

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board Agenda

Fylde Borough Council
Date of Publication: 20 December 2019
Please ask for : Katharine McDonnell
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01253 658423

**Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board meeting on
Tuesday, 7 January 2020 at 2.00 pm
Reception Room, Town Hall, St Annes**

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of interest

Members will disclose any pecuniary and any other significant interests they may have in relation to the matters to be considered at this meeting.

3. Confirmation of minutes

(pages 1 - 3)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting

4. Matters arising

5. Future High Street Fund: Fylde Coast Tramway Loop

(pages 4-7)

Report by Nick Gerrard

6 Exclusion of public and press

If the discussion during items 7 and 8 of this agenda involves the disclosure of "exempt information", as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the board wishes to move to confidential session, it may at any point pass the following resolution: "That the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the agenda item(s) is/are considered, on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Variation

Order 2006 and, that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

7. Blackpool Airport EZ Progress report (standing item) (pages 8 - 13)

Report of the Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council

8. Hillhouse Technology EZ Progress report (standing item) (pages 14 - 17)

Report of the Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council

12. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Tuesday 7 April 2020 to be held in the Reception Room at the Town Hall in St Annes at 2pm.

MINUTES Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Date:	Tuesday, 10 September 2019
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Economic Prosperity Board Members Present:	Councillors Susan Fazackerley MBE, David Henderson, Simon Blackburn
Chief Executive Officers Present:	Garry Payne, Chief Executive Wyre Council Paul Walker, Director of Development Services, Fylde Council (Substitute for Allan Oldfield) Neil Jack, Chief Executive Blackpool Council
Co-opted private sector representatives Present:	Martin Long (Blackpool), Neil Farley (Fylde), Peter Worthington (Wyre)
Other Attendees:	Paul Evans (BEIS), Nick Gerrard, Rob Green, Nicole Billington, Steve Smith, Katharine McDonnell
Apologies	Allan Oldfield, Katherine O'Connor

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive Fylde Council and Katherine O'Connor, Senior Policy Manager, Cities and Local Growth Unit – North West

Declarations of Interest

None

2. Confirmation of minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2019 were confirmed as a correct record

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Blackpool: The Place for Business – Inward Investment Marketing Strategy Update

Nicole Billington provided an update of the Business Investment Marketing strategy. She showed examples of additional content added to the website since the last meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion about previous concerns regarding the focus on Blackpool, which did not appear to have been addressed. The Board acknowledged that whilst the decision to use Blackpool as the main brand was correct, it felt like a missed opportunity not to use the website to articulate the offer of the wider area, and the nuances of the area.

In discussion it was agreed that it was not about breaking the Blackpool brand. It was acknowledged that Blackpool was well known, but once into the website, not to provide clarity regarding the three different areas, and what these could offer, was potentially misleading and detrimental.

It was agreed that Nick and Nicole would speak to the marketing consultants and look to correcting or providing clarification to the content, where possible.

Minutes – Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board – 10 September 2019

It was discussed that as the campaign came to an end in December, a review should take place with a view to build on the work already undertaken. The idea of closer collaboration between the three councils in regards to economic development was also mooted.

Decision: The Board noted the update, and Nick and Nicole to speak to the marketing consultants regarding the content of the website.

5. Local Industrial Strategy and The Lancashire Plan - Update

Nick Gerrard provided an update on the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). He advised that each local authority was asked to provide propositions regarding future plans, to feed into the LIS. A joint submission from the three councils had put forward the tram loop and development of the town centres, through the Future High Street Fund.

Discussion turned to the Tram Loop and how to further develop the idea to unlock future funding. It was discussed that a feasibility study would be the way forward. As Blackpool had refurbished and modernized the tramway, the authority could evidence the increased numbers of passengers and wider economic benefits.

It was discussed that collaboration, cooperation and innovation from the three councils in regards to the tramway loop with the benefits of improved connectivity and infrastructure, would fit with the Future High Street funding, and wider government agenda, and would give future bids for funding the edge.

