

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: IAN RICHARDSON**

DATE: 27 JULY 2017

DARWEN THREE DAY MARKET SITE PROGRAMME

Following the decision to demolish the 3 day market building and wide consultation with Darwen residents, businesses and stakeholders on the future use of the site, a planning application has been submitted to demolish the building and implement a landscape proposal for the site. The landscape scheme responds to the consultation providing a flexible space for events, reflection and socialising including both green and paved areas which will reflect Darwen's identity and heritage. Over the next few months, the design will be worked up in detail with key stakeholders. There will be further opportunity for wider consultation before the scheme is finalised in Autumn prior to tendering and appointing a contractor.

Subject to planning approval, the demolition of the 3 day market building is planned to start in September with completion before the Christmas trading period begins. A temporary surface will be laid to enable a Christmas programme of events with the landscaping due to start first quarter 2018.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE IN 2017

The Planning Service are continuing to perform well and meet targets. The Council are measured by the Government on a 2 year rolling period currently up to the period ending 31st March 2017. The target for Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks and including Extensions of Time agreed with the applicants is 60%. The Council's performance for this 2 year period up to 31st March 2017 is 98%. For non-major applications, considered against the same 2 year rolling period, the target is 65% for applications determined within 8 weeks and including Extensions of Time agreed with the applicants. From 2018, this target is increasing to 70%. The Council's performance for the 2 year period up to 31st March 2017 is 83%.

HIVE AWARDS

The third annual Hive Awards were held in May and saw a record turnout at King George's Hall where 15 awards were handed out to a variety of businesses and individuals across the Borough. Of particular note were the Arte Et Labore Award which went to the recently retired Chief Executive of the East Lancs Chamber of Commerce, Mike Damms and the Chairman's Award which went to the Tauheedul Education Trust. The awards evening itself was a roaring success with a record number of tickets sold and King George's Hall proving to be an excellent venue.

LEADING PLACES PILOT

Following the formal signing in May of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Council, Blackburn College and Lancaster University to work jointly to

promote prosperity and skills across the Borough, partners submitted a bid to the Local Government Association (LGA) to become one of 6 new pilot areas to champion such collaborations. On June 1st formal notification was received that our bid had been successful and we are now a Leading Places Pilot. The Pilot provides advice and support and a small amount of extra resource to develop the collaboration and work on a specific project which in BwD's case will focus on developing healthier lifestyles. In addition to the support on offer Pilot status will provide partners with more profile, access to national agencies and government departments in developing policy and support packages, and tellingly will put us at the forefront of a key strand of the emerging National Industrial Strategy in developing new collaborations between institutions to develop places.

Royal Voluntary Service – Community Voluntary Transport

The Community Voluntary Transport Service has now launched in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the Royal Voluntary Service. The scheme provides a flexible door-to-door alternative offering assistance and support to passengers and is currently being offered on an initial basis to Pleasington Cemetery. Feedback from users has been positive: *“The driver was very pleasant, professional, interesting to have a conversation with, really nice. We felt comfortable from the start. It was first class.”* The Council and the Royal Voluntary Service are continuing to look at different ways to promote the service, ensuring those in the local community are aware of this alternative transport provision.

Darwen East Development Corridor (DEDC)

The main objective of the new Marsh House Lane - Ivinson Road Link Road is to provide new highways infrastructure to enable the development of the designated housing site at Bailey's Field and Ellison Fold. However, key priorities within the project are to improve the local highway network and improve access to and from the eastern side of Darwen, to increase travel options between south east Darwen and the M65 Motorway, and to reduce congestion across Darwen whilst helping to bring forward sustainable growth in the Town. The Link Road has been designed as a neighbourhood road, with a 30 mph speed limit, 6 metre carriageway width, raised junction tables and sensitive landscaping. Road safety and visibility will also be addressed at associated junctions north and south of the new Link Road to improve conditions for all highway users. The Planning Application for the DEDC project is likely to be determined by the Council's Planning and Highways Committee in August 2017

NPIF Bid

The Council has recently bid into the Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Fund for the Fabric Borders project. The £3m project will improve pedestrian and vehicular access between Blackburn Town Centre and development areas both North and South of Barbara Castle Way. The reconfiguration of vehicular and pedestrian access and egress routes will improve orbital route congestion, remove barriers and improve pedestrian flows between Blackburn Town Centre and residential / retail areas with a predominantly Asian Heritage population. Improved access to new development sites, under-utilised employment sites and emerging retail and cultural offers will also be delivered by the project which marks the next phase of Blackburn Town Centre's regeneration. The Council expects a decision from the DfT in Autumn 2017.

Elton John Park and Ride

For the Borough's first stadium pop concert which took place on the 10th June, the Council worked closely with Blackburn Rovers Football Club to provide a dedicated Park and Ride bus service. Transdev operated the service which shuttled to and from the concert between Feilden Street Multi Storey Car Park and Ewood Park. Details on the service were provided to every Elton John ticket holder and also through the local media in the run up to the event. Take up was very good with 535 passengers carried on the day, averaging 18 passengers per bus journey to the ground and 89 on the return trips. Good feedback was received from users on the day, and the successful and safe operation played its part in limiting congestion around the arena.