

**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

Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS)

Growth funding of £2.16m has been allocated to Blackpool to implement an ITMS within the Borough. This will consist of 18 digital signs (electronic LED signage) at key locations within the town.

The signage will in particular inform people in relation to parking, with the ability to promote other messages as well, e.g. events, road incidents etc. This will help in terms of traffic flow and contribute to a smarter use of the transport network. The ITMS design is now complete and a contractor has been appointed, with the aim for works to commence from April 2017 through to July 2017.

Quality Corridors

Growth and Blackpool Local Transport Plan funding of £7.4m has been allocated to improve key roads within the town centre network over the next four years.

The programme of works, which is titled 'Quality Corridors', will provide highway and pavement improvements and upgrading, which also includes street furniture and signage. The first phase of work, Church Street between Cookson Street up to St John's Square, started on 16 January 2017 and is programmed to be completed by mid-April.

Anchorsholme Sea Defence

The final phase of the Anchorsholme sea defence scheme is underway and due to be completed mid-August.

Unfortunately, the final phase had been delayed because of works to the United Utilities pumping station roof, which is under the headland area and weather conditions. The works will

be completed by the end of August 2017, with the official opening of the new promenade and sea defences in September 2017.

Transport Hub

Works started on the Transport Hub on Market Street on 20 February 2017 and is due for completion on 28 May 2017. Highway and Traffic Management have worked closely with Blackpool Transport Services, Blackpool Licensed Taxi Operators Association and Blackpool's Highway Forum in relation to this scheme, which is being financed through Local Transport Plan funding.

Plymouth Road Bridge

Plymouth Road Bridge replacement works is now well underway, having started in July 2016 and fully closed after the Illuminations finished in November 2016. It is on programme and due to open one-way in each direction on 7 April 2017.

An excellent partnership and working relationship has been formed with Network Rail who have contributed circa £1m to the overall cost of £6.1m. In terms of the local community, night works have been unavoidable and a disturbance to some, however the Highways and Traffic division have put a great deal of time and effort into keeping people informed of progress and evening and night works.

The bridge will be fully open in July 2017 and is programmed to meet the timeline and budget.

United Utilities

A multi-million pound scheme to improve Blackpool's sewer system has moved into the next phase. A new outfall pipe installed under the promenade in 2015 had already helped the town win its first prestigious Blue Flag award. This next phase has already seen the Utilities Company start construction of a new underground storm tank in Fishers Field, which will help reduce storm spills during heavy rainfall. Over the coming weeks, work will start in and around the south of the town to lay a brand new surface water system and pumping station near Midgeland Road.

These improvements will reduce the amount of rainwater getting into the sewers and reduce flood risk and will help Blackpool meet new tougher bathing water standards. United Utilities are investing over £150m to improve bathing water and drinking water quality across Blackpool. Consultations have taken place with key Ward Councillors affected in Stanley, Highfield and Clifton Wards, with a robust public consultation process planned.

In relation to drinking water, engineers are currently working on St Annes Road to replace old water pipes to improve tap water quality and reduce the risk of bursts for 50,000 customers and from there will move to Squires Gate industrial estate to School Road and then the pipe will be taken into Fylde. Workers will move on to Squires Gate Industrial estate at the end of April, with minimal traffic disruption.

Keep Blackpool Tidy (KBT)

The Keep Blackpool Tidy Campaign is ramping up for summer 2017. Re-launched in the February half term, the campaign took to the streets of central Blackpool where the Council's exhibition trailer was deployed to engage with residents, visitors and businesses alike.

There was a great deal of public interest in the campaign and volunteers, free litter action packs being given to keen locals to enable them to get involved.

This campaign activity is the latest in a number of initiatives that have been devised because of the development of a Litter Strategy for Blackpool, in conjunction with national environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy.

Recent mini-campaigns have been focusing on tackling smoking related litter, which has seen the introduction of novel 'Ballot Bins' across the town centre and soon to be seen 'Gum Drop' bins aimed at tackling chewing gum litter.

The communications plan will soon be swinging in to full gear with campaign advertising and messages on bus stops and bus-backs among other high visibility mediums including a sustained campaign on social media.

Our local KBT campaign hosted a number of organised events across the town in support of the KBT's national Great British Spring Clean weekend between 3 and 5 March. This summer will also see the development and implementation of a 'Business Charter' encouraging both local businesses and national chains to become active partners in the campaign.

