

**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

Blackpool's Bridges Renewal Programme

At the last Council meeting, I highlighted the investment of £11.4m from the Department of Transport (DfT), Lancashire Growth Deal's and Blackpool's Local Transport Plan funding toward essential work to secure the future of our bridges. I fully understand how disruptive this work can be, but I remain pleased with how well the bridges renewal programme is being managed. Members will no doubt be aware of the current work ongoing at Harrowside and Squires Gate bridges. I am very pleased to update Members that we are currently on budget for both these structures and in terms of Harrowside, ahead of schedule. Indeed, we hope to have completed the essential repair at Harrowside by mid-February, ready for half-term week, with Squires Gate completed by Easter 2018 as expected.

Highway Claims

I am delighted to share the good news with Members that highways-related claims have reduced dramatically over recent years. Clearly, the actions of this and the previous administration are now paying dividends, in particular via Project 30 and the subsequent adoption of a robust Road Asset Management Strategy. Claims have reduced by 69.5% from a baseline figure in April 2014 to March 2017. The success story continues this year - from the baseline, the forecast at the end of March 2018 represents a cumulative reduction of 88.6%. This is a terrific achievement and particularly important in the context of the unprecedented corporate budgetary pressure brought about by seven years of unforgiving government cuts to our finances.

Such is our record in this area that we are now cited as an example of national best practice. For example, in terms of our Road Asset Management Strategy, the Head of Highways for the Department for Transport is using Blackpool as good practice in highway management and

supporting the networking group that Blackpool has set up. The group now includes Cumbria, Manchester, Lancashire, Stockport, Hatton, Plymouth, Southend and York, with a number of additional local authorities expressing an interest to join this year.

Highways and Traffic Management Preparations for Key Town Schemes - Conference Centre, Hotels, Tramway and Houndshill Extensions

I am pleased to confirm that what we expect to be the most disruptive phase of town centre works have now been completed. The utility diversion works to the junctions of the promenade and Talbot Road, Abingdon Street and Talbot and Dickson Road have now concluded, with the junctions' re-opened on 23 December as promised.

The next phase of the diversion works is currently underway with the final phase starting in February and expected to cease at the end of March. In terms of the latter, a great deal of work is being done by Highways and Communications to ensure businesses are fully informed and have the opportunity to enter into dialogue with us prior to the onset of the works. Officers will be meeting businesses at a number of events in February, one has been organised by the Blackpool Improvement District (BID) to discuss the programme for the work post April, in particular the future Quality Corridor and Tramway works. On that point, I am pleased to confirm that we are currently preparing to launch and advertise our Quality Corridors shop front improvement grant scheme. This scheme will be of great benefit to our town centre and many small business owners and I will be announcing details shortly.

Public Space Protection Order

The Public Space Protection Order we have adopted relating to the town centre and promenade is undoubtedly delivering benefits. Crucially, it is enabling agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour in more robust and effective ways. As such, officers of the Public Protection and Legal Services Divisions are looking to extend this Order further. Extension of the Order would involve widening the geographical area covered by the Order, or alternatively extending the subjects covered. As such, a 12-week public consultation exercise will be undertaken, including data and statistics provided by the Police Crime Data Analyst. Subject to approval, this consultation will commence in February this year.

Strategic Issues

Talbot Gateway

Our plans for the continued development of Talbot Gateway continue to take shape. The anchor scheme for Phase 2 of Talbot Gateway - the construction of a new four star hotel, tramway extension and transport interchange (connecting the tram to the rail system) - is set to commence late 2018/ early 2019. I can confirm that the hotel forming part of the scheme will be a Holiday Inn (which is four-star equivalent) and I am delighted that the Franchise Agreement has now been signed with the International Hotel Group. As all available independent research has shown, it is essential that we grow our supply of three, four and now five (The Sands) star hotel accommodation in the context of a renewed conference offer,

alongside supporting the quality accommodation we already have across our existing bed, breakfast and hotel base.

As part of this signal scheme at Talbot Gateway, work will commence on the construction of a new access ramp to Blackpool North Station from High Street in January 2018. The underpass that connects the new tram extension to Blackpool North station will be constructed as part of the new hotel development. Also tied to this scheme, we are currently considering the planning application for access to Banks Street Car Park.

Members will be aware that the Planning Committee approved the planning application for a new Wilko's store on Tower Street, together with an IMAX cinema and restaurant on 26 September. Construction is due to commence later this year and once constructed, Wilko's will relocate from its current location.

Central Leisure Quarter (CLQ)

Discussions with the international developer working on the CLQ are progressing well following the signing of the exclusivity agreement in spring 2017. We are expecting to receive the submission of an outline masterplan for the development this spring. This masterplan will then enable discussions to move onto a more detailed design, potential development agreements and long-term land and property arrangements.

Over recent months Council officers have also been in discussion with HMCTS (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service) regarding the potential relocation of the existing court facilities, which is the key remaining factor to unlocking the potential of the whole CLQ site. Tenders are currently being sought to undertake a feasibility study in respect to the above, with a number of alternative sites being reviewed. This study should be completed by late spring and will form part of the future negotiations with both the Developer and HMCTS, as the scheme progresses.

Former Yates Site

As Members may recall, I have previously reported that work was expected to commence on this site in November 2017 to construct a new Premier Inn hotel. I can confirm that Barnfield Construction has now been appointed to build the new hotel and due to programming issues, the commencement date is now reported to be early 2018. We remain understandably cautious, owing to the history of false starts on this site and will continue to exert pressure wherever and however we can on the site owners to get things going.

Policy Issues

Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy

The Council is about to commence consultation on a new Housing Strategy and a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

Members may be surprised to learn that it is no longer a statutory requirement for a local authority to have a housing strategy. However, it is my firm belief that we should have one for

Blackpool given how important housing issues are to our town, its people and its future. The draft Blackpool Housing Strategy sets out the Council's ambition to improve significantly the town's housing offer, building on recent initiatives like Blackpool Housing Company, Queens Park and the Foxhall Village development. The Strategy looks to build more high quality new homes, address poor quality rented housing and provide services that help people access the homes and support they need.

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy is a statutory requirement. It will help the Council and partners to prevent more cases of homelessness before they arise, resolve crisis situations quickly and help people recover and re-build their lives. The Strategy reflects the new statutory duties placed on local authorities by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Consultation on both strategies will run to March 2018, after which the strategies will be refined, finalised and presented to the Executive for approval.

Transforming Services

Progress at Grange Park

Work is progressing to complete the re-modelling of the City Learning Centre into the new @the Grange facility at Grange Park, with the local library, café, outdoor food growing, local shops and base for community groups. Once the shops have been re-located from Chepstow Road, there will be a major opportunity to re-shape the heart of the Grange Park estate and provide complementary new homes and open space. Initial ideas for this new development will be the subject of public consultation at the end of January and again in April, with work likely to start in 2019.

Working with Partners

Circus 250 Celebrations

Blackpool celebrated the national launch of the Circus 250 celebrations with projections on to the front of The Blackpool Tower building. The resort is one of six "Cities of Circus" in the UK that have been chosen to help commemorate the very first circus in London 250 years ago. Blackpool will develop its own programme of circus-themed events and exhibitions during the coming year, under-pinned by the world-famous Blackpool Tower Circus, which has not missed a season since 1894.

CultureBlackpool

A new campaign aimed at encouraging people to uncover the resort's culture and heritage has been launched. CultureBlackpool has been developed as a partnership between VisitBlackpool, LeftCoast, the Winter Gardens, Grundy Art Gallery and Grand Theatre. The campaign, which is being delivered under the banner of "The B-side at the Seaside", encourages both visitors and residents to explore the resort's rich architecture, heritage and internationally acclaimed installations and events. A range of Blackpool-born celebrities including the award-winning journalist John Robb, music star Little Boots (aka Victoria Hesketh) and artist Michael Trainor

are supporting it. As part of the marketing material, there is a special section within the VisitBlackpool website. The campaign was officially launched at an event in the Blackpool Tower Circus where a new film was unveiled, showcasing some of Blackpool's cultural and heritage assets.