



Blackpool Business Leadership Group

Business Partnerships Report – 4 April 2025

Welcome

We're beginning to see the green shoots of spring throughout town now as we enter April and there is plenty to celebrate.

Over the last few months the town has been making headlines for all sorts of reasons, but here are a few of my top three.

- 1) Blackpool has been classed as the second fastest growing economy in the North West – ahead of Liverpool and other regional cities and only behind Manchester. The most recent ONS figures look at 2023 and show the Blackpool's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and GVA (Gross Value Added) were both up 14% from the year before.
- 2) The most recent visitor figures show that the number of people visiting Blackpool grew again in 2023, meaning our visitor economy is now valued at £1.98bn, supporting 23,000 jobs in the town. It's a huge and growing part of our local business ecosystem.
- 3) A dose of magic from Harry Moulding showcased the best of Blackpool on Britain's Got Talent last week. He wowed the judges as well as showing off Pleasure Beach Resort and The Blackpool Tower. If you haven't seen the performance yet, it's on [Britain's Got Talent's Youtube](#).

That's not the only success story, here are plenty more reasons to be positive.

Top News

CENTRAL HOUSING REGENERATION UPDATE

The first phase of a major housing regeneration in central Blackpool has been released.

Parts of Ashton Road, Central Drive, Chadwick Street, Erdington Road, Grasmere Road, Harrison Street, Kent Road, Montrose Avenue, Princess Street, Rigby Road, Rydal Avenue and Salthouse Avenue are all within the redline boundary for the first phase of regeneration.

The ambitious regeneration programme will replace old, substandard housing with high-quality, sustainable neighbourhoods that meet the diverse needs of the local community.



Those that live or have businesses in the affected area have received a hand delivered letter letting them know that they are in the area and providing information on next steps and contact details of engagement officers.

Initially there will be no immediate change, this is a long term regeneration scheme and the houses within the area will not be required immediately.

Over the next 15 to 20 years, this initiative will serve as a catalyst for attracting much-needed private investment and development, fostering a vibrant and thriving community.

DEVELOPMENT LAND AVAILABLE AT AMY JOHNSON WAY

Development land at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone is set to become available this summer, potentially creating hundreds of new jobs on the Fylde coast.

The first round of plots will be available for sale from spring and access to the land available from this summer.

A new £18.5m road connecting Common Edge Road and Amy Johnson Way is currently being built and is expected to open later this year.



The plots range from 5,800sqm to 15,500 sqm and will be accessible from the new road. Each plot will benefit from a dedicated electricity supply and well as utilities and fast fibre internet connectivity. Outline planning consent for office, industrial and warehousing uses was granted in 2022.

Already over 200 businesses and around 4,000 people work from the Enterprise Zone.

To find out more and register your interest, visit: www.blackpoolez.com

BLACKPOOL PROMOTED AT MAJOR INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

Blackpool Council has been promoting investment opportunities in the town at a major global property conference.

Blackpool Council Leader Lynn Williams led a small delegation to MIPIM – the world's most influential property event – in France last week, placing Blackpool alongside other major town and cities from across the UK and rest of the world.



The Blackpool delegation promoted the town internationally to investors, as well as marketing two major investment opportunities: a carbon friendly data centre campus at Silicon Sands on Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, as well as Blackpool Central, a major leisure investment opportunity at the foot of The Blackpool Tower.

Over 20,000 international investors and developers attend the conference every year, with Blackpool making its first major appearance this year. The Blackpool delegation formed part of media publication Place North's collection of northern towns and companies, supported by Morgan Sindall Construction.

Blackpool's promotion at MIPIM is the latest in a range of work to market the town to investors, following on from successful exhibitions at the UK Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UK REiIF) over the last three years.

MULTIVERSITY GRANTED PLANNING CONSENT

Construction of a £65m multiversity campus will start this year.

