



BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Darwen

Town Investment Plan

January 2021

DarwenTownDeal.co.uk



Darwen Town Investment Plan



January 2021

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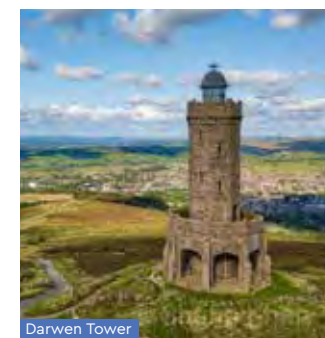
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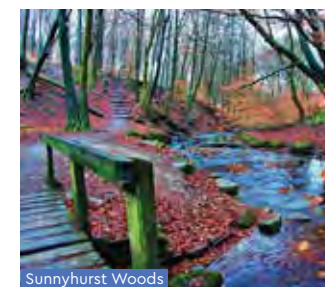
Bold Venture Park



Darwen Market Square



Darwen Tower



Sunnyhurst Woods

Foreword



Wayne Wild
Chairman, Darwen Town Deal Board

"This grant funding is THE springboard to Darwen's exciting new renaissance"

I am delighted to submit, on behalf of the Darwen Town Deal Board, the Town Investment Plan for Darwen. We believe this application for £30m funding will kick start more than £116m of investment that is desperately needed to regenerate a town that has, for far too long been left behind in the shadows of our neighbouring major cities.

Following extensive resident and business interaction during the TIP preparation we believe we have acted in the best interests of what they have told us they desperately want for Darwen's future. We are thoroughly excited and inspired by the opportunity the Towns Fund gives to Darwen's growth and regeneration.

Having lived and worked, as a director of a major metal manufacturing company, in Darwen for over 15 years I am acutely aware of the current issues and what real potential Darwen has with the right level of investment, perhaps for the first time in a generation. For these reasons I am honoured to chair the Board and play a large part in helping shape the Darwen's future.

Darwen's famous industrial past and history provides a strong foundation for the town's plans for immediate growth providing benefit to its entire community. With plans already agreed for 1,200 new family

homes, the town's spirit and welcoming nature wishes to expand further focusing fully on its maker-town ambitions. The iconic Darwen Tower, which can be seen from all points of the compass across East Lancashire, is the beacon of hope for both current and new residents and the local business community, signalling Darwen's bright and energetic future.

To encourage current and future residents to work, invest and play in Darwen in the following ways we will:

- Offer fantastic semi-rural modern family homes and exceptionally well designed and practical town centre living. Part of our plans is to develop a brand-new food hall to create an equally vibrant day culture to knit into the popular vibrant night life economy that already exists;
- Invest in urban, desirable and modern living, ultrafast broadband, employment sites, national quality sports and leisure facilities, arts and culture, SME start up units, improved arrival gateways, all within a 5-minute walk to some of our outstanding parks and moorlands;
- Invest in the infrastructure around our world renowned and internationally owned manufacturers and national award-winning apprenticeship providers. We need to encourage them to continue to invest in their businesses locally, and in return we invest in the infrastructure around them. Darwen is ideally geographically positioned close to the motorway and railway networks for easy access to national and international gateways to encourage global trade.

The Covid crisis has reminded residents of how lucky we are to live in an iconic and beautiful town that is surrounded by magnificent natural beauty. Investment is needed to give the children of current and new residents and employers the encouragement to seek work and invest in Darwen, lay long-term roots and contribute to shared and ambitious growth plans.

Darwen's coat of arms famously depicts the Latin motto "Absque Labore Nihil", which translates as "Nothing without labour". This perfectly describes the town's residents who are incredibly hard working, proud, passionate people who have learnt to adapt, create and innovate for future prosperity.

The projects proposed by our Town Investment Plan will dramatically change and improve the prospects of both Darwen's residents and businesses with the whole town committed to the hard work required to implement this Plan, as befitting our town's motto and ethos.

Supporting Statements

"Darwen is steeped in a rich and incredibly proud history of manufacturing – indeed, pioneering runs through the town's very DNA. So too does a relentless work ethic – a determination to 'get the job done.' This Town Deal represents an opportunity to truly kick-start the transformation of the whole area. A transformation that would breathe new life in to the very heart of the town, out through the residential areas and employment sites – creating much-needed new job and skills opportunities – and on to the sprawling moors which beautifully encompass Darwen. There's a real passion and determination to use this Town Deal as a catalyst for significant regeneration for Darwen and with it a commitment that every single penny be well spent on the behalf of its residents and for future generations to come. This is a chance for real change, a chance to make a real difference for Darwen."

Councillor Mohammed Khan CBE
Leader of Blackburn with Darwen Council

"Having represented Darwen as it's Member of Parliament for the last 10 years I know first-hand what a special place it is. A traditional Lancashire market town, proud of its history with the friendliest people you could ever hope to find.

There has however been a collective feeling that our town was being left behind, overlooked for investment in favour of bigger brasher neighbouring towns and cities. That's why we have all come together to grab the opportunity of this once in a generation Town Deal.

Working as a team we've created a fantastic transformative plan, backed by local people to regenerate, restore and renew our town."

Jake Berry
Member of Parliament for
Rossendale and Darwen

"We don't believe in doing things by halves at Blackburn with Darwen Council. And we know for that to truly deliver in the current economic landscape, partnership working is vital. We are ready to deliver on this Town Deal, our partners are ready, but most of all, the town is ready and crying out for it. We know that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a real difference to Darwen, the lives of its residents and the businesses here.

We have seized the opportunity to create a strong investment plan, underpinned by extensive and meaningful engagement right from the bottom up. We know what it will take to get this right for the town and have worked to develop a plan that will have true impact – a plan that will restore a sense of optimism for residents while harnessing their unwavering pride in their hometown."

Councillor Phil Riley
Deputy Leader of Blackburn with Darwen
Council and Executive Member for Growth
and Development



Image: Shafiq Khan



"Everyone knows each other. The community is very strong. It's a homely place"



Image: Shafiq Khan



Image: Shafiq Khan

"People can easily catch the train here, look around the town and walk out on the moor. It could even be a tourist attraction"



Image: Shafiq Khan



Image: Shafiq Khan



Image: Shafiq Khan

"We need to celebrate our history, but we also need to look to the future"



Image: Shafiq Khan

Executive Summary

Introduction

Our Town Investment Plan Summary sets out our ask for £29.8m of Towns Funding which will leverage a further £86m of investment into the regeneration of our town, transforming it into a modern and dynamic town fit for the 21st century – where people of all ages want to live, work and visit.

Located to the south of Blackburn in Lancashire, Darwen is an industrial town with a strong identity rooted in its manufacturing history and presence, having flourished on the back of Victorian dynamism. It sits at the gateway to the East-West Pennine Lancashire corridor, West Pennine Moors, and benefits from fast road and rail connections to Greater Manchester, Blackburn, Preston and the rest of the North West.

Darwen is ideally placed for growth, one of Lancashire's hidden gems, a traditional mill town recognised by its architectural icons and long established national and international industries, now combining with opportunities for new businesses and modern homeworking – a change accelerated by the impact of Covid.

Despite £130m of capital investment over the last 20 or so years, there is still much more to be done to address long-term decline and under-investment. However, major capital place-shaping investments have improved our key economic indicators and have also improved community engagement with ownership, raising local entrepreneurship and civic pride.

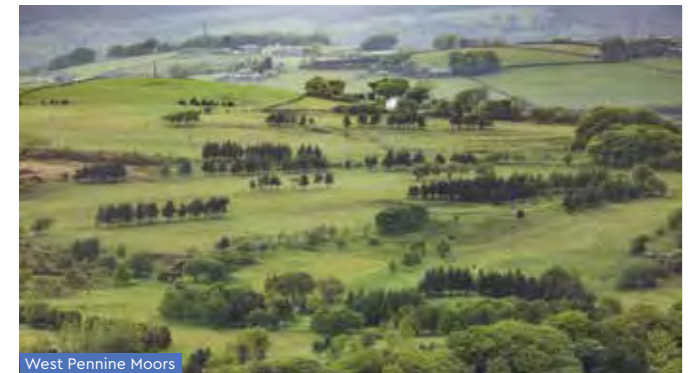
Our ambition is to transform Darwen into a contemporary Lancashire maker-town that offers high value skilled employment, flexible working, improved housing and an improved leisure offer. The regeneration will create an attractive town centre with vibrant day and night economy and easy access to the natural environment. Our history and industry underpin our values, and provide an extremely strong foundation for the town's plans for immediate growth providing benefit to its entire community.

"By 2030, Darwen will be an attractive modern maker-town that punches way above its economic weight; a leading centre for clean and innovative manufacturing and a town of choice, where upwardly mobile, flexible and active communities can experience our rich heritage and natural environment helping to transform Darwen into a dynamic and sustainable maker-town"

"The brass band practices in the town centre. In the summer you can hear the music on the street."



Brass band in Darwen Market Square



West Pennine Moors

Executive Summary

Our Vision

Our vision sees Darwen emerge as a place where flexible working is truly integrated into the town's economy; our key businesses retained and growing; new ones attracted by the town's reputation as a centre for innovative manufacturing; new housing opportunities for families integrated into our long established communities, with residents and businesses able to access ultrafast connectivity; and a town that offers an abundance of accessible sport, leisure and recreation opportunities for our young people alongside our beautiful Victorian parks and accessible Pennine moorland right on the doorstep.

By 2030, Darwen will be an attractive modern maker-town that punches way above its economic weight; a leading centre for clean and innovative manufacturing and a town of choice, where upwardly mobile, flexible and active communities can experience our rich heritage and natural environment helping to transform Darwen into a dynamic and sustainable maker-town.

Town Objectives



Objective 1

Deliver quality modern town housing and an improved sports, recreation, leisure and town centre daytime offer to provide a comprehensive vibrant town experience



Objective 2

Respond to opportunities arising from technological change and ensure Darwen is the choice location for innovative business sectors, to both extend jobs capacity and address the productivity gap



Objective 3

Provide the platform for modern business success to extend Lancashire's advanced manufacturing cluster, capitalise on opportunities for new ways of working, including extended options for flexible home working and ensure Darwen is the choice location for entrepreneurial and enterprising residents to excel



Objective 4

Improve town amenity, connectivity and navigability from town gateway locations to natural and treasured town assets to encourage active travel and an improved destination offer



Objective 5

Promote sustainable and clean growth, ensuring that TIP projects embed local benefit and are within environmental limits and ensure active communities are engaged at the very heart of our success



Darwen Market Hall and Square

Our Town Deal Propositions

We are proposing four Town Deal Propositions. These will be critical for translating our vision into a delivery strategy. These propositions are targeted at recognising Darwen's potential and the opportunities Town Deal investment can unlock. Our projects underpin the four opposite Propositions:



TD1

Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Maker-Town



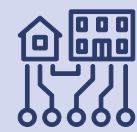
TD2

Contemporary Maker-Town



TD3

Attractive Gateways, Parks and Amazing Countryside Links



TD4

Digital Darwen

Executive Summary

Our Priority Projects

P1. Town Centre Core

(£14.0m Total Cost, £8.64m Towns Fund (TF))



This project seeks to revitalise the town centre with an offer fit for a modern maker-town. To bring vibrancy, and harness local arts and culture assets to create a real sense of community. There are plans to transform the Market and Foodhall, Darwen library and theatre, and provide a Maker-Market, an Adult Education and Skills Centre, new parking and landscaping with the Arches providing flexible food and beverage opportunities.



P2. Employment Growth

Sites (£8.9m Total Cost, £3.0m TF)



Delivery of high-quality employment land at Chapels South and Balle Street Mill. These developments will address the lack of commercial space in Darwen and build on the significant infrastructure investment recently completed through the Darwen East Corridor scheme. The Chapels South site is the location for both the nationally important AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator (TIP project 4) the Strategic Manufacturing (TIP project 5), and the Employment Growth Projects. All three will be located at the Chapels South site, forming an innovation campus.



P3. Town Centre Living

(£36.1m Total Cost, £2.27m TF)



The project will build 268 new apartments and houses throughout Darwen town centre, across seven gap sites. This modern town centre housing will be designed to target younger professional buyers and renters, including in-built designs to cater for modern homeworking patterns.



P4. AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator

(£4.6m Total Cost, £2.8m TF)



Darwen is an industrial town with a strong manufacturing presence. This nationally significant project will deliver an Additive Manufacturing Accelerator at the Chapels site. Supporting the manufacturing sector to adopt modern 3D printing manufacturing methods.

As a UK first, the centre will provide support to both metals manufacturers and the wider manufacturing sector in Darwen and the rest of the UK.



P5. Strategic Manufacturing

(£31.0m Total Cost, £3.0m TF)



This strategic project delivers a new polymerisation manufacturing facility together with an international Research and Development Centre. It safeguards the global competitiveness of the Darwen manufacturing base, founded during WW2. Reducing environmental impacts of the production process, introducing energy-efficient polymerisation technology and protecting local jobs.



P6. Destination Darwen

(£3.3m Total Cost, £2.23m TF)



As the Gateway to the West Pennine Moors, this project sustainably connects local residents, new housing areas and the historic town centre to the moors, and with over 1,200 new homes expected to be delivered in the near future, it is imperative that we find sustainable ways to make the outdoor spaces and parks accessible to residents. The proposals work at three levels including a heritage walk, moorland and parks trail, and skyline Darwen, connecting the moors and the outlying villages to the town centre.



Executive Summary

Our Priority Projects

P7. East Lancashire Sports Village (£8.43m Total Cost, £3.5m TF)



Health and well-being is the basis of a balanced community. The aim of this proposal is to dramatically increase participation in sport amongst all ages and at all levels in the town for a wide variety of sports, catering for all community groups. The Sports Village upgrades and creates local and regional sports facilities, transforming sporting opportunities for local people and making Darwen a place to visit for sports enthusiasts from across the region. The project will be anchored by a national cricket academy located at the Darwen Vale Aldridge Academy School, Skate and BMX park linked to Olympic cycling teams, upgrades to Darwen's cricket and football clubs and a new junior golf academy and driving range.



P8. Ultrafast Broadband (£5.75m Total Cost, £2.0m TF)



Rolling out Gigabit per second broadband, to 11,300 homes and premises. Providing free WiFi within a 500m radius of the town centre and offering free connectivity to low income families and charities.

This project supercharges Darwen's digital connectivity, supporting home working and unleashing the power of ultrafast broadband for local businesses and residents.



P9. Town Centre Gateways (£3.74m Total Cost, £2.4m TF)



To transform the key gateways into Darwen and to improve the access around the town centre. With 5 major interventions including a green wall along the southern road entry to the centre, 4 large scale artworks on strategically located gable ends to create a visual impact, connectivity improvements on strategic town centre streets, enhanced parking and improvements to the shopfronts of 64 retail properties along the main arteries into the town. This project will ensure that the principal approaches and gateways are restored to an acceptable standard for a thriving town.



Darwen Town Investment Plan – Key Headlines



310 new town jobs
300 town jobs safeguarded



268 new town centre homes
Over 1,000 Local Plan new homes supported



Major prized international manufacturing business safeguarded



AMRC Additive Manufacturing R&D Centre secured and 150 businesses assisted



Town centre gateways, streets, and countryside links improved
100km of paths and trails



500+ adults upskilled



New Sports Village for young people



Ultrafast broadband to 11,300 homes and businesses
Free town centre WiFi



£70.5m of leveraged private investment



40 – 50 new town centre businesses

GVA

£4,666m over 10 years
(£374m at NPV)

VFM

£9 for every £1 of public sector investment

Letter of Support

Dear Sir/Madam

We represent many of the key employers in Darwen, and wish to show our full support and commitment to both the town and the ambitions and growth priorities of the Darwen Town Deal Board, which is led by Wayne Wild.

Darwen was at the forefront of the first industrial revolution, a world leader, and with the support of our Town Investment Plan, we believe we have the opportunity to get to the future first once again!

This Town Deal Investment Plan, provides a renewed focus and impetus with many key measures driving and supporting the key economic and place-making changes needed to re-establish Darwen as an important regional centre for businesses, residents and visitors alike.

The town and local businesses have been impacted by COVID much harder and for longer than nearly any other place in the country. This Plan is alert to addressing some of the opportunities and challenges presented by COVID.

Darwen is already experiencing positive change with significant new housing developments helping to retain and attract new residents, new employment opportunities and infrastructure, and improved direct rail connections and connectivity to Manchester.

The Darwen Town Deal is a fantastic, once-in-a-generation opportunity to embed this progress within a wider forward-looking investment plan for the next 20 years with a

strong range of partners across the public, private and education sectors working together to improve the future prospects of the town.

The relevance, quality and impact of projects outlined in the Town Investment Plan is clear to local business leaders. Strategic and focused improvements to the town centre retail, housing and cultural offer, linking our urban and outstanding moorland assets, improved gateways and approaches, with major economic proposals for new strategic employment sites combined with new opportunities to improve applied industry research, innovation and skills linked to future business demands and opportunities. A very exciting programme for change in Darwen.

The vision of Darwen becoming a sustainable, modern-maker town is authentic and fits perfectly; building on and investing in our strong and innovative manufacturing base and talented and creative workforce, and helping encourage confidence and investment from the business sector. Investing in the place, with its strong built heritage and natural environment, will only increase the town's attractiveness as a place to live and invest as well as work and help employers to attract the best talent.

We have a great community of businesses in Darwen and the wider borough with a strong focus on manufacturing, and we would be more than happy to offer any further support and help to the Darwen Deal Board to help deliver our shared Town Investment Plan.

