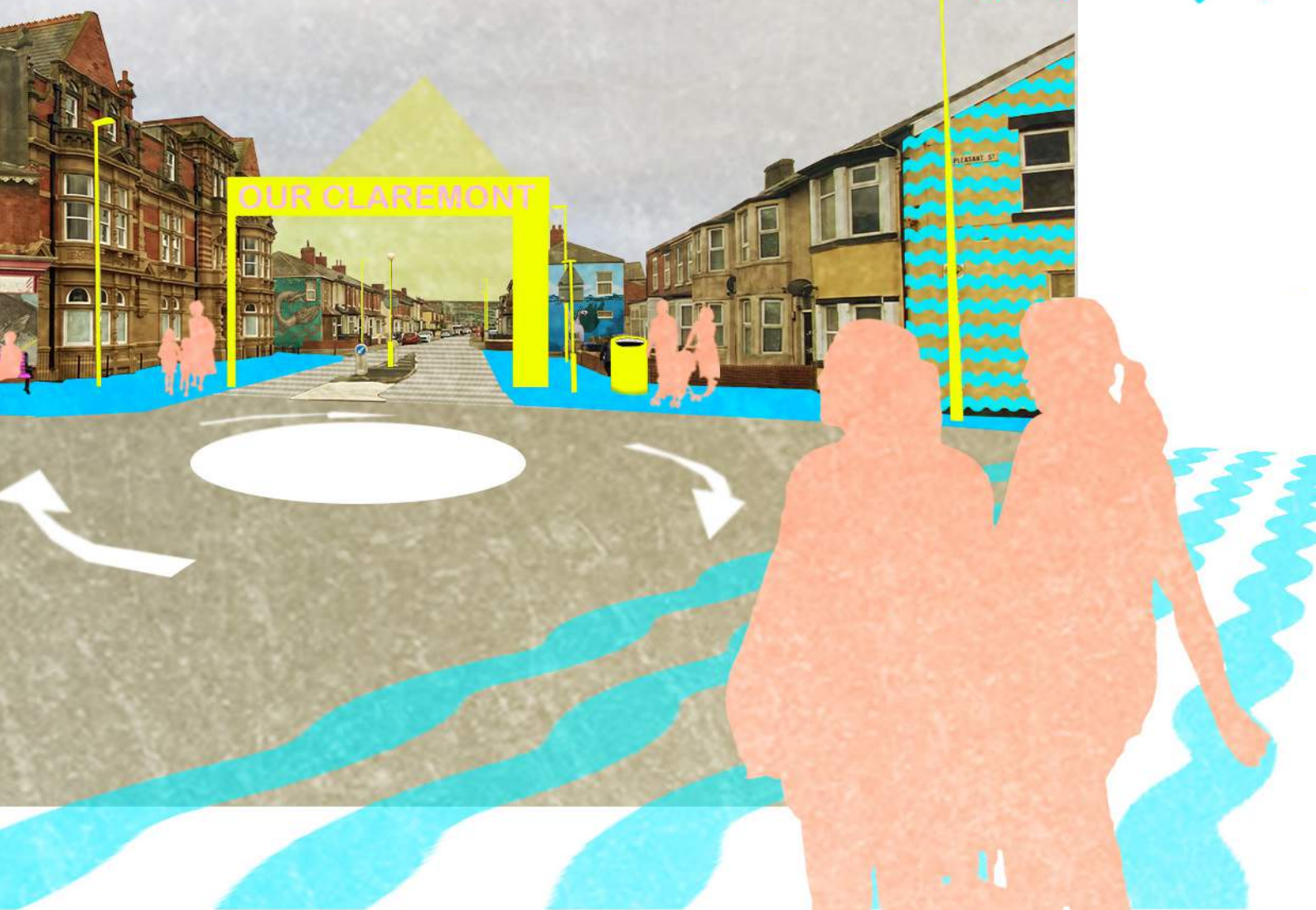


# Our Claremont: A Vision for the Future

Final Report

June 2020



Prepared by:



LDĀ DESIGN

On behalf of:



Blackpool Council

# Foreword



Councillor Lynn Williams

Deputy Leader Blackpool Council - Children



Councillor Ivan Taylor

Cabinet Member for Projects and Partnerships

We are incredibly proud to introduce this bold and ambitious vision for Claremont.

This vision has come from a determination to make Claremont a great place to grow up, live and work for our children and young people and the generations to come. It encompasses the ideas of young people, residents and other stakeholders and gives us a road map to work from.

We were very privileged to visit and hear from the wonderful Paul Kelly of Homebaked in Anfield, Liverpool. Like us they were a strong community with great heart, but also had some problems they wanted to address. They started their transformation by opening a co-operative bakery, offering volunteering and work opportunities for local people and making incredible pies (we tried them, delicious!). From there they have started to develop high-quality community-led housing and are in the process of refurbishing another residential block to also include spaces for start-up businesses. Give them a look, they are truly inspiring.

We know that Claremont already has many strengths; including its diverse community, many organisations and groups and its strong community. If the last few months have taught us anything, it is that we support each other when times get hard. But we also know there are areas where together we need and can make huge improvements.

And so, this vision is not just a document to sit on a shelf; but a call to arms! This is going to take time, and some things we will be able to achieve earlier than others, we should not lack ambition but we know that we are dependent on finding the money to make it happen through grants and trusts. BUT it will not get very far at all without you, the wonderful people of Claremont.

So grab a cuppa, put your feet up, give this a read and let us know your thoughts, what is most important to you, where you might be able to help or what you are excited about most.

Let's work together to make Claremont the best place to live by 2030!





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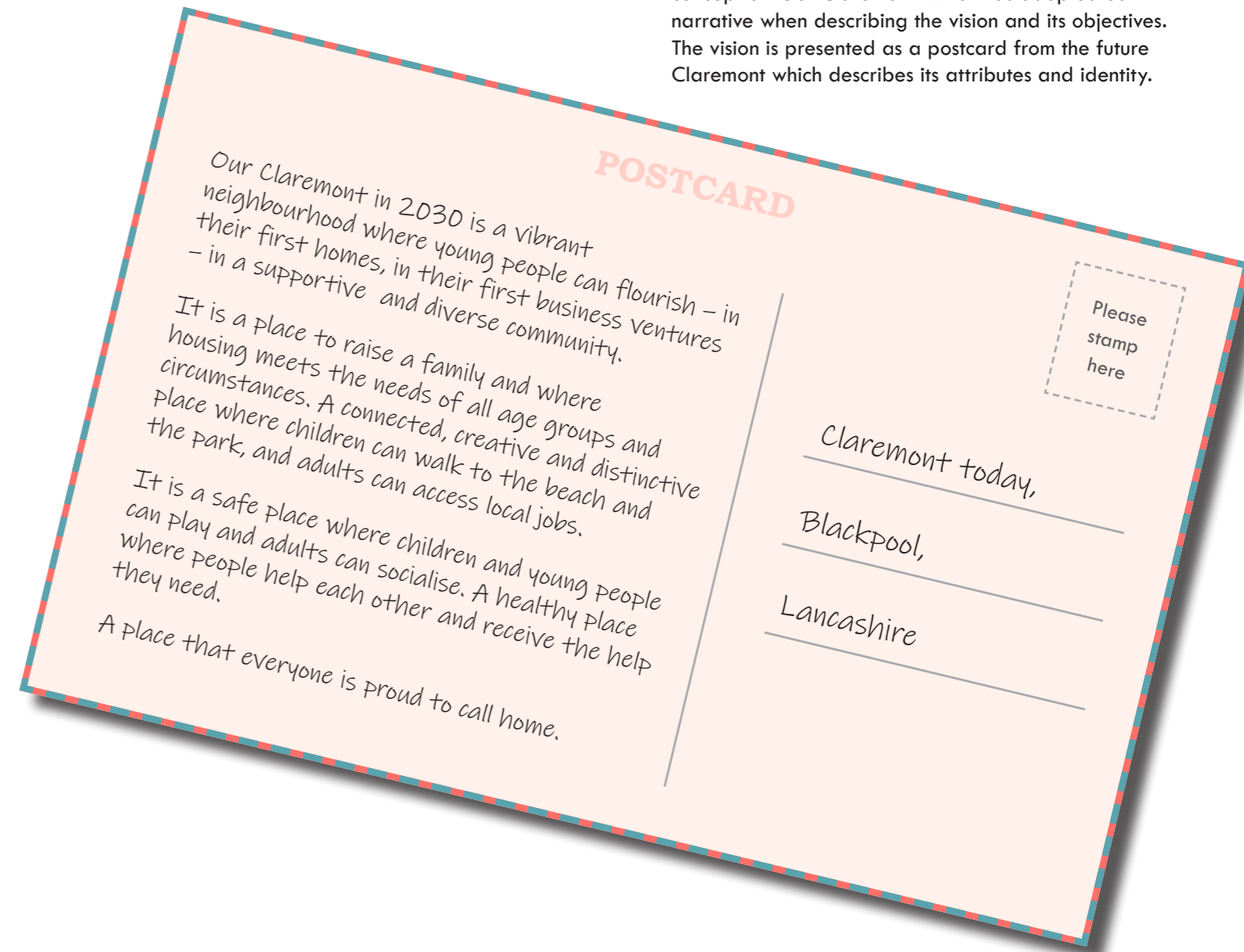
# Executive Summary

Lambert Smith Hampton [LSH] and LDA Design have been working closely with Blackpool Borough Council and the Magic Club in the last few months to help local stakeholders articulate a 'vision' for the future of Claremont. The Vision, developed with local stakeholders and young people provides a series of potential actions aimed at transforming the neighbourhood of Claremont in the short to long term.

## Our Claremont - Our Vision

It is important that the Vision was developed from a 'grass-roots' approach by the local community and stakeholders – as these are the people that the new Claremont is intended for (especially young people) by 2030; and whose commitment and consensus is needed in order to own and deliver it. At workshop engagement sessions attendees were asked about the place they wanted Claremont to be, using the concept of 'Our Claremont' which has adopted as narrative when describing the vision and its objectives. The vision is presented as a postcard from the future Claremont which describes its attributes and identity.

NB. This report articulates a vision for the future of Claremont that is based on community and stakeholder engagement. Delivery of the projects within this vision will need sufficient public sector and private sector funding being identified. Certain projects will also require site acquisition or landowner partnership.



Version: 3  
Version date: 15th June 2020  
Comment: Final Report

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with ISO 9001:2015





Potential street improvements in Claremont

## Our Objectives

Twelve objectives have been set for Claremont, grouped into three main themes which will guide future projects and development in Claremont, serving as a measure their success:

### Our Homes

1. Improve the quality of homes.
2. Create opportunities for additional housing.
3. Rebalancing the housing market to better meet the needs of the local community.

### Our Streets and Spaces

4. A distinctive and creative place.
5. A connected place.
6. Safe routes and spaces.
7. A greener Claremont.

### Our Community:

8. Access to employment opportunities.
9. Reinforcing community pride.
10. Be active, healthy and engaged.
11. An enterprising and creative place.
12. A fun place to be!

## Projects & Key Moves

With the Vision and Objectives established it is important to develop the projects that will realise the Vision and help to transform Claremont by 2030. These projects range from environmental improvements and opportunities for community enterprises, arts and culture through to refurbishment and potential redevelopment opportunities for improved

residential uses. Some of these will be 'quick win' opportunities; others are medium or long term possibilities.

All projects are summarised within an Action Plan, which provides more detail on potential outputs and delivery methods. The most significant projects have been developed in a little more detail and have been called 'Key Moves'.

At this stage the projects are presented as a range, or 'menu', of potential projects, some of which may be taken forward if circumstances and public funding allow. The Action Plan is set out in Section 7 and allows the projects to be compared and prioritised, and provides a nominated leader to champion and take forward their relevant actions.

### Our Homes

The projects and Key Moves plan has identified 14 sites that could be potentially redeveloped in order to deliver new housing. These are generally vacant buildings, underutilised spaces or employment and trade uses that would perhaps be better located outside of a residential neighbourhood.

### Housing Improvement Zones (HIZ)

In addition to the potential development opportunities it will also be important to raise the quality of existing housing stock through refurbishment. This will take a varied approach, according to mixed land ownership and localised need. It could include boundary treatments and external improvements (pointing, re-rendering, repairs, window replacement, painting used approved colour schemes etc.) through to internal refurbishments. The latter might involve converting houses that are currently sub-divided into self-contained 1-bed flats back to family houses or indeed knocking through adjoining houses to provide accommodation for larger families.



## Our Streets and Spaces

Ten projects have been developed to improve the streets and spaces of Claremont – creating new and improved spaces for socialising, relaxation, walking and cycling. They are:

- S1. The Wellness Walk;
- S2. Claremont Park improvements;
- S3. Proposed pocket parks;
- S4. Cheltenham Road pilot project;
- S5. Egerton Square public realm improvements;
- S6. Dickson Road (rear of hotels) environmental improvements;
- S7. Percy Street & Multi Use Games Area upgrades;
- S8. Alleyway upgrades;
- S9. Station Approach public realm improvements; and
- S10. Local public art projects.

## Our Community

### Potential Community and Enterprise Uses

There have also been opportunities considered for new community services that would benefit the local area – to better meet existing needs and to enable wider opportunities to be capitalised upon, for example to combat social isolation and improve access to employment opportunities. Such uses provide opportunities for local economic growth and employment as well as bringing the community together and fostering community pride, identity and cohesion.

It is important that any community uses or enterprises come from the community itself. The plan has provided a list of potential ideas based on what the community has raised at workshop sessions and the team believe will particularly work well in Claremont.

These include:

- All day café / access point for services;
- Community gardens & allotments;
- Healthy take-aways;
- Recycle and re-use workshops;
- Learning space / idea exchange;
- Charity bike shop;
- IT support / employment outreach;
- Dance/music studio; and
- Art and culture studio/spaces.

The key role of a strategy such as this is to facilitate opportunities for this community, art and culture uses and new enterprises. The Vision has therefore suggested potential suitable sites and buildings. The community enterprises and uses could be integrated and work well together, for example a drop-in café could sell honey made from a local bee-keeping enterprise, or is used as a hub to access various community projects services that are delivered off-site.

### Community Activities

In addition to the site-based community uses, the plan has identified, through community engagement, the potential for events and activities that can animate the streets and spaces of Claremont. These will integrate with the projects to improve streets and spaces. These ideas are summarised below:

- **Active Claremont** - healthy walks and trails have been identified;
- **Street markets** - temporary pop-up street markets along principal hubs and streets;
- **Claremont Gala** - extended to include several routes converging on the park;
- **Chatty Walks** - an opportunity to connect socially at the same time as getting fit, following the successful 'chatty bench' idea (developed by Claremont First Step);

- **Art Trails** - street art or local arts-led public art - a trail for visitors to discover and residents and enterprise to help curate and distinguish; and
- **Colourful Claremont** - co-ordinated painting of buildings or street furniture in an approved bright colour scheme, based on a currently developed colour palette by Left Coast. The celebration of the colourfulness through the LGBT+ community could also strengthen pride and cultural distinctiveness in Claremont.

## Delivery

This Vision has identified over 30 potential development opportunities and public realm projects, summarised in the Action Plan (in Section 7).

Development appraisals have been prepared to assess the viability of a sample of key development projects. Gap funding will be required to support transformational development in Claremont. If early transformational projects have a positive impact on market conditions, it is hoped that the viability gap will reduce making medium and longer term projects more viable.

As a next step, it is important to engage with Homes England once their new funding streams are confirmed after the Comprehensive Spending Review in mid-2020. This engagement should be on a Claremont-wide basis to discuss the Vision and the ways in which projects could be supported by Homes England. It will also need to integrate with wider proposals for Blackpool Council and Homes England's role in supporting these. It is clear that Homes England working alongside the community will need to be at the heart of the solution for Claremont.

Key objectives include raising the quality of housing stock in Claremont, but also to re-balance the housing offer – to better support balanced and more stable communities. In Claremont this means delivering more family housing and reversing the legacy created by the subdivision of houses to apartments (generally one-bedroom).

## Next Steps

This report sets out the Vision. It is the first part in an ongoing and long term masterplan. This now needs to be taken forward by the local community and their partners who should lead the process, set priorities and assign 'champions' for each of the identified projects ensuring proposals work towards the objectives.



Engagement with stakeholders and young people of Claremont





# Introduction

# 1.0

Lambert Smith Hampton [LSH] and LDA Design have been working closely with Blackpool Council and the Magic Club in the last few months to help local stakeholders articulate a 'vision' for the future of Claremont. The Vision, developed with local stakeholders and young people, provides a series of potential actions aimed at transforming the neighbourhood of Claremont in the short to long term.

This report summarises this process and presents the vision, objectives and projects intended to deliver 'Our Claremont'. The intention is for this report to be used as the basis for funding bids to public agencies but also to inform the private sector of the aims and objectives for Claremont.

The consultant team was commissioned in December 2019 by a partnership between Blackpool Borough Council and the Magic Club. The Magic Club are a youth engagement charity based in Claremont. The Study was funded through Homes England's Community Housing Fund.

The objectives of this project, are:

- i) To work with the Magic Club and other stakeholders to develop a series of environmental and development propositions which could improve Claremont as a place to live and visit. They should be innovative, and community led;
- ii) To produce a financial appraisal of each element of the project designs demonstrating financial viability. If additional grant funding is required, the identification of potential funding streams that could be used to fund this work;

- iii) To produce a short, medium and long term action plan;
- iv) To meet the criteria of the funding, the commission must include the production of plans for building new homes or conversion of existing dwellings to create new homes;
- v) To ensure that any plans are developed in conjunction with the relevant community lead; and
- vi) To be fully compliant with appropriate local and national planning policy and guidance, legislation and regulations and work within Blackpool Council's regeneration strategies.

The vision, objectives and action plan all resulted from ideas put forward from stakeholders and the local community. The process that enabled this is explained in the 'Engagement' section of this report. The consultant team then developed and explored these ideas to facilitate a co-ordinated and targeted set of projects, capable of delivery subject to funding. The later sections of this report include the Action Plan and delivery recommendations. Viability Appraisals, which have tested and informed the projects and delivery recommendations, are provided as a confidential annex.



# Issues & Opportunities

2.0

## Overview of Claremont

The separate Issues & Options report provides a thorough summary of the issues affecting Claremont and the opportunities it presents. This contains the following areas of analysis:

- Land-use and Ownership Review
- Townscape Analysis
- Property Market Review
- Socio-Economic Review
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Planning Policy Review

This report should be referred to for the full assessment however an overview of the key issues and opportunities is provided in the following pages.

