

**Meeting of:** The Cabinet

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 **Time:** 6.30pm

**Venue:** Council Chamber, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB



The meeting will also be live streamed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrLsMDOP7AYxik5pNP0gTIA/streams>

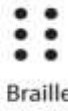
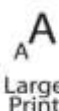
**Supported by:** Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services officer Tel: 01706 252423

Email: [glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk)

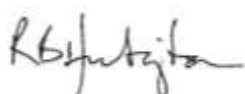
ITEM	Lead Member/Contact Officer	
<b>A.</b>	<b>BUSINESS MATTERS</b>	
<b>A1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	<p>Clare Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer 01706 252438 <a href="mailto:clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk">clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>A2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the last meeting</b> To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024.	
<b>A3.</b>	<b>Urgent Items of Business</b> To note any items which the Chair has agreed to add to the Agenda on the grounds of urgency.	
<b>A4.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> <i>Members are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to seek advice on interest issues if necessary.</i> Members are requested to indicate at this stage, any items on the agenda in which they intend to declare an interest. Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's Code of Conduct, they must declare the nature of any personal interest and, if the interest is prejudicial, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.	
<b>B.</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	
<b>B1.</b>	<b>Public Question Time</b> Members of the public can register their question by contacting the Committee Officer. Groups with similar questions are advised to appoint and register a spokesperson. This is an opportunity to ask a question about an agenda matter which the Council may be able to assist with. A time limit applies for each	<p>Questions can be submitted in advance of the meeting to <a href="mailto:democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk">democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a> in line with the Cabinet speaking procedure</p>

The agenda and reports are also available for inspection on the Council's website <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/>. Other formats are available on request. Tel 01706 217777 or contact Rosendale Borough Council, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB

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ITEM	Lead Member/Contact Officer	
	question and you are only able to address the meeting once. Please begin by giving your name and state whether you are speaking as an individual member of the public or as a representative of a group. (Question time normally lasts up to 30 minutes).	
<b>C.</b>	<b>CHAIR'S UPDATE</b>	
<b>C1.</b>	Update from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Councillor A Barnes
<b>D.</b>	<b>KEY DECISIONS</b>	
<b>D1.</b>	Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy	Councillor McInnes/Rob Huntington Chief Executive <a href="mailto:robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk">robhuntington@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a>
<b>D2.</b>	Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate & Housing Benefit Overpayment Write-offs	Councillor Walmsley/Chris Warren Director of Resources <a href="mailto:chriswarren@rossendalebc.gov.uk">chriswarren@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a>
<b>D3.</b>	Waterfoot Regeneration (Masterplan)	Councillor A Barnes/David Smurthwaite Director of Economic Development <a href="mailto:davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk">davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a>



**Rob Huntington**  
Chief Executive

**Date Published:** 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)  
Councillors Lythgoe, McInnes, M Smith and Walmsley**

**Rob Huntington, Chief Executive  
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer  
Yasmin Ahmed, Principal Legal Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy  
Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services  
Mike Atherton, Head of Planning  
Kimberley Haworth, Head of Financial Services**

**Also Present: Councillor Harris  
2 members of the public**

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Resolved:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

**3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor McInnes declared an interest in item 12 (E2) as she was a member of the Friends of Whitaker Park which was a branch of Civic Pride Rossendale.

Councillor Walmsley declared an interest in item 14 (E4) as he was the Treasurer of Bacup Pride which incorporated Friends of Stubblelee Park.

Councillor Lythgoe declared an interest in item 9 (D3) as he was a member of the Rossendale Leisure Trust Board.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A summary response was provided in relation to a question on item 7. A written response would also be provided.

**6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

An update was provided from the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting. The Chair was thanked for providing the update.

**7. MASTERPLAN/PHASING & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY/DESIGN CODES FOR SITE ALLOCATION REFERENCE H66 OF THE ADOPTED ROSSENDALE LOCAL PLAN**

The Lead Member for Planning, Licensing and Enforcement outlined the report which asked

for Cabinet approval subject to satisfactory consultation responses.

Cabinet were invited to comment on the report and clarifications were provided:

- It was suggested that a Visioning Board be set up including developers, Council officers, members and residents to oversee Masterplan activity.
- Biodiversity net gain would be considered for these applications.
- The Council would continue to work with residents but plans needed to progress.
- Edenfield residents were thanked for feeding into the plan.
- The Planning process was separate to the Masterplan process. Any highways concerns would be considered by Lancashire County Council as each planning application arose.
- Members were mindful of the risks if a Masterplan was not in place.
- The Planning and Forward Planning Teams were thanked for their work on the scheme.

**Resolved:**

1. Masterplan, Phasing and Implementation Strategy and Design Codes approved subject to the receipt of satisfactory consultation responses.
2. Any future amendments to the Phasing and Implementation Strategy to be brought back to Cabinet for agreement.
3. Visioning Board to be established to support the future development of the scheme.

**Reason for Decision:**

To facilitate the delivery of the largest housing allocation within the Adopted Rossendale Local Plan, in accordance with development plan policies.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**8. APPROVAL OF UPDATED VALIDATION CHECKLIST DOCUMENT FOR USE WHEN VALIDATING APPLICATIONS**

The Lead Member for Planning, Licensing and Enforcement outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the updated Validation Checklist document for immediate use.

Cabinet were invited to comment on the report:

- The Planning and Forward Planning Teams were thanked for their work on the process.

**Resolved:**

Cabinet approved the updated Validation Checklist document for immediate use.

**Reason for Decision:**

It was vital that the Council adopted a new up-to-date Validation Checklist to ensure that officers were able to require the full range of supporting documents to accompany applications.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**9. SWIMMING POOL SUPPORT FUND AND MARL PITS AIR HANDLING UNIT**

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the award of Sport England's SPSF capital funding, and to approve spend in accordance with the grant application and agree the procurement route for the award of a contract for the installation of an air handling unit.



Cabinet were invited to comment on the report:

- This was good news and officers were thanked for securing funding.
- The improvement works would reduce energy costs, support the Leisure Trust and help the Council work towards its Climate Change strategy.
- Council to ensure there was no overspend.
- Works need to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 so swift progress was needed.

**Resolved:**

1. The award of Sport England's SPSF capital funding of £290,000 to support energy saving interventions at Marl Pits Leisure Centre was noted.
2. Spend was approved in accordance with the grant application and the procurement route agreed for the award of a contract for the installation of an air handling unit.

**Reason for Decision:**

Agreement to proceed with procurement requirements will help Marl Pits Leisure Centre reduce its carbon footprint, become more energy efficient and enable the Council to progress towards meeting its carbon reduction targets.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**10. IMPROVEMENTS TO VICTORIA PARK WHEELED SPORTS FACILITIES**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the improvements, approve the bid to FCC Community Action Fund and grant authority to officers to submit external funding bids relevant to the project.

Cabinet were invited to comment on the report:

- The project would bring health benefits and have a positive impact on communities.

**Resolved:**

1. The improvements to the wheeled sports facilities at Victoria Park were approved.
2. Cabinet noted and approved the bid to FCC Community Action Fund and grants authority to officers to submit external funding bids relevant to this project.
3. If successful, delegated the acceptance of the external funding to the Head of Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services.
4. If a bid was not successful, authority given to officers to deliver an alternative scheme and to appoint a contractor in line with the Council's Constitution, provided the revised design was of value and provided a greatly improved experience.

**Reason for Decision:**

The development of Victoria Park Play wheeled sports will mean that the Council is investing to ensure the continued delivery. Much needed refurbishments of the existing area will ensure it is safe and remains an asset to residents. In addition, provision of challenging and exciting equipment for wheeled sports enthusiasts will mean the park addresses a shortfall of first-class facilities in the west of the borough.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

#### **11. VICTORIA PARK MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which provided a progress update to Cabinet.

Cabinet were invited to comment on all four Masterplan Update reports:

- Great improvements had been seen in all four parks.
- Stubbylee Park Group and officers were thanked for developing the Masterplan which had been adopted by the other three parks.
- The model could be adopted in other parks and playgrounds.
- Whitaker Park had been given a garden by Tatton Flower show which wouldn't have happened without the Stubbylee Masterplan.
- All staff and voluntary organisations were thanked for their help.

#### **Resolved:**

Cabinet noted the update on progress made against the Victoria Park masterplan.

#### **Reason for Decision:**

To provide an update for Cabinet members.

#### **Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

#### **12. WHITAKER PARK MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which provided a progress update to Cabinet.

#### **Resolved:**

Cabinet noted the update on progress made against the Whitaker Park Masterplan to date.

#### **Reason for Decision:**

To provide an update for Cabinet members.

#### **Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

#### **13. EDGESIDE PARK MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which provided a progress update to Cabinet.

#### **Resolved:**

Cabinet noted the update on progress made against the Edgeside Park Masterplan to date.

#### **Reason for Decision:**

To provide an update for Cabinet members.

#### **Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

#### **14. STUBBYLEE PARK MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which provided a progress update to Cabinet.

**Resolved:**

Cabinet noted the update on progress made against the Stubblee Park Masterplan to date.

**Reason for Decision:**

To provide an update for Cabinet members.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**15. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT Q1 2024/25**

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the content of the Q1 Financial Monitoring Report.

**Resolved:**

Cabinet noted the content of the Q1 Financial Monitoring Report.

**Reason for Decision:**

To note the 2024/25 monitoring report.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT Q1 2024/25**

The Lead member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider and note the Council’s performance during Quarter 1 of 2024/25 as detailed in the report and appendices.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Cabinet understood the challenges faced by the Council.
- The infographics on key achievements were welcomed.
- Processing of Housing Benefit claims within 5 days was a huge credit to the team and was well above the national average.

**Resolved:**

Cabinet considered and noted the Council’s performance during Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

**Reason for Decision:**

Monitoring the Council’s performance would enable Cabinet to identify and consider any service actions, projects, performance measures or corporate risks requiring further action.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**17. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Resolved:**

That public and press be excluded from the following item of business under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**18. FUNDING CONTRIBUTION FOR WOODHILL VIADUCT**

The Leader of the Council outlined the report and Cabinet members commented.

**Resolved:**

The recommendations of the report were agreed.

**Reason for Decision:**

To agree the recommendations of the report.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**The meeting concluded at 7.41pm**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

<b>Subject:</b>	Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Customer Services & I.C.T.	<b>Lead Member:</b>	Communities, Housing and Health
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	Attached: No	
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	Attached: No	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Angela Richmond	<b>Telephone:</b>	01706 252588
<b>Email:</b>	angelarichmond@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Cabinet consider the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approve the Local Housing Allowance Policy
- 1.2 That Cabinet delegate any minor amendments to the policy to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Lead Member.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 LHA was introduced in April 2008 for private tenants claiming Housing Benefit.
- 2.2 To encourage personal responsibility and financial inclusion, Housing Benefit is paid to the customer rather than the landlord when a claim is assessed according to Local Housing Allowance rules. The provision for customers to choose to have their benefit paid to the landlord was removed when LHA was introduced.
- 2.3 It is accepted that some tenants may struggle with the responsibility of budgeting and paying their rent. To help safeguard those tenants, the Council has discretion to make payments of benefit directly to the landlord where necessary. The Safeguard Policy sets out guidelines for deciding when it is appropriate to do so.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 When LHA was introduced in 2008 all housing costs for low income customers was met through Housing Benefit. This changed with the introduction of Universal Credit in 2018 meaning customers can only apply for Housing Benefit if they have reached state retirement age, live in supported accommodation or temporary accommodation. In all other instances they must make a claim for Universal Credit to meet their housing costs. Due to this restriction we only receive approximately 30 new claims for Housing Benefit each month.
- 3.2 At present 919 working age customers are in receipt of Housing Benefit. Unless the customer is living in supported or temporary accommodation they will be invited to make the move to Universal Credit in the next couple of months reducing the current caseload.
- 3.3 Restrictions on who can apply for Housing Benefit and the migration of our working age caseload means this policy will affect fewer customers moving forward. DWP estimate our working age caseload will reduce by 45% over the next six months.
- 3.4 At present 100 customers have their Housing Benefit paid directly to the landlord as a result of the LHA safeguarding policy, 79 of those are working age.

- 3.5 Universal Credit is paid directly to the tenant by default. Landlords can request direct payment if rent arrears accrue, this is known as an APA (alternative payment arrangement). So those customers migrating to Universal Credit will automatically be paid the housing element unless the landlord requests direct payment.
- 3.6 The Council needs to maintain an LHA safeguarding policy for as long as Housing Benefit remains, but over time this will affect a diminishing number of customers. This policy may eventually become obsolete and it is unlikely that any new LHA legislation will be enacted that will require a review of local policy.
- 3.7 Local Housing Allowance payment regulations have not changed since its introduction in 2008. A light touch review has been regularly undertaken however the current policy has not been updated since December 2007. There are no significant changes to the existing policy other than format and presentation.
- 3.8 It is essential for Rossendale Borough Council to demonstrate that we make objective, reasonable, fair and consistent decisions based on the circumstances of each case.

#### **4. DETAILS**

- 4.1 This policy will act as a guide for staff. Decisions will be documented and an appropriate review date determined.
- 4.2 Having a current and relevant policy ensures the Council;
- Provides reassurance to tenants that payments can be made to the landlord if appropriate.
  - Help sustain tenancies by preventing rent arrears evictions.
  - Demonstrates a reasonable, fair and consistent decision making process.
  - Ensure the process is not used to supersede support that tenants are receiving to help them manage day-to-day budgeting or circumvent the aims of the LHA.

#### **5. RISK**

- 5.1 Not having a policy may result in our most vulnerable residents being at risk of not being able to manage their tenancy effectively and the Council suffering reputational damage if decisions are not applied consistently.

#### **6. FINANCE**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the Council.

#### **7. LEGAL**

- 7.1 Each case must be considered on its own merits and this policy has been drafted for guidance, in order to ensure that the authority acts in a transparent and consistent manner.

#### **8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 All policy implications are included within the body of the report. This policy will be applied in a fair and equitable manner.

#### **9. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 9.1 Councils have a duty to ensure payments of Local Housing Allowance are made appropriately to safeguard tenancies. This policy sets out the Councils commitment to this as laid down by The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.

# **Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy**

## Contents

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<b>Responsible Service</b>	SAT and ICT	<b>Version/Status</b>	Final
<b>Responsible Author</b>	Angela Richmond	<b>Date Agreed/ Agreed At</b>	O&S: Date Cabinet: Date
<b>Date last Amended</b>	12/08/2024	<b>Due for Review</b>	Date



# Local Housing Allowance Safeguarding Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a Housing Benefit scheme for private tenants on a low income.
- 1.2 Under LHA rules, Housing Benefit is paid to the tenant, who is then responsible for paying the rent to their landlord themselves unless the tenant satisfies the criteria to pay the landlord direct.
- 1.3 Tenants who apply for Housing Benefit after April 2008, or who change address and will therefore be paid under LHA rules can no longer request that Housing Benefit be paid directly to their landlord.
- 1.4 Some tenants may struggle with the responsibility of budgeting for and paying their rent. To help safeguard these tenants from rent arrears eviction, the Council has discretion to make payments of benefit directly to their landlord where it considers this necessary.
- 1.5 The Safeguard Policy sets out guidelines for deciding when it is appropriate to pay LHA directly to the landlord.

## 2. Aims of the Policy

- Identify customers who may need the safeguard provisions, thereby reducing the need to resort to the eight-week arrears rule
- Help to sustain tenancies by preventing rent arrears evictions
- Provide reassurance to people who are likely to satisfy the safeguarding criteria that their benefit can be paid to their landlord
- Provide reassurance to landlords that direct payments will be made when needed where tenants are likely to have difficulty managing their rental payments or are failing to pay over benefit payments
- Make reasonable, fair and consistent decisions
- Ensure a transparent process that is easy to understand
- Deal with each case on its merits and not operating blanket policies
- Ensure the process is not used to supersede support that tenants are receiving to help them manage day-to-day budgeting or circumvent the aims of the LHA

## 3. Tenants who may have difficulty managing their own financial affairs

- 3.1 Each case will be considered on its merits, as there are no specific circumstances to show that a person is unable to manage their own financial affairs. The following circumstances may indicate a tenant would have difficulty to plan, manage and organise their rent payments:
  - Fleeing or subject to domestic violence
  - Homeless, at risk of homelessness or history of homelessness
  - Language difficulties
  - Literacy issues

- Person with a physical and/or sensory disability
- Person affected by mental illness
- Person with a learning disability
- Person suffering a serious illness
- Person affect by addiction issues
- Prisoners and detainees
- Young people leaving care

3.2 This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive. A person may not automatically be unable to manage their own financial affairs if they can be identified from the list above. Relevant and appropriate support may be in place.

#### 4. Tenants who are unlikely to pay their rent

4.1 Each case should be considered on its own merits. Whilst there are no prescriptive conditions to be met, there are some indicators that a tenant may be unlikely to pay their rent, although even when these do apply, many people in these circumstances will still pay their rent.

- Person with financial difficulties such as severe debt, IVA or bankruptcy
- Previously evicted due to failure to make rent payments
- Person is homeless
- Person has absconded from a property leaving rent arrears
- Person has a history of bad debts
- Person affect by addiction issues

4.2 The decision should be based upon the likelihood of the tenant using their Housing Benefit to pay their rent, and whether it is the tenant's best interest to pay Housing Benefit to the landlord.

This is not a definitive list.

#### 5. Rent arrears and the 8 week rule

5.1 Housing Benefit will in most cases be paid to the landlord if a tenant has rent arrears equivalent to the total of 8 weeks rent or more, or in anticipation of rent arrears reaching this level.

5.2 The landlord will have to provide evidence of the rent arrears, showing when the rent was due and what payments have been made.

5.3 If this rule is satisfied, we will pay the landlord unless they fail to satisfy the "fit and proper landlord" test, or it is in the overriding interest of the tenant not to make payments to the landlord.

5.4 We encourage landlords to contact us as soon as possible when the tenant fails to pay their rent, and not to wait until after the arrears stand at 8 weeks or more.

5.5 Payment can be made to the landlord where the tenant is having deductions from other DWP benefits to pay off rent arrears.

## 6. Gathering information and evidence

- 6.1 Requests for direct payment can be submitted by the landlord, tenant or person acting on their behalf.
- 6.2 All requests will be considered on the information and evidence provided whenever possible. If additional information is required we will contact the tenant, or the person providing support. Usually one month will be permitted for additional information or evidence to be provided or collected from either party.
- 6.3 Evidence will be considered from a number of sources, but not all evidence will carry the same weight. Representations may be considered from the following:
- Social Services departments
  - Housing and Homelessness teams
  - Support or care workers
  - Probation or youth offending officers
  - GP, Hospital or Consultants
  - Advisory services, such as CAB, Welfare Rights, Age Concern
  - Solicitor or courts
  - Bank, Building Society or financial help groups
  - Family or friends supporting the tenant
  - Landlords and managing agents

This list is not exhaustive.

## 7. Making a decision

- 7.1 Decisions on whether to pay the landlord will be made by the Housing Benefit assessment team, and any reconsideration requested will be completed by a second assessment officer. In the event of this being escalated the Benefits Manager will make the final decision.
- 7.2 One of two decisions will be made:
- The tenant is vulnerable and payment of LHA will be made to the landlord
  - The tenant is not vulnerable and payment of LHA will be made to the tenant
- 7.3 A review date will be set when this decision will be looked at again. The date of review will depend upon the circumstances of the individual, taking into account whether the need for payment to the landlord is likely to be short or longer term. For example, less frequent contact with the customer may be appropriate if they have a chronic or age related condition. If the tenants circumstances are unlikely to change there will be no requirement to review the decision.

7.4 Decisions will be recorded on the claim notes and a diary reminder set where applicable.

## 8. Notifying affected parties

8.1 The authority will write to the tenant and / or their representative and advise them of the following:

- The decision and reasons for it
- If and when the decision will be reviewed
- Their appeal rights

8.2 The customer is likely to agree to direct payments to their landlord, if the alternative is losing their tenancy or not being able to secure a new tenancy. If the customer is against direct payments (for example, if the customer has not initiated the request), it is for the authority to make a decision that is in their best interests. The authority will write to the landlord and advise them of the following:

- If their tenant satisfies the safeguarding criteria
- Amount of benefit to be paid direct to the landlord
- If and when the decision will be reviewed
- Request bank details if not previously received
- The landlord's appeal rights against the decision

8.3 Both the tenant and landlord can appeal against the decision made by the assessment team. An appeal must be in writing and state the reasons for the appeal. The appeal must be submitted within one month of the date of the decision letter. Appeals are heard by an independent tribunal administered by the HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS).

## 9. Policy review

9.1 This Policy will be reviewed on a periodic basis in order to ensure it remains valid, effective and relevant. This will normally be every 3 years or when a change in legislation occurs.

<b>Subject:</b>	Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate & Housing Benefit Overpayment Write Offs	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Finance	<b>Lead Member:</b>	Resources
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	Attached: No	No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	Attached: No	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Walker	<b>Telephone:</b>	01706 252592
<b>Email:</b>	ianwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Members are recommended to approve the write off of £63,202.22 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debt. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £8,437.50
- 1.2 Members are recommended to approve the write off of £6,152.21 in respect of irrecoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is nil.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of the report is to request member authority to write off bad debts of Housing Benefit Overpayment and Council Tax which are above the delegated limit of £5000 (see appendix).
- The sums to be written off are the amounts unpaid by the customer. Due to funding and precepting arrangements, the amounts borne by Rossendale in income foregone are lower than the totals written off.
- In each case, there are no more recovery options available to collect monies owed and therefore no prospect of collection in these cases.
- Appropriate Recovery action has been attempted, but the remaining balances are now irrecoverable.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is prudent practice to clear any debts from the ledgers which are now deemed to be irrecoverable. There is no delegated authority to write off debts in excess of £5,000, and so member authorisation is required.

## 4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The sum of £63,202.22 is regarded as irrecoverable in respect of Council Tax; it relates to individuals whose debts are now covered by Individual Voluntary Arrangements, Debt Relief Orders or who are now deceased. As such, no further collection activity is possible. The write off amount is the total unpaid tax. Due to the split between precepts, Rossendale will bear £8,437.50 of this sum directly.
- 4.2 The sum of £6,152.21 is regarded as irrecoverable in respect of Housing Benefit Overpayments; the case was due to local authority error. The write off amount is the total overpayment. Due to subsidy arrangements, there is no direct cost to Rossendale.
- 4.3 Housing Benefit subsidy arrangements are that provided total overpayment caused by local authority error is less than 0.48% of all payments, then 40% subsidy is retained. Therefore where overpayments are fully recovered, Rossendale could potentially receive 140% of the



**Council Tax**

Ref No	Name of Debtor	Address of Property	Period	Reason	Amount	Total
225*****	*****	BB4	2019/20	Various attempts to collect via enforcement. IVA approved June 2023 . Anything realised from IVA would be written back on.	£859.11	£5,268.07
			2020/21		£1,744.19	
			2021/22		£1,813.37	
			2022/23		£851.40	
225*****	Exors of *****	BL9	2015/16	Various attempts to collect via enforcement. CP passed away June 2021. Confirmed there is no money in esstate to clear debt. The property was identified in 2019 with backdated banding. The occupier apparently had not been aware that there would be council tax liability a Moved out without ever having paid and subsequently deceased.	£1,071.40	£7,413.55
			2016/17		£1,103.99	
			2017/18		£1,140.75	
			2018/19		£1,204.00	
			2019/20		£1,261.10	
			2020/21		£1,308.14	
			2021/22		£324.17	
217*****	Exors of *****	BB4	2008/09	Various attempts to collect via enforcement. CP was evicted from property March 2019 and has since passed away. No funds in estate to clear debt	£29.14	£5,209.20
			2010/11		£475.78	
			2011/12		£36.50	
			2012/13		£453.16	
			2013/14		£778.05	
			2014/15		£750.52	
			2015/16		£598.05	
			2015/16		£129.97	
			2016/17		£827.99	
			2017/18		£501.15	
			2018/19		£628.89	
224*****	*****	OL13	2016/17	Various attempts to collect via Enforcement. IVA approved February 2024. Anything realised from IVA would be written back on	£11.88	£6,560.63
			2017/18		£855.56	
			2019/20		£619.11	
			2020/21		£1,308.14	
			2021/22		£1,360.03	
			2022/23		£1,412.54	
			2023/24		£993.37	
228*****	*****	BB4	2017/18	Various attempt to collect via enforcement agents. Charge payer entered into IVA. Anything realised from IVA would be written back on	£855.56	£945.82
			2018/19		£903.00	
			2019/20		£945.82	

			2020/21		£981.10	
			2021/22		£1,020.02	
			2022/23		£1,151.90	£5,857.40
218*****	*****	BB4	2010/11	Various attempts to collect via Enforcement. CP went to prison and is since untraceable.	£231.13	
			2011/12		£785.80	
			2012/13		£787.63	
			2013/14		£590.25	
			2014/15		£746.11	
			2015/16		£777.83	
			2016/17		£827.99	
			2017/18		£119.54	
			2018/19		£446.21	
			2019/20			£5,312.49
222*****	*****	OL12	2015/16	Various methods of recovery attempted including attachment of earnings & enforcement. Became a trace in 2021 and no success in tracing new address	£576.77	
			2016/17		£839.50	
			2017/18		£867.26	
			2018/19		£915.05	
			2019/20		305.02	
			2020/21		1277.65	
					769.79	£5,551.04
223*****	*****	OL13	2018/19	Debt Relief Order approved 18/12/23 unable to recover. Partial payment of 2018 & 2020, steadily falling further behind until DRO	£693.83	
			2019/20		£1,471.27	
			2020/21		£956.15	
			2021/22		£1,554.20	
			2022/23		£1,740.47	
			2023/24		£1,717.27	£8,133.19
225*****	*****	BB4	2020/21	Empty property charges. No address other than property address (as shown on Land Registry) Recovery action failed and property sold	£941.18	
			2021/22		£1,360.03	
			2022/23		£1,199.15	
					£2,917.58	
					£1,540.32	£7,958.26
216*****	*****	BB4	2010/11	Charge payer always made arrangements with RBC & EA's which eventually failed left property without forwarding address and we have not been able to trace a new address	£296.55	
			2012/13		£410.00	
			2016/17		£198.00	
			2017/18		£665.75	
			2018/19		£1,175.00	



2019/20	£1,200.00	
2020/21	£1,308.14	
2021/22	£684.95	£5,938.39

**Council Tax for write off** **£63,202.22**

**Housing Benefit Overpayments**

1****	*****	BB4	22/04/13 - 14/01/24	Bedroom rate not amended when the non dependant moved out in 2013 claimant successfully appealed and the overpayment made non recoverable.	£6,152.21
				<b>HB Overpayment Total</b>	<b>£6,152.21</b>
				<b>TOTAL AMOUNT FOR WRITE OFF</b>	<b>£69,354.43</b>

<b>Subject:</b>	Waterfoot Regeneration	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
<b>Report of:</b>	Economic Development Officer /Head of Housing & Regeneration	<b>Lead Member:</b>	Economic Development
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: Yes	Attached: Yes	
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment:</b>	Required: No	Attached: No	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Leah Armitage	<b>Telephone:</b>	01706 252483
<b>Email:</b>	leaharmitage@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Approve the proposed Waterfoot Masterplan as a strategic document.
- 1.2 Delegate Authority to Director of Economic Development, Monitoring Officer and Director of Resources in conjunction with the lead member to carry out all procurement and securing of permissions to deliver the three projects as part of the UK SPF allocation.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Priority 1 of the Valley Plan states an objective for a Thriving Local Economy with a related outcome, to support the town centres as better places to provide their unique offers and a destination for local shoppers and visitors.
- As part of the Valley plan, there is a commitment to reinvigorate the local business environment in Waterfoot. This involves, developing a Waterfoot Masterplan and designating an area of Waterfoot as a conservation area.
- In December 2022, Rossendale Borough Council accepted UK SPF monies, of which £300k capital spend was allocated to Waterfoot to support the Valley Plan objectives. In June 2024, Rossendale Borough Council also accepted £20m in Long Term Plan for Towns Funding encompassing the areas of Crawshawbooth, Rawtenstall and Waterfoot.
- This report aims to provide information on how the Masterplan has been developed and recommendations for spend for UK SPF allocation.
- Future considerations could be given to the projects identified in the Masterplan as part of the Long Term Plan for Towns funding.

