

Town Centre Investment Plan Consultation Findings



Summary

The purpose of the Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan (**TCIP**) consultation was to engage with local residents and visitors to explore what was important to them regarding the future of Accrington Town Centre. The TCIP document was made available for consultation for six weeks between January and February 2022 and primarily took the form of an online questionnaire. In order to further strengthen participation numbers, paper copies were made available and a number of drop-in sessions and events were held at the Market Hall and Haworth. These multiple avenues of participation were promoted and broadcasted through a variety of social media channels.

Preceding this resident consultation, the project had carried out a consultation with local business owners, volunteers, stakeholders and residents. Following the results of this survey, the direction and content of the Town Centre Investment Plan was developed. Thereafter, the purpose of the latest round of consultation was to engage with residents and visitors on their thoughts regarding the latest proposals and, importantly, their priorities for the future of Accrington Town Centre. This pair of complementary consultations highlights the legitimacy of their results, as does the data.

In total, the survey received a healthy 1,127 completed responses, providing a high confidence level with the data findings. Over 87% of all responses **ranked shopping, a variety of food/drink and leisure and entertainment outlets** as the most important themes when looking at Accrington Town Centre. *This complements 5% to 13% of responses rating these services as 'Good' within Accrington Town Centre last summer (2021).* Six out of ten respondents ranked **Shopping and Retail Outlets** as the most important consideration, a figure proportionality higher amongst older respondents.

Respondents were asked to score out of 100 (0 being Not Important) how they would rate the **importance of environmental impacts** on the future of Accrington Town Centre. The average figure was 72.

Respondents were also asked how high they would score **Heritage and History** in being integral to the future plan. This theme scored a higher rate of 74 with residents from Hyndburn; the 35+ age band scored Heritage and History slightly higher than the environmental impacts.

When residents were asked to prioritise projects located within the 'Accrington Acre', over nine out of ten respondents felt **'Victorian Arcade renovated and transformed'** should be priority for investment and development, followed by over three quarters of respondents stating **'Accrington Market Hall investment and development.'** This compared to just over a third stating Warner Street to become a footway and 22% prioritising Accrington Town Hall front improvement and restoration.

Residents were also asked to prioritise projects in locations leading to and outside the proposed 'Accrington Acre' and over eight out of ten respondents prioritised **'Improve shop fronts on selected streets leading to Town Square'** and **'Repurposing of Accrington Arndale Centre (not for residential use)'** for investment and development. The projects of improving signage and Park & Ride scheme achieved just 26% and 15% respectively.

All further comments (496 individual comments) have been categorised into themes within this report and they range from Accrington being accessible, additional parking, more choice, greener, safer, better quality, focus more on youth, nightlife and Accrington's heritage.

Background:

The purpose of the Accrington Town Centre Investment Plan (**TCIP**) consultation was to engage with local residents and visitors to explore what was important to them regarding the future of Accrington Town Centre. The consultation asked residents on their views on future projects ideas, potential investment, and interventions with the goal aiming to help transform Accrington over the next 10-15 years.



The TCIP document was made available for consultation for a six week period between January and February 2022 and primarily took the form of an online questionnaire. In order to further strengthen participation numbers, paper copies were made available and a number of drop-in sessions and events were held at the Market Hall and Haworth. These multiple avenues of participation were promoted and broadcasted through a variety of social media channels.

The TCIP looks at a variety of initiatives that will help improve environmental quality in the town and encourage sustainable growth for the local economy. The results and findings from this survey will help the Council understand what residents and visitors want from Accrington and assist the Council in applying for future funding and investment.

The TCIP provides a vision with project ideas and supporting evidence. Alongside plethora of rich data, analysis and knowledge on Accrington, the document details a vision for 'The Accrington Acre' and lists 18 projects for the town centre, explaining why they meet the criteria set out. The plan centres heritage and environment as key themes, building on Hyndburn's history for a prosperous future - with Accrington at the heart.

Previous consultation and stakeholder events with local business owners, volunteers, stakeholders and residents had already taken place. The consultation was carried out by the British Polling Council Member Survation who were commissioned to undertake representative polling of the residents of Hyndburn. A representative poll (i.e. a sample which mirrors the demographics of the local area) of 15 questions was conducted by telephone between the 10th and 23rd of August 2021 of residents aged 18+ with a sample size of 505 people.

