

Transport and Works Act 1992 Blackpool Tramway (Blackpool North Extension) Order Planning Statement

Blackpool Council



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Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 This Application	1
1.2 Scheme Background	1
2. Site and Surroundings	3
2.1 Route Description	3
2.2 The Surroundings.....	3
2.3 Area Designations.....	4
3. The Promoted Scheme.....	6
3.1 Proposed Infrastructure	6
3.2 Proposed Operation and Service Pattern.....	6
3.3 Alternative Options Considered	7
3.4 Construction and Phasing of the Scheme	8
3.5 Funding	8
4. Case for the Promoted Scheme	9
4.1 Introduction	9
4.2 The Need for the Scheme	9
4.3 Objectives	10
4.4 Promoted Scheme	10
4.5 Benefits of the Promoted Scheme	11
5. Planning Policy Framework.....	13
5.1 Introduction.....	13
5.2 Local Level Policies	13
5.3 Regional Level Policies.....	17
5.4 National Policies	18
6. The Applications to be Submitted	20
6.1 Introduction.....	20
6.2 Request for deemed planning permission	20
6.3 Matters to be reserved for subsequent approval	20

7. Supporting Documents	21
7.2 Air Quality Assessment Report	21
7.3 Flood Risk Assessment.....	22
7.4 Heritage Assessment Report	23
7.5 Transport Assessment	24
8. Conclusions	26

1. Introduction

1.1 This Application

1.1.1 The Blackpool Tramway (Blackpool North Extension) (BNE) is a proposal to deliver a new section of tramway between the existing Blackpool to Fleetwood tramway and Blackpool North railway station. The extension would run from North Pier, where the existing tramway runs along the Promenade, through Talbot Square, along Talbot Road, to a terminus adjacent to Blackpool North, a distance of approximately 550 m. Regular tram services would be introduced from Blackpool North to the south and north of the town, supplementing the current tramway service.

1.1.2 This planning statement has been prepared in support of application for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 Order (TWAO Application) for the necessary powers to construct, maintain and operate the Blackpool Tramway (Blackpool North Extension). This application is promoted by Blackpool Borough Council.

1.1.3 This Planning Statement outlines and summarises how it is intended to address planning matters and issues related to the Transport and Works Act Order application for the Blackpool North Tramway Extension. It summarises:

- the site and surroundings of the scheme
- the promoted scheme
- the case for the scheme
- the relevant planning policy framework
- the application submitted
- the documents supporting the application

1.2 Scheme Background

1.2.1 The Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramway underwent a successful major programme of improvements in the four years to 2012, including improvements to tramway and highway as well as a new fleet of tram vehicles and depot. Since re-opening, tramway patronage has increased in line with expectations and in 2015 the tramway had its most successful year since the re-opening, in terms of patronage and revenue.

1.2.2 Currently, interchange between Blackpool North railway station, and the tram requires a transfer on foot of around 600 metres. As a result, tram is not an obvious or attractive way to travel to or from the station. Blackpool North is the town's rail hub, offering a range of frequent direct services and connections to interchange opportunities. Blackpool South and Blackpool Pleasure Beach railway stations, on a different line, offer a more limited service.

1.2.3 The result is a lack of integration between the tram system – which moves people around economically important destinations in Blackpool – and the rail system – which allows rail access to tourism, jobs and services in Blackpool from the rest of the UK, and access to jobs and services in the rest of the UK (particularly Preston and Lancashire) from Blackpool.

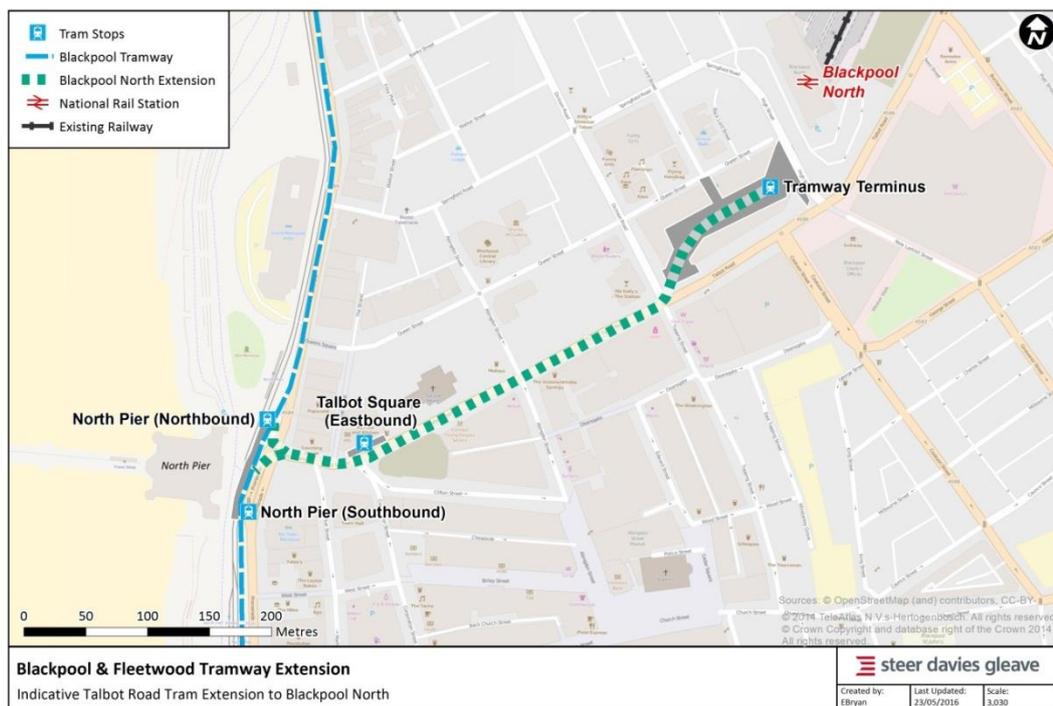
- 1.2.4 The promoted scheme will bring tram services to Blackpool North. The BNE, shown in Figure 2.1, comprises a 550 m twin track extension of the tramway from the Promenade, through Talbot Square and along Talbot Road terminating at a new tram stop forming part of the planned redevelopment of the current Wilko store site. The terminus would be at the same level as the Blackpool North railway station concourse, with access to the station being through an improved underpass, which is located to the south west of the station entrance.
- 1.2.5 Improving the connectivity between tram and rail services will, in particular, lead to an improvement for three movements of particular importance to the economy of Blackpool and the wider region:
- Inward movement of tourists to Blackpool from regional and national origins
 - The two-way movement of local residents between the North West and Blackpool for work, leisure and services
 - The internal movement of people between jobs, services and residential areas within Blackpool and Wyre

2. Site and Surroundings

2.1 Route Description

- 2.1.1 The BNE scheme (Figure 2.1) would run along the centre of Talbot Road, from the junction of the Promenade (A584) and Talbot Square, through its junction with Abingdon Street, and to the junction with Dickson Road/Topping Street – where the alignment would access the site of the current Wilko store. The BNE would be segregated from highway traffic through Talbot Square, share road space with westbound highway traffic on Talbot Road from Talbot Square/Corporation Street to Abingdon Street and with two-way traffic thereon.

