

# MINUTES

## Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
<b>Venue:</b>	Reception Room, Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Economic Prosperity Board Members Present:</b>	Councillor Karen Buckley, Leader - Fylde Council Councillor David Henderson, representing the Leader of Wyre Council Councillor Mark Smith, Blackpool Council.
<b>Chief Executive Officers Present:</b>	Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, Fylde Council Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Wyre Council
<b>Co-opted private sector representatives Present:</b>	Martin Long (Blackpool) Neil Farley (Fylde)
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	Nick Gerrard - Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council Rob Green - Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council Scott Butterfield - Strategy, Policy & Research Manager - Blackpool Council Marianne Hesketh - Corporate Director of Communities - Wyre Council Tony Doyle - Head of ICT - Blackpool Council Paul Evans - Assistant Director - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Adam Ogden – Blackpool Council Charlie Richards - Head of Projects & Regeneration - Fylde Council Wendy Dodds – EnBW/BP (present at items 1-5 only) Christine Wood - Notetaker - Fylde Council

### 1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Buckley welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Neil Jack.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### 3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. Matters Arising

#### Circulation of Various Working Group minutes dealing with the topic of climate mitigation

Councillor Buckley referred to Item 7 of the minutes (Economic Opportunities of Climate Mitigation and Adaptation, page 5) in which it had been agreed that the notes of various working group meetings dealing with the topic of climate mitigation would be circulated, as appropriate to the Board.

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Scott Butterfield advised as follows:

- Meetings of the Lancashire Decarbonisation Group were not currently minuted; and
- The Lancashire Climate Officers Working Group had not met since the previous meeting of the Economic Prosperity Board on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022; and (*Following the meeting, Scott confirmed that a joint meeting of the Lancashire Climate Officers Working Group with Lancashire Finance officers had been held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022, minutes of which have been circulated*)
- The Fylde Coast Economic Development and Climate Officers Group had met that morning the notes of which would be circulated to the Board and a verbal update would be provided at this meeting.

#### Investment Zone Submissions

Councillor Buckley referred to item 12 of the minutes and enquired around the progress of the Investment Zone submissions made by Blackpool and Lancashire County Council. Nick Gerrard advised that following the Autumn Statement Investment Zones were being “refocused” and in practice there was now considered to be no likelihood of them being taken forward.

#### 5. Presentation – Offshore Windfarm Consortium

Wendy Dodds, Stakeholder Engagement Advisor, BP delivered a presentation to the Board providing an overview relating to the following projects that would be subject of their own applications for development consent:

- Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd (consortium between Cobra MG and Flotation Energy)
- Morgan Offshore Wind Ltd (joint venture between EnBW and BP)
- Onshore infrastructure

The presentation also provided details relating to:

- The consenting process and Environmental Impact Assessments
- Supporting the local, regional and national economy
- Pre application non-statutory Consultation (2<sup>nd</sup> November to 13<sup>th</sup> December) and next steps (Statutory)

The Board was advised that the aim of the consultation was to introduce the projects, share early plans and provide opportunity for consultees to have their say. Proposals were in the very early stages with many details still to be finalised, such as the size and number of turbines, the offshore and onshore infrastructure, and the cable landfall location. At the centre of the proposals was the drive to a commitment to reducing UK greenhouse gas emissions and reaching net zero by 2050.

An indicative timeline of the process from Autumn 2022 until 2028/29 was also outlined within the presentation.

Wendy advised that she would be available to attend future meetings of the Board to provide regular updates on the projects as detailed above. Wendy also circulated a brochure advising that it was also available on the new single website that had been created at [www.morecambeandmorgan.com](http://www.morecambeandmorgan.com)

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chairman invited questions. These included matters relating to the Enterprise Zone, site selection process, location stations, cable routes, source of energy, energy storage, funding, potential for co-investment with the consortium, effects on wildlife, potential for training, social value, jobs and apprenticeship schemes.

**It was RESOLVED to note the presentation.** The Chairman thanked Wendy for the presentation.

#### 6. Innovation Catalyst

Tony Doyle, Head of IT, Blackpool Council provided an update on Innovation Catalyst reminding that this was a collaboration with Lancaster University that is funded through the shared Prosperity Fund.

Tony advised that a taskforce had been set up with the purpose of looking at the opportunities provided by the Aquacomms transatlantic cable that comes ashore at the Enterprise Zone and related developments. The task force was looking at exploring the feasibility of building low carbon liquid-cooled data centres that would be powered by

renewable energy and capturing the waste from the data centres so that it could be used to develop a heat network for surrounding businesses and communities.

