

CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN

Adult Social Care

A great deal of time and energy was being spent in preparation for the implementation of the 2014 Care Act on the 1 April 2015. A rolling programme of formal training was delivered, supplemented by in-house professional leads involvement. Following implementation the training is continuing, to ensure there is consistency in the application of the Act in terms of service delivery. Documentation for assessment and care planning was updated, together with a whole scale review of our Policies, processes and standard letters. In the context of the changes to FWI as we move to phase 2 involving accurate invoice processing for commissioned services and the increase in work generated by ever-increasing numbers of DoL assessments, the pressures remain very high. Recruitment of new staff to meet increased demand using part of the new Care Act monies was undertaken in May and we are awaiting start dates for these, from July onwards. This represents phase one and consideration regarding future staffing needs is scheduled for September, using information on the impact of changes over the first six months.

Despite this, the Adult Social Care teams are managing to continue to process all new work coming into the service, including allocating all new safeguarding alerts. They remain extremely busy, with high numbers of referrals and are steadily working through the reviews of service users, together with a dedicated reviewing officer. Progress in this area is kept under review, compiling formal monthly position statements to monitor progress. Progress on this (reviews) has slowed, due to demands on the service, posts not yet recruited to and sickness absences. The new Extensive Care Service, working with people over 65 who have two or more chronic physical conditions and are either at risk of or regularly being admitted to hospital is due to be operational at the beginning of July. The aim is to reduce unscheduled admissions to in-patient care and attendance at Accident and Emergency. This will be based at Moor Park Health Centre and a social work post has been funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to be part of the team.

The Integrated Learning Disability Team has also undertaken an analysis of their review position and is actively working to try to deal with some of the outstanding reviews, having reduced it by almost half. This also involves some data cleansing, which will be helpful going forward in terms of providing a clearer and more accurate position. We have agreed with Blackpool Teaching Hospital to review the management agreement for the team once they recruit to the forthcoming vacancy of their manager for the service.

Adult and Older Adult mental health services are now fully staffed. Demand on their services remains high. We have had some meetings with senior adult service managers from the main provider, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust, to review working arrangements and operational issues. The Trust is presently consulting on a community reorganisation of their services, as they consider downsizing their present community teams, to work more closely with respective locality services, including GPs, and to an extent mirroring the neighbourhood models developing out of the Better Care Fund arrangements. We have taken over the day service previously delivered by Richmond Fellowship, which has resulted in a number of support workers and a social worker being co-located with the Adult Community Team and focussing on the social inclusion and daytime activity needs of service users with serious and enduring mental health difficulties. The new in-patient facility, The Harbour, opened in March. This will affect the demand for Independent Mental Health Advocates for detained patients, as this has to be delivered by the Authority in which the hospital is located, not the ordinary residence of the patient.

The Hospital Discharge Team remains busy in ensuring discharge delays do not increase. The recent introduction of the Extra Supported Discharge team has created some pressures in terms of commissioning intensive care packages. Draft guidance has been published on the proposed Care Act Funding Reforms due to come into force from April 2016. We expect some further clarification in respect of how the proposed new arrangements will be organised and implemented in July 2015, with the timetable for the Statutory Guidance to be issued in October 2015.

Commissioned Services for Adults

Existing Intermediate care provision in Blackpool is excellent, but during periods of increased demand, additional residential rehabilitation resource is sometimes required. A number of initiatives were implemented to increase system resilience across times of peak demand. Here are some of the measures taken to facilitate hospital discharges and to avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions including:

- Additional Vitaline installer/ Support officer hours to support people at/ to return to home
- Increased care at home available from bank staff across Easter period
- Age UK (Pilot) Social Isolation Prevention Scheme taking a holistic approach and offering practical assistance to support discharge from hospital and signposting to services, which support people to live independently and avoid re-admission.
- Volunteer service to deliver a six month Prevention Pilot (Friendly Faces) to reduce social isolation and promote wellbeing.
- Additional Rapid Response care at home available from bank staff across Easter period
- 20 Additional 'flex up' intermediate care beds utilising in-house and residential care sector.

Hoyle at Mansfield is able to 'flex' to offer additional intermediate care beds during these peak periods, preventing unnecessary hospital admissions and ensuring hospital discharges are not delayed. Resilience schemes such as this fit with the national drive to address delayed discharges and ensure the local social care system is resilient and able to contribute to timely hospital discharges by providing an intermediate support in an appropriate care setting.

