

# Public Document Pack

## Executive Member Decisions

Friday, 12th April, 2024  
10.00 am

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**Appendix 3 for EMD - Purchase by Agreement of 7 Coleridge Street, Blackburn. BB2 1NL An individual property photographs**

Date Published: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024  
Denise Park, Chief Executive

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Growth and Development

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Strategic Director of Growth & Development

**DATE:** 10 April 2024

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Growth and Development

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Blackburn Central;

**SUBJECT: EMD King William Street High Street Accelerator**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

King William Street, Blackburn has been selected by the High Street Task Force as one of the ten High Street Accelerators. Each High Street Accelerator will be awarded £237,000 funding over 2 years by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

A High Street Accelerator is a pilot project and an opportunity to test and trial new ways of working to revitalise the high street and to tackle vacancies.

Led by the Local Authority, the pilot project will bring together residents, local businesses, and town centre organisations to develop a vision for the high street.

Eligible activity can include:

- Recruiting expertise to help research and create a vision
- Projects which help to make the area cleaner, safer and more visually appealing
- Improvements to signage, lighting, street design and shopfronts
- Working with property owners and commercial agents to facilitate new uses
- Testing different types of events
- Greening and environmental works

The Council submitted a proposal specific to the King William Street area as part of the selection process setting out the issues and which was subsequently approved by DHLUC. The report sets out the background and requests approval to begin the project.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member: Approves both the acceptance of the DLUHC grant and the authority to begin spending and delivery on the King William Street Accelerator pilot project.

### 3. BACKGROUND

The new High Street Accelerator programme was launched by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The pilot programme, based on research from the High Street Task Force will provide funding to ten areas to kick start local partnerships and facilitate/test a range of different activities aimed at reviving declining high streets and tackle vacancies.

Each Accelerator will receive £237,000 revenue funding (£50,000 2023/24 and £187,000 2024/25) and the opportunity to apply for additional capital funding in 2024 for high street environmental and greening projects.

The ten local authorities were selected by the High Street Task Force using a metrics-based methodology, involving analysis of commercial vacancy rates and other socio-economic factors. Each local authority was then invited to submit a proposal for the high street area that best met the funding criteria.

The Council submitted a proposal to target the funding to the King William Street Area.

The King William Street 'area' (which also includes Town Hall Street, New Market Street and Northgate) was selected for a number of reasons.

Its historic role as the town's commercial and civic core, and proximity to the Mall Shopping centre means the area retains its physical status as the town main 'high street', yet it in more recent times it no longer operates as traditional high street or focal point of activity for the town.

While economic development and regeneration initiatives have helped other areas of the town centre over the last 15 years, around King William Street the on-going challenges are particularly stark. National and global change is negatively impacting on town and regional centres, and Blackburn is not immune from the scale and speed of these changes.

Vacancies have increased and the quality and mix of offer weakened with the loss of independent retail and leisure, closure of banks and major high street retailers like Debenhams and Wilko. The only remaining retail anchor is M&S, which is likely to close within two years.

This narrow mix of offer means King William Street currently struggles to entice visitors out of the comfort of the shopping centre, footfall continues to decline and this has a knock-on effect to the vitality of other surrounding areas.

A small programme of cultural projects and meanwhile uses supported by small property grants and discretionary rates incentives have been relatively successful in helping to create temporary interest but this is not a long-term solution and benefits cannot be sustained without also tackling issues of lack of funding to properly maintain the environment and badly maintained properties, absent landlords, undesirable uses and developments, and anti-social behaviour.

A Blackburn high street was selected for the submission by the Council rather than a Darwen high street because Darwen was announced recently as one of the 55 towns announced by Government to benefit from a Long Term Plan with £20m funding over 10 years, in addition to the £25m Town Deal.

Led by the Local Authority, the pilot project will bring together residents, local businesses, and town centre organisations to develop a joint vision for the high street and to test ideas to facilitate this.

Activity will be guided by best practice developed by the High Street Task Force and the Council's emerging Cultural Investment Plan. The initial grant is revenue, but some physical improvements that facilitate revenue activity are eligible and encouraged.

