

[Home](#) > [Your Council](#) > [Creating a better Blackpool](#) > [Blackpool Town Deal](#) > [Blackpool Town Deal Board](#)

# Blackpool Town Deal Board

Last Modified April 14, 2026



## The Role of the Blackpool Town Deal Board

The Towns Fund Prospectus was specific on the initial role and membership of the Board which was to:

- Develop and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan
- Develop a clear programme of interventions
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

With the Town Deal programme now well into the delivery phase, the key roles of the Town Deal Board are to:

- Oversee the delivery of the agreed Town Deal programme including spend, outputs, outcomes and its subsequent evaluation
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders
- Oversee and ensure good communication of the Programme and engagement of key stakeholders
- To provide oversight of other regeneration programmes and major projects such as the Capital Regeneration Fund (CRP), the Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

The board is not a legal entity, its role is advisory. Its purpose is to work with Blackpool Council, which is the overarching accountable body for the Town Deal funds and delivery of the Investment Plan and the approved regeneration schemes.

[Blackpool Town Deal Board Terms of Reference \[PDF 963KB\]](#)

[Blackpool Town Deal Board Gift and Hospitality Register 2025-26 \[PDF 213KB\]](#)

## Members of the Blackpool Town Deal Board:



Above: (Town Deal Chair) Peter Cole, Chartered Surveyor

Peter is a Chartered Surveyor and has substantial experience in town centre regeneration and international property investment. He is a member of the Town Deal Board and was Chair of the Future High Street Fund Bid Board.

He is a former Chief Investment Officer and Director of Hammerson plc and is a Non Executive Director of LabTech International and Primary Healthcare Properties plc.

Town Deal Board member from: October 2020.

[Peter Cole Declaration of Interests \[PDF 523KB\]](#)



Above: Adam Knight, Blackpool Grand Theatre

Chief Executive, Blackpool Grand Theatre

Adam is Chief Executive of Frank Matcham's Grade II\* listed Blackpool Grand Theatre: An Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and winner of the UK Theatre Award for Excellence in Arts Education. Previously, he held senior positions at Crewe Lyceum for HQ Theatres/Trafalgar Entertainment, ICC Belfast Waterfront & Ulster Hall, Sherman Theatre Cardiff, Edinburgh Playhouse, Grand Opera House Belfast, and, for the Ambassador Theatre Group the Savoy Theatre and Trafalgar Studios in the West End, winning London Theatre Manager of the Year.

He began his career at Worthing's Connaught Theatre and as Education Trainee at Chichester Festival Theatre, before training as an actor at the National Youth Music Theatre, National Youth Theatre and at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. He has appeared on stage in London, on Broadway and in the UK Tour of *Blood Brothers* for Bill Kenwright. As producer his production of Samuel Adamson's *Some Kind of Bliss* starring Lucy Briers (Trafalgar Studios and 59E59 Theater New York) was nominated for a Whatsonstage Award.

A graduate of Ulster University he also holds an MSc from the University of Manchester's Alliance Business School. Twice nominated for Allianz Arts & Business Board Member of the Year, trusteeships include The Oxford Playhouse Trust, Gary Clarke Company, and Waverley Care, Scotland's leading HIV charity. He was a member of Crewe Town Deal Board, securing £22.5m Government Towns Funding for regeneration (including public realm improvements and development of a new live music venue). He is a member of the Left Coast Steering Group and is chair of Blackpool's Cultural Strategy Steering Group. Adam is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and attended the Buckingham Palace Reception for the Achievement of Young Adults at the invitation of Her Majesty, The Queen.

Town Deal Board member from: June 2024.

[Adam Knight Declaration of Interest \[PDF 67KB\]](#)





### Above: Allan Lockhart, NewRiver REIT

Allan Lockhart, CEO at NewRiver, has over 35 years' experience in the UK retail real estate market. Allan started his career with Strutt & Parker in 1988 advising major property companies and institutions on retail leasing, investment and development. In 2002, Allan was appointed as Retail Director for Halladale Plc focusing on acquiring value add opportunities in the UK retail real estate market, and ensuring the successful implementation of asset management strategies.

