

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

Tourism and Marketing Services (VisitBlackpool)

The second Blackpool's Back destination marketing campaign was launched in April following the success last year when visitor numbers grew by 200,000. This year's campaign, which includes a mix of PR, digital campaigns and TV advertising, is aimed at growing the number of short breaks by visitors as well as changing negative perceptions of the resort.

The TV element of the campaign was launched in Scotland at the end of June and will be followed by a campaign in the north of England, which runs from 15 July to 29 August. The TV advert is largely based on last year's advertisement, but updated to include CATS at the Opera House and new features at Madame Tussaud's.

The 2015 campaign has been funded in the main by Merlin Entertainments and Blackpool Council, but with additional contributions from a number of attractions and accommodation businesses across the resort.

Illuminations

The development of the new "Lightpool" show within the 2015 Blackpool Illuminations display is now taking shape following the procurement of the suppliers of the equipment that will be used to project spectacular 3D films on to the frontage of the Blackpool Tower buildings. The films, the first of which will be premiered at the start of this year's Illuminations, are being specially produced for Blackpool and will focus on the resort's rich history of entertainment. The Lightpool project, which also includes new town centre digital festooning, installations at The Grundy and themed shows within Brilliance on Birley Street, follows a successful £2m bid to the Coastal Communities Fund to help reinvent the annual Illuminations display.

Beach Patrol

The Beach Patrol Service is working in partnership with the RNLI in the development of a Community Life-Saving Plan for Blackpool, as well as promoting the RNLI's national 'Respect the Water' campaign. The service has also been working with Balfour Beatty in order to ensure that the new stretch of Promenade at Anchorsholme, where the new seawall is currently being built, will have the best possible safety features including public life-saving equipment, physical safety barriers and beach safety signs.

Planning and Land Use

The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012/ 2027

The Core Strategy Proposed Submission document (June 2014) with the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment and other supporting evidence base documents were submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination on in December 2014. The examination subsequently took place with the appointed Planning Inspector between 11 and 13 May at the Solaris Centre. Details of the Examination Programme, the Matters and Issues and the documents submitted to the Inspector can be found on the Blackpool Council website on the Local Plan 2012 to 2027 Examination page and the Core Strategy Submission page.

Following the Examination the Inspector has requested that the Council makes some modifications to a small number of policies in the plan and undertake a further round of public consultation. Officers

are currently working on the draft modifications, which will need to be agreed by the Inspector and then published for consultation. The consultation is currently expected to take place between July and September 2015.

Private Sector Housing Licensing/Transience

The Council's Housing Enforcement and Transience teams continue to inspect private rented properties and reach out to residents in the Claremont area as part of the on-going selective licensing and transience programme. Additional funding of £1.54million from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award fund will boost the capacity of the transience team from July, enabling them to increase work in the South Beach area and to plan for activity in new areas in the rest of inner Blackpool from the start of 2016. Proposals to roll out selective licensing to Talbot and Brunswick, Revoe and St Heliers are likely to be brought to Executive for consideration in October 2015 following statutory consultation with residents and landlords in these areas.

Decent Homes

The programme of Government-funded investment in Council housing to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard formally ended at the end of March 2015. Between 2008 and 2015, £60 million of additional funding was received from Government and invested in modernisation and backlog repairs to the Council's stock of around 5,000 homes by Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited. As well as investing in improvements, some of the least popular homes were demolished to enable the re-development of new affordable housing, such as at Queens Park and others were radically remodelled. The Council continues to have a responsibility to maintain its homes at the Decent Homes Standard and while investment in the capital programme will initially reduce, provision has been made in the Housing Revenue Account business plan to continue to invest to achieve high standards over the coming years.

"BSafe" – Blackpool Community Safety Partnership

Crime Statistics

All crime in Blackpool showed an 8% reduction between April 2014 and March 2015, when compared to the same period the previous year. This equates to 1217 fewer crimes.

