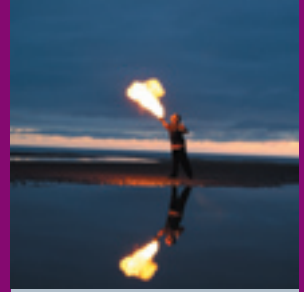


B L A C K P O O L C O U N C I L



Blackpool: Innovative, Confident & World-Class

A Strategy for Blackpool's Visitor Economy 2006/2010



2004-2005
Benefits Administration

A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to introduce the first Visitor Economy Strategy for Blackpool.

Blackpool has huge ambition to become a world-class resort that is 'a great place to visit – a better place to live'. This ambition is being delivered through the highly regarded Master Plan that is a response to decades of decline from the town's heyday as the country's premier seaside resort.

Although visitors to Blackpool sustain a significant part of our economy and we remain Britain's most visited resort, changing holiday patterns, competition and lack of investment have reduced the value of the product.

A strategy for the direction of our visitor economy is crucial. It must provide a route map to the New Blackpool that enables partners, both local and regional, to secure growth and ensure our visitors discover a Blackpool that is vibrant, friendly, well-managed, 'liveable' and accessible. This strategy seeks to strengthen and encourage a shared vision for Blackpool 2010 and beyond.

Blackpool Council has provided the leadership to develop new plans for the New Blackpool, in particular by championing and partly funding the formation of an urban regeneration company, ReBlackpool, to deliver physical transformation. The Council now looks to its partners locally, sub-regionally and regionally to prioritise, focus and promote investment in our visitor economy.

This Visitor Economy Strategy is not a marketing strategy for tourism, although appropriately targeted marketing and promotion are important. This strategy is an argument for partnership working focused on creating a strong and sustainable visitor destination where product, service and infrastructure are of a quality that continually exceeds expectations.

Any strategy is only a starting point. If this strategy is to be successful, the vision and delivery must be shared by many organisations working together. In the production of the strategy we have been greatly heartened by the growing degree of support towards it. Particular thanks must go to Marc Etches (who has prepared the strategy on behalf of Blackpool Council) and to the consultees and partners who have participated in this work.

We commend this Blackpool Visitor Economy Strategy to you and encourage you to work, with others, to achieve success for Blackpool.



Councillor Eddie Collett
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Regeneration and Tourism



Jackie Potter
Strategic Director of Tourism and Regeneration

A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

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A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Introduction

Blackpool is the UK's largest and most important coastal resort and has a celebrated reputation for innovation and, when necessary, reinvention.

The opening of Blackpool Tower in 1894, the use of miles of Illuminations to extend the traditional holiday season, the Golden Mile, the Pleasure Beach Amusement Park and the first electrified tramway system are all examples of the ways in which Blackpool has continuously developed exciting new attractions to draw visitors.

Blackpool was the UK's first fully developed, working class seaside destination and as the nation's 'Capital of Fun' continues to attract millions of visitors every year. However, affordable and rapid air travel matched by rising levels of disposable income and expectations of holiday-makers has resulted in global competition.

There is an urgent need to put in place a strategy that provides a positive and forward looking 'framework for action' that addresses key issues. At the heart of this strategy is recognition that strong partnership working is required to make a real difference for all those who would choose to live, learn, work, play and invest in Blackpool in the future.

This document outlines those key issues and proposes a vision and strategic actions aimed at re-establishing the full potential of the visitor economy in and around Blackpool.



"If you can dream it, you can do it."

Walt Disney

Blackpool's Place in England's Northwest

England's Northwest is a culturally and geographically diverse region that includes Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester and is home to 6.8 million people.

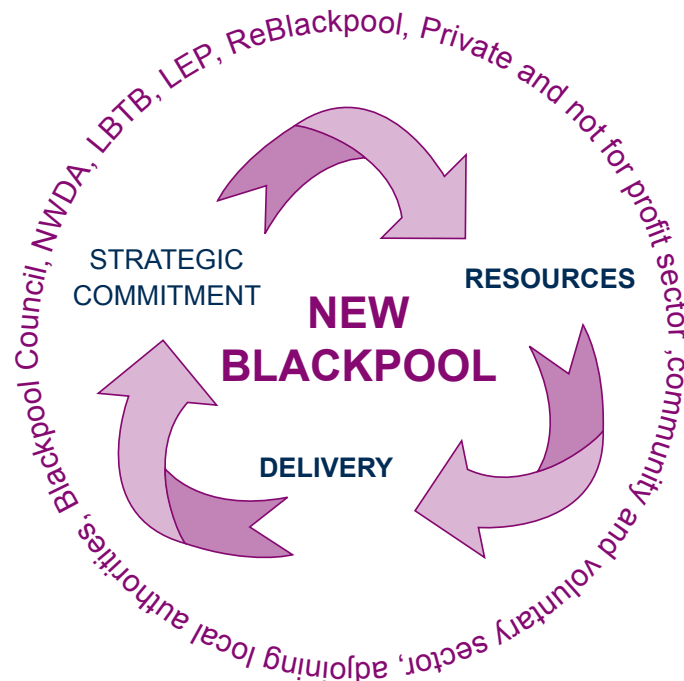
The region must successfully harness its natural, historical and cultural assets if it is to address the economic challenges it faces; the regional economy, which generates £98 billion, currently underperforms the national average Gross Value Added (GVA) by £13 billion (12%). Fewer people working per head of population account for £3 billion of this output gap and lower productivity per employee accounts for £10 billion.