The Board was advised that the taskforce had met from February to September which had culminated in a symposium of 100 attendees at the Blackpool Winter Gardens. A vision had been proposed recognising that this was a great opportunity for Fylde Coast, and that attracting low carbon data centres would provide spinoff benefits and economic opportunities. This could put the Fylde Coast in an important position in the wider economic development of the region when considering the next generation regarding the internet where there would be a need for high performance compute – artificial intelligence, robotics, e-gaming, esports. Cheap energy was required to attract data companies and the internet connectivity and fibre networks that make it possible to exploit next generation technologies.

The Board was further advised that the stage had been reached to turn vision into reality. The task force had been engaging with the Connective Places Catapult which was part of the quango, Innovate UK. A scope of work had been agreed to assist in building a roadmap looking at providing a demonstrator building with a data centre with the idea of catching the waste heat and reusing it which would provide the potential to target funding. It was hoped to finalise and sign off the proposal with a view to commencement in the new year. Following the symposium, as referred to above, the task force had met on one occasion in which Lancaster University had expressed strong commitment to support the project and was looking to submit a bid to another Opportunities Fund to enable continuation.

Tony advised that one of the stakeholders/catalyst members, Chris Miller from Power Harvest Infrastructure Ltd who represented several international Investors, which included the Singapore Investment company, owners of Peel Park and was interested in targeting a medium sized data centre on that campus and looking at the wider Fylde Coast to investigate the possibility of sustainable technology campuses. The Board was advised that Chris would like to meet with the different Local Authorities to explore opportunities and to bring the investment community together to carry out due diligence in the area. Chris was also very interested in the Enterprise Zone. Chris had expressed an interest in attending a future meeting of the Board.

**It was RESOLVED to:**

**Note the update; and**

**That the letter received from Chris Miller, Power Harvest Infrastructure Ltd would be circulated to the Board.**

The Chairman thanked Tony for the update.

#### 7. Fylde Coast Green Growth Opportunities - Update

Scott Butterfield, Policy and Research Manager at Blackpool Council provided a verbal update.

Scott advised of a meeting he convened to bring together officers from Blackpool, Fylde, Wyre, Lancashire County Council (LCC), Blackpool and Fylde College and the Chamber of Commerce to consider the issue of Green Growth, implications for the Fylde Coast, opportunities and barriers, a report of which would be published soon which could be submitted to a future meeting of the Board for formal consideration.

The meeting had received presentations from Scott on the definition of Green Growth, in which two links to the economy were identified – the benefits of measures to help residents retain more of their income for local spending and the creation of jobs and business opportunities, and Robert Snape, Low Carbon Projects Officer at Blackpool Council emphasising the importance and urgency of slowing and stopping carbon emissions. There had also been input from Robin Jones who has a joint role at LCC and the NW Net Zero hub to consider possibilities locally, innovation and examples of things that have worked elsewhere, and Miranda Barker, Sustainability Lead across the two Lancashire Chambers of Commerce, looking at the topic in relation to local low carbon businesses.

Potential opportunities such as the food sector, sustainable tourism, data, aerospace, Blackpool Airport and challenges such as funding, planning, risk management around innovation, speed of change, how to select the right projects and scale of problems to be solved were identified. These were all areas where there needed to be an agreed element for sustainability in the future. Coastal location, challenges in rising sea levels and opportunities to look at natural coastal defences had also been considered. Details of a Lancashire Wildlife Trust visit were highlighted demonstrating the potential role of the Fylde Coast as a place to sequester carbon.

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Scott advised that the next step would be to address as a group how to assemble knowledge, mapping of business opportunities, develop an understanding of where sectors are going locally and look at the potential of working together, closer collaboration, and developing a mini eco system to understand how to best place effort that would benefit all. Scott advised of the possibility of a full day conference involving local businesses and partners from other sectors including housing to develop key relationships. A report or update would be provided to the next meeting of the Board.

A discussion took place around the possibilities of encouraging a circular economy in which Scott advised that a report was being drafted around the levels of opportunity locally which could be presented to a future meeting of the Board. Examples of circular economy projects were provided.

Councillor Buckley enquired around the Solar Together Scheme. Scott advised the Board why the scheme had not been able to be progressed and also advised of other possibilities/alternatives to the scheme. He suggested that Andrea Howe, Energy Projects Officer who was leading on the Cosy Homes in Lancashire project, be invited to a future meeting to advise on government funding and options around reducing carbon emissions from housing.

