

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION
24th JUNE 2010**

GOLD

1. EXECUTIVE MEMBER'S PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR

In the coming year I will be continuing to give priority to improving the wealth and prosperity of the borough. We will continue to invest in the transport infrastructure of the borough and especially in the condition of the highways. Helping people move around the borough is key, and the transport review that is underway will continue to deliver the solutions that the borough needs.

In the new climate of public funding restraint, we must give greater emphasis to business growth and private investment. My portfolio will be doing all it can to support the business community of the borough. We will review the planning system to make sure it makes the right decisions for the borough without the unnecessary constraints of regional control.

Developing the waste treatment facility is a vital scheme for me this year and the procurement process is now starting in earnest.

The relocation of Blackburn markets is going according to plan with a tight timetable for fitting out the new units in the Mall, ready for opening next March. An open day for traders has been arranged in June so they can see for themselves the potential of the new site, and there is strong interest now from new traders. Obviously trading circumstances are difficult in the old site in its last few months, and we are doing what we can to mitigate this.

The Pennine Reach scheme has been put on hold for the time being, pending decisions on the funding programme. We will be ready to make progress as soon as the position becomes clearer. We have contingency plans to manage bus movements and replacement bus stops when the boulevard scheme starts for the Cathedral Quarter

2. TOWN CENTRE MOVEMENT STRATEGY

The Town Centre Movement Strategy will see a number of schemes delivered this financial year. It must be noted that there will be no immediate alteration to one way systems around the town centre before Christmas as we want to ensure that Christmas trade remains unaffected.

The following schemes are in numerical order in terms of delivery:

1. Feilden Street/Montague Street works are currently on site which will see a new traffic signal junction being installed on Montague Street. This will cater for two way traffic exiting Feilden Street. The scheme will be completed at the end of August. Montague Street will also be widened to increase capacity.
2. Railway Road is progressing and is due to be on site in July although this may slip due to funding uncertainty. It is anticipated that this scheme will be finished during April next year.
3. Preston New Road/Barbara Castle Way is looking to be on site in August which will see the right hand filter lane extended on Barbara Castle Way to increase capacity. This will in turn ease the flows on Barbara Castle Way westbound, when the right turn takes up the current outside lane.
4. Larkhill junction will see the introduction of a left hand turn slip lane from Barbara Castle Way and 3 lanes inbound to Blackburn from Larkhill, with the middle lane as a

bus lane. Wider design includes a contra-flow bus lane on Penny Street and one way out of Penny Street to Barbara Castle Way for general traffic. It is hoped that works will be on site in September and completed before Christmas. Any vehicular changes to traffic flow will be made after the Christmas trade period in the New Year.

5. Cardwell Place works will enable public transport to serve the northwest part of town. This will see King Street reversed outbound instead of inbound, as currently Barton Street first part will also be switched to one way from King Street to Cardwell Place. This will be the new route in order to gain access into the Mall car park from the Mincing Lane approach. Buses will run through Mincing Lane, Barton Street into Blakey Moor and St. Pauls Street to serve the northwest of the town centre. Cardwell Place will be switched to be one way from Feilden Street to Higher Church Street, meaning the main access into The Mall will be from Feilden Street and Cardwell Place. Timeline for implementation is from January to the end of March 2011.
6. Higher Audley/Bennington Street will see options being tested to understand the impact of the East Blackburn BSF development and to confirm modelling forecasts for that particular area. This is expected to be on site from January until the end of March 2011.

The programme is fairly substantial and will continue to be co-ordinated with as many jobs being worked on outside peak times, or where feasible night time working where resurfacing is required. Communications will be made in the relevant roadworks bulletin when the project becomes live.

3. DARWEN TOWN CENTRE TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE

The THI programme is progressing well with all monies almost completely committed. The new shop fronts in Darwen Town Hall and the refurbishment of Holker House are now complete and radically improve the townscape. The Heritage Lottery Fund are delighted with progress on the scheme and the amount of schemes on or about to go on site. There are 7 schemes on site on Railway Road, Bolton Road, Knott Street and Foundry Street and 5 others in the pipeline including the A and M Bargains, Tram Shelters and St Peter's Steps.

4. TOWN CENTRE FLORAL DISPLAYS

I am keen to get more colour into both town centres and the town centre team has been working closely with our colleagues in the Environment portfolio to achieve this. In Darwen for the second year, we have put up 23 hanging baskets on the Market Square and School Street in Darwen Town Centre supplied by John Woods, a long standing and well respected trader on Blackburn Markets. Local businesses are involved in a complementary scheme organised by the Shop and Business Association to add a welcome burst of colour around the rest of the town centre. Businesses were offered baskets and brackets funded by the Town Council and a competition is being held to see who has the best basket. There has been a really good take up and the town centre caretakers have been very busy putting brackets up around the town centre.

In Blackburn town centre, I was keen to try and support the businesses on Lower Northgate who are having a tough time with the closure of Mercers and Ethel Austin. We have installed some new planters on the street which will be planted up and this will make the street much more attractive.

5. CELEBRATE BLACKBURN 'BIG' FESTIVAL

This year, the Celebrate Blackburn festival theme is BIG! With larger than life attractions, events and activities across the town centre throughout July and August the festival aims

to bring families and shoppers to the town centre. The highlight of the festival will be the BIG Weekend, when there is a whole host of events going on during the day and the evening. For details of the programme, see www.visitblackburn.co.uk. The event is being delivered by Regeneration Department's Town Centre Team in partnership with the Culture, Leisure and Sport Department.

6. FIVER FEST 2010

Fiver Fest has been created to support local businesses and maximise the benefits of extra visitors coming into the town centre for Celebrate Blackburn. Businesses all over the borough have been invited to put on a £5 offer or deal during July & August which will be promoted through a marketing campaign. The marketing-line for the campaign is 'if everyone in the borough spent just £5 extra per week in our local towns and shops, it would mean almost £37 million per year extra into the local economy'. So far take up as been very good and more businesses are registering £5 offers every day.