



Blackpool Council



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport



NORTHERN  
POWERHOUSE



## Museum Exhibition Fit Out - Brief/Scope of Works - Overview

**Contract Dates:** March 2021 to March 2022

**Two part procurement process:-**

**Closing date for Selection Questionnaire:** 12.00 Noon 12 November 2020

**Closing date for Main Tender submission:** 12.00 Noon 15 January 2021

**Interview date Main Tender:** 27 January 2021

Blackpool Council is seeking a highly experienced and professional contractor to manage, produce and deliver the construction, fit out and commissioning of the exhibition that will be Showtown - the museum of fun and entertainment, Blackpool's first museum and heritage based visitor attraction.

This role is pivotal to the Blackpool Museum Project that is creating Showtown. The successful contractor must demonstrate that they are highly skilled and experienced in the production, fit out and project management of complex, multi-layered, multi-media exhibition design schemes within existing structural environments.

The successful contractor will have an excellent track record of working with and alongside other contractors involved within schemes they have managed. For Showtown this will include liaising and coordinating with basebuild contractors (for the museum) and the site developer's contractors as well as those contractors that are working on linked strands of the overall scheme such as AVs, manual interactives, large artwork illustration etc.

### Background to Showtown

Blackpool Council is creating Blackpool's first ever museum, Showtown - the museum of fun and entertainment. It will tell the extraordinary, rarely-shared stories of Britain's first mass seaside resort and its unrivalled role in the development of British popular entertainment over the past 150 years.

An immersive and engaging experience aimed at family audiences, Showtown's 1,200sqm of themed galleries are designed by Casson Mann. They feature exciting activities, audio-visuals and displays featuring around 800 items from our Blackpool Heritage Collection and from our partners and supporters including the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Music Hall Society and private collections.

The exhibition fit out project concentrates on the exhibition gallery spaces within the venue. Other elements (entrance, shop, ticketing, temporary exhibition gallery and learning suite etc) are covered within other packages. Liaison and coordination are essential and good/productive working relationships with the hotel fit out contractors is every bit as important as with the contractors working on all aspects of Showtown.

Showtown, as a museum, consists of six themed galleries:

### **Beside the Seaside**

Visitors are invited to step inside Showtown and into a multimedia stage set of Blackpool's seafront. Watch a stunning 17 metre seaside beach panorama come to life celebrating Blackpool as the first mass seaside resort and its iconic beach. See how holidays have changed, or have they? Perform your own Punch and Judy show and meet some of the characters who have entertained holidaymakers over the last 100 years and gave birth to Showtown.

### **How's Tricks?**

Visitors go behind the scenes in a Blackpool magic shop and have fun exploring practical jokes and magic tricks. Meet some of the amazing magicians who learned the tricks of their trade in Blackpool and discover Blackpool's importance to magic. See the incredible gallery of magicians who have performed in Showtown.

### **Roll Up! Roll Up!**

Our visitors step backstage into the world of circus and listen to stories from incredible circus performers. Find out why Blackpool is an international centre for circus. See stunning circus costumes and amazing props. Then step into our circus ring and become part of the show.

### **It's Showtime!**

Visitors explore a model townscape celebrating Blackpool's theatres and go through the stage door to find out more about the producers and stars of Blackpool's shows and popular entertainment. Have a go at ventriloquism or playing along with George Formby. Are you the next comedy star?

### **It's Better with the Lights on**

Our visitors enter our Lightworks workshop and step into the shoes of the designers and creators of the famous Blackpool Illuminations. Create your own illumination design and discover the history and magic of the UK's oldest and greatest free light show.

### **Everybody Dance Now**

Step onto the dance floor and get dancing. Discover Blackpool's iconic role in dance, from the spiritual home of ballroom to the home of Northern Soul. See the glittering ballroom outfits and marvel at the skill of their creators and the talent of professional dancers.

The Showtown venue, itself, is currently in development within the landmark Sands Resort Venue Hotel building on the Golden Mile, next door but one to Blackpool Tower. The Sands will be Blackpool's first 5\* hotel and leisure complex, due for completion in 2021. The museum will then follow. When it opens, Showtown will have a dedicated street-level entrance and shop on Bank Hey Street and will occupy the first floor of the new complex.

Visit [www.showtownblackpool.co.uk](http://www.showtownblackpool.co.uk) for more information.

## **Our Target Audience**

Showtown is targeted at both tourists and locals. The primary audience will be families.

