

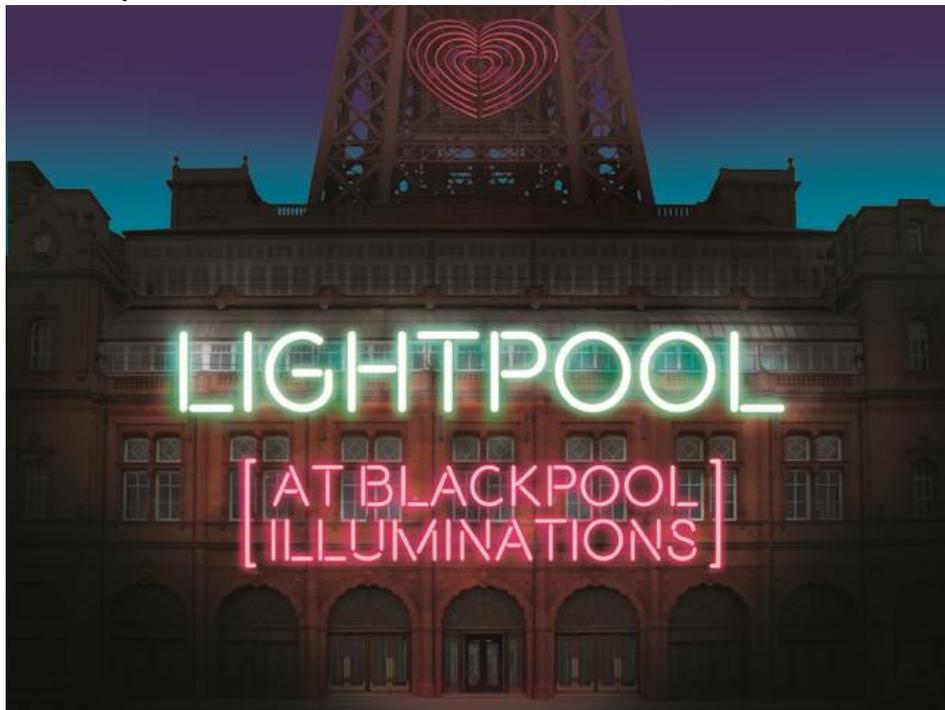


# BLACKPOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP GROUP

Business Partnerships Report – July 31, 2015

## Section 1: Visitor Economy

### ILLUMINATIONS/LIGHTPOOL



The new £2m Coastal Communities Funded Lightpool attraction is now taking shape in readiness for launch as part of the 2015 Illuminations show. The free programme includes:

- Digital mapping shows on the front of the Blackpool Tower building, with a specially created viewing area on the Comedy Carpet. The first 3D show, themed around Blackpool's entertainment history, is now in production together with a specially produced soundtrack
- Live performances under the Brilliance lights on Birley Street on various days during the Illuminations season
- Appointment of more than a dozen meet and greet resort ambassadors
- A new light-based exhibition at the Grundy Art Gallery, creation of illuminated vehicles and new LED festoons to draw Illuminations visitors into the town centre

## **NEW PROMENADE RESTAURANTS**

Two new promenade restaurants are due to open in the autumn.

### Tower Lounge

The parent company of Harry Ramsden's is to develop a new family restaurant concept in the former Tower Lounge.

Boparan Ventures Ltd, which already operates the traditional fish and chip restaurant on the Promenade, is to open a 300-cover themed restaurant which is planned to be the first of a new family restaurant chain in the UK.



Around 120 jobs will be created as part of the development which also includes a public bar, outdoor seating area and stand-alone kiosk. The original Tower Lounge bar closed last November.

### Las Iguanas

The Latin American restaurant chain, Las Iguanas, which has branches across the UK, is to open a new outlet in the former Burger King building on Blackpool Promenade (at the junction of Church Street). The themed restaurant is scheduled to open in the autumn. Recruitment of staff is now underway.

## **PIERS IN NEW OWNERSHIP**

Blackpool's South and Central Piers have been sold to the family who already own North Pier. The Sedgwick family are reported to have paid Crown Entertainments around £8m for the two piers.

Peter Sedgwick currently operates rides on both piers, including the 108-ft high Ferris wheel on Central.

Central Pier, which is 340m long, was opened in 1864. South, which is 150m long, opened in 1892. Neither has listed building status.

