

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (PLACE AND TOURISM) – COUNCILLOR GILLIAN CAMPBELL

The 'Places' area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Neal Brookes (Housing and Welfare Reform)
- Councillor Fred Jackson (Environment, Transport and Climate Change)
- Councillor Mark Smith (Business, Enterprise and Job Creation) and
- Councillor Maria Kirkland (Community Cohesion and Leisure)

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

Launch of MeetBlackpool.com

I am pleased to tell you that our preparations for the new conference centre are continuing with the launch of a new website, MeetBlackpool.com, which illustrates how £500m of investment in our town has delivered a reinvigorated business tourism offer with unique opportunities for event organisers and delegates on a regional, national and international scale.

Launched by VisitBlackpool, the website will be a powerful tool in helping to re-engage with event organisers and revitalise the resort's conference market, helping to reinstate Blackpool's reputation as a modern, vibrant and unique conference destination. Of particular interest to the trade is the showcasing of several "next generation" hotels, mainly at four and five-star standard; a wide selection of exceptional venues, delegate experiences and world-class attractions; and greatly-improved connectivity with direct rail services to major cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

Awarded Contracts

Contracts awarded since the last meeting are as follows:

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
EZ feasibility study / architect for relocation of fire station / engineering facilities and Airport control tower	Cassidy and Ashton (Preston)	Ad-hoc 6 months (12 months with 3 extensions available)	£12,650	20	0
Lift Maintenance	RJ Lift Services (Stoke on Trent)	24 months (1 +1)	£320,000	3	0
Minor Adaptations	North Liverpool Construction (Merseyside)	12 months	£300,000	8	2
ICT WEEE	Tier 1 Assets Management (Manchester)	Call off Contract	No charge to but may produce an income if the equipment is re-marketed/ refurbished	0 (Direct award)	0
Opportunity Area - Literacy Campaign Lot 1 - Marketing Lot 2 - Family Support	National Literacy Trust (London)	12 months	£155,000	6	3
Opportunity Area - SEND capacity Building	National Association for Special Educational Needs (Tamworth)	12 months	£100,000	4	0

CONTRACT	PROVIDER (Locations)	TERM (including extensions)	CONTRACT VALUE	NO. OF INITIAL BIDS	NO. OF BIDDERS WITH FY POSTCODE
Opportunity Area – Teach Blackpool – Programme Evaluation	York Consulting (Leeds)	12 months	£20,000	2	0
Feasibility Study for data	Cowi UK Ltd (Staffs)	Ad-hoc 5 months	£18,000	0 (Direct Award)	0
Contractor for re-surfacing schemes (Lot 1) and Civils Work (Lot 2)	<u>Lot 1</u> – Bethell Group (Manchester) Multipave Ltd (Leyland) Tarmac Trading (West Midlands) <u>Lot 2</u> – AE Yates (Bolton) Eric Wright Civil Engineering Ltd (Preston) George Cox & Sons Ltd (Bolton)	24 months (24 months)	£20.0m	14	0
NIMBLE Software	Nimble Group (Manchester)	One off acquisition	£180,725.64	0	0

Strategic Issues

A Mixed 2019 Season, but the Resort Pass Bucks the Trend

2019 has been a mixed year for visitor numbers with some very positive periods, according to our key tourism indicators for April to October. A general lack of consumer confidence during 2019 has been cited for what appears to have been a similar story for attractions and destinations across the UK. The detailed STEAM report analysis for 2019, which provides headline visitor numbers and the value of the tourism economy, will be available later this summer.

Locally, exceptional weather at Easter and the August Bank Holiday clearly contributed to a positive period, whilst a substantial events programme boosted the October half term. At other times, the indicators show a more variable picture, with parts of the season being adversely affected by inconsistent weather and one of the wettest summers on record, according to the Met Office. Severe weather also affected the summer events programme, with one day of the Blackpool Air Show weekend cancelled and the other day going ahead with a slimmed-down programme.

Car parking patronage on Council car parks over the main tourism season was comparatively flat during the 2019 season compared to the previous year, despite record figures in April and August. Meanwhile, inbound rail travel showed considerable growth compared to the previous year, reflecting a stabilization of some of the timetable issues that the resort suffered during the summer of 2018. This is despite the cancellation of Northern services, particularly on Sundays, over a number of weekends in the main summer season in 2019. Such inconsistency in the services provided to the resort continues to be a concern and is undoubtedly deterring people from visiting.

One area that significantly outperformed the trend was VisitBlackpool's Resort Pass scheme. More than 19,000 passes were sold across the 2019 season and we experienced record monthly sales in April, June, July and October. Other key events included the sold out SLIMEFEST over the October half term, attended by 12,000 people and watched by record numbers of viewers on Nickelodeon channels during November and Lightpool, which attracted over 50,000 visitors and generated substantial media coverage in The Times, Guardian, Daily Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, BBC and Granada. The replica Earth installation was a particular success, attracting 17,000 people to the Tower Ballroom.

