

**MINUTES OF BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARD MEETING -
THURSDAY, 25 MARCH 2021**

Present:

EPB members present:

Councillor Karen Buckley, Fylde Borough Council in the Chair

Councillor David Henderson, Wyre Borough Council

Councillor Mark Smith, Blackpool Council as substitute for Councillor Lynn Williams.

Chief Executive Officers:

Neil Jack, Blackpool Council

Allan Oldfield, Fylde Borough Council

Garry Payne, Wyre Borough Council

Co-opted private sector representatives present:

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

Other Attendees:

Nicole Billington, Marketing Officer, Blackpool Council

Tim Dixon, Tourism Manager, Fylde Borough Council

Mark Evans, Head of Planning and Regeneration, Fylde Borough Council

Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council

Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, Wyre Borough Council

Alexandra Holt, Tourism Officer, Wyre Borough Council

Rachel McQueen, Chief Executive Officer, Marketing Lancashire (until Item 7)

Andrea Wallace, Enterprise Zone Adviser, Wyre Borough Council

Paul Walker, Director of Development Services, Fylde Borough Council

Philip Welsh, Head of Tourism and Communications, Blackpool Council

Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager, Blackpool Council

No members of the public or press attending the meeting. The public parts of the meeting were broadcast via YouTube

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the agenda items 6 ,7 or 8 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

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3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2020

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 December be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2020

The Board received the following updates on issues considered at the last meeting.

In respect of Item 8- High Speed 2 and The Golborne Link

Mr Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, confirmed that as agreed at the meeting on 17 December 2020 letters had been sent in support of the retention of the Golborne Link on behalf of the Board and three authorities.

In respect of Item 12- Future Direction and Planning

The Chairman outlined that updates on Marketing of the Fylde Coast for investment, the Lancashire Economic Partnership and Flooding were proposed to be brought to the June meeting.

5 TOURISM RECOVERY

The Board received an update on progress with the Lancashire Tourism Recovery Plan from Marketing Lancashire and the work being undertaken on a Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre basis, and to discuss the scope for further collaboration to facilitate the tourism economy's recovery post-Covid pandemic.

Rachel McQueen from Marketing Lancashire was in attendance and highlighted to Board the initiatives from that organisation notably the publication of 'Redefining the Rule of Six – a Recovery Plan for Lancashire Tourism and Hospitality'. Ms McQueen emphasised that the recovery plan had been produced to work on recovery looking forward to 2022 and therefore would be separate from the developing ten year growth strategy. The plan included six strategy objectives namely, identifying platforms for collaboration, lobbying for further support for the sector, inspiring confidence and demand, positioning Lancashire as a must visit destination, develop proposals for a portal and securing maximum benefit for the sector and worked had continued while the sector had been closed. It had been acknowledged that the sector had a diversity which offered challenges over other sectors supported.

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Tourism representatives were in attendance from the three authorities and updated the Board on activities undertaken and referenced in the report.

The Board noted that it was positive that joint working was already undertaken in some areas and was especially pleased with discussions that were ongoing with transport providers including coach companies. It was noted that there was a need to ensure that consumer confidence and a central message that the Fylde Coast was a safe place to come back to. Discussion also took place on the issue of pent up demand and concerns that regular events might not be possible this summer. Tourism representatives highlighted a desire to work on activities that extended the season and could be delivered

Resolved:

To note the progress made and discuss the potential for further areas of collaboration to accelerate the recovery of the tourism economy on the Fylde Coast.

6 LEVELLING UP AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

Mr Nick Gerrard provided an update to the Board on the Levelling Up fund and the Community Renewal Fund. He explained to Board members the opportunities presented by such funds, the number of bids for which each authority potentially qualifies, the potential for cross-boundary bids and the role of MPs in the bid process.

Board members discussed potential areas on which their bids would concentrate and considered that it would be useful to bring reports on bids to the Board once submitted.

Resolved:

To note the report and the approaches to be taken by the Fylde Coast Local Authorities in relation to these funding opportunities.

7 BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE: UPDATE

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, provided the Board with an update on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

Mr Green highlighted that one of two project management roles, funded by Fylde Borough Council, has now been appointed and John Rutter had commenced work on the 1 March 2021. The other post had been re-advertised.

Further to the last three meetings Mr Green emphasised that central to the Enterprise Zones would be a request that government extend the period in which the 5 year business rates relief would be available from the current expiry in March 2022 to financial year 2025/26. With full Local Enterprise Partnership support officers had joined nationally with The Local Enterprise Partnership Network to put a proposal to HM Treasury. The desired outcome remained to seek an extension of business rates relief to 2025/26 as a low cost focus and engine for post Covid-19 economic recovery and growth, and to

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recognise the delays in all Enterprise Zones being able to bring forward enabling infrastructure. This remained a high priority for the Board and partners to ensure that Enterprise Zones could play their key role in delivering post-COVID industrial and economic recovery.

Ms Nicole Billington, Marketing Officer, highlighted that the hosting of workshops to develop a Digital Strategy for each of the Enterprises Zone allowing linkages with the Local Full Fibre Network. A meeting had also been proposed with the digital lead at Department for International Trade to introduce Blackpool's new digital opportunities.

Mr Paul Walker reported on the success of bidding for funding for M55 link road and that the decision of Cabinet to approve such works had now taken place.

Resolved:

To note the update.

8 HILLHOUSE TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE ZONE: UPDATE

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones presented an update on Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

Mr Green highlighted the signing of the Getting Building Fund agreement toward the costs of essential infrastructure upgrades including required upgrades to utilities and access roads to enable the new development to progress. Updates had been given at previous meetings but the signing of the agreement represented a further step forward.

Mr Green spoke about the closure of the Vinnolit site and the opportunities presented by the purchase of the site by the majority landholder, NPL Estates releasing new sites for development and enabling the relocation of existing businesses.

Further to Item 7, Mr Green again emphasised that central to the Enterprise Zones would be a request that government extend the period in which the 5 year business rates relief would be available from the current expiry in March 2022 to financial year 2025/26

Mr Green also highlighted the planning application for housing near to the site on the former Thornton AFC site and that it was not considered to impact on the development of the Enterprise Zone.

Resolved:

To note the update.

9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 16.25)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager
Tel: