



Blackpool and the Fylde:

**Our Framework for Inclusive
Growth and Prosperity**

Welcome



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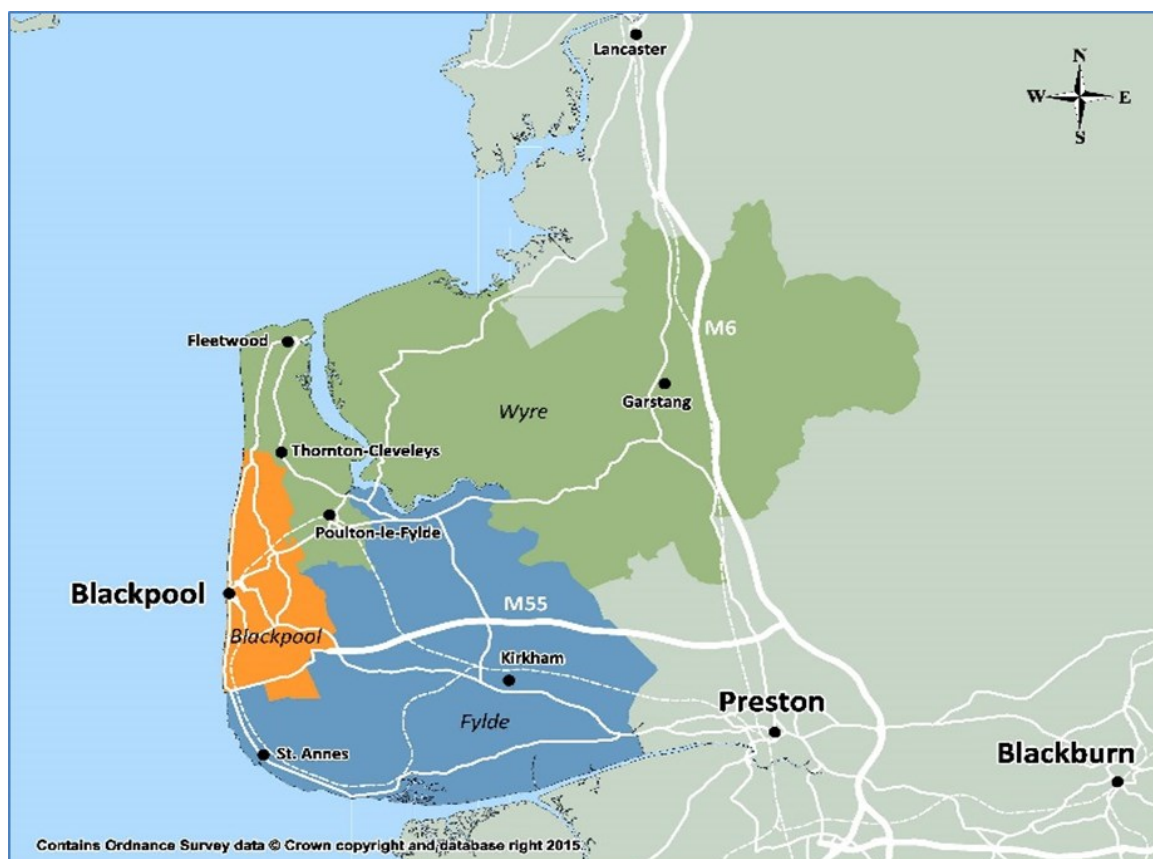


Blackpool and the Fylde Today

Blackpool and the Fylde is a coastal plain in the West of Lancashire, stretching from the Ribble Estuary to Morecambe Bay, taking in the local authority areas of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It is home to approximately 330,000 people, principally concentrated in an urban coastal strip running from Fleetwood in the North to Lytham further South. Blackpool and the Fylde broadly functions as a coherent economic space, with strong integration between labour, housing and consumer markets.

The area is best known for Blackpool, the country's largest and most historically significant seaside resort. Blackpool remains the UK's most popular seaside destination, with visitor numbers again on the rise. However, despite the recent upturn, the consequences of decades of decline in traditional tourism sectors mean that inner Blackpool is now the site of one of the country's greatest concentrations of socioeconomic deprivation.