This analysis has informed the development of subsequent project outputs and provides an evidence base to support the proposals being put forward:

### Townscape

Claremont is broadly contained by Warley Road to the North and Talbot Road to the South. These are connected principally by Dickson Road, running on a North/South axis, although there are also numerous secondary and tertiary routes throughout the area following the predominantly gridded street pattern.

The Promenade along the seafront and Devonshire Road to the East both running North/South form part of the wider strategic road network. While they provide good connectivity for vehicles they simultaneously form barriers to easy pedestrian movement, critically to the beach and pedestrian promenades. The tram tracks along the seafront exacerbate this effect.

Claremont is also divided by rail lines which lead into Blackpool North, the principal railway station for the town. There are no opportunities to cross the tracks within Claremont, which leads to a distinct separation to the communities within the area. Nevertheless a close proximity to the station provides good connectivity with the wider region.

There is limited Green infrastructure within Claremont. Claremont Park provides the main green space, however anecdotally it suffers from anti-social behaviour which prevents more vulnerable people from accessing it. The area does benefit from close proximity to the seafront and promenade.

Key views to the various assets and major landmarks within Blackpool such as Blackpool Tower are limited by the orientation of the rigid street pattern, particularly within the heart of the area, which combines with the other factors above leading to a sense of disconnect with the surroundings.

In summary, the Claremont area can be seen to have a number of issues, assets and potential opportunities for intervention:





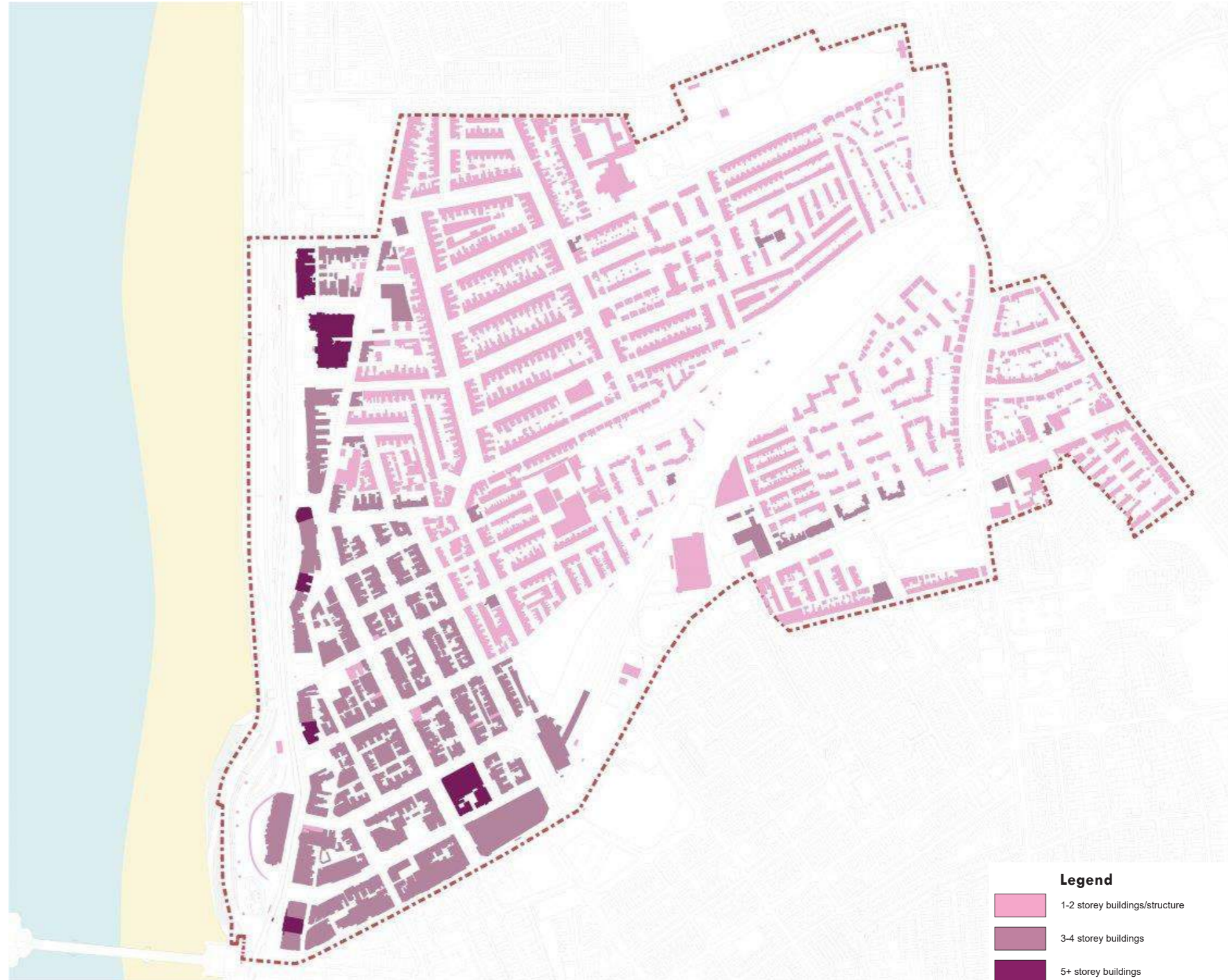
## Density and Form

Claremont has a clear hierarchy of built form. It is predominantly historic and of a similar era which leads to a largely coherent and contiguous network of streets and buildings. It can be broadly described as being of three types:

1. Seafront - which is typically made up of buildings that are bigger in scale and properties which are amassed into larger blocks exhibiting a variety of footprints. With the exception of the purpose built Imperial and Britannia Metropole hotels, these buildings were historically constructed as Victorian 'elite' residences, with their form and architecture derived from the popular styles of the era.

2. Town centre - which is typically made up of 3-4 storey buildings and concentrated to the South-West of the area. They follow a regular and tight street pattern, with smaller blocks and high permeability. These are typically purpose built commercial buildings, punctuated with bespoke civic and religious functions which serve as landmarks throughout.

3. Domestic - which continues in a gridded layout but with extended blocks of back-to-back terraces of predominantly 2-storey houses. There are various local amenities and functions dotted throughout, including a primary school, pubs, local shops and community centres. The area lacks a clearly defined centre through land use, although the buildings at the cross-roads forming Egerton Square evidence an historic concentration of local amenities.





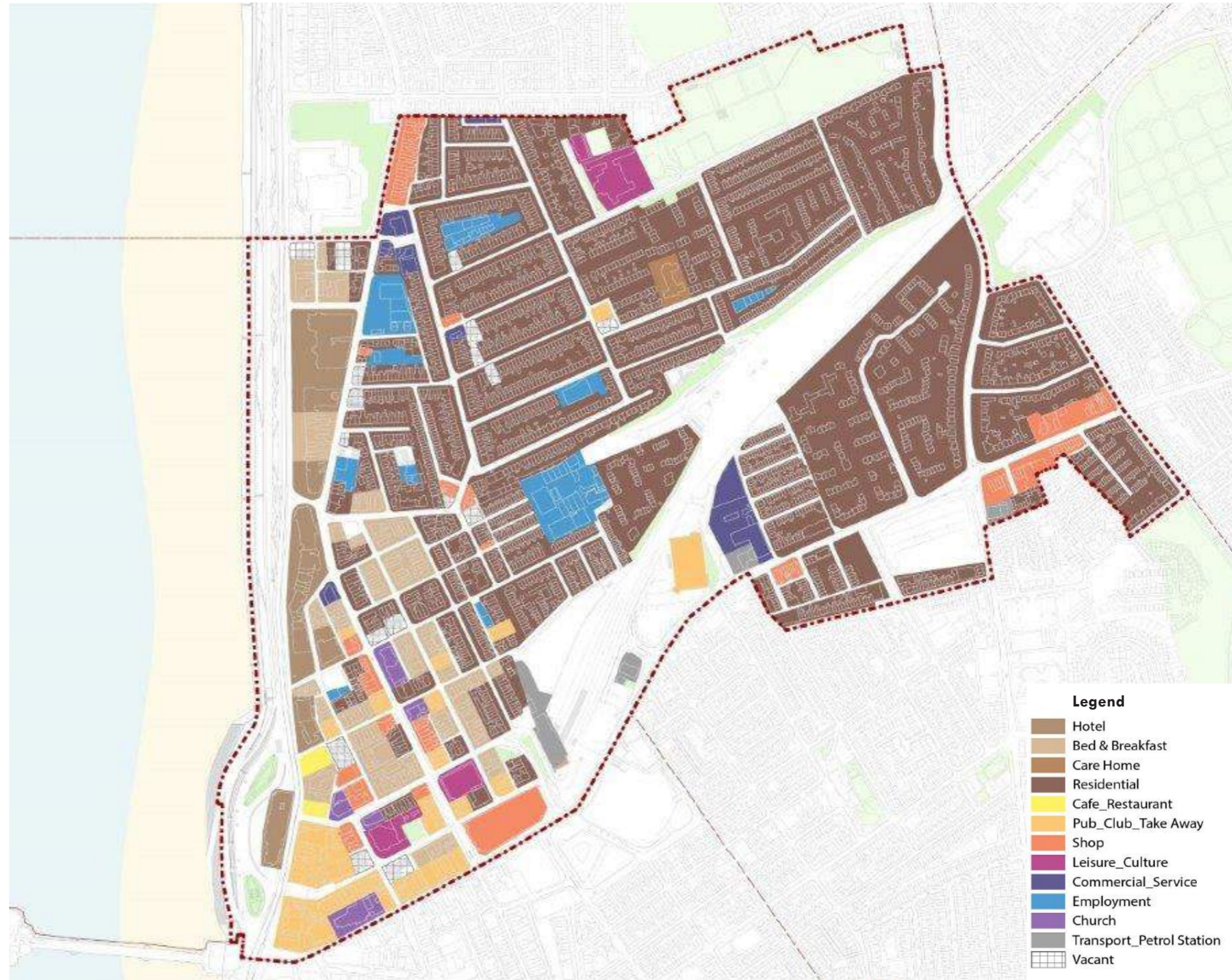
## Land Uses

As noted Claremont is a predominantly residential area. There is also, however, a high number of hotels and bed and breakfasts within the area which are largely clustered around Dickson Road and the waterfront.

A declining tourist industry has led to a number of former guesthouses and hotels either being vacated or being re-purposed as lodgings, which are often left in a poor state of repair. This contributes to a negative appearance and a lack of social cohesion amongst the communities within Claremont. The seasonality of the hospitality industry also results in a transient population and a relatively low permanent population density.

The area located immediately North of Blackpool town centre provides the most diverse land uses, with the addition of leisure, cultural and worship destinations, as well as shops, cafes, restaurants, takeaways, pubs and clubs.

Aside from the hospitality industry there are limited local employment opportunities with high levels of vacancy in many of the identified areas. Many of these are located within residential blocks, which could limit their use, however they provide a good opportunity for local and community enterprise.





### Public Transport.

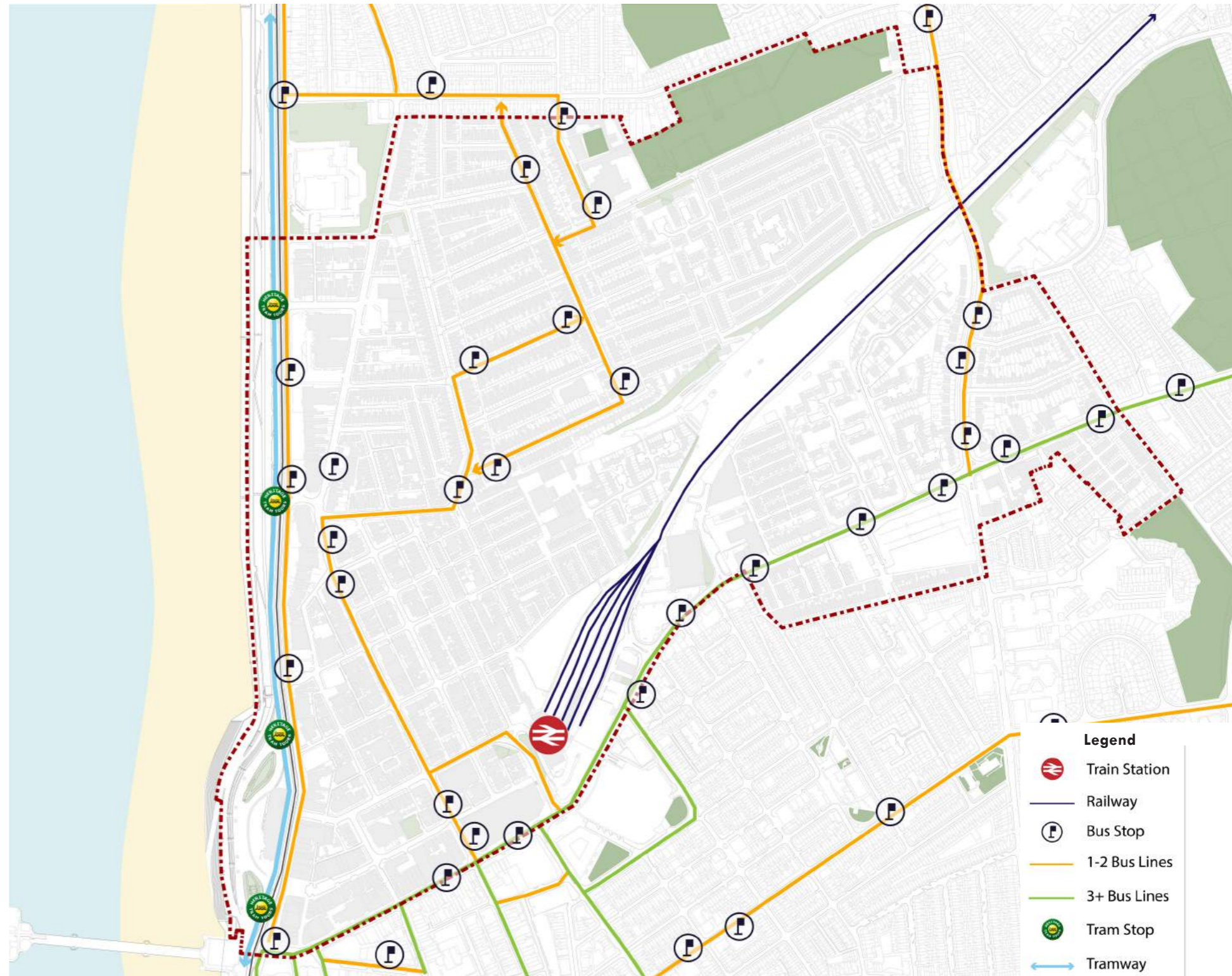
Claremont is well accessed by bus, tram and train services providing connections to and from the town centre and the wider North West region.

Bus routes run along the Promenade and throughout the area along Dickson and Sherbourne Roads in radial routes from the notional transport hub at Blackpool North Station. Bus stops along the routes are typically informally marked and their improvement could benefit bus patronage. Talbot Road running East-West along the southern edge of Claremont is the busiest bus corridor, which also includes routes that serve the wider inland areas of Blackpool.

There are four tram stops along the promenade within Claremont providing access along the seafront and to the nearby town of Fleetwood, located to the North.

Blackpool North Station situated in the south of Claremont is the main railway terminus for Blackpool town centre and provides good connectivity with the wider region including the cities of Preston and Manchester.

Approaches to the tram and train stations would benefit from some environmental improvements to encourage their use.





# Summary of Issues and Opportunities

In summary, the Claremont area can be seen to have a number of issues, assets and potential opportunities for interventions.

## Issues

- Housing: dominance of 1-bed accommodation, often poor quality, poor condition and poorly managed;
- An unbalanced tenure mix in the local housing market;
- Shortage of quality family accommodation;
- Former Guesthouses: abundance, many poor quality, some converted without permission and in poor state of repair;
- Mix of vacant commercial and residential buildings and sites;
- Employment uses within residential area;
- Lack of Council powers to promptly enforce the removal of eyesores (rubbish filled gardens etc);
- Declining local retail;
- Wider social-economic issues coupled with recorded anti-social behaviour not addressed with appropriate enforcement;
- Limited and poor quality public realm; and
- A lack of connectivity to the town centre through poor legibility and environment;



Vacant commercial properties



Heritage assets



Guesthouses



Claremont Park

## Assets

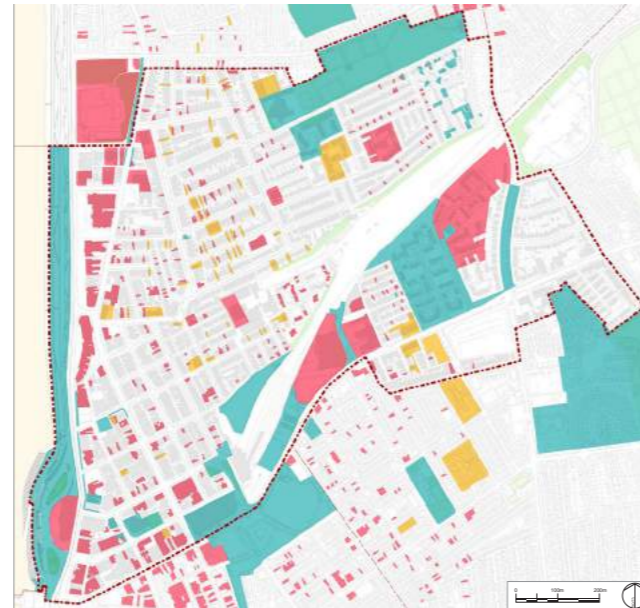
- Claremont Park and Gynn Park;
- Westminster Academy;
- Beach and waterfront;
- Some good quality housing stock when refurbished and occupied but needs more intervention;
- Heritage buildings add to sense of place and identity;
- Strong street form and legibility;
- Tourism creates economic opportunities within the area;
- Majority of guest homes are well managed and of good standard and add to local vibrancy and employment;
- The Grundy Arts Gallery and Central Library and associated support infrastructure;
- Accessible to the town centre & wider employment opportunities;
- Train station within area: connections to employment;
- Tram – accessibility to town centre;
- High residential density supports walkability;
- 'The people' - Strong and active community organisations;
- Diverse LGBT+ community that drives part of the economy and local character and distinctiveness;
- Diverse and distinguished arts and cultural movement; and
- Talbot Gateway driving change to the immediate south of the ward, but needs to signpost visitors to Claremont.



