Bishop Auckland Strategic Advisory Panel

28 January 2026

Durham County Council

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. GROUP 1 - Stronger Towns Board
3. GROUP 2 - Regeneration Programmes Update
4. Questions and Networking
5. Date of next mtg

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Welcome and Introductions

Shaun Hope
Chair Bishop Auckland Stronger Towns Board

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2. Stronger Towns Board Update

Shaun Hope

Durham County Council

Board Update

Governance Review

- **New Board Members**
- **ToR**

Strategic Advisory Panel

Communications

Durham County Council

Stronger Towns Project Updates

Durham County Council

Bishop Gateway

(Formerly know as ESAC)

Project Description

Provision of new road, car parking and pedestrian footbridge to service new visitor destinations

Progress Update

Significant technical work continuing to ensure pre-planning studies are in place with planning application programmed for submission in February 2026.

Cost estimates have been higher than expected and value engineering/scoping which has led to delays.

Pre-Planning Public consultation - November 25

- 135 attended consultation event
- 323 responses
- 91% supportive/very supportive
- 97% viewed plans to regenerate town as positive

Stronger Town Contribution

£15,700,000

Artists Hub

Project Description

Refurbishment of building to provide new space for creative businesses

Progress Update

Artist Hub is now open offering exhibition space, equipped kilns, programme of events.

Grants for community artists available

Bishop Auckland College to provide Level 3 courses in Art, Photography and Ceramics

Level 3 Seamstress and Costume Design Programme

Local Artist and Groups already engaged including:

- Jack Drum Arts
- Ferryhill Brass Band
- Sketching Club
- Young Artists Club

Stronger Town Contribution

£900,000

Market Place Hotel

- **Project Description**
- 59-bedroom, full-service hotel be built on the demolished site of the north side Market Place in Bishop Auckland
- **Progress Update**
- Planning approved September 2025 - design adapted to reflect advice from DCC Heritage officer
- Demolition complete
- Practical completion April 2027 with hotel opening May 2027
- **Stronger Town Contribution**
- £3,100,000

Property Reuse Fund 2

Project Description

Grant scheme for local businesses to bring vacant floorspace back into economic use.

Progress Update

Following success of FHSF PRF 1. Agreement from Stronger Town Board to realign £1.2m from TCD Public Realm works into PRF 2

PRF 2 launched early Jan25

4 Grants Offer Letters issued

2 schemes have progressed to full award creating 5 jobs

8 schemes progressing seeking to take up the remaining grant available

These schemes are expected to progress to award upon confirmation of planning consent or following the tendering of works packages.

Stronger Town Contribution

1,200,000

Town Centre Diversification

Public Realm

Project Description

Improvements to public realm space in Fore Bondgate, North Newgate Street and the Market Place.

Progress Update

Switch to a temporary experimental arrangement to provide funding for PRF2 agreed by Stronger Towns Board

Reduced scheme to redirect funding to PRF 2 – Proposal approved by Stronger Towns Board.

Market Place lighting largely complete with York Stone paving delivery delayed until early 26.

Fore Bondgate: investigations ongoing with feeder supply with a view to replace rising bollard with ANPR

Instruction to pause until Strategic Place Plan consultation is concluded and then coordinate with regeneration colleagues on scope.

Stronger Town Contribution

£1,116,000

Heritage Walking & Cycling/Tindale

Project Description

Linking residential, employment, education, retail and tourism locations across the town centre via accessible sustainable travel routes.

Progress Update

Following initial detailed design, the original proposed route would be very challenging to deliver

An alternative route linking to wider tourism, retail , education nodes and S&DR route is being developed.

Stronger Town Contribution

- **Heritage Walking and Cycling** £2,250,000
- **Tindale** £4,750,000

Springboard to Employment

Project Description

Refurbishment and renovation of McIntyre's Building into new training café and digital studios for Bishop Auckland College

Progress Update

Project is complete, opened Dec 2024

Restaurant and kitchen providing training to those seeking careers in the hospitality and tourism sector. There is also retail space for goods produced by small businesses.

Upstairs is a digital and training suite offering courses to help local people develop skills, as well as a job matching service.

