

# Council Plan 2019–2024

## Progress Update



# Contents

Foreword.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Our Council Plan .....	4
<b>Communities: Creating Stronger Communities and Increasing Resilience</b> .....	6
Improving Outcomes for Young People.....	9
Health and Social Care .....	11
Supporting Families.....	13
Increasing Resilience.....	14
<b>Improving Housing</b> .....	16
<b>Climate emergency: Addressing the Climate Emergency</b> .....	19
<b>The Economy: Maximise Growth and Opportunity Across Blackpool</b> .....	22
Visitor Experience – Tourism and culture.....	24
Infrastructure and Regeneration .....	26
Enterprise, Skills and Economic Inclusion.....	28
<b>Addressing inequalities and promoting equality through our values</b> .....	30
<b>A platform to deliver: ensuring a resilient organisation</b> .....	31
<b>How we’ll deliver on our commitments</b> .....	32

# Foreword

People shape places and places shape people. The council is in a unique position to help on both counts – driving forward a modern vision of Blackpool, its economy and renewing its position as the premier seaside resort in the UK, while also providing the help, support and opportunities for local people to make the most of their lives.

The world is constantly changing, but there are times when the pace and scale of change is greater. The past two years, with the world in the grip of COVID-19, has been one of those periods. The world in which the 2019-24 Council Plan was published has substantially altered and it is important that we reflect on those changes and consider our priorities and our plans and the progress that we have made.

Too often, Blackpool is described by the relatively negative life outcomes of its people. In such discussions, Blackpool is used to represent places that have been ‘left behind’ or areas in need of ‘levelling up’ – both terms that obscure the national policy choices that led to the situation. These terms also give an impression that Blackpool has been passively waiting for rescue. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Over the past decade, we have shown that we can do things differently. We have worked creatively and built partnerships, both locally, nationally and internationally, to change things in the town for the better. Working on our own and in partnership with others, we have shown that we can make a positive difference to the town and its people. The Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership and its town prospectus are emblematic of our collective drive and commitment to make things better for the town and its residents.

You can see the difference we have made most obviously in the regeneration of the town’s infrastructure and in the new homes we have built. More subtly, you can see it in the growing confidence of external investors in the town, with the new high quality branded hotels or the ambitious plans for Blackpool Central. You also see it in the support directly provided to children, families and adults in need of help, and in the work we do in partnership with other local services and local people to support the learning, well-being and opportunities available for all people in the town.

In the first period covered by the 2019 to 2024 plan we have delivered many of the building blocks for transforming and modernising the town. For the remaining period of the plan, we will strive to ensure that local people and businesses obtain the maximum benefit possible from these changes – this was always a core purpose of the plan and the past two years has only increased its importance. We will also invest in plans for our local communities, something that we have already begun with the Revoe and Claremont masterplans and we will extend this approach to key areas of South Shore over the coming years.

Since 2019 there have been many alarming changes, nationally and internationally. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered daily life for much of the past two years, while changes in the global climate have become more tangible and threatening. We have never been more connected to the wider world, while sometimes also being isolated. More than anything the last two years have emphasised the importance of people, family and community; and demonstrated what can be achieved through collective action harnessed to strong purpose.



**Cllr Lynn Williams**  
Leader of the Council



**Neil Jack**  
Chief Executive

# Introduction

The pace of change in Blackpool has been rapid in recent years. Post-COVID, our intent remains the same: to develop Blackpool as the UK's number one family resort, to grow the local economy and to make the lives of Blackpool people better. This refresh of the plan considers the progress we have made since 2019 in delivering the projects described in the original plan, the challenges we still face and our objectives for years ahead.

Between the mid-2000s and the end of this plan, we will have delivered over £1bn of investment in the town. We have stopped the fall in the number of staying visitors, and given the private sector confidence to invest in the town. We have improved the town's infrastructure: the defences, the tramways, trams and buses, the promenade, the Tower and the Winter Gardens. In the past three years we have built a new conference centre, begun the tram extension and its connection to Blackpool North train station. We have also seen new hotels opening and further ones under construction. We have arrested the decline of the town's economy while putting in place the building blocks for a brighter future.

We have also sought to broaden the local economy beyond tourism, to push up average wages and reduce dependence on seasonal employment, with the co-creation of two Enterprise Zones in the wider Fylde Coast which seek to deliver 6,500 extra jobs during their lifespan. We have also directly sought and encouraged new employers into the town, such as the Department of Work and Pensions, which will bring in 3,000 jobs into the heart of Blackpool. Over the next three years we will continue our drive towards a more rounded, resilient

economy, with a variety of jobs to suit all skills, offering opportunities for local people and enabling them to live in the town as their career develops. The council's work in the local housing market has been innovative and is nationally recognised. We have demolished or refurbished hundreds of poor quality houses and replaced them with quality affordable homes for rent and sale. We have also sought to directly improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector with a targeted approach to rogue landlords.

