Transport policy

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Introduction

As a mixed economy with a strong tourism sector, Blackpool is dependent upon its transport links to the wider economy and its local transport networks, the highway and vehicles and pedestrians using it. To enable transport efficiency and to improve the town's public realm, supporting the economy, is an ongoing challenge.

In line with its planning, transport and climate emergency policies, the council is keen to promote sustainable travel modes (public transport, cycling and walking) with the public realm improvement, de-congestion and air quality benefits this has. Nevertheless motor vehicle mobility is a vital part of the Blackpool economy and a well maintained and functioning road network is a key aim.

The overall objective is to ensure that both visitors and residents can get to and move around Blackpool easily, using a variety of transport modes. A modal shift to sustainable modes will assist the council in achieving its net zero goal and controlling traffic congestion, together with public realm and road safety benefits.

Plan a journey

Supporting Blackpool's economy

Blackpool Council aims to control congestion, improve the public realm, reduce pollution and decrease accidents on the town's roads by managing traffic effectively, including by promoting alternative ways to travel. This means working with local transport operators, making Blackpool a better place to live, work and invest for residents and businesses.

Effective transport systems are an essential part of the resort's economy and vital to its regeneration, particularly as new developments including the ongoing Talbot Gateway and the town centre Multiversity development come on stream. These developments are at the bus and tramway network's heart and convenient for Blackpool North railway station, reducing the need for people to drive and park for work.

Up to 20 million visits per year are made to enjoy Blackpool's tourist attractions, coming from all over the country and beyond. Thus the resort needs high quality access to national transport networks, road and rail. On arrival, visitors must have excellent gateways to encourage repeat visits and investment.

Following the Lancashire Combined County Authority's (LCCA) vesting on 1st April 2026, Blackpool Council is no longer a Local Transport Authority. It remains the Highway Authority. The LCCA's Local Transport Plan (LTP) core strategy and implementation plan now provide the transport policy template for the entire Lancashire area, including Blackpool. . The LCCA's advent will provide access to greater resources to improve transport networks across Lancashire.

At the time of writing, consultation upon the new LCCA Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan is underway. Comments on the Plan can be received up to 30th June 2026.

The council has bid successfully to the government's Levelling Up Fund, to achieve funding for the Town Centre Access Scheme (TCAS), providing a total of £17.1m to invest in the town centre's transport arrangements. This scheme will implement junction improvements to maximise town centre traffic volume resilience as new developments bring extra vehicle trips to Blackpool.

It is challenging to fit all the facilities that are needed - bus stops, taxi ranks, on-street parking, cycle parking, loading bays, pedestrian crossings etc - into what is a densely built-up place.

Maintaining highways assets

The Local Transport Plan programme includes schemes to repair roads, footpaths and bridges. Recent funding levels have been insufficient to prevent road condition decline. The council continues to look for extra money to pay for repairs and reverse this situation. A successful bid for additional government monies resulted in the Project Amber programme, using innovative technology to secure Blackpool's roads, in line with a highways asset management plan. The move to the Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA) arrangement means more resources for transport investment.

Traffic lights and street lighting are managed under the Community Lighting Partnership. Any faults with traffic lights or pedestrian/cycle crossings can be reported here. The local transport plan programme apportions resources to upgrade road junctions and traffic control systems as need and opportunity is identified. Traffic control systems are currently being reviewed and upgraded under a Government Green Light Fund supported programme.

Government has been able to make additional resources available through the Local Transport Grant system, which is £7m for the financial year 25/26. The bulk of this money has been dedicated to road and tramway system maintenance. A new programme for 26/27 is currently being assembled.

Moving forward, transport investment will be managed under the LCCA arrangement, which is now the local transport authority. Blackpool Council remains the Highway Authority. The new arrangement will be fully in effect from April 2026.

The council is working with Lancashire County Council to develop a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan [PDF 880KB]. This will run between 2026 and 2035.

Encouraging sustainable development

Good transport links with the national economy are crucial to encouraging inward investment into Blackpool.

Residents and businesses need good access to workplaces, shops, schools, education, health care and roads or public transport services to neighbouring towns.

When any large developments are proposed in Blackpool, the council assesses what transport arrangements will be made throughout the work's duration and after they have finished, as part of the planning process.