## **DANCE FESTIVAL, CHINA**

The Winter Gardens has given an assurance that the launch of a Chinese version of the Blackpool Dance Festival in no way jeopardises the future of the original Blackpool event.

The first overseas Blackpool Dance Festival will be held at the Grand Stage, Shanghai, from August 19-23, 2016.



The annual May festival in Blackpool, which attracts more than 20,000 competitors and spectators from more than 60 countries over nine days, will remain the world's foremost ballroom dancing festival.

## **REBELLION FESTIVAL**

The annual Rebellion Festival will be staged at the Winter Gardens from August 6-9. The festival will be held in various venues within the Winter Gardens and the line-up includes scores of acts such as Sham 69, The Damned, Buzzcocks and The Boomtown Rats.

## **NEW STARS AT MADAME TUSSAUDS**

Comedian John Bishop is the latest celebrity to be immortalised in wax at Madame Tussaud's, Blackpool. Other new figures already unveiled for the 2015 season are Olly Murs and Paddy McGuinness.

## **SWITCH ON**



Further details have been confirmed for the Blackpool iFest Illuminations Switch-On Weekend.

### Friday Night:

Pop band, The Vamps, will headline the switch-on concert on the Tower Festival Headland. Further performers will be announced over the next few days, along with the celebrity who will perform the switch on itself. The online ballot for free wristbands closes at 6pm on Friday 31 July. To date, there have been almost 50,000 applications for the 20,000 available tickets.

### Saturday Daytime:

Discussions are underway with a media partner for a large-scale event in the switch-on arena on the Saturday morning. It is hoped a formal announcement can be made over the next week or so.

### Saturday Night:

Fun House presenter Pat Sharp will host the best of 80s pop in a star-studded line-up that includes Bananarama, Jason Donovan, Paul Young, Limahl, Owen Paul and T'Pau. The concert is being staged in association with Vintage TV.

### Sunday Night:

Al Murray The Pub Landlord brings comedy to Blackpool's newest piece of public art – the Comedy Carpet – for the first time ever. The event will feature an hour-long set from Murray as well as performances from a number of other leading stand-up stars, including Chris Ramsey, Alun Cochrane, Tiff Stevenson, Carl Hutchinson and Craig Campbell.

### Ticketing

Tickets are on sale now for the Saturday and Sunday concerts and are priced at £15 per night or a weekend ticket for £30. The first 5,000 full weekend tickets sold guarantee a Switch-On night wristband.

## **PROM HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS**

### Burlingham Hotel

Blackpool Council's planning committee has approved plans for the demolition and redevelopment of the former Burlingham Hotel on South Promenade. The development will see the replacement of the existing premises with a five-storey residential apartment block and restaurant on the ground floor.

### Palm Beach

The £8m plan to replace the burnt-out Palm Beach Hotel on South Promenade with a 130-bedroomed Hamptons By Hilton hotel will go before Blackpool's planning committee. Blackpool-based Create Construction is leading the project, which includes a business hub, gym, bar and restaurant within the hotel complex.

### Warwick Hotel

Discussions have taken between Blackpool Council and the owners of the Warwick Hotel, which was severely damaged by fire towards the end of June and which adjoins the Palm Beach Hotel. Further updates on the future of the site to be provided as talks continue.

## **HOTEL SALE**

The 102-bedroom Hackett's York House Hotel on Queens Promenade has been sold for an undisclosed sum off an £800,000 guide price.

The four-storey hotel, which has a range of bars, restaurants, meeting rooms, banqueting facilities and function areas was bought by private buyers from London.

Property advisers Christie & Co said the buyers were attracted by the potential that both the hotel and the resort as a destination location had to offer.

## **TOWER STEELWORK**

A further £1.8m is to be spent on repairs to Blackpool Tower. The Grade 1 listed structure needs essential strengthening work to be carried out on the steelwork.

The work is part of an ongoing renovation of the Tower structure, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

## **MANCHESTER TO BLACKPOOL CYCLE RUN**

Around 8,000 people took part in this year's Manchester to Blackpool cycle ride. The event started outside Manchester United's Old Trafford football ground, ending at the Solaris Centre on Blackpool's South Promenade.

## **ANCHORSHOLME SEA WALL**

Blackpool Council's Beach Patrol service is working with Balfour Beatty in order to ensure that the new stretch of Promenade at Anchorsholme, where the new seawall is currently being built, will have the best possible safety features including public life-saving equipment, physical safety barriers and beach safety signs.