Decision: The Board noted the report, and it was agreed for Nick, Steve and Andrea to meet to discuss a joint feasibility study bid.

6. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Board decided that the public and press should be excluded for the remaining items on the agenda and passed the following resolution; “that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting, on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)) of Part 1 of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Variation Order 2006 and, that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information”.

7. Blackpool Enterprise Zone Progress Report (Standing item)

The Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council submitted a progress report on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone and provided a verbal update of additional information not contained within the report.

Decision: The Board noted the report.

8. Hillhouse Enterprise Zone Progress Report (Standing item)

The Senior Economic Development Officer, Wyre Council submitted a progress report on the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

Decision: The Board noted the report.

9. Dates of forthcoming meetings

Tuesday 7 January 2020

Tuesday 7 April 2020

All meetings would be held in the Reception Room, St Annes Town Hall, to commence at 2pm.

The meeting started at 2pm and finished at 3.35pm

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Agenda Item 5

Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting:	7th January 2020

FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND: FYLDE COAST TRAMWAY LOOP

1. Purpose of the report:

To update the Board on the proposal for all three local authorities to include a funding request in their respective Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bids (by June 2020) to support a business case study into a Fylde Coast tramway loop.

2. Background:

The Fylde Coast is served by heavy rail by the North Fylde Line, recently electrified, and the South Fylde Line branching off at Kirkham and Wesham, which is single track to its terminus (Blackpool South railway station). Since electrification, the disused single track railway from south Fleetwood no longer connects at Poulton-le-Fylde.

The Blackpool Tramway, fully upgraded in 2012, operated successfully by Blackpool Transport along the coast from Starr Gate (Blackpool/Fylde border) to Fleetwood Ferry (Wyre). An extension to Blackpool North railway station is currently under development.

The proposal is to investigate the feasibility of two further extensions to the tramway, creating two tram/rail interchanges, with the aim of creating a more cohesive Fylde Coast public transport system, boosting Blackpool, Kirkham and Fleetwood town centres.

3. Proposition:

Following the discussion at the last Board meeting it is proposed that each local authority includes within their FHSF submission, a bid for resources in order for Blackpool Council, in conjunction with Lancashire County Council as transport authority for Fylde and Wyre, to undertake a comprehensive feasibility study to recommend a sufficiently developed preferred option, which will be capable of being implemented if a future funding opportunity becomes available.

It is important that this opportunity is pursued to prepare the way to develop the tramway network further to enhance the sub-region in terms of accessibility, regeneration and environmental sustainability and support important economic sectors such as tourism.

A more efficient and effective, modern and reliable, public transport system could be created by operating continuous tramlines between Kirkham and Wesham and Poulton-le-Fylde via Lytham St Anne's, Blackpool, Cleveleys, Fleetwood and Thornton. A tramway loop would also serve Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone, Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Hillhouse International Enterprise Zone.

In the north, the tramway would utilise the trackbed of the disused railway line between south Fleetwood and Poulton-le-Fylde. To the south, the tramway would use the trackbed of what is currently an operational railway, with an hourly service to Preston operated by Northern Railway. Clearly, this operator and Network Rail, who own and are responsible for the two branch lines would need to support the proposal.

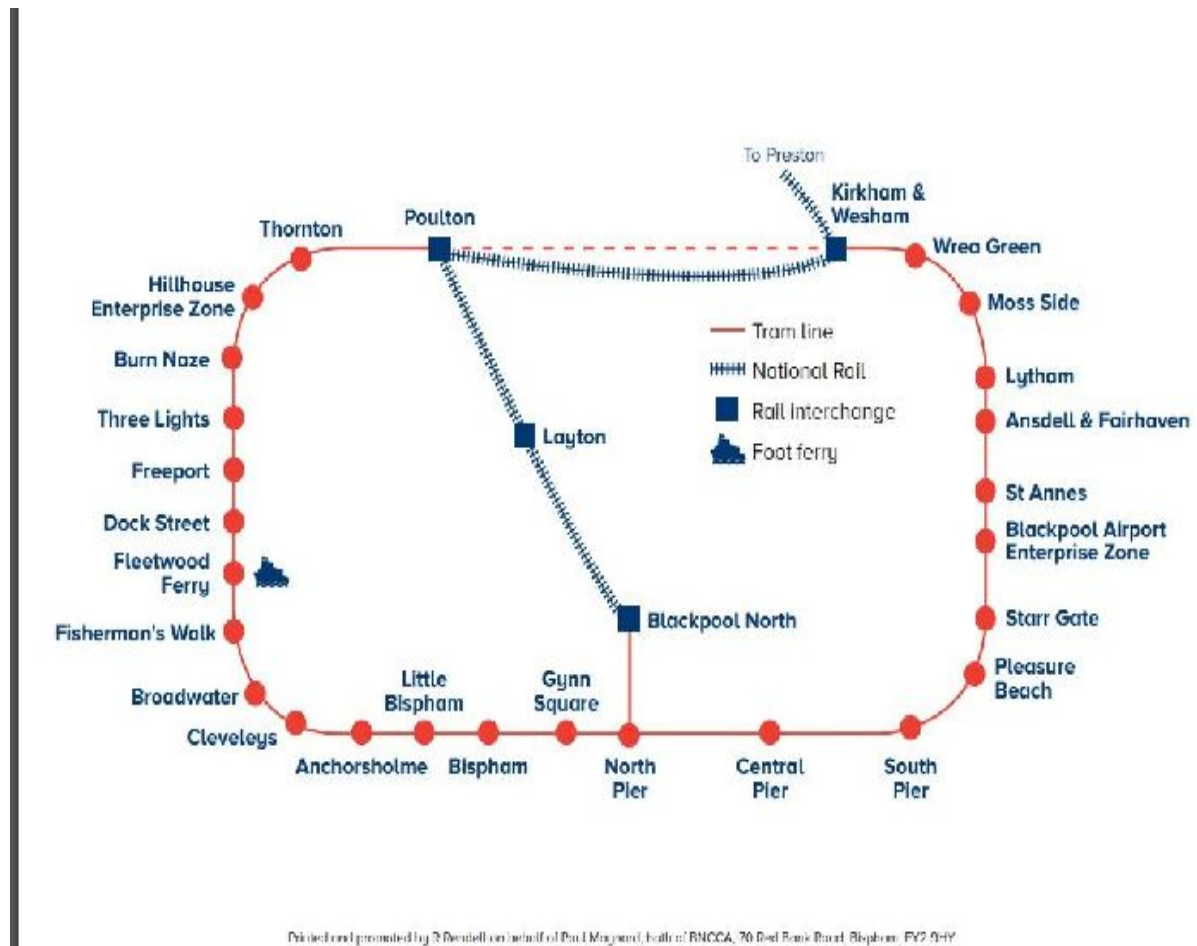
It should be stressed that the proposal is to undertake a business case study, which may or may not conclude the above is feasible, deliverable and would offer value for money, in accordance with a WebTAG appraisal, necessary for all major transport schemes. A healthy Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of >2:1 would be the ideal. The outputs would be an initial options report and then a comprehensive business case for the preferred option, which would reference previous options appraisal work undertaken. It is estimated that a comprehensive business case study would cost c£2m, which would be split equally between the Councils.

A tramway loop would ensure the Fylde Coast's settlements are better connected and more accessible to each other, benefiting local residents and visitors alike. Trips for employment, education, leisure and other purposes could be made by an efficient public transport system, improving transport choice, benefitting the environment and the local economy, boosting the high streets of Blackpool, Kirkham and Fleetwood. This joined-up proposal would demonstrate to Government and key stakeholders that the Councils are serious about not only improving the area and reducing retail leakage to Deepdale, Preston and further afield, with more attractive centres that will draw people in, hopefully reducing the proportion of their spend elsewhere and online, but also encouraging modal shifts towards a more sustainable form of transport.

