

Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting:	9 September 2021

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(s)

That the Board notes the report.

3.0 Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

a) Masterplan

The EZ masterplan and delivery plans have now been refreshed, to reflect the new development since 2016. The updated reports were presented to Blackpool's Executive and approved in December 2020 reflecting the impact of changes in third party ownership across the site, requirements for changes required to satisfy Sport England and address Highway and transportation concerns. The public engagement exercise commenced online from 4 June until 4 July. A one day drop in event did not take place due to ongoing Covid restrictions but a follow up meeting was held with representatives from a local community group, Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum.

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.

New Project Manager Posts:

A second Project Manager has been appointed and due to join the team late November. The importance of strengthening the project management resource is a very high priority to ensure continued successful and expanded delivery as the range and scale of direct delivery ramps up in 2021/22. An additional marketing and admin apprentice post will also be created to support the team.

b) Fiscal Incentives

Work is continuing to lobby MHCLG to seek an extension of EZ fiscal benefits which are due to expire for Blackpool in March 2022 for rates relief and November 2023 for ECA's.

Local MPs have pledged their full support but the LEP Network at this time is focused on the evolving role of the LEPs and suggested next steps is through nationwide local MP support and direct lobbying.

c) Current Activity Phase One

The second of three proposed planning applications designed to release the Common Edge Sports pitches has been approved at the Blackpool Council planning committee on 8th June and subsequently by Fylde planning committee. It includes a 3G sports pitch, grass rugby pitch, training area, reconfiguration and extension to existing car park, provision of associated hard-standing, fencing and

landscaping, improvement works to the access from Common Edge Road including the creation of a new footway and cycleway.

Conlon's Construction have been appointed and work will commence on site 31st August with a completion date of May 2022. The new sports pitches will come into use in mid-September and phased release of existing pitches will allow highway preparation works to progress. The existing Jepson Way changing facilities will continue in use for the interim period.

Further design work has continued both the Eastern Gateway Access and the Common Edge Road junction upgrade led by Blackpool highways team, with further detailed site investigation being commissioned. Leasehold surrenders and renewals with sports clubs have been negotiated and the outline planning application for the new highways and development of former Common Edge Playing fields will be submitted in September on completion of final supporting reports and documentation.

An informal online engagement exercise was undertaken between 4 June 2021 and 31st July. This was supported by a mail drop to local businesses and residents and backed up by PR and social media coverage to publicise the opportunity to "have your say". 95 responses were received with 60% positive feedback. 66 of the comments were about the airport redevelopment and a high number of comments expressed a wish to see the return of commercial flights to Blackpool. The Have Your Say pages are now closed for comment but all comments can still be viewed at <https://blackpoolez.com/have-your-say/>

These will all be considered when finalising planning applications which will also trigger further opportunity for local residents and business to express support for the proposals and raise any points of concern.

d) M55 Link Road

All funding is now in place including an EZ contribution of up to £1m with Fylde generated retained business rates growth monies being ring fenced toward this and works have commenced with an anticipated 2024 completion.

e) Initial Development

Contractors Eric Wright Construction handed over the 40,000 sq ft Multiply building on Amy Johnson Way enabling the occupier to commence fit out works on 2nd August. It is now anticipated the building will be commissioned and fully occupied by Multiply in January 2022. The full £800,000 Growth Deal funding support was claimed before the deadline of end February 2021.

f) Current Planning Applications

Two live planning applications are currently being considered by Blackpool Council, the planning application for the sports facilities and an application for a small fibre switching data centre to support role out of superfast broadband across the Fylde Coast.

A retrospective application for construction of a cement batching plant and transport depot at the Squires Gate Industrial Estate, has been refused following significant local objections but the applicants have advised they will be appealing the decision.

g) Squires Gate Industrial Estate (Former Wellington Bomber Factory)

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. Work is progressing to resolve

technical issues relating to planning permissions, building regulation and fire certification, whilst some individual rating assessments remain outstanding. The marketing officer continues to pursue a potential meeting with the owners to discuss the new tenants in the property and opportunities for joint development.

h) Communications Infrastructure

The head of ICT at Blackpool Council will be taking part in NW Insider's Powering Digital Innovation on 26 August where Blackpool's vision for a Digital Strategy will be promoted.

