

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

Highways Maintenance – potholes, carriageway and footway repairs.

Highway Consultative Forum

A new Highway's Consultative Forum has been established within the town, with the key aim of ensuring that local people have a greater involvement and say in the development and usage of highways within the town.

The group involves a wide range of stakeholders including Disability Groups, Blackpool Business Leadership Group, Blackpool Transport, Federation of Small Businesses, Taxi Operators Association, Police, Stay Blackpool etc.

The group has identified a programme of reviews and initiatives in relation to highways, with the focus being to include local residents and groups in each project.

A number of the group are represented on the newly formed Yeadon Way Project Board, with a resident and businesses Project Communications Plan agreed.

Project 30

The Project 30 Scheme was completed in mid-August 2014, delivered on time and within budget. The objective of the scheme to provide major improvement to the condition of the town's roads has been achieved and the results are evident to all who travel through the town. The Council is already seeing the signs of a reduction in third party tripping claims and are continuing to work hard to tackle the source of these and drive them down further. Over 91km of footway and 78km of carriageway has been treated through the project.

Highways Asset Management Plan

Due to Project 30, approximately 20% of Blackpool's highways are more resilient to damage from wear and tear, ageing, increasing traffic and severe weather. However, this does mean that if our highways are going to continue to provide the service for which they were built, there must be a sustainable approach to highway maintenance to make the best possible use of available funding available. If not then the highways condition will decline, with a return to defects like potholes and increased liability due to tripping claims.

The current tough economic climate poses big challenges to Blackpool Council to make the best use of limited resources in providing an acceptable highway service to the public, yet critically to maintain the integrity of our highways for future generations. A recent national public opinion survey reported that Blackpool was the only local authority with increased public satisfaction in road condition in the UK.

However, there are some decisions to be made on the levels of funding required to sustain the good work of Project 30. To assist the Members with these choices, the Highways Asset Management Plan is currently being reviewed and will be released later this year.

Project 30 has allowed the Council to understand the current state of its entire carriageway and footways and the rate of deterioration and the best treatment options that can be planned at the right time to have the most beneficial effect with regard to prolonging life at a point when the

treatment is most cost effective (i.e. maximum value for money).

Highway Asset Management will assist the Council in prolonging the positive effect of Project 30 and maximise future highway maintenance investment. Strong leadership and commitment from elected members and chief officers is vital in maintaining this approach, therefore the various stakeholders (including risk management, finance, communications, legal and highways projects) of the Project 30 board will now transform into a Highways Asset Management Board.

Yeadon Way Refurbishment Scheme 2014

The works to repair Yeadon Way have been programmed to avoid the illuminations period and are planned to commence in mid-November 2014. Work has already taken place to improve watercourses and drainage around the road, which is having a positive effect on land drainage in the area. The scheme will be completed by 31st March 2015.

Growth Deal Announcement

The Lancashire Growth Deal announced in early July 2014 confirmed funding for 2015/ 2016, but did not set formal spend profiles for the financial years beyond 2015/ 2016. The transport schemes in Blackpool included were:

- Integrated Traffic Management, providing an intelligent transport system to better manage traffic and parking in the town (starting 2015/ 2016)
- Maintenance of bridges, to repair a number of defective structures on key corridors (starting 2015/ 2016)
- Green Corridors, improving gateway and arrival points to the town centre (starting 2016/ 2017)
- Blackpool-Fleetwood Tramway Extension, to North Station (Business Case being developed by 2015/ 2016 and statutory powers sought by 2016/ 2017)

Business cases need to be developed and approved by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership to secure the funding.

Street Lighting PFI

December 2014 will see the completion of the five-year core investment period with over 16,000 new lighting columns and associated apparatus installed in the town and 90 signal junctions. In response to residents requests, a number of adjustments have been made to provide additional lighting in areas previously unlit.

In addition and in response to residents enquiries a number of the traffic signal junctions are being reviewed these include Plymouth road Roundabout, Vicarage Lane and Watson Road, the results and any changes will be presented to the Highway Consultative Forum meeting.

In January 2015, the street lighting and traffic signal PFI will focus on maintaining the assets and on the Annual Investment programme to replace the columns and assets that were deemed to comply at the commencement of this contract.