The last three years have also seen a transformation of the services we provide for the people of Blackpool. The original 2019-24 plan was written at a difficult time for the council's Children's Services – but huge strides have been made since, with the council investing heavily and focusing strongly and consistently on the quality of services that the council and its partners provide to children and families. We remain steadfast on our improvement journey, but the progress that has been made to date is clear from the recent positive inspection of local Youth Justice Services, the confidence of the government appointed Commissioner in the council's ability to continue to improve children's social care; and more widely in the



achievement of local primary schools and in the growing strength of local schools in recent Ofsted inspections.

Looking at wider services for people, we have supported care for older people and more vulnerable members of the local community through the pandemic – and we are particularly proud of the work the council has done to support those most in need through the national lockdowns and beyond.

Our engagement with outside partners, both in terms of research and delivering services for the town's residents remains strong. We continue our partnership with the NSPCC, A Better Start (now in its sixth year), in support of early development of children and parenting support for families. We have also built on the success of the lottery-funded HeadStart initiative, in particular its innovative work in redesigning services in partnership with those who have received support (co-production).

In the past two years, we have co-produced a new approach to children's social care with parents, Blackpool Families Rock, and we are currently using the approach to support a redesign of services for parents with a high likelihood of their children entering care as new-borns - a particular challenge for the town. We also continue to work with the DfE and all local education partners in the Opportunity Area – now extended into a further year, which has helped support the reduction in permanent exclusions across the town and enabled more children to attend local primary and secondary schools.

Since 2019, when the plan was first published, there have been many changes, but in spite of the challenges that the town has faced, we are in a better place than before. The programme of investment and renewal in the town's physical structure and appearance is reaping tangible benefits and the council's (and its partners) renewal and improvement of services for people is improving the outcomes for local people.



The critical role of local services in supporting those most in need has been one of the most important lessons of the past two years of the pandemic. We believe in public services and we are proud of the services that we provide. We will continue to deliver for our community, providing help to those who need it. If we are best placed to deliver services and lead work ourselves, we will. But we also know that the council can't do it all and we will continue to work in partnership to deliver better services and outcomes for local people.

The surge in visitors to the town during 2021 shows that Blackpool remains Britain's number one family resort.

The town's ongoing regeneration offers more opportunities for local people and we will strive to support local people to take advantage of those opportunities.

We want more people in Blackpool to have a good job that pays a real living wage and we will work with other local partners to ensure that workers are treated fairly. We want people to be healthy and live well. We want people to live in good quality homes. We know how important early childhood is. We are committed to helping local parents to raise children who aspire to the best things in life and have the knowledge and skills to reach their goals.

# Our Council Plan



# Retaining our position as the UK's Number One family resort, with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town

Values: Accountability, Compassion, Fairness, Quality Services, Trustworthiness


 **Communities**  
Creating stronger communities & increasing resilience


 **The Economy**  
Maximising growth & opportunity across Blackpool

 Health & Social Care

 Improving Housing

 Visitor Experience - Tourism & Culture

 Improving outcomes for young people

 Supporting Families

 Enterprise, Skills & Economic Inclusion

 Infrastructure & Regeneration

Addressing **Economic** and **Health** Inequalities as part of our Pandemic Recovery  
Delivering our **Climate Action Plan**, route to net zero and maximising social value

A Resilient Organisation: Innovative, Efficient and Customer Focussed, with great staff and strong governance

Working in partnership with our companies and other local organisations

Equalities: Fair Treatment, diversity in decision-making celebration increased respect, a representative and understanding workforce

# Communities







# Communities: Creating Stronger Communities & Increasing Resilience

Our people and communities are at the centre of life in Blackpool. Put simply, we aim to make the lives of local people better. We will provide help as needed, and focus in particular on early help, to prevent more serious challenges emerging.

We know that a high proportion of local children, families and adults face major challenges in their daily lives - higher than in any other town in England. We are committed to making a positive difference in their lives – enhancing the opportunities available, raising aspirations, improving their health and well-being and increasing their ability to make positive choices about their lives.

The 2019-24 plan detailed three flagship projects – A Better Start, HeadStart and the Department for Education-funded Opportunity Area – which marked a decisive shift towards enabling future generations and creating the right conditions for their success. The projects have continued over the past three years, with the Opportunity Area project extended into a fourth year, A Better Start now in its sixth year and HeadStart formally coming to an end later in 2022, with several key aspects now included in ongoing mainstream service and service design.

The 2019-24 plan provided less detail about the vital services that the council provides or commissions for local people in need of help. The pandemic has made it very clear how important these services are to people and to wider society and we are proud of our services that help local people in need.

During the pandemic the council's Adult Social Care services played a critical role in supporting those who provide help for older people and vulnerable people – ensuring that they continued to receive the support they need, while also supporting the local care sector itself through the most difficult period it has ever experienced.

As in the original plan, our focus on building on local strengths remains, whether at an individual level or a service level. We wish to support local people in addressing their own problems, using their strengths and those of their wider family and friends. We also want to work with all local services to form an effective network of early support for children, families and adults – so that help is available at the right time from the right place and does not require escalation or referral for assessment and classification before help is provided.