Christmas Town Centre Campaign

As in previous years, we implemented a discounted parking scheme to encourage Christmas shoppers into the town. The town centre benefited from a discounted parking scheme during December, where residents and out-of-town visitors were able to park for just £1 for any three-hour period on Central, East Topping Street and West Street car parks in the town centre. The scheme was delivered in partnership with the Town Centre BID and started with free parking across most town centre carparks on Saturday 30 November to celebrate both National Small Business Saturday and the Christmas Lights Switch-On in St John's Square.

Our analysis of ticket sales shows that 35,000 people took advantage of the £1 offer – an extra 5,000 compared to the same period in 2018.

Looking Forward to the 2020 Season – the New Destination Guide

I am always proud to see the wealth of wonderful events and attractions across the resort showcased in our Destination Guide and I am pleased to report that the 100-page 2020 edition has now been released. Produced by VisitBlackpool, the free guide highlights a vast range of new shows, hotels and entertainment for the coming year including:

- The opening of Blackpool's first five-star hotel, the Sands Venue Resort Hotel and Spa on the Golden Mile, as well as the new 150-bedroom Premier Inn opposite North Pier
- The Tower Coaster, one of several virtual reality experiences in the new Fifth Floor family entertainment area within The Blackpool Tower
- An exciting line-up of top-class shows, concerts and festivals including We Will Rock You, The Sound of Music, Grease The Musical, Footloose, Hot Ice Euphoria, the British Country Music Festival and concerts by international stars including Sir Cliff Richard
- A spectacular free events programme including the two-day Blackpool Air Show (8 and 9 August), Ride The Lights (1 September), the Illuminations Switch-On Concert (4 September), which will be the centrepiece of a revamped switch-on weekend to be announced in the next couple of months, World Fireworks Championship Blackpool (11, 18 and 25 September and 2 October), Blackpool Illuminations (4 September 4 to 8 November) and Light pool Festival (16 to 31 October)

Alongside the usual bundle of information on a wide selection of hotels and accommodation, nighttime attractions and tips on how visitors can get the best of all that Blackpool has to offer, it also includes an eight-page guide to eating out and a special focus on the 100th anniversary of the Blackpool Dance Festival at the Winter Gardens.

I would recommend that all members make time to have a look through the guide. Some of the photography is simply stunning and it really does act as a reminder of everything that makes our town such a wonderful place to live and visit.

Huge Stars at this Year's Blackpool Pride

A line-up of international talent has been announced for this year's Pride Blackpool weekend. The festival, a joint venture between VisitBlackpool and Pride Blackpool, will open on the night of Friday 5 June on the Tower Festival Headland with performances by two of the UK's most enduring music acts **Right Said Fred** and **Marc Almond**. Then, on the Saturday night, 6 June, **Jake Shears**, lead singer of the award-winning Scissor Sisters, will take to the stage for his Blackpool debut. It is set to be one of the summer's biggest events, so get your tickets now!

Stanley Park Golf Club

The Council is continuing to work with Holmes Investment Properties (HIP) plc on its proposed lease and plans for the future, with final details and due diligence taking place over the next few weeks adding to the work that has already been done in respect of this.

Following a meeting between the Golf Club representatives and plc just before Christmas, the club were advised that it was HIP's aim to take over the club by the end of March 2020 and a meeting took place with the staff of the golf club regarding their TUPE transfer arrangements on 27 January. HIP also made a commitment that the 18-hole course would be maintained for the 2020 playing season and that their intention was to submit a planning application relating to their proposals for the seven holes area east of East Park Drive. They have also now issued an open letter regarding their intentions.

Transforming Services

Transformation of Anchorsholme Park Almost Complete!

I am delighted to report that Anchorsholme Park is getting ready to re-open, with a soft opening at the beginning of April 2020 to be followed by the formal opening in May 2020. The investment by United Utilities to restore and improve the park follows the installation of an underground water storage tank that can hold the equivalent of five Olympic-size swimming pools of storm water and the building of a new storm water pumping station to replace the existing station on the promenade.

Local ward members, the parks friends group and parks officers, have been working closely with United Utilities in relation to the facilities within the park, which includes a new £250,000 playground, multi sports areas, café, events area, CCTV, lighting, new bowling pavilion and parks maintenance facility.

Launch of the New Lancashire and Blackpool Flood Risk Management Strategy

As a country, we are experiencing the impact of climate change and increasing number of flood events and occurrences, and as a Flood Risk Authority, Blackpool has an increasing responsibility to deliver statutory duties in respect of Flood Risk Management. To address these issues, we have contributed to the new Lancashire and Blackpool Flood Risk Strategy, which is on course to be launched in May 2020.

Members will recall the November 2017 flood, which affected 300 properties along our coast. The statutory Section 19 Report related to the event has resulted in the commitment of £110,000 of funding from United Utilities and the Environment Agency. This will be used by the Council and United Utilities to carry out a study exploring ways to increase resilience to flooding in Anchorsholme and Norbreck wards and Bispham and Greenlands wards.

