

Blackpool Council



wyre  
council

8 September 2020

## **BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARD**

Wednesday, 16 September 2020 at 1.00 pm  
Zoom Meeting

### **A G E N D A**

#### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

#### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2020**

(Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 June 2020 as a true and correct record.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

**4 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

If the discussion during items 8 or 9 of this agenda involves the disclosure of “exempt information”, as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Board wishes to move to confidential session, it may at any point pass the following resolution: “That the public and press be excluded from the meeting whilst the agenda item(s) is/ are considered, on the ground 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 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 in the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information”.

**5 FULL FIBRE NETWORK** (Pages 7 - 12)

To receive an update on the Full Fibre Network and advantages for Councils who are not already members of joining the Cooperative.

**6 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND UPDATE** (Pages 13 - 18)

To update the Board on the Future High Street Fund bidding process for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham.

**7 RESPONSE TO COVID 19 UPDATE** (Pages 19 - 24)

To update the Board on COVID-19 Grant support to businesses by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough and Wyre Borough Council.

**8 BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE UPDATE** (Pages 25 - 32)

To receive a progress report on Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

**9 HILLHOUSE ENTERPRISE ZONE UPDATE** (Pages 33 - 38)

To receive a progress report on Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of next meeting as Thursday 17 December 2020 at 2pm.

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## **MINUTES OF BLACKPOOL, FYLDE AND WYRE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY BOARD MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2020**

The minutes of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board (EPB) meeting held on Wednesday 3 June 2020 via Zoom

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### **EPB members present:**

Councillor Simon Blackburn, Blackpool Council  
Councillor Karen Buckley, Fylde Borough Council  
Councillor David Henderson, Wyre Borough Council

### **Chief Executive Officers:**

Neil Jack, Blackpool Council  
Allan Oldfield, Fylde Borough Council  
Garry Payne, Wyre Borough Council

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

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

### **Other Attendees:**

Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, Blackpool Council  
Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council  
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities, Wyre Borough Council  
Andrea Wallace, Enterprise Zone Adviser, Wyre Borough Council  
Paul Walker, Director of Development Services, Fylde Borough Council  
Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager, Blackpool Council

No members of the public or press attending the meeting. The public parts of the meeting were broadcast via YouTube.

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### **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

The Board considered the appointment of a Chairman for Municipal Year 2020/2021. The Board noted that the principle of rotation of this office round the three local authorities involved in the board.

**Resolved:**

That Councillor Karen Buckley, Fylde Borough Council, be appointed Chairman of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board for Municipal Year 2020/2021.

### **2 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The newly appointed Chairman welcomed Board members to the meeting. She introduced Mr Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager, Blackpool Council who would be providing the governance support for the board for the Municipal Year 2020/2021.

### **3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The Board considered the appointment of a Vice-Chairman of the Board for Municipal Year 2020/2021.

**Resolved:**

That Councillor Simon Blackburn, Blackpool Council, be appointed Vice-Chairman for Municipal Year 2020/2021.

### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Neil Farley, Co-opted member, Fylde Borough Council declared a prejudicial interest in the matter raised under Any Other Business the nature of the interest being that the proposed development would be connected to his employer.

## **5 MATTER ARISING FROM THE 7 JANUARY 2020 MEETING**

There were no matters arising from the meeting held on 7 January 2020.

## **6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE INFORMATION CIRCULATED INSTEAD OF THE 7 APRIL MEETING**

The Board considered matters arising from the information circulated instead of the 7 April 2020 meeting.

Mr Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director, highlighted one piece of clarification that the Fylde Coast Tram Loop feasibility study would consider a range of options including all forms of rail and light rail and would not be limited to the consideration of a simple extension of the current Blackpool tramway.

## **7 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2020**

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 January 2020.

### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

## **8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

### **Resolved:**

That the public and press be excluded from Agenda Items 10 and 11: Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone Progress Report and Hillhouse Enterprise Zone Progress Report as this includes the likely disclosure of Exempt Information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **9 CORONAVIRUS AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

The Board considered the issue of Coronavirus and Economic Recovery. It noted the significant help provided by central and local government under various schemes to help small business and the furlough scheme.

Mr Nick Gerrard and Mr Rob Green highlighted that a key development had been the uncertainty that the pandemic had placed on business development and expansion. There would therefore need to see steps taken to ensure that the Enterprise Zones did not lose out and in fact emphasise the key roles that Enterprise Zones could play as a driver for economic recovery.

The Board agreed with officers that central to the Enterprise Zones would be a request to government extend the period in which the 5 year business rates relief would be available from expiry in March 2022 to financial year 2025/26.

The board agreed to receive a further update and discuss the issue further at the next meeting.

## **10 BLACKPOOL AIRPORT ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, provided the board with an update on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

The report started by outlining the programme for updating the Masterplan to reflect substantial changes to the physical development around the eastern gateway access, sports field re-provision revised airport proposals and the change of direction for the future of the Squires Gate Industrial Estate (former Wellington Bomber Factory). The revised interim delivery plan would be presented to Blackpool Council as Accountable Body in July 2020 before submission to Fylde Borough Council, the Lancashire Local Economic Partnership and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Mr Green provided further information on a number of development schemes within the Enterprise Zone including at the former Wellington Bomber factory site and the recent grant of planning permission to locate new sports pitches outside the area which would allow the

relocation of existing pitches.

Mr Green then highlighted the work that had continued to support the installation of the new transatlantic fibre optic telecommunications cable, part of the North Atlantic loop from New York to Denmark, being developed by AquaComms. Cable ducting has been laid from the proposed landing point to the base station constructed at Blackpool Airport with a further expansion of the network under the Local Fast Fibre Network (LFFN) programme at the planning stage and the opportunities to link this with Fibre Blackpool and use as a further opportunity to bring high tech employers to the Enterprise Zone.

In conclusion Mr Green highlighted changes to the marketing of the Enterprise Zone with Marketing Lancashire having now engaged with Richard Barber and Co. to progress Phase 2 of the Enterprise Zone websites, phase 2 of the overarching Invest in Lancashire site and options around the integration of Evolutive.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

**11 HILLHOUSE ENTERPRISE ZONE PROGRESS REPORT**

Mr Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zone presented an update on Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

Mr Green initially highlighted work with the landowner NPL estates to encourage that organisation to bring forward proposals for an initial phase of speculative development totalling 6,100m<sup>2</sup>. The project would also require some local enabling infrastructure, including site access road, utilities and in particular an extension and repair to Hillhouse's water ring main. An application had been in preparation for Growth Deal funding in anticipation of last minute resources becoming available.

This would necessitate an updating of the Business Plan which was already commenced and likely to be approved in September 2020.

Mr Green then spoke about the exploration the opportunities of utilising Hillhouse for the generation and storage of hydrogen with meetings continuing and the hope that this project's remit would in time expand to encompass all forms of renewable energy.

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## **12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board considered as an urgent item a report about the potential for the Westinghouse site at Springfields near Preston to be designated as one of limited number of sites in the United Kingdom licensed to produce medical isotopes.

The location within an existing nuclear facility at Springfields was considered suitable and the Board's discussion highlighted the view that such expansion would benefit the area both in terms of ensuring the long term viability of the site and in attracting high-skilled jobs to the area.

The Board expressed support for the principle of the development and that it might perhaps generate synergy with the Enterprise Zones and agreed that the Council's Leaders would write in support.

### **Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 3.30 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager  
Tel: 01253 477157  
E-mail: [Lennox.beattie@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:Lennox.beattie@blackpool.gov.uk)



Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Report Author: Tony Doyle, Head of ICT Services,  
Blackpool Council

Date of Meeting: 16 September 2020

## LOCAL FULL FIBRE NETWORK

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To receive an update on the Full Fibre Network and the advantages for Councils who are not already members of joining the cooperative.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 That the Board recommend to both Fylde and Wyre Borough Councils to the join the cooperative and enter into further dialogue with Tony Doyle Head of ICT Services at Blackpool Council who leads on the Full Fibre initiative in Blackpool and Shaun Fensom the Chair of the cooperative.

