

## **CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN**

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The Resilient Communities area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Kathryn Benson (Schools and Learning)
- Councillor Amy Cross (Adult Services and Health), and
- Councillor Maria Kirkland (Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services).

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**

#### **School improvement**

I am pleased to advise that our school inspection outcomes for this academic year demonstrate clear evidence of improvement. We have had 18 Ofsted inspections since September 2017. Three schools continue to require improvement, however, thirteen were judged to be good and two achieved outstanding status.

Our revised approach to inclusion planning is starting to have some impact, evidenced by a reduction in children subject to alternative educational support, a reduction in exclusions and an increase in attendance. In year fair access referrals for children or young people hard to place have also reduced, meaning that more children and young people are educated in mainstream schools. This is the right approach and we must continue with it.

It is very pleasing that one of our primary schools has been nominated amongst eight contenders for the Times Education primary school of the year award. We wish Boundary Primary School well in the contest!

### **Strategic Issues**

#### **Demand Management**

We continue to address high demand for services, which are amongst the highest in the country. As Members are aware, Blackpool has unusually high rates of referrals, assessments, Section 47 Enquiries, Child Protection (CP) Plans and children looked after per our 10,000 population. The number of children in care stands at 540 as of 15 June 2018. As outlined in previous reports we have reviewed our social work practices to introduce measures to ensure reductions are safely managed. Our risk sensible operating model is beginning to be embedded into practice and we are seeing more effective management of risk. In addition, our care planning process is more robust in respect to management and decision-making. We continue to work with partners via the Improvement Board to monitor the effectiveness of plans to manage demand. Challenging targets remain in place to bring Blackpool more in line with the national, regional and statistical neighbour picture.

It is encouraging that we have started to see some impact evidenced by a reduction in the numbers of children coming into care and a reduction of 10.5% of open statutory casework. We continue to have some challenges with regards the timeliness of exit strategies from care and we review this position with our partners on a very regular basis.

### **Blackpool Opportunity Area**

Our work with the Department for Education continues to make good progress. To date over £1m of support has been allocated to a primary to secondary transition project, an English key stage 4 programme and 'our future our choice' careers event. In addition, Blackpool will be receiving just over £1 million over two years for the new Essential Life Skills programme.

Other significant pipeline projects for the coming 12 months include building a broader literacy programme, supporting the recruitment and retention of teachers and an inclusion package covering wrap around support for pupils. A careers hub will be established expanding careers activities in primary schools through the Primary Futures project and enabling young people to become involved in the Opportunity Area programme through a youth participation project.

## **Policy Issues**

### **Independent Safeguarding Review**

As previously reported, following the death of Mr Dennis Oldland and the widely-reported Coroner's findings, the Safeguarding Board was asked by the Council to consider whether a Serious Case Review would be appropriate. Following detailed consideration by a multi-agency Panel, it was concluded that this case did not meet the Serious Case Review Criteria.

However, the Council determined that it was important to conduct an independent review to identify any learning points for the organisations involved. The Safeguarding Board was asked to facilitate this independent review and I can confirm that the findings of this review have now been shared with the family of Mr Oldland.

The Independent Reviewers identified three key areas for learning, incorporating eleven clear recommendations. The three areas for learning are grouped by the report as follows:

- The finding of inadequate care in this case has learning implications related to induction, communication between carers and supervisors, monitoring and supervision, and record keeping, which is for the provider to rectify.
- Whilst ostensibly the findings relating to management and supervision are positive, there are several areas for consideration in improving the quality and timeliness of monitoring the carers' performance and this should be an integral consideration by commissioners of contractual requirements, to ensure providers monitor staff appropriately.
- Establishing an appropriate care package can be a complex task, but will be improved by the full involvement of commissioners, providers, the client and the client's family and which will be confirmed in writing to ensure all points are included.

