

BLACKPOOL CULTURAL STRATEGY 2024 – 2030 ADDENDUM

April 2024



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Quotes included in this report are verbatim comments taken from stakeholder consultations and workshop sessions.

Images courtesy:

Cover – House of Wingz

Back cover – The Comedy Carpet, Gordon Young

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The Intelligence Agency

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE (STEERING GROUP)

1.1 MEMBERSHIP OF CORE LEADERSHIP GROUP

Rationale for membership of Steering Group:

- Strategic cultural partner in the town;
- and/or track record of delivery;
- and/or securing significant investment from regional or national funding partner;
- and/or existing Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation or present applicant for 2023-26 cohort;
- and/or investor in the development of the framework process.

A Chair and Vice Chair will be nominated and appointed by the representatives. The Steering Group may invite other representatives from other key bodies to contribute their expertise and knowledge at certain points in the process. Substitutes are allowed from within same organisation.

Note

The present Cultural Strategy Steering Group is to refresh its terms of reference with the completion of the Cultural Strategy and go forward as the Creative Blackpool Development Group (CBDG)

1.2 PURPOSE

To lead on devising and implementing a process for:

- creating a clear and exciting vision for cultural development in Blackpool that is produced through wide consultation and communicated through the production and publication of a Cultural Strategy with an Action Plan for the next 3 to 5 years.

- establishing a strategic partnership working across Blackpool, regionally and nationally to enable arts and culture to make a significant contribution to the economic, social, and environment regeneration of Blackpool; advocate for and enable interventions for investment and collaborative working.

Once established, a core part of the partnership's work will be to oversee the implementation of the Cultural Strategy, monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Action Plan and regularly refresh the plan to ensure it is relevant to the latest opportunities and developments in the town.

1.3 MEETING FREQUENCY, LONGEVITY AND COMMITMENT

It is envisaged that the Steering Group will need to be in place for up to 12 months (until clearer governance is agreed and established). Meetings will take place monthly; smaller working groups may need to be established and meet more regularly to deliver specific tasks.

It is expected that members of the Steering Group will do their best to attend meetings on a regular basis. If a member of the Steering Group does not attend three consecutive meetings, they will be asked to step down due to lack of commitment (unless there are extenuating circumstances). Members sending apologies for a meeting will be expected to submit comments on papers received in advance to be shared at the meeting to ensure their views can be taken into account.

1.4 FUNDING / COMMISSIONING

Funding secured from the Arts Council England to enable a programme of work on setting up a Cultural Framework will be managed by Blackpool Council as the accountable body. Any contracting of freelance advisors, critical friends or consultants and other associated costs for the work will be undertaken by the Council adhering to its procurement policy.

1.5 FREELANCE REPRESENTATION ON THE STEERING GROUP

The Steering Group is committed to ensuring a range of voices from across the independent cultural sector can be heard through the development process and will seek to ensure barriers to taking an active part are minimised. Honorariums for time committed by freelance creatives to being active members of the Steering Group or any working groups established will be agreed at the outset.

1.6 DECISION-MAKING

By consensus.

1.7 GROUP ADMINISTRATION

- Setting up meetings and administration of the Steering Group will be undertaken by Blackpool Council unless agreed otherwise by the Group.
- Brief notes / actions to be taken of each meeting. Distributed in advance of future meetings.

1.8 MEMBERSHIP AT COMPLETION OF STRATEGY

1.8 MEMBERSHIP AT COMPLETION OF STRATEGY

Abingdon Studios Ltd (not for profit)	Garth Gratrix	Director and Artist
Aunty Social (CIC)	Catherine Mugonyi	Director
Blackpool & the Fylde College	Annie Kerfoot	Head of Leadership, Management & Lifestyle
Blackpool Business Improvement Districts (Tourism and Town Centre)	Sue Grindrod	Managing Director, BID Ltd
Blackpool Council – Regeneration & Communications Directorate (Cultural Services)	Peter Legg	Head of Economic & Cultural Services
	Carolyn Primett	Head of Arts
	Vicky Clarke	Head of Libraries
Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust (Showtown)	Elizabeth Moss	Chief Executive
	Kerry Vasiliou	Learning & Engagement Manager
Electric Sunshine Project (CIC)	Melanie Whitehead	Artistic Director
The Grand Theatre, Blackpool	Adam Knight	Chief Executive; Chair of Steering Group
Grundy Art Gallery	Paulette Brien	Curator
House of Wingz	Aishley Bell-Docherty	Artistic Director
	Samantha Bell-Docherty	Creative Director
LeftCoast (Creative People and Places)	to be nominated	Director; Vice Chair of Steering Group
Lightpool Festival	Philip Holmes	Artistic Director
TramShed Theatre Company	Zac Hackett	Artistic Director
Winter Gardens (BECL)	Michael Williams	Managing Director, BECL Ltd.
Arts Council England	Invited as observer as and when appropriate	

2. CONSULTANCY APPROACH

The Steering Group engaged the services of CTConsults via a competitive procurement process, to help mentor them to develop the strategy.

CTConsults met with the steering group both online and in person, to workshop and explore what goes into developing a cultural strategy. This included setting goals and ambitions, visioning, prioritising, creative writing, editing, governance models, action planning and more.

CTConsults helped the Steering Group explore Blackpool's cultural realities and ambitions, analysing other strategies for comparison. The consultants conducted desk research and stakeholder consultation, mapping of cultural assets and funding analysis. Collectively we forged a new place-based approach to collaborative strategy development practice.

CTConsults' role was mentoring and coaching the Steering Group, who had varying experience of policy development and implementation. They advised on the engagement process, spotted untapped opportunities / talent & provided a neutral / objective perspective, and presented research in an accessible manner. CTConsults identified Group members to be Writers & Editors, and built task groups to develop future implementation plans.

CTConsults also engaged wider stakeholders to add their views on priorities and opportunities, and sense-check the strategy framework. National bodies such as Arts Council England supported the process and are interested in creating a 'Blackpool Model' for collaborative cultural strategy development which can be replicated elsewhere.

CTConsults worked with the Steering Group to lay the foundations for the strategy by workshoping Blackpool's cultural realities and ambitions. Strategies were collectively analysed from elsewhere, to understand what would work in Blackpool. Desk research was conducted alongside stakeholder consultation to provide an evidence base to shape and inform thinking, including assessing Blackpool's role within Lancashire and the North West, and building case studies of good practice locally.

Once a strategy framework was agreed, CTConsults identified members of the Steering Group to become a Writing Team. A Writers' Away Day was facilitated, building the strategy spine and mapping out content for the core themes, with each writer leading one one section. Once a full draft was ready, the Steering Group met to feedback and an Editing Team was identified to provide a coherent, singular voice. Following this, CTConsults facilitated a series of stakeholder workshops in which the strategy themes were tested by a wider cohort and their feedback incorporated into the next draft.

Consensus decision making was utilised throughout the process. CTConsults worked to help all members of the Steering Group find their place within the creative ecology and understand how they add value; building a more democratic and level cultural leadership for the town.

3. CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

In order to produce this strategy, a range of consultation methodologies were utilised.

