

## PRIORITY 3

### WE WILL EXPAND AND PROMOTE OUR TOURISM, ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL OFFER

**Lead Members / Lead Officer – Cllr Graham Cain, Cllr Christine Wright,  
Cllr Simon Blackburn & Alan Cavill**

In **Priority 3** we say that we will **expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer**. This means that we will have:

- High levels of engagement in tourism, culture, arts and heritage from all sectors of the local community;
- Improved perceptions of Blackpool’s tourism offer amongst residents and visitors;
- Increased tourism numbers and visitor spend; and
- A clear sense of pride in Blackpool’s heritage.

#### Challenges 2014/15

Our focus this year is:

- The sustainability of the Illuminations;
- Broadening the cultural offer for residents and visitors; and
- Improving the overall visitor offer.

#### Current Activity

##### Sustainability of the Illuminations

A transformation of the current Illuminations offer and an associated fund-raising plan is currently being progressed. The key objective is to make the annual display more compelling and sustainable, with a much greater degree of economic impact.

This year’s Illuminations has seen a number of new features introduced, almost all of which were directly funded by sponsors. Prominent amongst these were the Eviivo section of spinning multi-coloured pylons called Dynamo and Alice’s Garden, a 3D tableau supported by the Hounds Hill Shopping Centre. This was co-designed by Laurence Llewelyn Bowen, the in-house Art team and award winning artist Jo Berry (supported by the Arts Council England). Beaverbrooks also returned sponsoring Bling and KRS continued to support the arches on South Shore. McDonalds also returned as a sponsor. The Bradshaws, a nostalgic look at happy visits in days gone by, was an additional attraction with a special CD sold to boost income on the Promenade. In addition to these, the Illuminations commemorated the anniversary of WW1 with the We Will Never Forget display.

Businesses and the public alike were given opportunities to be a part of the lights via either Logolights or Headlights, all of which raised valuable funds. The Friends of the Illuminations went from strength to strength, assisting in the delivery of many of the sponsorship opportunities and organising events and fundraisers. By far the biggest financial support came from BES of Fleetwood who literally gave the Illuminations its electricity in 2014 with a deal ensuring it would be half price in 2015. The service continued to do third party works to generate income with key contracts secured (against the private sector in open tender) in Sunderland, Chorley and St Annes.

The lights benefited from fabulous weather initially and visitor numbers, especially at weekends, were excellent. The Promenade collections remain strong, although final figures are not available at this time.

Following a successful Stage 1 Expression of Interest to the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF), the Council was invited to submit a full Stage 2 bid for the LightPool scheme, which was completed in October 2014. A decision on the £2.4m scheme (£1.98m from CCF) is expected in January 2015 and some development work will continue in anticipation of a successful outcome. Using advanced lighting technology, the project aims to reinvigorate the Illuminations in the most radical transformation of the show in 50 years. This will, in turn, help to create a long-term sustainable business model that will retain the existing audience, attract new visitors to Blackpool, create new commercial income streams and generate further employment and engagement opportunities for Blackpool residents. The project will also introduce a number of additional new elements providing greater levels of interaction for visitors, as well as further integration into the retail centre of the town. This will provide additional economic benefits for local businesses, beyond the existing seafront-centric Illuminations.

The headline attraction will be digitally mapped projections onto Blackpool Tower, which will be accompanied by bespoke audio provided via in-ear FM receivers. This projection and audio show will work in unison with new digital LED festooning stretching along the Promenade and extending into the town centre. These elements will encourage people to leave their cars and enter into the town centre on foot, creating additional footfall. There will be a direct link into the existing Brilliance light installation on Birley Street, creating an events space following the light and sound theme. Other proposed new features include new gateways at arrival points at the northern and southern ends of the existing Illuminations, as well as in the town's Central Car Park, alongside new illuminated welcome kiosks. The Grundy Art Gallery will also be given over to an artistic light installation during the Illuminations period, opening up the Illuminations to a new demographic group, and providing a daytime attraction.