Across the town, we wish to create the right conditions for community life and mental health to flourish – something our Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy will address through creating and restoring green spaces, linking them together better to encourage their use. We also know how critically important having a good home is for all people and we will continue with our innovative approach to the renewal and creation of high quality affordable homes that enable local people to remain in the town as they prosper, while also attracting others to live and work in the town.

The past 2 years have shown the importance of where you live and what's on your doorstep, both in terms of the services that are available but also in the condition of your local area. We have invested in street-cleaning and improved local parks. We have worked to protect and enhance the local environment, using enforcement where necessary and will continue to do so. We are using Social Value in our purchasing power to secure commitments in contracts from providers that deliver benefits to our communities and their spaces.



## Making life better for everyone by focusing on prevention

There are many people in Blackpool who need help in their daily lives. Many of the services most critical to supporting people's health and wellbeing and their safety are either commissioned or directly provided by the council. Children's Services works with over 4,000 children across a year and Adult Social Care services commission or provide support for just under 4,500 adults.

Most of the council's funds are spent in support of people in need, both children and adults, and over recent years we have worked hard to improve the support we provide to children and families. We have made good progress in the quality and impact of the services we deliver both directly and in partnership. This improvement is now evident in the outcomes being achieved by children and young people and by how Blackpool's services are viewed by external partners, such as the Department for Education and Ofsted and other inspectorates.

We noted in the 2019-24 plan that there would be further changes, pressures and opportunities for adult social care to which we would need to respond. As we predicted there will be further changes in how health and care services are to be provided over the next few years, with the creation of Integrated Care Systems (from April 2021), which divides England into 42 areas, each with its own budget and responsibility for the better co-ordinating health and social care help for those in need. Blackpool is part of the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICS. We stated in the 2019-24 plan that our approach would remain steady: working closely with health services to challenge traditional ways of working, maximising the use of resources to support people in the community to be as independent as possible, make sure people who are in need of services are safe and supported and are able to play a meaningful part in their community. This will continue to be our approach.





# Communities: Improving Outcomes for Young People

## By 2024, we will:

Continue to implement the NSPCC - led A BetterStart initiative, improving life chances for 0-3 year olds



### UPDATE:

A Better Start is now in its sixth year and, in spite of the pandemic, in the past year has delivered four successful outreach schemes focusing on; Getting Ready for School; Winter Advocacy; New Parents; and Toddlers, which supported over 2,000 families. The initiative has been critical in developing local awareness about the critical importance of the first 1,000 days of a child's life and has been instrumental in increasing the number of visits health visitors make to young children. While wider impact from the project on children's outcomes is not yet fully evident, there has been consistent improvement in the level of development at 12 months of infants in the town. Progress to date has been harder to achieve amongst the families facing the most acute challenges.

Improve the experiences and outcomes of young people in our services by improving relationships between organisations



### UPDATE:

Working closely with partners, we have improved the quality of services for vulnerable children and young people and the outcomes they achieve: there have been substantial reductions in the young people entering the criminal justice system, or custody. We have also worked with school leaders to transform our approach to children at risk of exclusion – reducing permanent exclusion rates by over half and reducing the number of children being educated outside of mainstream primary, secondary and special schools by 50%.

We are working collaboratively with the third sector to review the existing youth provision across the town. Surveys and focus groups with young people have shown a real ownership and connection with their local community and the review will help shape the future of youth provision, with young people placed at the centre of any future plans.



# Communities: Improving Outcomes for Young People

By 2024, we will:

Facilitate a school led system which improves attainment at Key Stage 4



## UPDATE:

Blackpool School Improvement Board has extended its focus to become the Blackpool Education Improvement Board – bringing together all local education leaders under an independent chair and with a 10 year strategy focusing on the two key issues in Blackpool: improving literacy and promoting inclusion in schools. Over recent years, we have seen improving results in Blackpool schools, with Primary schools out-performing the national average. External eyes also judge Blackpool’s schools to be improving – with nearly 90% now judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted and none judged to be inadequate. We expect these improvements to translate to improved attainment at the end of secondary school in coming years and in coming years we will continue to work with central government to improve our education system through the new Education Investment Area initiative.

Development of family hub model in local neighbourhoods for all age engagement and building community resilience



## UPDATE:

Delivery has been delayed by the pandemic, but three Family Hubs are now in place and services are now returning to the Hubs following a year of on/off lockdown. The council’s early help service for families has recently moved to a geographical, place-based approach. The service has also shifted its emphasis to running more courses to support families, especially to support parenting; and on supporting other professionals to work with families. The Family Workers in Schools project has been successful in building the skill and understanding of school staff in relation to the early help assessment and planning process. It is also helping improve the attendance and attainment of children and young people.



# Communities: Health and Social Care

## By 2024, we will:

Implement a new approach to delivering smoking cessation support and initiatives in the town



### UPDATE:

A new innovative community smoking cessation service has been implemented in the town, which complements existing GP and Pharmacy support. Blackpool's Community Stop Smoking Service provides bespoke help for all those who wish to stop smoking, providing free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) at the point of contact. The service reaches out into the community, to local GP surgeries, community spaces, workplaces and uses social media. Blackpool also enables access to an App called 'My Quit Route' for those who prefer to receive help online either through choice or as a result of COVID restrictions.