This has included:

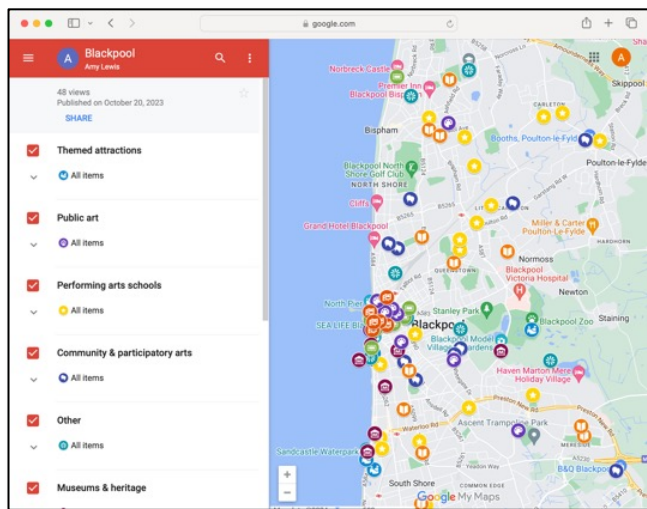
1. One-to-one conversations with targeted individuals stakeholders;
2. Two in-person workshops held at The Old Electric on 13th September 2023;
3. One online workshop for stakeholders on 20th September 2023.

Many individual freelance creative practitioners were consulted alongside these organisations.

This has resulted in input from the following organisations:			
Abingdon Studios	Blackpool School of Art	Friends of Stanley Park	North Shore Business Group
Arts Council England	Blackpool Sixth Form	The Grand Theatre	Paperpeutic
Aunty Social CIC	Blackpool Social Club	Grundy Art Gallery	Partingtons Holiday Centres
Arts Lancashire	Blackpool Symphony Orchestra	Hawes Side Academy	People's Powerhouse
AVR Dance	Blackpool Tower / Merlin Entertainments Cluster	Heritage Trust for the North West	Phil Winston's Theatreworks
Blackpool Pride Festival	Blackpool Transport	Hidden Track	Pot Bound
Barcadia Media	Blackpool Winter Gardens	Hive Arts	Rainbow Pathways
Beach House Bar & Bistro	Blue Skies Hospitals Fund	Houndshell Shopping Centre	Revoelution (Revoe Community Hub)
Black Liver	Buzz Bury Learning & Creativity	House of Wingz	Rossall School
Blackpool BIDs Ltd	By the Meter	Imitating the Dog	St. Nicholas C of E Primary School
Blackpool Civic Trust	Choice Hotels	Knight Rigging Services	Seaside Stitchers
Blackpool Coastal Housing	The Comedy Station Ltd.	Layton-Law.Com	Showtown
Blackpool Council	Cowbell Radio	LeftCoast	Solstice Arts Festival
Blackpool & the Fylde College	Crafty coos	Magic Club	Spitfire Visitor Centre
Blackpool Libraries	Creative Lancashire	Marketing Lancashire	That Alternative
Blackpool LCEP	Curious Minds	Marlborough Productions	TramShed Theatre Company
Blackpool Operatic Players	The Electric Sunshine Project	National Literacy Trust	YourblackpoolL
Blackpool Pleasure Beach	Fit the Bill Ltd	Noches De Salsa	Viva
Blackpool Pride of Place – BITC			

4 MAPPING & FUNDING ANALYSIS

A dynamic literal map of the cultural and community offer was developed as part of the research process. This map is a shared resource with c.125 entries currently.



It can be viewed interactively at: <https://bit.ly/3nHhahf>.

Observations

- Lots of dance provision for all ages and genres, and especially for children.
- Comparatively little drama, especially for adults.
- Very little public art (the world-class Comedy Carpet aside).
- Commercial galleries are lacking.
- Strong community venue infrastructure, but participatory & community arts offer is lacking overall.
- A few good quality participatory music and visual arts organisations.

- Some supporting infrastructure e.g. recording studios, School of Art – but missing rehearsal rooms, makerspaces etc.
- Good range of cultural venues and organisations, but not many. The steering group membership makes up the majority of the 'cultural offer', rather than being representative of it.

About the data:

- This data represents what is easy enough to find - there may be much more, but it is not visible online.
- Selected visitor attractions have been added if they have a link to cultural / heritage tourism.
- Only regular annual events have been added.
- This is a geographical map – organisations without a permanent venue have been given a nominal home e.g. where they host regular events.
- The geographical boundaries have been set by what is most relevant, as opposed to council boundaries.
- Some of the night-time economy / popular entertainment venues have been added if they regularly host live performance.

Additionally, Arts Council England funding was analysed.

Arts Council England investment in Blackpool

Project Grants since 2012:

- £1,337,980 – total investment.
- 69% of the project grant investment goes to Steering Group members.

- 35% goes to Illuminations / Lightpool.
- 13% goes to individual artists.
- 23% of funding went to Showzam and Sand, Sea and Spray – both of which have ceased.
- Alongside the ongoing Illuminations activity, this means at least 58% of funding went into short term festival activity.
- Since the pandemic, the level of project grant investment has been slowly recovering and is on an upwards trajectory. Prior to the pandemic, investment levels were less consistent.

What does this tell us?

There are not enough applications to ACE from Blackpool for a town of its size – or, the applications from Blackpool are too often unsuccessful. This could mean there is a gap in skills and/or confidence in ACE grant applications from Blackpool creatives. There is a need to grow the level of investment from ACE in Blackpool, which starts with more applications which are of an investable standard.

Significant levels of funding go towards short term festival activities – some of which no longer run. This has added to perceptions of a narrow or fragile cultural infrastructure. How festivals can become sustainable, and how their impact can be felt beyond the festival periods, is an opportunity area for Blackpool.

Employment data

Arts, Entertainment and Recreation represents 4.7% of jobs in Blackpool, compared to a national average of 2.3%. Inevitably, this data is skewed in Blackpool by high levels of employment in the entertainment sector. Blackpool's sector is c.30% of the size of Lancashire's sector. Lancashire falls behind the national average where this sector represents only 2% of employment. Therefore, Blackpool's role within Lancashire must be acknowledged and recognised. Accommodation and Food Service Activities makes up 12.5% of employment compared to a national average of 7.5%.

Geographical map

Full URL:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1iVp_6-SLwLuwEzSvubegp0a3fjxFseI&ll=53.82985721237998%2C-2.96765819999999962&z=11

5. KEYWORD RESEARCH

Data Date Range 01.02.2022 - 31.01.2023

BLACKPOOL: GOOGLE SEARCH TERM RESEARCH FINDINGS.

All visualisations created from the data from the Primary Dataset can be made accessible. On this sheet yearly performance of individual key words can be viewed in Column S. Brands included In The Research: As part of the research brands were defined and categorised into "Culture and Community" and "Commercial" to identify trends and differences between the two. These were named 'Sector Type'.