Alongside the new attractions, new posts will be created to help manage and deliver the innovative changes to the Illuminations. Sixteen resort "Ambassador" roles will be created, to provide a point of contact for visitors across the town. These individuals will receive a range of training and skills development including the renowned WorldHost customer care accreditation. Two new apprentice posts will also be created within the Illuminations team, one focusing on the electrical engineering element of the project, with the other focusing on IT and digital content creation.

### **Broadening the cultural offer for residents and visitors**

#### **Development of a Heritage-Based Attraction:**

The Museum for Blackpool Project was successful in its Round 1 grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which was announced in May. It was one of only six projects nationally which were awarded a major heritage grant and at £1.24m Blackpool received the highest award. We are now in the development stage which we are aiming to complete towards the end of 2015, at which point the Round 2 application to HLF will be submitted.

Eight new posts have been created to support the project including a project director. The new jobs have caused significant interest with in excess of 400 applications being received from across the UK and also internationally. It is anticipated that the full team will be in place by the end of the year.

There are three major contracts to award in the development phase: project management, architect design team and interpretive design team. It is anticipated that the project managers and the architect design team will be procured by Christmas with the interpretive design team being appointed early in the New Year. Smaller commissions to award include business plan support and fund raising advice which will be issued in the next few weeks.

£1.5 million has been earmarked for the Museum for Blackpool project from the Growth Deal, which was announced in July. We are only one of a handful of projects nationally to secure funding for this kind of project. We are also working with Lancashire County Council colleagues to clarify those areas of the Museum for Blackpool project which may be eligible for European funding and assess the realistic success rate. A number of trusts and foundations are being targeted and the project will be engaging a fundraising and income generation expert to provide advice and support.

The key actions for the next few weeks are to complete the staff recruitment and contract procurement processes; review the project board including terms of reference, membership and decision making; begin a community consultation/engagement programme and continue further fundraising.

### **Developing Blackpool Library Services:**

The Library Service, via its network of 8 community library hubs, is working to develop and enhance 5 key areas to improve both the quality and range of the current offer.

- **Digital** - The Library service continues to provide a crucial role in assisting residents with Internet access and online transactions, such as national government e-services. The Library service is represented on the Council's Welfare Reform Board and on the Digital Inclusion sub group. Currently the team are receiving training to enable them to work with benefit claimants to support access to Universal Credit which is due to be rolled out in Blackpool in December. As well as developing people's digital skills, residents are also signposted to other sources of support, such as debt advice, adult learning activities or cultural opportunities to help people rebuild their confidence or learn new skills. Events such as Get on Line Week and the creation of the Digital Charter for Go-On Blackpool, help increasing numbers of Blackpool residents to get online for the first time. Our aim is to increase the basic online skills of people, small businesses and charities by 25% over a 12 month period. Our digital offer also has a creative learning element: two monthly tech clubs were launched at Palatine Library in September.
- **Information** - The Society of Chief Librarians has undertaken a national skills audit to define and clarify the role of libraries and library staff in the assisted digital agenda, and to identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be effective digital champions. The Tinder Foundation has developed a work skills package, and all library staff are currently undertaking the five modular e-learning courses, to be completed by the end of March 2015. Library staff are working with Public Health, Customer First and a range of other partners to ensure that local people are well informed about the issues and opportunities which affect their lives.
- **Reading** - Save the Children's Get On Read On campaign launched in early September 2014 and celebrates the role of libraries in supporting children's engagement with reading. Blackpool was one of 200 libraries chosen to receive free copies of the popular 'Diary of A Wimpy Kid'. Summer Reading Challenge and BookStart continue to promote and inspire a passion for reading with children and young people. This year's Wordpool Festival, a partnership with Arts Services, was hugely successful with, for example, over 4,000 people participating in the Giant-themed Family Day at Stanley Park. A Micro Festival of Poetry for National Poetry Day was held on the theme of Remembrance. The

day included various workshops and poetry readings, and culminated in the announcement of the Wordpool poetry competition winner, and a drive through the Illuminations to see the winning poem in lights. Blackpool is also leading on a shared reading project with Lancashire libraries.