Figure 2.1: Blackpool North Extension Scheme



2.2 The Surroundings

- 2.2.1 The site is urban in nature, being contained within Blackpool Town Centre. The existing Blackpool tramway runs along the Promenade at the western end of the site. Blackpool North railway station is located at the eastern end of the site.
- 2.2.2 Present land use along Talbot Road comprises a mixture of retail, leisure and tourism, food and drink, some residential use on the first floor, and accommodation. The new Central Business District development (car park and retail/commercial space) has recently been completed opposite the Wilko site on Talbot Road and includes improvements to the public urban realm east of Topping Street and north/south of Talbot Road to the East of its junction with Dickson Road/Topping Street. Other non-commercial land uses on Talbot Road include the Town Hall and the Church of the Sacred Heart. No buildings are proposed to be demolished or otherwise directly affected as part of the BNE scheme.

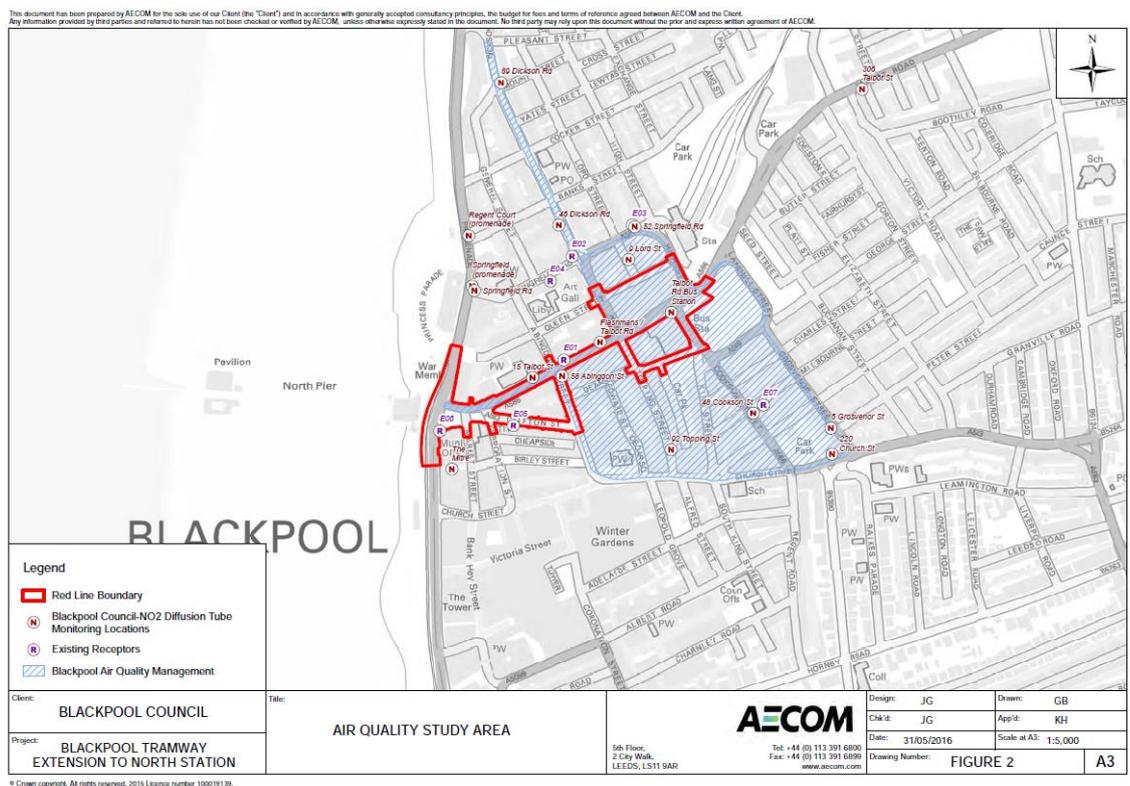
2.2.3 The total permanent site area which is contained within the Limits of Deviation (LOD) of the TWAO application¹ is 2.9 hectares (ha).

2.3 Area Designations

Air Quality Management Area

2.3.1 In line with the requirements of Part 4 of the Environment Act 1995, Blackpool Borough Council has carried out a phased review and assessment of local air quality within its area. Blackpool Borough Council declared an AQMA in Blackpool Town Centre in January 2001 (see Figure 2.2) due to concern over the achievement of its long-term NO₂ air quality objective. The justification for an AQMA was confirmed in the detailed assessment published in 2004.

Figure 2.2: 2005 AQMA Boundary



Source: A14/1 BNE Air Quality Assessment

2.3.2 Blackpool Borough Council’s Environmental Protection Officer² has noted that the Council intends to review the current AQMA and possibly revise the extent of the AQMA due to road changes within Blackpool. The draft revised AQMA proposal shows a reduction in the length of the AQMA along Dickson Road, but a wider corridor along Talbot Road.

¹ The Limits of Deviation are shown on the Works and Land Plans (A12) included with the TWAO Application and as the ‘Red Line Boundary’ on Figures 2.2 and 2.3 in this document

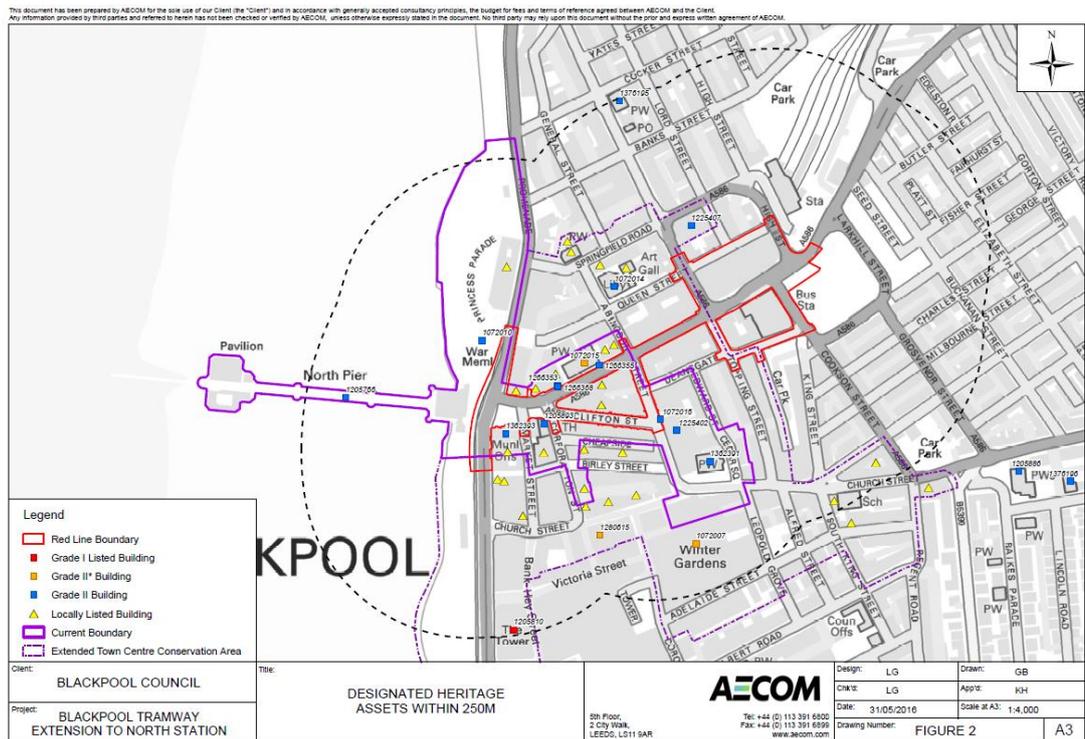
² In email correspondence with the Aecom Air Quality Assessment team (6 May 2016)