Regardless of its regeneration challenges, Blackpool and the Fylde is home to many extremely desirable residential and business locations, and home to a number of outstanding economic assets of national and international significance. Taken together, the economy of Blackpool and the Fylde has an output of £5bn, making it one of the key building blocks of both the Lancashire and North West economy. That said, the economy of Blackpool and the Fylde is not performing as it could and should. It is lagging behind regional and national averages, and the gap is growing. This Framework for Inclusive Growth and Prosperity aims to reverse this trend.



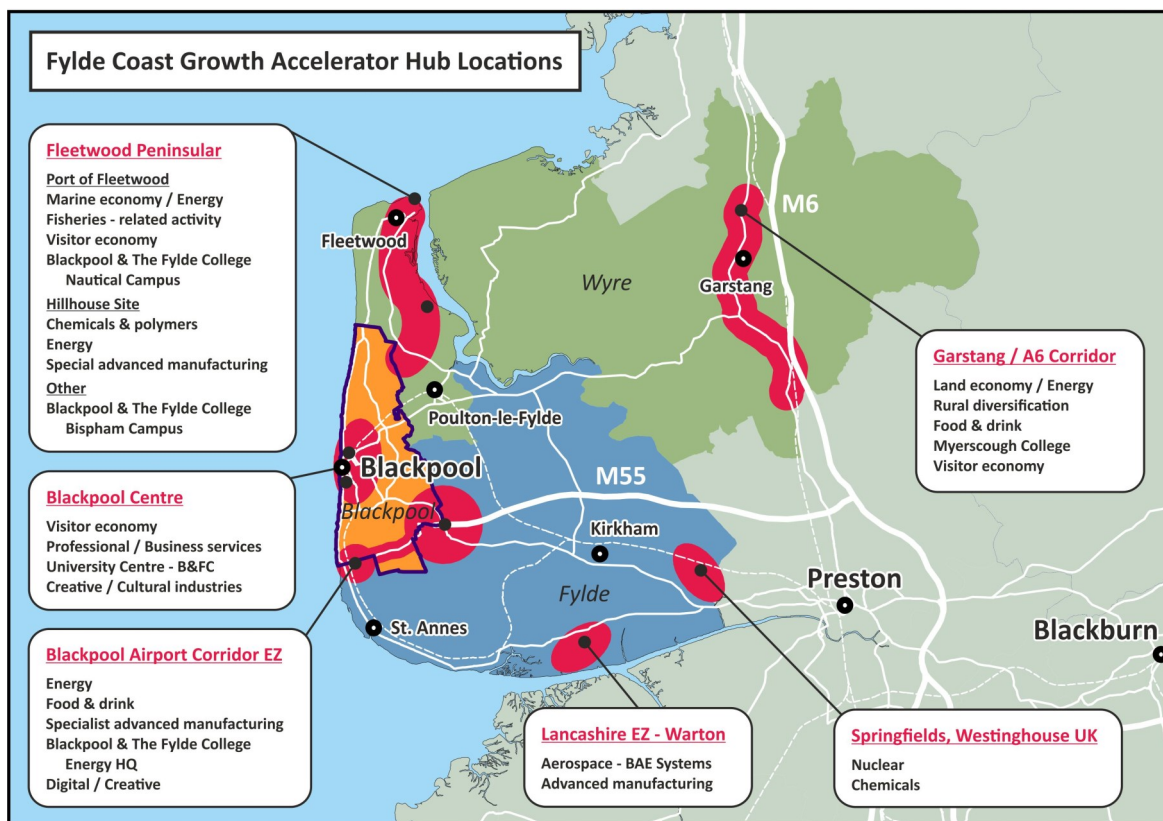
Our Core Economic Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges



The economy of Blackpool and the Fylde has clear existing strengths spread across a surprisingly diverse mix of sectors, including the visitor and cultural economy, advanced manufacturing/materials, aerospace and energy, marine, food and drink. Signature operations within these sectors include nuclear fuel production at Westinghouse UK Springfield, BAE Systems Warton (aerospace), Victrex Plc, Hillhouse (advanced materials), Pleasure Beach Blackpool (visitor economy), Lofthouses of Fleetwood (food) and SMP Ltd, Kirkham (marine). These sectoral strengths are supported by an enviable HE and FE offer, led by Myerscough and Blackpool and The Fylde colleges.

There are genuine opportunities to generate thousands of new jobs in the decades ahead, delivering the economic growth needed to close the performance gap. These opportunities include continued recovery and growth of the visitor and cultural economy, delivery of three Enterprise Zones at Blackpool Airport, Hillhouse and Warton, and maximising the vast economic potential of onshore oil and gas production should appropriate permissions be granted.

