

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	25 JANUARY 2021	14

FIBRE OPTIC CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The Economic Prosperity Board (EPB)¹ at its September 2020 meeting received a presentation on how the Local Full Fibre network www.FibreBlackpool.com recently established in Blackpool could be expanded and developed further to benefit the wider Fylde Coast.

Blackpool Council was successful in bidding to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) for a Full Fibre Wave 2 Grant under the Asset Reuse method by using an existing ducting asset in the Tramway to build a fibre optic spine along the Tramway. The effect of the award had been to create a spinal fibre network infrastructure to connect Council assets and to service both Enterprise Zones (Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse), the new Conference Centre at the Winter Gardens as well as establish a series of Meet me chambers across the Promenade. Work on this spine is nearly complete and already businesses are reporting on the advantages of that to their business.

The delivery vehicle for this initiative is the [Cooperative Network Infrastructure \(CNI\)](#) and is open to both large and small Internet Service Providers as well public sector organisations who wish to collaborate in enabling the building out of a Local Full Fibre infrastructure under dig once principles. For example if the Council is carrying out some public realm works which involve digging up a pavement it makes sense at the same time to install a fibre duct and make the spare capacity in this duct available to co-op members at a market rate thereby avoiding multiple telecoms companies digging the pavement and installing their own separate fibre ducts. In essence the Cooperative Network Infrastructure brings together public and private sector organisations to create and share new digital infrastructure.

The EPB were supportive of this collaboration and resolved to recommend to both Fylde and Wyre Borough Councils to join the cooperative and enter into further dialogue with Tony Doyle Head of ICT Services at Blackpool Council who leads on the Full Fibre initiative in Blackpool and Shaun Fensom the Chair of the cooperative.

Following this recommendation, an application for Fylde Council to join the cooperative has been approved. Over time this collaboration should assist in sharing and developing Fibre optic infrastructure on the Fylde Coast. The cooperative also provides the vehicle for bids for government funding to be made that could help to increase speeds and access for rural towns and villages.

¹ The Economic Prosperity Board (or joint committee) comprises of the leaders of the three constituent councils (Fylde, Wyre and Blackpool), with partners (co-opted members) from the private sector. Such an arrangement will deliver effective oversight on the work being undertaken in the Enterprise Zones, political interface and accountability on strategic policy areas for the Fylde coast and the link with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

The information has come from the report to the Economic Prosperity Board at its meeting on 16 September 2020.

LINK TO INFORMATION

[Economic Prosperity Board agenda and minutes](#)

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

To make members aware of this initiative and the benefits that could be achieved

FURTHER INFORMATION

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