

Blackpool Council's plan for 2013 – 2015



Encourage ambition and aspiration

Education and a fairer future

- We'll be focusing on:
- Encouraging children's ambition from an early age
 - Improving attendance and performance in our schools
 - Supporting parents by providing all children with free breakfasts in primary school
 - Helping people to help themselves and fulfil their potential

Protect and keep safe

We'll be focusing on:

- Managing the risks that make children and adults unsafe
- Making our care services easier to access and find out about
- Better quality and performance management across care services

Improve people's health and wellbeing

Pleasant places to live

- We'll be focusing on:
- Regenerating the areas where people live, such as Queens Park
 - Creating hundreds of affordable new homes across the town
 - Driving up the quality of accommodation in the private sector
 - Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

Health

We'll be focusing on:

- Reducing the level of smoking and alcohol related illness
- Detecting health problems such as high blood pressure at an earlier stage
- Encouraging people to become more active and maintain a healthy weight

Create a prosperous town

Things to see and do

- We'll be focusing on:
- Creating people a wide range of things to see and do
 - Improving our existing attractions, such as the Illuminations
 - Helping people get closer to Blackpool's history and heritage, by promoting places such as the Winter Gardens
 - Encouraging more people to participate in the arts

Jobs and businesses

We'll be focusing on:

- Creating apprenticeship and opportunities for young people
- Creating jobs in Blackpool and attracting new shops to the town centre through developments such as the Talbot Gateway Central Business District
- Encouraging local employers to pay local people the Living Wage
- Helping more people to set up their own business

Our Values

Excellent customer service

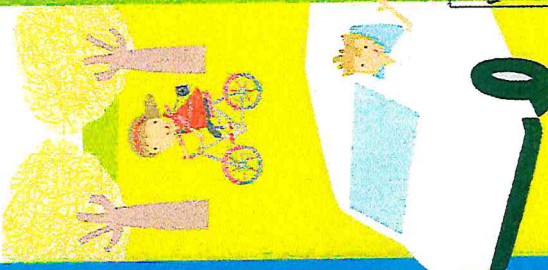
We'll be focusing on:

- Making sure all of our employees treat residents with respect, fairness and dignity
- Listening to you and taking on board your comments, complaints and compliments so that we can improve our services
- Providing you with a website that will make it easier for you to find out what you need to know

Pride in Blackpool

We'll be focusing on:

- Making Blackpool a town that residents can be proud of
- Talking to school children about Blackpool and the great things within their town
- Shouting about the great things Blackpool has to offer, creating an even better reputation for the town



Blackpool Council

Theme: Prosperous Town

Supporting priorities

- Expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer
- Attract sustainable investment and create quality jobs
- Encourage responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of our communities
- Equality ambition: Reduce economic inequalities

Why does this matter to Blackpool?

Blackpool is the nation's favourite seaside resort and the destination of choice for over 13 million visitors annually. It was the world's first working-class seaside resort and boasts an astounding entertainment heritage dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Even today, there is a density, quality and variety of theatres, ballrooms, and cabaret venues to rival Broadway or the West End. Blackpool is a world-leader in ballroom dance with five annual dance festivals and a 'holiday home' for Strictly Come Dancing. It has an unmatched reputation for magic, comedy, circus and variety, gaining national attention for our visual and public art programmes. We have some iconic assets in Blackpool Tower, the Winter Gardens, the Pleasure Beach and our world-famous Illuminations, the latter contributing over £200 million to our local economy annually.

Although Blackpool has made significant strides in improving quality within the visitor economy in recent years, not least through the arrival of Merlin Entertainments as a key partner in the development of some of Blackpool's key leisure assets, there is substantially more work to be done in this area. Continuous improvement of the quality and diversity of the tourism offer in Blackpool, building on the momentum generated in recent years through the attraction of new, high-profile providers and improved tourism infrastructure, as well as collaborative destination marketing is critical if Blackpool is to remain a mainstream destination.

So too is the attraction of a higher percentage of more affluent visitors and a bigger share of the conference and business tourism markets. Alongside this is a desire to invest in a skilled and capable workforce, where excellent customer care plays a key role in a positive visitor experience.

