



Blackpool Business Leadership Group

Business Partnerships Report – 29 May 2026

Regeneration News

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW MULTIVERSITY CAMPUS



Construction has now started on the new Multiversity campus, with representatives from all key stakeholders joining together on site to mark another major milestone in the transformation of the town centre.

Work is now underway on the new campus for Blackpool and The Fylde College, following approval of an updated planning application earlier this year, which will bring 3,000 students, apprentices and staff into the heart of Blackpool when it opens its doors in September 2028.

The 115,000 sq. ft. educational space will create a modern, inspiring and aspirational new learning environment in the town centre, helping position Blackpool as a centre for education, skills and opportunity.

As part of the development, George Street has now closed to traffic ready to be transformed into a public realm space once construction is complete, supporting our wider commitment to regenerate the Talbot Gateway area and create a more attractive, accessible town centre.

SOUTH SHORE REGENERATION KICKSTARTED WITH £1M INVESTMENT



Blackpool Council leader Lynn Williams and Blackpool South MP Chris Webb have committed to investing around £1m in South Shore.

Plans are now being finalised for projects that will improve the area and support residents, businesses, and community organisations, including:

- £415,000 to brighten up the area and support businesses on Waterloo Road and Lytham Road;
- Investment that will support young people, local businesses, public spaces and regeneration projects across the area;
- New murals, planting and public realm improvements.

The £1m investment is “just the start”, as Blackpool Council and Blackpool South MP Chris Webb push for a long-term regeneration package led by a community masterplan.

The majority of the funding forms the largest share of Blackpool’s £1.5 million Pride in Place Impact Fund, created by the government to deliver visible improvements in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

SOUTH SHORE'S PAST COMES ALIVE IN NEW COMMUNITY EXHIBITION



The South Shore Stories exhibition has officially opened at the Blackpool Enterprise Centre, inviting residents and visitors to step back in time and celebrate the people, places and memories that have helped shaped one of Blackpool's most loved communities.

The project, led by the Business Growth Team at Blackpool Council, has resulted in photographs, keepsakes and personal stories being shared by local people over recent months, capturing everything from family holidays and guest houses to shopping trips, seaside attractions and memories of the former Lido Baths.

Now brought together in a public exhibition, those memories offer a fascinating snapshot into the history of South Shore through the eyes of the people who know it best.

The exhibition also serves as a thank you to everyone who contributed their memories, photographs and stories. From residents and local businesses to families with long-standing ties to South Shore, the community response has helped highlight the sense of community and vibrancy that has always been part of this much-loved area.

FIRST SILICON SANDS DATA CENTRE GETS GREEN LIGHT



Blackpool's first data centre has been granted planning consent.

Fylde Council has voted to approve the 34,000 sq ft "technology exemplar building", which will seek to put Blackpool Council's data centre campus's green goals into action by exploring sustainable cooling methods.

Lancaster University is working alongside Blackpool Council on the three-storey data centre, research and development, and office complex. The application approved by Fylde Council this week is an outline one and focuses on a more than one-acre site off Squires Gate Lane within the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

This will be the first of many data centres on the 50-acre Silicon Sands if Blackpool Council can have its way. The masterplan for the scheme already includes provision for two other data centres of 10MW and 30MW.

This first data centre is much smaller than its future companions, with a capacity of 6MW. However, it plays a vital role in enabling researchers to explore and test the use of immersion cooling technology over cooling fans at data centres.

If the immersion cooling tech works the way it should, this would lead to a massive reduction of power consumption from data centres – up to 60%. In the process, it would also reduce the need for coolers, chillers, fans, and pumps on the site.

The liquid that is heated up as a result of this process would not be wasted either. It would become part of the campus's district heat network and provide low-carbon and low-energy heat to neighbouring businesses.

The outline plans from Blackpool Council also include a 61-space car park.

The approval comes shortly after SP Electricity North West said it would begin building a 330,000-volt substation to support Silicon Sands' power infrastructure.

Silicon Sands is being hailed as a potential economic gamechanger for the Blackpool and Fylde area. The data centre campus, alongside Peel Park, has been put forward as a potential AI Growth Zone. Blackpool Council estimates that should it succeed in the growth zone bid, the scheme would deliver £6.1bn in economic impact and support 6,000 jobs.

NEW ACCESS ROAD TO CREATE LOCAL JOBS OPENS



A new access road from Common Edge Road to Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone on Amy Johnson Way has opened.

Opening of the new road unlocks prime development land for businesses to grow and create valuable job opportunities for residents.

The new through road, Vickers Way, provides an alternative route in and out of the business park.

Vickers Way also features a shared footpath and cycle lane to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the business park.

To further improve accessibility through the Enterprise Zone, Blackpool Transport is running a bus service along the new route.

Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone sits across Blackpool and Fylde, supporting over 4,000 jobs across 200 businesses, with an ambition to create 5,000 new jobs in the area by 2041.

Blackpool Council is the accountable body for the Enterprise Zone on behalf of Blackpool and Fylde Councils, and has committed to investing £54m of creating new infrastructure to support business growth over the next 15 years.

Prime commercial land either side of Vickers Way is now available, providing space for businesses to grow and create more jobs in the area.

Interested businesses can visit www.blackpoolez.com to enquire.