Lancashire generates £18.1 billion GVA (19.6% of regional output) and Blackpool contributes £1.65 billion of this, which when averaged per person is 19% lower than for the region as a whole. Due to this underperformance of Blackpool's economy, improved performance

in the visitor economy of the town will have a significant impact on overall regional performance.

The opportunity presented by the New Blackpool is reflected in the focus given to the town's regeneration plans within regional and sub-regional strategies and business plans. Although Blackpool Council has a fundamental role in delivering the Visitor Economy Strategy, its success will rely largely upon the strong links to the work of a range of other regional, sub-regional and local partners. These will take on different but complementary roles as part of the partnership framework required over many years to transform Blackpool into a world-class resort.

More detail of the roles of different partners can be found in Annex 1 together with the specific responsibilities of Blackpool Council and full names of the acronyms of institutions referred to in this document are listed in Annex 2.



A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Blackpool – The challenges and opportunities

Like many coastal towns, the economy of Blackpool is dependent on tourism. Despite the increasing competition within a global holiday and leisure tourism market brought about by changing consumer affluence and aspiration, Blackpool's unique scale of accommodation and attractions has enabled it to cope better than many of its UK rivals.

However, the pace of decline in visitor numbers, average visitor spend and duration of stay, is accelerating. The local economy currently generates the 12th lowest gross domestic product (GDP) of all UK Boroughs.

At 70.2%, employment rates in Blackpool are considerably worse than the national average of 75.1%, and mean earnings in 2004 were only 72% of the English average and therefore well below those for the region.

Blackpool has one of the highest levels of adults with no qualifications and it is both the underperforming education and health systems that have direct consequences for worklessness.

With a residential population of 142,400, the Borough is one of the most densely populated authorities outside of London.

Blackpool's Master Plan

Blackpool has the capacity and ambition to re-establish its national and international reputation as a fun, exciting, world-class destination. This will be achieved with its ambitious Master Plan, launched in 2003, which aims to deliver economic, physical and social regeneration for the benefit of local residents and visitors alike.

The Master Plan covers a 200-hectare area with a resident population of 31,000, including Blackpool's sea front, airport, and many residential neighbourhoods. The Master Plan is focused on creating in Blackpool both a world-class, year-round entertainment destination and a place with balanced and healthy neighbourhoods that is also the retail, business, civic and cultural centre for the Fylde coast sub-region.

The vision within the Master Plan is the creation of a sustainable economy with the development of large-scale casinos as the catalyst for much-needed private sector investment. The acquisition of a regional casino licence will enable a step-change in the town bringing the scale of private investment, employment opportunities and investment in workforce development that is so desperately needed for addressing the social deprivation prevalent in Blackpool today.

Community Collaboration – Towards the New Blackpool

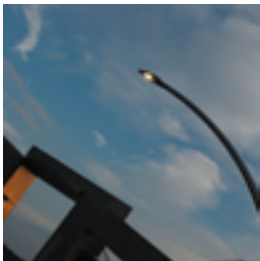
Alongside the delivery of these transformational plans, partners within the town recognise that we must maximise the potential of our existing assets by strengthening the fundamentals of the visitors' experience.

The scale and critical importance of the physical investment envisaged by the Master Plan needs to be matched by a cultural shift in attitude and pride in Blackpool as a visitor destination if we are to succeed. We must exploit our traditional strengths, especially our iconic attractions (Pleasure Beach, Tower, Piers, Illuminations), emerging products (Zoo, Airport, Sandcastle) and conferencing facilities. We must retain the sense of place and fun that is so much a part of Blackpool's unique attraction to millions of people and yet not be afraid to link Blackpool to other strong tourism offers within the region, thus diversifying our visitor base.

As changing trends in leisure and spending activity have altered the nature of tourism in the last 20 years, we need to conceptualise the visitor economy in a new, more relevant way than conventional tourism gave scope for. The Visitor Economy can be defined simply as all spending outside the normal routine. In addition to overnight guests, we must consider day visitors and residents spending on entertainment, attractions, conferences, festivals, sport and cultural activities and incorporate all spending on food, drink and retail.

Working in partnership with ReBlackpool, Blackpool Council and local stakeholders are determined to deliver transformational change to the overall quality of the visitor experience. We recognise that for the visitor economy to succeed, the whole town must be committed to delivering a quality experience for visitors and residents alike – the quality of place is as important as the nature of individual attractions. In doing this, we can ensure that Blackpool moves toward being an attractive place to live, work, visit and in which to invest and study.

There are many examples in the UK of cities who have transformed themselves by focusing on creating the all-round leisure and cultural experience that modern visitors seek – Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle are all excellent examples. The challenge for Blackpool is to be the first resort to emulate these standards of quality albeit in our own unique setting.



The diversity of Blackpool's visitor economy

The diversity of the tourism offer within Blackpool is immense, including unique attractions; a vibrant night-life and range of evening entertainments; theatres, libraries, galleries and exhibitions; World Fireworks Championships; World Ballroom Dance Championships; political conferences; increasing shopping facilities; and of course, Blackpool Illuminations – 'the greatest lights show on Earth'.

Considering this, Blackpool's visitor economy is not only about creating a great place to visit but also about the satisfaction, prosperity and enjoyment of local people. Tourism impacts upon all local and sub-regional communities. From the perspective of people within Blackpool, whether residents or out-of-town visitors, the quality of the toilets, street-cleaning, public realm, shopping, signage, information, transportation, entertainment, restaurants and service need to be managed as one entity to provide a quality experience.

We need a holistic approach to planning, developing and managing the town. Issues of transport, health, education, policing, skills and enterprise are no less important than marketing and visitor information.