CULTURE & COMMUNITY BRANDED TERMS	COMMERCIAL BRANDED TERMS
blackpool grand theatre	blackpool tower ballroom
aunty social blackpool	blackpool pleasure beach
leftcoast blackpool	madame tussauds blackpool
blackpool winter gardens	blackpool tower
tramshed	blackpool tower dungeons
abingdon studios blackpool	blackpool tower circus
the grundy art gallery	blackpool magicians club
blackpool cultural services	blackpool north pier
the electric sunshine project	ripleys believe It or not blackpool
school of arts at blackpool	sandcastle waterpark
	sealife blackpool
* Crossed-out organisations had no search activity and were removed from the dataset.	blackpool illuminations
	Funny Girls Blackpool

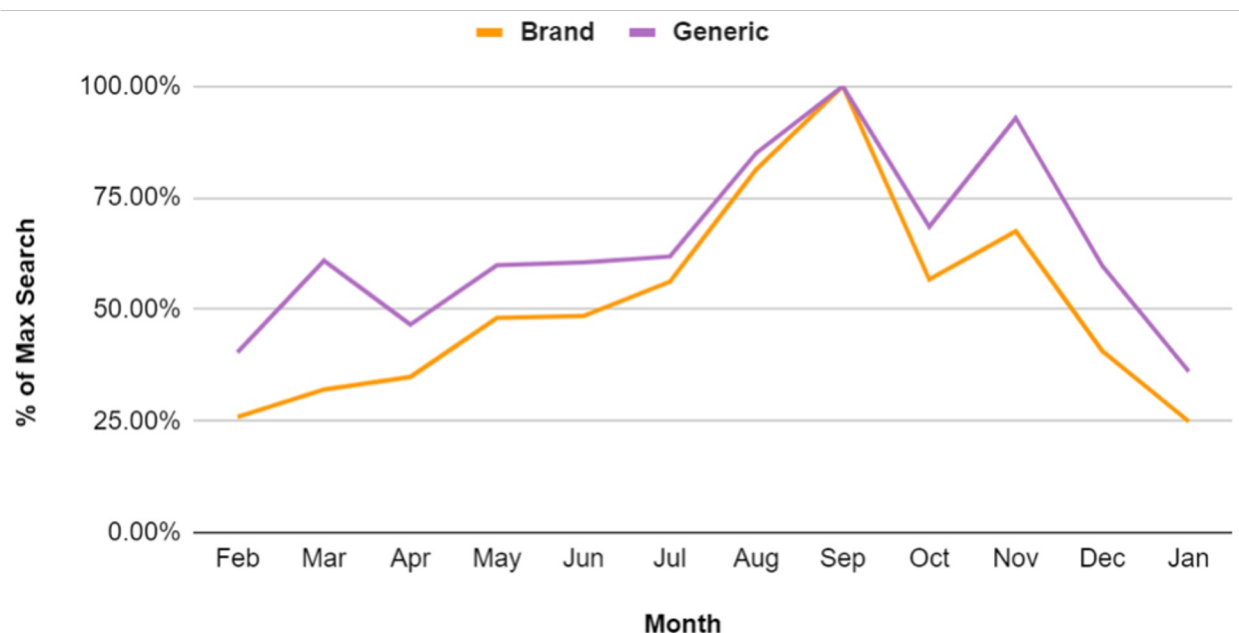
BRANDED VS GENERIC SEARCH

Brand

Search for specific organisations within Blackpool.

Generic

Search terms used to discover Blackpool's offering such as: 'things to do in blackpool', 'Galleries in blackpool' or 'whats on near me' (geotagged from Blackpool).



Blackpool Related Search across the UK by Keyword Type (% of max.)

BRANDED VS GENERIC SEARCH

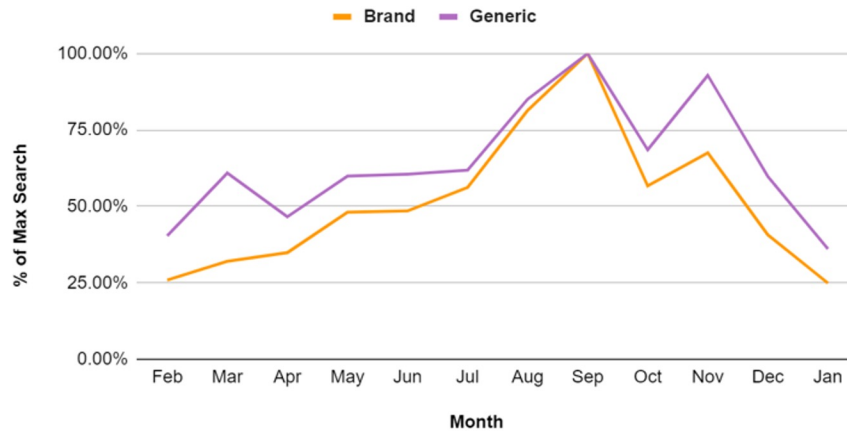
Brand

Search for specific organisations within Blackpool.

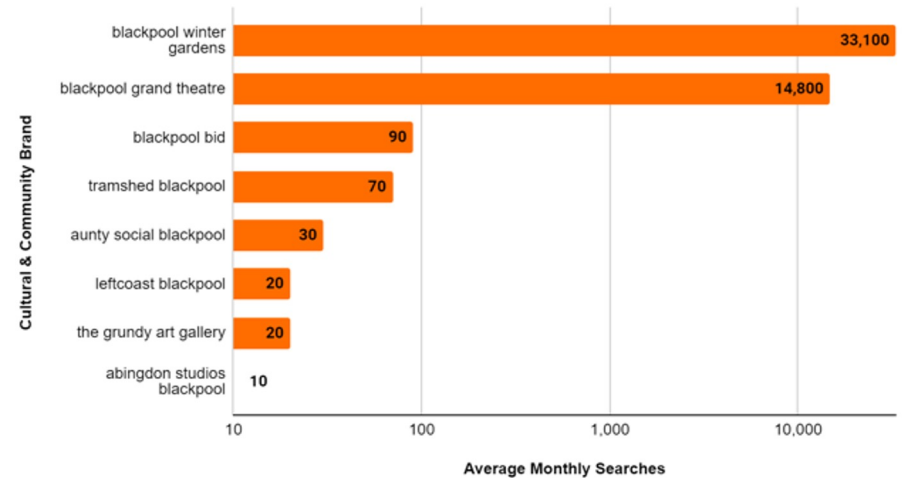
Generic

Search terms used to discover Blackpool's offering such as: 'things to do in blackpool', 'Galleries in blackpool' or 'whats on near me' (geotagged from Blackpool).