## Potential Opportunities and Intervention Mechanisms

The issues and assets identified lead to the emergence of a number of opportunities for improvement and intervention mechanisms can be identified to assist in realising those opportunities they include:

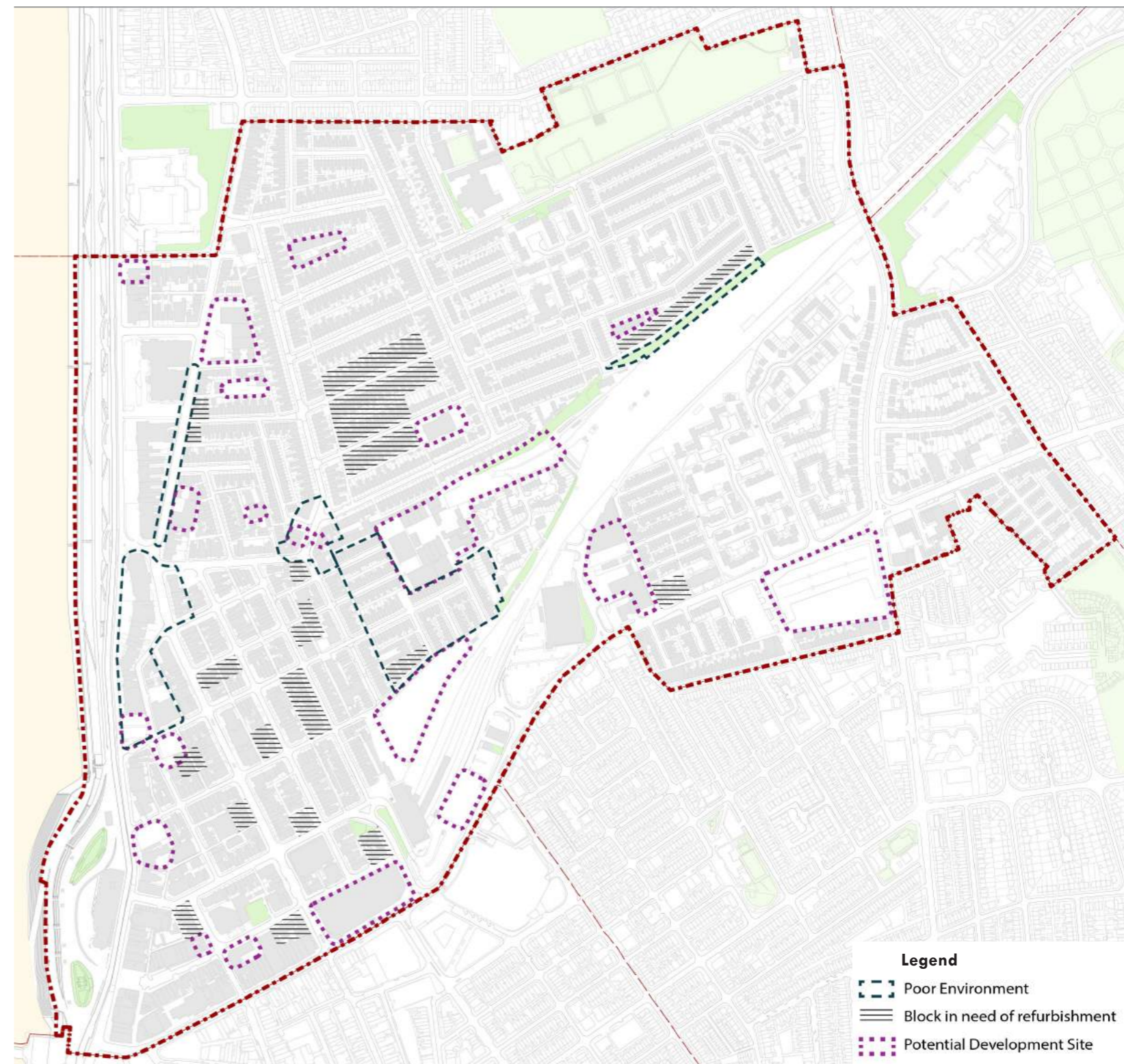
- Housing refurbishment programme;
- New housing infill development;
- Creation of green spaces;
- ‘Wellbeing Walk’ – safe routes to school, beach and town centre (note that the name for this could change as a result of wider community engagement);
- Enhance future role of Egerton Square as a ‘hub’ of the community;
- Improved street environments and pedestrian prioritisation;
- Use of proposed Article 4 Direction to further support Policy HN5 (2006);
- Implementation of development orders to encourage Family Homes;
- Increase site entries on brownfield register with intention to increase planning in principle (PIP) through Part 2 in future;
- ‘Pilot’ Street interventions;
- Reverse HMO/1 bed legacy, no current policy mechanism in place, need to positively encourage landlords fiscally to remove or move away from single occupancy units;
- Housing Zone; and
- Consolidate different public funding streams together to create collective funding pot to deliver wider vision (including regeneration, police, enforcement funding).



LEGEND

Red	Company
Teal	Local/ County Authority
Yellow	Housing Association

Above: Types of landowner within the area  
Opposite: Areas identified in most need of improvement



Legend

Blue dashed outline	Poor Environment
Hatched pattern	Block in need of refurbishment
Purple dotted outline	Potential Development Site



# Background

## Wider Context

# 3.0

Blackpool is well known as an historic seaside resort in the north of England. It remains a popular place to visit with some 19 million people visiting the town every year.\* Blackpool has undertaken much to regenerate its tourism and wider economy in recent years especially around the town centre and at the Enterprise Zone at Blackpool Airport. However, parts of inner Blackpool, including Claremont, are clearly affected by the legacy of a different tourist market – as seen for example in an over-abundance of guesthouses. The housing market has been subsequently affected with a surplus of large terraced properties now being subdivided and let as 1 or 2 bedroom accommodations, a majority of which is serving a transient housing benefit market (immigrating from other parts of the UK and generally remaining in the area for less than a year).

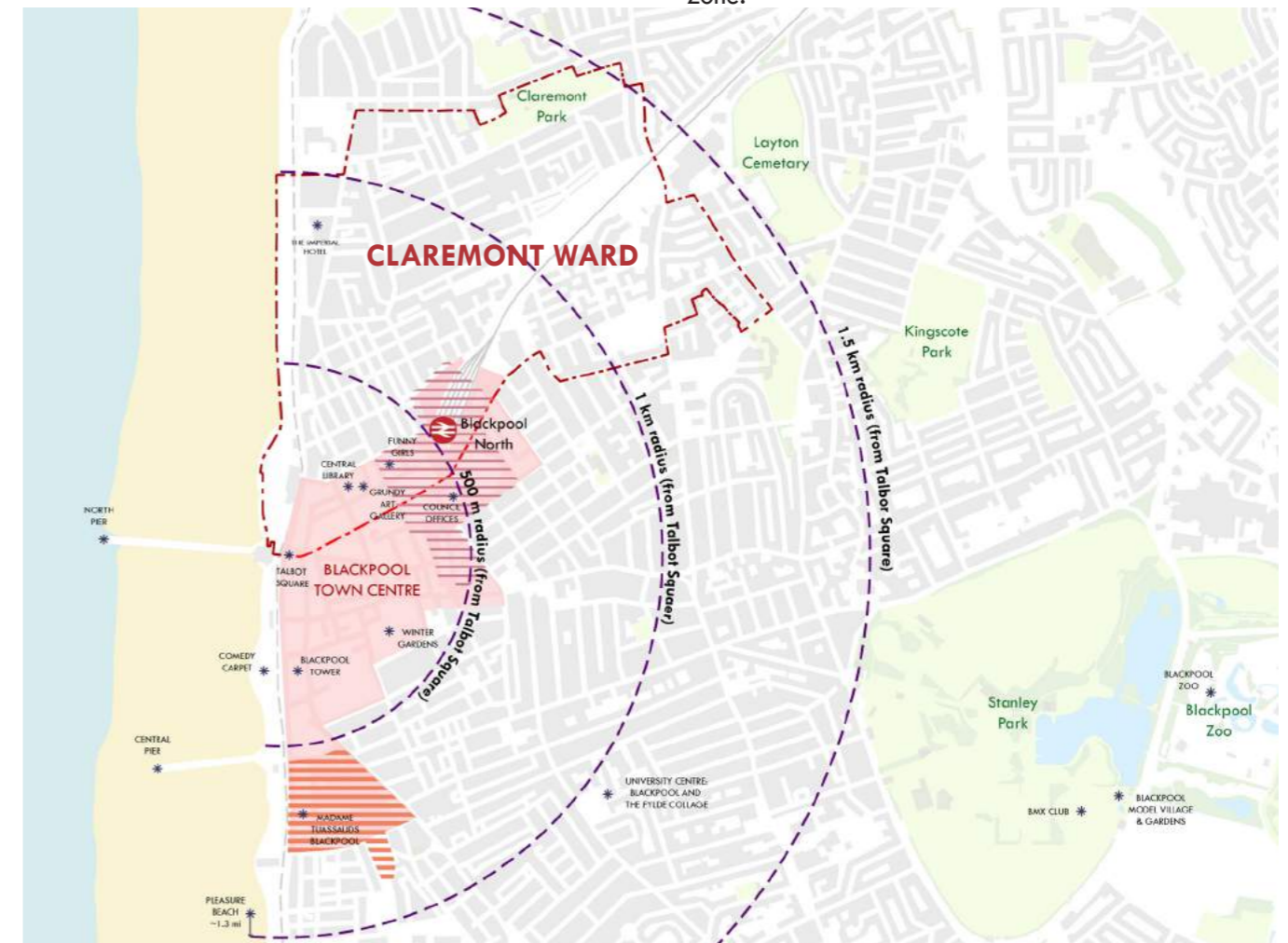
Claremont is clearly being impacted by these wider economic and social trends affecting Inner Blackpool. This includes structural issues in the housing market and the local economy, and the indirect social consequences that have resulted from this. As a result of these complex and interrelated issues, Claremont is a neighbourhood that is suffering from long term and deep-seated deprivation. This is shown through part of the ward (Lower Super Output Area 006A – which covers the western part of Claremont) as being the third most deprived neighbourhood in England & Wales in the 2019 indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) figures.



Photos around Claremont

### Key to regeneration initiatives

- Central Leisure Quarter
- Talbot Gateway



Wider cultural assets and regeneration areas on Blackpool

It is considered that the key priorities to changing the fortunes of Claremont are; access to jobs, improved living conditions, improved environment and enhanced community engagement. It is expected that Claremont and its residents will benefit from the current and proposed regeneration initiatives that are being pursued across the Borough. Being located in close proximity to the town centre and the seafront, Claremont is well connected to other parts of the town and region by public transport and walking, it is well placed for its residents to access the new estimated jobs proposed across the Borough and the Fylde Coast. Significant local regeneration initiatives include, but are not limited to, Talbot Gateway, the Central Leisure Quarter and Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

\*House of Lords Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns 2017-19



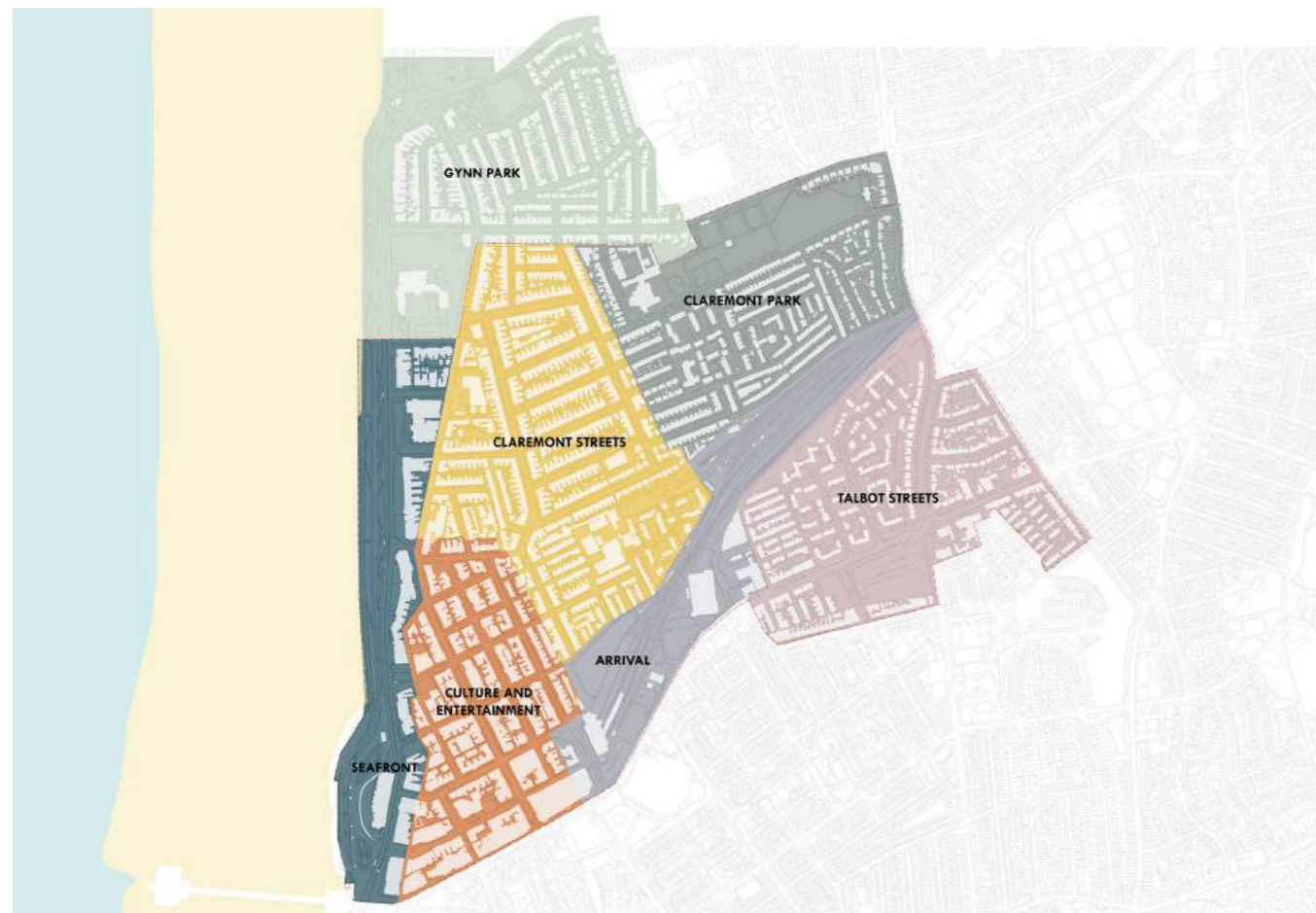
# Overview of the Study Area

Claremont ward sits to the immediate north of Blackpool town centre, bounded by the coastline to the West. The North Pier marks the line of the southern boundary, with tourism related uses stretching into Claremont from Blackpool Town Centre immediately to the South. Talbot Road continues this line and largely forms the southern edge. The ward is bisected by the railway line leading to Blackpool North Station (the town's primary rail station) which sits just within the boundary of Claremont. To the North and East as well as to the South East of the town centre, are other similar residential areas predominantly of Victorian era construction. The study area is generally defined by the ward boundary, however as an administrative boundary the area that many locally consider to form Claremont can differ and extends beyond and sometimes excludes streets and neighbourhoods. For

this reason we have additionally considered areas beyond the ward to the North within our analysis and regeneration response.

Blackpool North Train Station provides direct links to Preston and Manchester and the rest of Lancashire while the Tramway with stops along the promenade provides connection to the southern parts of the town, but also the nearby town of Fleetwood. The whole of Claremont is within a 20-minute walk (1.5km) of the town centre, providing excellent potential for active movement connections.

Claremont is also home to a well-established LGBT+ community (in the south-west part of the Ward), who form an important and valued part of the wider Claremont community and attracts visitors to Blackpool and to the ward.



Character areas within Claremont

The area of Claremont is principally residential, but there are areas of distinct function and character within including:

- **The Seafront**, historically fronted by grand houses and a promenade, it is now almost exclusively hotels with the historic buildings having been heavily modified over time. The promenade is dominated by the road and tramway which, in combination with the linear layout of the buildings, creates a barrier preventing easy access to the seafront.
- **Claremont Streets**, comprised of historic terraced housing, with distinct architectural features and a grid-iron street pattern. The streets are generously sized, and properties commonly modified to provide off-street parking in front of the properties. Notable for a lack of green space and planting. There are pockets of informal light industrial uses throughout however there are also a number of derelict and un-let commercial properties.
- **Claremont Park** includes the only park in the ward and the streets that surround it. This includes a mix of smaller tightly knit terraced streets and later 20th century housing estates. It is bound by the railway to the South and Devonshire Road to the East which has a negative effect on its environment at its edges. Gynn Park also sits nearby to the north of the ward but it is also used by the wider Claremont community.
- **The culture and entertainment district** is the area most closely associated with Blackpool town centre and includes a number of commercial functions focussed on Dickson Road. Part of this district of the town centre plays an important role for the LGBT+ community within the wider town centre's evening economy. The streets are arranged in a closer grid pattern, which provides good permeability and legibility, while buildings and uses are more varied in scale, style and quality. This area is also home to Blackpool's pre-eminent Grundy Art Gallery and central library which provide a landmark venue for the community and visitors to Blackpool. The Grundy is well-resourced both digitally and through traditional physical resources. Importantly it accommodates major national and international artists and other events.
- **The Arrival** point includes Blackpool North Train Station and the railway corridor. The area around the station is subject to regeneration through the Talbot Gateway masterplan and includes a number of new buildings both built and planned. Historic industrial estates and surface car parks focussed on the railway contribute little to the environment away from the station.
- **Talbot Streets** make up a mixed residential area around Talbot Road and includes historic terraced streets as well as newer regeneration developments on the sites of former industry. There are a number of smaller local shops and businesses which appear to be operating successfully.
- **Gynn Park** to the north, lying between Warley Road and the B5265, although outside of Claremont Ward is very similar in nature to the 'Claremont Streets' character area. Housing here is generally larger, of better quality and has a more balanced housing tenure mix. People living in this area access many of the same local services as Claremont residents – for example Westminster Academy, the Magic Club and the local centre around St Paul's church – all of which are located at the northern edge of Claremont Ward and serve a catchment to both the north and south. Similarly, many residents in Claremont Ward enjoy facilities such as Gynn Park in this northern area. For these reasons we need to look flexibly and boundaries and so we have also considered issues and opportunities in this character area.



# Engagement

4.0

Early engagement with communities and stakeholders has sought to provide a better understanding of Claremont and their aims and aspirations for the area.

In addition to targeted one-to-one conversations a series of workshops and drop-in events were held, bringing together young people and community representatives in discussion.

