

# Built Heritage Strategy 2016-2020

## A Future for The Past

# Blackpool Built Heritage Strategy 2016-2020

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## 1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

### 1.1 Introduction

Blackpool has a wealth of incredibly diverse heritage assets some of which are of national and international significance. Everyone has heard of Blackpool, and the town holds memories for so many people nationally and internationally. Blackpool Council continues to be proud of this unique heritage as the epitome of the British holiday resort.

Blackpool Council itself plays an important role in the management of that historic environment. It does so both as a major property holder, responsible for its own buildings and open spaces and as the local planning authority.

This pride and confidence in the heritage of the town was underlined by the Council's purchase in 2010 of two of Blackpool's most significant historic buildings; Blackpool Tower and Blackpool Winter Gardens. These buildings are an important part of the resort's ability to constantly re-invent itself. But as we regenerate and rebuild our town for the future, we must remember our past as well, and celebrate the best of it.

Understanding and valuing where our communities have come from and how they have grown is a critical part of residents' pride in Blackpool. We want to ensure that our exceptional heritage is recognised, valued, enhanced, explained and made accessible to as many people as possible.

Even more importantly, the Council wants local communities to be included in decision making processes and in projects that develop greater understanding of the town's past and their pride in local neighbourhoods.

### 1.2 Background

The Council's previous Heritage Strategy (2006-2010) paved the way for a number of key improvements, not least the provision of dedicated officers and the formation of community groups to further the aims of the strategy. This new strategy will re-visit some of the objectives of the 2006/10 strategy but will focus very specifically on Built Heritage.

This focus is in response to the enormous progress made in protecting and enhancing the historic built environment in the last eight years, including the Heritage Lottery funded Townscape Heritage Initiative and more recently with the Designation Review programme. The Designation Review was the result of a number of projects aimed at understanding the historic built environment of the town, not least the programme of townscape characterisation reports commissioned by the Council in 2008 to better understand the historic built environment in Blackpool.

These reports were part funded by English Heritage and SRB (Single Regeneration Budget) monies and were initially prepared to support Blackpool's World Heritage Site application. Whilst Blackpool's nomination for World Heritage Site Status didn't move forward, the studies commissioned for it revealed a lot more about Blackpool's built heritage than was expected.

The recommendations coming out of the characterisation reports started new projects like the creation of a 'local list'. This has now been completed and currently, over 250 buildings are protected with 'local list' designation. The recommendation for the creation of new conservation areas at Raikes Hall and Foxhall were also taken up and have now been completed.

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In addition, proposals to expand our existing conservation areas are also now being actioned, but all of this needs a framework to give direction to the overall goals and to keep the public (and developers) informed about what the Council is doing and what the impact is on them.

### 1.3 So what is the Built Heritage Strategy?

The Built Heritage Strategy sets out how we intend to manage the challenges of caring for our historic built environment over the next five years.

It provides information on what Blackpool's built heritage assets are, what kinds of designation we have and what these designations mean. It will also help the Council monitor and manage heritage assets more effectively through improved monitoring and enforcement.

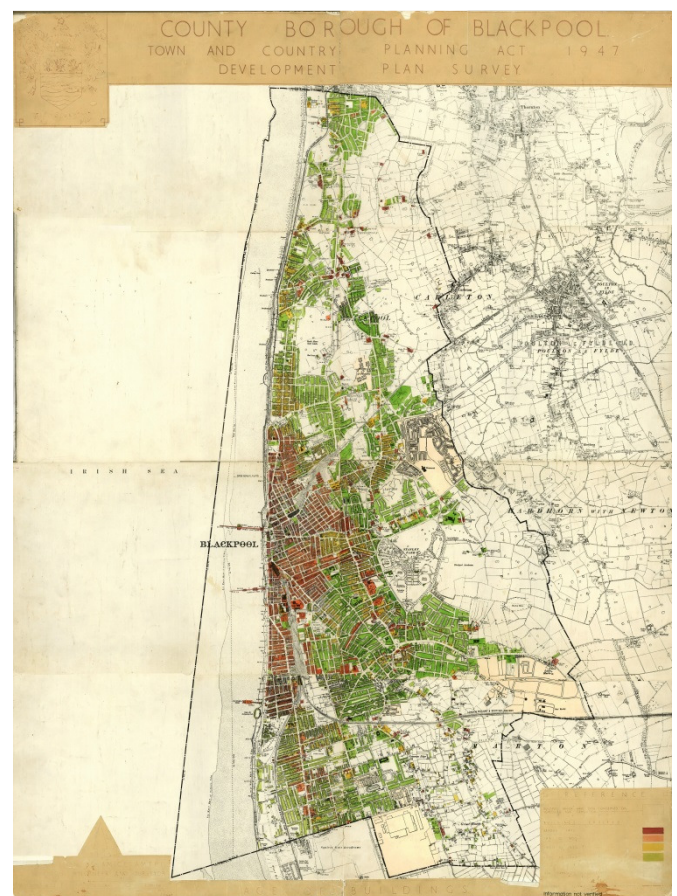
Blackpool's heritage assets include listed and locally listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas as well as sites of archaeological interest and definitions for all the above can be found in section 3 of this document.

Crucially, about 25% of all the built heritage assets in Blackpool are owned by Blackpool Council including the three biggest; Blackpool Tower, Blackpool Winter Gardens and Stanley Park. Other buildings owned by the Council include schools, libraries, local parks and cemeteries. This does create real challenges in terms of managing and funding sensitive change but it also allows the Council to put exemplary management at the core of its policies.

The format of the Strategy is straightforward, first addressing general aims and objectives, then moving on to the importance of Blackpool's built heritage in the wider context.

This is followed by a review of the law that governs the historic built environment and the policies which guide the application of the law, with a summary of the statutory and national amenity bodies – and those of a more local nature – who have a direct interest in the conservation and management of the historic environment.

The role of the Council in planning and development is also discussed and the Strategy then reviews the heritage assets of the Borough identifying particular issues relating to them. Emerging from this broad review are the 'themes' which identify the principal issues that the strategy will address and subsequently turn into specific actions for implementation.



**Fig 1. A map created by the Planning Department of Blackpool Borough Council in 1947 in response to the Town and Country Planning act. The map shows the age of all buildings in Blackpool after WWII, the red and orange sections being the earliest developed areas.**

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## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

### 2.1 Overview and Vision

The introduction outlined some of the general issues relating to the preparation of the Strategy, but it has a specific overall *aim* that can be expressed in the form of a single *Vision Statement*, namely:

**‘To ensure that the distinctive heritage of Blackpool is fully appreciated and recognised and that this strategy and associated action plan will seek to protect, conserve and enhance its built heritage for the overall benefit of the community’**

In the context of the Vision Statement, the objectives of the strategy are:

- To bring about an understanding of the significance of Blackpool’s built heritage in a local, regional and national context and to create a framework of protection for its buildings, monuments and open spaces.
- To bring about a general awareness of the meaning of ‘heritage asset’ in the context of the Strategy and to affirm the Council’s commitment to protecting existing and potential assets that together comprise the built heritage of the town.
- To promote a general awareness of legislation, planning policy and the important responsibilities and roles of owners, the local authority and national bodies and organisations in built heritage matters.

- To promote active community participation in heritage issues and to encourage local groups already involved in heritage to offer practical support in delivering the objectives of the strategy by working in partnership with the Council and other agencies.

These objectives will be delivered through a series of actions organised into three themes which reflect the issues and opportunities in distinct areas and each with actions attached. These themes are:

- 1) **Protecting and Conserving Built Heritage**
- 2) **Community Participation**
- 3) **Advocacy and Promotion**

### 2.2 Why have a Built Heritage Strategy?

One of the main reasons for the Strategy is to promote a greater appreciation of the extent of the built heritage of the town. It’s essential to understand that the built environment never stands still and is always the subject of pressures for change. There will always be a tension in balancing the protection of built heritage with the demand for development.

As a result, the Strategy and the subsequent action plan seek to find a way of reconciling these often conflicting needs. More than anything else though, the Strategy is aimed at ensuring that the public are fully engaged, not only with forming the Strategy but in delivering it as well. Only by ensuring engagement through the whole process will its objectives have wider public support.

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Blackpool Council also has a legal obligation to monitor the condition of all the heritage assets in the town. Where it owns buildings it has legal responsibilities as an owner and where buildings are owned privately it is responsible for helping owners manage change appropriately through planning and listed building consent.

In the past, illegal and inappropriate changes have been made to important buildings, often because owners are not clear on their legal responsibilities. Over many years, this has resulted in a decline in the condition and quality of the historic built environment. To combat this, the Strategy will tackle issues like sharing guidance and research to help owners and developers achieve the best out of historic buildings.

Until 2015 Blackpool only had two conservation areas and has less than fifty listed buildings. Lack of investment, and in some cases too much poor quality change over many years, has left the historic built environment vulnerable to the scale of change now required to improve social and business infrastructure in the town.

So much has been lost even since the 1980's that policies are now required for the protection and enhancement of what remains. But these policies will need to recognise the very genuine need for change now faced by Blackpool in the 21<sup>st</sup> century including the pressing need for quality housing and hotel accommodation to serve the local community and still vibrant tourism offer.

Visitors are also an important factor in supporting the town's built heritage. Tourists (both leisure and business) help to support and sustain the character of the places they visit through the money they spend.

Their spending provides valuable sustainable economic support, which in turn often drives the investment needed to maintain the quality and appearance of buildings and places. Good cases in point are Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens where profit made by Blackpool Council is only spent on the buildings and the service they provide. This in turn is important to the community from a social, cultural, economic and environmental point of view through small business growth, jobs and environmental improvements that encourage more positive change.

## 2.3 How the Strategy has been developed

The protection and enhancement of the built heritage of Blackpool is an important part of the Council's wider vision for the development of the town. Planning policies and individual projects like the restoration of Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens highlight this commitment. However, the development of this Strategy should be viewed as a very real commitment to take a more comprehensive and coordinated view towards protecting and managing the built heritage of neighbourhoods within Blackpool and not just as a series of actions focused on the town centre.

This strategy closely follows the format developed by Fylde Borough Council who have kindly agreed to the use of the format they developed in partnership with statutory and amenity bodies in 2013. The Council's Cabinet approved the preparation of the Heritage Strategy in April 2014 and delegated its preparation to the Built Heritage and Conservation Department. The team were supported by Senior Officers of the Council who are directly or indirectly engaged in built heritage and conservation matters or working with issues that affect neighbourhoods.



