

**MINUTES OF BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARD MEETING -
THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2023**

The minutes of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) meeting held on 29 June 2023 at Bickerstaffe House

EPB members present:

Councillors:

Councillor Karen Buckley, Leader, Fylde Council
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader, Wyre Council
Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader, Blackpool Council

Chief Executives:

Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive, Wyre Council
Neil Jack, Chief Executive, Blackpool Council
Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, Fylde Council

Co-opted Private Sector Representative:

Neil Farley, Fylde area representative

Other councillors present:

None

Others present:

Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager, Blackpool Council
Scott Butterfield, Strategy, Policy and Research Manager, Blackpool Council
Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration, Blackpool Council
Tony Doyle, Head of ICT, Blackpool Council
Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council
Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, Wyre Council
Adam Ogden, Communications Manager, Blackpool Council
Charlie Richards, Head of Regeneration Projects, Fylde Council

One member of the public and no press attended the meeting

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Board considered the appointment of a Chair for Municipal Year 2023/24.

Resolved:

That Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of Blackpool Council, be appointed Chair for Municipal Year 2023/24.

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed Board members and officers to the meeting and lead introductions.

The Chair thanked the outgoing Chair, Councillor Karen Buckley of Fylde Borough Council, for work throughout her term as Chair.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Board considered the appointment of a Vice-Chair.

Resolved:

That Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of Wyre Borough Council be appointed Vice-Chair of the Board for Municipal Year 2023/24.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

5 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst

agenda items 10 and 11- Blackpool Enterprise Zone Update and Hillhouse Enterprise Zone are considered, on the ground 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 in the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

6 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 2 MARCH 2023

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 March 2023.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7 FYLDE COAST GREEN GROWTH

The Board received an update on the Fylde Coast Green Growth from Mr Scott Butterfield further to the meetings on the 2 March 2023 and the 8 December 2022.

Mr Butterfield highlighted that as previously reported the three Councils had committed to identifying usable assets and finances to reduce their carbon footprints and improve environmental sustainability.

Mr Butterfield highlighted the particular progress on work from Blackpool's Strategy and Climate Team which had highlighted the potential benefits of using Wyre Borough Council's assets to generate solar power. A list of assets under consideration would now be refined in light of local knowledge. A workshop to explore the activity required in detail would take place in July 2023.

It was noted that Fylde and Wyre Borough Councils were both separately progressing work with East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce to help businesses reduce their carbon footprint.

Blackpool Council had created a draft proposal seeking to deliver a package of business support on green issues tailored around business size and readiness to act has been circulated for internal discussion, with a tender exercise to follow.

Mr Butterfield also emphasised the synergies with the next item on the agenda regarding the ethically-powered data centre

8 BLACKPOOL INNOVATION CATALYST- THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICALLY POWERED DATA

The Board received a presentation from Bob Burgoyne, Connected Places Catapult, on the development of sustainable data centres. Mr Burgoyne explained the present situation where data centres required large amounts of electricity but also generated large amounts of excess heat.

Mr Burgoyne explained that previously data centres had been located in major centres like Manchester or London. Additionally, generally the heat generated escaped into the atmosphere rather than being reused. The development of too many such centres in close proximity had placed stress on local infrastructure and these issues had resulted in many cities not wishing to allow further centres. Equally providers of data centres were keen to reduce their carbon footprint and minimise the negative impact.

Mr Burgoyne explained the opportunities that this presented to capitalise on the Transatlantic fibre connectivity, future renewable energy sources such as offshore Wind, Solar and energy storage at the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone as well as feed heat recovered from the data centres into a heat network for wider community benefit.

Mr Burgoyne highlighted that the trials that had been proposed at the Solaris Centre and in other locations to reuse heat in domestic properties. If this trial represented a success then the potential opportunity to replicate this in other locations and particularly within social housing developments was also noted.

9 LOCAL AUTHORITY ECONOMIC UPDATES

The Board received the following updates:

Blackpool Council

Mr Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director provided an update on the Blackpool Town Deal and £2bn Growth and Prosperity Programme in which he highlighted the three strategic objectives namely: Town Centre Regeneration with the primary project of Talbot Gateway, Extending the Tourism Season with the primary project being Blackpool Central and Jobs in Growth Sectors (with the primary project being the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone. Mr Gerrard explained the total funding of £136.7m which had been allocated including the 7 Town Deal schemes. Mr Gerrard emphasised the continuing developments within the Talbot Gateway including the progress in the Civil Service building and further car parking developments.

Mr Gerrard spoke briefly on the Edge project on Church Street which sought to combine protecting and repurposing a locally listed building with providing space and expertise to assist in business start-ups.