Blackburn's cultural offer has an important role to play in reimagining the high street both in the day and evening, creating a rich and diverse experience. The project will seek to encourage an enhanced cultural and leisure offer on King William Street, building on the creative cluster and programme of nationally recognised events already established. The environment will be improved, with cleaner and greener streets, making the space more inviting and safer.

Where properties are vacant or no longer financially viable for retail uses, the project will seek alternative uses. The streets will be animated with markets, events, street art and music to attract and appeal to a wider section of the community. It is important that King William Street can reinvent itself to regain its status as the town's gold standard high street, a desirable destination in its own right but also a gateway to other areas of the town centre.

The ten areas selected for the High Street Accelerators programme are:

- Abingdon Street and Queen Street in Blackpool
- Stoke Town Centre in Stoke-on-Trent
- Queen Street with Blackburn Road and Church Street in Great Harwood Town Centre in Hyndburn
- Scunthorpe High Street in North Lincolnshire
- Union Street and Yorkshire Street in Oldham Town Centre
- The Stepney area of Beverley Road in Hull
- King William Street in Blackburn Town Centre in Blackburn with Darwen
- Grimsby Town Centre in North East Lincolnshire
- Dovercourt Town Centre in Tendring
- Hyde Town Centre in Tameside

It also should be noted that the Council is working with Government to finalise a £20m Levelling Up Partnership funding package, which is principally focused on cultural investment in Blackburn Town Centre. It is hoped that this package will be presented in April to the Council's Executive Board for consideration and approval.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

##### **Risk of not accepting grant**

There would be some reputational risk to not accepting the invitation to accept the grant. Blackburn has been selected to participate based on independent research and it is envisaged that the findings of this pilot work will inform future best practice dissemination and funding rounds. The level of funding linked to this initiative is very modest, given the scale of challenges and opportunities in scope, though the funding is designed to complement and support delivery of other larger scale capital projects that Blackburn has recently secured funding for. The scale of funding may increase in future funding rounds should this Government pilot initiative be taken forward.

##### **Risk of not being able to deliver a successful project**

The project requires the creation of a new partnership, development of a high street vision and delivery of some trail activity based on guidance from the High Street Task Force. The nature of the pilot means there is no guarantee of success and as long as our activity can be evaluated and provide useful data for the High Street Task Force, then it will be of value and there are no penalties as a result of failing to deliver positive outcomes. However, Blackburn town centre already has a strong track record of partnership working and delivering innovative regeneration projects, and a good understanding of the challenges of King William Street, so it is very much the expectation that this project will provide positive outcomes for our high street and local community.

##### **Risk of not being able to spend grant**

If the grant is accepted, the Council is expected to receive the funding in early 2024 with the first £50,000 to be allocated by the end of March 2024. The remaining £187,000 is allocated for activities the following year to March 2025. The first year's expenditure in particular has a very tight deadline and will present some challenges, however, in light of our track record, experience and knowledge mentioned above, we are confident we can hit the ground running to enable us to meet these timescales. There is no penalty if the grant is not spent on time, and any unspent funds may be lost.

## 5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

King William Street has an important part of play in the continued growth and vitality of the town centre and in particular in supporting an enhanced culture and leisure offer.

The King William Street Accelerator will kick-start the delivery of the Council's emerging Cultural Investment Plan 2023-33 (currently in consultation) which responds to the need to facilitate development of the town's cultural infrastructure to create a resilient, ambitious and sustainable creative ecology. The pilot project will directly support the Cultural Investment Plan's 5 key missions of: vibrant town centres, aspiration and opportunity, placemaking, community pride and a strong economy.

The pilot project also supports Blackburn with Darwen's Local Plan 2021 to 2037, specifically: Strategic Objective SO12: Town Centres - to widen the range of activities taking place in the Borough's town centres to ensure their future vitality and viability.

Core Policy CP11: Town Centres and Commercial Development –to promote the growth of commercial development and other town centre uses such as leisure, entertainment, offices, education, arts, culture, tourism and housing.

Core Policy CP8: Securing High Quality and Inclusive Design – ensuring high quality design to making places more attractive, locally-distinctive, accessible, sustainable and safe.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no match funding requirements for the project. All grant is paid in advance of expenditure.

	Year 1 2023/24	Year 2 2024/25	Total
High Street Accelerator Grant	£50,000	£187,000	£237,000 revenue
Additional bid for high street greening projects		Share of up to £5 million between 10 pilots	TBC capital

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council will be the accountable body for all grant expenditure. All procurement will be carried out in-line with the Council standard procurement policy.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that officer time will be committed to support development and delivery of the project. This will come from existing staff within the Growth & Development Department.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Initial consultation with town centre partners and cultural organisations has been undertaken as part of the development of the Cultural Investment Plan.

The High Street Task Force has been consulted on the development of the proposed King William Street Accelerator pilot.

The project will formalise a new High Street Accelerator Partnership including residents, local businesses, and town centre organisations. The Partnership will help to develop the vision for King William Street and be consulted on the delivery plan.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Julia Simpson, Clare Turner</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	<b>21/12/2023</b>
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	
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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

***This checklist is to be used when you are uncertain if your activity requires an EIA or not.***

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the organisation's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. EIAs should be actively looking for negative or adverse impacts of policies, services and functions on any of the nine protected characteristics.

The checklist below contains a number of questions/prompts to assist officers and service managers to assess whether or not the activity proposed requires an EIA. Supporting literature and useful questions are supplied within the [EIA Guidance](#) to assist managers and team leaders to complete all EIAs.

<b>Service area &amp; dept.</b>	Growth & Development	<b>Date the activity will be implemented</b>	21/12/2023
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<b>Brief description of activity</b>	King William Street Accelerator Pilot Project
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Answers favouring doing an EIA	Checklist question	Answers favouring not doing an EIA
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does this activity involve any of the following: - Commissioning / decommissioning a service - Change to existing Council policy/strategy - Budget changes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does the activity impact negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Is there a sufficient information / intelligence with regards to service uptake and customer profiles to understand the activity's implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<b>Does this activity:</b> Contribute towards unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity creates or increases disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Reduce equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity fail to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Foster poor relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function prevents people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>FOR = 0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AGAINST = 6</b>

**Will you now be completing an EIA?**

Yes

No

The EIA toolkit can be found [here](#)

<b>Assessment Lead Signature</b>	
<b>Checked by departmental E&amp;D Lead</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Date</b>	04/01/2024





**BLACKBURN**  
*with*  
**DARWEN**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Name of the activity being assessed</b>				
<b>Directorate / Department</b>		<b>Service</b>		<b>Assessment Author</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing activity?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<b>Responsible manager / director for the assessment</b>		
<b>Date EIA started</b>	Click here to enter a date.	<b>Implementation date of the activity</b>	Click here to enter a date.	

**SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY**

<b>How was the need for this activity identified?</b> i.e. Why are we doing this activity?				
<del>Q</del> <del>Q</del> What is the activity looking to achieve? <del>Q</del> What are the aims and objectives?				
<b>Services currently provided</b> (if applicable)				
<b>Type of activity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget changes <input type="checkbox"/> Change to existing activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Other [ <a href="#">please state here</a> ]	

**SECTION 2 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER**

**What resources will support in undertaking the equality analysis and impact assessment?**

*Please identify additional sources of information you have used to complete the EIA, e.g. reports; journals; legislation etc.*

**Who are you consulting with? How are you consulting with them? (Please insert any information around surveys and consultations undertaken)**

Page  
Who does the activity impact upon?\*

Who does the activity impact upon?*	Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Members of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	General public	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Carers or families	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Partner organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?*  The groups in blue are not protected characteristics (please refer to p. 3 of the guidance notes)	Positive impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
	Negative impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
	No impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers

**\*If no impact is identified on any of the protected characteristics a full EIA may not be required. Please contact your departmental Corporate Equality & Diversity representative for further information.**

Does the activity contribute towards meeting the Equality Act's general Public Sector Equality Duty? *Refer to p.3 of the guidance for more information*  
***A public authority must have 'due regard' (i.e. consciously consider) to the following:***

DUTY	DOES THE ACTIVITY MEET THIS DUTY? EXPLAIN
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity removes or minimises disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	
Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity takes steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function encourages people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>Is a full EIA required?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Please explain how you have reached your conclusion <i>(A lack of negative impacts must be justified with evidence and clear reasons, highlight how the activity negates or mitigates any possible negative impacts)</i>			
2			

<b>Author Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Head of Service/Director Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the Initial EIA and the responsibility to publish the completed Initial EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
<b>Departmental E&amp;D Lead Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.

