



# BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

**Business Partnerships Report – May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013**

## Section 1: Private Sector Consultation

### **PROMENADE ROAD SCHEME**

A full consultation has commenced on the future of the stretch of Promenade between New Bonny Street and Talbot Square.

Following extensive debate about the effectiveness of the 2011 redesign of the category, five options have been drawn up as to how it could look in the future. These range from retaining the existing design to a four lane proposal:

**Option 1:** No changes. Repairs carried out when required to block work carriageway surface. The zebra crossing removed earlier this year would not be reinstalled.

**Option 2:** The block work carriageway and lay-bys would be replaced with asphalt. Three crossings would be required to allow people to cross safely. A raised kerbline would also be introduced at the edge of the footway.

**Option 3a:** The layout would remain a single lane in each direction with pedestrian refuges installed at up to six key points to help people cross the road. It also has right turn facilities and lay-bys. Asphalt would also replace the current blockwork and a raised kerbline would be introduced at the edge of the footway.

**Option 3b:** As option 3a but with an extended central reservation rather than smaller pedestrian refuges.

**Option 4:** Change the layout to provide two lanes in each direction, widening the carriageway. Replace block work with asphalt and install crossings at all junctions. Guard rails would need to be reintroduced for pedestrian safety reasons.

The options relate solely to the 600m stretch of the seven mile Promenade between Talbot Square and Bonny Street and the rest of the road will remain unchanged as a single carriageway.

The cost of each option has been fully evaluated and indicative plans have been drawn up which are designed to give residents an idea how each option would look and work. To view the options click here: [Promenade Options](#)

Please note that the consultation exercise ends on May 31. If you wish to take part in the online survey to express your opinion, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/blackpoolpromenade> before the deadline expires.

## EARLY MORNING RESTRICTION ORDER

Blackpool Council's Licensing Committee has decided to conduct a full consultation into a proposed introduction of an early morning restriction order in the town centre.

The proposed EMRO would prohibit the sale of alcohol between the hours of 3am and 6am, Monday to Sunday, in a designated area of the town centre (see map below). It is aimed at addressing recurring problems within the town centre such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour that is not directly attributable to specific premises.

The areas affected (all or part of) are: Queen Street/Queen Square; Springfield Road; Promenade (between New Bonny Street and Banks Street); Bank Hey Street; Market Street; Dickson Road; Talbot Road; West Street; Corporation Street; Abingdon Street; The Strand.



A total of 24 premises in this area currently have the ability to sell alcohol after 3am.

The consultation, which commences on June 13 and lasts for 42 days (last day July 25), will take in the views of residents and businesses. Every holder of a premises licence covering alcohol, entertainment and light refreshment will receive a letter about the consultation, regardless of whether they are in the EMRO area. In addition, consultation with businesses will be facilitated via the Blackpool Business Leadership Group and the Town Centre BID.

The results of the consultation will be reported back to the Licensing Committee in September when a final decision will be taken.

## Section 2: Enterprise & Funding Opportunities

### **COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND**

At least three schemes have been put forward by Blackpool-based organisations/partnerships for the second round of the Coastal Communities Fund.

#### **1. South Beach**

This project was submitted into the first round of CCF in 2012 by Groundwork on behalf of a number of partners. It was not successful in the first round, but CCF invited the scheme to be refined and resubmitted. The scheme focuses on the regeneration of the South Beach area and aims to:

- Diversify the economic base of the area, supporting and promoting start-ups in creative industries
- Directly create jobs, through bringing vacant high street units back into productive economic use
- Indirectly create jobs through contributing to the overall uplift of South Beach and stimulating business growth
- Safeguard existing jobs in South Beach, through increasing consumer footfall in the area and boosting local trade
- Create structured apprenticeships and training placements within local businesses to ensure that new job opportunities are accessible to local people.

The scheme proposes 20 direct and 26 indirect jobs will be created. The total project value is £825,000, with £715,000 requested from CCF.

#### **2. Regeneration By Light**

This ambitious scheme submitted by Blackpool Council incorporates a range of activities to support both the visitor and retail economies. It aims to:

- Revitalise Blackpool's famous Illuminations in the most radical transformation of the show in 50 years. One mile of the five-mile promenade display (along the historic Golden Mile) would be turned into the most spectacular lights show the UK has seen
- Provide complementary, innovative new light shows and events in the nearby town centre, providing a boost to the hard-pressed retail economy
- Encourage businesses in the town centre area to display decorative lights via a dedicated Council grant fund. New retail opportunities in the form of town centre "chalets" would be supported by events and marketing
- Introduce 10 trained "resort ambassadors" as all-year-round guides, operating at key locations across the town and providing visitors with a greatly-improved customer service experience

The scheme seeks to create 23 direct jobs and up to 450 indirect jobs over five years. The total scheme value is £1,862,000 with £950,000 requested from CCF.

