

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY

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

DATE: 5 October 2017

SATURDAY BUS SERVICES

The bus operator "Moving People" who run the no. 33 bus service linking Darwen and Blackburn via Hoddlesden, Pot House, Lower Darwen and Royal Blackburn Hospital have announced the introduction of a new Saturday service following requests from passengers. This 33 service was introduced following the withdrawal of services previously operated by Darwen Coach Services in December 2016. Three additional round trips on Saturday will start from 21st October 2017 to take advantage of shopping opportunities in both Blackburn and Darwen Town Centres. The Council continues to liaise with local bus companies with respect to the co-ordination of local public transport and those services that become commercially viable following the loss of subsidy is a major success for local residents.

DARWEN

The Shorey Bank Residential development is progressing well and is on target to complete by April 2018.

The demolition of the former 3 day market building is well underway and will be completed by the beginning of October, 4 weeks ahead of schedule. A comprehensive events plan for the period up to Christmas and into the New Year will be announced shortly with a marketing and communications plan to support it.

The detailed design for the new space and works to the Railway Road units will be developed over the next 3 months with a contractor in place and start on site planned for early Spring with a 5-6 month construction programme envisaged. Work will be phased to ensure that Darwen Music Live will go ahead without any disruption.

Members of Darwen Town Centre Partnership including businesses, traders alongside residents and Council and Capita staff working on the Darwen Market Square development were invited to participate in a markets event held by Kingston University as part of London Design Week on Saturday 23rd September. Liam Dargan, ex DACA and Kingston University student, who developed the Heart of Darwen project in early 2016 with the Partnership Board, organised the day brilliantly with a number of visits to different markets followed by a workshop at Old Spitalfields Market. The group's feedback on the day was very positive and all felt there were some very valuable learning to bring back to Darwen. Their shared experiences and feedback will be captured on film and documented and be shared on the Heart of Darwen website at the end of October. A further workshop will be held in Darwen later in the Autumn to review the findings and this will be fed into the design of future development of the Markets and Square.

CATHEDRAL QUARTER

By the end of September, Cummins Mellor and Northern Rail will have moved into the Cathedral Quarter office block with only part of the second floor of the offices

remaining available. This is remaining space is currently being marketed. The A Mano Italian restaurant and cocktail bar fit out is progressing well and due to open in October 2017. Staff across the restaurant and bar are being recruited and Christmas bookings are now being taken. The small unit across from the station is being taken by a well known coffee shop chain who hope to be open in good time for Christmas

PLANNING UPDATE

The demand for residential planning consents remains strong with application levels in 2017 currently standing at:

- Total number of residential approvals – 655
- Number of residential units still under consideration - 569

In terms of volumes and performance for 2017/18:

- 485 applications received (as of 14th September 2017).
- 347 applications determined (as of 14th September 2017).

Performance:

- Major applications within 13 weeks or agreed extensions of time is 100% (Government target 60%).
- Non-Major applications within 8 weeks or agreed extensions of time = 100% (Government target 65% - 70% from 2018).

Performance measure for preceding 2 years to quarter ending June 2017 (Government measure):

- Major applications within 13 weeks or agreed extensions of time = 98% (target is 60%)
- Non-Majors applications (Minors, householder & change of use) within 8 weeks or agreed extensions of time = 90% (target is 65% - 70% from 2018).
- Appeals: No Major applications within the last 2 years
- Non-Majors applications within the last 2 years – 1.43% allowed (target is 10% - this is measured against the number of appeals allowed against the number of applications determined in the period).

HIVE

The Hive network has continued to grow with membership now standing at over 360 local businesses and organisations. The network continues to promote the borough as an excellent place to do business, continues to link businesses with educational establishments through the Hive Business School and enables excellent links between the Council and the private sector.

The Hive Steering Group continue to meet monthly and have recently agreed a revised Terms of Reference which will enable membership of the Steering Group to rotate amongst Hive members providing opportunity to shape Hive priorities and work programmes. A Business Plan is currently being developed which will set out the vision for Hive over the next 12 months.