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## MINUTES OF BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2020

The minutes of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) meeting held on Tuesday 7 January 2020 at the Town Hall, St Annes.

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### **EPB members present:**

Councillors Susan Fazackerley MBE and David Henderson

### **Chief Executive Officers present:**

Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, Fylde Council

Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Wyre Council

Allan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration, Blackpool Council  
(substituting for Neil Jack)

### **Co-opted private sector representatives present:**

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

### **Other Attendees:**

Nick Gerrard, Rob Green, Marianne Hesketh, Mark Evans, Andrea Wallace and Katharine McDonnell

### **Observers:**

Councillor Craig Armstrong (Wyre), Mr Fred Moor

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## **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of Blackpool Council; Neil Jack, Chief Executive Blackpool Council; Katherine O'Connor and Paul Evans, BEIS.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **4 MATTERS ARISING**

Nick Gerrard advised that in regards to the business investment marketing strategy, with the contract coming to an end, a review had been undertaken, the findings of which would be fed into the scope of the contract for the next phase.

### **5 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND: FYLDE COAST TRAMWAY LOOP**

Following the discussion at the last Board meeting Nick Gerrard presented a proposal for the three local authorities to include a funding request in their respective Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bids (by April 2020 for Wyre and June 2020 for Blackpool and Fylde) to support a business case study into a Fylde Coast tramway loop.

He advised that the FHSF delivery manager for Blackpool and Fylde had been approached regarding the idea, and it was considered to be an innovative collaboration which chimed with the themes of FHSF. It was advised that if all three bids could make similar references, when submitted, it would evidence the collaborative approach being taken. However, Nick Gerrard cautioned that the Department for Transport would also need to be approached for their views.

Garry Payne advised that Wyre FHSF bid, the interim business plan for which needed to be submitted by 15 January (and the final version by April 2020) would make reference to the connectivity issues, the collaborative approach of the authorities looking for a solution, and specifically, the exploration of the tramway loop idea.

Allan Oldfield advised that the Fylde FHSF was slightly different to the Blackpool and Wyre bids, as the FHSF bid had come from the Kirkham Business Group and Kirkham Town Council. Fylde Council were a supporting partner, not the lead. The views and support of the Kirkham Business Group and Kirkham Town Council were vital before the Fylde bid could be submitted with the addition of a funding request for the business case study. Additionally, it was advised that Kirkham Town Centre was not next to the train line, so the case for connectivity had to be made.

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Nick Gerrard advised that at the first meeting of the Economic Prosperity Board, a decision had been made to support a passing loop for heavy rail on the South Fylde line as part of the Preston City Region Transforming Cities bid. Following the conclusion, in December 2019, of the detailed business case for that bid by Lancashire County Council, it had been decided owing to cost and value for money not to include the passing loop in the final submitted bid.

Mr Gerrard went on to advise that various studies had been undertaken over the last few years with the most recent looking specifically at a comparison of heavy rail options and a combination of trams utilising heavy rail lines, which required expensive specialised vehicles and was therefore considered not to be cost effective. He also pointed out that the large estimated costs of the study would be tested by tender but arose as a result of needing to get the agreed option sufficiently developed to establish a robust business case for funding its implementation.

It was agreed that it was essential that the brief for a study must build on the work of the existing studies and look at all the issues regarding connectivity between the three authority areas and the town centres, including connections to existing heavy rail, onward connections to the wider network, rail capacity within Greater Manchester, and to identify the best solution to those issues.

It was discussed that even if the bid for the study was unsuccessful through the FHSF, any work undertaken would stand all three authorities in good stead for future bids, and the issue of improving connectivity across the Fylde Coast was critical.

**Decision:**

- a) That the proposition was accepted.
- b) MHCLG are approached to secure endorsement for the approach being undertaken with a view to Future High Street Funding.
- c) Lancashire County Council, as transport authority for the vast majority of the study area, are formally approached for their support.
- d) Blackpool Transport, Network Rail and Northern Railway are briefed on the proposal and are given an opportunity to input.
- e) Community Rail Lancashire, Transport for the North, the DfT and the Poulton and Wyre Railway Society are consulted.
- f) Kirkham Business Group and Kirkham Town Council are consulted.

## **6 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Board decided that the public and press should be excluded for the remaining items on the agenda and passed the following resolution; “that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting, on the grounds 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 Minutes – Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board – 7 January 2020 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 the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information”.

## **7 BLACKPOOL AIRPORT EZ PROGRESS REPORT (STANDING ITEM)**

The Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council submitted a progress report on the Blackpool Enterprise Zone and provided a verbal update of additional information not contained within the report.

**Decision:** The Board noted the report and agreed that the risk register appeared as a separate agenda item for future meetings.

## **8 HILLHOUSE TECHNOLOGY EZ PROGRESS REPORT (STANDING ITEM)**

The Senior Economic Development Officer, Wyre Council submitted a progress report on the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone and provided a verbal update of additional information not contained within the report.

**Decision:** The Board noted the report and agreed that the risk register appeared as a separate agenda item for future meetings.

## **9 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 7 April 2020. The meeting will be held in the Reception Room, St Annes Town Hall, to commence at 2pm. The meeting started at 2pm and finished at 2.41pm.