



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – November 27, 2015

Section 1: Visitor Economy

BLACKPOOL BATHING WATER SUCCESS

Blackpool is in line for its first ever Blue Flag after figures showed that all of the resort's bathing waters have passed strict new European regulations.

Blackpool South was classified as "excellent", along with Fleetwood and St Annes North, opening up the opportunity to apply for Blue Flag status.

Blackpool North was classified as "good" and both Blackpool Central and Bispham "sufficient", meaning that none of the resort's beaches will have to display signage advising people not to bathe. Of the Fylde Coast's eight beaches, only Cleveleys fell into the "poor" category.

The results represent a remarkable turnaround as seven of the eight beaches on the Fylde Coast were projected to fail the regulations just two years ago.

Since 2011, the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Partnership has worked to increase investment in the area's sewer network, as well as creating teams of volunteers and businesses to look after the quality of the Fylde Coast's seas.



That work has seen United Utilities invest £160m in huge storage tanks beneath Preston, as well as an extra £100m worth of infrastructure improvements under way across the Fylde Coast. The LOVEmyBEACH campaign has also helped, with messages about looking after the sea reaching tens of thousands of people across the North West. In addition, hundreds of volunteers have carried out beach cleans and dozens of local businesses have signed up to be responsible companies.

The Partnership, comprising Blackpool, Wyre, Fylde and Lancashire Councils; the Environment Agency; United Utilities; Merlin Entertainments; and Keep Britain Tidy, is working with the regional Turning Tides partnership to maintain the standards on the seven beaches that have passed and undertaking further improvements at Cleveleys.

NEW DESTINATION GUIDE

Blackpool's new Destination Guide for 2016 has been published.

The guide includes stunning imagery of Blackpool, including the new LightPool projections on the front of the Tower building.

Tens of thousands of copies of the guide will be distributed over coming months.

Survey results from the 2015 Destination Guide showed that the quality of the design and content of the publication had in itself changed the perceptions about Blackpool with more than 60% of people surveyed.



RECORD OCTOBER HALF TERM

Blackpool has enjoyed one of its best October half-terms on record.

Figures from various sectors within the visitor economy show that the nine days at the end of October proved a remarkable finale to the 2015 tourism season, with a number of operators claiming their highest ever figures.

Indicators show that the season got off to a relatively slow start as an early Easter and inconsistent weather in the early part of the season impacted on visitor numbers.

However, as the summer holidays progressed, the resort recorded the highest August total for visitor figures for more than three years. This led to an even stronger performance when the Illuminations season got underway in September, culminating in a spectacular October half-term.

Among the October highlights were:

- Tram passengers totalling 827,000 compared to 570,000 in the same month last year
- Town centre and Promenade footfall the highest on record
- Council car park usage 20% ahead of last year
- 17,000 customers using the Tourist Information Centre compared to 14,000 last year
- Usage of the VisitBlackpool website 25% higher than October 2014
- Blackpool Resort Pass sales showing growth of almost 30%
- Sandcastle Waterpark admissions up by 7% in October and highest ever revenue
- Blackpool Zoo busiest October on record, up nearly 20% on last year.
- All Merlin attractions breaking previous records during October half-term

SHOWZAM! 2016

Blackpool's businesses are being encouraged to support the annual Showzam! festival during the February half-term.

Grants from Arts Council England, Blackpool BID and VisitBlackpool, together with support from key organisations in Blackpool, have enabled Showzam! to go ahead for a ninth year, despite cuts in core funding.

But more support is needed to enhance the four-day festival as organisers LeftCoast look to showcase some of the finest circus and cabaret stars in the town.

Last year Showzam! attracted more than 25,000 visitors to Blackpool, boosting the town's economy by an estimated £2m.

LeftCoast – which is curating Showzam! for a second successive year – is offering local businesses the opportunity to support and be part of the festival and has unveiled a series of sponsorship packages to suit all budgets.

These range from £150 through to £15,000 for a business which would like to be the festival's headline sponsor.

The 2016 festival includes a Carnival Ball at the Tower Ballroom on Saturday 13 February, and a week-long run of the Akoreacro circus. There will also be spectacular outdoor street theatre and entertainment within Showzam! Central at the Winter Gardens. Further details at www.showzam.co.uk

For more information about any of the sponsorship packages, contact Helen Frost, Audience Development Officer, on 01253 477973.

