



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – May 30, 2014

Section 1: Visitor Economy



CLEAN SWEEP FOR BLACKPOOL BEACHES

All of Blackpool's beaches have been granted Seaside Awards for 2014.

The national awards, announced by Keep Britain Tidy, have rewarded Blackpool South, Central, North and Bispham for their high standards of beach management, as well as their nearby facilities and water quality.

The four beaches make up the town's entire stock of bathing water beaches. Last year, only Central Beach received a Seaside Award.

The awards will be displayed on the promenade advertising signs between South and Central Piers.

Meanwhile, work is continuing with the Environment Agency and other partners to get Blackpool's bathing water standards to meet the more stringent EU regulations that will be brought into force next year.

- Dogs will be excluded from the beach between North Pier and South Pier from the beginning of May until the end of September as part of the campaign to keep key beaches clean during the peak holiday season.

SWITCH-ON FESTIVAL WEEKEND

BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS

SWITCH-ON FESTIVAL WEEKEND 29-31 AUG

FRI 29 AUG FREE SWITCH-ON

Register for wristbands now at visitblackpool.com/switchon

MAKE A WEEKEND OF IT

For more information about accommodation and what's on call: 01253 478 222 or go to www.visitblackpool.com

SAT 30 & SUN 31 AUG FESTIVAL WEEKEND

REGISTER NOW AT WWW.VISITBLACKPOOL.COM/SWITCHON FOR UPDATES ON ARTIST ANNOUNCEMENTS

VISITBLACKPOOL

Official event media partner

97.4 rockfm
your music your life

Plans are well advanced for the launch of a three-day Illuminations Switch-On Festival Weekend.

The event will be staged between August 29 and 31 on the Tower Festival Headlands outdoor arena and will comprise:

- **Friday 29 August**
Illuminations switch-on night in association with Rock FM. This will be a free, wristbanded event with a capacity of up to 20,000 people. Details of the celebrity line-up and switch-on star will start to be released from June onwards.
- **Saturday 30 August**
A musical themed night featuring excerpts from a range of high-quality show productions.
- **Sunday 31 August**
A line-up of chart stars old and new, culminating with a headline performance from one of today's leading recording artists.

Ticket prices for the festival weekend will be competitively priced with the "early bird" booking offer starting at just £20 for the full weekend of entertainment.

Details of the line-ups will be announced over the next few days, together with full details of ticket prices and booking arrangements.

VISIT ENGLAND AWARDS

Sandcastle Waterpark picked up a Silver Award in the Access For All category of the annual Visit England awards staged at Cheltenham Racecourse. VisitBlackpool was highly commended in the Visitor Experience category for the launch of the Resort Pass.

MAMMA MIA! BOX OFFICE

A fully branded MAMMA MIA! mobile box office is to be installed on the Tower Festival Headlands, close to the Comedy Carpet.



The box office, which will also be used to sell tickets for other attractions, will be operated by the Visit Blackpool team and will be open at key times during the holiday period.

The unit is intended to capture the attention of the hundreds of thousands of visitors who are expected to be moving around the Comedy Carpet during the peak season.

The show opens on Friday 20 June and runs until September 14.

- Don't forget that a discounted offer for BBLG members is still available. Simply go to the Ticketmaster website and insert BBLG in the offer code or call the box office on 0844 847 2517 and quote BBLG. Tickets normally £39.50 and £35 will be reduced to £35 and £30 for performances Tuesday to Thursday at 7.30pm.

MAMMA MIA! LINKS UP WITH TRINITY

The cast and company of MAMMA MIA! are to raise money for Trinity Hospice during their run in Blackpool.

There are plans for the cast members of the International Tour production to visit Trinity, and for a collection to be made for the hospice on the Gala Night celebration of the show on June 24.

WETHERSPOONS

Planning consent has been given for one of Blackpool's seafront amusement arcades, the Lucky Star, to be converted into a Wetherspoons pub. The conversion will include the erection of a glazed canopy over a raised decking area.

The Wetherspoons chain already has premises on Lytham Road; Central Prom and on Market Street in the town centre.

HERITAGE MUSEUM BID

Blackpool Council has received £1.24m from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of a new Blackpool Museum that will celebrate Blackpool's glorious past.

The Blackpool Museum, planned for the Winter Gardens building, will tell the extraordinary story of the world's first working-class seaside resort, celebrating its contribution to British and Western popular culture.

As well as displaying the council's own nationally-significant collections in an imaginative way, there will be high-quality space for temporary exhibitions. It will be a unique blend of museum, theatre and visitor attraction.

