

**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

Bridge Replacement Programme: Strong Performance Continues

I am pleased to inform Members that our £11.36m bridge replacement and improvement programme continues to be a success, with Devonshire Road Bridge running to programme and budget. In fact, I was delighted that the carriageway could be reopened earlier than programmed, in time for the August bank holiday and the Illuminations switch on. Thanks to all responsible for this good work.

Devonshire Road Bridge is the last major scheme as part of the programme and has seen investment in the abatement walls in terms of cladding to improve the appearance of the structure and to improve the drainage system in the footpaths. The street lighting levels have been increased underneath the bridge, repainting of the structure and general footway and carriageway improvements. The only remaining works are minor works to Watson Road highway, which will be undertaken with minimum disruption before the end of 2018 and involve altering the kerb line strategy to reduce risk of damage to the edge beams of the bridge. Minor works to Rigby Road and Chapel Street bridges will be progressed at an appropriate time as part of the proposed Central Leisure Quarter development.

Treasury Management

Contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
Lucozade Vending Machines	Lucozade Ribena Suntory (Stockley Park)	2 + (1+1)	Income contract	1	0
Empress Ballroom Ceiling Works	Hayles & Howe (Bristol)	Ad-hoc 4 months	£700,000	2	0
Occupational Health Physician	Dr Philip Atkinson (Poulton-le-Fylde)	2 + (1+1)	£86,400	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
Consultant Support for Planning Application for Carleton Cemetery Expansion	Cemetery Development Services (CDS) (Bedfordshire)	Ad-hoc 4 months	£41,350	9	0
Carleton Crematorium – Chapel Extension	F Parkinson (Blackpool)	Ad-hoc 7 months	£122,000	2	1
Design and Print of Your Blackpool Newspaper	Portfolio (Bolton)	1 + (1+1)	£24,000	9	1
Delivery of Your Blackpool Newspaper	Smart Distribution Solutions (Liverpool)	1 + (1+1)	£68,000	3	0
iPool e-Learning Software	Learning Pool (Derry, Northern Ireland)	2 + (1+1)	£112,000	Direct Award via CCS Framework	n/a
Voluntary Services Counselling	YMCA (St Annes)	1 + (1+1)	£30,000	Direct Award via Exception	n/a

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
Yeadon Way – Geotechnical and Site Investigation	Coffey Geotechnical (Manchester)	Ad-hoc 1 month	£17,100	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
BAEZ – Transport Assessment, Traffic Modelling and Concept Design	BWB Consulting (Nottingham)	Ad-hoc 6 months	£20,500	14	0
Repairs and Maintenance of Property and Assets	Ellis & York (Blackpool) Bambers RC (Blackpool) DLP Services (Salford)	1 + (1+1)	£1,500,000	9	4
Car Parks Back Office Software and Handhelds	WSP UK (Liverpool)	3 + (1+1)	£100,000	2	0
Provision of School Milk Cartons	Dales Dairies/Town Head Farm (Skipton)	1 year	£300,000	Direct Award via Exception	n/a
Workstation Assessments and Recommended Ergonomic Products	Back Care Solutions (Preston)	2 + (1+1)	£20,000	3	0
Provision of Bereavement Related Goods	JC Atkinson (Tyne & Wear)	1 + (1)	£10,000	Direct Award via STAR Framework	n/a

Strategic Issues

Our New Conference Centre: The Steel Has Come Out of the Ground!

I am delighted that the last month has witnessed visible progress in the construction of our new conference and exhibition offer at the Winter Gardens. Everyone can see that the new building is now taking shape, with phases 1 and 2 of the structural steelwork now in place. At the end of August, the Winter Gardens switched over to brand new electricity and gas supplies increasing the capacity and future proofing the centre.

I am pleased to report that we now have over 30 live enquiries for new conferences and events in the new facility with five new bookings already taken. We anticipate that the visible erection of the new facility will assist with our marketing efforts, with tours available for new customers before April next year. The build is on track to be complete and ready for the first event in August 2019.

Delivering Positive Change: Tower Street, Wilko's, Sands, Tramway and Museum

Our new Conference and Exhibition Centre, whilst strategically important, is only one of several fantastic new developments coming to our town centre for the benefit of both residents and visitors. I have previously advised Members of the complex set of deals that affect several crucial developments for Blackpool and its town centre. These developments include an IMAX cinema, new Wilko's, a new branded restaurant, the new tramway extension, Blackpool's museum and Blackpool's first five-star hotel.

