivers to park down local streets. A study should be undertaken to understand the numbers of visitors and parking capacity in the town centre, during different seasons and local events.

While the town centre has significant issues in regard to traffic, it does show a high level of economic activity. It must, therefore, plan for future parking demand and potentially safeguard areas of land. This might include areas of increased activity around Cottam Hall Playing field, Jean Stanfield Vicarage Park, and Poulton Rail Station.

By 2035, central government will place a ban on all new petrol and diesel cars. This intervention requires a plan to transition to electric vehicles, and to consider how the infrastructure needed will be provided. Charging points after 2035 will increase in demand and therefore, it is important to be 'ahead of the pack'.

Encouraging more events for younger people would also require consideration for extra parking and pedestrian movements and would need to be out of the town centre. An emphasis should also be on encouraging the younger demographic to access the existing public transport facilities in Poulton.

The Darwen EV Infrastructure Startegy considers future demand for charging infrastructure and locations for different types of charging needs. Helping Poulton understand the size and type of public infrastructure required, informing the business case for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. The LEVI funding would provide low powered charging units for people to charge at home or nearby. Targeting residential areas or sites that will serve local residents.

How and Who

Lancashire County Council are due to lead a county-wide Elective Vehicle Strategy to inform plans for further installation of electric charging points. To date electric charging points have been installed at Wheatsheaf Way Car Park, on Blackpool Old Road and at the Civic Centre Car Park.

Timescale

The visitor infrastructure strategy should be an early piece of work to inform other initiatives and future development. The recommendations of the strategy should be addressed so that they can be phased to meet requirements.

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 the Dundee charging hub

3. Transport & Linkage

3) Implementing Cycling and Walking Initiatives

What

The intervention has a number of aims to achieve better safety, more connected routes that lead to key local services and transport nodes, better air quality, less strain on public services, and providing an enjoyable and leisurely route for users, to encourage more active travel (i.e., walking and wheeling).

Improving cycling routes must be a part of the public realm projects by creating space for linking key routes, making it safer, accessible, and enjoyable to cycle. By enhancing the current cycling experience should also tie in with local community activities, this will get people of all ages and abilities to move with ease.

This intervention should align with the Fylde Coast Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) vision and objectives.

To note, improving cycling and walking infrastructure will be difficult when restricting vehicle movements or narrowing of roads. Consderation should be made regarding congestion and the pressures on the existing parking infrastructure.

Why

Precedent

Liverpool introduced its 'Cycling Revolution' in 2014 as a 12-year plan.

Greater Manchester 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 10-year period.

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

There are no national cycle routes in Poulton. However, there are a number of cycle storage solutions spread across the town centre. This will ensure a clear connection to local services and transport, and should attract residents and visitors. An effort should be made to expand the cycle network outside the town centre and connect to existing routes. This would better position Poulton to attract leisure cyclists and improve its visitor offer. This intervention also has clear health and well-being benefits and would support a mode shift from car use to cycling and walking.

At the time of writing, the emerging Fylde Coast LCWIP proposals include a long-term plan to provide the district with an Active Travel strategy. The local authority is championing connectivity in the borough, ensuring locals have access to high-quality active travel routes. This will help pinpoint key interventions that have been assessed and appraised as part of the LCWIP process and may be eligible for DfT funding (Active Travel Fund).

How and Who

Lancashire County Council would lead as highway's authority with support from Wyre Council. Opportunity for engagement and participation by a wide range of transport groups, community and environmental groups.

Timescale

Implementing the cycle/walking strategy will be in the long term, with recommendations starting in the short term. This will be linked to the delivery of other initiatives i.e., public realm improvements. In the interim, the local authority could look to coordinate with local groups who can plan events. Actively promote greater walking and cycling as part of the Wyre Moving More strategy, highlighting potential routes for visitors, and cycling enthusiasts.

Planning for future activities in the short term can support the events calendar, with new local cycling and walking initiatives. The town will need to prepare for an increase in cyclists by providing additional cycle storage in the town centre. Alongside this, new and popular routes should be highlighted for locals to try; this can be promoted through Wyre Community News, and the Discover Wyre and Wyred Up business network.

Image of Transport For Greater Manchester cycle hub

4. Community

1) Supporting Local Projects and Initiatives - Achieving Purple Flag status

What

Achieving Purple Flag status means managing and coordinating the town centre's nightlife. Ensuring the town meets a high standard of safety and is welcoming for all sectors. A successful town would have a number of activities throughout the day as well as the evening.