Blackpool continues to be primarily dependent on two employment sectors – the visitor economy and the public sector (including the Council, NHS and civil service). Whilst the restructuring of the public sector poses a threat to the overall economy, the visitor economy remains a key area of growth potential, albeit for jobs at the lower end of the pay scale. Like other seaside towns, it has struggled to compete with cheap flights to sunnier resorts, the rise of city based tourism in the UK and to provide the consistent quality of offer and service that will both attract new visitors and provide a high quality of life for its residents.

There is a recognised need to nurture growth businesses in other sectors (manufacturing, energy and environmental, creative and digital, and other professional and financial services) and to attract new investment that will provide sustainable jobs in other sectors within Blackpool and across the broader travel to work area. For this reason our economic footprint has to be viewed on a Fylde Coast basis as local people rely on jobs from across the Fylde area. Blackpool has worked closely with Lancashire County Council, Wyre and Fylde Council's to facilitate shared recognition of economic and cultural challenges and opportunities. The Council continues to work with partners via the Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company (EDC), and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), to ensure local economic regeneration needs are clearly understood and addressed.

Theme: Prosperous Town

Although much of Blackpool's business base comprises small to medium-sized businesses (SMEs), there is a core of businesses across a range of sectors that continue to provide a significant percentage of jobs within the town. While the prospects for these employers will predominantly be determined by external factors, there are areas - such as funding, recruitment and skills development - in which the Council and other public sector stakeholders can proactively assist. By developing a much closer relationship with these employers, Blackpool's reputation as a "business friendly" town will be enhanced among prospective inward investors, as we aim to provide a wider range of job opportunities for our local residents.

A generation of new businesses have started life with assistance from the Council's 'Get Started' initiative. Would-be entrepreneurs are faced with a mountain of issues to consider before starting trading such as testing their product or service idea through market research, accessing available finance or understanding basic legal and taxation issues. A solid business plan is essential to ensure new businesses have the potential to survive the vital first few months and years of trading, backed up by quality ongoing advice and guidance.

Employment is a key determining factor of quality of life and a means of reducing levels of deprivation, inequality and improving health. The seasonality of jobs within the visitor economy and the increasing fragility of jobs within the public sector has created serious employment issues within Blackpool. Across Blackpool, there are a high proportion of people claiming out-of-work benefits, with claimants of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) running at almost twice the national level - currently 23% compared to 12.5% nationally. This approximates to about 20,000 individuals claiming an out-of-work benefit, the majority of which (10,930) claim ESA. There is a particularly acute problem with young people who either have low aspirations or who are unable to see where future job opportunities lie within the town's economy. The Council plays a crucial role in assisting long term adult unemployed to become work ready through its

role as a Work Programme provider, working in partnership to connect targeted services around such issues as health and basic skills, and also as a major employer. We will continue to work in partnership with schools and colleges to improve the aspirations and attainment of young people, and actively engage employers to ensure that young people develop the skills they need to match the requirements of the economy of the future. Blackpool Council remains a key local employer and is committed to play its part in providing new employment and apprenticeship opportunities, maximising its influence and relationships with Arms Length Management Organisations, and vocational training providers.

The Facts

- 'Blackpool Visitor Omnibus Survey 2012 – Report Three' stated "The 'most important aspect' for attracting individuals to visit Blackpool in the autumn of 2012 is, as in previous years, the Illuminations".
- The Leeds Metropolitan University 'Economic Impact Assessment of Blackpool Illuminations' in 2010 found that: "Gross spending during the period studied from those visiting the Illuminations is estimated to be more than £3,072,624. If aggregated for the duration the Illuminations are on, this figure rises to in excess of £200 million".
- For residents in employment, the median amount of weekly pay for full time employees in Blackpool is £376.70 - around £100 per week less than the national figure.
- An estimated 17.8% of the working age population in Blackpool have no formal qualifications. Blackpool's community has literacy and digital skills substantially below national averages.