We look forward to receiving a positive response. Yours faithfully:



Tim Webber, MBE, Chairman and Managing Director of the Barnfield Group of companies



Steve Waggot, Chief Executive, Blackburn Rovers FC



Phil Lang, Estates and Facilities Manager, Crown Paints Limited



Bryan Welch, Operations Director, Perspex International Limited



Steve Hartley, Managing Director, WEC Group Limited




Steve Fogg, Chairman Lancashire Enterprise Partnership



Rachel McQueen, Chief Executive Marketing Lancashire



Melissa Conlon, AMRC NW Commercial Director, University of Sheffield



John Sturgess, Chair, Darwen Town Centre Partnership Board



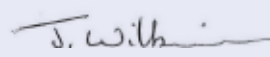
Ian Brown, Chair, Hive Blackburn with Darwen Business Network



Stuart McDonald, Head of Branch John Lewis & Partners Textile Factory, Herbert Parkinson



Miranda Barker, Chief Executive East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce



John Wilkinson, Regional Director Processing North Suez Recycling and Recovery UK



Paul Johnston, Managing Director, Capita TV Licensing

Projects Summary



Darwen Town Investment Plan Summary

Darwen Town Investment Plan Summary				
Our Challenges	Darwen Vision and Spatial Priority	Our TIP Objectives	Our TIP Propositions and Projects	Our Outcome and Impacts
<p>Longer Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs Capacity and Productivity Gaps Town Centre Gateways Town Centre Daytime Economy Success Retaining Young People and Talent Reducing Deprivation and Improving Social Mobility <p>Immediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid-19 Economic Recovery 	<p>Darwen 2030 Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Attractive Modern Maker-Town and Centre for Innovative Manufacturing Upwardly Mobile, Flexible, Active Communities Productive and Sustainable Town of Choice <p>Selected Spatial Priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on Town Centre and Town Gateways and Corridor Links <p><i>"By 2030, Darwen will be an attractive modern maker-town that punches way above its economic weight; a leading centre for clean and innovative manufacturing and a town of choice, where upwardly mobile, flexible and active communities can experience our rich heritage and natural environment helping to transform Darwen into a dynamic and sustainable town"</i></p>	<p>Objective 1 Quality modern town housing and improved sports, recreation, leisure and town centre daytime offer.</p> <p>Objective 2 Ensure Darwen is the choice location for innovative business, extend jobs capacity and address the productivity gap.</p> <p>Objective 3 Provide the platform for modern business, capitalise on new flexible ways of working and ensure Darwen is the choice location for enterprising residents.</p> <p>Objective 4 Improve amenity, connectivity and navigability between gateways and natural and treasured assets.</p> <p>Objective 5 Promote, sustainable and clean growth, embed local benefit and ensure active engaged communities.</p>	<p>Proposition 1 <i>Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Maker-Town</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P1: Town Centre Core P3: Town Centre Living P7: East Lancashire Sports Village <p>Proposition 2 <i>Contemporary Maker-Town</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P2: Employment Growth Sites P4: AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator P5: Strategic Manufacturing <p>Proposition 3 <i>Attractive Gateways, Parks and Countryside Links</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P6: Destination Darwen P9: Town Centre Gateways <p>Proposition 4 <i>Digital Darwen</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> P8: Ultrafast Broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New manufacturing, town centre commercial and R&D assets 268 modern residential units 11,300 homes and businesses connected to ultrafast broadband. 100km active trail infrastructure and 5 sporting assets 40-50 new businesses forming and a major business safeguarded 150 businesses benefitting from Research and Innovation support 500+ adults upskilled 310 new FTE jobs forming and 300 existing jobs safeguarded £70.5m of leveraged private investment £466m in town GVA over 10 years (£374m at NPV) Every £1.00 of Public Investment generates £9.00 in economic returns Wider Town Competitiveness, Active Travel, Health, Carbon Efficiency, Amenity and Labour Supply Impacts
<p>Our Town Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalising on Resident Talents Benefitting from New Ways of Working Targeted Place Shaping and Renewed Town Vibrancy Building on Sectoral Strengths 				



Modern Manufacturing



Darwen Leisure Centre

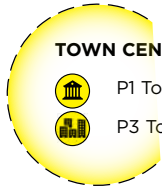


Sunnyhurst Woods



Market Square Sweet Shop

Town Investment Plan Priority Projects



TOWN CENTRE

- P1 Town Centre Core (various)
- P3 Town Centre Living (various)

EMPLOYMENT & MANUFACTURING

- P2 Employment Growth Sites
- P4 Additive Manufacturing Accelerator
- P5 Strategic Manufacturing

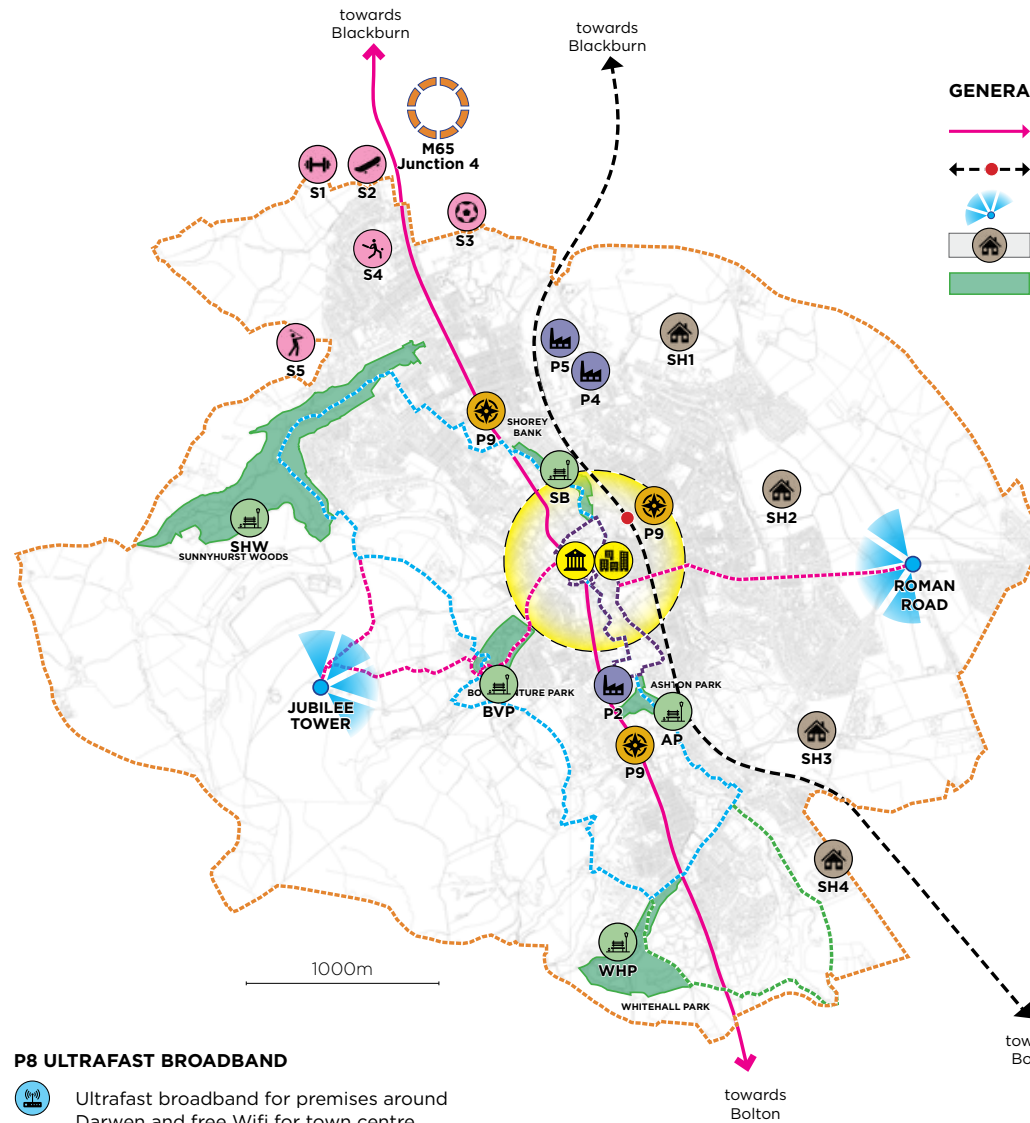
P6 DESTINATION DARWEN

- 20km Bridleway Loop
- 10km Heritage Walk
- 12km Heritage Walk (Extra Loop)
- 5km Heritage Walk
- Extra connections to high points

- SHW — Sunnyhurst Woods
- SB — Shorey Bank
- BVP — Bold Venture Park
- AP — Ashton Park
- WHP — Whitehall Park

P7 EAST LANCASHIRE SPORTS VILLAGE

- S1 Cricket Academy
- S2 Urban Sports
- S3 AFC Darwen
- S4 Cricket Club
- S5 Golf Academy and Driving Range



GENERAL MAP FEATURES

- Main road connections
- Railway connections
- High point with views over the town
- Local Plan housing allocation
- Strategic parkland and green space

LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS

- SH1 Holden Fold
- SH3 Baileys Field
- SH3 Pole Lane
- SH4 Cranberry Lane

P8 ULTRAFAST BROADBAND

- Ultrafast broadband for premises around Darwen and free Wifi for town centre

P9 TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS

- Series of interventions along main routes and across the town centre

1 Introduction

1.1 Darwen - The Attractive Maker-Town

1. Introduction

1.1

Darwen – The Attractive Maker-Town

Darwen is an industrial town located to the South of Blackburn in Lancashire. Lying in the valley of the River Darwen the town is surrounded by an attractive natural setting, with urban fringes linking to the West Pennine Moors, overtopped by our iconic Jubilee Tower.

Spatially, Darwen is accessed by the M65 and our town functions as a gateway on the East-West corridor linking Preston and the M6 to East Lancashire and the M66. The A666, the North-South corridor linking Blackburn to Greater Manchester, runs through our town and we benefit from direct rail services to Manchester Victoria and the Ribble Valley.

Our strong identity formed during the first Industrial Revolution, where we played a leading role in UK cotton-weaving success, enabled in part by our railway link and the Leeds—Liverpool canal. As a founding member of the football league, Darwen FC was also the first in the UK to employ professional players and we flourished on the back of Victorian dynamism.

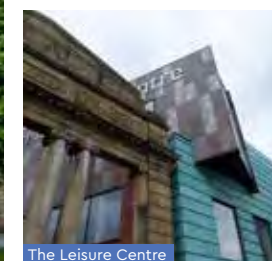
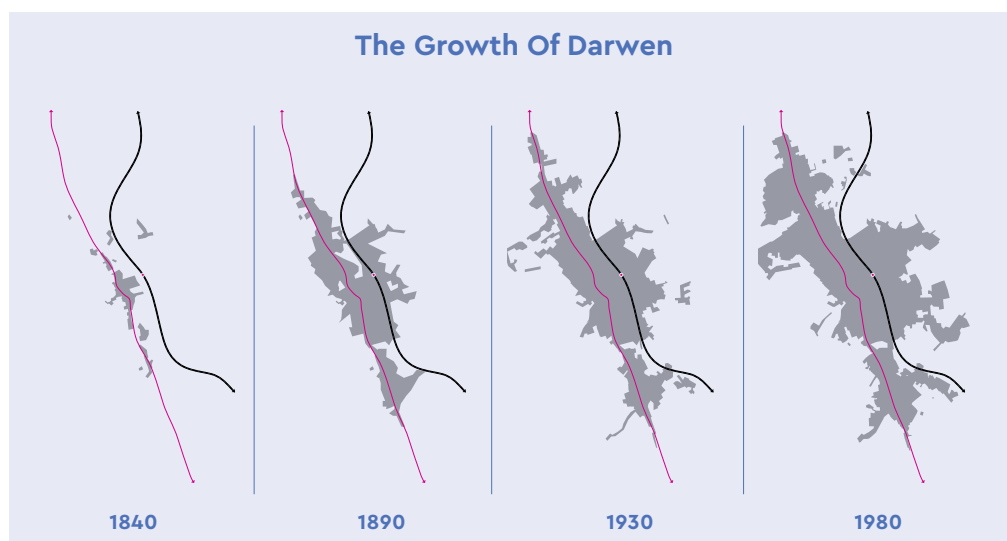
Our success as one of the country's leading mill towns means we have retained much of our mid-Victorian urban fabric and retained assets include the impressive Jubilee Tower, completed in 1898 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and India Mill and Chimney, both of which dominate our

skyline. We also boast Gothic and classical chapels, the renaissance circus around Market Square, our town Library Theatre and the impressive and highly significant 1882 Town and Market Hall, with its clock-tower added in 1899. Supported by cultural assets and historic Victorian public parks, our built environment instils civic pride, provides character and a real sense of place.

"Darwen is primed for new growth and capable of becoming a regional destination of choice for innovative businesses"

Melissa Conlon
Commercial Director AMRC North West
Sheffield University

"Darwen is great because it is independent"



1. Introduction

1.1

Darwen - The Attractive Maker-Town cont...

Since the 1950s, our textile industry has declined and we struggled to adapt to late-20th Century economic change. Our primary retail area overlaps significantly with Darwen town's conservation area, which covers our town's stone-built Victorian core, but away from our historic Market Hall and new Square, the rest of the commercial area has seen only piecemeal and spasmodic investment.

As a result, many retail and commercial buildings are now no longer fit for purpose and this limits the appeal of the town

centre to residents, visitors and businesses and investors. Despite this, we retain some excellent assets around our town, including significant continued engineering and production capacity with globally recognised household name brands. Many of our producers are nationally recognised exporters with deep and extensive North West and UK supply chains.

Since the M65 motorway opened in 1997, many businesses have been attracted to Darwen, with industrial estates growing to the north of the town at Junction 4 of the

motorway. The delivery of our motorway services opened up easily accessible land for businesses, allowing large edge-of-town industrial units to form.

Other enabling infrastructure has also unlocked capacity for other new employment and housing growth, and significantly improved our economic prospects, but we nevertheless remain one of the most deprived towns in England. Our borough is the 14th most deprived in England, placing it among the 10% most deprived areas nationally and our town's

existing performance gaps between Lancashire LEP and national averages across a range of economic and socio-economic measures have recently grown.

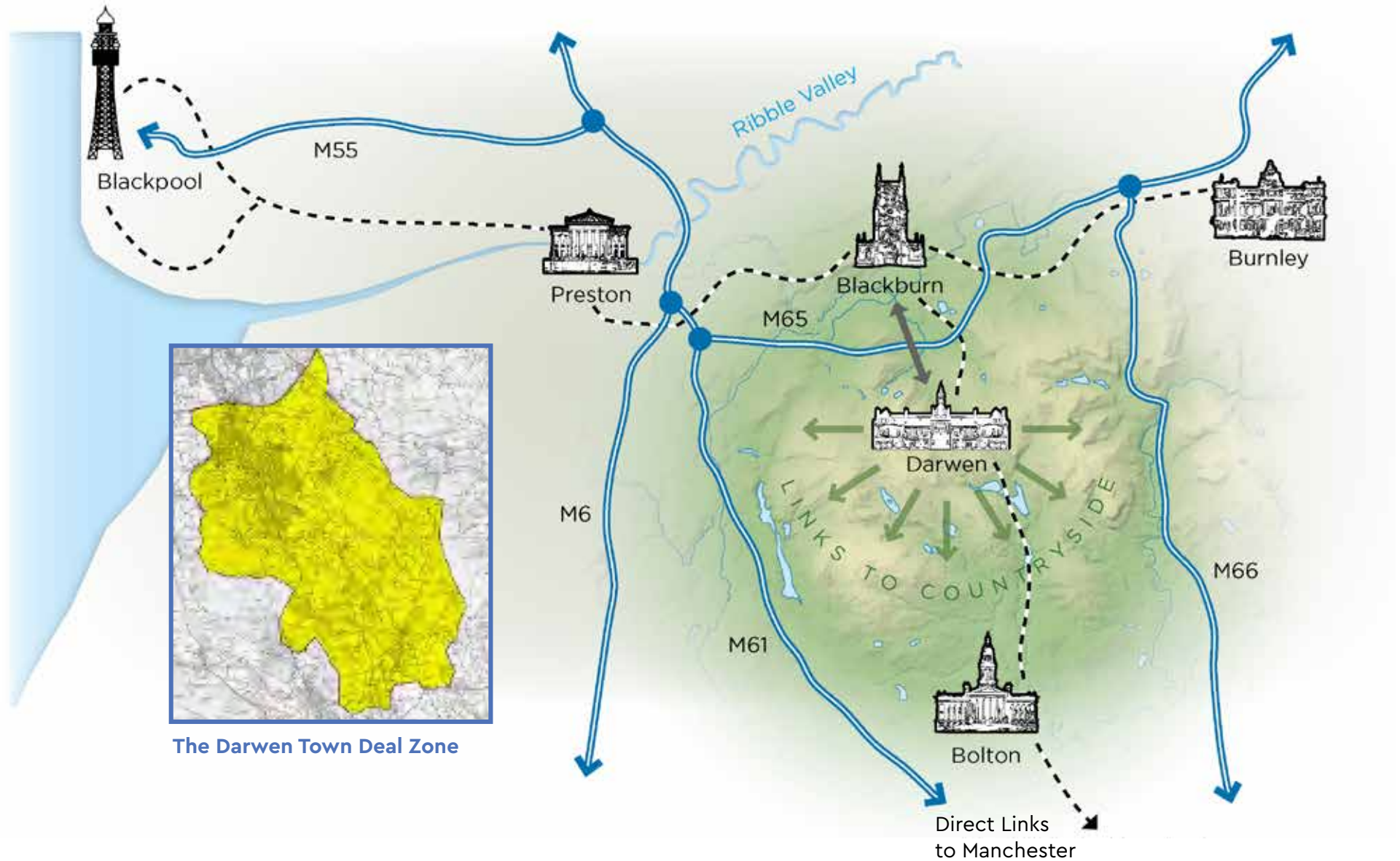
As we strive to progress initiatives to raise our performance, we recognise that more needs to be done and our Town Deal represents a once in generation opportunity to 'level up' our town.

Darwen Businesses



1. Introduction

Darwen Regional Context



The Darwen Town Deal Zone

2 Context - Darwen 2020

2.1 Town Assets, Performance and Economic Drivers

2.2 Town Achievements to Date

2.3 Long Standing Town Challenges

2.4 The Immediate Covid-19 Challenge

2.5 Key Opportunities for Darwen

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.1

Town Assets, Performance and Economic Drivers

Home to 32,240 residents and 2,265 businesses, Darwen has for generations served as a sub-regionally important local centre. Unlike Lancashire and the nation, our town's population has slightly contracted since 2011 (-2.6%), largely due to losses of around 2,050 younger residents aged under 50. Consequently, Darwen now has an ageing population and although we retain a strong sense of community, looking forward we must ensure our town has an attractive and comprehensive offer, particularly to help retain younger talent.

Providing an attractive leisure, sports and cultural offer is key to retaining younger residents and whilst our town has reasonably good digital infrastructure, many residents in more deprived communities currently cannot afford home broadband. Similarly, despite having a reasonably affordable housing offer, much of our living accommodation is in need of renewal, particularly in and around our historic industrial areas.

To proactively address housing challenges, we have successfully delivered around 500 new units since 2011, around 25% of the Borough's new housing. Acceleration of delivery from 2016, has resulted from the adoption of our current Local Plan which identified new and attractive, and several challenging, sites for development. The formation of a pro-active Council Growth Team in 2017 is also helping to attract developers to the Borough.

Since then, Darwen has seen construction of the popular Riverside Heights development for older people and the first major developments of quality family housing for years. Four housing developers, all of whom are new entrants to Darwen, are now on-site building over 400 new houses in the South-East of the town.

The developers are reporting very successful sales rates (despite Covid-19), including high levels of in-mover sales, recording 60% of new home sales to movers relocating from Bolton, Blackburn, other parts of Lancashire and Greater Manchester. This newly-thriving family housing market in Darwen is set to continue as two further major sites are earmarked for housing development and are progressing through the initial planning stages.

The above suggests that the effects of housing-led regeneration activities and wider place shaping are now beginning to pay off. We nevertheless have an ongoing need for housing renewal, with a particular need for supporting first-time buyers and young families. As such, our Local Plan identifies a borough-wide need for 840 new units over the next 5 years, with a significant share in Darwen. This is challenging given physical constraints, particularly marginal viability among brownfield sites and a lack of available cleared undeveloped housing land in the town.

There are currently around 10,475 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in and around the town and when compared against our 20,270 working-age residents, this is a particularly low jobs density of just 52 FTE jobs per 100 residents vs. 77 nationally.

This reflects our town's role as a key provider of North West jobs, primarily to Blackburn, Preston and Greater Manchester. Just 27% of working residents live and work in Darwen, which is a low level of town 'self-containment', although 4 in every 10 jobs within Darwen are filled by town residents

"The ambitious growth plan for Darwen identifies the critical changes needed to drive future prosperity"

Tim Webber MBE
Chairman & Managing Director
Barnfield Construction

Darwen – Commuter Inflows / Outflows

Town Workforce Origins		Town Resident Destinations	
Town residents	43%	Darwen	27%
Elsewhere in Borough	25%	Elsewhere in Borough	31%
Elsewhere in the LEP	20%	Elsewhere in the LEP	21%
Elsewhere in England	12%	Elsewhere in England	21%



New Housing Development



Junction 4 Skatepark

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.1

Town Assets, Performance and Economic Drivers cont...

High levels of out-commuting not only highlights a significant shortfall in town jobs, but it also suggests a significant 'mismatch' between available town jobs and our resident skills. Internally, our town's jobs market is dominated by production activities, supporting 1 in every 3 FTE town jobs, compared to 1 in 7 across Lancashire and 1 in 13 across England.

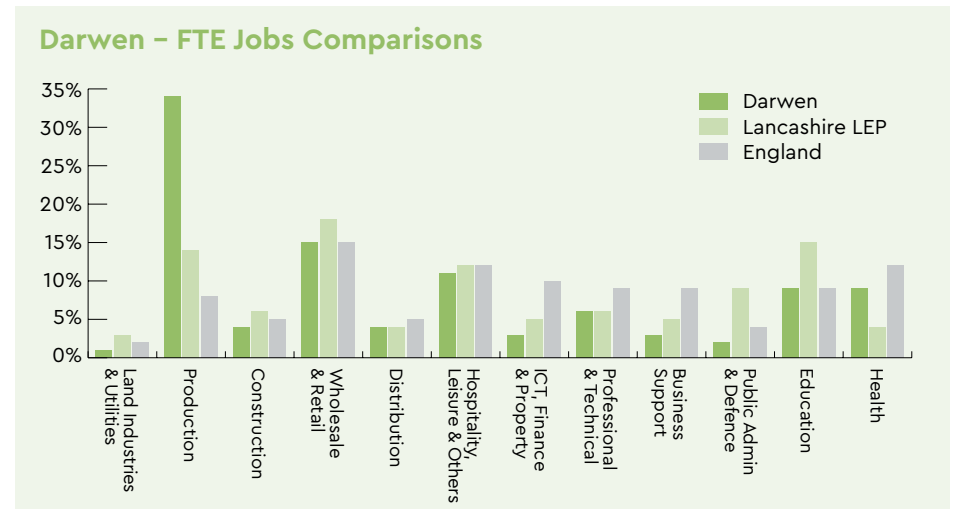
As a 'maker-town', our manufacturing strengths have served us well, but many jobs are threatened by increased automation and many leading businesses are also in foreign-ownership with decisions about Darwen often being taken overseas. This makes our economy vulnerable to externalities.