Prioritising public safety during late hours is crucial with the ability to move around the centre by foot with ease. This is achieved by providing activity such as food and drink, entertainment, and leisure to a diverse mix of ages, groups, lifestyles, and cultures. A night map would be ideal to highlight activity during those hours, this could link to the digital signage proposal.

This intervention would need strong leadership to organise, lead, and ensure the long-term management of achieving Purple Flag status year on year.

Why

Achieving Purple Flag status would raise Poulton's profile and enhance its public image. It would increase visitor numbers, lower crime and anti-social behaviour, and improve the perceptions of the town centre.

Other benefits include:

- Attract a wider consumer base.

- Increased expenditure.

- Create a more successful mixed-use economy in the longer term.

How and Who

The key to achieving Purple Flag status requires strong leadership and co-ordinated management. Plus, surpassing standards of excellence in managing the town centre ensures it maintains a high standard of safety.

This would be led by local traders and community organisations with support from Wyre Council to coordinate and improve the night-time offer.

A rigorous assessment would be undertaken to determine if the town centre outperforms the set criteria.

Timescale

This would be a short-term intervention. Submission for Purple Flag occurs four times a year.

Image of the Purple Flag Standards - with the Five Core Agenda Themes

Precedent

Guildford Town Centre has been recognised by the Purple Flag assessors for providing evenings and night out activities. These include music venues, theatres, bars, and restaurants, making them safe and vibrant places to visit during the evening.

Guildford Borough Council and Experience Guildford (the town's Business Improvement District) lead the Guildford Town Purple Flag Partnership Group (GTPFP), includes a broad range of town and county organisations including Surrey Police, the Safer Guildford Partnership, Street Angels, and Guildford Pub watch.

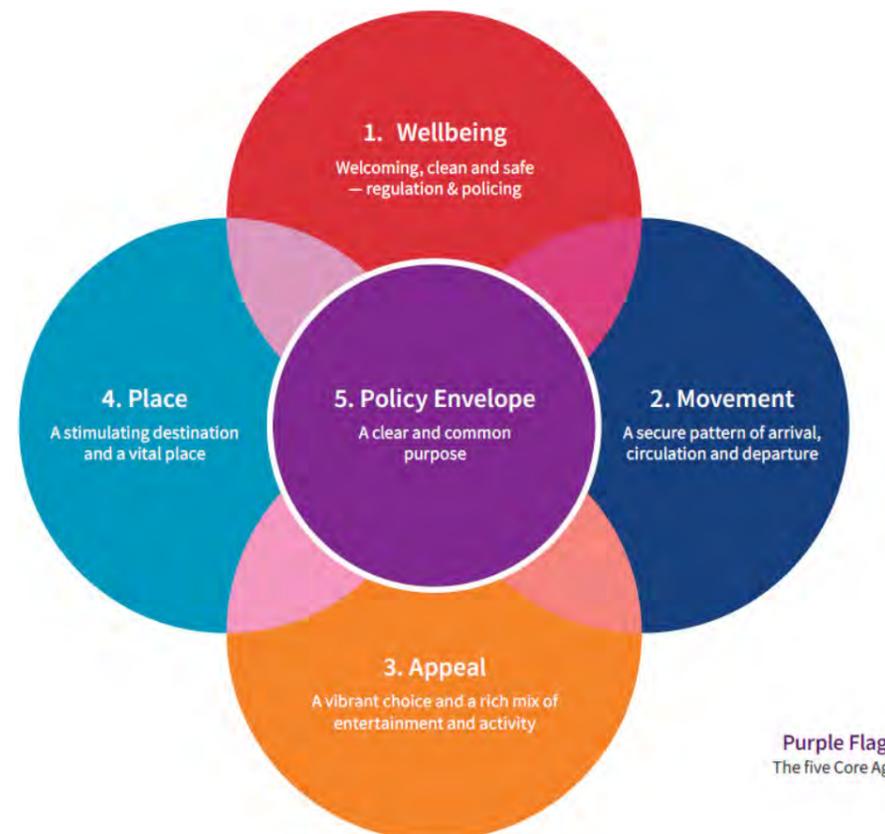Image of Guildford Town Centre - Awarded their Seventh Purple Flag

4. Community

1) Supporting Local Projects and Initiatives - Community-Led Planting

What

A programme of sustainable planting in key locations within the town centre, these would be in and around the town centre. These can be supported with fundraising at local events. Working out where planting would be placed is an important first step to minimise any confusion as to which spaces can be given a wow factor with lush planting and flower displays. Designated 'Green Zones' should be identified early on to minimise any confusion.

Success of this intervention depends on leadership, community engagement with the council and local stakeholders, and good coordination with event organisers. Greening space would involve targeting key spaces around Poulton and be incorporated at local events. The aim is to create a series of visually attractive spaces that would draw visitors to new areas of the town centre.

There is a potential link to the social prescribing intervention to support community involvement.

Precedent

Chorley in Bloom is making the area a more attractive place to live and visit, with a higher environmental awareness. Filling spaces with flowers, improving the overall biodiversity, and keeping the town and surrounding areas looking their best.

The group have in past turned derelict land, unloved and overgrown areas, into floral masterpieces and a community edible garden. Alongside this, a series of artistic pieces have created a positive impact on the towns image, making it a more beautiful and healthier place to live and work.

They also have developed good relationships with the local authority, businesses, and community groups. A number of volunteers also supported the scheme, who gained an educational experience, allowing them to give back to the community.

Why

There are a number of benefits to filling areas with high quality planting such as:

- A stronger sense of pride, contributing to reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour.

- More funding opportunities to support specific activities.

- Applying planting within urban spaces can help reduce stress.

- Brings a sense of calm and attraction to key spaces.

- Enhance biodiversity and habitat creation.

How and Who

This intervention requires a group of enthusiastic volunteers, potentially supported by the Poulton Partnership (which incorporates Poulton In Bloom) and Wyre Council, in order to design and develop project. When exploring designs options, establishing budgets, and understanding maintenance schedules.

Lancashire Country Council's Treescape team would work with Town Councils and community groups to secure funds for tree planting schemes, including in urban environments.

The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will also identify opportunities for supporting nature and biodiversity, including in urban areas that can provide connectivity between green spaces.

A strong presence on social media will help promote projects and enable groups to coordinate efforts and recruit volunteers.

Timescale

This is a short-term intervention which can change the look and feel of Poulton Town Centre.

Image of Chorley In-Bloom teaching and learning hub and horticulture example

4. Community

1) Supporting Local Projects and Initiatives - Support for Local Sport Clubs

What

A project to support sports clubs and the improvement of sports pitches and facilities.

Pitches at Cottam Hall and the Civic Centre are popular and well used with local sports clubs who have experienced considerable growth in membership in recent years. The pitches and facilities at both sites require improvement, especially as the clubs push forward to grow participation further. Improvements to these sites will enable people to become more active and enjoy a much better quality sporting experience.

Currently the Cottam Hall pitches host a number of adult and junior football and adult cricket matches, playing mostly at the weekend. The site is well used throughout the year with a series of popular community events such as the annual bonfire and Poulton Gala. The Civic Centre pitches and site are well used throughout the year, particularly by a local junior football club.

The proposal is that Wyre Council continue to support the development of the sites and work by the clubs to develop their plans and access external funding.

Why

The aims of sports clubs to promote and expand involvement in a range of sports are complementary to objectives in the framework to promote health and wellbeing and community strength and social values. The Council is launching in early 2024, a sport and physical activity strategy, Wyre Moving More. This strategy supports improvements to facilities such as these to help tackle inactivity rates across the borough.

The pitches are ideally located just outside the town centre boundary and can host a wide range of existing groups that can be a catalyst for further community initiatives. A masterplan for Cottam Hall is being developed and ideas to expand on the offer on the site include improving pedestrian, cycling and wheeling access and enhancing wildlife habitats and biodiversity. There is a need to improve the existing facilities at both sites, likely to be confirmed in the Play and Pitch Strategy, and to consider improvements identified by assessments such as the Football Foundation's PitchPower.

How and Who

Wyre Council working closely with local sports clubs and their national governing bodies.

Timescale

Development of the masterplan for Cottam Hall is underway, with initial design works for the pavilion proposed in 2024.

Images of Cottam hall during the day and during local events such as bonfire night and the local fair

5. Sustainability and low Carbon

1) Establishment of a Community Energy Trust

What

The intervention aims to reduce, purchase, manage and generate energy (using low-carbon methods i.e., solar, wind farms, biomass, etc), and utilise energy-saving measures such as better wall insulation, windows, and doors across the community. This could involve energy-saving measures such as better wall insulation, windows, and doors. This would involve the community creating an action plan and applying for membership with the Community Energy Trust.

Identifying potential community projects / buildings that need improvements should be explored early on for potential funding. An emphasis on engagement with, local leadership, and control, with the local community benefiting collectively from the outcomes.

Why

How and Who

As a first action, Wyre Council should establish contact with supportive organisations, such as 'Community Energy England' 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.

A Community Energy Trust would be a chance for Poulton to understand the issues and opportunities in the area, consider responses, and organise action. This would promote a greater sense of community but also start to renew the town's identity as a sustainable place to live, making it competitive to other areas.

Being a part of the Community Energy Trust allows access to a number of funding opportunities, such as 'Warm This Winter', 'Green Heat Network Fund' etc. (these can be found on the Community Energy England Website).

Early actions can include:

- Lancashire County Council will manage the new NW Community Energy Fund (both rural and urban) providing £2m for communities to grow local energy projects

- The Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) gives residents access to energy efficiency grants, affordable heating solutions, energy advice and support on a range of money saving energy measures, to help heat and insulate homes. CHiL currently has access to Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding and £41m through the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) for a mix of energy efficiency and clean heating measures.

- The Chamber Low Carbon Project, which is a fully funded service supporting businesses to make energy and environmental efficiencies, introduce on-site renewable generation and save money.

Timescale

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

Early actions should include:

- Ensuring the town is well positioned to benefit from grant funding for domestic energy upgrades.
- Supporting borough-wide 'retrofitting' initiatives.
- Establishing mechanisms to gather data for future energy decision making, or support for funding applications.
- Establishing a community group who will drive forward action.
- Supporting existing community energy initiatives

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.

Front Cover of the Community Energy England 2030 Vision

6. Health & Well-being

1) Develop an Exercise Referral Scheme

What

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 come, but not exclusively, from professionals working in primary care settings, i.e., 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.

This intervention involves people being referred from other health professionals, being assessed as to their needs/likes/goals, and signposted to relevant information, support and/or local 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.

Social Prescribing Link Workers also support communities to help start new groups and work with local partners to work together to meet local needs and aspirations.

How and Who

Social Prescribing is already established in Poulton and is provided by the NHS Wyre Integrated Network. This is supported by Wyre Council, Lancashire County Council, and other local health and wellbeing groups to further develop the community support offer.

Poulton can provide venues for these activities such as Poulton Community Hall, the Poulton Over 60's Centre, Poulton Leisure Centre and Cottam Hall Playing Fields.

Why

One of the opportunities and gaps in Wyre is the availability of an exercise referral scheme in Wyre, this is where people are assessed and offered an appropriate, safe and affordable physical activity programme. This intervention looks to introduce the exercise referral scheme by developing and supporting programmes aimed at people who are inactive or those with long term health conditions.

Timescale

This is an on-going initiative.

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

Front Cover of the Social Prescribing guide

6. Health & Well-being

2) Wyre Moving More Priorities

What

To implement the recommendations of the Wyre Moving More and Leisure Facilities strategies, with the aim being to embed a culture of moving more and thereby increase physical activity levels across Wyre.

The Wyre Moving More strategy has 3 core delivery themes:

- Health and Wellbeing

- Children & Young People

- Active Environments

This follows the 5 Big issues identified by Sport England – Recover and Reinvent, Connecting Communities, Positive experiences for Children & Young People and Active Environments.

Specific details are to be confirmed in partnership with the Wyre Moving More Board but projects will likely include developments at Cottam Hall Playing FIelds (playing pitches and community garden), playing pitches at the Civic Centre and other initiatives that involve and have the support of the Poulton voluntary and community faith sector.

Why

The evidence to support the health benefits of regular physical activity for all groups is compelling. There is strong evidence to demonstrate the protective effect of physical activity on many chronic conditions, better mental health, improved learning, and attainment as well as increasing cardiovascular fitness and helping people maintain a healthy weight.

Reinforcing regular exercise with activity should be a focus on key routes. Providing a chance to take a break and socialise, spend, and recover before continuing the journey. Linking this intervention with others within this framework can support the main reason why people would choose exercise more i.e., local events and art activities.

How and Who

Wyre Moving More Board and partners with an interest in promoting physical activity in Wyre.

Timescale

Implementation of the strategy will take place from 2023 – 2028.