Shape the work of the council towards delivering the Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy, greening the town



### UPDATE:

We have a tree strategy with a 'right tree in the right place' approach to ensure the council far exceeds its target of planting 10,000 trees by 2029. The Parks service is working closely with parks friends groups across the town to develop plans aimed at improving local green spaces for the local community. As the largest green space in Blackpool and winner of Park of the Year for two years, a 'Stanley Park Masterplan' will be developed collaboratively with key partners in 2022 setting out an ambitious plan to secure external funding to restore and transform the park over the following ten years.



# Communities: Health and Social Care

## By 2024, we will:

Increase physical activity levels amongst local residents to improve their physical, mental and social wellbeing



### UPDATE:

We adopted the Active Lives Strategy in January 2021, which stresses the importance of physical activity for physical, social and mental wellbeing. The strategy includes a number of ambitious objectives requiring collaboration with partners across the town to embed the importance and benefits of 'moving more' as a core theme in services that work directly with local residents. The strategy outlines the need for community engagement and delivery to target those who aren't moving to 'move a bit' and those that 'move a bit' to 'move a bit more'. Leisure service will shift its focus over the next 3 to 5 years to target those who are less active by ensuring that local leisure facilities are seen as a key part of the local community in improving health and wellbeing.

Continue to increase numbers accessing drug and alcohol services at an earlier stage and sustaining a positive outcome



### UPDATE:

We are using a range of initiatives to increase early access to drug and alcohol support. Approaches include the 'Lower My Drinking' app, which encourages people to assess their drinking and make positive changes, with referral to specialist services when needed. Since 2020, 857 people have engaged with the app. For younger people, the Young ADDER project is working with young people with a high level of need to try and tackle issues such as drug use. The service is currently working with 20 young people through the use of assertive outreach and the Lived Experience Team and the delivery of clinics in community settings.



# Communities: Supporting Families

## By 2024, we will:

Reduce numbers of looked after children in a safe, sustainable way through incremental improvements of the social care system



### UPDATE:

The number of children in care has reduced by 12% (80 children) since May 2020, against a rising national trend (up 1%). We have made a substantial investment in children's social care, both in the service itself; and in particular in supporting more children to remain with their families, where possible; and in providing more local homes for those children in our care. Substantial progress has been made in the past two years, but much more still needs to be done.

Work in partnership across Blackpool to review our approach to delivering safeguarding and support for families



### UPDATE:

Too often in the past in Blackpool, children's social care have become too involved, too early and with too many children and families. Blackpool council's approach to working with families has fundamentally changed in the past two years. Blackpool Families Rock is a more positive, strength-based, relationship-based approach and one co-designed with local parents. We have also worked with local partners in reconsidering how we work with local families and when it is right for children's social care to take a leading role, rather than others such as schools, nurseries or health visitors and GP practices who work on a daily basis with children and families.



# Communities: Increasing Resilience

## By 2024, we will:

Deliver whole system change by sustaining the HeadStart Resilience Revolution, increasing mental health resilience amongst 10 to 16 year olds across the town



### UPDATE:

Across the lifetime of the project, 45 schools participated, with over 3,500 primary school children benefiting from resilience-based classes or groups. 475 young people accessed walk and talk counselling in a place of their choice. Over 120 young people benefited from support with self-harm, none of whom subsequently returned to Accident & Emergency. Finally, 27 of our children now have a 'friend for life': a supportive adult that has made a lifetime commitment to the young person. This project has won the UK Youth award for innovation, helped achieve increased school attendance for the young people and no permanent exclusions from school.

Improving the co-ordination of volunteers across the town



### UPDATE:

Local volunteers have been critical in the past 2 years. Hundreds of volunteers dedicate their time and expertise to the most vulnerable every week. Back in March 2020 during the first lockdown, Volunteers Centre Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde worked closely with Blackpool Council's Corona Kindness to offer practical support for people who were isolating and to arrange vital befriending calls to connect with those most in need of social contact. The service has continued since after securing funding from Coronavirus Community Support Fund, as the BFriend Project. Throughout the pandemic the voluntary and community sector have worked together and met online regularly with the Director of Public Health to coordinate their efforts to support our residents and the relationships formed throughout the pandemic period have accelerated the plans to increase coordination and joint working.





# Communities: Increasing Resilience

## By 2024, we will:

Develop a placed-based approach to service delivery in community settings in partnership with public and voluntary sector organisations



### UPDATE:

As part of the wider Blackpool Pride of Place partnership and working with Business in the Community and other local agencies, we are piloting an intensive neighbourhood approach in Claremont. The Claremont Project seeks to better co-ordinate public service support for the local community, while also ensuring that lessons learned are rolled out more widely. Over the last three years we have developed a strong team of residents, public service agencies, business leaders, civil society organisations, young people and council representatives meeting regularly to tackle the challenges that the area faces. Work has focused on practical combination of local services – such as community drop in advice evenings running alongside school parents evening. We are also determined to help the community by supporting vibrant, organic community organisations such as the ‘Magic Club’, which gives local children and young people more support and opportunities.

