

**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**

### **Procurement**

A total of ten contracts have been awarded within the Council since the last report with a total value of £2.3m. With the exception of one very large contract for the Blackpool Museum Project, which was awarded to a London-based company, 59% of the remainder went to local suppliers.

Procurement has also acted on behalf of Council companies in awarding four contracts (value in excess of £1.3m and all out of area).

### **Public Space Protection Orders**

On 20 October 2014, the Government implemented the Anti-Social behaviour and Policing Act 2014 ("the Act). The purpose of the Act is to give Local Authorities and the Police more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB), providing better protection for victims and communities.

Amongst these new tools and powers are Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's), which are designed to stop individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space. It is for each individual Council to determine what behaviour(s) it wants to make the subject of a Public Space Protection Order.

A consultation exercise has been carried out regarding the implementation of PSPO's in the town centre and promenade and involved in excess of 1,000 people through either face to face interviews, online or paper responses.

As a result of the feedback the Executive on 5 October 2015 agreed PSPO's for the town centre and promenade, which relate to the following:

- Street drinking
- Loitering around cash machines / shop entrances
- Rag Mag sellers / purporting to be collecting for a charitable cause
- Lucky charms / heather sellers
- Engaging youths in card tricks etc.

### **Travellers**

Six Court Orders have been obtained to remove illegal incursions/ encampments and thereafter efficient clean ups. Injunction protecting all Council and open land from encampment by one problematic extended family.

### **Bridge Works**

The Council has been successful in seeking funding from Growth Funding and from the Local Transport Plan to enable essential repairs and reconstruction of ten strategic bridges to be undertaken at a total estimated cost of £11.365m.

The first bridge to be upgraded will be Princess Street Bridge, which will cost £1.3m, with work commencing on 9 November 2015 and completed prior to Easter 2016.

### **Bathing Water Quality**

As members will be aware, Blackpool's seawater quality is monitored by the Environment Agency as part of the European Water Directive. I am pleased to report that all four of Blackpool's areas which are tested (South/ Central/ North/ Bispham) passed the stringent tests this summer.

The results are aggregated over the last four years and as a result of this, Blackpool will not be required to place signs on the promenade next year informing people that the water is unsuitable for bathing.

This is an excellent result and reflects the hard work of the Fylde Coast Peninsula Water Management Group, which includes the Environment Agency and United Utilities.

### **Strategic Issues**

#### **Highway Asset Strategy**

A new Highways Asset Strategy is being developed, which when approved will set the way forward for a Highways Asset Management Plan. This plan is to be based on the future aspirations for the town's highway network and will form part of the Department for Transport's new funding model.

An opportunity for Members to be involved in the process will be available on 10 December, with the senior manager of Highways from the Department of Transport (DfT) involved.

## **Policy Issues**

### **Housing and Planning**

Recent Government announcements on Housing and Planning are likely to reduce the provision of affordable housing in Blackpool. The announcement in July of on-going rent reductions in social housing over the next four years puts pressure on the business plan for Council housing, limiting the potential for any more new Council housing after the re-development of Queens Park. The Housing and Planning Bill may require some “high value” Council housing to be sold and force the sale of affordable homes by housing associations. Other measures erode the potential for new affordable housing for rent as part of new housing developments, with the Government allowing developers to provide starter homes with 20% discounts on sales prices instead of affordable homes for rent.

### **Traveller Sites**

On 31 August 2015, Government published changes to planning policy for Traveller sites. The changes require Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) to determine whether households living on sites, encampments and in bricks and mortar fall within the new definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Show person. In determining whether persons are “gypsies and travellers” for the purposes of this new planning policy, consideration will now have to be given as to whether they are still travelling or whether they have permanently ceased to travel.

Consultants undertook a joint GTAA for Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre in 2013/ 2014, which determined a future need of 38 pitches for Blackpool to 2031. We are currently liaising with the consultants who undertook our assessment regarding the impact of the policy changes on our requirement. It appears likely that we will have to re-assess our future requirement under the new definition. However, the implications are that our requirement is likely to go down, although clearly at this stage we do not know by how much.

### **Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy**

The Main Modifications to the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy was consulted upon for six weeks from 25 August to 6 October 2015. In response to the consultation, only ten representations were received making 32 comments on the main modifications. These representations are now before the Inspector for his consideration along with all representations and evidence heard at the Examination hearings, which took place in May of this year. It is expected that the Council will receive the Inspector's draft report on the Core Strategy at the beginning of November 2015. The Council will be given two weeks to check the report for factual errors and inform the Inspector. Following this, the Inspector will publish his final report. If the final report from the Inspector is received in November and the Inspector

considers the Plan to be sound it is anticipated that the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy will be presented to Full Council in January 2016 for adoption.

### **Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy**

On 31 October, the Licensing Committee agreed to consult on a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. The draft policy has a particular focus on Safeguarding against child sexual exploitation, with drivers receiving appropriate training on safeguarding issues. There is also a greater emphasis on the fit and proper test for drivers.

## **Transforming Services**

### **Closure Order**

A three-month Closure Order under the provisions of Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 was obtained in relation to a premise in Blackpool to prevent the occurrence of future disorder or serious nuisance.