### **SAND, SEA & SPRAY**

Parts of Blackpool town centre were transformed into a spectacular outdoor art gallery as part of this year's Sand, Sea & Spray exhibition.

Adelaide Street, Cookson Street and the outdoor car park on Church Street were all utilised for the exhibition.

Over 35 artists from 12 countries including Russia, Argentina, Sweden, Norway, Brazil, Chile, USA, Holland, Switzerland, Portugal, France and UK took part in the show.

Among those taking part were seven Blackpool artists including Christian Fenn (pictured right).

Sand, Sea & Spray received excellent coverage in national and International press.



### **COASTAL COMMUNITIES FUND**

The Chancellor has announced that the Coastal Communities Fund will be extended by a further four years. It will now run until at least 2020-21. Blackpool received £2m in the last round of funding towards the regeneration of the Illuminations. It is understood that there will be around £90m available over the four years.

### **DOLPHINS' DAY OUT**

Bottlenose dolphins were spotted off the coast of Blackpool on one of the hottest days of the year at the end of June.

A pod was captured on film enjoying the sunshine while swimming in the Irish Sea.

The Sea Watch Foundation says sightings of bottlenose dolphins are very rare in the Irish Sea - they are usually found off the west coast of Ireland.



### **ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY**

Blackpool Grand Theatre will host the highly-acclaimed Royal Shakespeare Company when it brings its major tour of the year - A Midsummer Night's Dream – to the resort in April 2016.

The spectacular production will be performed with a unique mix of professional and amateur actors, following the selection of Poulton Drama to perform on stage with the RSC during the week-long run from April 5-9. Blackpool is the only North West venue for this tour. Tickets are on sale now.

### **TRAVELLERS' CHOICE AWARDS 2015**

Blackpool Zoo has been named as third best zoo in the UK in the 2015 Travellers' Choice Awards. It was also named as 10<sup>th</sup> best zoo in Europe and 21<sup>st</sup> in the world.

The awards, announced by Trip Advisor, named Blackpool Pleasure Beach as fifth best attraction in the UK.

Earlier this year, Blackpool was named as sixth best destination in the UK with London and Edinburgh occupying the first two places.

### **STAYCATION DESTINATIONS**

Blackpool is the fifth most popular "staycation" destination for 2015 according to the Travelodge Holiday Index. The resort is behind Cornwall, Devon, Lake District and London, but ahead of the likes of Edinburgh, Yorkshire Dales, Brighton, York and the Scottish Highlands.

### **A BLACKPOOL BIG BAND BOOGIE**

Blackpool got a double helping of BBC coverage over the weekend of July 25/26. The Saturday night saw the screening on BBC Two of a documentary that focused on the influential role that Blackpool played in the growth of Big Band music.



Strictly Come Dancing's Len Goodman and historian Lucy Worsley joined Jools Holland in an exploration of life in post-war Britain and how Big Band music helped keep up the nation's spirits. Much of the filming was done in Blackpool.

The following night, BBC Four showed the live concert that Jools performed in the iconic Empress Ballroom at the end of June. The spectacular free concert featuring Jools and his Rhythm and Blues Orchestra showcased hits from the most influential Big Band musicians of the post-war era and included performances by Ruby Murray and Marc Almond.

The concert and documentary were commissioned by BBC Four and BBC Music, with support from BBC North, Blackpool Council and the Winter Gardens.

## **CATS**

The West End production of CATS opened at the Opera House on July 9 for the start of a nine-week run.

Starring Jane McDonald as Grizabella, the Andrew Lloyd Webber production has opened to rave reviews with audiences of well over 1,000 people for each of the opening shows.

CATS runs until Saturday 5 September, with a short break in early August when the Rebellion punk festival takes over part of the Winter Gardens.

Tickets are available from:

[www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk](http://www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk)



## **MUSEUM FOR BLACKPOOL**

Plans for the proposed new Blackpool Museum will be unveiled to the public at a special two-day festival in August.

For the first time, people will be able to get a taster of what the museum could include, comment on the plans and see special performances.

The event, which will be staged in the Pavilion Theatre in the Winter Gardens on August 28 and 29, will include quintessential parts of Blackpool's history that everyone can enjoy, including a Blackpool Tower building challenge, a 1920s singing booth and large screen projections of Blackpool through the ages.

In May 2014, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Blackpool Council announced a £1.6m pot of money to start developing how a Blackpool Museum would look.