**3. BACKGROUND**

**3.1 UKSPF**

In December 2022, Full Council accepted £2.643m in UK SPF money [www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1349/council](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1349/council)

As part of the submitted and approved Investment Plan, the Council allocated £300,000 of capital monies towards the reinvigoration of the business environment in Waterfoot. This funding is to be spent between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 on a capital project only.

**3.2 Current situation**

Waterfoot has little footfall and as a result has a shop vacancy rate of 43% (July 2024) - the greatest figure across all towns in Rossendale despite there being some long standing businesses within the centre.

The 2017 Retail, Leisure and Tourism study designates Waterfoot as a large local centre, playing a prominent role in catering for the needs of Rossendale residents.

### 3.3 Early feedback

In summer 2023 work commenced to understand the current challenges and opportunities in Waterfoot. This involved lengthy consultation with key stakeholder and the general public and over 550 people provided feedback. The consultation feedback is attached in **Appendix A**.

The consultation identified a number of themes and it was clear a Masterplan and Vision was required to elevate the centre and stimulate further investment.

### 3.4 Agreed Actions

Following a brief with cabinet members and ward councilors, the following actions were agreed:

- To appoint external support to establish a Vision and Masterplan for Waterfoot underpinned by The Arts as its unique selling point
- To establish a Conservation Area and Management Plan for Waterfoot
- To establish a Waterfoot Regeneration Board

## 4. DETAILS

### WATERFOOT MASTERPLAN – Development of Draft Concept Masterplan

#### 4.1 Vision and Timeframe

The Waterfoot Masterplan is a visionary document that:

- Outlines ambitions for the area over the next 1 to 20 years
- Includes short, medium, and long-term objectives
- Aims to transform Waterfoot into a thriving town

#### 4.2 Community-Driven Approach

The Masterplan is rooted in community input via these mechanisms:

- Business-focused drop-in sessions
- Collaboration with arts community representatives
- One-on-one stakeholder meetings
- Conversations with building owners and shopkeepers
- Online survey circulated in various forums and through the schools

#### 4.3 Evidence-Based Foundation

The Masterplan is supported by:

- Data highlighting Waterfoot's challenges
- Analysis of Waterfoot's significance within Rossendale and Lancashire contexts

#### 4.4 Collaborative Development Process

The concept document incorporates input from:

- Internal colleagues

- Council members
- Lancashire County Council departments
- General public
- Stakeholder groups

All ideas presented have undergone careful consideration.

#### 4.5 Professional Expertise

Local firm, Squareyard was appointed via a tender process to complete the concept Masterplan, ensuring professional oversight and local knowledge.

### Draft Concept Masterplan: Key Information Appendix B

#### 4.6 Masterplan Components

The Concept Masterplan encompasses:

- A vision for Waterfoot
- Key objectives
- Identified opportunities in the Short, Medium and Longer Term

#### 4.7 Vision Statement

The Vision for Waterfoot builds on two primary strengths:

1. Excellent connections to outdoor activities:
  - Walking routes
  - Cycling paths
  - Riding trails
2. A thriving local arts sector

This dual focus is encapsulated in the vision statement:

***"A place to relax and unwind, a place for adventure, a place for arts and culture to thrive, a place for all"***

#### 4.8 Masterplan Objectives

The Masterplan aims to:

1. Increase footfall
2. Create a Civic Heart
3. Enhance countryside and nature connections
4. Develop a visitor economy linked to the arts and outdoors
5. Improve pedestrian links
6. Enhance the town's offer and street scene

#### 4.9 Project Implementation

The Concept Masterplan outlines:

- A series of projects and actions to contribute to Waterfoot Town Centre's future success
- Indicative timescales for implementation
- Potential funding sources
- Assessments of project deliverability

Detailed information on these aspects can be found within Appendix B.

## **Draft Concept Masterplan: Engagement Process**

### **4.10 Public Consultation**

- Throughout August 2024 and online survey was published
  - 555 responses
  - Closed on Friday 5th September
  - Feedback available in Appendix C

### **4.11 Media Coverage**

The draft masterplan received coverage from:

- BBC online (Lancashire coverage) [BBC News](#)
- Rossendale Free Press [Viva PR](#)
- Lancashire Telegraph [Lancashire Telegraph](#)
- Lancs Live [Lancs Live](#)

### **4.12 Stakeholder Engagement**

The Economic Development team and ward members conducted one-to-one meetings with:

- Businesses
- Artists
- Community organisations and groups

### **4.13 Public Drop-in Session**

A public drop in session was arranged with around 250 people in attendance at Waterfoot Yard on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August. The feedback is captured in Appendix C.

### **4.14 General Feedback**

- Mostly constructive and supportive
- Over 90% of survey respondents agreed with each project identified in the masterplan
- Many requested earlier action on Tricketts Arcade

### **4.15 Key Business Engagement and Artist Community**

12 businesses were actively approached to discuss the Masterplan. Valley Artists, Prospect Studios, the Horse and Bamboo and Whitehorse Project all provided feedback.

### **4.16 Additional Consultations**

Sessions were held with:

- Various departments within Lancashire County Council
- Transdev
- Local Civic Pride volunteers

### **4.17 Masterplan Refinement**

SquareYard made minor adjustments to the draft masterplan based on community feedback.

### **4.18 Next Steps**

Delegation is requested for Cabinet to sign off the overall Masterplan.

### **4.19 Project Appraisals**

The Masterplan identifies several projects of varying scales to support Waterfoot becoming a thriving town centre.

The capital projects identified will require the sourcing of external funding or private investment to deliver.

The £300k UK SPF allocation is required to be spent by March 2025. There is a remaining balance of circa £260k. The following short-term projects have been identified as options to be delivered with this spend:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Deliverability</b>	<b>Comments</b>
To clean up open section of <b>river Irwell</b> in centre	Unachievable in UK SPF timescales – as permit application for river working. Would be classed as revenue spend	Would be classed as revenue spend. <b>Deliver at a later date with a different funding stream</b>
To provide architectural lighting scheme in the <b>tunnels</b> to promote safety and fun elements	Achievable – subject to ecology input for roosting bats and input from historians	Small revenue cost of lights. Potential relocation of bats which could be difficult in timescales.
External works to <b>Tricketts Arcade</b> (minor) e.g. complete painting scheme or partial replacement of canopy segments to the arcade	Likely unachievable - subject to Complex owner issues require resolving initially and legal paperwork.	Repair works to building is excessive and investment might be blighted by other issues with the building. Tight in timescales. <b>Deliver at a later date.</b>
Fully Fit out a shop property to <b>trial a pop up shop</b> , allowing artists or entrepreneurs to showcase their work or product	Achievable - subject to willing building owner	Requires negotiation surrounding any on-going rent. Could be within the Arcade.
Locally designed and crafted <b>artwork</b> and <b>furniture</b> around the town centre including sculputres, benches, railings and bollards	Achievable	Require strict brief and microgrant process establishing
Paint on the proposals for the <b>bus turning circle</b> to understand the scale	Achievable	Useful step when looking at a permanent measure. Wouldn't formally change the route.
Create an <b>events space</b> area for use of any organisation to showcase where the heart of Waterfoot should be	Achievable	Requires interest from community groups to effectively establish.
Local artist to create "welcome to waterfoot" <b>signage</b> , complimented by Fingerpost signage, hanging signage, wayfinding, walking routes and car parking signage	Achievable	Local artist would need clear brief and microgrant or tender process establishing.
To complete shop front improvements to a number of retail properties	Likely unachievable – timescales to procure contractor and planning permissions.	Would need to be selective on properties and understanding the grant rate. Could possibly not deliver impact if only 1/2 properties deliver. <b>Deliver at a later date with a different funding stream</b>

- 4.20 As a result of the above, it is recommended to spend the remaining UK spf monies as follows:
- £50k – Locally designed and manufactured public artwork and furniture grants programme
  - £100k – Capital fit out of a “hub facility” within the Arcade which either has an entrepreneurial focus or a programme of community groups and clubs, such as book clubs, creative writing etc.
  - £100k – Create a dedicated events space on the former entrance to Mytholme place activated by a stage and public artwork.
- 4.21 Delegated Authority is requested to complete the necessary procurement to deliver the above schemes.
- 4.22 External funding will be sought to deliver other projects both listed above and identified in the Masterplan over the coming years.
- 4.23 From the public consultation, it was suggested more attention was paid to improve the external condition of the grade II listed building. There are a number of challenges with the building:
- The external condition of the building;
  - The condition of some of the residential apartments that are causing issues in the commercial spaces below;
  - A complex ownership structure;
  - The number of properties within the arcade on long leases or sublease

### **Waterfoot Masterplan- next steps**

- 4.23 Along with Rossendale Borough Council’s Cabinet, it is proposed that The Long Term Plan for Towns board will have oversight of the strategic delivery of the Waterfoot Masterplan and various subgroups, such as an arts town steering group that will be called upon to support on specialist elements within it.
- 4.24 Accompanying communications regarding the Waterfoot Masterplan will be carefully considered as part of the Long Term Plan for Towns funding.
- 4.25 The completion of dedicating areas of Waterfoot as a Conservation Area will take place in the coming months and subsequently, external funding will be applied for.
- 4.26 The necessary permissions and technical detail and construction for the schemes outlined above will be completed and delivered by March 2025.

## **5. RISKS**

- 5.1 Money is not spent by March 2025.
- 5.2 Cannot reach agreement with owner of arcade shop unit to long lease/purchase by March 2025.
- 5.3 Cost of shop unit redevelopment exceeds budget or there are unforeseen issues with the unit.
- 5.4 Do not receive backing and support from the local community. This will be mitigated by speaking with businesses regularly, having 1-1, doing advertisements, sharing information on the final masterplan once approved, etc.

## **6. FINANCE**

6.1 All expenditure will be within the budget envelope.

6.2 All expenditure will be in line with the terms of the grant.

## 7. LEGAL

7.1 All governance arrangements will continue to be implemented and monitored in line with approved procedures and publicised guidance.

7.2 Any necessary procurements will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

## 8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Policy implications and consultation undertaken are included within the body of the report.

8.2 Consideration to equalities, appropriate consultation and community engagement will be undertaken throughout the delivery of the Masterplan and will be given consideration in a relevant and proportionate manner.

## 9. REASON FOR DECISION

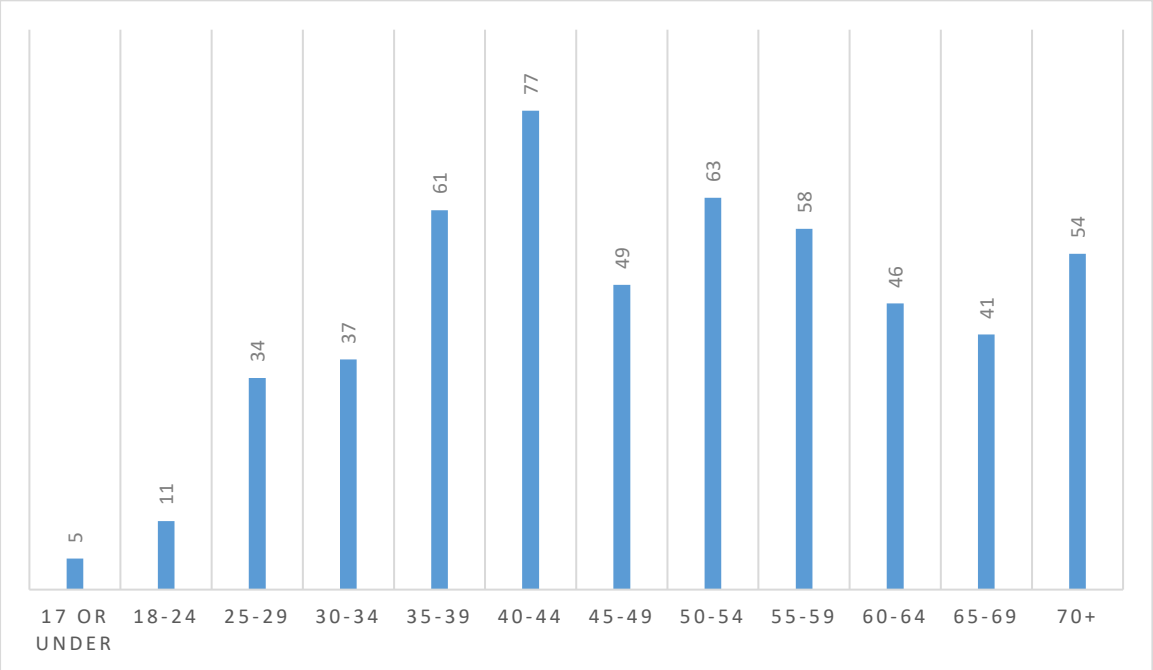
9.1 Accepting the Masterplan will be the catalyst for investment in Waterfoot and will be the first step to reaching the town's vision: ***“a place to relax and unwind, a place for adventure, a place for arts and culture to thrive, a place for all”***.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
2023 Consultation feedback	Appendix A
Waterfoot Masterplan	Appendix B
2024 Consultation feedback	Appendix C
Equality Impact Assessment	Appendix D

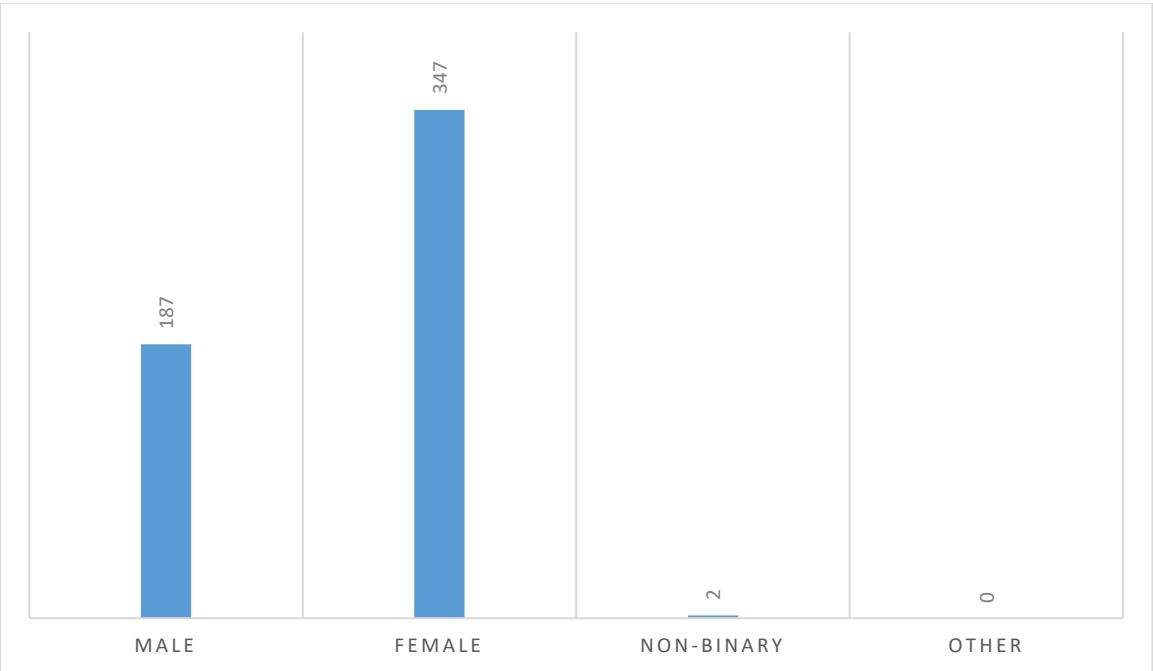


**Waterfoot Public Consultation – Carried out Summer 2023**

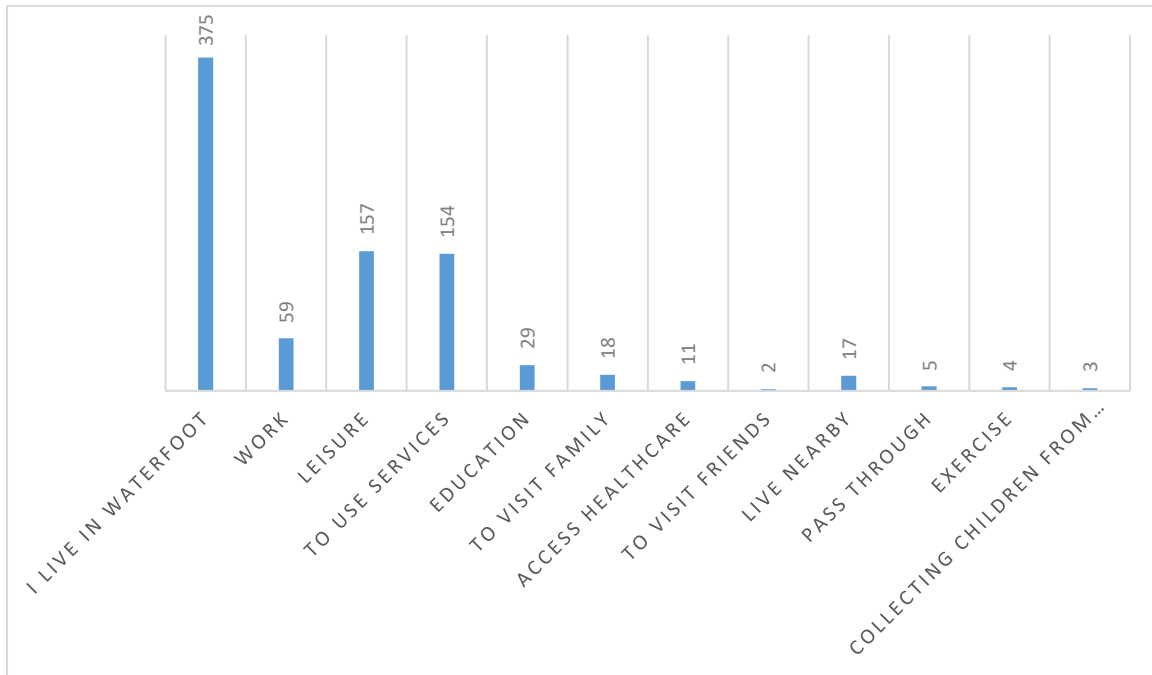
1) What is your age?



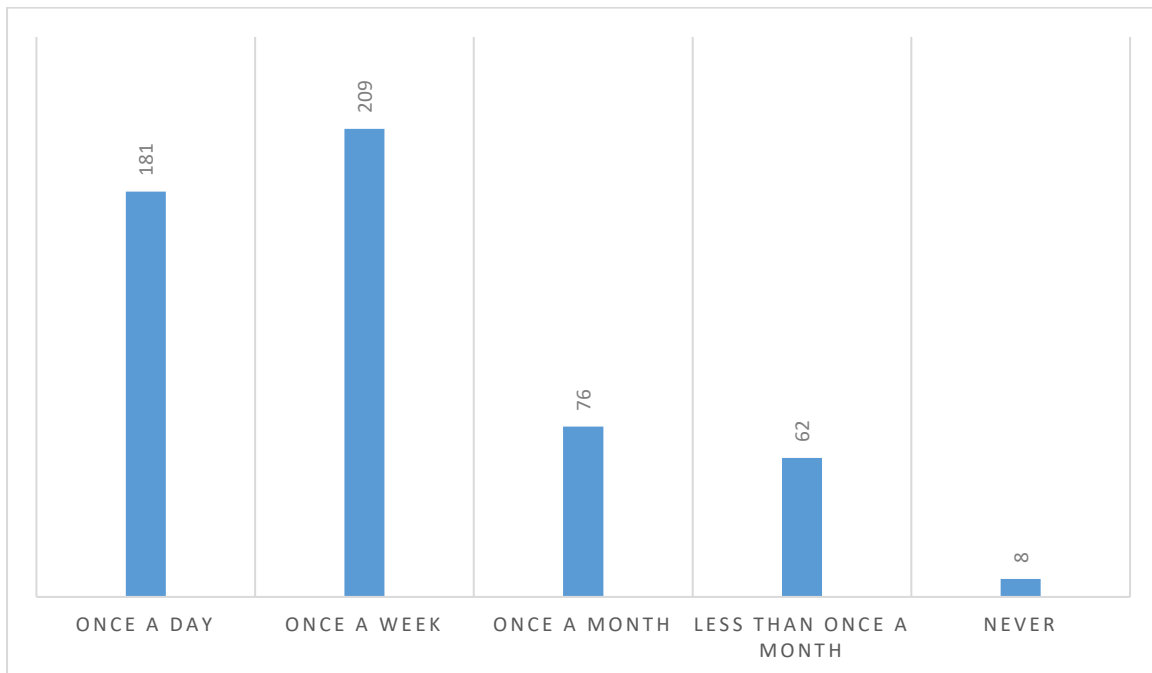
2) What is your gender?



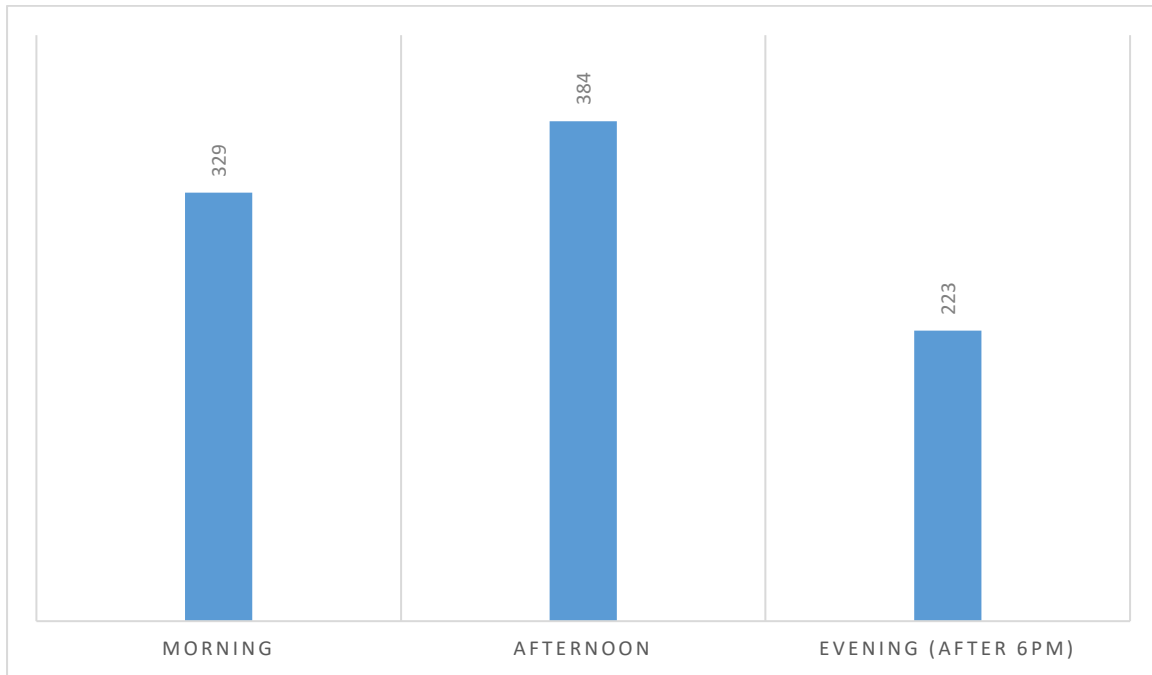
### 3) Why do you visit Waterfoot?



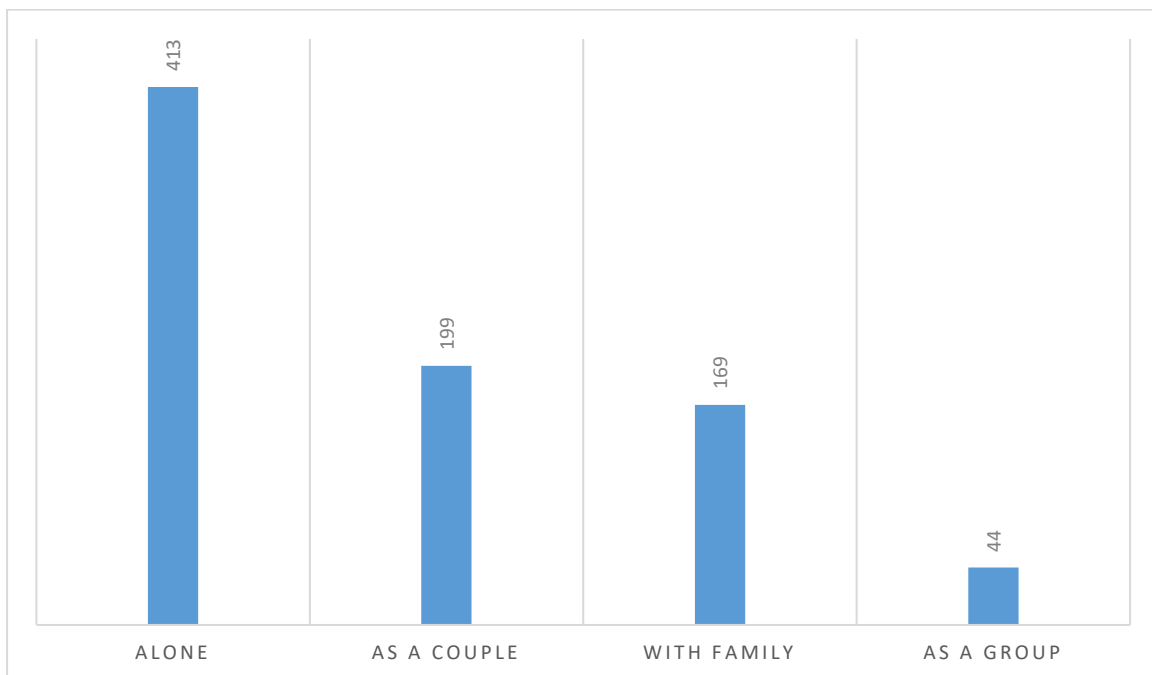
### 4) How frequently do you visit the centre of Waterfoot?