We also have a notably small professional service sector in our town and a smaller than typical civic and public service role, largely owing to some public services delivered in Blackburn or elsewhere in the region.

Although some recent business growth has helped to bolster our £466m town economy, many local jobs are in low paid, low value roles and our highest paid, most talented residents typically work elsewhere. At just £24,000, gross median annual workplace-based earnings in Darwen are currently around £7,750 below the national average.

The consequence of this has been a continued low value 'static' economy with growth in GVA significantly lagging wider averages and with a widening per worker productivity gap, our relative contribution to the national economy has diminished.

"My job is in London, but I'm working from home now. It is great being more local and I use the town centre and go out walking more with the dogs"



"Clean manufacturing technologies can make a major contribution to the economic success of Darwen"

Bryan Welch
Operations Director Perspex International

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.1

Town Assets, Performance and Economic Drivers cont...

Jobs growth has also been very slow and to some extent, our town has lacked business dynamism. A core town ambition is to extend and diversify our asset mix by providing the platform for new high volume and higher value activities that are accessible to residents. This will increase jobs density, raise productivity and ensure inclusive and sustainable town growth.

From a supply perspective, continued efforts to provide job opportunities and improve labour mobility are critical, particularly in communities experiencing acute employment deprivation, which for decades has remained a key town and Borough-wide challenge.

The delivery of new employment opportunities in Darwen is however constrained by a shortfall of identified employment land across the Borough. A recent review (November 2020) of employment land supply and needs has identified a residual need for 47.5ha of employment land in the Borough over the period from 2020–37, but at present we have a shortfall in identified supply of around 13.4ha and this has placed pressure on current supply, particularly in industrial markets, where vacancy rates have halved to just 5% over the past decade.

Across performance indicators, our town currently contributes around 15% towards the Borough economy and around 2% towards the Lancashire LEP economy. The following table demonstrates our performance to date across key indicators and our relative direction of travel against wider LEP and national performance. Overwhelmingly, this demonstrates a reasonably static economy, with widening performance gaps.

"New growth proposals will help support the long-term investment planning of committed local employers"

Stuart McDonald
Head of Branch John Lewis and Partners
Herbert Parkinson



Darwen – Key Indicators and Direction of travel (2015-2018)						
	Darwen	Lancashire LEP	England	Direction of Travel (2015-2018)		
				Town Change	Vs LEP	Vs England
Demography and Skills						
Resident Population (total,2018)	32,237	1,498,300	55,977,178	↘	↘	↘
Working-age Residents (16-64)	62.9%	61.1%	62.4%	↘	↘	↘
Working-age Residents in employment	74.8%	74.3%	75.1%	↗	↘	↘
Working-age Residents in Unemployment	3.6%	4.8%	4.2%	↘	↘	↘
Residents in Higher Order Occupations	45.7%	40.8%	46.8%	↘	↘	↘
Residents qualified to NVQ2+ (16-64)	75.0%	74.7%	75.0%	↘	↘	↘
Residents qualified to NVQ4+ (16-64)	39.5%	34.9%	39.0%	↘	↘	↘
Business and Economic Performance						
Businesses (total, 2018)	1,265	61,600	2,697,200	↗	↘	↘
Businesses per 10,000 Residents	392	453	482	↗	↘	↘
Total GVA (2018)	£466m	£34.1bn	£1.64tn	↗	↘	↘
GVA Growth (2015-2018)	+0.3%	+10.6%	+11.7%	↗	↘	↘
GVA per FTE (2018)	£44,456	£51,680	£61,220	↗	↘	↘
Jobs (total, 2018) *LSAOs	10,475	660,000	26,842,000	↗	↘	↘
Jobs per 100 Working-age Residents	52	72	72	↗	↘	↘
Jobs Growth (2015-2018)	+0.4%	+2.2%	+3.5%	↗	↘	↘
Median Workplace-based Annual Earnings (2018)	£25,000	£26,160	£29,860	↗	↗	↗

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.2

Town Achievements to Date

Our town partners are committed to prioritising economic development in partnership with developers, funders and the community, but with a combined capital investment of more than £130m over the last decade, there is still much to be done to address the impacts of long-term economic decline and under-investment by public and private sector partners. There are limited opportunities to develop synergies and deliver co-ordinated town-wide intervention at the scale required to

deliver real change in Darwen – but Town Deal investment as part of an integrated plan offers a once in a generation opportunity to correct this.

Major capital place-shaping investments have however bolstered our performance and smaller but equally significant projects have also offered opportunity for community involvement, buy-in and ownership of our ambitions, thus helping to raise civic pride and nurture local entrepreneurialism.

Across projects, delivery via a range of models and special purpose vehicles, including public and private-led partnership arrangements, has been pivotal in shaping our town for residents, visitors and businesses alike.





"We need more shops; I'd like to be able to come to town and browse"

<p>Spring Meadows, Pole Lane Housing In delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of 168 modern houses on 16.6-acre greenfield site • Persimmon Homes • Extended living offer 	
<p>Taylor's Green Housing, off Pole Lane In delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 126 family and starter homes • Kier Living • Extended modern living offer 	
<p>Darwen Market Square £1.5m Completed 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New modern public square at the historic core • Council • Showcases Darwen and provided flexible community events space 	

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.2

Town Achievements to Date cont...

<p>Riverside Heights £14m Completed 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of 30 supported extracare bungalows and 80 specialist apartments with supporting amenities• Social Providers• Extended family home offer	 A photograph showing a row of modern, single-story bungalows on the left and a multi-story apartment block with balconies on the right, set in a landscaped area.
<p>The Art School £1.4m Completed 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conversion of Art School to 43 apartments and 3 townhouses• Private• Extended town housing product	 A photograph of a large, historic stone building with Gothic-style windows and a prominent arched entrance, showing its conversion into modern housing.
<p>Darwen Vale High School £22m Completed 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery of new community school campus, sensitively merging the existing grammar school with a new 8,000sqm contemporary Academy building.• Buildings Schools For the Future, DfE, Blackburn with Darwen Council delivered via PFI with Balfour Beatty.• Upskilling capacity extended to 1,200 students annually	 Two photographs: the left one shows a modern, multi-story school building with large glass windows and a courtyard; the right one shows a large, historic school building at night with its lights on.
<p>Darwen's Historic Buildings £2m Completed 2011</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restoration of historic buildings, including Darwen Town Hall and Market and Holker House• Heritage Lottery Fund, Council, Private• Safeguarding of town assets and place-shaping events space	 Two photographs: the left one shows a restored historic stone building with a bay window; the right one shows a row of historic buildings, including a prominent one with a clock tower, in a town square.

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.2

Town Achievements to Date cont...

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy

£48m

Completed 2010

- Modern Skills Asset, including an Enterprise Hub and Sixth Form provision.
- DfE, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Aldridge Foundation
- Upskilling capacity extending to 1,600 students yearly

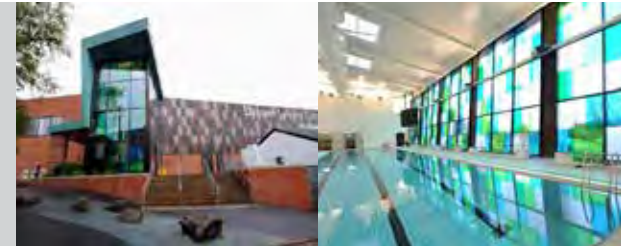


Darwen Leisure Centre

£12.7m

Completed 2010

- Modern sports and leisure facilities including 25m swimming pool, main gym, multi-purpose fitness studio, multi-use sports hall and a training suite.
- Blackburn with Darwen Council, Sports England
- Extended leisure for all abilities



2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.3

Long Standing Town Challenges

Despite recent progress, persistent economic and socio-economic challenges remain in our town and engagement with residents and businesses has identified five longstanding challenges.



Challenge 1:

Extending jobs capacity and addressing productivity gaps

Jobs densities in our town are so low that we currently have twice as many working-age residents as there are jobs. To reach jobs density averages nationally would require the creation of around 2,600 new FTE jobs in Darwen. The mix and lack of job opportunities has encouraged significant out-commuting to larger centres, with associated transport network pressures and sustainability challenges.

To some extent, the fortunes of the town have largely been determined by the relative success of neighbouring regional centres. This has weakened our resilience, whereby we rely on external success.

Similarly, the legacy of low-value activities in Darwen has meant that at current levels, average 'GVA per FTE job' is almost £17,000 lower than the England average.

GVA growth since 2015 has also been very slow (+0.3%), resulting in our town's productivity gap widening significantly by £3,400 per FTE job. Clearly Darwen has not witnessed the recent growth in prosperity evident in the wider economy.

Extending jobs capacity and reversing the per worker productivity gap are critical to levelling up. The impact of Covid-19 on Darwen, as subject to national and local restrictions for nearly a year, longer than nearly any other place nationally, has weakened our local jobs market and the business environment.

GVA per FTE Job Comparisons



2. Context – Darwen 2020



Challenge 2:

Improving key town centre gateways

Our historic core adds character but many key town centre gateways have seen very little investment for decades and are now in significant need of regeneration. We are today left with a legacy of unattractive, aged and increasingly redundant buildings, as well as various gap sites in key gateway locations.

Viability challenges over the years have deterred private-led interventions in our town centre gateways and the unattractive gateway areas have only served as a detractor for visiting and investing in our town.

Particularly challenging gateways are primarily located along our main A666 road from the North to the town centre, but there are other gateway areas across the town that also need significant renewal.

In light of this we are pursuing a spatial strategy that focusses regeneration activities in our most challenging gateways.



Challenge 3:

Town centre daytime economy success

Whilst our evening economy performs reasonably well (pre-Covid), Darwen town centre has a very limited daytime offer, with a very narrow mix of retail and limited leisure opportunities.

Pre-Covid, a Town Centre Healthcheck (ELG Planning, March 2019) found the town centres convenience retail offer to be reasonably strong, but our town centre has a comparably poor comparison goods offer, representing just 27% of units.

The key clothing sector remains very under-represented in our town, particularly in the men's / boy's and mixed clothing sub-sectors, no specialist furniture, textiles and gift shops present. The comparison goods offer that is available also lacks quality and this in particular weakens our town centre retail market.

The town centre's service offer, although reasonably comprehensive, also lacks quality and the community, leisure and education offer is limited to a narrow set of assets, including the Aldridge Academy, the Green, Darwen Leisure Centre and Darwen Library Theatre. We have no town centre hotels and this prevents staying visitor economy growth.

Shortfalls in the comparison goods and leisure offer alongside a reasonably poor-quality offer across the town centre only serves to drive footfall and spending away from our town core, which in turn limits business profitability and detracts from private-led investment.

This challenge has been exacerbated by recent population decline and low earnings locally. Above all, Darwen town

centre needs to offer a 'reason for being' and we have been progressing a strategy to provide a well-rounded offer to bring vibrancy and improve competitiveness. Covid-19 measures this year have ultimately made this very challenging.

"The passion and commitment of the local business community is second to none"

John Wilkinson

Regional Director Suez
Recycling and Recovery UK



2. Context – Darwen 2020



Challenge 4:

Retaining young people and talent

We are a town that boasts a highly talented resident workforce which broadly mirrors the national picture, but in recent years we have seen population decline, largely owing to the increased attractiveness of neighbouring centres.

This loss of competitiveness has sparked a worrying trend which since 2011 has seen a decrease of 2,050, residents, aged under 50. Unless addressed, there is a real threat to Darwen offering a competitive future workforce.

We must therefore ensure an attractive town living offer, including providing quality suitable housing and the range of supporting day and evening leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities that bring vibrancy. We must

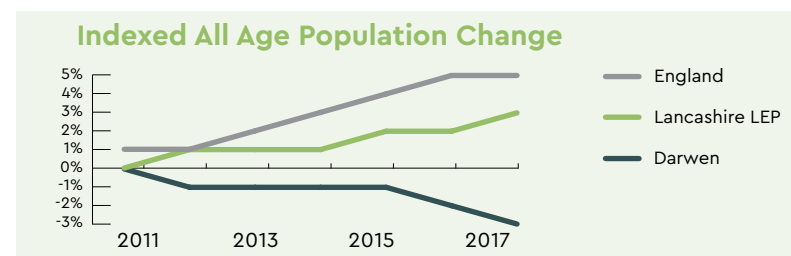
also ensure ready access to job options for younger residents and better connect our town to our outstanding moorland surrounds, again to improve the overall offer.

Above all, we must instil an aspirational culture that supports our young people to excel. As well as ensuring extensive job and training opportunities locally, we recognise a need to tackle longstanding youth anti-social issues, which are intrinsically linked to low aspirations. Our view is that this immediate challenge is best tackled through existing local mainstream interventions with our plan's focus on strengthening Darwen's jobs market and improving the town living and amenity offer as a mechanism for retaining younger talent.

"I'm really excited by the proposals to encourage young people to live, learn, work and play in Darwen."

Zara Hayat

Blackburn with Darwen Youth MP



Challenge 5:

Tackling deprivation and improving social mobility

Our borough is the 14th most deprived in England (out of 317 local areas), placing it among the 10% most deprived areas nationally. Internally, there is great disparity, with typically rural areas of relative affluence surrounding concentrated pockets of acute urban area deprivation.

Half of our town's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's) are among England's most deprived 10% and underlying sub-domain evidence points to high levels of income, employment and health deprivation locally and a poor living environment within the town.

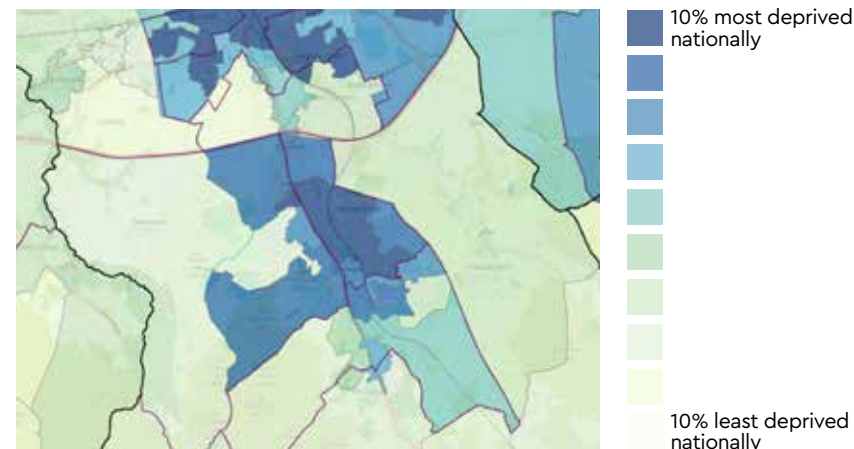
Of particular concern is the level of health deprivation, where 64% of communities are

in England's bottom quintile and we need our communities to be more active.

This longstanding challenge will only be exacerbated by Covid-19 induced recession and clearly a multi-agency holistic approach is required to remove barriers, address poverty, raise living standards and improve the quality of life in hard to reach communities. Town partners at all levels continue to progress various initiatives for this.

The Darwen Town Investment Plan will be critical in addressing socio-economic deprivation in the town, helping it to level up with the rest of the nation.

Relative Deprivation in Darwen



2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.4

The Immediate Covid-19 Challenge

At peak in August 2020, The Rossendale and Darwen Parliamentary Constituency area saw 32% of eligible residents furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, on par with wider averages.

Whilst furlough and self-employment support has offered protection against redundancies, as we continue to see national lockdown measures enacted there is a pressing unemployment concern. We are already seeing worryingly sharp increases in town claimants (as a proxy for unemployment) and in May 2020, a record 1,525 town residents received welfare support, almost doubling in the space of a year, with little sign of counts falling ever since.

We need to get the economy moving again, but ongoing lockdown measures have ultimately resulted in a dramatic fall in town footfall. Many businesses continue to be temporarily closed and the fear is that some

may never recover. Covid has impacted Darwen harder and for longer than nearly any other place in England with national and local restrictions in place for nearly a year with many months of restrictions to come.

For a town already very short of job opportunities, the immediate challenge is to identify actions to meaningfully rejuvenate Darwen in ways which give businesses, residents, workers, students and visitors the confidence to spend time there safely, whilst also observing continued social distancing needs.

Covid-19 has also impacted on town property markets, although the magnitude of impacts is presently less clear. Darwen's Town Deal strategy will however be crucially important in helping the town recover from the detrimental impacts of Covid-19.

Furloughed Jobs, August 2020		
	Total	% of Eligible
Rossendale and Darwen	14,300	32%
Lancashire LEP	208,100	32%
England	8,067,700	32%

Darwen Claimant Counts (January 2013 – November 2020)



Darwen High Street



Darwen High Street

"Improving shop fronts and making the town look better would encourage people to open business"

2. Context – Darwen 2020

2.5

Key Opportunities for Darwen

Whilst longer term and immediate town challenges are well understood, we see a number of opportunities to capitalise upon.



Opportunity 1: Capitalising on Resident Talents

Unlike most proximate similar towns, we boast a highly talented resident population with particularly high proportions of residents with degree level qualifications than wider Lancashire averages.

Although we have lost some younger talent in recent years, this nevertheless provides an excellent platform to build upon, and in ensuring higher paid, higher value job roles within Darwen, we see significant opportunity for both reversing the declining population trend and ensuring a more sustainable 'self-contained' town.

The ambition is to encourage greater levels of town containment by improving our jobs market alongside radically improving our living, leisure and town centre retail offer. This will significantly help to retain our most talented residents and attract new ones, thus helping to narrow our productivity gap, increase town vibrancy, footfall and spending and support retail and hospitality success.

Darwen has always had an active live music scene. Pre-Covid, Darwen Music Live, a free to audience, volunteer led 2 day festival attracting up to 30,000 visitors was first held in 2000 and grown every year since, celebrating 20 years last year.

Darwen-grown Sunbird Records venue and label has been at the forefront promoting new bands, new artists with original material and attracting bands from across the country to play in the town. It's achieving much more than just helping artists release music; now driving Darwen's night life and creativity, alongside Darwen Music School, other night time venues and a passionate local community, more and better practice and performance space will help push this creativity further.



2. Context – Darwen 2020



Opportunity 2:

Benefitting from New Ways of Working

Covid-19 lockdown measures have radically accelerated a longer-term shift towards more flexible home-based and remote working, particularly among office-based job roles. This has in truth been enabled through increased automation and improved digital infrastructure.

In Darwen, around 9,200 of our residents work outside of the town with a large proportion of workers commuting to formal office-based roles, largely in Manchester, Preston and Blackburn. This position has changed radically since the March 2020 lockdown and even following a vaccine programme deployment we anticipate new business models will increasingly focus on

delivery through home-based or remote working or via smaller-scale more flexible satellite offices rather than traditional formal centralised hubs.

To compete, our town centre in particular needs a strong and complementary service offer that supports increased remote and home working. As well as strengthening our underdeveloped office accommodation offer, we need private operators to provide improved support services and more informal meeting spaces, including coffee shops and restaurants.

Whilst we have good and reasonably fast broadband coverage, clearly the advent of increased remote working will require

excellent digital infrastructure, including access to ultrafast upload capability and bandwidths capable of higher volume data transfer.

New housing with built in spaces specifically designed for flexible and remote working also needs providing and this offers real opportunity for not only raising productivity, but also in helping Darwen to retain our most talented workers and their spending in the town.

Ultimately, greater retention of workers in the town will also negate commuting demands, with associated safety, noise, air quality and carbon reduction impacts.

"Now I am working from home I use the town centre much more. I've been shopping at the market. It would be great if it could be improved."



