

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

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR:  
BRIAN BAILEY  
DATE: 01.10.2015**

### **CATHEDRAL QUARTER UPDATE**

Handover of the office and hotel are on track for the end of September when the new Square will be open to the public. Final finishes on the public realm and the Bus Interchange will continue into October with trees planted in November, however the area will be complete in good time for the Christmas period. A launch of the office accommodation is planned for November and visits are taking place with potential occupiers. A calendar of events for the new Square is planned.

### **BLACKBURN TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY REVIEW**

The Retail Group have been commissioned to look at a future vision for the town centre and recommendations on future opportunities and demand will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

### **BLACKBURN TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE PROJECT (Northgate)**

Consultants have been appointed to support work on the project development phase which includes a comprehensive programme of building surveys and conservation appraisals required by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the stage II submission due 2016. The work will also consider options for the wider area, including the Waves development site, Blakey Moor building, public realm and highways improvements in the Northgate/Blakey Moor area. A programme of consultations was launched at the Blackburn Heritage Festival on 12/13 September. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) with match funding from the Council.

### **PENNINE REACH**

Work continues at the four key sites under the Pennine Reach project: Earcroft, Ewood, Furthergate/Burnley Road and Blackburn Bus Station. Following termination of the existing contract, the Council is now working with Eric Wright to complete the bus station. Work has also begun on customer facing elements of the Pennine Reach project including enhanced public transport information and streamlined ticketing options.

### **FRECKLETON STREET**

Work continues to construct the link road which will join the bottom of Montague Street to the Wainwright Bridge, completing a gap in the town centre orbital route and creating new development opportunities. Headland Archaeology continue their work in the former St Peter's Church graveyard while Eurovia are constructing the rest of the road link including junction works on King Street. Once the archaeological work is completed Eurovia will

move their operation onto the site to complete the remaining section of road. The contract is due to complete by Easter 2016.

### **RAIL SERVICES TO MANCHESTER**

On 24 August the first phase of the Blackburn to Bolton rail project was successfully completed with the commissioning and hand back of the line into operational service. Services have now resumed between Clitheroe and Manchester (via Blackburn and Darwen) albeit to a revised timetable until works at Farnworth tunnel (part of the NW electrification programme) are completed in October. Work at Darwen to install additional track, new signals and telecoms and two bridge re-decks has been successfully completed on time. The next phase of works will see the enhancement of waiting facilities at stations in the Ribble Valley and at Darwen and Entwistle. This work will be managed by the rail operator Northern Rail and will start in late autumn.

### **BLACKBURN & DARWEN MARKETS**

**Blackburn market** occupancy is 78.70% with Shoemith due to commence trading on 27 September. **Darwen market** occupancy is 74%, 6 day market is 93% and the annexe 100%. Stall marketing is continuing. A group of current traders hope to take on a new stall offering household goods and textiles and there is interest in a stall in the Market Hall to sell shoes and associated goods.

### **2nd DARWEN FOOD FESTIVAL – 1 August 2015/ DARWEN 1940s DAY – 22 August 2015**

Despite poor weather, the Food Festival was an outstanding success. Over 40 traders took part and the markets were busy all day. The next event is planned for 5 December 2015.

The 6th Darwen 1940s Day was the best yet with hundreds of people attending the event. Feedback from both traders and public has been very positive with comments stating that it was the biggest and best so far.

### **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, however, the main demolition cannot commence until the temporary bus station closes. The development agreement with developers Northpoint is well advanced and given the recent applications to demolish the Thwaites site, the Markets site is likely to represent the first phase of a larger redevelopment of this sector of the town.

### **HIVE**

The Borough's business leaders' network has announced the establishment of BwD Hive CIC, a new Community Interest Company designed to further the objectives of the original network. The creation of the CIC will help to ensure that all businesses within the Borough have the opportunity to play their part in promoting prosperity. Since starting the Hive 'movement' in 2012, around 250 local organisations of various size and sector have pledged their support. The CIC will be officially launched in October.