Individual breakdown of crime categories include:

- Anti-social behaviour has decreased by 3% (366 fewer crimes)
- Vehicle crime has decreased by 8% (82 fewer)
- Domestic Burglary has decreased by 11% (83 fewer)
- Domestic Abuse has decreased by 8% (131 fewer)
- Sexual Offences (not including rape) have decreased by 5% (12 fewer)
- Non-Domestic assaults have increased by 8% (171 more crimes)

Tools and powers

Since the implementation of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act in October 2014, Blackpool Council has been proactive in utilising the new tools and powers to tackle a wide range of antisocial behaviour issues. Officers from Blackpool Council have issued 98 Community Protection Notice Warnings, with only 17 of those progressing to the Notice stage. This demonstrates how effective this tool can be in resolving antisocial behaviour in its early stages.

Three persistent antisocial behaviour offenders have recently been tackled with the new tools and powers including the obtaining of Criminal Behaviour Orders for two prolific fly-tippers in Blackpool.

Legal highs

As a result of the emerging issue of legal highs within Blackpool, Community Protection Warnings and Notices have been issued to the five main retailers of legal highs in Blackpool. These establishments have now ceased to trade and as a result, this work was recognised as good practice and included in the Home Office guidance to local authorities in tackling legal highs. Recently it was announced by Central Government that similar measures will take place nationally, illustrating Blackpool's lead in addressing this issue.

Crime reduction and substance misuse initiatives

Work has been undertaken to tackle issues with drug supply and associated anti-social behaviour in the Claremont area. A number of tactics were employed during the four-week operation, including drug warrants, community engagement, leaflet drops and high visibility patrols.

Throughout the project so far, there have been twenty arrests and twenty visits to properties of concern where warnings have been issued in relation to persistent antisocial behaviour. Reassurance visits have also taken place in neighbouring properties, which has also helped to provide additional intelligence for the police and partners.

The operation has also uncovered a specific address, which is suspected of being involved with the recent influx of high strength heroin into Blackpool and a warrant has subsequently been issued to the premises concerned.

Highways and Transportation Policy

The Fylde Coast transport masterplan, a joint document with Lancashire County Council, is due to be published in the next few months and has been through a consultation exercise.

Refranchising of the rail services for Blackpool is now underway and will be completed by early next year.

CCTV/ Security Service

Work is ongoing to explore a number of different arrangements that would allow CCTV in the town centre to be monitored again, in partnership with Lancashire Constabulary. Although at present the cameras are not monitored, they continue to be maintained and are recording. As and when footage is required, it can be downloaded accordingly.

Arts

LeftCoast, the Creative People and Places programme for Blackpool and Wyre which was established 18 months ago to encourage more people to participate in the arts, has been invited by the Arts Council to apply for a further three years of investment. A total of £1m can be applied for with a match of 25% required on the total cost of the programme, which would be able to run from October 2016 up until October 2019. Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited is required to remain as the lead organisation as the recipient of the original £3m award. A range of match funding for the bid is presently being sought and secured, the outcome of the bid will be known in October 2015.

Grundy Art Gallery

Young people from Blackpool, who have been working with artist Sophie Mahon in response to the recent Grundy Art Gallery exhibition Modern History Vol 1, had the opportunity to take over and showcase their work in the gallery. The Grundy Art Gallery exhibition, Modern History Vol. 1, was the first instalment of three shows across the North West showcasing the work of emerging creative talent in the region. The show was in partnership with the Contemporary Visual Arts Network, which has created a series of projects and programmes, which aim to encourage artistic professional development.

A bid to the Arts Council by the Institute for Contemporary Arts including Grundy has just received a major award to form a national touring programme for day screenings of international artists' films by young and established artists. Each venue will have up to five events a year following a particular theme such as travel. The Grundy will receive funding of £35,000 to support the film programme coming to Blackpool for an Assistant Curator, audience development and marketing.

Libraries

All Blackpool Libraries staff have completed the five e-learning modules contained within the Digital Skills Training Programme, the Arts Council England funded this Workforce Development opportunity. Recent evaluations have shown that the programme has been an overall success with a clear indication of increased confidence and capabilities of library staff, resulting in potentially significant impact on library customers.