## Young Persons Workshop

A dedicated workshop for young people was held at the Magic Club on the 19th February 2020, where a series of activities sought to draw out their opinion of Claremont, its attributes and shortfalls. Attendees were asked to produce mind-maps of their local area as well as describe their dream future homes and street.

The key themes of discussion at the workshop included:

- **Safety and security** - a need for safe homes, secure private space and safe streets to walk and play;
- **Street environment** - a need to clean-up, reduce litter, remove offensive graffiti, provide better street lighting and tackle bad noises and smells;
- **Spaces to play** - a need for safe public and private green spaces offering opportunities for interaction and play;
- **Creative spaces** - a desire for spaces that provide opportunity for creative outlet, such as dance or recording studio, as well as gaming space;
- **Community spaces** - support for clubs and community centres which provide opportunities to come together, socialise and organise activities, particularly age focussed;
- **Climate action** - homes featuring renewable energy and provision for electric vehicles, as well as increased and enhanced green space and trees, improving the environment and providing wildlife



Young persons design workshop



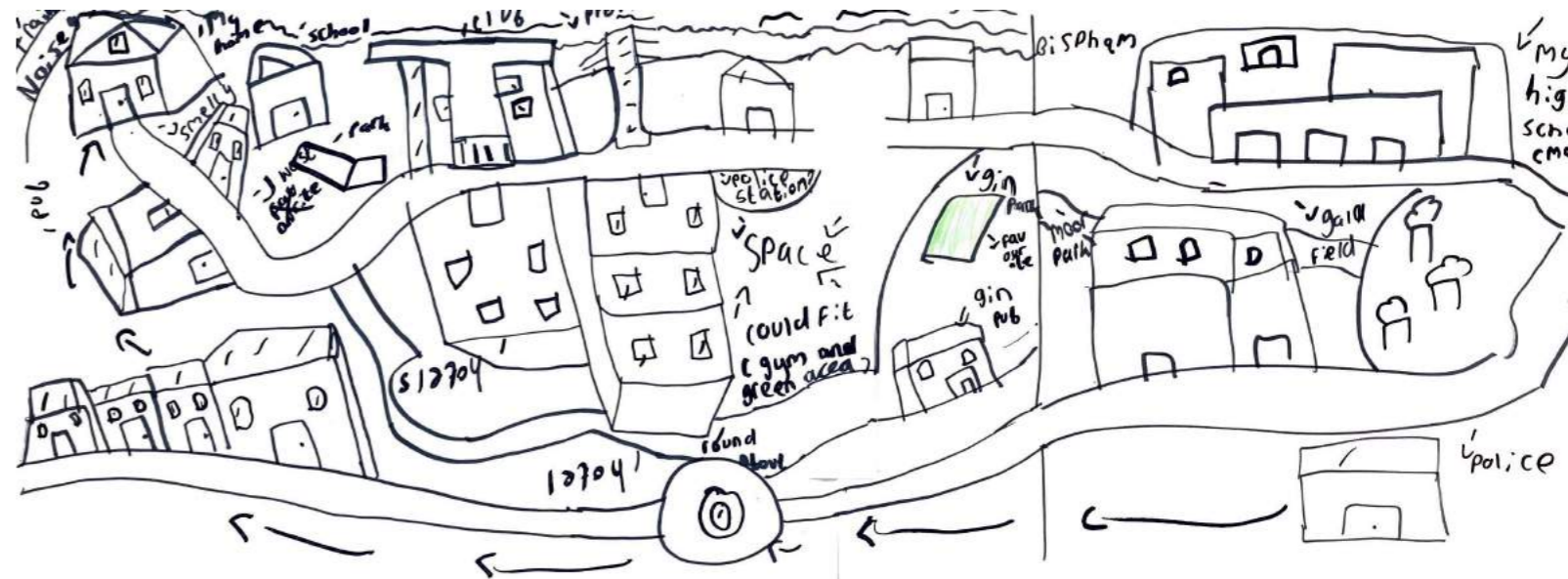
A mind map of Claremont



Young persons design workshop



Young persons design workshop



A mind map of Claremont





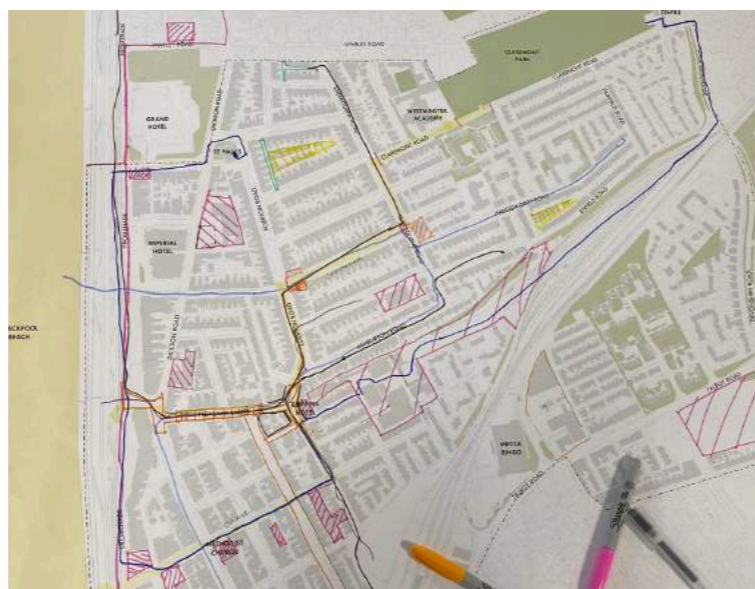
Stakeholder workshop



Stakeholder workshop



Comments from community drop-in



Comments from community drop-in

### Community Masterplan Week

Following, commencing on Monday 24th February a masterplan for Claremont was drafted with the input of key stakeholders in the area. The week was bookended with workshops to first gather insight on any further challenges and opportunities and finally to gain feedback on the thoughts and proposals of the design team devised during the week. A list of attendees is included within the appendices.

### Stakeholder Workshop

The workshop was introduced by Paul Kelly of Homebaked, Anfield who demonstrated what could be achieved through community involvement on regeneration projects. It serves as a good aspiration for Claremont and a continual reference project.

The workshop was well attended and discussions were focussed on two broad topics:

1. *Movement and Places*
2. *Land Use and Built Environment*

The key themes of discussions at the workshop included:

- **Community activity** - enhancement of existing offer including The Magic Club, Claremont Community Centre, St Paul's Church and Conservative Club. As well as opportunities for distributed initiatives such as a "chatty walk" building on the Chatty Bench;
- **Claremont Park** - environmental improvements and tackling vandalism to create a safer and more welcoming place, leading to the increased use and a sense of ownership;
- **The Beach/Promenade** - should be easily and safely accessible. Activities and events happening in the town centre could be expanded to include and engage with Claremont and other areas of Blackpool;
- **Street environment** - improvements to the appearance of rear alleyways. Streets should be cleaned and made greener. Consider activating and

animating the rear of hotels along the seafront;

- **Egerton Square** - is the natural community hub. It should become the heart of the area with possible community functions including a drop-in cafe, health outreach centre, internet access and support for employment;
- **Creative/community enterprise** - opportunity to support local artist community (eg. Art B&B) and make use of vacant buildings (eg. Zurich Club) through offering spaces to community enterprises;
- **Embracing local heritage** - local history should be celebrated, this could involve restoring crazy golf and kiosks near the North Pier as well as environmental improvements around heritage assets;
- **Opportunity sites** - potential and priority sites for redevelopment were identified which has informed the content of this report.

An open community drop-in session was held in the evening of the 24th February. Thoughts gathered mirrored the themes discussed in the workshops.

### Feedback session

A feedback session was held on Friday 28th February to present the initial thoughts of the design team and gather final comments. Proposals were well received by attendees with addition comments including:

- Existing community hubs - the Grundy Art Gallery and Central Library to the South of Claremont provide valuable learning and cultural resource and could be better linked with the communities of Claremont;
- Homes for large families - there is a specific need for homes for larger families with sufficient indoor and outdoor space.

For a summary of wider stakeholder engagement, including 1:2:1 telephone calls and meetings with stakeholders please see Summary of Engagement appendix.



# Our Claremont

## Our Vision

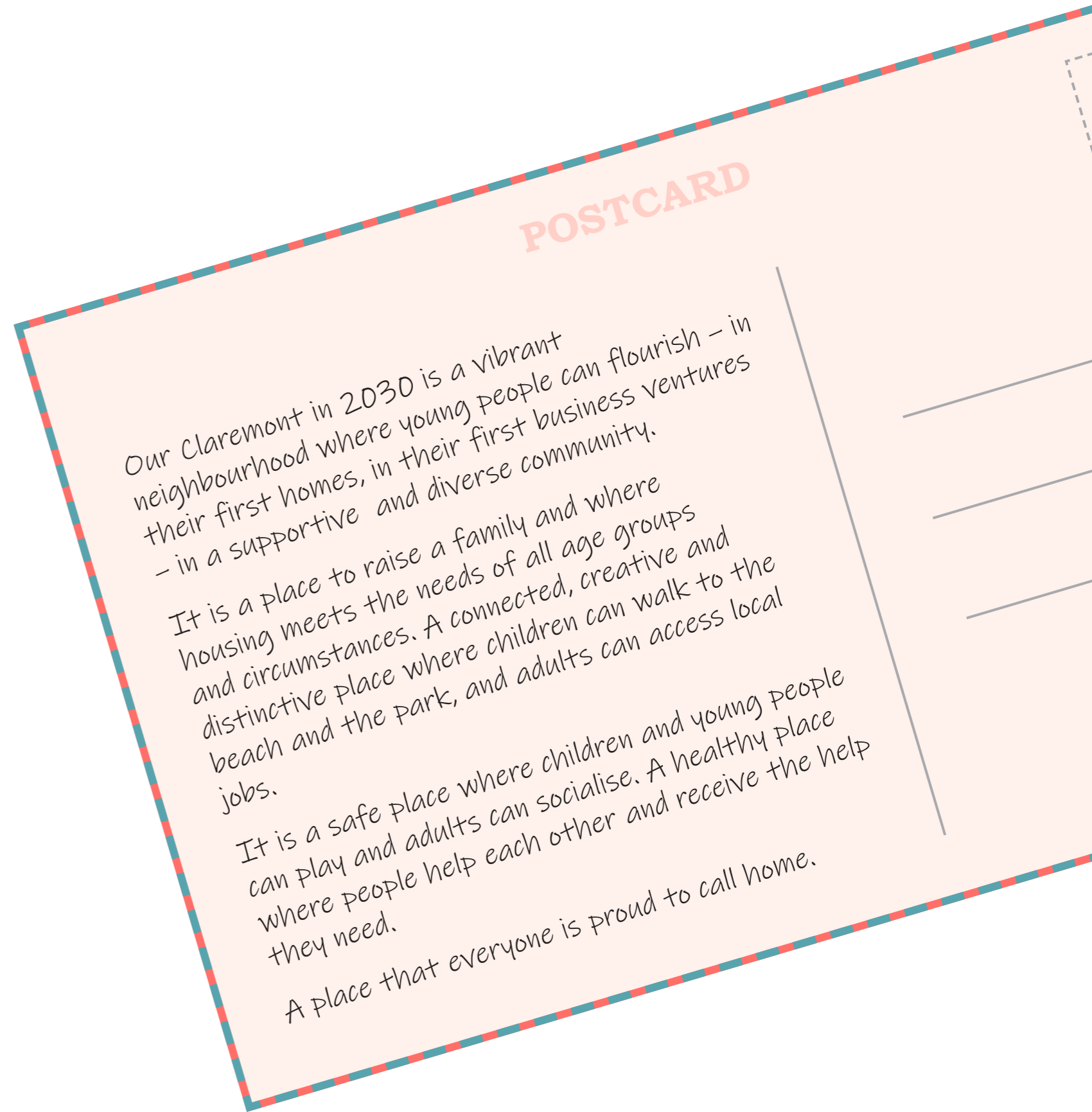
# 5.0

The first step in transforming Claremont is to establish what local people want their neighbourhood to look like, and be, at the end of the process. This then provides a guide to move towards and to measure future projects and indicators against. This plan has therefore set out a 'Vision' for Claremont in 2030. This Vision is unashamedly aspirational, but importantly is achievable with the right co-ordinated commitment, funding and activity being consistently provided to support it.

It is important that the Vision is developed from a 'grass-roots' approach by the local community and stakeholders – as these are the people that the new Claremont is intended for (especially young people); and whose commitment and consensus will be needed in order to own and deliver it. At workshop sessions attendees were asked about the place they wanted Claremont to be, using the concept of **'Our Claremont'**.

The Vision has therefore been developed as a direct output of the Engagement process described in the previous section. The client and consultant team have listened to what people have said in workshops, and in 1-2-1 dialogues and have captured thoughts and phrases that were expressed about how Claremont should change. There have been many consistent messages from all groups that have been engaged with to date. The team have categorised these to provide a coherent and integrated Vision that captures all of these thoughts and aspirations.

The Vision for Claremont is set out as a "Postcard from Claremont, 2030" adjacent.



*Our Claremont in 2030 is a vibrant neighbourhood where young people can flourish – in their first homes, in their first business ventures – in a supportive and diverse community.*

*It is a place to raise a family and where housing meets the needs of all age groups and circumstances. A connected, creative and distinctive place where children can walk to the beach and the park, and adults can access local jobs.*

*It is a safe place where children and young people can play and adults can socialise. A healthy place where people help each other and receive the help they need.*

*A place that everyone is proud to call home.*

Our Claremont: A postcard from the future



# Our Objectives

Following on from the Vision, the next step is to create a series of Objectives: to guide the development of projects to deliver and facilitate the vision. A collective response is needed to deliver the Vision and these objectives each explain exactly what the community is striving to achieve, in order that any project or proposal to change Claremont by anybody can be reviewed against the objectives. We have proposed a series of projects in Claremont (including 'key moves') which are designed to deliver some of these objectives which are detailed in the following chapters. The Objectives have helped to guide the project development and will be used to assess, prioritise and monitor them.

There are twelve Objectives for Our Claremont. These have been grouped into three main 'themes' and emphasise the need for a collective response to delivering the Vision:

- **Our Homes;**
- **Our Streets and Spaces; and**
- **Our Community.**

Listed adjacent, these are linked to the above three themes so it is clear to see how these objectives can help to support each other.



**1. Improve the quality of homes**

**2. Create opportunities for additional housing**



**3. Rebalancing the housing market**

**4. A distinctive and creative place**



**5. A connected place**

**6. Safe routes and spaces**



**7. A greener and healthier Claremont**

**8. Access to employment opportunities**



**9. Reinforcing community pride**

**10. Be active, healthy and engaged**



**11. An enterprising place**

**12. A fun place to be!**





## Our Homes

- 1. Improve the quality of homes –** Claremont needs to provide fit and decent homes for all who live and want to live here, irrespective of type and tenure. This could be via refurbishment of the existing housing stock, raising the standards of the private rental sector, disrupting the market to achieve this, and providing new high quality housing for all groups.
- 2. Create opportunities for additional housing –** in addition to improving quality there is a need for Claremont to play its part in responding to the national housing crisis and delivering additional housing. This is an objective shared with Homes England and Blackpool Council. The masterplan will identify opportunity sites for new housing. These could be for a variety of types and tenures, including apartments and family housing.
- 3. Rebalancing the housing market to better meet the needs of all –** when delivering new and refurbished housing it is important to consider the overall housing offer of the area and to ensure it meets all the needs of a balanced and diverse community. At present, the local housing offer is skewed towards one-bedroom flats and there is a need to better provide for families, as well as specific groups such as large families and the elderly. This will enable Claremont to house a more balanced and sustainable community.

## Our Streets and Spaces

- 4. A distinctive and creative place –** proposals must reflect the special place that is Claremont, celebrating its local character, history, culture and identity. Proposals should not make Claremont look like 'any town'. Local distinctiveness and creativity can be promoted through public art, culture, environmental improvements and the design of new development or refurbishments, all of which can incorporate local themes. Deciding what to celebrate is something best left to the local community and to stakeholders such as renowned artist groups by increasing and embedding the sense of local ownership and identity.
- 5. A connected place –** Claremont should be a place that is easy to navigate and move around in, by foot, on bicycle and for the mobility impaired. People should be able to move safely between their homes, community hubs, schools, the town centre and the seafront. These routes should be clearly signed, usable and attractive to all users. Connectivity of Claremont should not be limited to just physicality but through digital infrastructure fit for the 21st Century.
- 6. Safe routes and spaces –** related to Objective 5, all routes and public spaces in Claremont, need to be safe and should not be poorly used because of a fear and perception of crime. Actions need to be wide ranging, and linked to improved policing, but active uses and natural surveillance, in addition to practical measures such as designing out crime, improved CCTV, well designed lighting and secure boundary treatments all need to be built into projects.
- 7. A greener and healthier Claremont –** Claremont has a high density of urban development with little relief amongst the residential streets of any green space. There is a general desire amongst residents for a 'greener' and 'healthier' environment. This is further required due to the limited private garden space within the existing housing stock. Opportunities should be taken to provide street trees, planting and a sense of open space for residents.

## Our Community:

- 8. Access to employment opportunities –** the key to improving conditions for people is making sure that they have access to good quality employment. There are many new jobs being created across Blackpool and the Fylde Coast. It is important that people of Claremont have good access to these opportunities. This will include both physical measures (walking routes, public transport etc.) and also non-physical measures (for example helping people get online, help with writing CVs and applications, and providing residents access to the right skills and education) to benefit from the significant economic investment that is earmarked for Blackpool and the Fylde Coast.
- 9. Reinforcing community pride –** Claremont has a strong community with deep roots. It also has several active community, outreach, arts, and cultural groups undertaking important work in addressing many of its issues but continuing improved access to local services. There is a need to bring all of this activity together and extend it to create a cohesive and effective community spirit that includes all residents, including those that may currently feel excluded. Claremont should become a place that its community is proud to be a part of.
- 10. Be active, healthy and engaged –** in bringing the community together it is important to create inclusive social spaces and activities. These could be pocket parks or drop-in cafes, where people can meet and access local services and activities. Opportunities should be taken to promote physical exercise and socialising: from walking to active sports and events in the park. These measures will help to tackle social isolation and promote means to good physical and mental health and well-being.
- 11. An enterprising place –** Claremont is home to many local businesses, and enterprising people. The new Claremont should facilitate opportunities for small and growing local businesses and community enterprises and cultural activities to be born and flourish. These enterprises will play an important role in bringing communities together and generating local pride and positive engagement. The nature of these enterprises should be left to local people, with fiscal conditions and accommodation in place to support them. It will be important that these uses can co-locate successfully with residential environments.
- 12. A fun place to be! –** finally, this is Blackpool and the new Claremont needs to reflect Blackpool's sense of fun and entertainment. Claremont has the beach, hotel and leisure uses on the Promenade, pubs and clubs in the town centre fringe and a vibrant LGBT+ community. These are assets to be celebrated and cherished, located in proximity but in harmony with the residential community. Colour is an important part of this celebration. Colourful buildings, with painted render, are a part of the local character and this use of colour, perhaps extended, can help celebrate Claremont as a distinctive and creative place and a place to be proud of.