£30M BID TO BE SUBMITTED TO FIX COLONNADES



Blackpool Council is submitting a government bid for £30m to fix the colonnades.

The council has been invited by the Department for Transport's £1bn Structures Fund to submit plans to repair and refurbish the historic Grade II listed North Promenade colonnades between the Metropole Hotel and Gynn Square.

Almost one kilometre in length, the colonnades include three sections: Lower Walk at Gynn Square Crescent, Middle Walk from Warley Road to Pleasant Street and Princess Parade by the Metropole.

Built between 1910 and 1925, they remain a much-loved part of Blackpool's tiered seafront. However, like much of Blackpool's built heritage, the colonnades are over 100 years old and in serious need of repair.

Over the last few years, some entrances to the colonnades have had to close for safety reasons, however earlier this year work was completed to safely reopen three of the five entrances.

The estimated cost to repair and replace the entire length in a like for like design is estimated to be around £35m. This cost is over ten times the average highways budget given to the council by the government every year, meaning additional funding is needed to complete the repairs.

Lower Walk and Middle Walk sit within the North Promenade Conservation Area and are treated as Grade II listed heritage assets, reflecting their special architectural and historic interest.

The council submitted its interest in bidding for between £22.5m and £31.5m from the Structures Fund last month and has now been asked to submit a formal bid with detailed plans.

If the bid is accepted, the council would also contribute towards the remaining funding gap with work expected to be completed by 2030.

BLACKPOOL PIER COMPANY BECOME FIRST TENANTS AT THE ROBINSON



As the owners and operators of Blackpool's South Pier, Central Pier and North Pier, the company plays an important role in Blackpool's history. For generations, the piers have been central to people's memories of Blackpool, helping to shape its identity as a town as well as shaping Britain's wider seaside heritage.

There is something particularly fitting about them now finding a home at The Robinson, a building with its own historic story named after John Charles Robinson, the Borough's architect who designed many of our town's civic buildings between 1920 and 1944.

A spokesperson for The Blackpool Pier Company explained, "The Robinson felt right from the outset. With Ultra-fast fibre broadband and a great location, it is central to the three piers and close enough to our previous office to allow continuity in how we operate. Beyond that, the space itself is professional, well considered and somewhere the team genuinely enjoys being. The added security, with a staffed front desk and key fob access throughout, also gives real peace of mind."

The Blackpool Pier Company went on to say, “Since moving in, the support has been excellent. Everyone has been approachable and helpful, and there’s a clear sense that the building has been carefully designed with its occupants in mind. From the kitchens and breakout areas to the overall look and feel of the building, the design, the colours, the layout, it all contributes to an environment that feels both professional and comfortable. We would have no hesitation in recommending The Robinson.”

If you’re curious, explore The Robinson’s office spaces, co-working and meeting rooms to see what could work for you and your business.

RETAIL UNITS AVAILABLE AT STANLEY BUILDINGS



Since the completion of its refurbishment, a range of retail units are now available to let on Church Street, Cookson Street and Counce Street.

The units are located on Church Street, Counce Street and Cookson Street within the landmark Art Deco Stanley Buildings, which have just benefitted from an exciting £8.2 million redevelopment to create a dynamic business hub known as ‘The Robinson’.

The property is exceptionally well-positioned just a short walk from several of Blackpool’s most recognisable landmarks, including the Winter Gardens, Grand Theatre, Conference Centre and Blackpool Tower.

This property is also in close proximity to The Talbot Gateway business district and the new ‘Multiversity’ development due for completion in 2027 and supports the additional 8,000 students and staff moving to the area over the next few years.

The units range from 43m² to 97m² and you can [enquire here](#).

NEW SEA DEFENCES PLANNED FOR NORTH BLACKPOOL AND BISPHAM



Plans have launched for new sea defence measures for north Blackpool and Bispham.

The Blackpool Bispham Coast Protection Scheme will help protect the coastline from erosion and prevent homes being lost to the sea.

The proposed scheme will see sixteen rock groynes built along the beach in two areas – from Cocker Square (just north of North Pier) to Gynn Square, and from Bispham to Little Bispham.

Rock groynes are used across the UK and around the world to tackle coastal erosion and strengthen flood defences. They work with natural coastal processes by trapping and retaining sand, creating a series of headlands along the shore.

These headlands help stabilise the beach, reducing erosion and preventing existing sea defences from being undermined.

Blackpool's beaches are rapidly losing sand, a trend being accelerated by climate change. If left unchecked, this could have serious consequences.

The beach acts as the first line of defence during stormy weather. Once it drops below a certain level, sand is unable to naturally return, leaving a shingle ridden and muddy clay layer exposed.

This places existing sea defences at risk and could lead to rapid erosion of the sandy cliffs in north Blackpool and Bispham, putting homes, businesses and vital infrastructure at risk.

Blackpool Council has secured £61m from the Environment Agency to deliver the scheme.

Residents can find out more about the scheme and complete the consultation survey online.

