



Possible responses to the Skelmersdale Town Centre Masterplan (STCM) consultation currently underway which includes the redevelopment of the Glenburn School site and the demolition of the Nye Bevan pool.

The consultation is web based and needs to be completed [online](#), where layout and maps of the area have also been provided to illustrate the proposals.

The draft plan has three key proposed components, with each part containing several projects. The ambition is to deliver a coordinated scheme delivered as one regeneration project.

1. **Core Town Centre proposals**
2. **Glenburn site development**
3. **Town Park proposals**

But what if I don't live in Skelmersdale, why should I be interested in this consultation?

This consultation is on potentially very significant investments and projects. Consider:

- The proposed investment of c£150M (excluding private sector investment) is likely to be the largest expenditure on public infrastructure over the next 15 years. This concentration of resources may see limited funds available for investment in other locations.
- The loss of the Nye Bevan pool is subsumed within the Masterplan and will drive the clearance of this site before the construction of the proposed replacement Leisure Hub.
- Will the proposals be sufficiently appealing to attract visitors into the Town Centre from the wider Borough and beyond?

Wherever you live in West Lancashire, this consultation is important.

There are 9 projects in total, and a description for each is provided on the website, followed by a simple tick box option to express your level of agreement/disagreement with the proposals. This is very limited because often it will seem natural to strongly agree or agree with projects that are positive, but this agreement does not reflect the likelihood of any of the particular projects being delivered or the order in which they are delivered. We highlight where funding is not identified and/or secure in the orange boxes below.

For each question there is a free format text box to enter any comments you would like to make and **we encourage you to make full use of this box to give your considered views**. The projects are summarised below, together with a selection of points in the coloured boxes that you may wish to consider when making your own response.

Project 1. Core Town Centre proposals This is the core town centre scheme on some sites that are currently not used, plus the site presently in use as Nye Bevan Pool and the site of Yeadon Car Park. The proposal includes:

- Circa 182 new residential apartments,
- Ground floor accommodation for commercial uses such as places for food and beverage.
- A business start-up centre (Business Incubator)
- Improvement to the pedestrian areas including better linkages across the town centre
- A Wellbeing and Leisure Hub

Possible considerations

- Impact on bus services as the upper level depot is removed.
- Timing for the demolition of Nye Bevan Pool- the pool demolition is seen as a critical early step.
- Rail/bus interchange disconnected and linked by a raised footbridge
- Attraction of mixed retail outlets and apartments along the Concourse/West Lancashire College corridor
- Adequacy of parking provision for accommodation, retail and business incubator

Project 2. Business Incubator The site sits between the West Lancashire College and the Tawd Valley retail scheme.

- Building of a new small business facility.
- Providing managed workspace
- Supporting people into work and providing essential business skills and coaching
- To be located close to West Lancashire College and encouraging apprenticeships/ placements and potential fledgling businesses

Question 6 - Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create jobs and enterprise opportunities for residents?

Possible considerations

- At an estimated £4.6M, this budget is not included in the core costing. What surety is there that private funding will be secured to deliver in the timeframe?
- Number and nature of the employment opportunities cannot be identified at this stage
- What evidence is there to suggest fledgling businesses originate from 6th Form education?

Project 3. Refurbished and enhanced library

Upgrade of the existing building in the heart of the town centre to provide a much-improved facility. Existing functions and future aspirations of the facility to be explored in detail through design development. This includes library and education uses, making the building relevant to the community and young people, and the wider hub facilities that are based there.

Question 8 - Do you agree or disagree the proposal would add value to residents and support the plan to create an improved Town Centre?

Possible considerations

- At an estimated £3M, this funding is not part of the core development budget.
- Project will be led by Lancashire County Council
- Timing of refurbishment is not clear but unlikely to proceed until Project 1 is complete.

Project 4. Concourse Shopping Centre The plan is a proposal of how the town centre could be improved, strengthened, and how its visual and environmental appearance, accessibility and travel could be improved for both residents and visitors.

Question 10. Do you agree or disagree the proposal would add value to residents, improve the visitor experience and support the plan to create an improved Town Centre?

Possible considerations

- The Concourse is in private ownership. What is the confidence level that the investment required to deliver the project will be made within the timeframe proposed?
- A failure to invest in the Concourse may jeopardise the appeal and success of the wider Town Centre Masterplan
- The delayed development of the Wonderland project within the Concourse is seen as a significant factor in attracting visitors and developing a night time economy. Is this a realistic prospect - given the recent closure of another leisure facility – the cinema at the Concourse?

