



MINUTES

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Date:	Thursday, 2 nd March 2023
Venue:	Reception Room, Town Hall, St Annes.
Economic Prosperity Board Members Present:	Councillor Karen Buckley, Leader - Fylde Council Councillor David Henderson, representing the Leader of Wyre Council
Chief Executive Officers Present:	Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, Fylde Council Neil Jack, Chief Executive, Blackpool Council Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Wyre Council
Co-opted private sector representatives Present:	Martin Long (Blackpool) Neil Farley (Fylde)
Other Attendees:	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 Tony Doyle - Head of ICT - Blackpool Council Adam Ogden – Communications Manager - Blackpool Council Charlie Richards - Head of Projects & Regeneration - Fylde Council Christine Wood - Notetaker - Fylde Council Chris Miller – Power Harvest Infrastructure

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Buckley welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Marianne Hesketh and Councillor Mark Smith.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8th December 2022 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

Innovation Catalyst

Mr Nick Gerrard advised that since the previous meeting Connected Places Catapult had been appointed who were currently engaged on developing a road map for the initiatives previously discussed. Mr Gerrard further advised that this was a very important piece of work which would be carried out over the following weeks.

Investment Zones

Mr Gerrard advised that following Blackpool and Fylde's expressions of interest to take advantage of the Government's new investment zones scheme, the Government was still considering this initiative and that it may be that the initiative would still go ahead but with a much-reduced number of zones than had been originally anticipated. Mr Gerrard advised that this may present an opportunity and that the Board would be updated as and when any guidance was published.

5. Presentation – Power Harvest Infrastructure

Mr Chris Miller, Co-founder of Power Harvest Infrastructure (Phi) delivered a presentation to the Board. Mr Miller provided background to the Board about Phi advising that it develops 'Sustainable Technology Campuses (STCs)' bringing together Data Centres, renewable energy, energy storage and associated industries utilising the renewable energy resources and waste heat from the Data Centres, and green energy production; to support local district heating (residential and commercial), Greenhouse farming, AgTech and other clean tech/digital industry development.

Mr Miller also advised that Phi was a building platform business based on STCs that are developed and deployed in global locations that have the core criteria of grid infrastructure, extensive fibre connectivity, localised carbon neutral energy production and storage, local Government support and people talent.

The Board was provided with a summary of the first sites (8) currently targeted to be in Northern England, base cases including a location map and advised of the abundance of renewable energy locally. The presentation also included details of what was required from Regional/LA stakeholders and what Phi would bring.

The presentation also advised of 'what next' which would be to identify the most suitable near-term opportunities and work together to get what the region needs and deserves from the local unique capabilities/credentials and utilise potential assistance from the 'levelling up' agenda.

Mr Miller advised of the potential benefits that Phi could bring to the region as local investors were interested subject to the criteria being met. Mr Miller further advised that the Fylde Coast area was unique, all criteria was met. Mr Miller also advised that although Blackpool Airport was a site of interest, there were also obstacles and risks associated with airport locations.

A discussion took place in which Mr Miller responded to questions from the Board and advised that he had met with Fylde, Blackpool, and Wyre Councils and of the interest of working with Local Authorities and of the Digital Tourism options.

It was RESOLVED to note the presentation. The Chairman thanked Mr Miller for the presentation.

6. Fylde Coast Green Growth

Mr Scott Butterfield, Strategy Policy and Research Manager, Blackpool Council presented the Board with a report presenting an outline of carbon emission reduction projects to be progressed by collaboration between Fylde Coast Local Authorities. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr Butterfield referred to the previous meeting of the EPB on 8 December 2022 where he had verbally updated the Board on the workshop of a convened group of officers meeting that had taken place also on 8 December at the Solaris Centre in Blackpool to discuss potential opportunities, barriers, and projects. A summary of the session had been circulated to the Board separately. Mr Butterfield outlined to the Board a summary of the session including key themes emerging, ideas suggested at the workshop and projects developed based on suggestions from the workshop.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was an overview of the projects, which would be brought before individual Council management teams for a decision to proceed once further details were available. Mr Butterfield highlighted key issues from the overview.