### 3.0 Background Information

The previous meeting of the board on the 3 June 2020 expressed an interest in how the Local Full Fibre network([FibreBlackpool.com](http://FibreBlackpool.com)) recently established along the Tramway in Blackpool could be expanded and developed further to benefit the wider Fylde Coast. A map of the current network is attached at Appendix 5a.

Blackpool has been successful in bidding to the Department Of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) for a Full Fibre Wave 2 Grant under the Asset Reuse method by using an existing ducting asset in the Tramway to build a fibre optic spine along the Tramway. DCMS awarded Blackpool £3.1million to populate the duct with Fibre and build out the ducting infrastructure further to connect Council assets and to service both Enterprise Zones, the new Conference Centre at the Winter Gardens as well as establish a series of Meet me chambers across the Promenade. In effect this has created a spinal fibre network that can be used by the public sector to connect its own assets and the spare capacity can be made available through a broadband co-operative to the private sector. Due to some challenges with the cost of the fibre dig to the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone, Wyre Council has also recently committed additional funding to the Fibre project from Enterprise Zone retained business rates growth to ensure the Fibre spine reaches all the way to the Hillhouse Enterprise Zone.

The cooperative vehicle is key in ensuring State Aid compliance and was originally established in Tameside who received Wave1 Local Full Fibre from DCMS . The cooperative's formal name is Cooperative Network Infrastructure(CNI) <https://cni.coop/> and is open to both large and small Internet Service Providers as well public sector organisations who wish to collaborate in enabling the building out of a Local Full Fibre infrastructure under dig once principles. For example if the Council is carrying out some public realm works which involve digging up a pavement it makes sense at the same time to install a fibre duct and make the spare capacity in this duct available to co-op members at a market rate thereby avoiding multiple telecoms companies digging the pavement and installing their own separate fibre ducts. In essence the Cooperative Network Infrastructure brings together public and private sector organisations to create and share new digital infrastructure.

It is now also possible with BT Openreach's Physical Infrastructure Access(PIA) for co-op Members to also purchase spare capacity in Openreach ducts and telegraph poles at wholesale rates and combine Cooperative Network Infrastructure ducting to connect individual businesses and properties to minimise digging new ducts.

In Autumn 2020 an undersea International Fibre Optic link will connect Blackpool to New York at the Airport Enterprise Zone. The connectivity is being carried by Aquacomms a Dublin based company that specialises in delivering secure, resilient Transatlantic connectivity . This is part of a larger network known as the North Atlantic Loop connecting America and Europe. The arrival of this International connectivity which will potentially carry a third of the world's Internet Traffic between America and Europe provides the Fylde Coast with an unrivalled and unique opportunity to attract inward investment and build a stronger digital economy in the area. Combining Local and International Fibre potentially creates new opportunities for the local and regional economy.

### **Expansion and Development**

The work on the Fibre spine in Blackpool is now nearly complete and the first Full Fibre business customers from the Guest House sector have already been connected by a broadband coop member. These businesses are already reporting transformational benefits to their businesses from the Fibre connectivity having been poorly served by slower copper connections in the past. The broadband coop members are now gearing up their marketing and early indications are demand from businesses and residents is strong for the enhanced connectivity speeds full fibre can bring.

A number broadband coop members have expressed an interest in developing their footprint beyond the Blackpool boundaries, there is also potentially opportunities particularly targeting rural areas to bid for further funding from DCMS. A combination of collaborative working, seeking further funding opportunities, potential private investment from cooperative members some of which have significant investment backing from large financial institutions could enable further expansion and growth of the cooperative network along the Fylde Coast.