Whilst Blackpool and Fleetwood are already connected to the tram network, Kirkham town centre is somewhat detached from its local station, so would need to be better connected to Wesham by a regular bus service, possibly using low emission or electric vehicles as a complementary measure to serve the proposed tram/rail interchange at Kirkham and Wesham station. This complementary measure would be part of the proposal, as would the need for Northern Railway and perhaps other operators to stop all their services at Kirkham and Wesham to dramatically improving transport interchange and travel choice.

Connections by foot and facilities for the mobility and sensory impaired would be required at both Kirkham and Wesham, and Poulton-le-Fylde.

4. Proposed Tramway Loop:



5. Political Support:

Due to the economic and indeed potential environmental/low carbon benefits to such a proposal all three Fylde authorities have agreed that they would wish to incorporate the funding of such a study, jointly, in their respective FHSF bid submissions. Blackpool North MP Paul Maynard, who was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department of Transport in the last Government, is fully supportive of the proposal.

Preliminary discussions have already taken place with MHCLG officials on this strategic approach to be adopted by the three Fylde Coast authorities and they are in the process of exploring the approach which plays into two of the main FHSF themes regarding investment in physical infrastructure and improvements to transport access.

6. Recommendations:

- a) That the proposition is accepted, with any agreed amendments.
- b) MHCLG are approached to secure endorsement for the approach being undertaken with a view to Future High Street Funding.
- c) Lancashire County Council, as transport authority for the vast majority of the study area, are formally approached for their support.
- d) Blackpool Transport, Network Rail and Northern Railway are briefed on the proposal and are given an opportunity to input.
- e) Community Rail Lancashire, Transport for the North, the DfT and the Poulton and Wyre Railway Society are consulted.

Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Report Author: Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 7th January 2020

Recommendation: That the Committee notes the report.

1. Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

a) Masterplan

Work to revise the EZ masterplan and delivery plan will commence in the first quarter 2020 pending completion of key work on specific details around phase one, highways and airport design. The new plan will also reflect the impacts of the data centre study recommendations and the changes surrounding the Squires Gate Industrial Estate. A procurement process is underway to revise the plan and thereafter re-work the delivery plan, which will provide new estimates of cost retained rates revenue, jobs and impact upon GVA over the lifetime of the EZ. It is hoped that the revised plan and delivery plan can be completed and presented for approval to EPB by March 2020. The approved Marketing Strategy will continue to be implemented for the Enterprise Zone and where appropriate will be updated upon completion of the masterplan update.

b) Fiscal Incentives

The clock continues to tick with regards the EZ fiscal benefits with the business rates relief due to expire on 31st March 2022 and the enhanced capital allowances (ECA) due to expire in November 2023, which will leave only a very short window of opportunity to capitalise once new development sites are released upon completion of key enabling infrastructure.

Agreement has been reached at the LEP EZGC for action to approach MHCLG and HMT on behalf of the four Lancashire and other Northern EZ's to seek extensions of the Fiscal benefits.

To progress matters it is therefore intended, to prepare a draft formal proposal seeking an extension of the fiscal incentives available to EZ's and circulate this to all northern EZ's seeking their support in principle. Thereafter calling a meeting of EZ's to be hosted in Lancashire to confirm the basis of a collective approach to MHCLG and HMT.

Preparatory work is underway to identify contacts for all other Northern Enterprise Zones for a combined approach to government as well as ongoing discussions with other LAMEC Enterprise Zones on next steps.

c) Current Activity - Phase One

A revised hybrid planning application for phase one is in the final stages of preparation and on target to be submitted at the end of January, once a few minor outstanding issues relating surrender and renewal of sports leases have been concluded. The new application will reflect a revised location for the eastern gateway road and changed aspirations in respect of replacement sports provision which will satisfy previous objections raised by Sport England.

