

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN
2019**

Date: 3rd October

DIY SOS big build for Nightsafe

I was overwhelmed by the community response to Blackburn DIY SOS Big Build which successfully came to fruition thanks to hundreds of dedicated volunteers, working night and day to make it happen.

I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to every single volunteer, including many of our own staff and members, who volunteered to help get this mammoth project over the line. I went along to the Big Reveal with the Chief Executive and the Mayor to see the grand finale and thank the volunteers.

The community response was unbelievable, over 300 volunteers turned up to help get this build over the line. There were people there that had never volunteered before, volunteering for the first time and saying how proud it had made them feel.

I would like to say on the record thank you to BBC Children in need, all the people who provided materials, the local mosque and church for their support and making a difference.

Community Awards

I was delighted to attend the recent BBC Lancashire Community Heroes Awards at King George's Hall. The radio station honoured unsung heroes from across Lancashire.

It was very uplifting to hear the stories of people who go the extra mile to make their neighbourhoods better places.

We had two winners from our Borough. School boys Tom and Jack Mayoh from Darwen, who have raised thousands of pounds in memory of their mother were awarded the Ben Ashworth Award for Fundraising. I am sure members will all join me in congratulating them.

Our own community awards, jointly hosted with Community Voluntary Services, will be returning again in 2020 with a ceremony planned in June. We will soon be starting the search for sponsors for the event and I hope all members will consider putting forward deserving people in their neighbourhoods.

I have always said that Blackburn with Darwen is one of the friendliest, kindest and caring places you can find and as the awards show that is in large part down to the many volunteers that we're blessed with.

Social Integration update - Our Community, Our Future programme

Various projects funded through the Our Community, Our Future programme have continued to make good progress.

Last month the first Community Ambassador course began, delivered by the Families Heath & Wellbeing Consortium in partnership with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust and Care Network Hub. This 12-week course aims to help local people boost their skills and leadership qualities to work on projects aimed at making BwD a better place to live for everyone. Another wave will start in November.

Another two cohorts of the Youth Ambassador will start this autumn. Two cohorts of 11 to 16 year olds have already completed the programme, which is similar to the adult programme.

The first group of Workforce Integration Ambassadors have completed their training with Blackburn College. 20 Ambassadors from a wide range of local businesses took part in sessions focused on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Blackburn College is also currently delivering a qualitative research project to explore people's attitudes to diversity, social integration and identity in the borough. Around 120 residents will take part in face-to-face interviews in early autumn, with the interviews to be repeated early in 2020.

Work on the ESOL Hub is progressing with partners. A new website that brings together all ESOL provision in the borough, making it easier for learners to find courses that are right for them, is in development.

Finally, a number of local groups will receive funding through Our Community, Our Future grants to help them run projects aimed at bringing people from different backgrounds together.

Leaving the EU – Brexit preparation / update

Following on from our update in March the Council continues to plan in conjunction with its partners for the UK leaving the European Union on 31st October 2019.

The Civil Contingencies Service at the Council are working closely with council departments in preparing for the exit including “no deal” scenarios. We are receiving and acting upon advice received from Central Government and the Local Government Association. Departmental Business Continuity plans are being refreshed to reflect any risks.

The Council is an active member of the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) and we have been working in partnership with the police, fire and rescue service, NHS, Environment Agency and other key agencies to make preparations around potential consequences to the community if a ‘no deal’ Brexit occurs. The Council has contacted businesses across the Borough to see if any business continuity support and resilience planning is required from the Council. Engagement will continue throughout with LRF partners.

World suicide prevention day

Suicide is the leading cause of death in the UK for people aged under 35 years, and the leading cause of death for men aged under 50 years. In Blackburn with Darwen the latest data shows a reduction in the number of people taking their own lives with 37 doing so in the three-year period 2016-8. This is a drop from a high of 55 in 2010-12 and 46 in the previous reporting period of 2015-17. Local rates are now comparable with the England average.

The Public Health team commissions several providers to deliver suicide prevention training, anti-stigma work and to deliver community based mental wellbeing activity; pays for 200 licenses for the digital mental wellbeing platform ‘Big White Wall’ and for unlimited access to ‘Kooth’, a similar digital platform for young people aged 12yrs and over.

To further amplify a year-long programme of events, activities, training opportunities and suicide awareness raising across the Borough, a World Suicide Prevention Day event took place on 10th September 2019. This year's event started with a service at Blackburn Cathedral, with many school and college students present. The event then moved to outside

the Town Hall where many dozens more people were gathered, alongside volunteers from the Samaritans, those trained in suicide prevention, and the St John's Ambulance. A 40 second silence took place at 11:40 to signify that during their 11th hour, a person takes their own life around the world every 40 seconds. Several speakers then gave speeches outlining commitment to reduce suicide and detail their services. The event was televised and clips were shown on the ITV Granada news that evening.

Sport England: Together an Active Future

I am pleased to report that Pennine Lancashire's £3M Pathfinder document has been submitted to Sport England. The bid includes £600,000 for local delivery across Blackburn with Darwen.

Together an Active Future's approach is to work together with people and partners to create ideas and test different solutions that can be used to understand why not enough people access the wide range of activities, that are already available in Blackburn with Darwen and to change ways of working to better support people who are inactive and affected by poor mental wellbeing. Out of 13 Primary Care Networks (PCN) in Pennine Lancashire Darwen's PCN has been identified for some targeted engagement work with the Together an Active Future core team. Learning from all the test pilots will be shared within Blackburn with Darwen but also wider across Pennine Lancashire.

Members will be encouraged to know that over 1,345 individuals in Blackburn with Darwen have got involved in events, surveys and sessions and had their say about what they think needs to be different in the Borough to be more physically active and to be happier and healthier in the future. People and partners in the Borough told us that there is already lots going on, that we don't necessarily need more activities; what's really needed is a better way of supporting people and linking them to the activities.

From this engagement there are strong themes for our delivery plan which include the need to raise the profile of physical activity, making being active attractive and the 'new normal'; to involve people in decision making; to champion our volunteers and develop assets in communities to support sustainability. Importantly we will also take the opportunity to influence and embed physical activity across all areas and add value and impact to the borough's other externally funded projects including Childhood Obesity Trail-blazer and social inclusion's Our Community: Our Future.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved and helped shape our plans so far and I look forward to seeing the initial test and learn pilots 'go live' in the Autumn.

Health and care integration update

Recently, a review of the four Primary Care Neighbourhoods which have now been operational for 12 months, has taken place to clarify the progress and achievements to date and plan the next steps for development. As part of the review an electronic survey has been completed and a workshop with over 20 health, care and voluntary sector representatives took place. The key priorities for future development include partnership work with the four Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, the production of a collaborative Integrated Care neighbourhood workforce induction and steps to incorporate wider areas such as the 0-19 years Children's Offer.

National Festival of Making 2020

Economic and visitor evaluation is currently being undertaken and meetings with festival organisers are planned later in October to map out plans for 2020.

Dates for 2020 have already been announced, with the Festival of Making taking place on 6th and 7th June 2020.