Opportunity 3:

Targeted Place Shaping and Renewed Town Vibrancy

We already boast some excellent built environment assets, comprising iconic historic buildings and attractive Victorian-era parks set in our attractive moorland setting. These combine to provide an excellent foundation for renewed town vibrancy as we emerge from Covid-19, an urgent short-medium term ambition.

An extended town living offer will help bring vibrancy, but we recognise a need to re-imagine Darwen town centre to suit modern consumer and business needs, particularly by strengthening our underdeveloped leisure, daytime and visitor economy.

We have ambition to make parts of Darwen better connected, more amenable and more enjoyable. There are inherent opportunities to also better connect our town with its moorland surrounds, via our excellent park assets. At present access to the moors from the town is currently challenging with some routes difficult to navigate.

Similarly, some key gateway approaches to the town centre are now very tired looking and peppered with detractor buildings, including along the main A666 road through the town and other gateways.

Above all, we aspire to be a town that is fun, welcoming and accessible, with improved

amenity, extended opportunities for sports and leisure and improvements to our daytime economy. Renewed vibrancy will ultimately complement our spatial strategy and wider place shaping agendas, thereby ensuring future town success.

"We need to think about how people arrive here. Outside the train station there should be signage that points to The Heritage Centre, the parks and the moors."

2. Context – Darwen 2020



Opportunity 4:

Building on Sectoral Strengths

We are committed to supporting winners and our long history of manufacturing and production success will continue to be critically important to Darwen, supporting 1 in 3 town FTE jobs and around 40% of our economic contribution.

We see opportunities to further recent growth in manufacturing, but we also recognise a need for innovation and clean growth among our producers and for wider business diversification.

Since 2015 we have seen signs of growth in our manufacturing, motor trades, wholesale, distribution, professional service and health sectors, supporting 1,030 new FTE town jobs and this provides a good platform for future business growth and innovation.

Although we have also seen sizable losses in ICT, business administration and education in recent years, there is opportunity to reverse this trend, in part by strengthening our town centre, attracting new activities and developing our leisure and visitor economy offer.

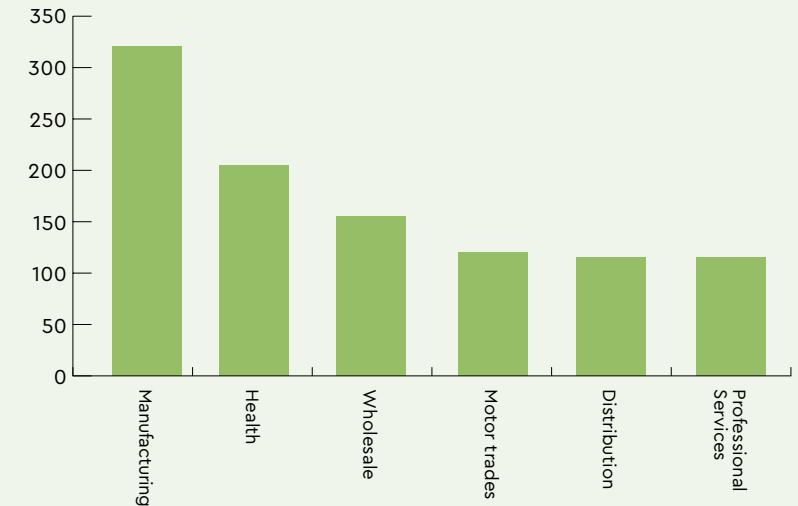
We must support activities that ensure our town has a well-balanced economy, not least to guarantee available career opportunities for residents. By building on sectoral strengths and diversifying activities, we also see significant

opportunity for strengthening collaboration and driving innovation in our key sectors and their supply chains, largely as a mechanism for raising town productivity but also to deliver clean growth outcomes.

We see opportunities for clean growth innovations among our historically high carbon emitting producers and their supply chains, particularly through the delivery of new research and development activities not only in our town, but also across Lancashire. Alongside attracting new innovative and cleaner manufacturing activities to Darwen, this will ensure that our town can grow sustainably and within environmental limits.

"A lot of people don't know that Darwen has some fantastic manufacturing businesses that are regionally and nationally important"

Growing Sectors – New FTE jobs since 2015



3 Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

- 3.1 Our Town Vision and Intended Outcomes**
- 3.2 TIP Objectives**
- 3.3 Our Selected Town Deal Propositions**
- 3.4 Investment Plan Outcomes**
- 3.5 Spatial Strategy**
- 3.6 Linking Darwen Town Centre and the Town's Iconic Moorland**
- 3.7 National to Local Policy Alignment**

3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.1

Our Town Vision and Intended Outcomes

Darwen is at the cusp of an exciting new future. Our history and industry underpin our values, our resilience and independence of spirit. Our town sits at the gateway to the East-West Pennine Lancashire corridor, and benefits from fast road and rail connections to Greater Manchester, Blackburn, Preston and the rest of the North West.

Darwen is ideally placed for growth, one of Lancashire's hidden gems, a traditional mill town recognised by its architectural icons and long established national and international industries, now combining with opportunities for new businesses and modern homeworking.

This will transform Darwen into a contemporary Lancashire maker-town that offers the best of high value skilled employment alongside a great quality of life, at the heart of which is an attractive town centre with vibrant day and night time economies offering live music and theatre, and serving as a gateway to our outstanding natural environment, a major asset for those who live and visit the area.

Our vision sees Darwen emerge as a place where flexible working is truly integrated into the town's economy; our key businesses retained and growing; new ones attracted by the town's reputation as a centre for innovative manufacturing; new housing opportunities for working families integrated into our long established communities, with residents and businesses able to access ultrafast connectivity; and a town that offers an abundance of accessible sport, leisure and recreation opportunities for our young people alongside our beautiful Victorian parks and accessible Pennine moorland right on the doorstep.

By 2030, we will achieve our vision for Darwen as an attractive modern maker-town that punches way above its economic weight; a leading centre for clean and innovative manufacturing and a town of choice, where upwardly mobile, flexible and active communities can experience our rich heritage and natural environment helping to transform Darwen into a dynamic and sustainable town.

"Darwen is a great example of a historic Lancashire town, rooted in self-starting businesses, with a manufacturing heritage second to none. The Town Deal investment will enable a renaissance in our home grown economic success, promote manufacturing innovation and enterprise at the regional level, and draw people from beyond our local community to visit our historic town and the superb surrounding countryside"

Miranda Barker

Chief Executive East Lancashire
Chamber of Commerce

3.2

TIP Objectives

Our TIP objectives will further contribute to the success of our vision for Darwen:



• **Objective 1**

Deliver quality modern town housing and an improved sports, recreation, leisure and town centre daytime offer to provide a comprehensive vibrant town experience



• **Objective 2**

Respond to opportunities arising from technological change and ensure Darwen is the choice location for innovative business sectors, to both extend jobs capacity and address the productivity gap



• **Objective 3**

Provide the platform for modern business success to extend Lancashire's advanced manufacturing cluster, capitalise on opportunities for new ways of working, including extended options for flexible remote and home working and ensure Darwen is the choice location for entrepreneurial and enterprising residents to excel



• **Objective 4**

Improve town amenity, connectivity and navigability from town gateway locations to natural and treasured town assets to encourage active travel and an improved destination offer



• **Objective 5**

Promote sustainable and clean growth, ensuring that TIP projects deliver local benefit and are within environmental limits, and ensure active communities are engaged at the very heart of our success

3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.3

Our Selected Town Deal Propositions

We are proposing four Town Deal Propositions, critical for translating our vision into a delivery strategy. Our propositions are targeted at recognising Darwen's potential and the opportunities Town Deal investment can unlock.

These four Propositions and underlying priority projects are summarised below. Section 4 sets out the project development and prioritisation process in more detail.

"We need to celebrate our history, but we also need to look to the future"

TD1: Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Lancashire Town



- P1 Town Centre Core
- P3 Town Centre Living
- P7 East Lancashire Sports Village

TD2: Contemporary Maker-Town



- P2 Employment Growth Sites
- P4 AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator
- P5 Strategic Manufacturing

TD3: Attractive Gateways, Parks and Amazing Countryside Links



- P6 Destination Darwen
- P9 Town Centre Gateways

TD4: Digital Darwen



- P8: Ultrafast Broadband

3.4

Investment Plan Outcomes

Our Vision and Town Deal Interventions will deliver a range of outcomes that will tackle our identified challenges and opportunities. These are summarised to the right and set out in more detail in relation to the Town Deal priority projects presented at section 4.

Anticipated Outcomes

- New manufacturing, town centre commercial and R&D assets
- 268 modern residential units and improved digital offer
- 100km active trail infrastructure and 5 sporting assets
- 40-50 new businesses forming and a major business safeguarded
- 150 businesses benefitting from Research and Innovation support
- 500+ adults upskilled
- 310 new FTE jobs forming and 300 existing jobs safeguarded
- £70.5m of leveraged private investment
- £466m in town GVA over 10 years (£374m at NPV)
- Every £1.00 of Public Investment generates £9.00 in economic returns
- Wider Town Competitiveness, Active Travel, Health, Carbon Efficiency, Amenity and Labour Supply Impacts



3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.5

Spatial Strategy

Our spatial strategy represents progression towards our town vision, informed by an urban design assessment with whole town thinking, ideas generation and various sketch diagrams.

Our valley location, nestled between steeply rising land to east and west, provides a dramatic landscape setting and our topography has for generations shaped Darwen's evolution.

Today Darwen's urban / rural setting is the canvas on which everyday lives are played-out and this is the starting point for our spatial strategy – the close relationship between town and country has been a recurring theme.

This spatial concept helps connect our

investment sites into a coordinated whole, referencing Darwen's history as a centre for textile manufacture to define our 'spiral thread' connecting places and projects.

Our TIP is possibly the only TIP nationally where all prioritised projects can be seen from one vantage point, Jubilee Tower (Darwen Tower). From here the town and our projects are laid out beneath you.

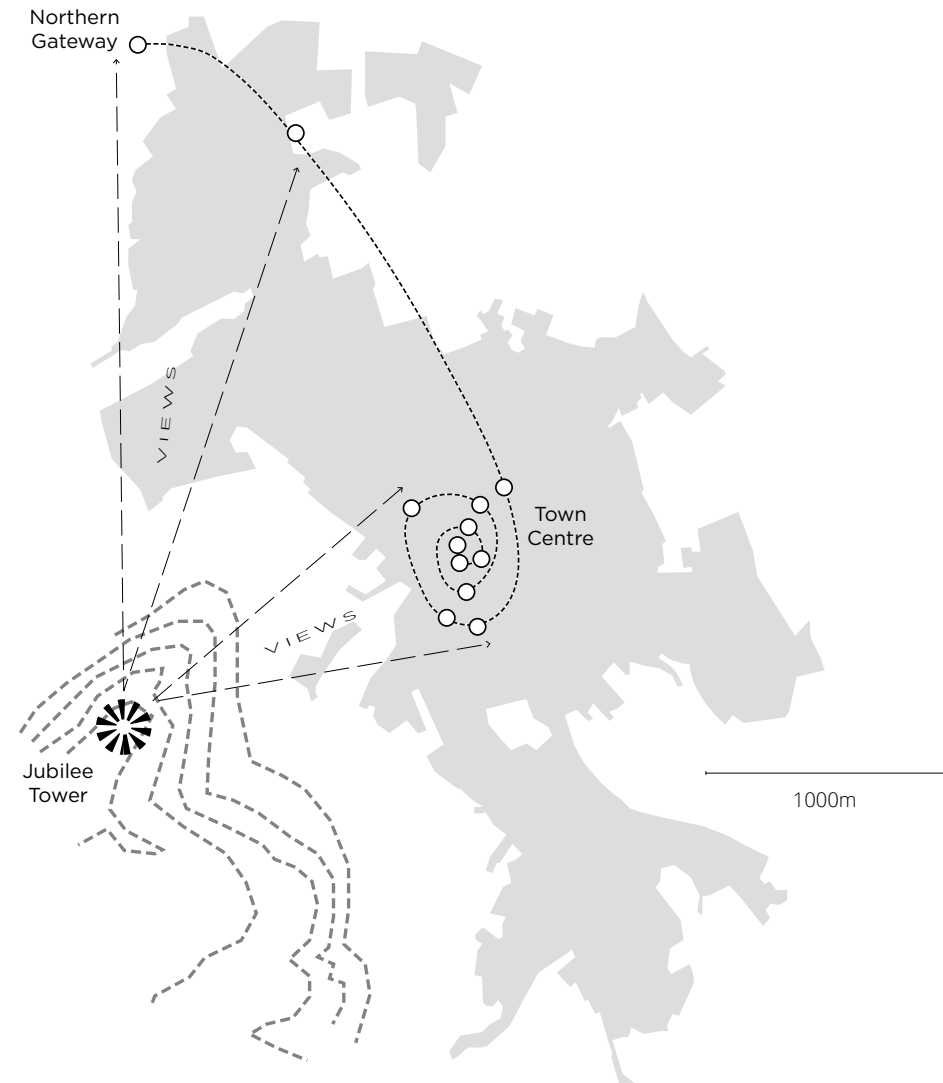
The spiral thread concept helps triangulate three key locations, namely:

- Northern Gateway (junction 4, M65) where several key projects are clustered;
- Jubilee Tower; and,
- Darwen town centre.

This connecting concept provides a unifying framework for our TIP and key priorities.

This spiral thread concept was a useful starting part, to allow the TIP team to connect together what would otherwise be a collection of disparate sites. This concept has since evolved to include stronger references to the surrounding moorland, linking town and country through the "Destination Darwen" project – see P6 on page 59. This proposes a series of circular walking loops, described in more detail on page 38.

Darwen 'Spiral Thread' Concept



Spatial Strategy
Our urban design process that led to the spatial strategy for Darwen

- Urban Design Assessments
- Whole Town Thinking
- Ideas Generation
- Sketch Diagrams
- Spatial Strategy

3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.5

Spatial Strategy cont...

The effect of topography and geography is striking. The town occupies a valley location and has developed in a linear fashion, with its east-west growth limited by steeply rising topography.

Excellent communications run through the town. To the north, towards Blackburn, the M65 provides fast connections west towards Preston and Blackpool, and east towards Burnley and other east Lancashire towns. South, the A666 Bolton Road takes people towards Manchester. The rail corridor also provides direct services to Manchester city centre.

Overlaid onto this physical context plan are a cluster of town centre projects within a 'walkable 500m zone' from the town core. This critical mass of new investments at our heart will make a visible change, delivering required town centre transformation.

Our town centre projects comfortably sit in their urban context, sitting easily alongside existing landmark buildings.

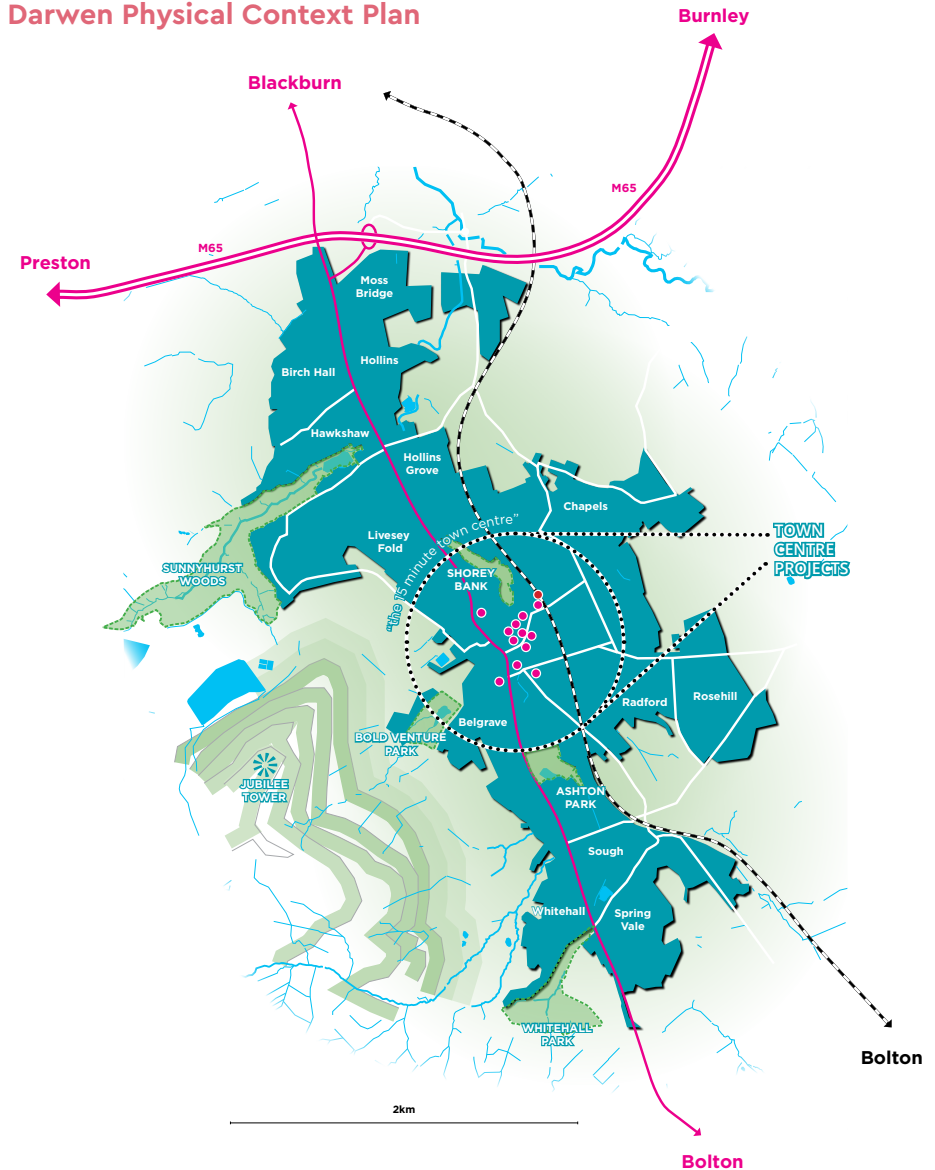
Our TIP will apply a bespoke unique architectural response to provide a legacy that future generations can be proud of, with new urban homes, creative spaces, the restoration of gap sites and improved gateways all combining to create a revitalised and vibrant new town centre.

Meanwhile, investment in our historic parks will champion positive outdoor lifestyles and will instill a sense of pride, especially in a post-pandemic context. New spaces will extend our ability to showcase local culture, enabling the people of Darwen to get together and celebrate shared experiences – a key message that came from our TIP public engagement work.

Finally, sites for micro-interventions have been catalogued, including refurbishing individual properties and shopfronts and several blank walls ideal for local-led mural artworks that will enliven our town and form part of the wayfinding and navigation system, directing people to the moors beyond the town.

The graphic right shows our spatial strategy, with TIP projects highlighted.

Darwen Physical Context Plan



3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.6

Linking Darwen Town Centre and the Town's Iconic Moorland

While our TIP focus is very much on town centre renewal, we have a set of supportive and interrelated projects across Darwen, spanning 5km, 10–12km and 20km 'Loops'.

Together, the Loops represent a strong, interlocking and innovative response to various town challenges:

20km Loop

The 20km bridleway Loop connects open moorland around Darwen, where investment in gateways, improved signage and surfaces will create an outstanding active travel resource, connecting Hoddlesden village to the east, Tockholes to the west, Whitehall Park to the south and several TIP supported sporting projects to the north at the East Lancashire Sports Village. Better integrated sports facilities with active travel links will improve our offer and respond positively to physical and mental health agendas.

