



Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board Agenda

Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 23 February 2022
Please ask for : Marianne Unwin
marianne.unwin@wyre.gov.uk
Tel: 01253 887326

**Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board meeting on
Thursday, 3 March 2022 at 2.00 pm in the Council Chamber - Civic
Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde**

1. Apologies of absence

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 3 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 December 2021.

4. An update from the Lancashire Employment Skills Survey on the results of the Fylde Coast

A presentation by Geoff Mason and Jamie Jervis-Parker for Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

5. Green job opportunities and skill gaps on the Fylde Coast

A presentation by Daryl Platt, Vice Principal – Engagement at Blackpool and the Fylde College.

6. Exclusion of the public and press

The discussion of the reports submitted under items 7 and 8 of this agenda may involve the disclosure of “exempt information”, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If at any point during the meeting, the board wishes to move to confidential session, it will need to pass the following resolution:

“That the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the remaining agenda items 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 Enterprise Zone: progress report (Pages 7 - 14)

Report of the Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council.

8. Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone: progress report (Pages 15 - 20)

Report of the Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council.

9. Any Other Business

10. Proposed dates and themes for the municipal year 2022/23

The board to discuss the following proposed dates and times:

- Thursday 9 June 2022 – 2pm
- Thursday 8 September 2022 – 2pm
- Thursday 8 December 2022 – 2pm
- Thursday 2 March 2023 – 2pm



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.

Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Title:	Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: Progress Report
Date of Meeting:	3rd March 2022

1.0 Purpose of the report:

To review the work of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone and its future work and priorities against its role and remit.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Board notes the report.

3.0 Progress

a) Masterplan and Delivery Plan

The refreshed EZ masterplan was approved by Blackpool's Executive in December 2020 reflecting the impact of changes in third party ownership across the site, changes required to satisfy Sport England and address highway and transportation concerns. The masterplan will continue to be reviewed and where appropriate revised, as new developments progress and new opportunities arise. A full review of the Masterplan will be undertaken in 2025 following completion of the enabling infrastructure to phase one centred upon Common Edge.

The revised delivery plan and annual progress report was approved by Blackpool Executive at its 7th February 2022 meeting, reflecting updated modelling of the forecast retained business rates income, to pick up changed layouts and delayed delivery dates for built development. The Executive approved an increase in allocated expenditure (via prudential borrowing) of £29.5m to facilitate the planned delivery of enabling infrastructure to the period end of Financial year 2022/23, with high levels of investment anticipated in the next 12 months on the highways, drainage and utilities at Common Edge.

The approved marketing strategy will continue to be implemented for the Enterprise Zone and where appropriate, will be updated in line with the revised masterplan and emerging opportunities and guidance from Lancashire LEP/Marketing Lancashire and marketing consultants to incorporate LEP priorities.

b) Project Management

As the scale and pace of development at the Enterprise Zone increases it is important that a strong project management team is engaged to drive forward a wide range of activity. The Enterprise Zone delivery team has therefore been strengthened by the recruitment of two specialist property professionals, with further additions to the team anticipated in the next twelve months to support marketing and provide project support.

c) Fiscal Incentives

The team has seen an increase in EZ business rates relief applications over the last quarter with a number of new enquiries and from EZ businesses looking to relocate due to business growth. Four

awards in principle have recently been allocated and a further five awards with the rates team for consideration.

Whilst local MPs pledged their full support to securing an extension of EZ fiscal benefits working with the LEP network, Paul Maynard MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys recently received a letter from DLUHC confirming that whilst the Government is glad to hear that the EZ program has been well received in Blackpool, the Government has no plans to create new, or extend existing EZs or the fiscal benefits.

d) Phase One Current Activity

Conlon's Construction commenced work on construction of the new changing pavilion site in late September, following clearance from the Football Foundation who are providing £250,000 of grant funding which was confirmed in December 2021. A completion date of June 2022 is programmed. The new sports pitches are in use and will allow a phased release of existing pitches that will permit highway preparation works to progress. The existing Jepson Way changing facilities are being used for the interim period.

Detailed design work is progressing for the design and construction tendering of the 3G pitch and rugby pitches with a contract scheduled to be tendered in February/March to enable operation from early 2023.