As well as delivering a state-of-the-art education campus for Blackpool & the Fylde College, the development on Cookson Street will bring up to 3,000 students and staff into the town centre.

Most of the houses within the scheme area have been purchased with a compulsory purchase order (CPO) expected to complete later this spring.



The final designs have also been granted planning approval to start demolition and construction.

Alun Francis, principal and chief executive at Blackpool and the Fylde College will be presenting the full Multiversity plans at Friday's meeting.

CONSULTATION LAUNCHED ON THE LANCASHIRE GROWTH PLAN

Following the creation of Lancashire Combined County Authority, earlier this year, businesses are being asked for their thoughts on the new Lancashire Growth Plan.

[The Growth Plan](#) will show how the area will use its core grant from government to support projects which should be resourced now.



Comments on the Growth Plan can be sent to lgp@lancashire.gov.uk before 11 April.

The Lancashire Combined County Authority has been created by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council to use some of the money and powers that up to now have been held by central government, to invest in ways that will help to make Lancashire a better place to live, work and do business.

BUSINESS EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

Blackpool Unlimited is hosting a series of business events in the next few months, listed below. More information on these events can be found at www.blackpoolunlimited.com

April
7 th - Introduction to Basic Accountancy and Cashflow
8 th – StayBlackpool Trade Show & Open Day 2025
30 th – Starting a business with the Blackpool Growth Business Academy

Visitor Economy Updates

RED ARROWS TO RETURN FOR AUGUST AIR SHOW

The world-famous Red Arrows display team have confirmed they will return to Blackpool this summer to perform on both days of the annual Air Show.

The two-day free event has become a standout highlight in Blackpool's events calendar, drawing aviation enthusiasts and families alike to enjoy aerial performances against the backdrop of the iconic Blackpool seafront.



This year's Air Show takes place on Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 August and is one of the region's biggest events, attracting hundreds of thousands of people to the Promenade over the weekend.

PLEASURE BEACH ANNOUNCES NEW RIDE

Blackpool's Pleasure Beach Resort has today unveiled its plans for a new £8.72M ride, which will be the biggest of its kind in the UK.

A Gyro Swing is being added to the park's line up of rides in 2026, and work has already begun on its delivery.

The ride is a giant spinning pendulum that swings 120 degrees and reaches 138 feet at its highest point. It can seat 40 riders who face outwards with their legs dangling, and will experience an exhilarating feeling of flying.

NEW HOLIDAY APARTMENTS AT SOUTH PROMENADE

Blackpool Pleasure Beach Resort has been given the go ahead to develop new holiday accommodation at the fun park which already boasts two hotels.

Council planners have approved an application to convert 18 units which are currently part of Ocean Boulevard on South Promenade into self-contained serviced holiday apartments.

They would be run as part of the existing Boulevard Hotel with guests able to use all the same facilities including car parking.



COMEDY FESTIVAL RETURNS THIS MAY

Blackpool is set to become the UK's comedy capital once again as the Blackpool Comedy Festival returns from May 24 to June 1, bringing together world-class comedians, immersive outdoor entertainment, and exciting new programming across the resort.

Developed in collaboration with Manford's Comedy Club, and supported by Blackpool Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), the 2025 festival is a true partnership between the town's venues, artists, and creatives.

Winter Gardens Blackpool, Showtown, Comedy Station, and Manford's Comedy Club serve as the festival's lead partners, delivering a diverse programme that combines headline comedy shows, street performances, workshops, and family-friendly events.



[For the full event line up visit the Blackpool Comedy Festival website](#)

PARKING FEES FROZEN

Parking fees in Blackpool are to be frozen for the next financial year in order to protect the local economy.

It means on-street parking in the town centre using a parking metre will remain at the same level it has been since 2022 with drivers paying £1.50 for an hour and £3 for up to 90 minutes.

The cost of parking in the main town centre multi storey car parks of Talbot Road, West Street and Central, as well as the main surface car parks of Banks Street and Central will all remain the same from April.