2.3.3 The BNE scheme is predominantly contained within the Blackpool Town Centre AQMA (both current and proposed).

Cultural Heritage

2.3.4 The majority of the BNE scheme is located within Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area, which covers Talbot Square and Talbot Road between the North Pier and Dickson Road (see Figure 2.3, which also shows the previous– 2005 – Conservation Area boundary for context).

Figure 2.3: 2005 and 2015 Conservation Area Boundaries



Source: A14/3 BNE Heritage Assessment

Water Resources and Flood Risk

2.3.5 The Environment Agency ‘Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea)’ identifies the BNE scheme as being located on land entirely within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). Flood Zone 1 comprises land assessed as having a less than 0.1% (1 in 1000) Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) of river (fluvial) or sea (tidal) flooding.

3. The Promoted Scheme

3.1 Proposed Infrastructure

Overview

- 3.1.1 The promoted tramway extension would leave the existing route at North Pier, via a two-way double track junction. The route would cross the Promenade highway and enter Talbot Square, which would be remodelled to provide segregation of trams and highway traffic. The existing pedestrian signals on the Promenade would be replaced by a signalled intersection. A new eastbound tram stop would be located in Talbot Square, to allow interchange with the existing North Pier tram stops.
- 3.1.2 As with the existing tramway, the trams operating on the extension will be powered via an Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) system. The OLE comprises an electrified contact wire located above the alignment of the tracks, with the power conveyed to the vehicle via a pantograph. The contact wire will generally be supported using discrete poles, as it was for the original tramway that ran along Talbot Road. The use of span wires to buildings using structural fixings will be investigated further as the scheme is developed, to aid with reducing street clutter. The traction power voltage is nominally 650 V DC.

Talbot Square

- 3.1.3 Beyond Talbot Square, a double track alignment would continue eastwards in the centre of the highway. Along this section of the route eastbound highway traffic will be diverted along the parallel Clifton Street. The signal intersection with Abingdon Street will remain.
- 3.1.4 The promoted route continues along Talbot Road to a new signalled intersection with Dickson Road/Topping Street. This section of the route will be shared with highway traffic in both directions; on-street parking, taxi bays and servicing will be provided.

Tramway Terminus

- 3.1.5 The proposed tramway terminus is planned to form part of the redevelopment of the current Wilko store site. The terminus is planned to be located in the centre of the development, close to and at the same level as the existing underpass to Blackpool North railway station.

3.2 Proposed Operation and Service Pattern

- 3.2.1 The existing tramway service operates between Starr Gate and Fleetwood Ferry from approximately 05:30 until 23:30, with a peak service every 10 minutes. Following completion of the extension to Blackpool North railway station, services and timetables on the existing tramway will be maintained.
- 3.2.2 The proposed services to Blackpool North will operate to a similar timetable with a peak departure every 10 minutes. The services to and from Blackpool North will alternate

between running northbound towards Bispham and southbound towards the Pleasure Beach. The additional services to and from Blackpool North will also provide additional capacity and an increased frequency of service along the busy Promenade section of the tramway network.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered

3.3.1 Consideration was given to other ways of meeting the scheme objectives during the SINTROPHER³ project. Alternative options were also considered within the analysis which supported the Conditional Approval funding application. The options considered were:

Shuttle Bus Option

3.3.2 A shuttle bus between Blackpool North and the tramway was considered but this option would introduce an additional journey leg and an additional interchange making the service unattractive to passengers such that it would be difficult to justify levying a passenger fare. There would be ongoing pressure on revenue budgets through its operating cost with little possibility of enough/any fare income to make it self-funding. This option was therefore rejected.

Alterations to Existing Bus Routes

3.3.3 Adjustments to existing bus routes were considered, such as altering an existing service from the Promenade to Blackpool North. Whilst this could be attractive for rail users, it would result in a disbenefit to existing passengers who would experience increased journey times and increased unreliability due to additional running in congested traffic. Furthermore, passengers would most likely complete their journeys by bus, placing these services more directly in competition with existing tram services. Similar issues would arise with providing an additional bus route; with the further consideration that competition with existing services as well as tram services would not result in sufficient fare revenue to cover operating costs. This option was therefore rejected.

Urban Realm Improvements

3.3.4 An option to enhance the walking route between rail and tram through urban realm improvement was considered. However, this type of improvement is already being undertaken through the Quality Corridors scheme currently being promoted by Blackpool Borough Council.

3.3.5 Although the Quality Corridors scheme will represent a significant improvement to the current urban realm, its impact on the connection between tram and rail services would be modest; producing some improvements to the journey quality but not materially improving connectivity. Delivering additional measures specifically to improve

³ SINTROPHER was an EU funded initiative which ran from 2007 to 2013 with the aim “to assess and promote development of new or improved tram services, linked to National Rail systems (and, where relevant, regional airports) as one way to improve access into and out of EU regions which are disadvantaged by reason of being geographically peripheral within the context of North West Europe.”

connectivity between tram and rail would likewise make only a modest contribution to meeting scheme objectives, and this option was therefore rejected.

Diversion of Existing Tram Services

3.3.6 This option considers adapting the existing 6 tram per hour through service to become a 3 per hour through service with 3 trams per hour from each direction diverted to Blackpool North. Every other tram would therefore require an interchange or incur a significant journey time increase for passengers travelling 'through' Talbot Square.

3.3.7 This option would require the same infrastructure as the Preferred Option, but would be deliverable without the purchase of additional trams. Analysis showed that the disbenefits to the increasing number of passengers along the existing tramway exceeded the benefit of the reduced costs of this option.

