

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR: MARTIN KELLY
DATE: 22 JULY 2021**

PLACE, PRIORITY 4: CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

South East Blackburn - Growth Deal Major Transport Scheme

Works on the new Link Road and widening of Haslingden Road are progressing well and the contractor remains on programme with planned completion set for autumn 2021. This is the final project to be completed from the Growth Deal 3 'Pennine Gateways' funding which also included the major infrastructure improvements at Carl Fogarty Way, Brownhill Roundabout, Pleckgate Road, Whalley Old Road and Four Lane Ends.

Local Transport Plan – Annual Improvements Programme

The 2021/22 LTP annual improvements programme was approved at Executive Board in June and includes road resurfacing and surface treatments, bridges and structures, road safety and improvements to traffic signals, drainage, street lighting and cycle routes.

Cycling and Walking Capability Funding

The service submitted a bid for 'Capability Funding' to the Department for Transport in April 2021 and a decision is imminent. The funding will enable the Council deliver several initiatives, to promote walking and cycling, working with both local schools and businesses. The funding will be used to support behaviour change activities including training, cycle loan schemes, travel planning, led events and the development of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan.

Enhanced Bus Partnership

In June, the service announced its intention to develop an Enhanced Partnership working with local bus service providers and Lancashire County Council. To commence April 2022, the 'Enhanced Partnership' will ensure that the Council is compliant with recommendations of the National Bus Strategy and that we develop and publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan with private operators to deliver agreed service improvements.

PLACE, PRIORITY 5: SAFE & CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

Road Safety – School Travel Surveys

Highways are presently working with several primary and secondary schools to undertake school travel surveys. These surveys are undertaken in conjunction with the schools and assess both parents and pupils responses. The data received will enable appropriate journey planning and what interventions / initiatives are required to influence and change behaviour to promote public transport, walking and cycling.

Townscape Heritage Project - Blakey Moor/Northgate/Lord Street West

The main contract for restoration and redevelopment works at Blakey Moor Terrace went out to tender at the beginning of June with a view to starting on site September/October for 12 months, subject to securing grant funding approval from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Grant funded works to neighbouring 29 Blakey Moor (former Jubilee Pub) are almost completed and the new business, Smoking Ranch n Grill, is aiming to be open in July/August.

Works to restore Council owned 14 and 20 Lord Street West are complete and Prism Gallery and Studios have reopened as a creative hub. Prism are joined in the building by Pennine Lancashire art commissioners Super Slow Way who have relocated from Burnley to Blackburn, and local design agency Source Creative.

Grant funded restoration works to bring derelict properties nos. 10 and 12 Lord Street West (former Mellors Wire Works) back into use are almost complete. So far the majority of the work has been internal, but the project has now started on the final phase of external works including restoring the original shop front at no. 12 and reinstating a new shopfront at no. 10 to create two separate retail units. This grant investment has helped bring forward £800,000 private sector investment on the former Campbells Amusements building and this will be ready to be marketed in August.

Funding has been agreed for phase II internal refurbishment at 35 Northgate (former Ribblesdale Hotel) and the main contractor is due to be appointed in the next few weeks.

The Townscape Heritage Project is now working with the private owners and businesses at 34 (Baileys Jewellers), 36-40 (Wellcome Poundshop), 27 (Poundcraze) and 13 (former Age Concern) Northgate to work up grant funded property improvement schemes to be delivered next year.

PLACE PRIORITY 6: STRONG, GROWING ECONOMY TO ENABLE SOCIAL MOBILITY

Growth Programme

The Growth Programme for 2021/22 was approved at Executive Board in April and is progressing as per the updates below.

Housing Developments

Further to the Growth Programme, the following major housing projects involving Council land are progressing through the planning stages:

- McDermott Homes were selected to purchase the Council land at Ellison Fold Way in Darwen and take forward a detailed planning application for residential development, which was received in February and approved in July. The development is expected to commence later this year and, combined with adjacent private land, will deliver a combined total of around 340 new family dwellings including 70 affordable houses plus contributions

towards more school places, roads and improving the Blacksnape Play Area.

- Keepmoat and Progress Housing have been selected to develop the Council's Haslingden Road Key Worker Housing Site, which will provide around 300 new homes close to Royal Blackburn Hospital, including a proportion of homes for NHS key workers. A planning application is expected later this year.
- Countryside Homes and Together Housing have now received full planning permission to build around 390 new homes of mixed tenure around Fishmoor Drive and Roman Road. The application incorporates two sites on Fishmoor Drive and one on Roman Road, and infrastructure works on Fishmoor Drive. Construction will commence later this year.
- Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 165 new homes at Whalley Old Road, a partially Council-owned site. The Council are working with adjacent landowners with site investigations to take place over the summer to investigate the ground conditions. The landowners will commence with marketing the site later in the year.
- The Council granted full planning permission in July to McDermott Homes to build 30 new family homes off Lomond Gardens in Feniscowles. Construction is expected to commence by the Autumn.
- Elan Homes has been selected to purchase and develop the residential development parcels at Milking Lane, Lower Darwen, which the Council owns as part of the Barnfield Blackburn Ltd Joint Venture. A detailed 'reserved matters' planning application for 76 homes is expected over the summer.

Other developments of current or former Council land, at a more advanced stage, include the Roe Lee site, where Persimmon Homes are established on site; the Griffin Redevelopment site, where Seddon Homes are building 56 new homes for Great Places in the first phase of development. Three sites in Mill Hill are currently under construction by Great Places at Shorrock Lane (former Laneside Care Home), Bowen Street and New Wellington Street. Applethwaite Homes have almost completed the new family homes at Tower Road, and Places for People are in the final stages of their development in Alaska Street, Infirmary Waterside. This includes the first adaptive homes built in the borough.

Commercial Developments

The Council completed the purchase of the former Thwaites Brewery site in May, as part of a Joint Venture with Maple Grove. Further updates regarding site proposals will be reported as the project moves forward.

Good progress is continuing to be made at the Milking Lane development site, which the Council is bringing forward as part of the Joint Venture Company – Barnfield Blackburn Ltd. Construction of the new link road through the site with associated flood prevention infrastructure began in 2020, and will open at the end of August.

At Carl Fogarty Way, preferred bidders have been selected for Plots 1 and 4, with legal progress progressing. Plot 6 is going through the tendering process with the remaining plots being offered to the market next year.

The new Blackburn Cinema and undercroft carpark is complete. Reel opened the cinema in May, when Covid restrictions allowed.

New Local Plan

Works to prepare an ambitious new Local Plan for the Borough are continuing. Widespread public consultation on a draft Plan took place from 8th January until 19th February, using a wide variety of media due to COVID restrictions. The team received more responses than ever before for a Local Plan consultation.

The responses have been reviewed and were reported to Executive Board in July. Another consultation will take place in January 2022 before submitting the Plan to Government for examination.

Community Renewal Fund

As one of 100 priority places earmarked by Government for applications to the £220 million Community Renewal Fund, a £3 million bid was made in June after a quick turnaround of 3 months for calls for Expressions of Interest through to submission. Over 20 detailed bids were submitted to the Council, and following independent review against the Government's assessment criteria, 9 projects were prioritised based on their ability to deliver positive impacts across the Fund priorities of Employment, Skills, Place and Communities as well as supporting the Council's strategic priorities. The maximum bid of £3 million was submitted and we await the Government's response in the coming weeks, as all project spend and delivery must be committed and completed by the end of March 2022.

Darwen Town Deal

The Town Deal Board and Council are still to receive any formal feedback and an indication of a final funding allocation in support the Darwen Town Investment Plan, which was submitted to Government in January.