Alternatively, a public exhibition will be available at Central Library from 26 May where residents can view the proposals and pick up a paper copy of the survey

Drop-in sessions will be held at:

- Central Library, Queen Street – Thursday 4 June, 1.00pm to 4.00pm
- Church of St Stephen on the Cliffs, Holmfield Road – Wednesday 17 June, 4.00pm to 7.00pm
- Cavendish Road Recreation Ground – Wednesday 24 June, 4.00pm to 7.00pm

Visitor Economy Updates

NEW £8.7M PLEASURE BEACH RIDE OPENS TO PUBLIC



An £8.72m ride at Pleasure Beach Resort has officially opened to the public, becoming the tallest ride of its kind in the UK.

Avitkas launches passengers 138ft into the air while reaching angles of up to 120 degrees.

Amanda Thompson, chief executive of Pleasure Beach Resort, said: “We have always had a reputation for going big and pushing boundaries and Avitkas is no exception.

“Its size and presence speak for itself. There is simply nothing like it in the UK.

“We wanted to build something that sets us apart and gives guests another reason to visit the park.

“This project is another reminder of our commitment to making Pleasure Beach one of the world’s greatest theme parks.”

The attraction is the resort’s biggest single investment in eight years, following the launch of rollercoaster ICON in 2018.

Pleasure Beach said the new ride forms part of its ongoing investment strategy, following recent redevelopments including Launch Pad and Valhalla.

The park was recently ranked the UK’s best theme park in Tripadvisor’s Best of the Best awards and is celebrating 130 years in operation this year.

UPSIDE DOWN HOUSE TAKING SHAPE ON SEAFRONT



A house that sits on its roof is taking shape on the seafront near Blackpool's South Pier.

Last month, planning permission was granted for The Upside Down House on the site previously occupied by the Theatre D'amour puppet theatre which was demolished in December.

The new attraction is expected to open to the public in May and be in place for three years.

Upside Down House UK Limited, which operates similar attractions in other parts of the country including Liverpool, Bournemouth and Brighton, said it hoped the new addition would attract year-round visitors.

The building is a two-storey structure which is designed to appear to be upside down on its roof and at a slight angle, creating novel scenarios such as a bed appearing to be on the ceiling.

Similar structures can be found across Europe and Blackpool's version will have an Ocean Blue exterior, to reflect its seaside setting.

ILLUMINATIONS BROUGHT IN TWO-IN-EVERY-FIVE VISITORS AND £300M



Blackpool's Illuminations attracted in two-in-every-five visitors to the resort in late summer and autumn last year.

The Lights were the main reason for visiting amongst 40% of visitors to Blackpool during their 18-week run, a survey has found.

Now new estimates suggest these visits generated £300m value for the local economy.

For seven-in-ten survey respondents – both residents and visitors – the Illuminations were their springboard for visiting and spending with other attractions and venues across the town too.

Amongst visitors, 58% spent £100 or more on food, drink and entertainment as part of their visit, including one-third who spent £200 or more on their visit. And of the two-thirds who also stayed over, groups spent an average of £400 per visit.

Similarly, 69% of residents went on to eat out and 52% visited other attractions while enjoying the Illuminations.

Millions of visitors enjoy the Lights every year, taking in the festoons running for six miles along the promenade, the tableaux at Bispham seafront, and large-scale, interactive displays.

Almost all survey respondents – 99% of visitors and 95% of residents – agree the Illuminations are an important part of Blackpool's identity.

WORLD FIREWORKS CHAMPIONSHIP BLACKPOOL RETURN FOR 2026



Dates have now been confirmed for this year's spectacular World Fireworks Championship Blackpool, one of the resort's most iconic autumn events.

Three countries will compete across three nights: Saturday 12 September, Saturday 26 September and Saturday 10 October.

Each breathtaking display - synchronised to music and launched from the beach in front of The Blackpool Tower - is completely free to attend, offering visitors and residents the chance to enjoy world class pyrotechnics in an iconic location.

The competing countries for 2026 will be revealed in the coming months.

A Blackpool Tourism Limited spokesperson said: "The championship forms a key part of Blackpool's major events calendar, which also includes the Blackpool Air Show on 8–9 August, Ride The Lights on 1 September, the Illuminations Switch On celebration on 4 September, and Lightpool Festival from 21–31 October."

For start times and full event details, visit visitblackpool.com/fireworks

MONET MASTERPIECE OPEN UNTIL 15 JUNE



There are still two more weeks to see an original Monet painting at Grundy Art Gallery.

The exclusive Claude Monet exhibition officially opened to the public on Saturday 28 March and showcases the artist's *The Petit Bras of the Seine at Argenteuil* (1872) thanks to an extraordinary loan from the National Gallery as part of its exciting Masterpiece Tour 2025–2027.

The celebrated painting belongs to a group of works Monet made in Argenteuil in 1872, a defining moment in the development of Impressionism. The arrival also marks a major cultural milestone for Blackpool, with the iconic piece now on public display in the North West for the very first time.

The National Gallery, London selected the Grundy from over 30 UK venues to be one of just four host museums and galleries to take part in the exhibition tour for this carefully chosen work from its collection. This prestigious piece will be followed by further artworks of art historical significance during the three-year project as part of The National Gallery's ongoing commitment to sharing its collection across the UK.

BLACKPOOL DANCE FESTIVAL MARKS HISTORIC 100TH YEAR



Blackpool Dance Festival 2026 has seen competitor entries almost double to 9,197 as the centenary year draws dancers from more than 50 countries to the iconic Empress Ballroom.