- **Health** - The Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme has been up and running for 12 months. The book collections focus on subjects relating to low mood, anxiety and depression. Results to date have been extremely encouraging with over 1,200 titles issued in Blackpool in the first year. Plans are currently underway for the national launch of Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia in January 2015. Public Health is funding the collections of books and associated material, and a day of events is being planned for people with dementia and their carers. To date two thirds of the staff are trained as Dementia Friends and the target is for all staff to be trained by the end of 2014. In addition two staff will be trained as champions. Libraries are increasingly used for community-based health activities including weekly memory screening clinics, mental health information clinics, and blood pressure checks. We are the base for the Arts and Health programme which has seen people referred by mental health services to participate in arts and creative activities. The weekly tea dances are still popular and provide one approach to reduce social isolation.
- **Enterprise** - The Library service has been working with Get Started and the Business Support Team to support more Blackpool residents who are considering starting a business. The aim is to maximise resources and avoid duplication. An action plan has been established to include work around enquiry handling, staff training, promotion to internal and external customers and agencies, and setting up business information collections in the three main libraries.

### **Creative People and Places:**

The Creative People and Places programme for Blackpool and Wyre, funded through a £3m award from the Arts Council for 3 years, has now been in place for 12 months. A Steering Group made up of public, private and voluntary sector partners in Blackpool and Wyre oversees the delivery of the programme which is now known as LeftCoast. Blackpool Coastal Housing, as the lead consortium partner, formally signed the contract with the Arts Council for the investment and has appointed Artistic Director, Michael Trainor and Executive Director, Julia Turpin to lead LeftCoast's work. In the first 12 months, LeftCoast has initiated, developed and invested in a range of key arts and cultural programmes, for example:

- Launched a large scale community engagement programme called Growing People, which has growing produce and healthy eating as an underlying theme to the work. Artists have already started work on the Mereside and Grange Park Estates and a mass participation event is taking place in late October.
- The Artistic Director of LeftCoast has worked closely with the Places Directorate on the development of a new creative strategy for the Illuminations which has been used to develop a bid to the Coastal Communities Fund. LeftCoast also delivered artist-led workshops with the community to decorate their bikes for Ride the Lights and also launched a Lumi-Dogs parade.
- Worked in partnership with the Grand Theatre to test a new approach to the theatre's summer programme by bringing the show Blam! to Blackpool. There was a comprehensive marketing campaign to attract local people to attend and 25% of attendees were new to the Grand Theatre.
- Invested in the Save Our Stories project working in partnership with Cultural Services. The aim is to establish a new arts organisation that works particularly with young people and children developing their literacy skills through creative projects with writers, artists

and designers. A pilot programme is being established with a mobile Save Our Stories craft going out and about to schools and local festivals.

- Provided match funding for a Lancashire and Blackpool Creative Employment Programme bid. This has been successful and has allowed 8 creative apprentice and intern posts to be established for young people at the Council, with the Grand Theatre and LeftCoast.
- Brought the spectacular outdoor aerial show As the World Tipped, by Wired Aerial Theatre, to Blackpool Cricket Club for 2 nights in September attracting local audiences of circa 6,000 people.

### Improving the Overall Visitor Offer

#### **Destination Management:**

Blackpool grew its overall visitor numbers by more than 200,000 during the summer months and also saw the number of overnight stays increase by 30%. The latest Omnibus survey shows that Blackpool attracted 3.51m adult visits in the period May to August compared with 3.3m over the same period last year. There was also a substantial growth in the number of overnight stays – up from 1.17m to 1.52m (an increase of 350,000 compared to last year). According to the survey, carried out in almost 5,000 UK households, much of that growth in overnight stays was derived from people attending a specific event in the resort.

During the May to August period, Blackpool hosted a range of high-profile events including Armed Forces Week; Blackpool Air Show; Rebellion Punk Festival; a 12-week run of Mamma Mia!; a stadium concert by Rod Stewart; Ride The Lights and the Illuminations Switch On Festival weekend. The resort also benefited from a £1m Blackpool's Back marketing campaign, a joint venture between Visit Blackpool and Merlin Entertainments, which included the first destination-based TV advertising campaign for several years. The survey reports high awareness of that TV campaign, estimating that it directly influenced 350,000 visits to the resort. The visitor satisfaction figures for the period are also encouraging with 89% of visitors satisfied with their visit, compared to 84% last year.