Early Supported Discharge (ESD) Utilising Systems Resilience Funding 2015/ 2016

The Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre ESD Rehabilitation at Home service is a joint initiative, which aligns to the following Fylde Coast strategic objectives:

- To provide a new holistic model of care, with treatment undertaken in community settings
- To prevent unnecessary emergency admissions to hospital through delivery of new service models that provide enhanced support in community settings and integrated care for the most needy and frail patients
- To provide safe, high quality and patient centred care, using evidence based pathways to provide standardised approaches to care with positive outcomes
- To be financially viable, managing services within available resources, allowing us to invest in our future
- To support and develop a skilled, motivated and flexible workforce that is able to innovate in the development of our services

This early supported discharge scheme reflects the strategic aims of the Unscheduled Care Strategy, Out of Hospital Strategy and Systems Resilience Plan and supports the overarching aim of the Care Act 2014 to promote wellbeing. Nationally, this service meets NHS England's mission of providing integrated high quality care for all by focussing on what care should look and feel like for patients and measuring its success whilst maintaining clinically effectiveness and safety. As part of the Fylde Coast Intermediate Care Review, the service will be integral in its development. The Commissioning Team has worked with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Adult Social Care and existing In-House Provider Services to ensure increased care capacity to facilitate early supported discharges, for example:

- Additional short-term care 'flex up' hours to support Early Supported Discharge (ESD) and bridge care gap during initial assessment period until ESD reablement commences.
- Additional Vitaline installer / support officer hours to support short term reablement at home
- Additional Primary Night Care hours

In summary there is now an ESD dedicated care element funding with carers on stand-by (up to 16 hours available per day) and extra Vitaline installer/ support capacity (30 hours per week) to support short term reablement at home. Additional service capacity available to 'flex up' short term care at home services based on level of demand from ESD including a short term 'step up' residential bed as necessary.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Panel will continue to focus on its priorities around looked after children and undertake its duties. An induction to Corporate Parenting is planned prior to the commencement of the next panel, along with a Corporate Parenting conference to be held in September 2015 to highlight the role of the whole council in undertaking its duties as corporate parents. Services will be asked to pledge their offer to our children and young people.

Adult, Community and Family Learning

The Community Learning Mental Health Pilot has begun with the first course being jointly delivered by an Adult Learning Tutor and a Psychological Well Being Practitioner. The aim of the pilot is to provide holistic interventions for adults with mild to moderate mental health needs and will be part of a national evaluation in 2016. A celebration event was held at Central Library on 20 April to present vulnerable adult learners with certificates. Over 60 people attended including families and friends to mark this significant milestone for many adults.

Delivery of the "Key to Your Home" course has begun. The course has been specifically designed to support tenants to gain knowledge of what is involved in being a responsible tenant. The aim is to improve tenancy sustainment rates across Blackpool.

Ofsted inspections

Early Years settings

Three group childcare and two childminder inspection reports have been published since the last Cabinet Member report. All three group settings inspected received a judgement of 'good'. Both childminders received a judgement of 'outstanding', which was a further improvement on their previous gradings of 'good'. Based on published reports, the overall percentage of settings and childminders with an Ofsted grading of good or outstanding is 89%, with 91.6% of childminders and 85.7% of group childcare settings. This compares to national figures (as at 31st December 2014 - the most recent data available) of 82% overall, 82% of childminders and 86% of group settings (this overall national figure also includes childcare on domestic premises, of which we have none in Blackpool).

14 -19 Strategy

Motivat8 is a discrete short course that took place in May/ June for Looked After Children (LAC) Not in Education or Employment (NEET) young people that Connexions is delivering, in conjunction with the Over 12's team. The programme is designed to engage and motivate young people with the aim of supporting them into summer provision that leads to involvement in mainstream education, training and employment opportunities from September.

Connexions is currently preparing to repeat its summer school programme for 16-18 year olds this year. There will be a range of 10 different programmes under the Summer Ventures banner. It is hoped that we will see a repeat of the success of last summer's activities that engaged and supported 96 young people, 70% of which came from recognised vulnerable groups. Connexions will also be supporting a range of other activities taking place over the summer, for example The Prince's Trust programmes and events led by the Blackpool Providers Group.

Project 90 will again be taking place in conjunction with Education Diversity. This project aims to support all students leaving Education Diversity this year, into a positive destination in September whilst maintaining contact with them over the summer to ensure their wellbeing.