Public realm improvement

Funding opportunities to further improve public realm will be sought, most recently from the government's Levelling Up programme, which has resulted in support for the Multiversity and TCAS projects, which will improve public realm to the town centre's east.

The local transport plan programme includes provision for public realm improvements. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan identifies potential walking zones or hubs, which will be appraised for improvements. Without external funding, such improvements might be small-scale, but opportunities for additional funding for more comprehensive schemes will be pursued.

Supporting transport innovation

Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council worked together to renew the tramway from Blackpool to nearby town Fleetwood, enabling a fleet of 18 modern 'Flexity 2' trams to help people travel between Blackpool and north Fylde coast destinations. A tramway extension to Blackpool North railway station opened to paying passengers on 16th June 2024, following the adjacent Holiday Inn hotel's completion, part of the Central Business District 2 regeneration scheme. Passenger boarding at this location has been growing

steadily.

The extension improves public transport access to Blackpool's seafront hotels and attractions, particularly the Pleasure Beach, and connects the North Fylde to the national rail network. It provides a public transport link between the Blackpool Central Business District and the wider area, including the main council office, Topping Street/Dickson Road shopping, Grundy Art Gallery and Central Library, restaurants and bars, and Sainsbury's supermarket. The tramway extension provides a further valuable light rail complement to the bus network. The same ticket products as for bus are available for the tram and smartphone tickets can be used.

Heritage trams have continued to use the system over the Illuminations period, providing a service for tourists and enthusiasts.

Vehicle traffic flow management technology reduces congestion, pollution and accommodates the traffic growth that will follow from economic regeneration, including growing town centre employment. Traffic control systems are reviewed for ongoing improvements. The network benefits from variable message signage, a car park management system and Bluetooth technology, which monitors traffic flow trends. The council is participating in the government's Green Light Fund initiative, installing cutting edge traffic control technology onto Blackpool's traffic corridors.

Supporting local public transport

Blackpool benefits from a high-quality bus network. The council wishes to see increased numbers of residents and visitors using the bus, in line with the local transport plan and the BSIP. Services are provided by Blackpool Transport Services, Stagecoach Bus, Archway Travel and Transpora North West.

More people commuting by public transport means less congestion, less air pollution and an improved environment, including for cyclists and pedestrians. The vehicles, services and payment options are in place to make this happen. Together with more people cycling, such sustainable transport can help to achieve net zero goals.

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) now set out councils' vision of how bus ridership growth might be achieved, to be taken forward under the new LCCA arrangement.

The plan forms the foundation for the enhanced bus partnership that is currently in place. This is a formal agreement with operators to improve local bus services. The enhanced partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will be replaced by new arrangements under the LCCA structure. Independently, the council will use its delegated local transport plan resources to support buses, including replacing bus shelters.

Blackpool Council's bus service improvement plan [PDF 798KB]

Timetables, information on smartphone apps and other information can be found on bus operators' websites, including journey planning and bus service real time information. Stagecoach Bus, Transpora North West and Blackpool Transport Services Ltd are operating contactless card payments on their vehicles, removing the need for cash change, although cash is still accepted. Using season and flexible bus fare products reduce bus travel's costs significantly in comparison to walkup fares and many products can be purchased using the smartphone app. Your phone can now carry your ticket!

The government supported £3 fare cap scheme will continue until the end of March 2027.

The council always keeps town centre bus stop arrangements under review. A transport hub focused on Market Street, Corporation Street, Clifton Street and Abingdon Street has been established. A town centre bus map can be found on the Blackpool Transport Services site. Operators' smartphone apps have interactive maps with journey planning and service tracking. New Talbot Road bus stops and shelters adjacent to the Blackpool North Tram Stop and railway station, now form a transport interchange.

A real time information (RTI) screen has been installed in the former Blackpool Transport Services shop on Market Street, Blackpool, providing information for transport hub located services. It is intended that new screens will be installed in shelters over 2026, funded from Government Bus Grant.

If travelling into Blackpool, the PlusBus system offers seamless interchange between rail and bus/tram services. Ask for the Plus Bus add on when you purchase your train ticket, or take up the prompt if buying on line or via an operator's app. For Blackpool visitors, this offer is for both bus and tram. The tramway now comes to the railway station's door.