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## 3 THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILT HERITAGE

### 3.1 National Importance

The following sections of the document will outline how built heritage has been protected at a national level through various pieces of legislation, and how these then apply to Blackpool. Despite changes in interpretative guidance it is unlikely that the core legislation governing the historic built environment will change to any great degree.

With the Localism Act of 2011, a lot of emphasis has recently been placed on local decision making and involving the public in planning for the future and this has created a greater interest in heritage and the amenities and buildings that local people value.

The historic built environment has now been recognised as having significant economic benefits not just from the point of view of the visitor economy, but also as a catalyst for regeneration and development. Positive planning policies and creative regeneration strategies, along with pro-active developers, have been pivotal in bringing about creative building and area based refurbishment schemes offering significant community benefits.

The quality of historic built environment is also often said to promote 'civic pride', acting as a reminder of how a place has evolved historically and its reasons for existing. It is often associated with adding to the quality of life for residents and promoting destinations for visitors. Undoubtedly, Blackpool's built heritage presents a huge resource which is of major benefit to the nation and its protection and conservation is of real importance.

### 3.2 Local Importance

The value of built heritage to the national economy is considerable. Visitors from around the world are drawn to the UK's historic cities and heritage tourist attractions. This is also the case in Blackpool where visitors are often drawn directly (or in some cases indirectly) to the great historic entertainment complexes or attractions. Many of these visits are made for reasons other than heritage, but they offer a unique opportunity to tell the story of Blackpool and its remarkable history.

The value of the visitor economy to Blackpool cannot be understated and the key historic assets of the borough (Pleasure Beach, Tower and Winter Gardens) are considered to be an important element in contributing to this value. Protecting and enhancing the quality of the built heritage of the Borough is therefore underpinned by a strong economic justification. The promotion of Blackpool is inextricably bound up with its heritage offer and this can be (and is often) used to market its unique and special character.

### 3.3 Heritage in the context of the Strategy

The term 'heritage' can be interpreted rather broadly and can be used to include art, culture, traditions relating to the development of a community, buildings, sport and language. However, for the purposes of this strategy it refers to the built environment and the physical features that it contains namely buildings, designed landscapes, historic infrastructure and archaeology.

Blackpool has heritage which falls into all the standard categories except recorded shipwrecks, battlefields and ancient monuments.

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## 3.4 Heritage 'Assets'

The built heritage of the Borough contains a rich and varied collection of areas, sites, buildings and other features. Individually and in many cases collectively, they are known as 'heritage assets'.

The Government's planning policy identifies a heritage asset as: "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include *designated* heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority through measures like *local listing*. (*Annex 2: Glossary, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012*).

## 3.5 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are recognised as being of national significance. They are 'listed'; that is they appear on a national list maintained by Historic England (formerly English Heritage). Locations are periodically reviewed and buildings selected although they can also be 'spot listed' on an individual basis upon a specific request to English Heritage, with priority being given to buildings at risk of significant deterioration or demolition.

'Listing' marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that care can be taken in change or development.

In considering change or alteration to a listed building, consent is required from the local planning authority. It is a legal requirement that special attention is given to assessing how the development will affect architectural and historic character of the building, including its setting.

In some cases expert bodies or organisations are required to be consulted and the views offered taken into account in reaching a decision.

Historic England are responsible for maintaining the 'List' of buildings of architectural or historical significance and are also responsible for defining the criteria under which buildings can or should be listed.

The criteria for 'listing' are identified as:

- **Age and rarity:** most buildings built before 1700 which survive in anything like their original condition are listed, as are most of those built between 1700 and 1840. The criteria has become tighter with time, so that buildings built within the last 30 years have to be exceptionally important to be listed, and under threat. A building has to be over 10 years old to be eligible for listing
- **Architectural interest:** buildings which are nationally important for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; also important examples of particular building types and techniques
- **Historic interest:** this includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history
- **Close historical association** with nationally important people or events
- **Group value:** especially where buildings are part of an important architectural or historic group or are a fine example of town planning (such as squares, terraces and model villages)



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Buildings are 'listed' according to their relative importance in the following way:

- **Grade I** buildings are of exceptional interest, often considered to be internationally important; only 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I
- **Grade II\*** buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II\*
- **Grade II** buildings are nationally important and of special interest; 92% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing relevant for a home owner.

At present there are 42 listed buildings in Blackpool, the majority of which are Grade II. Blackpool Tower is Grade I and a small number have a Grade II\* status. The buildings are varied in type and include private houses, churches, vernacular cottages and structures such as boundary walls and monuments. Blackpool's most remarkable collection of buildings though are those concerned with entertainment: Blackpool Tower and Blackpool Winter Gardens possibly form the most important pair of nineteenth century entertainment complexes in Britain.

Over the years, many of the buildings have been altered and adapted, most through listed building consent approvals. In the case of listed buildings, the interior is often as important as the exterior and so it is essential that owners and occupiers of these buildings are aware of their statutory obligations in respect of *any* planned changes. In view of the importance of these buildings, it is essential that the Council has an up to date inventory of all its listed buildings.

One of the principal reasons is so that any previous changes can form a baseline from which future changes can be then considered. Another reason is so that the 'significance' of the building – its historical value, setting, external appearance and internal qualities - can be assessed and recorded. This will assist significantly in the future assessment of development proposals that may impact on its character.

It is also important to offer further guidance for potential developers who propose alterations to listed buildings. To facilitate this, jargon free local guidance should be developed which outlines the nature and significance of listed buildings, legal requirements, guidance on assessing development impact on a building's significance and the process of managing listed building consent applications.

Blackpool is fortunate that it does not contain a large number of buildings that are considered 'to be at risk' due to their poor condition. However, the Grade II\* Winter Gardens and the Grade II\* Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes do fall into that category and are currently included on the Heritage at Risk list compiled by English Heritage. Improvements have been made at both buildings though and their futures are now looking more secure.

Historic England is now also concerned that the condition of Grade II listed building stock may be deteriorating. With reduced resources and a limited remit (Historic England will normally only advise on Grade II\* and Grade I buildings) the statutory body has been unable to comprehensively review changes to and/or deterioration of such buildings. To combat this they recently launched a scheme to try and involve local groups in capturing information

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about the condition of local Grade II listed buildings stock.

This is intended to result in what is effectively a list of Grade II buildings at risk. The Council is committed to working with external partners to capture this data and has already begun engaging with local groups with the capacity to help out in this area.

### 3.6 Conservation Areas

These are areas as opposed to individual buildings with the concept first being introduced in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Conservation Areas are defined in the planning acts as: “*Areas of special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*” At the present time, there are over 9000 areas designated nationally.

Conservation area designations are decided locally and they vary in form and type and can include historic town centres, villages and suburban areas. In these areas additional planning controls apply and local planning authorities are statutorily obliged to prepare proposals for their future management based on an appraisal of their character. The appraisal and management plan aspect of designation should include public engagement.

It is also a requirement of local authorities to review their areas from time to time to ascertain whether additional areas should be designated, bearing in mind that designation should be selective and meet the statutory requirement – namely constituting an area of *special character*. There are four designated conservation areas in Blackpool and these are varied in character. Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area is the largest covering its commercial centre with its historic street pattern, and contains impressive

groups of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century public and commercial buildings.

Stanley Park is different in character, its designation intended to preserve the park and its buildings alongside the plots laid out by celebrated garden designer and Town Planner Thomas Mawson, who created a Masterplan that allowed a 256 acre park to be created through the sale of surrounding plots. The Town Centre and Stanley Park Conservation Areas were designated in 1984, although the Town Centre Conservation Area was reviewed and extended in early 2015.

As part of its legal obligation to review and update, the Council carried out a series of intensive characterisation studies of nine areas of the borough believed to have been either early areas of development or to have special significance in terms of quality and/or distinctiveness. This resulted in a five year project (the Designation Review) which looked at the creation of a local list of architecturally or historically significant buildings, the expansion of existing conservation areas and the creation of new conservation areas.

As a result, Foxhall and Raikes Hall Conservation Areas were designated in February 2015. Foxhall is the smallest conservation area and is based around the streets which made up one of the oldest boarding house and mixed use districts in the town. Raikes Hall Conservation Area is one of the best preserved examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban housing in the borough, built on the site of Blackpool’s first major pleasure garden incorporating the 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion of the landowning Hornby family.

The Council prepared appraisals and management plans for the oldest conservation areas some time

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ago. Although still relevant, the existing documents are in need of updating.

Stanley Park Conservation Area is the subject of Article 4 Directions that bring within control certain forms of development, which otherwise would not require planning permission. The 'directions' have just been strengthened and updated to include modern technologies like solar panels, satellite dishes and charger points for electric cars. However, future appraisals and management plans would assess the appropriateness for new or revised article 4 directions, tree preservation orders and the potential for other controls including those that limit advertisements on commercial buildings.

Advice to property owners, in the form of leaflets on the Council's website, has proved useful, although this provision is limited at present. There is a very real value in providing more detailed guidance and information in relation to conservation issues and the Built Heritage Strategy and Action Plan actively promotes this. Historic England offers practical advice on the process of appraisals and management plans including guidance which is suitable for volunteers who may wish to be engaged in the process.

### 3.7 Historic Parks and Gardens

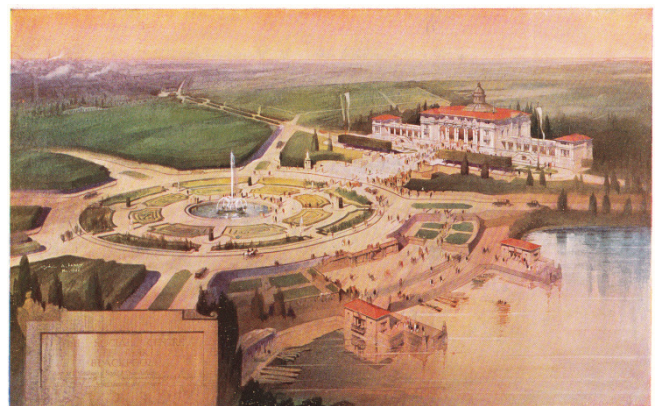
The Historic England 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special Historic Interest in England', established in 1983 currently identifies over 1,600 sites assessed to be of national importance. The sites are graded relative to their importance. Grade I sites are of exceptional interest. Grade II\* sites are particularly important, of more than special interest and Grade II sites are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them. Their significance can also be the result of its rarity, age, layout features and associations with

famous landscape architects involved with the design.

The majority of the sites identified on the Register are awarded a Grade II status. Around 27% of the 1,600 sites are awarded a Grade II\* status and a further 9% are classified as Grade I.