Early Years

Pupil Premium

Blackpool was one of seven Local Authorities to pilot the implementation of the Early Years Pupil Premium in January 2015. The pilot was successful and the Council's Free Entitlement Grant (FEG) database is now linked directly with the DfE's Eligibility Checking Service enabling checks to be undertaken swiftly to identify three and four year olds who are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium funding. To date 468 eligible children have been identified which is 73% of the initial target, the average of the pilots as a whole was 55%. The FEG payments system has been adapted and the first additional payments were made to Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) and maintained nurseries and childminders in March 2015. The additional funding is worth £302.10 per year per child.

Implementation of the free entitlement to Early Education for Two year olds

The implementation continues to progress with the number of two year olds accessing the grant, reaching 698 from a target number of 1009. This equates to 69%, a slight increase on the autumn term.

Governor Services

Local Authority Clerks have supported the majority of maintained schools throughout the spring and summer term to undertake reviews of effectiveness and skills audits in readiness for their reconstitution. Most have now agreed their new constitutions, and new Instruments of Government. The remainder of schools are on target to have this process completed by the end of the summer term.

School Organisation and Buildings

Pupil Place Plan

The Council is currently out to consultation on the draft Pupil Place Plan 2015/ 2020. The plan provides background into the school estate within Blackpool and provides data relating to the future forecasted pupil numbers and how this may impact on the available school places.

Building Works

PRU - Pegasus: (Old Christ the King School, Bathurst Avenue)

Construction works have now commenced on the old Christ the King school building on Grange Park. The works will see the school refurbished in preparation for the facility to be utilised as a Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit to be named 'Pegasus'. The works will be completed by the end of June in preparation for a phased occupation during July.

Westbury Lodge

The Local Authority has been working with the Blackpool Local Education Partnership (LEP) on a proposal to convert the vacant premises at Westbury Lodge into a Post 16 Special Educational Needs provision for both Park Community Academy and Woodlands School. This follows the successful application by Park Community Academy to expand their designation from September 2016.

Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) – Phase 1:

There are four schools due to be rebuilt under the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme, these are:

Aspire Academy and Highfurlong School

The contractors have now been on site for over 12 months and the work continues to progress well on the Blackpool Road site (former Collegiate High School site). The schools are due to take occupation

by October half term with the contractors then moving onto the demolition of the old Highfurlong School and the external works. There remains an outstanding concern relating to the Land Title ownership. The Local Authority has been liaising with both the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Academy sponsor on this matter in an effort to resolve.

Hawes Side Academy

Plans for the new school have now been approved by the Education Funding Agency. Work on the new school is due to commence on site this June, with completion due by September 2016.

South Shore Academy

The proposal for the new school at South Shore Academy has been approved. Work on this site is due to commence March 2016, with the school being available for occupation by September 2017.

Special Education Needs, Assessment and Support and Psychological

OfSTED is currently preparing a framework for the inspection of SEND services for 0-25 year olds with SEN and / or a disability. The Department for Education (DfE) in the near future will sign it off with a draft framework due. Pilots will take place with several localities before the first full inspections commence in January 2016. The focus will be the new SEND statutory frameworks from September 2014 and the various areas outlined in the May 2015 Code of Practice. These are extensive and cover a range of service and strategic areas across the council (Adult services, Children services, Education and Care), education providers/ schools/ colleges and health. The proposal is for three inspectors, two from OfSTED and one from the CQC for health, to carry out the inspections. It is unknown how long the inspections will last or the criteria for judgement. Preparation, within these parameters, has commenced.

Music Service

- Customer demand for this service has increased by 25%. New Service Level Agreements indicate further demand in September.
- 4,500 pupils continue to have weekly instrumental or vocal lessons. All instruments are loaned without charge. 1,280 instrumentalists have free weekly Wider Opportunities where children receive tuition for up to one year.
- Another two young instrumentalists have passed auditions for National Orchestras. This takes us up to 12 since September. This is also a first for Blackpool.
- The English Opera Touring Company has delivered inspirational programmes in Anchorsholme, Highfurlong and Marton Primary Academy.
- In April, a new Theatre Partnership was formed to meet the needs of our increasing number of young thespians.
- Charity Status has enabled us to set up a 'click on and donate' website button. Parents whose children receive free ensemble rehearsals have been particularly generous. As a result, the service has awarded its first £200 bursary.
- 20 Trinity Examinations were taken on 24 March. 100% passed including several distinctions at Grade 8.
- 59% of Blackpool School Choirs entered the Choir of the Year competition held in the Tower Ballroom. Winners included Anchorsholme, Norbreck and St Nicholas C of E Primary. Norbreck Academy have also performed in the under 12 finals in Barnardos National Choir Competition at the Royal Festival Hall.
- 50% of our schools competed in Musician of the Year. Primary School winners came from Norbreck, Anchorsholme and Claremont Primary whilst high school winners included Montgomery, Aspire, St Mary's and Lytham St Anne's High.
- 50% of our schools also competed in Pop Idol 2015. Winning primary schools included St Nicholas C of E, Our Lady of the Assumption and, St John Vianney Catholic. High School winners came from Montgomery, St Mary's Catholic and Aspire Academy. Several pupils are now auditioning in Blackpool for X Factor and The Voice.