### **WiFi Upgrade for Blackpool Libraries**

Following the overhaul of the public ICT network, Blackpool Library Service has been granted a total of £45,822 from the Arts Council of England to enhance Wi-Fi in all eight libraries. The Wi-Fi in Public Libraries in England fund was set up following William Sieghart's Review of Public Library Services and is an early priority for the Libraries Task Force. In Blackpool, this means that the service will be able to upgrade the current provision to make it even faster and more easily accessible. It will allow the service to support further the work around tackling digital exclusion, leading to growth in digital skills and supporting employability and business growth.

### **Public Consultation on Library Opening Hours**

The consultation on library opening hours is underway and closes on 20 November 2015. The review is proposing to make changes to opening hours based on the evidence of current usage and customer demand. We are working to a set of key principles:

- Maintaining library provision within a reasonable travelling distance of every home in Blackpool (and taking account of adjacent provision in Thornton and Cleveleys).
- Seeking efficiency and effectiveness in terms of cost versus usage and concentrating provision at times needed by the majority of people local to each library.
- Maintaining a degree of consistency across the service to reduce confusion.

The proposals include reducing opening hours in order to contribute to the Council's need to make savings, but also ensuring that the libraries are open when people most need to use them.

### **Third Sector Working**

Work is underway to explore more options for our third sector partners to deliver further elements of waste services to residents at no additional cost to the Council. This is in the spirit

and ethos of increasing capacity within the third sector whilst at the same time supporting and strengthening our partnerships.

### **Blackpool Integrated Traffic Management scheme**

The scheme's objectives are to better inform drivers on key approaches to the town about the availability of parking and provide other information that would help enhance their visit. Parking guidance information and variable message signage will be introduced with a view to better managing traffic and reducing congestion. The scheme, estimated to cost £2.16m, has been approved at October 2015 meetings of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, with £1.51m coming from the Local Growth Fund and 30% match from Local Transport Plan.

### **Working with Partners**

#### **Cosy Homes in Lancashire**

Cosy Homes in Lancashire, the contract with funder SSE (energy supplier) has been completed and Local Authority Partnership Agreements have been sent to the 14 Lancashire Local Authorities who are participating in the scheme.

#### **Property Matters**

Corporate Legal Services has been acting in property matters for Blackpool Housing Company Limited and recently completed the first purchase.

The sale of the Westgate House site has now been completed.

#### **Working with Employers**

The Council is working with a range of employers across the town to develop an approach designed to support those furthest from the jobs market in the town into work. The Group, chaired by Councillor Smith recognises the importance of work in terms of transforming people's lives at an economic and personal well-being level and is establishing some clear priorities for action by understanding the demographics of the town and identifying those who need the most support to become work ready.

#### **Business Advice Events**

The Council's Business Support Team is hosting a week of eight free and professional business advice events (16-22 November), aimed at enthusing and inspiring local entrepreneurs, as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW), the world's largest campaign to promote entrepreneurship. The events will be based at the Blackpool Enterprise Centre where delegates also have the opportunity to view the professional office and meeting room facilities available to the local business community. Further information is available at [www.blackpoolunlimited.com](http://www.blackpoolunlimited.com), the Council's business information and advice portal.

### **Reader Development**

With over 60% of our residents struggling with literacy, getting people reading is never more important. The Library Service runs a wide variety of reader development activities for people of all ages and is engaged in a number of key partnerships. In Blackpool, a working group has been established in collaboration with Children's Services, which links to the Blackpool Challenge. At a regional level, our Reader Development Manager is now the newly appointed strategic lead for Time to Read, a partnership with 21 Library Authorities, Arts Council England, The Reading Agency and the NW Society of Chief Librarians.

### **Schools Culture Hub**

Blackpool has been highlighted by Arts Council of England (ACE) as a model of good practice for its Schools Culture Hub, a partnership between Cultural Services, Children's Services, Grundy Art Gallery, Grand Theatre, LeftCoast and the Blackpool Schools Partnership. The partnership was recently visited by the ACE National Director of Learning and works to build new creative opportunities for Blackpool students, linked to the curriculum, helping to strengthen pathways into the creative industries, higher education and employment. Blackpool has been selected as the location for the regional launch of the Local Cultural Education Partnership by Curious Minds and the Arts Council, which will take place in the Winter Gardens in November.

### **LeftCoast**

LeftCoast was established in 2013 with the support of Blackpool Coastal Housing, Wyre Council, Grand Theatre and Merlin. The programme builds participation in the arts amongst those who would not normally engage and supports the development of the cultural industries as a core part of the visitor economy. The project has just been awarded a further £1 million to continue the programme beyond October 2016, building on the original £3 million from Arts Council of England. The programme has been commended for exceeding targets, its quality work, and scale of ambition.

### **Rover**

After winning the Letsrecycle.com national award for excellence in Waste Management in June this year, the service also won the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee's (LARAC) national award earlier in October. The service has been hailed as the "Best Partnership" by LARAC for the Council's partnership with charity Helping Hands who run the service five days a week. Rover, which launched back in October 2013, has collected 243 tonnes of recycling from 14,000 local residents that otherwise would have potentially gone to landfill.

### **Re-Use Shop**

Third Sector Partner, Calico, is refurbishing the empty golf discount shop on Counce Street (opening end of November) and converting it in to an additional outlet for refurbished white goods (washers, dryers, cookers, etc.).

They will deliver these household items to customers as well offer a take-back scheme for old, faulty appliances. All this not only supports those in greatest need, but also helps to support the Re-New Workshop at Bristol Avenue in terms of achieving sustainability.