As the principle deliverer of the services that influence the quality of the visitor experience, a local authority will provide strong leadership to facilitate and inspire successful destination management through collaborative working with partners across the private and public sector.

A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

For Blackpool to rebuild its reputation as the UK's favourite visitor destination, a concerted and collaborative effort is required to:

Restore a positive image of Blackpool to create pride and influence

Improve the quality of service and value for money for the visitor economy as a whole.

Establish a real sense of a fun but safe destination for everyone who visits, lives and works in Blackpool

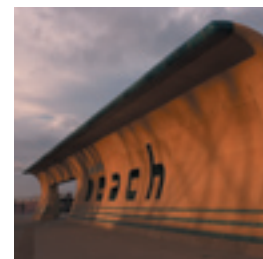
Refurbish the current tourism product and service delivery via a better skilled and more motivated workforce

Inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs and service providers to create new attractions and experiences that will attract visitors and residents alike

There are already a number of positive initiatives underway, beyond the work of ReBlackpool, including the planned restoration of Stanley Park, construction of a Debenhams Department Store, overhaul of the Houndshell shopping centre, the development of a National Seaside Heritage Centre and a bid to UNESCO for Blackpool to be awarded World Heritage status.

Other achievements include The Grand Theatre being named National Theatre of Variety, the public art installations on the Promenade winning national awards and establishment of the Regional Gaming Academy at Blackpool and the Fylde College.

This strategy is intended to build on what is already happening and guide all local, regional and national stakeholders in a joint effort to rebuild a sustainable visitor economy in Blackpool. However, to succeed there is a need for a common vision and an agreed framework for partnership and action.



"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity"

Albert Einstein

Our vision for our future

Our vision for Blackpool over the next decade sees it emerging as a world-class resort -

...A great place to visit, a better place to live.

This New Blackpool will be partly realised through the Master Plan projects; but in addition we will actively encourage the development of exciting and innovative experiences for our visitors. We will learn from and build on the successful investment in the Zoo and Sandcastle and seek to invest in and refresh our existing attractions.

Blackpool will aspire to express itself through

› **Innovative ideas and projects**

Creativity, innovation and enterprise will drive higher levels of visitation across the cultural spectrum that is our visitor economy.

› **Confident people**

Self-confident and positive local people, partners and businesses will inspire regional and national pride in Blackpool as the UK's 'Capital of Fun' and exceed standards of customer care.

› **Entertaining experiences**

World-class entertainment from the street to the theatre will surprise, excite and enthral the most discerning of international audiences.

› **Commitment to quality**

Establishing and maintaining high levels of quality in accommodation provision, visitor attractions, transport and the public realm will raise Blackpool to the high standards demanded by today's visitors and enable it to compete on national and international platforms.

Our partners are committed to delivering this vision and have agreed to a framework of partnership and action. Together we will drive forward the strategic aims and objectives that compose this framework, ultimately achieving improvements to Blackpool's visitor economy.



A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Our framework for partnership and action

The actions identified within this framework will make a significant and sustainable difference to the quality of the visitor experience.

It is vital that our approach is evidence-based, market-driven and consumer-focused, and that we invest resources to better understand our markets and the future direction for the Blackpool brand.

There are five key strategic themes that guide our strategy and subsequent actions:

1. Embrace a 'Blackpool as One' Philosophy
2. Blackpool and its Enduring Brand Strength
3. Welcome, Surprise and Delight Visitors
4. Investment in Enterprise, Infrastructure and People
5. Leadership and the Visitor Economy

Embrace a 'Blackpool as One' Philosophy

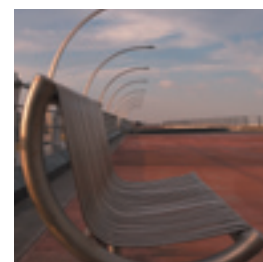
There is an urgent need for the town to 'speak with one voice' and for clarity in the roles and responsibilities of partners in the delivery of the New Blackpool. Public, private and voluntary sectors must find new ways of working together to ensure 'one plus one equals more than two'. Blackpool Council must show leadership from within and manage public services and facilities with the interests of the visitor economy front of mind.

Specialist support to business from the Council and other agencies must be streamlined and simplified to embrace a 'business first' philosophy. In return, commitment is needed by local businesses to collaborate and share in the effort necessary to deliver the actions contained within this strategy.

Local media must also share in the responsibility for making transformational changes happen. Blackpool needs to rediscover a renewed self-confidence, which in turn will lead to it attracting investment and visitors.

Key Objectives:

- › Identify 'Blackpool 2010' as a year of special celebration and use this as a focal point that the community as a whole can work toward via a planned programme of events and regeneration activity in much the same way as the European Capital City of Culture concept works.
- › Improve collaboration, coordination and communication across all sectors with a specific focus on achieving high calibre destination management.
- › Implement a system of reporting within the Council that maximises coordination of the work being done in different departments and creates greater synergy to contribute to improvements within the visitor economy.
- › Establish and maintain a public relations resource that is capable of co-ordinating all media contact in relation to Blackpool for the benefit of all stakeholders.
- › Analyse the recent 'self-perception' research across Blackpool and compare to regional and national research to establish a base from which the town is able to improve levels of self-respect and self-confidence.
- › Celebrate excellence, raise standards to lift quality and agree that mediocrity is no longer good enough.



"We must become the change we want to see."

