



**Building a better
Bishop Auckland
for everyone**

A busy market town bursting with opportunity.

The Bishop Auckland we know and love is a busy market town bursting with opportunity. The world has changed in recent years, leaving its mark on our town.

There has been a lot of talk about what is, should, and could be happening in Bishop Auckland. Sharing ideas, opinions, and experiences with people from across the town has helped shape an important plan. A plan to build a better Bishop Auckland for everyone – and this magazine aims to set out exactly what’s happening.

Working together.

A new Bishop Auckland Strategic Advisory Panel has been set up to engage with people from all areas of the community. The panel has an overview of the wide range of projects taking place and will ensure everyone is engaged and kept up to date. It will also provide advice and input into issues affecting the town.



What’s it all about?

Bishop for life

The plans to regenerate the town will make it a more attractive and vibrant place for everyone who lives and works here. We believe they will also attract more visitors – not just people who live nearby, but visitors from all over the UK and the world.

We want Bishop Auckland to be a thriving 21st Century market town. A town recognised as the gateway to the undiscovered Durham Dales. We want an inviting town centre that meets all our needs and is fit for the changing times we live in. As well as improving the town for residents and businesses, we hope our plans will attract more visitors. This will not only make the town a more vibrant place to live, it will bring more money into Bishop Auckland, helping it to grow and thrive.

Our town has been awarded £53 million by the government – on top of ongoing private investment – to support major projects that will achieve the changes you want to see in the future. This is in addition to private investment from The Auckland Project and Eleven Arches as well as £40 million from Durham County Council.

We’re delighted to be able to share more details of these projects on the following pages.

Greater investment and opportunity will follow. More opportunities to enjoy ourselves and for others to visit our town. More opportunities to establish and grow our businesses. And with these, more job opportunities.

It won’t happen overnight, but we have the funding and we have the plan.

This is our chance to create a successful future, a Bishop Auckland bursting with exciting possibilities for everyone. A vibrant place we all use and are proud of. A town centre that’s attractive and interesting. A place more people want to visit, spend more time, and return to. A Bishop Auckland for work, leisure, and life.

How did we get here?



These big plans for Bishop Auckland have been in the making for some time now. Over £375 million is being invested. But where is the money coming from and how were decisions on spending made?

Building a better Bishop Auckland for everyone

The money we are talking about is coming from the government, Durham County Council and private investors including The Auckland Project, Eleven Arches and the Zurbaran Trust. It includes £275 million from The Auckland Project, being spent on major attractions in and around our town.

New funding in the shape of £19.9 million will come from the government's Future High Street Fund, as part of a £29 million programme already planned by Durham County Council. £33.2 million will come from the Stronger Towns Fund. This extra money will be used to improve our town centre and parking, transport links and youth employability. The aim is to work together to get us future-ready and attract more visitors.

The Stronger Town Board approved the application for Stronger Town funding. Durham County Council is responsible for managing the funding, working closely with a range of partners and other interested organisations through the Stronger Town Board, which was set up to develop a Town Investment Plan to be submitted to government.

How did we get Future High Streets Funding and what will it be used for?

Bishop Auckland is one of 101 towns nationally invited to bid for the Future High Streets Fund. Durham County Council submitted a bid in June 2020, building on extensive work undertaken for the development of Bishop Auckland masterplan. In December 2020, the government announced £19.9 million to support the projects specified by the council. The council is working on the design and delivery of these projects. They include:

- A new bus station and additional car parking
- Partner developer appointed for 9-11 Newgate Street

- Purchase of the former amusement arcade to create an attractive route between Bondgate and Forebondgate
- A property re-use fund to help bring empty buildings back to life – two grants have already been agreed, with 20 further applications being considered

How does the Stronger Towns Fund work?

One of the requirements for getting investment from the government's Stronger Town Fund was that we set up a Stronger Town Board for Bishop Auckland. In line with strict guidelines, members include a mix of councillors from the town and county councils, our MP, business owners, Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership, The Auckland Project, the Bishop of Durham, the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, Bishop Auckland College, Jobcentre Plus and Believe Housing Group.

It was the job of the Stronger Towns Board to develop a Town Investment Plan – consulting local people, outlining how much money we were asking for and how this would be spent – and then submitting this to the government.

Big ideas don't shape themselves – that's why we have consulted with residents every step of the way. The bids for Stronger Town and Future High Street funding were shaped by the Bishop Auckland Masterplan which was developed in 2018 and based on consultation with residents and businesses.

The Town Investment Plan was submitted to the government on 31st January 2021. On 8 June 2021, the government advised that the bid had been successful, and we had secured a maximum of £33.2 million. It was now down to the board to finalise which projects would go ahead as part of this funding, which it agreed in May. Detailed business plans to secure the funding need to be submitted to government in the coming months. Public consultation will take place on plans to spend £8.1 million of the funding in the town centre.