Construction of the remodelled junction at Division Lane will commence in June with the intention that this is completed within 5-6 weeks. A Section 278 agreement with Lancashire County Council has to be agreed before work can commence and the planning conditions stipulate that the highway works can only commence after the completion of the main construction of the changing rooms.

Further design work has continued for both the Eastern Gateway Access and the Common Edge Road junction upgrade with Wilde Consulting appointed by Blackpool highways team, already making good progress. Further detailed site investigations have been commissioned and the first will commence on the 16th February.

Leasehold surrenders and renewals with sports clubs have been negotiated and an independent scoping assessment undertaken by consultants Arup which determined that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required to support the planning application for the highways, paving the way for submission of the Outline planning application at the end of February, once a revised drainage strategy has been completed. Because of delays in finalising the Part 2 of the Blackpool Local Plan (Examination in Public took place in December with approval not anticipated until Summer 2022), any decision for development of the presently Greenbelt land at Common Edge will be referred to the Secretary of State for a final decision, which may slightly delay implementation time scales. Detailed planning applications for the highways will be submitted in summer 2022.

e) Towns Fund

An application to the Blackpool Towns Fund for £7.5m toward the costs of an overall £18m project to provide new Highways and enabling utility infrastructure and drainage, was approved by the Town Deal Board and the Council's Executive and formally signed off by DLUHC in December. The Towns Fund project will cover the remodelling of Common Edge Road between School Road and Division Lane incorporating traffic signalled junctions, and the construction of the Eastern Gateway access road to link Amy Johnson Way and Common Edge, opening a further 10.5ha land for commercial development. The project will also enable two new access points to be constructed from Amy Johnson Way to the eastern side of the airport to support development of new aircraft hangars.

f) Multiply Development

Practical completion of the Multiply development took place in August with contractors Eric Wright Construction completing fit out work at the end of January. Multiply are now decanting from their existing premises and will be in full production by the end of March. The full £800,000 Growth Deal funding support was claimed before the deadline of end February 2021.

g) Squires Gate Industrial Estate (SQIE)

The new owners of Squires Gate Industrial Estate continue subdividing and letting units and an up-to-date tenancy schedule has been received from the new owners, with the property substantially let and the main elevations of the building have been over clad.

The EZ team has engaged with site owner Euro Properties regarding landscaping and maintenance of the strip of vegetation in front of SQIE and pruning works were undertaken in December. Discussions are ongoing with the owners to explore opportunities for new development on limited areas of the site, and improvements in access and drainage.

h) Communications Infrastructure

The Aqua Comms base station facility is operational and three wayleaves for telecoms companies linking into this have been completed. There are presently seven enquiries for data centres that have been generated as a result of the EZ's enhanced connectivity. The most advanced is for a 30,000 sq ft facility with proposals being progressed to locate this at the airport. This will also incorporate proposals for a new primary sub-station, a separate fibre switching station, and up to four new aircraft hangars. A planning application is being targeted for May 2022.

The news that a National Cyber security facility will be located at Samlesbury EZ will provide a further boost to the Fylde Coast's credentials as a major player in this very significant sector which will drive much future investment. The intention is to promote Blackpool EZ as the leader in "greening the data sector" and this will become one of our key marketing mantras. A study is underway to assess the feasibility of developing a solar farm at the airport to support the high energy requirements of data centres, alongside proposals for battery storage, connections to offshore wind farms, and use of the airport estate for ground source heat pumps and associated district heating systems. Consultants Horizon Energy have been appointed to confirm and develop the feasibility study for a 12-14 MW solar farm to be located on the south side of the airport.

Further to exploring the opportunities that the connection to the North Atlantic Loop can bring to the region, Lancaster University has agreed to invest some of their Community Renewal Funding to help Blackpool develop an innovation catalyst which includes a business case and local engagement to help attract investment into net zero data centres along the Fylde Coast.