# Projects & Key Moves

6.0

With the Vision and Objectives established it is important to develop projects that will realise them and help to transform Our Claremont by 2030.

This section explains potential projects that have been developed. These range from environmental improvements and places for community enterprises through to refurbishment and redevelopment opportunities bringing new residential uses. Some of these will be 'quick wins'; others are medium or long term possibilities. The opportunities highlighted are all included within the Action Plan in the following section, which provides more detail on their potential outputs and delivery methods.

The most significant projects have been developed in a little more detail and have been called 'Key Moves'.

The projects were identified through the community and stakeholder exercises. The key moves projects have been generated from the ideas of local people. The consultant team has evolved and developed these ideas further to become realistic projects with defined outputs and delivery mechanisms.

It is worth stressing that, at this stage, these are all potential projects: they all require external funding or partnerships, that may involve third party involvement and commitment for which the landowners will need to act as a partner, or land be acquired to facilitate wider objectives. Several of these sites currently accommodate existing businesses and uses – the ability of these projects to progress would therefore depend on the future intentions of these businesses, and current lease arrangements. This may require these businesses to be relocated. This can only be achieved with local leadership and collaboration with all stakeholders.

At this stage the projects are presented as a range, or 'menu', of potential projects, some of which may be taken forward if circumstances and funding allow. The Action Plan is set out in Section 7 and allows the projects to be compared and prioritised.

All of the proposed projects are described in the following pages. These are referred to by project numbers which can be cross-referred with the Action Plan (see Section 7) and the Projects Plans which identifies their location.

Projects are organised into the three 'themes' introduced in Section 5:

- **Our Homes;**
- **Our Streets and Spaces; and**
- **Our Community.**

'Key Move' projects are shown with illustrative plans and precedent images within this section. Viability appraisals have been provided for three pilot projects to represent sample projects (see confidential annex)



Community enterprise and learning



Local art projects



Street improvements



Community housing



# Our Homes

This study has identified a number of sites that could be potentially redeveloped in order deliver new housing and other uses that can meet the objectives alongside pre-existing developments, as illustrated on the adjacent projects plan. These are generally the sites of vacant buildings, underutilised spaces or employment and trade uses that would perhaps be better located outside of a residential neighbourhood.

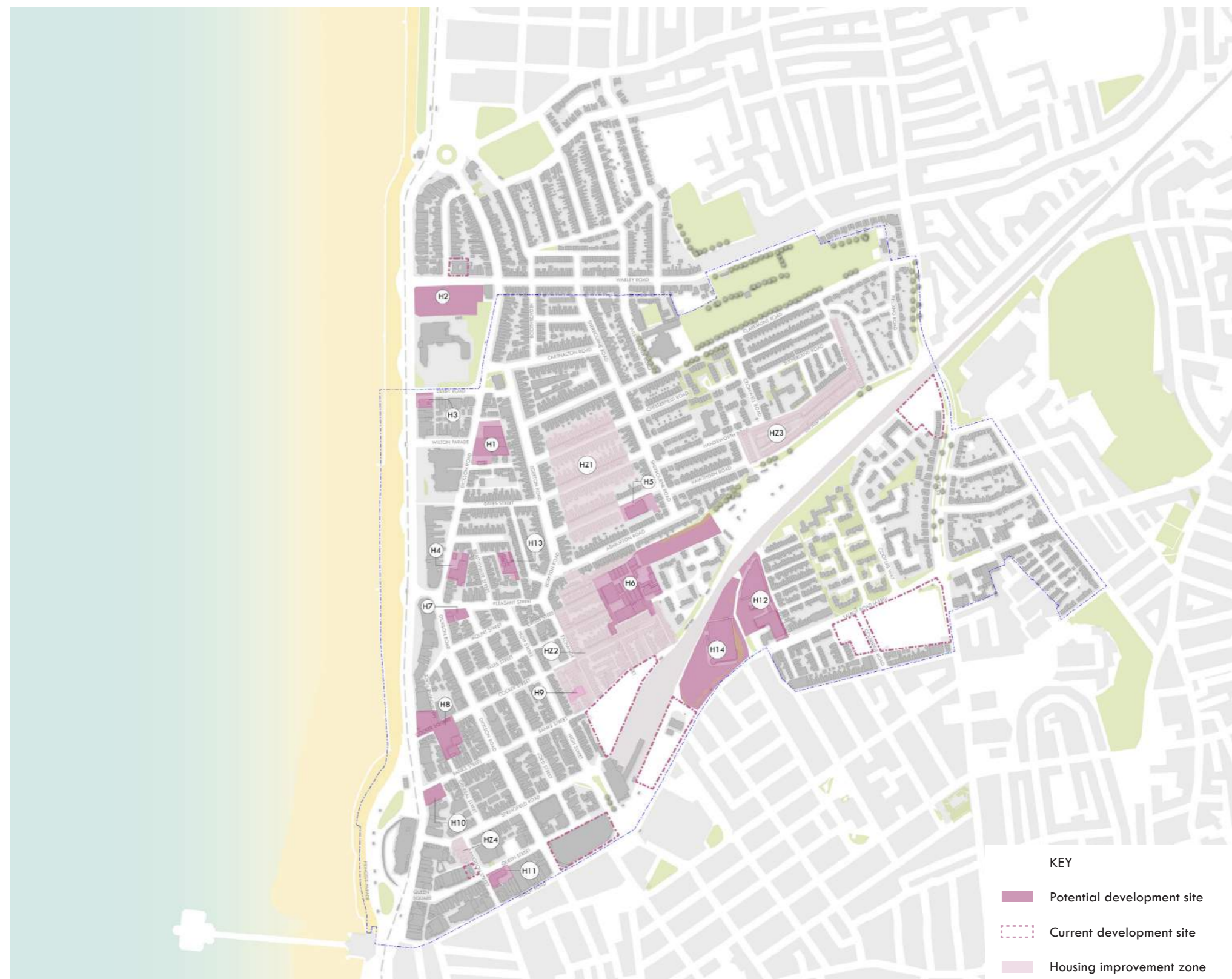
The identified opportunities are described in the following pages with options developed for selected sites to explore their potential.

**H1.** **Kwik Fit/Car Wash site** – the site of a Kwik Fit, a car wash, Décor 8 and Wynne’s garage; if these uses cease in the future or are relocated elsewhere then the site would be suitable for redevelopment of more compatible land uses. It could accommodate a mix of family houses and apartments.

**H2.** **Land north of Grand Hotel** – the hotel has a large amount of landscape surrounding that could facilitate a development site if it was considered surplus by the hotel operator. In close proximity to both the seafront and local shops and services this would make an opportunity site for an Extra Care retirement or similar retirement living uses.

**H3.** **Former Ambassador Hotel** – this former hotel is currently vacant and in a dilapidated condition. With a seaside aspect, this would make a excellent location for a modest apartment building or alternatively refurbished for a new hotel operator.

**H4.** **National Tyres** – site includes National Tyres and adjacent vacant buildings. If the current uses cease in the future, the site could have redevelopment potential for a mix of family houses and apartments. This would help to enliven this streetscene, where the hotels back onto on the opposite side of the street, and introduce a sense of ownership from active residential development land uses.



Our Homes Projects Plan





H6.



New characterful family housing



H5.

**H5. Clifford Road** – a site of existing trade and garage uses within a predominantly residential area. If redeveloped this would have potential to complete the street scene, improving the setting and delivering c.16 homes comprising family townhouses with private gardens and a small apartment block.



Sensitively designed infill housing



H8.

**H6. Cocker Street Industrial Estate** – the most significant potential opportunity in terms of scale. The industrial estate appears to be under-utilised and is surrounded by existing housing from the post war period, to which it provides a rather inappropriate neighbour and separates this estate from the rest of the residential area. Combining the estate with an area of surplus railway siding, the site presents an opportunity to re-integrate communities living in the area, improving its appearance and creating around 73 new homes, that could deliver a mix of high quality family houses and apartments as well as associated street improvements.

**H7. Dickson Rd/Pleasant St** – a large guesthouse is located on a prominent gateway with its own car park and is in somewhat poor condition. If this site was redeveloped it could accommodate a new good quality apartment development, potentially of fifteen 2-bedroom homes.



**H8. Cocker Square** – linking with the Wellness Walk, this site represents the gateway that would link the seafront with the Wellness Walk and create much needed public space for the Claremont community. Currently occupied by a Council-owned and managed car park, a private car park and two trade uses. If found to be surplus to car parking requirements; it has the potential to deliver two linked pocket parks fronted by two new apartment blocks, one of which would benefit from un-obscured sea views.

**H9. Back High Street** – a mixed redevelopment/remodelling project to provide improved family housing. There is a sport & social club here within the residential street. If this use could be relocated the club site could be redeveloped to provide three new townhouses. To the rear of the existing houses are a series of small employment units. If these were no longer required then this site offers a rare opportunity in Claremont to provide gardens for family houses. Incorporation of new gardens could accompany refurbishments to the existing dwellings.

**H10. Banks Street Car Park** – another small Council-owned car park located off the Promenade. If the site is found to be surplus to requirements for parking then it will provide another opportunity to facilitate a new high quality apartment block with panoramic sea views.

**H11. Former Jobcentre** – this is now a large vacant building on Queens Street within the town centre part of the ward. It is well sited to be redeveloped for a new town centre use or alternatively mixed use with upper floor residential.

**H12. Savoy Timber** – the timber trade use is located adjacent a predominantly residential character area. If the current uses cease in the future or are relocated elsewhere, the site offers potential for a new family housing development (c. 27 family houses). The site could extend to include the smaller trade uses at the rear. The opportunity could link to Project S7 and provide mutual benefits to the existing MUGA. The existing petrol filling station on Talbot Road could remain as existing.

**H13. Clyde Street** – there is a collection of lock-ups and garage uses within the inside of a residential block. If these could be relocated then this would offer a good opportunity site for a community enterprise use and a small number of family houses.

**H14. Mecca Bingo** – the bingo hall occupies a former food store and has a large surface customer car park. If the bingo operator wishes to relocate to better accommodation within the town centre in the future then there is potential to provide a residential redevelopment opportunity, or a mixed-use development with a residential focus.

Site No.	Development Type	Size (hectares)	Potential Capacity (no. of dwellings)
H1	apartments	0.44	29
H 2	extra care	0.64	46
H3	apartments	0.08	46
H4	family housing / apartments	0.18	9
H5	town houses	0.21	16
H6	family housing / enterprising	1.80	73
H7	apartments	0.10	7
H8	apartments, pocket park	0.36	28
H9	infill housing	0.07	3
H10	apartments	0.11	7
H11	town centre uses	0.10	----
H12	family housing	0.76	27
H13	refurb apartments, enterprising	0.14	9
H14	mixed use - residential focus	0.16	6
			Total of 306

Potential development capacity schedule





Co-ordinated painting of properties



Improved bin and bike storage solutions



Co-ordinated painting of properties



Modernising properties

## Housing Improvement Zones (HIZ)

In addition to the potential development opportunities it will also be important to raise the quality of existing housing stock through refurbishment. This will take a varied approach, according to the mixed land ownership, and according to localised need. It could include boundary treatments and external improvements (pointing, re-rendering, window replacement, repairs, painting used approved colour schemes etc.) through to internal refurbishments. Some of these works could be facilitated through small grant schemes that a low cost mens to 'kick start' improvements and champion low pride and responsibility. The latter may include converting houses that are currently sub-divided into self-contained 1-bed flats back to family houses. It could also include 'knocking through' adjoining houses to provide family housing for large families.

Significant work will need to be undertaken to ascertain the scale and location of these Housing Improvement Zones (HIZ) opportunities. This will be linked with wider trends and aspirations in the local housing market and with associated regulatory and funding measures intended to raise the quality of private rented housing. The House of Lords' Future of Seaside Towns, in association with Blackpool Council and Blackpool Business in the Community, recommended 'Housing Action Zones' in the town and the HIZ are recommended as areas that would benefit from this approach.

The HIZ could also seek to introduce or pilot a 'rent smart scheme' which have been successfully used elsewhere in the UK to qualitatively improve letting scheme through a Government backed accreditation scheme that provides improved service to both landlords and tenants.

The following preliminary areas have been identified, within which a variety of refurbishment and remodelling projects may be progressed by partners (see the Projects Plan).

- HZ1. Clevedon Rd/Chesterfield Rd/Cheltenham Rd;
- HZ2. Cross St/Lewtas St/ Cocker St; and
- HZ3. Enfield Road/Handsworth Road.

These are the areas of greatest need of this improvement approach within Claremont. We have developed a sample viability assessment to assess a pilot project of six units on Cheltenham Road. The location of the pilot would depend on landowner and resident intentions and collaboration. Once success is demonstrated the pilot project could be extended further along the street and rolled out further across the HIZ. These should also be integrated with streetscape environmental projects (see Project S4 which has been developed as a 'Key Move' to integrate with the Cheltenham Road pilot).

Possible Housing Improvement Zone initiatives ranging from aesthetic and functional upgrades to whole property modernisation.



# Our Streets and Spaces

Through engagement and a detailed study of the area a series of public realm projects and action areas have been identified for their potential to provide the greatest impact in improving the streets and spaces of Claremont. These are identified on the projects plan adjacent and range from specific sites to wider and holistic interventions.

It is hoped that these projects bring about environmental and safety improvements as well as encouraging community cohesion by creating more pleasant environments for people to use together.

The potential projects are described in the following pages.



Our streets and spaces project plan

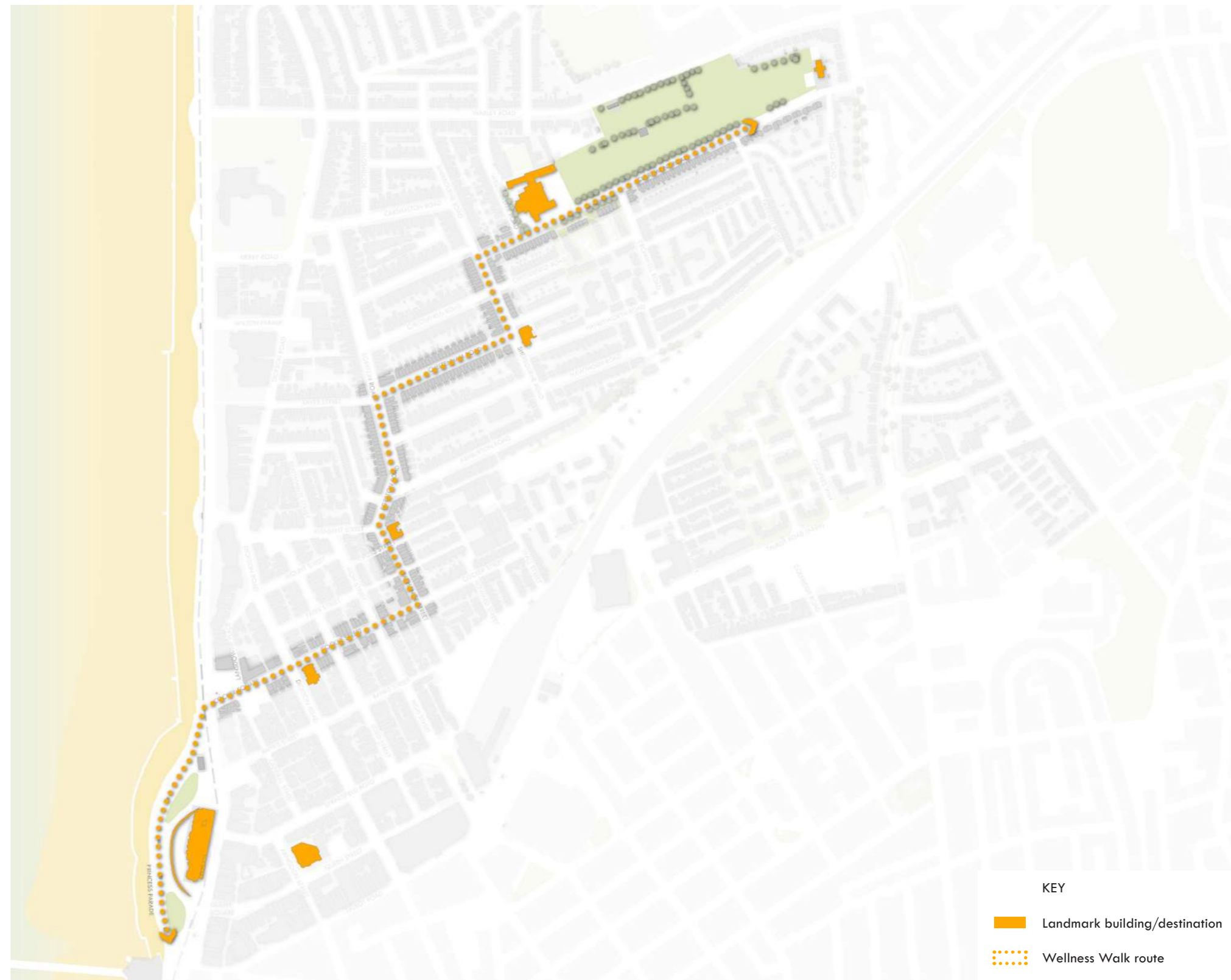


## The “Wellness Walk”

**S1.** **Wellness Walk** is a pedestrian friendly route running through the area and connecting its furthest reaches: Claremont Park in the North of the ward and the town centre and cultural assets to the South. It is to be a space where people can dwell and celebrate their community, while safely moving along any of its sections. The route passes several local landmark buildings and spaces, assisting navigation and helping to activate their surroundings. Key to its success is to make the environment safe and pleasant, with clear pedestrian priorities, places to stop and rest, street planting, improved lighting and colour all year round promoting active movement and healthy living.

It is intended that the walk is defined in part by a creative or artistic element, bringing identity to the streets that comprise it. This could be in the form of a colour palette, new and consistent signposting or a series of art installations forming a trail element. It is recommended that any artistic interventions are suitably co-ordinated by a public artist or organisation, such as Left Coast or Grundy Art Gallery to bring continuity and quality to the output.

