

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICER:  
BRIAN BAILEY  
DATE: 05.04.12**

**BLACKBURN MARKET**

The Market's Management Board met on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012 and discussed signage, marketing and promotion ideas, building on the recent National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) Indoor Market of the Year Award. The Visitor Centre opened in the market at the end of January, providing a one stop transport and customer information service for shoppers and visitors, and has seen an immediate increase in footfall.

**FORMER MARKETS SITE VACANT POSSESSION STRATEGY**

A major milestone has been achieved with the vacant possession strategy on the recent completion of the transaction to relocate Reidys.

**DARWEN TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY 2012 - 2016**

Consultation on the draft strategy has been completed and reported back to Darwen Town Centre Partnership Board in March. The strategy's themes and objectives were well received by residents and businesses. Local people felt that Darwen was a good place to live with many advantages but which needed better promotion. Assets included the countryside and parks, cultural attractions particularly around the evening economy, a good range of housing, the market and free parking. They also felt that there are good employment prospects for young people with the number of major employers in the town. Developing the right skills for business needs was also a priority. There are gaps in the retail offer and work to encourage new shops and businesses into the town centre would help make it more sustainable. Consultees also wanted to see business owners and residents take more responsibility for cleanliness and litter outside and around their properties

The final draft strategy is now being completed and will be presented to the Darwen Town Centre Partnership Board in May prior to reporting to Executive Board in June 2012.

**KING WILLIAM STREET PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS**

Work to the £1.2 million public realm improvement scheme in the King William Street area is now in its final phase and due for completion in June 2012. Local contractor Morans are currently working on the section between McDonalds and Debenhams, to be followed by some minor works to Town Hall Street. In addition, savings have been made throughout the scheme which has enabled additional improvement works to New Market Street.

## **ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRY**

Since the start of Assistance to Industry in 2009 the programme has successfully provided investment support in the form of grants to encourage businesses to expand, relocate or safeguard employment in the Borough.

The budget for 2011/12 was £150,000 and was awarded to seven projects generating £558,463 of private sector investment and creating 16 new jobs and preserving 3 more. Two further projects will be completed in 12/13, which will generate an additional private sector investment of £385,465 and create over 50 jobs in the next 2 years and safeguard 36.

As part of the Council's "Open for Business Campaign", Regenerate Pennine Lancashire as the delivery agent, is now actively taking and pursuing enquiries for 2012/13, against an increased budget of £300,000. To date 3 schemes are progressing and a further 7 are in the pipeline, collectively totalling £134,000 of grant aid, and potentially generating over 50 jobs in the next 12 months.

## **COMMUNITY ALCOHOL NETWORK (CAN)**

Staff from the Public Protection Service are taking part in the multi-agency Community Alcohol Network (CAN) operation in the borough in April. The operation has a range of objectives aimed at disrupting the supply and use of alcohol by young people. A similar project in Accrington resulted in the number of alcohol related anti-social behaviour incidents reducing by over a half. The first Blackburn with Darwen CAN project will take place in the north west of Blackburn, which covers Wensley Fold, Bank Top, Billinge, Revidge, Corporation Park, Pleckgate, Lammack and Beardwood. The North West Neighbourhood Policing Team responsible for these areas has signed up to the project. Posters will be displayed in shops and pubs and leaflets will be posted through resident's doors in a bid to raise awareness of the consequences associated with buying alcohol for children. Special Constables, Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Public Protection staff will be on patrol across the area, seizing alcohol from underage drinkers whilst ensuring it is also being sold responsibly.