Mahatma Gandhi

Embrace 'Blackpool as One' Philosophy

Objectives	Actions	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Date
Communication	Formulate a comprehensive strategy that engages and inspires local people to ensure Blackpool is 'a great place to visit – a better place to live'	Council	Local media, NWDA, ReBlackpool	Agreed strategy	Dec 06
Public relations	Improve the co-ordination of public relations activity and response by establishing a steering group	Council	Business Forum, ReBlackpool, local media	Agree future strategy to unite Blackpool as one voice and break down negative attitudes associated with the town	Dec 06
Self-perception	Analyse the recent research on residents' perception of town compared to the rest of UK and use the results to inform policy and deliver self-confidence	Council	NWDA, LBTB, Culture Northwest	Identify negative perceptions and formulate a strategic approach to adjust these and rebuild confidence	Mar 07
Celebrate the Best	Establish 'Blackpool Excellence Awards' to celebrate beacon businesses and as a stimulus for quality and the spread of best practice	Council	Business Forum, NWDA, LBTB Business Link, BiC	Awards format agreed First Awards Event	Feb 07
Blackpool 2010	Agree to establish a celebratory year and generate business plan with financial projection	Council	NWDA, GONW, Business Forum, ReBlackpool, Culture Northwest, LBTB, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council	Business Plan and financial projection agreed Launch	Dec 06 Mar 07



A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Blackpool and its Enduring Brand Strength

Blackpool is a strong and resilient brand with a resonance amongst consumers of all ages but more needs to be understood about its place in today's market.

Blackpool must build on the high levels of goodwill felt toward the town and find new ways to tell its story that will create and sustain emotional connections using the past, present and future. A key part of this is to renew the reputation of Blackpool as a resort that offers fun and value for money. It is vital to inspire those who visit or live here to engage enthusiastically and spontaneously in 'buzz marketing' on Blackpool's behalf.

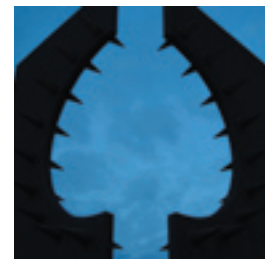
As well as utilising Blackpool's past brand, there needs to be expansion into new arenas, especially business, green and cultural tourism, to forge a new dimension to the Blackpool brand.

Recognising the timeframe for the delivery of the major transformational projects, we must focus on re-engaging with the 7 million people who live in the Northwest. Blackpool needs to aspire to become a 'global bench-mark' for successful destination marketing, utilising new and emerging communication and media technology.

Key Objectives:

- › Establish the brand vision of Blackpool and ensure future development and marketing activity is always guided by such understanding to reinforce this brand.
- › Commit to the sustainable development of annual events that will become, over time, regionally and nationally significant, including for example:
 - A Celebration of British Comedy
 - International Festival of Music and Dance
 - The UK's Biggest Beach Party
 - Blackpool's Gay Pride Festival

- › Others ideas include more ballroom dancing events, brass bands, MG cars exhibitions, more vehicle rallies, fringe theatre, jazz festivals, 'Festival of puppetry and visual theatre', 'Return of the Sun' winter lights festival and a 'Festival of Fire and Light'. We will be encouraging more ideas to come forward.
- › Extend the celebration of the Illuminations 'Switch-On' and exploit opportunities such as February Half Term to extend the brand beyond the traditional season.
- › Adopt a more sophisticated and segmented approach to marketing Blackpool that communicates the range of visitor propositions to the appropriate audience.
- › Use market research and visitor profiling to identify new niches in the market and adapt the Blackpool brand towards catering for these.
- › Tackle the problems associated with alcohol misuse and encourage a shift away from harmful binge drinking culture and stag & hen weekends.
- › Evaluate the effectiveness and value for money of the current Marketing Consortium; consider including a broader range of businesses and organisations and refocusing the type of marketing towards strengthening New Blackpool's brand.
- › Improve the quality of accommodation stock by implementing better systems of quality assurance, inspection and awards, as well as building upon the efforts we have already made towards improving accommodation, inside and out.
- › Implement improved sharing of visitor information through technological solutions to database management and customer relationship marketing to allow visitor profiling and help us meet their needs.



"Kites fly highest against the wind."

Sir Winston Churchill



- › Ensure that Blackpool is aligned to the Regional Business Tourism Strategy to fully exploit its capacity for regional and national conferences, incorporating conference trade into our brand.
- › Actively support Blackpool's Heritage Strategy and specifically, its bid for World Heritage Status.
- › Investigate a digital or internet protocol (IPTV) television channel that will broadcast from Blackpool, promoting what's going on in the town 365 days of the year and reaching across the UK and elsewhere in Europe, therefore circulating Blackpool's brand far and wide. Also, look into using Podcasting and SMS text messaging in marketing campaigns.



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Blackpool and its Enduring Brand Strength