Parking Services

Bank Street car park, which is close to the new Talbot Gateway development, has reopened after extensive improvement works. The car park has been completely resurfaced and new lighting has been installed throughout. The entrance has also been resurfaced and work is ongoing at present to improve the signage to the car park. There are two cash Pay and Display machines in the car park, but these will be soon updated to take debit and credit card payments. It has 230 car bays, 16 disabled bays and nine coach bays.

Highways and Transportation Management – including roads, cycling and pedestrians.

Wild Lane in Fylde Borough (Lancashire County Council being the Highway Authority) collapsed some months ago and traffic from Cypress Point, which travelled north/ south (between Cypress Point and the M55) on North Houses and Wild Lane then transferred to Division/ Midgeland and School Roads. This has transformed the quiet backwater of Division and Midgeland Roads into 'busy' commuter routes and off peak rat runs, often with vehicles travelling faster than is appropriate for conditions.

Many complaints have been received and there have been some minor accidents. The Police in conjunction with the Council have done what they can to monitor and control the issue, yet the problems persist.

Division Lane between North Houses and Midgeland has deteriorated due to increased use and Lancashire County Council need to repair it. To do so they need to close Division Lane, this of course is beneficial to Blackpool. There will be no access, apart from pedestrians, cyclists and horses, from School Road/ Midgeland Road to Division Lane. All access to Division Lane will be from Queensway. Blackpool Council has been asked to carry out the Traffic Management requirements.

The temporary closure is for 18 months and at this stage, it is unclear as to how long the work will take. Blackpool Council will consider their position once this detail is known. The diversion is via Heyhouses, Queensway, Common Edge, Progress, Squires Gate link Road and Lytham St Annes Way.

Other considerations during the closure period are Common Edge Road and School Road. The signal timings at this junction are to be altered to favour Common Edge Road and give reduced green time to School Road to discourage traffic from using this as an alternative route.

The closure was effective from Monday 18 August 2014.

Road Safety – including working with schools.

July saw the Road Safety team carry-out Year Six Transition event for Year Six pupils. The event challenges our young people to travel safely and responsibly when they are not in the company of an adult. This is one of our major target groups for casualty reduction.

This year we engaged with almost 1,000 children from 21 primary schools and although the event was oversubscribed and some schools missed out, we are arranging a bigger event for 2015.

There are four 30 minute sessions in the event, which include how to travel safely and responsibly on public transport, a session about making sure they are safe around a HGV, how to plan their journey, from making the right choice of transport to school or another event and a 30 minute road safety play performed by drama course students from Blackpool Sixth Form college.

Test Drive

The Road Safety team has just carried out summer "Test Drive" sessions which was delivered to 27 sixteen years old who are preparing to learn to drive. This is a full day course comprising of a morning classroom session followed by an afternoon spent in a driving school car on a college car park and proves to be very popular.

Promenade Bus Shelter Renewal

A programme of work has begun to renew a number of promenade bus shelters, which should be completed by the end of September.

On a sad note, one of our retired School Crossing Patrols (SCP) has recently died after a long battle against cancer. Bridie Mately was a SCP for over 32 years at Our Lady of Assumption on Common Edge Road. Bridie was awarded the MBE for her services as a SCP.

Equality and Diversity

Faith Engagement

A major new study from the Church Urban fund entitled “Good Neighbours” has been published. The report explores what churches do in partnership with public authorities in areas of high deprivation, documenting the extent of their distinctly “relational” community involvement 12 case studies are featured , one of which focuses on St Thomas’s C of E Blackpool .

The report, together with the progress of local initiatives such as the Blackpool Food partnership will be discussed at a meeting of the Council Leader, together with the Bishop of Lancaster next month aimed at building a long term strategic engagement between the Council, and churches and other faith groups active in Blackpool’s social agenda.

The Accessible Britain Challenge campaign

We are delighted that Blackpool’s Safe journey card initiative has been highlighted in a Ministerial letter launched this important national initiative. This local partnership project was one of only two specifically signposted in correspondence to all Local authority chief executives.

The campaign will be launched by Rt Hon Mike Penning and Brandon Lewis, Ministers of State for Disabled People and Communities and includes a resources pack of good practice encouraging all local authorities to step up their work here.

Homophobic bullying

National Research by Stonewall has revealed a disturbing picture of the extent of this across the country. The survey showed 86% of secondary school teachers say homophobic bullying happens in their school. Blackpool Council has done a number of local anti-bullying initiatives in partnership with our schools and relevant Officers and Cabinet Members are now exploring what more can be done on this within our school communities.