It will be based in the Grade 2 listed Winter Gardens, saving the Pavilion Theatre from dereliction and finding a use for other underutilised spaces.

The initial funding will enable the Council to carry out detailed surveys of the Pavilion Theatre to illustrate how the attraction would be designed and built.

Following the development stage (expected to last around 18 months) Blackpool Council will apply for £20m for the creation of the museum.

BLACKPOOL TV CAMPAIGN

Production of the Blackpool TV ad is now underway following filming in the resort over the past week or so.



The destination ad, which is a joint venture between Merlin Entertainments and VisitBlackpool, will go out in Scotland and northern England during June and July, supported by an extensive digital and PR campaign running until early September.

The key objective of the destination campaign is to challenge any negative perceptions about Blackpool and encourage people to take a fresh look at the resort.

It is anticipated that a formal launch of the TV ad will take place in the resort in early July – further details to follow.

COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND BID

Blackpool Council has submitted a stage one application to the Coastal Communities Fund for grant aid that would transform Blackpool Illuminations.

The "Lightpool" scheme aims to create a significantly more compelling visitor experience during the Illuminations season, creating more than a dozen new jobs and generating 800,000 additional visitors over two years.

A decision will be made in July as to whether the bid has been selected to proceed to Stage 2 of the application process.

ARMED FORCES WEEK

Blackpool's Armed Forces Week celebrations will be bigger than ever with the official Armed Forces Day event moving to the resort's 256-acre Stanley Park.

Armed Forces Day has now become a firm date on the calendar for towns and cities across the UK. In Blackpool both veterans and serving military personnel are celebrated for a whole week with a wide range of activities targeted at them and their families as well as the many thousands of people visiting the resort.

Until now Armed Forces Day celebrations have taken place in St John's Square in the town centre. VisitBlackpool is seeking to complement that activity with a full programme of free activities in Stanley Park.

This year Armed Forces Week is running from Monday June 23 to Sunday June 29 with Armed Forces Day taking place on Saturday 28.

The event begins with the raising of the Armed Forces Day Flag at Blackpool Town Hall on Monday 23. This is followed by a week of activities including the free Music for Heroes concert in the Blackpool Winter Gardens, a Service of Dedication at Fylde Memorial Arboretum and an Armed Forces' Gala Night Dinner.

Highlights on Armed Forces Day itself include live entertainment, war and modern-day training re-enactments, sports competitions, military vehicle displays, a World War Heritage Exhibition, archery, assault course and climbing walls.

The week comes to end on Sunday June 29 when Blackpool joins together to celebrate, honour and unite Britain's Armed Forces past and present in a service at the cenotaph, followed by a parade along the promenade.

For more information about Blackpool Armed Forces Week and Armed Forces Day go to www.armedforcesweek.co.uk

EVENTS GUIDE

A new guide providing details of the complete events programme in Blackpool between June and November has been produced by VisitBlackpool.

It will be distributed from the start of June onwards.

If any business requires any copies, please contact the VisitBlackpool team.



DERELICT HOTELS

Discussions are continuing with various property owners over the problem of derelict promenade hotels raised at the last Blackpool Business Leadership Group meeting.

The owners of the Warwick Hotel have given an assurance that they will refurbish the hoardings at the front of that building prior to the start of the summer season.

Other owners have been contacted with a view to improving the frontages of their premises or facing enforcement notices.

The owner of the cluster of derelict buildings between Yates's and the Dutton Arms at South Shore is seeking approval of a demolition notice so that he can start to remove the buildings and replace them with a five-storey development comprising apartments and bars/restaurants.

TOWER ARCHES

Two of Blackpool Tower's iconic arches on the promenade frontage of the building have been unveiled following restoration work.

Work is continuing on a further five arches as part of a programme that will see the restoration of the original terracotta features and the re-leading of the stained glass windows.

The first two windows were revealed to the public on the day that The Tower celebrated its 120th birthday.

IMPROVED "STAYCATION" FORECAST

A report by Barclays Bank is forecasting significant growth in domestic tourism in the North West over the next four years as the economy continues to recover.

The report suggests that annual expenditure from tourists within the UK is set to increase to more than £12bn in the region by 2017 – an increase of 28%.

Pubs and restaurants are forecast to get the biggest increase, with growth also expected for the accommodation sector, leisure attractions and retailers.

The report says that whilst an improving economy will result in a gradual rise in the number of consumers looking to holiday abroad again, it will not result in a return to the level of foreign holidays taken prior to the recession.