A number of influential stakeholders have been invited from the Data Centre industry, academia and the local community to attend a two day, residential activation session on the 2nd and 3rd March at the Boulevard Hotel, Blackpool. The University of Lancaster's School of Management will facilitate the sessions. The sessions will conclude on 15th June with a data centre symposium at the brand new Winter Gardens conference and exhibition centre, Blackpool where the findings and ways to market the opportunities will be shared.

i) Fibre Blackpool

The Fibre Blackpool campaign continues to promote the roll out a local full fibre network for improved, gigabit capable, broadband internet connection to residents and businesses on the Fylde Coast. Various suppliers are now active in the Blackpool area.

j) Marketing

Industrial enquiries continue to see a slight upturn in recent months and the team continues to progress an enquiry for 750- 100,000 sq ft from a local food and drink sector manufacturer. An outline development proposal has been submitted to DIT via Lancashire LEP in response to a national site search to accommodate a 50,000 sq ft development for manufacture of solar panels for high tech use.

Discussions have commenced for a new office enquiry of circa 20,000 sq ft for a financial sector occupier. Development proposals are also being worked up for three live projects from different engineering companies, all seeking circa 30,000 sq ft space by 2024. Several existing EZ occupiers are also looking to move to larger units as they continue to grow.

These enquiries will be confirmed and delivery accelerated as the detailed designs for the highways are completed. Private sector landowners have also been engaged to seek to support their bringing forward sites to meet the most urgent requirements.

Overall demand is far greater than the present availability of stock or development plots and a long list of interested parties are being kept warm. The greatest difficulty in translating these enquiries into delivered development is the combination of low rentals, high and accelerating construction costs and ground abnormals, which inhibits interest from traditional commercial property developers.

The logos for Blackpool EZ have now been refreshed as part of the Lancashire Enterprise Zones branding with a collective strategic marketing and communications plan being developed along with updates to promotional literature and websites in Q1/2 2022. This will be done in collaboration with a joint international agent for all four LAMEC sites appointed in collaboration with LCC, and Colliers have begun work targeting opportunities from the international markets.

Old branding:



New branding:



An interim newsletter and stakeholder letters about the planned initial roadworks at Common Edge Road were issued on 07 February and the next quarterly newsletter is planned for March 2022.

Top enquiries are:

No.	Date of enquiry	Target sector	Size	Type of enquiry	Progress to date
1	Apr 2020	AV	25,000 sq ft	D&B sale hangar for specialised sim/helicopter training facilities, worldwide contracts	Option agreement for land at airport under negotiation, timing of development dependent upon relocation of existing aircraft control facilities and obtaining planning for access, with highways presently in design
2	May 2020	AV	2 acres	Land sale for hangar complex for engineering and storage, high net worth investment for airport	Option agreement being finalised now that funding agreed for access road and enabling infrastructure,

					planning applications targeted for Spring 2022
3	Oct 2020	DC	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B LH for NW data centre facility requirement	Update Feb 2022: Discussions ongoing and progressing well in respect of potential location and timescale, potential site identified at airport P2 car park/close to LEHQ.
4	Nov 2020	FM	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B lease for fast growth, local target sector company	Discussions ongoing in respect of potential locations and timescales
5	Dec 2020	ADM	Up to 2 acre plot for 20,000 sq ft	D&B sale for established local manufacturers constrained at existing premises	Update Feb 2022: Contact re-established Nov 2021 and discussions ongoing with overseas parent company, exploring building options and relooking at viability and location
6	Jan 2021	DC	up to 125,000 sq ft	National company, land sale enquiry for data centre	Update Feb 2022: Discussions ongoing with company assessing options within the region and awaiting certainty on delivery timetable and availability of large footprint plot
7	June 2021	FM	Up to 100,000 sq ft	D&B LH requirement for local growth business in food manufacturing sector	Outline designs produced and costed, site identified at Common Edge with ongoing discussion on timescales and costs to refine requirements which now likely to be circa 75,000 sq ft. Will be assessed against lower cost existing building conversions away from Fylde coast
8	July 2021	DC	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B LH for data centre facility and adjoining tech hub using green energy	Update Feb 2022: Discussions ongoing in respect of potential locations, specifications, delivery alternatives, funding and timescale
9	Nov 2021	E	50,000 sq ft	Via DiT site for solar PV manufacturing facility	Update Feb 2022: Feasibility studies on solar farm to be undertaken and contractor appointed. Proposals submitted for Blackpool EZ to DiT via LCC, feedback awaited.
10	Jan 2022	OA	20,000 sq ft	Finance and banking	Initial discussions re: site location