Graphic of Wyre Moving More addressing 5 Big Issues

7. Technology & Digital

1) Development of a 'Smart Place Strategy'

What

A strategy to make use of existing and future technologies, to improve various sectors in Poulton. The focus should be on the needs of the community and understanding how innovative technologies can make the town centre economically successful. It should achieve a higher quality of life and a more sustainable town.

This would include digital technology, transport, utilities, health and well-being, energy, sustainability, environment, and employment. 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', 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 that Poulton is digitally evolving.
- Built-in potential for private sector collaboration.
- 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 – leverage the synergies of digital technology will be important. Opportunities for digital enhancement of visitor/customer experience.
- Visitor Economy – digital opportunities for marketing, booking, signature events, and the environment centre.
- Transport & Linkage – i.e., real-time transport information, parking/EV charging, strong links to transport management/control etc.
- Community, Health & Wellbeing – opportunities for local environmental monitoring and smart control to monitor and adjust energy consumption. Opportunities for a 'digital first' health and wellbeing initiative.
- Business Support - Opportunities for local startups to analyse data, problem solve, and generate solutions.

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.
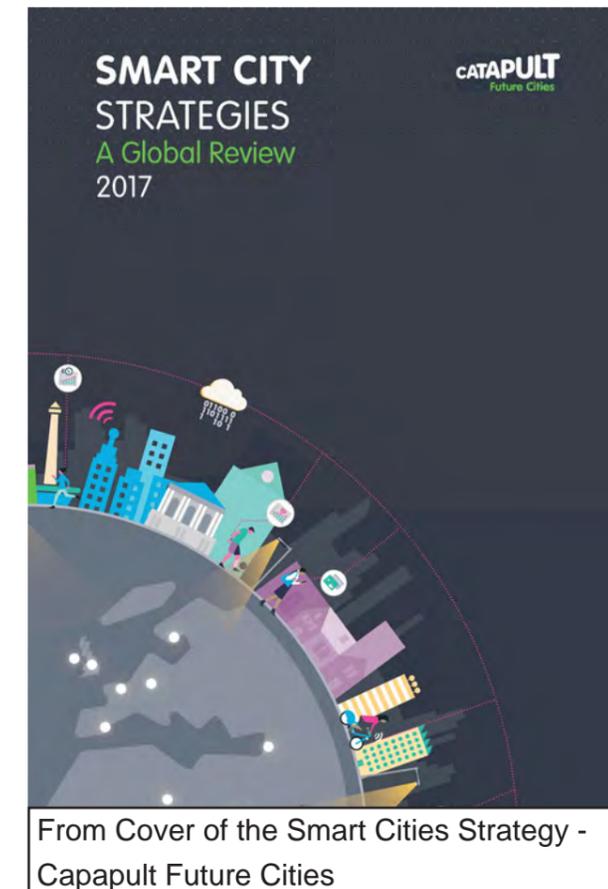
The project should be embedded within existing statutory frameworks to ensure implementation and funding. A public-private partnership will be important – plan for private sector collaboration.

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.

SMART CITY STRATEGIES
A Global Review
2017
CATAPULT Future Cities

From Cover of the Smart Cities Strategy - Capapult Future Cities

8. Business Support

1) Business Support Focused on Energy

What

This intervention looks to support Poulton's high street businesses with advice and potential funding opportunities to improve building energy efficiency and carbon footprint.

Implementing benchmarks in public sector procurement, such as requirements for any supplier to have a carbon-reduction plan, can help drive businesses to act. Additionally, the use of government-backed loan scheme / green loan facility to support business improvements would range from wall insulation to double glazing, and energy monitoring to improve and help business owners be aware of the energy they are consuming and potentially wasting.

Monitoring and highlighting successful methods of improving energy efficiency in an affordable way can provide insight and assistance to other local business owners that may need it.

Supporting businesses with application forms for government grants and loans and connecting owners with industry experts to understand available options, while assisting them for forward planning for any potential phased improvements.

Why

The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted Britain's poor-quality housing and commercial stock. There is a lack of funding options to support local high street businesses with their energy needs. Unlike large chain retailers, small independent stores will struggle the most to stay afloat.

Most funding streams support residential properties rather than commercial businesses. This is more important in Poulton as many of its stores are local independent retailers.

Improvements to the high street energy efficiency can secure long-term economic survival. Any saved funds, which would have been spent on energy, could be used to invest in the business.

Monitoring and highlighting successful methods of improving energy efficiency in an affordable way can provide insight and assistance to other businesses and property owners.