### **3. Playground of Wonders**

This bid was submitted by Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd on behalf of a wider partnership and is intended to complement the Creative People and Places Programme which won £3m of Arts Council funding last year.

It seeks to:

- Expand a creative incubator facility to meet demand from designers, commercial artists and other creative businesses requiring low-cost work, retail and exhibition space
- Provide tailored entrepreneurial growth support including specialist advisors/mentors, coaching in marketing and sales, e-commerce, design and product development
- Launch a “Made In Blackpool” social enterprise to develop retail opportunities (in empty shops/online) for local artists and designers

The project would create three direct jobs and 78 indirect jobs. The total scheme value is £1,040,000 with an £840,000 request from CCF.

This year’s CCF fund is worth around £22m. A decision on which projects have made it through to final judging is likely to be made in the summer.

### **BLACKPOOL INVESTMENT FUND**

A new grant and loan fund for businesses in Blackpool has been agreed by Blackpool Council.

The Blackpool Investment Fund will provide a mixture of grants and loans to support investment. Proposals will be encouraged for the following priority areas:

- **Blackpool town centre:** £80k of the fund has been ring-fenced for town centre investment that adds value to the existing retail offer
- **South Beach District Centre**, supporting the growth of independent traders
- **Growth businesses** that have been trading for at least three years
- **Start-ups** with growth potential

Interest rates for loans will be comparable with commercial rates. Job creation or safeguarding will be a requirement of any investment proposal.

The full criteria for applications will be completed and promoted to businesses over the coming weeks.

### **RBS/NATWEST LEISURE FUND**

The Royal Bank Of Scotland and NatWest have launched a £150m fund aimed at lending to SMEs in the leisure sector to help them become more competitive.

The fund is offering fee free loans of £100k upwards and incorporates two six-month capital repayment holidays to allow the investment to start paying its way.

RBS and Natwest has worked alongside Visit England to ensure that the fund has been developed in line with the leisure industry's needs.

### **EMPLOYER OWNERSHIP OF SKILLS FUND**

A revised £2m bid has been submitted for the establishment of a Blackpool Tourism Academy.

The bid to the Government's Employer Ownership Of Skills Fund has been submitted by a consortium of local employers including Merlin, Pleasure Beach, Blackpool Transport, Sandcastle, Cuerden Leisure and Blackpool Zoo, with support from Blackpool Council, Blackpool & The Fylde College and Marketing Blackpool.

A bid was made to the first round of the Skills Fund last year, but despite getting through to the final stages of judging, it was not successful.

Now a much enhanced bid, which includes £1.3m of cash and in-kind contributions from employers, has been put forward.

It seeks to develop a new skills academy for the visitor economy – the Blackpool Tourism Academy – to enable co-ordinated provision of training across several leading employers.

It will also encourage hundreds of small to medium enterprises within the resort to adopt the internationally-recognised World Host customer service standard as a minimum threshold.

The academy will develop a new tourism apprenticeship scheme with a target of more than 120 apprenticeships over a two year period.

Using the World Host suite of customer service programmes, more than 6,000 training places will be delivered if the bid is successful.

The Blackpool Tourism Academy would also seek to engage with all schools in Blackpool to develop a better understanding of the career path available within the tourism industry.

The result of the bid is expected in July, with delivery starting in October if it is successful.

## Section 3: Town Centre Economy

### **TOWN TEAM WALKABOUTS**

The Blackpool Town Team – which comprises a range of private and public sector partners, including town centre property owners and retailers – took part in a walkabout exercise to look at various issues that are adversely affecting the image of the town centre.

These include the appearance of empty shop units, quality of cleansing on the streets, condition of public realm and street furniture.

Within a few days of the survey being undertaken, the Council's Town Centre neighbourhood team had already carried out noticeable improvements by re-painting street furniture and clearing more than 250 blocked grids and gullies.

The Town Team will also use the evidence gathered to target commercial property owners to improve the appearance of shop fronts and empty units.

It is intended to repeat the exercise during the summer.