3.4 Construction and Phasing of the Scheme

3.4.1 The proposed project timescale is as follows:

- General arrangement designs: July 2016
- TWAO application: July 2016
- Potential Public Inquiry: Early 2017
- Secretary of State decision: July 2017
- Final design released: July 2017
- Contractor procurement commences: Early 2017
- Full Approval: December 2017
- Construction begins: January 2018
- Scheme Opening: April 2019

3.5 Funding

3.5.1 The total investment cost for the BNE scheme for Blackpool North Extension is £21,434,000 in nominal⁴ terms from the anticipated date of TWAO application approval. Conditional Approval for £16,400,000 of Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal funding for the scheme, representing 68% of eligible scheme costs, was obtained on 5 April 2016. Blackpool Borough Council has committed to funding the balance of costs beyond the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership funding. The Council's Section 151 Officer has confirmed that this balance is affordable.

⁴ That is including inflation. Sometimes also described as being in 'outturn' terms

4. Case for the Promoted Scheme

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section summarises the underlying need for transport intervention and sets out the justification for Blackpool Borough Council to promote the BNE scheme. It introduces the scheme objectives which were developed to capture this need for intervention and used to identify the best performing of the options considered (summarised in Section 3.3 of this document), which is the scheme being promoted.

4.2 The Need for the Scheme

4.2.1 Currently, interchange between Blackpool North railway station and the tram requires a transfer on foot of around 600 metres. As a result, tram is not an obvious or attractive way to travel to or from the station. In spite of a significant proportion of rail passengers travelling from or to locations which are close to the tramway, few of them choose to interchange with tram services as part of their journey.

4.2.2 There are three key types of movement where the current lack of connectivity between the tram and rail networks is a barrier to realising the full economic potential of Blackpool and the Fylde Coast sub-region.

Tourists to Blackpool from regional and national origins

4.2.3 The majority of tourist attractions in Blackpool are situated along the Promenade where the trams currently operate. Tourists arriving by rail at Blackpool North must walk for approximately 8 minutes to access tram services or use another mode (for example, bus or taxi) from the station to their destinations.

4.2.4 Improving the connectivity between Blackpool North and the existing tramway would allow travellers to get to the tourist destinations faster and with greater convenience. This would make visitor access to Blackpool by public transport more attractive and improve the experience of existing visitors.

Local residents moving between Blackpool and the North West for work, leisure and services

4.2.5 Significant numbers of workers commute to work in Blackpool – and conversely a similar (but lower) number commute from Blackpool to work elsewhere. A proportion of commuters use rail, and there is also a significant proportion of leisure, other and business travel using rail to and from Blackpool.

4.2.6 Improving the connectivity between Blackpool North and the existing tramway would improve access to jobs and services both for commuters coming into Blackpool and for commuters who live in Blackpool but work elsewhere. The labour market catchment would be widened for jobs and services within Blackpool and in the Fylde Coast and beyond.

Local people between jobs, services and residential areas within Blackpool

4.2.7 Recent development projects supporting new employment opportunities and revitalising the Central Business District (CBD) and tourist areas are contributing to making Blackpool Town Centre a more attractive destination.

4.2.8 The tramway is well used within Blackpool to access destinations along its length – which make up a significant proportion of the key trip generators in the area. Existing services on the current tram route along the seafront experience crowding during peak times, the volumes of passengers boarding at the busiest stops slowing down journey times and adversely affecting punctuality.

4.2.9 Improving the connectivity between Blackpool North and the existing tramway would improve access from the tram-served residential areas to jobs and services which already exist or will be associated with developments in the CBD and seafront areas. Increasing the number of services along the busy seafront would reduce peak loadings and improved journey times and punctuality for existing passengers.

4.3 Objectives

4.3.1 Based on the social, economic, environmental and transport issues faced within Blackpool Town Centre and the wider district, a set of objectives were developed to assess a range of different transport options specified with the intention of addressing these issues:

- Maximise growth of the Fylde Coast economy by enhancing accessibility and connectivity to key destinations within and outwith the sub-region
- Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of the Fylde Coast sub-region by complementing and, where possible, enhancing current development and regeneration proposals
- Reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases by contributing to wider carbon reduction and mode shift policies for the authorities making up the Fylde Coast sub-region
- Promote quality of life through a safe and healthy built and natural environment
- Contribute to enhanced quality of life by improving access for all to jobs and services
- Ensure affordability, deliverability and Value for Money of the proposed scheme taking account of current Government guidance

4.4 Promoted Scheme

4.4.1 The BNE scheme will bring trams to a terminus adjacent to and within clear sight of Blackpool North railway station. The BNE scheme will provide direct and convenient services from Blackpool North to locations along the existing tramway, respectively reducing journey times or travel costs for those currently walking, using bus or taxi to or from the station and CBD.

4.4.2 The scheme will improve connectivity between locations within and outside Blackpool, which is forecast to increase the number of current travellers using public transport and to increase the number of journeys between such locations.

4.4.3 The proposed tram services from Blackpool North will join with existing tram services along the Promenade, increasing the frequency of service and providing additional passenger capacity along sections with high peak passenger demand.

4.5 Benefits of the Promoted Scheme

4.5.1 The main benefits of the BNE scheme are set out below, against each of the scheme objectives:

Maximise growth of the Fylde Coast economy by enhancing accessibility and connectivity to key destinations within and outwith the sub-region

4.5.2 The scheme will bring trams directly to Blackpool North railway station. As a result, there will be a reduction in journey times and increase in accessibility, connectivity and passenger convenience. This will benefit travellers coming into and leaving Blackpool by rail.

4.5.3 The reduction in journey times is anticipated to increase the number of current travellers choosing to travel by rail and forecast to result in a modest increase in the number of tourists coming to the resort. Additional visitors would result in positive economic benefits to Blackpool.

Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of the Fylde Coast sub-region by complementing and, where possible, enhancing current development and regeneration proposals

4.5.4 The extension of the tram network between the Promenade and Blackpool North provides a convenient and attractive direct link for local people to and from the CBD area. As a result, an increased number of residents will have convenient public transport access to jobs and opportunities in the CBD.

4.5.5 The BNE scheme includes alterations to the urban realm around Blackpool North which will contribute to the revitalisation of this part of the town. The proposed terminus would be integrated with the plans for the current Wilko site, which form a future phase of the Central Business District redevelopment. The presence of the tram within the heart of this stage of the development will lead to improved access between the station and tram-served seafront areas.

4.5.6 The BNE scheme will also complement Network Rail's North West Electrification programme, which includes the Preston to Blackpool (North Fylde Line) route. After electrification there will be better quality trains and faster services between Blackpool, Liverpool, Manchester and Yorkshire stations. Improving the public transport accessibility of Blackpool North will increase the number of local residents within the potential catchment area for these improved services and improve the connections to

key attractions and destinations for visitors. The uplift in rail demand resulting from the passenger benefits of electrification will increase the size of the market for possible tram use.

Reduce transport's emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases by contributing to wider carbon reduction and mode shift policies for the authorities making up the Fylde Coast sub-region

- 4.5.7 As a result of the preferred scheme, public transport in the town will be more attractive and this will result in modest mode shift from private vehicles and therefore a small reduction in road traffic emissions in the town.