Created 6 jobs

Stronger Town Contribution

£1,300,000

South Church Enterprise Park

Project Description

Development of new incubator space for local businesses

Progress Update

Project currently under review

DCC capital funding withdrawn following capital review

Alternative funding and delivery options currently being explored e.g. JVA , Development Partner or offer development to the market

Should project not proceed Stronger Towns Board to consider options for reallocation of funds

Stronger Town Contribution

£1,700,000

3. Regeneration Programmes Update

Andrew Walker/Graham Wood

Durham County Council

Town Investment Overview

Fund	Projects	Funding	Source	Timescale
Stronger Town Fund	7	£33,200,000	Government +	2021 - 2028
Future High Street Fund	13	£19,856,853	Government +	2021 - 2028
Heritage Action Zone	44	£1,200,000	Historic England	2018 - 2023
Levelling Up	3	£30,860,000	Government & DCC	
Leisure Transformation	1	£20,000,000	DCC	
Restoring Your Railways	1	£72,000	Government and TAP	
11 Arches	1	£240,000,000	11 Arches and TAP	
The Auckland Project	6	£240,000,000	11 Arches and TAP	

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Future High Street Fund

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Bus Station

- **Project Description**

- Demolition and development of a new fit-for-purpose bus station and car parking supply, enabling visitor-led regeneration.

- **Progress Update**

- Some initial delays due the discovery of partially demolished houses directly beneath the footprint of the new bus station and live electricity cables running adjacent to footprint of new building (not identified on public utility drawings).

- Building complete subject to snagging

- Weather conditions have delayed final surfacing works

- **Future High Street Fund Contribution**

- £11,920,873

Bishop

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Entrance

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GS-1432m

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9-11 Newgate Street Food and Beverage Units (STACK)

Project Description

Provision of new food and beverage units by Development Partner - STACK

Progress Update

Project delayed

Structural stability of building next door

Health and safety priority

STACK fully committed to scheme - on-site when issue is resolved. Anticipate 6–9-month construction period with completion to be determined

Future High Street Fund Contribution

£3,304,824

STACK
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Public Realm

Project Description

North to Fore Bondgate - Hard landscaping and mural works. Planting and seating installed including power supply to new lighting columns.

Kingsway Car Park - Construction work on new car park. Car park operational since December 25.

Spanish Gallery - Public Realm improvements

Progress Update

North to Fore Bondgate - Project complete

Kingsway Car Park - Project complete

Spanish Gallery - Project complete

Future High Street Fund Contribution

North to Fore Bondgate - £651,869

Kingsway Car Park - £2,242,545

Spanish Gallery - £35,123

Road Junction Capacity Improvement

- **Project Description**

- Works to improve the road infrastructure at three key junctions which are currently inadequate to accommodate the current and projected number of road users.

- **Progress Update**

- FHSF fully committed on design work.

- Work to reduce queuing and congestion along the A688 in Bishop Auckland, Princes Street is complete, which involved widening the road from the roundabout northwards towards Tenters Street to allow extra queueing capacity in the left-hand lane.

- South Church roundabout and Coundongate roundabout junction works are still to be programmed for construction. Works will start Autumn 2026.

- **Future High Street Fund Contribution**

- £539,008

Property Reuse Fund 1

Project Description

Grant scheme for local businesses to bring vacant floorspace back into economic use.

Progress Update

Project supported 13 businesses with grants bringing vacant buildings and floorspace back into use

Future High Street Fund Contribution

£1,000,000

Strategic Place Plan

Bishop Auckland town centre has been identified as a location for a Strategic Place Plan (SPP) to encourage regeneration and renewal for the town and surrounding area.

The SPP project will look at the long-term regeneration of Bishop Auckland. It will work with the community to look at how the area can be revitalised, and will be developed to ensure that local people, businesses, and stakeholders can all shape the town's future vision.

This shared vision will help to write spatial, economic, and action plans tailored to Bishop Auckland's needs.

Bishop Auckland; Co design live now

Phase	Bishop Auckland SPP
1. Give us your views	22 Aug – 17 Oct 2025
2. Understanding your feedback	20 Oct – 5 Dec 2025
3. Your views on the Draft Vision	8 Dec – 9 Jan 2026
4. Amend and seek approval	12 Jan – 27 Feb 2026
5. Sharing the outcome	2 Mar – 1 May 2026

Town of Culture 2028

Bishop Auckland Town Council - leading on a bid - with support from local Partners

Competition Funding and Awards

£3 million to winning town to host a major cultural programme in summer 2028

X 2 finalists receiving smaller grants - £250k.

Core Judging Criteria

Judging focuses on 'Your Story' for narrative authenticity, 'Culture for Everyone' for inclusivity, and 'Making It Happen' for feasibility and partnerships.

Cultural Impact and Legacy

The initiative aims to boost economic regeneration, civic pride, creative participation, and long-term sustainable cultural development.

Inclusivity and Community Engagement

The programme encourages collaboration, social cohesion, and cultural excellence in small and medium-sized towns across diverse communities.