Objectives	Actions	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Date
Four Major Events	Provide budget through funding to establish four regional/ national events	Council	NWDA, LBTB, Culture Northwest, Northwest Vision, Business Forum, Police	Establishment of Events Strategic Group that agree events programme Procure funding from Bid to the NWDA and others	Apr 07
Marketing Consortium	Expand the number of businesses actively participating	BVEF	Council	Minimum of six	Oct 06
	Engage with NWDA/LBTB/ Visit Britain	BVEF	NWDA, LBTB, Visit Britain	Agreed future strategy	Nov 06
Marketing Strategy	Create 'short-breaks' campaign	Council	LBTB, NWDA, Visit Britain	Brochure/on-line	May 07
	Create coach company campaign	Blackpool Travel Trade Group	Business Forum, LBTB, NWDA	Agree and deliver campaign	Apr 07
	Establish plan to fully exploit new technologies including the internet	Marketing Consortium	LBTB, NWDA, Visit Britain	Visit Blackpool consistently in top ten search engine results	Apr 07
Market Intelligence	Design and implement shared database of useful cross-cutting information from local businesses for CRM solutions	Council	Business Forum, LBTB, Visit Britain	500 business-connected, 3 targeted e-mailings	Jun 07
	Establish ongoing consumer and market research programme	Council	Marketing Consortium, LBTB, NWDA	Monthly dissemination	Oct 07
Blackpool TV	Explore the viability of a digital/ IP TV broadcasting and promoting to UK/ Europe	Council	Northwest Vision, NWDA	Utilisation of new media to promote Blackpool	Jun 07
Brand Vision	Commission evidence based research to analyse the standing of the Blackpool Brand and provide future direction	Council	LBTB, NWDA	Brand vision research and qualitative focus groups resulting in a Vision and Action Plan	Apr 07
Accommodation Quality	Improve the quality of the accommodation stock	Council	LBTB, Visit Britain	Increase extent of quality assurance and accreditation	Ongoing

Welcome, Surprise and Delight Visitors

Blackpool needs to inspire people to talk about the town with positive enthusiasm and passion and to do this we need to constantly find ways to welcome, surprise and delight.

Key Objectives:

- Visitor Information Strategy – improve the way in which information is provided to visitors before and during their visit and focus on directing visitors to the best of the best.
 - Set new service and operational standards for public or licensed transport provision, specifically including taxis, coaches, buses and trams and extending to their depots and pick-up points, to improve visitor experience.
 - Create and manage our public spaces in ways that set national and international 'benchmarks' to improve Blackpool's green environment.
 - Ensure parking provision and operating policies reflect the needs of the visitor economy.
 - Focus on actions that ensure Blackpool is clean and safe at all times.
 - Establish a programme of street entertainment of international quality.
 - Introduce a sustainable programme of firework displays as an impressive additional attraction.
- Introduce an 'ambassador' programme at key events to welcome visitors, welcome investors and promote conference trade.
 - Improve the look of the primary entry points into Blackpool to create a better first impression, including adding 'Welcome' arches and welcome flags, smartening up the area along Lytham Road south of the Town Centre and Yeadon Way (key routes) and smartening up Lonsdale Road Coach Park.



A Great Place to Visit – a better place to live

Welcome, Surprise and Delight Visitors

Objectives	Actions	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Date
Visitor Information	Develop 'welcome' for coaches	Council	Business Forum, Police	Increase volume of coach trade	Aug 07
Taxis	Establish a Taxi Quality Partnership that will drive through mandatory licensing conditions and rigorously police	Council	Business Forum, BLTOA, Learning and Skills Council, Police	Improved visitor perception and adopted standard of quality	Aug 07
Buses, trains, coaches and trams	Agree and implement minimum quality standards of service	Council	Business Forum, Operators, Learning and Skills Council	Improve quality of service and transport usage	2007
Public realm	'Clean- Up' Blackpool Campaign	Council	Local media, Business Forum	Improve visitor perceptions	Ongoing
	Reinvigorate Promenade through the People's Playground competition	ReBlackpool	Council, Business Forum, QMI		
	Restoration of Stanley Park	Council	NWDA		
	Continued commitment to Public Art	Council	NWDA, Culture Northwest,		
	Smarten up entry points into town	Council	ReBlackpool		
Car parking	Establish visitor friendly operating policy	Council	Business Forum	Policy agreed and implemented	Apr 07 Apr 07
	Consideration of provision of edge of town 'park and ride' facilities	Council	ReBlackpool, NWDA, NWRA, GONW, operators	Facilities meet future needs	
Street Entertainment	Establish licensing policy and promote participation	Council	Business Forum, Culture Northwest, local colleges	Programme of activity in key locations	Apr 07
Fireworks	Hold the World Firework Championships	Council	Business Forum	Funding for annual event	Apr 07
Blackpool Welcome Programme	Introduce volunteer programme and ambassadors	Council	Business Forum, English Heritage	Improved visitor perceptions	Sept 07
	Support the 'Welcome to Excellence' training programmes	LBTB	Council	Collaborative training provision	2007

Investment in Enterprise, Infrastructure and People



Blackpool needs to become more enterprising and ambitious – characterised by more innovative and productive local businesses, sustained by skilled and confident local people. World-class resorts rely on world-class service and this requires motivated and capable people.

Blackpool needs to develop enterprise skills for people considering starting businesses, thereby enhancing entrepreneurship and knowledge-based business start-up, particularly amongst young people. A better understanding of the nature and relative importance of the visitor economy for Blackpool should be reflected in the local school curriculum. Also, we must make sure local businesses directly benefit from investment and growth in the visitor economy and therefore create a wider choice of higher value, year-round employment opportunities.