Following the launch of the Reading Well Books on Prescription (Dementia), there has been uplift in borrowing of 68% of the books. Staff supported the recent Dancing with Dementia event at the Tower Ballroom, promoting our services and linking with other partners in order to support this area of work. All of the library staff are trained as Dementia Friends and two of the team are Dementia Champions. A new partnership has recently been set up at Palatine Library between Age UK and the library for people living with dementia and their carers.

Staff training was scheduled for the beginning of June prior to the rollout of the long-awaited ICT offer for residents. Chrome devices will replace the People's Network equipment, which was introduced in libraries during 2004. This is an affordable, quick and pioneering solution for Blackpool Libraries and we hope that our residents will enjoy many more hours of surfing the web, emailing, job searching and much more. The new offer will include new hardware, an improved management system and a better printing facility. Following the staff training each library will receive their new equipment, timetabled for fitting between 15 June and 13 July 2015.

Following an Open Tender procedure and according to European regulations, the library service has two new library book suppliers. From 1 June, Askew's and Holts Library Service will supply and service Adult Fiction and Non Fiction and Peters Bookselling Services will supply all children's materials.

Heritage

Historic Collections

Blackpool Council owns a number of regionally and nationally significant historic collections. These include the Illuminations Collection, the Tourism Collection and the Cyril Critchlow Collection. Together they tell the story of Blackpool as the first working class seaside resort in the world. Blackpool Council has a responsibility to care for these important artefacts on behalf of the community.

The quality of care of these collections has improved significantly over recent years. This good work is now being built upon by the appointment of a dedicated Collections Manager. This post is externally funded by the John Ellerman Foundation for three years. The Collections Managers role is to ensure that the care of our collections is in line with national museum accreditation standards. This will potentially open up additional external funding opportunities. It will also support the development of the Blackpool Museum project. Work includes improving the storage and documentation of collections and encouraging wider public access to these fascinating and inspiring artefacts.

Blackpool Treasure Trove Project

The Blackpool Treasure Trove Project is part of the Community Heritage programme. The project brings together a number of community groups (including the Embroiderers' Guild and Claremont Community Centre) with artists. Using the heritage collections as the inspiration, they are making 'pop up' museum displays exploring the entertainment history of Blackpool. The pop up museums will be created over the next few months and will begin appearing around the town over the summer. This follows a similar project run with schoolchildren last year. The pop up museums developed by

the children are now touring Blackpool schools to encourage young people to find out more about their local history and the role Blackpool has played in the development of the seaside holiday.

Energy

Gas Supply Contracts: Saving 2014/ 2015

Blackpool Council introduced a proactive strategic approach to gas procurement in October 2006 with the introduction of flexible contracting rather than taking the conventional fixed price, fixed-term option. It has been identified through the use of flexible contracting, with the ability to make multiple purchasing decisions more economically advantageous timeframes could be identified to purchase opposed to purchasing large volumes of gas over a long period, significant reductions could be realised. Between October 2006 and March 2013, this has realised a saving of £1.4m.

Despite initial concerns for 2014/ 2015 over gas price direction with issues surrounding supply margins, Blackpool Council was able to take advantage of this marketing softening on the back of oil price reduction and warmer weather, achieving a reduction from initial contract prices. In financial terms an 11% reduction has been achieved in the delivered gas price compared with the conventional fixed price, fixed-term approach, delivering an end-of-year saving of £212,000 (net) across the Council's portfolio.

Electricity Supply contract: Saving 2014/ 2015

Blackpool Council has introduced a proactive strategic approach to electricity procurement with the introduction of flexible contracting rather than taking the conventional fixed price, fixed-term option. Despite initial concerns for 2014/ 2015 over energy security, carbon prices and oil, Blackpool Council was again able to take advantage of the marketing softening and achieve a reduction from initial contract prices. In financial terms a 6% reduction has been achieved in the delivered electricity price compared with the conventional fixed price, fixed-term approach, delivering a saving of £194,000 (net) across the Council's portfolio.

Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Phase 2

CRC Phase 2 started on 1 April 2014 and, unlike the previous Phase 1, there is a requirement to forecast and control energy use for the year with the incentive of lower forecast sale allowances versus the higher "Buy to Comply" purchasing. In April 2014, Blackpool Council bought 90% of its forecast allowances at a cost of £251,815. The 2014/ 2015 Phase 1 submission is going to final validation in preparation for audit for 31 July 2015 reporting deadline to complete Phase 1 of the scheme.

Integrated Transport Services and Central Vehicle Maintenance Unit (CVMU)

Currently a full tender process for all passenger transport within Children's SEN and Adults Social Care provision is being carried out. The evaluation stage of all external operators who have submitted tenders for each individual route is being carried out with the awarding to the successful operators in time for the new academic year 2015/ 2016.

Road safety transition events during June and July are being delivered aimed at Year 6 pupils in Blackpool focusing on making the transition from primary to secondary school as independent road users. The day consists of a timetable of sessions each addressing different road safety issues. The main outline for the sessions is:

- Bus talk with PCSO – safety and behaviour (on the actual bus)
- DHL Trucks and Road Safety talk – blind spots with a HGV, cyclists and pedestrian behaviour
- Living Streets walk and talk – walk around the area and a discussion about walking to school
- Theatre – quiz and round up at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Last year 1233 Year 6 children came to the event with 23 primary schools targeted this year. The event won the Modeshift Partnership Award last year.

Rideability

Rideability staff have now transferred onto the Council's terms and conditions, with a formal review of the service to be carried out in the near future.

Domestic Waste (including refuse collection and recycling)

In the last financial year (2014/ 2015), we collected 52,000 tonnes of waste and recycling from the kerbside of which 34.1% was in the blue and green lidded bins and brown sack. This material is sent for recycling and composting at the waste treatment facility in Thornton.

The total amount of waste and recycling collected and disposed of by the authority in 2014/ 2015 was 71,500 tonnes and this includes waste from other sources like the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), street cleansing, trade waste and parks. All these different waste types go towards calculating the overall Borough recycling rate.

A study is being undertaken this month to look at how we can improve the quality and increase the quantity of recyclable material in the blue bins. Also, closer working with the Communications team to develop targeted campaigns to raise awareness of what can and cannot be recycled.

The previous year (2013/ 2014), saw Blackpool break through the 40% recycling rate threshold for the first time and the service aims to maintain or improve on this year on year.

Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC)

The site accepted just short of 8,000 tonnes in the last financial year with a recycling rate of 67.6%, this is slightly down on last year, which was 69%. This would appear to be in line with the overall trend and the aim for this year will be to improve the rate.

Lancashire Waste Treatment Facilities (previously Lancashire Waste PFI)

In partnership with Lancashire County Council for the long-term disposal/ treatment of waste, the Waste Disposal Contract represents one of Blackpool Council's largest contracts. As a result of this, in a spirit of continuous improvement, we are always looking at ways of releasing efficiency savings year on year. The service is looking very closely at the waste processing operations of both the Thornton and Farrington (Leyland) plants with a view to increasing the amount of material that is successfully diverted away from landfill.

The Education Centre at Farrington continues to prove extremely popular with local schools, with 95% take up in the Blackpool area.

Third Sector Initiatives: Bulky Matters, Renew Workshop and Rover

Waste Services continues to develop and strengthen its partnerships in the third sector with a view to building capacity to deliver more services to local residents. These third sector initiatives continue to provide vital services to our residents enabling them to dispose of household items responsibly and putting those items to good use rather than landfilling them.

Bulky Matters has collected 2065 items in the first three months of this year with 57% of this recycled or reused.

The Re-New workshop has currently refurbished over 150 washing machines, among other items, to be sold on to residents who may be in need as well as supplying items to the Social Fund. Going forward there is an aspiration to secure a retail outlet to further increase the sale of refurbished electrical goods.

In the year 2014/ 2015, the Rover service exceeded all our expectations. It collected 44,183 items totalling 132.5 tonnes of material that was recycled from 7,624 visitors.

These initiatives have provided 26 people with training, 12 of whom have gained accredited qualifications as well as volunteering opportunities to improve the prospect of employment to local residents.