The Winter Gardens is hosting the world's largest and longest-running dance competition which takes place from 16th–29th May 2026 in the Empress Ballroom.

In a clear demonstration of the festival's centenary significance, official competitor entries have almost doubled year-on-year – rising from 4,561 entries in 2025 to a staggering 9,197 entries in 2026. Representing more than 50 countries across Ballroom and Latin American disciplines, this historic milestone has inspired dancers worldwide to be part of a once-in-a-century celebration.

Across 14 days of competition, more than 160 hours of dancing will fill the Empress Ballroom, the largest ballroom in the UK, as the festival brings together amateur and professional dancers.

The Blackpool Dance Festival is not just a world-class sporting and cultural event – it is a significant economic engine for the region. The two-week festival attracts approximately 25,000 visitors, the majority of whom are overnight guests travelling from across the UK and internationally. Accommodation, food and drink, transport and retail spend alone generates £10 million in visitor expenditure for the local economy.

SEA LIFE WELCOMES BACK VISITORS TO ITS ICONIC OCEAN TANK AFTER £1.4M TRANSFORMATION



Visitors are now able to step into the ocean tunnel and come face-to-fin with species whose origins stretch back hundreds of millions of years.

One of Blackpool most well loved attractions welcomed visitors to check out the £1.4 million transformation of its iconic ocean tank today.

The team at Blackpool Sea Life have reimaged the space as an immersive Jurassic seascape that connects modern marine life with their ancient ancestors.

Visitors are now able to step into the ocean tunnel and come face-to-fin with species whose origins stretch back hundreds of millions of years.

Guests can walk beneath a towering four-metre viewing window, where a dramatic mosasaurus skeleton takes centre stage, bringing to life the giant marine reptiles that once ruled prehistoric oceans.

The impressive 500,000-litre tank is home to more than 50 sea creatures, including blacktip reef sharks, nurse sharks and stingrays. The habitat was been carefully designed with caves, sandy areas and flowing currents to reflect natural ocean environments and support the needs of each species.

NEW OWNER OF BLACKPOOL'S ICONIC FUNNY GIRLS AFTER SALE COMPLETES



Blackpool's iconic Funny Girls venue, which was marketed at £3.5m by Christie and Co, will now be run by new owner Kane Oliver marking the end of an era for one of the town's most famous entertainment spots.

A new era has arrived at Blackpool's iconic Funny Girls after the sale of the much loved drag show venue has finally been completed.

Basil Newby has finally relinquished all ties with the Dickson Road venue after 40 years after deciding to retire.

NEW STRICTLY HOSTS ILLUMINATE BLACKPOOL TOWER



Blackpool Tower has been illuminated with the names of Strictly Come Dancing's new presenters – Johannes Radebe, Josh Widdecombe and Emma Willis.

The venue, which sees its Tower Ballroom used by the BBC programme for its yearly Blackpool Special, was lit up at 21:00 BST on Tuesday with the

presenters' names rotating around its base until the late evening.

A Strictly spokesperson said: "Blackpool is the home of ballroom of course - so it felt the right thing to do to welcome the trio."

FAMILY OWNED HOTELS UNVEIL REFURBISHMENT



Two family-owned hotels on Queens Promenade in Blackpool have unveiled their new look following more than £1m in refurbishment projects.

Brother and sister Nigel Seddon and Liz Brown have completed the work at North Shore's Elgin and Sheraton Hotels, as part of their pledge to reinvest into the businesses for their guests following a successful period of trading.

The Elgin has undergone a complete transformation of its bar, sun lounge and TV room areas while five bedrooms at The Sheraton have been given makeovers.

A key focus of the Elgin vision was to reposition the stage to the centre of the room, addressing customer feedback of a poor view from certain seats.

While, in the sun lounge areas, revised use of the space has cleverly increased the amount of seating available without resulting in overcrowding.

BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE LAUNCHES AMBITIOUS NEW SEASON



Blackpool Grand Theatre has unveiled a wide-ranging new season.

The event underlined the theatre's increasingly strategic role within the town - not only as a driver of the visitor economy, working in partnership with accommodation providers and tourism organisations, but as a vital cultural home for local audiences and community producers.

As The Grand continues to align large-scale touring work with national networks, it remains equally committed to ensuring that its programme reflects, involves and belongs to the people of Blackpool.

[See the programme here.](#)

AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR HERITAGE TRAMS REMAIN ON TRACK



A bold vision for the future of Blackpool's famous heritage trams is taking shape ahead of the launch of summer tours featuring several vintage vehicles.

The ambitious plans include a permanent home for the historic fleet, as well as regular trips on the seafront by some of the heritage trams.

Blackpool Transport's new Managing Director, Lea Harrison, has said the revitalisation of heritage operations is one of his top priorities, as well as finding a permanent home for an improved heritage tram attraction.

"Despite the fantastic efforts of everyone involved with the existing Tramtown site, a recent survey by an independent structural engineer found the building was unsafe and beyond repair," he explained.

"However, I would like to categorically state that this is not the end of the line for heritage trams in Blackpool. While it's sad that we need to say goodbye to the existing building, we also have an opportunity to build a sustainable future for a top tourist attraction featuring our world-famous fleet.