There is therefore an open invitation from Fibre Blackpool and Cooperative Network Infrastructure for both Fylde Council and Wyre Borough Councils to join the broadband coop. There is no financial commitment for the Councils to join other than £1, just a commitment from the Councils to explore collaborative approaches to sharing and developing Fibre optic infrastructure.

It should also be noted that it is also worthwhile exploring how the Council's own network infrastructure needs may be better served by collaborating or investing in a Fibre infrastructure. There are opportunities to not only connect Council buildings but increasingly other assets such as CCTV or Car Parks can benefit. Fibre connectivity is also a key enabler in the advancement of 5G and the Internet of Things(IOT) technologies that will become essential for towns and cities to compete in the digital economy.

### **Local Authority membership of Cooperative Network Infrastructure**

Local authorities can join other public sector bodies as members of Cooperative Network Infrastructure with a number of possible benefits:

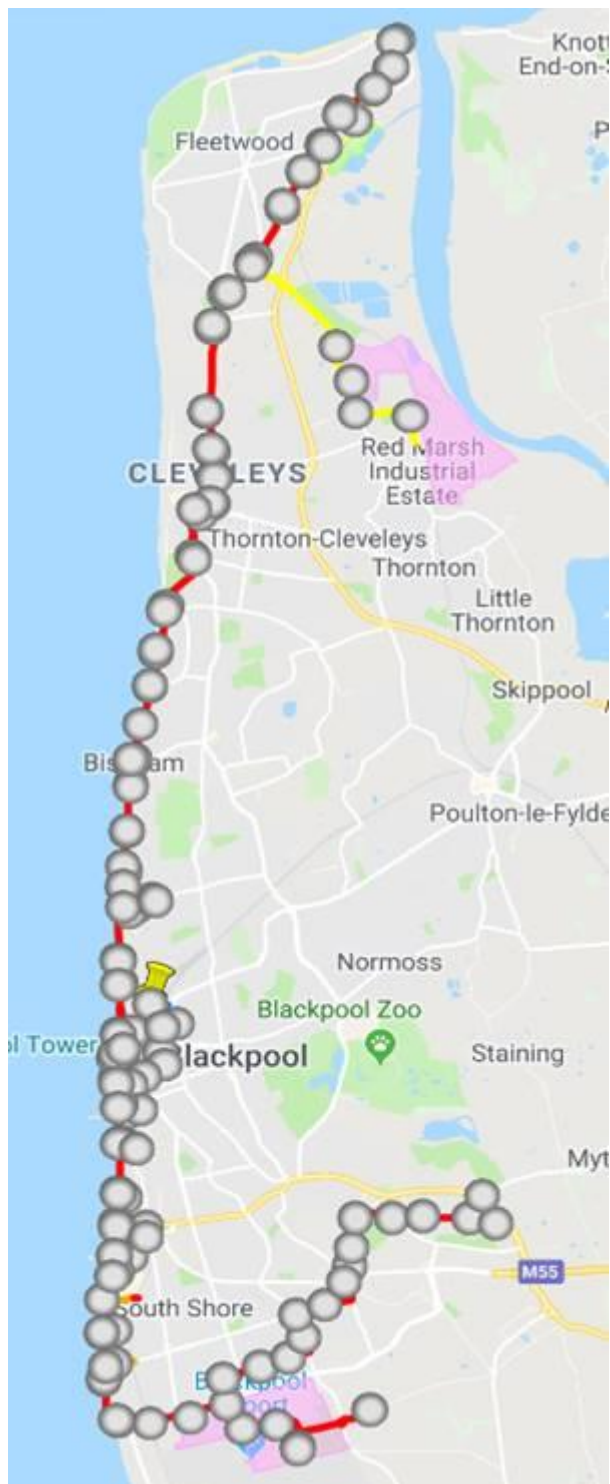
- Work collaboratively with other public sector bodies and with telecoms operators and investors
- Share digital infrastructure assets between public and private use to make savings and improve services
- Accelerate deployment of full fibre for the benefit of the local economy for example using 'dig once' opportunities

Local authorities currently in membership of Cooperative Network Infrastructure are Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, Blackpool Council and Manchester City Council.