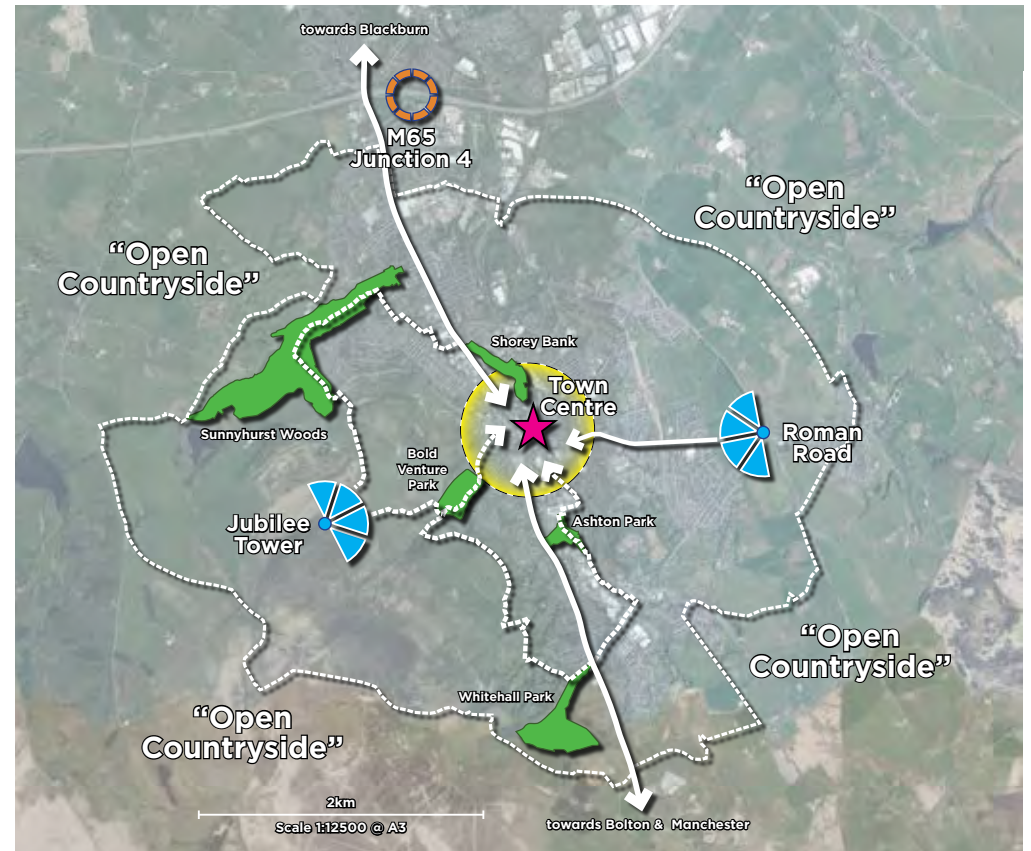
10km and 12km Loops

An inner Loop connecting our town centre with five outstanding parks – Sunnyhurst Woods, Shorey Bank, Ashton Park, Whitehall Park and Bold Venture Park. The parks are prized community assets, but they have suffered from under-investment over many years. However, TIP co-funding in footpath repair, gateways, signage, and drainage will create a new 10km walking/cycling trail Loop that connects our green infrastructure assets and repositions Darwen as a tourist

destination – get these spaces right for the locals, and the tourists will come. There is an option to extend the Loop to 12km, with a southern addition to connect Whitehall Park with a forthcoming new suburban housing development. Extra links from the 10km loop will connect existing east and west high points and our iconic Jubilee Tower.

5km Loop

While the western side of town will soon see over 1,000 new family homes delivered through private-led mechanisms, our town centre will also be a focus for a quality town centre living offer. A shorter 5km heritage trail Loop will complement this ambition, linking our outstanding industrial and architectural heritage with new TIP projects and key public spaces. This Loop also allows the wider 10km loop to be split through the town centre, forming a 'figure-of-eight'. For local events, such as trail runs, sponsored walks and sporting events, this flexibility will be vital. The Loop will also enable our town centre to act as a gateway for visitors to experience the wider Darwen offer, thereby driving footfall and town centre spending by actively encouraging and directing visitors to/from our town centre. The Loop will be supported by improved wayfinding and navigation, conventional signage and artistic work, sculpture, decals and impressions on the ground, embedding the Loops visually and psychologically into the landscape and townscape of Darwen.



"Since lockdown I have been able to walk much more. I am working from home, so it means I have time to get out with the dogs on the moor"

3. Darwen Town Investment Plan Strategy

3.7

National to Local Policy Alignment

Our vision is wholly aligned to national, sub-regional and local policy ambitions. Repurposing town centres and gateway sites has been a growing national policy objective, particularly as a mechanism for levelling up 'left behind' northern towns. Covid-19 and environmental agendas have also confirmed the need for increased active travel and digital connectivity and looking forward, we see significant growing emphasis on localism agendas, ensuring our urban cores are self-serving and sustainable, thus ensuring clean growth.

The retained longstanding objectives for Lancashire as outlined in the Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP, 2014) confirm the ambition to maximise Lancashire's economic strengths, including by reclaiming its role as a national centre for advanced manufacturing, research and innovation excellence and to create the right conditions for business and investor growth. These ambitions were reiterated in

the LEP's 2017-2020 Business Plan, which set the LEP's immediate priorities to (a) develop great places to live and work; (b) support business growth; (c) invest in growth; (d) champion key sectors; (e) develop Lancashire's skills base (f) better connectivity and (g) tell Lancashire's story in a more ambitious and confident way – The emerging Lancashire Local Industrial Strategy (for March 2021 publication) is expected to re-affirm these priorities when published this spring.

The Pennine Lancashire Growth and Prosperity Plan (2016-2032) also set its vision to significantly reduce the national productivity gap in the Pennine economy, which is located at the spatial centre of the Northern Powerhouse, and to continue to make a net positive contribution to the wider Lancashire economy.

Clearly, Darwen has an important role in meeting the LEP and Pennine Lancashire

ambitions and more locally, the Blackburn With Darwen Plan for Prosperity (2014-2020) set the ambition for transformative regeneration, connectivity improvements and faster broadband coverage. The Plan also supports efforts to bridge our productivity gap, encourage greater levels of local self-containment and ensure sustainable growth.

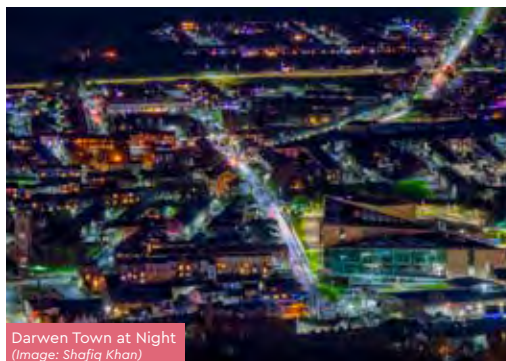
More recently, the Blackburn with Darwen Corporate Plan 2019-2023 sets the Council's vision for our residents to achieve a good quality of life in a vibrant and thriving place, with strong community values and an inclusive society.

The Council are now updating the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (Core Strategy, adopted 2011) with consultation planned from January 2021 with a view to submitting a new Local Plan for examination

by December 2021. The Darwen TIP process is informing the development of the Local Plan. To this end, our TIP projects have been fully integrated into the Council's Local Plan consultation and engagement work.

Clearly, Darwen is a town where coordinated action is needed to provide a strengthened and more sustainable economic role. Our town centre in particular needs radical, structural and sustainable change rather than piecemeal, fragmented and evolutionary improvements.

Transformation must better connect our outstanding natural assets and the centre to create a coherent, revitalised, distinctive offer for residents and visitors alike and we must give businesses the confidence to further invest in our town.



4 Projects

- 4.1 Projects Development Process – Identifying the Long List**
- 4.2 Project Prioritisation and Shortlisting**
- 4.3 The Proposed Town Deal Projects**
- 4.4 Darwen Town Deal Priority Projects**
- 4.5 Alignment to Challenges, Opportunities and Objectives**

4. Projects

4.1 Project Development Process – Identifying the Long-list

A long-list of projects was identified through the TIP preparation and engagement process, primarily through Theme Group discussions and consultation channels (see section 5).

To help identify projects, four Theme Groups were established, managed as sub-groups of the Town Deal Board covering 1) Land Use and Regeneration; 2) Arts, Culture and Leisure, 3) Transport & Connectivity, and 4) Skills and Enterprise.

The Theme Groups comprised Board members and additional individuals with expertise and interest in Darwen's future. This offered the chance to extend the TIP process to a wider stakeholder group.

Each Theme Group held between two and four meetings, developing and agreeing objectives and outcomes with focussed discussions on potential projects. All ideas and proposals for capital projects were considered, resulting in a long-list of potential projects. Each project was then

written-up with an outline of the project; how it would respond to key challenges; fit against the objectives and outcomes; projected costs; potential funding and delivery.

Theme leads then presented a summary of their activity and projects at Town Deal board level, enabling a long-list of over 20 projects, presented opposite. An indicative assessment of costs was made by the core bid team, assessing the potential long-list at over £140m. This was discussed at Board level.

"A dynamic manufacturing base will remain central to creating a prosperous Darwen"

Steve Hartley
Managing Director WEC

Darwen TIP – Long List Projects

	Indicative Delivery Cost (now superseded)
Investment Theme 1: Regeneration and Land Use	
1 Town Centre Core	
1.1 Darwen Market Hall – food hall and retail units incl. Arches F&B & Food Hub	
1.2 Demolition of Market Hall annex and car park & new landscaping	£12.0m
1.3 New Box Park – SME start-up units	
3.2 Renovated/modernised Darwen Library Theatre, flexible practice and performance space	
2.5 Adult Learning Centre (potential for location within Market Hall redevelopment)	
1.4 Town Centre housing (6–8 sites)	£31.9m
Investment Theme 2: Skills and Enterprise	
2.1 AMRC Additive Manufacturing demonstrator	£2.5m
2.2 High quality local employment sites (Balle St Mill, Chapels sites)	£5.0m
2.3 High quality employment site (Hollins Mill), link road to J4, roundabout & slip-roads	£50.0m
2.4 Entrepreneur Academy / Enterprise hub	£0.75m
2.6 Strategic Redevelopment site	£4.0m
Investment Theme 3: Arts, Culture and Leisure	
3.1 Music, Culture & night-life. Practice & performance spaces. (Mix of capital & revenue)	£1.0m
3.3 Sports Village North	£4.5m
3.4 Holden Fold – amenity sports	£3.75m
3.5 History & Heritage (Heritage Centre extension, Blacksnape play park, Bold Venture Park improvement, Darwen Tower)	£1.80m
3.6 Barlow Institute – facilities extension	£0.75m
3.7 Turton Tower – stables conversion to wedding / events venue	£0.50m
Investment Theme 4: Connectivity	
4.1 Darwen as a Tourist destination – improved public rights of way	£3.0m
4.2: Town Centre Arrival Gateways & street scene links to Market Square (300m radius)	£3.0m
4.3: A666 Corridor improvements	£3.0m
4.4: Digital Darwen (high speed wireless/microwave provision across the Town)	£2.0m
4.5: Sustainable Urban Drainage (additional works to Environment Agency flood works)	£2.6m
4.6: Highways major structures – exceptional maintenance	£5.0m
4.7: Public Transport capital projects – Spring Vale railway station / cycle hub building	£5.0m
Total Indicative Development Cost	£142.0m

4. Projects

4.2 Project Prioritisation and Short-listing

A check and scoring approach was agreed by the Board to prioritise the long-list using the Towns Hub website's Prioritisation Tool. The results were discussed and agreed by the Board.

Projects were first checked against the Prioritisation Tool's first sift, based on geographic fit (i.e. town centre, gateways or employment sites) and then fit against our vision. A second stage scoring and ranking process in accordance with the Prioritisation Tool then helped prioritise projects, thus enabling a preferred short-list. Projects were ranked against seven local 'alignment' factors, alongside the HMT Green Book criteria:

1. Response to Identified Town Challenges
2. Contribution to Vision, Objectives and Opportunities
3. Contribution to Covid Recovery
4. Deliverability Confidence
5. Scale and Status of Co-Funding
6. Scale of Leveraged Investment
7. Economic Benefits (Direct and Indirect Benefits)

4.3 The Proposed Town Deal Projects

Step 1: Scoring and Ranking

A financial limit for the Town Deal was agreed by the Board as not to exceed £30m. This provided a cut-off point for a short-listed set of projects from the long list as follows:



Darwen TIP – Short Listed Priority Projects						
	Total Cost	Town Deal	Local Funding	Sports	HE / FE Providers	Private
P1 Town Centre Core	£13.99m	£8.64m	£4.75m		£0.50m	£0.10m
P2 Employment Growth Sites	£8.89m	£3.00m	£1.00m			£4.89m
P3 Town Centre Living	£36.06m	£2.27m	£2.00m			£31.79m
P4 AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator	£4.63m	£2.80m	£1.00m		£0.83m	
P5 Strategic Manufacturing	£31.00m	£3.00m	£1.00m			£27.00m
P6 Destination Darwen	£3.30m	£2.23m	£1.00m			£0.08m
P7 East Lancashire Sports Village	£8.43m	£3.50m	£0.50m	£1.83m		£2.60m
P8 Ultrafast Broadband	£5.75m	£2.00m				£3.75m
P9 Gateways	£3.74m	£2.40m	£1.00m			£0.34m
Total Cost	£115.78m	£29.84m	£12.25m	£1.83m	£1.33m	£70.54m

4. Projects

Step 2:

Town Deal Propositions and Selected Projects

This section sets out our four Town Deal Propositions that translate our Vision into a deliverable strategy. These provide a structure for grouping and organising the short-listed projects.

The projects, re-numbered in accordance with our ranking, were then grouped under our four Propositions to provide a structure for the Town Deal.

"Darwen has a great music scene, people travel from all over for a night out in Darwen."

Darwen TIP – Selected Priorities and Town Deal Funding Ask			
TD1: Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Lancashire Town	TD2: Contemporary Maker-Town	TD3: Attractive Gateways, Parks and Links to Amazing Countryside	TD4: Digital Darwen
P1: Town Centre Core £8.64m	P2: Employment Growth Sites £3.00m	P6: Destination Darwen £2.23m	P8: Ultrafast Broadband £2.00m
P3: Town Centre Living £2.27m	P4: AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator £2.80m	P9: Town Centre Gateways £2.40m	
P7: East Lancashire Sport Village £3.50m	P5: Strategic Manufacturing £3.00m		
Total Town Deal Funding Sought: £29.84m			



4. Projects

Town Centre Core Projects

TIP Projects

- P1 Town Centre Core
- P2 Employment Growth Sites
- P3 Town Centre Living
- P4 Additive Manufacturing
- P5 Strategic Manufacturing
- P6 Destination Darwen
- P7 East Lancashire Sports Village
- P8 Digital Darwen
- P9 Town Centre Gateways

Town Centre Core Projects

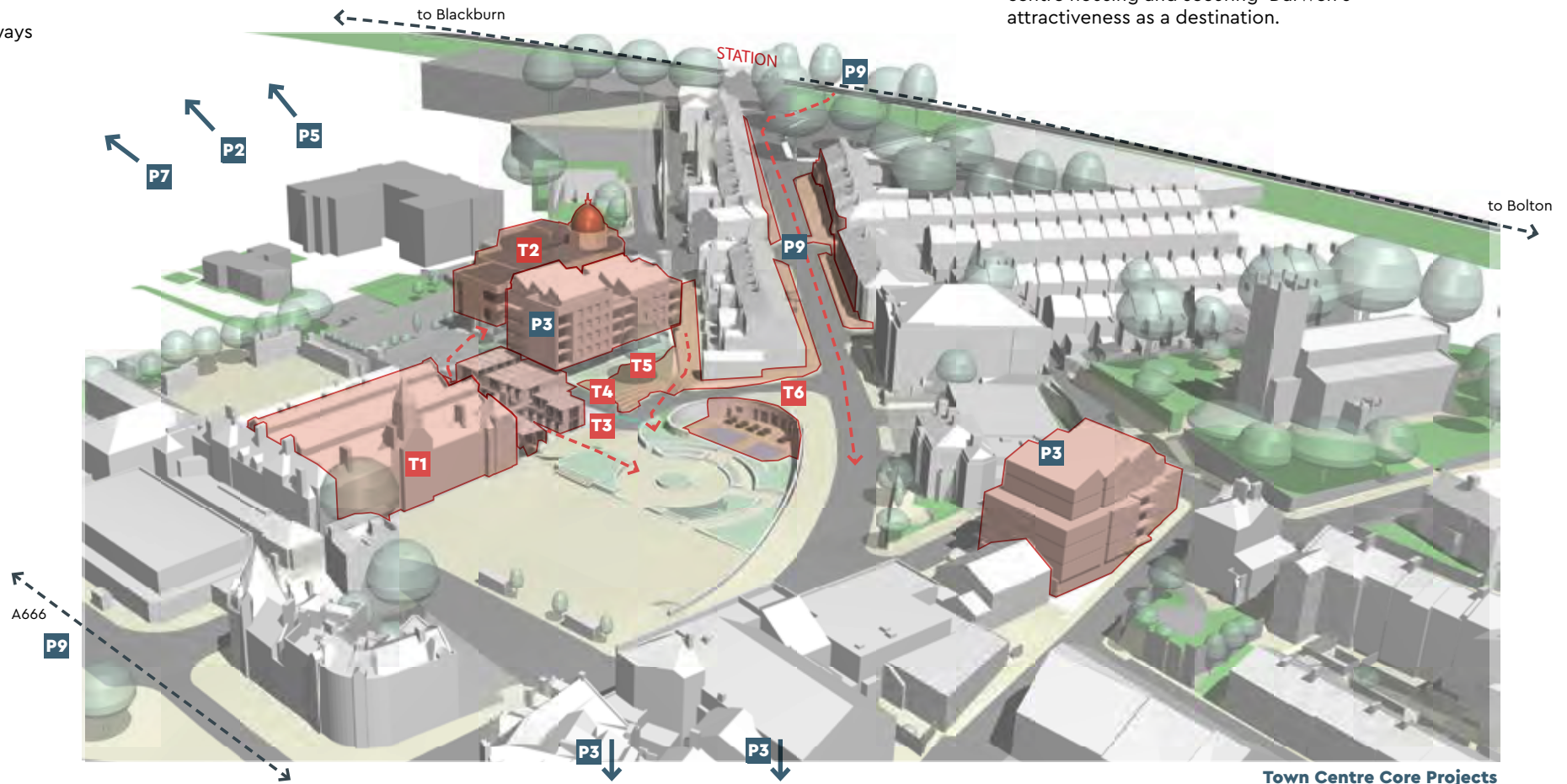
- T1 Market and Foodhall
- T2 Library and Theatre
- T3 Maker Market
- T4 Adult Education and Enterprise Hub
- T5 Parking and Landscape
- T6 Arches F&B

Vision

Restoring the town centre as the hub of a Modern Maker-Town.
 Creating modern working spaces and the conditions for collaboration, providing a range of opportunities for contemporary workers.

Outputs

Providing a thriving and exciting town centre with a diverse social, cultural, and activity based offer.
 Enhancing connectivity, promoting business innovation, making provision for flexible working in the new town centre housing and securing Darwen's attractiveness as a destination.