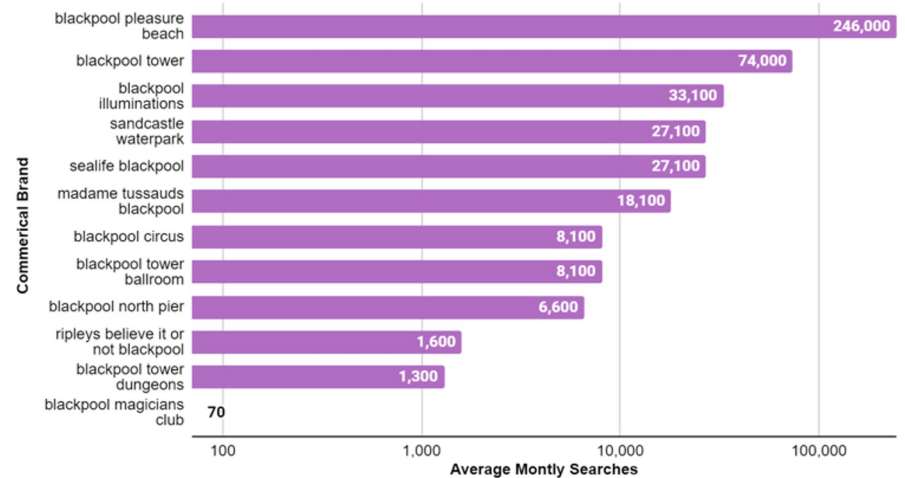
Blackpool Related Search across the UK by Keyword Type
(% of max.)



AVERAGE MONTHLY PERFORMANCE BY ORGANISATIONS WITHIN THEIR SECTOR TYPE



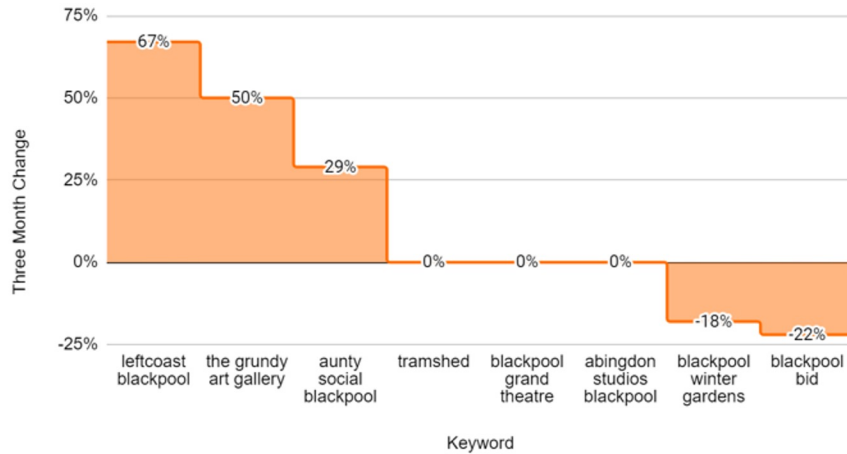
Average Monthly Performance by Organisations within their Sector Type



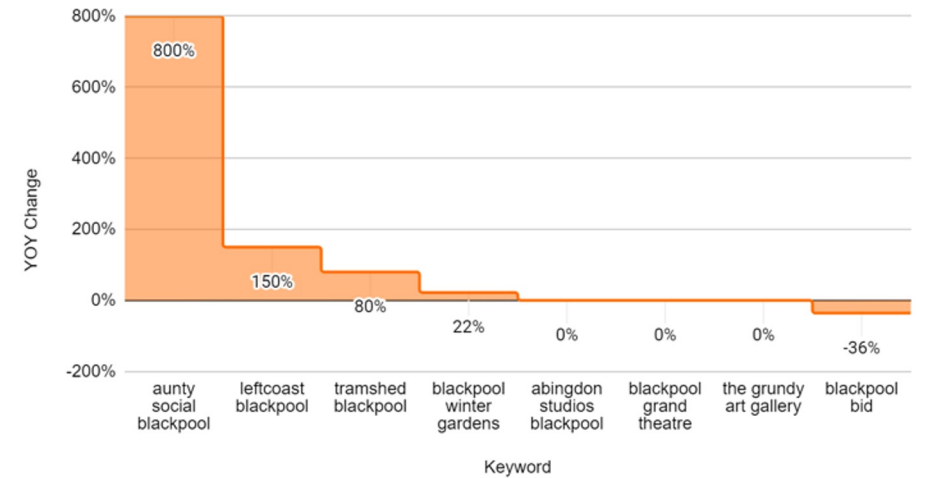
Average Monthly Searches for Commercial Organisations