Any proposals which affect the character of the park or garden should result in consultation with the Garden History Society (see below). In the case of Grade I or Grade II\*, Historic England will also be consulted. Local authorities are also encouraged to consider the potential for the local designation of parks and gardens and include them in a local list and incorporate policies in their Local Plan aimed at their protection and enhancement.

Many nationally designated historic parks and gardens have been the recipients of funding, including that provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, aimed at restoring them to their former glory. Engaging the community in preparing plans and strategies for the long term sustainability of historic parks and gardens is an integral part of the process for potential recipients of grant aid.



**Fig. 2** The original designs for Stanley Park demonstrate that the Park was more than just an open green space, it was intended as a social and cultural facility for the whole town. A huge site of nearly three hundred acres was assembled by the local authority, who then sold plots around the edges for high quality housing. This financed the creation of the park itself, now around 256 acres and

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boasting a County standard cricket ground, Zoo and Golf Course.

Blackpool only has one park which is included on the National Register. Stanley Park is listed at Grade II\* and has an area of about 256 acres incorporating a golf course, zoo, model village and county standard cricket ground.

The Park forms the core of a conservation area that incorporates the surrounding layout of streets in recognition of the overall Masterplan for its creation by Thomas Mawson in 1923. Between 2005 and 2007, a major £5m restoration, part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund was undertaken which restored its Italian and rose gardens, formal areas and buildings. The Park contains several locally listed buildings and a range of historic landscape features and sculpture.

In addition to the parks and gardens included within the national list, there are two local parks included on the 'Local List'. Devonshire Road Rock Gardens is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century park with a two level pond and waterfall system at its heart. It also contains an attractive folly-like pavilion called the Vista with views across to the Trough of Bowland.

Watson Road Park appears on the list not because of its landscaping but because of the significance of its archaeological potential. Under the park lies a complete series of well documented WWI training trenches which occupy an area equal to that of the park itself.

### 3.8 Scheduled Monuments

A schedule has been kept since 1882 of monuments considered to be of national importance by the government. The current legislation, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, supports a formal

system of Scheduled Monument Consent for any work to a designated monument.

Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground. There are over 200 'classes' of monuments on the schedule, and they range from prehistoric standing stones and burial mounds, through to the many types of medieval site - castles, monasteries, abandoned farmsteads and villages - to the more recent results of human activity, such as collieries.

Scheduling is applied only to sites of national importance, and even then only if it is the best means of protection. Only deliberately created structures, features and remains can be scheduled. The schedule now has 19,717 entries (about 31,400 sites). There are 1 million or so archaeological sites or 'find spots' of all types currently recorded in England.

Scheduling is reserved for carefully selected sites, which create a representative sample of sites from different historical periods. Specific permission is required for any development that may intrude or affect the significance of an ancient monument. At the present time there are no designated Scheduled Monuments in Blackpool and so there will be no specific reference to them in the Action Plan. If a site were to be scheduled in the future, then the requirement of the relevant acts would be followed with the necessary consultation carried out including the involvement of English Heritage.

### 3.9 Registered Battlefields and Protected Wreck Sites

The Historic England Register of Historic Battlefields identifies 43 important English battlefields. Its purpose is to offer them protection and to promote a better understanding of their significance.



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Battlefields are significant in four ways:

- As turning points in English history, for example the Norman Conquest which followed the Battle of Hastings in 1066, or the turmoil of the Civil Wars in the seventeenth century.
- Tactics and skills of war still relevant to the defence of the country evolved on historic battlefields
- Battlefields are the final resting place for thousands of unknown soldiers, nobles and commoners alike, whose lives were sacrificed in the making of the history of England
- Where they survive, battlefields may contain important topographical and archaeological evidence which can increase our understanding of the momentous events of history which took place on their soil.

In considering planning applications that may affect the site of a Registered Battlefield, planning authorities must take into account the effects of development on the significance of the particular site. The Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) allows the Government to designate a wreck to prevent uncontrolled interference. Designated sites are identified as being likely to contain the remains of a vessel, or its contents, which are of historical, artistic or archaeological importance. It is a criminal offence to undertake particular operations in a designated area without a license granted by the appropriate Secretary of State.

At the present time, there are no known Battlefields within Blackpool or historically significant Wrecks off its coastline.

## 3.10 Local Lists

Local listing seeks to identify buildings and other historic assets that fall short of qualifying for statutory listing but have local historical or architectural significance. The listing itself does not affect any permitted development rights a property may have under planning law, but does make the building's significance a material consideration in planning consent. Local lists can also be used to identify significant local heritage assets to support the development of Local Plans.

Blackpool has recently implemented a local list which now contains around three hundred entries. The type of built heritage represented varies from agricultural buildings to railway bridges, pubs and hotels as well as historic street furniture and signage. The formation of the list was carried out using the Historic England guidance on criteria and process. An important local dimension was added when the local list for each political ward was approved by the relevant community led Area Forum.



**Fig. 3 Houses on Layton Road. The house on the left probably dates from the late eighteenth century and that on the right from the mid nineteenth century. Blackpool's neighbourhoods are full of architectural surprises and it would be easy to forget that, despite being a primarily Victorian town, it has a much longer history.**

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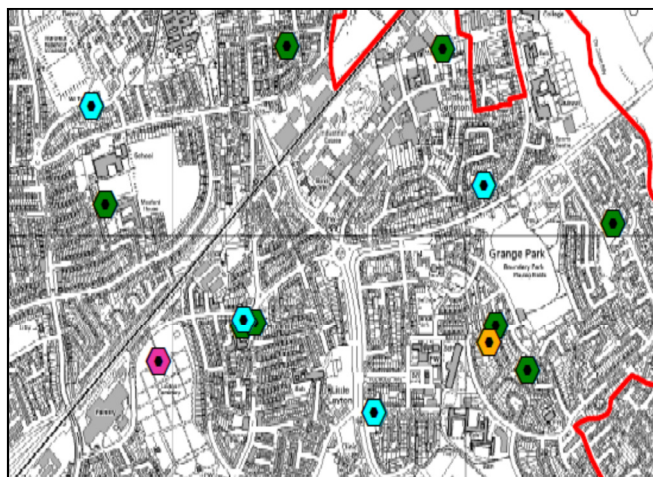
## 3.11 Areas of Archaeological Potential

The success (and massive over subscription) of the recent community archaeology project at Watson Road Park, which uncovered part of the WWI practice trenches under the park, has indicated a strong local interest in archaeology which the Council hopes to encourage further. The strategy will make provision for public involvement of this nature where possible as it brings local people closer to their own heritage and creates a sense of ownership and involvement.

There are other sites within Blackpool which could have archaeological significance. The Council will liaise with Lancashire County Council on these issues, for example, in preparing specific briefs for potential developers in respect of archaeological information required to accompany a planning or listed building application.

Lancashire County Council Archaeological Service's Historic Towns Assessment Report (HTAR) includes mapping that records all local finds and identifies areas of archaeological potential. The Local list also identifies some areas of local archaeological potential and makes provision for some investigation in the event of local development. Development proposals that could affect the character and setting of a historic park or garden are the subject of particular scrutiny if development is proposed which may have an impact on its significance.

This is usually a relatively simple process as the Council's ownership of these assets allows a greater degree of control.



**Fig. 4 Archaeological Potential.** This map section, prepared by the Lancashire County Archaeology Service shows the sites of archaeological finds in Blackpool. Finds date from the prehistoric to medieval and later finds. Future investigations are likely to be focused on any development in and around Foxhall, which was named for the late medieval home of the Tyldesley family and is thought to have been an early area of settlement in the town. Similarly, the site of Layton Hall, a house of the sixteenth century would be of interest if development were to happen in the area where records show it once stood.

## 3.12 Other Structures

Potentially, there are other structures or objects related to public realm that may have historic or architectural interest. These could include monuments, sculptures or historic public realm features like street signs, paving and lighting.

These features have in many cases been identified during the local listing process and will need consideration in terms of protection or relocation to appropriate settings if development is considered.



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## 4 PLANNING, POLICY, PRACTICE & ADVICE

### 4.1 Public interest in heritage

It is generally acknowledged that the built heritage of any town is important from a social, cultural and economic point of view. Research undertaken as an integral part of producing this Strategy - and as part of the development of the Core Strategy - has indicated an overwhelming public interest in the protection of built heritage in Blackpool.

Planning applications which propose development within sensitive areas and to important buildings often provoke significant public interest. Wide and sustained interest in particular projects such as the restoration of Blackpool Winter Gardens and Blackpool Tower are also indicators of this interest. This interest should be harnessed to allow the public to become actively engaged in heritage projects.

### 4.2 The historical role of heritage protection

After huge industrial development during most of the Victorian period, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a change in attitude emerge from some quarters that was critical of the destruction of many historic buildings. A particular critic was William Morris who founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in 1877. After much lobbying, this was followed in 1882 by the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, which offered limited protection but set the scene for later legislation.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the idea of protecting buildings and groups of buildings was to be found in the Housing and Planning Acts of 1923 and 1932. The idea of formally listing buildings was introduced in 1944 and was enshrined in the major post war planning act of 1947.

The formation of the Civic Trust in 1957 and official government publications in the early 1960's culminated in MP Duncan Sandy's drawing up the Civic Amenities Bill of 1966 which became an act in 1967. This act introduced the concept of area based conservation – i.e. conservation areas.

Since 1967, the various Governments have amended legislation, issued policy notes and circulars and the approach to conservation management has been modified over time by case law. However, the basic rules governing heritage protection remain in place.

### 4.3 The legal role of heritage protection

Heritage within the built environment is governed by specific national legislation. At its heart, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (The Act) sets out the powers which are available to the Secretary of State and local planning authorities for the protection of the historic built environment.

The Act sets out the specific responsibilities placed upon local authorities in respect of protecting and enhancing local built heritage as well as specific powers to assist with its protection. Most importantly the Act gives specific power to the Secretary of State to compile lists of buildings of architectural or historic interest (a power almost exclusively handed down to Historic England - see Para. 4.4 below).

The Act also contains a number of powers including the following:-

- *Authorising the serving of Building Preservation Notices and Listed Building Enforcement Notices*
- *Compulsory acquisition of buildings*
- *Repairs and Urgent Works Notices*

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- *The requirement for local planning authorities to have regard to the importance of the listed building in consideration of planning and listed building applications*
- *The duty to designate conservation areas and approve proposals for their preservation and enhancement.*
- *The power to award grants to enhance listed buildings and properties within conservation areas.*

These examples, identifying specific powers within the Act, in addition to other regulations, point to the importance placed on the managing, protection and enhancement of the historic built environment, and today The Act is a centrepiece of planning policy and practice.

These general and specific responsibilities and powers should form the basis of planning policies set out in an approved Local Plan which presents the local planning authority's approach to development within its area including its position regarding listed or locally listed assets.