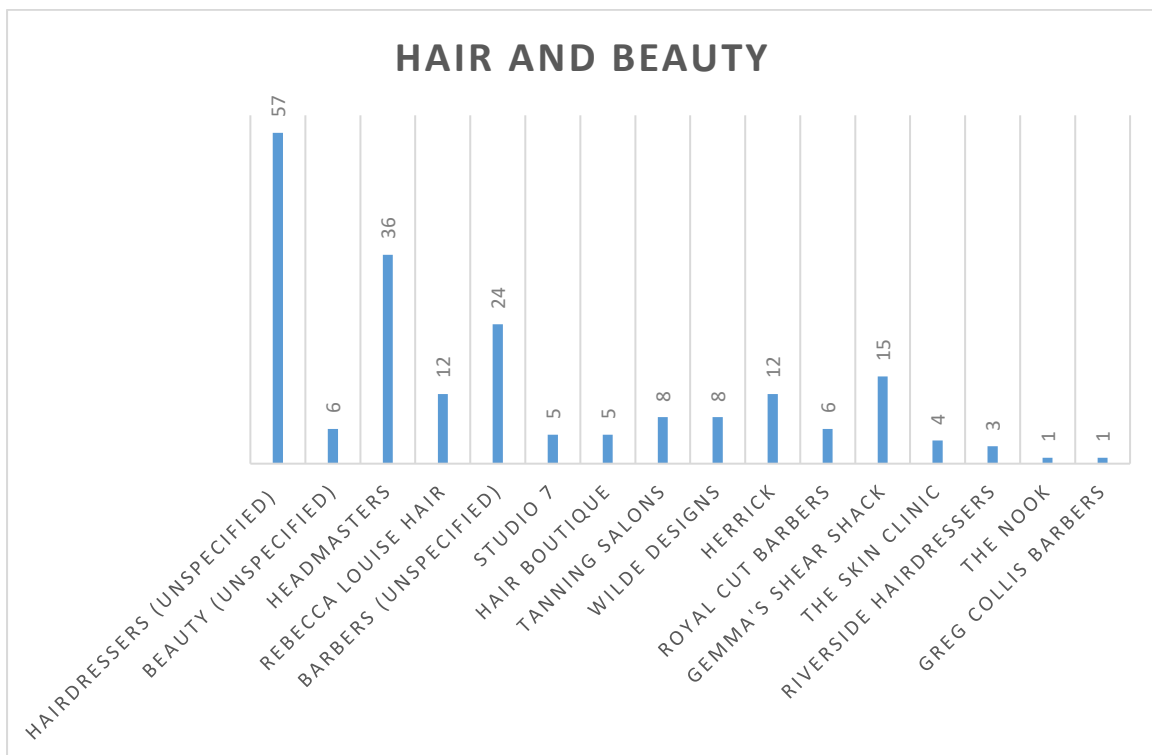
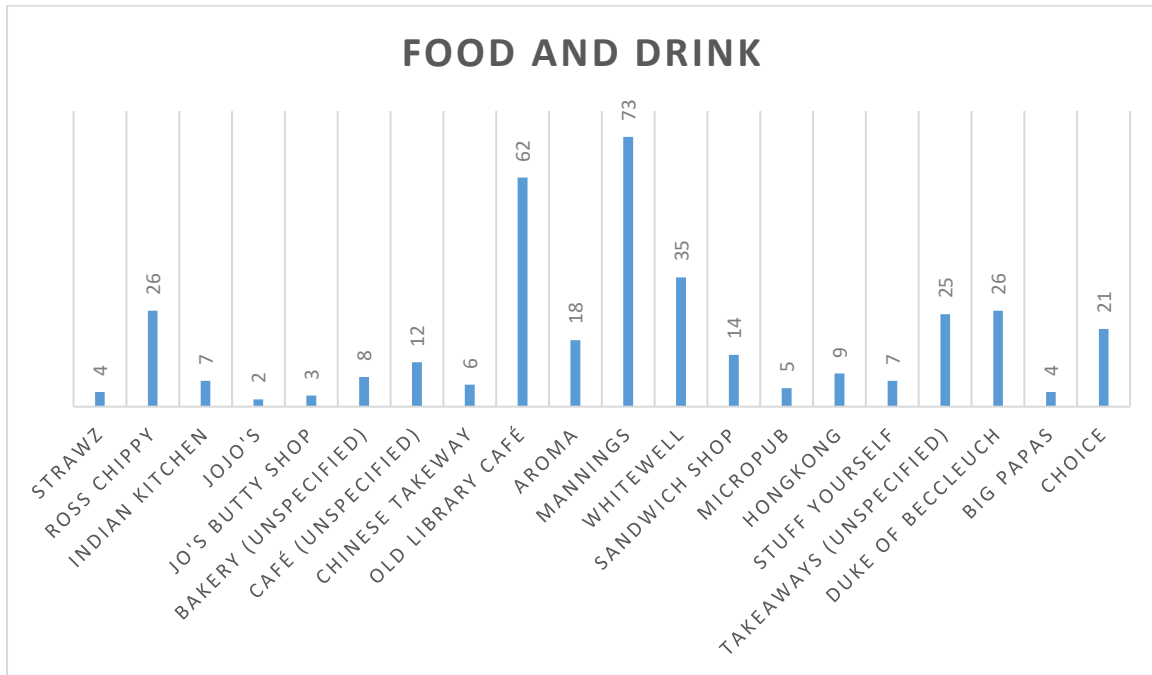
5) What time of day do you usually visit Waterfoot?



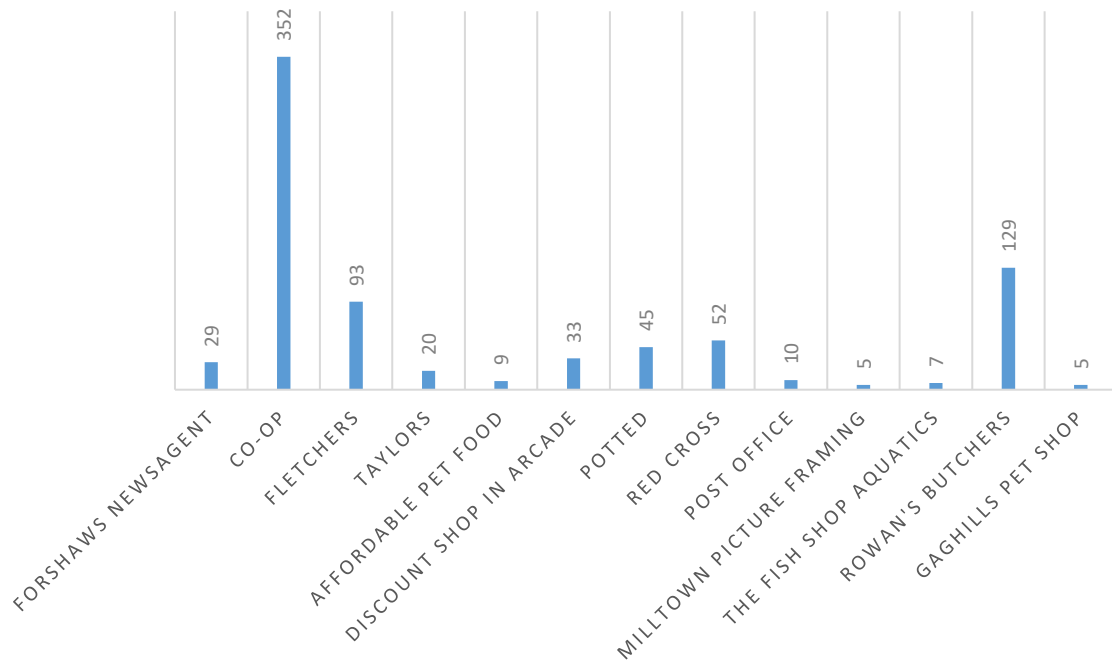
6) Who do you visit Waterfoot with?



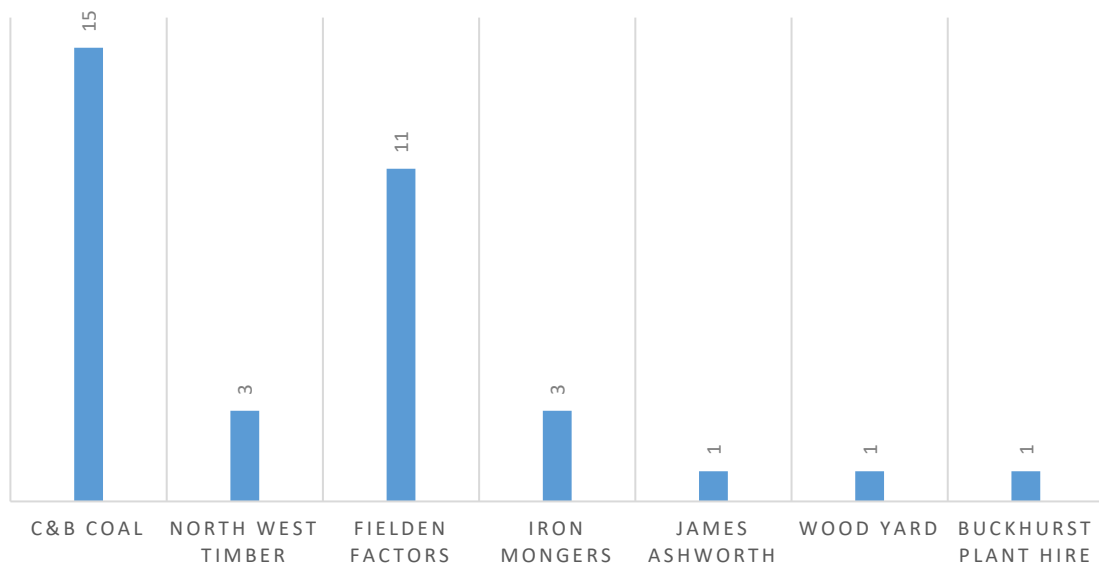
7) What businesses in Waterfoot do you visit?



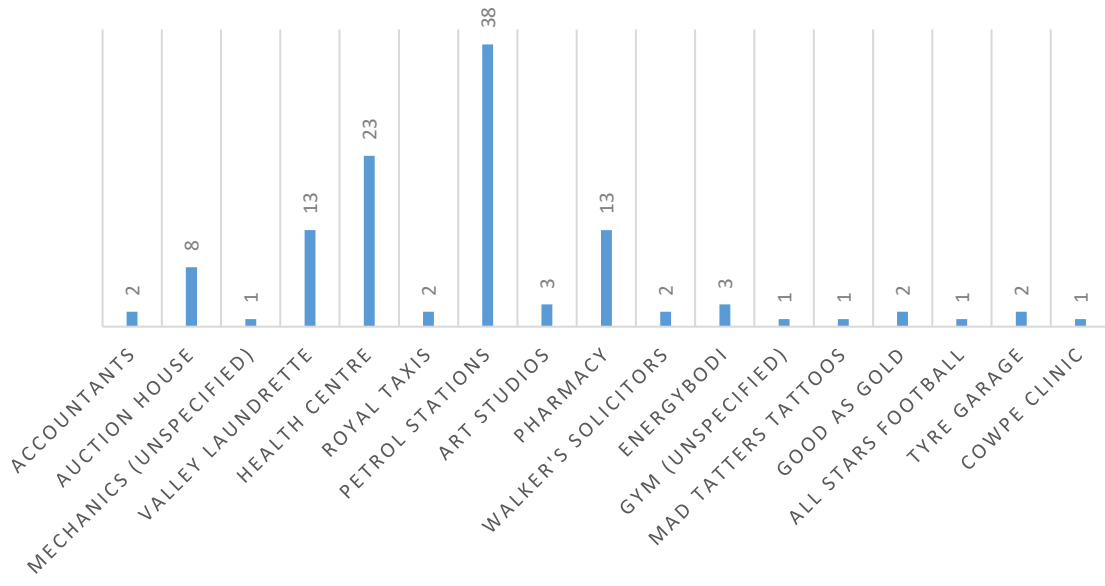
## SHOPS



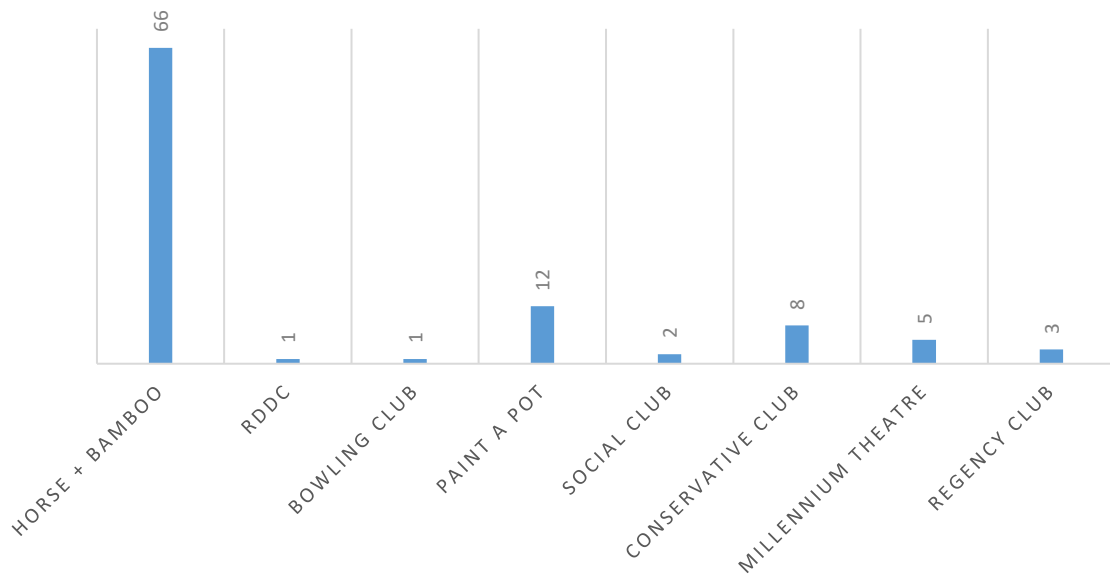
## CONSTRUCTION / BUILDING SUPPLIES



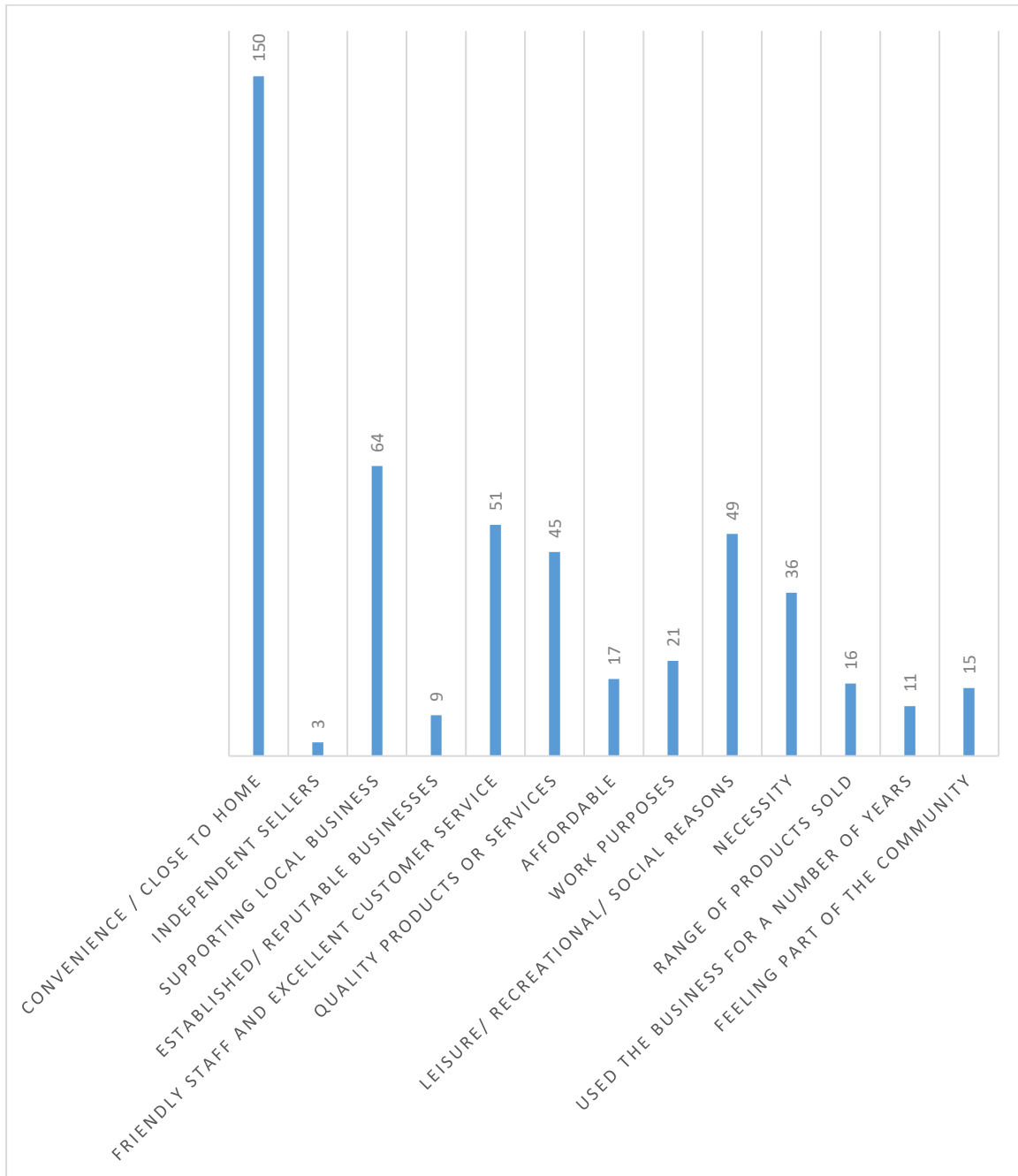
## SERVICES



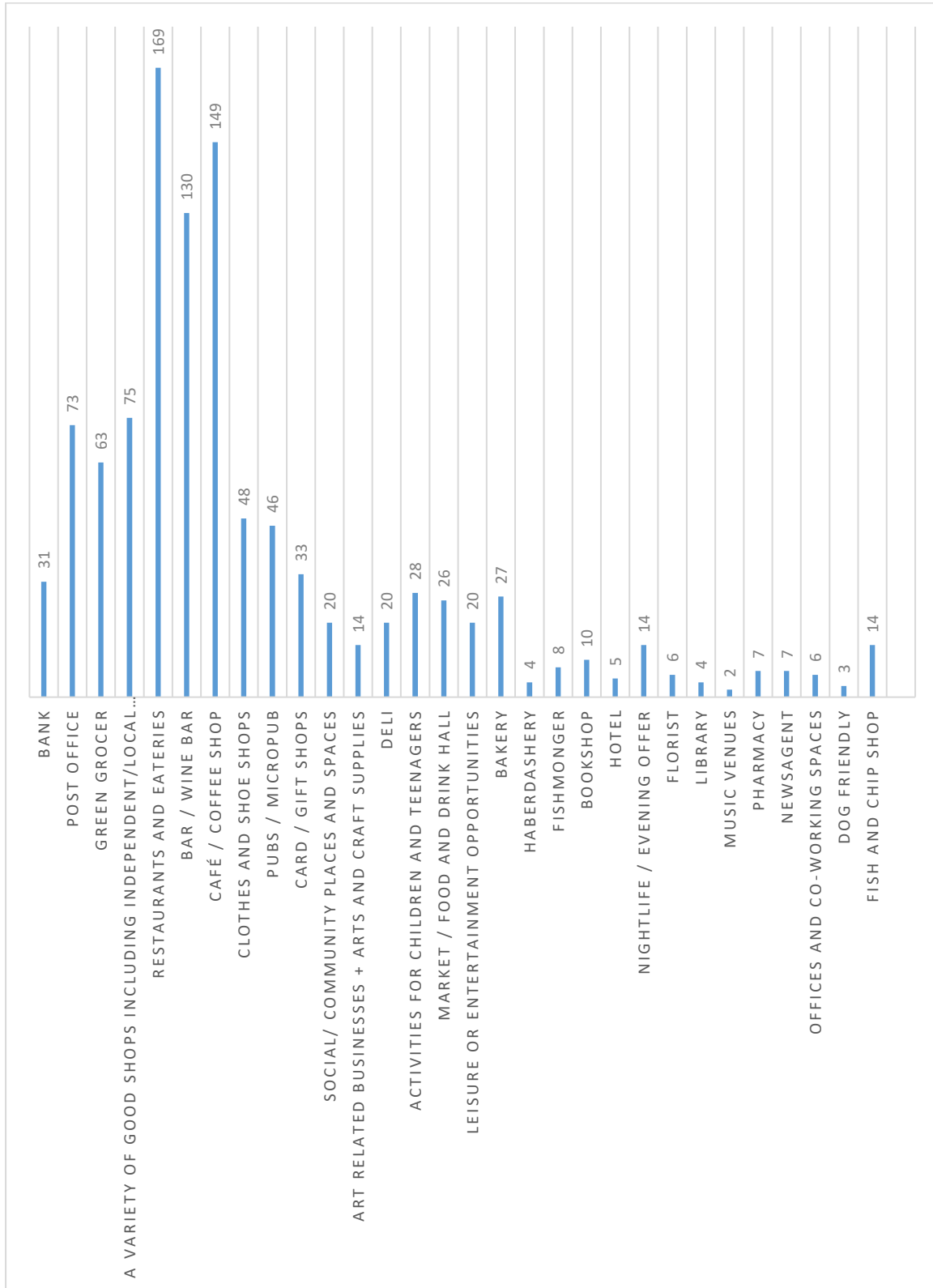
## ENTERTAINMENT AND SOCIAL



8) What makes you visit these businesses?

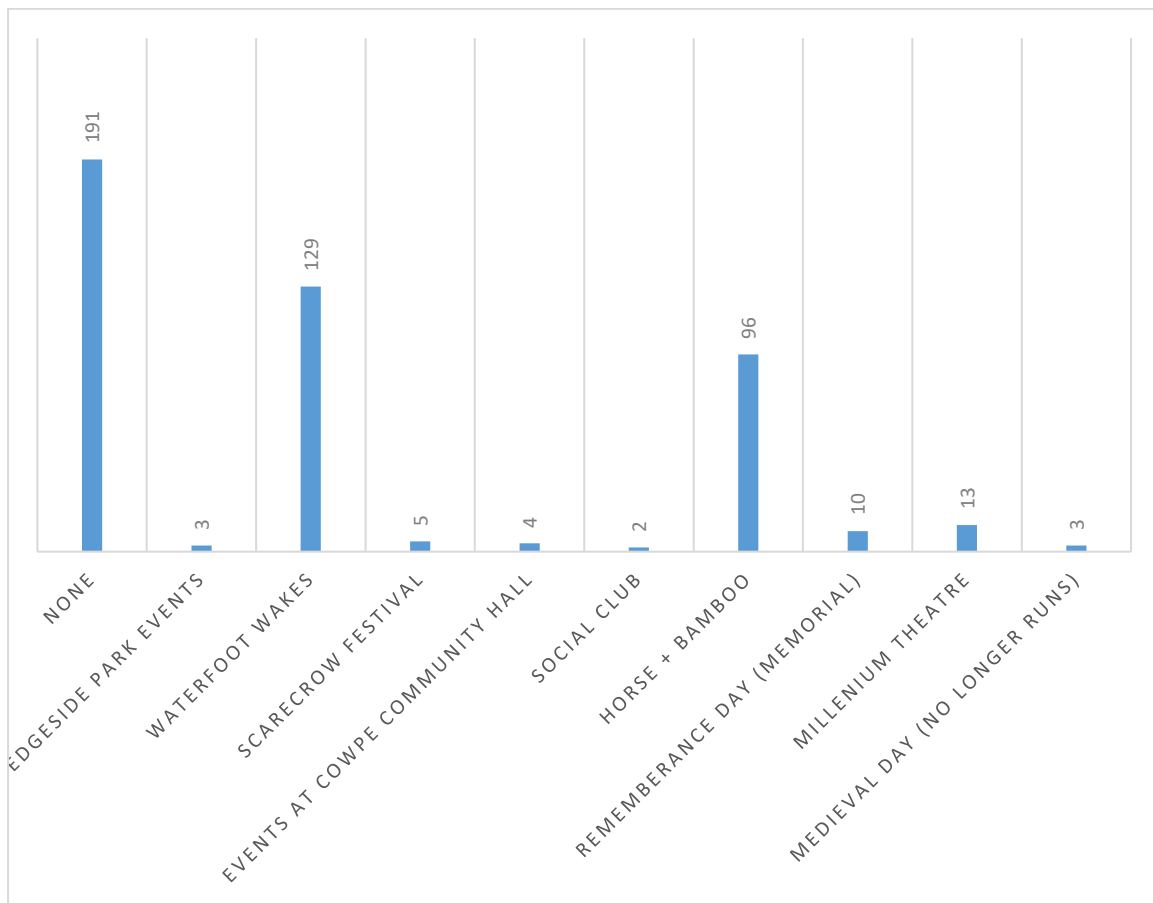


9) What type of business do you feel Waterfoot is currently missing?