### **NEW EXHIBITION AT GRUNDY**

A new exhibition “Aping The Beast” has opened at the Grundy Art Gallery. Centrepiece of the exhibition is a 15-foot high latex puppet dinosaur which was used in the making of a film made on location in Blackpool Tower Circus earlier this year.

The puppet will be used in a series of three performances during the exhibition, culminating in a procession along the Golden Mile on July 19. The exhibition runs until August 3.

### **WEBSITE GOES LIVE**



The website for the new Talbot Gateway (Central Business District) development is now live. It can be found at [www.talbotgateway.com](http://www.talbotgateway.com).

It includes information on the various elements of the scheme, the associated roadworks, the overall timescale and details of the new retail space that is being developed beneath the refurbished

Bus Station Car Park and on the ground floor of the new Blackpool Council office building.

The development is progressing to schedule and the refurbished Bus Station Car Park is due to re-open as a pay-on-foot car park on July 27<sup>th</sup>.

## Section 4: General Information

### **BLACKPOOL HIT HARDEST BY BENEFIT REFORM**

A new report on the impact of Government welfare benefit reforms has revealed that Blackpool will be the hardest hit place in the country.

The report, "*Hitting The Poorest Places Hardest*", carried out by Sheffield Hallam University, estimates that when the current welfare reforms come into full effect they will take £19bn a year out of the economy – the equivalent of £470 a year for every adult of working age in the country.

The impact varies greatly across the country with Blackpool affected worst of all – an estimated loss of more than £900 a year for every adult of working age in the town.

The report suggests that as a general rule, the more deprived the local authority, the greater the financial hit and a key effect of the reforms will be to widen the gaps in prosperity between the best and worst local economies in the UK.

Blackpool tops the list for a number of reasons, not least because it has a high proportion of adults of working age out-of-work on benefits, including one of the highest incapacity claimant rates in the country. But unlike most of older industrial Britain, which shares the high rates of out-of-work on benefits, Blackpool has a particularly high proportion of households (including out-of-work households) living in the private-rented sector, who are badly exposed to the reductions in the Local Housing Allowance element of Housing Benefit.

The report suggests that the loss of benefit income will have significant knock-on consequences for spending in the local economy and thus for local employment. The report can be read in full at this link: [Hitting The Poorest Places Hardest](#)

### **SUPERFAST LANCASHIRE**

Businesses are being encouraged to learn more about fibre broadband in preparation for the roll-out of Lancashire's new superfast network.

A specialist team of business advisors has been appointed as part of a new business support programme funded by Superfast Lancashire – a partnership between Lancashire County Council and BT to make high-speed broadband available to 97 per cent of Lancashire homes and businesses by the end of 2015.

The network, which is due to be in place in Blackpool by March 2014, is open to all service providers on an equal wholesale basis, and will open up new opportunities for households and businesses alike.

Over coming months Superfast Lancashire will be inviting local businesses to attend free seminars to learn more about what fibre broadband can do for them.

Services available will include intensive face to face support, training workshops, and skills master classes– all free of charge to qualifying businesses. A specialised Business Support Centre will open in the summer on Lancashire Business Park, in Leyland, which will enable businesses to see first-hand how superfast broadband can help their enterprise, such as through the employment of cloud computing services, video conferencing, social media and other collaborative business tools.

To find out more, visit [www.superfastlancashire.com](http://www.superfastlancashire.com)

### **WEST COAST MAINLINE FRANCHISE**

Virgin Trains is to continue to run the West Coast Main Line franchise until 2017. Virgin was given the right to run the rail line until the aborted franchise bidding process was resolved. That right has now been extended to April 2017.

Meanwhile, the company is awaiting formal approval from the Department of Transport and the rail regulator for the restoration of direct services between Blackpool and London.

Subject to that approval, the first direct services will be up and running by December – 10 years since the last direct Virgin service left Blackpool North station.

There will be two services each day. The first trains will depart Blackpool North at 6.36am, arriving at London Euston at 9.33am. The second service departs at 2.03pm arriving in London at 4.54pm.

Return trains are 10.33am arriving at Blackpool North at 1.35pm and 7.33pm arriving back in Blackpool at 10.18pm.

### **BLACKPOOL WINS e-COMMERCE AWARD**

Blackpool businesses are among the quickest to grasp the benefits of e-commerce, according to a new survey. Google and Ipsos MORI rated the town eighth best in the UK for online business.

The Google eTown Awards are designed to recognise those towns whose businesses are most actively embracing the web.