SHOWS SECURED FOR 2016

A series of shows have already been secured for the 2016 tourism season in Blackpool. The Winter Gardens has announced three major productions:

Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, starring Joe McElderry, will open at the Opera House on February 9 for a week-long run.

This will be followed in April by the return of **Blood Brothers**, which runs from April 4 to 9.

Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage, will make its resort premiere and launch a new UK touring production at the Opera House from August 11-30.



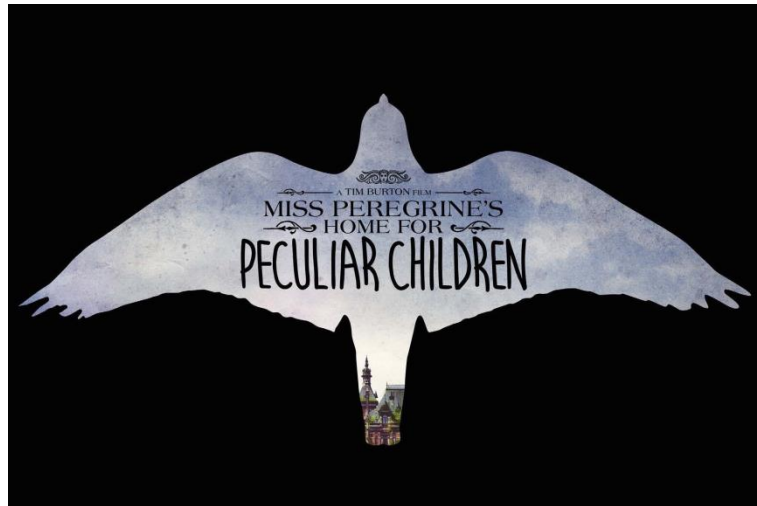
Meanwhile, The Grand Theatre has announced an extensive line-up for 2016 including a week-long run of **The Last Tango** starring former Strictly stars Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace who will dance in their final stage show together from June 27 to July 2.

MISS PEREGRINE FILM

20th Century Fox has revealed that the Tim Burton film partly shot in Blackpool earlier this year is scheduled for a Christmas release in 2016.

Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children, starring Samuel L Jackson, Eva Green, Judie Dench and Rupert Everett, is currently due for global release on Christmas Day/Boxing Day.

It means that Blackpool is well placed to capitalise on the anticipated worldwide interest in the film when PR and marketing campaigns kick in during the early part of 2016.



Tim Burton, who came back to Blackpool to switch on the Illuminations, after filming around the Tower and Promenade was completed, has spoken publicly about his love for the resort.

BLACKPOOL ACCOMMODATION TOPS CHART

Blackpool topped the league table of the world's leading hotel price comparison site.

Hotel search website trivago.co.uk have revealed the results of their Top Hotel Awards, using online user ratings in order to recognise the best-rated hotels, both regionally and nationally.

The Arthington Guest House in Blackpool was awarded first place as the top-rated hotel in the North West, with The Redstone in Blackpool in second place. With a rating of 96.38, the Arthington was rated third in the whole of the UK.

Out of the top 20 hotels and guesthouses in the North West, six are located in Blackpool, with three in the top 10.

LABOUR RETURNS FOR 5TH YEAR

Blackpool welcomed Labour's new leader Jeremy Corbyn to Blackpool in October as delegates gathered for the North West Labour Party conference.

