

**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (TOURISM, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOBS) –
COUNCILLOR GILLIAN CAMPBELL**

The Places area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Fred Jackson (Environmental Services and Highways),
- Councillor Mark Smith (Regeneration, Enterprise and Economic Development) and
- Councillor Mrs Christine Wright (Housing).

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at
<https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Corporate Issues

Purple Flag

Blackpool's Night Time Economy Group (a group consisting of Council, Police, NHS, Ambulance and Business representatives) has adopted the 'Purple Flag' nighttime economy management framework, which is administered by the Association of Town Centre Management.

Purple Flag is striving to create town and city centres that offer a clean, safe vibrant and diverse evening and night time economy. The programme aims to help drive up standards, celebrate achievement and replace negative perceptions with positive visions of success.

The core agenda provides five broad themes that are key to developing and managing a successful town centre at night. Together they provide a framework for assessing the quality and appeal of the area:

- Wellbeing
- Movement
- Broad Appeal
- Place
- Policy Envelope.

The Night Time Economy Working Group has identified leads for each area and a management framework for moving forward.

Keep Blackpool Tidy

Keep Blackpool Tidy Blackpool Litter Strategy 2016/ 2020 is being overseen by a multi-agency group, which is being chaired by the national Operations Director of Keep Britain Tidy. The group will be launching the 2017 Keep Blackpool Tidy campaign, which includes and relates to a

number of key themes Community Participation and Involvement, Business Engagement, Education and Signage and Information.

Highways and Traffic Management Division

The 'Local Highway Roads Investment Group' Blackpool established has 11 Local Authority members including Lancashire County Council and the latest Authorities to join at the latter end of 2016, Durham and York City Councils.

This is establishing Blackpool as a best practice in Highway Maintenance, with the Head of Highways at the Department for Transport stating Blackpool as an exemplar of good practice. More and more Authorities are taking an interest in the group and enquiring as to membership, in order to access the 'Blackpool Council Methods' approach to highways data management, which has recently been procured and is a Road Asset Management Framework.

Charity Fraud

Ongoing enforcement campaigns regarding breaches of the Public Space Protection Order and Fraud Act has yielded tangible results with a marked reduction of incidents and problems reported by businesses during the Illuminations and thereafter. Mr Marvin Trussell trading as Army of Heroes was convicted at Preston Crown Court and sentenced to three years in jail (the highest penalty obtained by the Authority) backed by being given a Disqualification Order from Company directorship for seven years. Other cases are currently going through the court system.

Traveller Incursions

The Authority had previously obtained High Court injunctions preventing certain named individuals and prohibiting certain areas from unauthorised incursions. This enables officers to expedite the removal of encampments and this has been utilised a number of times this year already, including most recently the issuing of 14 Directions to Leave following an encampment on West Park Drive. The sites are regularly being checked to ensure that they are free of encampments and that all relevant prohibition notices are on display. Officers were on call over the festive period if an immediate response was required to effect removal.

Built Heritage and Conservation

Options for including the Spanish Hall Roof repairs (granted aided by £500,000 from Historic England) with repair to the Coronation Street façade of the Olympia Building are currently being explored. This should help reduce disruption on this busy access street as well as reducing the impact of works on the operation of the Winter Gardens. It will also help reduce cost to the Olympia Façade element of the project.

Contracts

Details of the contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (years - including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF BIDS
Hot Drinks Vending in Blackpool Leisure Centres	Snacktime PLC (Berkshire)	2 + (1+1)	n/a – income from products sold	4
Provision of Prepared Sandwiches	Tasties of Chester (Chester)	2	Call-off as and when required	3
Building Materials (Council and BCH)	Jewson Ltd (Coventry)	2 + (1+1)	£165,000	2
Public Health Funerals	D Hollowell and Sons Ltd (Blackpool)	2 + (1+1)	£69,000	2
Security Services	Northern Security National (Blackpool)	2 + (1+1)	£860,000	4
Flexible and Temporary Workforce Contract – Highways Operatives	Lot 1 – George Cox and Sons Ltd (Blackpool) Lot 2 – Bethell Construction Ltd (Kearsley)	Short term – 7 months	Circa. £250,000	2
Advertisement Services for Statutory Public Notices	TMP Worldwide (London)	1 + (1)	£42,000	3
Statutory Financial Audit Services for Blackpool Transport Services Ltd	Smith Craven Chartered Accountants (Doncaster)	1 + (1)	£28,000	5

Strategic Issues

Winter Gardens Conference and Exhibition Centre

The conference and exhibition centre continues to progress. More detailed scheme plans have been completed and a full planning application was submitted at the end of November 2016.