Child Poverty

As the Centre for Early Child Development intensifies its work and the Head Start pilot project starts to deliver results, the Council's Child Poverty Framework now needs to be reviewed to account for the new working arrangements. Over the summer, we will update the statutory Child Poverty Needs Assessment and from this, we will develop and deliver the new strategy in line with our aim to create resilient communities.

Health and Wellbeing Board

We have undertaken a review of the Health and Wellbeing Board's operations with a view to increasing its influence at a time when its role is becoming ever more important. Our partners said they valued the discussions around priorities at the Board and as a result, we are bringing back thematic debates at the Board to focus on our priorities. This will also allow us to shape the detail of some of the main proposals our partners are working on, such as the New Models of Care work aimed at providing more cost effective care around the people who use our services the most. It will also help us get our thoughts in order around the NHS five year forward plan.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) describes a process that identifies current and future health and wellbeing needs and the causes of poor health within Blackpool. Since 2008 undertaking JSNA is a statutory duty under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have equal and joint duties to prepare JSNA through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The JSNA aims to promote a common understanding of health and wellbeing and provides transparency with regard to the local decision making process. Local partnerships, but principally the local Health and Wellbeing Board and partners, are expected to prioritise based on the information and evidence identified by their local JSNA, as it highlights where there are gaps in knowledge or services and helps inform effective decision-making.

The outputs of the JSNA process can be found on <http://blackpooljsna.org.uk/>

The JSNA is the process that gathers all key statistics regarding the health and wellbeing of the population of Blackpool.

The JSNA assesses need by comparing the health and wellbeing characteristics of Blackpool against other areas and examines how these characteristics change over time. JSNA is also used to determine where inequalities exist between different communities within the town and identify communities with specific health needs. As part of the JSNA process, the views of the public and service users are gathered to determine the expressed needs of the community and the strengths and assets found within the community.

Key outputs of the JSNA process include:

- Five core chapter that describe the population of Blackpool, health and wellbeing, lifestyle factors, social environment and living and working in Blackpool.
- Topic based needs assessments and reports
- Children Needs Assessment
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Library of Public Health Annual reports
- Ad-hoc analytical support

Schools Catering Services

As previously reported, from September 2014 school lunches have been provided free of charge to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 throughout all schools in England and Wales. This is a Government initiative aimed at ensuring a good quality, nutritional lunch is available to all pupils and it is anticipated that this scheme will be run on an ongoing basis for the foreseeable future.

As confirmed in the January 2015 census, the take up figure in Blackpool for the Universal Infant Free School Meal is in excess of 88%. Overall, there has been an increase of 34% in uptake since the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meal. Whilst some of this is due to the introduction of the Universal Free School Meal, there has also been an increase in the number of KS2 pupils taking a school meal.

In order to meet legislative requirements allergen information is available in each school kitchen. All the meats used are being sourced from British animals and are Red Tractor certified or have Farm Assured certification, ensuring total traceability.

Pupils continue to have a choice of hot meals available every day, complemented by a salad bar, featuring a wide range of produce, a breadbasket and a selection of tasty desserts. Menus are fully compliant with the School Food Plan and are changed each school term to take account of seasonal variations.

The Free Breakfast Service, for all primary school children, currently serves breakfasts in 35 primary schools. On an average week, we serve over 50,000 breakfasts, which equates to a take up rate of 90%.

Sport, Physical Activity and Play.

Blackpool's Early Years Physical Activity provision has been underway since the start of this academic year. January saw the recruitment of a full time Early Years Physical Activity Development Officer whose responsibility was to manage, deliver and co-ordinate the Early Years and Schools Transition Programme.

At the end of the last financial year, Blackpool's Early Years programme saw brilliant success with over 107 trained nursery professionals, of whom 96% have a good and excellent understanding of physical activity guidelines. We delivered in over 20 private and school based nursery settings engaging 689 (85%) young children. In addition, we established four Early Movers physical activity clubs around Blackpool's children's centres and schools with the aim to develop increase and sustain opportunities for children under five.