The single most important reason for visiting Blackpool was again led by Blackpool Pleasure Beach at 20%, with the coastal location at 18% and the range of family-friendly attractions at 15%. The Illuminations Switch On Festival weekend was the most visited event among respondents (8%), with Mamma Mia! second (4%).

The figures for May to August follow a hugely successful start to 2014: between January and April the first Omnibus survey of the year revealed growth of 25% or 600,000 visits compared to 2013. This means from January to August visits are up by 800,000 compared to last year. The final survey of the year will include the ten-week Illuminations period and the World Fireworks Championships.

The decision to revert to a free Friday night Illuminations Switch On event appears to have been fully justified with over 75,000 applications for free wristbands received for the event and over 18,000 people attending on the night. For the first time, the Switch On celebrations were extended to three nights with ticketed concerts being held on Tower Festival Headlands on the Saturday and Sunday, and a new food festival being staged between the Switch On arena and Central Pier. Around 3,500 tickets were sold for each of the ticketed concerts. Response to the new-look festival has been extremely positive, with a number of hotels reporting significantly enhanced room occupancy over the weekend. An audit of media activity over the weekend revealed that the resort received in excess of £750,000 of

PR coverage in newspapers, magazines, TV, radio and online. A decision will be made before the end of the year on the proposed format for 2015.

The BBC has confirmed that Strictly Come Dancing will be returning to Blackpool this autumn. The resort is set for a whole weekend of high-profile TV entertainment as the hit show returns to the Tower Ballroom on Saturday 15 November, with the North West broadcast for the Children In Need telethon hosted from the Tower Circus on the previous evening.

A revised Destination Management Plan for 2015-2017 is currently being developed with a view to a final draft being produced by the end of this year.

#### **Resort Pass:**

Year-to-date sales of Resort Pass are slightly down on 2013, mainly due to a switch in emphasis on marketing activity. As of the end of September, sales stood at 12,500 passes sold compared to 13,500 over the same period last year. In 2013, much of the Visit Blackpool marketing spend was directed towards Resort Pass sales – this year, there has been a greater emphasis on driving the overall volume of visitors to the resort. A review of the Resort Pass ticketing process is now underway to determine whether a more streamlined approach can be developed for 2015.

#### **Winter Gardens:**

The Winter Gardens has confirmed that over a million people visited the venue in the 12 months to June this year. That period included events such as the Bob Dylan concert, which attracted 10,000 fans; the launch of IlluminAsia which attracted over 100,000 visitors; and the early performances of Mamma Mia!, which went on to become the resort's highest grossing summer show with over 100,000 tickets sold. Almost 50,000 delegates attended business events and conferences during the period, an increase of 12,000 over the previous year. IlluminAsia has confirmed that it has taken up an option to remain within the Winter Gardens for a further two years.

#### **Challenges 2015/16**

Our focus for next year will be:

- Delivering a solution for Central Station development site;
- Implementing the Illuminations sustainability plan for 2015 and beyond;
- Delivery of the Blackpool Tourism Academy;
- Moving the heritage based visitor attraction forward to full HLF and Growth Deal funding approval;
- Progression of hotel developments e.g. Gateway Hotel;
- Sustaining growth in visitor numbers;
- Developing measures that will mitigate the impact of new bathing water legislation on Blackpool's visitor economy;
- Continue to identify and encourage new attractions to the town; and
- Identification of a range of new proposals and associated fund-raising opportunities that will enhance Blackpool's tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer.

### **Strategic Risks Related to this Priority**

The following risks are being monitored through the Strategic Risk Register to ensure that the necessary controls are put in place to effectively manage each risk.

<b>Strategic Risk</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>
Economic recession	National	<b>High</b>
Change in political priorities	National	<b>High</b>
Inability to continue funding the Illuminations	Local	<b>High</b>
Failure to regenerate the town	Local	<b>Activity Necessary</b>

**Details of the specific actions being taken to mitigate these risks can be found in the Strategic Risk Register.**

### **Key Actions & Performance Indicators for this Priority**


Details of the key actions and performance indicators for this priority can be found below.