Promote quality of life through a safe and healthy built and natural environment

- 4.5.8 The scheme will not materially change the accident characteristics of the road and surrounding areas therefore safety benefits directly arising from the scheme will be small. The forecast mode shift from private vehicles will result in a small reduction in vehicle km travelled and therefore in the number of highway accidents.

- 4.5.9 The anticipated levels of modal shift will result in some air quality benefits which are positive for the health of residents and visitors. Additionally, the urban realm enhancements will make a positive contribution to Blackpool as more attractive place to live and visit.

Contribute to enhanced quality of life by improving access for all to jobs and services

- 4.5.10 Access to the rail station is enhanced by reducing the time taken to move between the tram at the Promenade and rail at Blackpool North. This benefits local people by providing more convenient access to jobs and services in the developing central areas of the town and also enhances access to jobs and services outside Blackpool (because Blackpool North is more easily accessible by public transport).

Ensure affordability, deliverability and Value for Money of the proposed scheme taking account of current Government guidance

- 4.5.11 The promoted scheme represents High Value for Money to the public sector, calculated in line with Department for Transport guidance and independently assured as part of the Transport for Lancashire funding approval process. The analysis shows that, over the life of the scheme, its benefits are forecast to outweigh its costs of construction and operation. The funding required to deliver the promoted scheme is in place, demonstrating that it is affordable.

- 4.5.12 The design and specification of the scheme is appropriately well developed for the current stage of delivery building on the experience of the upgrade of the existing tramway which was completed in 2012. Blackpool Borough Council has a clear and robust plan to implement the scheme, demonstrating that it is deliverable.

5. Planning Policy Framework

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter provides an overview of the planning policies which are relevant to the scheme. The policies reviewed span economy, environment, land use and transport.

5.2 Local Level Policies

5.2.1 As planning permission for the BNE scheme is being sought through a direction of deemed planning permission pursuant to section 90 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the development plan is not paramount, as it would be for a standard application for planning permission. However, policies set out in the local development plan do fall to be considered alongside other material considerations.⁵

5.2.2 The Local Development Plan for Blackpool is currently undergoing a period of transition. The 'Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016' (Blackpool Borough Council, 2006) is being replaced by a new Local Plan, which will comprise:

- Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (adopted January 2016)
- Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management document (in the early stages of preparation)

5.2.3 The adopted Core Strategy and the 'saved' policies of the Blackpool Local Plan 2001 – 2016 currently form the basis for determining planning applications and priorities for Blackpool. Appendix B⁶ to the Core Strategy sets out the policies that are replaced and those that will continue to be 'saved' Local Plan Policies.

Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, 2012-2027 (adopted January 2016)

5.2.4 The Blackpool Core Strategy is a key part of the local planning framework. and was adopted in January 2016. It outlines the spatial vision for Blackpool and is underpinned by four main goals:

- Sustainable regeneration, diversification and growth
- Strengthen community wellbeing to create sustainable communities and reduce inequalities in Blackpool's most deprived areas
- Regeneration of the Town Centre, Resort Core and inner areas to address economic, social and physical decline
- Supporting growth and enhancement in South Blackpool to meet future housing and employment needs for Blackpool and the Fylde Coast

5.2.5 The BNE scheme will contribute to realising development goals for Blackpool by contributing to sustainable access to regeneration areas and employment opportunities.

⁵ R – on the application of Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) v Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change [2012] EWHC 46 (Admin)

⁶ <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Planning/Planning-policy/Blackpool-local-plan/New-Blackpool-local-plan/New-Blackpool-local-plan.aspx>

- 5.2.6 The scheme will provide enhanced connectivity between areas within the Town Centre and Resort Core, setting the foundation for focussed future economic growth and development. The BNE scheme supports Policy CS1, Blackpool's future strategic development is focussed on inner area regeneration such as the Town Centre, Resort Core (the Promenade and major attractions including major points of arrival) and neighbourhoods within the inner areas.
- 5.2.7 The Core Strategy identifies a need to secure quality office space to attract investment. Talbot Gateway (The Central Business District) has been identified as critical to delivering this type of space which is within walking distance of Blackpool North railway station. Investment here will support sustainable employment growth and revitalise the Town Centre through encouraging future inward investment (as outlined in Policies CS2, CS3, CS4 and CS9).
- 5.2.8 The Core Strategy notes that the Town Centre's retail offer does not provide the quality and range that is necessary to reflect its sub-regional role. There is a need to enhance the 'vitality and viability' of the Town Centre. The BNE scheme would connect housing to employment opportunities and quality retail. It also provides improved joined-up public transport networks across Blackpool and the wider Fylde Coast area.
- 5.2.9 The scheme supports Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy, which seeks a sustainable high quality transport network for Blackpool and a quality arrival experience. The policy refers to measures include providing a new tram link from the Promenade to Blackpool North railway station and improving interchange between transport modes by providing improved high quality infrastructure including buildings, facilities and public realm, making transport interchange easy and convenient for all users.
- 5.2.10 Saved policy RR11 requires that the central seafront (from the Pleasure Beach to North Pier) is managed as an area for active leisure and is improved to establish high-quality public realm. One of the specific improvements highlighted by the policy is the provision of a "*renewed and extended Tramway system*", such as that proposed for the BNE scheme.
- 5.2.11 Policy CS7: Quality of Design states that development will not be permitted to cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shading, noise and light pollution or any other adverse local impact on local character or amenity. The scheme will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts and therefore meets the requirements of Policy CS7.
- 5.2.12 The Council's policy in relation to the built, social and cultural heritage and heritage assets is set out in Policy CS8: Heritage. The policy states that there will be support for development which respects and draws inspiration from Blackpool's built, social and cultural heritage, complementing its rich history with new development to widen its appeal to residents and visitors. The reinstatement of trams on Talbot Road is beneficial to the town and could enhance the heritage of the area by providing a link to the past when trams last traversed this same route.

- 5.2.13 Saved policy LQ2 states that, *“the design of new development proposals will be considered in relation to the character and setting of the surrounding area”*. New developments in streets, spaces or areas with a consistent townscape character should respond to and enhance the existing character. These locations include:
- Affecting the setting of a Listed Building
 - Conservation Areas
 - Other streets, frontages and areas with a consistent townscape character
- 5.2.14 Saved policy LQ7 states that development that has a detrimental impact on strategic views will not be permitted. The policy lists the following views to be of strategic importance:
- Blackpool Tower – views from the seafront and along main transport corridors leading into the Town Centre
 - Views along the seafront and coastline
 - Views into and within Conservation Areas
 - Local views of other Listed Buildings
- 5.2.15 Saved policy LQ9 deals with demolition, alteration and additions to listed buildings. It also discusses development that affects the setting of listed buildings stipulating that development which adversely affects the character or appearance of a listed building, or its setting, will not be permitted.
- 5.2.16 Saved policy LQ10 outlines the approach that will be taken towards development within a Conservation Area. The policy states that applications for new development within Conservation Areas will be considered against the following criteria:
- The development must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
 - The development will need to respect the scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing of similar building forms within the Conservation Area
 - Trees and other landscape features contributing to the character and appearance of the area must be retained
- 5.2.17 The BNE scheme will not physically harm the significance of the listed or locally listed buildings, as there will be no physical alteration to them. Furthermore, the promoted scheme will not result in substantial harm to the significance and setting of the Town Centre Conservation Area. The promoted scheme therefore meets the requirements of Saved policies LQ2, LQ7, LQ9 and LQ10.
- 5.2.18 Policy CS9 seeks to ensure that development proposals minimise flood risk and incorporate appropriate sustainable drainage. The policy requires that new developments do not increase the rate of surface water run-off from the site and will reduce the volume of surface water run-off discharging to the combined sewer system. The BNE scheme is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and will remain safe from flooding during its lifetime and, by incorporating adequate drainage within the design, will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The promoted scheme therefore meets the requirements of Policy CS9.