Theme: Prosperous Town

- Blackpool has a low employment rate at 68.1% compared to a national rate of 70.3%.
 - 25.3% of Blackpool working age residents claim benefits – more than 10% higher than the figure for Great Britain as a whole (14.5%).
 - According to the national Active People Survey, only 37.2% of residents engage in the arts.
 - In 2012, Blackpool achieved its first two organisations on the Arts Council of England National Portfolio – the Grundy Art Gallery and the Grand Theatre.
- What we will do**
- To expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer, we will:**
- Develop a transformation and fund raising plan for the annual illuminations display in order to make them more compelling, sustainable and with a greater degree of economic impact.
 - Develop various projects contributing to Blackpool's emerging creative cluster, including the development of the mezzanine floor of Abingdon Street market as artists' studios.
 - Develop a proposal and associated fund-raising plan for a heritage based visitor attraction that captures the spirit of Blackpool's history, creates an attraction that is equally as attractive to residents and visitors and provides an anchor for a new 'cultural quarter'.
 - Agree the community programme within the Creative People and Places scheme and launch the 'Playground of Wonders' project to enhance local awareness.
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- Create a development framework for the Winter Gardens and appoint an operator who can deliver an affordable programme of high quality entertainment.
 - Continue to develop local libraries as community hubs to support learning, provide access to information, build aspirations and encourage social inclusion.
 - Develop and launch a formal skills programme for the visitor economy (Blackpool Tourism Academy) that will bring a higher level of transferable skills, career progression, apprenticeships and customer service and create new pathways into the industry for local people.
 - Establish clear working relationships and key delivery objectives with partner organisations including Blackpool BID, Merlin Entertainments; and Blackpool Operating Company.
- To attract sustainable investment and create quality jobs, we will:**
- Complete the development of the Central Business District, bringing construction supply chain jobs, new retail and food lettings, and a flagship Sainsbury's supermarket.
 - Encourage inward investment into Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, developing key industrial sites and ensuring adequate employment land is available for business uses.
 - Sell and lease surplus Council buildings and land to encourage new investment and job creation.
 - Continue to work with prospective investors and partners to develop the Central Station site into a year-round quality tourist attraction.

Theme: Prosperous Town

- Work with the Police to ensure new divisional headquarters are established in Blackpool.
 - Support job creation within housing schemes.
 - Detailed development of the scheme to link the tramway to Blackpool North station.
 - Support growth oriented business within Blackpool and the Fylde Coast to access targeted growth programmes (coaching, mentoring, innovation, and investment finance).
 - Offer targeted commercial loans and capital grants through the Council's Blackpool Investment Fund, aligned with Lancashire wide funding schemes.
 - Deliver targeted employment programmes to match work-ready long term unemployed residents with relevant local job and apprenticeship opportunities.
 - Work in partnership with the private sector to promote economic growth, investment and job creation.
 - Seek to increase the use of local suppliers.
- To encourage responsible entrepreneurship for the benefit of our communities, we will:***
- Increase the number of and survival rate of start up businesses in Blackpool and develop enterprise pathways for young people aged 16-24 who have a desire to start their own business.
 - Research the social and economic impact of the cultural and creative industries and produce an action plan for their future development.
- Continue to review existing contracts to see if they can be delivered at lower cost by other organisations, including those in the voluntary, community and faith sectors.
 - Ensure our contractors adopt our standard of paying invoices in 30 days, to help the cash flow of smaller sub-contractors.
 - Implement a sustainable procurement Code of Practice, Supplier's Charter, contract terms and conditions etc, which will encourage organisations contracted by the Council to pay the Living Wage, and support the creation of new local jobs and apprenticeship schemes.
 - Encourage the private sector to create new apprenticeship opportunities as part of their overall workforce planning and development.
 - Work in partnership with private sector companies to promote economic growth, investment and job creation.
 - Support people with social care needs into education and employment.
- How do we measure up?**
- Key indicators that we will use to measure our performance against this theme are:**
- Expand and promote our tourism, arts, heritage and cultural offer:***
- % residents participating in arts and cultural activity
 - Visitor numbers and types
 - Increase in illuminations sponsorship and income raised to support new features
 - Positive media coverage of Blackpool's cultural and tourism offer