Work commenced with dispensation under airport permitted development rights on Monday 9th December, to provide a new boundary fence to Blackpool Airport to carve off the land needed to accommodate new grass sports pitches, with an engineering contract due to commence in the new year, to provide a new airport perimeter track and crash gates prior to the engineering contract beginning in March to create the playing surface and drainage.

A further informal public consultation, will take place in January with a decision in principle, subject to Secretary of State consideration as it is Green Belt, anticipated in late Spring 2020.

The hybrid planning application will also include provision for a new primary electricity substation required to support anticipated increased power demand from early development of the phase one sites including the potential for possible data centres.

d) Eastern Gateway Access Road

Work on the eastern gateway access road design had been delayed whilst wider highway issues were resolved. The position of the access road which will now be a traffic light junction rather than the originally mooted roundabout, will be located to the north of South Shore Cricket Club. Work to the existing highway at Common Edge Road will be undertaken via the existing Highways PFI, whilst a separate design and build contract will be awarded for the new link between Common Edge Road and Amy Johnson Way, once the phase one planning consent has been granted. The target date for opening the through route is first quarter 2022.

e) Common Edge Sports Village

Initial work focusses on the relocation of existing grass pitches onto former airport land which will take circa 18 months from completion until they can be fully utilised. At the request of Sport England the Blackpool Council Playing Pitch Strategy is also being updated and the composition of the Common Edge facilities will be adjusted to reflect new requirements.

f) Link Road

Highway and transportation studies undertaken to support the phase one planning applications have confirmed that the M55 link road is not critical to the ability to develop out phase one of the EZ. Ongoing issues in relation to the funding and delivery of the proposed M55 link road continue and are being managed by Lancashire County Council, particularly in terms of funding and a delivery timescale.

g) Initial Speculative Development

Full planning consent has been granted by Blackpool Council for the development of a speculative 4,000m² B1/B2 unit on a site at Amy Johnson Way. Negotiations are in the final stages with a prospective occupier and subject to agreement on Heads of Terms and full financial sign off it is expected that a construction contract can be entered into with work commencing in January.

h) Planning Applications

There is currently one live planning application being considered by Blackpool Council for a proposed development of a 20MW gas fired power generation facility.

In November planning consent was awarded for a 1,400m² development on land in private ownership off Amy Johnson way and construction has now commenced, the majority of the property will be occupied by the developers business.

i) Squires Gate Industrial Estate (Former Wellington Bomber Factory)

The new owners of Squires Gate Industrial Estate have commenced some works on the property seeking to return some previously vacant accommodation to use and upgrading site security fencing. At the present time it is most unlikely that the owner would wish to explore the demolition and redevelopment of the property as initially proposed in the masterplan, although efforts continue to encourage appropriate development to come forward.

j) Communications Infrastructure

Work has continued to support the installation of the new transatlantic fibre optic telecommunications cable, part of the North Atlantic loop from New York to Denmark, which is being developed by Aquacomms. Cable ducting has been laid from the proposed landing point to the base station at Blackpool Airport. Additional cable ducting has been laid across the EZ estate, with a further expansion of the network under the Local Fast Fibre Network (LFFN) programme at the planning stage. The new transatlantic cable is due to come ashore in Q1 2020. Discussions are ongoing to conclude agreements for the completion of the LFFN link to Hillhouse EZ via the tramway.

Presence of the new optic fibre link will provide fast communication links with timings of less than 64 milliseconds to transmit data from Blackpool to New York, providing a distinct competitive advantage and USP for the EZ. The new connection will open up the possibility of securing investment in the provision of data centre facilities at the EZ and of securing investment from data driven industries.

