



**BUSY SCENE** The beach and promenade at Blackpool – captured in June

districts – have transformed their appearance ... it just takes a couple of hoteliers to start the process with some hanging baskets. Stanley Park not only looks superb but is attracting more visitors. Our heritage open days are about to start ... a few years ago we had about six places involved, now there are 50. Blackpool has civic pride."

#### **GIVING KIDS A BETTER START**

Blackpool is out to unlock up to £50m to help the town's most deprived children get a better start. It follows a £400k windfall from the Big Lottery this week to help the NSPCC work with council, health authorities and voluntary sector to identify gaps in existing services. The partnership will bid for between £30m-£50m Lottery cash for projects to transform vulnerable children's lives. Health chiefs identified three key areas to improve children's development - communication and language, diet and nutrition and social and emotional development. Council leader Simon Blackburn says Blackpool's breakfast club (free breakfasts at primary schools) is paying off in health, welfare and school attendance terms.

#### **DISABILITY FIRST**

Blackpool is blazing the trail for national best practice in disability-led projects. Stephen

Brookes, Bispham-based Ambassador for Disability Rights UK, says: "In spite of some negative national messages, the achievements of disabled people and their organisations is having a real impact on the community. Welfare reform and benefit cuts are causing some real fears but balanced against that, the community is seeing real gains from the mass of voluntary work and involvement successfully undertaken by disabled people across Blackpool."

A new Safe Journey card has been created in a joint effort by Blackpool Transport, disabled people, Highfurlong School, and the Office For Disability Issues, where Mr Brookes is a steering group member of the Disability Action Alliance.

He explains: "The card is a winner as it allows all disabled people access to public transport, and we are grateful to Blackpool Transport for their initiative in creating this valuable asset for disabled people."

"It's now at the centre of negotiation with other bus operators across the UK including the massive First Group and we've been approached by disability organisations in other parts of the UK, looking to start something similar."

Disability First's work to challenge to disability hate crime has also won national recognition

from Minister for Disabled Ester McVey, Association of Chief Police Officers, Crown Prosecution Service and MPs. "The confidence in reporting disability related incidents in Blackpool has increased by over 200 per cent - which demonstrates the power of the Blackpool model," adds Mr Brookes.

#### **BLACKPOOL BACK ON THE MAP**

Some of the biggest shows in Britain are coming to Blackpool this year, including Will Young in Cabaret and Tommy Steele starring in Scrooge at the Opera House. Blackpool Pleasure Beach celebrates the 90th birthday of the Big Dipper tonight; a brand new ride, Thrill O Matic, is the big hit for this season. The Lights switch on with Jonathan Ross is on Friday August 30 and The Script playing a full gig at The Tower Festival Headland with special guest Eliza Doolittle. Madness will play a second switch-on gig on Saturday August 31. It's masterminded by Marketing Blackpool which was set up in November 2011 with the intention of establishing Blackpool as the premier Europe seaside resort. Next Tuesday thousands of cyclists will take part in Ride the Lights. As well as lobbying central Government for a greater share of Coastal Communities cash, The Gazette is campaigning for the restaura-

tion of Vir with Lond in VAT on a ticket price pany secre Blackpool "The Treas the extrao which a rec tourism pr British eco

#### **ONE HUNDRE 100 DAYS**

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#### **HEALTHIER B Transferring**