**SECTION 3 – ANALYSIS OF IMPACT**

Does the activity have the **potential** to:

- **positively** impact (benefit) any of the groups?
- **negatively** impact/exclude/discriminate against any group?
- **disproportionately** impact any of the groups?

Explain how this was identified – through evidence/consultation.

Any negative impacts that are identified within the analysis need to be captured within the action plan in **Section 4**

**N.B.** Marriage & Civil Partnership is only a protected characteristic in terms of work-related activities and NOT service provision

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Reasons for positive and/or negative impact</b> Please include all the evidence you have considered as part of your analysis	<b>Action No.</b>
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Vulnerable Groups</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Deprived Communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Other [please state]</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>Does the activity raise any issues for community cohesion?</p> <p>Does the activity contribute positively towards community cohesion?</p>	
<p>Does the activity raise any issues in relation to human rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998? Details of which can be found <a href="#">here</a></p>	
<p>Does the activity support / aggravate existing departmental and/or corporate risk?</p>	<p><i>Is the activity on the departmental risk register? If it is not, should it be?</i></p>

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

<p><b>Action following completion of the impact assessment</b></p>			
<p><i>It is important that the correct option is chosen depending on the findings of the analysis. The action plan must be completed as required.</i></p>			
<input type="checkbox"/> No major change in the activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Adjust activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue with activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Stop and reconsider activity
<p><b>Please explain how you have reached your conclusion</b></p>			
<p></p>			

**SECTION 4****ACTION PLAN**

Action No.	What is the negative / adverse impact identified?	Actions required to reduce / mitigate / eliminate the negative impact	Resources required	Responsible officer(s)	Target completion date

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**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The responsibility for establishing and maintaining the monitoring arrangements of the EIA action plan lies with the service completing the EIA. These arrangements should be built into the performance management framework.

Monitoring arrangements for the completion of EIAs will be undertaken by the Corporate Equality & Diversity Group and the oversight of the action plans will be undertaken by the Management Accountability Framework.

If applicable, where will the EIA Action Plan be monitored?	<i>e.g. via Service Management Team; Service Leadership Team; Programme Area Meetings</i>
How often will the EIA Action Plan be reviewed?	<i>e.g. quarterly as part of the MAF process</i>
When will the EIA be reviewed?	<i>It should be reviewed at least every 3 years to meet legislative requirements</i>
Who is responsible for carrying out this review?	

<b>Author Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Head of Service/Director Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the full EIA, the responsibility for the associated Action Plan (if applicable) and the responsibility to publish the completed full EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
<b>Departmental E&amp;D Lead Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.



## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION



**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Growth and Development

**LEAD OFFICERS:** Strategic Director of Growth & Development

**DATE:** Friday, 29 March 2024

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Growth and Development  
Finance and Governance

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** Blackburn Central;

**SUBJECT: Purchase by Agreement of an Individual Residential Property at 7 Coleridge Street, Blackburn. BB2 2NL**

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To seek approval to purchase the above long-term empty property by agreement as part of the Council's Empty Property Strategy to reduce the number of long-term empty properties and provide much needed accommodation for the Borough.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

Upon being satisfied that:

- a) it would contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough;
- b) there is a compelling case in the public interest in bringing empty properties back into use.
- c) sufficient funds exist for carrying the resolution into effect.

2.1 Authorise the Strategic Director for Growth and Development to agree terms for the acquisition by agreement, therefore negating the requirement to use compulsory purchase powers to ensure that this property is brought back into use.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of the Council's commitment to bringing empty properties back into use, this property has been evaluated using the priority scoring matrix (Appendix 1). It scores highly due to the fact that the property has been empty since August 2022 and is currently in a poor state of repair.

3.2 The proposed purchase by agreement site is outlined in red on the attached plan (Appendix 2).

3.3 This pavement fronted mid-terraced property is situated in the Blackburn Central ward of the Borough and is set in a residential street consisting of similar properties. This terraced block formed part of the Griffin Renewal Area where 165 properties were identified for clearance and others benefitted from grant funded schemes that improved the external appearance of each row of terraced houses.