Following the successful sale of Halladale Plc in early 2007, Allan co-founded NewRiver and served as Property Director since its IPO until being appointed CEO in May 2018.

NewRiver REIT plc is a leading Real Estate Investment Trust specialising in owning, managing and developing retail assets across the UK that provide essential goods and services to local people, help support thriving communities and deliver long-term premium returns for our shareholders.

Town Deal Board member from: November 2025

[Allan Lockhart Declaration of Interest \[PDF 461KB\]](#)



### Above: Alun Francis OBE, Blackpool & The Fylde College

Principal and Chief Executive, Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC)

Alun Francis is Principal and Chief Executive of Blackpool and The Fylde College. He has thirteen years of experience in further education, having previously led Oldham College. Prior to this he had a varied career which has included a range of public services, local government, area-based regeneration, youth work and education, including primary, secondary and higher education. Alun has a strong interest in the economics of what is now referred to as 'levelling up' and sees FE colleges as making a strong contribution to addressing this challenge.

Alun is Interim Chair of the Social Mobility Commission which is an independent body, sponsored by the Cabinet Office, which exists to create a United Kingdom where an individual's future is not determined by the circumstances of their birth.

He received an Order of the Order of the British Empire for service to education in the 2021 New Year's Honours List.

Town Deal Board member from: September 2023.

[Alun Francis declaration of interests \[PDF 47KB\]](#)



Above: Chris Webb MP, Blackpool South

Chris Webb was born and bred in Blackpool, the town he now represents as Labour MP. He was first elected in May 2024 in the Blackpool South by-election and re-elected in July 2024 in the general election. He has worked on the front line of various charities, including Blackpool Food Bank, where he is a volunteer driver, and as chair of mental health charity Counselling in the Community. His first-hand experience of the challenges people in Blackpool face informs his work as MP and his commitment to build a better Blackpool.

Town Deal Board member from: September 2024.

[Chris Webb Declaration of Interests \[PDF 46KB\]](#)



Above: Canon Dick Cartmell, Together Lancashire

Blackpool born and a PE Teacher in Remedial and Special Education 1965 to 1977. Dick was ordained C of E in 1979 and was based for thirty years in the ministry on outer housing estates, ending at Blackpool Holy Trinity 2008. In his retirement he set up a Parish Development course and now since 2014, has worked as Together Lancs Fylde Coast Co-ordinator. An avid Pool season ticket holder, Dick enjoys music through a male voice choir and believes in human regeneration ahead of economic success. Let's never forget this town began as a health resort.

Dick set up two church urban fund projects in Blackburn and Blackpool based on community survival and wholeness, both of which lasted for over ten years. He is now about to launch a Poverty/Truth commission on the Fylde Coast which works on the principle "Anything about us, without us, is not for us." This is all about storytelling truth unto power and from this comes real change.

Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.

[Dick Cartmel Declaration of Interests \[PDF 48KB\]](#)



Above: Graham Cowley OBE, MBA, MICE, Business in the Community (BiTC)

Graham is a Chartered Civil Engineer who spent much of his career managing public private partnerships as Chief Operating Officer with Capita Property Services.

While in full time employment, Graham volunteered as a Director of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, chairing the £750 million Growth Deal Programme. This role required significant investment of time in Blackpool and he was ultimately asked to become independent Chair of the Blackpool Opportunity Area (OA), a Government funded pilot to improve social mobility. This was another voluntary role in which Graham invested two days per week for six years, working with many partners to achieve notable improvement in school inclusion, literacy and connecting young people with the world of work.

Prior to completion of the Blackpool Opportunity Area programme in 2022, Graham was asked to work for Blackpool Pride of Place, a business-led partnership, on a part time basis, listing among the achievements the first Levelling Up deal in the UK with Government. Skills and education continue to be a major priority.

Graham also uses his private sector property experience in a part time Non-Executive Director capacity with Atlas, the wholly owned property company of Blackpool NHS Trust.