A study to confirm the feasibility of undertaking such specialist data centre development has been completed by Danish based specialists COWI. A specialist task group has been established to progress the opportunities in this sector working closely with BITC and the Blackpool Pride of Place board and held its initial meeting on 10th December to discuss the overall findings of the report and approaches to a number of data centre developers and operators .and the group identified potential next steps to take.

k) Fibre Blackpool

An communications campaign was launched in November supporting and promoting Fibre Blackpool, a project run by a co-operative group from the private and public sectors working together to roll out a local full fibre network that will give an improved, gigabit capable, broadband internet connection to residents and businesses on the Fylde Coast. Early enquiries have been very positive with over 50 initial enquiries made to register interest through the dedicated website www.fibreblackpool.com

The first phase of the campaign was launched under the Co-operative banner due to restrictions imposed on the council's promotional activity during purdah. Phase 2 of the communication campaign will resume post-election when the council will promote the Fibre Blackpool campaign across all the council websites and social media platforms.

l) Marketing

Marketing Lancashire have now engaged with Richard Barber & Co. to discuss phase 2 of the EZ websites, phase 2 of the overarching Invest in Lancashire site and options around the integration of Evoluteive. We await confirmation of a meeting early in the New Year to discuss draft proposals and implementation of new website features.

Press and promotional activity continue and since the last meeting the team has exhibited at various profile raising events including:

- Eco-I Conference, Lancaster University (19-20/09)
- Tourism Society Conference, Blackpool (23-24/09) Presentation at Kirkham Grammar School (14/11)
- Growth 4 Business event part of Blackpool Enterprise Week (26/11)

Members of the EZ team have also attended as delegates at sector specific exhibitions to learn more about the key audiences the EZ is looking to attract and to make strategic connections within the various industries for example:

- World Aviation Festival, London (5-6 Sep)
- DCD (Data Centre Dynamics) Conference, London (5-6 Nov)

The team have also capitalised on opportunities to meet with international industry influencers whilst the contacts have been in the country attending other sector specific events such as 1025 Connect Capacity Europe Conference, London (Oct 2019).

Marketing Lancashire attended MIPIM UK this year and the team will receive feedback as to its suitability for future EZ sponsorship opportunities and the possible collaboration of all four Lancashire EZ sites under the LAMEC banner.

We are also working with LCC to appoint a joint international agent for all four LAMEC sites by Spring 2020.

In the coming few months, the team will be speaking at the Forum for the Built Environment, NW Built Environment Network and the Place NW Lancashire Development Update. The EZ team will also be exhibiting at EVO North, a two day, Northern Powerhouse event in Manchester attracting large numbers from public and private sectors to debate and discuss Transport and Connectivity, Business, Innovation and Investment, Health, Social Care and Wellbeing, Housing, Energy and Infrastructure, Science and Technology, Education, Skills and Employment.

In Q1 2020 we will be looking at updating and streamlining the promotional material to reflect any changes made to the Masterplan and Delivery Plan.

Additional EZ site signage has now been approved for location on the airport roadside frontage and the new signs displaying airport occupiers will be erected early Q1 2020.

The fourth EZ newsletter is scheduled for distribution to 115 registered recipients in January and work continues to engage more people to sign up to the newsletter.

There continues to be a steady stream of enquiries for the EZ, driven by the web site, site signage, and word of mouth. The enquiries remain steady although the volume remains low in part due to widespread market uncertainty, but also reflecting the relative paucity of immediately available accommodation and serviced development plots on the market.

Enquiry trends are for smaller accommodation in the 1-5000 sq ft category, with several live enquiries up to 10,000 sq ft, and a small number in the 30-40,000 sq ft range.

m) Blackpool: The Place for Business

The online communications campaign continues to grow from strength to strength as we approach the end of the initial 12 months contract with external agency collaboration Clarity/Diva. A marketing steering group met on 13th December where the team presented a round-up of the campaign's success and highlights over the past 12 months and delivered recommendations for taking the campaign forward, continuing to build momentum, changing perceptions and creating new opportunities for lead generation. It was put to the group which direction the campaign should now take, awareness building place marketing, or lead/sales led inward investment marketing or a combination of both. The group delivered some very valuable feedback that will be worked into the tender document and ongoing vision for the marketing strategy 2020/2021. The next 12 months inward investment marketing contract will be out for tender end Q1 2020.

n) Blackpool Airport

Work continues to replace worn out systems and upgrade the airports operational capabilities with the new Instrument landing System (ILS) now commissioned, with work also complete on replacement of taxiway lighting.