Since the announcement, a group of eight dedicated staff have spoken to more than 2,500 people in Blackpool and across the country to develop the museum and explore what it could include.

The aim is for the Museum, which will be based in the Pavilion Theatre and Horseshoe at the Winter Gardens, to incorporate all the best features of Blackpool's famous history in a fun, interactive way, far removed from a traditional museum format.

A second round submission for the final money for the Museum is scheduled to be made in February 2016, with a decision expected later that year. Blackpool Council has confirmed a £2m contribution towards the project, which will create 80 full-time jobs.

**Note:** Belinda Betts, Project Director for the Museum, will present at the September meeting of the BBLG.

### **BLACKPOOL AIR SHOW**

Blackpool's two-day air show will take place on Sunday 9 and Monday 10 August.

The free event will feature a host of spectacular aerial displays, including the world-famous Red Arrows, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Red Devils.

There is also a Blackpool "first" with the historic Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress making its maiden flight in the resort. The Vulcan XH558 Bomber will make its last appearance in Blackpool.

This year's event, which is best observed between Central and North Piers, is being supported by TransPennine Express and Rock FM.

The full line-ups for both days can be found at [www.visitblackpool.com](http://www.visitblackpool.com)



### **SNOWMAN AT THE TOWER**

The classic film, The Snowman, is coming to Blackpool Tower Ballroom in the run-up to Christmas. The film will be shown on a large screen on December 10, accompanied by a live professional orchestra.

The event also includes selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite accompanied by specially commissioned animation.

### **HIGH PRAISE**

The heritage organisation, Historic England, has named Blackpool Tower as one of its "seven wonders of the English seaside".

The other six are: Brighton's Royal Pavilion and Saltdean Lido; Hippodrome Circus, Great Yarmouth; Grand Hotel, Scarborough; Margate Scenic Railway; Southend Pier.

### **CAMERON PLEDGE ON TOURISM**

Prime Minister David Cameron has unveiled a new plan to boost tourism across the UK – in an attempt to spread the benefits of one of the country's fastest growing sectors beyond the capital.

A new inter-ministerial group will be headed by Culture Secretary John Whittingdale and will focus on five key areas including creating a better co-ordinated sector; boosting skills and jobs; retaining talent; reforming regulation; improving transport; and working on an improved welcome.

## Section 2: Town Centre Economy

### **TALBOT GATEWAY**

Blackpool Council's new £20m headquarters at Bickerstaffe Square has been shortlisted for a global award.

The office development opposite Blackpool North railway station Blackpool is one of 47 projects on the shortlist for recognition at the prestigious World Architecture Festival 2015 Awards.



Designed by AHR, one of Europe's longest standing architecture and building consultancy practices, the building has already received a number of accolades, including Best Corporate Workplace in the BCO Awards Northern Region and Energy Efficient Building Project of the Year at the 2014 Energy Awards.

Winners will be announced in November at a ceremony being held in Singapore.

### **BID CAMPAIGN**

Blackpool Town Centre BID (Business Improvement District) is campaigning for another five-year mandate to enhance the town centre.

Between August 1 and 28, all businesses within the BID area are being asked to vote on paying an additional levy of 1% on business rates into a fund that is used for activities and initiatives to deliver a more vibrant, thriving town centre.

**NOTE:** Eileen Ormand, Manager of the Town Centre BID, will present at the July 31 meeting on the BID prospectus.

### **HEALTHY HIGH STREETS**

Blackpool is one of 34 town centres selected to join the Healthy High Streets programme, run by Business In The Community.

The programme, which is backed by major brands including Boots, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer, Santander, EE, Exterion Media and Greggs, aims to increase footfall, reduce the number of vacant shops and create new jobs over a three-year period.

As a result of being selected to join the programme, Blackpool town centre will benefit from a package of support, including access to skills and expertise, and dedicated High Street champions from local businesses.

An initial meeting involving representatives from Business In The Community, the Town Centre BID, Blackpool Council and a number of the major brand partners, has already been held with a view to forming a local partnership team that can address specific problems within Blackpool town centre.

## **CCTV MONITORING**

Blackpool's CCTV monitoring service is set to be reinstated with the support of volunteers.

The service fell victim to Council budget cuts in 2013 with cameras still operating but round-the-clock monitoring no longer taking place.

Since the service stopped there have been numerous calls to restore some form of monitoring, both from town centre businesses and from victims of crime.