Tip Shop

The Household Waste Recycling Centre Re-use shop, The Tip Shop, is set to break the £100,000 mark this month after its fourth year in operation. This is a significant milestone for the facility as not only does it divert waste from costly landfill, but it also redistributes items back out in to the local community, as well as donating £10,000 per annum to the Mayor's Charity.

The shop has gone from strength to strength over the last few years and is a firm favourite with local residents using the tip. It has seen significant development in this time and is now a hub of activity for people looking for a bargain or even a refurbished washing machine.

Major Fake Toys Case

Amazing Savings Limited/ Jonathan Jacob Kahn have been found guilty following a trial at Preston Crown Court. This was one of the largest ever such cases nationally and revolved around Trading Standards Officers taking possession of almost 300,000 toys from across the country and accessing premises in Blackpool, Salford and London. The illicit operation had links to China where alleged theft of moulds and manufacture of the toys occurred and involved false importation details of a Company in Almeria, Spain. The Authority intends to pursue Proceeds of Crime recovery and £3.5 million of assets have already been restrained.

Charity Frauds

Ongoing enforcement of the Public Space Protection Order is occurring, leading to convictions of offenders selling “gag mag” style publications following them making false claims regarding who is benefitting from such sales. There are also a number of cases being pursued regarding fraud offences and two major convictions have already been secured at Preston Crown Court. This week, Derek Snelson was sentenced to a 12-month custodial sentence following conviction for falsely claiming to be collecting on behalf of the North West Air Ambulance, using a bucket emblazoned with their logo whilst collecting moving from pub to pub.

Previously, Marvin Trussell was convicted of setting up a bogus armed forces charity, namely Army of Heroes and then collecting on the streets of Blackpool, Manchester and Liverpool claiming that they were supporting former soldiers suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other injuries on their return from conflict zones. Upon conviction, Trussell was given a three-year custodial sentence.

Begging/ Street Drinkers

Following an escalation of problems over these issues, a new ultra-robust enforcement campaign has been agreed between the Head of Public Protection, Tim Cogle and Chief Inspector Lee Wilson to turn around the situation. Dedicated joint working arrangements have been delivered with Housing Options, Blackpool BID, Police and Public Protection Officers.

Following attempts to engage and provide the support needs of these individuals, 40 problematic beggars have been identified and a further 11 problematic street drinkers. Robust use of tools within the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act has been implemented and these are being backed by Prosecutions and Criminal Behaviour Orders from the Courts. So far, two individuals have been prosecuted and received Criminal Behaviour Orders, two individuals have been served travel warrants, escorted to the railway station and returned to where they came from. Twenty-nine Community Protection Warnings have been issued, 13 Community Protection Notices issued and seven further prosecution cases already in Court.

Contracts

Contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (years - including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF BIDS
Parade Inspections	Water Saving Techniques (Renfrewshire)	2 + (1+1)	£320 per day	2
Purchase of two Hiabs (Loader Cranes)	Lancashire DAF Trucks Limited (Preston Walton Summit)	3 (warranty period)	£219,410	2

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (years - including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF BIDS
Community and Environmental Services – Business Model Options Appraisal	V4Services Limited (London)	Ad-hoc	£15,000	Direct Award
Highways Design – Bispham Village	Waterman Aspen (Manchester)	Ad-hoc	£14,000	4
Municipal Buildings Refurbishment	F Parkinson Limited (Blackpool)	Ad-hoc	£2,000,000	4
ITS – Blackpool Intelligent Transport System	Swarco Traffic Limited (Richmond)	Ad-hoc	£2,160,00	2
Catering Disposables	Alliance National (Crewe)	2 + (1+1)	£30,000	4
Recycling of Wood Waste	SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK Limited (Maidenhead)	2 + (1+1)	£200,000	5
Agency to Deliver a Cultural Tourism Campaign	Vivid Limited (Manchester)	1 (no extension)	£38,000	7
Fixed Wire Testing	Quartzelec Limited (Manchester)	3 + (1+1)	£125,000	6
Revenues and Benefits Software	Capita IT Services Limited (London)	5 + (2)	£385,000	Direct Award
DIPS Off-Site Scanning Software	Northgate Information Solutions Limited (Alderley Edge)	5 + (2)	£385,000	Direct Award
BACS Software	Automated Payment Transfer Limited (Surrey)	4 (will be reviewed in year 4)	£8,000	3

Ready to Switch' Update

Another successful energy auction has taken place with First Utility offering the best price for the following contracts:

- Dual Fuel - online billing and paper billing
- Electricity Only - online billing and paper billing

First Utility is the largest independent energy supplier with more than 900,000 customers. This makes it the largest supplier outside of 'The Big 6'. It has recently campaigned to reduce switching times for energy customers and prides itself on customer service.