Architects Cassidy + Ashton have been appointed subject to formal contract, to undertake initial feasibility/option studies for the replacement of old aircraft hangars and associated aircraft parking aprons as a first step toward opening up the frontage of Squires Gate Lane for new business park development. Their work will also include studies on the provision of a new control tower, fire station and administration facility, possibly located south of the main runway.

o) Third Party Development

Work has now completed on the 9MW Gas Fired Power generation facility and this is operational, similarly work to the Aquacomms base station has completed. The only construction presently underway is the development on land to the east of Seneca House off Amy Johnson Way.

To date:

- A total of 202 live enquiries are currently logged for Blackpool EZ.
- Some 73 businesses have located to the Enterprise Zone since April 2016.
- A total of 1520 jobs have located to the Enterprise Zone, this figure includes jobs new to the area, safeguarded jobs within Blackpool and construction full time equivalent jobs.

p) Project Team

The seventh meeting of the Blackpool Airport EZ Project Team took place on 13th September at Blackpool Airport and the eighth meeting took place on 8th November at Lancashire Energy HQ. The next meeting subject to confirmation will take place on Friday 24th January at Lancashire Energy HQ.

r) Risk Register

The Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone risk register is available for consideration and review and is fully updated on a quarterly basis or when significant changes occur.

Report Author

Rob Green Head of Enterprise Zones

Rob.green@blackpool.gov.uk

07500 786402

Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author: Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting: Tuesday 7th January 2020
Recommendation: That the Committee notes the report.

Hillhouse Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A series of meetings have been held with the senior managers at NPL Estates to better understand their proposals for a phase of speculative development which would in part, assist the decanting of existing businesses from the old International Business Centre, releasing that site for redevelopment with the focus on the need for enabling infrastructure and the funding thereof.

Further clarification has also been obtained on the phasing and costings of the wider on and off site infrastructure costs and for individual development plots. This information is now being modelled into a revised delivery plan by consultants Genecon. The implementation plan will also reflect the impacts of the withdrawal of Vinnolit from the site over the next 12 months and the release of additional development land that this may enable.

MARKETING

Signage

All three large signboards are now in place, the final one being the most prominent on Bourne Road.

Promotional Drone Video

Video footage captured and 'Buzz Drones', with 'Just By Michael' (videographer) was completed in September. The video is approximately three minutes long and mainly shows aerial footage of the site and the potential development opportunities. It also includes some ground videography entering the operational side of some of the businesses with short interviews and commentary. This project aims to showcase the Enterprise Zone to prospective interested parties looking to relocate to the site.

The finished video has been made available to all EZ occupants, is displayed on the www.hillhouseez.com website and the Wyre Council web pages.

Newsletter

The previous newsletter can be found here <https://mailchi.mp/aeab24c26fe7/may-e-newsletter-361669> which was distributed to 52 recipients. Work continues to engage more people to sign up to the newsletter. The fourth edition of the newsletter will be published in Jan 2020.

Marketing Strategy

A marketing strategy is being drafted for inclusion in the Delivery Plan and a communications plan for 2020/2021 and these will be shared with the EPB at its next meeting. The EZ marketing team continues to support tenants on the site with any good news stories.

Events

Hillhouse EZ and Blackpool EZ co-exhibited at the Eco-I Conference, Lancaster University in September. The conference was well attended by over 300 delegates working within the renewable energy sectors and the team received a few enquiries about property availability at the two sites.

Hillhouse EZ and Blackpool EZ teamed up to co-sponsor 'Construction Business of the Year 2019' at the Wyre Business Awards, a prestigious awards ceremony held on Thursday 5 December at Marine Hall in Fleetwood.