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. The dedicated website www.fibreblackpool.com is still receiving enquiries registering interest in the scheme and various suppliers are now active in the Blackpool area. The EZ marketing officer will provide marketing support for any co-op members for the benefit of EZ businesses. Discussions are now underway to secure extension of the LFFN network along the coast to serve Wyre and Fylde, particularly the rural areas of both authorities. There is an increasingly strong level of interest from businesses involved in the digital and telecommunications industries in locating facilities within the EZ offering the prospect that Blackpool and the Fylde Coast can become a major player in this booming sector.

j) Marketing

A series of workshops are ongoing to deliver a branding refresh and collective messaging for all four LAMEC sites and a combined communications strategy is to be implemented.

Regular newsletter updates have continued throughout lockdown providing Covid-19 business support advice with the Marketing Officer continuing to monitor the situation carefully. The next quarterly autumn 2021 edition is planned for September.

A joint international agent for all four LAMEC sites has now been appointed in collaboration with LCC.

Top enquiries are:

No.	Date of enquiry	Target sector	Size	Type of enquiry
1	Jan 2021	DC	up to 125,000 sq ft	National company, land sale enquiry for data centre
2	June 2021	FM	Up to 100,000 sq ft	D&B LH requirement for local growth business in food manufacturing sector
3	Oct 2020	DC	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B LH for NW data centre facility requirement
4	May 2021	DC	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B LH for data centre facility and adjoining tech hub using green energy
5	Apr 2020	AV	25,000 sq ft	D&B sale hangar for specialised sim/helicopter training facilities, worldwide contracts

6	Nov 2020	E	20,000 sq ft	D&B sale for mix of owner/occupier and spec devt
7	May 2020	AV	2 acres	Land sale for hangar complex for engineering and storage, high net worth investment for airport
8	Nov 2020	FM	Up to 30,000 sq ft	D&B lease for fast growth, local target sector company
9	Dec 2020	ADM	Up to 2 acre plot for 20,000 sq ft	D&B sale for established local manufacturers constrained at existing premises

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

k) Blackpool: The Place for Business

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. To put forward a company news story for submission please contact the EZ marketing officer. Online engagement and followers of the campaign continue to increase month on month.

l) Blackpool Airport

Work is underway to apply to CAA for new operating licenses to come into effect from end of October and a specialist project manager appointed on a short term contract to lead the transition. The recruitment process for appointment of new Managing Director for the airport company is underway with initial interviews having been conducted.

Discussions have commenced 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.

m) Third Party Development

There is no current third party development activity on site.

To date:

- A total of over 250 live enquiries are currently logged for Blackpool EZ.
- Some 115 businesses have located to the Enterprise Zone since April 2016.
- A gross cumulative total of 1697 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 2nd July 2021 via MS Teams. The next meeting is due 30 September.

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.

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. Progressing fiscal benefits extension proposals to government
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
The airport has experienced a negative impact of Covid-19 however impact not as greatly felt as other larger regional airports and has remained open (observing restrictions) throughout pandemic.	Refresh of marketing plan, website and social media. Progressing architect's designs for new hangarage and remodelling for new commercial opportunities. Focussed targeting of core sector opportunities

p) Milestones

The table below lists key milestones which will be reviewed at the EZGC scheduled for 15 September 2021.

Milestones	Dates
Proposition and identifying opportunities for data centre market	Ongoing
Sports facilities work completes	May 2022
Land / property acquisitions x 4 (one exchange May, others August)	August 2021
Appoint international marketing agents LAMEC brand	Complete
Changing Rooms and car park/3G pitch planning approved	Complete
Appoint Common Edge Changing room and 3G pitches contractor	Complete
Architectural feasibility study & design work for airport complete	May 2022
Focussed marketing of Common Edge phase 1 commences	ongoing
Design and outline planning application for Eastern Gateway Access	Sep 2021
Design and outline planning application for Common Edge Road	Sep 2021
No. 12 grass football pitches ready for use September 2021	Complete
40,000 sq ft devt handed over to occupier complete	Jan 2021
Outline Planning approval for highways	Feb 2022*
12 month construction contract for EGA access and related EZ highwys	June 2022
Release of existing sports pitches and commencement of highway and utility infrastructure	May 2022
Fiscal benefit extension decision from HM Treasury	Mar 2022
Airport Control tower, fire station relocation planning application	Summer 2022
Outline planning app for airport redevelopment	Mar 2022
Decision on airport redevelopment planning application	Autumn 2022
Commencement of works for airport redevelopment	January 2023
Replacement hangar development commenced	Sep 2022
Completion of airport redevelopment works	2024/5



*Subject to Secretary of State approval of Greenbelt development

Report Author

Rob Green Head of Enterprise Zones

Rob.green@blackpool.gov.uk

07500 786402