To summarise the previous survey findings, 90% of people stated the town centre is in need of regeneration and investment. A sizeable number of local residents rarely visit the Accrington Town Centre, indicating that the Arndale choice of shops, cafes and restaurants are poor. These residents choose instead to visit Blackburn or Manchester. On the occasions they do visit Accrington Town Centre, they appreciate the historic buildings, architecture and heritage of the place- with particular emphasis on the Market Hall and Town Hall. Residents would like to see investments that improve the shopping, eating and drinking experience and a shift from 'too many' betting, charity and discount shops. There was particular fondness for small independent traders and those selling local produce and goods.

Following the results of this survey, the direction and content of the Town Centre Investment Plan was developed. The purpose of the recent round of consultation was to engage with residents and visitors on their thoughts regarding the latest proposals and, importantly, their priorities for the future of Accrington Town Centre.

Methodology:

The survey was carried out on an online platform (Survey Monkey) and designed by Council employees. In order to further strengthen participation numbers, paper copies were made available and a number of drop-in sessions and events were held at the Market Hall and Haworth between the dates of 14th January to the 11th February 2022.

The survey was promoted on various social media channels, drop in sessions and public engagements. As a result, the survey received a significant and healthy response size of 1,127 with 628 residents from Accrington, 448 from the rest of Hyndburn and 51 responses from outside the borough. The majority of responses were completed within the first week of the consultation opening, with a typical average time of survey completion being approximately 4 minutes and 30 seconds.

The large survey response provided a strong confidence level with the data findings. However, careful consideration and evaluation of the findings will need to be considered when analysing and interpreting data by smaller socio demographics samples sizes (not weighted) and can lead a higher variance with the findings and data.



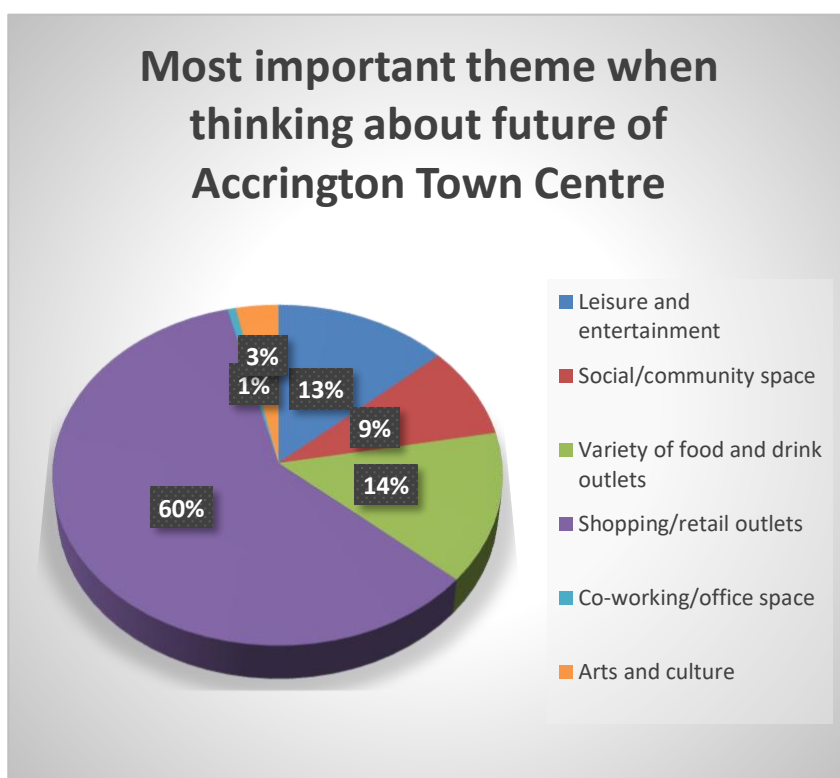
TOWN CENTRE INVESTMENT PLAN CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Q1. From the list choose the facility / theme that is the most important to you when thinking about the future of Accrington Town Centre.

87% of all responses *ranked shopping, variety of food / drink and leisure and entertainment outlets* as the most important themes when looking at Accrington Town Centre. *This compares to just 5% to 13% of responses within last summers (2021) residents poll rating these services as ‘Good’ within Accrington Town Centre.*

Six out of ten respondents ranked Shopping and retail outlets as the most important consideration and this proportion is higher amongst older respondents with just 5% rating these service as ‘Good’ within the residents poll.

