

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

**CLLR JAN – VIRMANI**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: SAYYED OSMAN  
DATE: January 2015**

### **Shorey Bank Older Persons Housing**

A planning application has been received by the Council and will be considered over the coming month. The build programme is planned to start in May and will be in two phases, Phase 1 is the Extra Care block and Phase 2 will be the bungalows. TVH intend to complete both phases simultaneously and the total build programme will be 96 weeks. TVH have also secured Affordable Housing Grant from the HCA to support development of the extra care block.

### **Roe Lee Redevelopment**

The scoping exercise focusing on topography, planning context, site constraints, utility provisions and school requirement within the Roe Lee area has been concluded. An Executive Summary and Baseline Report have been circulated internally for comment. A timeline is being developed to carry out consultations to develop and formalise the Roe Lee masterplan. Emerging proposals show capacity for the site to provide executive family housing and an extra care scheme. Masterplan proposals will be presented to members for approval prior to public consultations.

### **Empty Properties Clusters Project**

The 14 empty homes on Queen Street in Darwen (previously owned by the Council) have now been fully refurbished by TVH and let for affordable rent. A further 3 properties on Harwood Street are nearing completion and will also be let through the BwithUs scheme. TVH have agreed purchase prices on a further 5 empty properties in central Darwen and the matters are with legals. 4 purchase offers have also been made and negotiations are underway on another 5 properties.

### **Empty properties CPO**

40 Gillibrand Street, Darwen has now been CPO'd and vested to the Council, 12 Westwell Street, Darwen and 44 Shadsworth Road, Blackburn are still going through the CPO process and should be concluded within the next couple of months. All three will be offered for sale and refurbishment for reoccupation through a local estate agent.

## **TOBACCO ENFORCEMENT DOG ON PATROL**

In December 2014 trading standards officers once again enlisted the help of the Trading Standards North West Illicit Tobacco sniffer dog to carry out routine enforcement visits to retailers in the Borough.

Intelligence was used to target retailers who were suspected of selling illegal tobacco; the sniffer dog helps by assisting officers to locate tobacco which is hidden away from routine inspection, and was successful in finding 22 packets of counterfeit cigarettes.

## **Troubled Families Programme Update**

### **Phase 2 Expanded Troubled Families Programme 2015- 2016**

We can confirm that following another successful claim in October 2014. BwD have been confirmed as a Wave 2 Early Starter Local Authority. It must be noted that the amount of funding available for the expanded programme is less than half of what was originally available. Funding for this is available for each family who achieves success and will be paid in two parts: an upfront attachment fee of £1,000 per family and a results-based payment of £800 per family. Plans for delivery of the expanded programme have been drawn up and we are currently working on the development of an Outcomes Plan. To date we have claimed outcomes against 332 of our 465 families.

## **Customer Services**

Customer Services are experiencing an increased demand and in certain areas we are currently working towards ensuring that vacancies are covered through temporary staffing.

The main thrust of change is the move to Universal Credit along with the Council starting to engage more customers through its digital services.