"In the short-term, this may include 'pop-up' displays of vintage trams until funding is in place for a fitting home for the entire fleet, and plans for regular heritage tours over the summer months will be announced shortly."

In the meantime, members of the public have enjoyed seeing vintage trams in operation during a series of private tours in May.

“Blackpool is as famous for its historic trams as it is for its tower and the Pleasure Beach and we are fully committed to preserving the town’s rich tramway heritage for future generations to enjoy,” Lea said.

“Over the next few months, we will be working closely with the local authority, other stakeholders and partners on more detailed proposals, and we’re looking forward to making further announcements in due course,” he added.

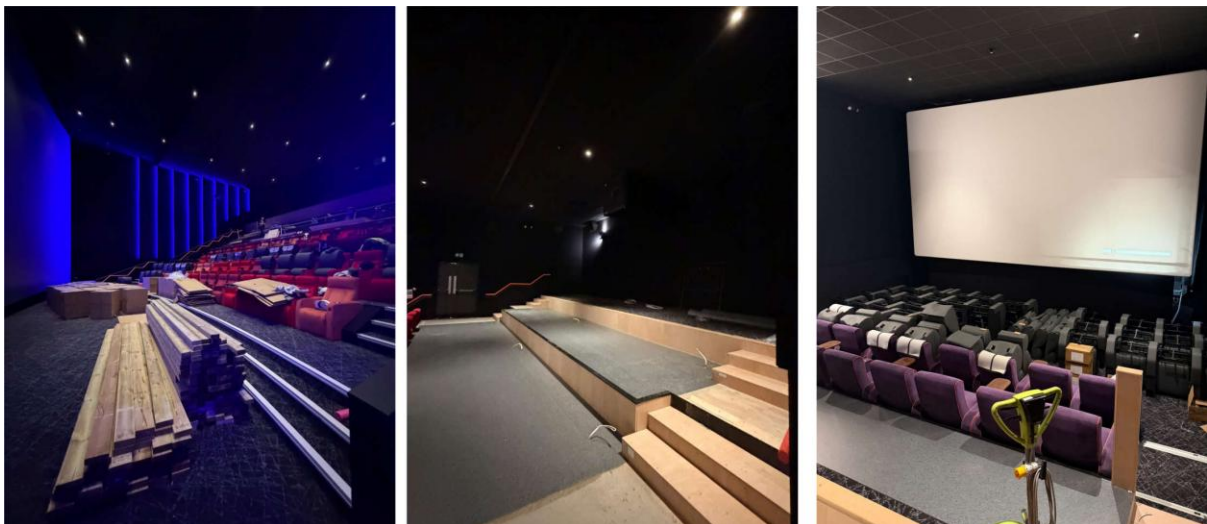
RESORT RIDER BUS ROUTES RETURN

A popular bus service that’s helped thousands of visitors make the most of holidays on the Fylde coast is set to return ahead of the summer season.

First launched last year, the ‘Resort Rider’ buses proved a huge hit with both tourists and local residents by bringing the year-round Service 1 and seasonal Service 2 buses together under a single brand.

Offering easy access to top attractions from the Cala Gran Holiday Park and hotels along the promenade, the service is now set to return bigger and better than ever before.

WORK BEGINS ON MAJOR UPGRADE AT BLACKPOOL CINEMA



The Arc Cinema Blackpool is undergoing a major refurbishment, with luxury seating and new screens planned ahead of the summer blockbuster season.

Work has officially started on a significant upgrade of The Arc Cinema Blackpool, marking the latest stage in the venue’s transformation following its takeover of the former Backlot Cinema in August 2025.

The town centre cinema became part of The Arc Cinema group last summer, joining a growing portfolio of sites across the UK. At the time, the company retained the existing staff and introduced a simplified pricing model, with tickets starting from £5.95 all day, every day.

Since the rebrand, the venue has continued to operate from its central location at Houndshell Shopping Centre, where customers benefit from free parking and a familiar local team.

Now, attention turns to a substantial internal upgrade aimed at improving the overall cinema-going experience. More than 300 electric recliner seats are set to be installed across all nine auditoriums, replacing existing seating with what the company describes as a premium, comfort-focused offering.

Two additional screens are also being completed as part of the works, increasing capacity from seven to nine screens and positioning the site as a larger entertainment destination within the resort.

The venue will continue to house Lancashire's only IMAX screen, with a large proportion of seats in the auditorium being upgraded to recliners. A mix of luxury seating and standard options will remain available.

Further improvements are planned for the foyer and lobby areas, with changes designed to improve layout, customer flow and the overall arrival experience.

Despite the scale of the refurbishment, the cinema will remain open throughout the works. Some disruption is expected, with possible changes to screening schedules and film availability during different phases of the project.

The refurbishment is expected to be completed ahead of the summer holidays, in time for a packed release schedule including Toy Story 5, Supergirl, Minions 3, Moana and The Odyssey, which is expected to be a major draw for audiences at the IMAX screen.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BLACKPOOL PRIDE FESTIVAL



Blackpool Pride Festival will be celebrating its 20th anniversary with a landmark three-day event and a two-day street party when it returns next month.

Blackpool Pride 2026 will run from Friday 5 June to Sunday 7 June at the iconic Blackpool Tower Festival Headland.