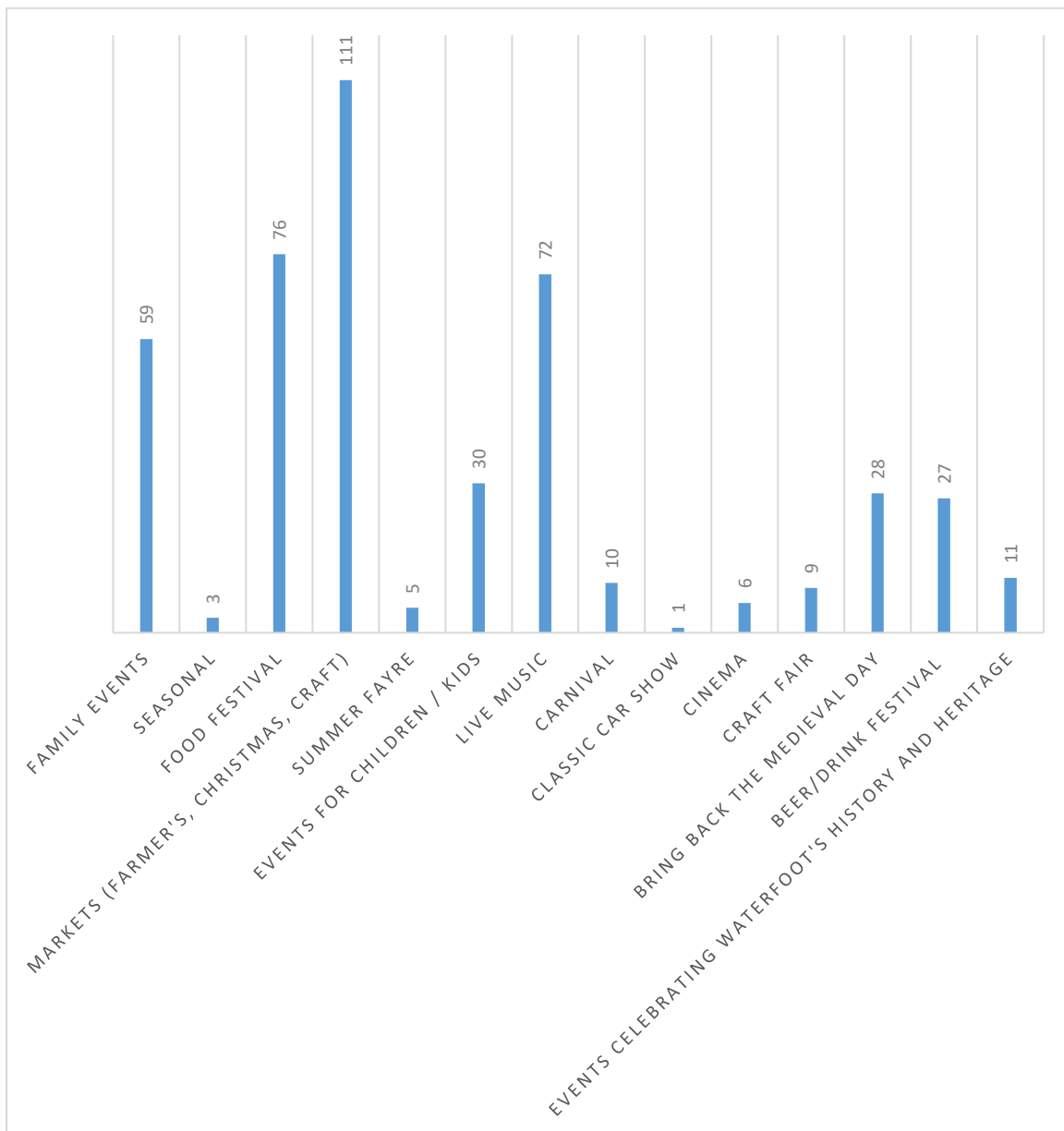




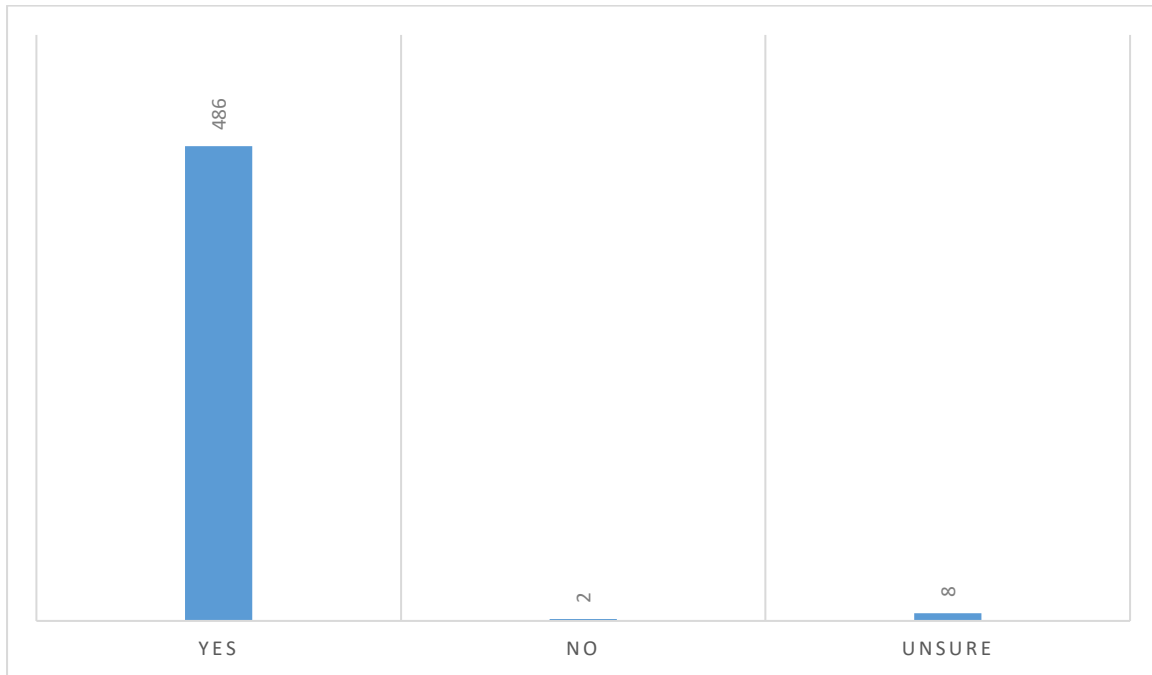
10) Which events in Waterfoot do you attend?



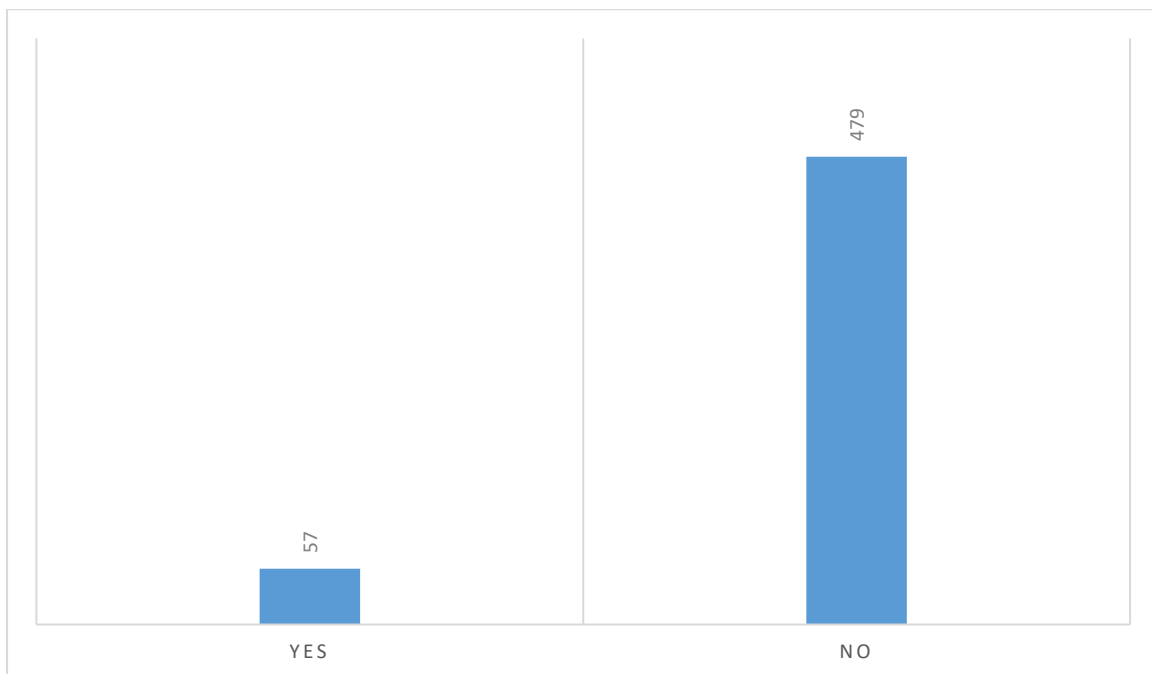
11) What type of event would you like to see in Waterfoot?



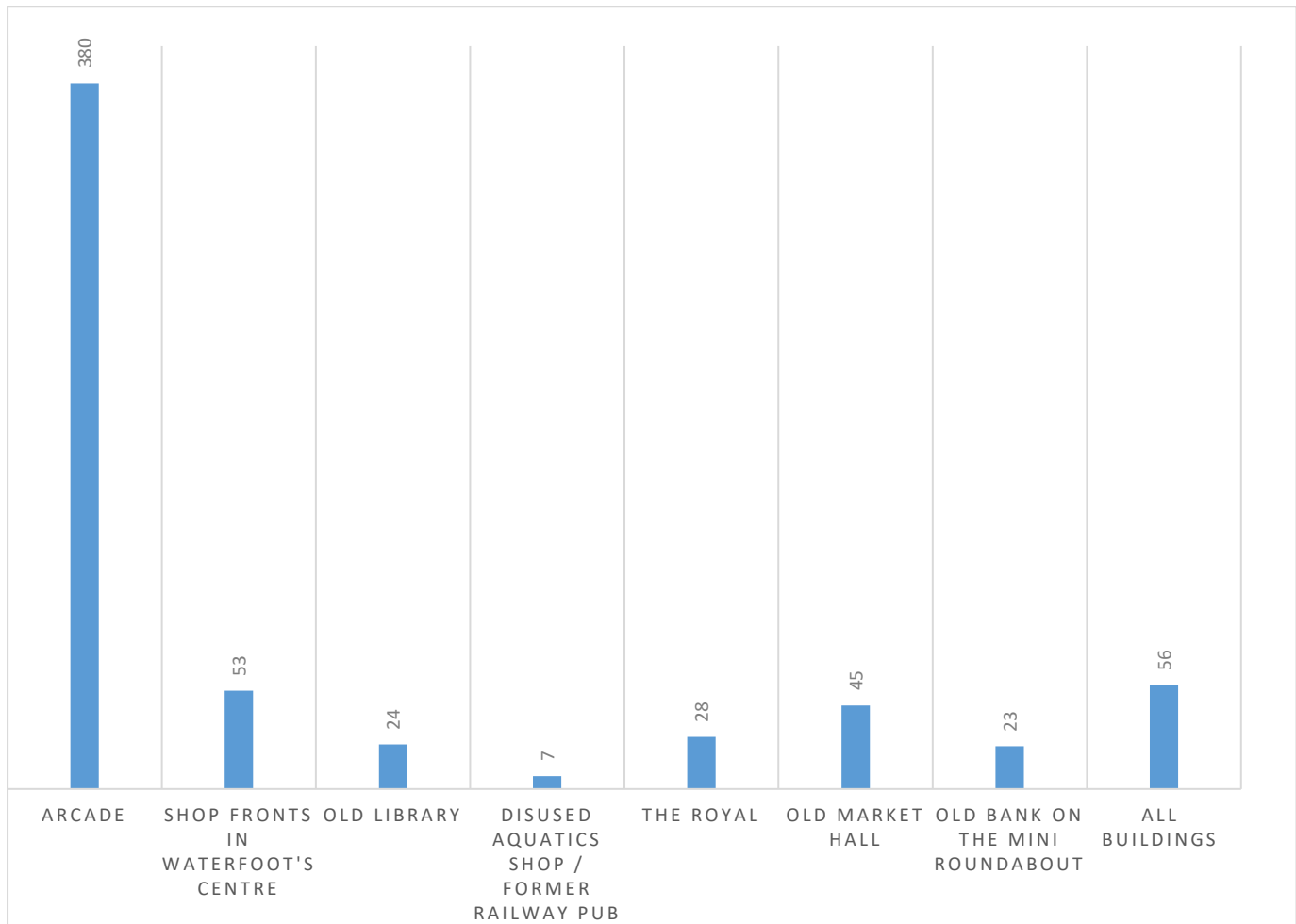
12) Would you welcome external funding for Waterfoot?



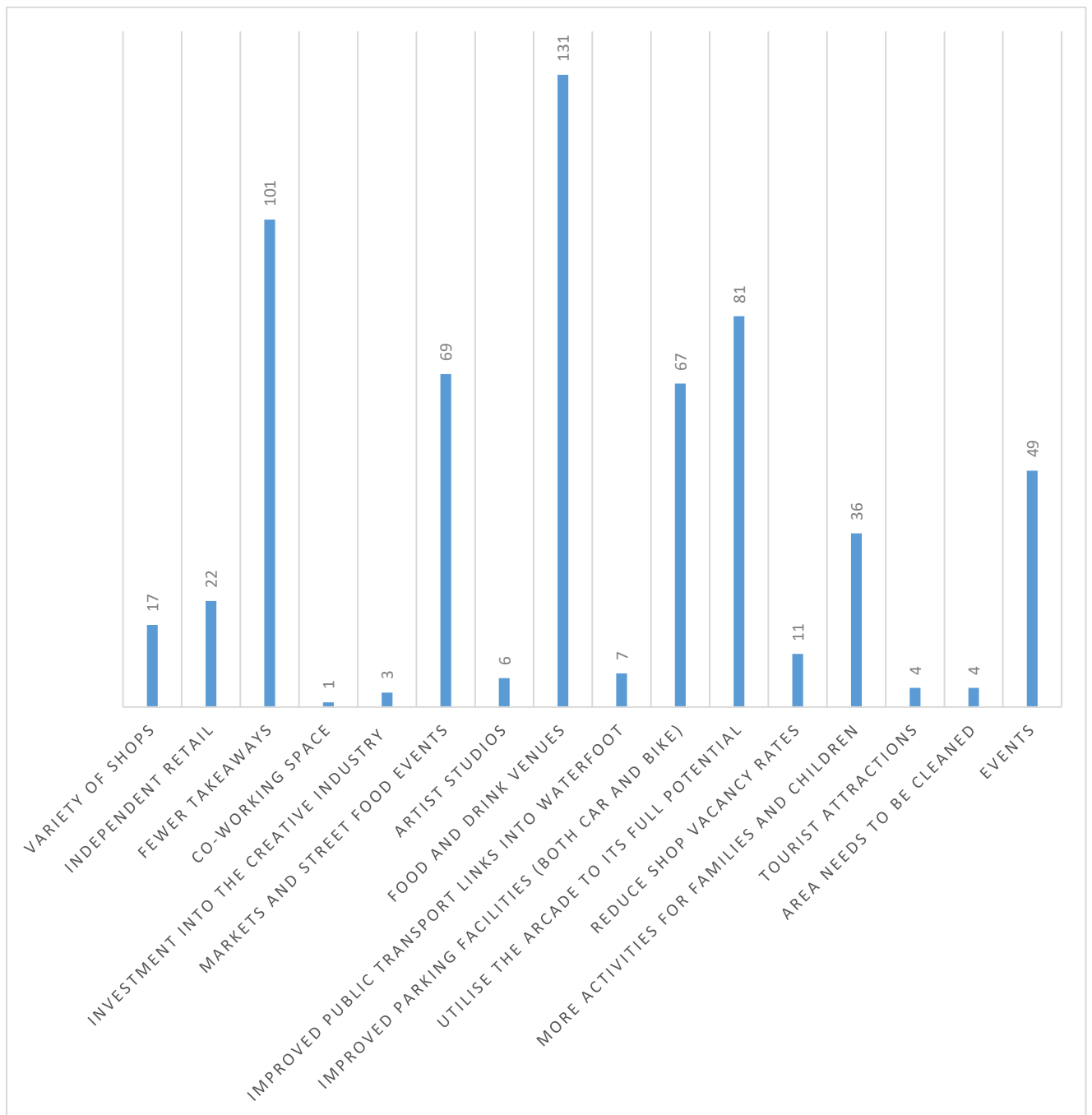
13) We are currently exploring the possibility of Waterfoot's centre becoming a conservation area. This will help to protect the unique character and heritage of the area. Does this pose any issues to you?



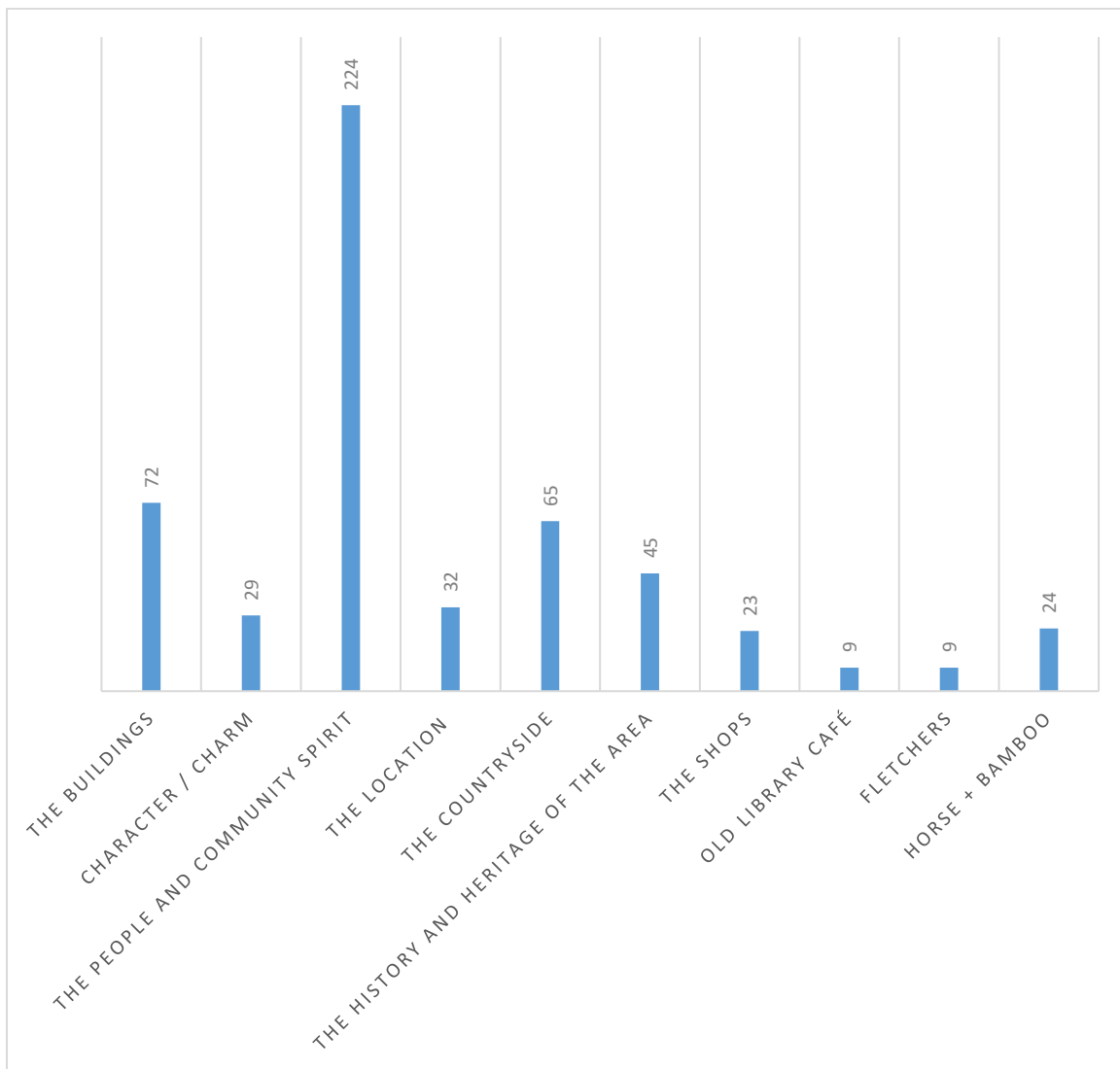
14) If there was more funding to enhance and protect some of the buildings in Waterfoot's centre, which buildings would you like to see improved?



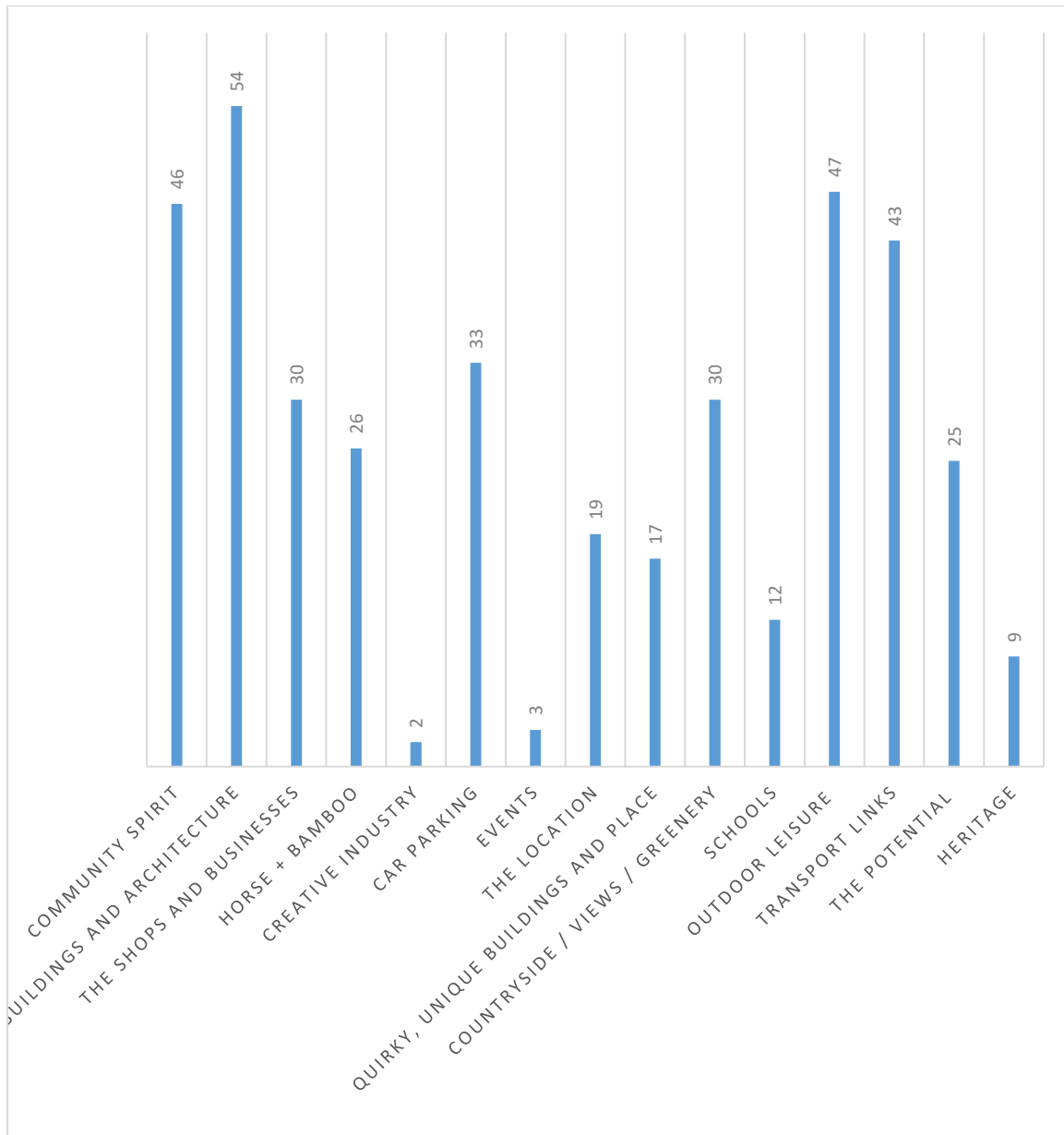
15) What ideas do you have to boost footfall in the centre of Waterfoot?



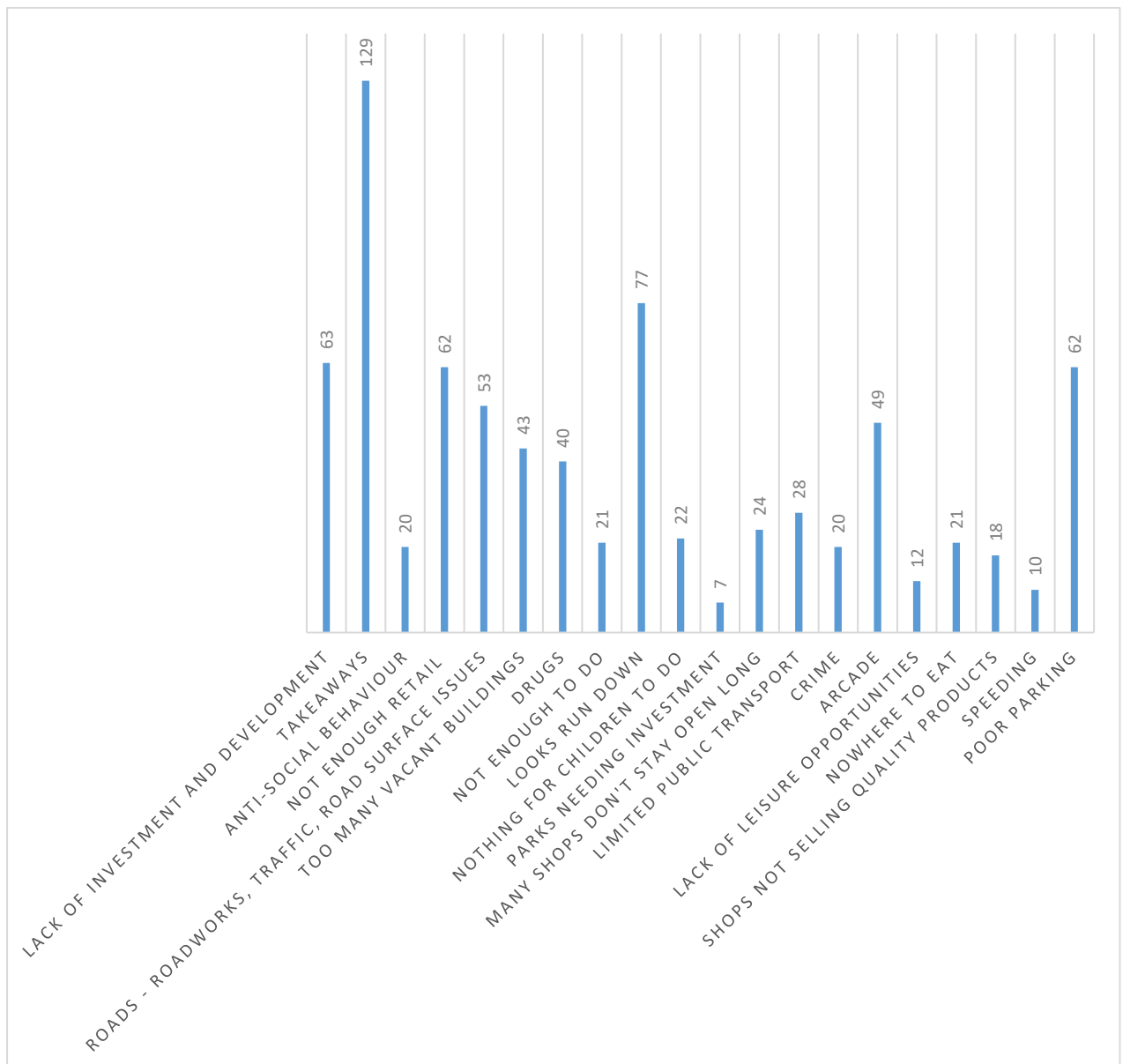
## 16) What do you love about Waterfoot?



17) What are the strengths of Waterfoot when compared with other areas of Rossendale and East Lancashire?



18) What do you feel the main challenges are in Waterfoot?





