

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

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 stalled and the accountable body at Wyre are chasing a response from Genecon to progress this.

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, are now preparing detailed planning applications for the development which should be submitted to Wyre council before the end of the year. A planning application for the demolition of the gatehouse office and erection of a new gatehouse office building has been submitted in May 2021, pending approval.

The project encompasses 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.

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

A purchaser for the former Sainsbury retail site has been identified and their intention is to secure a planning consent for up to 250 homes and potentially a smaller district retail centre which will support employment and provide some retained business rates growth. Planning applications are anticipated later this year and discussions are being progressed regarding contributions toward enabling infrastructure, including site drainage and access from the Western gateway road.

A planning application submitted by NPL Estates for a hybrid residential development of the former Thornton AFC site has been approved. Once works commence, this should see the completion of works to enable Bourne Road, the main access route to Hillhouse, to become an adopted Highway. In the meantime NPL have introduced a number of measures to reduce traffic speeds on Bourne Road.

b) MARKETING

A series of workshops are underway to discuss the branding and 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.

An agent has now been appointed to lead on international marketing for all four EZ's within the LAMEC cluster.

Addisons Group featured as a business case study in July as part of the Fylde Coast's investment marketing campaign website. Read in full here -

<https://businessinblackpool.com/addison-group-case-study/>

The team welcomes any further businesses at Hillhouse to profile their success.

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 Fylde Coast EZs.

Current enquiries include:

Date of enquiry	Target sector	Size and type of enquiry
NEW Aug 2021	Advanced materials – USA sustainable chemical manufacturer via DIT	10 acres, £50m investment
Jul 2021	Window frames manufacturer	n/k via NPL
Jul 2021	Energy from waste project	n/k via NPL
Jul 2021	Engineering company	n/k via NPL
Feb 2021	Waste to energy project	10,000 sq ft
Feb 2021	Construction	1 acre outdoor secure storage
Jan 2021	USA owned PPE manufacturer	200,000 sq ft
Jan 2021	Energy and renewables	20,000 sq ft new build industrial
Jan 2021	Organic waste recycling centre	10 – 20,000 sq ft industrial
Jan 2021	Waste to energy recycling project	Up to 2.5 acres
Jan 2021	Warehousing and distribution of beauty supplies	20,000 sq ft new build

c) Hydrogen Steering Group

Further Hydrogen Hub meetings will now be re-established now that social distancing restrictions are lifted. NPL will lead these meetings. 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.

d) Site Activity

i) Vinnolit

Majority landowner NPL Estates have completed the purchase of the vacant property of the former Vinnolit site and prior approval for the demolition works has been granted for work that will likely to take up to 12 months and will release new sites for development. There is strong market interest in occupying former Vinnolit buildings which are to be retained and upgraded.

ii) New companies on site

1. An events company employing 25 staff have moved into a larger 14,000 sq ft unit.
2. Forsa Energy build is now complete and fully operational employing approximately 5 staff.

e) Job Creation

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

f) EZ Board Meetings

A Board meeting took place on 9th July online with a group of stakeholders including Hillhouse tenants. The date and time of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

g) EZ fiscal benefits

Work is continuing to lobby MHCLG to seek an extension of EZ fiscal benefits which have now expired at Hillhouse 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.

h) 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.	Maintain relationships with NPL and Wyre key contacts, provide ongoing support whilst the team restructures and recruits new personnel.
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

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) and LCC
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:

The table below lists key milestones scheduled to be discussed and approved at the Hillhouse EZ Project Board on 9th July.

Milestones	Dates
Forsa Energy completion of build and commissioning	completed
NPL Grant agreement in place for Get Britain Building Fund	completed
Risk Register updated regularly by Project Board	ongoing
Revised Delivery Plan	Ongoing
Appointment of joint international marketing agent LAMEC brand	completed
Planning application submitted utilities and infrastructure upgrade including new gatehouse	completed
Demolition and clearance of Vinnolit plots complete	Q2 2021
60,000 sq ft speculative development of small multi-use units planning submitted*	Q3 2021
Planning permission granted for utilities infrastructure and new gatehouse	Sept 2021
Construction commences for utilities infrastructure and new gatehouse	Q3 2021
A flood risk assessment to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding	Q4 2021
A transport assessment be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding	Q4 2021
An Environmental and Ecology study to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding **	Q4 2021
Completion of electric and water main upgrades*	Nov 2021
Subsequent roll out of fibre ducting on site	Q3 2021
Fiscal benefit extension decision from HM Treasury	Nov 2021
Procure subsidy control advice once Implementation plan complete	March 2022

*Applications still to be submitted by NPL

** Habitat assessments to be undertaken Nov 21-Mar 22



**HILLHOUSE TECHNOLOGY
ENTERPRISE ZONE
LANCASHIRE**

*PART OF THE LANCASHIRE ADVANCED
MANUFACTURING & ENERGY CLUSTER*

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