The Bishop Auckland Masterplan.

Future High Street Fund and Stronger Town Fund projects directly support the delivery of the town masterplan, consultation for which took place in 2017 and 2018. Projects also link to priorities identified during other consultations.

Masterplan consultation (Round 1) Summer 2017 661 responses	Masterplan consultation (Round 2) July 2018 649 responses	Heritage Action Zone consultation and engagement programme 2019/20 80 events / 4,000 people / 20,000 social media engagements Brighter Bishop Auckland local business engagement 40 local businesses Brighter Bishop Auckland hospitality engagement 25 local businesses	#MYTOWN Webpage Live 2020 Stronger Towns Consultation December 2020 968 responses Towns and villages consultation 120 Bishop Auckland households participated
2017	2018	2019	2020

What’s already happened?

As well as securing significant private investment, partners have successfully secured a massive £53 million in government funding for the town. In the next five years, this money will be used to support 16 projects, funded by the Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund.

These projects will build on the extensive work already underway by The Auckland Project to revitalise the town centre and create more opportunities for us all.

The Bishop Auckland Strategic Advisory Panel has recently been set up to help keep residents and businesses fully informed on these and other projects that will make Bishop Auckland more prosperous in the future. The panel brings together a range of voices and opinions, all with a shared interest in creating a culturally vibrant, heritage-driven town centre.

It brings together current and former Durham County Council members and MP Dehenna Davison, as well as local business people, community, and voluntary groups. These include The Auckland Project, Bishop Auckland Town Council, the Town Team, Heritage Action Zone, Let’s Clean Up Bishop Auckland, the Brighter Bishop Auckland Partnership, and the Stronger Towns Board.



Mum and daughter team Carol and Laura Knight run Tinkers Treasures, Fore Bondgate:

“We’re really passionate about the town. We’ve got a lot going on here, and there’s money that we’ve been given by the government to make it a better place. We’ve got the castle, we’ve got Kynren, the Spanish Art Gallery. We have got an opportunity to make something of it.

“The history, the heritage, the community and the people are what make Bishop Auckland so special.”

“Bishop Auckland is going to be more touristy, there will be more bars and more restaurants. A holiday feel – that’s what I hope for Bishop Auckland. Give it some more time and it will come together, it will take time, but it will come together. The history, the heritage, the community and the people are what make Bishop Auckland so special.”



Robert Bedford, Bedfords Appliance Care, Newgate Street

“I’ve been here 50 years. You can’t live in the past, you’ve got to make things better.”

“I have people dropping in all the time. I have customers who are the grandkids of people I have fixed washing machines for in the past. You need to make it work and put yourself out for your customers. It’s about give and take.”

“Hopefully the town will go up but it will depend on people investing. People have dreams, a lot of people have dreams, a lot of people want to achieve, live the dream of self-employment. It’s hard work, you’re competing against online sales. The whole retail sector is so different now. There’s a business for anybody but you shouldn’t expect a living, you have to work for it and put a bit in to get a bit out. You’ve got to build a customer base and return business.”

“I visit places and think this is what Bishop should be, people living above every shop and a community that’s going to drop into the town.”



Simon and Amanda Hill, Opened Simon’s Butchers on Newgate Street in early 2022

“We were looking for a larger premises and realised that there wasn’t a butcher in Bishop Auckland. For us it was the perfect opportunity to expand our business.”

“It’s getting busier week on week. We’re building up nicely. We’ve been here for four months and we’re still getting people coming in who didn’t know we are here, so we’re still building our customer base. A lot of people don’t know what’s on the high street and when they find us it’s a bonus, it gives people more of a reason to come into town.”

“There’s a lot going on behind the scenes in Bishop Auckland.”

“There’s a lot going on behind the scenes in Bishop Auckland. In the next 18 months to two years there will be an explosion down the bottom end of the high street that will hopefully bring a lot more people into town and it will hopefully benefit the businesses at the top end of the town too.”

“A lot of people through Covid went back to grassroots shopping, through that you find a lot more people shopping locally. Hopefully that will help things in the long run.”

Many organisations have been working together for some time now to deliver the vision and plan for investment in a better Bishop Auckland.