As a result, Blackpool Council, working in partnership with Blackpool Town Centre BID, has jointly been exploring how some form of service could be restored at a reduced cost.

A proposal for a volunteer-led service has now been completed with Blackpool BID and the Council agreeing to second officers to help manage the project.

Blackpool Police, meanwhile, has agreed to use its volunteer co-ordinating team to recruit, train and vet staff suitability. It is hoped the service will be up and running by September.

## **TOWN CENTRE RESTAURANTS**

A host of new restaurants and eating establishments are due to open within Blackpool town centre before the end of the year.

### Hounds Hill

A revitalised food court, including **Burger King**, **El Taco**, **Roosters** and **Café Real**, will open on July 31.

American-themed **Ed's Easy Diner** will open in one of the vacant units in the shopping centre on August 31.

**Café Fresch** opened in one of the empty shops on Victoria Street on July 23. The Italian family restaurant chain, **Prezzo**, is due to open in the former Republic shop on Victoria Street in mid-October.

### Other Parts of Town Centre

**The Sea** fish restaurant is due to open on the ground floor of the 81 Central building on Church Street (opposite Pizza Express) on August 6.

Work on **Mr Basrai's World Cuisine** on the ground floor of Talbot Road multi-storey car park, is now well underway with a scheduled autumn opening.

A new **Costa Coffee** outlet opened in the large vacant shop unit at the junction of Church Street and Corporation Street (opposite The Grand Theatre).

## **81 CENTRAL**

A number of office units are now available at 81 Central, a contemporary office building next to the Winter Gardens.

The available units can be viewed at this link: <http://www.81c.co.uk/rental.html>

Further information is available from [michaelwilliams@wintergardensblackpool.co.uk](mailto:michaelwilliams@wintergardensblackpool.co.uk)

## **SYNDICATE DEMOLITION**

Demolition of the former Syndicate nightclub on Church Street is now well underway.

The building, which in its heyday was one of the largest “superclubs” in the UK with a capacity of more than 4,000 people, closed in August 2011.

Prior to being turned into a nightclub it was the ABC Theatre and cinema.

Once the demolition is completed in the autumn, the site is earmarked by Blackpool Council for development. In the short-term, the site will be used as a temporary car park.



## **SELECTIVE LICENSING**

Blackpool’s successful Selective Licensing housing scheme could be on its way to the town centre. The resort has received national acclaim for the work that has taken place to improve housing and reduce anti-social behaviour in South Beach and then Claremont.

Now plans are in place to extend the scheme from early 2016 to take in an area stretching from around Blackpool Football Club at the south end, through the central Gateway area bordered by Seaside’s Way and Central Drive, encompassing the town centre all the way to Talbot Road at the north end. The area will stretch inland as far as Devonshire Road.

Around 5,760 properties in total fall within the area, of which 2,702 would be subject to Selective Licensing, which requires that all privately rented properties in the area have a licence and that landlords show they manage their properties effectively.

This means not only providing a safe and legal standard of housing but also taking responsibility for their tenants behaviour through taking measures like proper referencing before allowing tenants to move in.

The consultation, which began on July 17, will last for 10 weeks and during the consultation period there will be a series of public events to allow local residents, landlords and managing agents learn more about the proposal.

Dates and venues for these events running from August 3 to August 25 are available on the Council’s website: [www.blackpool.gov.uk/central-licensing](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/central-licensing)

## YATES'S SITE



Revised hotel plans are to be submitted for the Talbot Square site once occupied by Yates's Wine Lodge. After its previous application was turned down by Blackpool Council's planning committee in April, Whitbread has re-worked the proposals for a 150-bedroom Premier Inn with a restaurant on the ground floor.

It is expected that the development will create 65 year-round jobs.

The site has been derelict since Yates's burned down in February 2009.

## Section 3: Enterprise & Economic Development

### SHALE GAS DECISIONS

Shale Gas company, Cuadrilla, is to appeal against the decision by Lancashire County Council to refuse permission to drill and frack at two sites on the outskirts of Blackpool.

Cuadrilla had applied to extract shale gas at Preston New Road, Little Plumpton, and at Roseacre Wood. The county council rejected both applications at the end of June.

Planners had recommended the Preston New Road site for approval, but advised that the Roseacre Wood application should be turned down on traffic grounds.