All cooperative members are expected to contribute to the governance of the cooperative and make a minimum investment of £1. Members can then trade with Cooperative Network Infrastructure for example by providing or accessing assets or making further investment for a return.

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## Appendix 5a: Footprint of the existing Local Full Fibre Network



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Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Report Author: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director,  
Blackpool Council

Date of Meeting: 16 September 2020

## **FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND (FHSF) UPDATE**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To update the Board on the Future High Street Fund bidding process for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To note the report.

### **3.0 Background Information**

Previous Board meetings have highlighted the aims and objectives of the Future High Street Fund and how each Fylde coast authority had indicated their wish to submit a bid for Blackpool, Fleetwood and Kirkham respectively.

Each Authority has now submitted their final bids, the detail of which is set out below, and the outcome of which is anticipated in the early Autumn.

In respect of the previously discussed proposal for each Authority to seek funding towards the Fylde Coast Rail Study, whilst Blackpool and Wyre have include this Fylde have not after their appraisal and feedback. In line with the resolution of the Economic Prosperity Board, Fylde sought the endorsement of Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government through the inclusion of the study within their draft business case submission but the feedback provided set out that revenue grants such as feasibility studies are not within the scope of Future High Street Fund. In addition, they were unable to justify including a request to fund Study given the distance of the station from the town centre which made it difficult to identify any tangible benefits to the town centre of Kirkham from this project. Unlike the Blackpool and Wyre bids, which seek the full £25m funding, the Kirkham bid seeks in the region of £9m and so the inclusion of such a large cost element with no quantifiable benefit would have significantly diluted the Benefit Cost Ratio of their business case to such an extent that the bid as a whole would have been seriously jeopardised.

Nonetheless, Fylde Borough Council have confirmed that they remain committed to exploring ways in which the services provided along the South Fylde Line may be improved and, as referenced at a previous Board it was discussed that even if the bid for the study was unsuccessful through the Future High Street Fund, 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. The importance the Government is placing on transport infrastructure is also seen as an important factor. It remains to be seen how Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government respond to the proposals in the Blackpool and Wyre submissions.

#### 4.0 Future High Street Fund Bid Submission detail

##### Blackpool Bid

###### Date of submission

Blackpool submitted its bid on the 20 July 2020.

###### Funding Sought

There are 11 schemes in the Blackpool programme. The schemes amounted to a Future High Street Fund ask of £25m with public co-funding of £18.3m and private investment of £16.1m.

###### Project List

The Blackpool interventions programme was based around three **Strategic Objectives (SO's)** reflecting the aims and objectives of the Future High Street Fund improving experience, driving growth and future sustainability. The 11 schemes are:-

- **Houndshell Extension:** To provide a physical enhancement to the Houndshell shopping centre via an extension allowing the private sector to invest in a new cinema, 2 restaurants and support the relocation of Wilko, providing an overall boost to the town centre.
- **Abingdon Street Market:** To secure the rejuvenation of the Abingdon Street Market to make it more appealing to a wider resident and visitor base

*NB: these first two schemes have subsequently received an allocation through the Getting Building Fund and both are now going through the Local Enterprise Partnership's accelerated assessment process.*

- **Post Office Acquisition and Redevelopment:** To secure the refurbishment and re-use of this prominent vacant building for a private sector hotel development.