- **Shopping / retail outlets (60%)** – more important to older and people with a disability
- **Variety of food and drink outlets (14%)** – more important to younger people and BAME respondents
- **Leisure and entertainment (13%)** – more important to younger, BAME and respondents from outside borough
- **Social / community space (9%)** – more important to people outside the borough, younger, BAME and people with a disability
- **Arts and culture (3%)** – more important to people outside the borough
- **Co-working / office space (1%)** – across all respondents this theme was not classed as the most important



Responses by location:

Responses from Accrington residents and those from the rest of Hyndburn are very similar to overall responses ranking shopping, food and drink and leisure/entertainment outlets as the most important factors.

Respondents from outside Hyndburn scored Leisure and entertainment and Social / community space more important than those residents from Hyndburn (20% compared to 13% for leisure and 12% compared 9% for community space). This was also the case for Arts and culture where 5.9% of respondents from outside Hyndburn ranked this theme as most important compared to 2.5% of Accrington residents.

Co-working office space and Arts and culture themed responses were not considered the most important themes when thinking about the future of Accrington Town Centre.

Table 1. Cross Tabulation Responses - Most important themes by Area of Response

	Accrington		Rest of Hyndburn		Outside Hyndburn		Total	Total
Leisure and entertainment	84	13.4%	57	12.7%	10	19.6%	152	13.4%
Social/community space	55	8.8%	36	8.0%	6	11.8%	98	8.7%
Variety of food and drink outlets	91	14.5%	64	14.3%	5	9.8%	161	14.2%
Shopping/retail outlets	379	60.4%	269	60.0%	27	52.9%	676	59.8%
Co-working/office space	3	0.5%	4	0.9%	0	0.0%	7	0.6%
Arts and culture	16	2.5%	18	4.0%	3	5.9%	37	3.3%
Total	628		448		51		1131	

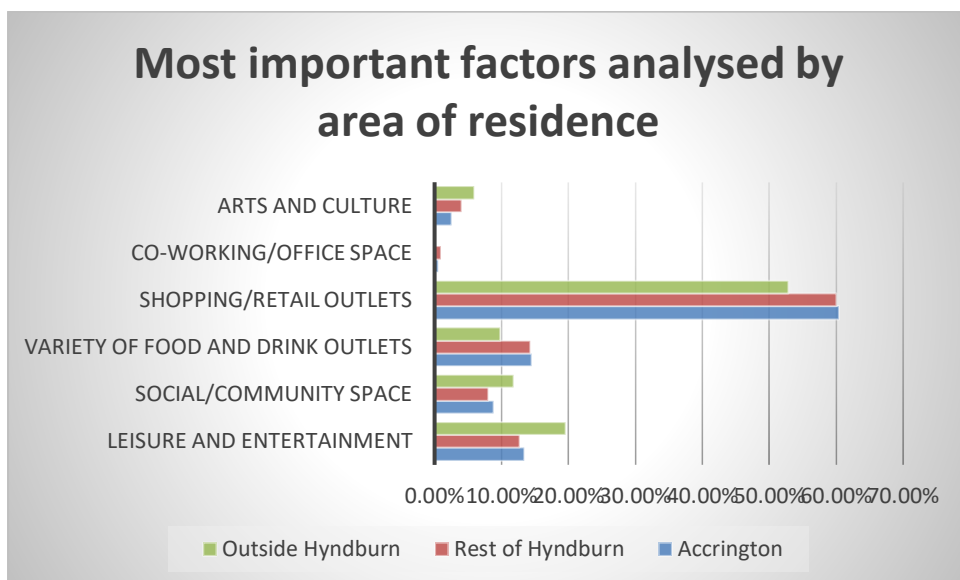
Age Band

Younger people regarded variety of food and drinks, Leisure and entertainment and social community space higher in comparison to all responses. Whilst older respondents claimed shopping retail outlets was the most important factor when it came to the future of the town centre.