**NOTE:** Cuadrilla will be presenting on its next steps at the July 31 meeting.

### PROJECT SEARCH

A project to help young people with learning disabilities find permanent employment has been hailed as a great success following the first nine-month scheme.

Project Search is run by Blackpool Council; learning disability charity, The Royal Mencap Society (Mencap); Blackpool and the Fylde College; and the town's three special schools: Park, Woodlands and Highfurlong.

The first intake of 10 students took part in two months of learning skills in a classroom environment at Blackpool Council's new offices to make them more employable, before going out in to the world of work to gain experience.

The jobs varied hugely from office working to manual labour. This summer, seven of the young people graduated having impressed enough to secure a permanent job with two more deciding to go back to full time education.

The success rate of 70% is higher than the average for other similar projects that have taken place across the world. The success of the project will see it expand next year with Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust pledging its support to running a second scheme from September 2016.

**NOTE:** A presentation will be made to the September meeting of the BBLG to explain to businesses how they can benefit from having a Project Search student in the workplace. For more information, go to: [www.blackpool.gov.uk/projectsearch](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/projectsearch)

## Section 4: General News

### **PROGRESS HOUSE DEAL**

Blackpool's police headquarters is to move out of Blackpool, opening the way for the development of the former Central Station site.

Lancashire Constabulary is to buy the former Blackpool Council office site at Progress House in Marton for a sum of £2.2m to build a new police station.

In turn, the Council will purchase Bonny Street police station for just over £3m, adding a further piece to the Central Station development site, most of which is already in Council ownership.

Bonny Street will be leased back to the constabulary for up to five years until their new station is built. The Council has also agreed to lease out space in the Municipal Buildings in Blackpool town centre to the police so that they can retain a town centre presence.

It is 50 years since Central Railway Station closed with the land being used for a car park ever since. It was proposed as the site for the super casino that never materialised.

The Council is intending to market the site to potential developers before the end of this year.

Demolition of Progress House was completed at the beginning of 2015.

### **PROM RESURFACING**

An area of Blackpool Promenade in front of The Tower has been resurfaced.

The area between Adelaide Street West and Church Street needed to be replaced due to recurring problems with the block paving work which was installed around four years ago.

The work was carried out between 10pm and 5am over a three-week period to avoid traffic disruption.



### **WATERLOO ROAD MARKET**

The New Market on Waterloo Road was officially opened by Gordon Marsden MP at the end of June. Local business owners David Clewes and Susie Gallagher got the building back up and running in April after it was shut for more than a year. They have been helped by a £75,000 grant from Blackpool Council to repair the roofing.

### **THE LANCASHIRE STORY**

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has appointed SKV Communications and “thinkingplace” to deliver an initial 12-month media and communications campaign.

The agencies are tasked with developing and communicating a compelling Lancashire economic narrative – “The Lancashire Story” – by delivering a strategic campaign to reach target audiences, working alongside Marketing Lancashire.

Preston-based thinkingplace will deliver a three-month exercise of engagement, meeting with a wide range of interviewees in order to develop an over-arching communications campaign. Manchester-based SKV Communications will update the LEP’s digital platforms, and deliver campaigns to key regional and national audiences.

### **ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT**

Blackpool Council’s Public Health annual report for 2014 has been published. It looks back at health in the resort and focuses, in particular, on responding to the recommendations of the Due North report.

Due North, a report by Professor Margaret Whitehead of the University of Liverpool, highlighted a widening gap in health inequalities between the North and the South of England and called for action to address the divide.

In Blackpool Council’s annual report, author Dr Arif Rajpura calls for an action plan to be developed to try to help narrow the gap.

Statistics highlighted which illustrate the divide include life expectancy figures which show that men in Blackpool live an average of five years less (74.3 years) than the average across England (79.4 years).

To read the report, go to <http://blackpooljsna.org.uk/public-health-annual-reports/>

## **COMMUNITY ORDERS**

Blackpool residents are being asked to comment on new plans to crack down on anti-social behaviour.

Blackpool Council is proposing to use Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) on areas of the town centre and Promenade, as well as in all of its parks.

A Public Spaces Protection Order would give greater powers to the police and Council to deal with certain types of anti-social behaviour in the town centre, including:

- drinking on the streets
- taking legal highs
- selling “lucky charms” or heather
- selling magazines or publications not for legitimate charities (this would not affect sales of The Big Issue)
- selling wristbands

The council would also have further powers to tackle issues in parks, such as:

- graffiti
- criminal damage
- youth nuisance
- substance misuse

The 12-week consultation, which began in June, is asking residents their thoughts on the proposals, before a final submission goes to the Council’s Executive. So far, around 250 people have had their say on the plans.