The primary research carried out in 2015 and repeated in 2016 revealed that:

- the audience profile is not a traditional museum visitor profile
- local and tourist markets were very similar
- traditional museum visitors are our hard to reach group
- value for money is vital
- nostalgia is key and
- animation and activity are important

Potential audiences were segmented using Morris Hargreaves McIntyre's Culture Segments. The research showed that Showtown's potential audience profile is:

- Primary: Entertainment and Expression
- Secondary: Perspective, Enrichment and Stimulation
- Tertiary: Affirmation, Essence and Release (our hard to reach audiences)

## **Museum Operation**

The Museum will be open all year round, from 10am-5pm, with the potential for extended opening hours in summer, in line with other indoor attractions across the resort.

There will be an admission charge (an annual season ticket, to gain the advantage of gift aid). The adult ticket price is anticipated to be £7.95. All Blackpool residents will have free entry.

The Museum will be operated for the Council by an arm's length Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, led by a Board of Trustees and a CEO.

## **Project costs and funding**

The project costs are c.£13m. Funding is a mix of public and private sector. We have already secured £4m from the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund, £1.5m Growth Deal Funding, £4.4m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £1.75m from Coastal Communities Fund.

We are also seeking funding from private sector grants and donations fundraising. Blackpool Council is committing £1m to the capital costs, as well as already having invested significantly in the project's development to date.

## **Programme**

Works are due to start on site by December 2020, and Showtown will open to the public for the 2022 tourist season.

The designs have been agreed to RIBA 4 and work packages will be tendered from winter 2020.

## **Design Team**

The internal design team consists of the Head of Heritage, leading on the overall capital development alongside the Project Manager, Basebuild Project Manager leading on the Basebuild

works and overall design co-ordination and QS services for the basebuild. We have contracted the services of Casson Mann to design the exhibition and Buttress Architects for the basebuild.

## **The Commission**

### **Overview:**

The whole concept of the exhibition is a behind the scenes view of what makes Blackpool famous – what it takes (and has taken) to put on the summer season. It's the people - the professions, the skills, the history and importantly, the huge, critical mass of working class British holiday makers that established the first mass, seaside destination.

The Showtown space is designed to be like a journey around Blackpool. Visitors arrive at 'the prom' – a linear gallery from where they then move into the galleries to explore 'the town'

Through its exploration of Blackpool, Showtown is a celebration of both the British seaside holiday and British popular entertainment that has international resonance.

The idea of a privileged behind the scenes view is key to the concept so, for example, you are not looking at a Punch and Judy Show (you can do that outside on the actual promenade) but rather you are inside the Punch and Judy booth, listening to the Professors who make the magic happen, touching the puppets, hearing the crowds outside. Similarly, in the Circus area, the visitor does not enter through the ticket office - they 'sneak round the back', lifting up the tent flap to find themselves behind the ring where the clowns are putting on their makeup, the smell of greasepaint, the jugglers are practising, the animals being fed.

The exhibition is very much aimed at a family, cross-generational visit – children, parents and grandparents. But it is not saccharine or patronising. It is as robust in its humour as Blackpool is.

The exhibition is also not set in any one time and it does not present a linear time line or chronology. Instead, it celebrates the threads and attributes that are consistent throughout Blackpool's history and cherry picks the best examples. Hence the exhibition is very much a montage approach both in museum content and design style.

Collection objects are displayed both within cases and on open display. These are supported by a wide range of props and accessories to enhance the narrative. A host of 2D graphic assets are displayed to best advantage as well as providing source material for our illustrators' large scale wall treatments.

A wide range of AV opportunities greet visitors across the galleries from the moment they step through the doors of Showtown. These offer the means of sharing, in a creative way, more assets with visitors than can be accommodated elsewhere within the gallery displays.

A key ambition within Showtown is to bring together many voices within the galleries. These can be well known celebrities, icons of the entertainment world and members of Blackpool's communities. All have an equal share in presenting Showtown and its storylines to our visitors.

The team behind Showtown is committed to enabling access to as wide an audience as possible, as are Blackpool Council and the organisations providing funding support for the development. The Showtown Access and Inclusivity Policy is included in the tender documents and will make useful reading as part of this tender.

Part of the commitment to widening access is to undertake testing/consultation for areas of the Showtown exhibition. To date the graphics and exhibition designs have been tested with focus groups. Samples of AV elements will also be presented to relevant focus groups after the first edit stage, working in conjunction with the Showtown Learning and Engagement team.

