

CABINET MEMBER FOR LEVELLING UP: PEOPLE - COUNCILLOR JO FARRELL

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Public health and health protection
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Harm reduction
- Domestic abuse
- Leisure services including leisure management, Active Blackpool, Community Sport, PE and schools' sports and outdoor pursuits
- Libraries
- Housing options and homelessness
- Decent Homes
- Housing related support and sustaining private sector tenancies
- Catering
- Equality and diversity
- Adult Learning
- Getting People into Work including Positive Steps and Business Growth Prosperity
- Relationship with Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus
- Social Value
- Welfare benefits and Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1: Tackling tobacco addiction and creating the conditions for a smoke-free generation

The use of tobacco is the single greatest entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability and death in this country. New proposals published by central government recommend both legislation and financial investment in order to tackle this significant public health issue, with the consultation exercise closing on 6 December 2023. The Council responded to the consultation to give its full support to proposals seeking to raise the age of sale of tobacco to those born after 1 January 2009 and to restrict the marketing and sales of e-cigarettes to tackle the significant uptake amongst children and young people. Both would send a clear signal of the

issue and support our local activity to ensure age restrictions on the sale of vapes and tobacco are being upheld locally (see the cabinet member report for Community Safety, Street Scene, and Neighbourhoods).

The government has committed to funding several initiatives to improve smoking cessation support. This includes an additional £70 million annually to support local authority-led stop smoking services and £45 million over two years to roll out the national 'Swap to Stop' scheme. The new ring-fenced monies will enable our existing community-based tobacco addiction and treatment services to have sufficient leadership capacity and oversight and increased co-ordination and delivery to ensure that all of our smokers have the support that they need to quit. Blackpool will also receive an additional £281,362 which will be provided through a new section 31 grant on top of the current public health grant allocations.

Our existing stop smoking community service, Blackpool Tobacco Addiction Service, achieved 366 quits in 2022, exceeding our yearly target of 325 quits, measured by the number of smokers who have not re-started within a four-week period. Carbon monoxide verified quits also increased in 2022, with an average carbon monoxide validation rate of 71.2% compared to a national average of 15%. The service continues to work in partnership with the Acute NHS Trust's Inpatient Smokefree Service as part of the NHS Long Term Plan to ensure pathways are linked for continuity of care. The close collaboration and the integration of these services offers a bigger opportunity to deliver better outcomes for smokers quitting in Blackpool. While the 2023 report is not yet available, data so far shows that we have had 825 quit dates set up to November with a quit rate of 46.5% and 76.8% co-verification.

Theme 2: Capital investment in community sport and leisure facilities

Over the last 12 months, Leisure Services has secured a significant amount of capital investment to enhance sport and leisure facilities across the town. The £6 million Common Edge Community Sports Village development opened in June 2023 and includes a full size 3G football pitch, grass rugby pitch, training pitch and changing rooms. The project has provided significantly enhanced sport and leisure facilities as part of the Enterprise Zone Project which also included £250,000 external funding from the Football Foundation. A refurbishment of the second all-weather pitch at Stanley Park took place towards the end of 2023, which was also part-funded by the Football Foundation.

In October 2021, the government and Lawn Tennis Association announced significant investment into public tennis courts across Britain with the aim of bringing public park tennis courts in very poor or unplayable condition back to life and engaging 1 million more players in tennis. At the start of 2023, Blackpool received £214,321 investment across four locations,

including Stanley Park, Cavendish Road Park, Claremont Park and Anchorsholme Park. The athletics track at Stanley Park also received investment of £324,657, which enabled a full replacement of the running track and throwing areas, providing a safe and modern facility for residents to use and allowing large scale athletics events to continue in Blackpool.

Further investment in sport and leisure facilities across the town is planned for 2024, with funding from the Football Foundation to develop PlayZones (multi-sports playing areas) in Talbot and Brunswick. This forms part of a wider project working with the Blackpool Boys and Girls Club to build a new youth centre, with work on these two projects expected to start in spring 2024. Additionally, conversations are on-going with the Football Foundation, who are keen to invest in a redevelopment project of Boundary Park changing rooms and outdoor sports area which provide up-to-date community sports and activity spaces for local residents.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.