- 5.2.19 Saved policy BH4 notes that developments should, as far as possible, contribute to the improvement of air quality and mitigating measures should be taken where there will be an increase in air emission levels. The scheme will not result in significant adverse effects on air quality and no mitigation is required. The promoted scheme is therefore considered to be consistent with Policy BH4.
- 5.2.20 The focus of Blackpool's regeneration is within the Town Centre, Resort Core and inner areas (Policies CS17, CS18, CS19 and CS20). The scheme will support sustainable economic growth through encouraging developments and retail to locate in the heart of the town.
- 5.2.21 The Core Strategy note that the success of the Town Centre is dependent upon improved connectivity including a 'cohesive pedestrian layout' and enhancing movements between the Town Centre and seafront. The promoted scheme supports these aims.
- 5.2.22 The Core Strategy acknowledges the role of South Blackpool in delivering the core vision for Blackpool. The area of South Blackpool is important to meeting the future growth needs of all Blackpool residents (Policy CS24, CS25 and CS27).
- 5.2.23 Ensuring continuous, quality connections between the South Blackpool area and the northern, central areas such as with the BNE scheme, will support the attractiveness of the southern areas of Blackpool to developers and will maintain connections between jobs and residents wherever they are located within Blackpool as a whole. It will also promote sustainable travel, reducing the need for cars and supporting strategic connections to the airport.
- 5.2.24 The Council wishes to see Blackpool achieve its full potential as the main centre at the heart of the Fylde Coast urban area, for shopping and other town centre needs and with an expanded centre of employment. The promoted scheme would run partially through and serve the Leisure Zone (saved policy SR8) within the Town Centre and then through the Retail Cafe Zone (saved policy SR6) before terminating in the Central Business District (saved policy SR3).

Blackpool Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2016, April 2011

- 5.2.25 Blackpool's transport policy and plans are set out in Blackpool's Local Transport Plan (LTP) to 2016, which as statutory policy is of primary importance when considering a transport intervention. The LTP is driven by six strategic objectives, which are as follows:
- Objective 1 – Improve, maintain and make best use of Blackpool's transport network; in particular its roads, footways and bridges
 - Objective 2 – Improve road safety by interventions that reduce the number of people, particularly children, killed and seriously injured on Blackpool's roads
 - Objective 3 – Manage congestion levels on Blackpool's roads, especially where it impacts on local economic performance

- Objective 4 – Improve transport to and within the resort, particularly by more sustainable modes, to enhance the visitor experience and support the local economy
- Objective 5 – Improve the efficiency and management of parking to support the local economy, especially for shoppers and visitors
- Objective 6 – Improve access to healthcare, education, employment, shops, social/leisure opportunities and resort attractions, particularly by sustainable modes

5.2.26 The BNE scheme aligns with the objectives of the LTP, providing sustainable connectivity which will support the future outlook for the town.

Town Centre Strategy, March 2013

5.2.27 The Town Centre Strategy has been developed to align with the LTP and Core Strategy.

5.2.28 The Strategy considers the tramway as an important factor in the future success of the redevelopment of the Town Centre being a sustainable mode of transport for all users into the Town Centre. The BNE scheme supports the aims of the Town Centre Strategy by enhancing connections to the seafront and supporting multi-modal interchange for users.

5.3 Regional Level Policies

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan, March 2014

5.3.1 Blackpool is located within the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Each LEP has its own Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) which identifies the key investment priorities for its area.

5.3.2 One of the local LEP priorities is *“the development of a renewal strategy for Blackpool...to sustain the growth to the visitor economy and address severe local housing market challenges”*. A focus on the *“unique characteristics”* of the town to create economic opportunities for local residents is a key priority for the LEP.

5.3.3 The renewal of Blackpool is driven by seven initiatives. Amongst these are Town Centre transport interventions, specifically the Blackpool North Extension and Blackpool North railway station/Central Business District Transport Interchange and the need to create a positive sense of arrival/departure.

5.3.4 The BNE scheme would be beneficial, complementing the recent tramway refurbishment and integrating with the Central Business District area, improving public transport for visitors and residents. Further, it will improve interchange between tram and heavy rail services, extending the connectivity to Blackpool to and from the sub-region.

5.3.5 The LEP is providing funding towards the scheme in Blackpool which demonstrates that the LEP is accepting of the need for the scheme and consider that the scheme aligns to the outlook and vision of the SEP.

Lancashire and Blackpool Borough Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

- 5.3.6 The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) sets out the nature of flood risk across Lancashire, outlines who is responsible for managing the various types of flooding, and specifies how the risk from local sources of flooding in Lancashire will be managed.
- 5.3.7 The LFRMS states that main sources of flooding in Lancashire include flooding from ordinary watercourses (small streams and channels), pluvial (surface water runoff as a result of heavy rainfall), and groundwater (where water held beneath the ground reaches the surface). To manage these risks, the LFRMS sets out a number of strategic objectives and specific measures for achieving these objectives.
- 5.3.8 One of the key aims of the LFRMS is to ensure that new development is safe from the effects of flooding and does not increase the risk of flooding.
- 5.3.9 The BNE scheme is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and will remain safe from flooding during its lifetime; furthermore, it will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The promoted scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable in flood risk terms and meets with the requirements of the LFRMS.

5.4 National Policies

National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

- 5.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 27 March 2012. The NPPF states that unless material considerations indicate otherwise, development proposals which accord with the Development Plan should be approved. As set out above, the current and emerging development plans in Blackpool support the implementation of the scheme.
- 5.4.2 NPPF outlines 12 core principles that planning should seek to achieve, which includes to: *“proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the ...infrastructure ... that the country needs.”* It also states that it should *“support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate”* and *“actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling”*.
- 5.4.3 The NPPF notes that *“significant weight should be place on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”* and *“to help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.”* The NPPF emphasises the importance of ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- 5.4.4 The importance of sustainable transport modes in terms of development and contribution to broader sustainability and health objectives is also outlined by the NPPF. It states that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel, with encouragement given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse emissions and congestion.

5.4.5 Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion: *“local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including... transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of ports, airports or other major generators of travel demand in their areas.”*

5.4.6 The BNE scheme aligns to this outlook, providing a solution which will contribute to sustainable growth in Blackpool.