To help interpret the meaning of the law, successive Governments have published a series of circulars and planning policy statements which advise on policy, practice and procedural issues. When taken together with the Act they set out the approach of the law relating to heritage issues.

## 4.4 National Planning Policy

The most recent significant change in guidance relating to The Act is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and outlines how they should be interpreted and applied. It promotes the concept of *sustainable development*.

The NPPF identifies that the three component elements of sustainable development are;

- promoting and assisting in economic growth;
- promoting socially vibrant communities and environments; and
- contributing to the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment - including the historic environment.

The NPPF sets out clear guidance for local authorities to follow. Specifically, it states that local authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. It notes how heritage assets are irreplaceable and should be conserved appropriately. In drawing together policies, the local authority should consider the economic, social and environmental benefits of conservation and in particular any new development should make a positive contribution to local character.

It is important therefore that in preparing this Strategy and the Council's Local Plan, that the management of heritage assets is recognised as a particularly important issue and that it should be reflected in future policy and practice. It follows that the Strategy (and Local Plan) should identify the extent and importance of local heritage assets and also identifies practical ways to protect them.

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## 4.5 Statutory Bodies

The UK Government has two Statutory Bodies which advise it on aspects of the historic built environment in England. These are:

**Historic England** is the Government's main statutory adviser on the historic built environment. Officially known as the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, it is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Its powers and responsibilities are set out in the National Heritage Act (1983). It is tasked with the preservation and enhancement of the Built Heritage of England for present and future generations.

More specifically, its remit includes:-

- *Advising the Government on the listing of buildings*
- *Maintaining a register 'The National Heritage List for England' e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas.*
- *Recording buildings and conservation areas 'at risk'.*
- *Offering and giving grants to support the conservation of historic buildings and conservation areas.*
- *Giving appropriate advice to local authorities in respect of particular listed buildings and historic places/conservation areas.*
- *Providing advice to Government on heritage matters.*
- *Providing expertise, advice, training on a range of conservation matters.*

The **HELM** programme (Historic Environment Local Management) was set up by (the then) English Heritage in 2004.

HELM was given the task of working with key partners to provide the tools to manage positive change in the historic environment. It provides accessible information, training and guidance to decision makers in local authorities, regional agencies and national organisations whose actions affect heritage assets.

HELM also provided detailed guidance and other advice in respect of a number of issues in connection with the historic environment under five themes; regeneration; the understanding and recording of the historic environment; the character of places; managing and protecting the historic built environment and funding.

HELM has now been absorbed into Historic England but still offer free training programmes and advice.

Historic England has, over the years, taken an active interest in issues relating to conservation of the built heritage in Blackpool. This has included funding the characterisation assessments in 2007/8 which resulted in the Designation Review project which commenced in 2011 and which has prompted a whole series of further projects.

It has been engaged in offering advice on specific applications affecting listed buildings and advising on the proposals for the restoration of important landscapes like Stanley Park. Whilst the remit of Historic England is necessarily strategic in nature, the Council nonetheless views it as a partner in working constructively on conservation issues.

**The Theatres Trust**, the second statutory body was set up in 1976 by an Act of Parliament to 'promote the better protection of theatres for the benefit of the nation'. This makes it the statutory government sponsored consultee on any planning

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application or development involving land on which there is a theatre or which will have an impact on theatre use.

Consequently, local authorities are legally obliged to consult the Trust in any planning application affecting the future of a theatre (or former theatre) or where a theatre is adjacent to or within the land subject to the application.

The Theatres Trust's remit is not constrained to listed or historic theatres. The main object of the Trust is to ensure 'that current and future generations have access to good quality theatres that reflect our cultural life and offer inspiring places to enjoy theatre'. It does this through offering advice direct to both owners and to local planning authorities.

The Theatres Trust also enjoys the same right as Historic England to bring cases to judicial review where local authorities have not consulted or where local decisions are seriously at odds with the view of the Statutory Body.

The Theatres Trust also holds an archive of records and other material for theatres across the country and operates a small grants scheme to encourage improvements within theatres.

## 4.6 Non-Statutory Bodies

**The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** was established in the United Kingdom under the National Lottery Act of 1993. The Fund opened for applications in 1994.

The HLF's activities are often aimed at restoring important elements of the built heritage including buildings, groups or areas of buildings, parks and open spaces with a specific focus on public benefit and long term engagement. Funding is available to projects that promote an

understanding of heritage and its significance, preserve the heritage for the enjoyment of present and future generations and appeal to a wide range of community interests including social and educational benefits.

Grants under the Lottery programmes usually have to be 'match funded' and have strong community support. Bids for funding are competitive within an overall national budget. Lottery grants have been awarded to significant heritage projects within Blackpool with the two notable examples being the restoration of Stanley Park and the recent Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme in the town centre.

Community Groups within the town have also been the recipients of smaller grants for projects related to built heritage.

Whilst not technically an advisory body or a consultee, the Heritage Lottery Fund is a key partner in many schemes affecting the historic built environment and its role has been a crucial part of positive change in Blackpool.

**The National Amenity Societies** are a group of independent organisations, often charities, with responsibility for the promotion and protection of various aspects of the historic environment. There is a legal obligation to consult some or all of these on particular planning applications, particularly in the case of demolition or partial demolition of a listed building.

The national amenity societies are also consulted on policy proposals relating to the historic environment in respect of the formulation of the Local Plan.

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The National Amenity Societies include:

- **The Council for British Archaeology** founded in 1944, is an educational charity working throughout the UK to involve people in archaeology and to promote the appreciation and care of the historic environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The care of ancient and historic buildings, monuments, and antiquities and to improve public education about archaeology are its key objectives.
- **The Ancient Monuments Society** was founded in 1924 "for the study and conservation of ancient monuments, historic buildings and fine old craftsmanship". It is committed not only to campaigning for historic and beautiful buildings, but to furthering the study of them. The Society is unique amongst the Amenity Societies in that buildings of all ages fall within its remit. 'Ancient Monument' is a notoriously ambiguous term, but it is taken to mean any man-made structure of architectural or historical interest including houses, churches, alms-houses and traditional barns. It produces an annual register of listed buildings threatened with demolition.
- **The Georgian Group** was founded in 1937 and is the national charity dedicated to preserving Georgian buildings and gardens generally dating from the era, 1700 to 1837. It is consulted on over 6,000 planning applications a year involving demolition or alterations. Its consultee status gives it an opportunity to comment constructively on proposals and to help owners, architects and planning authorities towards better solutions. Essentially the Group seeks to protect the impressive planning and architectural legacy from the Georgian era.
- **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** was founded in 1877 by William Morris and is involved in all aspects of the survival of buildings which are 'old and interesting'. Its principal concern is the nature of their "restoration" or "repair", because misguided work can be extremely destructive. Essentially, the Society is concerned with ensuring that the design, form and craftsmanship of buildings is understood and protected and that the authenticity of buildings is maintained through careful repair.
- **The Victorian Society** is the champion for the protection of Victorian and Edwardian buildings which it considers are irreplaceable, cherished, diverse, beautiful, familiar and part of everyday life. The Society's aims are to 'conserve', through the saving of Victorian and Edwardian buildings or groups of buildings of special architectural merit, from needless destruction or disfigurement. It seeks to 'involve' through the awakening of public interest in, and appreciation of, the best of Victorian and Edwardian arts, architecture, crafts and design. It also seeks to educate by encouraging the study of these and of related social history and to provide advice to owners and public authorities with regard to the preservation and repair of Victorian and Edwardian buildings and the uses to which they can, if necessary, be adapted.
- **The Twentieth Century Society** (sometimes abbreviated simply as C20) is a British charity which campaigns for the preservation of architectural heritage from

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1914 onwards. It was founded in 1979. The society's interests extend to buildings or artefacts, whether important or humble, rare or commonplace, that characterise twentieth-century Britain. It campaigns for the recognition and protection of important twentieth century buildings.

## 4.7 Other national groups

In addition to the National Amenity Societies, there are other important groups with whom the Council consults on matters affecting the historic built environment.

- **The Garden History Society** is dedicated to the conservation and study of historic designed gardens and landscapes. Through its interventions, advice and casework it has helped save or conserve scores of important gardens. It comments on planning proposals and advises on Heritage Lottery projects relating to the restoration and enhancement of historic parks and gardens.
- **Civic Voice** is the Umbrella Group for civic societies and it supports the networks and actions of Civic Societies and lobbies for the Civic movement in Parliament. Born out of the demise of the national Civic Trust in 2009, the group focuses on highlighting issues and concerns over changing legislation and on greater public involvement in place-making and governance of amenity and locality. Blackpool is currently represented on the Board of Trustees of Civic Voice.
- **The Cinema Theatre Association (CTA)** is the body set up to promote cinemas. Like the Theatres Trust, it concerns itself with good quality cinemas of all

periods, but much of its casework revolves around listed or locally listed examples.

- **The Heritage Alliance** represents the independent heritage sector drawing together heritage charities established for the purposes of protection, preservation, improvement, enhancement or revitalisation of the historic environment.

These national and interest specific amenity societies demonstrate the depth and breadth of interest and involvement in relation to built heritage and the historic environment in general. The Council engages regularly with these bodies proactively, offering updates on general progress and/or issues with historic building preservation in Blackpool and in the consideration of individual development proposals.

They can offer expertise and help identify case studies in relation to particular aspects of built heritage and inform the preparation of policy and guidance which will emerge through the Strategy and subsequently the Action Plan.

## 4.8 The Local Authority

Blackpool Council has to some degree the greatest influence on how its local communities develop and change (outside of national policy issues), and there are a range of factors that influence its decision making. Blackpool Council's Corporate Plan sets the agenda for the work of the Council in the short to medium term. This includes the setting of its priorities and a series of objectives and actions to achieve the desired outputs. The Plan describes how its priorities will be delivered and the milestones and targets associated with its delivery.



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Blackpool Council has two corporate priorities which help direct its policies and how it governs. One of these is; *Maximising Growth and Opportunity across Blackpool*. This includes protecting and enhancing the historic built environment and making it part of the overall economic offer of the town.

There are a number of departments that are responsible for managing elements of the historic built environment and other departments whose day to day work has an impact on the historic built environment of the town. All of these have the power to affect the quality of important buildings, areas and open spaces and all have the responsibility to work towards the Council's corporate priorities.

**Development Management.** Blackpool Council, in undertaking its role as local planning authority, plays an important part in the management of the historic environment.

It is through the planning process (Development Management) supported by the Built Heritage and Conservation Service that much of the public engagement takes place. Decisions made by, or on behalf of the Planning Committee of the Council, take account of public opinion, heritage bodies and amenity organisations.