Town Centre Core Projects

4. Projects

Theory of Change

Town Deal Propositions 1 : Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Lancashire Town

Inputs <i>Resources and activities</i>		Outputs <i>What is delivered or produced</i>	Outcome <i>Early or medium-term results</i>	Impacts <i>Long-term results</i>
P1 Town Centre Core:	£8.64m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Market Hall, a new 170 seat food hall and 2 new F&B units 21 new 'Maker-Market' SME maker units Upgraded/remodelled civic assets, including Darwen Town Hall and Darwen Theatre and Library A new Adult Learning and Enterprise hub A new 79 space visitor car park 268 new residential units A new sports campus, comprising 3 new sports facilities (Cricket Academy, Junior Golf Academy and Driving Range an Olympic standard urban sports facility) and enhancements to existing football and cricket facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating new community spaces in Darwen town centre, supporting renewed day and evening vibrancy by attracting increased town centre visits, dwell times and spending Ensuring the town offers an excellent civic and service role and extending the town adult learning offer Providing the platform for SME start-up success and ensuring the town centre has a compelling accessible and well-rounded offer Extending the town living offer, including the delivery of new products that cater for modern homeworking demands Delivering new leisure and recreation assets, ensuring a well-rounded competitive town offer that in particular attracts and retains younger residents £34.48m in private leveraged investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-40 new town centre businesses created and a range of town centre activities safeguarded 81 new FTE jobs directly created and 50 existing jobs safeguarded, with supporting long term GVA contributions 250 new town residents attracted and 100 younger residents retained in Darwen Upskilling, the potential for redressing deprivation locally and improved accessibility to employment opportunities, thereby supporting improved labour supply locally Uplift in sports participation locally, the attraction of national events and resultant positive impacts on health, wellbeing and community cohesion Improved image and prestige value of Darwen town centre as a place to live, work and invest in
P3 Town Centre Living:	£2.27m			
P7 East Lancashire sports Village:	£3.50m			
Total Town Deal Ask:	£14.41m			

4. Projects

Theory of Change

Town Deal Proposition 2: Contemporary Maker-Town			
Inputs <i>Resources and activities</i>	Outputs <i>What is delivered or produced</i>	Outcome <i>Early or medium-term results</i>	Impacts <i>Long-term results</i>
<p>P2 Employment Growth Sites: £3.0m</p> <p>P4 AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator: £2.8m</p> <p>P5 Strategic Manufacturing: £3.0m</p> <p>Total Town Deal Ask: £8.8m</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15,500 sqm of new high quality modern production, R&D and ancillary commercial space • 7.2 acres of redeveloped brownfield land and the delivery of Perspex Internationals new energy efficient campus at Chapels South • Deployment of new regionally important AMRC additive manufacturing technologies research with supporting upskilling offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attraction of 4-6 new high value production businesses to Darwen • Retention of a nationally important manufacturing presence in Darwen, conforming the town's ongoing role as a manufacturing centre of excellence • Extension of the nationally important AMRC brand in Lancashire, extending the town's research and development capacity in new technologies and supporting regional business and supply chain innovation and success • Providing local workforce upskilling by offering apprenticeships, degrees and CPD training in partnership with the University of Sheffield and local FE providers • £31.89m in private funding leveraged private investment • Supporting the success and aligning with Town Deal Proposition 1 SME units in Maker Market/Box Park project as part of Town Centre Core project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to support 225 new town FTE jobs directly, with potential to support £135m of town GVA over 10 years • Safeguarding of 250 high value jobs in Darwen and associated safeguarded GVA impacts • Energy efficiencies among a prized town business, supporting improved productivity and bringing carbon savings • 100 businesses working in the AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator, with improved turnover prospects, and 50 companies adopting additive technologies regionally • Upskilling of 500 workers in additive technologies, supporting a long-term competitive town workforce and associated impacts on labour supply locally

4. Projects

Theory of Change

Town Deal Proposition 3: Attractive Gateways, Parks and Countryside Links				
Inputs <i>Resources and activities</i>		Outputs <i>What is delivered or produced</i>	Outcome <i>Early or medium-term results</i>	Impacts <i>Long-term results</i>
P6 Destination Darwen	£2.23m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100km of improved active travel loop infrastructure and upgrade works to 4 park assets • Regeneration of up to 64 town centre shop and building fronts with supported refreshed public realm and potential for increased town centre car parking capacity • Creation of new art installations at 4 gateway locations and the delivery of a new iconic 'living wall' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing improved and more sustainable town connectivity, navigability and accessibility to important town cultural and natural assets • Delivering high-quality streetscape regeneration on important town centre gateway approaches. • Improving the visitor experience, increasing footfall and extending dwell times and spending in the town centre. • Encouraging more sustainable forms of active walking and cycling travel, thereby reducing motor-based travel demands locally • Bringing renewed pride and confidence in Darwen for residents and businesses • £0.42m in private leveraged investment • Complementing Proposition 1 outcomes for an improved town centre experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and generating town centre spending, supporting town centre retail and visitor economy activities • Providing image and prestige value • Encouraging healthy active travel for residents, with associated improved health carbon saving impacts • Delivering amenity impacts
P9 Town Centre Gateways	£2.40m			
Total Town Deal Ask:	£4.63m			

4. Projects

Theory of Change

Town Deal Propositions 4: Digital Darwen				
Inputs <i>Resources and activities</i>		Outputs <i>What is delivered or produced</i>	Outcome <i>Early or medium-term results</i>	Impacts <i>Long-term results</i>
P8 Ultrafast Broadband	£2.00m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of Ultrafast gigabit capable broadband technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing unrivalled digital connectivity to 11,300 town businesses and domestic properties, including free Wi-Fi within a 500m radius of the town centre and free access for 2,260 disadvantaged families. £3.75m in private leveraged investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved image and prestige value of Darwen town centre as a place to live, work and invest in
Total Town Deal Ask:	£2.00m			

4. Projects

4.4

Darwen Town Deal Priority Projects

TD1: Exemplar Dynamic and Sustainable Lancashire Town

P1 Town Centre Core

P3 Town Centre Living

P7 East Lancashire Sports Village

4. Projects

P1 Town Centre Core

Locations:

Darwen Town Centre
School Street
Darwen Market Square

Current Use:

Markets, Market Annexe, Car Park,
Market Square Arches

Investment Theme:

Regeneration + Land Use
Arts, Culture + Leisure
Skills + Enterprise

Value:

Total project value	£13.99m
TIP funding required	£8.64m
Other funding	£5.35m

Project Description

This major project seeks to revive the heart of Darwen town centre and to restore Darwen as a modern market town with a town centre that is a focal point for the community. Given its prime location at the heart of Darwen, this is a core project for the regeneration of Darwen and the centrepiece of the Darwen Town Deal bid.

The town centre core project restores the heart of a modern maker-town. It brings vibrancy and harnesses the arts and culture in the town, a focal point for Darwen's sense of community.

Darwen has been affected by the general decline experienced by most UK town centres, with people spending more time online shopping, coupled with out of town retailing.

The plans transform the Market, Darwen Library and Theatre, with a Foodhall, a Maker Market, the creation of an Adult Education and Enterprise Hub, parking with a rooftop landscape and the renovation of Market Square Arches.

Significant investment has already gone into the demolition of a 1970s outdoor market and the creation of the landscaped market square. Existing arches around the east wall will house a new bar/restaurant

with fountains and tables in the space in front, animating the square and providing a safe space for parents to socialise and children to play.

The existing market annexe and car-park, is beyond economical repair. In its place is a new landscaped car park on three levels with a pedestrian route from the square to school street, restoring town centre connections and the site for a vibrant new 'Maker' market. At ground floor this will host existing and new market traders. The upper level includes areas for a new adult education centre and a tech enabled Enterprise Hub, alongside a contemporary public gallery and exhibition space.

The basement of the market hall will provide music rehearsal space. With the 'Darwen Live' music festival and performances at the Library Theatre, Darwen is established as a venue for live entertainment. The 'Carnegie' library is to be restored to 21st century standards. A new entrance on School Street connects directly through the Maker market to the new market square. New planning within the theatre allows the creation a 'black box' multi-function space significantly improving the usefulness of the theatre for multiple events.

Project Outcomes

The refurbishment of the Market Hall, with the Maker Market Annexe, library and theatre and animated square.

The regeneration of the market and Library optimises the functionality and viability of key cultural heritage assets for a modern and future Darwen and will provide a vibrant community focus for the town.

It strengthens the local economy by investing in areas for which Darwen has a growing reputation. It works to support local business, by attracting visitors from the town and throughout East Lancashire.

It engages local people and re-energises neglected areas and structures. Providing a greater sense of pride and belonging in the community, whilst also strengthening local economic development through tourism, entertainment, education and business.

By bringing a significant improved town centre, the project complements the wider challenge of retaining younger residents in the town.



- T1 Market and Foodhall
- T2 Library and Theatre
- T3 Maker Market
- T4 Adult Education and Enterprise Hub
- T5 Parking and Landscape
- T6 Arches F&B

4. Projects

P1 Town Centre Core cont...

Project Outcomes

- 81 jobs created
- Increased visitor numbers
- 30-40 new town centre businesses
- Adult learners assisted



170
Seats in the Food Hall



79
Car parking spaces



27
Market units



4
Adult learning classrooms

- Contemporary Exhibition Gallery
- Renovated Library and Theatre
- Renovated Market Hall
- New routes around the centre
- Play fountains and outdoor seating

T1 Market and Foodhall

The Market Hall is the centerpiece of Darwen town centre, a key cultural asset, establishing Darwen's role as a 'market town'. The grand old structure poses a challenge, but provides an opportunity to marry old and new. The proposals will create a high quality, contemporary food hall, supporting local food businesses, with food and drink stalls alongside the traditional traders in the renovation of the existing 5 day indoor market.

The existing market annexe and car park will be replaced with projects T3, T4 and T5

T2 Library and Theatre

Darwen Library is a grade II listed building and an original Carnegie library with a thriving theatre. The proposals for reorganisation, renovation of the old building and a new 2 storey entrance wing on School Street will secure the library's position as Darwen's cultural hub. The location of the new entrance at the west of the building responds to the town core proposals for a new link from the Market Square to School Street providing a major focal point for the re-activation of School Street.

T3 Maker Market

The Maker Market proposals sit on the roof of the basement car park level and create a new north south pedestrian route, connecting School St to the Market Square. The units are built from re-purposed shipping containers. A lightweight and adaptable replacement for the old concrete market annexe. New entrances into the Market Hall will improve the connection of the new foodhall with the square.

T4 Adult Education and Skills

The upper gallery of the market hall will be renovated to provide small teaching spaces and the maker market will include classrooms for adults education provided in partnership with Blackburn College.

Two upper level containers in the Maker Market will be fitted out as an outreach contemporary gallery for Library and public exhibitions. A suite of rooms at the upper level are set aside for voluntary organisations and careers service.

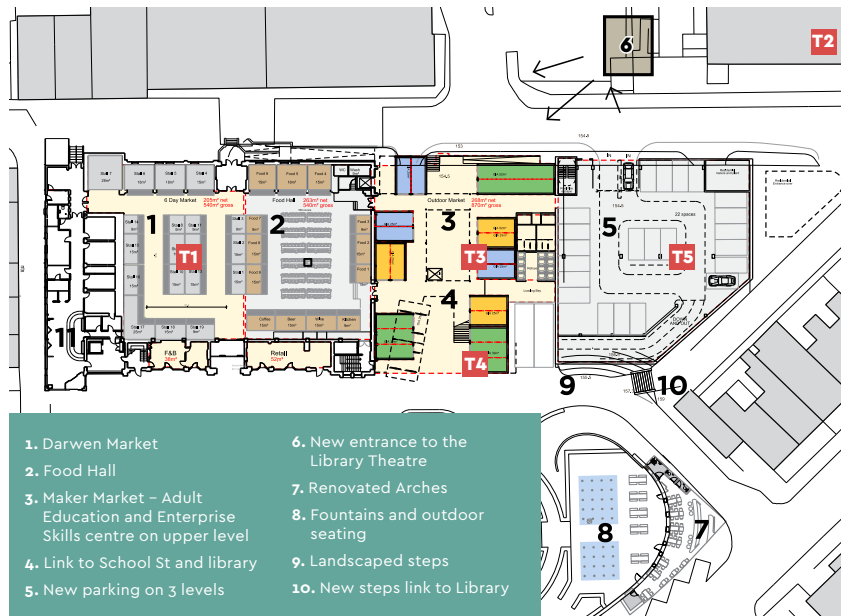
T5 Parking and Landscape

A significant part of the proposal is the replacement of the existing parking with a modern, light and spacious town centre covered car park over three levels.

The roof level of the parking forms a stepped landscape, giving south facing spaces for sitting out facing the square. Activating a further route to the library to the east of the annexe and a direct route from the square to the station.

T6 Arches F&B

The east wall of the square is brought to life with a Cafe-Bar facing west. A social space with public tables and play fountains. Darwen's own 'Granary Square'



4. Projects

P3 Town Centre Living

Locations:

Duckworth St, Church St, School St,
Foundry St, Belgrave Heights

Current Use:

Surface Parking
Brownfield Sites
Market Annexe

Investment Theme:

Land Use and Regeneration

Value

Total project value	£36.06m
TIP funding required	£2.27m
Other funding	£33.79m

Project Description

This project will provide 219 modern apartments and 36 new houses on seven sites within walking distance of Darwen Town Centre. All of the sites are located within 300m of the market square.

The developments will be located on vacant or dilapidated land, filling in the many of the gaps left by previously demolished buildings and renewing Darwen's town centre zone.

The housing and apartments will be high quality and designed to provide for modern living and working patterns, with dedicated home working spaces. The ground floor areas of some of the apartment sites will be given over to commercial or retail and a number of the apartments will be modern live-work units with ground floor workshops.

The Belgrave Mill development will secure completion of a significant abandoned brownfield residential site in Darwen Town Centre, which was partially constructed and subsequently stalled over 10 years ago. The project will alleviate the long-standing concerns of Darwen residents due to the significant blight which the site inflicts on the town centre.

A pepper pot housing scheme included in this project will see 13 dilapidated terraced houses fully refurbished and brought back into use.

Project Delivery

Delivery of these housing projects will revitalise Darwen town centre. The sites have been carefully selected so that they are easily deliverable, with 4 of the sites in council ownership and one owned by a development partner.

Financing for the developments is approved in principle (Housing Growth Partnership have confirmed their serious interest) and Town Deal funds will be used to undertake preparatory works on the sites to ensure that the schemes are commercially viable.

All of the sites are sustainably located close to the centre of Darwen and the railway station which provides frequent and quick access to nearby major urban centres such as Manchester and Blackburn.

Working with private developers and strategic housing partners. The provision of the housing is split between; sale, for rent, and affordable in the form of part ownership.

Our Pepper Pot Housing scheme, will see 13 dilapidated terraced houses renewed to a high standard and brought back into use in a rolling programme between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Project Outcomes

219 Apartments
36 New Houses
13 Refurbished Houses
1000m² commercial space

As well as regeneration town centre infrastructure, this project will generate high quality housing that will help to retain young, professional, economically active people in Darwen. The close proximity of the sites to the town centre will help to maximise spend in the local daytime and night time economy, supporting local businesses and our other town centre projects.

The innovative designs of the units will allow for more frequent home working, supported by our ultrafast broadband project, and ground floor retail, leisure, workshops and studios will allow for new and flexible ways of working.



- 1. Duckworth St**
32 Apartments
- 2. Police St**
26 Apartments, 12 Houses
- 3. Market Annexe**
36 Apartments
- 4. Church St**
28 Apartments
- 5. Foundry St**
39 Apartments
- 6. Belgrave Heights**
58 Apartments, 23 Houses
- 7. Pepperpot Housing**
Bank Street
Bridge Street
Church Street
Church Terrace
Green Street East
Railway Road
Victoria Street



4. Projects

P7 East Lancashire Sports Village

Location

AFC Darwen, J4 Skate Park, Darwen
Community Cricket Club, Darwen Vale
Academy, Darwen Golf Club

Current Use

Football club, urban sports (BMX/
scooters/skateboard) school playing
fields, cricket club, golf club

Investment Theme

Arts
Culture
Leisure

Value

Total project value	£8.43m
TIP funding required	£3.50m
Other funding	£4.93m

Project Description

We want to make Darwen a fantastic place to live and a great place to visit. As part of this ambition, the Darwen Town Deal will create the east Lancashire Sports Village, linking together a series of high quality local and regional sports facilities, all within easy reach of Junction 4 of the M65. These new and upgraded facilities will be of an extremely high regional/national standard, transforming sporting opportunities for local people and making Darwen a place to visit for sports enthusiasts from across the region.

The project will:

- 1) Create the Aldridge Northern Cricket Academy. Providing a new, iconic national standard cricket facilities in partnership with the Aldridge Foundation, ECB, Lancashire Cricket Club and Darwen Cricket Club. This development will create a state of the art pitch, pavilion and indoor cricket centre and also enhance existing tennis, rugby, rounders athletics and netball pitches on the same site.
- 2) Modernise Darwen Community Cricket Club, improving the pitch, changing and social facilities, developing a new family friendly play area and improving car parking and access.
- 3) Modernise Darwen's historic football club (AFC Darwen) increasing the capacity of the stands, developing new changing facilities, enhancing social facilities and creating community use fitness/gym provision.

4) Create an exciting new national standard BMX facility at the Junction 4 Skatepark. Delivered in partnership with British Cycling.

5) Create a new Junior Golf Academy and driving range at Darwen Golf Club.

All of these sports facilities will be connected by the walking and cycling routes that are created as part of our Destination Darwen project.

Project Delivery

Linking together new and improved sports facilities to form a connected sports village will transform leisure and sporting opportunities for local people.

Key sports organisations have been working in partnership with us to develop the project and are committed to supporting its development through match funding. Partners include Sport England, Lancashire Cricket Club and the ECB, Golf England, the Football Foundation and British Cycling. Total match funding is estimated at more than 50% of the total scheme costs and this presents a fantastic opportunity for the Town Deal Fund to have a significant impact on sports facilities that will benefit not only Darwen but the wider region.

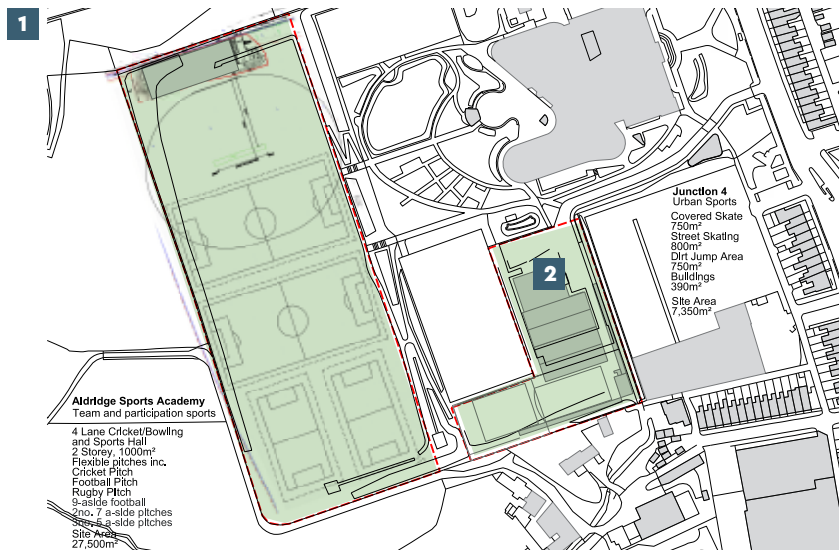
All of the land required for the developments is in the ownership of the partners. AFC Darwen is leased by the Club from Blackburn with Darwen Council. The cricket academy Site is owned by the Aldridge Academy and the golf practice and training facility is within the Darwen Golf club site boundary.

Project Outcomes

This project will deliver high quality national standard sports facilities for Darwen and the wider region, capitalising on the proximity of the sites to Junction 4 of the M65.

The project will:

- Increase the number of local people engaging in sport with associated health and well-being impacts encouraged by new high quality sports facilities.
- Be attractive across Lancashire and the wider region, drawing an increased number of visitors to the town, increasing spend within the locality, helping Darwen build back better from Covid-19 and supporting longer term economic development.
- Improve the perception of the town by local residents, businesses and visitors. Importantly, this project improves leisure opportunities for young people and helps to retain them within the town.



1. Cricket Academy
2. Urban Sports
3. AFC Darwen
4. Junior Golf Academy

4. Projects

TD2: Contemporary Maker-Town

P2 Employment Growth Sites

P4 AMRC Additive Manufacturing
Accelerator

P5 Strategic Manufacturing

4. Projects

P2 Employment Growth Sites

Locations:
Chapels South
Balle Street Mill

Current Use:
Brownfield

Investment Theme:
Skills + Enterprise

Value

Total project value	£8.89m
TIP funding required	£3.0m
Other funding	£5.89m

Project Description

There is a clear need to deliver high quality employment land in order to accelerate job growth in Darwen and across Lancashire, as reflected in local, regional and national policy.

There is a shortage of high quality commercial sites within the Darwen Town Deal area. To address this shortage, to accelerate the delivery of new employment sites in Darwen and to mitigate the impact of brownfield constraints from former heavy industrial uses, a package of measures is presented.

The project builds on the significant infrastructure investment recently completed as a result of the Darwen East Distributor Corridor scheme, supported by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership via Growth Deal 2. It will also deliver on the objectives of the Pennine Lancashire Growth & Prosperity Plan (2016–2032) – for employment growth, improving career prospects and investing in infrastructure.

Project Delivery

Through Blackburn with Darwen's strategic partnership with Barnfield Construction, a contractor is already in place to deliver the development. The key activities to be completed before the project can start are securing approvals such as planning permission.

The Balle Mill Projects will be delivered directly by Barnfield and the Chapels South site will be delivered through a joint venture between Barnfield and Blackburn with Darwen Council.