11	Feb 2022	ADM	c.20,000 sq ft	Manufacturing facility	Initial discussions re: plot availability
12	Feb 2022	AV	15,000 sq ft	Hangar for private aircraft	Discussions initiated

SECTORS: ADM - Adv. Manufacturing & engineering, AV - Aviation, OA - Office administration, FM - food manufacturing, E - Energy, DC – digital and creative, O - Other

k) Blackpool Makes It Work

Work is progressing to update the website www.businessinblackpool.com and the team are building a strong portfolio of case studies from successful target sector businesses around the Fylde Coast. Online engagement and followers of the campaign continue to increase month on month.

NW Insider ran a five page feature regional review on Blackpool in its January edition, a first for the magazine to solely focus on just one town in their regional feature, testament to all the exciting regeneration projects happening on the Fylde Coast (copies available at the meeting). Blackpool will also feature in their North West Investment Guide 2022.

Blackpool Makes It Work sponsored and manned a stand at the Place NW Lancashire Development Update on 10th February in Burnley, one of the first live events since early 2020. Alan Cavill from Blackpool Council was a guest speaker and panellist at the event to talk about Blackpool Airport and Blackpool's regeneration ambitions.

Blackpool Makes It Work are also sponsors of the upcoming March/April edition of the Blackpool Hotspot feature in Lancashire Business View. A launch event is being arranged at a venue (TBC) in Blackpool on 16th March so please look out for further details on how to attend.

The events team will also be exhibiting at the UK REiif Expo in May 2022, a three day real estate conference in Leeds where development and investment opportunities on the Fylde Coast will be promoted. If Wyre and Fylde Borough Councils would like a representative to attend one or all of the three dates, please register your interest with the EZ marketing officer. For more information please visit: www.ukreiff.com

l) Blackpool Airport

A new Managing Director has been recruited and will commence their role in Q1/early Q2 with an emphasis on identifying and securing new business opportunities.

Discussions have continued to base a new CPL training facility at the airport initially looking at cohort of 20 pilots per annum and potentially rising to 100. Similarly discussions are ongoing for provision of specialist helicopter pilot and engineering training facilities, with the airport looking to capitalise on opportunities to become a major centre for aviation industry training.

Key to progressing development and securing additional business rests with the relocation of the existing control tower and provision of new and replacement hangar accommodation and apron predominantly within the Fylde Greenbelt. Initial design studies are underway for the new tower and for the development of up to six new aircraft hangars across two locations at the airport, which has remained fully operational throughout the pandemic and is currently experiencing higher volumes of aircraft movements than before the pandemic, with the more lucrative corporate flights finally also growing as international travel restrictions are lifted.

m) Business Enquiries and Jobs

To date:

- A total of over 190 live enquiries are currently logged for Blackpool EZ and a review is underway to assess each requirement. An internal matrix of enquiries has been developed to identify the top enquiries based on potential investment, deliverability, size of development, job creation and strategic implications.
- Some 133 businesses have located to the Enterprise Zone since April 2016.
- A gross cumulative total to date of 1950 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.

n) Project Team

The latest meeting of the Blackpool Airport EZ Project Team was hosted online on Friday 28th January via MS teams. The next meeting is due to take place 16th March on MS Teams.

o) Risk Register

The Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone risk register is reviewed regularly with Blackpool's corporate risk team, the Project Board and the Programme Board (EPB) every quarter.

Many of the main risks are ubiquitous to development in the UK and outside the direct control and influence of the EZ team such as Covid and Brexit, which have in recent months seen significant logistical interruptions to supply chains and to the cost and availability of materials. Strategy to mitigate impacts from such risks is dependent on specific factors pertaining at any one time and these potential impacts are reviewed in all project meetings. As a standard practice construction contracts now all include clauses relating to delays from pandemics and promised delivery date have to extend to account for this, whilst additional levels of contingency for costs inflation are being built into delivery plan budgets. The confidential risk register will be circulated separately to Board members on request.