These decisions also take significant account of local planning policies and supplementary guidance.

The Council takes a proactive role in offering advice to developers and their agents with respect to potential proposals that may affect heritage assets including schemes in conservation areas, potential works involving listed buildings and archaeological sites. Some of the successful

schemes in historic areas have resulted from a positive, partnership approach in establishing the appropriate design criteria for development.

The Council appreciates that developers have – and will have - a major impact on the present and future landscape of the Borough and that they take financially difficult decisions and associated risk. Where the principle of development is appropriate the Council, through the development management process, always seeks to work in partnership with prospective developers. This is on the basis that development is acceptable in principle and that the agreed aim is to produce development that responds positively to historic buildings and the setting of any site.

As set out earlier in this document, there are two basic types of listing: Statutory (those buildings on a list assembled and maintained by Historic England) which are of national importance, and Local (those buildings and other assets buildings on a list assembled and maintained by the local authority) which reflect local significance.

Permission to change, develop or alter statutorily listed buildings is handled through Listed Building Consent. This is a system which mirrors planning consent but requires additional information on how the significance of the building will be protected in any change. The forms for listed Building Consent are similar to those for Planning Permission but there is no charge for processing the forms. If someone is applying for Listed Building Consent they may also need to apply for Planning Permission as well.

**Local listing** is quite different because no separate form is required and the protection offered by Local Listing only applies when Planning Permission is a legal requirement.

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If works do not require planning permission (it is always advisable to check) then they are permitted development rights and no further permissions are required.

Decision making varies from case to case. Where a decision is acceptable in principle to both the Conservation Officer, Planning Officers and Chair of the Planning Committee, decision making can be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer, this is called Delegated Authority.

If the case is particularly difficult or there are objections or differences of opinion, the application will normally be referred to the Planning Committee for decision. The Planning Committee are then able to hear representations direct from all parties and make balanced decisions based on all the information.

In all decision making, the Council takes into account advice from statutory consultees such as Historic England as well as local consultees like the Built Heritage and Conservation Department and Blackpool Civic Trust. The Planning Committee also uses the extensive library of advice notes on offer about development in the historic built environment as well as legal, highways and other internal advice.

**Built Heritage and Conservation** Is the department that advises the Council (generally and specifically) on matters affecting the historic built environment.

It works alongside other departments in providing specific advice to the Executive or in assisting these other departments in making decisions or gathering information.

The areas it has specific responsibility for are:

- Buildings (listed and locally listed)
- Designed Landscapes (registered or locally listed parks and gardens)
- Archaeology (areas of archaeological significance or potential)
- Conservation Areas (areas of special local character or historical significance)
- Advising on infrastructure (changes to highways or major development affecting listed assets or conservation areas)

The department is also responsible for promoting the historic built environment and providing advocacy between the Council and Statutory Bodies, Amenity Societies, Special Interest Groups and major funders. This includes responsibility for informing and consulting with the public on proposals that affect listed buildings or other heritage assets in the town.

**Planning Enforcement** is also critical in managing the historic built environment. They are responsible for enforcing against breaches of planning law and for the enforcement process for listed buildings that can result in criminal damage charges for owners who break the law. Their ability to enforce depends very much on the strength of Council policy on the historic built environment and on the recorded information about listed and locally listed buildings.

**Estates** are another important service. As the Council owns around 25% of all listed and locally listed buildings, the Estates department is responsible for their maintenance and for leasing and inspecting council owned property. As landlords they often have a more powerful role than planning when changes to a rented, listed or locally listed building are being considered through Landlords Consent.

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They also undertake maintenance and repairs to Council properties and are responsible for ensuring all works are appropriate.

**Highways** are a key service which operate almost everywhere within the borough. They are responsible for road, paving and traffic signal maintenance as well as the introduction of new infrastructure relating to regeneration and change. They are also responsible for enforcing highways violations and liaising with utilities companies over infrastructure for telecommunications, electricity and gas, much of which uses highways or public land for cabling or piping, often under roads.

**Parks & Leisure** are responsible for the Grade II\* Registered Stanley Park and the locally listed Watson Road Park and Devonshire Road Rock Gardens. They are also responsible for the historically significant Layton Cemetery with its Grade II listed chapel and the important early crematorium at Carleton. The Parks and Leisure teams have a wide network of Friends groups who work with them to help raise funding or provide a volunteer workforce for maintenance.

## 4.9 Local Strategy & Policy

**The Blackpool Local Plan** for 2012 – 2027 comprises two parts: Part 1 is the *Core Strategy*, which sets out the strategic policies to guide new development, while Part 2 is the *Site Allocations and Development Management policies* document. Part 2 will allocate sites for development, safeguarding or protection, and includes development management policies to guide appropriate development.

In addition, *Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)* will be produced where necessary to support, or provide more detailed guidance on,

policies in the Core Strategy or Site Allocations and Development Management document.

Both the Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Management policies replace the former Blackpool Local Plan (2006). A number of development management policies set out in the current Blackpool Local Plan will continue to be “saved” and considered alongside Core Strategy policies when determining planning applications.

The Core Strategy will be used to assist in determining planning applications and priorities for the Borough over the 15 year plan period (2012-2027). However, it is likely to be reviewed before the end of this plan period, in whole or in part, to ensure that there are sufficient developable sites available for future needs. It may also need to be updated to respond to unforeseen changes.

This Built Heritage Strategy will be one of the documents that will inform the Core Strategy Process with reference to Site Allocations and Development Management policies.

## Supplementary Planning and Guidance

**Documents** come from a number of sources (planning guidance from local authorities and other guidance from statutory bodies like Historic England). However, local authorities often produce local planning guidance to assist developers, the public and its own council members in promoting sympathetic development. These guidance documents help in determining planning proposals which affect built heritage.

Blackpool Council currently has no Supplementary Planning Documents specifically for the Historic Built Environment although work has commenced on revised guidance relating to shop fronts,

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roofing and architectural joinery (windows and doors).

Guidance is also being drafted for general works to listed and locally listed buildings to guide owners/developers on the law relating to historic buildings and how the council makes decisions on what is and is not appropriate.

The Council will often also produce design briefs for larger development sites and these offer design guidance for developers who are contemplating proposals within historic areas and must consider any heritage assets that may be affected by development.

## 4.10 Local Groups and Organisations

The Borough is fortunate that there are a number of volunteer organisations such as 'friends' groups and societies that have a keen interest in environmental issues and actively support initiatives to manage open spaces adding to the community value of local heritage assets. Many of these are represented through the Blackpool Heritage Forum.

Through the Heritage Forum, organisations with specific and general heritage interests were invited to partake in the first phase of consultation on the Built Heritage Strategy as stakeholders and the feedback from them has been invaluable in putting this strategy together.

**Blackpool Heritage Forum** is made up of a number of local groups, some with a direct interest in the historic built environment generally, some with interest in a specific building or site and some interested more generally in the town's cultural heritage. The forum brings together a diverse range of organisations for information sharing and more practical projects like the Heritage Open

Days. It acts as a news and information hub and allows groups that might not normally interact to share things like training and best practice.

**The Blackpool Civic Trust** was formed in 1975. Over the years it has become a key independent organisation for the area in monitoring and commenting on planning issues. It is respected as an informed pressure group which conscientiously endeavours to protect and promote the conservation of the built environment of Blackpool.

The Membership meets monthly to consider new building developments within the town and monitors all new planning applications through its executive committee which makes recommendations for the membership to vote on. It aims to make positive, informative helpful comments, supporting good design in housing and shop fronts in particular.

The Civic Trust is keen to promote policies to protect local conservation areas and establish scope for further additions as well as assist with the preparation of appraisals. The Trust welcomes the development of the Heritage Strategy and associated Action Plan and is willing to offer its expertise and resources, as appropriate, to help with its implementation.

**The Lancashire Gardens Trust** was founded in 2007 and has an active interest in the recognition, protection and enhancement of different types of 'historic parks and gardens' in the County promoting the recognition, awareness and enjoyment of them. Importantly, the Trust offers guidance on planning proposals relating to important landscapes and complements - and often works alongside - the Garden History Society.

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The Trust is keen to educate the public as to the value of historic landscapes and also seeks to influence government policies in respect of this element of the historic environment. The Trust would be keen to work with the Council and other partners in the recognition and development of policies for the preservation, protection and enhancement of historic landscapes.

**Blackpool & Fylde Historical Society** is a registered charity and was formed in 1990. It is concerned with the preservation and protection of all buildings of architectural and historic interest on the Fylde Coast as well as areas of archaeological potential.

**The Heritage Trust for the Northwest** is a registered charity and its principal aim is one of restoring important historic buildings and establishing new sustainable uses for them, which will secure their future. Funding for particular projects is established through partnerships and companies and often the Heritage Lottery has been, and is, a source of funding.

The Heritage Trust for the Northwest has also created a construction services company which it uses to restore historic buildings. The Heritage Trust for the North West is not currently active in Blackpool, but plans to restore the abandoned 18<sup>th</sup> century Midgeland Farm are being discussed with them in an effort to create a centre for heritage skills in partnership with Blackpool & Fylde College. An impressive element of the work of the Trust is the engagement and involvement of volunteers who actively support and assist in the delivery of projects.

## 4.11 Local Authority Partners

**Lancashire County Council** no longer provides an in-house advisory service for archaeology. This

has now been out-sourced to a private company who continue to provide a basic level of support to planning authorities across Lancashire. The private company also maintains the Lancashire Historic Environment Record which presently contains some 25,000 entries ranging from ruins to listed buildings. This record covers the area governed by Lancashire County Council and the two Unitary Authorities.

**Neighbouring local authorities** are also important in looking at historic built environment issues. At the Fylde Coast level, there are significant benefits in assessing where joint working could be beneficial; exchanging ideas and approaches to different aspects of heritage and sharing scarce resources.

One example is in the case of Fylde Council who developed the framework and themes for this strategy. Given the similarity of much of the building stock there may also be merit in producing joint publications and advice notes on generic issues. Joint working and knowledge sharing – particularly relating to their experience of implementing the strategy - could be beneficial in the implementation of this Heritage Strategy and associated Action Plan.

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## 5 THEMES OF THE STRATEGY

### 5.1 Introduction to the themes

The information and analysis discussed in the preceding sections has had the objective of identifying the issues that the Built Heritage Strategy for Blackpool should address.

These are to be referred to as themes, three of which have been identified. The themes form an important link between the identification of relevant issues and the means of implementation through the Action Plan. Each theme is taken in turn and includes specific aspects within its broad scope. Key 'actions' are identified which will form the basis of the Action Plan itself.

