

Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr Peter Murphy, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder	Council	December 2016	8(d)

Executive Report: Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio, as set out below.

2. Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) Scheme

- 2.1** Officers submitted an expression of interest focussed on providing business support for new and existing businesses and training for local people within Fleetwood and other coastal town centres. The application has not been successful on this occasion. The CCF4 programme received 248 applications requesting a total of £240,879,902 but this year's budget totalled just £38.1 million. Given that the Council secured over £1.5m from CCF2 it is intended to review the situation with a view to putting in a further funding application next year.

- 2.2** An application for funding to create a new Coastal Community Team for Cleveleys was submitted at the end of September based on improvements within Cleveleys. A decision is awaited.

3. Coastal Revival Fund – Marine Hall Dome

- 3.1** Works are continuing and nearing completion and we hope to have a dome refurbishment opening ceremony at Christmas.

4. Hillhouse Enterprise Zone (EZ)

- 4.1** Officers are currently assisting with business enquiries for the site. One company has relocated on the site creating 20 jobs in the scaffolding and lagging trades. In addition there are three major potential investment proposals at Hillhouse, two of which are now moving forward with formal planning applications.

- 4.2 Officers submitted a draft five year Implementation Plan for the EZ to DCLG by the end of September and are continuing to work towards producing a final version by March 2017. This is being undertaken in partnership with landowners, developers and the Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Economic Development Company.
- 4.3 We have submitted a bid to Government for funding so Officers are able to help deliver commercial development sooner and more effectively. If successful, funding will be used to develop a master plan, marketing strategy and signage etc.

5. Business support

- 5.1 A total of nine flood application grants were processed in partnership with Lancashire Boost totalling £17,479. In addition to this, Business Rates Discounts were also given to these businesses totalling £39,074.
- 5.2 Wyred-Up membership is increasing steadily and currently stands at 65 (four more since last quarter) being 20 more than our original target of 45 businesses. New memberships are being promoted at all events. The last event took place at the Wyre Banqueting Suite, Garstang.
- 5.3 The Wyre Business Exhibition (Wyre Expo) took place on 11 October attracting over 45 businesses. Two Social Media workshops were also held during the course of the event. Feedback forms are currently being collated.
- 5.4 The 3rd Annual Wyre Business Awards took place on Thursday 24 November. It was a great evening and an opportunity to celebrate local business successes.

6. Local Growth Plan

- 6.1 Work to refresh The Local Growth Plan, which expires in March 2017, is continuing and a draft plan will be circulated for comment in late Autumn, with the final document being considered by Cabinet in Spring 2017. Outputs in the current plan have been successfully delivered under the six key strategic initiatives and a full output report on the delivery of these will be provided in Spring 2017. The refreshed Growth Plan will set out our economic objectives and aspirations for 2017 to 2020 and will be prepared in consultation with our business community.

7. Planning Policy

Local Plan

- 7.1 As previously reported, evidence on the scale of constraints in relation to highways and flood risk is critical in determining what level of the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing can be delivered in the Local Plan. The Planning Policy Team continues to work with consultants and strategic partners including the Environment Agency, LCC and Highways England (HE) to identify the extent to which flood risk and highways capacity is a constraining factor in delivering housing growth and consequently determine an appropriate deliverable housing requirement for the local plan.

- 7.2** A further draft report on highway capacity was received from LCC at the end of October. The highway evidence forms the justification why the Local Plan cannot deliver the full OAN. Officers still have concerns with the evidence and therefore legal advice is being sought from Counsel whether the evidence is robust and will stand up to scrutiny by the Inspector, developers and adjoining authorities. The continuing delay on the evidence from LCC is causing the delay with the Local Plan, as other work cannot progress.
- 7.3** There has been a delay in the timetable for the additional detailed highway report related to Poulton-le-Fylde which is now due to be completed by mid-December.
- 7.4** As previously reported, Highways England (HE) have advised that they cannot provide conclusive advice on the capacity of the A585 following completion of the Little Singleton By-pass in 2022, until the scheme for the road is designed in detail later this year. At a meeting with HE at the beginning of October HE agreed to provide the Council with a further report on the capacity of the new road following more detailed modelling and preliminary designs.
- 7.5** The Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is now complete and final endorsement is awaited from the Environment Agency.
- 7.6** The draft Plan is also being shared with service providers and in particular the Local Education Authority and the various CCGs so as to establish what level of services are needed to support growth in the Local Plan.

8. Other Matters

Wyre Power

- 8.1** Pre-application consultation with relevant organisations including Wyre Council has recently been commenced in respect of a proposed new 900MW Megawatt electrical (MWe) Power Plant primarily using combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) technology with optional additional open cycle gas turbine (OCGT) to be located within the EZ at Hillhouse. The project has been registered with PINS National Infrastructure Planning with a formal application to be submitted to Government by mid-2017.

National Grid – North West Coast Connections Project

- 8.2** In 2011 National Grid were asked to connect six new energy projects to the national electricity network. This included four offshore wind farms, a 850 megawatt (MW) combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) in Thornton (Hillhouse), on the Fylde coast, in Lancashire, as well as the proposed new 3.2 gigawatt (GW) nuclear power station known as Moorside near Sellafield, West Cumbria. The Moorside site was nominated by the Government for a new nuclear power station in its National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6).

- 8.3** At the outset Wyre was affected, not only by the proposal to connect a proposed power station on the Hillhouse site but also by the potential for connections to the other sites to be made via Stanah. In this respect a report setting out the various strategic options proposed was considered by the Council's Planning Committee in July 2012 in response to an initial consultation by National Grid. Wyre were also signed up as a party to the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) relating to the project. The principal purpose of this PPA was to secure the involvement of all relevant officers from affected planning authorities with a commitment that National Grid paid for all officer time and necessary travel expenses involved.
- 8.4** The focus of the project changed after the withdrawal of the application for the power station at Thornton, such that the purpose of the project was simply to connect the proposed Moorside power station. After lengthy consideration of the merits of the strategic options National Grid decided, in June 2015, to provide a complete connection for Moorside made up of two parts including:
- a route going onshore north from Moorside to a point on the existing grid network at Harker, near Carlisle; and
 - a route going onshore south from Moorside across the Furness peninsula then under Morecambe Bay, emerging at the new Middleton substation near Heysham in Lancashire
- 8.5** On this basis Wyre was no longer affected by the project and we withdrew from the PPA in October 2015. Nonetheless, we have received a pre-application consultation letter from National Grid dated 24 October 2016 seeking formal views on the project prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
- 8.6** At present it is not considered that a formal response is necessary, although we have sought views from National Grid on the potential implications for the proposed project of the intention, by Wyre Power, to submit a new proposal for a power station for consideration by the Government as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

9. Comments and Questions

- 9.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.