SECTOR CHANGE: CULTURE & COMMUNITY

Culture & Community: Three Month Change by Keyword

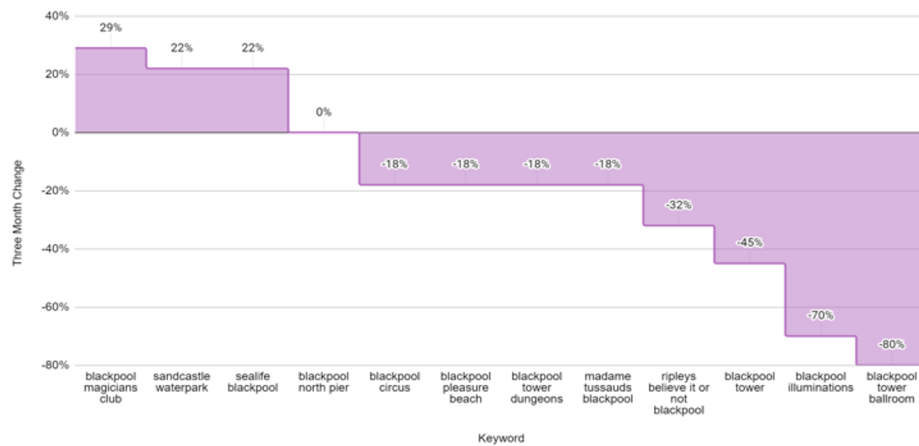


Culture & Community : Year-on-Year Change

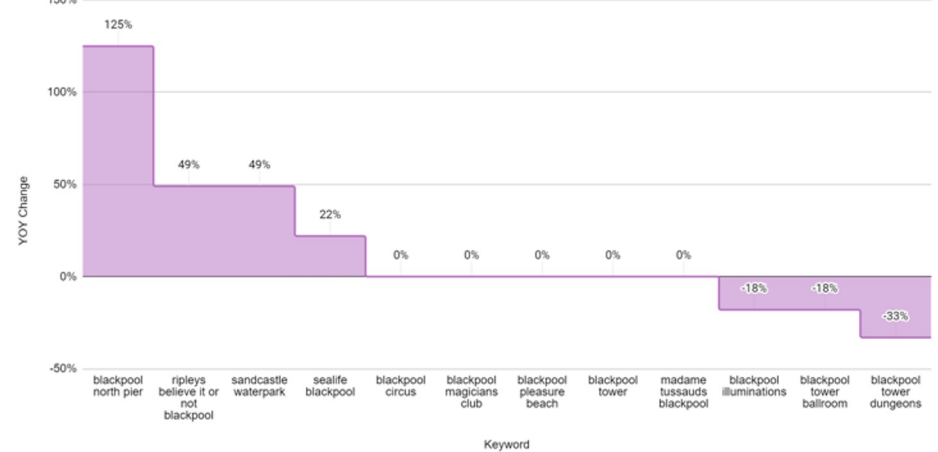


SECTOR CHANGE: COMMERCIAL

Commercial: Three Month Change by Keyword

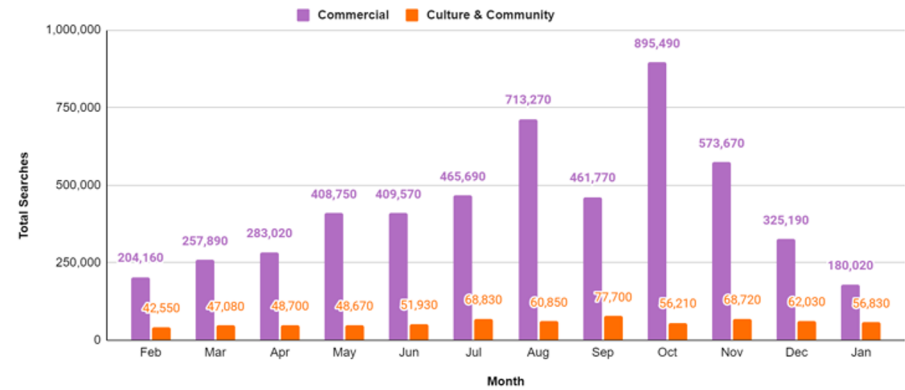


Commercial: Year-on-Year Change



VOLUME OF SEARCH BY SECTOR GROUP

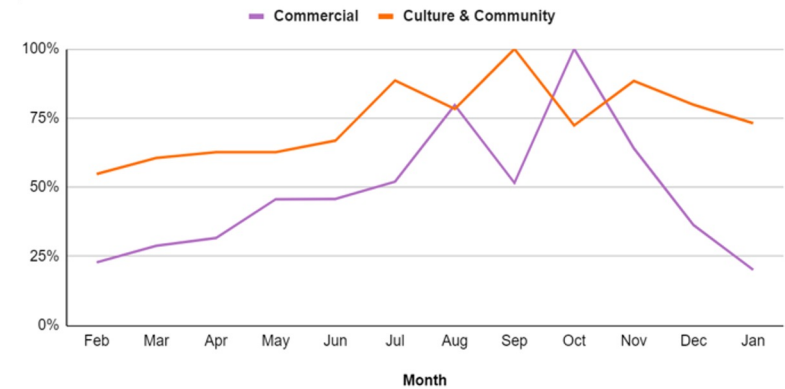
Total Search figures for Culture & Community and Commercial Brand Search



VOLUME OF SEARCH BY SECTOR GROUP

Total Search for Culture & Community and Commercial Brand Search:
Represented as % of max.

— When the same data set is displayed as % of Max it offers us some insight of consistency and performance over time.

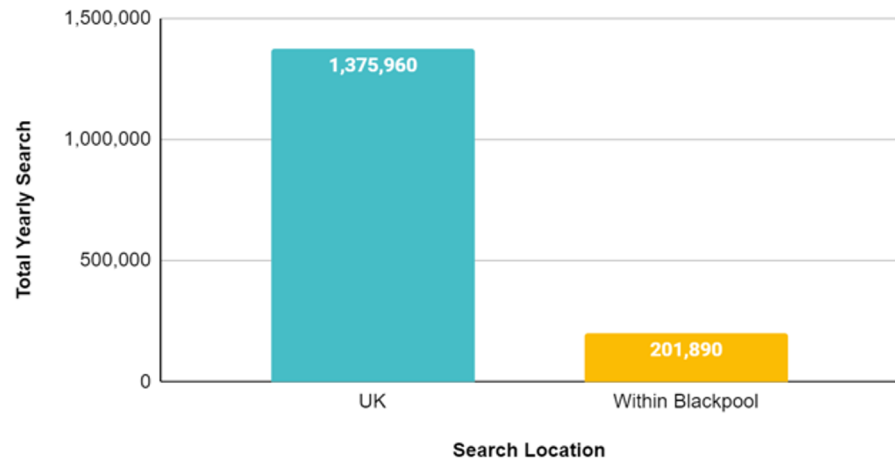


INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SEARCHES

TOTAL VOLUME OF SEARCH BY LOCATION TYPE

Volume of Yearly Generic Search for Blackpool Activities by Location

Graph notes the total number of searches of generic searches about Blackpool in the UK and Within Blackpool (tourist vs local).



Xxxxxx

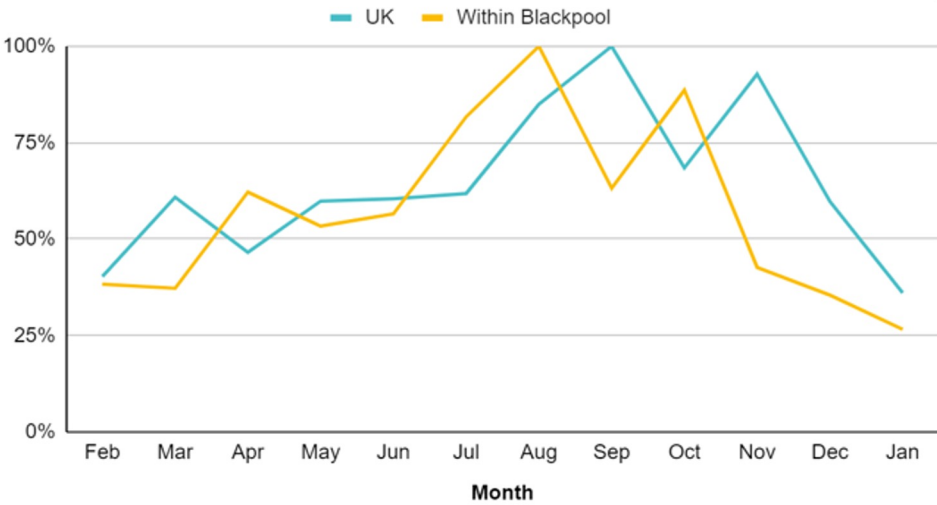
GENERIC SEARCHES BY SEARCH LOCATION TYPES

Monthly Generic Search Performance by Search

When this is placed as a % of max. representation we can begin to identify a trend.

- Locals of Blackpool climb and peak over the summer months when looking for things to do.
- People from outside of Blackpool peak in Winter Months. This could be due to the commercial events of this time.
- The Residents of Blackpool’s search Trend almost mirrors but a month in advance.

There is a gap in when Blackpool residents and visitors become most interested in engaging with activities.