Town Deal Board member from: June 2023.

[Graham Cowley Declaration of Interests \[PDF 48KB\]](#)



Above: Jane Cole, Blackpool Transport

I am the Managing Director of Blackpool Transport, the award winning, major bus and tram operator for Blackpool and the Fylde Coast. We operate bus and tram services, offer rail replacement, event management and Park and Glide services.

I joined Blackpool Transport in 2014 after a successful 17year career working for Virgin Trains at a senior level in Operations, Business Development and People Development.

Leading a successful passenger transport business requires a customer first attitude and strong inter-personal skills, extensive industry knowledge and the ability to develop and grow the people in your team which I am able to do as a trained executive coach and mentor (ILM Level 7 in progress) and Common Purpose World Leader.

Blackpool Transport is an award winning company with our most recent award being Employer of the Year for the Lancashire Red Rose Awards.

I have successfully delivered business transformation programmes that are aligned to delivering strategic business aims and local transport plans and I was recently voted Business Woman of the Year at the Northern Enterprise Vision Awards.

As we move towards 2021 we have the vision at Blackpool Transport to continue to grow and develop our work in the community and with our stakeholders to make Blackpool and the Fylde Coast a great place to live, work and visit.

I am very active in the Transport Industry and the Business world to keep my skills and knowledge up to date and relevant as:

- An Executive Board member of Album
- Fellow member of CILT
- A member of CPT
- Vice President of the North west Lancashire Chamber of Commerce
- Executive Board member of Blackpool and Fylde Collage
- Committee Member of Common Purpose
- Board member of Blackpool Pride of Place

I am also a member of many networking groups and in particular Women in Transport.

[Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.](#)

[Jane Cole Declaration of Interests \[PDF 762KB\]](#)



[Above: Julian Winter, CEO and Director at Blackpool FC](#)

Julian is originally from Huddersfield and played football professionally for both Huddersfield Town FC and Sheffield United FC. His football career was ended at 27 with a serious knee injury. He then pursued a return to academia securing a first-class honours degree in Leisure & Recreation management at Sheffield Hallam University.

Julian re-entered the football industry as a Community Officer at Grimsby Town FC and then took on similar roles at Sheffield Wednesday FC and Watford FC.

Julian became the CEO at Watford FC in 2008. He then moved onto Sheffield United FC in 2011 and made subsequent moves to Notts County FC, Huddersfield Town FC and Swansea City AFC before joining Blackpool FC in the summer of 2023.

Julian is married to Pauline and has 4 children: Benjamin, Isaac, Eve and Isabelle.

[Julian Winter Declaration of Interests \[PDF 49KB\]](#)



Above: Kate Shane MBE, Managing Director, Blackpool Tourism Ltd

Kate joined Blackpool Council as Managing Director of its wholly owned tourism company in autumn 2024. In this role, she is responsible for delivering the 'One Blackpool' strategic vision for the resort, fostering a collaborative culture across the tourism sector by uniting public and private sector leaders to guide Blackpool towards an exciting and successful future.

Prior to this, Kate was Regional Director for Merlin Entertainments, where she led a team delivering memorable experiences to over two million guests annually across the resort's cluster of attractions, including The Blackpool Tower, Circus and Ballroom, Madame Tussauds, Sea Life, Gruffalo Clubhouse, Dungeons, and the Sandcastle Waterpark. During her tenure, Kate employed over 500 local people and drove strong growth in visitor numbers, financial performance, and guest satisfaction, all underpinned by a commitment to skills training and team wellbeing—a cause close to her heart.

Kate serves on the National Visitor Economy Advisory Council, the Lancashire Combined Authority Business Board, the Blackpool Pride of Place Board (part of Business in the Community), and the Blackpool Towns Fund Board. She is also Chair of the Blackpool Tourism BID.