- 3.4 The terraced row containing this property was identified as requiring action in the longer term, however, the removal of Housing Market Renewal funding by Central Government resulted in the inability to complete the renewal area, leaving the terraced row in its original condition.
- 3.5 The property is situated adjacent to the Griffin phase 2 development site which has been identified for multi-tenure housing. It is essential that the appearance of the property is improved prior to the commencement of build on the site which will attract potential buyers to the area. In its current condition, the property would contribute to a negative impression of the area as a whole.
- 3.6 The property has stood empty since August 2022 and is in a poor state of repair. The external condition is poor and neglected, which is having a negative impact on the local neighbourhood.
- 3.6 The property has been the subject of complaints regarding its condition from both local Councillors and residents, including.
- The general poor condition and appearance of the building
  - The fact the property continues to remain empty.
  - Fly tipping in and around the rear yard.
- 3.7 Substantial efforts have been made to contact the owner to encourage him to bring the property back into use. However, his personal circumstances require that the property be sold quickly. A purchase by agreement in this case will allow the Council to ensure that it is refurbished to a good standard and re-occupied in a timely manner.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

- 4.1 Tackling empty properties supports the key priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan and the Empty Property Strategy.
- 4.2 There are currently around 2,771 empty properties (March 2024) accounting for 4.4% of the total housing stock in the Borough, of which 1,826 (2.9%) are classified as empty and unfurnished with 952 (1.5%) of those homes classified as long-term empty homes (over 6 months) with 327(0.52%) of those being empty for over 2 years. Whilst most properties will only be empty for a short time, others have been empty for a long time and need to have action taken to remedy this.
- 4.3 Continued efforts are required to ensure that properties are empty for a minimum period of time and the Council's message that long term empty properties will not be tolerated continues to be communicated.
- 4.4 There are currently no grant funding opportunities available to support empty homes refurbishment (previous HCA initiatives ended in March 2015). Direct support and signposting is offered to help owners to bring their properties back into use. Where owners are unwilling or unable to bring their properties back into use, enforcement action is considered to be the most appropriate course of action to be taken.
- 4.6 Empty properties in the borough can have negative environmental impacts on neighbourhoods in addition to being a wasted housing resource. At neighbourhood level, empty properties attract fly tipping, crime, arson and nuisance. It is a priority to tackle these problems through enforcement as part of the wider effort to improve neighbourhoods and prevent blight.
- 4.7 Bringing empty properties back into use creates extra accommodation for rent or sale and could also generate additional income for the Council via New Homes Bonus (NHB) payment.

- 4.8 The costs will be funded from the Neighbourhood Intervention Fund which is part of the Council's Housing Capital Programme; there are sufficient uncommitted funds available within the programme to support the acquisition of this individual property.
- 4.9 Once acquired, the property will be offered for sale via a local estate agent to the highest bidder with preference given to buyers who intend to owner/occupy the property once renovated. A building licence will be granted to the buyer and formal sale is completed once the property has been renovated to the Council's required standard. This approach also encourages the use of local labour and local spend.
- 4.10 To date, 33 properties have been acquired either by purchase by agreement or compulsory purchase through the Neighbourhood Intervention Project. This has facilitated the renovation and re-occupation of some of the most problematic properties across the Borough and helped to reduce anti-social and criminal activities, which the empty properties attract.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Local Plan Policy CP4: Housing Development highlights that a number of sites of differing sizes and locations are allocated within the Plan to contribute to the Borough's housing supply, along with support for development on urban windfall sites (including underutilised or previously developed land). An allowance has also been included within the Local Plan housing trajectory to account for long term empty properties being brought back into use. As a result, bringing empty homes back into residential use will contribute to the Borough's housing supply.
- 5.2 Bringing housing back into use would increase housing supply in the borough. Properties may be occupied by owner/occupiers or be available as private rented accommodation. It would also free the local community of the problems created by properties standing empty and derelict for such a long time.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The funding for the purchase by agreement is available in the Neighbourhood Intervention Fund which is part of the Council's Housing Capital Programme.
- 6.2 The costs will be funded from the Neighbourhood Intervention Fund which is part of the Council's Housing Capital Programme; there are sufficient uncommitted funds available within the programme to support the purchase of this individual property.
- 6.3 Some revenue budget will be required to fund the subsequent sale of the property. The amount required will be approximately £1,000 for the estate agent's fees. This will be funded from within existing budgets.
- 6.4 Capital receipts from sale of assets funded by the Neighbourhood Intervention Fund are recycled back into the project so that further purchases by agreement or CPO's can be undertaken as and when required.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 If purchase by agreement cannot be secured, under the provisions of section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 the local authority may acquire houses or buildings which may be suitable as houses, together with any land occupied with the houses or buildings. The power is available even if the