Mr Butterfield also advised the Board of a fast forward bid that had been submitted the previous day requesting £300,000 of funding from UK RI. Mr Butterfield also referred to Climate Adaptation and Nature Positive Development work to date and next steps as outlined in the report at Appendix 1. Mr Butterfield also advised that Andrea Howe, Energy Projects Officer, Blackpool Council had been unable to attend the meeting as planned to provide advice on Government funding and options around reducing carbon emissions from housing but would attend a future meeting of the Board.

Councillor Buckley advised that the Councils and Leadership would be looking at the projects that had been put forward.

A discussion took place around the recommendation in the report at 2.1 “The Economic Prosperity Board requests that the relevant officers from the Authorities progress the identified schemes and provide updates to future Board meetings”.

The Chairman thanked Mr Butterfield for his report and contribution.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED: -

That the Economic Prosperity Board requests that the relevant Officers from the Authorities progress the identified schemes and provide updates to future Board meetings.

7. Local Authority Economic Updates

The Board received the following updates:

Blackpool Council

Mr Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council, updated on the **Talbot Gateway** Central Business District which was a major part of Blackpool’s £1bn+ Growth and Prosperity Programme.

- The Board was advised that the vision for Talbot Gateway was to create a Central Business District to secure more high-quality jobs not only to expand and drive footfall into the Town Centre (with the knock-on effects of encouraging the upgrading of the town centre retail, restaurant, and other facilities) but also to secure and increase job opportunities for local residents.
- The Board was further advised that the Council and Muse Developments Ltd had been working in partnership to develop the Central Business District since entering into a Development Agreement signed on 12 March 2009.
- Mr Gerrard updated on phases 1,2 (Holiday Inn, Tram Extension and Underpass), 3 (Civil Service Hub), 4 (Multiversity), and future phases on the Gateway and benefits of the scheme to Blackpool.

Mr Gerrard responded to questions from a Board Member relating to parking and potential park and ride schemes in Blackpool.

Fylde Council

Mr Charlie Richards, Head of Projects and Regeneration, Fylde Council delivered a presentation which updated on progress since the previous meeting in December 2022 relating to **the St Annes-on-the-Sea Town Centre Masterplan** as follows:

- Round 2 Bid of Levelling Up Fund LUF) for £14.6m had been unsuccessful

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- A Leadership Board Workshop had taken place on 19 January 2023 to consider the next steps, lessons learned, challenges ahead and future delivery on the masterplan including consideration of resources available and feedback to inform a LUF Round 3 bid and to consider alternative potential funding sources for Active Travel which featured highly in the masterplan.
- The key steer from Members had been focus on St Annes Square. A bespoke project in the Square focussing on events space delivery, lighting, CCTV, signage, and wayfinding was to be taken forward following feedback received from Members, local businesses, and local groups within St Annes.
- Charlie would be speaking with the masterplan consultants around a feasibility study to take the project out of the plan without compromising the integrity of the plan.
- There was continuing dialogue with Lancashire County Council (LCC) as a key partner for potential funding towards the Island site via the Lancashire Economic Recovery Grant Scheme.

Mr Richards also provided an overview on the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** as follows:

- Fylde's allocation of £2.6m to be spent until the end of March 2025. Mr Richards advised that a Local Partnership Group had been established to agree Fylde's priorities that would feed into the agreed Investment Plan. The Group had concentrated the funding in relation to the three key investment themes included within the programme (Communities and Place, Local Business, People and Skills).
- There were 14 projects that would make up the £2.6m allocation which were a mixture of Bespoke Fylde projects with emphasis on capital projects, particularly in the Public Realm.
- Mr Richards highlighted 'quick wins' – SLA for Northwest Aerospace Alliance, Ice Sculptures event, AFC Fylde delivering NEET support for Yong People.

