

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION**COUNCILLOR MAUREEN
BATESON****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR:
BRIAN BAILEY
DATE: 07.11.2013****TEMPORARY BUS STATION**

Construction of the temporary bus station within Blackburn town centre was completed on time with bus services transferring from the Boulevard on Sunday 22nd September. The project was undertaken by the Council's HAMIS team and was completed on programme and on budget. 13 bus shelters were relocated from elsewhere in the Borough for use on the temporary Bus Station. Following passenger comments, and with winter in mind, a further 2 shelters have been provided at the busiest stops. Four advertising boards have also been installed to promote Blackburn Market. Officers will continue to provide information to assist passengers and continue to work with bus operators to help improve the service.

PENNINE REACH

The Department for Transport announced Full Approval for the Pennine Reach project on 1st October 2013. This gives the go-ahead for the construction of a new Bus Station in Blackburn, a new traffic system for Ewood which will ease congestion and improve public transport facilities and a new road linking Burnley Road with M65 Junction 6 which will open up new employment and development opportunities. Along the Pennine Reach route key junctions will be upgraded along with all bus stops and shelters. New ticketing systems and real time information will be introduced which will make bus travel quicker and easier. Construction of the new Blackburn Bus Station will commence in November 2013 with highways schemes commencing in 2014. The project will be fully complete by March 2016.

CATHEDRAL QUARTER DEVELOPMENT

Further site surveys and investigations are taking place ahead of a start on site in early November to deliver phase 1. This includes a 30,000sq ft high quality office building with retail/restaurant underneath, a 60 bed Premier Inn with restaurant at ground floor, a new transport interchange for buses in front of the Railway Station and a new public square and gardens. This is forecast to deliver around 500 jobs in total and transform this important gateway. It will be completed in autumn 2015. Clergy Court, the Cathedral's new residential building which includes offices and a refectory open to the public is expected to start on site by the end of January 2014 and will complete at the same time as the rest of the development.

PINCH POINT HIGHWAYS FUNDING

The Department for Transport recently approved the Council's Local Pinch Point Fund bid for improvements to Haslingden Road which involves road widening between the Guide Roundabout and the M65 Junction 5 to provide 2

lanes in both directions and the conversion of the Guide Roundabout to a 4-arm signalised junction. The scheme, costed at £1.5m, will relieve congestion on one of the borough's most important gateways and improve access to Royal Blackburn Hospital, and key employment areas at Shadsworth, Walker Park and Davyfield Road. The scheme will be implemented in 2014/15 and complements Highways Agency investment to signalise M65 Junction 5.

BWD CONNECT

The BwD CONNECT project is taking to the road and providing expert travel advice in the community. Having worked with a number of local businesses including Crown Paints, businesses at India Mill, Royal Blackburn Hospital and Evolution Park to deliver travel and transport roadshows to their employees a town centre roadshow is now being offered to help the general public plan smarter sustainable journeys. Following the success of the Blackburn town centre roadshow on 27th September a further roadshow took place in Darwen on Friday 18th October.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS 2013

Rock FM will be acting as hosts for the forthcoming Christmas Lights Switch On events in the Borough which are taking place on Thursday 21st November in Blackburn and Saturday 23rd November in Darwen. Rock FM have themed the events 'Dreaming of a Winter Wonderland'. There will be two different celebrity appearances at each event with Poppy Cat, Nickelodeon's latest children's character, in attendance. Prior to the switch-ons Poppy Cat will be visiting the Children's Ward at Blackburn Royal Hospital.

In Blackburn, Poppy Cat and other children's characters The Snowman, Rudolf and of course, Father Christmas will be visiting The Mall and the Market before taking to the stage at approximately 5.30pm and the lights will be switched on around 7pm. The event will finish with a fantastic firework display.

In Darwen there will be a new and exciting switch-on event. Darwen Light Night will see the skies and prominent buildings in Darwen illuminated in a dazzling spectacular delivered through a partnership between Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, local businesses and the Borough Council. The event will involve music, entertainment, late night shopping, food and drink and of course a lot of lights! The event will also finish with a fantastic firework display. Both Blackburn and Darwen Markets will be hosting a series of events throughout the Christmas period with details on the Council's website.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL LANTERN PARADE AND FIREWORKS

The annual Lantern Parade will take place on Thursday 12th December. There will be workshops held in empty shops in Blackburn Town Centre, Youth Zone, local schools and Blackburn College. Local children and adults will be asked to collect their lanterns and take them to the top of Church Street to display in the Cathedral Grounds. This will take place from 5.30pm and will be followed by a firework display around 6.30pm. A Cathedral Concert will begin at 7.30pm.