Additionally, Northern Railway is working to offer through ticketing from train to BTS bus and tram services. Watch for this coming on stream for seamless public transport into and around the resort.

The council recognises the important role taxis and private hire vehicles play in supporting the visitor and night-time economies. The role landaus play in providing promenade pleasure trips is also acknowledged. Regular dialogue occurs between representatives of the

trade and council officers concerning network and ranking issues, ensuring that appropriate ranks are available.

For the weekly shop and a bit of extra exercise, walk or bus to the store and call a taxi to take you home.

Taxi companies are increasingly using smartphone apps to enable booking.

Taxis and private hire vehicles reduce the need for car ownership for the occasional car user. They provide an essential link between transport hubs, hotels and attractions.

Supporting coach

The coach industry continues to bring many people to the resort and this is valued. The Central car park site provides for year round scheduled National Express services and scheduled seasonal services. The Confederation of Passenger Transport has awarded the council Coach Friendly Status.

The FlixBus company has indicated that it will start running services into Blackpool from 1st April 2026.

Coach parking locations are identified in the parking services section of this site. This also provides information on the paybyphone app that enables 72 hours free parking for coach vehicles. Foxhall Village, Seasiders and South (peak time use only) facilities are all marked for coach. For a more town centre location, Banks Street is also so marked and is signed, while Gynn Square provides a facility for north of the town centre.

The need for new and better coach facilities is kept under ongoing review and is being addressed within the Blackpool Central project. Coach can provide an alternative arrival mode for visitors who do not drive and seek value for money travel to Blackpool's attractions.

The VisitBlackpool website provides advice to coach passengers and coach operators.

Supporting cycling

Blackpool has several cycle routes. Cycling on the Promenade is a popular activity, particularly using the Jubilee Cycleway to the north. This route and others are intended for leisure and commuting cycling at low speeds and not racing, training or other fast riding, particularly as pedestrians including children are also using this space. With recent sea wall works at Anchorsholme now complete, it is possible to cycle with care all the way between Starr Gate and Fleetwood on the Promenade.

Minor works for cycling can be funded from the Local Transport Plan programme, including cycle parking. The council has worked with Lancashire councils to establish a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in line with government policy, which provides a long-term plan for a segregated cycle route network (and walking zones). Further resources for active travel expenditure (cycling and walking) have been made available through the Active Travel England organisation and are now integrated with the local transport plan, moving forward under the LCCA structure.

Supporting rail

Around a million visitors arrive by train each year and summer services can be crowded. Electric trains provide three of the four regular hourly services - two to Manchester Airport via Piccadilly and one to Liverpool. The York service benefits from the class 195 diesel train with its far superior facilities compared with its predecessors. These trains are more spacious than previous units and peak-time overcrowding has been eased since their introduction. Another hourly Preston/Colne service runs from Blackpool South railway station.

Northern Railway provides services at Blackpool North and Blackpool South stations. This company's website or app provides all journey planning, ticket purchase and timetable information.

The Avanti West Coast company provides a direct service to London Euston.

Access to London, Scotland, the West Midlands and other large conurbations is recognised as a key consideration for those who might invest in Blackpool. The council is keen to see improvements to the Preston hub railway station, as so many people change trains there

to come to the resort. It would also like to see direct trains to Scotland, which the resort has lost, and would be very likely to make a significant contribution to the resort's economy.

The council is a member of the West Coast Rail 250 group, which has supported the improvement of the vital West Coast Main-line, which brings visitors from Scotland, the south and connects the resort's businesses to London and Birmingham.

The council is also a stakeholder in the Transport for the North organisation, which is looking at new strategic transport links for the entire north, together with technology based transport solutions. Following the High Speed 2 rail line's northern leg's cancellation, this work will be even more important.

The council supports the South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership. With support from local MPs, a strategic outline business case proposal to make improvements to enable the line's frequency to be increased to two trains per hour, was submitted to the former government's now cancelled Restoring Your Railway Fund. Next steps to pursue this objective are now being considered. Although it is not in Blackpool, the council also supports the Poulton and Fleetwood line reopening project, which received money from the Restoring Your Railway fund for feasibility appraisal work.

Supporting equality

Transport policy promotes equality and helps people to participate in society. An LTP strategy equalities impact assessment has been prepared for the new LCCA transport documents.

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Additional information

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