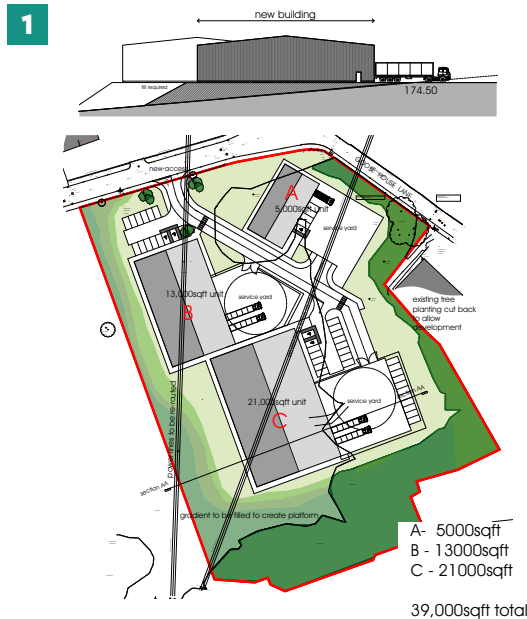
Risks for the project are considered to be low. Site assembly is agreed and the legals are progressing. Given the brownfield status of the sites, no significant planning risks have been identified. There is proven local demand for high quality commercial sites and the use of Town Deal funding to support site preparation will ensure that the schemes are commercially viable.

Project Outcomes

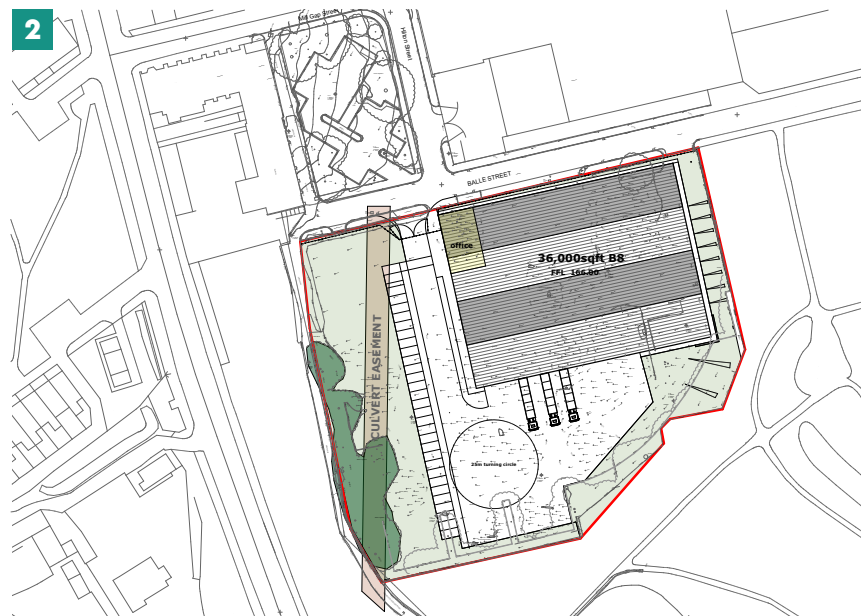
This project will deliver 7,000 sqm of new, high quality, affordable employment floor space on 7.2 acres of land.

Abandoned or dilapidated sites will be developed, creating opportunities for local businesses to expand and for new businesses to relocate into Darwen.

New jobs opportunities will be created for local people, accelerating jobs growth in Darwen.



Chapels South



Balle Street

4. Projects

P4 AMRC Additive Manufacturing Accelerator

Location
Chapels South

Current Use
Brownfield site

Investment Theme
Skills + Enterprise

Value	
Total project value	£4.63m
TIP funding required	£2.80m
Other funding	£1.83m

Project Description

Darwen has a long history of metals and plastics manufacturing. Successful metals and plastics manufacturing companies based within the town provide a significant amount of skilled and unskilled employment to the local community.

Additive manufacture (3D printing) of metal and plastic components is a new technology and is growing quickly. By 2024, the global additive manufacturing sector is estimated to be worth over £35bn a year. UK manufacturers have been slow to adopt these new technologies and have been falling behind those in other countries.

This project will create an AMRC additive manufacturing accelerator based at the Chapels site in Darwen. This centre will be a UK first and will provide support to metals and plastics manufacturers in Darwen, the wider region and across the UK.

Throughout the development of the accelerator, the AMRC team will both lead the project development and will begin to provide support to local manufacturers to understand and adopt additive manufacturing methods. This means that Darwen's additive accelerator can begin to have an immediate impact on the local and regional economy.

Project Delivery

This project is supported by Blackburn with Darwen Council and the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at the University of Sheffield.

An accelerator team will focus on design and construction of the accelerator at the Chapels site and this will be delivered through Blackburn with Darwen's strategic partnership with Barnfield Construction. It is anticipated that the site will be ready by March 2022. Alongside site construction, work will be undertaken to select, purchase and install the advanced technology and equipment that will be required for the operation of the accelerator, including:

- AM machines
- Metallographic and powder testing equipment.
- Design studio equipment (design, simulation, process modelling).
- Virtual reality systems for component visualisation.
- Ancillary equipment for surface finishing/cleaning.
- Specific automation equipment for AM process control.

Project Outcomes

Delivered in partnership with the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre at the University of Sheffield, the Additive Manufacturing Accelerator will:

- Showcase the latest additive manufacturing (3D printing) technology.
- Help metals manufacturers adopt new additive manufacturing / 3D metals printing technologies.
- Create a local supply chain of high quality additively manufactured components, particularly for the aerospace industry.
- Develop workforce skills by offering apprenticeships, degrees and CPD training in Partnership with the University of Sheffield and local FE providers.
- Create and protect high value manufacturing jobs within Darwen and the surrounding region.
- Attract inward investment to Darwen and the surrounding region.



4. Projects

P5 Strategic Manufacturing

Location

Chapels South

Current Use

Brownfield site next to existing Manufacturing

Investment Theme

Skills + Enterprise

Value

Total project value
TIP funding required
Other funding

£31.00m
£3.00m
£28.00m

Project Description

This is a major strategically important project, being delivered in partnership with Perspex International, one of Darwen's largest international manufacturing businesses.

The project will enable Perspex International to be retained within Darwen with the development of a new purpose built, large scale production plant, at a newly created, energy-efficient campus at Chapels South, co-located alongside the AMRC.

The project will include:

- New polymerisation equipment.
- A new international Research and Development Centre.
- A new power supply.
- Company offices.

Project Delivery

This strategic project safeguards the global competitiveness of the Darwen manufacturing base, founded during WW2. Reducing environmental impacts of the production process and introducing energy-efficient polymerisation technology.

The project will secure the delivery of circa 8,500 sqm (91,500 sqft) of employment floorspace, protection of 250 jobs, and enhancement of Research and Development facilities.

The project is to be delivered by the existing multi-national manufacturing business on land already owned by them.

Project Outcomes

- Challenge 1: Jobs Capacity and Productivity – by bringing process efficiencies and ensuring the retention of a major town employer
- Challenge 6: Covid-19 Response – by retaining and ensuring the economic recovery of one of our most prized businesses

250 SAFEGUARDED JOBS

8500M² AREA

50% ENERGY USE REDUCTION

CO-LOCATED WITH THE AMRC



PERSPEX



INTERNATIONAL



4. Projects

TD3: Attractive Gateways, Parks and Amazing Countryside Links

P6 Destination Darwen

P9 Town Centre Gateways

4. Projects

P6 Destination Darwen

Location

The Town Centre, the wider urban area, the surrounding hills

Current Use

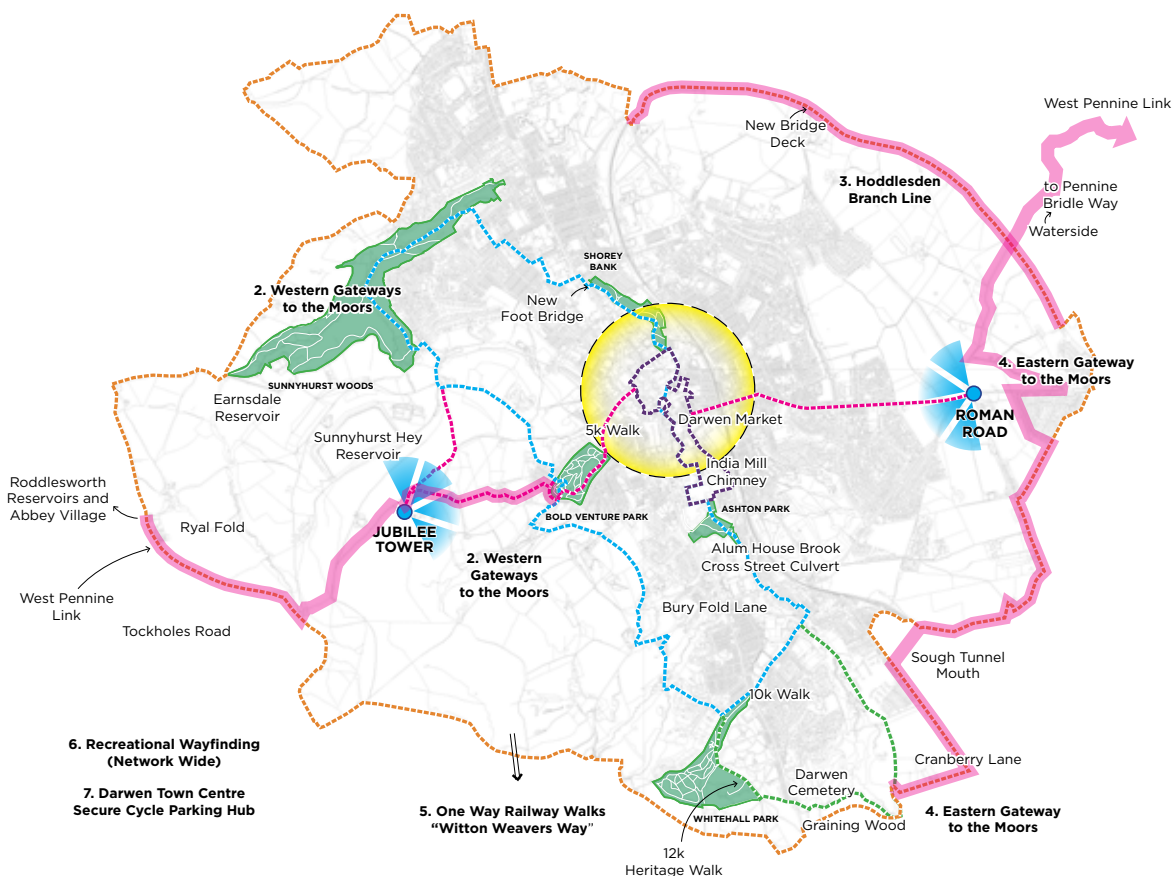
Linking existing routes and opening new paths links

Investment Theme

Connectivity

Value

Total project value	£3.30m
TIP funding required	£2.23m
Other funding	£1.08m



Project Description

Darwen is a gateway to the West Pennine moors. The proposals work at three scales. With Darwen Makers Trails, including a fully accessible town centre heritage walk, a 10km, heritage, moorland and parks trail and 'Skyline' Darwen – a full 20km bridleyway loop taking in the moors and the east and west skylines of Darwen for walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

The focus for the proposals is the local community. Linking and connecting existing residents and the new housing areas, to the town centre and out to the moors. With 1,200 new homes being delivered through the Local Plan and up to 500 homes in the town centre, it is vital that we help Darwen's residents access the available parks, and outdoor spaces in sustainable ways.

We know from our consultation that Darwen's moors, Tower and parks are an attraction for people from much further afield. Improving the connectivity of 3 very clear trail proposals will bring more visitors and improve their experience. The outdoors and recreational tourist town proposition drives footfall and therefore spending, into the town centre. While these visitors will initially be attracted to the Tower and the moors, enjoying the open space and views, they are routed through Darwen's Heritage, starting and ending their trips in the town centre, sculpture, and decals and impressions on the ground – will all help embed these loops visually and psychologically into the landscape and townscape of Darwen.

- 1) The creation of new Public Rights of Way (PRoW) links across the Town to connect with existing rights of way such as the Witton Weavers Way and Pennine Bridleway.
- 2) Improving access to the moorlands from the urban parts of the town by enhancing the footpaths through the main parks, including Bold Venture Park, Ashton Park, Sunnyhurst Woods and Whitehall Park.
- 3) The creation of the 'Darwen Makers Trails', a range of circular cycling and walking routes around the town, including short distance walks accessible to all and more challenging 5km, 10km and 20km routes.
- 4) The transformation of the dismantled Huddlesden branch railway line, into a new walking and cycling route with a new footbridge bridge to provide traffic free access.
- 5) A town centre loop through Shorey Bank and a new footbridge across the River Darwen will also provide an improved green route to the railway station.

Project Delivery

Significant parts of the network are existing and simply need identifying and waymarking. We are working with Blackburn with Darwen Council to identify the necessary interventions and align the projects with existing projects such as the Pennine Bridleway.

Whilst this project can be delivered independently of other TIP projects, the Darwen Makers Trails will link together a number sites that are the locations for other Darwen Town Deal projects. This includes all the East Lancashire Sports Village, housing and commercial development sites and the town centre core project. As such, this project is important in realising the full value of the Town Investment Plan and in creating a sense of connection between the Town Deal projects.

Project Outcomes

This project will create and connect up to 100km of new and upgraded walking and cycle paths and will improve Darwen's historic parks.

The project will maximise the potential of Darwen's outstanding natural setting, improving the town for local residents as well as supporting the success of Darwen's visitor economy.

Wider opportunities for recreation will bring significant health and well-being benefits to our communities.

4. Projects

P9 Town Centre Gateways

Location

Darwen Town Centre, School Street, Darwen Market Square and A666 Gateways

Current Use

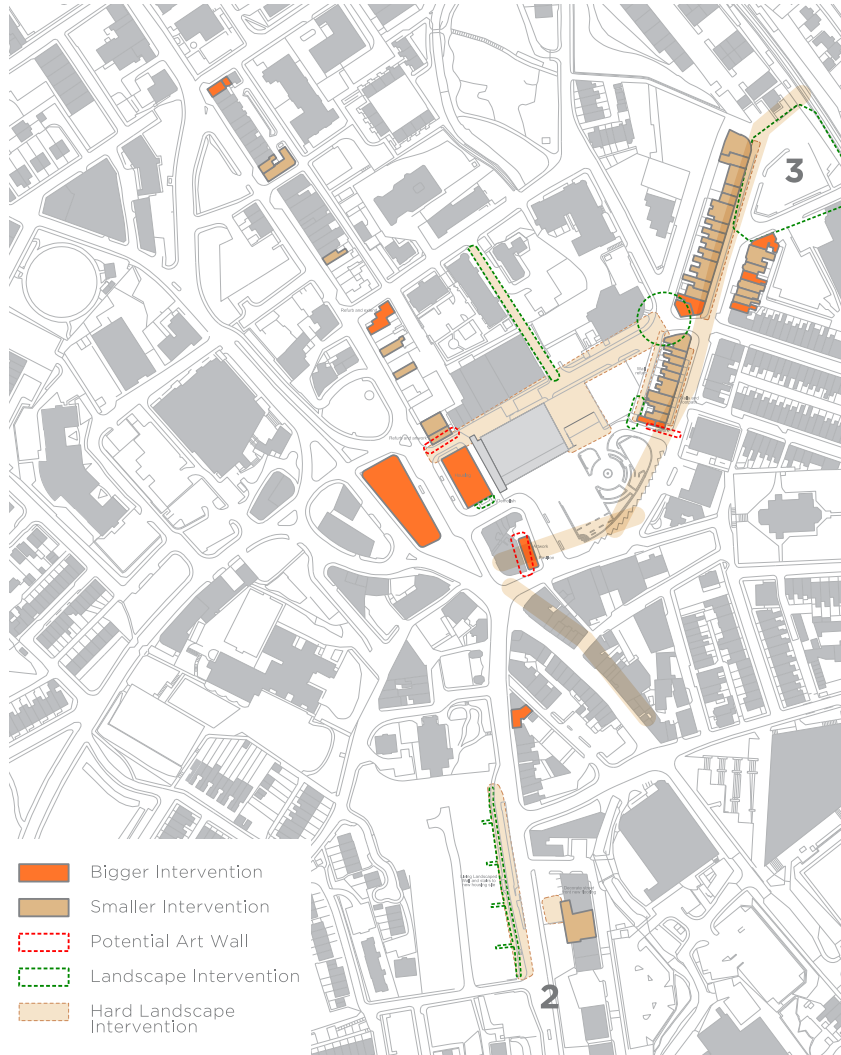
Markets, Market Annexe, Car Park, Market Square Arches, Mixed use properties across Darwen Town centre and key road gateways

Investment Theme

Regeneration + Land Use
Arts, Culture + Leisure
Skills + Enterprise

Value

Total project value	£3.74m
TIP funding required	£2.40m
Other funding	£1.34m



Wall art

Project Description

Darwen's principal approaches and gateways to the town centre are generally in very poor condition, having suffered from years of neglect. The proposals will address the town centre streetscape, provide connections between pedestrian areas and also boost important but often overlooked, background buildings. Key gable walls and boundary walls are chosen as art and landscape intervention opportunities.

Darwen's main road and the railway follow the River Darwen, north to south, in a steep sided valley, connecting Blackburn and Bolton. The three main gateways are north of the centre on the A666, south of the centre by the India Mill, and at the railway station to the east. We have identified key buildings and sites where strategic intervention will have maximum impact.

New paving and footpath improvements along with restoring shopfronts and facades along railway road, will provide high quality streetscape, from the rail station to the town centre core, building on the exceptional work already completed in the new market square.

A key gateway project is a vertical landscape wall at Belgrave Heights on Bolton Road. The site of the former 6 storey Belgrave Mill, 4 new stairs through the wall will provide new connections between the housing development and the town centre core. A landscape of hardy local plants like flowering heathers will give a lovely shot of colour to the town centre approach. Improvements will be made to the facades of a targeted set of 64 retail properties on the main roads heading into Darwen Town Centre.



Shop fronts

Project Delivery

In partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Council, the improvements will be delivered through the Council's transport plan and property regeneration initiatives. Agreements need to be reached with the landlords of the targeted retail properties. The expected contributions from landlords have been set at affordable levels over three years.

Project Outcomes

To transform the key gateways into Darwen and to improve access around the immediate vicinity of the town centre. The project is made up of several components:

- 1) Improvements to the shopfronts and facades of a targeted set of 64 retail properties on the main roads heading into Darwen Town Centre, including the A666 North from Blackburn, A666 South from Bolton and Railway Road, which runs from market square to the railway station.
- 2) Installation of a 4 large scale artworks on strategically located gable ends to create a visual impact in the town centre and complement the work that has and will be undertaken in Market Square.
- 3) Improvements to town centre connectivity including better pedestrian links between Market Square and key town centre assets such as the leisure centre, rail station, shopping areas, library theatre and Shorey Bank Park.
- 4) Enhanced town centre car parking.
- 5) Replacing a large, ugly blockwork retaining wall adjacent to Belgrave Heights on the A666 with an innovative vertical, growing landscape connecting a new housing development to the town centre and enhancing the perception of Darwen by those visiting or passing through.