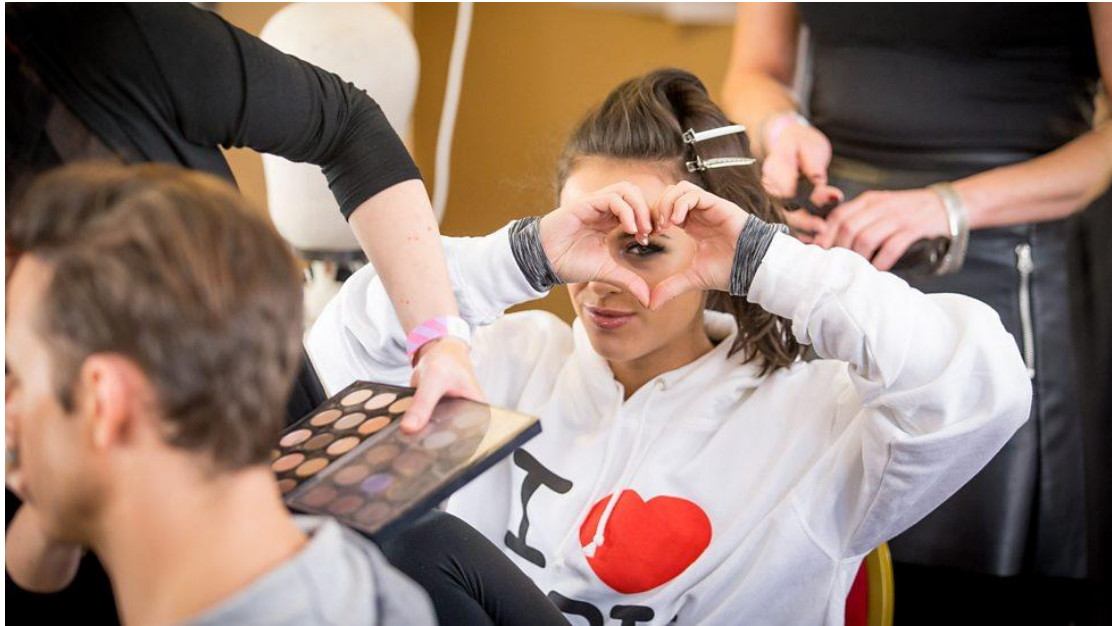
The conference, which started at the end of half-term week with a welcome dinner at The Hilton, saw the party return to the resort for the fifth year in a row. More than 800 delegates, including a raft of the UK's most influential politicians including the new leader and his deputy, Tom Watson MP, attended.

An additional 300 young people aged between 18 and 21 attended the youth conference which ran in parallel to the main event.

The main conference and workshop events took place at The Imperial Hotel. Due to a huge increase in delegate numbers this year Mr Corbyn addressed attendees at the Winter Gardens.

STRICTLY BLACKPOOL

Blackpool benefited from millions of pounds worth of prime-time TV coverage as Strictly Come Dancing made its annual excursion to the Tower Ballroom.



The resort received extensive coverage on BBC television and radio and national media in the run-up to the Blackpool live shows on November 21/22 as dancers and celebrities vied for the right to compete in the home of ballroom dancing.

This year's show in the Tower Ballroom also received extensive PR due to the appearance by Take That performing their new single on the show.

The opening scenes of the show included a specially produced projection of the Glitter Ball and title sequences on the front of the Blackpool Tower building.

On the Monday after the show, judge Darcy Bussell, appeared on the BBC's Breakfast programme to talk about why she loves Blackpool.

LANCASHIRE TOURISM AWARDS

Blackpool had two winners in the Lancashire Tourism Awards held in Blackpool. The Winter Gardens, which hosted the awards event, was named Best Conference/Meeting Venue and Blackpool Zoo was named winner of the Large Visitor Attraction Award.

CHINESE FLIGHTS

The potential to open up North West tourism markets to China dramatically increased following the announcement of the first direct service from mainland China to Manchester.

Hainan Airlines is planning to run the new Manchester-Beijing service, which will run four times per week from June 2016. The airline company has already intimated that it is open to the idea of growing the route to a daily frequency at some point.

The decision was taken after three years of discussion with Manchester Airport and is partly based on the growth in Chinese tourists visiting the UK. Tickets for the flights are already being sold on the airline's website.

KEEPING BLACKPOOL TIDY

Blackpool Council and environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy have signed up to a new partnership aimed at making the town the cleanest seaside resort in the UK by 2020.

The project will see the two parties put together a five-year plan to prevent the root causes of litter by working with residents, visitors and businesses to reduce packaging, increase effective litter disposal and encourage social responsibility.

The campaign follows on from the success of the North West's LOVEmyBEACH campaign, in which Blackpool has been heavily involved, which has encouraged responsible citizenship to improve bathing water standards and beach cleanliness throughout the region.

Initiatives have included volunteer-led beach cleans, working with businesses to ensure they are disposing of waste in an environmentally friendly way and working with schools and colleges to educate young people with a view to creating an improved culture of social responsibility in the future.

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

RE-LAUNCH OF CCTV

Blackpool's CCTV monitoring service has been re-instated, operated by a combination of Blackpool Council and Town Centre BID wardens, supported by local volunteers.

