

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR DAVE HARLING

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING

DIRECTOR:

BRIAN BAILEY

DATE: 25.04.2013

MARKETS SITE DEMOLITION

Following Executive Board in March 2013, the evaluation of the demolition tenders was delayed due to the need to clarify pricing and the exclusion/inclusion of specific items of work. However, this has now been completed and the successful tenderer has been appointed. Demolition work is therefore expected to commence on site at the beginning of May with a 17 week contract period.

PENNINE REACH

The Executive Board will be asked to endorse the Final Approval Bid for Pennine Reach with the Department for Transport. The £40m project will deliver new bus stations in Blackburn and Accrington and new highways infrastructure which will open up new employment and development opportunities. Key junctions will be fitted with intelligent traffic lights to keep traffic moving and all bus stops and shelters will be upgraded along the route. New ticketing systems and real time information will be introduced which will make bus travel quicker and easier. Subject to approval, work is planned to commence in June 2013 with the project completed by March 2016.

LOCAL PLAN – PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS

Fourteen public consultation events have been organised around the borough between the 26th of February and 21st of May, focusing on the potential for housing growth on identified development sites.

The local plan is required to progress the Council's commitment to housing growth as set out within the approved Core Strategy and to respond to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Prior to each event Ward Members are invited to a briefing meeting with Planning Officers. The events are organised in consultation with the Community Officers and Neighbourhood Managers who help to publicise the events locally. Residents close to the potential development sites are leafleted inviting them to attend.

The events have been very well attended so far and residents have had the opportunity to raise their concerns and discuss matters with officers.

In parallel with the public consultation, work is progressing on infrastructure planning in relation to local roads, drainage, flooding, schools, open space, sport provision and health facilities. Following completion of the consultation a draft plan will be prepared for public consultation before being submitted to Government for examination in early 2014.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

A number of bad weather events have taken place through the lengthy winter season of 2012/13. High routes have been badly affected on a number of occasions.

This culminated in the snow event of the Friday 22nd March and Saturday 23rd March 2013. Exceptional snowfall along with gale force winds caused significant drifting cutting off the communities of Pickup Bank, Tockholes and Edgworth. Snow drifts were reported as being as high as 13ft at Pickup Bank and additional JCB support to supplement the four gritters and plough was called in to dig the communities out throughout Saturday into Sunday. An exceptional effort by all involved was able to keep the network operational from Sunday onwards.

To date total salt use has been 3,400 tonnes compared with 2,000 tonnes in 2011/12.

The BwD Winter page was again a real success. The general public have been using this to plan their travel. A text message service was also introduced to inform Ward Members of current conditions on the road network and has been equally successful in communicating the latest information first hand.