Core challenges must be addressed if Blackpool and the Fylde is to deliver and maximise the value of future growth. Infrastructure investment must be secured to deliver key sites, aspiration and skills levels must be raised to equip our residents to take new jobs, and educational attainment must improve at secondary level in particular. Crucially, we must also provide the homes and living offer to capture growth and retain talent; this will mean both new homes and intervention in areas of acute failure that currently undermine growth and fuel negative perceptions.





What We Want to Achieve and How

The overarching objective for Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company is simple. We want to deliver **inclusive economic growth and prosperity**, and in doing this, close our performance gap with national averages and **drive improvement in the quality of life and health of our people and businesses, now and into the future.**

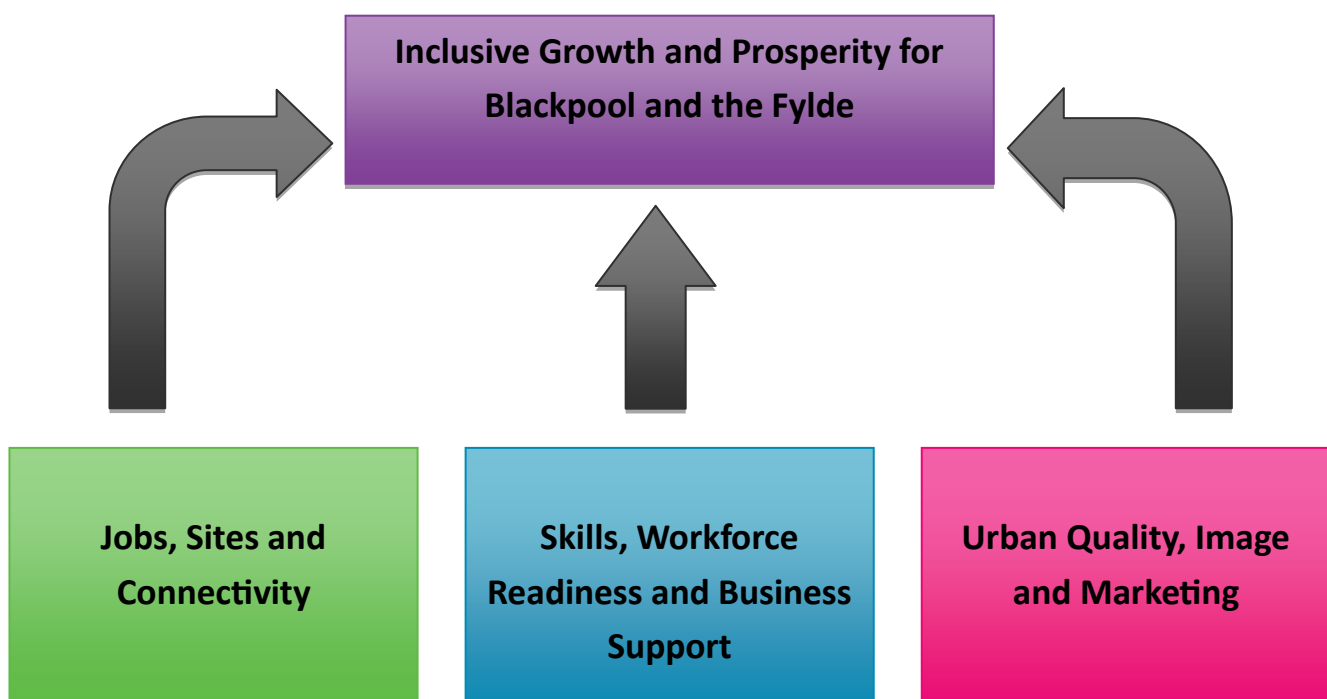
Inclusive growth and prosperity means creating jobs and bringing investment; crucially however, it also means ensuring that the **benefits of jobs and investment are felt, first and foremost, by the residents and businesses of Blackpool and the Fylde itself.**

We will deliver our overarching objective for inclusive growth and prosperity via three mutually reinforcing priority action areas:

Action Area 1: Jobs, Sites and Connectivity, focuses on those actions and projects that will act as the catalyst in enabling job creation and growth in our existing and future key economic sectors.

Action Area 2: Skills, Workforce Readiness and Business Support, focuses on those actions and projects that will equip residents and business to take advantage of new opportunities as they are generated.