The Environment Agency and United Utilities are also looking to form Community Flood Forums in these areas, which would inform, involve and empower local people to be a part of the flood resilience agenda. Community engagement events are being arranged to seek residents interested in getting involved and I would wholeheartedly encourage local people to come forward.

Progress on Yeadon Way

Along with Councillor Fred Jackson, I recently visited the works being carried out on Yeadon way, meeting the contractor Eric Wright Civil Engineering for an update on the works, which involve a 2km stretch between Hawes Side Lane Bridge and the Ashworth Road Roundabout. This work is vital to keep traffic moving in the town, with the carriageway carrying on average 12,000 vehicles a day and bringing in tens of thousands of tourists into Blackpool during the season who would otherwise need an alternative route through residential areas. Such heavy traffic levels combined with an ageing infrastructure built on an old railway embankment has seen the carriageway weakened in recent years.

Work being undertaken includes an improved road surface, new drainage, 90 new streetlights and replacement of concrete walls with steel barriers. The works are now 11 weeks into the 28 week programme and I am pleased to report they are currently running on time and to budget.

Transport Hub: Camera Enforcement

Through regular dialogue with bus and taxi operators at Blackpool Highway Forum, it was apparent that infringements are regular in and around the transport hub, Market Street, Church Street and Corporation Street, with inconsiderate parking affecting bus scheduling and access for those with a legitimate reason to be in these streets. The introduction of camera enforcement in relation to the existing restriction received Cabinet Member approval in 2019, this allows the proposal to progress to consultation, which is taking place in the affected area.

The cameras will help enforce the existing restriction, making the streets safer for all users, in particular pedestrians and bus users. It will also increase the efficiency of taxi operators and the speed and reliability of the bus operators.

Working with Partners

Local Residents Plan for the Future of Claremont and Revoe

I am pleased to report that the Council was successful in bidding to Homes England's Community Housing Fund for £285,000 of funding to help plan for area improvements in Claremont and Revoe. The funding is being used to work with The Magic Club and Revoelution in planning improvements to local streets, working up plans for housing refurbishment and, where possible, for new homes in those areas. Getting the input and ideas of local residents is crucial to the ultimate success of the plans, which will be delivered by the Council and local partners.

Foxhall Village Update

As members will now be aware, the developer of Foxhall Village, Hollinwood Homes, has gone into administration as a consequence of the collapse of the Marcus Worthington Group. This unfortunately means that work on the Foxhall Village site came to a halt in September. The Council had assembled and remediated the two phases of the site and entered into a Development Agreement with Hollinwood Homes in 2013, after which they were responsible for building out the development and selling the homes in phases over 10 years. 200 of the planned 410 homes have been completed to date and homes were selling well prior to the collapse of the wider company group.

The Council has worked as swiftly as it can with the administrator of Hollinwood Homes and expects to have legal control of all parts of the site within the next few weeks; it is fair to say that it is a very complicated situation. Great Places Housing Association will continue to own 40 plots where foundations are already in the ground for affordable homes for rent. We are now working with them on plans for the build out of all 74 new homes planned for Phase 3 and the completion of five partly built homes, but it is likely that it will take a further three/ four

months before a new contractor can get up and running on site. The Council will also now work to find an alternative route to developing the Phase 4 land next to Blackpool Football Club, with our focus being to continue the transformation of the site achieved to date.

Active Blackpool Funding

I am delighted to report that the Leisure Services Active Blackpool team has attracted revenue funding in excess of £350,000 for health promoting activities and programmes in Blackpool. £75,000 of funding from Sport England will allow them to test a new approach to engage inactive people with long-term health conditions to become active by developing a new partnership approach with Adult Social Care. The project will be targeted at those who are referred onto the reablement programme delivered by Adult Social Care and aims to provide education, improve awareness of physical activity opportunities within the community and get people with long-term health conditions more physically active. The project will have three strands: a six-week programme delivered by the reablement team, training for non-clinical employees about Physical Activity and long-term health conditions, and promoting awareness of the Active Blackpool (GP referral) programme within Blackpool.

Meanwhile, £288,000 is being provided over three years to Active Blackpool and Blackpool Coastal Housing for a "Get Out Get Active" (GOGA) programme, to be launched in April 2020. The programme will focus on the most inactive people in five targeted communities, using community centres and other local assets familiar to people as a base. The initial venues are Ibbison Court (Bloomfield ward), Spencer Court (Claremont), Argosy Court (Park), Dunsop Court (Victoria), Aysgarth (Stanley) and KinCraig (Ingthorpe), with a further venue to be confirmed in Mereside.

The hope is that sustainable activities will be developed using a mix of volunteers and the gradual introduction of charges for sessions.

Community Safety

I would like to inform Members that all of our Community Safety work will now be undertaken by the Public Protection team under Tim Coglán as Head of Service, in the Community and Environmental Services Directorate that is led by John Blackledge. The operational team was already fulfilling the majority of Community Safety functions and have now added to these the lead role on Counter Terrorism/ Prevent, Scrutiny and Domestic Homicide Reviews.