

News

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Next phase at Talbot Gateway starts next week

The next phase of Blackpool's town centre regeneration is set to get underway in the first week of June as contractors prepare to start on site at Talbot Gateway.

This phase of development will see the demolition of the existing Wilko store, the completion of the new tramway interchange at Blackpool North Station, a new underpass, a four-star Holiday Inn hotel and restaurant, and new retail outlets.

The start of the demolition marks Phase Two of the Talbot Gateway project in Blackpool's Central Business District. The first phase saw the opening of Sainsbury's supermarket and the development of offices, which now accommodate more than 1,000 public and private-sector employees.

Robertson Construction Group has been appointed jointly by Blackpool Council and development partner, Muse Developments to start work on Monday 1 June and will initially undertake the demolition of the Wilko store and car park, which ceased trading at the end of March. Demolition and construction work is expected to take around two years.

Mike Horner, development director at Muse Developments, said: "This is currently an unprecedented time for everyone across the country, which is creating new challenges for developers and contractors to maintain construction activity while working within government guidelines. We're completely focused on this challenge with health and safety at the top of our agenda. At the same time, we're also working with our partners to make sure we continue to bring forward important developments that will bring both economic and social prosperity to our towns and cities when it's needed most.

"It's a proud moment for everyone involved at Talbot Gateway, as we take the next step on the journey to transform and re-energise the town centre, by delivering a new landmark hotel and high-quality brand to strengthen the hotel offering in the town. We will also be creating a number of much-needed jobs in the process.

"The renaissance of Blackpool is gathering apace and we're delighted to be playing an important role with the Council in delivering this vision and making Blackpool a more attractive, more resilient and better place for the future, whatever that may look like."

Dirk Pittaway, managing director, Robertson North West, said: "Talbot Gateway's regeneration continues to gather pace and as a growing business in the region we are thrilled to be playing our part. Robertson has significant experience in the hotels sector and we will use that to deliver a facility that is best in class and something everyone in Blackpool can be proud of.

"We will work closely throughout with Blackpool Council and Muse Developments, who have both shown real commitment and drive in continuing to progress the project during recent months. Clear procedures, including social distancing, will be in place to ensure the safety of everyone involved on site.

"We will also put local people at the centre of the project to ensure the wider community can benefit. Indeed, we've already started to work with the local college, with the aim of providing real opportunities to people throughout the project and beyond. Talbot Gateway is hugely important to

the town and we cannot wait to get started.”

Proposed Schedule of Works:

- Demolition of Wilko’s building, Talbot Road - June to December 2020
- Construction of the high street underpass - November 2020 to 30th April 2021
- Construction of the Holiday Inn Hotel - October 2020 to April 2022
- Tram extension and track completion - January to May 2021

All timings are subject to there being no further delays due to the current Covid-19 crisis.

Executive leader of Blackpool Council, Cllr Simon Blackburn, said: “The team have been working tirelessly around the clock to ensure that the delivery of this flagship commercial development stays on course and goes ahead as planned. We are confident that all the correct procedures have been put in place to secure the health and safety of all the construction workers, which is our top priority at this critical time, and we will be monitoring activity on site very closely to ensure that all the government workplace guidelines are followed.

“As we emerge out of the current emergency crisis and into a period of recovery and rebuilding, it is really important that as a community we stay committed and focused to the successful delivery of the ongoing regeneration projects throughout the town, to ensure the town is in the best possible place it can be to achieve economic recovery, improve long term resilience, create new opportunities and secure long-term jobs for the people of Blackpool.

“Phase Two of Talbot Gateway will transform this key entrance into Blackpool and we are delighted to be one step closer to realising our long term ambitions for the town.”

Blackpool Council and urban regenerator, Muse Developments have been working in partnership to develop the Central Business District since entering into a Development Agreement in March 2009.

Blackpool Council has entered into a franchise agreement with International Hotel Group (IHG) for the 144-bedroom Holiday Inn, which is due to open in 2022, creating up to 50 full-time jobs.

Cllr Blackburn continued: “This next phase of the development will offer brand new retail locations, an improved leisure offer to boost the night-time economy, offer more high-quality accommodation choice for leisure and business visitors alike and promote a more integrated and connected use of our transport system. We hope that all residents, businesses and visitors can enjoy and benefit from the radical improvements being made not just at Talbot Gateway, but right across the town.”