How and Who

Wyre Council to lead this intervention in collaboration with local shop owners. The Wyred Up agenda aims to create a network to help local businesses access government grants and take advantage of support services. This would lend support in the current cost-of-living crisis providing support mechanism to the high street.

Coordination with industry experts to understanding potential options and funding streams.

Timescale

This is considered a short to long-term intervention. Monitoring government funding streams is important to this intervention's success.

8. Business Support

2) Digital Training for High Street Businesses

What

A series of courses to support high street businesses to improve their digital skills – such as website development, content creation, or learning different software applications.

The training programme will be designed around local business requirements, so that the courses are relevant to business needs and provide skills that enhance their services and brand. The programme should also give insight into industry standards and exemplar case studies. The courses should take place online or in suitable location within the town centre.

Why

Developing digital skills can open doors to expand and trade online, and potentially lead to a town centre app to sell goods and services. This intervention aims to work with and build on the current digital training courses available to include a number of digital courses for local businesses.

At the time of writing, digital training at Poulton Library covers basic computer skills which include online shopping, using health apps, and digital garage sessions that support online marketing.

How and Who

The Lancashire Skills Hub can create a training course for high street businesses, coordinated with Wyre Council. Alongside, digital training through Adult Education Budget providers and perhaps though co-funded Skills Bootcamps.

Poulton library could host digital access to, and support with, essential everyday functions and training to ensure that all local businesses can access the full benefits of being digital – to the benefit of the wider town.

It is important to highlight successes and new initiatives to attract more users.

It is important that feedback from local business is heard and actioned. These can provide new ideas or perspectives, refreshing content throughout the intervention period.

Timescale

This is considered a short-term intervention to implement with general support to be long term.

8. Business Support

3) Recruit Enterprise Advisors

What

Enterprise Advisors are industry professionals who bring years of experience from the public and private sector. These advisors volunteer their time to help schools develop a strong career programme, helping raise students' aspirations and awareness. Enterprise Advisor provide invaluable 'real world' advice regarding career paths and development.

Advisors would provide advice to local schools such as labour market information. Services also include a mentoring scheme to provide soft skills (i.e., communication, teamwork, and problem solving), ensuring young people succeed in the workplace.

Engaging with local businesses and employers in Poulton's network should be explored early on.

Why

The main benefits include:

- The chance to create a talent pipeline and support the development of the future workforce.

- Easier access to schools and colleges to raise awareness of business and industry sectors.

- Opportunities to enhance local business and education links, and invest in Poulton's local community.

- The Enterprise Adviser network provides a forum for employers to network, discuss and work together to resolve local skills issues.

- A way to access a cluster of schools through regular network of meetings.

- Working on a 1-2-1 basis allows advisors to boost pupil confidence and bridge gaps in understanding.

- Using local experience and networks to inspire young people and improve their chance of getting a job.

- Provide insight into local organisations, industry and opportunities available in the local labour market.

- Deepen the connection to the local community.

- Build up the company's reputation.

- Develop unique interpersonal and strategy skills.

- Develop local business networks.

- Address skills gaps in the local and national job market.

- Better understand the education sector and the challenges it faces.

How and Who

There is an existing scheme to register advisors, this intervention looks to increase the number of professionals from local businesses to sign up as advisors. Working closely with the 'Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development' (CIPD) Enterprise Advisor positions can be advertised in addition to individuals registering their interest.

Timescale

While this is a short-term intervention, strong connections should be formed from the outset, continuous collaboration with the key business and local schools would be required and regularly reviewed to maintain the benefits that they provide Poulton.

8. Business Support

4) Engage and Attract Businesses to Invest in Poulton

What

Developing a dialogue with property owners, agents, and chains to support attracting businesses to move and invest in Poulton.

The local authority could support this by collating information about town centre vitality and performance, which would help businesses assess whether to invest – such as footfall, shop uses, vacancy rates and key contacts. Positive feedback from other traders can also influence decision-making and could be gathered through consultation with local traders, property owners, and the Poulton Partnership. Assembling a 'business taskforce' to gather data about the high street could be one way of collating useful information.

Access to this as open-source information could support a business viability assessment. Overlaying with planning policy information such as local plan designations would help businesses predict Poulton's growth and its market direction. This could be done using an online interactive map with layers of information presented to the user.

Why

The relationship with businesses is important for Poulton's long-term economic success. Communications between local authorities and businesses have been essential to securing and sustaining a voice to inform decisions about local polices and place-based decisions.