DfT Local Transport White Paper: Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen, 2011

5.4.7 The White Paper’s vision is *“...for a transport system that is an engine for economic growth, but one that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities”*. Particular emphasis is placed in the White Paper on the role of local communities in enabling people to make more sustainable travel choices. It notes the steps taken to decentralise spending powers through the LEPs.

5.4.8 The key objectives identified by the White Paper are to encourage economic growth, reduce carbon emissions and encourage the wider objectives of transport (such as more physical activity, improved road safety and air quality). The promoted scheme aligns with these objectives as the scheme will offer journey time savings, promote sustainable transport, and support economic growth in the town.

DfT Door to Door: A Strategy for Improving Sustainable Transport Integration, 2013

5.4.9 This strategy focuses on reducing the complexities of travel and encourages the use of active modes and public transport across the entire door to door journey. More journeys being made sustainably is central to the Government’s goal of reducing carbon emissions from transport.

5.4.10 The BNE scheme bridges the gap between two transport networks in Blackpool: rail and tram. The scheme provides convenient access to travellers heading from Blackpool North to key destinations, including hotels and attractions on the seafront, and from those destinations to Blackpool North, improving the connectivity of public transport in the town and overall, contributing to an improved door-to-door journey.

5.4.11 Additionally, the scheme also contributes to improved interchange through a reduced walking time between Blackpool North and the Promenade. Improved interchange is noted within the strategy as offering confidence to travellers.

5.4.12 Delivering a high quality environment for cyclists and pedestrians is also important. The BNE scheme will complement the separately implemented Quality Corridors infrastructure as well as providing a catalyst for future economic development in the town, another priority of the strategy.

6. The Applications to be Submitted

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The powers to construct, operate and maintain the tramway extension will be obtained via an application for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992. The Order will also give the powers to compulsorily acquire rights in the required parcels of land for the scheme, both on a permanent and temporary basis. The application is made directly to the Secretary of State for Transport.

6.1.2 The application is accompanied by a request for a direction of deemed planning permission under section 90(2A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6.2 Request for deemed planning permission

6.2.1 The applicant has opted to apply for deemed planning permission at the same time as applying for a TWAO. As a result, the Secretary of State will decide whether to issue a planning direction when determining whether or not to make the TWAO. As a matter of policy, the Secretary of State will not make a TWAO without issuing a planning direction where one has been sought, as consideration of the planning merits will be a part of the consideration of whether to authorise the scheme.

6.2.2 This request for a Planning Direction seeks deemed planning permission to be granted for the whole development and each element of it. The request for a Planning Direction includes a description of the “*elements of the development or possible development*” for which planning permission is being sought. In summary, these are:

- Formation of a tramway and tramroad, including the construction of associated drainage and ducting and the installation of all associated cabling, plant, electrical and mechanical equipment, fixings, fencing and screening and any other operations necessary or expedient for the development
- Infilling of and or mediation to the structure forming the void beneath Talbot Square that was formerly a public convenience and barbers shop
- Formation of a new tram stop, Blackpool North including shelters, lighting, plant, apparatus, equipment cabinets and access ways
- Environmental works to mitigate negative impacts of the scheme, including hard landscaping works;
- Relocation of the post box located within the footway to the south west corner of the Sacred Heart Church to a location to be agreed with the Royal Mail and local highway authority
- Miscellaneous highway operations including surface works
- Formation of a construction compound to facilitate the construction of the works on land formerly occupied by a retail store/multi-storey car park development

6.3 Matters to be reserved for subsequent approval

6.3.1 It is proposed that the design and external appearance, materials, landscaping scheme, and Code of Construction Practice should be for the subject of subsequent approval by the local planning authority to the extent and in the manner set out in conditions to the direction.

7. Supporting Documents

7.1.1 The BNE scheme is not anticipated to have significant impacts on the environment in construction or operation, including in relation to noise, air quality, the historic environment, ecology and nature conservation and the water environment. The screening direction given by the Secretary of State⁷ concludes that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required and therefore a scoping opinion is also unnecessary.

7.1.2 The supporting documents accompanying the Transport and Works Act Order include:

- An Air Quality Assessment Report (A14/1)
- A Flood Risk Assessment (A14/2)
- A Heritage Assessment Report (A14/3)
- A Transport Assessment (A14/4)

7.2 Air Quality Assessment Report⁸

7.2.1 An Air Quality Assessment of the BNE scheme has been prepared to accompany the TWAO application. This complies with Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) and Environmental Protection UK (EPUK) guidance. The projected change in traffic flows on Clifton Street/Abingdon Road exceed two of the criteria stated set out in the May 2015 IAQM/EPUK guidance, indicating a need for an air quality assessment. The report examines the potential for the scheme to affect air quality during the construction and operational phases.

7.2.2 Emissions of airborne particulate matter generated by construction activities will be controlled using on site management practices to the extent that the scheme should give rise to negligible short-term effects on dust deposition rates and concentrations of particulate matter at the nearest sensitive receptors.

7.2.3 Temporary re-routeing of traffic along the local road network during the construction phase is expected to increase traffic flows on nearby roads over a short period of time (several weeks), resulting in higher NO₂ and Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) concentrations at nearby sensitive receptors. The effects of these higher concentrations on local air quality are considered to be temporary and slight adverse and therefore not significant.

7.2.4 Once operational the BNE scheme will re-route traffic from Talbot Square along Clifton Street, and this is where the greatest change in vehicle flows is expected. The projected annual mean NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations are expected to meet the annual mean objectives at all receptors. Overall, receptors are predicted to experience a small change in NO₂ annual mean concentration, resulting in a negligible and not significant effect.

7.2.5 The proposed reconfiguration of the junction at Talbot Square/the Promenade is expected to lead to an increase in annual mean NO₂ concentrations at the Clifton Hotel

⁷ Ref: TWA/2/2/137, dated 14th March 2016

⁸ A14/1

because the new highway arrangement will bring vehicle emissions closer to this receptor. The predicted annual mean concentration at the hotel is less than 30 µg/m³ and therefore the effects are considered to be negligible and not significant.

7.2.6 The air quality assessment demonstrates that the BNE scheme will not result in significant adverse effects on air quality and is therefore considered to be consistent with relevant planning policy.

7.3 Flood Risk Assessment⁹

7.3.1 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) of the promoted scheme accompanies the TWAO application. The aim of the FRA is to assess the flood risks posed to and by the promoted scheme.

7.3.2 The FRA has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the accompanying on-line Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Flood Risk and Coastal Change (DCLG, 2014). According to the NPPF, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required to inform the determination of developments covering an area of 1 ha or greater in Flood Zone 1.

7.3.3 The BNE scheme lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, the zone of lowest flood risk from fluvial sources, and the type of development is deemed to be appropriate in its proposed location.