Stabilise our communities through additional activity to regulate private sector housing, reducing supply and improving quality



### UPDATE:

National government funded Blackpool as one of five pilot areas reviewing the supported housing market, with an emphasis on demand, quality of support, and value for money. The pilots are intended to improve supported housing at a local level, while also providing evidence on what works to guide future policy and regulation. We have now developed new local standards and pathways to ensure that tenants and support providers have much greater clarity over the standards expected, and the council have submitted evidence to the newly formed select committee. There is a high volume of poor quality private rented sector homes in Blackpool and we know that not all of the provision supports tenants with the right stability of tenancy and quality and safety of accommodation. We continue to lobby nationally for better standards and regulation of the private rented sector.



# Improving Housing

By 2024, we will:

Deliver hundreds more affordable new homes across the town



## UPDATE:

My Blackpool Home has grown from zero to over 500 quality affordable homes adding a further 59 homes in 2020/21, despite the pandemic, following an increase of 123 homes in 2019/20. We have also sought and been granted approval by the regulator for a new subsidiary registered provider: Lumen Housing. Lumen Housing has brought forward 16 homes to date, with plans to grow to 80 homes over three years.

In addition to innovative interventions in the local housing market, we continue to set the local standard for good council homes – with Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) providing nearly 4,700 good quality affordable council homes for rent. We have started to build new council housing at scale again, at Troutbeck, and have now started on site for 131 new homes at Grange Park.

During the pandemic BCH was in contact with more than 2,000 vulnerable customers, distributed food parcels at the height of the lockdown and supported vaccination hubs with volunteers, while still maintaining core services to the high level we routinely expect.

Blackpool Coastal Housing use the national Housing Associations Charitable Trust (HACT) model to measure the social value and impact our services and activities have on our customers and local communities. Social Value measures the non-financial impact and benefits, such as an increase in confidence, improved health and wellbeing and social inclusion. In 2020/21 Blackpool Coastal Housing delivered over £1.3m in added social value.

The Grange Park development will provide 131 new homes for affordable rent, comprised of 2 to 6 bed houses, bungalows and new one bed sheltered housing. We reached a number of key milestones recently, with planning permission granted, Homes England funding secured, and a developer appointed. Work started on site with enabling works in October 2021 and groundworks in November. Work will be undertaken in two phases, with 78 units in Phase 1 and a further 53 in Phase 2, with full completion expected in 2024. With the support of the European Social Fund, and council investment, these new homes will have a number of energy saving measures and technologies, including 30 air source heat pumps, in order to reduce the carbon footprint.



Improve the look, feel and environments of our inner ward areas



#### UPDATE:

Working with our wholly owned waste company, ENVECO, we have committed additional funding into the Neighbourhood Environment Action Team (NEAT). This will ensure a greater focus on fly tipping and environmental crime and also increased engagement with local people in helping them to manage their waste better. ENVECO will link and work with Public Protection where more resource is being provided to address environmental protection, anti-social behaviour and poor quality housing issues in these areas.



# Improving Housing

## By 2024, we will:

As part of the pandemic response, since March 2020 we have provided over 700 households with emergency accommodation. At its peak we supported 193 households in temporary accommodation, this figure is now below 70 and changes daily, but the current trend is downward, representing an enormous effort from the Council and partners. Partners from all sectors stood together to provide additional services to those displaced, including food, clothing and support. During the period of the pandemic over 400 households have moved forward into their own tenancy, supported housing, or returned to their family home.

The strong multi-agency approach developed during COVID continues, with key services co-located within housing. This means households with complex needs receive support with physical and mental health, substance misuse, and wider housing support in one place.

Over the past year, we have been able to add new supported housing provision for young adults. The Positive Transitions Pathway (PTP) provides tailored, intensive tenancy management and life coaching for young people leaving care to help them become successful tenants and positive contributors to the community and has been recognised as a national exemplar for delivering housing services to care leavers. The service has recently been enhanced through the opening of William Lyons House (WLH), which provides more intensive support and accommodation for those young people who would struggle living on their own without help.

Blackpool council has long been recognised as a trailblazer for its approach to local housing - and together with our COVID response to homelessness - our achievement was recognised in the UK Housing Awards with Blackpool judged to be 'council of the year' in 2021.

Enable further housing delivery through pro-active assistance to developers, including use of CPO powers where necessary



## UPDATE:

In spite of the pandemic, the council continues to move forward on important housing projects, designed to meet the needs of the residents of the town. Examples from the past six months include approval for 51 properties in Bispham and the release of the former Mountford Centre site for housing. Blackpool is a densely urban town and we need to be creative in developing new homes. Four fifths of the town's urban area is developed and the remaining undeveloped land is largely protected open space providing important local recreation. Balancing the need for more good homes in the town with the needs of existing local communities is never easy, but we will never shirk that challenge.