I am very excited and pleased to report that the legal agreements required to enable the simultaneous delivery of these schemes, of which there are 21 in total, will be signed off in October. This progress enables me to give you a bit more detail about how and when these fantastic projects will start to happen. Blackpool's IMAX style cinema is scheduled to open its doors in autumn 2020, employing 40 people and being part of a £20m investment in the town centre. The new Wilko's that will have its main entrance in Hounds Hill will be completed in late autumn 2019 and open shortly thereafter. This development will safeguard 60+ jobs in the town and secure the future of a major retailer.

A new branded restaurant employing 30+ people will also be part of the Tower Street development. The new five-star Sands Hotel and associated restaurant will employ over 100 people in another year-round business. An investment of £20m will see Blackpool's first ever five-star full service hotel opening circa Christmas 2019.

The tramway development will see all road closures completed before the end of February 2019 and then the new station will be built once the existing Wilko's is demolished. The first passengers will be able to ride up to Talbot Gateway before the end of 2020 and we will need around 20 new staff to operate this extension. The Holiday Inn and Restaurant will also be built once Wilko's is demolished and will be open before Christmas 2021 employing over 100 people.

These developments will change the face of our town centre for the better and will bring 400 new year-round jobs primarily for local people. I am proud and excited to be responsible for the delivery of these significant new drivers for our economy.

In addition to all of this, the new Blackpool Museum will be open early in 2020 employing 40 people. This museum will providing a focal point for local people to understand and enjoy Blackpool's seminal, pioneering and above all, entertaining role in national and international popular culture.

Quality Corridors Shopfront Grant Improvement Programme

I am delighted that we now have some 40 premises in the target area with designed schemes for improved shopfronts in the town centre. The next stage is to tender all this work in the coming months to enable much of the improvement work to commence over the winter. As ever, there will be a focus on local contractor benefit in the award of works.

Our Fantastic Summer/ Autumn Events Programme

It is my pleasure to report that the VisitBlackpool summer events programme has attracted huge volumes of visitors to the resort as well as generating a significant volume of very positive national and international publicity.

Blackpool Air Show took place over the weekend of 11 and 12 August with the Red Arrows bringing the event to a spectacular finale on the second day. It also included performances by the Typhoon, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the Aerosuperbatics team. The event, sponsored by Arriva Northern, attracted large crowds to the Promenade on both days. In order to alleviate some of the traffic congestion, Blackpool Transport successfully trialed a park-and-ride facility at Blackpool Airport.

The annual **Ride the Lights** event took place on 25 August, attracting a record number of participants, all taking the unique opportunity to cycle under the Illuminations prior to the official Switch-On. This year, the event was re-titled Let's Ride the Lights, marking a new partnership with British Cycling who deliver a range of "Let's Ride" events in major cities across the UK. British Cycling added a new dimension to the evening event, bringing a variety of cycle-themed entertainment on to the Tower Festival Headland.

International music star Alfie Boe pulled the switch to trigger 66 nights of Illuminations at the annual **Switch-On** celebration on 31 August. The concert, staged in association with MTV, featured performances by Blackpool-born Rae Morris, as well as Ella Eyre, Diversity, HRVY and Jonas Blue. The ballot to win the 20,000 free wristbands attracted a record 130,000 applications! Half of the ticket allocation was reserved for Blackpool residents. For the first time, Switch-On also included a "Golden Circle" enclosure at the front of the arena, which gave up to 2,000 additional spectators an opportunity to guarantee their place at the concert at a nominal price of £10.

The following day, the Switch-On arena was used to host global pop icon **Britney Spears** on the final date of her UK "Piece of Me" tour. The concert has attracted worldwide publicity and following the appearance by Will Smith in 2017, has confirmed the Tower Festival Headland's status as a major outdoor concert venue.

Blackpool Illuminations has a circus theme for 2018, marking the resort's designation as one of six UK cities of circus. The designation is intended to mark 250 years since the first circus performance was played out on London's Embankment. The Illuminations display includes a circus-themed "big top" on Gynn Square Roundabout, new festoons and a specially made 3D projection show that will be projected on to the front of the Blackpool Tower building to

celebrate Blackpool's rich circus history throughout the Illuminations season. A second new show, marking the 70 birthday of Sooty, will be launched in early October.

Although the summer events programme has now ended, there is much more to look forward to between now and the end of the Illuminations on 4 November. The annual **World Fireworks Championships** will take place on four consecutive Fridays, 7, 14, 21 and 28 September. This year's competing countries are France, Romania and Canada, with the winner announced on the showcase night on the final night. The event will once again be based around the Tower Festival Headland and North Pier.

In association with VisitBlackpool, Nickelodeon will bring its hugely popular **Slimefest** concerts back to the Pleasure Beach Arena on 20, 21 and 22 October. Talent already lined up includes Diversity, HRVY, Jonas Blue and America's You Tube phenomenon, Jo Jo Siwa. All six concerts sold out within weeks of going on sale.