£53 million
in government funding

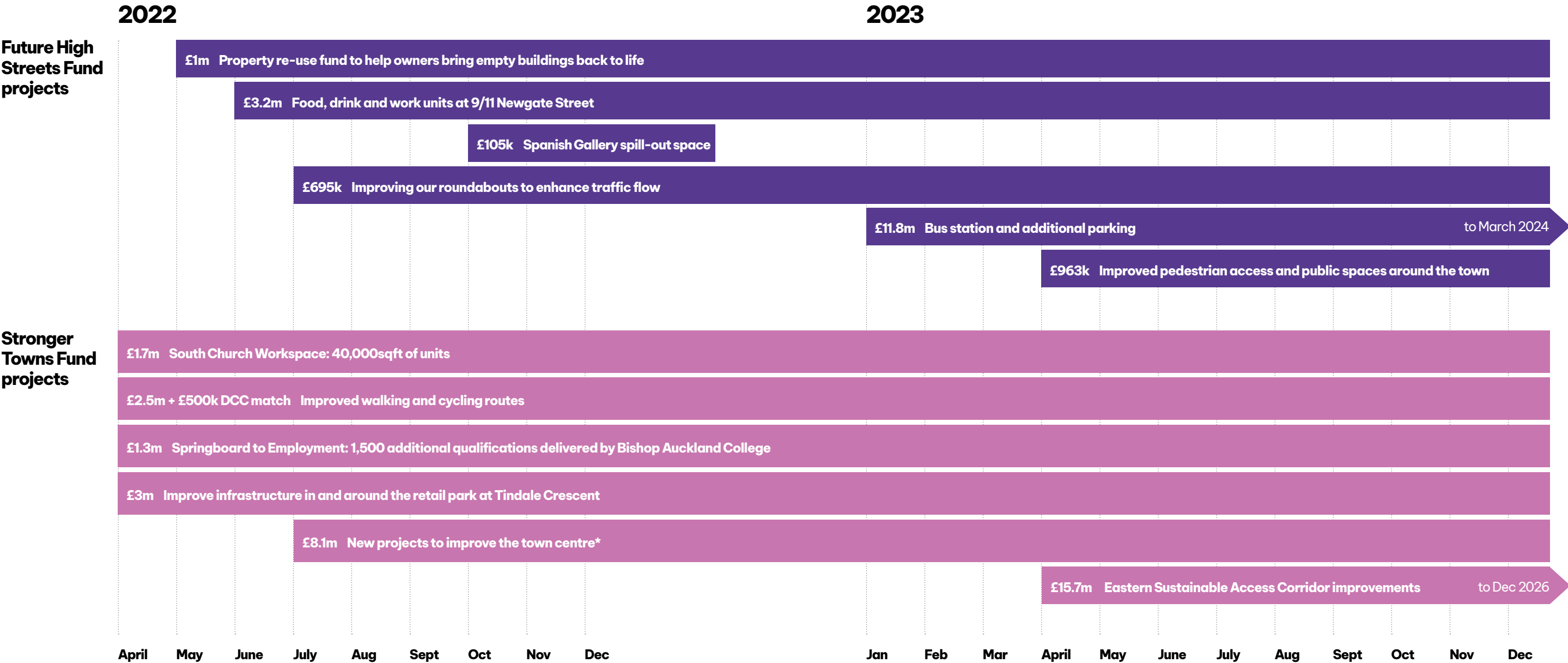
16 projects
supported

What's next?

Investment is already happening in Bishop Auckland, with significant work taking place to develop initial plans, appoint contractors and prepare for work to begin on the ground.

Some of these, like the bus station, additional parking and major road and junction improvements will take several years to complete, but you will start to see work begin on some of these during 2022 or early 2023. The Eastern Sustainable Access Corridor will take the longest time to deliver, with a timescale of three years from start to finish, with a project end date of December 2026.

Durham County Council also recently completed the purchase of the Newgate Centre. As well as plans to carry out improvements to the interior and exterior of the building, the council is already working to attract new tenants. The aim is to create a more modern, vibrant environment that not only serves as a shopping centre but also a meeting place and entertainment venue.





Bishop Auckland have your say

During the summer, residents and businesses will have the opportunity to give their views on a number of projects going through the planning process. There will also be a chance to provide feedback on a number of ideas to improve the town centre using £8.1 million of Stronger Towns funding.

Building a better Bishop Auckland for everyone

We have:

- The investments and heritage to become an internationally important visitor destination
- Fantastic connections and potential as the Gateway to the undiscovered Durham Dales
- Opportunities to develop as a modern service centre for South West Durham

Our plans will:

- Strengthen Bishop's day and night-time economy
- Create more opportunities for young people
- Boost our underperforming tourism numbers
- Bring about an urban renaissance for our town centre
- Improve our roads, parking and beds to accommodate visitors

**This is what
we're looking
forward to:**



1.1m
additional annual visitors

20% boost
to County Durham
visitor economy

1,500
new qualifications
for young people

3,750 new jobs
in and around our town

£192m
private sector investment

7
new significant all year-
round visitor attractions

90,000sqft
new space to help our
businesses grow

£100m
other potential investment



Our partners

Bishop Auckland Heritage Action Zone

The Auckland Project

Eleven Arches

The Zurbaran Trust

Bishop Auckland Town Council



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