Key Risks:

Risk and Issues	Mitigation and Actions
Slight delays to construction due to Covid-19 working restrictions	Safety guidelines in place and work continuing.
After short period of uncertainty, property enquiries are returning but overall lack of market demand due to Covid-19/Brexit uncertainty and the commercial viability of development.	Clear marketing strategy defined and implementation underway with robust delivery schedule for serviced plots with specific emphasis on future data/digital sector opportunities
Increased construction and material costs are affecting viability of development projects	Work with contractors and architects on regular value engineering to ensure viability and ensuring that adequate contingencies are built into estimates
Due to delays in ability to progress the Common Edge infrastructure, interest may find alternative sites	Regular communication with prospective occupiers and interested parties

p) Milestones

Milestones	Dates
Appoint international marketing agents LAMEC brand	complete
Changing rooms and car park/3G pitch planning application decision	complete

Changing rooms and 3G pitch contractor appointed – start on site 6 th Sept	complete
No. 12 grass football pitches ready for use	complete
40,000 sq ft development handover for client fit out (Multiply)	complete
Proposition and identifying opportunities for data centre market	ongoing
Focussed marketing of Common Edge Phase 1 commences	ongoing
Design and outline planning application for eastern gateway access	Feb 2022
3G pitch designed and tendered	Mar 2022
Land / property acquisitions x 4 (two complete two in negotiation)	Mar 2022
Architectural feasibility study & design work for airport complete	Mar 2022
Outline planning app for airport redevelopment (Phase 1 – P2 car park)	June 2022
Design and outline planning application for Common Edge Road	May 2022
Outline planning approval for highways	May 2022*
Release of existing sports pitches and commencement of highway and utility infrastructure	June 2022
Airport Control tower, relocation planning application	Sep 2022
12 month construction contract for EGA access road commences	Nov 2022
Replacement hangar development commenced	Oct2022
Decision on first airport redevelopment planning application	Oct 2022
Commencement of works for airport redevelopment	Nov 2022
Completion of airport redevelopment works	Autumn 2025

*Subject to Secretary of State approval of Greenbelt development

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:	3 March 2022

1.0 Purpose of the report:

To review the work of Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone and its future work and priorities against its role and remit.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That the Board notes the report.

3.0 Hillhouse Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

a) Delivery Plan

Finalisation of the implementation and delivery plan has been held in abeyance pending the findings of interested parties in developing large areas of the EZ and a decision by Government on the Rail Reinstatement Project for the Poulton to Fleetwood line.

Wyre Council have held discussions with interested parties for significant redevelopment of areas of the EZ, these parties are now in contact with LCC to better understand the Rail Reinstatement Project and its impact upon their ambitions, with the last meeting held prior to the Christmas break.

Wyre Council will lead on the Delivery Plan refresh once the Government's position on Rail Reinstatement is known.

b) Getting Building Fund

NPL, who have secured funding from the Getting Building Fund toward the costs of essential infrastructure upgrades to enable the new speculative development to progress, have received planning permission from Wyre Borough Council and are progressing with all the works.

The project tackles a requirement for some urgent upgrading and repair to ageing enabling infrastructure, including site access road, upgrade of utilities, and an extension and repair to Hillhouse's water ring main and electricity supply mains. It will also incorporate the extension of the Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) super-fast broadband in a ring around the site, linking to the recently completed LFFN extension of the Fibre from the Tramway to the Hillhouse gatehouse, funded by Wyre BC as EZ accountable body. Planning consent has been secured for the relocation of the gatehouse and NPL have commenced construction.

The project has been allocated funding of £630,000 comprising £504,000 Getting Building Fund, with additional match funding provided by Wyre Council and NPL at £63,000 each.

The works are progressing to programme and budget, and designs have been completed for all three elements – sub-station, water pipeline and gatehouse move. The design for fibre broadband is also

complete. The water pipeline works are ahead of schedule, expected to be completed by April 2022. Work on the new gatehouse has commenced, with an expected April 2022 completion date.

c) Residential Development

BXB have purchased the former Sainsbury retail site and a planning application has been lodged for the main site for residential development of up to 250 homes and potentially a smaller district retail centre which will support employment and provide some retained business rates growth.

If approved, this development should see the further extension of the northern access road to the Fleetwood/Poulton railway line. A decision is anticipated Q1/Q2 2022 and BXB are commencing plans for an additional acre 'island' site with a view to submission Q2 2022.

