**Construction Set to Begin in Saltaire, Marking New Chapter of Heritage, Community and Education**

Construction work is set to begin on what is to be known as the ‘James Roberts Centre’ on Caroline Street, marking an important milestone in preserving Saltaire’s heritage, improving public access to the Saltaire Collection, and continuing Sir Titus Salt’s legacy of education.

The new centre, which had been known as the Community, Arts, Heritage & Future Tech Hub but which has now been named after mill owner and philanthropist Sir James Roberts, is mainly being funded through a £6.26million grant from the Government’s Shipley Towns Fund alongside £200k from the Community Infrastructure Levy, will benefit both local people and visitors, and is being delivered by Shipley College.

As custodians of many of Saltaire’s historic buildings and the Collection itself, Shipley College has long been committed to preserving Salt’s legacy through education and community engagement. The new centre builds on that commitment, creating opportunities for residents, visitors and schools to explore Saltaire’s social History.

Currently, the Saltaire Collection is housed within a small, designated space and adjoining store in the Exhibition Building. While it contains thousands of important artefacts, documents and photographs, exhibition space is limited, public access is restricted, and storage conditions are becoming increasingly unsuitable.

The new centre will provide accessible exhibition and interpretation space, helping to protect the collection while allowing more people to engage with its stories. It will also enhance Shipley College’s vocational learning facilities, strengthening the link between heritage and skills development that has defined the site for generations.

A spokesperson for the project said:

“This is about more than preserving buildings and artefacts. It continues Sir Titus Salt’s belief in the power of education and ensures future generations can understand and appreciate the story of Saltaire.

As custodians of the Saltaire Collection and many of the buildings within the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Shipley College recognises its responsibility to protect and share this heritage.

The Caroline Street site has always been a place of learning and opportunity. By creating a new home for the Collection and a welcoming space for people of all ages, we are ensuring that legacy continues long into the future.”

Cllr Andrew Judson, Executive Member for Economy, Regeneration and Planning, Bradford Council said:

"This project is an investment in people and in the future prosperity of the district. High-quality education and skills provision are essential to economic growth, and the new facilities will provide Shipley College with a modern environment that supports students in developing the knowledge and experience they need for successful careers.

“At the same time, the development will increase activity in Saltaire, support local businesses and strengthen the area's appeal as a place to study, work and visit. Projects like this help create vibrant centres and destinations that can attract investment and generate opportunities for local communities.

“We are pleased to have reached this important milestone and look forward to seeing the building progress over the coming months."

Chair of Shipley Towns Fund Gill Thornton said:

“The start of construction is a significant moment for Saltaire, and for the Shipley Towns Fund programme. This is another example of a towns fund project which will have a lasting impact and create education and training opportunities for a stronger future for people throughout the area.

“Bringing together Shipley College and the Saltaire Collection in a single purpose-built facility is an innovative approach that connects learning, culture and community. It will create opportunities for people of all ages to engage with Saltaire's remarkable history while ensuring that this nationally important collection is more accessible than ever before for generations to come.

“It is hugely encouraging to see years of planning and collaboration now becoming a reality, and I look forward to seeing the benefits this project will bring for residents, students and visitors alike."

During construction, local residents and businesses will receive regular updates on progress, access arrangements and any expected disruption.

Heritage-themed hoardings will be installed around the site featuring historical information, artist impressions and details on how to follow the project’s progress.

The College is proudly supported by their design and construct partners, 3xa Design, Batty France, Dudley Consulting Engineers, Nexus Allied, Spring and Company and Artium Construction.

Further information will be available at: saltaire.info

**ENDS**

For more information about the project contact: newcentre@shipley.ac.uk