



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – January 25th, 2013

Section 1: Town Centre Economy

TOWN CENTRE RESEARCH

A new consumer report carried out by Experian has given an illustration of Blackpool's key competitors in terms of retail expenditure.

The results show that Blackpool retains almost 47% of expenditure from its primary catchment area and "leaks" around 26% to its three main competitors – Cleveleys, St Annes and Preston (see charts below). The study suggests that the majority of primary catchment shoppers do not travel a great distance to shop.

For comparison purposes, we have also obtained the Preston report which shows that Preston city centre only retains 26.9% of retail expenditure from its primary catchment area with a further 7% "leaked" to Blackpool.

Who are my key competitors?		
Centre Name	Shopper Expenditure	Percentage
Blackpool - Central	£626,219,611	46.8%
Cleveleys	£177,205,798	13.2%
St Annes	£96,753,364	7.2%
Preston	£79,741,660	6.0%
Blackpool - The Blackpool Retail Park	£74,784,993	5.6%
Fleetwood - Freeport Designer Outlet Vill	£66,804,499	5.0%
Lytham	£45,972,136	3.4%
Blackpool - Marton Retail Park	£30,735,249	2.3%
Poulton-le-Fylde	£22,109,361	1.7%
Blackpool - Holyoake Avenue Retail Park	£20,618,443	1.5%
Blackburn	£18,169,274	1.4%
Fleetwood	£13,711,555	1.0%
Blackpool - South Shore	£10,494,524	0.8%
Preston - Deepdale Shopping Park	£9,809,275	0.7%
Southport	£9,005,641	0.7%
Other	£35,660,573	2.7%
Total	£1,337,795,955	100.0%

26.4% leakage to top 3 competing centres

Who are my key competitors?		
Centre Name	Shopper Expenditure	Percentage
Preston	£824,592,977	26.9%
Blackburn	£307,163,210	10.0%
Blackpool - Central	£217,183,438	7.1%
Southport	£149,344,157	4.9%
Preston - Deepdale Shopping Park	£142,884,840	4.7%
Chorley	£134,945,074	4.4%
Blackburn - Townsmoor Retail Park	£105,919,744	3.5%
Lancaster	£90,827,299	3.0%
Preston - Mariners Way Retail Park	£89,718,458	2.9%
Bolton	£88,195,294	2.9%
Wigan	£77,011,986	2.5%
Burnley	£74,523,756	2.4%
Manchester Central	£65,837,856	2.1%
Preston - The Capitol	£59,013,523	1.9%
Preston - South Rings Retail Park	£57,411,267	1.9%
Other	£580,743,857	18.9%
Total	£3,065,316,735	100.0%

22% leakage to top 3 competing centres

VACANT UNITS/SHOP CLOSURES

The Jessop's photography store on the corner of Abingdon Street and Talbot Road was one of more than 187 stores across the UK that closed when the company went into administration. A total of 113 jobs have been lost at Jessop's North West stores including Blackpool.

The future of HMV, which has a large store on Bank Hey Street, Blackpool, remains uncertain after the company's management team appointed administrators to work with them to try to rescue the business. HMV, which is the UK's last remaining national music retailer, has 230 stores in the UK and Ireland, employing around 4,500 people.

Blockbuster, the DVD and games rental company which has also gone into administration, does not have any Blackpool town centre outlets, but does have units on Whitegate Drive and at the junction of Preston New Road and Cherry Tree Road. Further details are awaited on which of the company's 500-plus stores are to close.

- As revealed towards the end of last year, Blackpool's town centre vacancy rate dropped to 14% at the end of November. Whilst this is a substantial drop on the last quarter results, the situation was helped by the emergence of a number of temporary "pop up" shops in the run-up to Christmas. The next empty shop survey results will be available at the end of February.

SYNDICATE

Following the announcement that Blackpool Council is to buy the Syndicate nightclub building, the Council has been listening to ideas from the public and businesses about possible future uses for the venue.

The Council is particularly keen to ascertain whether the interest from the public can deliver a useful and viable proposition for the former ABC cinema.

The decision to purchase the building is a strategic one because of its location between the new Talbot Gateway development and the town centre. Any future development will help to link the two areas together.

WINTER GARDENS' EMPRESS GRILL

The operation of the Empress Grill and Mazzei Café in the Winter Gardens has been brought "in house" in order to explore new and different ways of attracting more business. The two facilities will come under the control of the Winter Gardens' operating company, Crown Leisure, with effect from the start of February. Both the Empress Grill and the café were previously operated by Heathcotes Outside, part of The Lindley Group. Many of the existing staff will remain in place and Heathcotes will continue to operate as specialist event caterers in Blackpool.