- **King Street Rejuvenation through Property Acquisition:** To acquire 8 vacant properties on King Street to support land acquisition for the location of a major office development.
- **Creative Business Incubation:** To acquire and refurbish 3 vacant units in the town centre to create new retail/maker units for small businesses including pop ups and art and culture businesses.
- **Adelaide Street transport Hub and Access Improvements:** Accessibility and public realm scheme on Adelaide and Bank Hey Street to improve public and other transport access including bus shelters, taxi, cycle, and pedestrian access facilities, directly supporting the Houndshill, Sands Hotel and Showtown developments.
- **Innovation Partnership:** Working with a retail consumer specialist, investment and innovation firm using their expertise and contacts to pilot innovative digital retail technologies in high street businesses, improving businesses' understanding of their customers
- **Digital infrastructure:** To provide the high street businesses and shoppers access to better broadband and the substantial digital infrastructure available to Blackpool
- **Monitoring and Analytics Applications:** To develop and design a monitoring system to understand more clearly visitor footfall, how people move around, the places they visit and the time they spend, to help support businesses adapt to change, and identify new opportunities to enhance the visitor experience.
- **Fylde Coast Rail Study, incorporating proposals for a Tramway Loop:** Technical feasibility study and outline business case to support an extension of the current Blackpool-Fleetwood line to increase frequency and improve connectivity through a train or tram loop across the Fylde Coast and beyond.
- **Application technology marketing and promotion:** Introduce a town centre gift card and loyalty programme to stimulate economic activity through increased footfall and local spend.

## **Wyre (Fleetwood Bid)**

### **Date of submission**

Fleetwood's Future High Street Fund bid was submitted on 4 June 2020

### **Funding Sought**

The bid looked to secure £22.3 million

### **Project List**

A programme of investment to regenerate Fleetwood town centre was grouped under three complementary themes - enabling town centre living, reviving town centre assets and public realm and restoring town centre access. The summary of projects is set out below:

- **Port redevelopment:** – provision of a new sea wall and integrated linear park to unlock the derelict waterfront site to deliver up to 172 homes, including 55 affordable homes within the first phase.
- **Redevelopment of Store 21 and associated parade:** – to explore opportunities to redevelop vacant shopping parades as purpose built affordable housing and ground floor community/business space.
- **Public Realm:** – linking civic and cultural spaces along Victoria Street and Adelaide Street and supporting the 'heritage quarter' at Albert Square/Lord Street through high-quality public realm.
- **Fleetwood Museum:** – extension of the museum to create a fully accessible new visitor centre with an extended offer.
- **Fleetwood Market:** – Development of the food and drink offer in the Victorian Market Hall and redevelopment of derelict land to provide additional trading areas which could be used as a makers market/open space.
- **Fylde Coast Tramway Technical feasibility study and outline business case:** - to explore the reopening of the Fleetwood-Poulton rail line to extend the existing tram/rail network.

## Fylde (Kirkham) Bid

### Date of submission

The bid was submitted on the 17 August 2020.

### Funding Sought

The bid looked to secure £9,509,835 from Future High Street Fund based on :

1. Future High Street Fund Property acquisitions	£2,269,210
2. Public Realm improvements	£4,625,000
3. Development and Building refurbishment costs	£1,705,000
4. Conversion and improvement grants	£501,625
5. Revenue costs	£409,000
TOTAL	£9,509,835

### Project List

- **The Kirkgate Centre:** Acquisition of a key town centre building for redevelopment /re-purposing the property, including the conversion of upper floors into 22 affordable dwellings.
- **Hillside Court:** A key Grade II Listed building, which has been vacant for at least 5 years will be redeveloped/refurbished into a heritage/skills/eco/educational centre as part of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) for Kirkham.
- **Hillside (Phase 2 and 3):** Acquisition of the neighbouring development plot allowing the 'garden' to be redeveloped. It is proposed to create a new 'earthship', building with space for teaching /hosting and ancillary facilities such as canteen, tools and materials store, drying rooms and office.
- **Former TSB Bank:** Conversion of a vacant Grade II listed building into community hub, suitable for a variety of uses including a community cinema, and Arts Centre. This project will diversify the uses and encourage more people to visit the centre of Kirkham.
- **Public Realm Improvements:** physical improvements to the public realm to reduce traffic and reprioritise the high street in favour of pedestrian movement. Collectively, these works will lead to a positive increase in footfall and general ambience within the town centre area.
- **Development and Building refurbishment costs** to enhance the function and effectiveness of space within existing properties along the Poulton Street, to significantly enhance the architectural quality of the street scene and improve townscape quality.