The monitoring service ceased due to Council budget cuts in 2013, meaning that while cameras were still operating, round-the-clock surveillance no longer took place.

A fresh commitment to restart those services was made by Blackpool Council, Blackpool BID, and the Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner earlier this year, with Blackpool Police agreeing to help recruit volunteers to staff the CCTV control room.

Blackpool Council's Night Time Economy Working Group, which includes businesses, public services and other organisations and meets regularly to focus on the future of the town centre, has also shown major support for the reintroduction.

The cost of staff time, training and equipment is being shared between Blackpool BID, Blackpool Council and Blackpool Police with additional one-off grant funding of £52k from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The team of volunteers will be fully trained on running the CCTV control room, which includes teaching them how to use the CCTV equipment and what to look out for on the cameras as well as how to report any crimes or anti-social behaviour that are caught on camera.

YATES'S SITE PLAN APPROVED

Fresh proposals for a £7m hotel and restaurant on the site of the former Yates's Wine Lodge in Blackpool town centre have been approved.

Councillors originally rejected the Whitbread scheme for a 150-bedroom six-storey Premier Inn with a BrewersFayre restaurant on the ground floor because the design was "overbearing" and would put further pressure on town centre parking.

Developers came back with revised plans, reducing the height and introducing a first floor wrought iron balcony facing Talbot Square.

There is still no off-street car parking provided but planners say there is enough existing car parking to accommodate additional traffic.

The site has been derelict for almost seven years following a fire which destroyed the Yates's building.



Work on site is now due to commence in the early part of 2016, with a proposed autumn 2017 opening date for the hotel and restaurant.

GYM GROUP

Leading low-cost gym operator, The Gym Group, is to open a new fitness centre on the ground floor of the former Talbot Road Bus Station in the early part of 2016.

The company, which has pioneered "pay as you go" gym usage, will occupy more than 17,000sq ft of space in the units facing on to Talbot Road and Cookson Street.

As part of the deal, Blackpool Council's own gym, which occupies part of the adjacent Bickerstaffe Square building, will close, transferring its equipment to Blackpool Sports Centre.

The Gym Group has around 350,000 members across 60 sites in the UK and has plans to open a further 80 gyms in coming months.

TOWN CENTRE RESTAURANTS OPEN

Two national restaurant chains have opened for business in Blackpool.

The South American-themed Las Iguanas has opened in the former Burger King building on the junction of Church Street and the Promenade. It has taken on around 50 staff. The restaurant and cocktail bar is open until late seven days a week.

Italian restaurant Prezzo has opened on the Victoria Street façade of the HoundsHill Shopping Centre, creating 15 new jobs. The restaurant seats 82 inside and a further 20 on the outside terrace. It will be open from noon to 11pm every day.

CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN



X-Factor winner Ben Haenow kick-started Blackpool's Christmas campaign when he switched on the festive lights on November 21.

This year's Christmas marketing campaign focuses on the overall entertainment offer which includes the production of A Christmas Carol, opening at the Winter Gardens on December 4 until January 3, and three pantomimes.

The Grand Theatre presents Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs from 4 December-3 January starring Su Pollard as the wicked Queen and The Blackpool Tower Circus presents Pinocchio with resident clowns Mooky and Mr Boo from 22 November-17 January. Blackpool Pleasure Beach is presenting Dick Whittington On Ice from 13 December-1 January.

There are also seasonal shows at Sand Venue, Viva and Funny Girls.

The Town Centre BID will be animating the streets with live entertainment on each Sunday running from 29 November-20 December in St John's Square (or the Winter Gardens if the weather is bad). There is also a Santa's grotto in the Winter Gardens grand vestibule adjacent to Illuminasia and ice skating and a separate grotto at the Pleasure Beach Arena.

A "Park For A Pound" discounted parking scheme will be available on Thursday late night shopping dates – November 26, December 3, 10 and 17, at four town centre Council-owned car parks and at the Houndshill Shopping Centre. Park for a Pound will also be available Sunday November 29 and December 6, 13 and 20 in the four Council Town Centre Car Parks - West Street, Central, Talbot multi-storey and East Topping Street.

NOTE: Members of the BBLG can take advantage of a discounted offer for A Christmas Carol at the Winter Gardens. Use the code **humbug** when booking online to get seats for all shows for £20 per ticket. The code can be used for individual or group bookings.