# **WATERFOOT MASTERPLAN**

## **DRAFT TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN**





# **PRESENTATION STRUCTURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **SETTING THE SCENE:**

- STRENGTHS
- OPPORTUNITIES
- OBJECTIVES

## **POSITIONING IDEAS AND CONCEPTS**

## **EARLY PROPOSALS FOR DISCUSSION**



# INTRODUCTION

## **FIRST AND FOREMOST:**

- WE ARE ROSSENDALE RESIDENTS OF 44+ YEARS
- TWO OF OUR TEAM ARE FORMER PUPILS AT BRGS
- WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT ROSSENDALE AND ITS FUTURE
- WE HAVE INTRINSIC LINKS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

## **OUR BACKGROUND:**

- PRACTICING URBAN DESIGNER FOR 25 YEARS
- EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE DELIVERING REGENERATION PROJECTS BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY
- OUR PRACTICE IS BASED IN RAWTENSTALL
- WE HAVE A PASSION FOR PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND CREATE SUSTAINABLE TOWNS FOR THE FUTURE.

## **OUR APPROACH:**

- TO ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AT ALL STAGES
- TO IDENTIFY SHORT TERM PROJECTS THAT CAN HAPPEN QUICKLY
- TO CREATE A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK TO ALLOW IDEAS TO BE TESTED BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION
- TO PROPOSE MEDIUM AND LONGER TERM PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND FUNDING TO COME FORWARD.



S Q U A R E   Y A R D



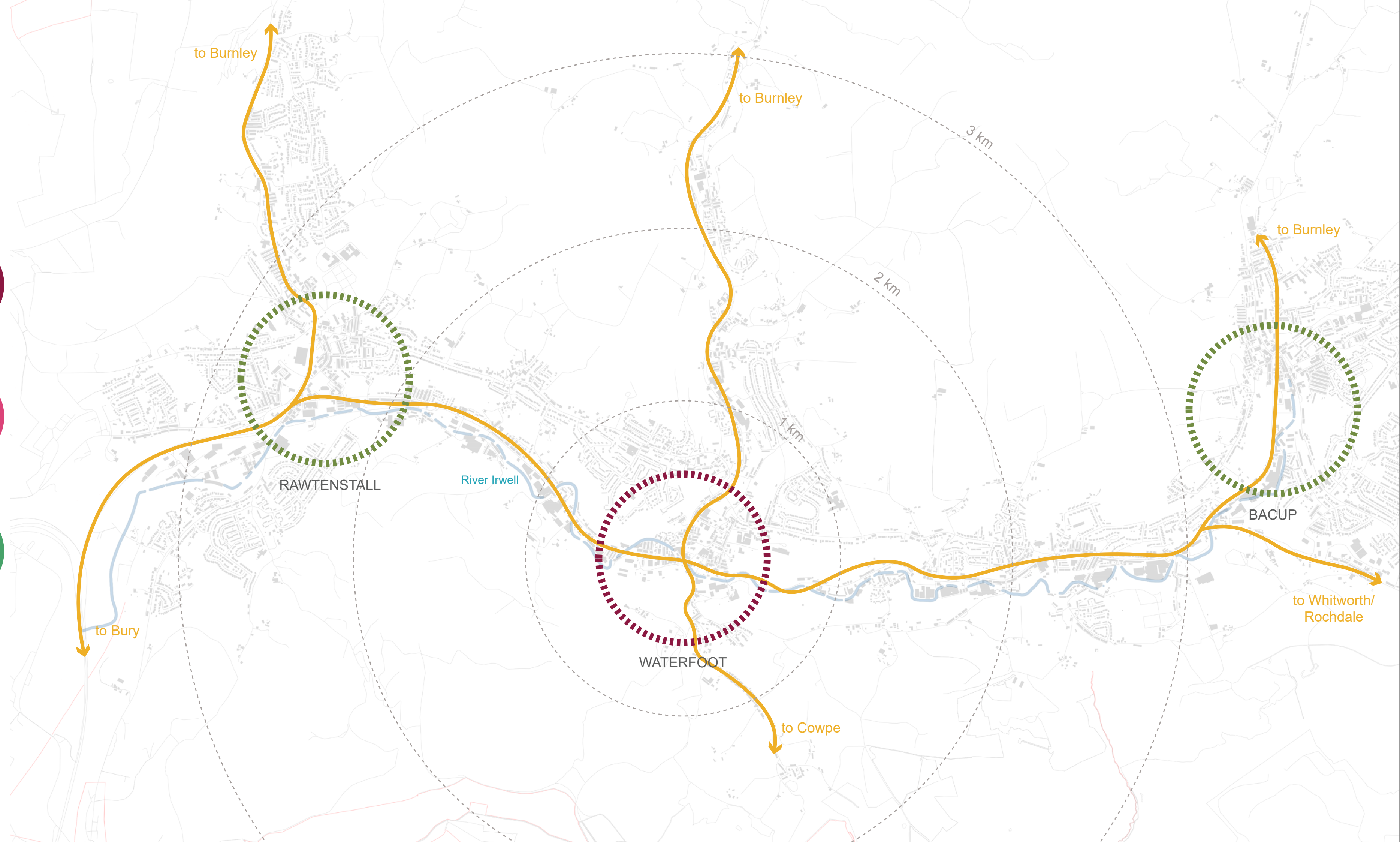
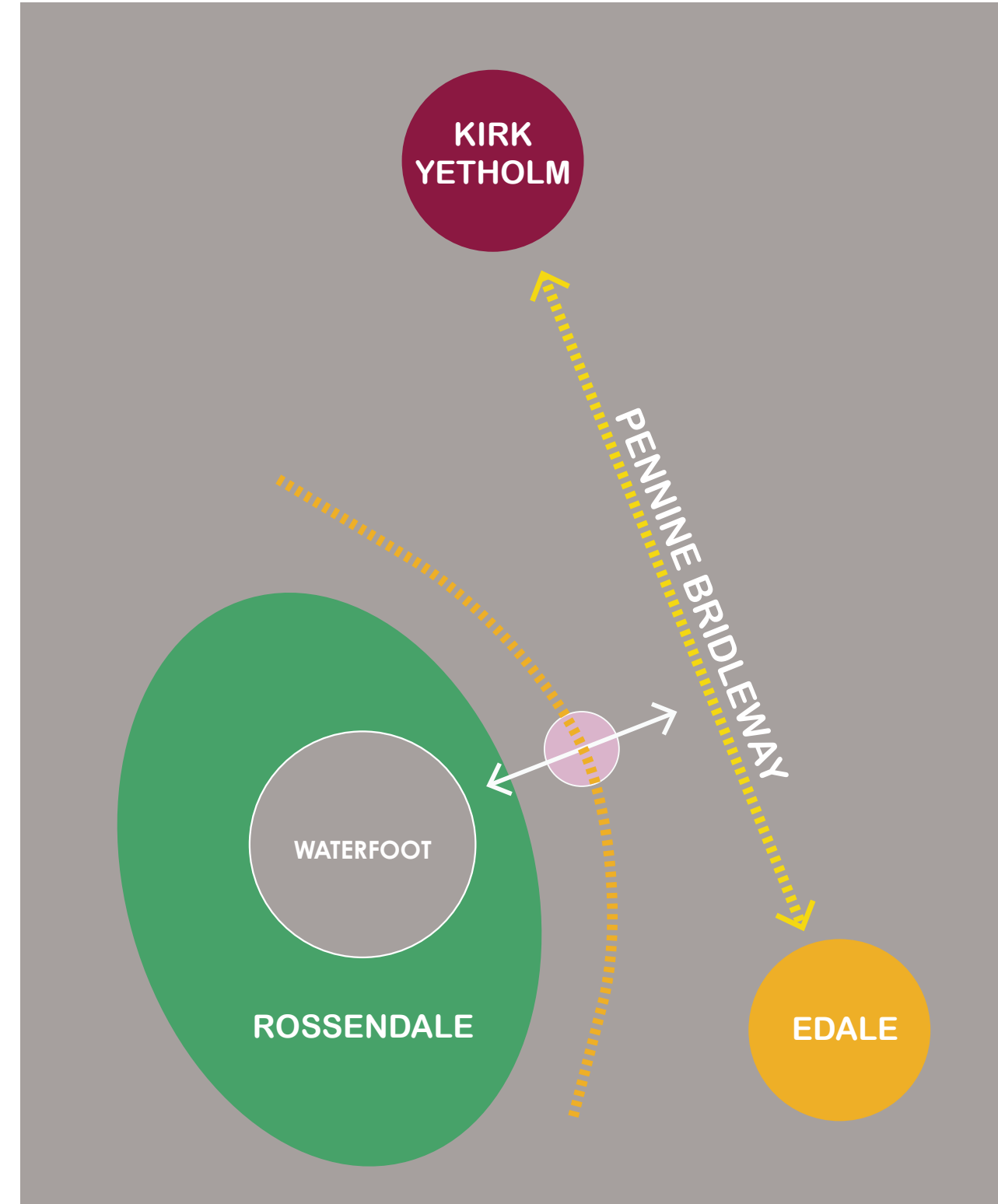
# SETTING THE SCENE





# CONTEXT OF THE MASTERPLAN

WHAT IS THE PARTICULAR ROLE OF WATERFOOT IN THE WIDER CONTEXT OF ROSSENDALE AND BEYOND?





# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

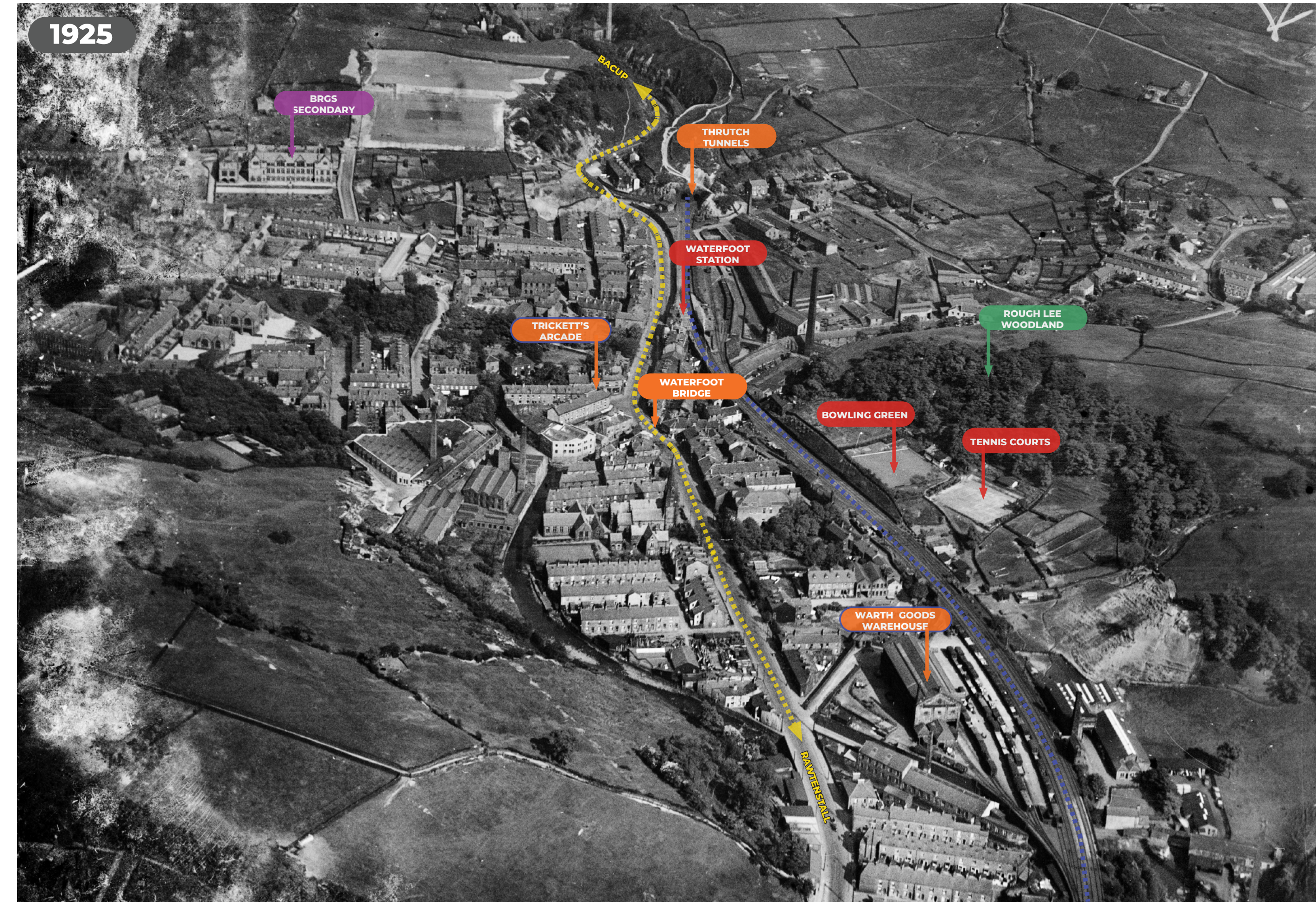
- Waterfoot was originally known as 'The Waterfoot' which is a place where two rivers meet.
- The area was largely uninhabited prior to the industrial revolution, with the population centred at that time on the ancient trade routes through Newchurch following the line of Newchurch Road and Booth Road.
- The arrival of the railway in 1848 saw rapid development in Waterfoot.
- The railway station was named 'Newchurch Station' as Waterfoot was an extension of Newchurch at that time.
- The town unofficially got its name when the Post Office arrived in 1851 and was named 'Waterfoot Post Office'.
- In 1881 the railway station was renamed 'Waterfoot for Newchurch'.
- The plentiful supply of high quality 'soft water' in the area drove the industrial revolution as it does not leave unwanted calcium deposits and is perfect for washing cotton.
- 'Cooperation' in Waterfoot in the 1860's ensured 'The Golden Valley' wealth was distributed evenly with workers holding shares in the mills they worked in.
- Waterfoot is home to Gaghills Mill founded by Henry Trickett who also built the Victoria Arcade. At one point Gaghills was the largest slipper factory in the world, employing over 1000 people and manufacturing 72k slippers per week.
- Trickett introduced profit sharing, sick pay, and holiday clubs long before they became part of the industrial scene. He treated his staff well; the 6 people he employed at the start were still with him 30 years later.





# STRENGTHS

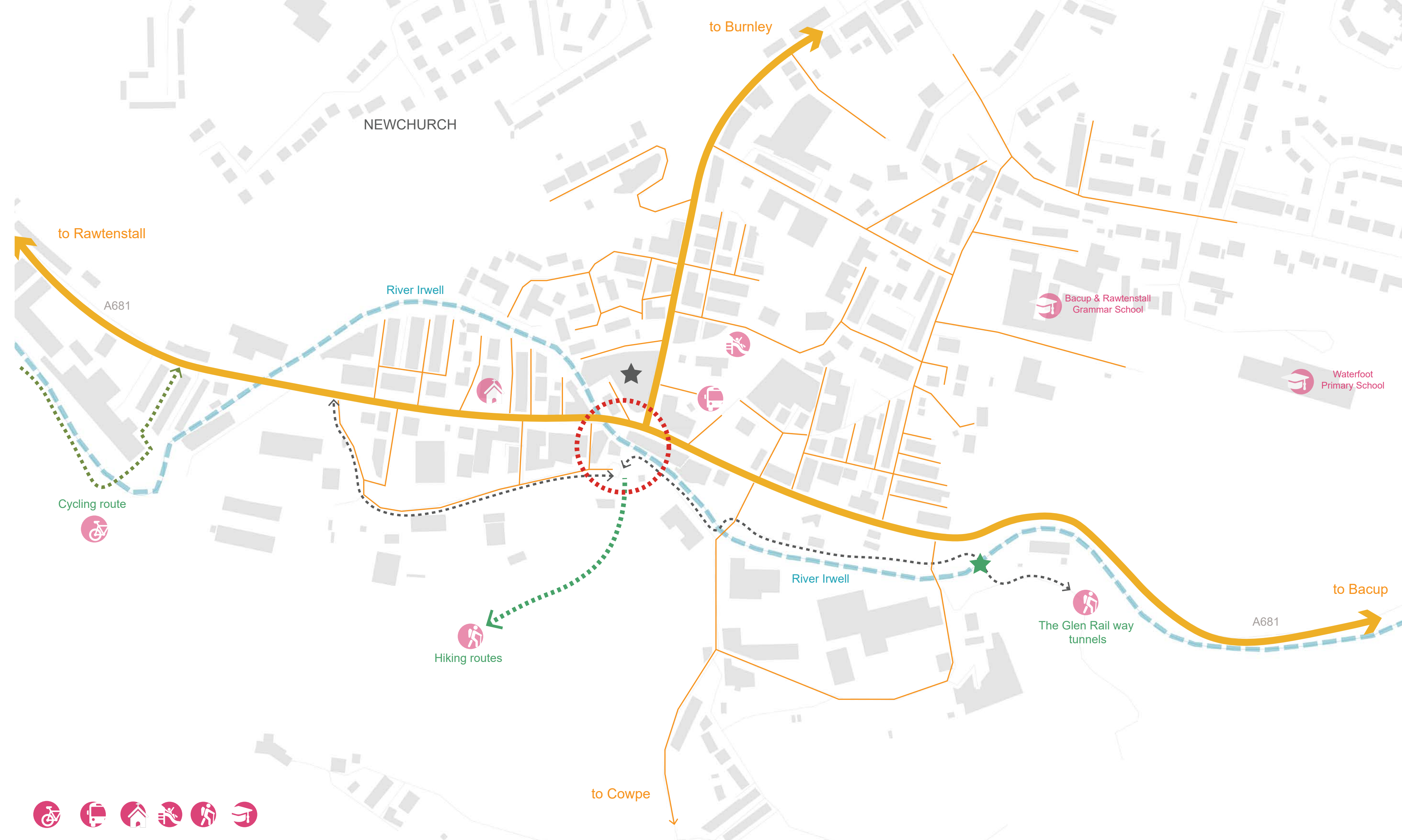
- ▶ STRONG COMMUNITY
- ▶ ATTRACTIVE TOWNSCAPE AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS
- ▶ RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE
- ▶ THRIVING ARTS AND CREATIVE COMMUNITY
- ▶ STRONG HISTORY OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT





# OPPORTUNITIES

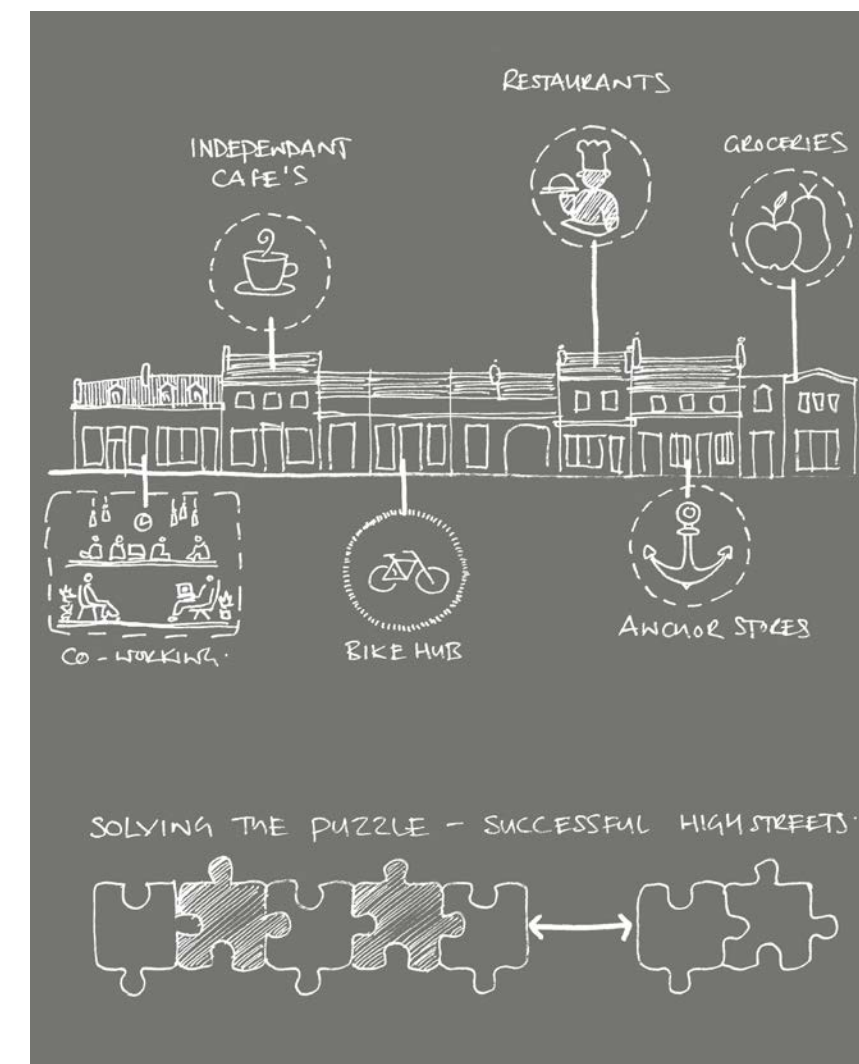
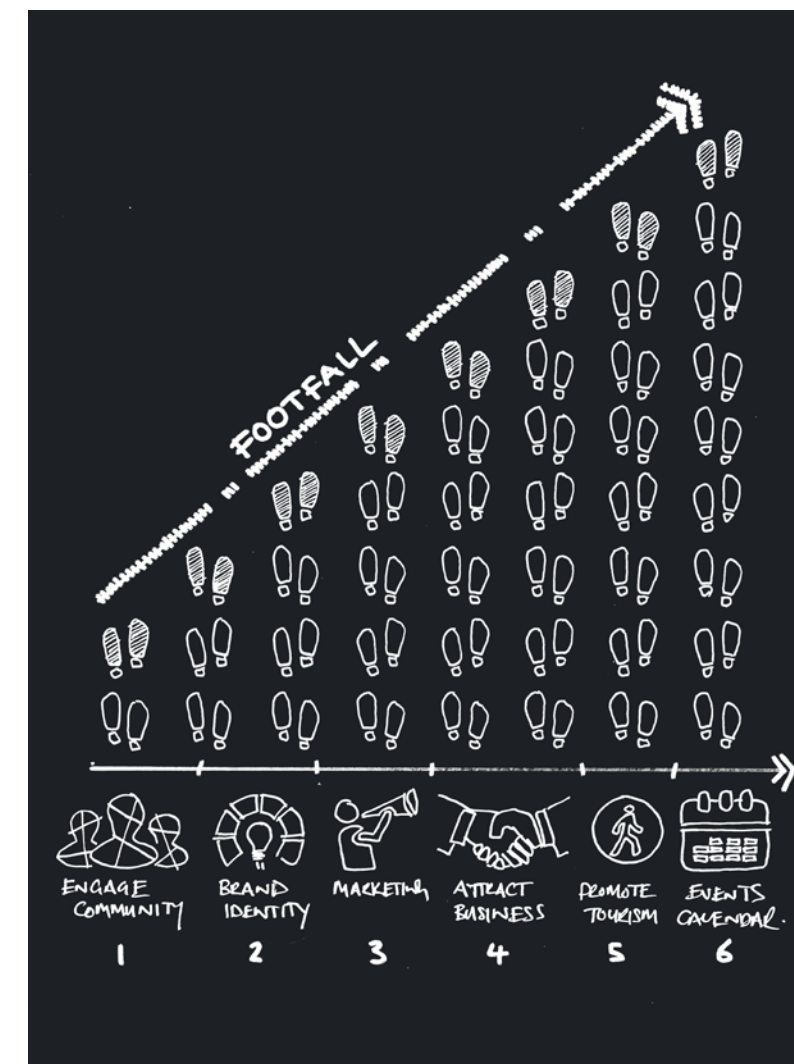
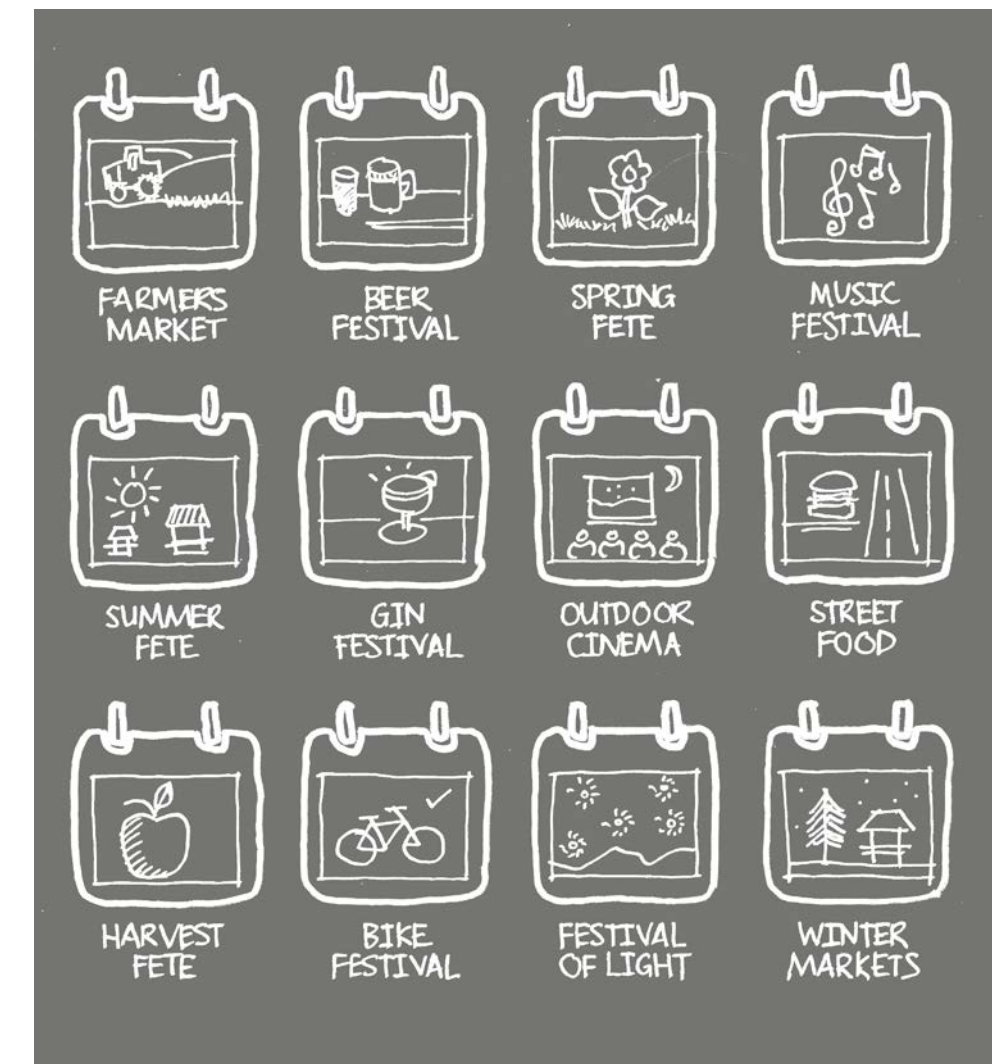
- ▶ HIGH STREET AND VICTORIAN ARCADE
- ▶ ACCESS TO THE RIVERSIDE
- ▶ PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT AND CIVIC SPACE
- ▶ WEALTH OF UNDERUSED BUILDINGS
- ▶ CONNECTIONS TO THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE





## OBJECTIVES

- ▶ INCREASE FOOTFALL
- ▶ CREATE A CIVIC HEART
- ▶ ENHANCE COUNTRYSIDE AND NATURE CONNECTIONS
- ▶ DEVELOP A VISITOR ECONOMY
- ▶ BETTER LINKS FOR PEDESTRIANS
- ▶ ENHANCED HIGH STREET OFFER AND STREET SCENE



## VISION STATEMENT

**“A PLACE TO RELAX AND UNWIND, A PLACE FOR ADVENTURE, A PLACE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE TO THRIVE, A PLACE FOR ALL”**

# POSITIONING IDEAS AND CONCEPTS





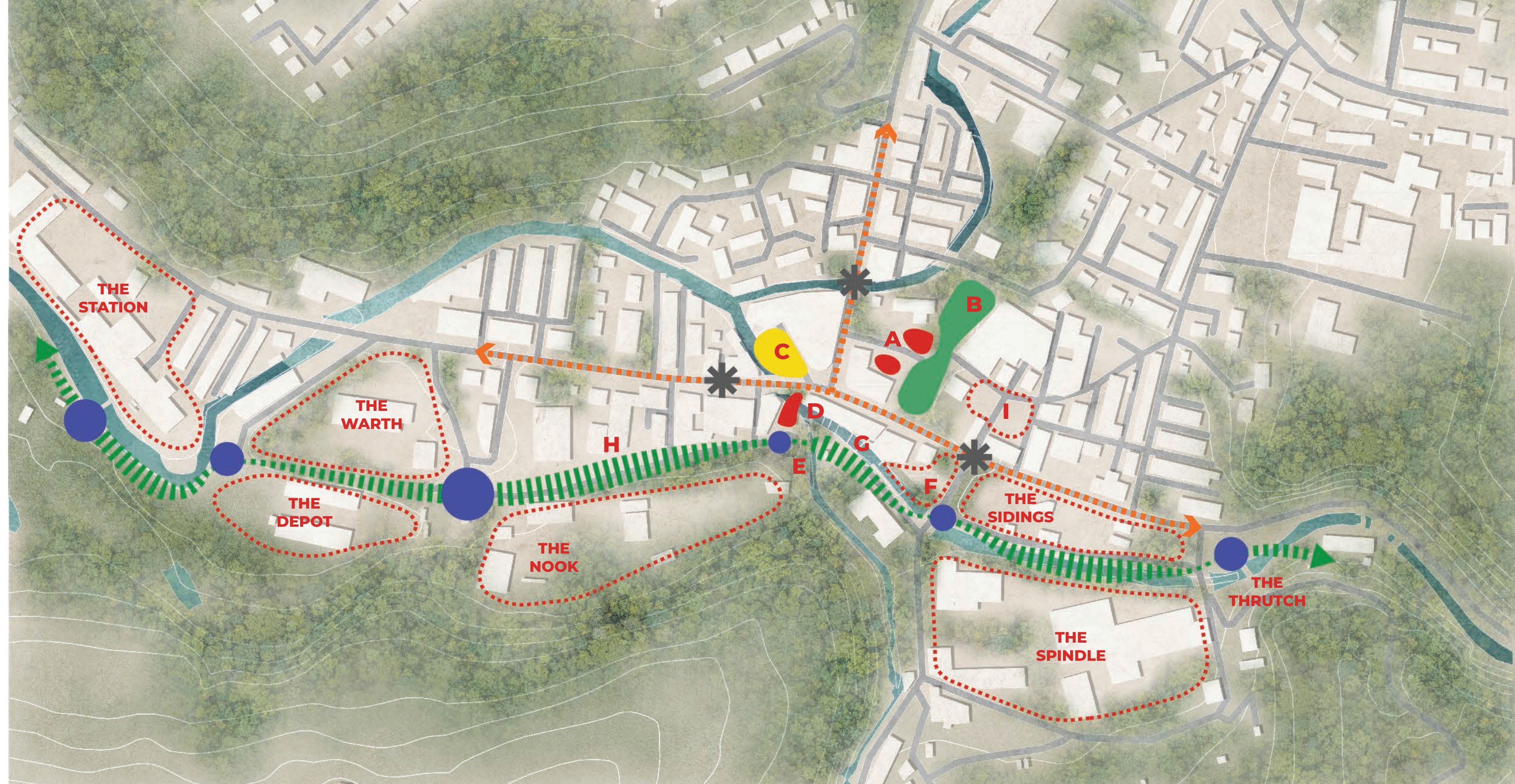
## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

(PLACE NAMES ARE SUGGESTED)

### AIMS:

- INCREASE FOOTFALL
- IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT
- CREATE A NEW CIVIC HEART
- ENHANCE SHOPS AND HIGH STREET
- IMPROVE CONNECTIONS WITH THE RIVER
- ENHANCE CONNECTIONS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE
- DEVELOP A VISITOR ECONOMY

- A. MYTHOLME PLACE
- B. MYTHOLME GARDENS
- C. VICTORIA SQUARE
- D. THE TOLL BRIDGE
- E. TRICKETT'S PLACE
- F. ROYAL GREEN
- G. LITTLE VENICE
- H. THE OLD RAIL LINE
- I. COTTON SQUARE





## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (PLACE NAMES ARE SUGGESTED)

### VICTORIA SQUARE

Victoria Parade forms part of this area. Trickett's arcade which also fronts the square is built in the shape of a 'V' to honour Queen Victoria.



### THE SIDINGS

This area which is close to the now demolished train station was previously railway sidings and coal storage to fuel the steam trains.



### THE OLD RAIL LINE

This area runs parallel to the Rawtenstall to Bacup train line which was opened in the mid 1800's and dismantled in the 1960's.



### THE WARTH

The site of the former Warth railway goods warehouse with associated railway sidings.





## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES (PLACE NAMES ARE SUGGESTED)

### MYTHOLME PLACE/GARDENS

Former site of Mytholme manor house and gardens. It is the present site of Mytholme Play Park.



### THE TOLL BRIDGE

This area is the site of the original toll bridge that serviced the road between Bacup and Rawtenstall.



### LITTLE VENICE

A local nickname for the area of the Irwell in the centre of Waterfoot. The name was given due to the bridges spanning the river to access the rear of the buildings on Bacup Road.



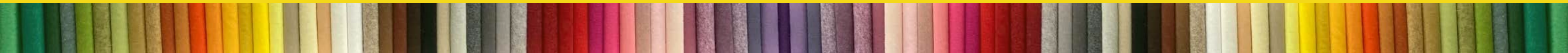
### TRICKETT'S PLACE

Named after the entrepreneur Henry 'The Slipper King' Trickett.





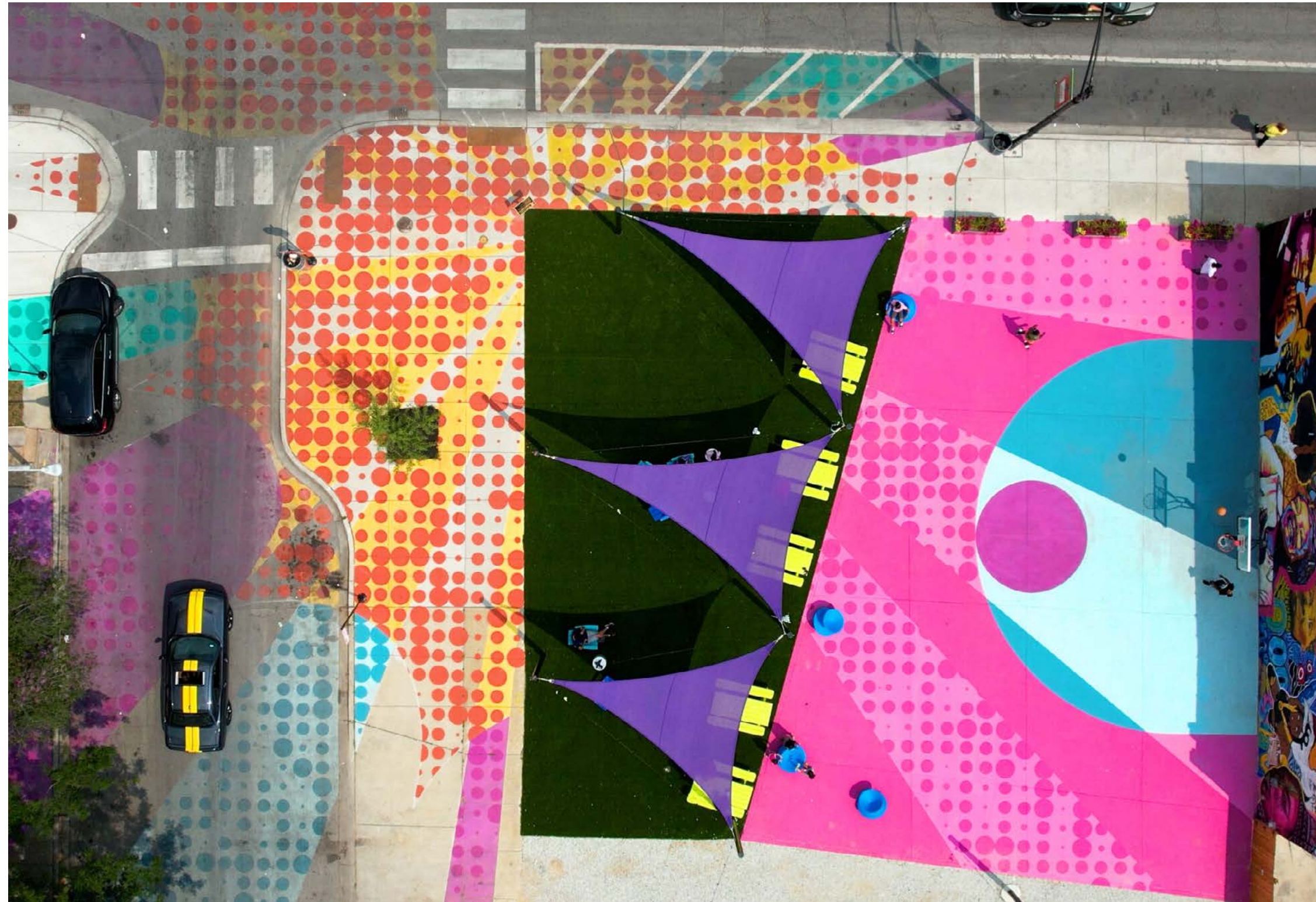
# SHORT TERM/TEMPORARY INTERVENTIONS





# STREET ART

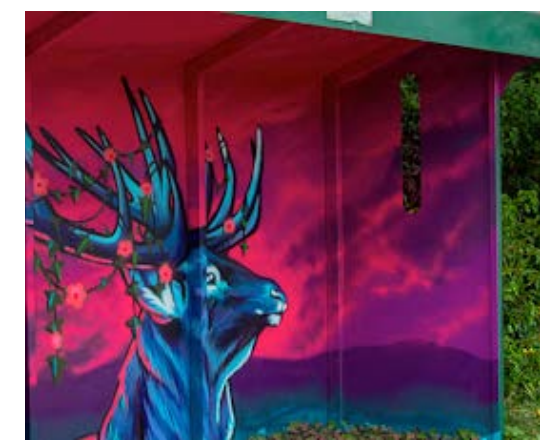
- ▶ TEST INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES
- ▶ HIGHLIGHT CROSSING POINTS
- ▶ SLOW TRAFFIC SPEEDS
- ▶ CREATE TEMPORARY SPACE FOR EVENTS
- ▶ CREATE INTEREST ALONG MAIN ROAD





# STREET FURNITURE ART

- ▶ IMPROVE STREETSCENE
- ▶ CREATE ARTS TRAIL AROUND TOWN
- ▶ LINK TO CREATIVE EVENTS
- ▶ GENERATE FOOTFALL
- ▶ DRAW WIDER INTEREST
- ▶ DEPICT LOCAL HISTORY





# FACADE ART

- ▶ HIGHLIGHT GATEWAYS
- ▶ ENHANCE POOR FAÇADES
- ▶ PROVIDE A REASON TO STOP
- ▶ HIGHLIGHT LOCAL HISTORY





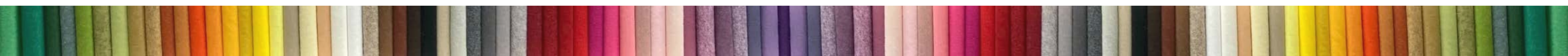
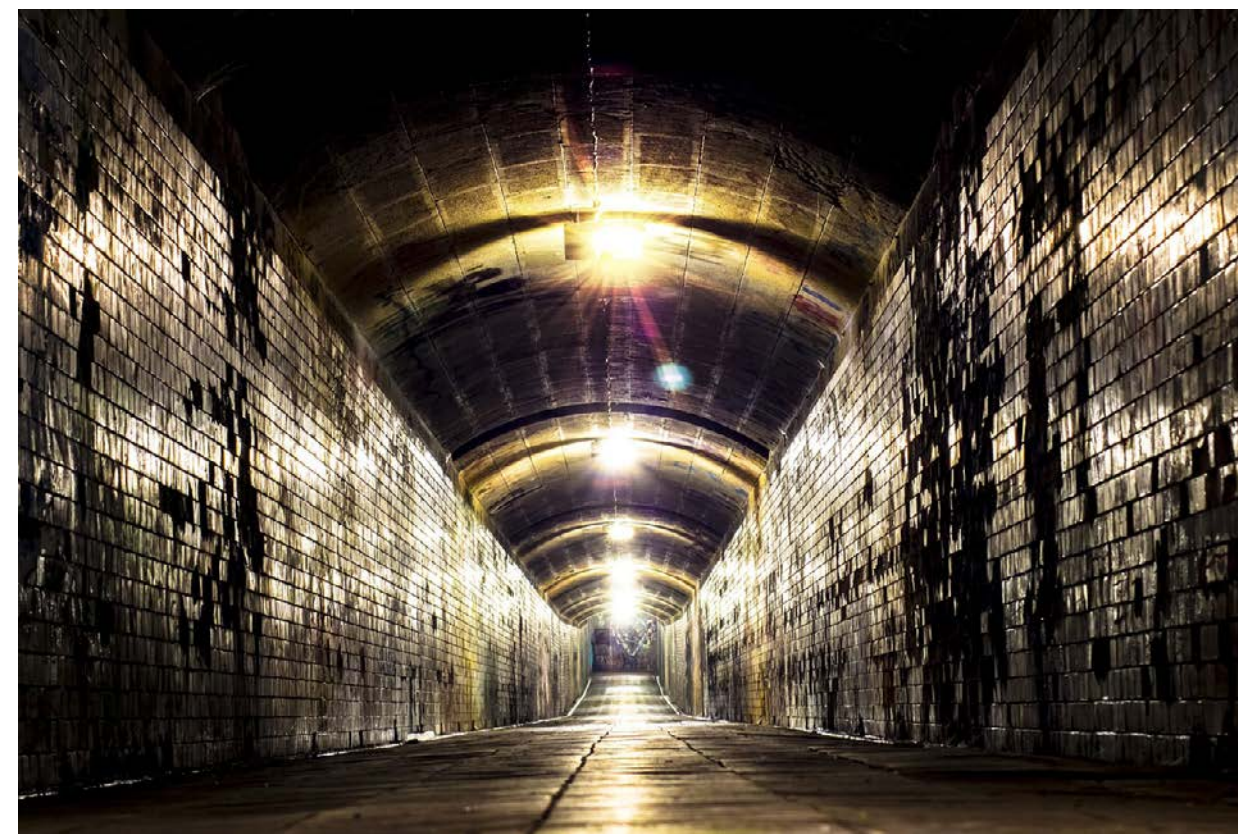
# SEASONAL INTERVENTIONS





# ILLUMINATED ART

- ▶ SEASONAL EVENTS
- ▶ HIGHLIGHT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES
- ▶ ENHANCE TUNNEL ENVIRONMENT
- ▶ GENERATE FOOTFALL
- ▶ CREATE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY





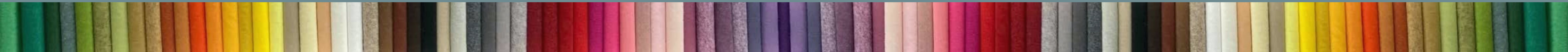
# COMMUNITY EVENTS

- ▶ EXTEND EXISTING CALENDAR
- ▶ EXTEND RANGE OF OFFER
- ▶ GENERATE ANNUAL PROGRAMME
- ▶ DRAW A WIDER AUDIENCE
- ▶ FOOD/MUSIC/ART/CULTURE/MAKERS
- ▶ TEST FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IDEAS





# **MEDIUM TO LONG TERM INTERVENTIONS REQUIRING ADDITIONAL FUNDING**





# 'MYTHOLME PLACE' PLAZA DESIGN PRECEDENTS

- ▶ REWORK THE BUS TURNING CIRCLE
- ▶ CREATE SPACE FOR EVENTS
- ▶ CREATE A NEW CIVIC HEART
- ▶ USE NEW PAVILION AS AN ANCHOR
- ▶ INCLUDE A STATE OF THE ART PLAY AREA
- ▶ CREATE A SAFE PLACE FOR FAMILIES
- ▶ LINK WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT





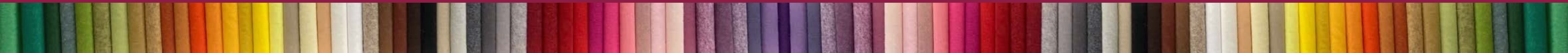
# 'LITTLE VENICE' LINEAR PARK PRECEDENTS

- ▶ INTERVENTIONS WITH THE RIVER
- ▶ NEW ROUTE FOR RECREATION
- ▶ OFFLINE AWAY FROM THE ROAD
- ▶ GREEN SPACE WITH POCKET PARKS
- ▶ ENHANCE BACK OF HOUSE SPACE
- ▶ SAFE PLACE TO RIDE/WALK/RUN
- ▶ PLAY ALONG THE WAY





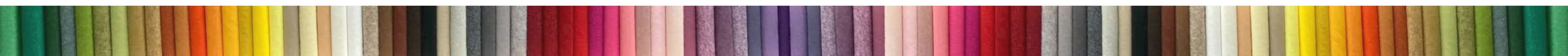
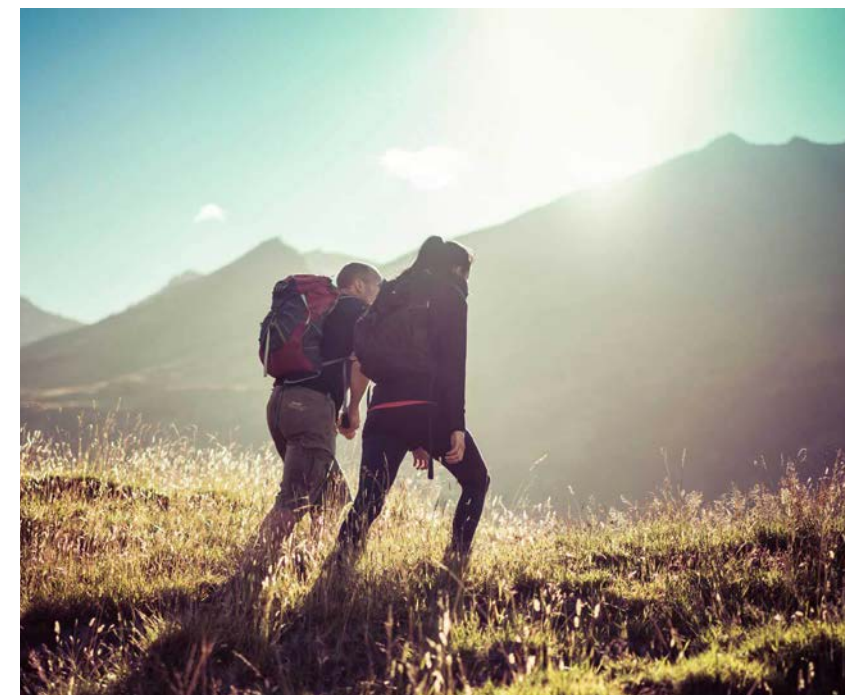
# **MEDIUM TO LONG TERM INTERVENTIONS REQUIRING PRIVATE INVESTMENT**





# 'THE WARTH' RURAL ACTIVITIES HUB AND WELLNESS RETREAT (UTILISING EXISTING HERITAGE BUILDINGS)

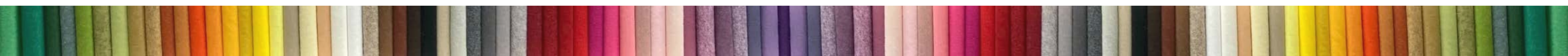
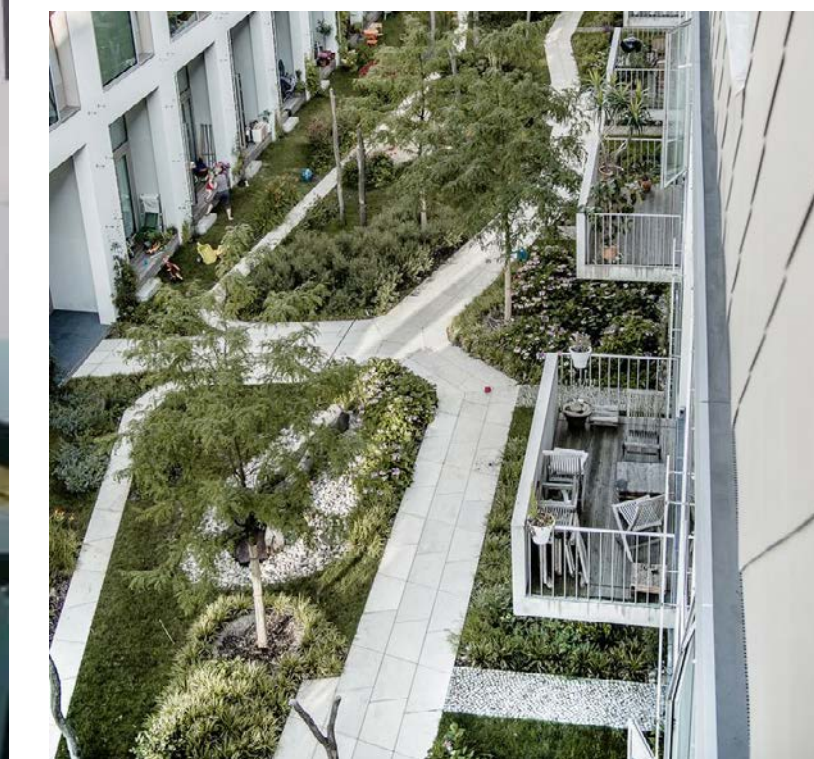
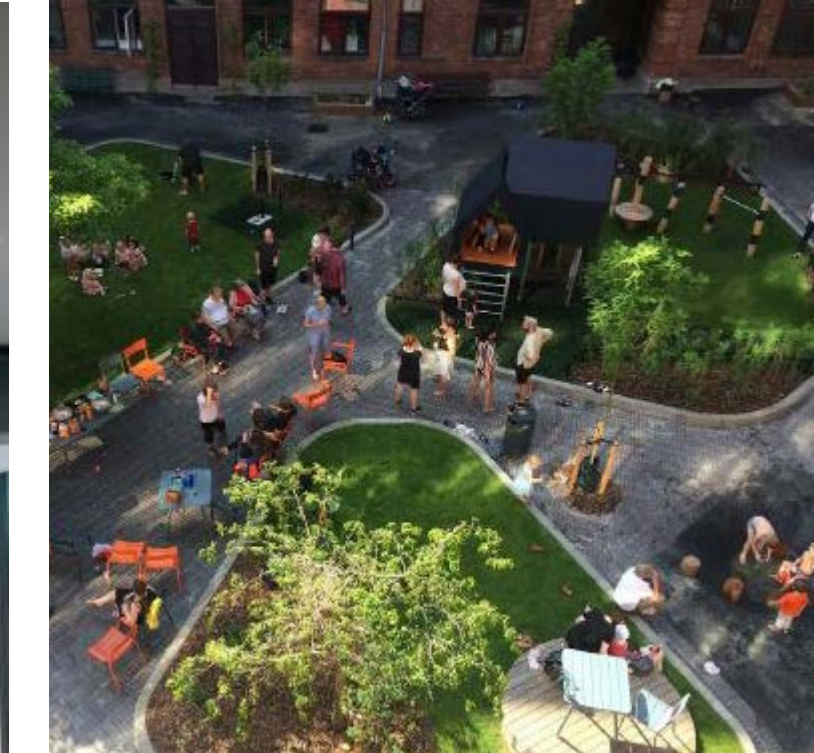
- ▶ CYCLE HUB
- ▶ GYM
- ▶ SPA/WELLNESS
- ▶ POOL/SPLASH
- ▶ CINEMA
- ▶ EATERY
- ▶ HOTEL
- ▶ EVENTS VENUE





# 'THE DEPOT' SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AND VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

- ▶ BRING BUILDINGS BACK INTO USE
- ▶ CREATE VISITOR ACCOMMODATION
- ▶ HOTEL/HOSTEL/BUNKHOUSE/B AND B
- ▶ OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL HOUSING
- ▶ CREATE A NEW RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY
- ▶ TOWN CENTRE LIVING
- ▶ SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