The competitive tariff offered by First Utility is cheaper than any of the 'Big 6' open market tariffs. This achievement is all the greater given particularly challenging market conditions in which many suppliers are announcing price hikes prompting media criticism and threats of Government intervention.

I-Choose the Company responsible for co-ordination and management of the energy auctions has started to send personal energy offers out to those customers who registered prior to the auction taking place. Households within the Blackpool Council area can still obtain a no obligation personal offer from this auction by registering their interest on the website www.readytoswitch.co.uk before the acceptance end date of 20 March 2017.

Library Service

The Library service is undergoing a staffing restructure to ensure that it provides a service fit for the 21st Century. A longer-term plan is now needed that addresses both work priorities and opportunities and mounting financial pressures and at the same time maintains the service with eight functioning libraries.

In January 2017, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) conducted a formal review of the Museum's development work. The project was very well received with elements of the work being described as exemplary. The Executive met this month to consider the submission of the round two funding application to the HLF. The HLF will make their decision in June.

Built Heritage and Conservation

The Council has now submitted a nomination for Blackpool's three piers to be included on the World Monuments Watch List for 2018/ 2019. The nomination brings a small amount of funding to enable public engagement, but more importantly, it will provide an important international platform for the Council to initiate talks with Central Government on the future of our Piers. We will be assisted in this by The National Piers Society who has already started a wider ranging national dialogue based on the huge impact of climate change (in the form of storm surges and rising sea levels) on marine heritage structures. Mr John Darlington, who is the Director of the World Monuments Fund in the UK and who is a member of the Museum Project Board, has supported us in our nomination. The successful nominees will be announced in New York in mid-October of this year.

Proposals for an Article 4 direction

The Executive has now approved the proposals, in relation to the Raikes Conservation Area. We are now working alongside planning, legal and enforcement colleagues to agree the detail for inclusion in the direction. This will help us deal with poor quality changes to the attractive buildings which make up the Raikes Hall Conservation Area and protect its residential amenity for local communities. There will be a consultation period and the direction will be non-immediate (it will come into force 12 months after the notification) allowing a period in which modifications can be made as part of existing permitted development rights.

Strategic Issues

Planning Peer Review

The Planning Service was subject to a Local Government Association/ Planning Advisory Service Peer Review (17 to 19 January 2017). The peer review was both a positive and productive exercise. The Council has just responded to the draft feedback report, which has been shared with Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the Chairman of Planning. We are now working on an Improvement Plan with the Planning Advisory Service that will include actions around streamlining process, building relationships with stakeholders and providing more targeted support for elected members. The final recommendation will be shared with the Planning Committee.

Winter Gardens Conference and Exhibition Centre

Full planning approval was granted on the 22 February. Further progress on the technical design has been made. The main contractor tender process is progressing well, scheduled to conclude by the end of March, updates on the award of grant funding are anticipated in this month.

Winter Gardens Spanish Hall roof and Coronation Street Facade

The tender process in relation to extensive renewals and repairs on the Winter Gardens Spanish Hall roof and Coronation street façade will be complete in the next two weeks. Once the contractor is in place a full programme of works will be finalised.

Blackpool Tower Lifts

Re-cabling of the first lift is complete and the second is nearing completion. Upgrading of the lift cables should allow the lifts to operate at higher wind speeds, reducing down time and increasing revenue.

Golden Mile Centre

Further work is taking place in order to improve the aesthetics of the Golden Mile complex while adding to the commercial offerings within the site through revised tenancies.

Policy Issues

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan for Blackpool

The Environment Partnership has been appointed (February 2017) to develop a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan for Blackpool. This piece of work will build on the Council's existing commitment to protecting, enhancing, expanding and connecting green and blue infrastructure and ecological networks in Blackpool, contribute to meeting the goals and objectives of the Council Plan and other key strategy documents including the Blackpool and Fylde Framework for Inclusive Growth and Prosperity, the Planning Framework and the Health and Well Being Strategy.