HOUNDSHILL NEW OWNER

Blackpool's Houndshill shopping centre has been bought in a £105m deal by New Frontier, a Mauritius-based investor. The centre, which is anchored by Debenhams, spans more than 300,000sq ft and has 65 retail units and 750 parking spaces.

BURGER KING SEEKS ALCOHOL LICENCES

Burger King is reportedly applying for licences to sell alcohol in some of its UK restaurants, including Blackpool.

Blackpool, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Hull and Bury St Edmunds, are said to be part of a pilot project to test alcohol sales before rolling out licensing applications for other restaurants within the chain. Rivals McDonald's also serves alcohol in some European branches, notably in Spain and Germany.

VACANT UNITS

There has been a net increase of three vacant units in Blackpool town centre since August. The Principal Retail Core area now has a vacancy rate of 12.3%, rising to 15.7% in the Core Retail Area (see definitions below).

The newly vacant units include: Boots Opticians, Phone Clinic (Victoria Street); Millets, Go Mobile, Champs Sports Bar (Church Street); The Money Shop, Exotic Tastes (Abingdon Street); Originals, Best One (Clifton Street); AJ's Bistro, Asia's supermarket (Topping Street), Jean's Café (Deansgate); Los Gringos (Dickson Road) and 06 Games (King Street).

Since August a number of businesses have occupied previously vacant units. These include: Ed's Easy Diner, Jack Jones, Cardzone/Home & Fragrance (Houndshell); Millets (Victoria Street); Las Iguanas, The Sea Restaurant (Church Street) and Moda Italia (Bank Hey Street).

The November 2015 vacancy rates are as follows:

Area	Total Units ¹	Total Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate
Principle Retail Core (Local Plan boundary based around Houndshell, Victoria Street, Bank Hey Street, Church Street, Corporation Street and Adelaide Street West)	163	20	12.3%
Core Retail Area (as above but also including Topping Street, Queen Street, Clifton Street, Birley Street, Market Street, Talbot Road, Abingdon Street and Cedar Square)	466	73	15.7%
Town Centre Boundary (as above but also including the Promenade, Springfield Road, Dickson Road, King Street, Cookson Street, Counce Street and the new Talbot Gateway area)	644	114	17.7%
Periphery Town Centre Area (the Town Centre Boundary area excluding the units contained within the Core Retail Area)	178	41	23.0%

BRILLIANCE ON BIRLEY STREET SESSIONS

A festival of local music stars brought a month of Illuminations-inspired arts events in Blackpool town centre to a close.

Throughout October, free-to-enter live arts performances were staged underneath the Brilliance arches on Birley Street as part of the new LightPool project.

A special festival called The Brilliance Sessions, hosted by local singer James Edgar, brought the programme to a finale during half-term week.

The shows, commissioned and funded by LeftCoast have seen a variety of family-friendly events, including bicycle ballets, umbrella parades and circus acts taking place beneath the Brilliance arches.

TOWN CENTRE CLEAN UP

New powers have been granted to get rid of anti-social behaviour in Blackpool town centre and parts of the promenade.

Blackpool councillors have approved public space protection orders which give officers the ability to ban activities such as selling of “lucky charms” and rag mags, taking legal highs, and loitering with the intention of begging.

It comes after a consultation exercise in which hundreds of people told the council they felt intimidated by yobbish behaviour including people drinking in the street and loitering around cash machines.

The order can be enforced by police officers, authorised police community support officers, council officers and other designated groups, including officers under the community safety accreditation scheme.

Under the protection orders, anybody caught engaging in such anti-social behaviour would be committing a criminal offence and would be liable for a criminal record and a fixed penalty notice of £100.

Activities will be banned in the town centre, north of Chapel Street and south of Springfield Road. The eastern boundary of area follows Central Drive, Albert Road, Adelaide Street, King Street George Street and Buchanan Street.

A similar draft order relating to the town’s parks is also being considered.

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE

Blackpool Airport has been allocated Enterprise Zone status, paving the way for the first planning application to be submitted for an Energy Headquarters for Lancashire to be developed on the site.

Enterprise Zone status, which comes into effect in April 2016, will transform the area into a key employment site with the potential for nearly 140 new businesses. It could support as many as 3,000 new jobs over more than two decades to 2030.