Good data tells a story about a town centre, particularly in relation to its performance and its workforce. Data around Poulton's workforce i.e., young people and skilled workers, will enable businesses to hire locally and understand Poulton's customer base.

Businesses are often attracted to a place that feels relevant and vibrant. This point is linked to other interventions in this framework to make the town centre a place people would want to call home.

How and Who

This intervention would be led by the local authority, with support from private sectors businesses, and should be looked at early on in the framework process for potential partners.

Timescale

The project should be a short-to medium-term intervention. Continuous collaboration with the key businesses should be maintained and regularly reviewed.

6. Development Toolkit

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Design Principles

6.3 Implementation

6.1 Introduction

The Regeneration Framework has set out a high-level approach to the regeneration of Poulton 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 to themes that are not limited to any particular place.

Wyre Council currently has no specific urban design or placemaking policy to guide and control Poulton Town Centre's regeneration in line with this Framework. Under the heading 'Design Principles', this section provides advice on creating an appropriate design policy.

Chapter 6 provides advice on organisational structures and partnerships which may be suitable to deliver the specific initiatives or 'projects' identified in this document, on a approach to the management of the delivery of the town centre regeneration.
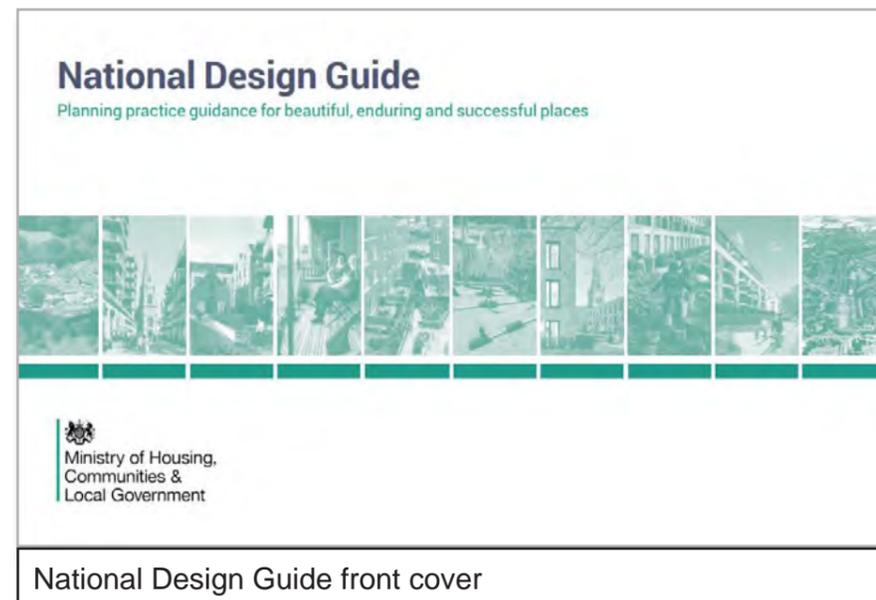
National Design Guide front cover

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 to live and work, and helps make the development acceptable to communities'. There is specific mention of the vitality of town centres, 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).

- Public Realm Design Guide for Hostile Vehicle Mitigation, 2020.

- Revitalising Town Centres: a handbook for council leadership, 2018.

In summary, good design matters to the government and is embedded in planning policy.

A number of Design Guide front covers including Compendium for Design, Happi 4 and Manual for Streets

Security & Local importance

Being distinct, i.e., identifying and celebrating local identity, is a key criterion for successful towns. Preserving and enhancing this design significance will be central to Poulton's regeneration.

It is important in places like Poulton that its surroundings remain open and inclusive. Any physical measure designed to protect should be integrated and proportionate to the types of threats today. The purpose of the guide is to assist the public realm design process, and to encourage a positive and creative response to the challenges of protective security.

Economic importance

Good design has economic value i.e., 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 Poulton), and then set out and explained within a design policy document – a Poulton 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 Poulton

The starting point for Poulton should be a more practically focussed set of principles that are of specific relevance to Poulton's built environment. This ensures that future interventions are designed to meet the highest standards.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Page from Principles for well-designed space - 'The Councillor's Guide to Urban Design'

Embedding Good Design into Poulton

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 local community groups and others who will be involved in the redelivery of the Framework – elected members, and key officers. 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 (at key points in the process) and the use of design review panel input to key projects – PlacesMatter, the standing NW region design panel.