Scott also advised of the Eco Plus funding which would be available for homeowners and of a consultation process around the scheme. Scott stressed the importance of publicity around this scheme to ensure uptake of the scheme.

**It was RESOLVED to note the verbal update.**

#### 8. Local Authority Economic Updates

The Board received the following updates:

##### Blackpool Council

Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council advised of the following current major projects as part of Blackpool's £1bn+ Growth and Prosperity Programme which involved a huge amount of investment focused on three themes as follows:

- Creation of Jobs in the Growth Sectors – the aim being to diversify the economy and the major project being the Blackpool Airport EZ, progress on which was reported elsewhere on the agenda
- Breaking the cyclical nature of the Tourism economy by creating year-round tourism with the lead project being the £300m Blackpool Central development. Work had begun on the first phase of the multi storey car park at Blackpool Central which would be finished next year to free up the remainder of the site for the development of the Leisure components, and the Heritage Quarter proposals would also be commence.
- Regeneration of the Town Centre with a particular focus on increasing employment and footfall in the town centre with the major project being the Talbot Gateway Central Business District multi-phase project, the first phase of which had been Council offices and Sainsburys, completed in 2014, with phase 2, the tram extension up to the Blackpool North station, the four-star Holiday Inn Hotel and underpass would be completed next year and which would also create a transport hub ; and Phase 3, the DWP Civil Service Hub bringing c 3,000 jobs into the town centre starting on site early next year.

Nick also advised of Multiversity which was the relocation of the Park Road campus of Blackpool and Fylde College into the town centre which would bring c2,500 students into the town centre, for which the site assembly was currently underway funded by Town Deal, and for which the outcome of a Levelling Up Fund bid for the construction of the Multiversity was awaited.

This was a huge amount of investment in the town centre which was hoped would address vacancy issues and bring more spending power for the benefit of the Fylde Coast and by increasing staying visitors which would also increase spending and the year-round tourism economy. The Illuminations season had been extended until January 2023 as part of a multi-year programme of investment. Other developments were included to encourage people into the town centre with the extension of the Houndshill Shopping centre with one of the largest Imax screens in the

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country which would be completed next year, as well as the refurbishment of Abingdon Street Market to provide an offer attractive to a broader demographic.

Other planned schemes in the town included the Revoe Community Sports Village adjacent to Blackpool Football Club to provide community sports which were at the planning application stage, and a scheme to refurbish Stanley Buildings within the town centre which would provide opportunities for small businesses.

Nick reminded the Board of the Winter Gardens Conference and Exhibition Centre that had opened earlier in the year which is being complemented by the substantial upgrade of local hotels including the refurbishment of the Post Office which was next to the market subject to Levelling Up funding.

Plans for the letting of former Debenhams store to Frasers were also outlined to the Board.

### Fylde Council

Charlie Richards, Head of Projects and Regeneration, Fylde Council delivered a presentation which updated on current economic programmes/projects in Fylde. The presentation focused on the Council's adoption of the St Annes Town Centre Master Plan which includes the vision for development of the Town Centre, the Island site and the connecting public realm. Charlie advised that a Levelling Up Round 2 application has been submitted to deliver a significant element of the public realm works contained within the Masterplan and it is hoped that a successful bid will kickstart it's overall delivery.

Charlie gave an overview of the work and processes that were undertaken in developing the Masterplan with the Council's appointed consultant Building Design Partnership and their team of multi-disciplinary specialists. The cost of the commission was approximately £250,000, which was funded jointly by Fylde Council and Lancashire County Council via the Economic Recovery Grant Fund.

Charlie advised that the plan had been completed in two stages. Stage 1 included gathering the evidence base and completing a town centre health check which demonstrated that without intervention, the economic fortunes of St Annes Town Centre would steadily decline in the following years.

Stage 2 involved preparing a comprehensive list of interventions and projects throughout the town, including an extensive public consultation period delivered over several months. This resulted in a revised master plan including the key project intervention areas as follows:

- Station gateway
- Events space within the Square
- Active travel link
- The Pier and Pier Link
- Promenade Gardens Refresh
- The Island Site

Plans for the Island to be redeveloped during the master plan process were outlined which would maintain and enhance the existing uses of the site, creating links to the town centre with retail and hospitality venues. An artist impression showing the vision for the site was also included within the presentation, showing the potential opportunity to attract hotel/spa and leisure facilities on the site.

it is hoped that that catalyst for the proposed vision at the island will be the delivery of the new St Annes on Sea seawall project. This is a circa £12million Environment Agency funded scheme which is a continuation of coastal

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defence replacement across the Fylde Coast. Fylde has contributed £2.4million to the project which will be delivered in phases with the second phase due to be completed for Spring 2025 subject to Planning.