ownership of the property is to be transferred to someone else.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Resources needed to purchase the property will be provided by the Empty Properties Team. Some support will be required from the legal team to carry out the conveyancing process.
- 8.2 Some support will be required from the Growth Team's surveyor to carry out a valuation of the property concerned and agree the purchase price.

## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 Comprehensive consultation has been undertaken to understand the impacts of empty properties on local communities. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) supports bringing empty properties back into use. This has also been reflected in the Council's Local Plan which treats empty properties as a valuable resource towards meeting housing need within the borough.
- 10.2 The further development of the Council's Empty Property Strategy has also consulted stakeholders and agencies prior to consideration of further tools to tackle empty properties.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>0.01</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Nicola Fox: Principal Housing Projects Manager</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Empty Property Strategy

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

***This checklist is to be used when you are uncertain if your activity requires an EIA or not.***

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the organisation's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. EIAs should be actively looking for negative or adverse impacts of policies, services and functions on any of the nine protected characteristics.

The checklist below contains a number of questions/prompts to assist officers and service managers to assess whether or not the activity proposed requires an EIA. Supporting literature and useful questions are supplied within the [EIA Guidance](#) to assist managers and team leaders to complete all EIAs.

<b>Service area &amp; dept.</b>	Growth & Development	<b>Date the activity will be implemented</b>	02/04/2024
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<b>Brief description of activity</b>	Purchase by Agreement of Individual Residential Property at 7 Coleridge Street, Blackburn. BB2 1NL
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Answers favouring doing an EIA	Checklist question	Answers favouring not doing an EIA
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does this activity involve any of the following: - Commissioning / decommissioning a service - Budget changes - Change to existing Council policy/strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Does the activity impact negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Is there a sufficient information / intelligence with regards to service uptake and customer profiles to understand the activity's implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	<b>Does this activity:</b> Contribute towards unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity creates or increases disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Reduce equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity fail to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure	Foster poor relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function prevents people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>FOR = 0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>AGAINST = 6</b>

**Will you now be completing an EIA?**

Yes

No

The EIA toolkit can be found [here](#)

<b>Assessment Lead Signature</b>	Nicola Fox
<b>Checked by departmental E&amp;D Lead</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Date</b>	19/03/2024

<b>Name of the activity being assessed</b>				
<b>Directorate / Department</b>		<b>Service</b>		<b>Assessment Author</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing activity?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<b>Responsible manager / director for the assessment</b>		
<b>Date EIA started</b>	Click here to enter a date.	<b>Implementation date of the activity</b>	Click here to enter a date.	

**SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY**

<b>How was the need for this activity identified?</b> i.e. Why are we doing this activity?			
<b>What is the activity looking to achieve?</b> <b>What are the aims and objectives?</b>			
<b>Services currently provided</b> (if applicable)			
<b>Type of activity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget changes <input type="checkbox"/> Change to existing activity	<input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning	<input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input type="checkbox"/> Other [ <a href="#">please state here</a> ]

**SECTION 2 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER**

**What resources will support in undertaking the equality analysis and impact assessment?**

*Please identify additional sources of information you have used to complete the EIA, e.g. reports; journals; legislation etc.*

**Who are you consulting with? How are you consulting with them? *(Please insert any information around surveys and consultations undertaken)***

Page 2  
Who does the activity impact upon?\*

Who does the activity impact upon?*	Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Members of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	General public	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Carers or families	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
	Partner organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly			
Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated within the Equality Act (2010)?*  The groups in blue are not protected characteristics (please refer to p. 3 of the guidance notes)	Positive impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
	Negative impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers
	No impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Carers

**\*If no impact is identified on any of the protected characteristics a full EIA may not be required. Please contact your departmental Corporate Equality & Diversity representative for further information.**



