

CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY – COUNCILLOR JONES

Highways Maintenance – potholes, carriageway and footway repairs

Work is continuing to repair the town's worst roads through the Project 30 Scheme, which is due for completion in August 2014. Significant improvement to the highway network condition has already been achieved with over 55km of footway and 60km of carriageway work done to date.

A bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport's "Pothole Fund" for a share of a £143m pot, which has been made available to deal with maintenance issues. The funding will be allocated based on individual local authorities' record and performance in dealing with maintenance of highways assets. Given our good record in promoting innovation in the management of our highways assets, it is expected that Blackpool will receive a share of this funding.

Integrated Transport Services and Central Vehicle Maintenance Unit (CVMU)

Rideability Community Transport is the Council's door-to-door community bus service, which allows elderly, frail and disabled residents of Blackpool to access services and days out by using the accessible bus service.

The integration of the bus service from the Charity Disability Services Ltd, in September 2013 to the Council and the continued involvement of the charity, its vehicles and volunteers have allowed for the success of the service to continue and the use of additional Council resources has given the service a new lease of life.

Rideability now has access to more vehicles and drivers, giving opportunity for the service to reach more people with a disability, elderly and mobility impaired residents. The service means the users can attend appointments both leisure and health, visit relatives and friends, make weekly shopping trips to local supermarkets, attend local day care facilities and of late the service has extended its lunch trips to meet the demand of passengers to include bi weekly pub lunch visits, Saturday day trips and evening theatre trips.

The service has increased its passenger journeys by around 50% since transferring to the Council, which equates in excess of 17,000 additional trips and the service is confident that another 10% increase will be achievable over the coming 12 months.

Street Lighting PFI

The street lighting core investment period is due to complete in December of this year, which will see the installation of approximately 16,000 street lighting columns bollards signs and associated lighting. The Service provider is currently completing installations for a number of backstreets and additional areas highlighted that will assist in the reduction of crime (one of the outputs identified for this PFI).

In respect of the traffic signal installations, approximately 90 signal junctions have been replaced and the final two installations are taking place at Manchester Square and Plymouth Road /St Walburgas junctions.

Due to the amount of public interest with regards Plymouth Road/ St Walburgas roundabout, in particular questions about the requirement for traffic lights at this roundabout, the public response appears to be split with drivers suggesting the lights are removed, but pedestrians requiring the traffic

control. The junction will be monitored during the next nine months with the traffic signals altered during the off peak times. Discussions will also be held with the local schools, as demand for the pedestrian crossings will change as the schools access change in this area.

Parking Services

Blackpool Council is heavily discounting parking prices every weekend throughout June and July. The deal, which is designed to boost business and provide a positive welcome to residents and visitors, will see most town centre car parks offer 10 hours parking for just £3. It includes all town centre car parks apart from Central, West Street and East Topping Street car parks, which are already very well used at their current pricing point.

Transport Management – including roads, cycling and pedestrians

A report on the proposed tramway extension was submitted to the Executive. It was resolved to approve that the scheme to extend the Blackpool - Fleetwood Tramway from North Pier/ Talbot Square to Blackpool North Railway Station and to develop the major scheme business case.

Following the Council's successful bid to the Department for Transport's Local Pinch Point Fund for resources to repair Yeadon Way, work is progressing on the selection of contractors for the works. Key criteria in the selection will be how quickly works can be completed and whether the contractor can programme any elements of the works, which require the closure of Yeadon Way to be carried out during the winter period outside the holiday season. The scheme has to be completed by 31st March 2015 to meet Department for Transport deadlines for spending the grant funding.

Road Safety and Sustainable Travel – including working with schools

From 1st April 2014, a change to the Concessionary Travel Scheme resulted in concessionary pass holders from outside the authority boundaries being excluded from free travel on the trams. This is in line with every other tram network in the country. This has resulted in 86,278 fewer concessionary journeys made than in April 2013. There were however only 4,282 fewer passengers on the trams. This has resulted in an increase in revenue for Blackpool Transport and a saving to the Council's concessionary travel budget of approximately £57,000.

In a passenger survey, Blackpool Tramway came out as the best overall tramway in the country. Some highlights are that 85% of passengers believe that the fares represent value for money and 97% of all passengers were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the overall journey experience.

Walk to School Week has been celebrated with two events including a dance walk event at Layton Primary and the launch of a new Park and Stride area for St Nicholas' School with Gordon Marsden MP. We await a decision in July on a joint funding bid with Living Streets to the Department of Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund for 2015/ 2016 to extend the Walk to School outreach programme for a further year and to expand remit to include workplaces and communities.

Road Safety initiatives currently being progressed are:

- Child pedestrian training is currently taking place with Year Three pupils at primary schools
- We are undertaking a Preparing for Transition event for Year Six students moving on to high school. This will focus on independent travelling and safety for this vulnerable age group.
- Smart Phone, Stupid Driver campaign will be promoted in the town centre throughout June to reinforce the message that it is not acceptable to use your phone whilst driving
- We are working with public health colleagues to engage with older drivers through pharmacists. Leaflets and posters with advice and information on driving past 60.

- Building partnerships with Early Years settings to get key messages across to parents about their responsibility for teaching children about road safety
- Refreshing the content of the Test Drive course targeting young/new drivers
- Working with police to deliver drink/drive messages with poster and banner advertising in town centre pubs and clubs linked to the World Cup

A new staff travel and parking scheme has been launched for Council staff moving to the new offices at Bickerstaffe Square. This aims to be as flexible as possible, give staff a wide range of parking, and travel choices whilst accommodating the parking needs of businesses and shoppers. A new staff car park has been provided on the site of the old Devonshire Road Hospital and new annual bus tickets made available which are valid for use on all Blackpool Transport services. Staff have the option of a five-day ticket to meet their commuting needs or can select the seven-day ticket for weekend travel also. A Park and Ride discount pass to support staff parking at the Devonshire Road car park is now available.

On a borough-wide level, the Blackpool Travel Plan Partnership, made up of organisations committed to promoting sustainable travel and led by the Council, is currently carrying out the Big Blackpool Commuter Count as a way to co-ordinate activities and measure success.

Equality and Diversity

Talbot Gateway engagement

In consultation with N-Vision and others, the concerns from the blind and partly sighted community over the operation of new pedestrian crossings in this area are being reviewed. Five possible ways to modify the infrastructure have been identified and the Council is now consulting over whether these proposals will remedy the problems. This consultation is also open to other suggestions if people think these particular options will not work.

Faith engagement

The Anglican Diocese of Blackburn, through the Bishop of Lancaster, is committing to work closely with the Council on coordinating action to address the town's social agenda.

Blackpool Pride 2014

This year's Pride festival took place on the weekend of 14/ 15th June. The Council liaised closely at strategic and operation levels with the Blackpool Pride committee in the months and week leading up to this event. The Council is committed to building the Pride festival as a key focus for tourism and promoting diversity and community cohesion in our town.