Architects have been engaged to develop technical designs and a tender process has begun in order to appoint a main contractor. State Aid compliance work continues to progress. Grant funding bids have been submitted for Growth Deal (GD3) monies £15m and Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) £2.9m. The second round of CCF funding bid has been issued. Further updates on GD3 progression are expected later this year.

Planning - General

At the November 2016 Planning Committee, full planning and listed building consent was granted (with some additional conditions) for the redevelopment of the Grade II listed Post Office site on Abingdon Street. Outline consent was granted for the erection of part five/ part six-storey 156-bedroom hotel on the site currently used as car parking on land bounded by Leopold Grove, Adelaide Street and Alfred Street.

There have been 20 decisions on planning appeals this year (where the Council has refused planning permission) and 17 of those appeals have been dismissed. This demonstrates that in those 17 cases the Council was right to resist inappropriate development/ uses. Of the 17 dismissed cases, five were Planning Committee decisions to refuse and 12 were officer delegated decisions to refuse. Of the three appeals allowed one was a Planning Committee decision and two were officer delegated decisions.

Planning - Winter Gardens Conference Centre

The reserved matters application for the Conference Centre has been submitted and validated and is now in its consultation phase.

Libraries

In December 2016, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016/ 2021'. The backbone of the report is the Universal Offers for Public Libraries, which were launched in 2013 and to which Blackpool signed up to as a member of the Society of Chief Librarians. The library service welcomes the objectives outlined in 'Ambition' and looks forward to further developing the Universal Offers to ensure they help individuals and our community to flourish.

The "Think Libraries First" approach cited in the report is very positive. Libraries have proven to be strong partners in delivering agendas across Local Government, including health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, literacy, life chances and skills and social cohesion and integration.

Policy Issues

Changes to Government Housing Policy

The Housing and Planning Act enacted earlier in 2016 contained a number of provisions aimed at reducing social housing stock and promoting home ownership. The new Government has recently announced a number of changes that will help to protect the role of social housing in Blackpool and help us meet local needs. These include dropping provisions that would have forced the Council to charge market rents to any households living in Council housing and

earning more than £30,000 and send additional receipts to the Treasury. The Government has also delayed the introduction of provisions in the Act for Councils to sell their best housing stock when it becomes empty to fund discounted sales of social housing by housing associations and this may be dropped altogether.

The Autumn Statement announced that grant funding for new affordable rented homes would again be available, grant funding has, over the last 12 months, been limited only to new affordable homes for sale, which are financially unviable in many areas of Blackpool. We will now review the opportunities to bring forward new affordable housing in the town to meet local needs.

All political parties are supporting a Homelessness Reduction Bill that will give new statutory duties to Local Authorities to prevent homelessness, current statutory duties focus on how Councils assess and respond to homelessness. It is expected that some additional funding will be provided to meet the new responsibilities, although in Blackpool we are already well prepared, with around half of the work of the Housing Options team assisting people at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point.

Improving Lives Green Paper

In October 2016, the Government issued a green paper called 'Improving Lives' to consider the relationship between health, work and disability. The Government's ambition is to halve the disability employment gap whether or not people have a long-term health condition or disability. Almost one in three working-age people in the UK have a long-term health condition, which puts their participation in work at risk. Around one in five of the working-age population has a mental health condition. The paper acknowledges that health and welfare systems are struggling to provide a meaningful support, with too many people falling into a downward spiral of declining health and being out of work, denying them the benefits that employment can bring, creating pressures on the NHS as well as a major injustice in society.

The challenges are complex and a number of areas for action are outlined such as ensuring that disabled people and people with long term health conditions have equal access to labour market opportunities and are given the support to prevent them from falling out of work and to progress in workplaces which embed health and wellbeing practices. One example of innovation listed includes the mental health and employment trailblazers now active in Blackpool, West London and the North East, providing specialist employment advice alongside clinical talking therapies.

Built Heritage and Conservation

The Built Heritage Strategy has now been approved for publication. This will allow a number of Community/ Council projects to progress including further excavation of training trenches at Watson Road Park in the lead up to the centenary of the end of WW1 and continuing efforts to secure the future of the 18 Century farm buildings at Midgeland Farm. Some projects have already commenced with Blackpool Civic Trust leading on a survey of Blackpool's Grade II listed buildings as part of the national programme launched last year by Historic England. The Council

has already provided training and support for this project, which is likely to span the next 12 months.