Wyre Council

- Mr Garry Payne, Chief Executive, Wyre Council updated advising that significant funding had been received for Fleetwood Market. Mr Payne further advised of the obstacles faced due to decarbonising the building and that cost would now be £3.2m. When the project was completed, service costs to tenants would reduce due to the reduction in costs of electricity supply.
- Mr Payne also referred to the Wyre Annual Business Award Ceremony and suggested that the Board may like to consider holding a combined Fylde Coast Business Award event. Mr Payne advised that the Wyre Business Awards was public sector lead and accepted private sector nominations for awards. The event was very well attended by approximately 240 attendees but was restricted to businesses in Wyre.

1. It was RESOLVED that the Board would consider the suggestion of holding a combined Fylde Coast Business Award event; and

2. To note the updates.

8. 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.

9. Blackpool Airport EZ Progress report

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council presented the Board with the progress report. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr Green highlighted from the report as follows:

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- Work on the Division Lane junction had finally begun on 9 February following further last-minute delays from United Utilities and LCC. Mid-May 2023 was the anticipated date that the project would be finished but that there had been a further development that an LCC drain under the development had collapsed. Due to the collapsed drain, Divisional Lane East Access would need to be closed and Midgeland Road would have to be temporarily reopened.
- The 3G floodlit football pitch was due for completion this week and would probably be used for the Blackpool Cup, subject to a limited period relaxation of planning conditions – which had been applied for, the event may attract up to 10,000 visitors to the area,
- The Rugby League pitch would be ready for community use in March 2024.
- All site investigations had been completed for the main road. It was hoped to commence work in June 2023 on the Link Road subject to negotiations with United Utilities and ENWL on service diversions.
- A report on the Solar Farm was anticipated to be received on 10 April 2023.
- A meeting would be taking place on 13 March with BP and the two wind farms.
- Planning applications re the airport would be submitted to panel this month.

Mr Green responded to questions from the Board around traffic issues around Queensway.

It was RESOLVED to note the update.

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his report and contribution.

10. Hillhouse Technology EZ Progress report

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

Mr Green highlighted the following key areas:

- Fleetwood/Poulton Rail Line. Network Rail would be submitting the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport in February 2023 for the re-opening of the Fleetwood/Poulton rail line. The SOBC was expected to show that a Tram/Train option was the most impactful in terms of Benefit/Cost analysis, but all options remained open for consideration.
- If the Tram/Train option became the option of choice, there was a possibility that a bridge would not be required which would speed up the delivery of the Western Access Road and reduce costs.
- Combined working with Wyre Council was taking place, who had set up a fund to support surveys with support from NPL. The first survey, Topographical of the site was now underway and would provide baseline information to support all development planning applications with further reports on transport assessment on drainage and utilities. Applicants would be required to contribute to access the reports.
- A number of discussions were taking place with Lancashire County Council as a Planning Authority in relation to waste to energy projects.

It was RESOLVED to note the update.

The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his report and contribution.

11. Any Other Business

Levelling Up Funding

Mr Gerrard advised the Board around criteria and potential challenges for round 3 bids for Levelling Up Funding.

Lancashire Economic Directors' Group

Mr Green advised that he was currently supporting the Lancashire Economic Directors' Group who were currently undertaking a strategic site study. Mr Green advised that the group was requesting identification of sites that were not currently known as part of the Lancashire 2050 Strategy.

12. Proposed provisional dates and themes for the municipal year 2023/24

The following dates were proposed for the dates for the municipal year 2023/24:

Thursday, 8 June 2023

Thursday, 7 September 2023

Thursday, 7 December 2023

Thursday, 7 March 2024

It was RESOLVED that an alternative date in June 2023 would be identified for the first meeting and that the further potential dates would be considered at the June 2023 meeting. The meetings would be administered by Blackpool Council for the municipal year 2023/24. Details to be forwarded in due course.

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