

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board Minutes

The minutes of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Thursday, 9 December 2021 at the Members Lounge - Civic Centre.

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board members present:

Councillor Henderson, Leader of Wyre Council
Councillor Buckley, Leader of Fylde Council

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Williams, Leader of Blackpool Council
Councillor Smith, Executive Member for Blackpool Council
Neil Jack, Chief Executive, Blackpool Council
Paul Evans, Civil Service Representative
Nicole Billington, Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone Marketing & Administration Officer, Blackpool Council

Chief Executive Officers present:

Garry Payne, Wyre Borough Council
Allan Oldfield, Fylde Borough Council

Co-opt Private Sector Representatives present:

Martin Long (Blackpool)
Neil Farley (Fylde)
Peter Worthington (Wyre)

Officers present:

Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council
Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities
Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services Officer
Daine Banks, Corporate Apprentice

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

22 Declarations of interest

None.

23 Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on Thursday 9 September 2021 were **confirmed** as a correct record.

24 Future job opportunities from a business perspective - focused change in the market and green job growth (nuclear energy)

Neil Farley, Co-opted private sector representative for Fylde Council, submitted a presentation that addressed future job opportunities from a nuclear energy perspective.

Neil Farley covered the following key points of the presentation:

- The history of Springfields
- Springfields main activities
- The North West Nuclear Arch
- The future opportunities for Nuclear Energy
- Providing skills for the next generation

Neil Farley updated the board that around 15 to 18 per cent of all the electricity generated in the UK came from power stations using nuclear fuel manufactured at Springfields. He added that this fuel also generated around 30 per cent of the low carbon energy in the UK. He explained that due to the reduction of power stations over the next three to five years these percentages could halve.

He highlighted that the essential point from this presentation was to identify the opportunity of nuclear energy at sites such as Springfields on green job growth and the production of green energy, especially as the country moves to a low carbon agenda.

Martin Long, Co-opted private sector representative for Blackpool Council, questioned whether the education was in place to provide the vital skills needed for the nuclear industry. Neil Farley explained the work of the National Skills Academy Nuclear and the Nuclear Skills Strategy Group. He added that locally the North West had many colleges and universities with some great science programmes, but the main challenge was how to retain the talent once they graduated.

Additional questions were asked regarding the North West Nuclear Arch, future opportunities at the Springfields site, the political stance of nuclear energy and addressing public fear.

The Chairman of the board suggested that an additional presentation surrounding this topic be brought to a future EPB meeting.

The Chairman thanked Neil Farley for his attendance and contributions.

25 The opportunity for investment in carbon mitigation strategies

The Chairman updated the board that this item would be deferred to a future meeting of the EPB.

26 Exclusion of public and press

The Economic Prosperity Board **agreed** that the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the remaining agenda items 8 and 9 were 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 informations.

27 Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: progress report

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, submitted a report and provided the board with an update on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

Rob Green updated members that a new Managing Director had been recruited for Blackpool Airport Operations Ltd. The board welcomed the suggestion for them to address a future meeting of the EPB once established in post.

Rob Green also updated the board that since the publication of the report, there had been two additional risks added to the register, specifically regarding planning matters at Common Edge.

Councillor Karen Buckley questioned whether the timing of the improvement works to the access from Common Edge Road and the M55 Link Road had been taken into consideration to avoid major traffic disruption. Rob Green assured the board that this was high on the agenda and that there would be communication with the local residents alongside working with consultants to minimise the disruption.

Councillor Karen Buckley also expressed her concern with the proposal of road works on Clifton Drive, which would create further disruption. Rob Green agreed to liaise with Lancashire County Council regarding this issue.

The report was noted.

28 Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone: progress report

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zone, submitted a report and presented an update on Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

Rob Green explained the common issue for both the Enterprise Zones was

surrounding recruitment, job skill shortages and training.

The board noted the report.

The Chairman thanked Rob Green for his reports and contributions.

29 Any Other Business

The board established that their 3 March 2022 EPB meeting should be focused on the theme of skills particularly on work underway to address skills gaps on the Fylde Coast.

They reaffirmed that Blackpool and the Fylde College be asked to provide a report/presentation with the emphasis on green job opportunities, skills gaps on the Fylde Coast and how they are addressing this.

The board also **agreed** to invite Lancashire LEP (Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) to provide an update on the outcomes and results of the Lancashire Employer Skills Survey specifically regarding the results of the Fylde Coast.

The meeting started at 2.05 pm and finished at 3.20 pm.

Date of Publication: 23 December 2021.