Project 5. Glenburn Site Redevelopment. The proposal includes:

- Major new residential development of circa 425 new and affordable homes for sale and rent
- Connections between Glenburn and town centre by walkable footbridge, linking the two areas, making access easier and safer
- Potential to include a railway station
- Environmental setting

Question 12. Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create improved housing opportunities for new and existing residents?

Possible considerations

- The adopted Local Plan, Policy SP2 states that the Glenburn site should be enhanced as an educational facility. What evidence exists to justify deviating from the current Strategic Policy for house building?
- The Lawful planning use of a lapsed site (Glenburn) is still that of a playing field. What justification is there to re-designate this for housing development?
- As the site is intended for sale to private developers, will the priority to build housing lead to development that is disconnected from delivery of other Town Centre investment?
- West Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies a need to re-provide both playing field and artificial turf pitches that have been lost in Skelmersdale, "in a sporting hub elsewhere". This alternative has not been identified as part of the Masterplan. What is the benefit of locating such a facility elsewhere when Glenburn provided that in the past?
- Could some housing development generate the funding receipts to provide a community sports hub on the rest of the Glenburn site – something OWL have promoted?
- Is the low housing density proposed, suitable for this urban location, and would the 85% homes for market sale (only 15% would be 'affordable') be sustainable in this location?

Project 6. New Rail Station. Alongside the proposals for the residential development at the former Glenburn site a new rail station is proposed.

Question 14. Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create improved transportation links for Skelmersdale residents?

Possible considerations

- A funding proposal for c.£750M has already been rejected by the Department for Transport. What is the possible funding that will deliver this project by 2040? None have been identified.
- Analysis of the passenger numbers utilising the rail replacement bus service to Kirkby station indicates an average of 7 passengers per journey (same frequency as the proposed rail service). This is well below the 1000 per day used to justify the failed rail bid. Is the demand for a rail service sufficient to influence a change in Government funding policy?
- Does the high uncertainty of a future rail station, justify the protection of this site from alternative development or for recreation uses as OWL would like to see?
- Why is the rail station remote from the re-located bus terminus? How well does this separation support the vision of an integrated transport hub?
- Would the addition of a rail station increase the visitor numbers to the new Town Centre?

Project 7. Improved Town Park proposals. Upgrade of the existing Tawd Valley Park in the heart of the town centre to create a safe, well defined, and attractive formal park. Linkages across the Tawd Valley would be improved, including a new footbridge. This project also links into project 8 - enhancing the existing amphitheatre and the development of a new visitor centre for the Tawd Valley.

Question 16 - Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create an improved environmental offering, which would help to improve health and wellbeing for residents?

Possible considerations

- Positive improvements to the public realm adjacent to the River Tawd, provides better access to open space.
- Can the improvements be made without dependency on funding for other projects within the Masterplan?

Project 8. Tawd Valley Visitor Centre & Refurbishment of the Amphitheatre. The proposal includes a visitor centre within the heart of the Tawd Valley, adjacent to the existing amphitheatre. This centre would include a café, toilet facilities, education and studio spaces. Including facilities for park wardens and also bike hire facility. It would be a new destination and bring life and activity to the centre of the valley.

Question 18. Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create an improved environmental offering, which would help to improve health and wellbeing for residents?

Possible considerations

- Positive improvements to the public realm as part of the wider open space improvements proposed in Project 7.
- At an estimated cost of c£4.5M, the funding and schedule for the delivery of the visitor centre has not been included. What is the certainty that this will be delivered before 2040? The council has had plans for a new visitor centre at the Beacon for approximately 10 years and not delivered it.

Project 9. Yewdale Residential Development. The proposal includes the development of approximately 18 new family affordable homes overlooking the Tawd Valley and amphitheatre space. The new housing scheme will be modern and energy efficient.

Question 20. Do you agree or disagree the proposal would help to create improved housing opportunities for new and existing residents?

Possible considerations

- Small expansion of the Yewdale estate that has the potential to deliver energy efficient, affordable homes.

Questions 22-29 Relate to Equalities and Demographics. You do not have to answer these if you do not want to.

Make sure after Question 29 that you click submit to ensure your response is registered.

Take the time and make your voice heard. The consultation results will be reported to councillors before any decisions are made.

Please contact the Our West Lancashire office at office@ourwestlancashire.com or 01695 351361 for any further assistance.

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www.ourwestlancashire.com/get-involved