A comprehensive Action Plan has now been developed to address each of these areas and elements of this are already in the process of delivery by providers, commissioners and those responsible for the monitoring of contracts. The Action Plan has been shared with the independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board, who is satisfied with the arrangements. Additional funding has been diverted to the Quality Monitoring Function to provide additional capacity and to enable engagement directly with people receiving services and their family members in understanding any quality issues in service delivery. In addition, the findings have directly influenced the specification of a new Care at Home contract ready for a retender later this year.

### **Evidence of Improvements in Child Oral Health**

Poor oral health can have a very negative impact on a child's development. In the Public Health Outcomes Framework, one of the indicators is the proportion of five-year-old children free from dental decay. Until the latest oral health survey figures were published in May 2018, Blackpool's five year olds had significantly more decayed teeth compared to England and North West averages and Blackpool was in the highest 20% of all local authorities for tooth decay. However, the oral health survey figures published in May 2018 showed an increase in the proportion of five year old children free from dental decay, up from 57.5% (2014/ 2015) to 75.1%. This is now in line with the national average of 76.7%. Whilst we are approaching these figures with suitable caution, we believe that a number of sustained, evidence-based programmes have contributed to the improvements we are now seeing. For example, since 2015/ 2016, Health Visitors have delivered toothbrush and 1450ppm fluoride toothpaste packs, together with oral health advice to all new parents, at three stages in a child's life, up to the age of two and half years. There have also been numerous supervised tooth brushing programmes. In addition, a milk fluoridation programme in Primary Schools (Years 1-6) commenced in November 2016 via the free school breakfast scheme.

## **Transforming Services**

### **Leisure Services**

I am very pleased to inform Members that in 2017/ 2018 our leisure service received over one million attendances to activities and facilities provided across Blackpool, with the three main leisure facilities alone seeing 1,032,746 attendances. This is the first time on record that the facilities have exceeded the one million mark, an increase of 9.6% compared to the previous year – fantastic news. The service has seen an increase in attendances across a number of activity areas, with a big focus taking place on the learn to swim programme at both Palatine Leisure Centre and Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre resulting in a 32% increase in attendances. Furthermore, the Active Blackpool programme, which provides supported activities for local people with a health condition saw a 5.6% increase in attendances across all of the leisure sites. Can I congratulate everyone who has contributed to this success.

### **Bereavement Partnership and Carleton Development Programme**

On Thursday 24 May, we shared our plans with the Bereavement Partnership - an established group of funeral directors, clergy and lay preachers - for significant development of the facilities at Carleton Cemetery and Crematorium in line with the approved Capital

Programme. The development will include extending the existing crematorium building to improve the working area for both our operators and the engineers who carry out routine maintenance on the cremators, the opening of a new café in July (to be run by Nibbles who provide a similar excellent facility at Anchorsholme Library and Blackpool Centre for Independent Living), improved lighting, car parking and shelter and a proposal to extend the cemetery by an additional seven acres, providing an extra 2,000 plus burial plots. We anticipate that it will take approximately five years to complete all the enhancements, with the main work around the chapel and crematorium area taking place in the next two years.

The Bereavement Partnership feedback was very positive and representatives from the partnership will input into the location of the shelter, additional lighting, extra car parking and help shape the layout of the extension to the cemetery. As some Members are aware, we have had ongoing issues with the current cremators for some years, which have unfortunately led to reduced capacity. As part of this project, the Council will be investing in new cremators. In order to deliver a full service now, two temporary cremators are already on site and will provide the capacity we need whilst the works take place.

## **Working with Partners**

### **@TheGrange**

As I reported last time, the former CLC has been transformed into @TheGrange - the fantastic new community hub for the Grange Park area. @TheGrange is home to a Community Farm, a HIS community shop, library, community café, One Stop Shop, pharmacy and the Neighbourhood Police Team (both moving in shortly). The building also includes various meeting rooms and a large theatre space. Our Adult and Family Learning Team are based @TheGrange as well as staff from More Positive Together. @TheGrange is being managed by Groundwork on behalf of Blackpool Council.