# Climate emergency





# Climate emergency: Addressing the Climate Emergency

Along with over 300 other Councils, Blackpool has declared a Climate Emergency. This commits us to lead and support local institutions, businesses and people in reducing their carbon footprint. The goal is to be “net zero” by 2030, meaning that any carbon emissions must be balanced by measures that absorb an equivalent amount of carbon gases.

We will continue to put local people at the centre of our plans, not least through the work of the Blackpool Youth Climate Group and the Blackpool Climate Action Partnership, and working with Lancashire Councils on a devolution deal which does justice to our beautiful natural environment. As recommended by our residents’ Climate Assembly, we will seek to achieve net zero in a fair way, advocating for extra support for Blackpool to ensure, nationally, that those best able to do so provide the most support for this transition.

Our Climate Action Plan describes how we will work towards this goal as a Council and borough. Using a “Climate First” approach, we will take into account the impact of our actions on the climate and our natural environment at the very start of planning our services and projects, looking to minimise and remove any negative effects. The Climate Action Partnership will co-ordinate our efforts across the public and private sectors, delivering actions across ten themes:

- Housing
- Buildings and the Built Environment
- Transport, Getting Around and Digital
- Power and Heat
- Cleansing, Food, Water and Waste
- Community Leadership, Communication and Involvement
- Working With Others
- Business
- Natural Environment
- Building Knowledge, Capacity and Financial Resources

We will use a mix of innovative projects, practical interventions, awareness raising and enabling activity to achieve our goal of net zero. Actions already taken include switching to 100% renewable electricity, hosting a Climate Assembly, switching our street lighting to LED, and taking part in a government trial of a new Leyland electric truck to service the Illuminations. We are building net zero into our decision-making processes through Impact Assessments and the development of carbon calculating tools and measures. With the cost of net zero estimated at well over £1 billion, we will need sustained government support to achieve our goal. However, the principles outlined in the Medium Term Financial Sustainability Strategy allow us to seek funding from both public and private sources to deliver projects which give the biggest carbon reductions.





# The Economy







# The Economy: Maximise Growth and Opportunity Across Blackpool

Our plans for the local economy build on the town's preeminent position amongst UK seaside resorts, while also seeking to diversify into new areas. The concrete achievements of our £1bn+ Growth and Prosperity programme over the last three years have laid a solid foundation on which we can build further in the next four years.

In October 2020, Blackpool was one of the first 7 UK towns to obtain a 'Town Deal' with the Government and received £39.5m, the highest amount received by any town in the country. In consultation with local people, businesses and visitors, we pulled together a list of 7 projects which the Council will take forward over the next five years: Blackpool Central Courts relocation, the Multiversity site assembly, a new road to open up development sites on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, the Southern Quarter/Revoe Community Sports Village; the Edge - modern office space for new start-ups and growing local businesses in the centre of town; upgrading Blackpool Illuminations; and the Youth Hub to support young people into training and work.

Over the next five years we will begin to deliver a new world-class Leisure Quarter at Blackpool Central – as well as opening our new conference centre to re-capture a larger slice of this burgeoning market; and opening a new museum. All this will bring extra visitors, who will be able to get around the resort more easily thanks to investment in our transport infrastructure, and stay in a much expanded selection of high quality hotels. And crucially, all of these new developments will create new jobs for local people.

The Enterprise Zone continues to develop and safeguard skilled jobs, with the benefits of skilled work being more widely shared around the borough as phase 2 of the Talbot Gateway moves towards completion – connecting up the town's key transport infrastructure and helping to diversify the local economy and widen the jobs available for people who live in the town.

We know that the town and its economy has been seriously affected by the pandemic and that many of those in the town need support in gaining confidence to enter or re-enter the workplace. We will continue to deliver tailored programmes to deal with the complex factors suppressing people's ability to achieve. In particular, we will focus on young adults whose entry into the world of work has been especially disadvantaged by the pandemic.

Blackpool's digital vision underpins the Council plan by supporting resilient communities, climate change and sustainable economic growth. Blackpool is at the centre of the North Atlantic ultra-high-speed data cable, connecting New York, the U.K. and Northern Europe and the investment in local and international fibre optic



infrastructure is supporting business growth and providing our community with some of the best connectivity in the country. We will use our connectivity advantage to build and strengthen Blackpool's Digital economy, develop new opportunities and support future jobs.



# The Economy: Visitor Experience – Tourism and culture

## By 2024, we will:

Complete development of a new 21st century conference offer at the Winter Gardens, and increase numbers of new conferences



### UPDATE:

The £28 million, state of the art conference centre opened in early 2022. The centre seamlessly integrates with the famous Winter Gardens complex, creating a hub of 12 distinct venues offering almost five acres of connected conference, meeting, event and exhibition space, with the capacity to accommodate up to 7,000 delegates. The new Conference Centre will be the catalyst for the development of 3, 4 and 5 star hotels in the town.