Substantial progress has been made by Dickie & Moore with their residential development plans for the former Thornton AFC site. The first show home will be completed in Feb 22. The works to complete Bourne Road, the main access route to Hillhouse, to become an adopted Highway will commence in Q2 22. In the meantime NPL have introduced a number of measures to reduce traffic speeds on Bourne Road, including a competition to involve the local children to design road side signage. In addition Dickie and Moore, NPL, Hillhouse remediation and Breck Developments have an agreement to sweep and maintain Bourne road.

d) Fleetwood/Poulton Rail Line

An initial study undertaken by LCC leaves all three options on the table and as this includes heavy rail the requirement for a bridge over the track bed to enable the northern access road continues to be a constraint in progressing development. The Department of Transport have confirmed receipt of the Feasibility Study. This is the major constraint to progressing key infrastructure to open up the Northern part of the EZ with one prospective developer directly engaged with LCC to try and progress a decision. Cost of a bridge across the line will be circa £3.5m.

Initially NPL considered only an at grade crossing would be acceptable because of potentially high loadings associated with transport of equipment for the proposed gas fired power station development which has now been abandoned. Assuming a bridge option would now be acceptable funding still needs to be identified and there would likely be a three year plus lead time to development.

e) Marketing & enquiries

Sarah Kemp CEO of Lancashire LEP is due to visit Hillhouse on 22nd March as part of a familiarisation process to aid and benefit a new collaborative marketing strategy for the four EZs.

The Hillhouse logo now been refreshed as part of the Lancashire Enterprise Zones branding and now all marketing literature requires updating to reflect the changes. Site signboards will be refreshed during 2022.

Workshops are ongoing to inform updates to the four websites to reflect each of the current EZs sites and their commercial development land and property availability. Content, searchability and usability

will all be addressed to ensure the websites are attractive, visually effective, informative and easy to use.

Regular newsletter updates continue to be issued and the next quarterly edition is due March 2022.

Hillhouse EZ will also be represented under the Blackpool Makes it Work campaign banner at UK REiif (Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) in Leeds, May 2022, where there will be an opportunity to promote investment opportunities across the two active Fylde Coast EZs.

Current enquiries include:

Date of enquiry	Target sector	Size and type of enquiry	Progress update
Feb 2022	Low carbon power generation via DTI	£100m investment	Offer in preparation
Jan 2022	PPT recycling plant via DTI	20acre £30m investment	Awaiting feedback
Jan 2022	Battery Storage	£1m	HOT agreed
Jan 2022	Manufacturing	£500k, 1 acre	HOT agreed
Jan 2020	Business park	60,000sqft	HOT in discussion
Feb 2021	Waste to energy project	10,000 sq ft	HOT agreed progressing to purchase
Jan 2021	Waste to energy recycling project	Up to 2.5 acres	HOT agreed progressing to option
Jul 2021	Window frames manufacturer	n/k via NPL	HOT agreed
Jul 2021	Energy from waste project	5 acres, £50m investment	HOT agreed
Oct 21	Engineering manufacturer	60,000 sq ft workshop	To commence spring 22 subject to planning and funding
Oct 21	Asphalt production	2.5 acres, £2m investment	Pre application planning discussions held with Wyre Council and progressing to option
Nov 21	Housing and retail	10acre £30m investment	Planning Application submitted by BXB Ltd for housing development
Jan 2020	Business park	60,000 sq ft spec development	HOT in discussion

f) Hydrogen Steering Group

NPL who are the lead on hydrogen activity, will hold the first meeting of the year on 22nd March 2022 at Wyre Borough Council's civic offices. Added impetus to the work of the group is anticipated in the

wake of Government announcements about the new green agenda and the role of hydrogen as a clean fuel source for transportation.

g) Site Activity

i) Vinnolit

Majority landowner NPL Estates have acquired the vacant property of the former Vinnolit site and the property is currently been marketed jointly by Avison Young and Robert Pinkus & Co LLP. There is strong market interest in occupying former Vinnolit buildings which are to be retained and upgraded with an events company having already occupied one warehouse.

ii) New companies on site

A fast growing transport company has located at Hillhouse and also have taken additional office space.

