

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**COUNCILLOR MOHAMMED KHAN**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

People: A good quality of life for all of our residents

### **Health and Care Integration Update**

The East, North, West and Darwen Primary Care Neighbourhood Groups (PCNs) have commenced work to merge the Primary Care Neighbourhood GP meetings with the monthly PCN meetings to enable wider discussions on how health, care and community partners work collaboratively to address the health inequalities of our local communities. It is envisaged that the developments will help improve access into local health, care and community services for local people and patients, jointly develop positive solutions to address key issues, share practice across the four neighbourhoods and support the development of neighbourhood based action plans.

Following a Social Prescribing workshop that took place last year, which a number of integrated health, care and community representatives attended, work is progressing well to recruit four new full time Social Prescribers. The Social Prescribers will be responsible for working in the four neighbourhoods of Darwen, East, North and West. They will enable local people who are attending GP appointments to have the opportunity to be connected to local services to seek support and help improve their health and wellbeing. Examples may include referrals into services such as the wellbeing service, volunteering, education and training opportunities and advice / information services provided by the voluntary sector. Further details will be shared in the future.

Place: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit

### **New Year's honours acknowledgements**

The latest New Year's Honours included recognition for two people from the Borough, Vivien Bickham received an MBE and Michael Grime received a British Empire Medal.

Ms Bickham has worked tirelessly to support the victims of domestic abuse and we join with the nation in applauding your work with Women's Aid. Mr Grime has worked tirelessly as a local Scout leader helping and encouraging many generations of our young people become confident members of our society.

Our Borough has some amazing people who serve their community and on behalf of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, we would like to offer our congratulations.

### **Our Community, Our Future social integration programme**

The social integration programme is on track to reach its target for the number of people engaging with Our Community, Our Future in Year 2. For the number of groups engaging with the programme, we have already exceeded that target, in part down to the Our Community, Our Future grants, and the work of the Engagement & Integration Officers.

Since the allocation of grant funding to 26 projects in September, we are starting to see a real impact across communities. A wide variety of organisations are leading activities to support our communities and bring them together – through arts, sport, wellbeing, and so

much more. Over Christmas, we supported a number of organisations hosting events and activities to bring people together at a time of year that can be difficult for many.

During January, Our Community, Our Future board members, partners and local transport providers will take part in a workshop to look in detail at the data and intelligence gathered so far as part of our Community Routes transport project. The aim is to work together to begin to come up with some innovative solutions to help people to better connect to places of work and leisure.

In March a new website will be launched, with information about classes delivered by a range of ESOL providers in Blackburn with Darwen. Learning English Together aims to make it easier for learners to get assessed, then find a class at the right level, in a venue that suits them, and with shorter waiting times.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

Monday 27 January is the annual Holocaust Memorial Day. It's the date on which we remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, alongside the millions of other people killed under Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. This year's Holocaust Memorial Day also marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

On Holocaust Memorial Day thousands of people across the UK will be coming together to learn more about the past and make a commitment to help create a safer future for everyone.

In Blackburn with Darwen, the Council will host a commemorative interfaith event on Tuesday 28 January. We will welcome Rabbi Arnold Saunders, members of the Interfaith Forum and pupils from local secondary schools. Together with myself and the Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen, we will share the message that hatred and hate crimes have no place in our borough, and commit to stand together in unity with people of all faiths and beliefs. Candles will be lit and a minute's silence will be observed in memory of those people who lost their lives through the Holocaust and other genocides.

### **Community Volunteers Awards**

Nominations for our own community awards, jointly hosted with the Community Voluntary Services, open on January 24.

The awards recognise the best of Blackburn with Darwen and celebrate those who go the extra mile to make their neighbourhoods function often with no thought of reward. This borough is blessed with many great volunteers and voluntary organisations. There are many uplifting stories out there of people who make their communities better places which these awards will highlight.

I am pleased with the number of businesses and partners who have agreed to sponsor the event. I hope all members will consider putting forward deserving people in their neighbourhoods and the ceremony will take place in June.

## Economy: A strong and inclusive economy with continued growth

### **Leaving the EU – Brexit preparation / update**

Following on from the update in October, the Council continued to plan in conjunction with its partners for the UK leaving the European Union on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The Council being an active member of the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) worked 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 of a ‘no deal’ Brexit scenario. The Council also supported the Chamber of Commerce and also contacted businesses across the Borough to see if any business continuity support and resilience planning was required from the Council.

Brexit lead officers of local authorities from across the country have now been thanked for this work after no-deal preparations for the end of this month were formally stood down by the government just prior to Christmas.

The Resilience & Emergency Planning Service (previously named Civil Contingencies Service) at the Council will now continue to monitor the national position in conjunction with LRF partners.

### **National Festival of Making 2020**

The National Festival of Making will return to Blackburn for a fourth year on 6th and 7th June 2020.

Planning has now begun and I encourage you all support this fantastic event. We are working with many partners to ensure that this continues to be a huge success and I invite all members to attend the festival and promote our borough as a great place to live, work and visit. More details will be shared at future meetings.