

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**COUNCILLOR PHIL RILEY**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR: MARTIN KELLY  
DATE: 7 October 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 nearing completion with the opening 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 Annual Improvements Programme for 2021/22 was approved at Executive Board in June and includes road treatments, bridges and structures, road safety and traffic signal improvements, drainage, street lighting and cycle routes. Projects completed since last update include:

- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Resurfacing - Whalley New Road, Duke Street, Yew Tree Drive, Tockholes Road, Emerald Avenue and New Chapel Street
- Surface treatments - Belmont Road and Bolton Road
- Drainage - Pleckgate Road and Preston Old
- Spray Injection Patching Programme
- Wainwright Railway Bridge Repainting and Refurbishment

#### **Cycling and Walking Capability Funding**

A bid for 'Capability Funding' was submitted to the Department for Transport in April 2021 with funding of £272,528 to be received in October. The funding will enable the Council deliver several initiatives, to promote walking and cycling, and work with both local schools and businesses. The funding will be used to support behaviour change activities including training, cycle loan schemes, travel planning and events, and the development of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan.

#### **Enhanced Bus Partnership**

In June, the Council announced its intention to develop an Enhanced Partnership, working with local bus service providers and Lancashire County Council. To commence April 2022, our Enhanced Partnership will help ensure the Council is compliant with Government's National Bus Strategy, and able to develop and publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with private operators to deliver agreed service improvements. The BSIP will analyse current service levels and include targets to:

- improve bus journey time and reliability

- increase passenger numbers and customer satisfaction

A draft publication will be consulted upon in October.

## **PLACE, PRIORITY 5: SAFE & CLEAN ENVIRONMENT**

### **Safer Roads Operational Group and Strategy**

Highways are presently working in collaboration with Public Health, Community Safety colleagues and external stakeholders to develop the Safer Roads Operational Group. This group brings together multi-agency partners working collaboratively with the joint aim of delivering healthier and safer roads within Blackburn with Darwen. The purpose of the Group is to manage the delivery of the Road Safety Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen in order to reduce road casualties and achieve the vision that people are safe and feel safe on Blackburn with Darwen's roads. In particular the Group will facilitate a collaborative approach to engagement, education, enforcement and engineering activities across Blackburn and Darwen.

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

Two local contractors have been shortlisted for the restoration and redevelopment works at Blakey Moor Terrace and we are working with Procurement to agree the contract award subject to grant funding approval. Once on site, works are expected to be completed by December 2022. We will be engaging a commercial agent to help market the properties for food and drink uses.

Grant funded works to neighbouring 29 Blakey Moor (former Jubilee Pub) with the new business operator aiming to open in October / November.

The contract for internal refurbishment of 35 Northgate (former Ribblesdale Hotel/Baroque) has been awarded to a Blackburn company, Wade Group, and will start in January 2022.

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

### **Housing Developments**

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

- 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 / 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 and site investigations are under-way to understand the ground conditions.
- 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 has been received and is currently undergoing public consultation.

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 McDermott Homes have commenced their development at both Lomond Gardens in Feniscowles where 30 new family homes will be built and at Ellison Fold Way in Darwen which 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.

### **Commercial Developments**

The Council/Maple Grove Joint Venture company is progressing with masterplanning work for the former Thwaites Brewery site and surrounds. 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 Barnfield Blackburn Joint Venture Company. The new link road through the site opened at the end of August and detailed (reserved matters) planning applications have been received for the commercial and residential plots.

At Carl Fogarty Way, preferred bidders have been selected for Plots 1, 4 and 6, with legals progressing. Plots 2 and 3 will be offered to the market next year.

### **New Local Plan**

Works to prepare an ambitious new Local Plan for the Borough are continuing. Responses to the borough-wide consultation earlier this year were reported to Executive Board in July and a further consultation will take place in January 2022 before submitting the Plan to Government for examination.

## **Darwen Town Deal**

The Town Deal Board and Council have received an indicative Government funding offer of £25m to support the delivery of the Darwen Town Investment Plan (TIP), which was submitted in January 2021. The Plan has received the maximum funding available and Government feedback was very positive. Heads of Terms have been agreed and signed and a review of projects with the Board has taken place testing deliverability and taking account of any changes since the original bid was submitted in January. A project summary and support work was submitted at the beginning of October. Work is now progressing on the detailed business cases for submission by early summer 2022 to Government and the Council, as the Board's accountable body. All funding will be allocated in line with Government requirements and our programme management and assurance frameworks. The Council, as the accountable body, will be responsible for the delivery of the programme over the 4-year funding period.

## **Community Renewal Fund**

The Council is still to hear from Government whether we have been successful in our application to the £220 million Community Renewal Fund. Our skills and enterprise development proposals were submitted in May with funding decisions expected by July. There are now severe risks regarding the delivery of project proposals given Government's requirements that funded projects must complete by March 2022.