

20 January 2016

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

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The Places area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Fred Jackson (Municipal Assets),
- Councillor Mark Smith (Business and Economic Development) and
- Councillor Wright (Housing, Procurement and Income Generation).

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**

### **Blue Flag**

At the Council meeting of 25 November 2015, Blackpool's Bathing Water Quality results for the season were reported, with all four areas passing the stringent tests.

I am pleased to report that a meeting has been held with Keep Britain Tidy, who administer the Blue Flag Award and it has been agreed that Blackpool submits an application for the Blackpool South, which will be required to be submitted by 31 January 2016.

An international panel will consider the application in February 2016, with notification of the award or otherwise on 13 April 2016. If successful, the information would be embargoed until 19 May 2016.

### **Contracts and Procurement**

A total of 11 contracts with a total value of £2.6m have been awarded within the Council since my last report. Two very large contracts were awarded of £1.2m to AE Yates of Bolton for the Princess Street Bridge repairs and £0.8m to Insight Direct of Manchester for Microsoft Licence renewals, this explains why only 9% of contracts by value were awarded to local suppliers.

A new Commissioning and Procurement Strategy for the period 2016/ 2019 has been developed following a number of workshops with internal commissioners and the local supply chain. The Strategy was considered by the Executive in January 2016.

## **Strategic Issues**

### **Highways Asset Management Strategy**

The new Highways Asset Management Strategy is being developed and will be available to Members in the New Year for consultation and involvement.

A briefing session was held with Members on 10 December 2015, which provided details of Government policy changes in relation to Highways Asset Management Funding and also how Blackpool is responding.

As Blackpool is taking a pioneering approach in relation to Highways Asset Management, Mr Steve Berry, Head of Local Roads, Light Rail and Cableways at the Department of Transport travelled from London to address Members and be a part of the meeting.

### **Enterprise Zones**

It is a key element of Blackpool Council's strategy for jobs and growth to push for Enterprise Zones on the Fylde Coast and I can confirm that over the past few weeks we have secured agreement for two Enterprise zones on the Fylde Coast. The nature of the local economy is that jobs created anywhere on the Fylde Coast are likely to benefit Blackpool residents in terms of job and business opportunities, so we have given these schemes our full support even where they are outside the Borough. An Enterprise Zone brings a number of benefits in attracting businesses to the area, the most notable being the availability of Business Rate Relief of up to £275,000 over five years or the availability of capital allowances that can be offset against tax to support investment. These zones will help us attract everything from manufacturing to office jobs and in particular will seize upon the Fylde Coast's unique opportunities in the energy industry including renewables and off-shore oil and gas.

Over the next few weeks and before formal designation in April, I have asked officers to work with our neighbouring authorities to develop further our offer for these important areas of investment, which will bring thousands of new jobs to the area. We already have interest from a number of companies who want to move to the area and I hope to be able to bring you more information about these investments over the next couple of months.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014**

An injunction has been obtained in the Royal Courts of Justice, which forbids 13 named defendants from setting up an unauthorised encampment anywhere within the Borough and prohibits them from occupying land in the Borough for residential purposes. The injunction also forbids them to carry out various other activities, which include engaging in abusive, offensive or threatening behavior on open or publicly accessible land in Blackpool.

These travellers were particularly problematic, moving from place to place within Blackpool. It is believed to be the first time in the country that a local authority has used the new Anti- Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act, together with the Planning Act to secure an injunction against illegal travellers.

In addition, the injunction applies to 'persons unknown' and forbids such persons, amongst other things, from setting up an encampment on seven specific areas of land in Blackpool, namely Lawson Road Playing Fields, Common Edge Playing Fields, Mereside Park Clifton Road (both sides), Layton Recreational Ground, land at Langdale Road and South Shore Car Park, without planning permission and from the occupation of those areas of land for residential purposes, including in caravans.

Anyone who breaches the injunction may be imprisoned, fined or have their assets seized.

## **Policy Issues**

### **Business Growth Service**

The face of publicly funded business support is changing with the Government deciding (as part of the spending review) to wind down the national delivery of the Business Growth Service (incorporating Growth Accelerator and the Manufacturing Advisory Service) by the end of March 2016.

GrowthAccelerator was the principle service able to support growing retail and visitor economy businesses in Blackpool. The provision of extra resources to Business Growth Service components was also planned to be a key part of the revised Boost Business Lancashire programme (Lancashire Business Growth Hub). The initial Boost service engaged with 135 Blackpool businesses, 11% of the Lancashire total. The Growth Accelerator provided around £1m of support in Lancashire. The Government is providing some extra money for Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Growth Hubs, £12m across the country, but this will not fill the gap left by the discontinued services. The LEP is now considering how to deliver the Boost service in light of these changes.

## **Transforming Services**

### **ICT Services**

ICT Services is currently supporting the Blackpool Challenge Partnership and Headstart Bid with the creation of new digital/ community portals to enable collaboration and sharing. The new Office 365 email system has now been rolled out 1,926 employees. Approximately 1,400 employees have been migrated to the new system in the last quarter.

## **Working with Partners**

### **The Skills, Training and Employment Partnership**

The Skills, Training and Employment Partnership met in November 2015, chaired by Councillor Smith, which brought together all the major employers in the town alongside employment support and training partners. Consideration was given to determining where the greatest areas of need are in the population in terms of creating employment opportunities in order to

ensure that the partnership can firm up its priorities. In addition, there was a commitment to ensure that commissioned work, where possible includes provision for local labour and there was an opportunity to share best practice and ideas.

### **Re- New Workshop**

Work on completing the Furniture Restoration Workshop is now finished. The work was being carried out in partnership with our third sector partners Calico and Ring Stones, the construction arm of the social enterprise.

Now complete, Calico will be working closer with another local charity, Shabby-to-chic, to promote the local circular economy by delivering restored furniture back in to the community while teaching local people new skills.

Plans are also afoot, in conjunction with Furniture Matters, for a redesign of the Council's kerbside textile recycling scheme. This would see the scheme ultimately being delivered by them thus increasing the capacity of the third sector to deliver Council services to local residents.

### **Rover**

After a very successful year, Rover (the Council's mobile recycling unit) continues to be a favourite among locals. Working in partnership with Helping Hands, a local Community Inclusion Company, Rover continues to lead the way in terms of innovation by potentially working on a new innovative project in conjunction with United Utilities (UU).

UU has identified Blackpool as an area where the drainage network suffers with significant grease and fat related issues. Rover will be adding grease and fat to its collection list in a bid to assist UU in addressing this. The off-take of this material will then be sent for bio-fuel. More information on this project will be available in the New Year.

### **SELNet Awards**

On Friday 27 November saw the annual Social Enterprise Lancashire Network annual award ceremony at the Hilton Hotel in Blackpool. Attended by Councillor Wright, Blackpool Council was highly commended in two categories for its partnership working with the third sector.

### **Queens Park Redevelopment**

We have now let the contract for Phase 2 of the Queens Park redevelopment. This will include the demolition of the remaining tower blocks hopefully in April 2016. This further work with our partners Lovell Homes will bring a further 99 quality new homes to the area and an investment of over £10m. I am pleased with the development that has been carried out to date providing fabulous new affordable homes for the people of Blackpool and I am sure that this next phase will at least equal that award winning achievement.

**Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL)**

The Council finalised a funding deal in September with SSE plc on behalf of all 15 local authorities across Lancashire. A launch event for the scheme was held at the Winter Gardens on 13 November 2015, with over 100 representatives from partner agencies attending. The first boilers and insulation measures have been installed and the scheme is seeing increasing interest from households, health providers and community groups now that the cold weather has arrived.