

Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee



Date	21 February 2008
Venue	Lowther Pavilion, Lytham
Committee members	Councillor John Bennett (Chairman) Councillor William Thompson (Vice-Chairman) Ben Aitken, Keith Beckett, Maxine Chew, Michael Cornah, Trevor Fiddler, Lyndsay Greening,
Other Councillors	Karen Buckley, David Chedd, Fabian C. Wilson, Paul Hayhurst, Barbara Pagett, Elaine Silverwood, Elizabeth Oades, Janine Owen,
Officers	Phillip Woodward, Claire Platt, Paul Walker, Tony Donnelly, Mark Sims, Peter Welsh
Members of the public	Several members of the public attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 November 2007 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

None

4. Central Lancashire. Blackpool Growth Bid

The report before the committee provided a background of the Growth Point Bid and gave basic details of the bid and its main features.

A report on the Growth Point Bid was considered by Cabinet on 14th November 2007 following the submission of a formal Expression of Interest by the participating Councils.

The Cabinet had resolved 'to support the Growth Point Bid in principle and ensured that the interests of the Borough Council were protected through future officer and member involvement in the development of the bid, if successful'.

The decision of Cabinet was the subject of a call-in request for consideration by the Policy and Service Review Committee. This Committee met on the 13th December 2007 and resolved (inter alia):

1. Not to call-in the decision, on the grounds that it had been taken in the best interests of the residents of Fylde.
2. To recommend, however, that the matter be heard by the Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee.

The Portfolio Holder considered the recommendation of the Policy and Service Review Committee and had supported a further reference to Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee.

In discussions with the other Growth Point Bid Partnership authorities, it was understood that the Dept. of Communities and Local Government had indicated that the Growth Point bid would be strengthened if Wyre and Fylde Councils became full members of the bid partnership and the two local authority areas included within the Growth Point bid area. Wyre Borough Council had already resolved to join the partnership if the bid proceeds to the next stage.

The current consideration was therefore whether this Council should similarly resolve to formally join the Growth Point Bid Partnership should the bid be successful in going through to the next round.

Members were aware that whilst the submitted bid had been made in respect of the council areas of Blackpool, Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, the main document identified the M55 Hub and Blackpool Airport as Economic and Development Hubs which were core elements of the Growth Point Programme. Appendix 3 to the submission document also made specific mention of Whitehills Park and Whyndyke Farm. It indicated that 'discussions with Fylde Borough Council were on-going to discuss their role in the Growth Bid Programme'.

At the present time, the Fylde lands had been referred to in the submission document, potential housing numbers had been estimated in respect of the above sites and an indicative timetable for housing development produced.

On this basis, the Fylde lands appeared to be in an undefined 'grey' area which were not formally part of the Growth Point Bid area but were referred to in the documents as core elements.

Following information provided prior to the meeting by the Chief Executive of Blackpool Borough Council and Jo Lappin from Government Office North West the committee debated the pros and cons for joining the Growth Point Programme and also considered a question submitted from a member of the public concerning possible governance arrangements associated with the bid. The committee raised issues concerning staffing capacity; public consultation; the partial review of the Regional Spatial Strategy; supply of affordable housing; opportunities to access external funding; infrastructures; roof tax and section 106 incomes and noted that there appeared to be a degree of uncertainty around the likely implications of joining the Growth Point bid and in particular what benefits if any would flow to Fylde Borough.

Following a full debate it was RESOLVED to defer making a final decision until additional information emerges as part of the announcement of the next stage by DCLG, to make a more considered response.