Finalise design and funding, then deliver the Blackpool Museum project



### UPDATE:

Showtown will be Blackpool's new museum of fun and entertainment in which we celebrate the greatest show town on earth by engaging local residents and visitors through fun, laughter and stories, sharing what makes Blackpool special. This c.£14m project is currently in construction and we are on site now working hard to make it happen. Opening in time for Easter 2023, Showtown puts Blackpool centre-stage and reveals its lasting influence on the nation's sense of fun and entertainment. Showtown will be filled with displays, films and fun activities for all the family to enjoy, telling personal stories and highlighting how Blackpool has touched the lives of millions of people. Presenting 800+ objects from Blackpool's internationally significant and extensive collections both physically and digitally alongside loans from the V&A Museum and private owners.



# The Economy: Visitor Experience – Tourism and Culture

## By 2024, we will:

Implement a new model of funding and delivery to sustain the Illuminations, events programme and cultural services



### UPDATE:

The Illuminations has been successful in securing £4.5M from the Town Deal for infrastructure development, new technologies and commissioning national and international artists to contribute to the continued evolution of the illuminations offer. A new Tourism Business Improvement District has been formed designed to provide more co-ordination in promoting the cultural and events offer to local communities and visitors and provide resource for new events and festivals, including Light Pool. In a further enhancement to the tourism offer, Merlin are bringing exciting new developments to the town including a new Peter Rabbit themed explore and play attraction, which is set to add to the growth in confidence we are seeing from the private sector who are bringing investment to our visitor economy.

Deliver the first phase of a £300m investment into Blackpool Central, to include world class visitor attractions, including the UK's first flying theatre



### UPDATE:

The planning application for the initial phases of the project has been approved, including a new 1,306 multi storey car park and creation of the Heritage Quarter. Outline plans have also been approved for the rest of the site, including a major public events square, three indoor entertainment centres, a hotel, restaurants and other new hospitality and leisure spaces. 90% of the 700 people who responded to the public consultation expressed their support for the plans. Construction of the multi-storey car park and Heritage Quarter is expected to begin in 2022 and take around two years to complete.



# The Economy: Infrastructure and Regeneration

By 2024, we will:

Complete the tram extension, transport interchange and new 4\* hotel at Blackpool North station



## UPDATE:

Progress on the £35m Talbot Gateway Phase 2 continues apace, with the delivery of the second phase due to complete in 2022. This phase will witness the opening of our new tram extension, connecting our world famous tramway with Blackpool North rail station to make the town centre one of the most sustainable locations for new investment and jobs. Construction is now well underway for a new Holiday Inn next to the tram interchange, adding 144 additional quality hotel rooms to the centre of town.

Implement the Blackpool Enterprise Zone Delivery Plan, facilitating the growth of energy, aviation and food sectors



## UPDATE:

The Enterprise Zone has attracted over 1,600 jobs to date. Eight developments have been completed since the Zone went live, with another due to be completed in January 2022. Future schemes include a substantial remodelling of the airport to give it a sustainable future, and a solar farm development that could contribute up to 50% of the council's energy needs.



# The Economy: Infrastructure and Regeneration

By 2024, we will:

Deliver extensions to the Central Business District at Talbot Gateway



## UPDATE:

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) have agreed a 25 year lease with Blackpool Council and partner Muse Developments to develop a new regional hub at Talbot Gateway. Work on the site will commence in 2022, over 3,000 DWP staff will move into the Blackpool Hub and Centre for Health and Disability Centre (CHDA) in autumn 2024 in a new £100m office development in Blackpool town centre.

Further invest in highways, including completing the Quality Corridor programme, Yeadon Way upgrade and bridge renewal programme.



## UPDATE:

The Quality Corridor programme has invested £7.84m in giving some of Blackpool's key roads a facelift making streets more welcoming and shops more vibrant. Yeadon Way strengthening and improvement work costing £3.3m was completed in May 2020, maintaining this vital link from the M55 to the heart of Blackpool.

During the early part of the plan, the council purchased Houndshill Shopping Centre & Abingdon Street Market to bring forward major extension and regeneration schemes. We have big plans for Houndshill Shopping Centre, with a new IMAX style cinema and 2 new restaurants due to be completed by the end of December 2022 – designed to diversify the town's offer to residents and visitors. The rejuvenation of Abingdon Street Market is ongoing, due to be completed in mid 2022.



# The Economy: Enterprise, Skills and Economic Inclusion

## By 2024, we will:

Get hundreds of people back into work via job schemes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including HealthWorks and More Positive Together



### UPDATE:

Since 2018 nearly 600 people have been supported into work. More Positive Together has helped secure jobs for 250 people this year (170 of whom were unemployed and 80 were economically inactive), while also helping a further 200 people into education and training as a bridge into jobs.

The Chefs Academy, which was launched in October 2021, is a good example of engaging with young people interested in a career in hospitality and catering. The programme gives young people the skills to either gain employment or progress into further education, while also providing a much needed skilled workforce for the local hospitality industry.

