

Report of the Executive Member for Regeneration on 24th January 2019

Councillor Phil Riley

Portfolio Co-ordinating Chief Officer: Martin Kelly

Cinema

Barnfield Construction broke ground on the new Cinema development in October with site works well underway with the steel frame scheduled for erection in February. Construction of the cinema is scheduled for 66 weeks with practical completion programmed for December 2019. Reel Cinema is planning to open around Easter 2020. Detailed design has commenced on the adjacent Jubilee Square Public Realm scheme with a separate procurement process to be undertaken in Spring with construction scheduled for Summer.

Milking Lane

Demolition of the derelict office buildings is complete and Barnfield Blackburn submitted an Outline Planning Application in November for a mixture of employment uses, a careers hub and up to 100 dwellings. The planning application is now being assessed with further technical site assessments simultaneously underway to help prepare the site for re-development. The Growth Team are engaging with potential occupiers of the employment plots and soft marketing the site to stimulate wider market interest. The employment site will be branded as Millbank Business Park with further marketing and signage to be created over the coming months.

Roe Lee

Persimmon Homes exchanged the contract to purchase the Council's Roe Lee site in October. Full planning approval to develop the site, subject to S106 agreement, was granted to Persimmon by the Council's Planning Committee on 20th December. Works by the Council's highways team are progressing well and scheduled to complete by the end of January. Persimmon intend to start work on site immediately after completing their purchase of the site.

Ellison Fold Way

The Ellison Fold Way major transport project, funded by the Council and Growth Deal via the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, is nearing completion. New infrastructure has been built along the corridor and the following are now in operation:

- A new compact roundabout at Sough Road/Grimshaw Street, which has improved sightlines and delivered new crossings and refuges for pedestrians. The roundabout accompanies new housing developments on Pole Lane and Cranberry Fold.
- New mini-roundabouts at Marsh House Lane/Priory Drive and Pole Lane/Priory Drive and changed priorities which have slowed traffic down on the approaches.
- New junction arrangements at Oak Grove/Iverson Road which have improved sightlines and safety.
- 6 additional parking spaces at Iverson Road for the benefit of local residents.

The Priory Drive traffic calming scheme will be delivered to co-incide with the completion of the Ellison Fold Way link road in February. The scheme will unlock

future development of new housing and improve access to local employment opportunities, and provide an alternative for residents accessing the M65 at Junctions 4 and 5.

Griffin

The Griffin Pub has now been demolished and demolition of the remaining terraced houses on Stansfeld/Hancock Streets is nearing completion. Following a successful tender of the site through the Council's Developer Framework, work is underway with the preferred developer to refine the proposed scheme layout. The refined proposal is planned to be ready by March.

Local Plan Update

Work on the evidence base for the new Local Plan is progressing. The *Housing and Economic Needs Assessment Study* was completed in December, work which included a *Call for Sites*. Three further studies are now underway – *Retail Capacity Study*, *Employment Land Review*, and *Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment*.

The first stage of public consultation on *Issues and Options* marks the first significant step towards the development of a new Local Plan. The intention is to consult on the *Issues and Options* document in February and March for a period of six weeks, aimed at all members of the public and key stakeholders. The consultation document sets out the main points to consider in producing a new Local Plan and seeks feedback via a series of questions on the following matters:

- Vision and Strategic Objectives
- Growth Options
- Spatial Issues
- Thematic Issues covering employment, housing, public facilities, environment, quality of place, and access to jobs and services.

The consultation activity will be as follows:

- Hard copies of consultation documents will be in libraries (deposit points) – with posters informing of consultation in community centres /leisure centres;
- Consultation questionnaire will be uploaded to Survey Monkey for ease of completion;
- Database of potential interested parties will be emailed a copy (circa 250 organisations and individuals);
- Hard copy shuttle in March will contain a reminder; and
- Regular updates in e-shuttle.

Blackburn Townscape Heritage Project

Refurbishment works to 35 Northgate are due to complete by mid-March. The property is being offered for retail/leisure use with the second phase of works undertaken by a new operator, in due course. It has been discovered that the 1890s building was designed by James Birtwistle, a prominent early architect whose practice designed King Georges Hall, Blackburn's Courts building and the Port of Liverpool building. The Council is working-up plans for 29, 48 and 50 Northgate and 14 Lord Street West to go out to tender in February. The Blakey Moor public realm work is now underway with the contractor due to complete by the end of March.

Town Centre Christmas Trading – Early Feedback

A review of Blackburn Town Centre Christmas activities with the BID and key town centre retailers and the Markets is underway. However, early feedback is encouraging given the wider national picture. For example, in the week before Christmas, footfall in the Market was up by 1.5% on last year. Trading at the Christmas Markets was subject to very difficult weather conditions throughout the four weeks though many traders have expressed a wish to come back next year. A co-ordinated marketing campaign of the whole offer has been well received.

Trading in Darwen Market has been similarly positive over Christmas with traders reporting good footfall and increased business over the period compared to last year. New businesses, increased marketing and popular activities for families helped to widen the customer-base with increased footfall from Bolton, Hyndburn and Blackburn.

Darwen Market Square

Works on the Square are well underway, including new paving sourced from a local quarry in Brinscall and existing railings refurbished and installed on Railway Road. This work is scheduled for completion by the end of March with artwork installed once construction finishes.

Highways Update

The renewal of mini-roundabouts continues with the majority on the principal road network now complete. The aim was to complete this work by the end of January. Wet weather delays have extended the delivery of this work programme by a few weeks. The Winter season has been relatively mild with limited gritting operations taking place. However, cold weather is anticipated by the end of January.

The resurfacing programme for Higher Audley Street, Livesey Branch Road and Preston New Road is being costed for delivery by the end of March. This work will be funded from the additional Department of Transport funding announced in November.

Highways Operations continue to plan and deliver new capital schemes within the current budget framework. Highway works at Roe Lee are progressing well. Work will commence on the Sudell Cross, Victoria Street new link road from 14th January; this coincides with the completion of highways works to Gib Lane and Livesey Branch Road. The main focus for 2019 is to deliver key highways capital schemes and to remain a Department of Transport band 3 Local Authority for asset management.