

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

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING**

**DIRECTOR: BRIAN BAILEY**

**DATE: OCTOBER 2016**

### **CATHEDRAL QUARTER**

The first tenants of the office at Cathedral Square, Govnet, an events conferencing and training provider for the public sector, have moved into the second floor and it is expected that there will be occupation of 3 floors by the end of the calendar year. Legal negotiations are progressing on one restaurant unit with strong interest in the other and Café Northcote and Premier Inn are trading well. Activities on Cathedral Square will form a key part of the Christmas promotional programme and a Christmas market day is planned.

### **PENNINE REACH**

The Pennine Reach project is now at an advanced stage with remaining traffic signals being validated and linked in with the Council's Urban Traffic Management and Control system. Furthergate works are due to complete with the Copy Nook / Higher Eanam junction planned to re-open in early October 2016. The Harwood Street / Furthergate junction's signals were switched on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016. A small number of bus shelters in Darwen Town Centre are to be upgraded with realtime information in October 2016. Bus Lane enforcement began in the borough on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 after a two week notice period to drivers and residents. A funding bid has been submitted to the Lancashire LEP under the Growth Deal initiative to support development of adjacent employment sites.

### **WAINWRIGHT WAY**

Work continues to dispose of the sites allocated for new employment use either side of the new link road. The closing date for submission of expressions of interest was Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Submissions will be reviewed and shortlisted parties asked to submit formal offers. To date there has been a very positive response to the marketing of development plots from a variety of developers.

### **DARWEN 3-DAY MARKET**

The works required to accommodate traders relocating from the 3-Day Market to the Annexe and main Market Hall have now started on site and should be completed by the end of October to allow traders to benefit from the pre-Christmas trading period. Most of the 3-Day traders (12 or 13) are likely to relocate. Regarding the redevelopment of the 3-Day market site, the Darwen Town Centre Partnership Board and Council officers are working to prepare a development brief for the site. The results of initial soft market testing with potential commercial developers and occupiers and the feedback from the stakeholder consultation carried out earlier this year will be considered as the development brief is prepared.

### **BLAKEY MOOR TOWNSCAPE PROJECT**

The project has now secured £1.5 million from HLF to be matched by the Council. Negotiations to acquire properties on Blakey Moor are progressing and an architectural research project with Blackburn University students started on 27<sup>th</sup> September. Once the HLF have issued a formal permission to start (expected October), property owners and businesses will be invited to a workshop to update them on eligible works and the grants application process.

### **COMMUNITY CLOTHING**

Community Clothing, the social enterprise launched by fashion designer Patrick Grant is due to open its first shop on Lord Street West at the end of September. The shop will provide a showcase for the Community Clothing brand, as well as a number of other high quality, British made products. The shop has been given a facelift with the help of a small property improvement grant from the Council, design expertise from DAG architects and labour from Bootstrap Enterprises and Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School. Plans are also underway to bring the upper floors back into use as a sewing skills academy as part of the Townscape Heritage Project.

### **BLACKBURN MARKETS REDEVELOPMENT SITE**

The Growth Board has approved a proposal to provide temporary car parking on the site in the short term to maximise income potential. As to longer term uses, GL Hearn property consultants have been commissioned and will be commencing an options review shortly. This will assess market demand from occupiers and developers, what uses might be acceptable and which will complement the existing town centre offer and planned future developments on other sites, and will report back on delivery options.

### **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND STREET LIGHTING**

The LED street lighting project is now virtually complete except for some special lamps that are still to be installed in town centres and conservation areas. This has already generated a major reduction in the Council's spend on energy for street lighting, with more to come as the dimming capabilities of the new lamps are optimised.

In relation to highways works Members will have seen that the resurfacing around Great Bolton Street and Town's Moor is now complete, which has meant a major improvement in the impression of this gateway into Blackburn Town Centre.

### **HIVE AMBASSADORS NETWORK LAUNCHED**

The Hive Ambassadors Network was launched in the new Hive Business Lounge at Ewood Park on Thursday 22nd September by the leader of the Council, Cllr Mohammed Khan, Khalid Saifullah, Chair of the Hive and Hive Steering Group members. Key businesses from across the borough were invited to pledge their commitment to working together to promote the prosperity of the borough after hearing about some of the key initiatives the Hive are delivering such as Hive Business School, Primary Engineer, the Manufacturing Excellence Group and the programme of business events.