- 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			Visitor Economy		Transport & Linkage		
	HS1: Public Realm Improvements Strategy	HS2: Wayfinding and Information	HS3: Incorporating Street Details and Playfulness	HC1: Develop the Visitor Economy	HC2: Improve the Monday Street Market Offer	TL1: Fleetwood To Poulton Rail Line	TL2: Improving Transport Facilities for Visitors	TL3: Implementing Cycling and Walking Initiatives
Cost of Project - Levelling Up ● Major Investment ● Quick Win ●	● (red)	● (orange)	● (orange)	● (orange)	● (orange)	● (red)	● (orange)	● (orange)
Timescale / Planning - Short, Mid, Long	S-M	S	S-M	S-M	S-M	L	M	L
Timescale Implementation - Short, Mid, Long	M	S-M	M	M	M	L	S-M	L
Delivery Partnership — LCC = Lancashire County Council, LA = Local authority, C = Community, H = Health authority, T = Transport authority, U = University, B = Business, A = Amenity Group, HA = Housing Association, D = Developer, Lead*	LCC*, LA, T, B, A	LCC*, LA, T, A	LCC*, LA, B, A	C*, LA, LCC, B	D*, LCC, LA	T*, LA, LCC, C	LA*, A, T, C	LCC*, LA, A, T, C
Potential Funding — CGF = Central Government Funding, LA = Local Authority, LCC = Lancashire Country Council, T = Transport Authority, H = Health Authority	CGF/LA/LCC	Private/LA	Private/LA	LA	Private/LA	CGF/LA/LCC	LA	Private/LA/ LCC/T
Key Next Steps	Feasibility assessment	Scoping & concept	Scoping & concept	Establish working group, develop action plan	Scope & concept, feasibility assessment	Feasibility study, develop action plan, Scope options, develop brief, Establish a working group	Scope, funding and procurement	Scope, funding and procurement

Community	Sustainability & Low Carbon	Health & Well-Being		Technology & Digital	Business Support			
CR1: Supporting local projects and initiatives	SLC1: Establishment of a Community Energy Trust	HW1: Develop an Exercise Referral Scheme	HW2: Wyre Moving More Priorities	TD1: Development of a Smart Place Strategy	BE1: Business Support Focused on Energy	BE2: Digital Training for High Street Businesses	BE3: Recruit Enterprise Advisors	BE4: Engage and Attract Businesses to Invest in Poulton
🟢	🟠	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟠	🟢	🟢	🟢
S-M	M	S	S-M	M	S	S-M	S-M	S
M-L	S-L	S	S-M	M	S-L	S-M	S-M	L
C* LA HA B A	LA* T B C	C* LA H	LA* C	LA* C B U	D* LA T C U	C* B LA	LA C B U	LA* B C
LA/Private	LA/CFG	LA	LA	LA	LA/Private	Private	LA	LA
Identify a vision for the area and a project champion, scope options and feasibility	Scope brief for strategy report	Establish a working group, develop action plan	Dialogue with stakeholders, scoping of concept	Scope study, develop brief	Establish a working group and meet with potential interested parties	Establish a working group, scope & action plan	Establish a working group, dialogue with stakeholders, scoping feasibility assessment	Establish working group, develop action plan

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 Poulton's Town Centre. The identified interventions form an interlinked package of development and improvement actions.

For each intervention, the 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 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-to-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 Matrix therefore also seeks to identify those projects that are most critical to the delivery of Poulton'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 on their nature. These are likely to include:

- Delivery led by the Poulton Partnership Board – i.e., an initiative to support planting projects.

- Supporting young people, i.e., improving qualifications and providing jobs.

- Delivery by Wyre Council (and partner organisations if necessary) – i.e., 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) – i.e., the establishment of a Community Energy Trust.

- Collaboration with private owners of land/property – i.e., plans for the former police station.

- Providing opportunities for local startups to influence Poulton's future.

Poulton First

The local authority could consider introducing 'Poulton First'. This would be a service to broker to promote apprenticeships and volunteering for local people. The service could support young people/startups with apprenticeships, finding a job, work experience, and volunteering. Such a service could also help with CV writing, confidence building, presentation skills, and pre-apprenticeship courses.

Town Centre Management

This Framework focusses on the delivery of physical interventions and social programmes to help Poulton 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, but other arrangements are available, and options should be periodically reviewed. Town centre management structures include:

1) 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.

2) 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.