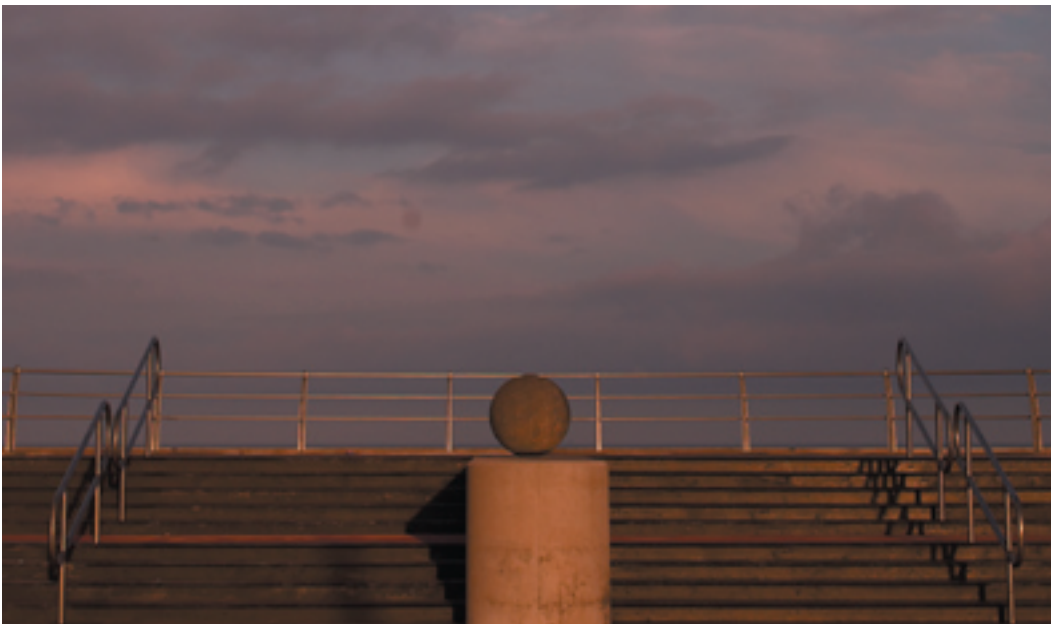
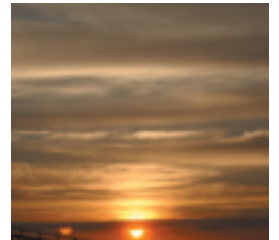
Critically, Blackpool needs to develop improved management and leadership skills in the service sector as well as corporate social responsibility and environmental management skills. We need to improve communication between all business sectors and stimulate engagement to ensure a strong united voice represents the visitor economy. We need to instill a sense of local commitment and ambition in the workforce to give people a personal stake in Blackpool's future, encouraging better services and attitudes from within Blackpool.

Key Objectives:

- › Secure resources from the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) to help embed a new enterprise culture, tackling a range of underperformance from schools to small business growth, stimulated by the transformational challenge and opportunities of the visitor economy.
- › Development of a Skills and Employment Strategy to support the anticipated growth of key assets including hotels, casinos, bars, restaurants, taxis, trams, buses and the airport.
- › Encourage specific industry support for the growth of the regional gaming academy at Blackpool and the Fylde College.
- › Establish a coaching and mentoring programme for local businesses involving local young people, especially school leavers and include an induction to New Blackpool's brand.
- › Develop a 'Visitor First' programme that encourages visitor-dependent businesses to adopt best practice and invest in new products, services and facilities, drawing on the experience of the Tourism Support Bureau, Invest in the Best and Lancaster University's Marketing Toolkit.
- › Share commercial success stories such as hotel developments and exploit these as 'benchmarks' to encourage new private sector investment.
- › Support the renaissance of the Illuminations via new investment and sponsorship initiatives within a framework of environmental sustainability.
- › Support the renaissance of the Blackpool Tram System via new investment and sponsorship initiatives within a framework of environmental sustainability.

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- › Purposefully exploit the opportunity offered by Blackpool International Airport to connect Blackpool to business and residential communities regionally, nationally and internationally.
- › Facilitation by ReBlackpool of the resort's Master Plan for regeneration, including development of the Conference Leisure Quarter, Talbot Gateway and renewal of the seafront as the 'Peoples Playground'.
- › Support for the development of a Higher Education Centre to assist local people and businesses to acquire skills to contribute and benefit from the New Blackpool.
- › Secure sponsorship and private investment – £20 million over three years – to facilitate improvements to infrastructure, human resources, attractions and accommodation. Consider offering financial incentives to do this.



Investment in Enterprise, Infrastructure and People

Objectives	Actions	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Date
Skills Development	Develop an overarching skills strategy that encompasses all aspects of visitor economy	Council	Learning and Skills Council, NWDA, Business Forum	Adopted strategy	Apr 07
	Enhance the quality of existing provision of food/beverage training in Blackpool, beginning with the new training academy on Springfield Road	Council	BTFC, Business Forum, Learning and Skills Council, NWDA	Improved culinary training programmes	Oct 06
	Promote linkage between performing arts within the curriculum of all local schools and employment opportunities	Council	Culture Northwest, Arts Council, local schools	Pathway into local employment	Nov 06
	Work with regional and national agencies towards co-ordinating skills and business support	LBTB	Council, Regional Tourism Forum	Establish mutually beneficial partnerships and action plan	Nov 06
Regional Gaming Academy	Support the further development of the Academy to be recognised as a National Centre of Excellence	Council	Learning and Skills Council, Business Forum	National Centre of Excellence	Sep 07
Business Coaching and Mentoring	Set up an informal 'buddy' network of successful businesses to deliver support to 'rising stars'	Business Forum	Council, BiC, Business Link, Town Centre BID	Agreed model in operation	Apr 07
Business Development	Establish business support programme using Lancaster University Marketing Toolkit model	Council	NWDA, Lancaster University Tourism Centre	Agreed Approach Launch Programme	Nov 06 Apr 07
	Advocate public sector funding support for heritage buildings in private ownership	Council	NWDA, GONW, DCMS	Ministerial response	Apr 07
Share Business Success	Communicate successful investment ventures to encourage further local investment	ReBlackpool	Council, Business Forum, local banks	Agreed approach and delivery of first event	Nov 06
Illuminations	Bid for £500k to fund the 'Festival of Light'	Council	Business Forum	Establish event in the Town Centre	Feb 07
Sponsorship	Attract £20m over three years to support Illuminations, trams and events	Council	Business Forum, NWDA	Secure major sponsor	Apr 07
	Secure resources from LEGI	Blackpool LSP	Council, Business Forum, LBTB, Chamber of Commerce, NWDA, Business Link	Resources to nurture entrepreneurialism	Dec 06
Alcohol misuse	Work with Blackpool NHS' Alcohol Harm Strategy to increase awareness of the dangers associated with binge drinking, and discourage this culture	Blackpool NHS	Council	Measurable reduction in the problem	Nov 07

