



BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – March 22nd, 2013

Section 1: Enterprise & Funding Opportunities

COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND

A £1.3m bid to the first round of the Coastal Communities Fund aimed at stimulating the economy in the South Beach area of Blackpool was unsuccessful.

The scheme, which was led by Groundwork on behalf of a wide range of partners, was not among the list of 20 winners announced in February.

Feedback suggested that there was a lack of clarity around the 200-plus job outcomes proposed in the bid.

Twenty seaside towns were included in the list, with projects ranging from:

- £2m for public realm and infrastructure improvements to support the seafront regeneration of Seaburn in the North East
- £1.2m for a restaurant and food court development at the gateway to Hastings Pier
- £1.4m to complete the reinstatement of a railway service between Wareham and Swanage in Dorset
- £2m to regenerate under-used tourism facilities and improve the visitor offer in North Tyneside

Almost £500,000 was also awarded to the Morecambe Bay Partnership to enhance the area as a tourism destination through branding and marketing, place-making and creation of over 300 training places.

The funds available for the forthcoming Round 2 of the Coastal Communities Fund have increased to £27.8m - £4m more than last year.

Detailed guidance and a deadline for submission of bids have not yet been announced. Once those details are available, consideration will be given to various projects which could be put forward to benefit Blackpool and the Fylde Coast.

PRESTON CITY DEAL

Preston is on course to be granted a City Deal by central Government. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has confirmed that 20 areas, which were invited to submit bids last October, can now begin negotiations to formalise their City Deals.

The initiative is intended to hand cities the freedom, power and tools needed to shape their own economic future.

The City Deal would underpin plans to create around 23,000 jobs, 15,000 new homes and nearly £1bn in and around Preston over the next decade.

Securing the City Deal is expected to provide the basis for a number of major schemes to be realised, including new roads and widening of existing routes to improve access to and from the motorways.

It will also support a series of new housing developments which are constrained by the existing transport infrastructure and complement plans to develop the city centre.

It is intended that Preston's City Deal should have a wider economic impact across Lancashire.

Blackpool did express a formal interest in securing a City Deal in its own right, but was not invited to submit a bid.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO HESELTINE REPORT

The Government has stated that it wants local authorities in economic partnership areas to enter formal joint working arrangements before offering them access to the new levels of devolved Whitehall funding recommended by Lord Heseltine.

The Treasury issued its response to Lord Heseltine's economic growth report, *No Stone Unturned*, published last autumn, saying it had accepted 81 of the 89 recommendations, "either in full or in part".

The report called for £49 billion of central Government funding to be devolved to business-led public-private local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to boost growth. In December's Autumn Statement, the chancellor George Osborne announced the government's backing for the single funding pot, and also said LEPs would receive £250,000 a year to draw up strategic growth plans for their areas.

The latest response has said the content or value of the 'Single Local Growth Fund', which would be in place by April 2015, would be revealed in the next spending round in June and would focus on Transport, Housing and Skills.

The Government said it wants local authorities in local enterprise partnerships to form strong governance arrangements and collaborative working before it decides how much money they can access from the fund.

The full review can be found at

[http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/PU1465 Govt response to Heseltine review.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/PU1465_Govt_response_to_Heseltine_review.pdf)

Section 2: Town Centre Economy

APOLLO RELOCATION

Blackpool electrical store, Apollo, is relocating to make way for redevelopment in the resort's town centre.

Apollo is moving from its current site on Talbot Road to the former Woodman Centre on Vicarage Lane, Marton.

The store's current Talbot Road site is part of the Talbot Gateway development zone where work has now started on new council offices and a new Sainsbury's supermarket. As part of the development it is proposed to build a Sainsbury's petrol station on the Apollo site.

VACANT UNITS/SHOP CLOSURES

Latest analysis carried out at the end of February shows that Blackpool town centre's empty shops vacancy rate is running at 14.5% - considerably lower than the rate of 24% suggested by the Local Data Company.

It was expected that the vacancy rate would increase this quarter due to the seasonal closures of Christmas pop up and temporary units. However the rise has been lower than expected at a marginal 0.4 percentage point increase, compared to the 14.1% vacancy rate seen in November 2012 and considerably lower than the vacancy rate seen this time last year of 17.1%.

Between January 2011 and January 2013 Blackpool suffered 12 retail closures due to businesses going into administration.

The Centre for Retail Research has released figures showing that 2012 was the worst year since 2008 for retail closures; almost 4,000 stores, 54 retailers and over 48,000 employees were affected. They expect 2013 to be a better year than 2012, but forecast a flat 2013 in terms of retail growth.

