

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR MAUREEN  
BATESON**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR:  
BRIAN BAILEY  
DATE: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

### **HOUSING GROWTH UPDATE**

Work is well under way on the new draft Local Plan which will identify sites for new housing, as well as other types of development, for the next 15 years. Residents have now been sent feedback on the comments made through the public consultation which took place between February and June. The draft Plan is expected to be presented to Council Forum later in the year.

As well as the plan itself, work is under way on a toolkit of support that the Council can offer to developers to help bring forward stalled or difficult housing sites within the urban area. This will be reported on in more detail along with the draft plan.

### **FORMER MARKET SITE AND INTERIM BUS STATION**

The demolition of the former Blackburn market site is proceeding well. The first phase was completed on the 26th July and handed over for work to start on construction of the interim bus station. This work is now well underway and the interim bus station should be completed and ready for use on the 22nd September, allowing the Boulevard to be closed and work started on the Cathedral Quarter scheme at the end of September. The second phase of the markets demolition should complete by mid September, ahead of programme, and will be temporarily hoarded off pending a start on the permanent bus station construction. Options are being considered for interim site treatment of the residual development area between the interim and permanent bus stations.

### **BLACKBURN TOWN CENTRE BUS CIRCULATION**

The Council has recently introduced additional bus stops and has upgraded highways to give a greater number of options for bus passengers in Blackburn Town Centre. The Council's aim is to minimise disruption caused by the demolition of the Markets and development of Cathedral Quarter and New Blackburn Bus Station projects.

Extra bus stops close to Debenhams and the Town Hall will benefit shoppers, college students and workers coming into Blackburn Town Centre bringing them closer to where they want to be, whilst giving more options for interchange between services. It will also become easier to visit Barbara Castle Way Health Centre from a range of destinations with a new bus stop added on Simmons Street. In addition there are two new bus stops at Darwen Street and St Peters Street.

### **UGO CARD FOR UNDER 19s**

On 1st September 2013 local bus operator Transdev launched a simpler and cheaper travel scheme for under 19s. Anyone under the age of 19 can ask for a Ugo ticket (child fare) and receive reduced price travel. The Young Person's Saver and Beez Buzz Cards are no longer required to prove entitlement to the Ugo reduced fare.

The Council has extended the child fare discount on contracted regular bus services and school bus services within the Borough where it sets the fares to under 19s. The initiatives from Transdev and the Council will help provide more young people with affordable access to continuing education, training, work experience and jobs and is another strand of the Council's Open for Business campaign.

### **MILL HILL 20 MPH PILOT**

The Council is currently holding a public consultation exercise on the introduction of a 20mph Community Road Safety Zone in Mill Hill. This pilot project supports Council objectives on road safety, public health and sustainable transport, and when introduced will provide a sound evidence base for possible further roll out of 20mph zones across the borough.

Funding for the pilot zone which is bounded by Preston Old Road, Livesey Branch Road, Spring Lane and Green Lane is provided by the Council's Local Transport Plan.

### **FLOOD RESILIENCE PATHFINDER**

The Council in partnership with Groundwork Pennine Lancashire Ltd has secured funding of £276k from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for a Flood Community Resilience Project called Flood Watch. The aim of this project is to improve the community's resilience to flooding by preparing residents and businesses in flood risk areas for possible future floods and to help them cope with any potential damage to their properties. The Council is aiming to achieve this by making communities aware of flood risk, preparing them for flood risk and educating them to take the right action during a flooding event. A project team is in place and the project will run until March 2015. Flood risk areas have been identified and project activities have begun in the Bank Top area and will be rolled out across other flood risk areas over the next 18 months. The team have already been active with a presence at the recent Darwen Gala.

### **BWD CONNECT (SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT)**

BwD CONNECT is now working with businesses in Darwen following its successful launch in Blackburn and the publicity of its good work through a dedicated website and range of marketing materials. Having been approached by India Mill to help resolve traffic and car parking issues we are now planning to deliver CONNECT roadshow events and provide all staff with a free personalised travel plan which will detail the walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing options. Crown Paints are also to receive expert advice and assistance from the CONNECT team and are also going to benefit from free mentoring training for its staff to ensure apprentices and people on work placements at the company get the best out of their experience. For more information visit [www.bwdconnect.org.uk](http://www.bwdconnect.org.uk)

## **TOWN CENTRE EVENTS**

The Blackburn Beach has been very well received during its time in front of Blackburn Town Hall. The new attraction aimed to bring some extra vitality to the Town Centre. The space in Town Hall Square was offered for free in exchange for a family entertainment with the theme of Summer. The Blackburn Beach was given the period from 5th August to the 30th August 2013 and due to its success was extended until the 8th September.

Darwen Town Centre has also played host to some very successful events through the summer notably the Pedal Car Race on 21<sup>st</sup> July and the 1940s Day on the 31<sup>st</sup> August. Congratulations must go to all those involved in the organisation of these events which not only provided great entertainment but brought visitors to the town and provided a welcome boost for local traders.

Christmas dates this year are confirmed as Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November for Blackburn Light Switch On, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November for Darwen Light Switch On and Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December for the Lantern Parade followed by Cathedral Fireworks and Carol Service.

## **NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIPS AWARD**

Congratulations go to Henry Clark an apprentice working in the Town Centres and Economy team within the Regeneration department, who won his category in the regional awards run by the National Apprenticeships Service and now goes on to the national finals in Birmingham in November. He was presented with his award at a glittering ceremony hosted by Edwin Booth, Chair of the Lancashire LEP at County Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> September. With the Council's continued commitment to apprenticeships I'm sure this will be the first of many such awards.