HAMLET WILL TRAVEL TO BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE IN 2026

The world-renowned Royal Shakespeare Company will make a welcome return to Blackpool Grand Theatre from Tuesday 24 March to Saturday 28 March 2026 with William Shakespeare's HAMLET.

This epic family drama of deceit and murder is directed by the multi award-winning Rupert Goold (Dear England, King Charles III) and will tour the UK after opening this year in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon to rave reviews. Full casting for the UK 2026 tour is yet to be announced.



Call the Box Office on 01253 290190 or visit

www.BlackpoolGrand.co.uk for full listings, bookings and further information

NEW TRAM TIMETABLE STARTS FROM APRIL

With the summer season fast approaching, Blackpool Transport is boosting tram services with a new timetable as part of its ongoing commitment to meeting the transport requirements of Fylde Coast residents and visitors.

From Sunday, April 6, they'll see a 50 per cent increase in services, with daytime trams running every ten minutes, seven days a week, and every 15 minutes in the evenings. The new timetable will also see some direct services between Fleetwood and Starr Gate significantly reducing journey times for many customers.



Further information about the new timetable can be found here: [BPTramway_A4Leaflet_April2025.pdf](#)

NEW RESORT RIDER BUS ROUTES

New Resort Rider routes are landing in Blackpool.

The Resort Rider provides a really easy way to explore Blackpool by bus, perfect for holiday makers and day trippers wanting to explore the iconic seaside resort. It consists of routes 1 and 2 and provides links to all of the attractions and popular destinations in town, including the world famous tower, all three piers and Blackpool Zoo.

Operated by Blackpool Transport, the 1 route will continue to connect a number of popular destinations via the promenade, including Affinity Outlet Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Norbreck and North Pier. It will also continue to stop at Blackpool North Station providing easy ongoing connections for holiday makers and commuters.

The brand new 2 route is an hourly service connecting the popular Cala Gran Holiday Park, Cleveleys and Norbreck to Blackpool town centre, all three piers, the Pleasure Beach and the zoo.



MONET PAINTING COMES TO GRUNDY NEXT YEAR

The National Gallery has selected Grundy Art Gallery to be one of four museums and galleries from across the country to take part in the prestigious The National Gallery Masterpiece Tour 2025 to 2027.

The National Gallery's *The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil* by Claude Monet will be displayed at Blackpool's Grundy Art Gallery in spring 2026 (28 March -13 June).



The Grundy has also released its programme for this spring, running from 28 March until 7 June.

For more information: <https://www.thegrundy.org/>

PLANS SUBMITTED FOR YATES BAR

Plans regenerate Yates Bar in South Shore into a hotel, restaurant and bar have been submitted.

Yates Bar closed its doors to the public on March 19 2022 and surrendered its alcohol licence that year.

A new application is for the change of use of the building from a drinking establishment with food provision to a



drinking establishment with expanded food provision and hotel, with ancillary restaurant and event space.

The plans also include an additional floor, roof terrace and rear extension.

BLACKPOOL CUP RETURNS THIS EASTER

The popular Blackpool Cup junior football tournament returns this Easter.

More than 400 youth teams and over 12,500 people attended the Blackpool Cup tournaments held during Easter and May Day bank holiday weekends last year, bringing a large economic benefit to the town.



BLACKPOOL WINS BIG AT TOURISM AWARDS

Blackpool businesses won big at last month's Lancashire Tourism Awards, hosted by Marketing Lancashire.

Held at Blackpool Tower Ballroom, several Blackpool-based businesses in a range of categories took home awards:

- Large Hotel – Elgin Hotel
- Accessible Tourism – Blackpool Zoo
- Tourism Experience of the Year – Blackpool Transport Services Limited
- Large Event – Blackpool Dance Festival
- Large Visitor Attraction – Blackpool Zoo
- Small Visitor Attraction – Spitfire Visitor Centre

SHOWTOWN SET TO LAUNCH WW2 EXHIBITION

As the world commemorates 80 years since the end of the Second World War, Blackpool's untold wartime story will take centre stage in a compelling new exhibition at Showtown, opening 2nd April 2025.