TALBOT GATEWAY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT UPDATE

Works are progressing on the Central Business District (Talbot Gateway) scheme including the construction of the new highway layout.

A new road (New Larkhill Street), which separates the new Council office building from the Sainsbury's supermarket, has been constructed and is open to traffic.

Talbot Road bus station is now encased in scaffolding as a full refurbishment gets underway prior to it re-opening in July with a new glass-fronted exterior and retail units on the ground floor.

There will be various traffic restrictions in place during the construction stages. Up-to-date information on road closures and diversions will soon be available on a dedicated website which is being created by Muse, the lead developers for the Talbot Gateway scheme. The website address is www.talbotgateway.com

FORMER YATES'S SITE

TGI Friday has confirmed that it is no longer interested in moving on to the former Yates's Wine Lodge site in Talbot Square. The developers are now seeking a replacement tenant to join the two that have already committed to the development – Tesco Express and the Cosmo restaurant chain. Construction work on the site has not yet commenced.

Section 2: Enterprise & Funding Opportunities

LANCASHIRE GROWTH HUB

A £7m scheme to help promote business growth in Lancashire has won funding from the European Regional Development Fund.

The Lancashire Business Growth Hub is intended to bring together a package of practical support that will enable businesses to fulfil their growth potential.

Through the hub, firms with high-growth potential will be prioritised for access to practical specialist advice, coaching and mentoring.

Companies, including those based in Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, will be able to access the hub through a simple, one-stop portal which gives local companies easy access to existing and specially-commissioned quality business growth support. Services will include:

- Practical advice and support for companies who want to develop new products and new markets
- Access to a world-class programme of management and leadership development through leading business and academic thinkers
- Experienced business mentors matched to growing businesses
- Support for businesses who want to develop their workforce
- Help for businesses seeking accommodation
- Support for businesses seeking finance/working capital

The hub is underpinned by a partnership between Lancashire County Council, University of Central Lancashire, Lancaster University, Regenerate Pennine Lancashire and Winning Pitch. For more information on The Lancashire Business Growth Hub contact LCDLinfo@lancashire.gov.uk

FREE TRAINING FOR BUSINESSES

Blackpool Council's Trading Standards team is offering businesses free training courses to ensure that they stay the right side of the law.

There are two short courses on offer – one dealing with the general sale of goods and services, the other providing traders with detailed information about online selling. The courses are suitable for all businesses selling goods and services to consumers, regardless of the size of the business or how long they have been trading.

The courses will be delivered at the Blackpool Council offices at Progress House, Clifton Road, Blackpool (next to Tesco) between 1pm and 4pm on Friday 15th March (Sale of goods course) and the same time on Friday 22nd March (Supply of goods and services over the internet). Delegates are free to enter one or both courses.

To book a place or to get further information, contact Catriona Bright on 01253-478386 before January 31st or email her at: catriona.bright@blackpool.gov.uk

NATIONAL START-UP LOAN FUND

Blackpool aims to take advantage of a recent expansion of a national start-up loan fund which offers young entrepreneurs aged 18-30 loans of up to £2,500 to help them start businesses. The fund has recently been increased from £82m to £112m.

Blackpool Council's Get Started business advice service offers a universal support service to anyone looking to start a new business, and is able to help young applicants to prepare a credible business plan needed to access the start-up loans fund.

ORACLE CHALLENGE

Young entrepreneur Joseph Pegler, aged 21, has won the Oracle Young Enterprise Challenge after impressing a "dragon's den"-style panel to earn himself £1,000 and six months' free office space at the Oracle.



Joseph plans to launch an online agency called the *Lucky Jotter* showcasing and selling works from emerging local and national artists as well as staging high-profile arts exhibitions.

Of the six finalists, it is envisaged three to four new businesses will emerge over coming months with further advice and assistance from the Get Started service, including help in applying for up to £2,500 from the Government's StartUp Loan Fund.

ACCELERATING BUSINESS GROWTH

A Blackpool manufacturing company is the first Fylde Coast company to be awarded a grant from Lancashire's £7.5m Accelerating Business Growth (ABG) Fund.

The Bispham-based firm, Nutrition Group plc, has been offered the maximum grant available of £150,000 towards a total investment of £1.8m, enabling the company to relocate and modernise its manufacturing hub to a 75,000sq ft industrial unit in the Clifton Road industrial area.

The company intends to expand its range of sports nutrition products and increase its current workforce of 75 by a further 15.

Blackpool Council's Economic Development team has assisted the company to source the fund and are providing recruitment support and other assistance as required.

Further joint working is planned with the fund operator, Regenerate Pennine Lancashire, to ensure the fund is more widely promoted and accessed by other eligible companies wishing to expand.

REGIONAL GROWTH FUND: ROUND 4

The Government has announced a fourth round of the Regional Growth Fund with £350m available.

In October, 21 North West business projects secured £77m worth of new funding from the third round of the Government's flagship stimulus growth programme. They are expected to create or safeguard about 20,000 jobs.

The RGF is worth £2.6bn over five years until 2016 and replaces the £2.4bn annual pot which was available to the former regional development agencies.

Thornton-based Kilgour Industries was one of the successful third-round applicants and aims to relocate its metal treatment plant to Bispham in 2013. Pre-planning talks are underway around a proposal to demolish the existing industrial building and create a new more modern fit for purpose unit with improved vehicular access. The company plans to create at least 60 new jobs.

Applications for round four of the RGF will close at midday on 20 March 2013. The minimum threshold is £1m. A North West "expression of interest" event is being held in Manchester on January 31.

BLACKPOOL TOURISM ACADEMY: SECOND ROUND BID

Work is continuing on a revised bid to the Employer Ownership of Skills Fund. The deadline for submission of bids has now been put back to March. The intention is to develop a bid in excess of £1m that will allow a consortium of private sector employers working in Blackpool's visitor economy to develop tourism-based apprenticeships and training opportunities.

COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND: SOUTH BEACH

A decision is still awaited on the £1.3m bid to the Coastal Communities Fund submitted by Groundwork at the end of September. The bid includes a range of activities intended to stimulate the economy in the South Beach area of Blackpool. A decision was expected in the first part of January and is said to be imminent.

Section 3: General Information

MEDIA CITY VISIT

Several members of the Business Leadership Group, including representatives from Marketing Blackpool, Scream Management, In The Pink Leisure, Number One Hotels Winter Gardens and Merlin Entertainments, attended a familiarisation visit to the BBC's new headquarters in Media City, Salford Quays, in early January.

The party was given an extensive tour of the BBC's broadcasting facilities at Media City, which include production and studio facilities for various divisions including BBC Breakfast, sport, children, entertainment, future media and Radio 5 Live.

The visit was staged with the intention of strengthening relationships between BBC North and Blackpool in order to promote filming/programming opportunities and develop links with our creative industries.

BIBAS RETURN TO BLACKPOOL

Lancashire's principal business awards – the BIBAs – will return to Blackpool for 2013. The awards ceremony, which attracts up to 1,000 people, was staged in Preston in 2012 to mark the start of the city's Guild celebrations. The 2013 awards will be staged at Blackpool Tower on Friday 20th September. Closing date for entrants is Friday 29 March.

PROMENADE ROADWORKS

A number of roadworks are taking place on the Promenade over coming weeks.

Work has commenced on the replacement of the existing zebra crossing at West Street which had started to show signs of damage and subsidence. The work is scheduled to be completed before the February half-term subject to the weather (work was stalled for several days due to the freezing weather).

The scheme involves the use of temporary traffic lights which are now being operated manually during peak periods in order to minimise disruption.

A new zebra crossing linking the Tower main entrance and the Comedy Carpet is due to be installed between February 22 (the end of the February half term) and March 22. This will again involve the use of temporary traffic lights and some delays are likely.

Finally, resurfacing work will be carried out on the Prom between Chapel Street and Rigby Road after Easter. Northbound traffic will be maintained, but southbound traffic will be diverted at Chapel Street, along Central Drive and Rigby Road. This is scheduled to be completed by May Bank Holiday.

VICTORIA HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT

Work is under way on a £16m revamp of the entrance and car park at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.



The project will see the development of a new multi-storey car park and a new public entrance area which will incorporate a pharmacy and other retail outlets.

The car park will provide 950 spaces, which should be sufficient to meet staff and public requirements on site.

Construction firm Willmott Dixon has been awarded the design-and-build contract.

FESTIVAL HOUSE – ONE YEAR ON

The Festival House wedding venue celebrated its first anniversary on January 12. It has hosted 405 weddings since the first day when Kelly Garrick and her husband-to-be, Simon, became the first couple to use the seafront venue.

TRAMWAY

The new tramway continues to generate high levels of usage from residents and visitors. Over 400,000 passengers were carried in September and again in October. Numbers from the end of the illuminations to Christmas are still being assessed.

A town centre Christmas park-and-ride scheme using existing parking facilities and the tramway was operated on a trial basis from 6th December to 4th January by Blackpool Council and Blackpool Transport Services to try to offset the closure of some car parks due to the Central Business District works. During December around 50 tickets were sold.