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

WEEKEND PARKING OFFERS

A £3 a day parking offer has been agreed for several car parks around Blackpool during the early summer months.

The £3 tariff will allow up to 10 hours of parking on Saturdays and Sundays between Saturday 7 June and Sunday 27 July on the following car parks:

Bolton St, Bonny St, Chapel St, Cocker St, Cocker Sq, Gynn Sq, Lonsdale Rd, Lytham Rd, Queen St, South King St, Talbot Road Multi-Storey

TALBOT GATEWAY LATEST DEVELOPMENTS:

NUMBER ONE BICKERSTAFFE SQUARE

Blackpool Council has started to occupy the new office development within Talbot Gateway. The Council is the anchor tenant of Number One Bickerstaffe Square and the first of more than 800 staff have now moved in. The remainder will be relocated from other Council buildings over the next two months or so.



With the exception of frontline services requiring a public access presence at the Municipal Buildings on Corporation Street, the majority of Council employees will be based in the new offices.

The Council's current portfolio of office buildings are old and inefficient, becoming increasingly costly to run and maintain. The sale of buildings such as Progress House, Westgate House and South King Street will contribute towards the cost of building the new offices.

GATEWAY FITNESS

The new gym on the ground floor of Number One Bickerstaffe Square opened on May 19. The gym is open from 6.30am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, and boasts 60 state-of-the-art fitness stations.

RETAIL UNITS

Negotiations are continuing with a number of interested parties over the new retail units on the ground floor of the office building and also those on the ground floor of the neighbouring multi-storey car park.

Two food outlets are close to completion of agreements and are likely to be the first occupants.

SAINSBURY'S OPENING

The opening of the new Sainsbury's superstore within the Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme has been confirmed as Wednesday 23 July.

The supermarket has now taken control of the new 120,000sq ft store and Barr Construction has commenced a 12-week fit-out.

The development will create around 300 jobs in Blackpool, most of which have already been recruited.

The Sainsbury's petrol station on the opposite side of Talbot Road is already trading.

AWARD FOR MUSE

Blackpool's new £220m Talbot Gateway scheme was named Commercial Development Of The Year at a business awards ceremony.

The North West Business Insider Awards attracted 1100 property professionals from across the region and the Talbot Gateway scheme by Muse Developments, beat strong competition from several other major projects.

TRAMWAY EXTENSION TO BLACKPOOL NORTH

Funding for an £18.2m extension to Blackpool's tram system is in place after Blackpool Council agreed to find the remaining £4.7m towards the scheme.

The proposed extension will run from North Pier to Blackpool North railway station, linking in with the new Talbot Gateway regeneration scheme.

The Department for Transport is providing £16.4m of the funding. Production of a business case in support of the scheme is likely to take three years, although the actual extension work is expected to be completed within a six-month period.

ROAD CHANGES AT TALBOT GATEWAY

Blackpool Council has agreed to adapt the new roadway around Talbot Gateway following representations from disability groups. The road scheme will be adapted to include improved crossings on Talbot Road.

SUBWAY OPENING

A new Subway shop is nearing completion within the Winter Gardens building. The frontage of the shop has been fitted out in a style that is in keeping with the historic frontage of the building.

TOWN CENTRE VACANT UNITS

The overall number of vacant shop units in Blackpool town centre has fallen over the past three months.

At the time of the survey being carried out at the start of May, there were 121 vacant units compared to 125 in the previous count, reducing the vacancy rate to 18.4% within the town centre boundary.

The newly vacant units include Bodycare, Accessorize and Monsoon (3 adjacent units on Church Street); Everything £5 (Bank Hey Street); Sweeties (Cedar Square); SK Menswear (Birley Street); Karma café bar & Crystal shop (Abingdon Street) and Trinity Hospice (Clifton Street) which has relocated across the road.

Since February a number of businesses have occupied previously vacant units. These include: 99p Takeaway (Abingdon Street); Pound Bakery/Café, Morrisons Food and Lancashire Women's Centres (Church Street); Blue Inc and Phone Clinic (Bank Hey Street); Bodycare (Houndshill); The Crepe Pan (Cheapside) and Happy Jack's (Promenade).

WINTER GARDENS

A new private limited company, wholly owned by Blackpool Council, is to take over the operation of the Winter Gardens with effect from late June.

The decision follows a tendering process to appoint a new operator which ended with none of the applicants being appointed.

Staff employed by the current operator, Crown Entertainment Centres Ltd, will transfer to the new company, under the management of Michael Williams.

NIGHT SAFE HAVEN

Blackpool is to get a new Night Safe Haven to help tackle problems in the town centre at night.