Alongside this, in a shared celebration of diversity and inclusion, more than 20 local businesses have been working together in the Rainbow Quarter to organise a community street party on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June.

Across the two days, there will be music on Lord Street in the afternoon with a host of local talent throughout both evenings.

The events mark two decades of championing equality, diversity and inclusion, bringing local people and visitors together to celebrate under this year's powerful community chosen theme, 'One Love, One Pride'.

PANDORA OPENS NEW AND EXPANDED STORE IN HOUNDSHILL SHOPPING CENTRE



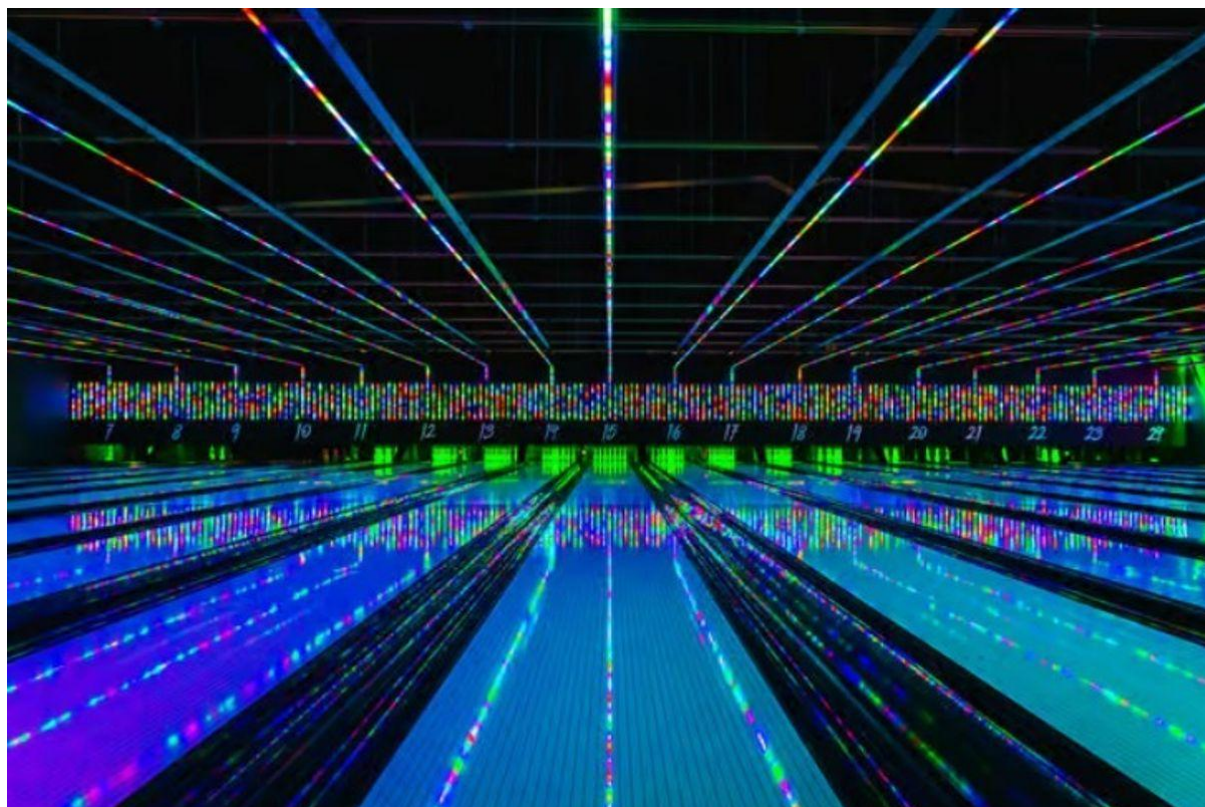
Jewellery retailer Pandora has opened a new and expanded store in Houndshill Shopping Centre.

Following a move from their previous premises, the new Pandora site is nearly twice the size of the business' previous unit, increasing from 47m² to 81m², providing a larger retail space for customers.

As well as offering the brand's jewellery range, including its well-known charm collections, the new store features a range of new additions including an engraving service enabling customers to personalise items in-store.

In its place, the old Pandora store is being fitted out as a Lovisa.

NEW JOBS ON OFFER AT TENPIN'S BLACKPOOL BOWLING CENTRE



Bowling operator Tenpin has announced the next round of new job vacancies up for grabs in the run-up to opening a new centre in Blackpool this summer.

Interest in the new attraction has been steadily growing as new details recently emerged about what it will offer after its big launch date on Friday June 5.

The bowling centre, based at the former Odeon cinema on Rigby Road, will feature not only bowling but karaoke, laser tag, escape rooms and a host of other activities.

In detail, that will include 24 state-of-the-art bowling lanes, two private karaoke rooms, a laser tag arena, three immersive escape rooms and a dedicated soft play area for younger children.

Laura Barlow, Regional Manager from Tenpin “We chose Blackpool because it’s a town with a strong sense of community, a vibrant tourism scene, and real potential for year-round leisure.

HAVE YOUR SAY ON HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

Blackpool Council is carrying out an important study to help shape future planning policies and decisions as part of the new local plan.