Consequently the curriculum sports provision and early years' level of service has continued to grow, with new programmes including Learn to Cycle and Learn to Swim being very popular and with many schools and nurseries requesting additional high quality physical activity provision and support for child and staff development.

We are looking to further increase the number of settings and staff involved in the Early Start programme, we have many new exciting events and opportunities for the whole of the Early Years and Foundation Family to get involved in with the first event having been held on 17 June at Blackpool Sports Centre. We are also looking forward to launching a summer programme to keep them healthy and active over the summer holidays.

The School Transition Programme has seen similar success with 92.80% of the cohort engaging within some form of physical activity. Transition clubs have seen popular uptake with 79 Year 7 students engaging, we have signed posted many students to local community and sports clubs to further increase and sustain their involvement within sport.

Sport Blackpool's School and Community Team has continued to promote the benefits of a healthy and physically active lifestyle through the provision of high quality delivery within the school day and beyond. The School Games in Blackpool has been recognised at National and Regional levels for the work undertaken with clubs and engagement with competitive opportunities.

On the ground competitions have recently taken place and have seen the winners medals presented to Stanley for Tag Rugby, Norbreck for High 5 Netball, St Mary's Handball and St Teresa's for Key Steps Gymnastics in build up to the SPAR Lancashire School Games Level 3 Finals that took place in Blackpool on 30 June.

Community Sport in Blackpool has seen an increase through the additional projects taken on with Street Games. The Friday Doorstep Sports Club will see the introduction of activities including handball, dodgeball and crazy catch to complement the existing football sessions. New activities in the shape of Rookie Lifeguards and Outdoor Revolution are due to get underway as part of the CLUB1 Programme. A new site for the Healthy Play Programme has been added to the programme, which provides children in the Claremont area to access sports sessions every Monday evening.

To celebrate National Bike Week, 13 to 21st June, guided bike rides took place from Moor Park Health and Leisure, Blackpool Sports Centre, Solaris Centre and Bickerstaffe Offices.

As part of Blackpool Youth Games, the first cycling event was held in the Sports Arena on Thursday 25 June as a way to reward children that completed the Bikeability cycling proficiency this year.

A new partnership with Blackpool Victoria Hospital has been formed to launch a staff bike scheme using four yellow hire bikes as part of their healthy workplace initiative.

A new partnership with 4techmoto vocational education centre to provide students with hire bikes to refurbish and utilise for further hire and provide new opportunities for individuals who may require a cycle to access employment.

An additional 12 balance bikes (pedal-less) are due to be delivered for rolling out of the new Early Years balance bike scheme that introduces bike control skills to 3 to 5 year olds. A programme of 1 day/ 3 days/ 5 days' options has been developed.

The Feel Good Factory continues to grow at Moor Park with over 160 new members. The Active Blackpool team has introduced a Heart Failure class at Moor Park, a new partnership with the NHS Heart Failure rehabilitation team will provide a swift and effective process for referrals and sustainability. A new Healthy Community Walk based at East Pines Park will start in July.

The Steps to Health Programme has been one of the six pilot schemes in the country to work with Walking for Health at Macmillan. The Health walks are incredibly valuable for people with many types of health conditions, including cancer. We know that physical activity helps people living with and beyond cancer and 67% of people who have had a cancer diagnosis are not sufficiently active. We have been working with Macmillan to try to engage people that have had a diagnosis of cancer and their family members to try the walking programme within their local community in and around Blackpool. Results from the pilot scheme will be in September 2015.

Drowning prevention is at the forefront of Aquatics throughout June linking to the national RLSS drowning prevention charity week, 20 to 28 June. Throughout the week, the delivery of water safety awareness was the focus for all primary school swimming and learn to swim lessons. The Blackpool Youth Games swimming event will also follow this theme by incorporating Rookie lifesaving relays.

On the 26 June, a new Rookie Lifesaving club for children 8 to 16 years took place at Palatine Leisure centre and it is hoped that this will soon be replicated at Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre.

Climbing and bouldering has seen a huge increase in patronage with 733 individuals utilising our facilities at Blackpool Sports Centre during April and May 2015.

The High Ropes has opened its doors to the public providing a new attraction for the residents and visitors of Blackpool.