Wartime Blackpool will reveal the crucial role the seaside town played in sustaining national morale during the Second World War. Marking the first anniversary of Showtown's opening, Wartime Blackpool is an exhibition that has been co-created



with members of Blackpool's local community, unlocking personal stories and highlighting the town's unique wartime experience.

TOWER DUNGEON NAMED AS BEST FAMILY DAY OUT

Blackpool Tower Dungeon has been named as one of the best family days out by The Radio Times.

The dungeon is the only Lancashire attraction named on the list published last month.

"Like The York Dungeon, The Blackpool Tower Dungeon also has a mix of live actors, terrifying scenes, and special effects in areas such as The Labyrinth and The Dark Chapel, plus, it has a ride, too.



"The Drop Dead Ride is sure to get your heart racing if the blood-curdling rooms haven't already."

STAYBLACKPOOL OPEN DAY

StayBlackpool's open day is taking place on Tuesday 8 April, 2025 at Norbreck Castle.

The event, is a curtain-raiser for the new tourism season, aimed at the accommodation and hospitality sectors across the Fylde Coast.

Free parking will again be available.

Town Centre Updates

RESTORATION WORK COMPLETED ON GRAND THEATRE



A major restoration project on a Grade II-listed Victorian theatre has been completed.

The eight-month work at Blackpool's Grand Theatre saw broken stone and brick work repaired and repointed and large areas of the roof replaced.

The illuminated sign at the top of the building has also been fully restored for the first time since the 1970s.

The funding from Arts Council England will be also be used towards making the theatre, which opened in 1894, more accessible to visitors.

COURTS AND POLICE STATION DEMOLITION



Contractors have been on the site demolishing the former courts and police station on Bonny Street.

Work is progressing well and the skyline of Blackpool will change forever in the coming months. DSM Demolition has been appointed to demolish the old police station, municipal courts and the old joke shop on Central Drive was demolished last month. Work is due to be complete by the summer.

During the work, Bonny Street will temporarily close to enable the bridge over the road to be removed.

Some of the wooden panels that have been removed from the courts, have found a new purpose in the redevelopment of Stanley Buildings.

The cost for the demolition will be met from funding allocated by the UK Government as part of the Blackpool Town Deal, which was announced in 2022. The cleared site is currently being marketed to investors to attract a world class leisure attraction.

NEW LIGHTING PLANS UNVEILED FOR BLACKPOOL TOWN CENTRE

Plans have been unveiled for an ambitious new lighting scheme in Blackpool town centre including a possible canopy over one pedestrian area.

The proposals could also include programmable column wrap lighting across a number of key streets including Coronation Street, Edward Street and Deansgate.

Meanwhile £100,000 has been put towards greening up projects in the town centre including on Topping Street, Deansgate and Edward Street, as well as on Houndshell Plaza at Adelaide Street.

TOWN CENTRE OCCUPANCY

The latest town centre occupancy survey shows 77.3% of town centre units are currently occupied, rising to 85.1% in the main shopping area around the Houndshell.

The numbers show a small increase from the last report, while a number of new retailers have moved in over the last three month period, including: Bellisima, Umami, Tower Footwear, Holiday Travel Shop.com, CFO and Cozy Café, while TUI has moved into Houndshell Shopping Centre.

WENDYS COMES TO BLACKPOOL

Fast food chain Wendy's to open new store in Blackpool.

Burger company Wendy's is seeking full planning permission for the sub-division of the former Viva Vegas Diner bar and grill on the Promenade.

The proposed restaurant will boast 78 covers and create around 40 new jobs, including 20 full-time jobs.