Table 2. Cross Tabulation Responses - Most important themes by Age Band

	Under 18		18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+	
Leisure and entertainment	6	24%	15	19%	37	19%	39	16%	27	10.0%	21	11%	6	5%
Social / community space	3	12%	15	19%	16	8.0%	18	7%	26	10%	9	5%	10	8%
Variety of food and drink outlets	9	36%	13	17%	34	17%	41	17%	40	15%	16	8%	7	6%
Shopping/retail outlets	7	28%	32	41%	104	52%	139	57%	170	63%	133	70%	89	75%
Co-working / office space	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	0.4%	2	1%	2	1%	1	1%
Arts and culture	0	0%	4	5%	7	4%	5	2%	5	2%	10	5%	6	5%
	25		79		199		243		270		191		119	

Chart – Most important factors analysed by area of residence



Disability

Over two thirds of respondents from people who stated they had some form of disability ranked shopping and retail outlets as the most important factor followed by social community space with 16%.

Table 3. Cross Tabulation Responses - Most important themes by Disability

	Do you consider yourself to have a Disability?			
	Yes		No	
Leisure and entertainment	7	5.2%	144	14.5%
Social/community space	21	15.7%	76	7.7%
Variety of food and drink outlets	9	6.7%	151	15.2%
Shopping/retail outlets	91	67.9%	584	58.8%
Co-working/office space	0	0.0%	7	0.7%
Arts and culture	6	4.5%	31	3.1%
	134		993	

Ethnicity

Ethnic minority responses saw a slightly lower proportion of people in favour of shopping and retail outlets (41% compared to 60% across all responses). Ethnic minority respondents rated Leisure & entertainment; Social community space; and variety of food and drink outlets slightly higher when compared to the overall response.

Table 4. Cross Tabulation Responses - Most important themes by Ethnicity

	Asian or Asian British		Black, Black British, Caribbean or African		Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups		Other ethnic group		White		Ethnic minority / BAME	
Leisure and entertainment	8	19.5%	1	33.3%	2	9.1%	3	25.0%	136	13.0%	14	17.9%
Social/community space	8	19.5%	0	0.0%	4	18.2%	1	8.3%	84	8.0%	13	16.7%
Variety of food and drink outlets	8	19.5%	0	0.0%	4	18.2%	2	16.7%	146	14.0%	14	17.9%
Shopping/retail outlets	15	36.6%	2	66.7%	10	45.5%	5	41.7%	641	61.3%	32	41.0%
Co-working/office space	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	4.5%	0	0.0%	5	0.5%	1	1.3%
Arts and culture	2	4.9%	0	0.0%	1	4.5%	1	8.3%	33	3.2%	4	5.1%
	41		3		22		12		1045		78	

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Q2. When you think about the future of Accrington Town Centre how important is the environmental impact of plans to you? (Score can range from 0 to 100)

The overall average score (100 very important compared to 0 Not important) was 72 for All responses compared to a Median score of 76. The range of scores went from 0 all the way up to 100.

This question received a total of 1,114 responses with 619 from the Accrington area.

Table 5. Cross Tabulation Responses – Environmental impact scores by Area of Residence

When you think about the future of Accrington Town Centre how important is the environmental impact of plans to you	Overall Total	Area of residence		
		Accrington	Hyndburn	Outside Hyndburn
Score	71.9	72.1	71.9	70.3
Number of responses	1114	619	444	50

When analysing by area those responses from the Accrington area achieved the highest score when people were asked to state how important environmental impact plans were within the future of Accrington Town Centre plan.

Table 6. Cross Tabulation Responses – Environmental impact scores by Age Band

	Age Band						
	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Score	67.8	72.6	68.9	71.4	70.1	75.1	77.4
Responses	25	77	196	242	268	187	117

Amongst Age Bands the 65+ scored environmental impact on the plans highest with 77.4 whilst Under 18's scored the environmental impact's the lowest at 67.8.

Table 7. Cross Tabulation Responses – Environmental impact scores by Disability

	Disability	
	Yes	No
Score	73.8	71.6
Responses	132	981

- Environmental impact scores (more important) with responses from people who class themselves with a disability (73.8 compared to 71.6).

Table 8. Cross Tabulation Responses – Environmental impact scores by Ethnicity

	Ethnicity				
	Asian or Asian British	Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	White
Score	77.6	81	72.6	57.7	71.8
Responses	41	3	22	11	1033

- Responses from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African residents scored the Environmental impact highest. However, the sample size was very low (just taken from 3 responses), followed by Asian or Asian British (77.6), Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (72.6), White (71.8), and Other ethnic group (57.7).
- Within ethnic breakdown only people describing their ethnicity as ‘White’ achieved a robust sample size of 1,033 compared to 77 from ethnic minorities respondents.

HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Q3. When you think about ATC how important is it for you that heritage and history are part of future plans? (Score can range from 0 to 100)

The overall average score (100 very important compared to 0 Not important) was 74 for All responses compared to a Median score of 80. The range of scores went from 0 all the way up to 100.

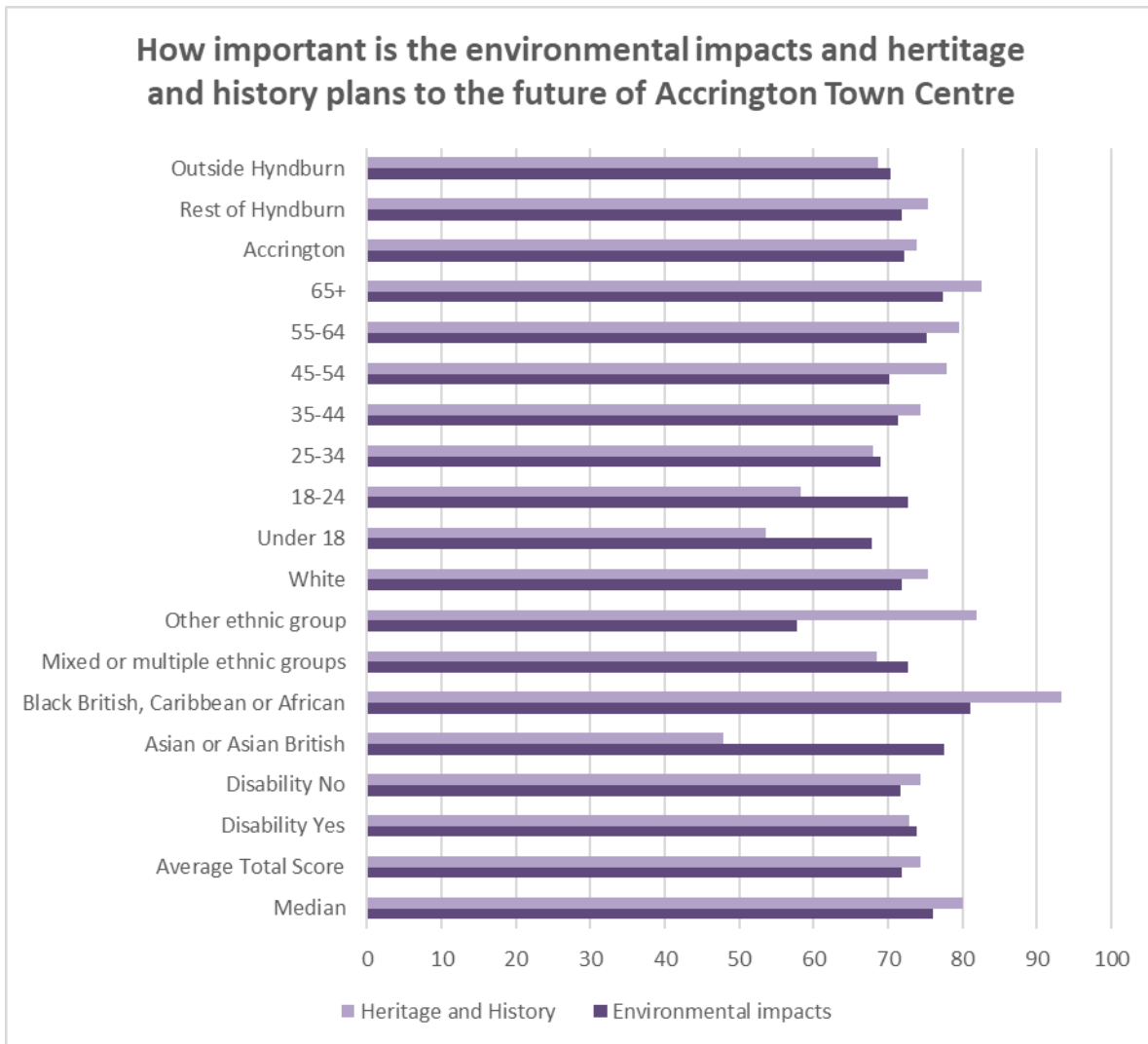
This question received a total of 1,111 responses with 617 from the Accrington area.

On average amongst respondents Heritage and History scored higher than environmental impacts. The table below indicates where Heritage and History scored higher than the importance of Environmental impacts. Within the 2021 resident's poll 68% of residents liked Accrington's historic buildings and architecture.

