

CORPORATE PORTFOLIOS

The 'Corporate' portfolio consists of:

- Councillor Lynn Williams – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Ivan Taylor – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance

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>

Strategic Issues

Multiversity Success! Delivering the very best opportunity for our children and adults

I am sure all Members will join me in celebrating our success in winning £40m of Levelling Up Round 2 funding for Multiversity, a project we have been developing in close partnership with Blackpool and the Fylde College since 2017. The Multiversity campus will deliver state of the art Further and Higher Education facilities in the heart of our Town Centre. It will create thousands of opportunities for Blackpool children and adults to study for further and higher qualifications, enabling them to get the skills they need to get good jobs and succeed.

We are ambitious for our residents and I want all of our people to think that further and higher education can be for them. This new campus will help us raise aspirations in the best facilities and in the possible location. How fantastic!

I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to give us the opportunity to now make Multiversity a reality: our terrific staff, the College and the support we have had for this project from our business community, Elected Members, neighbouring authorities and MPs.

The Multiversity will add another wonderful string to our regeneration bow. It will sit right alongside Talbot Gateway, a new Civil Service Hub and everything else now in delivery in the town centre such as Blackpool Central, the new Imax cinema, Frasers department store, the market, conference centre, attractions and hotels. Blackpool Council is undoubtedly delivering transformational change for our residents, business and visitors.

Budget Process

The 2023/24 Budget report will be considered by Executive next Monday alongside the Capital Programme for 2023/24 - 2025/26 and associated Capital and Treasury Management strategies. The latest in-year budget monitoring shows a slight improvement from the £11.4m forecast overspend reported at the last Full Council meeting to £10.7m (as at month 8) despite ongoing pressures in the care sectors. The focus over the last month has been on producing a balanced budget for 2023/24 following receipt of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for Blackpool Council on 19 December 2022.

Lancashire 2050: working together with purpose

In November, the speaker of the House of Commons hosted a Lancashire Day reception at Westminster for a group of Councillors and Officers to launch the new Lancashire 2050 Framework. The document sets out a strategic plan on how we will work together as a collective, harnessing our skills and specialisms to guide the county towards a prosperous and sustainable future. A comprehensive blueprint, it covers our shared vision around economic prosperity, transport and infrastructure, environment and climate, housing, early years and education, employment and skills, health and wellbeing and communities and place. Getting agreement on the key issues is just the start of what I hope will be a long and fruitful deepening of our collaboration across political parties and across our wonderful county and work has now turned to developing some truly transformative actions that Blackpool will be at the heart of. Ultimately, this is a key part of our approach to securing a comprehensive devolution deal for Lancashire to deliver meaningful change across the county.

Corporate Issues

Memorial Service

Blackpool paid its respects at a service honouring the heroism of three Blackpool police officers who died in an attempted sea rescue 40 years ago on 6 January 2023. PCs Angela Bradley, 23, Gordon Connolly, 24, and Colin Morrison, 38, all drowned trying to save a holidaymaker who entered the sea to rescue his dog. A fourth police officer, PC Pat Abram, was rescued at the scene. Scores of people, including families of the officers and the doctor who resuscitated PC Abram, were at the service led by Lancashire's Chief Constable, Chris Rowley. The service took place in Jubilee Gardens in Gynn Square, close to where the tragedy unfolded and near the Blue Light Memorial that honours emergency services personnel who have died on duty.

Operation Goshawk and fire on Church Street on Boxing Day

The Council played a major role in an Emergency Planning exercise involving all of the emergency services, health service, voluntary services and armed services to rehearse in a live setting our response to a major incident. Based around a terrorist incident, the exercise was

particularly timely with the introduction of Martyn's Law following the Manchester Arena attack. We will use learning from the exercise as part of our planning processes for all types of major incident.

I would like to thank all staff who were involved in responding to the fire on Church Street over Christmas. As always, I am proud with how well we respond to these situations no matter when they occur, with staff working to keep the public safe and get the town up and running again as soon as possible.

Working with Partners

Christmas By The Sea/Illuminations Extension

The extension to the Illuminations season coupled with the second year of the "Christmas By The Sea" event has once again proved an invaluable boost to Blackpool's tourism economy. Promenade footfall for the period of the Christmas event (18 November to 2 January inclusive) was recorded at almost 6 million, an increase of 10% compared to 2021, which was itself an exceptional year. Feedback from many tourism businesses has been extremely positive with some showing record levels of trading for a winter period. The two-month Illuminations extension (7 November to 2 January) also showed a significant increase in Promenade footfall of almost 20% compared to the previous year. We are now working with potential sponsors to repeat the Christmas event during 2023. The event has been shortlisted in the Large Event of the Year category in the Lancashire Tourism Awards due to be staged at the Conference and Exhibition Centre on 7 February 2023.

New Destination Guide for 2023

Blackpool has unveiled a brand-new guide for 2023 showcasing a spectacular programme of events, shows and attractions for the year ahead. The resort's new Destination Guide is fronted by resort ambassador, Nigel C. Gull, the seagull puppet that featured in a £1m TV advertising campaign during 2022. Nigel gets pride of place on the cover of the new 88-page glossy guide, which also includes a fascinating behind-the-scenes insight into how he was created by award-winning puppeteer, Andy Heath. The guide, illustrated with stunning photography, celebrates a very special milestone - the 160th anniversary of Blackpool's majestic North Pier, charting its history from its opening day in 1863 when more than 20,000 people turned up to stroll along its wooden boardwalk. This year's official tourism season launch will take place on Friday 31 March at the Conference and Exhibition Centre.

2023 Events Programme

The 2023 major events programme is already taking shape with agreed dates for Armed Forces Week (19-25 June), Air Show (12 and 13 August), Ride The Lights (29 August), Illuminations Switch-On (1 September), World Fireworks (16 and 30 September and 20 October) and

Lightpool Festival (20-28 October). Confirmation of more dates and further information on all events will follow over the next few weeks.

Transforming Services

Bispham benefits from better connectivity

The Fibre Blackpool Service has just completed an upgrade to a number of Council sites and schools, with the first site to be connected being Bispham Endowed Primary School. Their new 10Gigabit internet connection runs over 500 times faster than their previous service, making it one of the first primary schools in the country to benefit from this speed of connection and enabling different types of learning opportunity in the future. The upgrade is thanks to investment from the Department of Media, Culture and Sport to upgrade fibre embedded in the tramway (£3.5million) and through working with TNP and CityFibre who are both members of the co-operative.

A number of other Bispham schools will benefit in the coming weeks, with rollout to more public sector sites including schools, NHS and council planned over the next 12 months. The quality of the infrastructure has also led to the main provider of internet services on the Isle of Man, AQL, joining the Fibre co-operative and setting up a presence in Blackpool.

Confirmation of all Electric Buses for Blackpool Transport

Blackpool Transport Services (BTS) and the Council are now moving forward positively with our conversion of the diesel bus fleet to all electric buses. The Council has agreed a loan to BTS to convert and build various parts of the existing depot to facilitate the layout changes needed to accommodate electric vehicle chargers and deal with changes to the maintenance required by the fleet. The buses will come in in two tranches to replace all vehicles within 3 years, ensuring that we can tailor our requirements as we learn about the practicalities of operating electric buses. The first of the buses will hit the streets in 2024, putting us well ahead of the rollout of electric buses in other parts of the country. This is a huge project but one which will make a massive contribution to our Climate Emergency carbon reduction targets, with a projected saving of 111,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually and a corresponding contribution to the quality of air in all of the communities served by the vehicles.