A small engineering upcycle company has located on the Hillhouse site.

An expanding company that delivers large events and concerts Europe wide have taken storage space.

h) Job Creation

The EZ team will continue to liaise with NPL Estates on any new or safeguarded jobs on the site.

NPL and Addisons, supported by Wyre Council, are exploring the opportunity to set up a training centre/centre of excellence for workplace development at the Hillhouse site to cover all aspects of training; providing school experience placements/leavers opportunities and workplace development to include all aspects of the workforce from apprenticeships through to management training. The plan is to improve the availability of suitable candidates for job vacancies for all businesses in the area and the Hillhouse site. An Initial meeting with Lancashire Local Skills Improvement and Lancashire Skills Hub has been arranged to progress.

i) EZ Board Meetings

A Board meeting took place on 4th February online with a group of stakeholders including Hillhouse tenants. The next meeting is planned for 25th March via MS Teams.

j) EZ fiscal benefits

Local MPs have pledged their full support but the LEP Network continues to be focused on the evolving role of the LEPs. Paul Maynard MP for Blackpool North and Cleveleys recently received a letter from DLUHC confirming that whilst the Government is glad to hear that the EZ program has been well received in Blackpool, the Government has no plans to create new, or extend existing EZs.

k) Risk Register

The Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone risk register is regularly reviewed by Wyre Borough Council's corporate risk team and will be reviewed again at the upcoming Project Board. Copies will be available upon request.

Key risks:

Risk and Issues	Mitigation & Actions
-----------------	----------------------

Change of key personnel at NPL and staff resources at Wyre BC stretched due to staff departures.	Clarify role and ongoing support from Blackpool EZ Delivery team with new SLA to be put in place and strengthening Wyre support team, new staff members recruited at Wyre BC to strengthen the team
Lack of market demand due to Covid-19/Brexit uncertainty and the commercial viability of development with existing scheme such as Energy from waste/Biomass plant which are in development being cancelled or postponed long term.	Allocated government Getting Building funding to help kick start essential infrastructure to better market the site to potential occupiers and stimulate private investment. Regular responses submitted to DiT large scale enquiries.
Continuing delays in applying for and securing planning and highway approvals and potential land contamination issues that need to be overcome.	Close liaison with NPL, Wyre (accountable body) and LCC, refresh of EZ Project board and securing additional delivery support resource
Requirement for flood mitigation measures and utility upgrades across the site and issues surrounding the ability construct western access road over Fleetwood-Poulton railway line. Delay in commissioning essential pre-planning surveys	Close liaison with NPL, Wyre (accountable body) and LCC and securing additional delivery support resource
Failure to secure purchase or rights over the Fleetwood rail line will impact upon ability to construct Northern Access road and add costs.	Close liaison with NPL, Wyre (accountable body), LCC and Network Rail
Decision on future use of rail line will impact on cost and timing of western access road if bridge is required	Participation in Fleetwood and Poulton working group chaired by LCC

I) Milestones:

Milestones	Dates
Forsa Energy completion of build and commissioning	Completed
Getting Building Fund grant fund agreement - LEP/NPL agreed	Completed
Appointment of joint international marketing agent LAMEC brand	Completed
Planning application submitted utilities and infrastructure upgrade including new gatehouse	Completed
Planning permission granted for utilities infrastructure and new gatehouse	Completed
Demolition and clearance of Vinnolit plots complete	Completed
Procure subsidy control advice once Implementation plan complete	TBC
Completion of revised Delivery Plan and masterplan refresh	Ongoing
Risk Register updated regularly by Project Board	Ongoing
Planning application submitted for 60,000 sq ft development	Mar 22
Construction commences for utilities infrastructure and new gatehouse	Underway
Subsequent roll out of fibre ducting on site	Q2 2022
A flood risk assessment to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding	Q2 2022

A transport assessment be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding- subject to progress on study of options for Fleetwood Poulton rail route	Q2 2022
An Environmental and Ecology study to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding *	Q2 2022
Completion of electric and water main upgrades	Oct 2022

*Habitat assessments to be undertaken Nov 21-Mar 22

Report Author

Rob Green Head of Enterprise Zones

Rob.green@blackpool.gov.uk

07500 786402