Section 3: General Information

CAIROLI IN THE PARK



One of Blackpool's favourite entertainers is to be honoured with a statue in Stanley Park.

A six-foot replica of clown Charlie Cairoli is to take centre stage in the park's Rose Garden.

During his career, Charlie broke the record for the most performances at the same venue after appearing at the Tower Circus for 40 consecutive years between the 1930s and 1970s.

Artist Brian Nicholson has created the fibreglass statue which will be set on a stone plinth.

The Friends of Stanley Park have been working on the statue project for the last six years.

ANCHORSHOLME SEA DEFENCES

Thirteen thousand properties in Blackpool and Wyre are to benefit from up to £100million of investment in one of the largest flood defence schemes in the UK.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Environment Agency have announced that funding has been set aside for major new sea defences at Anchorsholme and Rossall to reduce the risk of coastal flooding.

Blackpool and Wyre Councils are working in partnership to replace sea defences from Kingsway to Little Bispham at Anchorsholme and between Rossall Hospital and Rossall Point.

FOXHALL VILLAGE: PRIDE OF '53

One of the finest moments in Blackpool's sporting history is to be immortalised with the town's newest neighbourhood set to be named after the 1953 FA Cup-winning heroes.

Developer Hollinwood Homes is proposing to honour all 11 members of the Blackpool team, along with manager Joe Smith, by naming the streets in the £50m Foxhall Village development after them. Another club legend, Jimmy Armfield, will also have a street named after him.

The housing scheme is designed to transform a run-down part of the resort and will see 400 homes built on land adjacent to Blackpool FC's Bloomfield Road stadium, bounded by Central Drive, Tyldesley Road and Princess Street.

Work began earlier this month to start clearing the site. The 10-year project will see building work commence at the beginning of 2014 and the first homes ready by the end of 2014.

YOUR TV

The broadcasting regulator, Ofcom, has confirmed that the local television licence for Blackpool and Preston has been awarded to YourTV.

The licence has been awarded for a period of 12 years and it is expected to create around 20 new jobs. YourTV Blackpool & Preston is a subsidiary of YourTV Ltd, which won the Manchester local TV licence earlier this year.

There were two applicants competing for the Blackpool/Preston licence, with YourTV competing against Metro 8 Preston. Ofcom stated that YourTV demonstrated "better knowledge of the area". It added that its partnership with the University of Central Lancashire was a key factor.

YourTV's application stated that it wanted to "own What's On across the spectrum of anything and everything that is going on in Blackpool and Preston."

The station will be available on digital television and online, and will likely begin broadcasting later this year. It is expected to provide several hours of original content each day and will have repeated content in evenings and weekends to take account of the working population and those on shifts.

YourTV Blackpool & Preston is chaired by Tony Carr, a co-founder of Radio Wave and now managing director of Blackpool-based Social Enterprise Solutions.

WHYNDYKE FARM DEVELOPMENT

Work on a £40m new mental health unit for the Fylde Coast will begin in April.

Lancashire Care NHS Trust has announced it hopes to have the Harbour facility at Whyndyke Farm (off Preston New Road in Blackpool) fully operational by spring 2015.

The new facility will replace the existing Parkwood Unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, which will remain open until the Harbour project is completed.

WEST COAST MAIN LINE

Virgin Trains has confirmed that it is seeking approval to restore direct rail services between Blackpool North and London Euston.

The operator of the West Coast Main Line has submitted a bid to the Department of Transport, Network Rail and the rail regulator to introduce two direct return services to the capital from December.

If approved, 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. All services will stop at Kirkham and Wesham station.

EXPORT SUCCESS

Blackpool-based Chelsom Lighting, which designs and manufactures decorative lighting and furniture for hotels and cruise ships, has announced a 15 per cent increase in export sales.

The family-owned business has opened a new office in the Far East to allow its export customers to benefit from better lead times and reduced freight costs.

Its export sales now account for 35 per cent of its £7m turnover, up from less than 20 per cent two years ago.

The company also recently opened a Middle East office and expanded further into North America with a new 16-strong sales force based in the US.

It employs 50 staff and has provided lighting to hotels including The Savoy in London, Four Seasons Hotel in Park Lane and the George V Paris as well as the Cunard Line's Queen Mary 2.

SHALE GAS OPERATIONS

Cuadrilla has strengthened its commitment to carrying out community consultation and environmental risk assessments as it continues its shale gas explorations in Lancashire.

Latest analysis has confirmed that the Bowland Basin holds at least 200 trillion cubic feet of gas and a next milestone within the exploration programme is to estimate how much of this can be recovered.

In the meantime, the company says it will complete a full Environmental Impact Assessment for each exploration well site where it is seeking planning consent for drilling, hydraulic fracturing and flow testing.

At the existing exploration well site at Anna's Road (on the outskirts of Blackpool) where an application to drill has been under consideration by Lancashire County Council, the application will be modified to include an Environmental Impact Assessment and resubmitted later this year.

Subject to all necessary approvals, Cuadrilla intends to return to the site and complete work in 2014. It is also proposing to strengthen its exploration programme by adding a number of additional temporary exploration sites during this year and next to assess gas flow rates.

LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Local office furniture suppliers were invited to a procurement open day to hear further details of a new opportunity to supply furniture to Blackpool Council over a two-year framework agreement. The agreement will include provision of office furniture for the new Council offices within Talbot Gateway. The open day is one of a number of initiatives underway to ensure that local businesses are aware of supply opportunities with the Council.

30 OR LESS CAMPAIGN

Blackpool Football Club has become the latest organisation to sign up to the speeding campaign, *Blackpool is 30 or less*.

The club's pledge follows a similar commitment from Radio Wave, Blackpool Police and the Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service in showing their support for the Council-led campaign, which aims to make the roads safer by encouraging drivers to adhere to speed limits.

So far more than 3,600 people have signed up to show their support and Blackpool Council's Road Safety Team will be engaging with other businesses and organisations throughout the year to spread the word.

For more information on the campaign and to sign the pledge visit www.blackpool.gov.uk/speedlimits

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

The latest Duport Business Confidence Report for Blackpool shows a record number of companies were registered here during 2012. Between January and December, there were 1,734 new companies formed - more than any other year in the town's history. More information and statistics can be found at <http://www.duport.co.uk/blackpool>.

Section 4: Visitor Economy

SHOWTIME

Four West End shows are lined up for Blackpool during the 2013 season – with the prospect of more to come.

Theatre impresario Bill Kenwright has confirmed that the Opera House will host:

- Save The Last Dance For Me, July 15-20
- Soul Sister (based on the life of Tina Turner), July 29-August 3
- Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, October 1-5
- Blood Brothers, October 21-26

Disney Live! will also be at the Opera House from August 22 to 25 and Riverdance has been confirmed as the October half-term show for 2014.

VISITOR NUMBERS 2012

Blackpool saw further growth in visits during 2012 – despite some of the worst weather on record.

The latest independent survey carried out by Omnibus reveals that there were 3.7m adult visits to the resort between September and December.

Added to the previous survey results for the January to April and May to August periods, that provides a combined total of 10,390,000 adult visits for 2012 – 300,000 higher than 2011.

When a “child factor” is applied to the figures, it takes the total number of visits to Blackpool to well over 13million, bucking the downward trend experienced by many UK destinations.

In the September to December survey period, October generated the highest number of visits at just over 1m, followed by December at 0.96m, September at 0.83m and November at 0.7m.

Visitor satisfaction levels for the autumn period remain high at 84%.

BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS

1. Extension to 2013 season

Blackpool Illuminations will shine for an additional week during the 2013 season. The lights will be switched on August 30 and remain on until Sunday 10 November in a partnership agreement between Blackpool Council and Merlin Entertainments.

The 2012 Omnibus visitor survey revealed that the Illuminations display was the single most important reason for people coming to Blackpool during the autumn period. A total of 28% of the respondents gave that as their primary reason. This percentage has steadily increased from 24% in 2009.

2. Illuminations donations

The value of visitor donations to the Illuminations has increased from £118k in 2011 to £129k in 2012. However, business contributions have again fallen – from £21k in 2011 to £20k in 2012. The Council Illuminations team is working with the Friends Of The Illuminations, which was set up last year, to look at ways of encouraging business contributions to the annual Lights display.

3. Tower legs lit up



The illumination of the Tower legs was officially switched on in time for Valentine's Day and the entire system was "soak tested" during the February half-term period.

This enabled the Council's Illuminations team to carry out tests over an extended period of time in order to verify the system's stability and performance. The lighting of the Tower has been extremely well received by residents and visitors.

The team is devising an ongoing maintenance strategy for the lighting system to ensure it is in good working order at all times and also developing an annual events programme that will maximise usage of the lighting system.

The Tower lighting can be themed in various ways eg, it was lit in a multi-coloured rainbow during February to mark LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual Transgender) History Month.

- The Brilliance town centre lighting project is being temporarily shut down over the summer for essential maintenance and the repair of some technical problems. The show will re-launch as an upgraded Illumination feature in September with new shows added to the programme.