Proposal for an article 4 direction

The Executive has approved a proposal for an article 4 direction for the Raikes Parade Conservation Area. The direction will limit permitted development rights in the conservation area in response to significant concerns from local residents around loss of character to poor maintenance and alterations to properties in the area. The direction is non-immediate, but once fully in force will allow the Council more discretionary control over certain types of development in this attractive residential area.

Transforming Services

Quality Economic Development Services

In the last six months, Blackpool Council's Economic Development has secured three national quality marks. This includes ISO 9001:2015 for its quality management system, the Matrix standard for the quality of self-employment and employment advice and guidance and the Fair Train Gold Award for the quality of its work placement programme. These independently assessed awards provide confidence to partners and funders alike over the consistent quality of services, as well as a boost to front-line staff aspiring to improve continuously services for local businesses and residents.

Effective Collections Bid Successful

Cultural Services has been successful in its bid for £97,000 from the Esmee Fairbairn Effectives. The award will fund a three-year project focusing on the internationally significant Blackpool Tower Circus collection and enabling more public engagement with the collection. The project includes working with the Health and Social Care Sector such as family support, children's mental health, learning disabilities, residential care youth services, homelessness, mental health services and children and family services to train practitioners and volunteers in the therapeutic use of the historic collections as part of their daily work.

The Heritage Service will also work with Save Our Stories to engage with children and young people by using the Circus collections as inspiration, helping them acquire the literacy skills they need to take them on their magical storytelling journeys. The project will also work with the Circus community to enable their experiences and expertise to be added to the collections and inform wider understanding of Circus and its history.

Planning

A pre-peer review position statement on Planning in Blackpool has now been completed and has been sent to the LGA for consideration by the review panel. The Peer review itself commenced on Monday 16 January 2017 and the review panel will attend the January Planning Committee. In advance of this, an action plan based on the 2015 Planning Advisory Service Review has been issued and the department is about half way through implementation of the recommended actions.

Working with Partners

HealthWorks

The Council's new adult employment and health facility is now live, with a number of services now relocated to refurbished Council offices on Clifton Street (former Tourist Information Centre). The building now houses the Council's lead adult employment services team, which includes Positive Steps into Work and a number of integrated employment and health services including Health Futures, Healthy Lifestyles and the mental health and employment trailblazer. The trailblazer focusses on supporting unemployed residents who currently access talking therapies via the Blackpool Clinical Commissioning Group's Supporting Minds service. From January 2017, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) Local Specialist Obesity Service (LSOS) will also start to operate from HealthWorks. Effective partnership working both within and without the new facility will be crucial to its success. Several Council services are already active and contributing including Economic Development, Public Health, Adult Community Learning, as well as co-delivery and strategic partners in Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Blackpool CCG and the Jobcentre Plus.

Lancashire Not Forgotten

Following the success of a £49,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant for Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire County Council, the "Lancashire Not Forgotten" project has been officially launched and a Project Officer has started work. Digital and visual artists will start work in 2017 to support the work to capture and preserve the memories of those living with dementia, remembering how they lived, worked and played through shared heritage. The library service is represented on the Dementia Action Alliance and this partnership is an important part of ensuring the success of the project.

Nibbles 2 Café at Anchorsholme Library

A second Nibbles café will open at Anchorsholme Library in early 2017. This arm's length venture will not only be based in an ideal community venue, but will enable clients of the service to move on in their careers and progress into work. This is covered in more detail in the report of the Cabinet Secretary.

Great Exhibition of the North

We are still awaiting the announcement about the £15m legacy fund linked to the Great Exhibition of the North. However, the Head of Heritage and the Artistic Director of LeftCoast will travel to Newcastle in the New Year to discuss how Blackpool may still be part of the delivery of the Exhibition, thus maintaining the profile of Blackpool and continuing to position ourselves as potential beneficiaries of the legacy fund.

British Gas Boilers

Following on from the Cosy Homes in Lancashire project, Blackpool Council was approached by British Gas seeking permission to target benefit clients to ascertain their eligibility to have a brand new boiler installed in their home either free or at a minimal cost. Over 9,000 residents

in receipt of relevant benefits were identified and received a letter from the Council notifying them of the qualifying criteria. British Gas reimbursed the Council for the administration costs in full and have confirmed the following results:

Leads generated = 120

Installations complete = 13

Installations pending = 6

Applications not progressing = 101