- **Conversion and improvement costs:** Capital support to convert and/ or improve and repair the all property acquisitions.
- **Revenue costs:** revenue support for Fylde Borough Council to run the Future High Street Fund programme over 4 years.

Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

Report Author: Nick Gerrard, Growth and Prosperity Programme Director,  
Blackpool Council

Date of Meeting: 16 September 2020

## RESPONSE TO COVID-19

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Board on COVID-19 Grant support to businesses by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough and Wyre Borough Council.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the report.

### 3.0 Background Information

On 11 March 2020 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the creation of a **small business grant fund ("SBGF")** to help businesses deal with the immediate financial impact of the 2020 COVID-19 crisis. Although not part of Non Domestic Rate ("Business Rates"), eligible businesses were those who were registered for Business Rates and those who qualified for Small Business Rate Relief ("SBRR"). It was originally stated as a one-off grant payment of £3,000.

On 17 March 2020 the Chancellor announced an extension to the SBGF scheme and an increase in funding to £10,000. He also announced a new grant fund for those Business Rate payers who were in the **retail, hospitality and leisure sector** but who did not receive SBRR. The scheme was in two parts and awards were made based on rateable value. Scheme 2A ("RHGA") was a £10,000 payment for those with a rateable value up to and including £15,000, and Scheme 2B ("RHGB"), a payment of £25,000 for those with a rateable value above £15,000 but below £51,000.

On 1 May 2020 the government announced a new **Discretionary Grants Fund (DGF)** scheme which would provide a discretionary grant payment to those who were not eligible for the SBGF or the RHG Schemes. Further guidance was issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund on the 13 May 2020. This scheme was funded on the basis of 5% of the expected expenditure on the two grant schemes above.

On 23 July the Government informed Local Authorities of the closure of all COVID 19 Business Grant Schemes on 28 August 2020. This includes the Discretionary Grant Fund as well as the Small Business Grants and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant

#### 4.0 Blackpool Council

A critical part of Blackpool's multi-faceted response to the pandemic was the immediate establishment of an enhanced business support service to help protect the local economy.

With thousands of Blackpool's businesses and their employees facing huge upheaval after the government lockdown announcement, it was vital that the Council and partners were able to deliver a dedicated service that gave credible help and guidance to those who needed it.

As Central Government began to roll out £330bn worth of rescue measures including temporary loans, rate relief, cash grants, Job Retention and Self Employment Schemes to support businesses and save employees from hardship, the Council's Business Support Team within the Economic Development Services, established a COVID-19 helpdesk: [www.blackpoolunlimited.com/c19business-support](http://www.blackpoolunlimited.com/c19business-support).

They then formed a close working relationship with colleagues in finance and business rates departments to provide urgent help to those businesses that were eligible for financial aid to be able to access it. The partnership has provided a remarkable service to date, certainly one of the best in the country. Within the first few weeks, there was a huge surge in usage of the website helpdesk with 12,000 enquiries and almost 900 businesses receiving direct support to date.

The strong cross-working relationship with finance and business rates was crucial as many of these queries related to the rate support grants being administered by the Local Authority.

On 1 April 2020, Blackpool Council received a total of £59m from Government to start the process of paying the business support grant payments to local businesses. The challenge was to get the money out the door as quickly as possible, recognising that many businesses were becoming increasingly desperate for support. Over the next two weeks, messages went out across multiple channels to advise eligible businesses to send in their bank details so payment could be made.

At the same time, the finance and business rates teams were working around the clock and through weekends to check eligibility, make sure the claims were not fraudulent and the process the payments directly into bank accounts.

As of the end of August 2020, the Council had paid £47.17m to 4,154 businesses.