CATEGORISING THE SEARCH

Term Category	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Arts Organisation	58%	84%	42%	37%	47%	63%	58%	84%	79%	89%	63%	100%
Cultural Organisation	71%	71%	86%	93%	57%	57%	79%	100%	71%	79%	43%	57%
Discovery Term	42%	48%	51%	69%	71%	76%	94%	100%	67%	75%	41%	30%
Galleries & Museums	53%	56%	58%	85%	66%	66%	100%		61%	69%	57%	42%
Landmark	38%	64%	47%	55%	56%	57%	85%	100%	72%	98%	74%	37%
Multi-Purpose Venue	45%	45%	55%	55%	67%	100%	82%	67%	100%	82%	67%	67%
Music	57%	48%	84%	86%	89%	91%	95%	100%	84%	75%	64%	43%
Theatres & Shows	70%	79%	69%	73%	70%	75%	84%	88%	100%	99%	91%	76%
Themed Attraction	18%	23%	30%	45%	45%	52%	81%	100%	38%	47%	21%	13%
Yearly Event	25%	12%	13%	17%	17%	19%	26%	43%	95%	100%	62%	34%

6. CREATIVE NEEDS ANALYSIS

Introduction to Blackpool *

Blackpool is the heart of the Fylde Coast and one of the most densely developed boroughs in Britain, with around 140,000 residents; the Fylde Coast has a population of around 350,000 residents. Blackpool's past and present are inextricably linked with the tourist industry. The town was originally developed as a health resort and holiday destination following the arrival of the first trains in 1846 and the increased prosperity and leisure time of the working class. This brought with it an epic physical transformation, with the first Illuminations in 1879 and the opening of the first electric tramway in the UK in 1885, catalysing the development of the town's iconic attractions. Despite a decline in visitors prompted by the rise of cheap package holidays abroad from the 1970s, Blackpool has continued to retain a unique place in the nation's imagination and is currently experiencing growth in its visitor economy, with renewed interest from investors and holidaymakers alike. Blackpool, renowned as famous for fresh air and fun, officially has the second cleanest air in England and Stanley Park was voted the best park in the UK.

Blackpool's international profile as a centre for entertainment means it continues to be one of Britain's most visited destinations. There are over 20 million visitors annually who come to enjoy cultural and visitor attractions - such as the historic Blackpool Tower and Winter Gardens conference complex, the three piers, the promenade, a lively events programme including the Air Show and Fireworks Festival, performance and the visual arts, family fun at the Blackpool Illuminations and heart-pumping action at the Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

The resurgent visitor economy is creating new opportunities for local residents and the economy is diversifying. Future growth potential exists within emerging sectors including aerospace and advanced engineering, advanced materials technologies, food manufacturing and digital and cyber technologies, as well as energy-related businesses that draw upon the strength of the North West in this sector.

Blackpool is a true British icon, the only urban seaside resort with over 150 years of heritage, the first working class holiday resort in the world and one with an unshakeable vitality. A town that has a place in the hearts of the British public.

Blackpool's story is one of continual reinvention, notable for its scale, speed and ambition. Driven by the desire for progress and the need to respond to the effects of an ever-evolving society, the town seeks new ways of working and innovating. Blackpool's unmistakable entrepreneurial spirit has endured through a 'can do' culture of tackling problems in a nimble way that constantly seeks positive change rather than fighting to maintain an archaic status quo. There is a healthy and progressive partnership between Blackpool Council, businesses, investors, and the community which makes things happen in a coordinated way.

Challenges *

Blackpool's profile comes with significant social and economic costs. Shorter stay visits have created pressure on the sector to keep costs and wages low and jobs seasonal – disincentivising long-term investment. Former B&B's are the biggest contributor to Blackpool's mass of thousands of Houses of

Multiple Occupation (HMO), three quarters of which are occupied by transient renters. Significant numbers of often absentee landlords have a poor track record of maintaining these properties, profiteering from artificially high housing benefit levels, whilst enabling the spread of a morass of social and health problems. The result is the greatest concentration of deprivation in England, with an influx of high numbers of low-income and vulnerable people with poor social networks from other towns. Such is the poor quality of this accommodation that those who find a way of improving their lives move away from the resort, creating a continuous cycle for landlords to fill spaces with those who are less fortunate. This is a core intractable problem and one that leads to extreme pressure on local public services.

The statistics are stark. Low wages, low employment rates, high levels of benefit claimants, poor health and high exclusion rates from school mean that child poverty is unacceptably prevalent in the town. In inner Blackpool, 50% of households live in private rented accommodation, further destabilising the permanency of communities. Together, this has led to an economic malaise that is further exacerbated by a high proportion of residents with long-term debilitating illnesses and some of the poorest mental and physical health outcomes in the country. With young people under-performing at GCSE level, aspirations in the town are frequently low. The corresponding low skills levels and low numbers of graduates remaining or returning to the town, provides little incentive for employers with professional or technical careers to choose Blackpool as a place for growth.

Blackpool's Renaissance *

Unprecedented levels of physical regeneration are underway in order to tackle these issues with The Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership and Blackpool Council working together with national Government, to realise Blackpool's renaissance.

In January 2020, a Town Deal Board was created to encourage residents and civic leaders to create plans for a Town Deal. Led by the Blackpool Pride of Place Partnership, the Town Deal Board secured £40m for seven projects, including: a Youth Hub (The Platform) to support young people into training and employment in the town; relocating the Blackpool Central Courts to enable the full delivery of Blackpool Central; the Multiversity; infrastructure investment at Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone; Revoe Community Sports Village in the Southern Quarter; The Edge – a business hub, and modernisation of the iconic Blackpool Illuminations. This was in addition to around £60m of Growth Deal and Coastal Communities Funded projects already delivered in recent years, along with the Shared Prosperity Fund. The Government's Getting Building Fund was used for two projects in the town: the revitalisation of Abingdon Street Market and The Houndshell Shopping Centre extension for The Backlot Cinema and Diner with one of the largest IMAX screens in the country.

In March 2022, Blackpool agreed a strategic Levelling Up Partnership with national government and has now benefitted from circa £140m in Levelling Up Funding. This has contributed to strategic schemes across the town that have supported the delivery of the ambitious £2bn Growth and

Prosperity programme. The Levelling Up Partnership also funded local initiatives such as enhancing the local enforcement team to pilot tougher inspections against a proposed Decent Homes Standard for the private rented sector. The town has kept its promises and continues to deliver real change on the ground. There is a drive for social value through these projects across all sectors of society to ensure that it is targeted at those who need it most. These life opportunities complement those being created through our Careers Hub, supported by our innovative Responsible Business Network.

The strategic Levelling Up Partnership with central Government is working with 1,000's of new jobs created and improvements in outcomes for young people. Progress has already been made on improving the worst of the housing stock with a further £90m announced by the government in March 2024 for Blackpool to use on new housing and regeneration in areas such as Claremont and Revoe, some of the most deprived wards in the country.

The Pride of Place Partnership's newly published Town Prospectus (March 2024) sets out an ambitious vision for the continued renaissance of the town and desire to work with more government departments, that will deliver cross cutting preventative solutions in housing, health, education, skills and employment outcomes. The Cultural Strategy is referenced with a direct ask to Government for investment in the cultural infrastructure.

INVESTMENT IN BLACKPOOL'S CULTURE

Blackpool Council invests c.£6m per annum in cultural services, demonstrating a commitment to its owned cultural assets. Blackpool has been identified as a Priority Place by Arts Council England and a Levelling Up for Culture Place by DCMS.

LeftCoast has been operating a Creative People and Places programme in Blackpool for a decade. Blackpool's first museum, Showtown, is due to open in 2024 and has received £4m in funding from NLHF. The Local Cultural Education Partnership has won awards this year from UK Theatres (Excellence in Arts Education) and Children & Young People Now (Arts & Culture).

One new National Portfolio Organisation was created in the latest investment round from ACE, (Blackpool Illuminations) and the existing two NPOs received uplifts in their grants (45% for The Grand and 52% for The Grundy).