The visitor economy update and visitor accommodation update and needs assessment will:

- Update understanding of Blackpool’s tourism economy and future growth potential
- Review current visitor accommodation across the town and assess future needs
- Help identify future planning and policy priorities

Visitor accommodation is a key part of Blackpool's tourism offer and local economy, so it is important that the study reflects the experiences and views of those working in the sector.

We are therefore keen to hear from accommodation providers, property owners and property professionals. Your feedback will help us understand current challenges, opportunities and market trends, and ensure future policies are realistic, evidence-based and support a successful and sustainable visitor economy.

[Complete the survey](#)

Business News

BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE SELECTED AS DEFENCE TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE COLLEGE



The announcement follows a visit to Bispham campus by Luke Pollard, Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, who met learners, apprentices, employees and partners to confirm the designation.

This new status is part of a £175 million Government programme to strengthen skills provision in key growth sectors, including defence, advanced manufacturing, clean energy, digital and technologies.

Nationally, it is estimated that up to 600,000 additional workers will be needed in priority industries by 2030, and as a Defence TEC, B&FC will play a central role in supporting the development of the high-level technical skills needed to meet growing workforce demand in the sector.

The college will work with employers and partners across the defence sector to support learners into skilled roles in areas such as engineering, nuclear and cyber security, contributing to regional economic growth and strengthening national capability.

NEW DIRECTION FOR BUSINESS SUPPORT FROM APRIL 2026



Blackpool Council has confirmed plans to reshape its business support offer from April 2026, as it moves into what they describe as ‘a new phase’ of delivery for the town’s enterprise community.

Speaking with Angela Kershaw, Head of Business Growth at Blackpool Council, she said that while some existing programmes won’t continue in the same way, their focus on supporting business growth in Blackpool remains unchanged.

Angela said: “We will be continuing to support business growth across Blackpool.

“We’re already looking at new opportunities and different ways to deliver that support, making sure it remains practical, accessible and relevant to what businesses need. It’s about evolving what we offer while keeping that strong local connection.”

In the new phase businesses will continue to be able to access support through an online enquiry form, designed to connect them with relevant advice and guidance at different stages of their development.

A programme of tailored workshops will also be rolled out, shaped around the needs of local businesses. These will sit alongside practical tools including a Commercial Property Locator, aimed at helping people find both commercial and industrial property in Blackpool.

Investment in the Blackpool Unlimited website will continue, with the site acting as a hub for opportunities, resources and guidance. A downloadable Net Zero toolkit is also available, to help businesses take manageable steps towards becoming more sustainable.

[Find out more](#)

BLACKPOOL PUPILS BENEFIT FROM AI SUPER CURRICULUM



Secondary school pupils and students from across Blackpool are benefitting from an AI super curriculum designed to boost digital skills and highlight employment opportunities in the cyber industry.

The Blackpool MEGA (Motivated, Educated Generation with Ambition) Hub is one of 10 hubs across the Lancashire local authorities. It's helping secondary schools access a pioneering technology-enriched programme and AI Academy that inspires pupils to pursue a career in the digital sector.

More than 400 young people will take part in the first two years of the programme, where they will be given direct access to leading industry professionals and employers.

Aiming to support at least eight Blackpool schools, the MEGA Hub will enable approximately 440 pupils to take part in hands-on technology experiences.

There will be 40 scholarships available for year 12 and 13 students, helping them develop critical and technical skills. They will also gain industry insights through workplace visits, real-world challenges and assessment centres designed to open access to career opportunities they may not otherwise encounter.

SUPPORTING GOOD WORK IN BLACKPOOL: THE FAIR EMPLOYMENT CHARTER



Blackpool Council is inviting local businesses of all sizes and sectors to take part in the Fair Employment Charter - a free, voluntary scheme designed to support and recognise good employment practices across the town.

The Charter provides a straightforward framework for employers to reflect on how they support their workforce and to demonstrate their commitment to good work. It focuses on key areas that matter to both businesses and employees, including fair pay and employment conditions, job security, safe and supportive working environments, flexible working, and training and development.

Many local businesses are already doing positive things in these areas. The Fair Employment Charter is about recognising that good practice, sharing it more widely, and supporting continuous improvement where helpful - rather than creating additional burden or one size fits all requirements.

Taking part in the Charter can help businesses to:

- strengthen their reputation as a responsible local employer
- support recruitment and retention in a competitive labour market
- improve staff engagement and wellbeing
- demonstrate values led employment practices to customers, partners, and potential employees

The scheme is council led, free to join, and designed to be accessible to organisations at different stages. Employers can engage at different levels, reflecting where they are now and where they may want to go next.

Businesses interested in finding out more or getting involved are encouraged to get in touch to explore how the Fair Employment Charter could work for their organisation.

Contact Fair.Employment@blackpool.gov.uk or Georgia.Thomas@blackpool.gov.uk

General news

FURTHER 24 BLACKPOOL ROADS SET TO RECEIVE MAJOR UPGRADES



Blackpool Council adds further 24 residential roads to its resurfacing programme, including Devonshire Road - with 15 roads set to be completed before the summer holidays.

This is part of a significant £6m investment in Blackpool's roads, focused on improving the streets people use every day to park by their homes, get to work, visit shops and appointments, and support family life.

Blackpool Council's road maintenance budget has increased by £6m this year, targeted at resurfacing and restoring key routes, extending the life of Blackpool's roads for years to come.