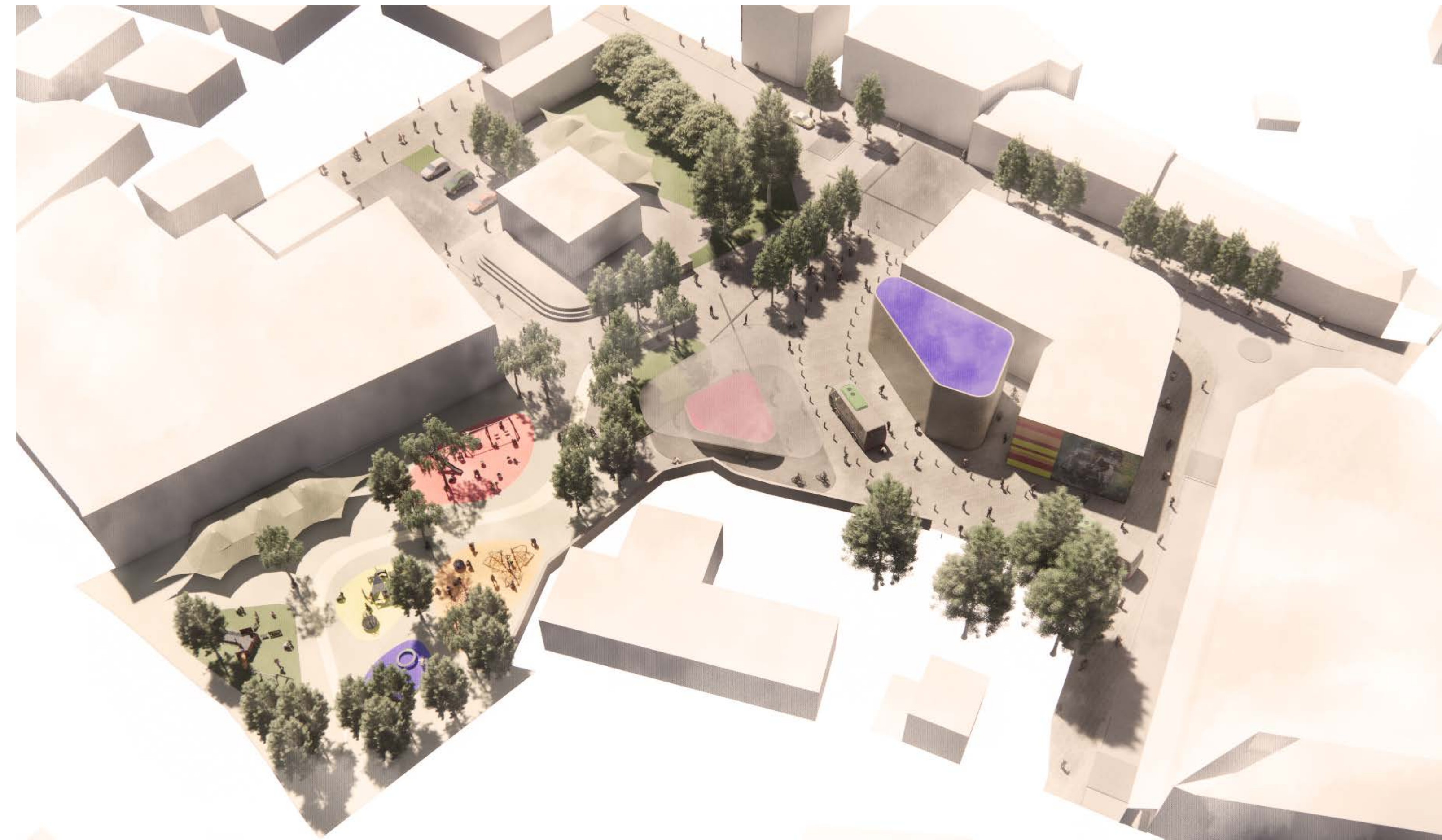


# EARLY DESIGNS FOR DISCUSSION





# DEVELOPMENT SITE 1 - 'MYTHOLME PLACE AND GARDENS'





# DEVELOPMENT SITE 1 - 'MYTHOLME PLACE AND GARDENS'





# 'THE OLD RAIL LINE' - LINEAR PARK CONCEPTS





# 'LITTLE VENICE' - RIVERSIDE PARK CONCEPTS



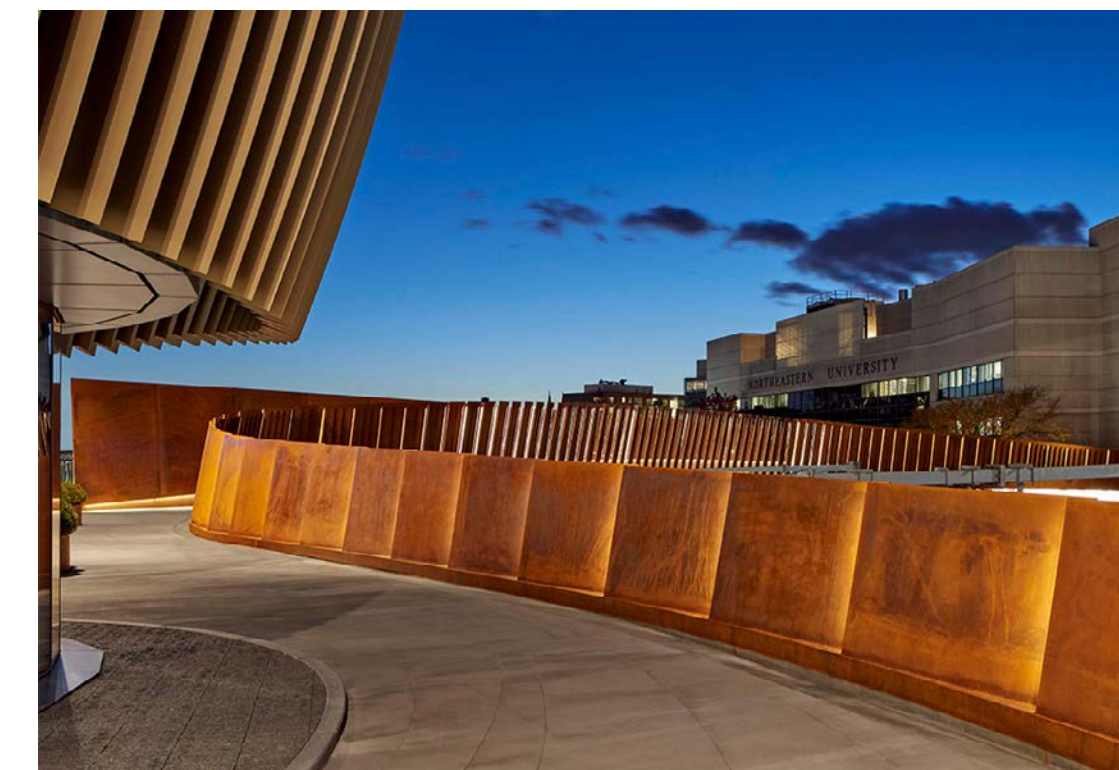


# 'LITTLE VENICE' - RIVERSIDE PARK CONCEPTS





# 'THE TOLL BRIDGE' NEW CONNECTION TO RIVERSIDE PARK

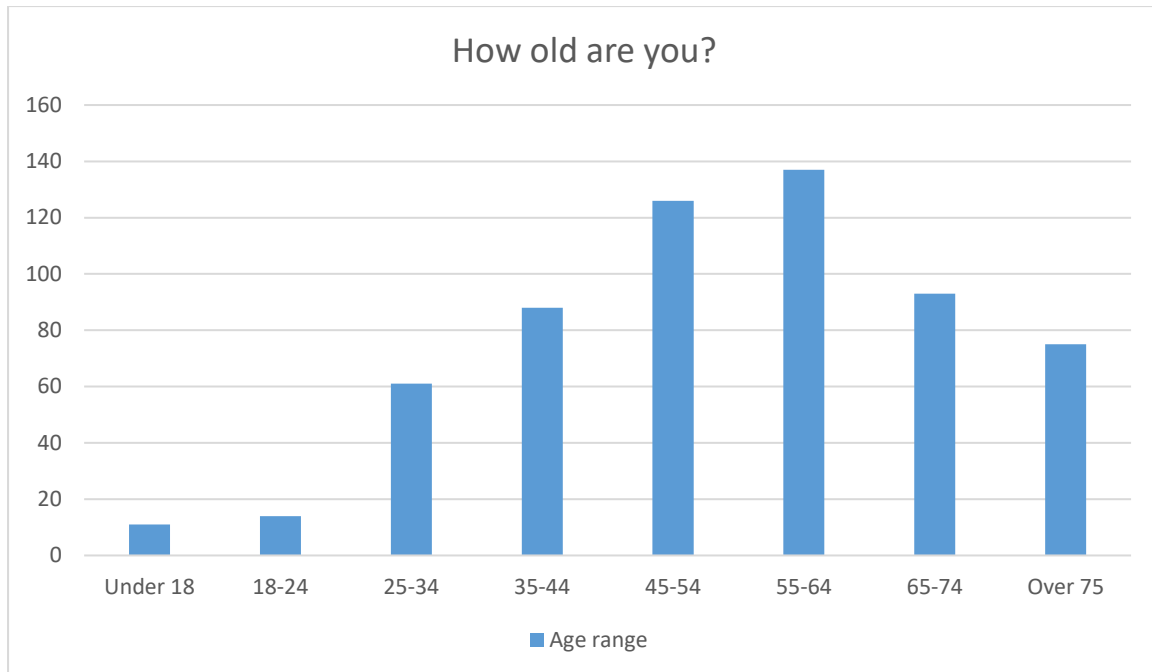




**END OF REPORT**





2024 Waterfoot Draft Masterplan FeedbackOnline survey:**Question 1: How old are you?**

Under 18: 11

18-24: 14

25-34: 61

35-44: 88

45-54: 126

55-64: 137

65-74: 93

Over 75: 17

**Question 2: How often do you visit the centre of Waterfoot?**

Daily: 161 responses (29.43%)

A few times a week: 160 responses (29.25%)

About once a week: 68 responses (12.43%)

Less than once a month: 62 responses (11.33%)

A few times a month: 54 responses (9.87%)

About once a month: 42 responses (7.68%)

The most common responses are "Daily" and "A few times a week," which together account for nearly 59% of all responses.



### **Question 3: What would make you visit Waterfoot more often?**

1. Improved Retail Offerings:
  - More variety of shops, especially independent and local businesses
  - Fewer takeaways and more diverse food options
  - Specific requests for bakeries, greengrocers, post offices, and boutique shops
  - Desire for a broader range of products and services
  
2. Renovation and Aesthetics:
  - Renovate and revitalise the Victorian Arcade (most frequently mentioned specific structure)
  - Improve the overall appearance of buildings and shop fronts
  - Clean up the streets and public spaces
  - Add greenery, flowers, and hanging baskets to enhance visual appeal
  
3. Food and Drink Establishments:
  - More cafes, restaurants, and bars (not just takeaways)
  - Requests for wine bars, bistros, and family-friendly eateries
  - Desire for outdoor seating areas and a "cafe culture"
  
4. Community Spaces and Activities:
  - Create more public spaces for socializing and relaxation
  - Improve existing parks and play areas
  - Organize community events, markets, and entertainment
  - Develop arts and cultural venues (galleries, theatres, etc.)
  
5. Traffic and Transportation:
  - Improve parking facilities
  - Address traffic congestion issues
  - Enhance pedestrian crossings and walkways
  - Some mentions of better public transportation and cycling infrastructure
  
6. Safety and Cleanliness:
  - Address perceived safety issues, especially in the evenings
  - Increase cleanliness of streets and public areas



- Reduce anti-social behaviour

7. Heritage and Character:

- Preserve and highlight the town's historical features
- Develop a unique identity for Waterfoot (comparisons to places like Hebden Bridge)
- Capitalise on local history and cultural assets

8. Economic Revitalisation:

- Support for local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Desire for more job opportunities and economic growth
- Concerns about empty shops and the need for business diversity

9. Nightlife and Entertainment:

- More evening activities and venues
- Family-friendly entertainment options
- Diverse nightlife scene (not just pubs)

10. Environmental Improvements:

- Create more green spaces
- Enhance access to natural features (like the river)
- Some mentions of sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives

The most frequently mentioned issues were:

1. The need to renovate and revitalise the Victorian Arcade
2. Desire for a greater variety of shops, especially independent businesses
3. Reduction in the number of takeaways and increase in diverse food/drink establishments
4. Overall improvement in the appearance and cleanliness of the town centre
5. Creation of more community spaces and activities to draw people to the area

These responses indicate a strong desire for a comprehensive regeneration of Waterfoot, with a focus on creating a vibrant, diverse, and attractive town centre that serves both local residents and visitors.

**Question 4: SHORT TERM AMBITION - We are looking for expand on the already very successful arts scene in Waterfoot by adding more artistic interventions around the**



**town. This could be through street art (murals, sculptures, etc), street furniture (benches, railings, etc) and public realm design.**

## **What ideas do you have to help develop Waterfoot into an Arts Town?**

### Street Art and Murals

- Many respondents expressed interest in street art and murals
- Suggestions for historical murals depicting Waterfoot's past
- Some concerns about potential vandalism

### Sculptures and Installations

- Suggestions for sculpture trails
- Interest in functional art pieces (e.g., artistic benches, bus stops)
- Mentions of a large unique sculpture like the Tilted Vase in Ramsbottom

### Facade Art

- Multiple mentions of improving building facades, especially the arcade
- Suggestions for window art in vacant properties

### Lighting and Illumination

- Strong interest in improved lighting, especially in the tunnels
- Suggestions for light art and installations

## 2. Community Involvement and Local Artists

- Strong emphasis on involving local artists and community members
- Suggestions for art classes, workshops, and exhibitions
- Interest in involving schools and young people in art projects

## 3. Cultural Venues and Events

- Calls for more support and promotion of existing venues like Horse and Bamboo Theatre
- Suggestions for art galleries, craft fairs, and artisan markets
- Interest in music events and festivals

## 4. Historical and Heritage Focus

- Many respondents emphasized the importance of highlighting Waterfoot's history
- Suggestions for art that reflects the town's industrial and railway heritage

## 5. Infrastructure and Town Improvement

- Strong sentiment that basic infrastructure needs addressing before art installations
- Frequent mentions of renovating and improving the arcade
- Calls for general cleaning, maintenance, and beautification of the town

## 6. Nature and Green Spaces



- Suggestions for incorporating more greenery and flowers
- Interest in making the river a more prominent feature
- Ideas for combining art with nature

#### 7. Economic and Practical Concerns

- Some skepticism about the focus on art over practical improvements
- Concerns about potential waste of money
- Suggestions for using art to attract businesses and visitors

#### 8. Safety and Accessibility

- Mentions of improving safety, especially in the tunnels
- Suggestions for making the area more accessible and pedestrian-friendly

#### Most Frequent Suggestions

1. Renovate and improve the arcade
2. Install street art and murals, especially those depicting local history
3. Improve lighting, particularly in the tunnels
4. Involve local artists and community members in art projects
5. Create sculpture trails or unique landmark sculptures
6. Establish more cultural venues and events (galleries, markets, festivals)
7. Incorporate more greenery and floral displays
8. Focus on general town cleaning and maintenance before art installations

#### Key Concerns

1. Potential waste of money on art when basic infrastructure needs attention
2. Risk of vandalism to art installations
3. Ensuring art fits with the character and history of Waterfoot
4. Balancing artistic development with practical town improvements
5. Making sure art initiatives benefit the whole community, not just a select few

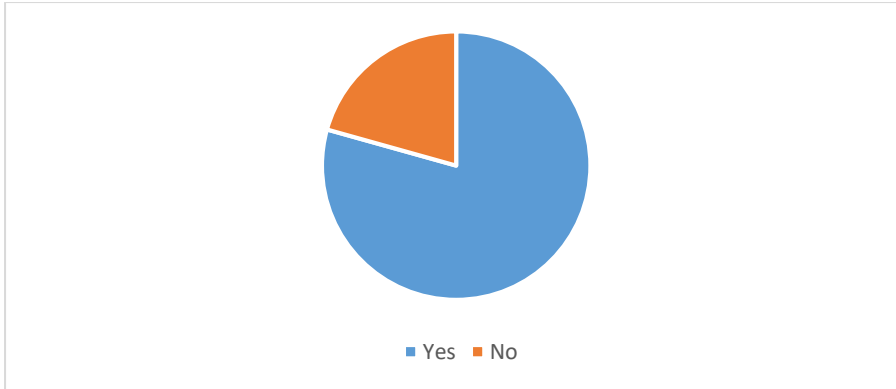
**Question 5: SHORT TERM AMBITION - The railway tunnels were a feat of engineering when they were constructed in the 1850s. It has been identified that the tunnels feel unsafe due to the lack of lighting.**

**If we were to add an artistic intervention that would better illuminate the tunnels, would you be more likely to walk, run and cycle through them?**

Yes – 434

No – 113





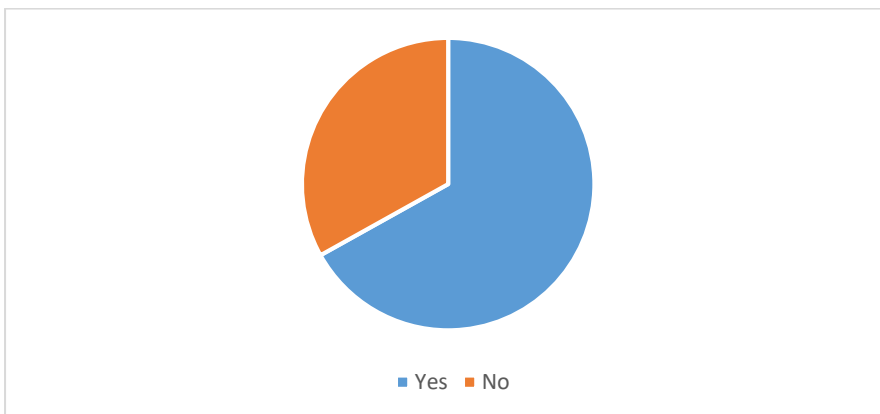
**Question 6:**

**SHORT TERM AMBITION - We are looking to re-configure and re-purpose the bus turning circle next to Rowan's Butchers. The way it will be designed will make the block of buildings (where the Butchers and Headmasters are) the new turning circle. This will free up space create for us to create a community 'heart' to Waterfoot.**

**Do you like this idea?**

Yes – 366

No – 181





## **Question 7: Any comments on the idea above?**

### Parking Concerns

Many respondents expressed worry about the potential loss of parking spaces, which they see as crucial for local businesses and visitors. There's a strong sentiment that reducing parking would negatively impact Waterfoot's economy.

### Impact on Existing Businesses

There's significant concern about the fate of existing businesses, particularly Rowan's Butchers and Headmasters hairdressers. Many respondents value these long-standing local businesses and don't want to see them displaced or negatively impacted.

### Traffic and Transportation

Some respondents raised concerns about how the reconfiguration might affect traffic flow, particularly for buses entering and exiting onto Bacup Road. There were also comments about the need for improved public transportation.

### Community Space and Aesthetics

While many liked the idea of creating a community heart or town square, there were mixed opinions on how this should be implemented. Some supported the idea of more green spaces, seating areas, and places for community events.

### Preservation of Historic Buildings

Several respondents emphasized the importance of preserving the character and historic buildings of Waterfoot, opposing any plans that might involve demolition.

### Focus on Trickett's Arcade

Many suggested that efforts should be focused on renovating and improving Trickett's Arcade, which is seen as a key feature of Waterfoot that needs attention.

### Cost and Necessity Concerns

Some respondents questioned the necessity of the project, viewing it as a potential waste of money that could be better spent elsewhere.

### Safety and Anti-social Behavior

There were concerns about the potential for new public spaces to attract anti-social behavior, with calls for adequate lighting and policing.



### Alternative Suggestions

Some respondents offered alternative ideas, such as developing existing spaces, creating market areas, or focusing on different parts of Waterfoot.

### Clarity of Plans

Many respondents expressed confusion about the exact nature of the plans, indicating a need for clearer communication and more detailed visuals.

### Environmental Considerations

A few comments touched on environmental aspects, such as the need for more green spaces and considerations for local wildlife.

These themes reflect a community that is engaged with its town centre but has diverse and sometimes conflicting views on how it should be developed. There's a clear desire for improvement, but also strong attachments to existing features and businesses, and concerns about practical matters like parking and traffic flow.

**Question 8: MEDIUM TERM AMBITION - To work with the owner of Trickett's Arcade to restore the arcade to its former glory both internally and externally. To reopen the central space of the arcade to the public, and have an array of independent shops.**

**This will also include a public realm space between the Arcade, Victoria Mill and the former Railway Pub.**

**Do you like this idea?**

Yes – 534

No - 13





**Question 9: Any comments on the idea above? What types of business would you like to see in the arcade?**

1. Urgency and Priority Many respondents feel that renovating Trickett's Arcade should be a top priority and done sooner rather than later. They see it as crucial to Waterfoot's revitalization.
2. Current State There's a strong consensus that the arcade is currently an eyesore and in a state of disrepair, negatively impacting Waterfoot's appearance.
3. Desired Businesses Respondents suggested various types of businesses they'd like to see: a) Independent/artisan shops b) Cafes and restaurants c) Bars and micropubs d) Art galleries and craft shops e) Bakeries and delis f) Boutique clothing stores g) Bookshops h) Florists i) Fruit and vegetable shops j) Gift shops
4. Unwanted Businesses Many explicitly stated they don't want more: a) Takeaways b) Charity shops c) Bargain/discount stores d) Hairdressers/barbers e) Nail salons
5. Community Spaces There's interest in creating community spaces for: a) Art exhibitions b) Pop-up markets c) Events and performances d) Youth activities
6. Historical Preservation Many respondents emphasized preserving the arcade's historical character while modernizing its functionality.
7. Economic Concerns Some raised concerns about: a) Affordable rent for businesses b) Sustainability of new businesses c) The need for increased footfall
8. Parking and Access Several responses mentioned concerns about parking and access if the arcade is revitalized.
9. Management and Ownership Some responses touched on issues of current ownership, suggesting compulsory purchase or stricter enforcement of building maintenance.
10. Comparison to Other Areas Respondents often referenced successful models in other towns like Rawtenstall, Ramsbottom, and Hebden Bridge.
11. Broader Impact Many see the arcade's renovation as key to overall improvement of Waterfoot's image and economy.
12. Timeline Concerns Some respondents expressed frustration with how long talk of renovation has been ongoing without action.

These themes reflect a strong desire for change, a mix of nostalgia for the arcade's past and hope for its future, and practical concerns about implementation and sustainability.

**Question 10: MEDIUM TO LONG TERM AMBITION - There are a number of mills in Waterfoot, especially along Burnley Road East. If these mills were to be repurposed and brought back into use, what would you like to see in them?**

1. Housing and Accommodation
  - Affordable housing/apartments
  - High-end apartments
  - Mixed-use developments (residential + commercial)
  - Social housing
  - Accommodation for visitors/tourists
  
2. Business and Employment



- Office spaces/co-working areas
- Small business units
- Light industrial use
- Start-up incubators
- Manufacturing spaces

### 3. Leisure and Entertainment

- Cinema
- Bowling alley
- Indoor play areas for children
- Gyms and fitness centres
- Swimming pools
- Climbing walls
- Trampoline parks
- Skating rinks

### 4. Arts and Culture

- Art galleries
- Museums (local history, textile industry)
- Artist studios
- Performance spaces/theatres
- Craft workshops
- Exhibition spaces

### 5. Retail and Shopping

- Independent shops
- Antique stores
- Markets (food, craft, vintage)
- Outlet shopping centres
- Boutique shops

### 6. Food and Drink

- Restaurants
- Cafes
- Bars and pubs
- Food halls
- Breweries

### 7. Community Spaces

- Youth centres
- Community centres
- Libraries
- Educational facilities
- Spaces for clubs and groups



## 8. Wellness and Health

- Spas
- Yoga studios
- Wellness centres
- Medical facilities

## 9. Sports and Recreation

- Indoor sports facilities
- Dance studios
- Martial arts centres

## 10. Tourism and Heritage

- Heritage trails
- Visitor centres
- Hotels/B&Bs

## 11. Green Spaces

- Gardens
- Parks
- Landscaped areas

## 12. Technology and Innovation

- Tech hubs
- Innovation centres

The most frequently mentioned themes were:

1. Housing and Accommodation
2. Leisure and Entertainment
3. Arts and Culture
4. Retail and Shopping
5. Community Spaces

Many respondents emphasised the importance of mixed-use developments, combining residential spaces with commercial, retail, or community facilities. There was also a strong emphasis on preserving the heritage of the mills while repurposing them for modern use.

**Question 11: LONG TERM AMBITION - Better utilising the space behind the shops on Bacup Road (behind the Horse + Bamboo) to create a riverside walk. This will remove the need for pedestrians to walk along the main road and improve connectivity with existing walking and cycling routes.**

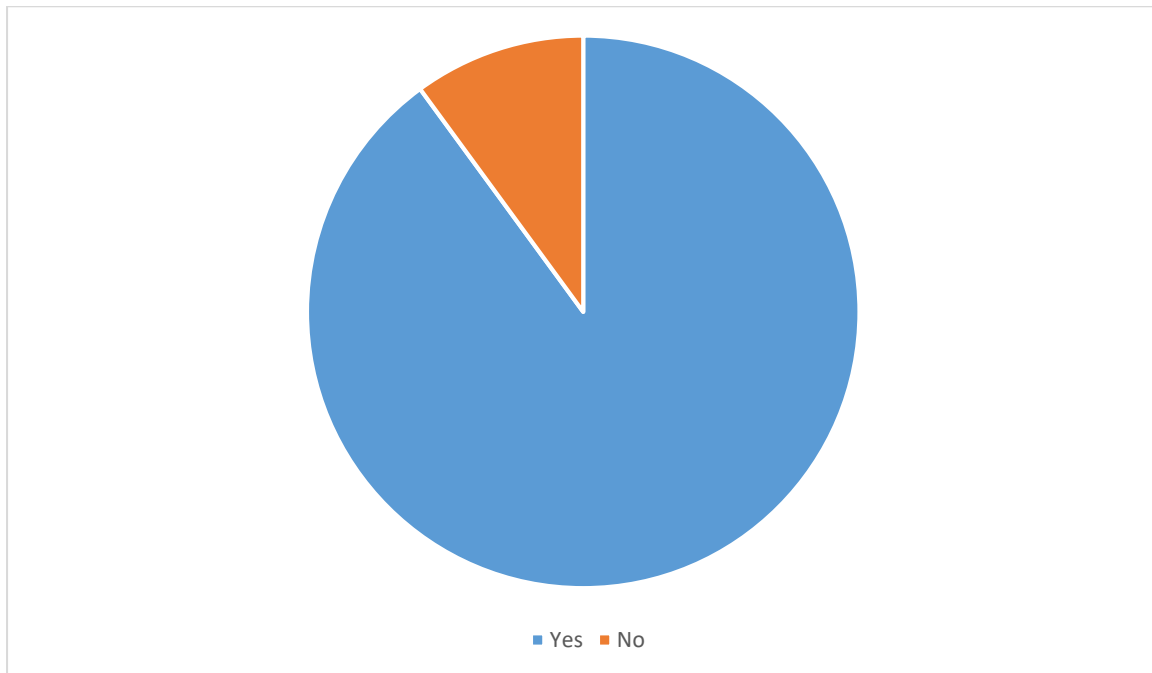


**Although the River Irwell runs throughout Rossendale, there are very few points where it can be interacted with. The introduction of a linear park along the riverside walk will better connect the path with the river.**

**Do you like this idea?**

Yes – 492

No - 55



**Question 12: Any comments on the idea above?**

**1. Safety Concerns**

- Multiple mentions of safety, particularly:
  - Need for proper lighting
  - Requests for CCTV to prevent crime and anti-social behavior
  - Concerns about drug users in the area
  - Specific mentions of safety for women and children

**2. Parking Issues**

- Significant concern about loss of parking spaces
- Many note that the area is currently used for essential parking by:
  - Residents
  - Business customers
  - Staff of local businesses

**3. Traffic and Access**



- The road is currently used as an alternative route when Bacup Road is congested
- Concerns about access for:
  - Emergency services
  - Businesses (especially deliveries)
  - Residents of Irwell House (retirement complex)

#### 4. Maintenance Concerns

- Questions about who will maintain the area
- References to other local paths that aren't well-maintained
- Concerns about litter and need for bins
- Mentions of issues with Himalayan Balsam overgrowth

#### 5. Impact on Local Businesses

- Worries about reducing footfall past shops on main street
- Concerns about impact on industrial businesses in the area
- Some suggest it could benefit businesses by attracting visitors

#### 6. Integration with Existing Infrastructure

- Requests to connect with other paths/routes:
  - Valley of Stone Greenway
  - Existing cycle paths
  - Bridle paths
- Suggestions to extend the walk to connect Rawtenstall and Bacup

#### 7. River-related Issues

- Concerns about flooding
- Comments about river pollution and cleanliness
- Some excitement about making the river more accessible
- Questions about safety regarding water access

#### 8. Design Suggestions

- Requests for benches/seating
- Suggestions for art installations
- Requests for natural elements (trees, flowers)
- Some preference for rustic over modern design

#### 9. Usage Considerations

- Support for:
  - Cyclists
  - Dog walkers
  - Families
  - Horse riders
- Some scepticism about how many people would actually use it

#### 10. Cost and Priority

- Questions about whether this is the best use of funds



- Suggestions that improving the main street should be prioritized
- Some view it as unnecessary or "fantasy"

Overall Sentiment: The responses are mixed, with many people liking the concept but having practical concerns about implementation, maintenance, and impact on current use of the space. There's a clear tension between the desire for improvement and worries about disrupting existing functionality of the area.