This Strategy and Action Plan has a key role to play in the regeneration of the resort making a vital contribution to economic growth and the health and well-being of our residents and visitors. With respect to the latter, as a Public Health Authority, Blackpool Council is more closely integrating its public services to ensure that planning, transport, housing, environmental, health and cultural policies are more closely aligned to more effectively address the social determinants of health in the Borough. This strategy and action plan is a key opportunity to support this agenda. The development of this strategy will be informed by existing and new evidence, existing policy commitments and activities already underway and will set out a coordinated framework for action to drive the further improvement of the quality, accessibility and functionality of the resort's green and blue infrastructure (GBI). It is anticipated that the work will be completed by October 2017.

Transforming Services

The Library Service

The library service has submitted bids for funding for various projects from the £4m Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Fund, set up by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Taskforce. Over 100 applications were received and are currently being assessed. The aim of the funds is to pilot innovative activities in public libraries in England to support all parts of society, including the most deprived areas. Blackpool's solo bid was for £81,800 to provide an enhancement of the Get Started scheme throughout the eight libraries. The other bids were written as consortia ones, totaling £504,598 and projects relate to the National Libraries Week events, a micro bit project, and a shared reading project for young people.

Homelessness Reduction Trailblazer

Blackpool Council has been successful in bidding for additional funding to prevent homelessness under a new Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme. The local programme covers Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, with Blackpool Council taking the lead as the accountable body and provides an additional £600,000 over two years across the Fylde Coast area. The programme is designed to trial new approaches that will be made mandatory under the new Homelessness Reduction Bill and to work better between areas. In Blackpool, it will mean continuing the work of a dedicated worker at Blackpool Victoria Hospital to identify and

resolve housing issues, better use of data to identify people at risk of homelessness and more resources to deal with people with complex needs including rough sleepers. This should result in fewer people becoming homeless and more effective responses in the most difficult cases.

Central Area Selective Licensing Scheme

The Executive has agreed in principle a new Selective Licensing scheme for the Central area, covering the inner town between the existing schemes in Claremont and South Beach. This follows the introduction of an HMO Additional Licensing scheme in the same area from July 2016 and ensures that all rented properties conform to license conditions and maintain consistent standards of management. A feature of the new scheme will be a co-regulation approach that gives landlords the opportunity to join an independent membership scheme to demonstrate their compliance with licensing conditions. This was suggested by landlords and builds on good practice in some other areas. The new scheme now requires confirmation from the Secretary of State before it can go ahead.

Working with Partners

Better Start and Libraries

Better Start is enhancing the early year's areas in some of Blackpool Libraries. Local Dads have been involved in a project supported by the Illuminations team. Palatine, Central, Layton, Revoe and Mereside will benefit from some additional features, including book tree houses, book cubes and murals. The first installation is due to take place shortly at Palatine Library and it is hoped that these will make some positive changes for our youngest readers. FRED (Fathers Reading Every Day) have held a four week project to encourage Dads to read to their children following research that Dads reading has more of an impact on their child's development than Mums. The library service has seized the opportunity to promote their services and formal training events have been held at Central and Palatine Libraries. Local Children's centres have linked up to their nearest library and the service generally has helped to break down the perceived formality and old fashioned image that seemingly puts the Dads off libraries.

Camerado Living Room at Central Library

The Living Room has been shortlisted for two awards Local Government Award in the Community Involvement Category and as a finalist in Social Category of the Edge 2017 Awards. One of the outcomes of the Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 is increased reading and literacy. These are two of the most fundamental skills in life. Although operational, the service is proud to report that during February 2017, 1,000 children visited Palatine Library for school and nursery visits, the aim being to encourage reading for pleasure. Also during February, every class from Boundary School visited the library, each child borrowing one book.

Hotel Developments

There are a number of new, mostly branded, hotels that are either in development or about to commence. The Council has a direct interest in the proposed four-star hotel adjacent to Blackpool North Station with a proposed 142 rooms. The Hampton by Hilton in South Shore, on

the site of the former Palm Beach, is a private development by Create Construction of some 130 rooms. This project has benefitted from support from the Council's Business Loans Fund.

The former Yates' site has an approved plan for a 140 room Premier Inn and I understand that a contractor has now been appointed and should commence on site before the end of May. The fourth hotel in development is a 90+ room five-star hotel above the Sands Venue and this is also due to commence before the summer.

There are a number of other hotel proposals that are either seeking or already have planning approval in outline. The only two, which I understand are actively being discussed are on a plot adjacent to the Winter Gardens and the former Central Post Office. If these planned and underway hotels are all developed, this will bring 800 new branded three, four and five star rooms to the resort. These developments are very important to our work on promoting the new conference venue as a lack of branded hotel stock was often also quoted as a reason for events and conferences not to use Blackpool.