Among the local businesses cited at the presentation of the award were Toast Bar & Grill in Blackpool town centre and Brooks Collectables in South Beach.

### **BURTON'S INVESTMENT**

A Blackpool biscuit factory is to get a share of a £13.5m investment to boost production and improve efficiency. Burton's Biscuit Company has confirmed that the money will be split between its sites in Llantarnam, Edinburgh and the Devonshire Road factory in Blackpool.

The investment comes just a year after Burton's invested £12.5m in its supply chain. The company manufactures Wagon Wheels, Maryland Cookies and Dodgers, as well as Cadbury biscuits under licence.

### **LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL APPOINTS NEW LEADER**

The Labour Party's Jennifer Mein has been formally appointed as the new leader of Lancashire County Council. The appointment follows a deal struck between Labour and the Liberal Democrats to form an administration.

The Conservatives lost control of the county council in the election on 6 May. Labour held the majority with 39 seats, four short of overall control.



## Section 5: Visitor Economy

### **MAMMA MIA!**



Blackpool is hosting a summer season of a major West End musical production for the first time in 10 years.

The international tour of the worldwide hit Mamma Mia! will be staged exclusively at Blackpool Opera House in a 10-week run between June 20 and August 31 next year. It is the only UK destination outside London to host the production during 2014.

To date, the show has been seen by more than 50 million people around the world, grossing more than \$2 billion at the box office.

Tickets for the Blackpool run, which features eight shows a week, are now on sale.

### **BLACKPOOL NAMED TOP SEASIDE DESTINATION**

Blackpool has been named Britain's most popular seaside resort by members of the website, Trip Advisor.

It outshone rival destinations including Torquay, Llandudno and Brighton in the annual Traveller's Choice awards, which are based on thousands of reviews left online.

In the overall list including cities, London was the leading British destination followed by Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool and Belfast. Blackpool was Britain's sixth most popular place, followed by Birmingham, Torquay, Llandudno and Bristol.

### **WALLACE AND GROMIT RIDE OPENS**

The new Wallace and Gromit Thrill-O-Matic ride has opened for business at Pleasure Beach Resort. The family attraction, which takes a trip through Wallace and Gromit's film adventures, was part-funded through a loan from the Growing Places Fund, facilitated by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. Alongside the ride is a new Thrill-O-Matic store selling exclusive Wallace and Gromit merchandise including cheese-flavoured rock made in Blackpool

### **£2 PARKING IN JUNE**

Blackpool Council is charging £2 to park for up to 24 hours in some of the resort's largest car parks during June in a joint initiative with Marketing Blackpool. Participating car parks include South, Central Beach, Lonsdale Road and Central Coach resulting in the availability of almost 2,000 spaces for vehicles at reduced rate.

## BUSINESSES URGED TO SUPPORT THE LIGHTS

A greater number of local businesses are being urged to support Blackpool Illuminations.

TV star and Illuminations designer Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen appealed to businesses to stop taking the annual event for granted and help fund new features to make the annual show sustainable in the future.

He was speaking at a meeting organised by the Friends of Blackpool Illuminations Group where it was reported that businesses in the resort contributed £21k towards the £2m cost of the Lights last year, compared to £100k in 2002.

Conversely, visitor collections on the Promenade continue to grow with a contribution of £112k in 2012 - a 10 per cent increase over the previous year.

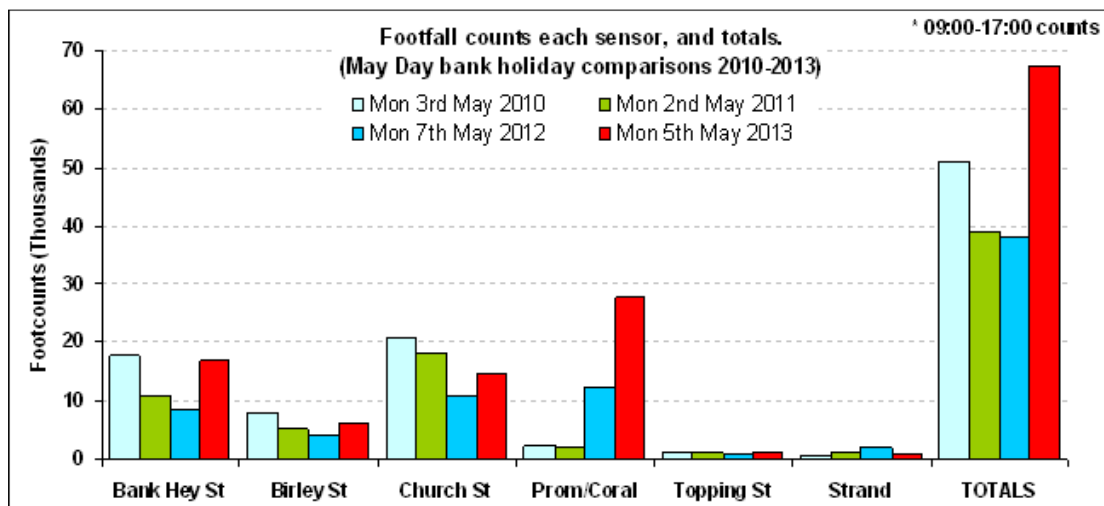
This year, the Friends of Blackpool Illuminations are asking hoteliers, retailers and other tourism-related businesses to put out distinctive purple collecting tins. Forty tins have already been distributed with Sainsbury's at Bispham agreeing to put tins at their check-outs one day a week.