The purpose-built facility will replace an existing vehicle and include new facilities such as a private treatment and recovery area; disabled access; external CCTV and a large screen to show prevention and safety messaging.

The service, originally launched in 2008, helps to support vulnerable people who are in distress in the town centre at night from a variety of causes ranging from physical violence; excessive alcohol consumption; drug taking; separation from friends and family; or people who are lost.

It is staffed by the North West Ambulance Service; Lancashire Police; Blackpool Council; St John's Ambulance; and NHS community nurses, as well as workers from the Renaissance project, part of Drugline. It is situated on the apron outside Blackpool's Town Hall between 9pm and 4am every Saturday night.

Every year, the Night Safe Haven helps to prevent almost 1000 avoidable hospital admissions, providing major relief to Blackpool Victoria Hospital's A&E unit.

In addition, around 3000 other people receive help and advice from the service each year about a range of medical and personal safety issues from alcohol and drugs to sexual health, contraception and transport.

Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

GROWTH DEAL FOR BLACKPOOL

Blackpool Council has been working closely with the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a Growth Deal for the resort.

As a result, the draft Strategic Economic Plan that has been submitted to Government includes a specific section entitled "The Renewal of Blackpool".

This includes a request for £26.6m of Growth Deal funding to sustain the expansion of the visitor economy and address severe challenges in the local housing market.

The eight key schemes outlined are:

- Transformational intervention in Blackpool's housing market
- Heritage Based Visitor Attraction (see item under Visitor Economy)
- M55 to St Annes link road
- Integrated traffic management system
- North Station/Talbot Gateway transport interchange
- Blackpool tramway extension from North Pier to Blackpool North rail station
- Major maintenance scheme for bridges in the resort
- Blackpool Town Centre "green corridors"

Key policy requests include investment issues relating to the relocation of police and courts facilities from the Central Station site; development of a co-ordinated approach to the regulation of unconventional gas (including the location of relevant regulatory functions on the Fylde Coast) and granting of a large casino licence.

Support is also being sought for a number of investments around Blackpool and the Fylde College, including the development of an elite energy school.

Discussions between the LEP and Government over the Growth Deal requests are continuing with a decision on what support is likely to be forthcoming expected in late July.

NORTH OF ENGLAND ENTREPRENEURS

Stephen Thorpe, the Chief Executive of CME Medical in Blackpool (and a member of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group) has been shortlisted in this year's North of England Entrepreneur of the Year Awards.

A total of 20 entrepreneurs from 18 companies in the North West have been shortlisted in this year's awards event which will be held at the Lowry Hotel in Salford on June 24.

QUEENS AWARD FOR BLACKPOOL FIRM

Blackpool company, TISS, which manufactures devices to prevent fuel theft and spillage from all types of commercial vehicles, is to be honoured with a Queen's Award for excellence in business.

The company, which is based on Lytham Road, has increased its exports as a percentage of total sales from 13% to more than 40% over three years.

A reception will be held at Buckingham Palace in July after which TISS will be able to use the Queen's Award emblem in advertising, marketing and packaging for five years.

ASSISTED AREA STATUS CONFIRMED

The Government has confirmed that Blackpool is to be included on the UK Assisted Areas map for the first time.

A total of 11 wards across Blackpool and eight more in Fylde and Wyre are included in the final Assisted Areas map that has now been published.

Assisted Area status incentivises economic growth by making local businesses eligible to bid for additional funding and support to help them invest and create new jobs.

Section 4: General News

ALDI AT OXFORD SQUARE

Proposals for a new Aldi supermarket at a key gateway into Blackpool have been approved in principle by planners.

The scheme will see the Sofaworks store and the former Oxford Pub in Oxford Square demolished in order to build a 1,647 sq metre store and provide 101 parking spaces. The store is expected to create 35 new jobs.

CUADRILLA PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cuadrilla Resources has announced its intention to submit before the end of May a planning application to drill, hydraulically fracture and test the flow of shale gas from up to four exploration wells at a proposed site at Preston New Road, near Blackpool.

It is expected that once the planning application has been validated by Lancashire County Council, it will be decided within a 16-week period whether or not it can go ahead.

Plans will also be submitted for the installation of a network of seismic monitoring stations within a 4km radius of the proposed exploration site.

A separate planning application for a second proposed exploration site at Roseacre Wood, near Kirkham, will also be submitted to the county council a few weeks after the Preston New Road application.

The decision to submit the applications follows an extensive public consultation exercise.