Work with partners to deliver the Opportunity Area programme, raising attainment and aspirations of our young people



### UPDATE:

Support workers in schools have worked with over 300 young people since 2019, supporting improved attendance and behaviour. In addition, 167 young people have engaged with the 'Targeted NEET' (Support) project and been provided with support to develop employability skills, with 33 participating in work experience or internships and 39 progressing into jobs, far surpassing expected figures. The approach used by the project has now been adapted by Positive Steps to work with an older age group of 16 to 24 year olds.



# The Economy: Enterprise, Skills and Economic Inclusion

## By 2024, we will:

Support local businesses to grow and expand by maximising take-up of the Business Loans Fund



### UPDATE:

In early 2019, the Council extended the Business Loans Fund scheme by a further £100million, bringing the total fund to £200million. By the end of September 2021 the fund had committed £134m, created 650 jobs and safeguarded further 1,100 jobs. It has supported investments in hotels, the hospitality business, leisure, manufacturing and marketing amongst other sectors.

Economic inclusion remains one of the biggest challenges facing the town & the council. COVID has had a severe impact and we have moved decisively to support the young people of the town – who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. The national Kickstart programme and Blackpool's Youth Hub both seek to directly address this critical issue. The Youth Hub will be a dedicated base for young people with an advisory team working in partnership with co-located Department for Work & Pensions Work Coaches, local employment and skills providers and employers to connect young people with opportunities for work and learning. Young people's wellbeing, confidence and skills level will all be addressed to help them actively pursue work and paths into learning to help improve their job prospects.

# Addressing inequalities and promoting equality through our values

Everyone at the council is expected to share the following common values:

- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for delivering on the promises we make, and can be challenged if we fall short.
- **Compassion:** We'll be caring and understanding and try to help. We'll also always consider both individual and wider community needs.
- **Quality:** We take pride in our services, and will always seek to deliver the best service possible.
- **Trustworthiness:** We will be honest with you about what we can and can't do and the decisions we make. We will only make promises that we can keep, and we will make sure that your information is kept confidential and securely.
- **Fairness:** Everyone will receive a service appropriate to their circumstances, which treats them with respect.

Our approach to equalities is closely linked to our values. Our equality objectives are as follows:

1. We will deliver **services** that are fair – with more people telling the council that they experience fair treatment by council services.
2. We will ensure that **our staff** are more representative of the community the council serves and equality and diversity is embedded in our culture.
3. We will involve people from diverse backgrounds in **decision making** at every level.
4. We will **celebrate the growing diversity** in Blackpool and increase respect and understanding for all.
5. We will work with partners to help reduce **economic inequality**.
6. We will work with partners to help reduce **health inequality**.

All new council plans and strategies are reviewed to ensure they're tailored to the needs of groups with protected characteristics. The next formal review of the Council's Equality objectives will begin later in 2022.





# A platform to deliver: ensuring a resilient organisation

To deliver on our ambitions the council needs to be efficient and resilient – able to withstand short term and even long-term pressures, as well as ongoing reductions in the funding we have available. The COVID pandemic has ably demonstrated the council’s resilience over the past 2 years. Most of our resilience comes from the planned approach to managing reductions to our funding.

The council had to make a total of over £996m of savings between 2010 and 2021, through a combination of technical savings, policy changes, service transformations and reductions, moving more of our services online, generating more income, encouraging voluntary activity and social action, and seeking to reduce demand on our services in favour of preventative and alternative delivery approaches.

We’ve also adopted new innovative approaches to increase our reach and influence to better enable the council to achieve its strategic aims. Examples of this include our wholly-owned companies, bidding for funding, working in partnership, and making savings whilst transforming our services.

In the past decade, the council has bought or retained ownership of companies where it is in the town’s best interests for us to do so. Companies have greater flexibility than the council in how they operate and in their ability to earn income. We can also support companies through loans and preferential rates that benefit both organisations. This approach has led to unparalleled investment, expansion and development of services and the building of new homes in the town, in addition to enhancing our ability to influence economic development. We will continue to work in partnership with our companies, helping them to seek and deliver new opportunities for the wider benefit of the town and its people.



# How we'll deliver on our commitments

To monitor how well we are delivering the plan, we have a performance management framework, which enables us to understand how we're doing, to identify areas of under-performance, and to move resources around as needed. It ensures that we are accountable for how well we're doing.

Council performance indicators are monitored and scrutinised quarterly, with an annual report analysing performance against targets and against the performance of similar authorities.

We have reformed the performance monitoring of our companies through a new Shareholder Committee. As well as regularly reviewing the overall performance of our companies, the Committee ensures that our companies contribute fully to the council's strategic objectives and to the wider vision for the town.

Within the council, directorate and departmental business plans set out the actions described in this plan in more detail. These plans are monitored by councillors and officers, and considered as part of reports to the overview and scrutiny committee.





**To ensure our services are accessible to all, documents prepared by Blackpool Council are available in large print, Braille, on audio-cassette or computer disk upon request. We can also provide help for British Sign Language users and provide information in other languages. Please ask for details or telephone 477117.**