Across Showtown the full suite of gallery networks, showcases, AV elements, manual interactives for all ages and a broad range of photo opportunities ensures there is something for everyone, whatever their age and interests. Showtown will be a theatrical, immersive and fun 3 dimensional environment.

It is expected that the contractor will provide training for staff, a maintenance plan and maintenance manuals wherever appropriate. There is a 12 month defect liability period (following practical completion) to cover any snagging issues. The lifespan of the galleries is 10 years.

**Key objectives:**

- To produce and complete the full museum fit out work of Showtown, to the agreed designs and to the highest of standards, ensuring Showtown embodies a top quality environment for its role as a prime museum destination for Blackpool
- To project manage the museum's production and fit out work effectively and efficiently using high quality management systems and procedures to ensure a smooth and successful operation from start to finish
- To work within the allotted budget
- To work effectively, collaboratively, cordially and seamlessly with The Sands hotel's contractors, Showtown's basebuild contractors, your own teams/sub-contractors and those working on other packages within the project (eg AVs, manual interactives, large artworks, shop fit out and object installation etc)
- To ensure the production and fit out fully delivers the interpretation and 3D design, in particular the behind-the-scenes approach to storytelling, as designed and created by Casson Mann
- To have effective and efficient communication throughout the project with the client, the design team at Casson Mann and suppliers as well as, when appropriate, site visitors and media representatives
- To ensure that the staff operating Showtown, after completion, have all the necessary manuals and documentation to hand and have received suitable training where appropriate

**Key outputs:**

Schedules that require a Signed NDA before release:

Appendix B - Preliminaries & Conditions of Contract

Appendix C - Final Script

Appendix D - Access & Inclusion Policy

Appendix E - AV Software Schedule

Appendix F - AV Hardware Schedule

Appendix G - 3D Design Drawing Package

Appendix H - Blackpool Graphic Design Specification

## Appendix I - Text Style Guide

### **Requirements of the contract:**

- Excellent demonstrable project management skills and experience to ensure the smooth running of the Showtown fit out from mobilisation to completion
- Provide and confirm a schedule for the fit out programme including the development, production and installation stages, review and comments periods and final sign off by the Exhibition Design Team.
- Regular programme updates
- Maintaining a risk register
- Providing early alerts and/or indications of any concerns and issues
- Production and fit out work to the highest quality standards incorporating 'best practice' in all aspects of the final contractor detail designs, construction and final finishes
- Demonstrate the highest standards of effective liaison and co-ordination of both directly managed staff and all other contractors involved with The Sands hotel and Showtown
- Communicate effectively with the Exhibition Design team, the AV software and hardware contractors, the manual interactive contractor and the large artwork illustrator throughout the contract and, particularly, during the on-site installation phase of the contract in order to ensure that all AV, manual interactive and large artwork elements are suitably accommodated within the Showtown galleries
- Attend approval meetings and provide regular progress updates to the Showtown/Museum Project Manager throughout the production period
- Advise client on readiness for Sign off at each stage
- Managing the project programme effectively and efficiently
- Managing the project budget effectively and efficiently, liaising with the Cost Manager where appropriate
- Complete the fit out work on programme and to budget
- Provide a user manual for any relevant elements of the exhibition fit out with maintenance instructions, guidance and appropriate training
- Comply with the 12 month defect liability period for any snagging purposes

### **Required Knowledge, Skills and Experience:**

We are looking to appoint highly experienced contractors for the Showtown exhibition fit out tender. We need contractors with a well-recognised reputation for working within the cultural sector on such skilled work showing demonstrable evidence of the following:

- A proven track record of working on large scale exhibition fit out projects that comprise complex combinations of networks, multimedia interactives and visual experiences. Please note, this is not solely limited to the heritage and visitor attraction sectors
- Recognised reputation for the highest standards and excellent quality of work on production and installation projects
- A professional approach to and extensive experience of working successfully in a collaborative and flexible manner
- Excellent planning, programming and communication skills
- Excellent and extensive experience in project and budget management
- Excellent and extensive experience in risk management

- Accredited to ISO 9001 – Quality Management Systems – or similar, with evidence of quality management systems in place within the organisation
- Accredited to ISO 14001 – Environmental Management – or similar, with evidence of quality environmental management systems in place within the organisation