Hydrogen Steering Group

Following an initial request from NPL to examine the opportunities of utilising Hillhouse, for the generation and storage of Hydrogen, a forum has been set up to explore the potential of hydrogen research, production and storage at Hillhouse. The initial meeting took place on Friday 6 December at B&FC Ashfield Road Campus. Individuals from both the public and private sectors were in attendance. There was wide agreement that this initiative needed to be pursued to ascertain full potential and that ideally the group should also be tasked with looking at additional low carbon energy opportunities across the EPB area – with a request from members that the public sector partners took on the role of coordination to enable maximum reach and buy in from potential contributors

The initial workshop involved a presentation by NPL Estates, a round table open discussion and an opportunity for Q&As.

The vision for hydrogen power on the Fylde Coast is to help meet local ambitions to deliver a clean low carbon energy economy in the area and to create a centre of excellence supported by education and industry. The plan is to deliver hydrogen research and production at Hillhouse, leading to the creation of a support network for hydrogen production, hydrogen storage, and supplies to local authorities, transportation companies, businesses and housing is in its infancy and more work needs to be commissioned to develop the proposals and look at integration with other renewable energy provision needed to power the Hydrogen generation.

In addition, to create provision of a hydrogen support network for the transport fleet for Wyre, Blackpool and the wider area. The plan would be to have depots and filling stations at least at Hillhouse EZ and Blackpool EZ. It would also involve/create sustainable energy solutions supported by tidal wind, solar, waste to energy plants etc.

The ambition around the Hydrogen sector will in part replace the lost potential from the Shale Gas industry and support Blackpool & The Fylde College and the Energy HQ at Blackpool Airport EZ in becoming a centre of excellence for renewable and sustainable energy studies, the Hillhouse EZ would specifically facilitate the delivery of waste to energy, solar, wind, hydrogen production, sustainable business park, connections to local housing and new transport links.

SITE ACTIVITY

Vinnolit - It is confirmed that Vinnolit ceased trading on August 31st 2019 and the site is now in the process of decommissioning and staff redeployment. Key staff will remain on site until at least Summer 2020 to assist in the decommissioning of the site. It is understood that a majority of the existing workforce have either opted for retirement or secured new roles with other businesses at Hillhouse with employment support and re-training advice being provided. Close contact is being maintained with Vinnolit management both onsite and via the immediate parent company in Germany.

The plant ceased operating as tier 1 COMAH status although lower tier COMAH status remains in respect of other manufacturing operations and upper tier COMAH status would be easily re-instated if required.

Biomass - Heads of Terms have been agreed between a Biomass developer and Le Fylde Estates (Landowner NPL Group) for a 150,000 tonne p/a EfW plant within the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone. Site investigations and early planning works are taking place. It is projected this will create a number of short-term construction jobs and permanent operative jobs once completed.

Forsa Energy – Early construction work has now commenced on the development of a new 20MW Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR) gas turbines, planning consent having been granted in 2017.

Job Creation – We expect a high number of construction jobs to be created this next quarter due to the start on site by Forsa Energy. At the time of writing, the team is waiting for confirmation on how many construction full time equivalent jobs are currently on site. In Q1 2020 the team will contact all Hillhouse businesses to assess what additional growth and jobs creation there has been over the past 12 months.

Joint Agent for LAMEC Cluster – The team is working with LCC to appoint a joint international agent for all four LAMEC sites by Spring 2020.

EZ Fiscal Benefits - The clock continues to tick with regards to the EZ fiscal benefits with the business rates relief due to expire on 31st March 2021 and the enhanced capital allowances (ECA) due to expire in November 2023, which will leave only a very short window of opportunity to capitalise once new development sites are released upon completion of key enabling infrastructure. As detailed in the Blackpool Airport report a combined approach to seek an extension of fiscal benefits is underway.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITY

- Complete implementation plan by January 2020

- Procure specialist State Aid advice once IP completed
- Complete updated Risk Register by January 2020
- A flood risk assessment to be commissioned for the entire site
- A transport assessment be commissioned for the entire site
- A utilities assessment to be commissioned for the whole site
- An Environmental and Ecology study to be commissioned for the entire site

Ends

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.