Table 9. Comparing scores between Heritage and History with Environmental impacts by Socio demographics

Higher score for Heritage and History	Lower score for Heritage and History in comparison
Accrington	Outside Hyndburn
Rest of Hyndburn	Age band below 35
Age band 35+	Asian or Asian British
White ethnic group	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
Black or Black British, Caribbean or African	With a disability
Other ethnic group	
No disability	

Chart – How important is the environmental impacts and heritage and history plans to the future of Accrington Town Centre



**A proportion of the Social Demographics sample size are quite low indicating a higher level of variance with the margin of error.*

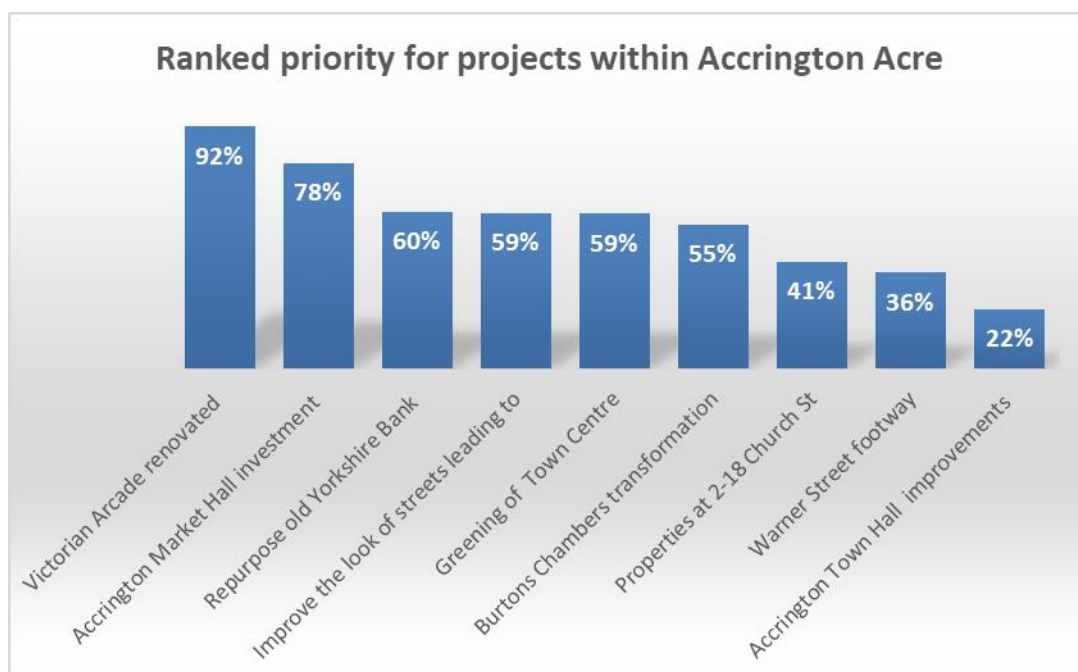
Q4. In the proposed Town Centre Investment Plan there are 18 project ideas listed and explained. The projects below are located WITHIN the proposed 'Accrington Acre' – please choose five projects from the list which you feel *should be a priority for investment and development*.

Over nine out of ten respondents felt 'Victorian Arcade renovated and transformed' should be priority for investment and development, followed by over three quarters of respondents stating 'Accrington Market Hall investment and development.'

Table 10. Ranked priority for projects within proposed 'Accrington Acre'

Project idea within Accrington Acre	Responses	Rank	Percentage
Victorian Arcade renovated and transformed	1035	1	91.8%
Accrington Market Hall investment and development	877	2	77.8%
Repurpose old Yorkshire Bank Building (near Town Square)	671	3	59.5%
Improve the look of streets leading to the Town Square eg lighting / cobblestone	664	4	58.9%
Greening of Accrington Town Centre	661	5	58.7%
Burtens Chambers transformation (building opposite Town Hall housing Bet Fred)	617	6	54.7%
Properties at 2-18 Church St and 43-59 Blackburn Rd	457	7	40.6%
Warner Street to become a footway	410	8	36.4%
Accrington Town Hall front improvements and restoration	252	9	22.4%

CHART – Ranked priority for projects within Accrington Acre



Q5. In the proposed Town Centre Investment Plan there are 18 project ideas listed and explained. The projects below are in locations leading to and outside of the proposed 'Accrington Acre' - please choose five projects from the list which you feel *should be a priority for investment and development*.

