

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

COUNCILLOR: PHIL RILEY

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: IAN RICHARDSON
DATE: 22 MARCH 2018**

LANESIDE CPO

Despite intensive negotiations with the owner to bring the property back into use, it remains an eyesore and a target for anti-social behaviour. Approval has now been received to proceed to make a CPO for the disused building and land and the report is to be published on Friday 16th March 2018. It is anticipated that the CPO will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing and Communities by June 2018. If any objections to the CPO are received, this may cause a public local inquiry to be held.

HOUSING COMPLETIONS 2017/18

The Council can report that the expected housing completions for the year ending 2017/18 are circa 430. This comprises all new build, affordable housing, long term conversions from empty homes and residential conversions. Our affordable housing delivery is expected to be 120 new homes, accounting for around 28% of all completions and exceeds the Council's planned target of 20%. Housing completions are now at the highest in Blackburn with Darwen for over 15 years. The Council can also report that planned Section 106 infrastructure contributions to be received now exceed over £5m. The Council will release a full report over the summer detailing a summary of all contributions and the committed or planned expenditure areas.

LAND RELEASE FUND

Blackburn with Darwen Council has been successfully awarded £737,000 under the Government's Housing Land Release Fund to help bring brownfield sites in the borough forward for development. £32,000 was awarded for the Newfield Development Area and £35,000 for Fishmoor Drive, both in the SE Blackburn Housing Zone, and £670,000 for the Griffin Regeneration Site. This funding is for infrastructure works including site access and mains services, site surveys and remediation works to deal with poor ground conditions and remove any contamination.

The application was made by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as part of Lancashire's One Public Estate round 6 funding submission. The Council acts as lead authority for the Lancashire One Public Estate partnership which submitted Land Release Fund bids on behalf of several local authorities in the county.

WINTER MAINTENANCE UPDATE

The winter season so far has been challenging through an early onset of a cold period and then with a cold snap in late February along with a heavy snowfall on 8th March 2018.

The grit bin refills have continued to take place when resource has permitted in order to gain access to salt stock in over 400 locations. Our salt barn has had an estimated 5,000 tonnes worth of salt use this season alone, which is over and above a normal winter season which would usually see around 3,500 tonnes worth of use. The barn itself holds around 2,500 tonnes.

A service review of the 17/18 season will commence during April and put in place additional measures for resilience into the 18/19 season.

BwD ROADS

The Councils Highways Facebook page continues to grow with the number of followers steadily rising since the relaunch on 1st September 2017 to over 15,000.

User reviews consistently rate the page with a 5 star rating, and the feedback from members of the public highlights the page as their first stop for information relating to Highways in Blackburn with Darwen.

	01/09/16 – 28/02/17	01/09/17 – 28/02/18	% Increase
Impressions	1,044,989	4,336,034	414%
Engagements	8,288	37,404	451%
Clicks	1,653	5,374	325%
Likes	584	3,445	589%
Video Views	32,000	189,000	590%

Snapchat Channel was also launched on 01/01/18 - featuring Highways related information and has over 100 followers currently.

The recent snowfall in Blackburn with Darwen led to 643,920 people accessing the information over a three day period, with 10,207 likes, comments or shares. This also features a number of videos to show CCTV imagery of the conditions on the road network, which attracted 159,000 views.

All of the statistics have been through organic growth; none of our content has been boosted by paid for services.

ALASKA STREET UPDATE

Council has appointed Places for People as preferred developer for an all affordable housing scheme at Alaska Street in Blackburn. The scheme further strengthens the commitment of the Council and PFP to the area following the completion of the Infirmary Waterside development by PFP. Proposals will be submitted by PFP in March which will show a development of 73 dwellings with a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed homes in addition to a small number of bungalows. The development will be the first affordable scheme developed by

PFP using their modular housing product manufactured by their in-house company Modularwise.

DARWEN MARKET AND MARKET SQUARE UPDATE

Market traders in the Market Hall are reporting improved footfall and optimism for the future as new stalls are created for businesses relocating into them from the Annex building. By the end of March, up to 6 businesses will have moved into new and improved pitches in the Market Hall as opportunities become available for new traders in the Market Annex with a Craft Ale Bar already signed up. A regular fresh fish offer every Friday is now trading outside the market entrance and opportunities for new businesses to try out ideas to encourage entrepreneurship as well as events and activities to attract more footfall and new customers will be available.

The detailed design has been completed for the Market Square improvements and a contractor will be appointed in April ahead of a May 2018 start on site. Early works will be planned to ensure very little disruption to Darwen Music Live weekend with the project completed in time for the Christmas trading period. More customer and business awareness sessions have been taking place in the markets and the detailed proposals shared via social media and the Council's website. Overall, feedback has been very positive with residents, market traders and local businesses excited at the opportunities the space will open up for the town centre once complete. Plans to support businesses and encourage customers to keep shopping and visiting the centre during the works will be implemented and include pop up markets, town centre performances and other activities programmed into the Market Annex. An artist with international profile has been appointed very recently to the scheme and will begin consultation with the community from April.