The HoundsHill Shopping Centre and Sheraton Hotel have each donated £500 for the purchase of an additional 300 collecting tins for distribution.

If your business is interested in contributing to the 2013 Illuminations please contact: [philip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:philip.welsh@blackpool.gov.uk)

## MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY FOOTFALL

Blackpool recorded its highest footfall since records began on the May Day Bank Holiday Monday. The chart below shows that the six camera sensors on the Promenade and in the town centre showed a 76% increase over last year. The Promenade sensor in isolation showed a 126% increase over last year.



## SHREK ARRIVES IN BLACKPOOL



Madame Tussauds in Blackpool has greeted its tallest figure – a seven-foot high Shrek.

Created by the Madame Tussauds' studios, Shrek is featured in a new, interactive Children's Zone which also includes Bob The Builder and Spiderman.

## IBIS STYLES OPENS IN TOWN CENTRE

The 90-bedroom Blackpool Central Travelodge in Talbot Square has been re-branded as the Ibis Styles Blackpool.

French group Accor, owner of the Ibis brand, has entered into a franchise agreement with the freeholder, Blackpool Central Hotel.

The Blackpool property was one of the first Travelodge hotels to be offloaded by the budget hotel group under the terms of a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA) which required Travelodge to shed 49 hotels to secure the company finances.



## NOT JUST A TOWER....

Marks & Spencer is featuring Blackpool Tower on the packaging of one of its new Great British Summer products – a limited edition Fish & Chips flavoured crisp.

## CHOICE HOTELS INVESTMENT

Choice Hotels has invested £150,000 in a new restaurant at The Cliffs hotel in Blackpool as part of an ongoing investment programme in its portfolio.

The new-look restaurant at the 163-bedroom hotel was designed by Cleveleys-based interior designer Gail Hunt.

Choice Hotels also owns The Claremont and The Viking in Blackpool and The Patterdale and Keswick Country House Hotel in the Lake District. The company says it has invested more than £500,000 over the last year in upgrading the bedrooms and public spaces of all its properties.

## **BATHING WATERS UPDATE/LITTER INITIATIVE**

Around a dozen local businesses took part in a half-day workshop at Solaris to explore ways in which bathing waters across the Fylde Coast peninsula can be improved prior to the introduction of more stringent European regulations coming into effect in 2015.

The businesses, including a selection of those that operate along the Promenade, examined various initiatives that will help water quality and also looked at how they can contribute to the improvement programme.

During the workshop, the delegates – which also included representatives from United Utilities and public sector partners from Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils and the Environment Agency - were given an insight into progress made to date and the possible roll out of signage that will be used to inform bathers about water quality.

In a follow-up initiative, a number of businesses around the South Beach area – including McDonald's, South Pier, Sandcastle and Lucky Star Amusements – are looking at ways of working with Blackpool Council to resolve problems of excessive litter on busy days, particularly around the Spanish Steps leading to the sea.

The businesses are looking at various ways in which they can assist including litter picking; incentives to encourage customers to deposit litter responsibly and use of a hotline to alert cleaning services when public bins are full.

## **CENTRAL BEACH GETS SEASIDE AWARD**

Blackpool's Central Beach has been given a Seaside Award by the Keep Britain Tidy Group, recognising that it is safe, clean and well managed. The Seaside Award is a quality standard for those beaches that have not achieved the internationally-recognised Blue Flag.