Her previous roles include Trustee of Blackpool Food Bank, representing Merlin on the Care Leaver Covenant National Business Council, Non-Executive Director of Blackpool Transport, Board of Governors member at Blackpool and The Fylde College, Non-Executive Director of LeftCoast—a Creative People and Places organisation funded by Arts Council England—and membership on the IAAPA EMEA Advisory Board.

A passionate advocate for Blackpool, Kate is dedicated to creating a better future and enhancing opportunities for those who live, work, and visit the resort. She believes collaborative working—bringing together business, the third sector, and communities—is key to achieving sustainable success.

As part of her community engagement, Kate established the Blackpool Tower Food Hub during the pandemic, a food donation point with contributions distributed across the town via Blackpool Food Bank. She also played a pivotal role in Merlin's social value initiative with the Care Leaver Covenant and the Purpose Coalition, focusing on social impact delivered by place-based tourism organisations.

Kate was awarded an MBE for services to tourism and the local community in the King's Birthday Honours 2025. She intends to leverage this recognition to drive greater focus and support for Blackpool's visitor economy.

Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.

[Kate Shane Declaration of Interests \[PDF 51KB\]](#)





### Above: Lorraine Beavers MP, Blackpool North and Fleetwood

Lorraine is the current Member of Parliament for Blackpool North & Fleetwood having been elected in July 2024. She has also served as a local councillor on Lancashire County Council and Wyre Borough Council for many years.

Lorraine was brought up in Fleetwood and still lives in the town with her husband John. They have been blessed with two daughters and four grandchildren.

Town Deal Board member from: September 2024.

[Lorraine Beavers Declaration of Interests \[PDF 240KB\]](#)



### Above: Mark Robinson, NewRiver REIT

Mark is a high-profile leader in the worlds of retail property and placemaking, a position recognised with his appointment to lead the government's High Street Task Force in July 2020, following his role as Revo President in 2019.

Over nearly three decades, Mark has worked in all aspects of the industry as an advisor, investor/developer and occupier. In 2008 he co-founded Ellandi, a business currently undertaking over 30 projects in the UK with a value in excess of £1.5 billion, which was sold to NewRiver REIT in July 2024.

In December 2024 NewRiver and Blackpool Council won the prestigious Public/Private Partnership award from the Estates Gazette for their work on retail transformation in Blackpool town centre.

Mark is a passionate advocate of the role of community in repurposing and shaping the purpose of our future places in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the current market.

Town Deal Board member from: September 2022.

[Mark Robinson Declaration of interest \[PDF 52KB\]](#)



### Above: Neil Jack, Blackpool Borough Council

Neil Jack was appointed as Chief Executive of Blackpool Council in September 2011. Neil, who was born and educated in Blackpool, had previously been Director of Finance and Resources at Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) since 2006. During this time BCH's success in a Government inspection generated nearly £50 million to improve the quality of social housing in Blackpool.

Prior to joining Blackpool Coastal Housing, Neil had previously worked for Blackpool Council in the Finance Department covering a wide variety of services.

During his six years as Chief Executive, Neil has helped steer the organisation through £118 million worth of cuts to the council's budget, while also overseeing external investment in the town of around £350 million, and acting as the landlord to some of the UK's most famous attractions: The Blackpool Tower, Winter Gardens and Sandcastle Waterpark.

The current and upcoming investment in regenerating Blackpool includes construction of Blackpool's first business district, a revamp of the resort's tramway and extension to the train station, major new conferencing facilities at the Winter Gardens plus £55 million to ensure that young children get the possible best start in life and that teenagers in the town get access to the best mental health support designed to increase their resilience. Neil has a key role in the delivery of both the Better Start and HeadStart programmes in Blackpool. He is the Chair of Executive Board for the HeadStart Programme and an Executive Board Member for the Better Start.

Work led by Neil to readdress Blackpool's housing supply has also included replacing run down social housing with new quality, family accommodation, and involves requiring poor private landlords to improve the quality of HMOs in areas of the town. An innovative £30m project for Blackpool Council to operate as a private landlord to improve run down properties in the town and enhance the current housing marketplace across the town is also under way.