The town centre proposal comes in response to public calls to tackle issues like street drinking, begging and alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour.

To comment on the proposals, complete the survey on [www.blackpool.gov.uk/pspo](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/pspo), or email [pspo@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:pspo@blackpool.gov.uk) before 31 August.

## **WHYNDYKE FARM**

Outline plans for a major new housing development on the outskirts of Blackpool have been approved by Fylde Council’s development management committee. The Whyndyke Farm development includes plans for 1,400 homes, a school, workplaces and leisure facilities.

Although the plans were agreed by Fylde, they must still be approved by Blackpool Council before the development can progress. The plan is due to be considered in September.

## **LEFT COAST**

The Creative People and Places programme for Blackpool and Wyre which was established 18 months ago to encourage more people to participate in the arts, has been invited by the Arts Council to apply for a further three years of investment.

A total of £1m can be applied for with a match of 25% required on the total cost of the programme which would be able to run from October 2016 up until October 2019.

Blackpool Coastal Housing is required to remain as the lead organisation as the recipient of the original £3m award. A range of match funding for the bid is presently being sought and secured. The outcome of the bid will be known in October 2015.

### **BLACKPOOL CHALLENGE**

The Blackpool Challenge – a scheme aimed at driving up standards across the resort’s schools – was formally launched at the Winter Gardens in June.

The event, which was open to parents, pupils, teachers and employers, included a panel made up of members of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group. This panel was aimed at explaining to the audience what employers were looking for from the education system.

Professor Sonia Blandford, who is leading the Blackpool Challenge, will be looking for further engagement with local businesses, in order to raise aspirations and improve outcomes for every child in Blackpool.

It is intended that another employer-based discussion will be held in early autumn. Further details to follow.

### **LOST AT STANLEY PARK**

An exhibition celebrating Blackpool’s built heritage and history is on show at the Stanley Park Visitor Centre.

“Lost”, put together by local historian Ted Lightbown, features long-gone buildings in Blackpool such as the Palace Theatre and Derby Baths.

The photographic exhibition will be on display until August 2 between 11am and 3pm, Wednesday to Sunday. The Visitor Centre is next door to the Art Deco café in Stanley Park.

### **TIDAL BARRAGE**

A proposal to build a £200m tidal energy power station across the River Wyre has reached an important milestone after the Duchy of Lancaster granted exclusivity rights for the scheme to Natural Energy Wyre.

The decision means the company can now start to progress the £10m stage one funding required for full completion of the planning application.

The scheme, which would involve construction of a barrage across 600 metres of the River Wyre between Fleetwood and Knott End, would have a lifespan of more than 120 years.

With a build cost of around £200m, the power station would produce 150GW of electricity per year and power tens of thousands of homes in the UK.

As well as the power generation, it is envisaged that there would also be leisure facilities including riverside dining, retail space, full pedestrian and cyclist access, and education and visitor centres.

The construction phase for the project is expected to take three years to complete.

## **BIBAS SHORTLIST**

A number of Blackpool businesses have made it through to the finals of the annual BIBA awards, which will be staged at the Tower Ballroom on Friday 11 September. They are:

### **Most Inspiring Business of the Year:**

- Build Up, Blackpool
- Jobs, Friends & Houses Community Interest Company

### **Exporter of the Year:**

- Colossal Group

### **Medium Business of the Year:**

- MAC Clinical Research

### **Service Business of the Year:**

- Colossal Group

### **Professional Services Business of the Year:**

- Barcadia Media
- FTS Merit
- TUTIS Concepts

### **Micro Business of the Year:**

- Love Displays
- The Ink Squid

### **Entrepreneur of the Year:**

- Lee Kirton, Colossal Group
- Adrian Meakin, The Ink Squid

### **Business of the Year:**

- Danbro

### **New Business of the Year:**

- Rope Access Inspection - North West
- TUTIS Concepts
- World Travel Lounge

### **Best Use of Information Technology:**

- The Ink Squid

### **Employer of the Year:**

- Danbro

### **Leisure Business of the Year:**

- Blackpool Zoo
- Catering Elite

### **Construction Business of the Year:**

- Build Up
- FTS Merit

**Philip Welsh**  
**Head of Visitor Economy**