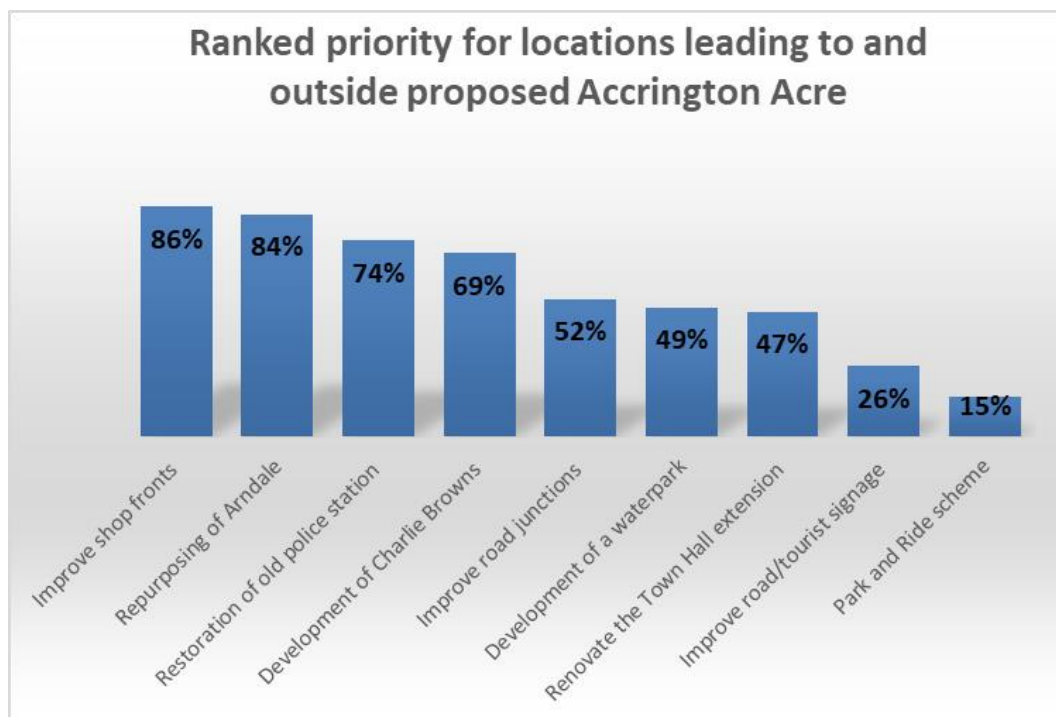
Over eight out of ten respondents felt the following projects were a priority for investment and development 'Improve shop fronts on selected streets leading to Town Square' and 'Repurposing of Accrington Arndale Centre (not for residential use)'.

Within the 2021 residents poll only 13% of people liked the Accrington Arndale and felt the choice of shops, cafes and restaurants are poor.

Table 11. Ranked priority for locations leading to and outside proposed 'Accrington Acre'

Project idea leading to and outside Accrington Acre	Responses	Rank	Percentage
Improve shop fronts on selected streets leading to Town Square	974	1	86.4%
Repurposing of Accrington Arndale Centre (not for residential use)	942	2	83.6%
Restoration/renovation of old police station building	831	3	73.7%
Development of Charlie Browns Site (corner of Abbey Street)	776	4	68.9%
Improve road junctions and access to Accrington	581	5	51.6%
Development of a waterpark/visitors centre at Platts Lodge	547	6	48.5%
Renovate the Town Hall extension (part of Broadway)	529	7	46.9%
Improve road/tourist signage leading in to Accrington	297	8	26.4%
Park and Ride scheme	167	9	14.8%

CHART – Ranked priority for locations leading to and outside proposed Accrington Acre



RESPONDENTS - SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Band:

- 45% of responses from 35 to 54 age band (513 responses)
- 2% from Under 18's (25 responses)
- 9% from under 25's (104 responses)
- 10% from Over 65's (119 responses)