Balfour Beatty has been involved in the design proposal for the Enterprise Zone including the creation of a new passenger terminal. This will, in turn, facilitate the plans for the new Energy HQ, a development that is supported by the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The main runway will remain intact and there is clear stated intention from both Balfour Beatty and Blackpool Council to pursue new commercial passenger flight opportunities. The Green Belt status of some areas of the airport site is unaffected.

FRACKING UPDATES

Cuadrilla HQ

Oil and gas exploration company Cuadrilla has announced that its new headquarters will be based near Preston. The company, currently based in Lichfield, Staffordshire, plans to move to Bamber Bridge in early 2016.

Judicial Review

Residents of Roseacre, near Blackpool, have been granted a judicial review of a monitoring scheme linked to Cuadrilla's plans to carry out fracking operations there. Although Lancashire County Council rejected the firm's main fracking application, it did approve an "array" of seismic monitoring equipment.

High Court Judge Mrs Justice Lang said it was arguable the council had erred in law in granting planning permission.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTRE OPENS

Blackpool and The Fylde College has officially opened its Advanced Technology Centre.

The new facility at the Bispham Campus is intended to deliver the technical and leadership skills required by students to address the skills shortage in the advanced engineering and manufacturing industry.

The building, which was officially opened by Martin Taylor, Managing Director, Combat Air, BAE Systems features:

- Advanced engineering workshops including the latest technology to provide the environment to deliver industry level skills.
- A project zone featuring pneumatics, robotics, electronics and the latest CAD design studio where a design can be sent to manufacture in the same room.
- Research and development centre including purpose built facilities for both aerospace and engineering programmes.
- Automotive workshops that have been designed to provide a working environment in line with market leaders such as AUDI, BMW and Porsche.
- Materials and paint applications workshop to mirror that of the highest industry standards in line with Boeing, Rolls Royce, McLaren.

More than 20,000 students choose Blackpool and The Fylde College annually. Of these, 6,000 and more than 200 employers will benefit from the new facility.

COLLEGE ROYAL AWARD

Blackpool and The Fylde College has been awarded the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize Award for Higher and Further Education Excellence.

The award was awarded specifically for the College's bespoke work in the field of Project Management in partnership with both regional and national employers. The College created its graduate training programme in association with industry partners. To date, more than 400 project management graduates have been through the scheme.

The College was one of 21 UK universities and colleges to be awarded prizes recognising a wide range of innovative work that demonstrates practical benefit to people, in the UK and beyond.

Section 4: General News

WHYNDYKE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Plans for a £200m development on the outskirts of Blackpool have been approved, paving the way for 1,400 new homes, a primary school and a health centre.

The Whyndyke Farm development at the end of the M55 will be built over the next 10 to 15 years.

The plans for the 225-acre site, which is currently used as farmland and by two small caravan sites, were approved by Blackpool Council's planning committee, after a similar approval was given by Fylde Council. Work could start next year.

The final go-ahead depended on developers agreeing to contribute towards affordable housing, extra secondary school capacity and providing a new bus service.

The outline planning application will see a mixture of 350 two-bed, 700 three-bed, 280 four-bed and 70 five-bed properties on the northern part of the site.

There will also be two neighbourhood centres, retail space and a pub with vehicle access from Preston New Road and Mythop Road.

The consortium behind the development includes a company owned by the Oyston family, who planned in the 1990s to relocate Blackpool FC to a new purpose-built stadium on the site.

250 BLACKPOOL COUNCIL JOBS AT RISK

Blackpool Council has announced proposals to achieve £9m of reductions in council services in the next financial year, 2016/17, with another £11m still to be found from corporate initiatives. It is expected to result in 200 job losses with an additional 50 posts ending.

The proposals, which were revealed following extensive consultation with the public, were due to be discussed at a full Council meeting on November 23.

JOB LOSSES

More than 100 jobs are to be lost in Blackpool following announcements by two nationally-based businesses.

DIY chain B&Q will close its mini-warehouse at Holyoake Avenue in Bispham as part of a nationwide review of its stores. It will look to redeploy staff within other stores in the Kingfisher Group.

Burton's Biscuits also announced that a re-structuring operation at its Devonshire Road factory resulted in the loss of 87 temporary seasonal jobs. Burton's is a significant employer in Blackpool with around 500 jobs.

