

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN

Date: 27th July 2017

National Festival of Making 2017

The National Festival of Making that took place on 6th-7th May saw over 30,000 people flock to Blackburn town centre to enjoy the celebration of makers and making.

Visitors who came from all over the UK, enjoyed two days of demonstrations, workshops and performances as well as a collection of art installations, held at a variety of venues around the town centre including Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery and The Making Rooms.

Volunteers helped ensure the festival, backed by Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Superslow Way and Blackburn with Darwen Council, ran smoothly by acting as visitor guides and welcoming people to the town.

As a recognition of their hard work, over 100 people of all ages and from all backgrounds, who signed up to help throughout the weekend attended a special reception in the Council Chamber at Blackburn Town Hall on Monday, July 3.

The volunteers did a fantastic job and quite rightly were recognised for their contribution to what was a wonderful event. The Festival of Making brought people together from all walks of life and was a great example of what we can achieve when we all work together.

Social Integration

Promoting and supporting social integration is a key priority for this Council. I believe the most valuable thing we can do as a Council is to continue to have some of the best opportunities for people to get together, mix and enjoy themselves and as a result break down barriers.

That's everything from helping schools to successfully link up, to supporting high quality events and major cultural activities, to running sports and leisure and youth facilities. The National Festival of Making is amongst one of the many examples of our efforts.

Since April's Council Forum, I would like to update you with events which have brought people together to celebrate the community. They include The Fusion Awards in May 2017, where volunteers, professionals, charity workers and entrepreneurs were recognised and awarded for their fantastic work at the annual community recognition awards ceremony.

Towards the end of May, communities came together across the Borough with events to celebrate national Refugee Awareness Week ranging from exhibitions, drama pieces and the sharing of stories.

In June, people from all faiths and none gathered to remember loved ones at the Let Us Remember annual memorial day. Around 100 people attended the emotional

service where people were invited to plant a plaque with a tribute for their loved one. A tree was also dedicated as a mark of remembrance.

Held in memory of MP Jo Cox, people from all over the borough united to mark The Great Get Together, 16-18 June. Events were held to celebrate everything that we all have in common and to bring communities closer together.

To mark Srebrenica memorial Day, on 13 July, schools, agencies and the community united against hatred at a special service to commemorate the Srebrenica Genocide of 1995. At the event over 100 peace messages were written as a mark of unity.

The Great British High Street Party

On Saturday 15th July Blackburn celebrated its double win in the national Great British High Street Awards. A commemorative plaque to celebrate Blackburn's victory in the Great British High Street Awards was unveiled. A big thank you to Blackburn BID and the local businesses for their support and the council will continue to support this special partnership.

Lancashire Governance and the Northern Powerhouse

I would like to congratulate our Rossendale and Darwen MP Jake Berry on his recent appointment as the new Northern Powerhouse Minister, I'm sure he will support both Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire with opportunities to influence and benefit from the Government's Northern Powerhouse agenda.

Health and care transformation

Blackburn with Darwen Council continues to play a key role in health and care developments and any proposed changes, both on a Pennine Lancashire and a Lancashire and South Cumbria footprint.

The financial challenges are still daunting, through the pressures and demands on our services, but it is important we and residents, help to shape the plans so we have the confidence that proposals are right for this borough.

Locally, the Together a Healthier Future team has held a number of engagement events including sessions at Darwen Vale school, the Older People's Forum, in partnership with Blackburn Healthwatch and the Carers Service.

A further public event is scheduled for Wednesday, August 9 at Blackburn Central Library for a 1pm start. I would be grateful if you could help promote this event to your constituents.

All members are welcome to attend but I have asked the Together a Healthier Team to organise another briefing for members in the Council Chamber over the next few weeks to update members. I will circulate the details once I have them. You can find further details about the library event at www.togetherahealthierfuture.org.uk.