‘Wellness Walk’ is the name currently adopted in concept however we recommend that a community engagement exercise is carried out so that Claremont residents themselves can name this project. This will help to promote a better sense of ownership and community adoption of the idea.



The Wellness Walk route

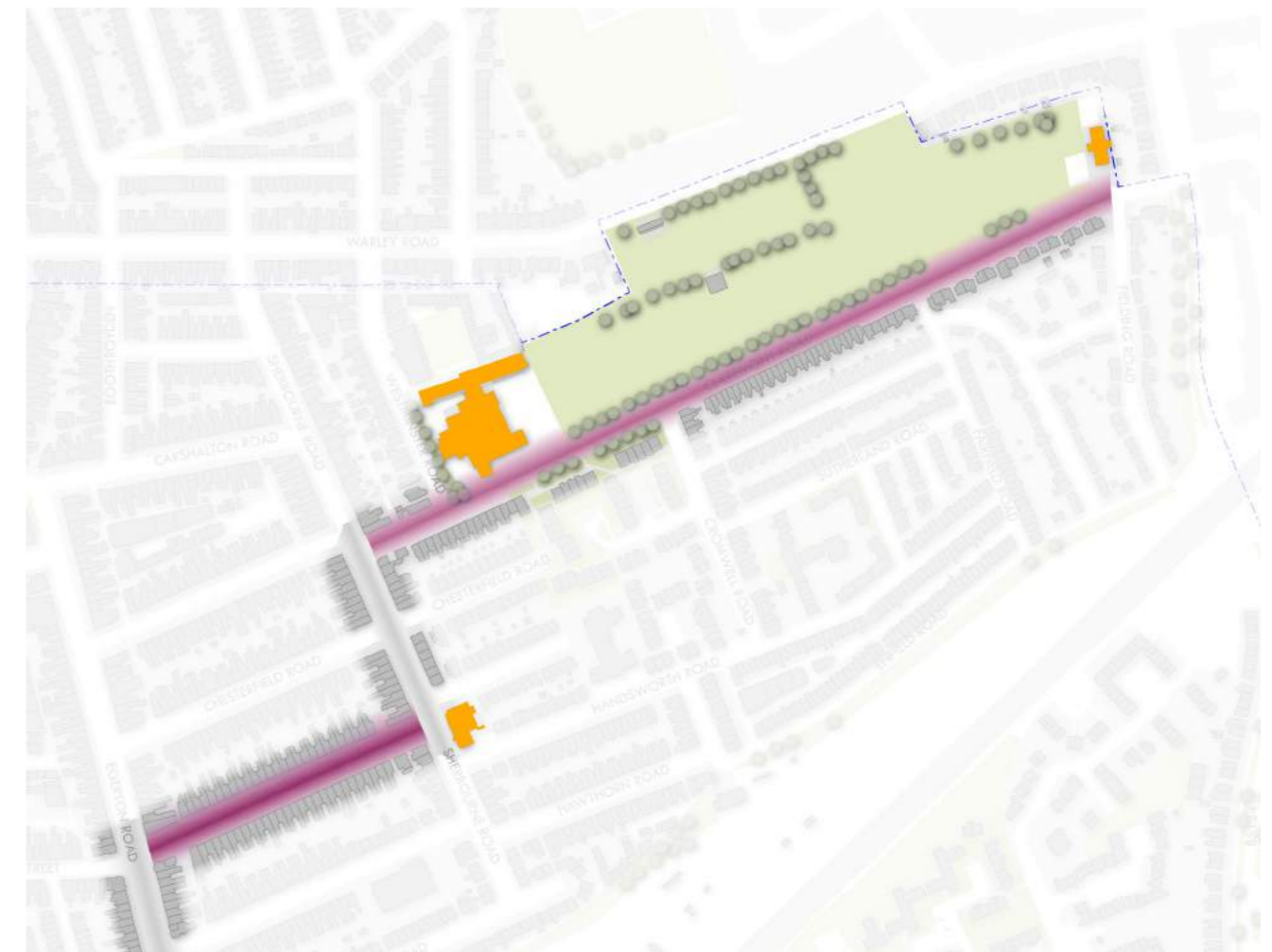


## Wellness Walk - in detail

The route passes through a series of different environments each with differing characteristics and functions. The treatment of each of these environments should subtly vary, bringing interest and identity to each of the walk's sections:

**The school street** is focused on children and play. It has colourful features, with animated boundaries and interactive pavements and a close association with Claremont Park. Vehicle movement should be restricted and slow, with limited parking. Junctions and pedestrian crossings should be clearly marked. Alternative street furniture should be considered and selected for its fun and attractiveness, with mundane and functional pieces creatively transformed with the input of young people to improve their appearance and represent their ambitions, such as interactivity or greening. Interventions could include amongst others: Painted pavements or murals; informal planting; bespoke signage created by school children; or decorated junction and meter boxes.

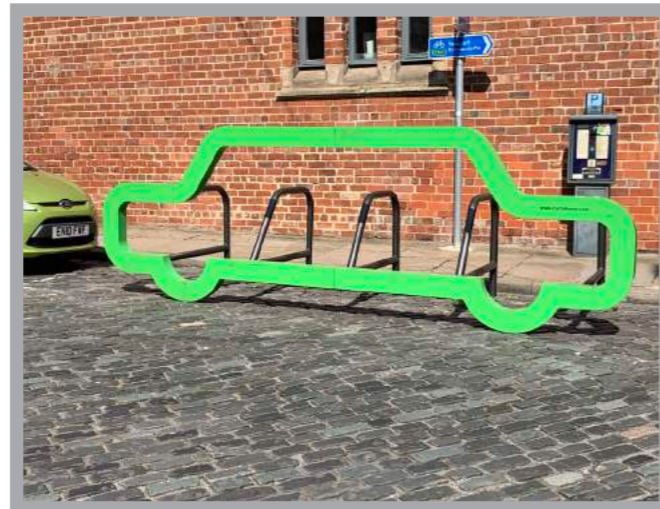
**Home streets** celebrate the neighbourhood and its residents. On-street parking is low with empty road space occupied by planters and trees, changing the environment to be pedestrian, rather than vehicle focussed. Pocket parks are created in other gaps (between buildings or in front of unused alleyways) creating places to sit and converse with neighbours or come together and be productive, such as community gardens or allotments. Activity will be able to spill out onto the street, allowing neighbours to interact more easily. Regular community initiatives bringing light competition between residents is encouraged as a way to animate and enliven the street, potentially on a seasonal basis - such as most beautiful spring garden or Christmas decorations. Bespoke or collectively created street signs could bring individual street identity. See also project 'S4 - Cheltenham Road'.



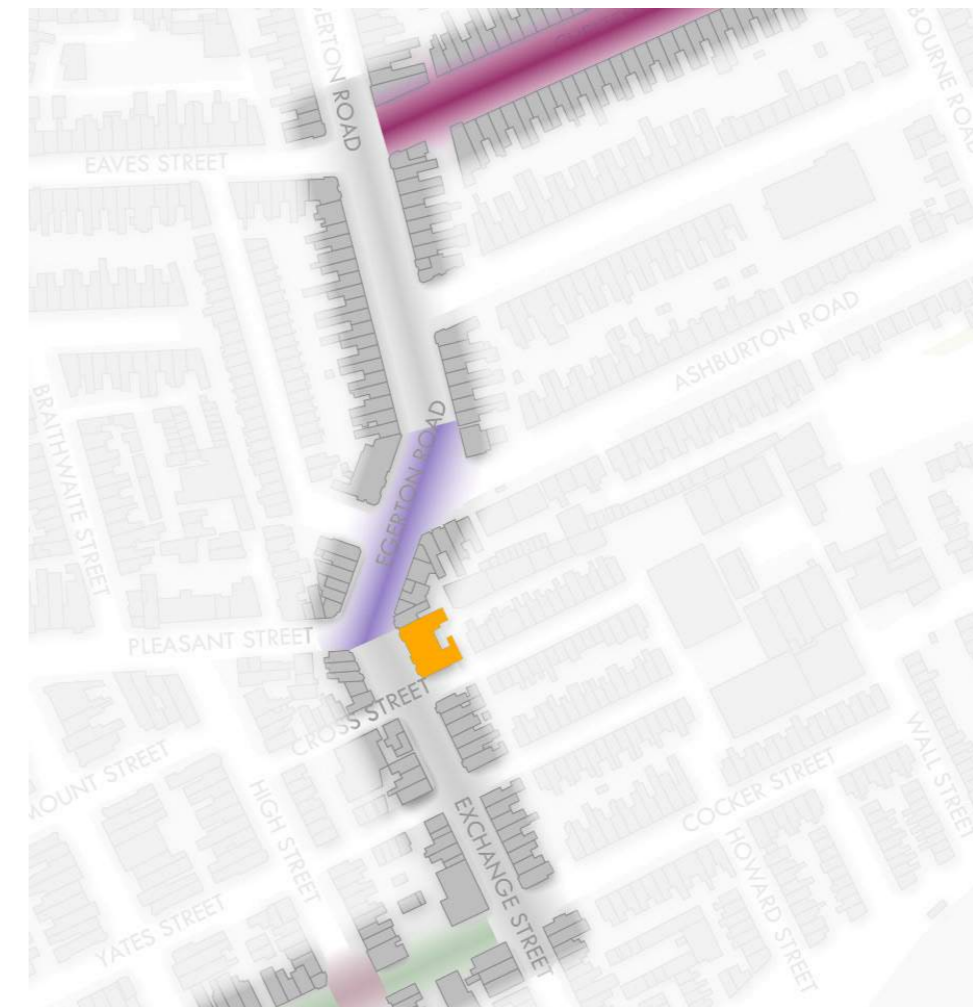
Wellness walk, North section



**Functional streets** are movement oriented. With less desirable points to dwell they provide a connection between destination spaces. Active modes of transport should be catered for and encouraged: well illuminated and secure cycle racks could be provided; with cycle awareness markings on the road surface; and sufficient places to stop and rest should be provided for the elderly and less able. These functions could be incorporated into reclaimed parking spaces, simultaneously reducing the amount of cars on the street. Pedestrian crossing places would benefit from being defined and could be of eye-catching design. Interventions could include: taking over parking spaces for bicycle parking or pop-up parks; identifying and marking pedestrian crossing points; or creating priority lanes for cyclists.



**The community square** is a hub for residents and visitors, occupying and re-imagining the existing Egerton Square. Located roughly centrally in the area it is a pedestrianised zone, marking it as an identifiable space, rather than a street or thoroughfare. Where possible, kerb heights are reduced and surface materials are high quality, with road detail achieved through changing materials, rather than solely paint markings. Space is provided for ground floor functions to spill out onto the pavement, creating a vibrant and interesting space. See also project 'S5 - Egerton Square'.



Wellness walk, mid section



**Gable streets** are streets less integral to the vehicle movement network which could be reclaimed for pedestrians on a temporary or semi-permanent basis. They can combine to form a series of interesting and characterful spaces, bringing interest and moments to pause when moving through the area, particularly towards the beach. They could serve as event spaces for local businesses allowing a “takeover” in the summer months. Interventions could include: pop-up markets and street food events; temporary art installations or performances which could be affiliated with Pride Blackpool or other local events.



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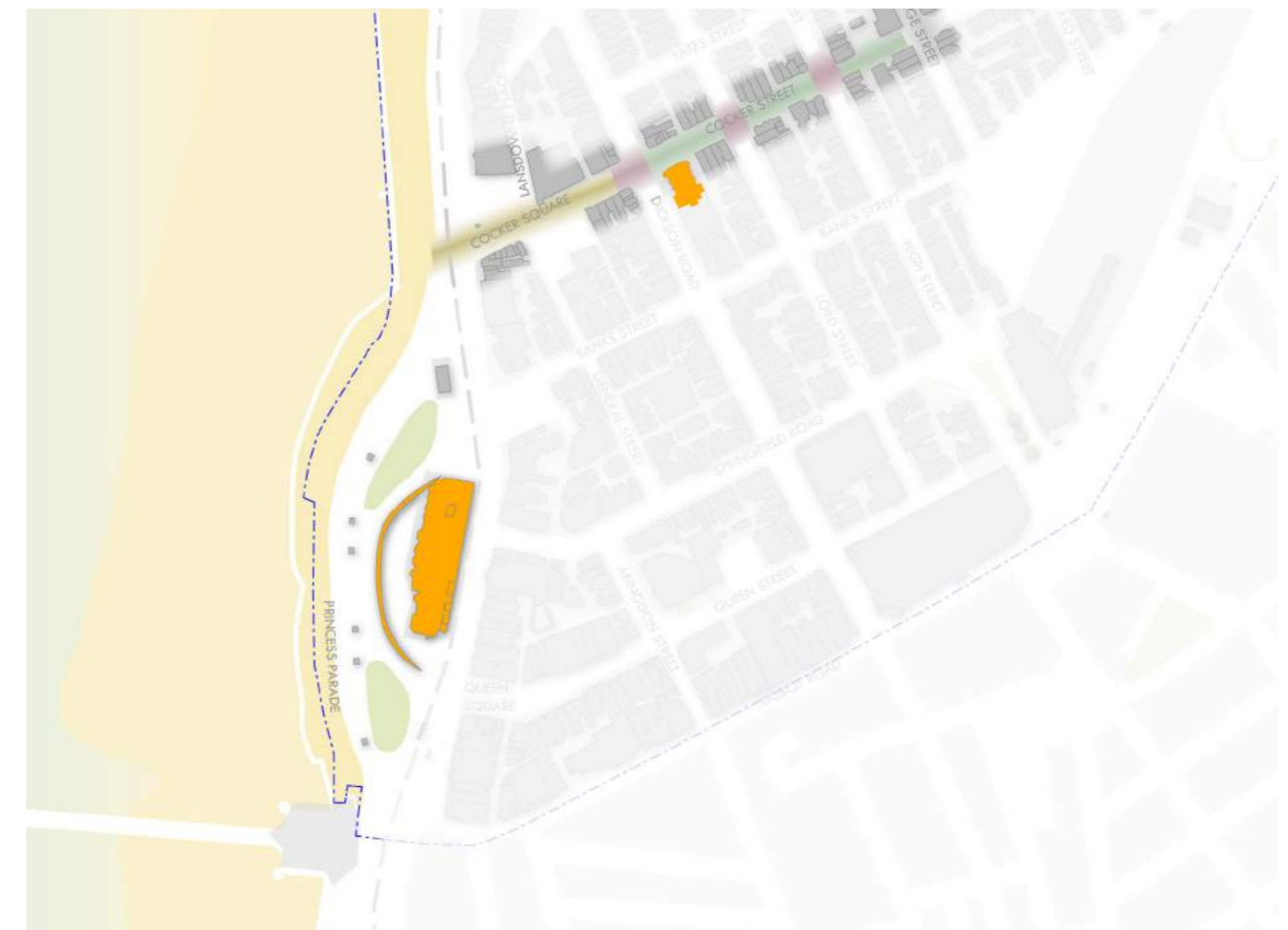
**Junctions** support all movement but prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. The junction should be ideally raised with pedestrian crossings well lit and marked although alternative approaches to road markings can have similar effects in redefining driver behaviour. Colourful and playful road markings can turn the junctions into points of interest and help with wayfinding. Positive additions could include: improved or bespoke wayfinding and signposting; painted roads or pavements; or art installations on buildings or street furniture.



**The seafront approach** marks Claremont’s connection with the beach and sea. It is a more formal space, which presents a public face to the area and potential gateway to visitors passing on the Promenade. Higher quality materials and street furniture should be used. It is a good space for public art which should be produced with community involvement, perhaps a space for Blackpool’s answer to Trafalgar Square’s “Fourth Plinth”. Interventions could include: benches and street furniture; tree planting; or pop-up markets and food stalls.



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Wellness walk, Southern section



**S2.** **Claremont Park** is already established but under used. It should see improvements that make it a place with a sense of community ownership. It should be enjoyed by all ages throughout the year and provide a focal space for larger community gatherings and festivals. The current annual Claremont Gala provides a good blueprint for use of the space and should be expanded upon. Lighting upgrades in particular will improve safety in the evening and winter months. Other interventions could include: an improved identity for the park through updated signage or wayfinding; path upgrades; and local planting events involving the local community

**S3.** **Pocket Parks** provide relief between buildings or activate left over spaces. Claremont currently has limited public space, so they are a good way of introducing additional diversity to the offering. Pocket parks can be temporary or permanent, and work well as pop up installations, very often becoming permanent occupying unused spaces. By their nature they are varied in size and character so add a layer of richness and interest to the public realm. A number of opportunity sites exist throughout Claremont, spaces for specific intervention should be identified through community involvement and design and could include: informal or structural seating arrangements; community gardens; and areas for play.



© Stephen Evans Photography

A pocket park taking over a street space.