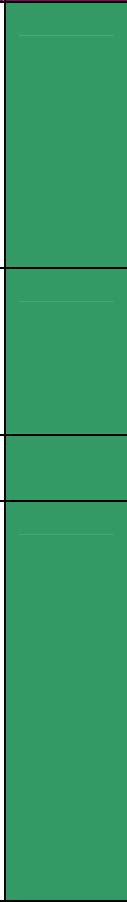
**Priority 3 Key Actions**

**Key – Overall Progress:**

 On track

 Not on track but being managed by the department to bring back on track

 Not on track and needs support from outside the department to bring back on track

Objective	Key Action	Milestones	Deadline	Dept	Lead Officer	Overall Progress
Sustainability of the Illuminations	Identification and pursuit of new income streams and cost reductions	Seek additional opportunities for out of town partnership working	Nov 2014	PL	Richard Ryan	
		Increase overall amount of commercial sponsorship linked to Illuminations compared with 2013	Jul 2014			
		Increase overall amount of promenade collections compared with 2013	Nov 2014			
		Increase overall amount of business / private sector contributions compared with 2013	Mar 2014			
	Deliver a new wow factor which significantly broadens the appeal and diversifies the offer	Cement working relationships with Left Coast	Nov 2014	PL	Richard Ryan	
		Defined plan in place for the Illuminations display and development of Illuminations in the town (both financially and creatively)	Dec 2014			
		Funding secured	Mar 2015			
	Improvement of overall satisfaction rating of the 2014 display	Increase satisfaction ratings for Illuminations compared with 2013	Nov 2014	PL	Richard Ryan	
	Broadening the cultural offer	Develop an adventurous, imaginative and high quality cultural offer for Blackpool	Lead the development of a new cultural offer at the Winter Gardens, ensuring regional and national impact	Mar 2015	PL	
Develop a Blackpool Cultural Plan linking to the development of a Fylde Coast Cultural Partnership and the Lancashire LEP			Mar 2015			
Establish 'Save our stories' as a new arts organisation for Blackpool			Mar 2015			
Continue to develop the Grundy Art Gallery in line with its Arts Council of England 'National Portfolio' (NPO) status			Feb 2015			
Support the development of the Grand Theatre in line with the Arts Council NPO status			Mar 2015			
Lead the illuminations transformation project (stage 1 CCF bid)			Mar 2015			
Undertake review of events calendar			Mar 2015			



Objective	Key Action	Milestones	Deadline	Dept	Lead Officer	Overall Progress	
	<b>Increase and widen engagement in culture, creating access amongst sectors of the community who might not otherwise take part</b>	Develop plans for a museum attraction for Blackpool	Mar 2015	PL	Polly Hamilton		
		Lead the Council's input to Left Coast (Creative People and Places)	Mar 2015				
		Develop a new approach in libraries to engage non-users and vulnerable sectors of the community	Mar 2015				
		Review and develop the Community Heritage Programme	Mar 2015				
	<b>Develop the role of Cultural Services in delivering wider Council priorities</b>	Help raise aspiration and improve educational achievement	Mar 2015	PL	Polly Hamilton		
		Contribute towards an improvement in health and wellbeing by delivering the Arts and Health programme and health information services	Mar 2015				
		Work with Customer First and other Departments to develop libraries as Council community 'hubs' for the delivery of a wider range of Council services	Mar 2015				
		Develop key role of libraries as learning and information hubs for Blackpool. Continue to respond to Welfare Reform and Digital by Default/Assisted digital Govt agendas	Mar 2015				
	<b>Improving the overall visitor offer</b>	<b>Develop new packages and opportunities</b>	Development and launch of travel trade package	Mar 2015	PL	Nicola Atanassova	
			Develop bespoke packages for niche markets	Jun 2014			
Develop new Blackpool discount card			Sept 2014				
<b>Develop a range of marketing campaigns and opportunities with new and existing partners</b>		Agreement of joint marketing campaign with Merlin	Apr 2014	PL	Nicola Atanassova		
		Commence roll out of small campaigns	May 2014				
		Roll out marketing plan targeted at the Irish market	Mar 2015				
<b>Provide additional support to Mamma Mia</b>		Provide additional PR and marketing support	Sept 2014	PL	Nicola Atanassova / Mandy Tythe-McCallum		
		Develop joint opportunities with key partners	Apr 2014				
		Identify suitable events for cross promotion	Jun 2014				
<b>Develop an improved Switch On experience within budget</b>		Agree format for 2014 Switch On night and festival weekend	Apr 2014	PL	Philip Welsh		
		Deliver 2014 Switch On night and festival weekend	Aug 2014				
		Commence planning for 2015 Switch On	Oct 2014				
		Agree format of 2015 Switch On events	Mar 2015				
<b>Develop and promote a wider events programme of opportunities for partners linked to the existing programme</b>	Identification and agreement of partnership arrangements for Pride, the Air Show, the Fireworks Championships and the Illuminations	Jul 2014	PL	Nicola Atanassova			