Chart – Respondents Age Band

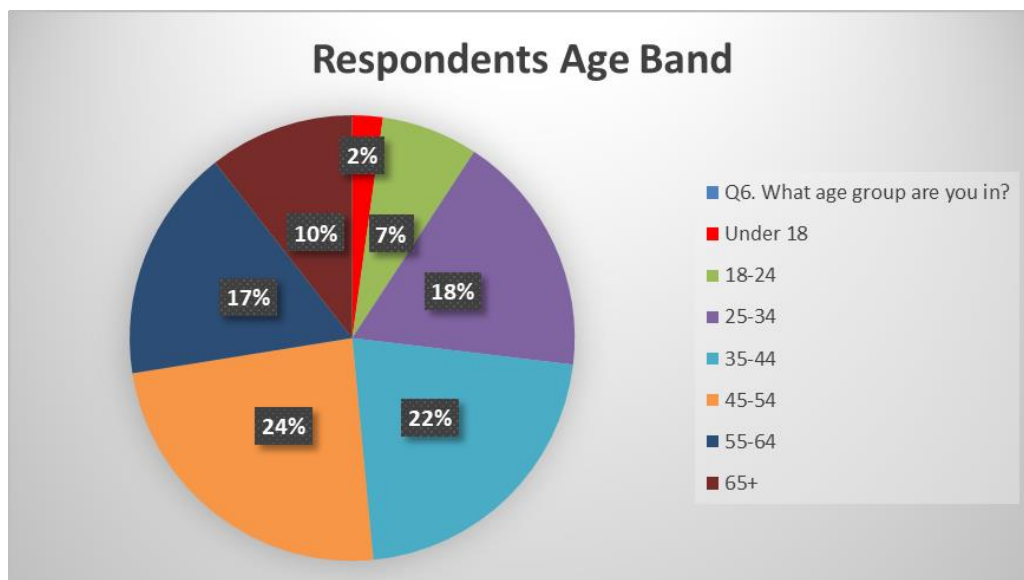


Table 12. Age Band:

Q6. What age group are you in?	Number	Percent
Under 18	25	2.2%
18-24	79	7.0%
25-34	199	17.7%
35-44	243	21.6%
45-54	270	24.0%
55-64	191	16.9%
65+	119	10.6%

Disability

Table 13. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Q7. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		
Yes	134	11.9%
No	993	88.1%

The 2011 Census indicated 11% of people in Hyndburn had long term health problems or a disability similar to the survey proportion.

Ethnicity:

Table 14. What is your ethnicity?

Q8. What is your ethnicity?	Number	Percentage
White	1045	93.0%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	22	2.0%
Asian or Asian British	41	3.6%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	3	0.3%
Other ethnic groups	13	1.2%
Total ethnic minority	79	7.0%

The 2011 Census indicated 12% of the Hyndburn's population described their ethnic origin within a BAME category. The numbers above indicate the survey received lower numbers and proportion from ethnic minority groups.

Area of residence:

Table 15. Area of residence (5 digit postcode provided to help indicate area)

Q9. Location	Number	Percentage
Accrington	628	55.7%
The rest of Hyndburn	448	39.8%
Outside Hyndburn	51	4.5%

**In this study the wards of Peel, Barnfield, Central, Church, Spring Hill, Milnshaw and Baxenden represents the Accrington area. All other wards represent rest of Hyndburn. Postcodes outside Hyndburn were classed as Outside Hyndburn.*

Topics / themes:

- Accrington could become next 'hotspot' with the right investment
- Accrington will never be like Altrincham
- ASB
- Attract young professionals
- Bigger, better market
- Bus station in the wrong location
- Concerns over whether the Council can improve the Town Centre
- Crime
- Demolish the Arndale
- Disabled parking
- Don't let Warner Street become pedestrianised
- Drugs
- Easily accessible for cars – let traffic flow
- Fairtrade independent shops
- Focus on youth
- Free town centre shuttle bus
- Green community spaces
- Homemade gastro food options
- Improve entrance into Accrington
- Make use of empty shops allow rent free exhibitions so it creates cultural buzz
- Make Accrington a food destination (not fast but good)
- More parking
- Need to get back to the thriving market town Accrington use to be
- No shops, no nightlife
- Nightlife and music venues
- Not much to do for kids activity wise
- Public toilets
- Relocate leisure facilities into the town centre
- Remove parking charges
- Rent reductions
- Super hub for independent retailers with cheaper rent attracting entrepreneurs with a vision
- Too many pound, charity and mobile shops
- Trendy eateries and bars would transform Victorian Arcade
- Trust the Council it will deliver
- Variety of better quality shops (such as clothes and toy shops)
- Work with smaller businesses