TAXI DRIVERS TOP SURVEY

Blackpool's taxi drivers came top of a national survey after scoring the highest marks for availability and reliability. The findings were published as part of the 2015 National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey carried out by Ipsos MORI.

Blackpool was also named top performer in a number of other categories within the survey, including street lighting, enforcement of speed limits, safety of children walking to school and road safety and training of young drivers.

QUEENS PARK DEVELOPMENT

A huge project to replace run-down tower blocks with around 200 new family homes is entering its second stage.

Work to build 99 new homes as part of Phase 2 of the Queens Park development has now begun.

Service disconnections, asbestos removal and soft stripping removals of the tower blocks will begin shortly, while demolition of the maisonettes and tower blocks will take place early next year.

The second phase of the £22m project will demolish the final three tower blocks and replace them with more family homes and renovate parts of Layton Recreation Ground.

The work follows the completion of the first phase this summer, which saw the northern area of the estate completely transformed after the first two tower blocks were demolished and replaced with 92 flats and houses.

All residents have now been moved out of the old properties and preparatory works by housing regeneration specialist Lovell are underway.

The work beginning next week will start to strip out the last three of the Queens Park tower blocks – Churchill Court, Walter Robinson Court and Elizabeth Court - as well as re-landscaping parts of Layton Recreation Ground.

Once the work is complete, a new area of Layton Recreation Ground will be created within the new estate near to Elizabeth Court, with consultation on the re-landscaped park to take next year. All of the 99 homes as part of phase two are expected to be completed by the end of March 2018.

BLACKPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

Blackpool FC has submitted plans for a new training facility with upgraded changing rooms, offices and a gym to replace their existing facility at Squires Gate.

It would include changing rooms, a classroom, offices, a hospitality area/players' canteen, a rehabilitation gym and a physio room. The project would also enable the club's academy to be housed at Squires Gate.

- A new health and beauty spa has opened within the Blackpool FC Hotel. The Mayfaire Spa includes steam room, sauna and treatment rooms.

ALCOHOL CODE OF PRACTICE

Off-licences in Blackpool are to be asked to sign up to a new code of practice to help tackle problem street-drinking.

The move is intended to support existing licensing rules and stave off problems before they happen, reducing the need for police to have to spend time dealing with street drinkers whose behaviour could prove off-putting to visitors to Blackpool town centre.

Measures included in the code of practice include:

- No single can or bottle sales of alcohol
- No sales prior to 9am
- All staff to attend a compulsory responsible alcohol retailing course.
- High-strength products stored behind the counter rather than on general sale
- An agreement to focus product lines away from cheap, high ABV (Alcohol By Volume) products

The code of practice follows discussions with a number of town centre outlets some of which acknowledged problems stemming from single can sales and frequent visits from customers who were known to cause problems.

Licensing officers are planning to contact retailers directly in coming weeks to discuss the new code of practice.

ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

A series of highways improvements have been made across Blackpool to assist blind and partially-sighted people.

These include improvements for pedestrians using the Promenade, as well as enhanced crossings at the Central Business District and the introduction of a green line system to help people visiting the N-Vision centre at Squires Gate.

The green line system adopts a similar approach to one that directs people to Moorfields Eye Hospital in London by providing a contrast with the colour of the regular pavement, enabling those with a visual impairment to get to their destination.

In Blackpool's case, the painted green line now directs people from the nearest bus and tram stop at Starr Gate to the N-Vision centre on Bosworth Place.

Similarly, newly installed zebra crossings at the Central Business District, along with studded pavements are making it easier for people with low vision to locate safe crossings on Talbot Road, Dickson Road and High Street.

WETHERSPOONS DISPOSAL

Pub group JD Wetherspoon is to dispose of more than 30 of its pubs, including the Auctioneer on Lytham Road, Blackpool.

The company operates three other pubs in the resort – The Layton Raikes, Albert & The Lion and the new Velvet Coaster. None of these are affected by the sale.

GRANT AWARDS

More than £10,000 has been awarded to local community groups in Blackpool.

Blackpool Coastal Housing's Tenants' Project Fund provides grants to help local projects that improve lives for BCH tenants, residents and leaseholders.

One of the unique aspects of the fund is that BCH customers decide which projects are most deserving of funding awards. In the first round of applications, two were approved by the BCH Customer Panel:

UR Potential received £6,000 for their 'UR Potential Community Project' which includes youth and adult volunteering opportunities such as babysitting and bike renovation courses.