Since February, 21 residential roads across the town have already been resurfaced, covering more than 44,000 square metres of road. These improvements are making everyday journeys smoother, safer and greener for residents, businesses and visitors.

Works planned include Devonshire Road, between Mansfield Road and Warbreck Hill and between Talbot Road and George Street – busy local routes used daily by residents, families and businesses. Over time, sections of the road have deteriorated, resulting in an uneven surface.

More improvements are also planned on key routes across the town in the coming months, including St Annes Road, Central Drive and Bloomfield Road, with further details to be announced soon.

MAINTENANCE WORKS TO HAWES SIDE LANE BRIDGE



Improvements to Hawes Side Lane bridge have started, helping to protect and improve the structure for the long term.

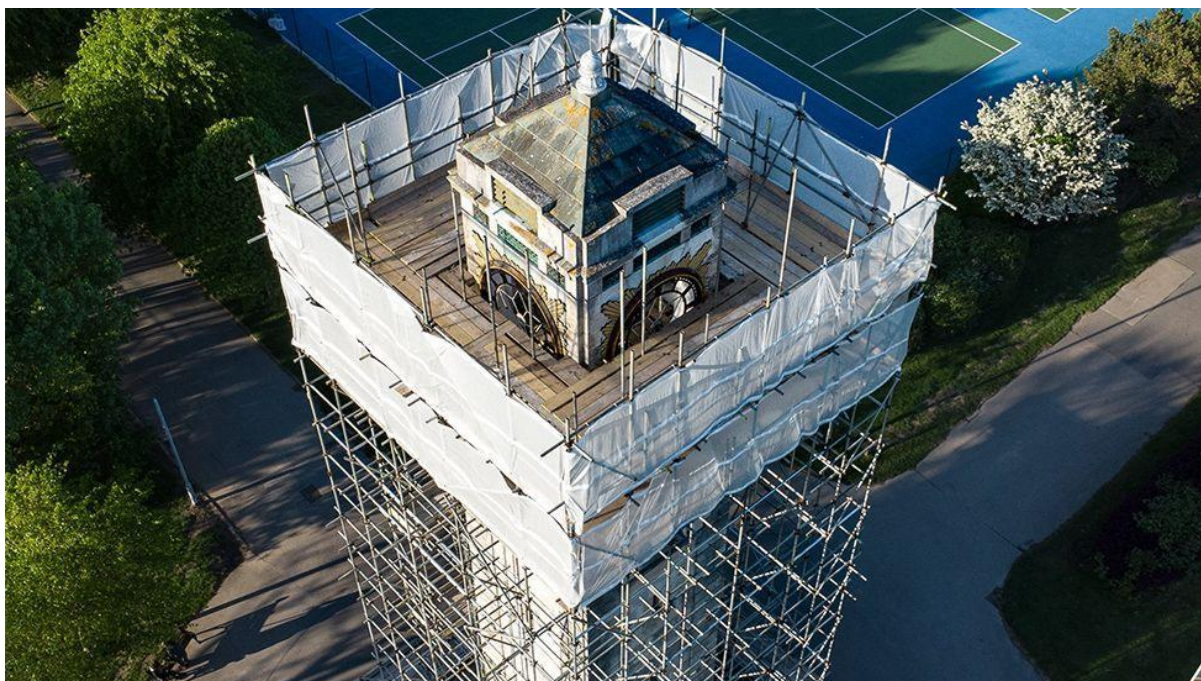
From Tuesday 26 May to Friday 10 July, essential preventative maintenance will take place on the bridge, which carries Yeadon Way over Hawes Side Lane, and is one of the key routes into Blackpool.

To complete the works safely, Hawes Side Lane will be closed between Pedders Lane and Dewhurst Avenue for approximately 7 weeks, weather permitting. Vehicles travelling on Yeadon Way will be unaffected by the works.

The proposed works will involve the repairing and repointing of brickwork and masonry, cleaning and removal of graffiti, renewal of low headroom signage and resurfacing Hawes Side Lane in the immediate vicinity of the bridge.

The work is essential to protect the structural integrity of the bridge, which was originally built in the 1890s.

CLOCK TOWER REVAMP BEGINS FOR STANLEY PARK'S 100TH BIRTHDAY



One of the most distinctive features of Blackpool's Stanley Park is being renovated to coincide with the park's centenary later this year.

The Grade II-listed Cocker Memorial Clock Tower opened in 1927 to honour Dr William Henry Cocker, Blackpool's first mayor and a key figure in the town's 19th Century development.

Designed by Lionel Budden, the landmark links the park's south gate to the Italian Garden.

A schedule of maintenance and restoration works at the park, which is also Grade II-listed, will be delivered throughout the year, with Blackpool Council investing £500,000 along with £50,000 raised by the Friends of Stanley Park.

The works include the repairs to the Cocker Clock and the water fountain feature within the Italian Gardens.

The aim is for the works on the clock tower to be completed by later this summer to mark the park's centenary.

And finally

Over the last year I've been asking for feedback on the partnership reports and meetings. Recently feedback has slowed a lot, so I am no longer sharing fresh feedback forms. That said, if you ever do have feedback you can contact me on the email below. I look forward to seeing you all on Friday.

Adam Ogden
Head of Communications
Blackpool Council
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