A date for the Outdoor Revolution launch has been set for the weekend 11 and 12 July 2015. An opportunity to showcase the outdoor activities available, kayaking on the lake, challenge the High Ropes, Climbing and Bouldering in Blackpool Sports Centre and Orienteering and Geocaching in Stanley Park.

Parks and Green Environment

The Parks and Open Spaces Service have submitted a bid for £20,000 in partnership with the Friends of Watson Road Park to the SITA Enhancing Communities Fund. This will enable the refurbishment of Watson Road Park playground. The funding would be used towards the cost of commissioning a specialist contractor to install new play equipment to a pre-agreed design plan and specification. A further £4,000 Section 106 money has already been secured towards the scheme.

The bid has followed a series of public consultation events where park users were invited to have their say on the existing playground as well as consider five differing playground design options to stimulate debate and ideas. The overwhelming view is that the current playground is in a poor state of repair and needs improved provision. Comments included that the playground lacks equipment, which stimulates imaginative play particularly for toddlers. People also commented that the current playground is unattractive, lacked bins, seating and areas for families to utilise.

The feedback obtained was fundamental in enabling us to pick a winning design option, which was presented to the consultees. It has been agreed that some items of existing play equipment in reasonable repair, including climbing units and swings, could remain and be renovated. However, a number of new items will be introduced to invigorate the space and ensure a more varied play experience.

Following the production of a joint design brief by United Utilities and Blackpool Council with regard to development works within Anchorsholme Park, a draft park master plan has now been produced ready for consultation in July. United Utilities is leading a five-year project from January 2015 aimed at improving bathing water quality on the Fylde Coast. The majority of Anchorsholme Park will be closed for the duration to allow engineers to carry out the work. These works include two phases, Phase 1 works a new storm water storage tank and connection into main sewer, Phase 2 works a new pumping station, screening chamber, 4.5 km outfall, pressure chamber and supporting buildings/ infrastructure. Once the works area is completed, the park will be refurbished and reopened to the public. The master plan shows how the park will look following the refurbishment. More detailed designs and specifications for new park buildings, play and sport facilities and landscaped areas will also be produced in due course.

Stanley Park and Showground

A bid for funding by the Parks and Open Spaces Service in partnership with the Friends of Stanley Park to Yorkshire Banks Spirit of the Community Awards for the creation of Busy Bee Meadows, has been successful. However, the value of the grant will not be known until the announcement is made at an award ceremony in Leeds in early summer. Successful winners will either receive a payment of £10,000 or £5,000. The funding will enable the creation of Busy Bee Meadows on Stanley Park.

The projects vision is to develop the Fylde Coast's very first purpose made wildflower meadow experience that brings nature to the doorstep of the community and provides a hugely important

habitat for bees and butterflies. With a meadow guide and interpretive signage, the meadow will go a long way to enhance people's appreciation of Blackpool's green heritage. The meadow will be situated on an existing field overlooking a number of key park facilities and will be accessible through an existing path network and will contain a series of mown paths enabling people to explore up-close.

The visitor centre at Stanley Park as well as the planned new visitor centre at Marton Mere Nature Reserve will serve as superb hubs to promote the meadow and distribute information. The meadow will facilitate and compliment a range of outdoor activities including pram and toddler walks, NHS linked health walks as well as nature study and Junior Ranger sessions. The construction, management and conservation of the meadow will enable an excellent range of volunteering projects, including the inclusion of volunteers to assist in the preparation and seeding of the site, as well as keeping pernicious weeds in check. Seasonal seed collecting events (such as National Seed Gathering Sunday) will spearhead a Blackpool Seed Hub, where park visitors can purchase bags of native, local wildflower seed to sow at home.

Stanley Park's five year Strategic Management Plan was created in partnership and consultation with a comprehensive range of stakeholders including Natural England, English Heritage, Blackpool Civic Trust and local group Nature Watch. It outlines a clear need for implementing sustainable grassland management practices to develop a wildflower legacy, benefit local biodiversity in particular invertebrates, reduce uneconomical and labour intensive grass cutting regimes, enable conservation volunteer involvement and benefit local schools that will have a special place to undertake environmental education.

Marton Mere Nature Reserve and Ecological Areas

Construction of the new Marton Mere Visitor Centre has now been completed. The project team are now designing the building interior to include exhibitions, displays, flexible classroom space and office. It is hoped the building will be launched in early summer. The Sand Martin nesting bank, island remodelling works and bird hide installation is also complete. Upcoming summer works include footpath refurbishments, installation of new signage and the creation of a nature trail. A new friends group is also being developed and an event and activity programme is being drafted.