Does the activity contribute towards meeting the Equality Act's general Public Sector Equality Duty? *Refer to p.3 of the guidance for more information*  
***A public authority must have 'due regard' (i.e. consciously consider) to the following:***

DUTY	DOES THE ACTIVITY MEET THIS DUTY? EXPLAIN
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act <i>(i.e. the activity removes or minimises disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i>	
Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the activity takes steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i>	
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(i.e. the function encourages people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i>	

<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>Is a full EIA required?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Please explain how you have reached your conclusion <i>(A lack of negative impacts must be justified with evidence and clear reasons, highlight how the activity negates or mitigates any possible negative impacts)</i>			
<p>Page 25</p>			

<b>Author Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Head of Service/Director Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the Initial EIA and the responsibility to publish the completed Initial EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
<b>Departmental E&amp;D Lead Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.

**SECTION 3 – ANALYSIS OF IMPACT**

Does the activity have the **potential** to:

- **positively** impact (benefit) any of the groups?
- **negatively** impact/exclude/discriminate against any group?
- **disproportionately** impact any of the groups?

Explain how this was identified – through evidence/consultation.

Any negative impacts that are identified within the analysis need to be captured within the action plan in **Section 4**

**N.B.** Marriage & Civil Partnership is only a protected characteristic in terms of work-related activities and NOT service provision

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Reasons for positive and/or negative impact</b> Please include all the evidence you have considered as part of your analysis	<b>Action No.</b>
<b>Age</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Race</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Sex</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Vulnerable Groups</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Deprived Communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Carers</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Other [please state]</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>Does the activity raise any issues for community cohesion?</p> <p>Does the activity contribute positively towards community cohesion?</p>	
<p>Does the activity raise any issues in relation to human rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998? Details of which can be found <a href="#">here</a></p>	
<p>Does the activity support / aggravate existing departmental and/or corporate risk?</p>	<p><i>Is the activity on the departmental risk register? If it is not, should it be?</i></p>

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

<p><b>Action following completion of the impact assessment</b></p>			
<p><i>It is important that the correct option is chosen depending on the findings of the analysis. The action plan must be completed as required.</i></p>			
<p><input type="checkbox"/> No major change in the activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Continue with activity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Stop and reconsider activity</p>
<p><b>Please explain how you have reached your conclusion</b></p>			
<p></p>			

**SECTION 4****ACTION PLAN**

Action No.	What is the negative / adverse impact identified?	Actions required to reduce / mitigate / eliminate the negative impact	Resources required	Responsible officer(s)	Target completion date

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The responsibility for establishing and maintaining the monitoring arrangements of the EIA action plan lies with the service completing the EIA. These arrangements should be built into the performance management framework.

Monitoring arrangements for the completion of EIAs will be undertaken by the Corporate Equality & Diversity Group and the oversight of the action plans will be undertaken by the Management Accountability Framework.

If applicable, where will the EIA Action Plan be monitored?	<i>e.g. via Service Management Team; Service Leadership Team; Programme Area Meetings</i>
How often will the EIA Action Plan be reviewed?	<i>e.g. quarterly as part of the MAF process</i>
When will the EIA be reviewed?	<i>It should be reviewed at least every 3 years to meet legislative requirements</i>
Who is responsible for carrying out this review?	

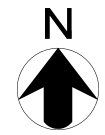
<b>Author Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<b>Head of Service/Director Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the full EIA, the responsibility for the associated Action Plan (if applicable) and the responsibility to publish the completed full EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
<b>Departmental E&amp;D Lead Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	Click here to enter a date.

