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# New retail and leisure

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## Brand new cinema complex with IMAX® now open!

Located in Houndshell Shopping Centre's new extension, The Backlot cinema and diner will bring the very best entertainment to the heart of the Blackpool community.

The cinematic wonderland will feature Blackpool's only IMAX® screen and one of the largest in the North West. The screen, measuring 10.85m high and 19.87m wide, will be equipped with the company's most advanced theatrical experience, IMAX with Laser.

Immersive by design, IMAX® with Laser has been developed from the ground-up to deliver crystal clear, lifelike images and precision audio for a moviegoing experience unlike anything else.

At The Backlot you will be able to experience the latest Hollywood releases, arthouse titles, event cinema and past big screen favourites. Designed to create a unique arts and entertainment hub for both the local community and Blackpool visitors, it will be the new place in town to host events, from corporate conferences and birthday parties to comedy nights, live gaming tournaments and local community meet ups.

Complementing the big screen, The Backlot's 100-seater diner will serve fresh burgers, hotdogs and wings, along with a delicious range of desserts, including American style pancakes, indulgent sundaes and thick milkshakes.

With a total investment of £20m, the Houndshell development will make a huge difference to the leisure experience for Blackpool residents to enjoy.

[Read the full story.](#)

The Backlot offers special [membership deals](#) for local residents and Blackpool based businesses. Perks include 20% off tickets, food and non-alcoholic beverages. Exclusions, and terms and conditions apply.

The overall scheme has been facilitated by £5m of funding from the government's COVID-19 Getting Building Fund, following formal approval by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in October 2020. Blackpool Council funded the balance of the scheme through prudential borrowing.



## Abingdon Street Market

Already popular with locals and visitors of all ages, the reonvated market and food hall has made a significant impact on the town centre. Offering a 250 seating dining and drinks area with six delicious eateries, two dedicated bars, and an on-site coffee shop on offer - as well as nine independent retail vendors, selling a range of products, from fresh produce to handmade crafts and gifts.

Blackpool Council used £3.6m of funding from Getting Building Fund to purchase the historic market building, carrying out a full internal refurbishment prior to its opening in May 2023.



The opening of the food hall and retail area, the latter of which launched in November 2023, at the new-look Abingdon Street Market was part of a much wider plan to regenerate Blackpool town centre, with aims to boost the economy, create jobs and provide more things to see and do.



The team behind the operations of the market, The Little Blackpool Leisure Company, have worked hard to produce a successful venue with a wide-ranging offer.

Delivering a diverse and successful events programme - with over 300 having taken place in the first year alone, including a range of craft and skill workshops, live music and DJ events, makers markets and themed fairs to name a few – the market has fast become a popular staple on the Blackpool map.

A list of current vendors, opening time and details of upcoming events can be found at [Abingdon Street Market's official website](#).

Abingdon Street Market has received £3.6 million from the UK Government through the Getting Building Fund, £300,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and £90k from the UK Government through the Historic England Heritage Action Zone programme.

## Frasers department store

The Frasers store, spanning over 100,000sq ft, opened its doors to the public in November 2023. The partnership with the Council brings together a range of exciting brands, including Frasers, Flannels, Sports Direct, Game, and Evans Cycles, all under one roof.

Since it acquired the Houndshill in 2019, the Council has been working hard to support the town's post-pandemic recovery and turn the shopping centre into a key driver for the regeneration of the town centre.

Blackpool is undergoing a significant transformation with a £2bn Growth and Prosperity Programme of investment and one of the most crucial developments was the re-letting of the former Debenhams store.



As of July 2023, only 39% of the former Debenhams vacant stores around the country have been successfully re-let, making this partnership a remarkable achievement for Blackpool and a significant milestone at national level.

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