As part of the council's work to create a stronger economy, Neil has also overseen huge improvements to Blackpool's tourism offer, with more than seventeen million visits to the resort being made every year, generating £1.32 billion into the town's economy and supporting 20,000 jobs. As part of Neil's role to improve Blackpool's tourism offer, he also chairs the Turning tides board, which works to improve the quality of bathing water across the North West, culminating in Blackpool being awarded the region's first Blue Flag in 2016.

Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.

[Neil Jack Declaration of Interests \[PDF 529KB\]](#)





## Above: Steve Williams, Force Technology

An entrepreneur and business leader who has created three successful engineering companies and turned-around range of manufacturing businesses and charities with employee numbers from 10 to 150.

Actively engaged in UK manufacturing cluster groups with a focus on developing small and medium enterprises (SMEs). A passionate supporter of educational, heritage and cultural charities and regional regeneration projects in Northern England.

- Managing Director and Owner - Force Technology Ltd
- A specialist manufacturing company established 2015 with over 30 employees
- Voluntary Roles - Lytham Hall - Trustee and Project Coordinator, Lytham Windmill and Old Lifeboat House - Museum Coordinator
- Director - Northern Automotive Alliance, Institute of Spring Technology
- Trustee - Heritage Trust for the North West, Lytham Town Trust, Lytham Heritage Group

Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.

[Steve Williams Declaration of Interests \[PDF 50KB\]](#)



## Above: Tracy Hopkins, Blackpool Fylde and Wyre VCFS

Tracy Hopkins is currently CEO of Citizens Advice Blackpool and has been in this role since 2014. As a strategic leader in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFS), Tracy has been instrumental in developing the partnership of VCFS leaders across the Fylde Coast and Chairs the VCFS Leadership Group, working closely with partners across the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System as part of the VCFS Alliance.

Following her time at Manchester University studying psychology, Tracy trained as a teacher in FE. This then took her on to developing training courses for adults and working within education and skills. Tracy spent 7 years a CEO of an Education Business Partnership (EBP) across Greater Manchester. Providing opportunities for young people and developing enterprise learning at a time when there was a policy focus on employability and education. During this time, Tracy worked as a consultant to the Department for Education and Skills, advising on employer engagement and helping employers implement meaningful corporate social responsibility agendas. Tracy also worked with the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to develop education leadership and travelled to North America to share models of successful leadership with leaders from around the world, this work was instrumental in the development of academies and school business managers. Tracy's entrepreneurial skills helped her transform the EBP from a charity dependent upon grants to a social enterprise selling services to schools and colleges.

This move towards social enterprise development, saw Tracy take up the role of CEO of an exciting organization that provided accommodation, work and training to people who were street homeless. Tracy spent almost four years running this social enterprise; developing the retail offer, opening a community café and supporting people to make the transition into independent living, employment and positive changes to their lives. During this time, Tracy also acted as Chair of a Domestic Violence charity and a trustee of Preston Community Network. Tracy worked alongside initiatives such as Big Local to support communities to find their own solutions. As an advocate of VCFS infrastructure, Tracy has contributed to a range of projects with the aim of creating a robust, sustainable VCFS that makes a positive impact on local communities.

As CEO of Citizens Advice in Blackpool, Tracy has taken the organization from a position of financial uncertainty to one of stability. Building a team who are responsive, capable and willing to innovate in order to provide the best possible service to our communities, the CAB is viewed as a strategically significant across the VCFS. Through working with funders, Tracy has secured projects to help people with debt and mental health issues and has set up Young Citizens Advice Blackpool – the first of its kind in the country. Tracy is passionate about the work of the CAB, regularly contributes to research and campaigns work at a national level emphasizing the impact this can have on the lives of seldom heard communities and individuals. Building on links with the NHS, Tracy is now working with neighbourhoods across the Fylde coast to implement Social Prescribing.

Town Deal Board member from: February 2020.

[Tracy Hopkins Declaration of Interests \[PDF 533KB\]](#)

[↑ Back to top](#)

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