@TheGrange was officially launched on Saturday 14 April with a family fun day. It was an extremely successful and well attended day, attracting more than 1,300 residents. Numerous partners worked together to put on this free community event. Since the launch event, the team @TheGrange has been carrying out consultation to find out what the residents would like to do at their new community hub. Many of these activities have already started including Zumba, Slimming World, reading, gardening and cooking groups, sports and coffee mornings. Activities on the way include a choir, after school club, ballroom dancing and social evenings. On 19 May, the team @TheGrange held a Royal Wedding Party, which was a sell-out! Upcoming events include:

- World Cup Events – in conjunction with the Children's Centre and aimed at reducing domestic violence. There will be sporting activities on the green (adjacent field) food from the various countries playing, a large outdoor screen to watch England matches, planting activities and children's crafts.
- Grange Park's 70 Birthday Party – to be held on the green on 4 August, this is a multi-partner organised event with the first planning meeting taking place on 5 June at 11.00am @TheGrange.
- Farm Day – Friday 31 August run by Better Start.

### **Establishment and Launch of the Health and Social Care Academy**

I am very pleased to inform Members about an exciting development in the local health and social care (HSC) sector. The Health and Social Care Career Academy was launched in early May. The Academy is an alliance between Blackpool and Fylde College, Blackpool Council, Blackpool CCG, Blackpool and Fylde Acute Hospital Trust and a range of health and social care providers from the public, private and independent sectors. The vision of the Academy is to facilitate the education, training and development needs of Fylde Coast health and care providers in partnership, led by those providers via the Career Academy Steering Group. Health and social care is a key priority for Blackpool and Lancashire, with forecasts suggesting employment in Lancashire's HSC sector overall is set to grow by 1.7% in the period to 2024. This is in a context where skills gaps, an ageing workforce and recruitment and retention issues are already major challenges. Through discussions with key partners including Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Health and Social Care Career Academy has been established to facilitate clear, locally based, career pathways and progression routes into and through the new models of care.

A particular focus of the Academy is to raise the positive profile of health and social care and the many and varied career paths that exist within and between. More information and some examples of how the Academy has affected positively on learners can be found at <https://www.hscacademy.org.uk/>

### **Strategic Health Alliance and a move into Bickerstaffe**

I am pleased to inform Members that the Council has recently agreed to enter into a strategic alliance to bring together health related programmes, research and teaching and learning between Lancaster University, Blackpool Council and Blackpool and Fylde College.

The alliance also encompasses Better Start, HeadStart, Fulfilling Lives and the Health and Social Care Career Academy mentioned above.

I am particularly pleased to report that this strategic alliance will come to life via a significant physical presence in Number One Bickerstaffe Square later this year. Blackpool and the Fylde College will be delivering courses to students from new teaching spaces in the building from September and partners will be co-locating teams elsewhere into the building closer towards Christmas. The intention is for co-location of teams to assist in driving the development of innovative approaches and interventions for improving population health. By bringing together a set of established major initiatives being led by the partners and harmonising the complementary skills and strengths within each organisation, the alliance will provide a strong interdisciplinary platform for maximising the delivery and impact of those initiatives, for configuring a joint approach towards future infrastructure and programme development and for attracting funding and resource to support further activity. A visible presence within the Talbot Gateway area of Blackpool will also afford the potential for economic benefit through the impact associated with a UK top-ten university collaboration, as well as growth through broader recruitment opportunities.

I am sure Members will join me in welcoming this development. It will be fantastic to have a Blackpool and the Fylde College and Lancaster University presence in the heart of our

town. I am looking forward to seeing students in and around Bickerstaffe and the wider town centre and I hope this is something that can be expanded upon in future years.

### **Stanley Park Events for All the Community**

I am delighted that Stanley Park events continue to grow year on year. In partnership with the Friends of Stanley Park and the Parks Service, last year the park hosted in excess of eighty events. This year numbers will increase to over one hundred, from Saturday morning Park Runs, theatre plays to the ever-popular bandstand pop events. The recent good weather over May bank holidays saw the park at its busiest with an estimated four thousand audience at the bandstand alone. Events are planned every weekend until mid-September, the majority of which are entirely free.