The Kensington Trust also received £6,000 for their 'Crisis Grant Line Furniture Recycling' project which aims to deliver furniture free of charge to individuals and families who would normally not have the means to purchase the items.

Funding of up to £500 has also been granted to a number of successful smaller projects, covering a wide range of community-based activities and services.

BRIDGE CLOSURES

A five-year programme to repair up to 10 bridges in Blackpool has started. Urgent works on Princess Street bridge on the Central Corridor commenced on November 9 and are scheduled to continue until March next year. The works have been deliberately timed to take place outside of the main tourism season.

While the work is taking place, Seaside's Way will be closed to through traffic between the junction at Bloomfield Road and Central Car Park. Access to Blackpool Football Club will still be available from Seaside's Way northbound, with Lonsdale Road car park, opposite the West Stand, remaining open.

Without the £11m of remedial work, it was feared that Princess Street and some other bridges would have to close.

For more information on diversions and the wider project to repair or replace a number of Blackpool's bridges, go to www.blackpool.gov.uk/bridges

SUGARY DRINKS

Blackpool Council is campaigning to reduce consumption of sugary drinks among children and teenagers.

It has launched a Give Up Loving Pop (Gulp) campaign encouraging Blackpool students to take part in a 21-day challenge to give up sugary drinks in the hope that they will switch to healthier drinks for good.

Awareness and education sessions are being held throughout October and November at participating high schools as well Blackpool and the Fylde College and Blackpool Sixth Form College. Figures released earlier this year from Public Health England (PHE) show that children aged between four and 18 are getting 30% of their sugar intake from sugary drinks.

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support

PARKING REVIEW

Thanks to all those businesses that took part in the online survey relating to Blackpool Council's Strategic Parking Review. Consultants AECOM gathered 69 responses to the survey, which are now being fed into the review. The initial results should be available early in the New Year.

CAREERS OPTIONS EVENT

Business support is being sought for the annual Careers Options event in January 2016.

The two-day event, which is being held at Pleasure Beach on January 26 and 27, is aimed at raising the aspirations and careers awareness of children and young people in Blackpool. Last year, around 1600 students visited the event.

The event promotes growth employment areas across Lancashire and also advises visitors on the core skills valued by employers, and how best to develop them through current and future studies.

If you or your business can get involved on one or both days to engage and inspire young people in Blackpool, and/or you have current skills gaps or job opportunities that you want schools and colleges to be aware of, then please contact Julie Whalley from the Blackpool Guidance Community. Email whalleyjulie@btinternet.com or call 07762 543094

RADIO WAVE CHARITY AUCTION

Business contributions are being sought for Radio Wave's annual Charity Auction Day, which last year raised more than £11,000 for the RNLI and Aiming Higher.

This year's on-air event, which is being held on Thursday 3rd December, will raise money for the Fylde Coast Carer's Centre.

Any business interested in donating prizes, should contact Holly Buckley at Radio Wave as soon as possible. She can be contacted by email at Hollie.Buckley@thewavefm.co.uk or call 01263 650300.

All businesses that donate will receive an on-air mention.

CORPORATE PARENTING

Businesses are invited to a special conference aimed at improving the life chances of young people in Blackpool who are in care or who are preparing to leave care.

Blackpool Council, which is the "Corporate Parent" for these young people wants them to have the same opportunities that other young people are afforded.

The conference – "Our Children, Our Story, Our Ask" – has been put together by the children themselves and will be held from 4pm to 7pm at the Spanish Hall in the Winter Gardens on Wednesday 9 December.

If you are able to attend or interested in how your business can assist with Corporate Parenting, please email: Delyth.curtis@blackpool.gov.uk

SHOEBOX APPEAL

Blackpool-based Candy House Entertainment will be collecting donations on behalf of the Send A Smile Shoebox Appeal at the BBLG meeting at the Hilton on Friday 27 November. The appeal is in aid of children in poorer countries and is administered by the International Aid Trust.

Simply bring along your shoebox donation to the hotel on the day of the meeting. Contents can include small toys and games; children's clothes; toiletries; food items; stationery.

For further information, contact Vicki Rogers at candyhouseentertainment@yahoo.co.uk

Philip Welsh
Head of Visitor Economy