The rejuvenation of the famous Blackpool Illuminations was also highlighted with Mr Gerrard explaining that the improvements both included new and improved attractions but also a reduced carbon footprint.

The presentation concluded by outlining the progress in delivering the site assembly for the Revue Sports Village and the Multiversity.

Fylde Council

Mr Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, and Mr Charlie Richards, Head of Regeneration Projects provided a brief update on the initiatives being undertaken by Fylde Borough Council. Mr Oldfield reminded members of three key investment themes for the £2.6m of UK Shared Prosperity Funds namely Communities and Place, Local Business, and People and Skills- the balanced approach between short term “quick wins” and longer terms solutions. Mr Oldfield also highlighted the recent success of the Lytham Festival.

Wyre Council

Ms Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director of Communities updated the Board on issues within Wyre Borough. Ms Hesketh reminded members of the significant funding that had been secured for Fleetwood market to fund a project which combined the reinstatement of historic features with improved energy efficiency and decarbonisation. The approach of Wyre to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with a focus on arts and cultural themed events to drive town centre regeneration and business support. The Rural England Prosperity Fund from which Wyre Council had successful bid for £140,000 to supercharge growth and create employment opportunities in more rural areas.

10 BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE: PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council presented the Board with the progress report. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr Green highlighted from the report as follows:

- A further review of the Delivery Plan is being undertaken and will be presented for consideration by Blackpool's Council's Executive later in 2023. This will allow adjustment to costs and included contingencies following receipt of tenders for the major highway and infrastructure work.
- The Common Edge Sports Village had been now completed with the exception of the new floodlit rugby league pitch where the late seeding of grass due to weather will be playable from October 2023. The new pavilion would be formally opened on the 30 June 2023 and the facilities having been in use since completion of the Division Lane Junction in the first week of June. The new grass pitches have completed their second season of use – and again hosted a very successful Blackpool Cup youth tournament over Easter and May bank holiday weekends.
- The Aquacomms base station facility had now become fully operational. There were now nine outline expressions of interest in the development of data centres at the Enterprise Zone in phase two the Knowledge quarter – Silicon Sands – the largest being for a large 10MW facility.
- Industrial enquiries had reduced in the light of the recent economic turbulence but are expected to pick up once stability returns to the markets and once the final design for the Eastern Gateway highway is confirmed allowing proactive

marketing campaigns to commence

- Blackpool Airport Operations Limited had agreed a ten year business plan with shareholder, Blackpool Council, to return the airport to profitable operation, with the emphasis on securing new commercial opportunities. Initial interest has been good and delivery will be dependent upon provision of new enabling infrastructure and commercial hangar accommodation.

11 HILLHOUSE ENTERPRISE ZONE: PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, presented the Board with an update on the Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone and its future work and priorities against its role and remit. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr Green highlighted the following key areas:

- Network Rail had submitted the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport in February 2023 for the re-opening of the Fleetwood/Poulton-Le-Fylde rail line. This Strategic Outline Business Case indicates that a Tram/Train option is the most impactful in terms of Benefit/Cost analysis. However this would only become a preferred option if the relevant Minister approves the project to progress to the next stage.
- BXB's planning application for residential development of the site originally allocated for development of a large food store and district centre had been refused, with the developer having now submitted a revised application to run in parallel with a pending planning appeal and an ongoing application for commercial development on the adjacent 'Island' site with decisions anticipated in July 2023.
- Majority landowner NPL Estates had acquired the vacant property of the former Vinnolit site in 2022 and having cleared much of the former production facilities have refurbished and actively marketed the remaining buildings, the majority have now been let. The revised Masterplan for Hillhouse would identify the availability of new development plots in this area.
- Finalisation of the implementation and delivery plan has been delayed pending the completion of a full masterplan review and a decision by Government on the Rail Reinstatement Project for the Poulton to Fleetwood line, Consultants WSP have been commissioned to undertake a concept design for the Northern access route –

incorporating the worst case cost option of a rail overbridge and thereafter to undertake a full refresh of the masterplan, to include recent new developments – the clearance of the former Vinnolit site and emerging opportunities within the energy and sustainable waste management sectors. An update would be brought to a future meeting.

12 UPDATE ON FUTURE ISSUES

The Board received a brief update on future and developing issues.

The Board noted the progress being made towards the identification of development sites for the Lancashire 2050 review. The Board noted that a report would be brought to a future meeting but would include identification of sites to be brought forward in the short, medium and long terms.

13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Board agreed the dates of future meetings as follows:

Thursday 28 September 2023 2pm

Thursday 7 December 2023 2pm

Thursday 14 March 2023 2pm

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.45pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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