## THEME 1 PROTECTING AND CONSERVING BUILT HERITAGE

**This theme deals with the protection, management and enhancement of heritage buildings. It covers buildings in public ownership and those owned by private individuals and how best to protect them from inappropriate or unauthorised development.**

### Listed Buildings

Blackpool has a relatively small collection of statutorily listed buildings but those that we do have are remarkable for their quality and are in many cases of national importance.

The protection of listed buildings through the planning process is an important part of controlling development but not everyone

understands the reasons for listing, the processes used to determine planning and listed building consent or what happens if changes are made without permission.

As set out earlier in this document, there are two basic types of listing: Statutory (those buildings on a list assembled and maintained by Historic England) which are of national importance, and Local (those buildings and other assets buildings on a list assembled and maintained by the local authority) which reflect local significance.

Permission to change, develop or alter listed buildings is handled through Listed Building Consent. This is a system which mirrors planning consent but requires additional information on how the significance of the building will be protected in any change. Where changes have been made without permission, the Council does have the power to intervene through planning enforcement and to work with owners to achieve the necessary consents or to reverse changes, but the process can be complex.

The number of alterations approved through listed building consents can be tracked through planning records, which are freely accessible to everyone, but there isn't always a detailed record of their current condition and we don't always understand what alterations and changes have taken place since they were first listed (see section 6.1).

In considering proposals for works to a listed building or its setting, the Council will scrutinise proposals stringently taking account of any comments made by expert bodies or the general public. The Council will also make available clear and jargon free guidance on listed buildings in Blackpool to ensure that owners understand their responsibilities under the law.



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Aside from the legal requirements, the Council owns a substantial proportion of all listed and locally buildings in Blackpool. This means Blackpool Council should be leading on best practice and ensuring that works to listed and locally listed buildings meets standards set out in national and local policy.

The ongoing works at Blackpool Winter Gardens and Blackpool Tower demonstrate the commitment of the Council to high quality repair and restoration, setting the example for other listed and locally listed building owners in balancing the need for change against the harm poor quality work can cause.

## **ACTION**

- *Undertake a baseline study of Blackpool's listed buildings using photography and a descriptive record to capture the current state of protected buildings in the town.*
- *Ensure that enforcement action is **always** taken where listed buildings are subject to changes or developments without the proper consent and consultation.*
- *Ensure that policies are included within the Blackpool Core Strategy and subsequent Development Management Policies that seek to protect the character of listed buildings.*
- *Ensure that the Council follows best practice in planning for the future of its own historic buildings and in implementing repairs and restoration.*

## **The Local List of Buildings**

In addition to listed buildings (on the national register), Blackpool maintains a list of buildings of local architectural or historical significance. This is

generally referred to as the 'Local List' and includes a range of assets such as buildings, engineering structures like bridges and some of our local parks.

The Council is committed to protecting these locally important historic assets as these are often the buildings that communities relate to in their own area of the town, local landmarks and places we all use or see on a daily basis.

The public are more widely consulted on local listing than they are on statutory listing and the Council sees the Local List as a way in which the public can have a very real role in protecting the appearance and amenity of their own neighbourhoods. To support this principle, the Council wants to open up the process so that members of the public can identify local historical assets and propose them for local listing.

Protecting Locally Listed Assets from demolition can be difficult, as the law allows buildings that are not statutorily designated to be demolished using the prior approval system. If the Council believes that the test of benefit versus harm to the historic built environment has not been met, reactive article 4 directions may be used to remove the permitted development right to demolition by prior approval.

## **ACTION**

- *Create a nomination system for local listing open to everyone to ensure that the public have a real say in protecting their local historic buildings.*
- *Update the list as appropriate and produce a publicly accessible list of local assets with historical information and photographs.*

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## Conservation Areas

Blackpool has four conservation areas at the present time, which are varied in character and size. Appraisals and management plans are in place for the two oldest conservation areas, but these are now almost ten years old and need to be updated to reflect changes in the physical makeup of the areas and in legislation.

In addition, the nine detailed characterisation studies of Blackpool undertaken in 2007-2009 made clear recommendations for at least four new conservation areas and the extension of the two existing conservation areas. Work on this programme is now well advanced and it is envisaged that all new proposals will have gone to public consultation by the end of 2016.

Historic England compiles a national list of conservation areas that are to be considered to be 'at risk' either due to the absence of appraisals and management plans or threats from development, neglect or decay. Blackpool is not on any of these lists currently, but it is envisaged that areas like the Town Centre Conservation Area are in reality at risk from incremental and small scale change that can often be hard to enforce against without an evidence base.

## ACTION

- *Set out a programme of conservation area appraisals to be undertaken on a phased basis with priority being given to those areas considered to be most at risk.*
- *Undertake an immediate 'at risk' assessment of the current conservation areas, which should be used to inform the first key action, above.*

- *Create a baseline survey of those areas considered most at risk to assist with more effective enforcement against illegal or inappropriate change.*
- *Ensure ALL conservation areas have an up to date appraisal and management plan that reflects current condition and development issues.*

## Regeneration Schemes

Over the last decade or so, the Council and its partners, both in the public and private sector, have delivered a number of key regeneration schemes aimed at revitalising neighbourhoods within Blackpool. It is accepted that regeneration schemes do not need to ape the historic built environment but they should respect the density, character and nature of local buildings and should enhance the quality and appearance of any conservation area.

In the case of the town centre, the fact that much of the core of the town is contained within the Town Centre Conservation Area has meant that the Council already requires that schemes normally underpin the principle of 'preservation and enhancement'.

Any future schemes should reflect and respect the significance of these designations and the design of such schemes should follow the guidance and principles set out in the relevant management plan for the conservation area.

## ACTION

- *Any regeneration scheme proposal in a conservation area should respect the defined character of the area and aim to actively enhance that character.*

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- *A Heritage Statement should always be included with any planning application to demonstrate how development respects the local significance of an area or group of buildings.*
- *Any opportunity to improve the historic public realm as a result of regeneration schemes should be taken.*
- *Work more closely with the Lancashire Gardens Trust on looking at local assets and their real significance in the wider green or open spaces context.*

## Historic Parks and Gardens

The Borough contains only one park contained within the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (Stanley Park) which is listed at Grade II\*. There are a small number of assets that are of historic interest, including Watson Road Park (the site of a major system of training trenches in WWI) and Devonshire Road Rock Gardens (a small but well-designed park with attractive Italianate water features and a recently restored pavilion). A number of 'Friends groups' are also engaged in the improvement of local parks and all three of the above parks have active Friends groups who support the council in a number of ways and who have been responsible for improvements in these parks over recent years. Friends groups are a key example of public involvement in Blackpool, and the Council is careful to nurture involvement and participation wherever possible.

## ACTION

- *All designated parks and gardens should have a management plan in place following guidance issued by Historic England.*
- *To continue to support 'Friends' groups including those which can significantly support the enhancement and management of parks and gardens and open spaces.*

## Archaeological Sites

Policies on archaeological potential will be included within the Core Strategy as part of the second phase (Development Management Policies). These policies will set out the criteria that the Council will apply when considering development proposals that may have an impact on the particular significance of a site with archaeological potential. The Council will also work closely with the County Council in respect of the processing of planning applications and other consents, setting out guidance notes in respect of the requirements that need to be met in order that the impact of the development can be fully understood.

## ACTION

- *Include appropriate policies within the Core Strategy that relate to archaeological issues and archaeological potential.*
- *Produce guidance to assist developers in providing appropriate information in respect of archaeological issues.*

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## THEME 2

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

**This theme is essentially concerned with the role that the community - taken in its broadest sense - can play in pursuing the objectives of this Strategy. The long term protection and management of the built heritage of Blackpool will rely on a shared community vision which demonstrates how it is valued and the policies that are ultimately in place to ensure that this aim is achieved.**

#### Informing the Public

Public engagement works best when the public are well informed and have access to quality, jargon free information. Blackpool currently lacks some of the basic material for informed engagement with no up to date published guidance on conservation areas, listed buildings, locally listed buildings or archaeology.

The Council also holds a major resource in the historic townscape characterisation research carried out in 2008/9 which would be useful in encouraging informed representation through greater understanding of the development of neighbourhoods in Blackpool and what areas have particular or special character within the town.

These resources are as valuable to developers as they are to the public as they answer questions in advance and give the background to much of the reasoning for decision making in planning or historic environment contexts.

#### ACTION

- *Issue clear and jargon free guidance on listed and locally listed buildings; what the impacts of listing are, what different types of listing mean and what the designation and decision making processes are.*
- *Issue clear and jargon free guidance on conservation areas; what effect conservation areas designation has and what the designation and decision making processes are.*
- *Update the Listed Buildings of Blackpool (web publication) to include more information on the buildings, and an updated photographic record of their current appearance and condition.*
- *Edit and publish the Blackpool Characterisation Reports as a web based resource for the public.*

#### Learning

Blackpool has a highly successful schools cultural programme that creates place and resource based learning tools that highlight the value and importance of heritage.

This offers a further opportunity to draw young people into understanding and appreciating built heritage, on the basis that they are its future guardians.

But the desire to know more isn't just about educating younger people. The extremely active adult education programme in Blackpool has generated a unique heritage based group, Blackpool Heritage Champions.

The Champions work out of the Blackpool Fylde & Wyre Volunteer Centre and have undertaken a number of projects including Heritage Guide Training and a Pop-Up Museum programme.

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In addition, the recent community archaeology project at Watson Road Park has allowed local people to engage in understanding local history in a very real and practical way.

But the learning isn't all one way. The knowledge and experience of local groups – often gathered over many years through experience or project work – is also important. This knowledge represents a currently un-tapped resource which needs to be captured and fed into the action plan for this strategy where possible.

## ACTION

- *Work with Schools to develop and issue resource packs and place based educational tools based around Blackpool's built heritage.*
- *Continue to work with community groups like the Blackpool Heritage Champions and the voluntary sector to maximise an understanding of the value and importance of the built heritage of the Blackpool.*
- *Maximise the opportunity for all sections of the community to actively participate in the development of heritage awareness and inclusion within the development of particular projects.*
- *Ensure that two way learning opportunities are maintained in all interaction with local groups.*
- *Capture all relevant information or knowledge about the historic built environment held by special interest groups. This may take the form of an audit of historic material they own or simply an oral history exercise.*



**Fig. 5** Community projects like the Big Dig at Watson Road Park are an important way of getting people to engage with the past. The archaeology project was massively over-subscribed and many people from outside Blackpool had to be turned away. Projects like this are a practical way to gather information about the past and develop community involvement in a meaningful way.