Charlie further advised of a number of live schemes such as the regeneration of Kirkham via the Kirkham Futures Programme at a cost of circa £11million. This Programme has multiple funders - Future High Street Fund, Historic England, LCC, Fylde Council and Kirkham Town Council and comprises of several different projects such as the Shopfronts Grant Scheme, Public Realm Improvements, Acquisition and development of 2 prominent properties (Hillside and Former Girls Charity School) and supporting activity programmes such as Health and Wellbeing and a Cultural Consortium.

Charlie further advised of a capital project to address public realm issues in Lytham (particularly street lighting) to help with the delivery of the winter events programme. Work is also taking place with various Parish schemes in conjunction with the planning team to deliver neighbourhood plans. There is a Regeneration Framework and an Economic Development Strategy which identifies work taking place in Parishes and Towns.

### Wyre Council

Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director of Communities, Wyre Council updated advising that the focus of Wyre following the pandemic was around the town centre recovery of Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Garstang and Poulton. A Regeneration Framework was being developed which had been completed for Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Garstang and had set out short-, medium-and long-term interventions which had been very helpful in relation to the Shared Prosperity Funds enabling to identify peak projects within the town centre and align with prosperity funding. The framework would assist when applying for future funding.

Marianne further advised of the relaunch of the wired-up network which had not been as successful as anticipated, therefore further work was to take place around business support. Marianne referred to some good examples in the Blackpool area around business support which could be replicated when working across the Fylde Coast.

The Board was informed of another key project working with ABP at Fleetwood docks and port and the acquisition of 40,000 sq. ft of a food processing facility with the intention of safeguarding the fish processing industry by the purchase of the facility. A discussion took place around the potential risks associated with this key project.

**It was RESOLVED to note the updates.**

#### 9. Exclusion of the Public and Press

As the public and press were not present at the meeting and the fact that the information was generally in the public domain, the Board decided not to pass the exclusion of the public and press resolution for the remaining items on the agenda as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Variation Order 2006.

#### 10. Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone - Progress Report

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, presented the Board with an update on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone and its future work and priorities against its role and remit. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

The following key areas were highlighted:

- At a meeting of the Executive at Blackpool Council on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 the latest delivery plan had been approved which would result in a funding increase of £14 million for the highways infrastructure and associated projects.
- Completion of the changing rooms at Common Edge which would open in March 2023 when highway work was completed. The highway works, which would cause some inevitable disruption, would commence on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. A public engagement event would be held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

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- A planning application was likely to be submitted for Airport East from the new roads and towns fund. Plans had been discussed at the Civil Aviation Authority who were happy with the proposals in terms of safeguarding impacts.
- Innovation Catalyst – Data Centre Demonstrator as referenced in an earlier item
- Still awaiting the study on solar farm and consideration of the next form of air traffic control, digital or tower.

The Chair referred to the BusinessinBlackpool.com website and some confusion on the references to Lytham St Annes. Rob advised he would take up the issue with BusinessinBlackpool.com.

**It was RESOLVED to note the updated report.**

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his report and contribution.

#### 11. Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone Progress Report

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones presented the Board with an update on Hillhouse Enterprise Zone in relation to its future work and priorities against its role and remit. A copy of the report had previously been circulated to the Board.

Some of the key areas highlighted at the meeting included were that there were still some issues in the completion of building work on the Gatehouse. There had been some issues with the contractor. It was hoped the work would recommence in the new year and would be completed quickly.

The planning application for a residential development by BXB had been deferred at the previous day's Planning Committee. This application would be considered again in approximately February 2023. This was the catalyst to commencing the work design on the new road. Preparations were underway to undertake a topographical survey to assist with the design and feasibility assessments regarding the concept design of the road and bridge.

There was still a very good pipeline of high-level enquiries from waste to energy of over sustainable users. Two generated enquires had been completed.

**It was RESOLVED to note the update.**

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his report and contribution.

#### 12. Any Other Business

##### Shared Prosperity Investment Funds

Nick Gerrard shared the good news the Shared Prosperity Investment Funds had been approved that week for each authority. Nick advised of the concern of the LGA around late approval and short time scales to achieve year one spend profiles. The Board was advised that there was a facility to move underspends from year 1 into year 2 or to submit a change request to the Government. Paul Evans asked that questions be directed to him and that Policy teams would respond.

#### 13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

To note the date of next meeting as Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 2pm in the Reception Room at the Town Hall, St Annes.

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