NORTHERN RAIL FRANCHISE

Northern Rail has been awarded the franchise to operate trains across the north of England until February 2016.

Northern Rail, which is a 50:50 joint venture between Abellio and Serco, has operated the franchise since 2004.

The DfT and Northern Rail are working on proposals for a new fleet of electric trains for the franchise, which would involve existing diesel stock released to strengthen other services during the period of the deal.

BLACKPOOL TO LONDON RAIL SERVICES

Attempts to bring back a direct London to Blackpool rail link have been revived.

Network Rail, which last year rejected plans by Virgin Trains to introduce two new direct return services a day between the resort and London, has confirmed it is working with Virgin on an application to bring back a direct link by December.

The application will have to go out to consultation and be ratified by the Office of Rail Regulation before it is given full approval.

The Blackpool Business Leadership Group has played a key role in lobbying for the reintroduction of the services

TANGERINE CONFECTIONERY

Talks are continuing in an attempt to minimise job losses at Tangerine Confectionery in Blackpool.

The company announced in March that it was going into a formal 45-day consultation with over 160 staff regarding the proposed closure of the Clifton Road factory by March 2015.

The company is intending to retain its other factory site at Vicarage Lane.

TRAFFIC LIGHT JUNCTIONS

An investment programme that has seen the replacement of numerous traffic light junctions across Blackpool is nearing completion.

The final two projects – at Manchester Square and St Walburga's Road roundabout - should both be completed by the end of June.

SMALL BUSINESS PARKING PERMITS

Blackpool Council is introducing a new Tradesman's Parking Permit designed to help small businesses.

Stopping off at multiple addresses can be challenging for businesses such as couriers because of residents' parking areas and other restrictions in place across a number of areas in Blackpool.

Hence, the Council has launched a new annual pass (£100 per annum) which will grant trades people permission to park in residents parking areas, pay and display zones and limited waiting bays, providing they can show they are doing their job.

The offer is available to tradesmen who work on a planned/appointment basis and the permit will only allow parking for a maximum of three hours (no return within three hours) and be applicable between Monday and Friday.

To apply for the Tradesman's Parking Permit call 01253-476429 or 476395.

ANCHORSHOLME SEA DEFENCE WORKS

Work has commenced on the £86m Rossall and Anchorsholme coastal protection schemes to replace 2.9km of sea walls, renew the promenade and preserve the beaches along the coast.

The schemes, which are being undertaken by the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Partnership, will protect over 12,000 properties and local infrastructure from the risk of coastal flooding. The work is being carried out by Balfour Beatty.

Both schemes will be funded mainly by the Environment Agency and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Over the past 30 years, Blackpool's coastal defences have been strengthened by more than £130m of investment. The seawall at Anchorsholme is the one remaining part of the Blackpool coastline to be replaced.

Works at Anchorsholme will be completed in autumn 2015, with works on Rossall continuing to the summer of 2017.

YEADON WAY REPAIRS

Discussions are continuing over the scheduling of vital work to preserve the future of Yeadon Way.

The Government has awarded Blackpool Council £3.6m to carry out strengthening and repair work to the key route into Blackpool, but is insisting that the money has to be spent by next March, meaning the work has to be carried out over the autumn and winter period.

The road will have to be fully closed for safety reasons and night works cannot be carried out due to the proximity of residential homes.

Discussions are being held with contractors to determine how the work – expected to last six months – can be done with minimum disruption to the visitor economy, particularly during the Illuminations season.

Details of closure dates and diversion routes will be circulated once they are finalised.

NEW MAYOR OF BLACKPOOL

Councillor Val Haynes has been appointed as the new Mayor of Blackpool.

Cllr Haynes, who has been first elected in 1995, will celebrate the Mayorship during 2014/15 year - her last as a Blackpool councillor. She replaces Cllr Eddie Collett. Her husband, Alan, will serve as the Mayor's Consort.

The new Mayor has selected two charities to support during her mayoral year – Donna's Dream House and the Snowdrop Centre.

Cllr Chris Ryan will take up the position of Deputy Mayor for 2014/15.

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support

PROPERTY SCENE CHARITY BALL

Businesses are invited to take tables at the second annual Property Scene charity ball and auction which is being held at the De Vere Hotel, Heron's Reach, Blackpool on July 25.

Tickets for the event (which is in memory of estate agent Jim Broomhead) are priced at £45 per person, £400 for a table of 10, and include drinks reception, three course meal, complimentary wine on table, auction and raffle followed by entertainment.

For more information or to book tickets, go to www.thepropertysceneblackpool.co.uk/charity-ball

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