## Blackpool Heritage Forum

The Heritage Forum comprises representatives of a number of organisations/groups who could well be significant in delivering parts of the action plan for this strategy. The Forum itself acts specifically as an information and networking hub, often coming into its own for major collaborative events like Heritage Open Days.

It isn't necessarily the specific role of the Forum to comment on individual planning proposals or act as a lobby group as such but its member groups quite often do so.

The Forum has provided key stakeholder opportunities for groups in the drafting of this document and this in turn has provided ownership that should allow them to engage in the delivery of some of its objectives.

## ACTION

- *Identify objectives of the Strategy which can be delivered by members of the Forum and task them with agreed projects.*



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- *Continue to support forum members with information and project opportunities linked to the objectives of the strategy.*

## **The Planning System**

The planning system is one of the key ways in which the public can actively engage and participate in the area of built heritage. Development Management is the process by which development proposals are made to and determined by the local authority. Blackpool Council has an extensive and established method of engaging the general public as well as the local interest groups.

On a day to day basis, the Council engages with the public on planning issues through the legal obligation to consult with the public on all planning applications.

The Council has a limited number of statutory and local consultees who it invites to comment by email or letter and the wider public are invited to comment through site notices and notices in the local newspaper.

Early consultation with the public and local groups where it has been possible in the past has resulted in a better understanding of development proposals and the need for change including any local benefits. It follows therefore that earlier and wider engagement improves the effectiveness of consultation, but this isn't always possible.

There has already been an opportunity for the public to influence the outcome of the Core Strategy which will underpin the way in which Blackpool Council will manage development and change within the town. The Core Strategy sets out the broad approach to development and the historic built environment and this Built Heritage Strategy will be used to inform the next stage of

the process in forming specific policy for Development Management and how that impacts on Blackpool's built heritage .

## **ACTION**

- *The Council will widen its active planning consultation on all applications affecting the Historic Built Environment with local groups like the Blackpool Heritage Forum.*
- *The Council will engage in consultation with local groups at the earliest possible stage on developments affecting the historic built environment .*
- *The Council will encourage private developers considering schemes which will have an impact on the historic built environment to consult with the public at the earliest possible stage.*

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## THEME 3

### ADVOCACY AND PROMOTION

**This theme is essentially concerned with raising the profile of the Strategy and the objectives within it. It seeks to generally increase awareness of the importance of heritage to the community in Blackpool and to visitors. By promoting our built heritage we also support our ability to be advocates for it. External bodies are better able to see that the Blackpool community cares about its buildings and what they represent, allowing better communication and partnership working with statutory and amenity bodies. This in turn leads to an ability to influence regional and national partners and to increase access to funding available for the historic built environment.**

#### Corporate Issues for the Council

The Corporate Plan of the Council sets out its main objectives for the benefit of the community and the associated actions and targets it hopes to achieve to deliver the Plan. It is now widely accepted that the quality of life for residents is enhanced by the quality of the environment in which they live and particularly the quality of the historic built environment and the many anchors to continuity and community past it offers.

The Council has already demonstrated its commitment to Heritage and Culture in its corporate objectives. However, it should be recognised that the protection and management of the built environment runs through the policies and practices of the Council ranging from planning

and regeneration to maintaining parks, gardens and highways – all factors that assist in place management and the resulting quality of place.

This is particularly important in the context of important historic areas because the quality of the environment of the town is essential to the future well-being of the community including the promotion of economic investment and particularly, in the case of Blackpool, the visitor economy.

Issues affecting the built heritage of the town are dealt with across the Council at officer level and through the direct involvement, policy direction and decisions of its elected members.

The adoption of the Strategy will require its delivery and a proactive approach to ensure it succeeds. For this reason, Historic England positively supports the principle of appointing a ‘Heritage Champion’ – an elected councillor who has a particular interest in built heritage matters and who will assist in the delivery and progress of implementing the Strategy.

Blackpool already has a Heritage Champion in the form of the Cabinet Member for Culture and is committed to supporting this role to ensure the effective implementation of the Built Heritage Strategy across the Council.

#### ACTION

- *The Council will prepare an agreed ‘Heritage Protocol’ that will seek to ensure that cross departmental activity, in the context of the services the Council provides or in the case of particular projects, will have regard to the objectives of the Heritage Strategy, where relevant to the particular service area.*

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- *The Council will provide active support for the existing 'Heritage Champion' who will assist in the delivery of the Strategy and associated Action Plan, providing internal and external advocacy for its aims and objectives.*

## **Planning Policy and Development Management**

Development Management will play a crucial role in implementing the policies of the emerging Local Plan, the objectives of this Strategy but also needs to operate within a complex raft of legislation relating to the historic environment. It is required to have regard to national planning policy and is often bound by specific regulations and procedures.

It is essential that planning applications are thorough in the way they are submitted so that they can be given proper consideration and that the public, who may have an interest in a particular development, are able to fully appreciate and understand what is proposed. To this end, it is essential that the requirements of the Council with regard to submitting applications are appropriate and balanced in their requirements.

Regulations require developers to prepare 'Heritage Statements' (Design and Access Statements) to fully explain the rationale of the design of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage asset. At the present time, these statements vary enormously in content and quality and it would be beneficial if guidance were published that sets out the Council's requirements – and expectations – with regards to appropriate content and scope of these statements.

In addition, the Council will always have regard to comments made on planning applications by the public, organisations and expert bodies.

Another important aspect of the development management process is the issue of enforcement – often where development has taken place which is unauthorised or not developed in a way that complies with approved plans or planning conditions. Complaints about unauthorised development are often submitted by local residents.

In addition, the Council will compile and publish guidance on specific aspects of the historic built environment such as good quality design in conservation areas. Such guidance is an important way of ensuring the public and developers have the appropriate information for development in the historic built environment and it provides a sound base for negotiation of development in such cases.

## **ACTION**

- *The Council will prepare supplementary planning documents or other guidance with the objective of setting out the Council's approach to design in the historic built environment. Guidance will be updated as appropriate to reflect changes in the law or local policy.*
- *Design Briefs will be prepared in the case of important sites which may have an impact on heritage assets, including conservation areas, listed buildings and historic parks and gardens.*
- *The Council will support the hosting of pre application dialogue with potential proposals that will have an impact on heritage assets. In appropriate cases, the*

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*Council will include appropriate bodies which may offer advice and assistance as regards potential forms of development and the approach the developer should take.*

- *The Council will prepare advice notes setting out its expectations and requirements with regard to the submission of Heritage Statements and provide examples of best practice.*
- *The Council will seek, through appropriate conditions, to ensure a high quality of development including hard and soft landscaping. It will also pay particular attention to archaeological matters in relation to particular sites and impose appropriate planning conditions to ensure that these matters are fully safeguarded.*
- *The Council will produce an 'Enforcement Protocol' in respect of the historic environment and other matters appertaining to the built heritage. This will form part of a wider Heritage Protocol aimed at improved joint working.*
- *The Council will widen its active consultation with the national amenity groups where appropriate/relevant to ensure the widest informed response possible.*

## **Regeneration Schemes**

As outlined in the Strategy many of the regeneration schemes that have been undertaken in the town centre have been within the Town Centre Conservation Area. These have included re-modelling of town centre spaces, new street furniture and improvements to buildings.

The private sector input to regeneration has been significant and has included both large and small scale developments. The general approach to design is one of having regard to the character and quality of the historic environment.

In Blackpool Town Centre a more contemporary approach has been introduced but, nonetheless, to reflect the historic character of the town including its resort history. As a general rule, any further regeneration schemes within designated areas should seek to reflect the history and character of the particular area.

In the case of Historic Parks and Gardens, the recent National Review for English Heritage (Historic England) on Research on Registered Parks and Gardens indicates that historic parks and gardens are being rapidly eroded through revenue development schemes and that this particular approach to sustainability is harming historic designed landscapes incrementally.

On the whole, Blackpool Council has a good record of dealing with its historic landscapes, but like all other local authorities, the pressure of severe spending cuts raises pressure on services that need to raise revenue to sustain municipal parks and gardens.

## **ACTION**

- *Potential and future regeneration proposals/schemes will always have due regard to the character and history of the particular place with respect to alterations to buildings, new development and in the use of landscaping and materials.*

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- *Particular regard will be paid to existing conservation area appraisals and the potential impact on listed buildings.*

## Public Realm

The public realm generally includes designed spaces and the buildings surrounding them but in this context, is generally taken to be the publicly accessible parts of the environment, physically and/or visually. In the case of conservation areas, the design, management and maintenance of the public realm is an important element of its character and a particularly important indicator of the quality of place.

In designing the public realm, the most appropriate materials and street furniture will be used consistent with available resources. It will then be appropriate to put in place a 'public realm code'. Essentially, this will provide a manual that will identify a specification for the various elements of the public realm including street furniture, landscaping, and materials and an inventory with agreed maintenance schedules put in place.

This practice would represent a good means of auditing the quality of the public realm and agreed actions from the various partners involved would highlight what is required to maintain it to an appropriate standard.

This initiative will involve working alongside the Council's Highways department.

## ACTION

- *Ensure that the public realm in the context of historic assets, i.e. conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and in the vicinity of listed buildings, is managed*

*appropriately through published management plans.*

- *The opportunity will be taken to work with other internal partners, including Highways as regards the development of an approach to the design of and future management of the public realm in historic areas.*

## Working with other partners

Many of the key actions suggested advocate a policy and practice that supports the protection and enhancement of the built heritage of the town and offers the opportunity to involve various organisations which share the view. This includes Historic England as well as other statutory and amenity organisations.

At grass roots level, local interest groups and organisations with an interest in built heritage have the potential to play a strong and active role in shaping policy and decision making.

In the development and implementation of the Action Plan, specifically through the potential involvement of the Heritage Forum, the assistance of the various bodies may provide an invaluable way of helping achieve the vision of this Strategy and its implementation through the Action Plan.

## ACTION

- *In the development of this theme of Heritage Advocacy and Promotion, the Council will as appropriate work with outside organisations and bodies that can assist in the delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan.*
- *The Council will seek joint working opportunities with neighbouring*



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*authorities where there are benefits to shared resourcing and information.*

## **Skills Development**

There are training events available at little charge that staff and members of the Council can attend. The Council is a member of the Lancashire Conservation Officers Group which is a forum for practitioners who share knowledge and expertise on a range of heritage matters.

There is a clear local shortage of skilled crafts people to engage in conservation work to a high standard. However, it is known from contact with other local authorities that there are specific courses offered by training organisations and colleges that can provide appropriate training in these types of skills.

Some of the regeneration schemes that have been undertaken in the town highlight that these traditional skills are still available.

