

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT**      **PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING**  
**DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN**  
**DATE: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Darwen Library building work**

The work is expected to be completed by mid June 2013. The work includes the repair and replacement of some windows in the atrium area of the library. Disruption to services has been kept to a minimum.

**Blackburn Central Library building work – cladding project**

Good progress has been made to date on phase 1 of the project. Following the dismantling of the link bridge work has begun on the removal of the cladding and restoration to the Northgate elevation. Internal hoardings have been erected to facilitate the work and minimise disruption to services.

**Reading Well: Books on Prescription**

The library service is participating in a new scheme which will use reading to help those suffering from conditions such as depression and anxiety. Reading Well Books on Prescription will enable GPs and other health professionals to borrow approved titles from their local library. This service was launched nationally in early June and will be rolled out shortly within the Borough.

**Blackburn Museum Service**

Blackburn Museum Service is continuing to host the Department for Education and Arts Council England funded Museums and Schools project. Blackburn Museum and Turton Tower are working with 6 other museums across Pennine Lancashire to deliver increased school visits to Museums. So far the project has ensured the facilities and equipment across all venues are up to date and teachers have been engaged to write new school museum sessions. A further £168,000 for 2013/2014 will see the completion of the new school visit sessions ready for the new academic year in September 2013. This funding will also allow improvement and integration of the existing core offer to schools from all 8 venues working more closely together.

**Creative People and Places**

Arts Council England launched 'Creative People and Places' in 2012 which invited applications for up to £3million for projects that focus on empowering targeted local communities to experience and commission excellent art.

A bid was submitted for Pennine Lancashire led by Canals and Rivers trust, alongside a core partnership group which includes Arts Partners in Pennine Lancashire (APPL), Barnfield Construction Limited and Groundwork Pennine Lancashire, with a range of named affiliate organisations both locally such as Youthzone and Graham and Brown and bringing in artists and organisations of national significance including a partnership with the Liverpool Biennial.

The Arts Council stipulated that the bid could not be led by the local authorities, but there has been significant support from local authorities across Pennine Lancashire in developing the bid. In May 2013, the Arts Council announced that the Pennine Lancashire bid had been successful and had been awarded the £2m that was requested.

The Pennine Lancashire bid will empower local people of all ages to take a leadership role in programming, producing and experiencing high profile, world-class creative arts activities from outdoor festivals, screenings and live performances to environmental arts projects, temporary digital installations, exhibitions and 'pop-up' cultural spaces. The geographic scope of the project runs from the west of Blackburn, and will end on the east of Brierfield, with 2 key hubs of activity at Burnley and Blackburn. The first phase of the project will take up the next 6 months will be to develop a robust business plan, match funding package, governance and community consultation. The Arts Council will release £50,000 to cover this period. Then realistically the programme proper will start in early 2014.

### **Community Sports Activation Fund**

Blackburn with Darwen's re:refresh Sports Network project has secured £226,068 from Sport England to extend and expand the successful re:refresh programme. Blackburn with Darwen was 1 of 32 projects nationally that secured round one funding exceeding £5.1m in total. It is 1 of 8 awards in the NW and the only project in Lancashire. The additional funding through Sport England has safeguarded 1 FTE and will enable re:refresh to expand its offer to include a programme of weekly sessions focusing on locally identified sports (rounders, netball, cricket, basketball, badminton, swimming and running/athletics). It will increase re:refresh's existing base of 100+ volunteers by training and accrediting extra, local community sports coaches. Over the next 3 years the project will also help to develop and formalise the Community Sports Forum, currently 42 sports clubs. The project, which starts on 1st July will use a variety of community venues and settings to increase citizens' choices for participation and contributing to improved health and wellbeing across the borough.