OPEN GOLF ECONOMIC IMPACT

Research commissioned by organisers of the Open Golf Championships at Royal Lytham in 2012 suggests that the tournament contributed £65m to the Lancashire economy. The figure includes around £28m which directly flowed into the local economy via spectators, organisers, sponsors, media and the players. A further £37m destination marketing benefit was derived from exposure on global television.

BLACKPOOL PRIDE FESTIVAL

Blackpool's annual Pride Festival is being re-launched in an effort to attract more families to the event. The festival celebrating the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community has been held annually in the resort as a street party since 2006.

2013 sees Blackpool Pride move to the Winter Gardens as a free, two-day indoor festival on Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th June. Plans are also being drawn up to stage a parade along the Promenade to the Winter Gardens via North Pier.

For more information visit the Blackpool Pride Festival website at www.blackpoolpridefest.com.

HOPPER SERVICE LAUNCHED

Blackpool is launching a Resort Hopper Bus to enable visitors and residents to get around the resort's top attractions with ease.

The Resort Hopper, operated by Blackpool Transport, will provide a service every 30 minutes transporting people between Marton Mere and Blackpool Pleasure Beach, taking in various attractions along the way including the Zoo, Stanley Park, Blackpool Model Village, Sandcastle Waterpark and Blackpool Tower.

The Resort Hopper will begin operating on Saturday 23rd March until Sunday 3rd November. For more information about the Resort Hopper go to www.blackpooltransport.com

COMEDY CARPET IN PRINT

A book is to be produced on the story behind the creation of Blackpool's Comedy Carpet public artwork.



The book will include visuals of artist Gordon Young working on the designs and will document the history of comedy in the resort.

The "carpet" features catchphrases from around 1,000 comedians, spanning 100 years and is one of the most complex pieces of public art ever commissioned.

The book will be published in the autumn and will be available worldwide.

NEW EXHIBITION AT GRUNDY

A new exhibition opens at The Grundy Art Gallery on Saturday 23 March. All That Comes Between Us is a solo exhibition by Andrew McDonald and includes a number of new sculptures and hand-drawn animations. The exhibition, which is supported by funding from Arts Council England continues until May 11.

Section 5: Requests for Private Sector Support

VARIETY CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN

Variety, the children's charity (originally the Variety Club of Great Britain) has launched two local initiatives to help disadvantaged children on the Fylde Coast.

- A celebrity golf day challenge with comedian Stan Boardman will be held on May 15th at The Village Heron's Reach. Cost is £60 per ticket and teams of four are invited to register their interest as soon as possible.
- The Variety Committee in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, has also launched a new campaign called Twenty for 2 Challenge. They are seeking 20 companies in the area to each raise £2,000 over the course of 2013, using whatever fund-raising activities they choose.

To register for the golf day or to find out more about the challenge, contact David Jones on 07813-291216

ASPIRED FUTURES FUND-RAISING EVENING

Aspired Futures, the charity that presented at the Blackpool Business Leadership Group in November and which 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

Further information on Aspired Futures can be found at 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 30th 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

Section 6: Award winners...

CIVIC TRUST AWARDS

A number of businesses were recognised at the annual Blackpool Civic Trust Awards held at the end of February:

- Best Shop Front: Abingdon Street Market
- Best Night Time Economy: Viva! Blackpool
- Best New Build: The Oracle
- Best Building Refurbishment: Bispham Library (now The Langdale Centre)
- Transforming Blackpool Award: Blackpool Football Club Hotel

SPIRIT OF LANCASHIRE AWARDS

The Blackpool-based **Butterfly Group**, set up five years ago to provide relief of sickness and poor health for those affected by immune and auto immune illnesses such as lupus, MS and Crohns Disease, won the Community Cohesion Award at the annual Spirit Of Lancashire Awards held at The Village Heron's Reach. The group not only helps sufferers with support but also encourages further development of service users such as enrolling on volunteering programmes.

At the same awards, **Ur Potential** which works with 450 disengaged young people across Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, and particularly those with mental health support needs, won the Children, Young People & Families Award. The group provides innovative volunteering opportunities and also runs youth-led groups such as art and drama to support young people.

RED ROSE BUSINESS AWARDS

The Squires Gate-based business, **The Ink Squid**, which specialises in providing compatible ink and toner cartridges for brand-name printers, won the Start-Up Business Of The Year in the Red Rose Business Awards staged at the Winter Gardens earlier this month.

PHARMACY BUSINESS AWARDS

The Blackpool-based creative agency **Happy Creative** won the Innovation Award for their "Meet The Whitties" branding campaign at the Pharmacy Business Awards held in London. The campaign was developed as part of a major re-brand of the 30-branch Whitworth Chemists' chain.

Philip Welsh
Head of Partnerships & Business Development