Developing skills in built heritage matters is essential in achieving high quality outcomes. Historic England and, more locally, the Heritage Trust for the Northwest, have run programmes for the development and understanding of historic building techniques.

Local colleges have expressed a willingness to consider this matter further with the potential for skills development courses being a possible option.

## **ACTION**

- *Identify the potential for skills development training with respect to heritage matters where resources allow and include existing staff and elected councillors.*

- *Offer the opportunity for Member Training to be made available to elected members to assist in the understanding of and development of the Strategy and heritage issues in general.*
- *Develop the potential for Blackpool and the Fylde College's building skills department to be involved in heritage projects to assist in developing local heritage skills.*
- *Prepare a list and develop a framework of 'qualified' contractors that are known to have skills in the field of traditional building construction or who have specific professional skills related to heritage projects.*

## **Web Based Resource**

It is suggested that the Council could host a dedicated web resource as part of its general web site. The site would be built up over time and include the Strategy and Action Plan and also details of the projects and specific actions as they progress.

The web site would allow the Council's guidance documents to be accessed through links to PDF documents and have updates on important projects like the restoration of features at Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens.

The overall objective of developing a web based resource would be one of providing a 'one stop shop' for 'all matters heritage'. The availability of the web resource and its development would be a specific action that could be brought about quickly, being developed as ideas and opportunities arise.

## **ACTION**

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- *Develop a web based resource to support the development of the Strategy and Action Plan and implement as soon as practicable. The resource should effectively create a 'one stop shop' for heritage advice and information.*

## Guidance Notes and information

A simple and effective means of disseminating information on particular issues is by way of advice notes, which contain relevant content, direct to the desired recipient. In the past this type of notification has been undertaken in conservation areas to outline for property owners the implications of being within a designated area.

In many situations, owners of buildings who carry out unauthorised works without the necessary planning permissions simply claim that 'they were not aware'.

These types of guidance notes have not been produced for some time and it is considered that if carried out, on a phased basis, it would represent a very cost effective way of notifying the community, where appropriate, of the specific obligations in respect of heritage matters. The leaflets would also point to the links available from the web site to provide further information. It is considered that properties within conservation areas are potentially vulnerable to undesirable change and the production of advice notes would be a very effective method of disseminating important information. In the past the Council has been offered help from voluntary groups with collating and distributing information of this type.

## ACTION

- *The Council will make guidance notes (as set out in Theme 2 – Informing the Public)*

*available online as well as in printed format at Blackpool's Central Library.*

## Publications & Exhibitions

Discussions with local groups and societies during the preparation of the Heritage Strategy highlighted just how popular events are which promote and increase understanding of the history and heritage of Blackpool.



**Fig. 6 Blackpool Council have directly published books on the town's key heritage assets and worked with partners like English Heritage on other books.** Some of the organisations, including the Blackpool Heritage Champions, Winter Gardens Trust and Heritage Trust for the North West, have specific events to promote a greater understanding of history and heritage. In addition, publication has become an important part of sharing information on the historic built environment and has also been a useful medium for allowing the public to see items and documents from the Council's historic collections.

These collections contain many drawings and images of Blackpool's buildings and the feedback from community groups has indicated that having an architectural or built heritage resource which charts the history of the development of the town would be both popular and useful.

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The Built Heritage & Conservation Department already has a programme of exhibitions which are hosted at Stanley Park Visitor Centre, and which is now in its second year, that deal with aspects of Blackpool's history, and the recent Pop Up Museum project run by the Blackpool Heritage Champions has added skills and knowledge to the voluntary sector.

In terms of publications, the Council has already produced four publications on its greatest historic assets, Blackpool Winter gardens, Blackpool Tower, Blackpool Pleasure Beach and the Illuminations all of which contain images from both Council and private archives.

In addition the Council recently collaborated with Historic England to support the production of general book on Blackpool's Seaside Heritage under its Informed Conservation Series.

## **ACTION**

- *To promote and publish information on heritage based events led by the Council or community groups as appropriate.*
- *To publish or work with third parties to publish freely accessible on-line or electronic publications on Blackpool's built heritage*
- *To investigate the creation of a publicly accessible online resource based on architectural records and images of key buildings in Blackpool.*

## **Heritage Open Days**

The idea of Heritage Open Days is about 'opening up' significant buildings that otherwise might have very little – or no – public access. The public are usually offered a guided tour of the building where items of significance are highlighted. Some open day initiatives have catered for schools so that the younger generation have direct access to particular buildings and their significance can be explained.

Blackpool Town Hall featured in the very first Heritage Open Days programme and the Fylde Coast now has the largest active programme of openings in the North West which is co-ordinated by the Blackpool Heritage Champions through the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Volunteer Centre.

## **ACTION**

- *The principles of Heritage Open Days should continue to be supported by the Council and the concept extended wherever possible.*

## **Media Opportunities**

The scope for coverage to be given to heritage issues in the media is considerable as a way of raising the profile of heritage issues through the production of articles on matters of interest. The launch of the Strategy and its Action Plan is bound to raise interest and the profile of the subject matter. It may be possible to introduce regular features to support the initiatives contained within the Strategy thereby raising its profile

## **ACTION**

- *Identify opportunities for attracting media interest in the promotion of built heritage projects and issues.*

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- *Work with the Council's Communications Department to develop a strategy for communicating stories about Blackpool's Past to media outlets.*

## General Publicity

Within the general promotion and publicity undertaken by a large number of organisations within Blackpool, including the Council, heritage and nostalgia feature strongly in the general promotion of the area. The visitor offer is bound up with the environmental quality of the town and in turn its built heritage is a major aspect of this offer. In considering such general publicity, the opportunity should be taken to fully exploit the uniqueness of many of Blackpool's buildings and the importance of its architectural heritage.

Visit Blackpool have included heritage based articles in their resort destination guides for the last few years and this, along with the constant improvement of buildings like the Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens, contribute to a growing appreciation by visitors of the importance of Blackpool's past as part of its future.

### ACTION

- *The Council will continue to promote the historic built environment as an integral part of the visitor offer through publications like destination guides and website promotion.*
- *The Council will support external organisations in promoting the historic built environment as part of their own visitor offer by the provision of information and images for other publications where appropriate.*

## Heritage Interpretation

In addition to other means of communication to promote the built heritage, direct information on site or in trail form can be a really useful way of increasing understanding of the importance of Blackpool's built heritage and how it relates to the history of the town and its communities.

Blackpool already has a central area heritage trail with longer and shorter routes. These contain information about individual buildings on a walking route through the Town Centre Conservation Area and up towards Stanley Park which also has published stand alone Heritage and Nature trails to follow.

The Blackpool Civic Trust has for many years erected blue plaques on buildings with architectural or historical significance within the town and the Council have also funded plaques. There are currently plans for additional plaques and to improve the quality of existing plaques. The Council are now working in partnership with the Civic Trust in a move from plastic to cast metal discs more appropriate to listed and locally listed buildings.

In addition to the above, the Council is currently preparing new guide books for Stanley Park and Blackpool Town Hall which will be available as free downloads from the Council, Civic Trust and Friends of Stanley Park websites. However, other neighbourhoods would benefit from simple heritage trails and the interpretation that blue plaques bring to locally listed buildings.

### ACTION

- *Support the development of further Heritage Trails within the Borough focusing on historic neighbourhoods like Layton, Marton and South Shore.*

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- *Support the development of the Blue Plaque scheme and the move towards better quality plaques.*
- *Look for opportunities to incorporate interpretation of the historic built environment in new development, particularly public realm.*



**Fig. 7. Heritage Open Days is one of the most important tools Blackpool has in terms of promoting its rich and unique heritage. Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre have one of the largest joint programmes of opening in the northwest and Blackpool Town Hall was one of the first buildings to open its doors (with the help of Blackpool Civic Trust) when the scheme first began over twenty years ago.**

## 6 IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Introduction

The Strategy has outlined in some detail the many factors that have influenced the approach to be taken to the protection and management of the historic built environment of Blackpool.

The background issues set out in sections 1 to 4 has resulted in an identification of the three themes that are relevant to the conservation of built heritage in Blackpool into the future. The themes are divided into elements with a review of the issue followed by a series of key actions.

### 6.2 Practicalities

On face value, the number of actions proposed is considerable but it should be noted that many of the most important actions are already under development. In addition, whilst the Council has a key role to play in implementing the Strategy, the opportunity will be taken to include a number of other organisations and bodies in its development to reduce the impact on resources. For instance, Blackpool Civic Trust is keen to assist in the development of particular initiatives including the potential for some support in achieving external financial assistance for key projects.

In this context, the development and implementation of the Strategy should be seen as a partnership with collaborative working at its heart. This principle recognises the value of partnership with community groups in driving forward the Council's corporate objectives.

### 6.3 Action Plan Delivery

The Strategy should be seen as a strategic long term initiative that offers a comprehensive approach to the management of the built heritage of Blackpool. It is intended that the published Built Heritage Strategy will be set out in a tabular form which will indicate the nature of the action/project, the expected timescale for its delivery, the lead partner and whom it would be supported by. Any funding required for the delivery of the Actions and how tasks or milestones will be identified would also be included where appropriate.

Taken as a whole, the Action Plan contains a wide variety of initiatives and through the consultation process and following its review, it will be necessary to establish the delivery of the actions on a priority basis.



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Whilst inevitably some of the actions will require resources over a period of time, some of them will be relatively easy to deliver. Some of the actions will require a specific methodology to be developed, for example, conservation area appraisals and management plans.

The Strategy will remain a live document and will be assessed on an on-going basis with a formal review every two years. The Action Plan will set out the annual work plan for the purposes of managing progress on a year to year basis through local Key Performance Indicators. To keep elected members and senior officers informed of progress, issues and any change in objectives or delivery programme, an annual report will be produced at the end of each financial year.

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Blackpool Council would like to acknowledge the huge help offered by Fylde Borough Council's Task and Finish Committee for their own Heritage Strategy in allowing us to use large sections of content and the format and theming of their own document. This has been invaluable in the preparation of the Built Heritage Strategy for Blackpool. Particularly thanks must go to Paul Drinnan and Catherine Kitching for working so closely with us on this and for all their hard work researching current national policies.

In addition, the Council would like to thank the following partners for their input to the Strategy:

Blackpool Civic Trust  
Blackpool Heritage Forum  
Blackpool Volunteer Centre  
Heritage Trust for the North West  
Lytham St Anne's Civic Society



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To request a consultation form by email, please contact

[builtheritage@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:builtheritage@blackpool.gov.uk)

or to take part in our online consultation, please go to

[www.blackpool.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/consultation)