WARBURTONS BAKERY CLOSURE

Warburtons has confirmed the loss of more than 70 jobs as it closes its bakery in Blackpool. Eighteen of the 73 staff have been relocated or taken early retirement, leaving 55 compulsory redundancies.

The firm has said that the Brinwell Road site closure was due to a decline in household spending and increased competition. Production is scheduled to finish at the end of January.

The Warburton depot on Blackpool Business Park is unaffected by the closure.

QUEENS PARK HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

A preferred developer has been appointed to a £22m housing scheme that will transform Blackpool's Queens Park housing estate into a vibrant new neighbourhood (*see artists' impression below*)

Affordable housing specialist Lovell will build 198 houses and apartments on the council-owned estate over the next six years, replacing five tower blocks and other existing homes which are set to be demolished.



Eighteen of the properties will be sold on the open market with the remainder managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing.

Demolition work is scheduled to start in May, with construction work underway by the summer of this year.

WEST COAST MAIN LINE

Virgin Trains is to continue operating rail services on the West Coast Main Line until November 2014 under plans announced by the Government.

The announcement came after First Group's successful bid for the £5.5bn franchise was cancelled following "significant technical flaws" in the tendering process.

The Department for Transport (DfT) said the latest franchise agreement coincided with the early completion of a deal to roll out 106 new Pendolino carriages. This will provide passengers on the West Coast line with four new 11-carriage trains and lengthen 31 existing trains from nine carriages to 11.

SHALE GAS OPERATIONS

The Government has given the go-ahead for Cuadrilla Resources to resume its shale gas explorations in Lancashire.

The hydraulic fracturing (fracking) operations were suspended in May 2011 after two small earthquakes in the Blackpool area.

Following a detailed study and further analysis by an independent panel of experts commissioned by the Department of Energy & Climate Change, the Government concluded that the seismic risk associated with fracking can be managed effectively through a series of controls.

It is understood that Cuadrilla is ready to move ahead with its plans, involving the hydraulic fracturing and flow testing of a number of wells across Lancashire during 2013.

These further explorations by Cuadrilla are dependent on the company obtaining new planning permissions from the relevant local authorities, Environment Agency permits and consent from the Department of Energy & Climate Change.

TRAINING PROVIDER RELOCATES

Lancashire-based training provider Training 2000 has relocated its Bispham operations to Blackpool Business Park. The centre will house learners working on the theory side of their qualifications between on-the-job training.

The firm also has sites in Blackburn, Nelson and Preston, and more recently opened a new training centre in Carlisle.

Section 4: Visitor Economy

VISITOR NUMBERS

The headline visitor numbers for the final four months of 2012 should be available in the early part of February.

The Omnibus survey (covering over 4,000 households) was conducted at the start of January.

For the first time, the survey includes a number of questions relating to visitor satisfaction on the Illuminations display during its centenary year.

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support

PLAYGROUND OF WONDERS...RECRUITS REQUIRED

Could you play a part in transforming the cultural life of Blackpool and Wyre?

As revealed at the November meeting of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group, a consortium has been awarded £3m by the Arts Council of England (the largest award under the Creative People and Places Fund) to get more local people involved in the arts.

The consortium, which comprises Blackpool Coastal Housing, the Grand Theatre, Merlin Entertainments, Blackpool Council and Wyre Council is seeking up to seven new independent board members to provide support and strategic leadership for the programme, which is entitled The Playground Of Wonders.

If you are enthusiastic about the arts, experienced in partnership working and genuinely committed to tackling inequalities in participation, then the consortium wants to hear from you.

For a Board Member Recruitment Pack containing more information about this volunteering opportunity, please email jobs@bch.co.uk

Alternatively, if there is someone within your organisation who might fit the bill, please pass on details. The deadline for applications is 12 noon on Friday 22nd February, 2013.

GIVE A LITTLE CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

The Give A Little Christmas campaign generated almost £50,000 worth of gifts for distribution to families in need across Blackpool.

Local businesses, residents and churches donated £37,000 worth of presents and £9,600 of “experiences” which were distributed to more than 900 children. Each of the children received around £30 to £40 worth of presents.

The business community contributed a very significant part of the total with various companies giving toys, tickets to attractions and events, and organising staff collections or fund-raising events to boost the appeal.

BBLG MEETINGS 2013

These are the confirmed dates and venues for the remaining meetings of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group in 2013:

- Friday 22 March: The Tower
- Friday 31 May: Viva
- Friday 26 July: Winter Gardens
- Friday 27 September: Pleasure Beach Resort
- Friday 29 November: Hilton Hotel

All meetings start at 8am for 8.30am.

Philip Welsh
Head of Partnerships & Business Development