Leadership and the Visitor Economy

The future vibrancy of Blackpool's visitor economy depends on strong leadership across all sectors; public, private and voluntary.

Blackpool Council has a responsibility to ensure a good understanding within its organisation of the impact of public policies and subsequent actions across the visitor economy.

Community and business leaders also need to engage positively on the basis of joint responsibility for this strategy and the agreed actions leading from it.

Blackpool must recognise its place and role sub-regionally, regionally and nationally and take responsibility for maintaining positive and productive working relationships with all its partners. This includes our Wyre and Fylde neighbours, who will be key in expanding sub-regional attractions and promoting the social, economic and environmental changes needed to make Blackpool 'a great place to visit – a better place to live'.

Blackpool will act as a 'gateway' to the region that has a rich and diverse array of distinctive natural, cultural and historical assets. We should embrace the opportunity to be passionate about this.

Key Objectives:

- › Establish an effective cross-sector Business Forum that is capable of segmenting its communication and engagement strategy to capture the businesses that are dependent on the success of the visitor economy. This Forum will review the implementation and monitoring of this Strategy and its agreed actions. The lead for the Business Forum will be the Blackpool Business Leadership Group (BBLG), a new independent group that will sit above and recruit its ongoing membership from the business community.
- › Strengthen existing links with key sub-regional, regional, national and international partners including major cities, local towns, NWDA, GONW, Visit Britain, DCMS, DTI and the EU, to secure stronger partnerships.
- › Engage proactively with key regional and sub-regional partners in the development and implementation of strategy in key areas such as business tourism, skills and events.
- › Support the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board in developing joint initiatives with other sub-regional tourist boards to attract visitors to the region as a whole.



Leadership and the Visitor Economy

Objectives	Actions	Lead	Partners	Outcomes	Date
Business Forum	Establish a business forum to guide the implementation of this action plan	BBLG	Council, BiC, LBTB, private sector	Full private sector support for visitor economy	Jan 2007
Regional / National Networking	Map networking priorities and allocate responsibility for contact and feedback	Council	LBTB, Visit Britain, Culture Northwest, NWRA, NWDA, GONW, Fylde and Wyre Councils	Complete mapping	Apr 07
Regional / Sub-regional Strategies	Ensure development of all local strategies impacting on visitor economy	Council	LBTB, NWDA, GONW	Business Tourism Strategy adopted and launched	Dec 06
Blackpool International Airport	Promote the airport as 'gateway' to Northwest	Airport, Council	Business Forum, LBTB, NWDA	Marketing action plan in place	From 2006
Regional Tourist Boards	Establish quarterly forum for sharing information and future activity	LBTB	Council, NWDA, Visit Britain	First event	Nov 06



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Implementing the strategy

Our Commitment

Harnessing existing initiatives and networks to develop an integrated and sustainable approach in implementing the Visitor Economy Strategy will be critical to its success.

The strategy recognises the importance of linking benefits to the economy with support for local and sub-regional communities and their cultural aspirations and a recognition and integration of the need to protect and enhance the environment.

It is only at the local level that real change can be brought about. The framework for action reflects the need for local champions, building on existing strengths to create a long-term, sustainable future for Blackpool.

Successful destinations must also work with neighbouring and like-minded destinations and therefore it is important to set this strategy in the context of not only developing Blackpool's visitor economy but also that of the Fylde coast, Lancashire and the Northwest as a whole.

Having established our strategy and framework for action it is essential that we deliver real outcomes. The framework will be monitored by the Business Forum and the Strategy will be updated and reviewed annually.



Annex 1



"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."

Henry Ford

The following are the key organisations and agencies that this strategy seeks to engage to enable Blackpool to deliver the framework of partnership and action plan that it is committed to:

Northwest Development Agency

The Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) is the strategic leader of the economic development of the region.

The region expects to receive £167billion of public resource in the next three years; £72billion will be allocated to economic development and regeneration over which the NWDA will have some level of influence including direct grant funding of £1.3billion.

Regional Economic Strategy

The NWDA has the specific responsibility for leading the development of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The RES is the rolling 20-year strategy that is shaping the future economic direction of the region.

The current RES has a particular focus on activities during the years 2006-09 and is linked to other policy frameworks including the Regional Spatial Strategy (which includes the Regional Transport Strategy), the Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Health Improvement Plan.

Within the RES there is explicit support for Blackpool as a regional and national tourism asset that is in urgent need of economic and social regeneration. The delivery of the Blackpool Master Plan is identified as a key transformational project.

Specifically, the NWDA endorses Blackpool as the priority location for regional casino development in the UK, supports the growth of Blackpool International Airport and investment in public realm, green space and environmental quality.

Regional Tourism Strategy

As strategic leader of economic development in the region the NWDA is also responsible for guiding the Regional Tourism Strategy (RTS).