October half term will also see the return of **Lightpool Festival** thanks to the securing of Arts Council funding. It will launch on 18 October with Light Odyssey, a unique sound and light collaboration with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. The ticketed concert will be staged in the Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens. The following week will see three nights of free entertainment (25 – 28 October) in the town centre and Promenade, incorporating a mixture of live performance, art installations, community engagement and a repeat of last year's hugely successful Illuminated tram parade.

Destination Marketing

The 'Blackpool Has It All' destination marketing campaign has been running throughout the summer, with a mixture of TV advertising in Scotland and the North of England and extensive digital and PR activity. By the end of July, the number of positive travel articles about Blackpool that had featured in British media had totalled more than 100. A radio campaign ran in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Yorkshire during August to mitigate against some of the potential damage caused to the resort's visitor economy by continuing disruption to inbound rail services.

A Special Note of Thanks

Switch on weekend this year presented particular burdens on our staff and the staff of our supporting partners. It was wonderful to have such unprecedented demands for tickets. As ever, numerous unexpected problems and challenges emerged in the run up to the weekend, but visitors would not have known as things went so well. I am hugely grateful to the people who worked so hard to make the weekend a great success for Blackpool and both safe and fun for all those that attended. The people and teams responsible for this great success know who they are. I would like to register publically the thanks of both Council and town for what they do, frequently above and beyond what can be reasonably expected of any employee.

Transforming Services

The Challenge of Implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act

It is now nearly six months since local authorities' duties to assist people threatened with homelessness were extended through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Blackpool Council is ready to respond, with its new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 and new systems to work with people using personal housing plans. Everyone who needs help with their housing situation now works through a plan with a Housing Options officer, agreeing what further support is needed. Most people are coming for help even before the new duty to prevent homelessness kicks in and the Council is able to help by mediating with landlords or families to prevent moves or ensure that moves are planned and appropriate. My Blackpool Home is helping to source more properties with private landlords and the My Home Choice Fylde Coast system for accessing social housing is about to be upgraded and re-launched.

The demands of the new Act have led to a significant increase in service demand and I am proud of how our hard working officers are rising to the challenge. The number of people helped by Housing Options has increased by 25% since this time last year, in the three months of April to June 2018, the Housing Options team closed 746 cases, most of which were advice, early intervention and prevention. This reflects the commitment and excellent service provided by the team, but also shows the increasing demand for help. The support given to young people leaving care has also improved significantly over the last year or so, with better planning for independence and new dedicated flats with support provided by Blackpool Coastal Housing. The greatest challenge now is to help people with chaotic lifestyles that are at risk of rough sleeping to turn their lives around and so the Housing First project is being expanded from this month. Funded by Fulfilling Lives, it provides a home and intensive support to local people with the most entrenched problems, with early evidence showing that it can achieve really positive results.

Working with Partners

Righting the Wrongs: Anchorholme Sea Defences

I wish to make it absolutely clear to Council that the necessary repairs to the northern section of the sea defences at Anchorholme, where some movement and water egress has affected a number of revetment slabs, is the sole responsibility of Balfour Beatty as the main contractor. Indeed, the relationship with Balfour Beatty is structured through a clear design and build contract, which explicitly places responsibility for any defects on the contractor. In relation to this Balfour Beatty has accepted responsibility and to ensure absolute clarity in relation to this, has publicly stated that the cost of repairs will not be coming from local council taxpayers. Balfour Beatty is now starting the repair process. Part of this will involve grinding out slabs that have moved to enable the appropriate intervention repair.

I appreciate that this issue is a matter of significant concern and I have taken a very close personal interest in arrangements to ensure Balfour Beatty deliver on their contractual

obligations. Despite the need for these repairs, I wish to remind Members that Balfour Beatty is a very experienced civil engineering contractor, who previously constructed the £76m Central Blackpool Coast Defences project and also the Cleveleys coast defence project for Wyre that abut the Anchorholme project. With all this in view, I am confident that they have the necessary experience, knowledge and expertise to deliver the required solution. I will be watching.

Premier Inn: Contractors Now on Site!

At long last, I am very pleased to confirm to Members that the contractor for the 170 room Premier Inn on the former Yates' building is now on site. The contractor is Barnfield Construction, a reputable Lancashire firm. Completion is planned for early 2020. Premier Inn has already communicated that they will work with the Council to ensure local people have every chance of securing the jobs created by this development. Redevelopment of this site, along with completion of the tramway extension, will make a terrific improvement to the appearance of both Talbot Square and Talbot Road, encouraging further investment in the area and surrounding buildings.