Claremont Park - Improved lighting



Claremont Park - Lighting installations



Claremont Park - Improved planting



Claremont Park - Improved signage and wayfinding



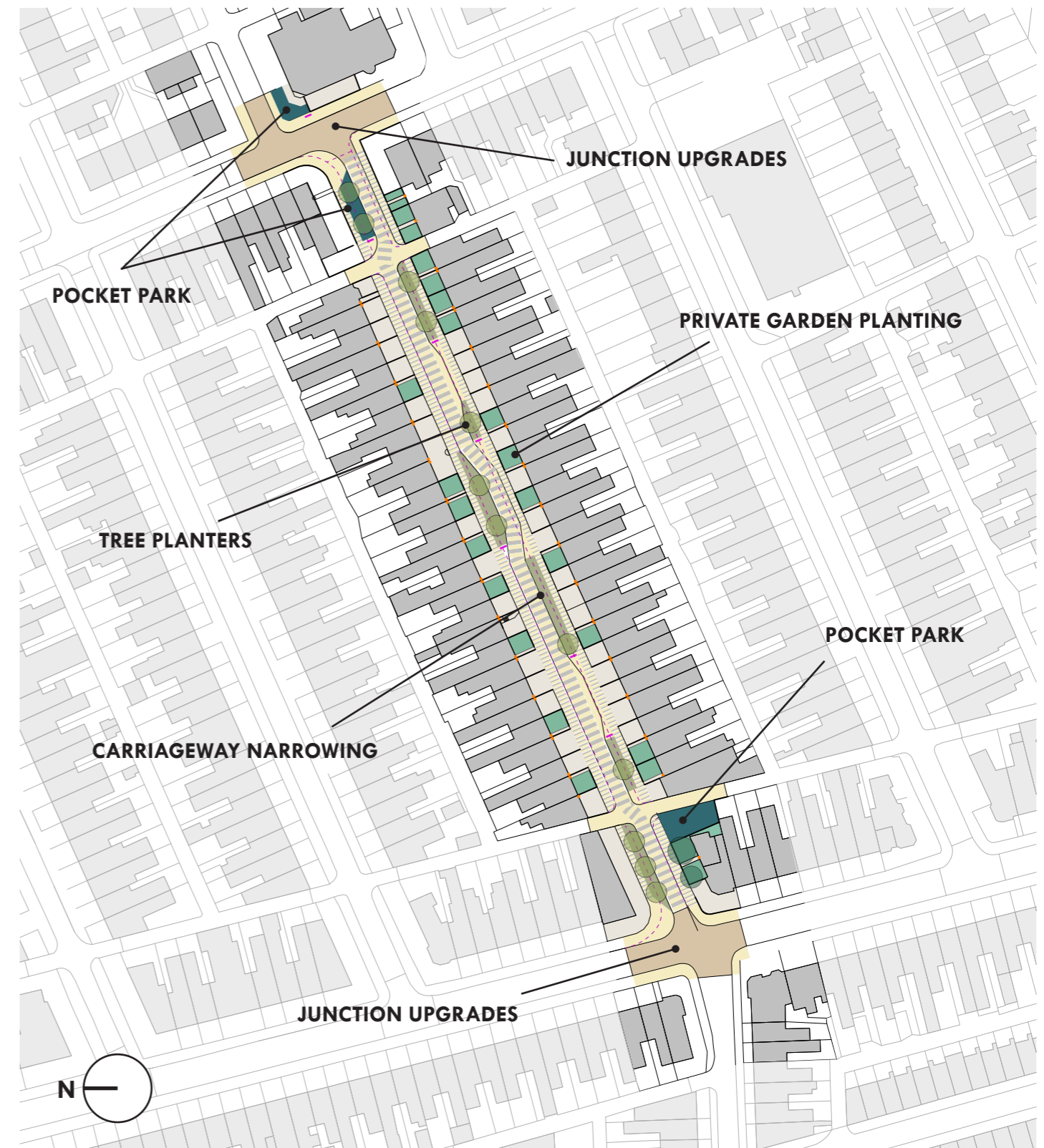
**S4.** Cheltenham Road is identified as a potential pilot project for the transformation of residential streets within Claremont. Initially identified for improvement as part of the Wellness Walk it will provide a blueprint for the transformation of other similar streets. It is envisioned as a community driven project which engages residents in the installation and upkeep of new elements, transforming its character from road to a more pedestrian friendly environment. This is achieved by “claiming back” the highway from the car, narrowing the carriageway by constructing planters and street furniture which creates a meandering road, having the simultaneous effect of improving the appearance and encouraging slower vehicle speeds. Specific interventions could include: painted streets and pavements; formal or informal planting arrangements; street furniture such as bicycle racks and seating; neighbourly initiatives to improve front gardens and entrances; as well as the introduction of bespoke graphics and signage contributing to local identity and place.



Cheltenham Road currently



Cheltenham Road re-imagined



A plan of proposed Cheltenham Road pilot project.



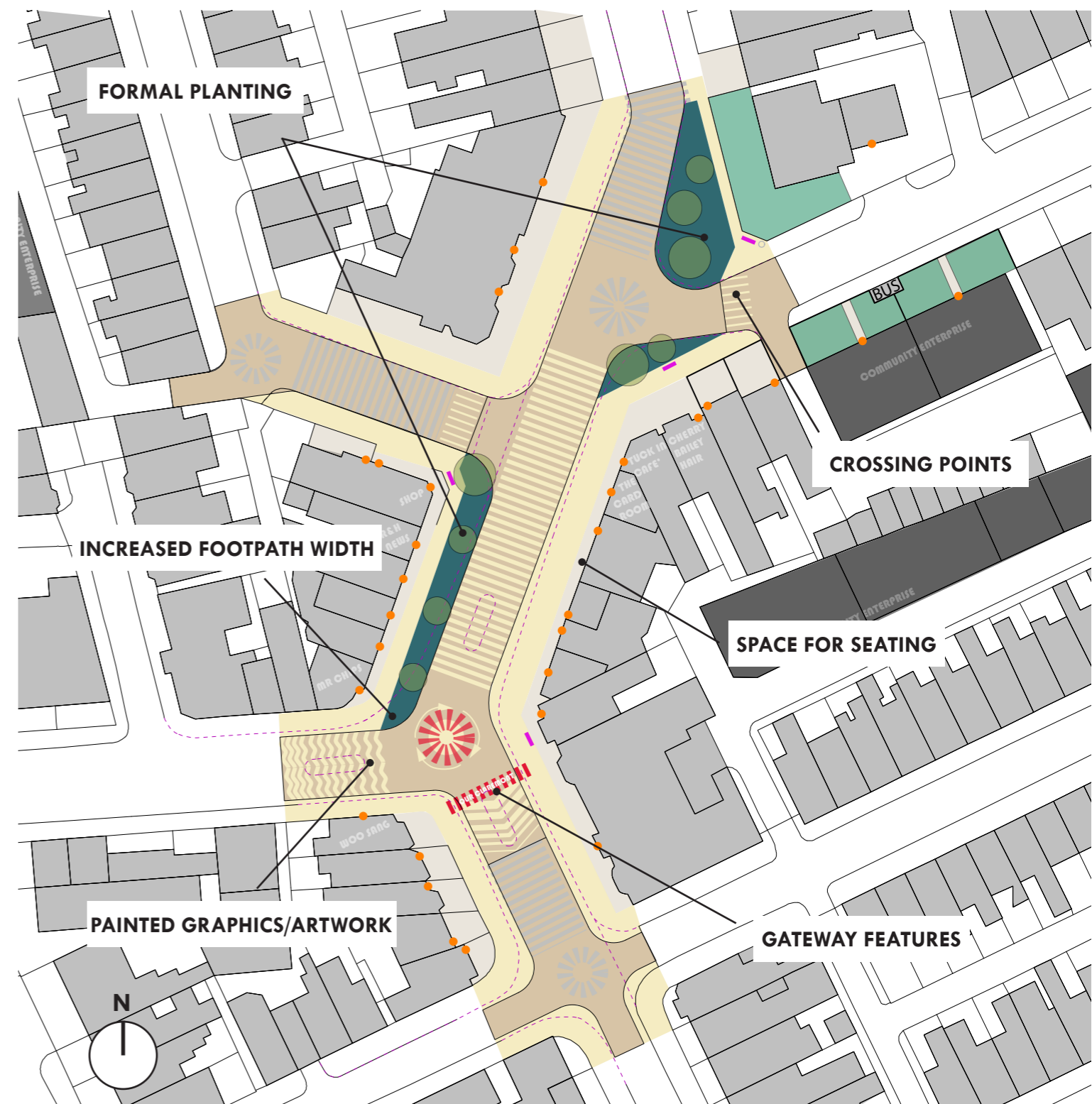
**S5.** Egerton Square is the natural centre of Clarendon and has good potential to be transformed into a community hub. Already lined with available commercial units, the sustainability of any new businesses or community enterprises locating here will be dramatically improved through upgrades to the public realm, increasing dwell time and bringing life to the space. Creating a pedestrianised zone will define Egerton Square as a place and improve pedestrian connections across the road. Graphic markings or changes in surface material will define the area, mark the gateway points and give the square an identity. Street planting is encouraged to provide shelter, improve appearance and air quality, enhance biodiversity and resilience.



Egerton Square currently



Egerton Square re-imagined



A plan of proposed Egerton Square transformation





**S6.** **Dickson Road (behind the hotels)**, despite being a primary route through the area, presents a poor environment. It is comprised of a wide single carriageway faced onto by the rear elevations and yards of hotels, that in the other direction look out onto the Seafront, as well a mix of predominantly empty commercial units and light industry. The letting of the commercial units to businesses or community ventures has the potential to improve pedestrian activity and the redevelopment of sites into residences would raise footfall (see housing projects). Additional environmental improvements could take the form of informal public artwork, with the blank sections of wall and elevations behind the hotels utilised as a canvas for murals and authorised street art (as Art B&B “Fried Egg”).



**S7.** **Percy Street Multi Use Games Area** has seen recent upgrades however it is hidden largely from view located to the rear of houses and at the back of a block of residential streets. Its environment would be improved by integrating further activities for younger people, creating an active hub and access improved through wayfinding and lighting.



**S8.** **Alleyways** are prevalent throughout Claremont as part of the historic terraced building forms. They have been gated in the past which has improved security, however their environment on the whole remains unpleasant and under used. They have the potential to be transformed into valuable outdoor community space through community engagement and little funding. Placing of planting and furniture in the space will encourage its use and upkeep.

**S9.** **The Station Approach** to Blackpool North from Claremont is poor and the station concourse naturally points towards the town centre, turning its back to Claremont. This is exacerbated by the infrastructure heavy streetscape surrounding the station, which makes navigation at ground level difficult and unpleasant. In order to better integrate Blackpool North Station into its location, redevelopment around should consider the approach from Claremont, providing openings and respecting pedestrian desire lines from the North to make arrival as easy and appealing as possible, encouraging both active movement and use of public transport by local people.



**S10.** **Local public art** has the potential to engage but also alienate local populations. Its inception and location should be carefully considered, working with local communities and artists to provide an output which is relevant and exciting. Public art could take various forms, from curated graffiti walls, to sculptures or performative and temporary installations. It should speak of Claremont and instil a sense of pride and belonging to the area.



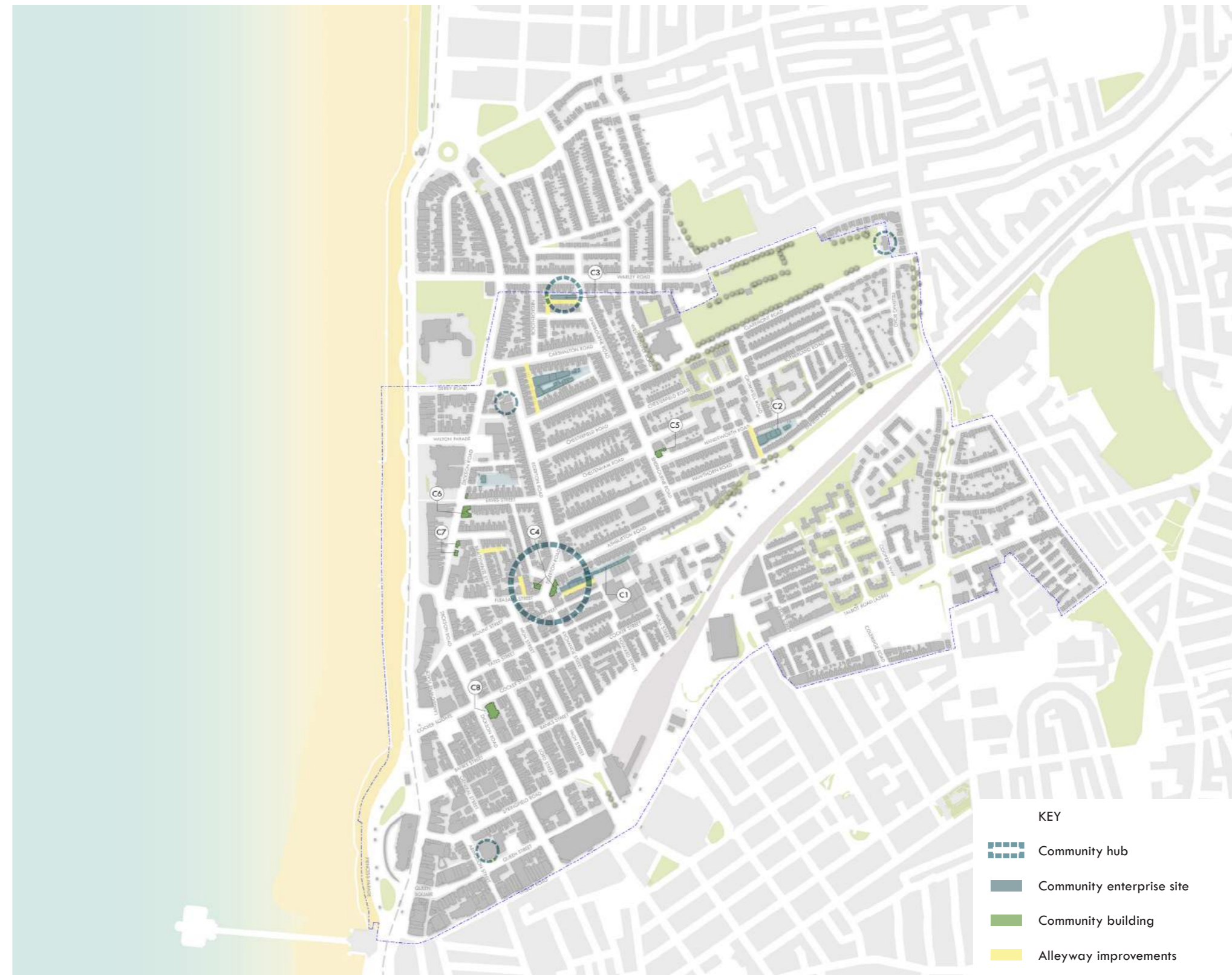


# Our Community

## Community Hubs

This Plan has identified five 'community hubs' in Claremont. These provide anchors as the main centres for community services and amenity which are important for local identity and purpose. There are, of course, important community services that continue to be delivered outside of these hubs too, such as Claremont First Steps Community Centre on Dickson Road, however these five are recognised for their geographic spread and variation in offer. It is important that all of these hubs as well as other services, are effectively linked and following proposed projects have been developed to support this concept. The identified hubs are:

- **Egerton Square** – a key location in the heart of Claremont and a long-standing (though currently threatened) local centre. Suffering from crime and vacancy, although still accommodating two convenience stores and a fish & chip shop, it should be improved as a community hub – with new community functions making use of vacant units.
- **St Paul's** – as well as a place of worship the church hall provides valuable community space for events and performances. It is the starting point for the annual Claremont Gala parade.
- **Claremont Park and Community Centre**– the park itself provides community facilities catering for play and sports, while the community centre, formerly a branch library provides a venue for clubs and events. The park hosts the annual Claremont Gala.
- **Magic Club** – already a hub for the younger members of the community the Magic club represents a successful community outreach to be built upon and enhanced.
- **Central Library and Grundy Art Gallery** – an established centre for culture, technology and learning, the library and gallery represent a hub for the community with connections to a wider context.



Community hubs and opportunities



## Potential Sites for Enterprise Uses

Community enterprise uses have proved key components of recent successful neighbourhood regeneration schemes in the North-west (for example Homebaked in Anfield or the Moss Cider in Manchester). Such pop-up and experimental uses provide opportunities for local economic growth and employment as well as bringing the community together and fostering community pride, cultural, identity and cohesion.

There have also been opportunities considered for new community and cultural services that would benefit the local area – to better meet existing needs and to enable wider opportunities to be capitalised upon, for example to combat social isolation and improve access to employment opportunities.

It is important that any community uses or community enterprises come from the community itself. The plan has provided a list of potential ideas below based on what the community has raised at workshop sessions, what has worked well in similar urban neighbourhoods and what the plan believes will particularly work well in Claremont.

### Ideas for Potential Enterprise Uses

- All day café / access point for services;
- Kitchen garden & allotment;
- Healthy take-away;
- Recycle and re-use workshop;
- Learning space / idea exchange;
- Culture shops;
- Charity bike shop;
- IT support / employment outreach;
- Dance/music studio; and
- Artists' studio.

The key role of a strategy such as this is to facilitate opportunities for these community uses and enterprises. The plan has therefore suggested potential suitable sites. The community enterprises and uses could be integrated and work well together, for example a drop-in café could sell honey made from a local bee-keeping enterprise, or is used as a hub to access various community projects services that are delivered off-site.

A community café could also provide younger persons access to the internet and other IT equipment to allow them to engage with digital technologies. This access will help them develop new relevant skills and experience of using and familiarising themselves with modern technology, better preparing them for future employment opportunities, as well as practical help in preparing CVs and searching and applying for jobs online. The café could create an affiliation with the Grundy Building with its access to information and arts.

The three areas below (and shown on the Projects Plan) are existing sites that accommodate a variety of employment uses within the interior of residential blocks. If there is surplus space here, or existing employment uses could be relocated, then it is recommended that these areas are remodelled to create opportunity sites for enterprise uses, in an improved environment. This would then form a better neighbour and more compatible use for the surrounding residential areas.

- C1. East Boothroyden;
- C2. Rear of Handsworth Road; and
- C3. Rear of Ashburton Road



Community and social enterprises





Community cafe



Repair shop



Art studios



Technology centre

## Potential buildings for new community uses

There are a number of vacant buildings in Claremont (often former shops and services) that could accommodate potential new community uses, they include:

- C4. Egerton Square (several units);
- C5. Former Whistle Stop (Handsworth Rd/ Sherbourne Rd);
- C6. Vacant block Dickson Rd (between Bute St/ Eaves St);
- C7. Vacant buildings Dickson Rd (North of National Tyres); and
- C8. Former North Shore Methodist Church.

The buildings identified are not an exhaustive list of opportunities and any suitable space which becomes available will have the potential for use by the community and could be managed by a local community group.

## Community Events and Activities

In addition to the site-based community uses, the plan has identified through community engagement the potential for events and activities that can animate the streets and spaces of Claremont. These will integrate with the projects to improve streets and spaces. These ideas are summarised below.

- **Active Claremont** - healthy walks and trails can be identified, designed into street improvements and promoted through community hubs. Measures could also include external gym equipment in key hub areas and in parks, these have been introduced across the UK in recent years and provide access to exercise facilities that are available for all age groups. This allows people to engage with physical workouts in public areas.

- **Street markets** – certain streets could be closed temporarily to accommodate pop-up street markets, selling goods from local traders, including new community enterprises. This would link with street improvement projects, which would design-in this capacity. It also offers potential to experiment with street closures, which could be extended to other streets, or made permanent. There are many wide carriageways in the area that are not fully needed for local traffic. Access and parking for adjacent residents must still be maintained.
- **Claremont Gala** – this is already a popular seasonal activity with a route through the streets to Claremont Park. It could be extended to include several routes, starting from all over the neighbourhood and converging on the park.
- **Chatty Walks** – following on from the successful 'chatty bench' idea (located in front of St Paul's medical centre and developed by Claremont First Step), this would be an opportunity to connect socially to combat isolation at the same time as getting fit.
- **Art Trails** – the neighbourhood could be a place for street art or local arts-led public art, which could then provide a trail for visitors to discover whilst providing a platform to celebrate the existing artists in Blackpool and the North West of England.
- **Colourful Claremont** - co-ordinated painting of buildings in an approved bright colour scheme, based on a currently developed by idea by Left Coast. This has potential to link with several refurbishment and environmental improvement projects and would help to foster community pride and distinctiveness. The LGBT+ village provides a perfect example to celebrate colour and to express the culture and identity of this key area. This could be through rainbow signage and crossings designed by the community.