The Creative Need

Taking a collective view of this data and evidence, Blackpool's cultural sector is delivering work of excellent quality – but it is underappreciated, under-resourced, and undervalued. Blackpool's economy is dominated by the tourism sector, but culture and creativity could and should be positioned to be an active player in the town's renaissance. Shared Prosperity Funding for Blackpool of over £6m had only £357k allocated to cultural projects, since there was no way to respond with a collaborative, strategic ask. The cultural sector needed shared

ambitions to influence, benefit from and contribute to Blackpool's regeneration.

Blackpool Council decentralised decision-making by commissioning a new cultural strategy via a Steering Group – an unconstituted body with a range of cultural organisations and freelancers representing a range of Blackpool's communities. The Steering Group committed to ensuring a range of voices from across the independent cultural sector could be heard through the development process of the Cultural Strategy, and barriers to taking an active part were minimised. Honorariums for time spent by freelance creatives to being active members of the SG or working groups were agreed at the outset. Previously strategies developed by consultants resulted in a disconnect; this approach enabled broad sector buy-in and commitment.

The new cultural strategy aims are already starting to be delivered by creating a space for disparate organisations to converse, contribute & connect. This process has enabled new voices and partnerships to have a meaningful impact on Blackpool's cultural regeneration.

The new strategy document is now agreed by everyone within the Steering Group, and an Action Plan has been developed, alongside a new delivery model. Consensus decision making was utilised throughout the process. All members know their place within the creative ecology and understand how they add value; building a more democratic and level cultural leadership for the town. The strategy document is not the outcome, but a new working culture and equity of leadership is.

The Place Partnership bid will enable the cultural sector in Blackpool, led by the Steering Group*, to develop its delivery plans and aspirations in line with the new Cultural Strategy. This will complement and support the wider investment in Blackpool, realising the opportunity to ensure arts, culture & heritage are an active and integral part of Blackpool's renaissance.

** This text has been taken directly from the 2024 Blackpool Town Prospectus published by the Pride of Place Partnership through Business in the Community.*

PRIORITY	WHAT SHOULD BE	CURRENT OFFER	GAP ANALYSIS	PLANS TO CLOSE THE GAP
Developing Cultural Leadership	1. A formal, new cultural body which leads in driving the strategy forward with unwavering ambition, responsibility and commitment to upholding the values outlined. 2. An influential and aspirational voice for the cultural sector contributing to the regeneration objectives of Blackpool, with grassroots representation. 3. Dedicated post to help implement the cultural strategy action plan and coordinate key communication & leadership actions.	1. The Cultural Framework Steering Group represents c.12 arts organisations from across Blackpool. 2. Presently one cultural representative (LeftCoast) on the Town Board to speak for the whole cultural sector.	1. Cultural advocacy within area-based planning and investment bodies. 2. A pipeline of creative cultural projects to support regeneration & cultural strategy objectives. 3. Clear points of access and development opportunities for local cultural leaders. 4. Provision of board opportunities for young people and early career creative professionals.	1. Feasibility study into a dedicated independent cultural body. 2. Creative Blackpool Development Group established, exerting impact in terms of advocacy and influence for the cultural sector. 3. Recruit a Creative Blackpool Director to accelerate core leadership actions. 4. Improvement in data collection and being able to demonstrate impact and return on investment for culture in Blackpool.
Developing Our Cultural Sector	1. Clear opportunities for sustainable cultural and creative careers in Blackpool. 2. Available and affordable incubation and innovation spaces for creative activities and businesses. 3. Guidance and support for business support & fundraising. 4. An entrepreneurial creative and cultural ecosystem that matches the visibility and reputation of the Tourism sector - locally, nationally and internationally. 5. The cultural sector applying and embedding sustainable approaches to how they deliver their work. 6. Cultural sector in Blackpool skilled in using new technologies and securing investment for creative new technology programmes to engage with their communities.	1. Multiple cultural organisations delivering excellent quality work, in silos but with limited funding or resource. Not making the most of different strengths through collaboration. 2. Very few organisations making successful applications to ACE. 3. Residents leaving the town to pursue creative careers elsewhere. 4. Touring and national organisations working in Blackpool to meet their own 'outreach' needs with little long-term impact on Blackpool's cultural sector. 5. Limited pool of experienced leaders; no succession planning in place to support new creative entrepreneurs.	1. Programmes that offer skills-based learning and experience for adults / creatives. 2. Hubs for creative co-working and enterprise. 3. Opportunity for networking locally, nationally, internationally. 4. Lack of sharing knowledge and expertise on sustainability issues in the sector. 5. Lack of understanding of opportunities through new technologies. 6. Lack of co-ordinated cross-organisational producer and curatorial training and development opportunities.	1. Curricula development via educational partners, cross-organisational training programmes incl. artist mentoring, key skills development (literacy, digital, numeracy) plus sector relationship building. 2. Commitment from cultural organisations to attend local careers events and promote cultural sector jobs and careers. 3. Harness existing partnerships for development programme opportunities e.g. Factory International, Sadler's Wells, Artangel, RSC, V&A. 4. Develop bespoke business support for creative businesses and artist development initiatives. 5. Strengthening of communication networks to share learning on issues such as sustainability.

* see detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan

PRIORITY	WHAT SHOULD BE	CURRENT OFFER	GAP ANALYSIS	PLANS TO CLOSE THE GAP *
Prioritising Creativity Within Our Communities	1. Creative experiences and creative co-production understood and valued as a crucial tool in helping to meet Blackpool's complex social needs. 2. Blackpool-based creative organisations commissioned to provide interventions, and local communities grow up being involved in and experiencing cultural activities that they enjoy and wish to develop further.	1. Culture is listed as an option within Blackpool Council's Social Value policy with no tangible ask. 2. Multiple cultural agencies delivering excellent quality work, largely in silos and with little funding or resource. 3. Some limited partnership working on programmes which address social issues. 4. Many cultural experiences are targeted at tourist audiences are price out local communities.	1. Significant gaps in Blackpool residents having clear, affordable opportunities to participate in or consume cultural experiences. 2. No clear co-ordinated ask for private investment into projects which deliver socially-engaged cultural activities. 3. Limited partnership working between cultural providers and social / health / community providers.	1. Development of a Blackpool 'cultural passport' which enables free cultural experiences for local residents across Blackpool, throughout their lives. Set up a new Cultural Experiences Fund Panel to administer small grants and report progress. 2. Private investment opportunities are maximised. 3. Develop a coordinator role to facilitate partnerships and stakeholders.
Growing culture's role in regeneration, and the visitor economy	1. Blackpool's culture and heritage is understood and valued as an integral part of the Blackpool experience for locals, businesses and visitors. 2. Creative approaches are utilised in regeneration projects. 3. Blackpool is part of a national network of coastal creativity. 4. Blackpool's digital transformation is led by local people with the requisite creative & digital skills.	1. Cultural tourism is not perceived as a core pillar of Blackpool's tourism offer. 2. Some heritage assets are celebrated (e.g. trams, Tower). 3. Festivals / events / activities often helicopter in and out with little impact on the local creative ecology. 4. Little data or evidence to show the impact of culture & heritage on Blackpool's (visitor) economy. 5. Projects such as the Heritage Action Zone have utilised cultural activity as a driver for regeneration e.g. Aunty Social CIC.	1. Data collection, collation and analysis to measure and demonstrate the economic & social value of culture & heritage. 2. Gap in confidence of culture & heritage to deliver regeneration needs. 3. The value of culture and heritage in building place perception and pride in place is understood and supported. 4. Skills agendas need to appreciate the importance of cultural experiences in order to develop creative problem-solving for future workers and industries.	1. Support the Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Cultural Education Partnership in delivery of a joined-up approach to developing a youth-led LCEP and microsite. 2. Development of a Blackpool 'cultural passport' for young people and adults that enables and promotes joined up free cultural experiences for local residents across Blackpool, throughout their lives. 3. Ensure cultural sector contributes to the Fylde Coast Research Consortium AHRC funded phase 3 programme – mobilising community assets to tackle health inequalities through access to culture, nature & community.

