

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

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR:  
BRIAN BAILEY  
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### **CATHEDRAL QUARTER**

Construction works for the office and hotel, public realm and bus interchange are all practically complete with Cathedral Court now likely to be complete early in the New Year.

The Premier Inn was opened to the public on 4 November with rooms being released on a phased basis. One Cathedral Square, the office block, has now been handed over although snagging continues. A Launch Day on 12 November hosted by Jack Straw was well attended with almost 150 attendees from local businesses, property agents and partners. Feedback was very positive.

The refurbishment of the Queen Victoria statue is now complete and the war memorial 'St Michael and All Angels' is complete and was re-dedicated on 14 November 2015.

### **PENNINE REACH**

Work is progressing well on all major highways elements which are now in the final phases of construction. Construction of Blackburn Bus station is progressing well, with the installation of plastic loops and glass and associated public realm. Enhanced public transport information units are now installed, powered up and showing scheduled bus information on the Blackburn Railway Station bus stops. Streamlined ticketing is also live with smart ticketing cards now in circulation.

### **FRECKLETON STREET**

Work continues apace on the construction of the new link road which will join the bottom of Montague Street to the Wainwright Bridge. Headland Archaeology have now completed their work in the former St Peter's Church graveyard and a final report is expected shortly. The contract is due to complete early 2016.

### **RAIL STATION INVESTMENT**

Work will begin soon on the enhancement of local stations on the Clitheroe line as part of the LEP and Council funded improvements. Darwen and Entwistle stations along with all stations in the Ribble Valley will benefit from improved passenger waiting facilities. Pleasington Station will also be upgraded with support from the BwD Connect Project.

## **HIVE, BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH**

Following the incorporation of the Hive business leaders network as a Community Interest Company, the network has this month welcomed its first 'supporters' by way of voluntary donations. Funds donated will be reinvested in Hive-endorsed initiatives such as a programme of engagement between schools and business.

## **BLACKBURN TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE**

Blackburn Town Centre's Townscape Heritage project has been working with consultants to develop the Phase II application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Eligible buildings have now been surveyed and consultation events have taken place with businesses, property owners and the public. A final public consultation in December will review the concept designs produced for the public realm around King George's Hall and proposals for the Blakey Moor block of shops.

## **KING STREET REVERSAL**

The direction of one way traffic flow on King Street was reversed on 9 November in response to movement strategy consultation feedback received in the summer from businesses and the public. The development of Freckleton Street link road and the new junction at the bottom of Montague Street and King Street now provides an opportunity to bring inbound traffic straight into the town centre.

## **CHRISTMAS EVENTS PROGRAMME**

Events in Blackburn Town Centre are being delivered by Blackburn BID in partnership with the Council. Branded the 'Festival of Light', the programme starts on 19 November with the Lights Switch on. Lancashire United are offering a special £1 travel ticket on the night. Other events include the lighting up of the Victoria Building, lantern workshops, the Lantern Parade and Cathedral Fireworks on 10 December. Holy Trinity Church will also be lit up on 12 December for the festival finale and Blackburn People's Choir concert. Darwen Christmas Lights Switch on will take place on Saturday 21 November.

## **APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR AWARD**

On 21 October, following the GTA England Conference in London, Henry Clark, an apprentice with the Town Centre Team won a national competition to be named 'Apprentice of the Year'. Henry won recognition in the Business Services Category and received his award from the Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills. Out of the 4 finalists, he was the only learner to be doing a higher apprenticeship framework.