Objective	Key Action	Milestones	Deadline	Dept	Lead Officer	Overall Progress
		Confirm Christmas programme with BID	Jun 2014			
	<b>Growth of the Resort Pass concept</b>	Launch Resort Pass and Resort Pass+	Apr 2014	PL	Nicola Atanassova	
		Develop partner agents for sales of the Resort Pass	May 2014			
		Explore opportunities for bespoke version of the Resort Pass such as Silver Pass and Mamma Mia Pass	Apr 2014			
	<b>Assist in the delivery of improvements to Winter Gardens programming and conference facilities</b>	Delivery of new productions to the Opera House	Mar 2015	PL	Mandy Tythe-McCallum / Lee Frudd	
		Delivery of the Opera House Cinema and programming content	May 2014			
		Develop proposals to improve conference facilities in the Winter Gardens	Sept 2014			
	<b>Provide support to the Blackpool Tourism Academy, aiming to boost the skills of tourism sector workers, create a new tourism apprenticeship scheme and establish Blackpool as a WorldHost destination</b>	Establish and facilitate the Blackpool Tourism Academy Board and HR Leads Group	Jun 2014	PL	Peter Legg	
		Oversee the completion of the tourism practice apprenticeship framework	Dec 2014			
		Commence 25 apprenticeships	Mar 2015			
		Promote, coordinate and deliver WorldHost customer service training across a wide range of businesses operating in the visitor economy	Mar 2015			
	<b>Ensure that the Destination Management Plan for Blackpool is delivered in terms of key objectives and key measures</b>	Production of a new Destination Management Plan	Oct 2014	PL	Philip Welsh	
		Key measures agreed	Nov 2014			
		Quarterly monitoring undertaken	Jan 2015			

**Priority 3 Performance Indicators**

**Key – Performance Trend:**

- ✓ Performance is improving
- ✗ Performance is getting worse
- Performance is staying the same
- Data not due to be reported this quarter

Indicator	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2014/15		2013/14 Total	2012/13 Total	Trend	Comments
					Total	Target				
Amount of Illuminations income (promenade collections)						Increase on last year	£126,000	£129,000	✗	Annual measure available in December
Amount of Illuminations income (business collections)						Increase on last year	£22,000	£7,000	✓	Annual measure available in December
Amount of Illuminations income (commercial)						Increase on last year	£90,000	£20,000	✓	Annual measure available in December
Visitor satisfaction rating	89%	89%				Increase on 2013	84%	91%	✓	Year end figures are the average figures from Omnibus Surveys conducted 3 times a year
% of stay versus day visits	31% stay 69% day	44% stay 56% day				Increase on 2013	40% stay 60% day	40.7% stay 59.3% day	-	
Headline visitor numbers	3.1m	3.51m				Increase on 2013	9.75m	10.47m	✗	No. of adult visitors recorded by the Omnibus Survey
Pride in Blackpool’s heritage and culture						Baseline	New PI	New PI		From Resident’s Survey
No. of Winter Garden events						Increase on last year	197	50	✓	Annual measure available in April
Participation in the arts						Increase on last year	68%	New PI		Tri-annual survey. Baseline is Mar 2014 and shows the % of people who participate in or attend 3 or more activities.