## PRIORITY SCORING MATRIX

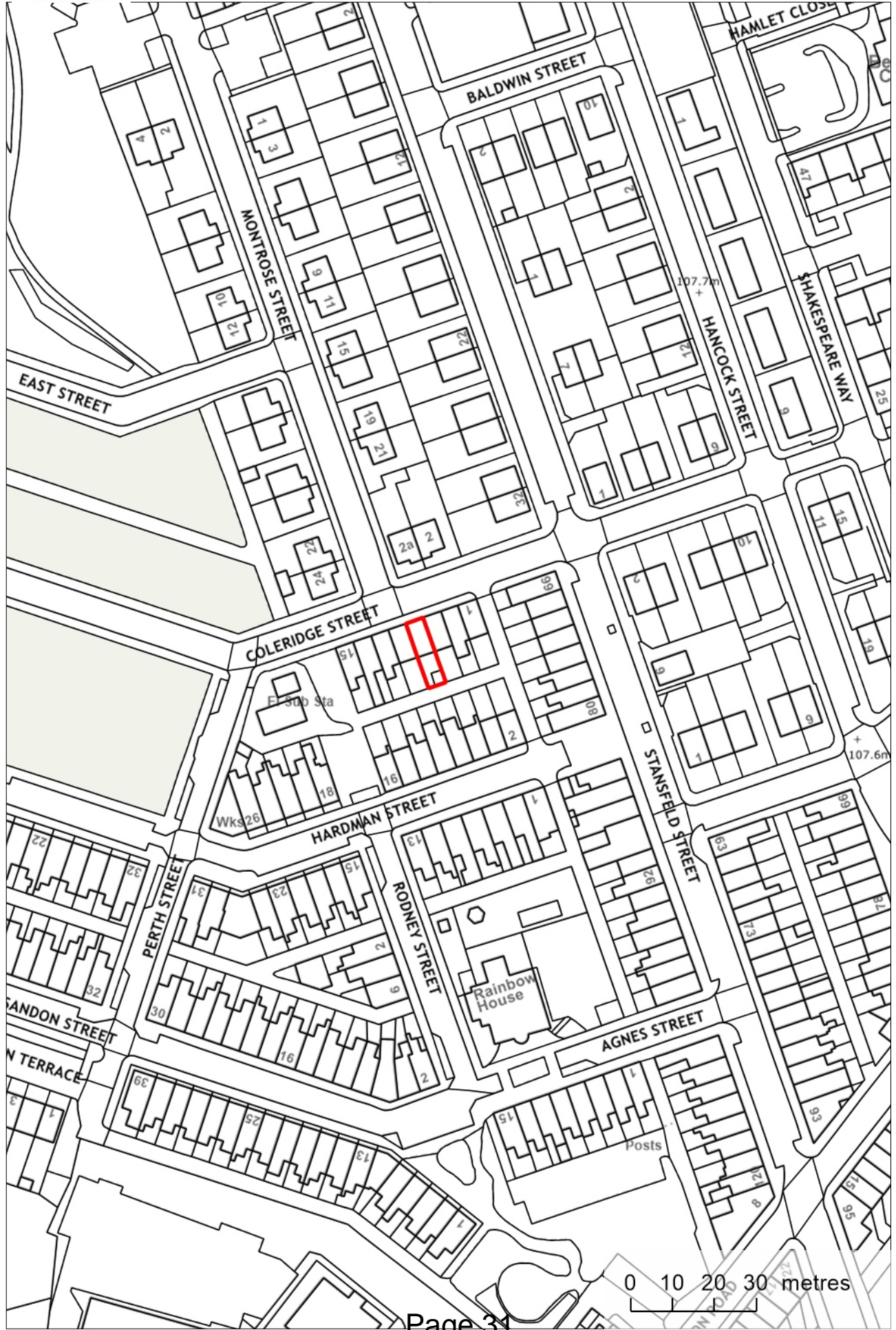
Maximum Points: 38 (must score 26 or over)

<b>Address: 7 Coleridge Street, Blackburn. BB2 2NL</b>		
<b>Score</b>		
How long has the property been Empty?	Less than 6 months	0
	6 months to 2 years	1
	2 – 5 years	2
	Over 5 years	4
Is the property in disrepair?	No	0
	Minor disrepair	1
	Serious disrepair	2
	Severe disrepair	4
Have complaints been received in Respect of this property?	No complaints	0
	Under 3 complaints	1
	5 to 9 complaints	2
	10 complaints or over	4
Is the property within an Intervention area?	No	0
	Yes	2
Is the property within an Investment area?	No	0
	Yes	2
Is the property within a selective Licensing area?	No	0
	Yes	2
Adequate evidence of attempted previous contact with owner?	No	0
	Yes	20
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b><u>29</u></b>

# 7 Coleridge Street, Blackburn



1:1250 @ A4



7 COLERIDGE STREET, BLACKBURN. BB2 1NL