Action Area 3: Urban Quality, Image and Marketing, focuses on the essential interventions required to ensure we develop a living offer that supports growth and the retention of talent, as well as tackling entrenched disadvantage and negative perceptions.



Priority Action Area 1: Jobs, Sites and Connectivity



This priority action area focuses on those actions and projects that will act as the primary catalysts for enabling job creation and growth in our existing and future key economic sectors. At its heart, the focus here is on bringing forward the sites and infrastructure required to deliver the greatest economic opportunity and return. Central to this are a number of new and existing Enterprise Zones (EZs). Blackpool and the Fylde will soon be home to three EZs – Blackpool Airport, Hillhouse and Warton – presenting a once in a generation opportunity to unleash potential, drive job creation and investment in our advanced manufacturing/materials and energy sectors in particular. Infrastructure improvements are essential in order to deliver this opportunity, especially planned and further investment in the A585 from J3 M55 to Fleetwood.

Sites and connectivity are also essential in driving jobs and growth in the visitor and cultural economy and the development of the professional services sector. Key priorities here include the delivery of a major new development at the Central Leisure Quarter site in Blackpool. We must also work to ensure we create the right conditions for retention and development of civil service departments and the professional services sector. To this end we are engaging with government about becoming a civil service hub, and prioritising the completion of the Central Business District at Talbot Gateway and the tramway extension from the promenade to Blackpool North Station.

Headline Partner Priorities and Projects for Action Area 1, 2015-2020:

- Commence delivery of Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse Enterprise Zones, to include recruitment of delivery teams, site masterplanning, and the initiation of business rate and capital allowance relief
- Delivery of A585 Skippool to Windy Harbour Bypass, and make the case for further A585 investment and improvements to access to the port of Fleetwood
- Develop a nationally significant cluster of energy businesses anchored at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, using on-shore gas and oil production as a catalyst for growth should relevant permissions acquire approval
- Work to ensure Blackpool and the Fylde remain a centre of significant government employment by becoming a defined civil service hub
- Delivery of a 21st Century conference and hotel offer anchored at the Winter Gardens, Blackpool.
- Devise and implement a delivery strategy for the Central Leisure Quarter site adjacent to Blackpool town centre
- Completion of Talbot Gateway and delivery of the tram extension from the promenade to Blackpool North station
- Support the continued growth of the strategic development location around Junction 5 of the M55; in particular the Wyndyke Healthy New Town, Whitehills Business Park growth and the delivery of the St Annes M55 link road



Priority Action Area 2: Skills, Workforce Readiness and Business Support

We want the people and businesses of Blackpool and the Fylde to be the primary beneficiaries of new jobs and economic growth. For this to happen, we must significantly improve the skills of our residents, as well as working with those with complex needs to return to the labour market. We must also engineer the right kinds of support to foster new business creation and development.

As it stands, the skills levels of our residents lag significantly behind both county and national averages; as does our rates of business formation. We will reverse these trends by expanding appropriate degree level provision and creating new centres to deliver the skills required for our existing and new key growth sectors. For example, Blackpool and The Fylde College have established a new Energy HQ at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, and will lead delivery of an expanded HE offer. We will also continue to develop innovative ways of tackling complex needs and returning people to the labour market. For example, local partners will deliver a ground breaking pilot scheme to return individuals with mental health needs into employment.

We want to make the Fylde Coast the best place in the UK to start and grow a business. We will blend excellent local insight, infrastructure, contacts, networks and knowledge to provide an exceptional base environment for all businesses – those growing or locating into the area (the Enterprise Zones will lead on this), as well as new and young businesses. We will offer business start-up support and aftercare which assists businesses to achieve their potential, meeting the needs of high growth businesses and those who seek self-employment.

Typically Fylde Coast businesses use less publicly funded business support than other businesses in Lancashire. We will develop long term relationships with growing and relocating businesses, helping them to implement their growth plans and ambitions using national (eg UKTI), regional (eg Access to Finance) and local (eg BOOST) funded support where appropriate. We will develop suitable services where none exist (typically in Visitor Economy and retail sectors), and seek to enhance provision where possible. We will build on existing links to private sector support to facilitate a vibrant business support infrastructure.