The RTS identifies Blackpool's economic revival as a key 'signature project'; a capital-intensive tourism project that will have a major impact on the region's performance as a tourist destination.

Other Regional Strategies

The NWDA is also responsible for bringing forward a number of other key regional strategies that are relevant to the renaissance of Blackpool's visitor economy.

Specifically, emerging strategies include Business Tourism, Major Events, Visitor Information, Skills, World Heritage and Business Development.

Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board

Lancashire and Blackpool combine as one of five sub-regional partners that, along with the NWDA, the Northwest Regional Assembly, Culture Northwest, Visit Britain and the private sector, form the Regional Tourism Forum. The Forum is in part responsible for the delivery of the RTS.

The Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB) has the responsibility to facilitate and support the growth and development of tourism within the context of the RTS in partnership with a wide range of private and public sector stakeholders, including local authorities.

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Culture Northwest

Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Government department that also has responsibilities for tourism and gambling policy, and the NWDA, Culture Northwest (CNW) is the Cultural Consortium for the Northwest.

Culture Northwest champions the whole spectrum of cultural and creative interests in the region, including tourism, sports, arts, heritage, museums, libraries and archives, and creative industries.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

Museum, Libraries and Archives, North West (MLA) is the regional strategic development agency working to promote and develop the social, cultural and economic potential of the sector and its contribution to learning, inclusion and community cohesion.

North West Vision

North West Vision assists film-makers, production companies, cultural/arts organisations, facilities companies and training providers with support and funding to establish and encourage talent and the development of the film and television industry in the region.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England works to get more art to more people in more places. They develop and promote the Arts across England, acting as an independent body at arm's length from Government. Between 2006 and 2008, they will invest £1.1 billion of public money into supporting the Arts.

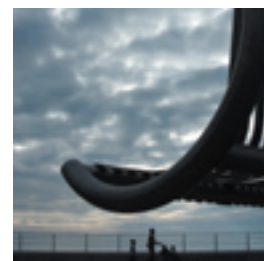
English Heritage

English Heritage exists to protect and promote England's spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood.

ReBlackpool, Urban Regeneration Company

The UK Government supports Blackpool's Master Plan and in February 2005, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) granted Blackpool an Urban Regeneration Company (URC) as a mechanism for turning the plan into reality.

The URC, ReBlackpool, is now established and in partnership with the NWDA and Blackpool Council, will facilitate the delivery of major regeneration projects including the Conference Leisure Quarter.



Blackpool Council

The Council has responsibility for the following aspects of the visitor economy:

- › Destination Marketing
- › Welcoming visitors to Blackpool in a positive and exuberant way
- › Visitor management and signage
- › Public realm and public art
- › Developing and operating libraries, museums, galleries and sports facilities
- › Managing park, open spaces and leisure facilities
- › Trading Standards and Environmental Health
- › Community Safety and Licensing
- › Street Cleaning, Parking and Planning
- › Sustainability in attractions and infrastructure, including transport
- › Promoting an understanding of the visitor economy across the Council
- › Integrating the visitor economy with economic development plan and other strategies
- › Working with the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Quality Management Initiative (QMI) to enhance the quality of the town centre and sea front
- › Investing in and developing the Illuminations

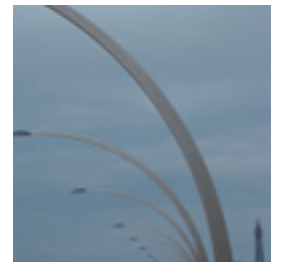


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Annex 2

Abbreviations

AC	Arts Council
BBLG	Blackpool Business Leadership Group
BC	Blackpool Council
BiC	Business in the Community
BLTOA	Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators' Association
BMC	Blackpool Marketing Consortium
BTFC	Blackpool and the Fylde College
BVEF	Blackpool Visitor Economy Forum
CNW	Culture Northwest
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EH	English Heritage
GONW	Government Office Northwest
LBTB	Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board
LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LUMS	Lancaster University Management School
MC	Marketing Consortium
MLAC	Museums, Libraries and Archive Council
NWDA	Northwest Development Agency
NWRA	Northwest Regional Assembly
NWV	Northwest Vision
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VB	Visit Britain



Annex 3

Thanks to all the partners and consultees who gave us their feedback on the initial version of this Strategy.

- › Alan Heywood, Tourism Centre, Lancaster University
- › Alexa Brain, Drivers Jonas on behalf of Leisure Parcs Limited
- › Alison Gilmore, Imperial Hotel
- › Andy Howe, Blackpool NHS
- › Annabel Hammond, Service Integration Officer, Corporate Policy
- › Bernard Booth, Principle Youth Officer, Education
- › Chris Sullivan, Leisure Parcs
- › Councillor Robert Wynne
- › David Biesterfeld, Nobel Organisation
- › David Cam, Blackpool Pleasure Beach
- › Georgia Hayes, Ribby Hall Village
- › Graham Page, Group Planning Officer
- › James Berresford, NWDA
- › Jon Walton, Jobcentre Plus
- › Julie Rivas, Sea Life Centre
- › Karl Turner, Hilton Hotel
- › Lynn Cole, Blackpool Combined Association
- › Mike Wilkinson, Chief Executive, LBTB
- › Nigel Hanson, Town Centre Organisation
- › Paul Iles, Grand Theatre
- › Peter Wright, DeVere Hotel
- › Phillip Brown, Premier Holiday Association
- › Steve Pye, Federation of Small Businesses
- › Tom Pridmore, Wyre Borough Council
- › Viv Wood, Fylde Borough Council

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