Public Protection Orders

The consultation exercise is commencing regarding the possible implementation of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) relating to the town centre and promenade and Parks.

If successful, these areas would benefit from being more closely regulated with both Blackpool Council and Police officers having extra powers to deal with antisocial behaviour.

No cold calling scheme

Public Protection officers are rolling out a new Super No Cold Calling Zone across the town, starting with sheltered housing areas. The aim is to provide extra support and reassurance to elderly and vulnerable residents, whilst criminalising the activities of unsolicited doorstep sellers.

Trading Standards, Food Hygiene and all Enforcement activities

The draft Tattoo Hygiene Rating Scheme report has now been completed and officers are about to launch this scheme. The aim is to improve hygiene and health across the sector, to educate both businesses and the public and to drive up quality.

Selective Licensing Officers are now at the stage of reporting for prosecution those owners that have not licensed their properties in the Claremont area. To that end, 32 offence reports have now been submitted, with more to follow.

Officers of Advice and Education, Health and Safety Enforcement and Food Control are running an intervention operation 'Most Complained About Hotels' aimed at these premises. The intelligence used to identify the properties includes review sites as well as more traditional sources such as complaints to the Authority and Police. Initially education and assistance is provided, but backed by tactics that are more robust where improvement is not forthcoming.

Multi-agency Saturation Wards operations are underway with Public Protection officers working out of hours with the Police, Immigration, Benefit Fraud and Electricity North West to tackle antisocial behaviour and criminality around the problematic licensed premises in the saturation wards. Robust tactics involving prosecutions and licence reviews are underway to reduce the number of problematic premises and the associated problems.

Gambling Enforcement officers are working with the Gambling Commission to tackle underage gambling across the town. Over 40% of attempted test purchase attempts have led to contraventions. Repeat exercises are ongoing and failures are being reported for prosecution and licence review where appropriate.

A Charity Fraud prosecution is underway following a street fraud involving supposedly collecting on behalf of armed forces charities. As these cases are notoriously difficult to prosecute successfully, advice has been sourced from Counsel who will be engaged to present the case at Court.

The review of the working practices of the Environmental Protection team has been completed along with its embedding within the Public Protection Divisions methodology of working. The new procedures are in place, which should improve access and response to clients' needs, a new reporting mechanism to expedite production of Notices and Prosecutions and the delivery of the Out of Hours Noise / Antisocial behaviour service. This is now paying dividends with prosecutions starting to flow, including two major fly tipping cases.

Licensing Services

The Licensing Committee met for the first time this Municipal year on Wednesday 3 June and agreed to recommend the Executive and Council to approve a new Statement of Licensing Policy. This will help strengthen the review process when holding licensed premises to account if they are alleged to be breaching one of the licensing objectives. The Committee will also be looking at the statement of gambling policy following the issuing of new guidance and also reviewing and strengthening the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy, in particular in relation to improved practice needed following the experience of Rotherham and Oxfordshire and the child sexual exploitation issues, which have taken place there.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) – within the Council and external

Upgrade of Libraries ICT Systems

Following a successful pilot of new public access computers using Google Chrome Technology the service will now be rolled out to all Libraries during July and August. This will include a new self-service printing solution, which will also work with mobile devices and tablets using the Libraries free Wi-Fi network.

In conjunction with the new public access computers the Libraries staff counter computers will be replaced. This will complete the Windows 7 rollout with all Windows XP devices now removed from the Council's network.

Elected Members ICT

Members ICT facilities at the Town Hall have now been upgraded. The rollout of tablet devices to save on printing costs is continuing. As part of this rollout, Members are being upgraded to the new Microsoft Office 365 email service. The new email service will provide significant larger email storage than the previous system.

Children's University

ICT Services is once again supporting and facilitating the graduations for the Children's University Programme. The service is supporting many small graduations at assemblies in individual schools for pupils participating in the programme. The main graduation ceremony will take place on Thursday 9 July at 6pm in the Empress Ballroom Winter Gardens for pupils over 300 pupils who have been enrolled in the programme for three years.