LANCASHIRE JACKETS SET TO OPEN SOON AT CEDAR SQUARE

Lancashire Jackets has opened on Cedar Square behind Abingdon Street Market.

Serving freshly made jacket potatoes, the shop will open from 11am to 5pm, seven days a week.

It is the second spud-based shop to open Blackpool in the past couple of months after The Spud House, located on 76c Dickson Road, which launched late January.



BLACKPOOL THEATRE COLLECTIVE AIMS TO PROMOTE BUDDING ACTORS

Two drama tutors who have opened a theatre collective have said they wanted to prove to budding actors they could have a career in creative arts without the expense of moving to London.

Ian Meeson and Carl Walker are behind Blackpool's Theatre Collective, a free college for 16-19-year-olds, which aims to give students free access to drama school.



The Theatre Collective is based on the ground floor of Bickerstaffe Square, underneath the Blackpool Council offices.

LGBTQ+ GROUP CREATES BLACKPOOL 'RAINBOW QUARTER'

Rainbows have been appearing on street signs in Blackpool as a community group works with councillors to support LGBTQ+ people in the resort.

It coincides with Blackpool developing its Be Who You Want To Be area, which aims to boost inclusivity and help regenerate the north of the town.



Zebra crossings and street planters have also been decorated in the many colours of the Progress Pride flag, which is a symbol of the LGBTQ+ community.

Shaun Pickup, community lead for the Be You In Blackpool group, said: "One of the main ideas is to give the area around Lord Street, Dickson Road and Queen Street an identity to help encourage investment within the area.

"Blackpool's the LGBTQ+ capital of the country, so we're now creating the Blackpool rainbow quarter," he added. "18 months ago we were down to about four LGBTQ+ venues and we're already up to 24 venues, so it's already showing that people are starting to invest in the area."

Business News

MC REPAIRS CUTS CARBON EMISSIONS BY 60%

MC Repairs, a specialist in dental equipment repairs based on Amy Johnson Way, has significantly reduced its carbon footprint with the help of the Blackpool Net Zero Business Academy.

By implementing energy-saving measures and improving sustainability practices, the company aims to become the UK's first net-zero dental repair shop.

Since working with the Academy, MC Repairs has made significant progress in cutting emissions and improving operational efficiency. The installation of an 88-panel Solar PV system has resulted in an annual carbon saving of over 6.01tCO₂e. Upgrading to 100% LED lighting with motion sensors has also led to an estimated reduction of 100kgCO₂e in energy waste.

The company has now reduced its carbon emissions by approximately 60%, putting it firmly on the path to achieving a net-zero status.

For fully funded support in making your business more energy efficient and carbon-friendly, talk to [Blackpool Net Zero Business Academy](#).



HOW BLACKPOOL GROWTH BUSINESS ACADEMY HELPED LAUNCH COOPER CREATIVE

A fully funded business academy has helped Rob Cooper launch and grow his new photography business.

Rob met the [Blackpool Growth Business Academy's](#) Nikki Hesford, who explained the academy's role. Crucial for Rob, given that he was launching a business from scratch, was the fully-funded support from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.

Since signing up in May 2024, Rob has benefited from planning sessions with academy advisors and workshops to help him prepare for launch.

For Rob, one of the most positive outcomes of his experience with Blackpool Growth Business Academy is the network he's developed. "I've done quite a bit of business with the people in my academy network and I've been referred to clients by a couple of the coaches."



COASTAL COLOUR CLUB AND HOUSE OF WINGZ BRIGHTEN UP WATERLOO ROAD

Artists have used their skills to brighten up a Blackpool street by painting benches and planters in a multitude of colours.

The work on Waterloo Road in South Shore has been carried out by members of the Blackpool-based House of Wingz arts and performance group as part of its Coastal Colour Club.

House of Wings has also carried out painting projects to brighten up parts of the LGBTQ+ quarter in Claremont ward in the town centre. The scheme in Waterloo has been funded by ward funding with £2,350 being allocated from the ward budget of councillors Diane Mitchell and Simon Cartmel.



BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE CELEBRATES OFSTED RATING

Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC) is celebrating a 'Good' Ofsted rating highlighting four key areas as 'Outstanding' – and showing significant progress across the organisation.

Inspectors visited all areas of the college provision to examine teaching, learning and the student experience during a rigorous four-day inspection in February.

Their findings, published today, confirm its commitment to excellence in education, student development and meeting regional skills needs.

Ofsted's overall 'Good' rating is significantly boosted by four 'Outstanding' sub-judgements for: behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, and adult learning programmes.

The report highlights the dedication of staff in supporting students and apprentices who “thoroughly enjoy their education and training” and enjoy high-quality teaching that equips them with valuable skills for their futures.



VOTE NOW FOR LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS

Coastal Radio brings you the return of the Local Business Awards 2025, proudly supported by Blackpool & The Fylde College.

The shortlist for each of the awards was revealed last month, with [voting now open](#).

The winners will be announced at a black tie gala dinner and entertainment on the evening of Thursday May 22nd at the glamorous Blackpool Tower Ballroom.



BLACKPOOL SCOOPS RED ROSE AWARDS

Blackpool businesses were big winners at last month's Red Rose Awards.

The awards are hosted by Lancashire Business View and judged by business leaders across the county.

- Built Environment Award – Thompsons Contract Blackpool
- Collaboration Award – Dennis Eagle
- Commitment to Skills Award – Dennis Eagle



Many more Blackpool businesses were also shortlisted for awards throughout every category.

COZY KENNELS AWARDED NORTHERNPOWERHOUSE LOAN

Cozy Kennels & Cattery Limited (Cozy Kennels) on Midgeland Road has been awarded a £50,000 loan through Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund II.

Operating from its Blackpool site for 17 years, Cozy Kennels provides comprehensive pet care services including overnight boarding, day care, grooming services, and specialised pet nutrition through its "Reid's Kitchen" brand. The facility is licensed to care for up to 57 dogs and 11 cats at one time.



The NPIF II funding package will enable significant site improvements across the facility with plans including modernisation of reception areas and staff facilities, enhancement of outdoor spaces, security features, and upgrades to kennel facilities with improved ventilation systems.

The £660m Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund II covers the entire North and provides loans from £25k to £2m and equity investment up to £5m to help a range of small and medium sized businesses to start up, scale up or stay ahead.

[More information on the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund II](#)

SIMPLER RECYCLING FOR BUSINESSES

Is your business ready for the upcoming changes to business waste?

Did you know that by 31st March 2025, all businesses and non-domestic premises with 10 or more full-time employees must separate plastics, paper and cardboard, glass, metals (such as cans, tins, and foil), and food waste from general waste?

Read more: www.enveconw.co.uk/services/a-guide-to-simpler-recycling/

CODE GALAXY NAMED AS LIKELY UNICORN

Mary Speakman, Managing Director of Blackpool-based website and software development company Code Galaxy, was proudly shortlisted for the prestigious "Most Likely to Become a Unicorn" award at the Goldman Sachs Small Businesses UK Awards, held at the iconic Tate Modern in London and delivered in partnership with Bloomberg.

Chosen from over 1,500 nominations, Mary was recognised as one of just five entrepreneurs across the UK whose businesses demonstrate exceptional potential for rapid growth and global tech scale. The award—named after the term used to describe rare, high-growth startups—marks a significant milestone for Mary and the Code Galaxy team, and shines a spotlight on the innovation emerging from the North of England

And finally

Yet again, we are expecting a bumper attendance at this Friday's BBLG. Almost 200 people have registered – a great show of support from the Blackpool business community.

As always, I would like to know your thoughts on the membership and events.

Please do contact me on my email address with any comments, or please complete the post-event feedback form: <https://forms.office.com/e/v2be66rc0A>

I look forward to seeing you all on Friday.

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