## **HOPPER BUS LAUNCHED**



Blackpool has launched a Resort Hopper bus to enable visitors to get round the resort's top attractions more easily.

The Resort Hopper, operated by Blackpool Transport, provides a service every 30 minutes transporting people between Marton Mere Holiday Park and Blackpool Pleasure Beach, taking in various attractions along the way.

Blackpool Transport has worked with Marketing Blackpool to launch the service which operates a day saver rate from £2 for children and £3.50 for adults. The Resort Hopper will operate until Sunday 10 November.

## Section 6: Requests for Private Sector Support

There are two forthcoming events that have previously been mentioned in my Partnerships Report, but which still need further support:

### **ASPIRED FUTURES FUND-RAISING EVENING**

Aspired Futures, the charity that provides personalised support, counselling and life coaching for vulnerable children aged 2-16 is holding a fund-raising event on Saturday June 15.

The event, to be staged at Blackpool Sixth Form College, will take the form of a fair and family variety show.

The organisers are seeking businesses to attend on the night and/or offer support in other forms eg, taking stalls at the fair, providing raffle prizes, sponsorship or in-kind support for catering, entertainment or event staging.

Anyone interested in supporting the event can email Carmen Conquer at [aspired.futures@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aspired.futures@yahoo.co.uk)

Further information on Aspired Futures can be found at [www.aspired-futures.com](http://www.aspired-futures.com)

### **PROPERTY SCENE CHARITY BALL**

The first Property Scene charity ball and auction is being held in memory of Blackpool-based estate agent, Jim Broomhead who died in 2010.

The black tie event is being organised for the evening of August 30<sup>th</sup> at The Village Heron's Reach and will raise money for Cancer Research.

Tickets are £40 per person, or £350 for a table of 10, including drinks reception, three-course meal, auction and entertainment. Raffle and auction prizes are also being sought from businesses.

For more information go to: [www.thepropertysceneblackpool.co.uk/charity\\_ball](http://www.thepropertysceneblackpool.co.uk/charity_ball)

## Section 7: Congratulations to...

### **SANDCASTLE WATERPARK**

Winner of the Gold Award in the Access To All category in the 2013 VisitEngland Awards For Excellence. The award, presented by Viscountess Cobham, Chairman of Visit England, is in recognition of the work that the Sandcastle team does in breaking down as many barriers as possible for guests with disabilities. For example, the Sandcastle works closely with the Blackpool-based charity Aiming Higher to provide out-of-hours events for families with disabled children.

### **RADIO WAVE....**

Celebrating 21 years on air since its first broadcast on May 25, 1992.

### **... AND THE GAZETTE**

Celebrating 140 years of publishing since it first hit the news stands on April 3, 1873.

### **BLACKPOOL BUSINESSES ON BIBA SHORTLIST**

A host of Blackpool businesses have been shortlisted for the prestigious BIBA Lancashire business awards. They are:

#### **E-Business Of The Year**

Barcadia Media  
The iBox  
The Ink Squid

#### **Green Business Of The Year**

Playtime UK  
F Parkinson Ltd

#### **Exporter Of The Year**

Playtime UK

#### **Service Business Of The Year**

I Care GB

#### **Small Business Of The Year**

Healthpoint

#### **Medium Business Of The Year**

F Parkinson Ltd

#### **New Business Of The Year**

Darbus  
The Ink Squid  
Colossal Training

#### **Manufacturer Of The Year**

SPS EU Ltd  
Laila's Fine Foods  
Playtime UK

#### **Entrepreneur Of The Year**

Adrian Meakin, The Ink Squid  
Daniel Cuffe & Peter Taylor, Cuffe & Taylor  
Lee Kirton, Colossal Training  
Bob Seddon, Healthpoint

#### **Leadership Team Of The Year**

Danbro  
F Parkinson  
Laila's Fine Foods

#### **Excellence In Customer Service**

Danbro

#### **Employer Of The Year**

Danbro  
F Parkinson Ltd

#### **Business Woman Of The Year**

Deborah Parker, Progress Employment

#### **Business Of The Year**

Danbro  
Laila's Fine Foods  
SPS EU Ltd

#### **Change For Growth Award**

SPS EU Ltd  
Danbro

Judging is now underway with winners to be announced at the BIBA awards ceremony on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September at The Tower Ballroom. The BBLG is co-sponsoring the event which brings 1,000 business people and guests into the resort.

**Philip Welsh**  
**Head of Partnerships & Business Development**