

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

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Roe Lee Redevelopment, Blackburn (BwD) – Capita Symonds has been commissioned to carry out a masterplan for the Roe Lee area and is in the process of conducting stakeholder interviews with private landowners within the area. This process will help to identify constraints, aspirations and opportunities. Recently the project team has been informed that future school provision for the North area of the borough may need to be accommodated within the Roe Lee site and this will be addressed within the master planning process. Additional information includes identifying housing need, boundary areas and different housing options.

Orchard Grove, Darwen (TVH) – The development of 95 homes at Orchard Grove, Darwen is now complete. Of the 95 properties there are 60 occupied and 35 are fully built and available for sale. TVH are now offering 'Help to Buy' on this scheme which is a Government initiative to support potential buyers with low deposits.

North Road, Blackburn (Great Places) – Development work is progressing well with all services running across the site having been diverted to enable building work to continue. Foundations have been laid for several plots and red brick boundary walls have been erected for others, evidencing the contractor's determination to make up for the initial delays experienced at the start of the project. Development remains on track to complete in summer.

The Royals, Blackburn (David Wilson Homes) – To date a total of 53 new homes have been built, out of which 3 are show houses, 48 occupied and 2 are available for sale. An additional 32 properties are currently under construction, out of which 14 have been sold off plan. The anticipated build completion date is July 2015.

Moorgate Mill, Blackburn (Inclusion Housing) – The scheme will be completed in May. Nominations are being submitted to a panel which is meeting every two weeks. The panel has members from Housing Needs, Adults Commissioning, Inclusion Housing and the care provider. An open day ceremony is being planned for the summer.

TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME UPDATE The programme is on target with both its identification of families who meet the criteria and in its projection of outcomes. We are fully staffed and now in the process of evaluation of the project to date. This will include a cost benefit analysis to identify whether any savings have been made. We have submitted more detailed information to the national evaluation team on 43 families. A full report on this will be produced shortly. The programme continues to support the developing Transforming Lives programme, which aims to integrate services to intervene at the earliest opportunity to better support the needs of adults, families and children. Headline target update figures indicate:

- 340 families identified as meeting the troubled families criteria
- 270 families are currently being supported via a Key worker/lead professional
- 139 families have made substantial progress in increasing school attendance, reducing ASB and/or youth offending, as well as adult members moving along the pathway to work.

SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (SFA) CONTRACT UPDATES – COMMUNITY LEARNING, ADULT SKILLS BUDGET AND NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE (IAG) The SFA funding is now granted through two funding streams - Community Learning and the Adult Skills Budget (ASB) and is attached to an overall target figure of 3051 new learners per year. At the end of March over 1,700 learners had enrolled on courses with the service. The ASB funding comes with a financial target of £114,000 and all projections to date indicate that this target will be met by the end of July 2014.

The National Careers Service (NCS) contract commenced in April 2013 with a target to provide 5340 Careers Guidance interventions. By the end of February 2014 we had delivered 4642 interventions. We have recently supported redundancies in Thwaites and Simon Jersey Ltd, our own apprentices due to complete in August 2014.

SHARED HISTORIES Organised by the Darwen & Rural Shared Neighbourhood Team, this project aims to raise awareness about the contribution of BME communities to the British war effort in both World Wars. The project included an exhibition of genuine historical artefacts like weaponry and ordinance, letters from the front, films and photos and objects from everyday trench life. The project had the full support of 5 secondary schools and the college and involved over 600 young people in eighteen (2 hour) classroom sessions.

TRADING STANDARDS PROSECUTION The Consumer Protection Team has successfully prosecuted a car dealer in Blackburn for offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

The trader in question sold cars on two separate occasions to two private individuals, but falsely marked the invoices as trade sales, which effectively took away the consumers' statutory rights. The cars subsequently broke down but the trader refused to fix them, pointing to the fact that the invoices stated trade sale. As a result the Consumer Protection Team raided the trader's premises under warrant and seized a number of trade invoices from the company's offices. Evidence disclosed further offences of a similar nature.

On the 12th of February 2014 the trader pleaded guilty to 7 charges and was fined £6600 with £2464 costs awarded and a victim surcharge of £120; total = £9184. The company also signed an undertaking under the Enterprise Act 2002, which will allow the Authority to obtain an injunction if further offences are committed.

A number of cases involving the motor trade will be taken before the courts in coming months.

HOUSING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT Following two successful prosecutions for unlicensed rented properties in the Darwen selective licensing area, rent repayment orders were successfully obtained to recover the amounts paid by the Council in housing benefit in the last 12 months. The owners of the properties were required to pay the Council £3828 and £1577 respectively. Rent repayment orders will now be applied for as a matter of course following prosecutions for unlicensed premises where housing benefit is involved.

ONE STOP SHOP MOVING TO APPOINTMENT BASED SERVICE The provision of advice and support with application forms by Customer Service staff will from the end of March move away from a 'drop in' based service to a predominately appointments based one. By allocating appointments to all but urgent cases Customer Services be able to spread the customer volumes/contact over the whole day/week.