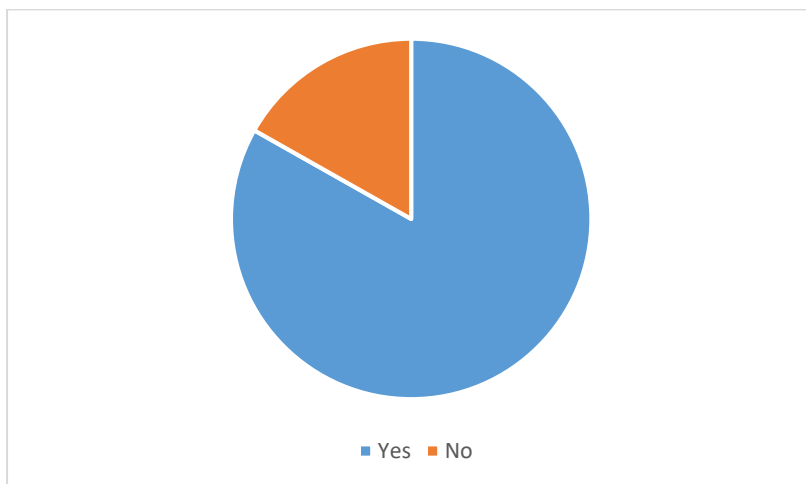
**Question 13: LONG TERM AMBITION - Creating a 'base camp' for those exploring the Pennine Bridleway, Mary Townley Loop and Valley of Stone Greenway. This will create overnight accommodation for those visiting the area, meeting our ambitions to develop Waterfoot's visitor economy and enhancing connections between the town centre and countryside.**

**Examples of overnight accommodation include camp sites, backpacking hostels and hotels.**

**Do you like this idea?**

Yes – 455

No - 92



**Question 14: Any comments on the idea above?**

### 1. Infrastructure Concerns

- **Traffic and Parking:** Many respondents expressed concerns about:
  - Existing traffic issues in Waterfoot
  - Limited parking availability
  - Need for improved road infrastructure to handle increased visitors
- **Basic Amenities:**
  - Need for public toilets



- Better signage for walking routes
- Maintenance of existing paths and trails

## 2. Sequential Development

- Strong emphasis on improving Waterfoot first:
  - Enhancing the town centre
  - Creating attractions and activities for visitors
  - Developing restaurants, cafes, and quality shops
- Many felt accommodation should come after other improvements

## 3. Accommodation Preferences

- **Popular Options:**
  - Small, boutique hotels
  - B&Bs
  - Glamping pods
- **Mixed Opinions:**
  - Hostels (concerns about "wrong clientele")
  - Campsites (worries about management and potential misuse)
- **Suggested Locations:**
  - Repurposing existing buildings (especially mills)
  - The Royal Hotel frequently mentioned as a potential site

## 4. Economic Impact

- Generally positive view of potential benefits:
  - Bringing money into the area
  - Supporting local businesses
  - Creating job opportunities
- Some scepticism about viability and demand

## 5. Local Identity and Character

- Concerns about:
  - Maintaining the village feel
  - Not becoming overdeveloped
  - Balancing tourism with local needs
- References to successful models:
  - Hebden Bridge
  - Ramsbottom

## 6. Outdoor Activities Focus

Frequent mentions of:

- Mary Towneley Loop
- Mountain biking
- Walking trails
- Horse riding
- Need to better promote these existing assets

## 7. Practical Considerations



- Need for:
  - Proper management of facilities
  - Quality standards for accommodation
  - Affordable options
  - Year-round viability (weather concerns)

### **Key Insights**

1. There's a clear "chicken and egg" dilemma: many feel Waterfoot needs to be improved before it can attract visitors, but visitor accommodation might be needed to drive improvements.
2. The community seems to favour gradual, thoughtful development that:
  - Respects local character
  - Builds on existing strengths (outdoor activities)
  - Starts with improving the basics
3. There's a preference for quality over quantity, with concerns about potential negative impacts of certain types of accommodation.

### **Notable Quotes**

- "Waterfoot is right on the Pennine Bridleway and yet there is nowhere for people to stay who are using the route."
- "We need to convince a big wide world out there that Waterfoot and Rossendale are places worth visiting and not a shoddy house developer's playground."
- "You need an extension to the railway for anything here to be sustainable."

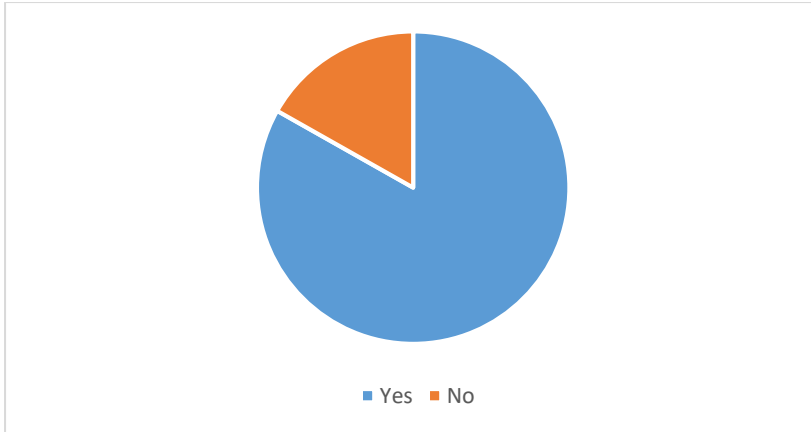
**Question 15: LONG TERM AMBITION - Transform an existing building to create a rural activities hub and wellness retreat. This will provide a myriad of facilities for both residents and visitors to use, including a gym, spa/wellness centre, swimming pool, cinema, restaurant, hotel and events venue - think Holmes Mill in Clitheroe or Crow Wood in Burnley.**

### **Do you like this idea?**

Yes – 455

No – 92





## Question 16: Any comments on the idea above?

### 1. Infrastructure Concerns

- **Traffic Impact:** Many respondents worried about increased traffic on already congested roads
  - Bacup Road and Burnley Road East specifically mentioned as problematic
  - Concerns about parking capacity and impact on residential areas
- **Town Size:** Frequent mentions that Waterfoot is "too small" for such development
  - Comparisons to larger towns like Clitheroe and Burnley
  - Questions about available space in the village

### 2. Economic Viability

- **Affordability**
  - Strong emphasis on keeping facilities affordable for local residents
  - Suggestions for local discounts or "pay what you can" options
  - Concerns about pricing out the local community
- **Sustainability**
  - Questions about long-term viability
  - References to failed similar projects in Rawtenstall
  - Concerns about impact on existing local businesses

### 3. Facility Preferences

- **Swimming Pool**
  - High demand for additional swimming facilities
  - References to closure of existing pools (Whitworth, Haslingden)
  - Mentions of Marl Pits being the only current option
- **Mixed Views on Other Facilities**
  - General support for wellness/spa facilities
  - Some scepticism about cinema viability
  - Interest in gym facilities, but notes about existing competition

### 4. Community Impact

- **Positive Potential**
  - Could "put Waterfoot on the map"



- Potential to attract visitors to the area
- Job creation and local economic benefits
- **Character Preservation**
  - Desire to maintain village feel and character
  - Suggestions to use existing buildings (mills, arcade)
  - Concerns about changing the nature of the town

## 5. Timeframe and Implementation

- **Scepticism**
  - Many view it as unrealistic or "pie in the sky"
  - References to similar failed projects in Rawtenstall
- **Location Alternatives**
  - Suggestions that Rawtenstall might be more suitable
  - Mentions of other potential sites in the valley

## Key Patterns

1. **Cautious Support:** Many responses follow a "good idea, but..." pattern
2. **Local Focus:** Strong emphasis on benefiting local residents, not just visitors
3. **Practical Concerns:** Infrastructure and economic viability dominate negative responses
4. **Scale Sensitivity:** Repeated concerns about project scale relative to town size

## Notable Contrasts

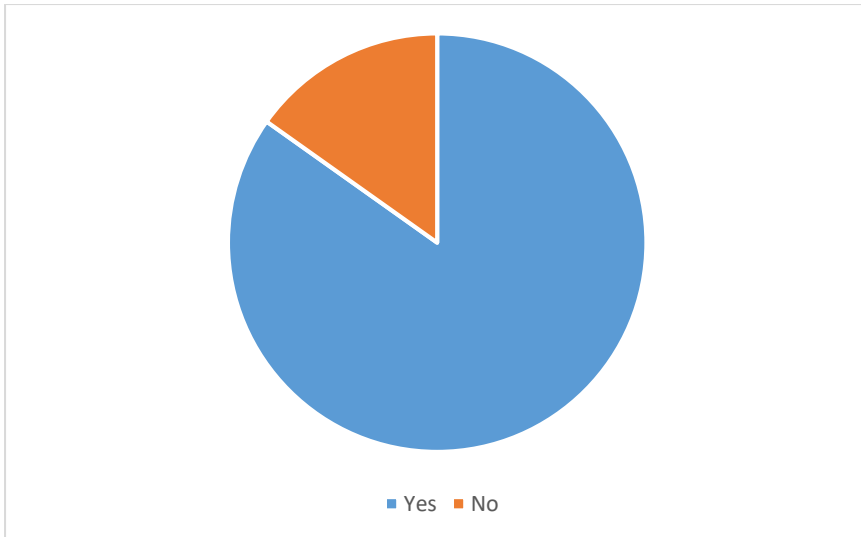
1. Some see it as essential for growth, others as a threat to local character
2. Divide between those wanting to attract visitors and those prioritizing local needs
3. Split between ambitious vision supporters and pragmatic sceptics

## Question 17: Overall, do you like the ideas presented in the draft masterplan?

Yes – 464

No – 83





**Question 18. Which aspect of the draft masterplan is your favourite?**

1. Arcade Renovation: This is by far the most frequently mentioned aspect. Variations include "restoring the arcade", "renovating Trickett's Arcade", "improving the arcade", etc. Frequency: Mentioned approximately 100 times.
2. Riverside/River Walk Development: Many respondents expressed interest in developing a riverside walk or improving access to the river. Frequency: Mentioned about 20 times.
3. Arts and Culture: There's significant interest in developing Waterfoot as an arts hub, including street art, murals, and artistic interventions in public spaces. Frequency: Mentioned roughly 15 times.
4. Wellness Retreat/Rural Activities Hub: The idea of creating a wellness centre, spa, or rural activities hub was popular. Frequency: Mentioned about 25 times.
5. Improving the Town Centre: General comments about revitalizing the town centre, improving its appearance, and making it more attractive to visitors. Frequency: Mentioned approximately 30 times.
6. Tunnel Lighting/Improvements: Several respondents liked the idea of improving the tunnels, particularly with artistic lighting. Frequency: Mentioned about 10 times.
7. Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities: Some respondents expressed interest in having a swimming pool or other leisure facilities. Frequency: Mentioned about 10 times.
8. Repurposing Old Buildings: Interest in repurposing old mills and other historic buildings for new uses. Frequency: Mentioned about 15 times.
9. Green Spaces and Walking Routes: Interest in developing more green spaces, parks, and walking routes. Frequency: Mentioned about 15 times.
10. Scepticism/Criticism: Some respondents expressed scepticism about the plans or criticized them as unrealistic. Frequency: Mentioned about 20 times.

The arcade renovation stands out as the clear priority for most respondents, with many viewing it as crucial to the overall regeneration of Waterfoot. The other themes, while less frequently mentioned, show a desire for a mix of cultural, recreational, and aesthetic improvements to the town.

**Question 19: If you are a local artist who would like to get involved in developing the Arts Town vision for Waterfoot, please leave your email address below**



Email addresses being safely stored on the RBC system and not shared publicly for GDPR purposes.

**Question 20. If there is anything else you'd like to see included in the Waterfoot Masterplan, please add it here.**

- **Traffic and Parking Concerns:** This is one of the most frequently mentioned issues. Many respondents expressed concerns about traffic congestion, the need for better parking facilities, and improvements to road infrastructure. There are also calls for traffic calming measures and better management of roadworks.
- **Cleanliness and Maintenance:** Many comments focus on the need to clean up the town centre, maintain buildings, and improve the overall appearance of Waterfoot. This includes requests for better street cleaning, building maintenance, and general tidying up of the area.
- **Green Spaces and Walking/Cycling Routes:** There's significant interest in developing more green spaces, improving existing parks, creating better walking and cycling routes, and enhancing connections to the surrounding countryside.
- **Community Facilities and Activities:** Respondents frequently mentioned the need for more community spaces and activities, particularly for young people and children. Suggestions include youth centres, improved playgrounds, and facilities for various age groups.
- **Retail and Business Diversity:** Many comments address the desire for a more diverse range of shops and businesses, with particular emphasis on reducing the number of takeaways and attracting more independent, quality retailers and eateries.
- **Arts and Culture:** While there is support for arts and cultural initiatives, some respondents expressed scepticism about the "arts town vision." However, many are in favour of public art, cultural events, and preserving local heritage.
- **The Arcade:** Although not as prominent in this set of responses, there are still several mentions of the need to prioritise the renovation of the Arcade.
- **Public Transport:** Improvements to public transport, including better bus services and even suggestions for reinstating rail connections, were mentioned by several respondents.
- **Safety and Anti-social Behaviour:** Some respondents raised concerns about safety, drug-related issues, and the need for more police presence to address anti-social behaviour.
- **Realistic and Sustainable Development:** Many comments stress the importance of realistic, achievable plans that consider long-term maintenance and sustainability. There's a desire for practical improvements rather than overly ambitious or "far-fetched" ideas.



## Drop In Session Feedback

The key themes and specific points raised are as follows:

1. Infrastructure and Maintenance:
  - Horse muck/cleanliness in the tunnels: 1
  - More town caretakers for litter/park maintenance: 1
  - Repair poor road surfaces/potholes: 5
  - Improve derelict buildings/renovations: 3
  - Restore cobbled streets: 1
  - Repair and maintain community centres: 1
2. Traffic and Parking:
  - Concerns about reduced parking due to bus turning circle changes: 3
  - Need for adequate parking to attract visitors: 3
  - Traffic congestion/new housing adding to traffic: 2
  - Improve roads for better access: 2
  - Provide more parking in Waterfoot: 2
3. Business and Economic Development:
  - Reduce/restrict takeaways: 4
  - Encourage businesses to maintain shop fronts: 2
  - Incentives/grants for businesses to prevent vacancies: 1
  - Promote local businesses and arts community: 3
4. Community Engagement and Safety:
  - Involve local community in projects: 2
  - Address antisocial behaviour and drug issues: 3
  - Improve local policing/neighbourhood watch: 2
5. Arts, Culture, and Heritage:
  - Promote and support the arts community: 3
  - Capitalise on history and architecture: 3
  - Incorporate art installations, sculptures, and lighting: 3
  - Preserve and promote local heritage: 2
6. Specific Areas of Focus:
  - Renovate and repair Trickett's Arcade: 8
  - Improve the bus turning circle area: 2
  - Address issues with the former Kidderminster Shoes building: 1
  - Improve the Burnley Road East area: 1
  - Enhance connectivity between Waterfoot and Rawtenstall: 2
7. Amenities and Services:
  - Provide a post office: 2
  - Retain and maintain public toilets: 2
  - Improve the visual quality of empty/vacant storefronts: 2
8. Miscellaneous:
  - Scepticism about the masterplan and its feasibility: 3
  - Need for more realistic and practical approach: 2
  - Improve signage and wayfinding: 2
  - Establish a Waterfoot board or similar organization: 1

The feedback highlights concerns about maintaining infrastructure, addressing traffic and parking issues, supporting local businesses, enhancing community engagement and safety, preserving arts and heritage, and improving specific areas of focus like the Trickett's Arcade. There is also some scepticism about the feasibility and practicality of the proposed interventions.



### **Full breakdown of responses from feedback sheets**

- Horse muck in the tunnels in an issue – slippery and can't see in the dark – dirty
- Don't understand the issues around the bus turning circle. It looks like there would be less car parking. The car park is well used and needed to attract shoppers
- Make the town centre more attractive – planters, trees etc to get more diverse businesses and shops in Waterfoot
- Fewer takeaways
- Make Old Library Café (Lamppost) frontage more attractive with plants. Could be a lovely focal point
- More town caretakers to clear up rubbish in the park
- Plenty of parking already
- Why are there so many EV charge points?
- Make people aware of creative spaces around Waterfoot i.e. signs, murals in the town centre to direct people to workshops and exhibitions
- Make people aware there is a thriving arts community right on their doorstep
- The arcade
- Further to the arts community, which is a vibrant hub for over 20 years close to Waterfoot town centre on Burnley Road East, there is an annual Arts Trail. This could be a starting point of involving artists within the community
- Empty shops and businesses – use/create attractive photos of the valley/architecture to board empty windows
- Sort the arcade out – renovate and repair, prevent shop keepers from putting goods on the pavements
- Restrict takeaways
- Involve local community in projects e.g. litter picking and supporting Civic Pride
- Make sessions available to times for people who work (4-6pm is difficult). Need all the community to get involved
- Encourage businesses to look after their buildings and premises
- Fund what we already have: buildings/architecture; water courses; wildlife; walks
- What is the 'toll bridge' – not in the history
- Fancy things will not fix or cure basic mess. Look after real things first
- Look what is being approved up the valley – more houses just adds to Waterfoot being an increasingly busy thoroughfare for the commuters
- Additional zebra crossing point near Horse and Bamboo
- Former Kidderminster Shoes building needs sorting
- Run down shops on Burnley Road East
- Arcade
- Turning circle
- Not sensible to lose car parking in the plan for the bus turning circle – seems to work well as it is
- Nothing will improve Waterfoot as long as the arcade remains in such a dangerous state.
- Shop fronts need to be smartened up and shopkeepers encourage to keep the fronts clean and weed free
- Love the idea of capitalizing on the arts / history – putting in sculpture/art displays and lights in the tunnels
- Promote Horse + Bamboo more
- Lots of young families moving to the area – build on the park/ play area
- Have a public space for events etc is a great idea
- This is an invention – not Waterfoot. Get real



- Great that it's being looked at. But need to plan for every day and not once a year
- Interim measures such as painting and litter picking, planters, etc, would help lift the look of Waterfoot
- Where is the water?
- Why is there no mention of using/improving Trickett's Arcade? It has history, great architecture and would provide a better hub for the centre of Waterfoot
- Please don't take the car park – this will affect all of the businesses in the centre
- Love the aspiration!
- Cleaning/sweeping the tunnels
- Better tunnel lighting
- Arcade renovations
- Arcade
- Better signs for the Valley of Stone Greenway for cyclists and pedestrians
- Renovations and repairs to the derelict building beside the Irwell / back of Kenroys
- Promotion of the Mary Townley Loop and cafes etc
- Divert Valley of Stone Greenway to go behind the concrete works / Fielden Factors to avoid the main road
- Provide enough parking close to the shops
- Provide funds for the upkeep and repair of local community centres e.g. Cowpe Community Hall
- Repair poor road surfaces
- More parking in Waterfoot
- Improve roads full of potholes so people can drive to see the improvements
- Potholes
- Renovation of the arcade
- The tunnels don't need money
- People must be made to take their rubbish home
- Tunnel already has lights so you can see the rubbish
- The roads are in poor condition
- There's drug dealing in the area (cocaine capital)
- Lack of amenities e.g. a post office
- Too many takeaways selling the same and not enough cafes / restaurants
- Money laundering establishments bringing down the reputation of the area
- Provide suitable activities for teens / local support
- Take more frequent local feedback
- Integrated and strategic planning
- Local policing / neighbourhood watch
- Not sure what can be done about drug problem
- Fix roads
- Fix arcade so more inviting
- Retain history – including cobbled streets, which have more longevity than tarmac
- Monitor shop frontage changes
- Ensure local services are provided
- This can't be fixed with a bit of paving and paint
- Anti social behaviour problem
- Rubbish in the river and pathways
- Open drug dealing
- Chemical works under arches – river throwing rubbish in river
- No more takeaways
- Cycle lane - clean and do up



- Need a post office
- Bollards by arcade canopy – so car cannot damage it
- Picnic benches restored on Lench Cycleway
- Keep public toilets
- Sculptures along trail
- Remove charity bins from carpark
- Grants made available for local businesses to prevent shops being left empty
- Bacup Road – average speed enforcement
- Call Bridge End House ‘Bridge End House’ again – tell its history properly
- Turning circle – entrance needs to be off Bacup Road
- Where will car parks be?
- Signposted and functional
- Gulley and drain repairs
- More pedestrian crossing points
- Connect the walkway from Rawtenstall to Waterfoot better between the Warth and the Depot – to help connectivity of physical activity
- Access and places to connect the water
- Improve visual quality of shop fronts even if empty
- Upsell the area even if long term goal of improvement for use
- Parking accessible / safe to accommodate capacity of pop up events - even if temporary
- Some capacity plan to accommodate hosting pop up events
- Need good and practical road crossings in the area – so cars stop to enable crossing road more effectively if increasing footfall
- Train station into Rawtenstall area that connects to Manchester directly – in this decade
- Improve derelict buildings on route on back path or knock down and do something with them e.g. environmental ed. Building
- Improve quality walk route from Waterfoot to Rawtenstall
- Sensor activated lighting in the tunnels
- Could there be lighting projections in the tunnels?
- Historical context of masterplan document needs altering
- Street cabinet (e.g. BT / Virgin) painting – have similar themes or colour schemes to make them cohesive across the town
- Conservation area comes first before masterplan
- Don't do anything with the trees next to the bus turning circle. They're historical evidence of the old driveway to the former Myholme House
- Walking – Rooley Moor Road (The Cotton Famine Road) – Black history connection
- Car parking provision needs to be considered to attract visitors
- A dream by people who don't have any idea what the people of Waterfoot want
- This is rubbish
- Bring back the post office
- Slow through traffic down
- Irwell Sculpture Trail
- Needs to be more realistic
- Better signage
- Need a tourist information point
- These are labelled as ‘interventions’. YES that's exactly what they are
- White Horse Project
- Quality art – ensure



- Market takeaways as street food from around the world
- A Waterfoot board
- More parking
- Public toilets
- Support for the artists' studios on Burnley Road East (Prospect and Valley Artists)
- Toilets that are open and clean
- Shop fronts need improving
- Involve A Level and GCSE art students from BRGS so it feels like a community project
- Newground's Hut on the walking route
- Civic Pride for Waterfoot
- We moved here 34 years ago attracted by rivers, play areas and the close walks, which I think is the main attraction of Waterfoot



### INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>Name of Policy, Decision, Strategy, Service or Function, Other: (please indicate)</b>	Waterfoot Masterplan	
<b>Lead Officer Name(s) &amp; Job Title(s) :</b>	Leah Armitage – Economic Development Officer Megan Eastwood – Head of Housing and Regeneration	
<b>Department/Service Area:</b>	Economic Development	
<b>Telephone &amp; E-mail Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:leaharmitage@rossendalebc.gov.uk">leaharmitage@rossendalebc.gov.uk</a> 01706 252483	
<b>Date Assessment:</b>	<b>Commenced:</b>	<b>Completed:</b>

**We carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to analyse the effects of our decisions, policies or practices. The EIA should be undertaken/started at the beginning of the policy development process – before any decisions are made.**

#### 1. Overview

<b>The main aims/objectives of this policy<sup>1</sup> are:</b>
A strategic document outlining the regeneration vision for Waterfoot over the next 20 years.

(Refer to **EIA Guidance** for details)

Is the policy or decision under review (please tick)

New/proposed

Modified/adapted

Existing

#### INTERNAL ONLY

#### MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED (to be completed by the relevant Head of Service following review by Management Team / Programme Board)

- Outcome of EIA agreed/approved by Management Team / Programme Board:  
Yes  No
- Is a full EIA required Yes  No
- Referred back to Assessor for amendment : (date)
- Published/made publicly available on: (date)

Signed:..... (Head of Service / Director) Date:

Date of Review<sup>2</sup>:

**[To be completed by Lead Officer]**

<sup>1</sup> Policy refers to any policy, strategy, project, procedure, function, decision or delivery of service.

<sup>2</sup> This date will be set on an annual basis as default for review unless otherwise specified by you.



## 2. Equality Impact

Using the table below please indicate whether the policy/strategy/decision has a positive, negative or no impact **from an equalities perspective** on any of the protected equality groups listed below. **Please also give consideration to wider equality of opportunity and community cohesion impacts within and between the groups identified. If you have identified any negative impact and mitigating actions are not sufficient, you will need to complete a Full Equality Impact Assessment.**

Equality		Positive Impact (It could benefit)	Negative Impact (It could disadvantage)	Reason and any mitigating actions already in place (to reduce any adverse /negative impacts <u>or</u> reasons why it will be of positive benefit or contribution)	No Impact
Age	Older people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Younger people and children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	Physical/learning/mental health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender Reassignment	Transsexual people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and Maternity		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race (Ethnicity or Nationality)	Asian or Asian British people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Black or black British people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Irish people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	White British	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Chinese people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gypsies & Travellers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Other minority communities not listed above (please state)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Belief or Religion		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex	Women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	Gay men, gay women / lesbians and bisexual people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and Civil Partnership (employment only)		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribution to equality of opportunity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribution to fostering good relations between different groups (people getting on well together – valuing one another, respect and understanding)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights <a href="http://intranet/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=86&amp;documentID=251">http://intranet/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=86&amp;documentID=251</a>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Responsible Section/Team		Version	
Responsible Author		Due for review	
Date last amended		Page 2 of 2	