# Our Claremont Action Plan

# 7.0

The Our Claremont Action Plan provides a summary, and assessment tool, for the projects described in Section 6. It enables the projects to be integrated into a co-ordinated and comprehensive set of actions.

The Action Plan provides a brief description of each project – providing a reference that is linked to the Project Plan to locate them, and describing the potential opportunity, scope and capacity for broad outputs.

The headings in the Action Plan allow projects to be compared against each other in terms of links to objectives, cross-references to other projects, and to timescales. This will allow them to be prioritised.

The Action Plan provides useful information, where these are known or can be reasonably be provided within the scope of this project to assist delivery – i.e. delivery lead and partners, indicative timescales, and broad order of costs (for public realm projects and sample development projects only).

The timescales have enabled a series of projects to be indicatively identified as 'Early Wins'. These will be vital in generating a sense of momentum within the local community and in encouraging confidence that Claremont is changing.

There is clearly much more work to do to develop every project but the Action Plan provides a tool that can be used to co-ordinate them moving forward. It can be used to assist BBC with funding bids to deliver these projects.

The key next action in taking the Action Plan forward is to prioritise the projects. The consultant team have indicated a suggested priority (high, medium or low) for each project, according to how best they meet the vision and objectives and how important they will be to deliver transformational change to Claremont. It is important that partners and stakeholders review these projects and agree the prioritisation of projects. This will be vital when capacity to deliver all projects may be limited and subject to available funding.



# The Action Plan

Project	Type	Opportunity	Description	Landowner	Timescale	Link to Objectives	Link to Other Projects	Priority (suggested) - to be agreed by stakeholders
<b>Our Streets and Spaces</b>								
S1. Wellness Walk (see plan)	Public realm project	Public realm enhancement / movement project	Minor interventions along the route. <b>12300m2</b> (area measured excluding Cheltenham Road and Egerton Square, area estimated separately below)	tbc	Early Win	5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12	S3, H8	HIGH
S2. Claremont Park	Public realm project	Lighting, events, management, street interface environmental improvements	Improved safety and creative lighting, street furniture upgrade, opportunity for art spaces (walls/panels) <b>4195m2</b> circa	BBC	Early Win	4, 7, 9, 10		HIGH
S3. Pocket Parks	Public realm project	sample scheme (see potential sites below)	space for seating, planting and growing, art space, play <b>TOT 650m2</b> , as illustrated The two main ones are 120m2 [in Egerton Square], 100m2 to [in Cheltenham Road]. There is the opportunity to create some smaller ones along the pedestrianised streets, for example along Cheltenham Road, as illustrated [430m2 overall]	tbc	Short/Medium	4, 6, 7, 10		HIGH
S4. Cheltenham Road	Public realm project	Street enhancement - sample scheme	Colourful aesthetic, low cost / temporary interventions (seating/planters) for immediate effect; informal play and street greening. Street realignment as traffic calming measure. <b>3455m2</b> , as illustrated (including the area of the smaller pocket parks)	tbc	Medium	4, 6, 7, 9, 12	HZ1	MEDIUM
S5. Egerton Square	Public realm project	Public realm enhancement	Community Square with colourful aesthetic, hard and soft landscape, entrance gateway and pocket park.	tbc	Early Win	4, 7, 9, 12	C4	HIGH
S6. Dickson Road (rear of hotels)	Public realm project	Environmental improvements	primarily soft landscape and tree planting, seating, some play <b>4375m2</b> circa	tbc	Early Win	6, 7, 8		MEDIUM
S7. Percy Street & MUGA	Public realm project	Improve access to MUGA, wayfinding, usage	soft landscape improvement for residents use <b>1238m2</b> (includes the 300m2 of MUGA)	tbc	Early Win	5, 6, 10	H1 2	MEDIUM
S8. Alleyways	Public realm project	sample scheme (see locations on plan)	colouring up the streets, residents re-appropriation with informal greening and seating <b>2515m2</b> circa	tbc	Medium	5, 6, 9	C1-3, HZ1-3	HIGH
S9. Station Approach	Public realm project	Already being led by Council on Car Park site	good quality public realm <b>7065m2</b>	tbc	n/a	n/a		MEDIUM
S10. Local public art	Public realm project	Oppprtunity to form part of above projects	Claremont identity features, designed by local artists - incorporated into public realm	tbc	Medium	4, 9, 12	S1-10	MEDIUM
<b>Our Homes</b>								
H1. Kwik Fit/Car Wash site	Opportunity Site	Opportunity if existing uses relocate (Kwik Fit, Car Wash, Décor 8, Wynne's garage)	0.55 ha, new apartments	Anglo-Dutch Property, Printers UK Property, Places for people, unknown	Long	1, 2		LOW
H2. Land north of Grand Hotel	Opportunity Site	Potential spare capacity on site	0.71 ha, 46 units, Extra Care	Britannia Hotels	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3		MEDIUM
H3. Former Ambassador Hotel	Opportunity Site	Vacant and derelict building	0.77 ha, 46 apartments	Tbc	Medium	1, 2		HIGH
H4. National Tyres	Opportunity Site	Opportunity if existing use relocates	0.19 ha, 9 units. Family houses/apartments	Darenda Mews Ltd	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3		LOW
H5. Clifton Road	Opportunity Site - Draft Design	Opportunity if existing uses relocate (Trade / Garage)	0.21 ha, 16 townhouses	Oclar Properties, Mobility 2000, Unknown	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3		HIGH
H6. Cocker Street Industrial Estate	Opportunity Site - Draft Design	Under-occupied industrial estate, opportunity if uses relocate	1.78 ha, 73 units. Family houses/apartments	Tan Property, Ashley Foundation, Arriva Rail N, Wallace Estates, Helpfavour, unknown (3)	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3, 7		HIGH
H7. Dickson Rd/Pleasant St	Opportunity Site	Large guesthouse with car park - opportunity if relocates	0.10 ha, 15 x 2-bed apartments	Choice Hotels Ltd	Medium/Long	1, 2		LOW
H8. Cocker Square	Opportunity Site - Draft Design	Two small surface car parks and trade/garage uses- opportunity if surplus/relocate	0.52 ha, 28 units. Apartments & pocket park	Blackpool BC / private	Medium	1, 2	S3	HIGH
H9. Back High Street	Opportunity Site - Draft Design	Project to create family housing. Sports & Social club - opportunity for new development if relocates. Refurb of existing units to family houses. Creation of rear gardens if trade units can be relocated.	0.33 ha block, 3 new townhouses, refurbish 12 houses, create back gardens for all	Sathy Estates Ltd, various other	Medium	1, 2, 3		HIGH
H10. Banks Street Car Park	Opportunity Site	Potential if surplus	0.11 ha, 7 apartments	Burnbrae Ltd	Medium	1, 2		MEDIUM
H11. Former Jobcentre	Opportunity Site	Vacant building	0.09 ha, town centre use	Chainkey Ltd	Short/Medium	8, 11		LOW
H12. Savoy Timber	Opportunity Site	Opportunity if existing trade use relocate (timber yard and others)	0.76 ha, 27 family houses	Savoy Holdings, IPM Pension, Electricity NW	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3		LOW
H13. Clyde Street	Opportunity Site	Infill housing, lock-ups, garages - opportunity if cleared	0.16 ha, 9 units. Refurbished houses, apartments, enterprise	Sprucedale, Last Drop	Medium	1, 2, 3		MEDIUM
H14. Mecca Bingo	Opportunity Site	Opportunity if existing use relocates, or car parking is larger than needed	0.15 ha, 9 units. Mixed use- residential focus	Graves (Cumberlamnd) Ltd	Medium/Long	1, 2, 3		LOW
<b>Housing Improvement Zones</b>								
HZ1. Clevedon Rd/Chesterfield Rd/Cheltenham Rd	Refurbishment	includes pilot site for appraisal - refurb to family housing	includes 2-into-1 opportunity to provide accommodation for larger families	Multiple private ownerships	Long	1, 3, 4, 9	S4, S8	
HZ2. Cross St/Lewtas St/ Cocker St	Refurbishment		as above	Multiple private ownerships	Long	1, 3, 4, 9	S8	
HZ3. Enfield Road/Handsworth Road	Refurbishment		as above	Multiple private ownerships	Long	1, 3, 4, 9	S8	
<b>Our Community</b>								
<b>Potential sites for enterprise uses</b>								
C1. East Boothroyden	Community Uses & Enterprises	Healthy take-away	Potential site for enterprise use/s	unknown (4 titles)	Medium	4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	S8	MEDIUM
C2. Rear of Handsworth Road	Community Uses & Enterprises	Recycle and re-use workshop	Potential site for enterprise use/s	unknown (5 titles)	Medium	4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	S8	MEDIUM
C3. Rear of Ashburton Road	Community Uses & Enterprises	Learning space / idea exchange	Potential site for enterprise use/s	Paul Blake + 5 unknown	Medium	4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	S8	MEDIUM
<b>Potential buildings for new community uses</b>								
C4. Egerton Square (several units)	Vacant buildings	IT support / employment outreach	Potential site for community use/s	Winch & Co	Short/Medium	8, 9, 10, 11, 12	S5	HIGH
C5. Former Whistle Stop (Handsworth Rd/Sherbourne Rd)	Vacant corner shop	Dance/music studio	Potential site for community use/s	Neiman Developments Ltd	Short/Medium	8, 9, 10, 11, 12		MEDIUM
C6. Vacant block Dickson Rd (between Bute St/Eaves St)	Vacant buildings	Artists studio	Potential site for community use/s	Mondo Properties (3 units), unknown (1)	Short/Medium	8, 9, 10, 11, 12		MEDIUM
C7. Vacant buildings Dickson Rd (North of National Tyres)	Vacant buildings	Charity bike shop	Potential site for community use/s	unknown	Short/Medium	8, 9, 10, 11, 12		MEDIUM
C8. Former North Shore Methodist Church	Vacant buildings		Potential site for community use/s	Trustees for Methodist Church	Short/Medium	8, 9, 10, 11, 12		LOW
<b>Community Events and Activities</b>								
Non-physical projects - see Ideas	Community Activities	Active Claremont - healthy walks/trails	Potential community activities	n/a	Short/Medium	4, 9, 10, 12		MED/HIGH - depending on project
	Community Activities	Street markets		n/a	inc potential			
	Community Activities	Gala - extend routes		n/a	Early Wins			
	Community Activities	Chatty Walks		n/a				
	Community Activities	Art Trails		n/a				
	Community Activities	Colourful Claremont - co-ordinated painting of buildings		n/a				



This plan has identified over 30 potential development opportunities and public realm projects. The Action Plan in Section 7 has listed each of the projects alongside the anticipated outputs, delivery lead and potential partners, potential funding and phasing, including early wins.

The public realm improvements are all projects that will require public sector funding and delivery. Phasing of these works should ensure that projects offering the greatest transformation and positive affect on the Claremont area should be prioritised.

The Council owns a handful of the potential development opportunity sites. The Council has the greatest control over the delivery of these sites for early transformative development. Delivery of these sites could proceed in one of three ways:

1. The Council could transfer sites to the Blackpool Housing Company for development.
2. The Council could market the sites for disposal subject to either a development agreement or robust planning framework to guide delivery of development.
3. The Council could procure a development partner to deliver a number of the project sites.

There are a number of under used or neglected assets that are outside of Council control. The Council should actively promote and encourage the redevelopment of these sites through planning policy and all other means. Where these methods fail, the Council should consider use of CPO to acquire these sites for redevelopment. The Council will have to consider appointment of a development partners (either Blackpool Housing Company, another Registered Provider or a private sector partner) to support the delivery of acquired sites.

There are a number of trading assets and active uses (for example commercial activities in predominantly residential areas) on a number of potential development sites that will have to be relocated before transformational development can occur. A number of these sites include active employment (including potential employment for local residents) and identification of relocation sites for existing businesses will be important to retain jobs insofar as reasonably possible. The Council will have a key role in identifying relocation sites and supporting existing businesses to relocate.

Finally, there are a number of poor quality residential properties (predominantly subdivided to one bedroom accommodation) and guesthouses that are in need of regeneration/investment. Focusing on clusters of such properties to create transformational housing conversions (whereby multiple subdivided properties and guesthouses are converted) to provide high quality family housing will in all likelihood have to be delivered by the Council and Blackpool Housing Company. It may be that these projects can be delivered through open or off market acquisitions, although in likelihood use of CPO will required to acquire comprehensive control of a cluster of properties.

## Development Viability

Development appraisals have been prepared to assess the viability of a sample of key development projects. In particular, development appraisals have been prepared for the following projects:

- The Former Ambassador Hotel Site (H3)
- Cocker Street Industrial Estate (H6)
- Cocker Square (apartments on Council-owned car park) (H8)
- A notional Housing Improvement Zone Project (sample of 6 houses on Cheltenham Road within project HZ1)

LSH has recently prepared the Council's Local Plan Viability Assessment (LPVA). Using the assumptions adopted in the LPVA unless otherwise appropriate and stated, LSH has used a residual appraisal model to test the viability of these sites. The model discounts all development costs (including land costs and developers profit) from the estimated gross development value to assess the viability of sites, identifying either the potential surplus for planning contributions or the viability gap.

The LPVA has identified the underlying weakness in the inner Blackpool market area and it is therefore no surprise that the viability analysis for the sample projects has identified marginal viability at best and a viability gap more generally across the sample sites.

This means that gap funding will be required to support transformational development in Claremont. If early transformational projects have a positive impact on market conditions, it is hoped that the viability gap will reduce and medium and longer term projects might become viable.

The viability appraisals for the four sample sites are available in a separate confidential appendix.

## Development Funding

Homes England has supported the development of a community-led urban planning exercise for Claremont (i.e. this Vision) with Community Housing Funding. It is hoped that Homes England will continue to support this project and provide ongoing support through the Community Housing Fund and other funding streams. At the time of the writing the structure and availability of Homes England funding streams is not yet confirmed pending the outcome of a comprehensive spending review.

As a next step, it is important to engage with Homes England once their new funding streams are confirmed. This engagement should be on a Claremont-wide basis to discuss the Vision and the ways in which projects could be supported by Homes England. It will also need to integrate with wider proposals for Blackpool and Homes England's role in supporting these. It is clear that Homes England will need to be at the heart of the solution for Claremont.

Other potential funding streams that we have investigated included the Towns Fund and the Quality Corridors - Property Improvement Fund (PIF). BBC have funding under the PIF but this is currently oversubscribed. BBC currently have a live application for Future High Street Fund but this is limited to an area within the town centre that does not include any part of the Claremont ward. BBC also has a live application to the Government under the Towns Fund. If successful, this may provide opportunities to support community and enterprise projects in Claremont, but would not normally support development or public realm projects.



## Planning Instruments and Council Support

An important way in which BBC, as local planning authority, can assist in the delivery of projects, is using one of a range of potential town planning instruments that are available to them. This could include:

- Use of the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction to further support Policy HN5 (2006) in restricting the further conversions of family houses to apartments and maintain quality through refurbishments and conversions.
- Implementation of development orders: to encourage Family Homes (conversions and new build) by creating a smoother planning process.

Beyond the planning system there are other measures the Council can use to lead and support delivery:

- Using their CPO powers (and threat of them) to support site assembly, working with BHC and other developers to deliver sites.
- 'Pilot' Street interventions (for example projects H9, S4 and the sample project within HZ1) to demonstrate what can be achieved and how it can be done – encouraging the private sector to follow.
- Stronger enforcement of landlords to deliver improved housing standards including consideration of 'rent smart schemes' seen elsewhere in the UK.
- Consideration of improved police/enforcement agencies presence and surveillance to deter current anti-social behaviour including use of public space protection orders.
- Consolidating different public funding streams together to create collective funding pot and providing support through the funding application process.

## Transforming the Local Housing Market

Key objectives include raising the quality of housing stock in Claremont, but also to re-balance the housing offer – to better support balanced and more stable communities. In Claremont this means delivering more family housing and reversing the legacy created by the subdivision of houses to apartments (generally one-bedroom). This will need concerted action on several fronts: disrupting the market (through BHC and others) – delivering better quality 1 and 2 bedroom apartments; creating fiscal incentives to deliver family housing and disincentives to deliver low quality one-bed apartments (linked to Housing Benefit payments); and then acquiring and converting the surplus low quality stock and converting it back to family housing.

These are bigger issues than those affecting Claremont and for this Vision alone to resolve. Additional new measures will be needed. The aforementioned Article 4 Direction will be an important tool, as will continuing and extending the good work BHC are doing as a 'disruptor'. Further structural measures could include those suggested in the 'Housing Action Zones' suggested in the House of Lords Future of Seaside Towns report, which are being considered for Blackpool. The Housing Improvement Zones identified in Claremont (Projects HZ1-3) are recommended as potential areas where this designation could apply.

## Community and Enterprises Uses and Activities

Several projects with the Action Plan are designed to be led by others: local enterprises, community groups and developers. The strategy here is that this Vision facilitates opportunities to be identified and delivered by the community through these groups. The Action Plan has identified sites and buildings for these uses and linked these to other projects (including public realm projects) and provided the framework for them to be integrated and assessed within the wider vision. It has also suggested a range of potential enterprise and community uses (most of which emerged from the community and stakeholder engagement) but it is important that the project ideas are initiated through local entrepreneurs, creatives and local leaders. The Council and their partners (including the Magic Club) can then support these groups in delivering the projects. In setting the vision and objectives and allowing these projects to be assessed against these objectives will support funding bids used to support them.

This group of projects also includes a range of community activities. Again, ideas have been suggested (emerging from engagement) but these should emerge from local ideas and led by community groups. These projects will integrate in a vital way with the public realm projects: they will animate these new and improved streets and spaces and help to engender a sense of community pride and ownership within Claremont. They can also be used as activities to assist the delivery of wider future projects: for example closing a street (that has been improved under a public realm project) temporarily for a street market or other event and using this as a trial for a potential permanent closure.

## Next Steps

This report has set out the Vision. It is the first part in an ongoing process. This now needs to be taken forward by the local community and their partners, who must now take ownership of the projects, set their priorities and lead the process, assigning 'champions' for each project.