* see detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan

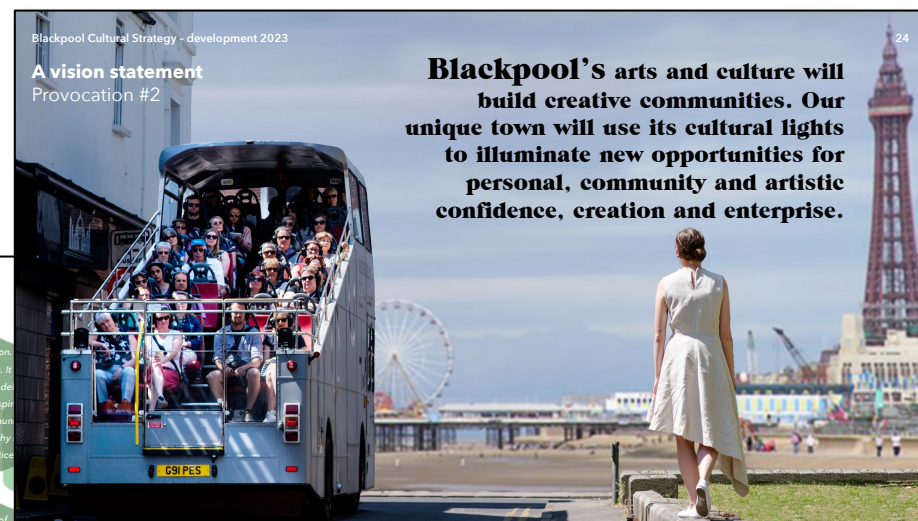
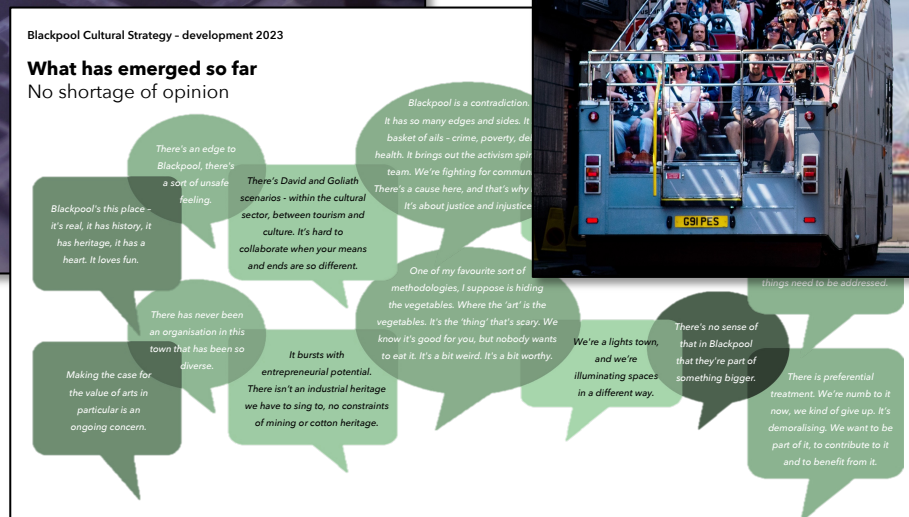
PRIORITY	WHAT SHOULD BE	CURRENT OFFER	GAP ANALYSIS	PLANS TO CLOSE THE GAP *
Growing culture's role in regeneration, and the visitor economy				4. Research feasibility of creating a Cultural Experiences Fund supported by Social Value donations to support disadvantaged local communities and groups taking part in cultural experiences. 5. Private investment opportunities are maximised with a co-ordinated ask from the cultural sector. 6. The opening of Showtown and its programme will begin to address this gap. 7. Securing the capital to deliver major cultural infrastructure projects such as Blackpool Culture Hub, Grand Theatre development plan and TramTown will strengthen the critical mass of cultural assets. 8. Joined-up marketing and PR of the year-round cultural offer will grow new audiences – both local and visitors. 9. Culture & creativity will be prioritised as a long-term solution to economic growth and investment propositions.

* see detailed Cultural Strategy Action Plan

7. VISIONING REPORT

The Visioning Report is a standalone report, produced in April 2023 as part of the strategy development process.

It is available as a separate document in support of this strategy. The original supporting data to this report has been replicated in Addendum 5 in this document.



8. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

LOCAL	Blackpool Town Centre Strategy 2022 & Action Plan 2023	Showtown brand guidelines
a-n Assembly Blackpool 2021 digital programme	Blackpool Town Prospectus 2030 Agenda for Action	TESP Annual Report 2022
Aunty Social Mission, Vision & Values	Boathouse Youth Strategy 2022-26	https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Business/Working-with-the-council/Selling-to-the-Council/Blackpool-Councils-suppliers-charter.aspx
BGMedia – various videos and VICE documentary	DCNW Blackpool Dance Research	https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Business/Working-with-the-council/Selling-to-the-Council/Social-value-policy.aspx
Blackpool Coastal Housing Tenants' Project Fund Application Guidance	Delivering Social Value for Blackpool: A guide for suppliers 2022-23	REGIONAL
Blackpool Destination Guide 2023	Fylde Cultural Strategy 2009-2014	Lancashire 2050
Blackpool Digital Vision 2030	Get Dancing Evaluation report 2022	Remade: Lancashire LEP Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire Executive Summary 2020
Blackpool Heritage Service Brand Strategy	Grundy NPO application, IP Monitoring & Activity Plan	NATIONAL
Blackpool High Street Heritage Action Zone Cultural Mapping Research	LeftCoast Phase 2 Final Evaluation Report	Creative Industries Innovation in Seaside Resorts and Country Towns, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, 2022
Blackpool LCEP Terms of Reference	Lightpool NPO application & Activity Plan	LGA Cultural Strategy in a box
Blackpool Museum Project NLHF Second Round Application Market Research summary report	Open Up the Mic evaluation 2022	Movers and Stayers Localising Power to Level Up Towns, 2022
Blackpool School of Arts prospectus	Our Claremont: a vision for the future	No Place Left Behind, The Commission into Prosperity and Community Placemaking
Blackpool's Levelling Up programme	Revoelution Creative Civic Change bid	https://i-d.vice.com/en/article/3kvjd9/blackpool-art-scene

