

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

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: BRIAN BAILEY  
DATE: 16.07.2015**

### **CATHEDRAL QUARTER UPDATE**

Works to the office and hotel, public realm and bus interchange are still on track for completion at the end of September with Cathedral Court now likely to be completed in November. The rendering on the outside of the hotel elevation on Dandy Walk is almost complete and much of the outstanding works is now taking place inside with the sample room complete and approved by Whitbread's project managers. The office elevations are almost complete with curtain walling underway at ground floor level. A number of visits are taking place with potential occupiers and enquiries are being followed up.

### **PENNINE REACH**

The Council has recently terminated the contract to build the new Blackburn Bus Station following serious concerns over lack of progress. The services of a commissioned professional expert have been used to advise on the legal situation and all future options. The intention now is to proceed with the procurement of a new contractor to complete the development.

Footway and public realm improvements to Salford, Penny Street and Railway Road have progressed well with resurfacing completed at the end of May. Complementary works to Jubilee Street are underway.

Highway construction works at Ewood are complete and the northbound link road section opened on 15 June. At Furthergate works are progressing in terms of widening the 700m section of road between Copy Nook and Furthergate and the new 1.1km link road between Burnley Close and the Red Lion roundabout is taking shape. Works are programmed to complete on both schemes by autumn 2015.

### **FRECKLETON STREET**

The Council has awarded the main contract to construct the Freckleton Street Link Road which will connect King Street / Montague Street with the Wainwright Bridge. Works commenced on site on 15 June with the contract due to run until autumn 2016.

## **RAIL SERVICES TO MANCHESTER**

On 17 May a new hourly service to Manchester from Blackburn via Accrington and Burnley was introduced. This investment will be further complemented by the BwD scheme to enhance service frequency between Blackburn and Manchester on the Clitheroe line. Funding has been secured from the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership and the extension of the Darwen passing loop will begin in July.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SUMMIT**

Local businesses have been meeting with education and skills providers and the Council to consider skills gaps within the borough and future planning to ensure that the skills needs of a growing local economy are met. Businesses are showing a strong appetite to work more closely with schools and training providers. The group will meet again in September when the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership have published their sector skills reports.

## **BLACKBURN & DARWEN MARKETS**

Blackburn Market occupancy has remained static at 81% of sq.ft. of available space and 73.5% in actual number of stalls. Marketing of vacant stalls is continuing through trade magazines and other outlets.

Darwen Market occupancy has remained at 76%. The 6 day market is at 93% with some interest in 2 vacant stalls. Occupancy has increased to 100% in the Annexe. Occupancy in the 3 day market remains at 58% and options on the future of the 3 day market building are being investigated.

## **MARKETS REDEVELOPMENT SITE**

Land assembly in connection with the Blackburn Markets redevelopment site is now complete. The initial stages of the Exchange offices demolition are underway; the asbestos removal is being carried out and will be followed by decommissioning the high voltage substation in the basement. However, the main demolition cannot commence until the new bus station is completed and operational, and the temporary bus station closed. The development agreement with Northpoint is well advanced but is unlikely to be completed until we have clarity about possession timescales for the temporary bus station site.

## **WEAVERS' WHEEL**

Following approval by the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership Board of the joint bid with Lancashire County Council for funding to develop the East Lancashire Cycle Network, work will now commence on a 4 year delivery programme to create the 'Weavers' Wheel' cycle network. This will link existing well-used cycle paths with a mix of on/off cycle paths to create a 26km wheel around Blackburn which will be signed in both a clockwise and anti-clockwise direction. The bulk of the network will be delivered over the next 2 years and the Council will work with the local community to create art and horticultural projects to complement signage and information boards.