

# Green light for £300m Blackpool Central scheme which could create 1,000 jobs

A £300m scheme to create a new world-class, year-round leisure destination at the former Blackpool Central railway station has been given the green light.

The project will be the largest single investment in Blackpool for over a century and is expected to create around 1,000 jobs, bring an estimated 600,000 additional visitors each year, and boost annual spend in the town by about £75m.

At a meeting of Blackpool Council's planning committee on Tuesday, October 12, members approved Nikal Ltd's and Media Invest Entertainment's detailed planning application for the first phases of the scheme, which include a new 1,306 space multi-storey car park and Heritage Quarter.

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Outline plans to deliver a major public events square for live events, three indoor entertainment centres, a hotel, restaurants and additional leisure and hospitality space at Blackpool Central were also given the go ahead.

The plans include the grade II-listed former King Edward VII Picture House being transformed into a new 'Artisan Food Hall', which spills out onto new outdoor space for 'al fresco' dining.



The locally-listed King Edward VII pub will be refurbished into a new pub and hotel while the King Edward VII apartment building will be renovated into an aparthotel.

Richard Fee, Nikal chief executive, said: “This is a key moment for levelling up Blackpool’s visitor economy post Covid.

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“Blackpool Central will help transform and futureproof the town’s tourism offer, and last night’s approval is an important step forward in our journey.

“Our lead investor, Alan Murphy, has been behind the project from the beginning and is delighted to see the scheme coming to fruition.







“We have worked hard to ensure that the scheme will complement Blackpool’s current attractions and wider leisure offer.

“This approach will help us to secure game-changing benefits for Blackpool – drawing in 600,000 additional visitors a year and boosting annual spend in the local economy by £75m.

“We are now looking forward to getting spades in the ground to build the multi-storey car park and Heritage Quarter, which are the catalysts for delivering our wider vision.”

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Norbert Reichart, chief executive of Media Invest Entertainment, added: “This decision is fantastic news for the rejuvenation of the town. Blackpool is the undisputed entertainment capital of the UK and our scheme will help cement the town as a must visit year-round destination for generations to come.

“The resurgence of staycations and the UK opening back up to international tourists creates huge opportunities moving forward to attract more visitors and encourage tourists to stay longer on their trips to Blackpool. We believe that the Blackpool Central experience will be at the heart of maximising these opportunities.”



Cllr Lynn Williams, Blackpool Council leader and cabinet member for tourism and culture, said: “Yesterday’s decision is a major milestone for this transformational regeneration project which has been widely anticipated by our residents, who can now look forward to seeing activity on site as construction starts in earnest.

“The development means so much more to our residents than just a new leisure and entertainment destination, as it brings lots of new, varied and skilled year-round job opportunities, extra footfall and revenue to local businesses, and breathes new life into a run down and neglected part of the town, which will vastly improve the area and will have a positive effect

on the surrounding residential streets and local population.”

Construction of the multi-storey car park and Heritage Quarter is expected to start in 2022 and will take around two years to complete.

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