Green wall

4. Projects

TD4: Digital Darwen

P8 Ultrafast Broadband

4. Projects

P8 Ultrafast Broadband

Location

Darwen Centre and wider Darwen catchment area

Current Use




Residential and Commercial areas

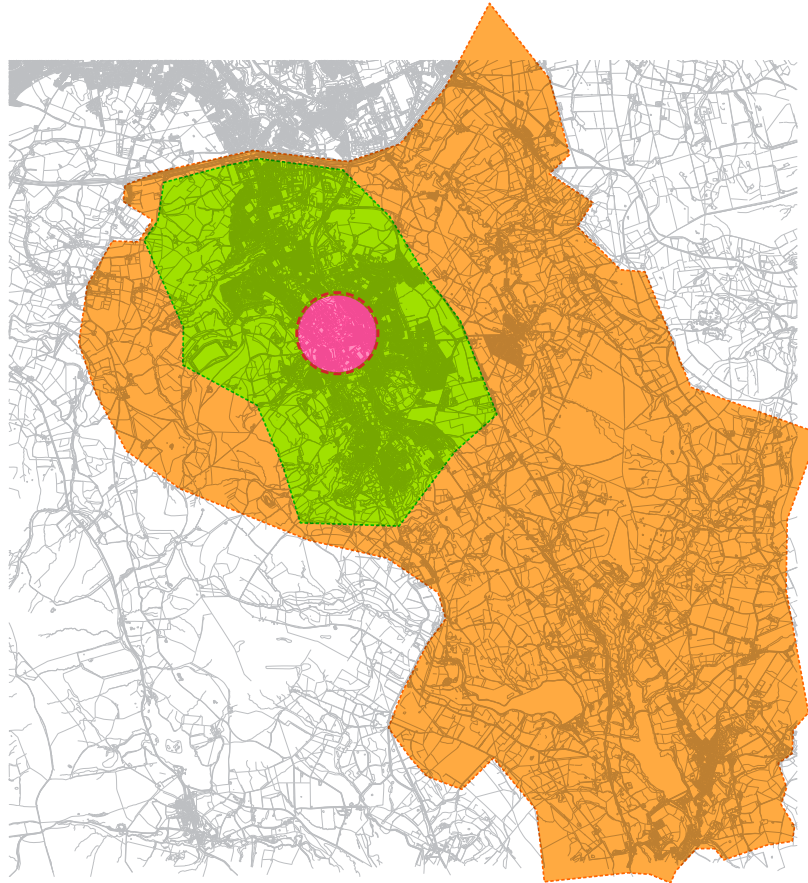
Investment Theme

Connectivity

Value

Total project value	£5.75m
TIP funding required	£2.00m
Other funding	£3.75m

-  Free public WiFi
-  11,300 connected properties, ultrafast broadband zone
-  Town Deal Zone



Project Description

Ultrafast broadband to reach 11,300 premises around Darwen (the area bounded by the green shaded area) and to roll-out free Wifi over the life of the Towns Fund within a 500m radius of Darwen Town Centre with 20% of the network capacity made freely available for low income households.

IX Wireless Limited trading as Internexus (IXW) was formed 2017 and is driving the rapid expansion and roll-out of its innovative ultra-fast broadband network in the North of England. IXW is already working with BDUK and is setting up networks in Salford, Manchester, Bolton, Preston, Blackpool and Blackburn. This project will promote sustainable, clean growth and support the local economy to create jobs and prosperity.

Project Delivery

IXW will provide Gigabit per second connections, with 6 Gigabit speeds by 2025, providing affordable 100Mbps service at £21/month, opening up ultrafast speeds to residents and businesses.

IXW is investing £0.5m to extending its Blackburn network along the A666 through Darwen towards Bolton. This sets up access for around 3,500 premises through Darwen and a 'backbone' for IXW to be able to access BDUK funding from the Government's new £5bn UK Gigabit Broadband Programme. The 2020 Spending Review released the first £1.2bn between 2021-2025 'to the hardest to reach areas' (on the map likely to be the area bounded between green and orange).

Darwen has an opportunity to 'piggy-back' IXW's network investment and with the £2m of Town Deal funding widen the roll-out to reach premises within Darwen's urban green area and extend coverage from 3,500 to 11,300 premises. This will enable IXW to reach 11,300 premises at a cost of just £176 per premises (BDUK in 2020 paid out suppliers £500 per premises passed in urban and £1500 premises passed in rural).

Project Outcomes

Faster, more reliable and resilient broadband connectivity will ensure that Darwen's TIP has an immediate impact on the town. Local businesses will be able to rely on a modern business platform with ultrafast upload and download speeds. Home workers and home learners will be able to use ultrafast broadband to support new ways of working and Gigabit capable wireless connectivity will support new home designs, with built in home-working spaces.

- 11,300 Business and domestic premises connected to ultrafast (Gigabit capable) broadband 100Mbps.
- Free public Wi-Fi implemented across town centre zone.
- Free ultrafast broadband connections for low income families.

4. Projects

4.5

Alignment to Challenges, Opportunities and Objectives

As a check, each priority project has been cross-checked back against the Challenges, Opportunities and TIP Objectives set. The analysis presented opposite identifies where projects are likely to have a direct or complementary impact.

"We should turn the centre of Darwen into a cultural quarter"

Darwen TIP – Project Alignment									
● – Direct Contribution ○ – Complementary Contribution	Exemplar, Dynamic and Sustainable Lancashire Town			Contemporary Maker-Town			Attractive Gateways, Parks and Links		Digital Darwen
	P1	P3	P7	P2	P4	P5	P6	P9	P8
Challenges									
Jobs Capacity and Productivity	●		●	●	●	●			●
Town Centre Gateways	●	●			●	●	●	●	○
Town Centre Daytime Economy	●	●			○		●	●	●
Retaining Young People and Talent	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
Deprivation and Social Mobility	●	○	●	●		○	○	○	●
Covid-19 Response	●	○	○	●	●	●	○	●	●
Opportunities									
Resident Talents	●	●	○	●	●	●			●
New Ways of Working	●	●		●	●	●	○		●
Place Shaping and Town Vibrancy	●	●	●	○		○	●	●	○
Sectoral Strengths	○			●	●	●			●
Objectives									
Quality Housing, Leisure and Town Centre Offer	●	●	●				●	●	●
Business and Jobs Growth and Productivity	●		○	●	●	●			●
Modern Business Platform	●	●		●	●	●			●
Amenity, Connectivity and Active Travel	○		●				●	●	○
Sustainable Clean Growth and Engaged Communities	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	●

5 Engagement

- 5.1 Darwen TIP Engagement Process to Date**
- 5.2 Phase One Street Audio Tracks**
- 5.3 Phase Two Board Interviews**
- 5.4 Phase Three Stakeholder Qualitative Interviews**
- 5.5 Phase Four Digital Focus Groups**
- 5.6 Summary Four Key Messages to Underpin the TIP**

5. Engagement

5.1

Darwen TIP Engagement Process to Date

Our targeted TIP engagement process builds on the findings of our extensive 9-week Heart of Darwen public consultation with over 500 town stakeholders and the findings of the MHCLG-led MyTown campaign.

The key stages in the TIP engagement process – the street audio tracks, Board member and stakeholder interviews, and digital focus groups – have provided the TIP project team with a rich resource of information and direction to inform the TIP Propositions and Projects. This section of the submission document brings together all the key messages and headlines received over the period August 2020 to November 2020 into a single coherent set of messages. These have directly informed and influenced the projects list.

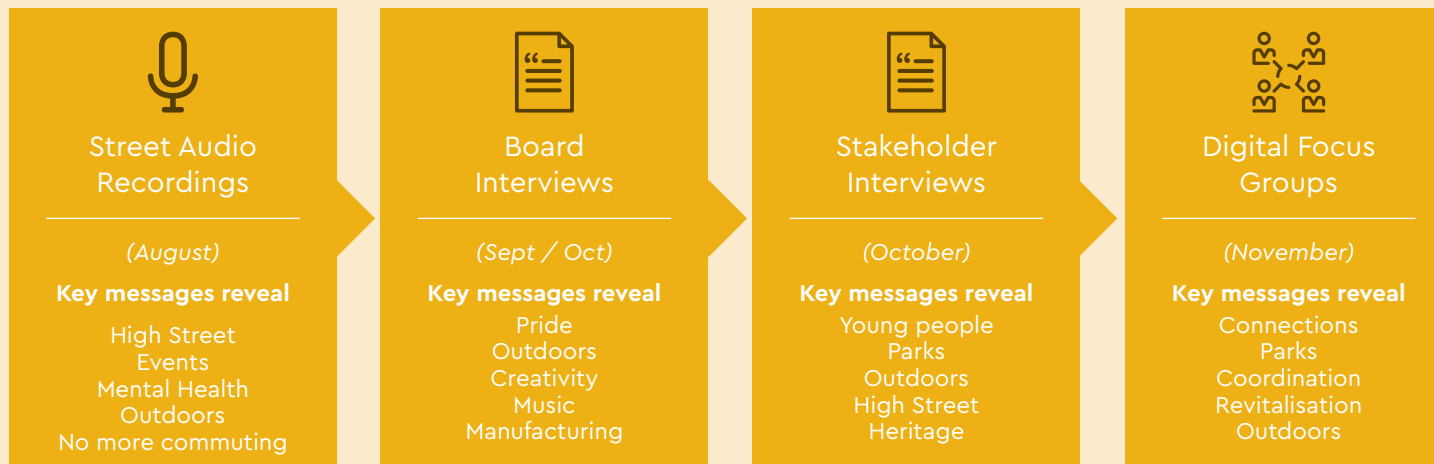
Selection of comments received by the TIP team following the Phase Four Digital Focus Groups

"Thank you for facilitating tonight's meeting, it felt very positive and hopeful for Darwen and we felt that you are very much the right team to take this forward for the town"

"Really enjoyed the focus group"

"I felt really pleased to be involved"

Darwen TIP Engagement Process



This four stage engagement process began by capturing the authentic voices of Darwen in the streets of the town centre. These messages were supplemented and tested through conversations with Board members and key stakeholders before finally being used to steer and inform a series of map-based digital focus groups. This innovative engagement approach was developed in response to the Covid-19 restrictions placed on travel and social gatherings.

5. Engagement



5.2 Phase One Street Audio Tracks (August 2020)

Street audio 'vox pops' interviews with 14 individuals identified a very strong sense of community, reflecting the town's history and industrial heritage. Consultees cherished the town's landscape, urban setting and parks and during the Covid-19 lockdown, residents have made greater use of the local market and town centre, many of whom traditionally commuted and shopped less locally.

Pre Covid-19, the town's vibrant nightlife and notoriously good nightlife was highlighted as a real asset and our new market square was identified as a huge

success. Consultees however felt frustrated about the quality of shops and the general look and feel of the town centre. Residents wanted to stay and shop locally but the town lacked choice and quality and there was a desire for a significantly improved experience.

"Now I am working from home I use the town centre much more. I've been shopping at the market. It would be great if it could be improved"

"I am using the high street more now that I work at home. It's not brilliant!"



5.3 Phase Two Board Interviews (September/October 2020)

Town Deal Board members identified Darwen as a town ready for reinvention, with political will for change. Members felt that successful reinvention should recognise the town's past, specifically identifying the concept of a '21st Century homemaker town' as a modern twist on the town's cottage industries and cotton weaving heritage. By extension, an emphasis was also placed on the connection between the town and the surrounding landscape, with ambitions for better infrastructure to create fluid connections for the modern worker.

The role of the digital economy was also identified as already starting to 'sow seeds' in the local economy. The new vegan deli and health food shop was identified as performing well and there was an identified opportunity for Market improvements to create a real farmers market feel with focus on local produce.

The theme of restoration was recurrent, with members wanting to bring heritage buildings back to life with a contemporary edge. Darwen has a proud history of local family business and there was a feeling that

TIP projects need to support and prioritise locally focussed business growth. The town's Covid recovery plan must also seek to help safeguard its anchor employers while encouraging new business formation.

5. Engagement



5.4 Phase Three Stakeholder Qualitative Interviews (October 2020)

The team selected 18 individuals and organisations to form an interview short list. These were selected to best represent the interests of local business, community, the arts, heritage, sport, leisure, culture, and young people. 12 interviews of 90 minutes each were recorded, equal to 18 hours of interview time. These identified several, key repeated messages.

The community want town centre regeneration to extend the day time economy and the thriving (pre Covid-19) evening economy could also diversify, with more places to eat out and socialise.

Interviewees were extremely vocal about the parks, which were viewed as a key

local attraction linking culture and heritage. There was a strong feeling that parks should be restored to become a greater feature of the town, including the need for surface improvements, better pathways, new cafes and restoring the bandstand at Sunnyhurst Woods. It was noted that such improvements would become an attraction and make Darwen a destination for families, walkers, and day-trippers.

Local community groups were extremely concerned about young people growing up in poverty and associated anti-social behaviour, with a desire for improved youth provision and better resourcing.

Interviewees also identified a lack of employment opportunities locally as a catalyst for poverty and low aspirations, with an identified need for joint working to maximise outcomes from mentoring, apprenticeship and youth training provision. Ultimately more employment opportunities in meaningful jobs were viewed as key to enabling new cultures around learning and work to flourish.

People in Darwen are proud of their heritage and interviewees identified a desire for including references to the town's past into design concepts.

"There is great history here in Darwen. The Brass band is part of that, it's been going for 120 years"



5.5 Phase Four Digital Focus Groups (November 2020)

Three digital focus group sessions with 32 individuals then verified conversations in the three earlier phases, validating and reiterating many of the key themes that were already emerging.

In particular, the focus groups confirmed local appetite for park and Market Hall improvements.

The process was supported by active 'live' digital mapping which identified and mapped 82 specific datapoints, observations and suggested town improvements, as shown opposite.

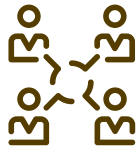
Participants then went on to say that problems with paths in the park meant it was inaccessible to many community members, elderly people struggle to use the park now as do parents with prams or wheel chair users.

There was an animated conversation about the Darwen Market Hall with, people wanting it to be more like the one in Stockport or Borough Market in London. Participants all agreed that the market was a missed opportunity at present.



Screen grab of the live, real-time Google mapping exercises that reveal 82 specific data points. These have been used to inform the projects list.

5. Engagement



5.5 Phase Four Digital Focus Groups cont... (November 2020)

These spatial conversations were recorded directly into Google maps creating a digital archive. This location-based, detailed information gives the team access to very specific individual experiences.

The group sessions were very lively and again it became clear just how passionately residents believe in their town and community and want to improve elements of it. Much of the conversation in these sessions verified what we had heard

throughout the consultation process and validated many of the key themes that were already emerging.

During these sessions, the project team was able to test emerging ideas with participants and listen to their responses. What we have learned has been fed back to the team and integrated in the project proposal.

"The parks in Darwen should be celebrated. They are part of the town's heritage and a gateway to the moors"

5.6 Four Key Messages to Underpin the TIP

Across the four-phase consultation process with over 70 stakeholders, the following themes and key messages were identified:

Key Message 1: Town Centre First	Key Message 2: Park Life	Key Message 3: Investment in Young People	Key Message 4: New Home Working Paradigm
Focus investment on the town centre, to provide local people with better facilities near their homes, to keep wealth creation within the local community.	People want park improvements to make them useable by all. This will create more opportunity for families to enjoy the parks, exercise and meet. Improved parks can also become a Darwen visitor attraction.	There is a very strong feeling about helping young people to overcome the socio-economic issues that impact negatively on them. Existing services need to be better joined up. Young people need more positive things to do and the opportunity to get good quality jobs in the local economy. Opportunities for young people to access training and leisure would be a valuable resources. Investment in young people is investment in the future of the town.	Darwen is already benefiting from the move to digital and home working, and there is opportunity for Darwen to build on this success.

6 Governance and Delivery

6.1 Governance of Town Deal Funding

6.2 Business Case Development

6.3 Partnerships

6.4 Indicative Programme

6. Governance and Delivery

6.1

Governance of Town Deal Funding

Blackburn with Darwen Council is the accountable body for the Darwen Town Deal Board and TIP. Governance and accountability will follow the Council's well-established assurance framework for managing major projects. The Council's constitution will guide all governance, due process and reporting requirements for the programme, including Executive Board approval of the Darwen TIP 2020–2035, key business cases, the publication of decisions and authorisation of delegated authority to proceed with the development and delivery of investment proposals as set out in the Plan.

The Council provide administrative support for the Town Board and will continue to publish minutes, key decisions and progress and financial updates via the Council's website through the life of the Plan.

"The night time economy is good here, but they need to diversify and have more restaurants and less takeaways"

6.2

Business Case Development

The Board will bring forward its priority projects with project sponsors, relevant partners and client leads through a 'three phase business case' cycle as currently used by the Council, including the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) – proportionate to the scale of Town Deal funding required. Each business case stage will address HM Treasury's 'five cases' (strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management) to secure final business case approval to proceed from the relevant accountable body.

The Council has a track record of delivering major capital projects and growth programmes of local and national significance with robust governance arrangements. A centrally managed programme will be established with appropriate methodologies adopted, at project level, to set up and deliver projects with partners in the most effective way. This will ensure the Council, as accountable body, can monitor and deliver projects consistently, to address agreed priorities in the TIP, consistent with national guidance and agreed Government targets, whilst retaining some flexibility of approach. Prince 2 principles and gateway decision stages will be followed.

6.3

Partnerships

Three levels of engagement and collaboration have been created to develop this TIP and identify the preferred projects.

- The Town Deal Board
- The four Thematic Groups as detailed in 4.1
- Community engagement.

The Town Deal Board has 12 members including 3 tiers of governance (<https://darwentowndeal.co.uk/meet-the-board/>). These include representatives of:

- Blackburn with Darwen Council
- Darwen Town Council
- The MP for Rossendale & Darwen
- Local Business and Investors
- Darwen Town Centre Partnership
- East Lancashire Chamber/Lancashire LEP
- Prominent members of civic and voluntary organisations

The relationship between the Council and the Town Deal Board will continue to be managed by agreed Terms of Reference, and will remain fully compliant with national guidance to achieve the highest standards of public governance. This will ensure transparency of decision making, a code of conduct, a register of members' interests and appropriate management of any conflicts of interest.



6. Governance and Delivery

6.4

Indicative Programme

The vast majority of the capital assets needed to deliver the TIP are either already in the control and ownership of the Council or its strategic partners who have been heavily involved in TIP development process. The only exception to this relates to the Town Centre Gateways project where relationships with key property owners are currently being formalised.

Our first step will be to establish a Core Investment Plan Programme Board, accountable to the main Town Deal Board, as the over-arching 'client' function to lead, manage and monitor all projects centrally.

The Programme Board will be supported by a Programme Management Office (PMO). Roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined and agreed by the Town Deal Board. Programme Board leadership will be provided by Martin Kelly, Strategic Director (Place) at Blackburn with Darwen Council.

The Programme Board will include all relevant senior Council officers, including the S151 officer, and elected members, including the Executive Member for Growth and Development. The PMO function will mirror existing programme

delivery arrangements within the Council. The Town Deal Board Chair and Board members will have an on-going 'support and challenge' role at key stages of implementation, and will retain overall oversight and responsibility for TIP delivery and performance.

"More investment in arts and culture will be good for the town"



6. Governance and Delivery

Darwen TIP Indicative Programme	2021/22					2022/23					2023/24					2024/25					2025/26																															
Project Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar				
P4: AMRC – Additive Manufacturing Accelerator (AMA)																																																				
Memorandum of Understanding																																																				
Business Case																																																				
Approval of Match Funding																																																				
Detailed Design																																																				
Planning Approval																																																				
Construction																																																				
Completion																																																				
Equipment Purchase & Commissioning																																																				
P5: Strategic Manufacturing Site																																																				
Business Case																																																				
Approval of Match Funding																																																				
Site surveys																																																				
Detailed Design																																																				
Planning Approval																																																				
Procurement																																																				
Appointment of Contractors																																																				
Construction																																																				
Completion																																																				
P6: Destination Darwen																																																				
Business Case																																																				
Approval of Match Funding																																																				
Detailed Design																																																				
Planning Approval																																																				
Procurement																																																				
Appointment of Contractors																																																				
Construction																																																				
Completion																																																				

6. Governance and Delivery

Darwen TIP Indicative Programme	2021/22												2022/23												2023/24												2024/25												2025/26												
Project Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
P7: Junction 4 Sports Village																																																													
Business Case	█	█	█	█	█																																																								
Approval of Match Funding			█	█	█	█																																																							
Detailed Design						█	█	█	█	█	█																																																		
Planning Approval											█	█																																																	
Procurement																																																													
Appointment of Contractors																																																													
Construction																																																													
Completion																																																													
P8: Digital Darwen: Ultrafast Broadband																																																													
Business Case	█	█	█																																																										
Approval of Match Funding			█	█	█																																																								
Procurement			█	█	█																																																								
Appointment of Contractors																																																													
Construction																																																													
Completion																																																													
P9: Gateways																																																													
Business Case																																																													
Approval of Match Funding																																																													
Site surveys																																																													
Detailed Design																																																													
Planning Approval																																																													
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