7.3.4 The scheme will be protected by existing sea defences along the Promenade and is at low risk of flooding from tidal sources. The risk of flooding from groundwater is considered to be low. The risk of flooding from artificial sources (for example reservoirs, canals) is assessed as negligible.

7.3.5 There is an existing risk of flooding from surface water run-off and sewers within the limits of deviation of the BNE scheme range from 'Very Low' to 'High'. The severity of risk is greatest in the western part of the site near the Promenade. The FRA highlights that there is an existing residual risk of surcharging of the combined sewer and of exceedance of the system's design capacity and recommends that consideration should be given to improving the existing road drainage, particularly in areas currently at High risk of flooding from surface water.

7.3.6 The BNE scheme will utilise the existing highway drainage. There will be no change in the permeability of the ground surface within the limits of deviation and no increase in surface water discharge within them as a result of the BNE scheme. Therefore, there will be no change to the existing water run-off rates within the Site and no increased risk of flooding to receptors within or outwith the limits.

7.3.7 The FRA demonstrates that the BNE scheme would remain safe during its lifetime and would not increase flood risk within the limits of deviation for the scheme or elsewhere.

⁹ A14/2

The BNE scheme is, therefore, considered to be acceptable in flood risk terms and meets the requirements of the NPPF.

7.4 Heritage Assessment Report¹⁰

- 7.4.1 A Heritage Assessment of the promoted scheme accompanies the TWAO application, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF. The assessment examines the potential for the scheme to result in impacts on the Town Centre Conservation Area, heritage assets and archaeology.
- 7.4.2 The Town Centre Conservation Area has historic and architectural interest which derives from the listed and locally listed buildings. These buildings reflect a range of architectural styles, materials and uses (domestic, civic, retail and commercial) which illustrate the development of Blackpool as a tourist destination from the 19th Century onwards. Collectively the buildings contribute to a varied and active streetscape. The assessment also acknowledges that there have been alterations to historic buildings (such as loss of original features and inappropriate shop fronts, signage and use of incongruous materials) that have had negative effects on the streetscape and setting.
- 7.4.3 The BNE scheme will not directly affect the significance of any listed or locally listed buildings, as there will be no physical alteration to them. The main consideration of the assessment is therefore the potential impact of the scheme on the street and townscape of the Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 7.4.4 The proposed additional signage, signalled junctions, OLE, pedestrian crossings and associated traffic management will lead to additional visual clutter, which could detract from the overall experience of the Town Centre Conservation Area. However, it is important to note that Talbot Square is an area that has changed over time and junctions have been previously changed and upgraded. The design intent is to combine OLE, existing street lighting, illuminations and re-use existing column positions wherever practicable to minimise clutter and change to vistas.
- 7.4.5 The loss of public realm in Talbot Square will diminish the experience of Talbot Square as a historic square and the focal point of the historic development of Blackpool; however, it is noted that the Square has been subject to many changes since it was first laid out. Both historically and currently the Square has been dominated by highway and tramway infrastructure. The existing public realm in the Square is a more recent addition. An area of public realm will be provided within the footprint of the Square, on the northern side of the proposed new tramway, and as such it will not be completely lost.
- 7.4.6 A number of vistas have been identified as contributing to the setting and experience of the Town Centre Conservation Area. The scheme will be visible in the vista looking down the length of Clifton Street towards the North Pier and in the vista from the North Pier towards the Town Hall. Within these vistas the BNE scheme will introduce additional infrastructure within the view, particularly with the introduction of the OLE for the trams. However, this will be minimal as it is intended to combine lighting, OLE columns and illuminations to avoid any visual intrusions. The assessment also highlights that

¹⁰ A14/3

trams were a common feature of these vistas in the past and that their reintroduction would be a link to the heyday years of Blackpool when trams traversed the same route.

7.4.7 The assessment concludes that there will be less than substantial harm to the significance and setting of the Town Centre Conservation Area. This is supported by Historic England, who consider that *“the existing tramway can be said to contribute to the character of the Blackpool Town Centre Conservation Area”*¹¹.

7.4.8 The BNE scheme has the potential to impact upon below-ground heritage assets; however, this impact is reduced by the effects of previous modern disturbance and development and by the low potential for archaeology to be located here in the first instance. The potential for impacts upon below-ground heritage assets from the scheme is therefore assessed as low to negligible.

7.5 Transport Assessment¹²

7.5.1 The implementation of the tramway extension to Blackpool North railway station will improve public transport connections. In this respect, it does not represent a traditional land use development that increases demand for car based travel. However, the proposed tramway will be routed via Talbot Square and Talbot Road. These and their adjoining roads accommodate a number of other transport modes and facilities. A Transport Assessment (TA) of the promoted scheme has therefore been prepared to accompany the TWAO application. It provides an examination and understanding of the implications of the scheme on transportation issues.

7.5.2 The overall conclusions of the TA are that the BNE scheme can be introduced without causing significant detriment to the existing highway, or to the wider public transport system and its users. More specifically, the TA has demonstrated that is that there are no detrimental impacts to active modes, parking, road safety, events in the town or through construction of the BNE scheme.

7.5.3 The TA notes that taxis will be affected by the proposed changes to the highway network, and as a consequence rank locations and routes to and from them will be amended. However, the general accessibility of the Town Centre area to taxis will be retained. The illustrative scheme proposals retain the existing rank provision. The implementation of the changes will be subject to review by Blackpool Borough Council, as the highway authority, in combination with a general review of kerbside provisions within the area and other potential improvement schemes in consultation with Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association.

7.5.4 The TA also notes that access for servicing is retained, albeit routes local to the scheme will be amended as a consequence of the changes to the highway network on the introduction of the tramway extension. The BNE scheme will result in formalised and extended facilities along the Talbot Road corridor to offer a better level of formal provision than exists today and there will be a minor reduction in loading bay provision

¹¹ A14/3 Table 4.1 and Appendix C

¹² A14/4

in the Market Street area. Overall it is concluded there will be no material impact upon access and servicing.

- 7.5.5 Ultimately, the scheme will result in positive benefits for visitors to Blackpool and the proposals and mitigation measures to offset any impacts are wholly aligned with the vision of Blackpool Borough Council, the transport policy and other complementary schemes.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1.1 Blackpool Borough Council is promoting the Blackpool North Extension – a tramway which will improve the connection between Blackpool North railway station and the current tram network along the Promenade.
- 8.1.2 This statement summarises the planning issues related to the Transport and Works Act Order application for the scheme, and accompanying request for a Planning Direction. It summarises:
- the BNE scheme and its location
 - the case for the scheme
 - alternatives to the proposed scheme
 - the objectives for the scheme
 - the benefits of the scheme
- 8.1.3 In response to the Secretary of State’s screening direction, no environmental impact assessment has been undertaken but reports setting out likely issues in relation to particular environmental topics accompany the TWAO application, and have been summarised in this statement. Additionally, a summary of the accompanying Transport Assessment for the scheme has also been included. This statement demonstrates that the scheme conforms with local, regional and national transport and planning policies.