

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING

DIRECTOR:

BRIAN BAILEY

DATE: 1st November 2012

BLACKBURN FORMER MARKET SITE REDEVELOPMENT

The Council has now secured vacant possession of the old market site and the planning application for demolition has been submitted. The expected demolition start date is now January 2013, with the contractors expected to be on site for 4 months. Hoardings will secure the demolition site until the new bus station is completed in 2014. Discussions are continuing with Thwaites, Sainsburys and CTP, the Council's appointed developer.

PENNINE REACH

The Council is continuing to develop Pennine Reach proposals with the Department for Transport and is working through final planning stages. A number of key milestones have recently been passed and these include planning approval for the new Blackburn Bus Station and the renewal of planning permission for Furthergate and Burnley Road link roads. Discussions are continuing over the details of the scheme. Final confirmation is expected from the DfT in early Spring.

CATHEDRAL QUARTER

The planning application has been submitted for the Cathedral Quarter scheme to include Clergy Court, public realm, office block and a hotel. Consultation is taking place with the application expected at November's Planning and Highways Committee. Design work on the bus/rail interchange is progressing and the works will be coordinated in parallel with the new bus station to minimise disruption to the town centre. Construction works are now expected to start on site in June 2013.

THE HIVE NETWORK

The Hive is a new group of business leaders working together with the Council's Open for Business initiative to make the Borough more prosperous. A key aspiration of the Hive is to help build the right environment where businesses thrive, create innovative products and services for local and world markets, and where residents aspire to achieve their dreams for education, learning and employment.

Founder members of the network come from the Blackburn with Darwen Prosperous Group, which brings together 20 influential private companies from across the Borough as part of the Local Strategic Partnership. The network was officially launched on the 25th September at an invitation only event held at Blackburn Youth Zone. Approximately 100 business leaders attended the session and have since committed to being a part of the Hive. All businesses in the Borough are encouraged to take shared responsibility and play a lead role in creating new opportunities for all.

CHRISTMAS 2012

A fantastic Christmas programme is taking shape for Blackburn and Darwen.

Blackburn Christmas Lights Switch On will take place on the 22nd November 2012 launching the late night shopping in The Mall Blackburn. The event will build on the huge success of last year by bringing along Spongebob Square Pants and Dora the

Explorer to switch on the lights. A host of other children's characters will also be in attendance throughout the day in Blackburn Market. Rock FM will complete the most fun switch on to date.

Blackburn Cathedral Fireworks and Lantern Display will take place on the 13th December 2012 and will kick off with the annual lantern parade before gathering at the Cathedral Grounds for the fireworks and Carol concert. Workshops will be held in the weeks up to the event for children to make their lantern ready for the night.

Darwen Christmas Lights Switch On will consist of a two hour show packed full of children's favourite characters as well as all the usual musical entertainment. The annual donkey parade will take place at 3.30pm finishing for the start of the show at 4.00pm. For the first time, the children of Darwen will be given the opportunity to perform as part of the show. Following October half term, primary schools in Darwen will receive a Rock FM pack to get them involved with the switch on and will then all come together at the end of the show to join the Snowman in singing the classic 'Walking in the Air'. Also for the first time, Darwen will host the East Lancs Hospice Santa Dash where hundreds of 'Santas' will make their way around the town centre. The switch on will culminate in the usual spectacular firework display. Details can be found via www.visitblackburn.co.uk

FLOOD REPAIRS

Following the unusually heavy rains throughout the summer and flood damage notably in Darwen, investigations and survey work has revealed £0.5 million of repair work required to be carried out as soon as possible. This includes repairs to footways, underground culverts and drainage works, carriageways, retaining and boundary walls and works to Knott Street and Union Street. The programme of works is now underway and will be completed by mid-December. Funding from the Council's new Infrastructure Reserve will be used to support these works. On a more positive note the Council has received confirmation of financial support from the Environment Agency for three drainage projects totalling £150,000 at Bury Fold Brook, Bury Road culvert and for the Queen's Park area drainage study.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

The Council's salt barn is full, with 3,000 tonnes recently purchased at the lower summer rate. 16 drivers from all areas of the Department will be on a standby rota with 14 more NVQ trained volunteers available for call-out in exceptionally harsh conditions. All the gritters have been serviced and tested, each has a dedicated snow plough and is fitted with GPS tracking equipment to optimise efficiency. They will be serviced throughout the season. Salt bins are in place and will be refilled in the near future. Once again salt bags will be offered to schools, places of worship and other community facilities at a small charge. Members will receive a briefing on the role of Winter squads, and a Facebook page and other social media will be used to ensure residents and businesses are kept updated.