Headline Partner Priorities and Projects for Action Area 2, 2015-2020:

- Plan and begin delivery of an expanded Higher and Technical and Professional Education offer anchored in central Blackpool, led by Blackpool and The Fylde College
- Support Lancashire Energy College HQ at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone
- Deliver Blackpool Mental Health and Employability trailblazer pilot programme, and bid for resource to fund additional schemes to return individuals with complex needs to the labour market
- Challenge low aspiration and 11-16 educational attainment, in particular Key Stage 3 and 4 in Blackpool, and support the Multi Academy Trusts in the delivery of improvement
- Develop support packages for businesses locating in the Enterprise Zones
- Develop support packages for key sectors excluded from the BOOST service
- Introduce comprehensive, universal start-up support service able to meet the needs of non-Boost eligible high growth businesses and those seeking self-employment.



Priority Action Area 3: Urban Quality, Image and Marketing

Blackpool and the Fylde is already in possession of many outstanding places to live. However, we must grow and radically improve our living offer if we are to ensure that jobs and economic growth stick, and failing areas do not hold us back. We need to deliver new homes in the right places, and local authority partners are committed to working together to achieve this through the Local Plan process. Furthermore, we must radically intervene to tackle chronic housing market failure in inner Blackpool, where an acute structural imbalance is supporting accelerating levels of socioeconomic deprivation, choking off the recovery of the resort, and fuelling negative perceptions of the entire area. Blackpool Council is setting up a new housing company to kick-start a process of direct intervention in these failing areas and is opening a direct dialogue with the government about the changes we need to welfare policy to create the wider conditions for housing investment.

As well as housing improvement, we must also continue to invest in Blackpool town centre. Blackpool town centre is the urban heart of our geography but it does not serve the Fylde as it could and should. It has the highest rate of retail leakage of any UK primary urban area, and its image undermines our wider offer. With partners we will deliver planned improvements to the Blackpool town centre and produce a fresh spatial strategy assisting delivery of new catalytic projects such as Central Leisure Quarter, new developments to further stimulate the cultural economy, and expanded HE provision.

Headline Partner Priorities and Projects for Action Area 3, 2015-2020:

- Complete new Local Plans for Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre to include co-operation in the identification of 5 year housing supplies in each local authority area
- Establish a new Housing Company with £26m of public investment to begin process of structural change in inner Blackpool
- Acquire ability to vary housing benefit payments in inner Blackpool via agreement between Lancashire Combined Authority and Government
- Create a revised spatial strategy for Blackpool Town Centre to include provision for key projects including delivery of Green Corridors, the Central Leisure Quarter site, an expanded Higher Education offer, Hounds Hills expansion, a new cultural quarter and tram extension to Blackpool North station
- Ensure delivery of the electrification of train line from Blackpool North station to Preston, including significant connectivity improvements at Kirkham and Wesham
- Maximise the economic benefits and public realm improvements identified in the Fylde Coastal Strategy using the £20m Replacement Coastal Sea Defences as a catalyst for further development and investment including Fairhaven Lake and the Island Site
- Work with Lancashire LEP, Marketing Lancashire and UKTI to encourage inward investment and respond positively to inward investment enquiries. As part of this, establish a single protocol and system to handle inward investment enquiries across the Fylde Coast



Governance & Delivery

Delivery of this Framework for Inclusive Growth and Prosperity will be overseen by the Board of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company (EDC). The Board of the EDC is made up of key public and private representatives from across the sub-region, to include Local Authority Chief Executives, the Principal of Blackpool and The Fylde College, and local business leaders.

In addition to oversight of the strategy, the Board of the EDC will act as the Programme Board for Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse Enterprise Zones, working with the Local Enterprise Partnership as appropriate in the development and delivery of these key sites and other projects.

Lead Board Members and Lead Senior Officers have been identified in order to assist the Board in developing an effective work programme, and in delivering effective oversight and accountability. Lead Board Members and Lead Officers have been allocated to each of the three EDC Priority Action Areas, as set out below.

	Priority Action Area 1: Jobs, Sites and Connectivity	Priority Action Area 2: Skills, Workforce Readiness and Business Support	Priority Action Area 3: Urban Quality, Image and Marketing
Lead Board Member	Alan Cavill Director of Place, Blackpool Council	Bev Robinson Principal and CEO, Blackpool and The Fylde College	Neil Jack Chief Executive, Blackpool Council
Lead Senior Officer	Rob Green Head of Enterprise and Investment, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre EDC	Peter Legg Head of Economic Development, Blackpool Council	Antony Lockley Strategic Head of Development, Blackpool Council

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