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Getting building for a better Blackpool

We're delighted that £8.6m has been secured from the government's COVID-19 Getting Building Fund for two key town centre projects to boost the town's economic recovery and create much needed jobs for the local community.

The funding, which was approved by Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in October 2020, will kick start the development at Houndshell Shopping Centre phase two and the regeneration of Abingdon Street Market.

Securing Getting Building Funding towards the developments means that work on site for the two 'shovel ready' projects can start as early as spring and will be ready by March 2022.

Houndshell Shopping Centre - Phase two development

A trio of deals have now been signed for the £20m development of phase two at Houndshell Shopping Centre, including a multimedia cinema and entertainment venue, and a new home for retailer wilko.

Details include:

- The signing of a 25 year lease with Tower Cinemas (Blackpool) Ltd for a nine-screen, IMAX-ready multimedia complex
- The return of hardware and household retailer, wilko, formerly located at the old Fine Fare building on Talbot Road, which was demolished towards the end of last year to make way for next phase of the Talbot Gateway development which includes a tram interchange, four-star Holiday Inn and Marco Pierre White restaurant. wilko will take a 15-year lease with the council on a new, purpose-built unit on the site of the Tower Street car park
- Completion of a contract with Coolsilk, the developer behind Blackpool's first five star hotel, The Sands Venue and Resort Hotel and Spa, for the sale of Tower Street outdoor car park which will enable the development to go ahead



The development sees Tower Cinemas (Blackpool) Ltd, trading as MMC Cinemas, launch a unique Multi Media Cinema/Conferencing and Entertainment centre providing a 850 seat venue, with 9 state-of-the-art digital screens, including a giant PLF (Premium Large Screen Format) IMAX-ready central screen, set to be the largest in the north west, within a 40,500 sq ft unit.

Designs also include flexible seating to allow screens to double as conference venue spaces, designated incubator space for the region's digital/media start-up businesses, and an e-sports café. [The multimedia cinema complex alone is set to create 30 full time jobs.](#)

John Sullivan, founder of MMC Cinemas, comments,

“Blackpool has an astonishing heritage as a leisure destination for the North West region and beyond, and this multi-media centre is set to re-cement that reputation. Its flexible design is geared to the needs of the town and wider Lancashire needs, offering not only a destination venue to experience the latest cinema releases, but is also

flexible to enable conferences, space to encourage developing local business and much, much more. We're particularly excited about its ability for Blackpool to tap into the growing e-sports trend with dedicated gaming space. It's a true privilege to be bringing this unique entertainment and business hub to the local area."

It will be complemented by two restaurants totalling 3,760 sq ft that will be delivered to shell specification. The council is in advanced negotiations with leisure operators for these units.

A wilko's spokesperson, commenting on the new store and their return to the town centre said,

"After a lot of searching, we're delighted to have finally found a new home for our store and are looking forward to providing Blackpool families with all their hardware and household needs for years to come."

The council acquired the Houndshell Shopping Centre in for £47.6m in November 2019 as part of its long-term strategy to revitalise the town centre.

Cllr Lynn Williams, Leader of Blackpool Council, said:

"We have always made it very clear that our acquisition of the Houndshell was the first step in revitalising Blackpool town centre by introducing high-quality leisure attractions to complement the existing retail offer. If the town centre is to prosper, we have to provide new reasons to attract residents and visitors. The signing of these three contracts paves the way for us to take a major step along that road. We are delighted that all parties are now on board and we can move forward to an early start on site date, bringing new jobs and opportunities."

Grahams will be the main contractor on the Tower Street site with CBRE as the project build managers and cost consultants. Eddison's are the property management company for Houndshell Shopping Centre.

[Read the full press release.](#)

Abingdon Street Market

£3.63m will be used to buy the market and to carry out a full internal refurbishment, providing a bright and modern shopping experience in the heart of the town centre. Customers will benefit from a wide range of independent retail and food retailers, together with new flexible office and performance space.

More details about the redevelopment project will follow in the next few weeks.

Getting Building Fund

On 4 August 2020, the government confirmed the list of over 300 successful projects which will receive a share of £900 million from the Getting Building Fund.

The [full list of projects](#) is available on GOV.UK.

The Getting Building Fund is investing in shovel-ready infrastructure projects to create jobs and support economic recovery across the country. Projects funded include:

- Regeneration of town and city centres
- Green infrastructure and clean energy
- Transport and digital connectivity improvements
- Unlocking of housing and business sites
- Support for SMEs and learners

The successful projects (over 300) are expected to deliver up to 85,000 jobs, over 1,500,000 sqm of commercial floor space, unlocking 45,000 homes, almost 1,000,000 sqm of public realm or green space improved or created, over 50,000 new learners assisted, and 65 million kgs of CO² emissions saved.

All projects have been selected by Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral Combined Authorities in each area and endorsed by the Housing Secretary.



[Lancashire received an allocation of £34.1m for 10 projects](#) which will create jobs and invest in much needed infrastructure improvements, helping the county recover and bounce back quicker from the pandemic.

All of the successful ten schemes have demonstrated they have the ability to accelerate growth and create employment, and are a good mix of projects which will have an impact across the whole of the county.

The schemes range from regeneration projects in some of Lancashire's towns which have been adversely impacted by COVID-19, to high-end research and development facilities which will contribute to the government's clean growth agenda.

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