The first publicised league tables showed that Blackpool Council was above average nationally in respect of the speed of getting these payments out to local businesses- 51.8% v 49.6% national average by amount and 61.2% v 51% national average by number.

When the discretionary fund was made available by government they asked each Local Authority to allocate a percentage of the remaining resources according to a locally determined set of criteria. By 28 August 2020, Blackpool had paid £2,450,000 to 216 businesses. This is around £30,000 more than the allocation but the Council had committed this additional resource so that it could apply the criteria fairly and ensure that all of the money made available was paid out (thereby not handing any back to the Treasury).

It is also important to note that the Council's adult employment services (such as Positive Steps) continue to actively support unemployed residents remotely, at a time when job vacancies in the local labour market have plummeted. These employability measures will be crucial once the economy is fully switched back on, where many more unemployed will require assistance.

In addition as part of the efforts to rejuvenate the economy has also made bids to the Reopening High Streets Fund, Future High Streets Fund, High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund, Getting Building Fund and Towns Fund with some approvals already received.

Below is a summary position statement on the various Covid-19 grant schemes in Blackpool:

<b>FUND:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>	<b>VALUE OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>
Small Business Grants Fund	3,161	£31,610,000
Retail, Hospitality, Leisure Fund	774	£13,110,000
COVID Discretionary Grants Fund	219 ( <i>884 applications</i> )	£2,450,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>4,154</b>	<b>£47, 170,000</b>

## 5.0 Fylde Borough Council

The Council established a cross party member Town Centre Working Group (TCWG) which has the remit to lead on and oversee the Council's response to the impact of Covid-19 on the town centres and the wider economy in Fylde. The TCWG meets on a regular basis and has a dynamic action plan that incorporates initiatives from the Reopening the High Streets Safely Fund and measures proposed by the Lancashire Resilience Fund.

Officers have provided support and advice to premises ahead of opening along with continued support (7 days a week). The Council provided grants to the three town centres (St Annes/Lytham/Kirkham) for each business group to fund initiatives that support recovery in the town centres.

Dedicated teams were set up to provide advice and support to non-essential retail and then the hospitality sector ahead of re-opening with ongoing advice, monitoring and support throughout. The Borough has seen a significant number of people visit the coast and countryside as the lock down eased, the better weather arrived, people being on furlough and international travel curtailed. This placed pressure on waster, parks, litter, enforcement, car parking and traffic management all of which have had additional resources to manage demand. Significantly more visitors made social distancing more difficult and led to an increase in reports of non-compliance.

A significant number of businesses have reported good business triggered by staycations and COVID circumstances i.e. furloughed parents; children at home; travel bans and the Eat Out to Help Out initiative. However, there are concerns that the landscape will change in September with weather change, end of the scheme and schools reopening. The circumstances created by COVID 19 has benefited tourism locations despite the lack of major events to attract footfall, it has helped many businesses recover after the lockdown.

The need to social distance has resulted in a review of existing public realm schemes currently being delivered to ensure that pedestrian flows to ease movement is addressed. The Council has produced an initial video Enjoy Fylde Safely aimed at providing reassurance to visitors and residents that Fylde is managing the risks responsibly and that it is safe to visit, a further video has been produced to update and reinforce the message across all service sectors.



Below is a summary position statement on the various Covid-19 grant schemes in Fylde Borough:

<b>FUND:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>	<b>VALUE OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>
Small Business Grants Fund	1,233	£12,330,000
Retail, Hospitality, Leisure Fund	319	£5,770,000
Discretionary Grants Fund	180	£1,011,250
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,732</b>	<b>£19,111,250</b>

## 6.0 Wyre Borough Council

The Council established an internal taskforce to oversee and coordinate its response to Covid-19 and one element of this is to consider the impact on the local economy. This group meets on a weekly basis.

An additional internal working group has been established to support the reopening safely of the four Town Centres within the Borough (Poulton / Fleetwood / Garstang / Cleveleys) and this meets on a fortnightly basis. The working groups remit has been to develop the Action Plan required for the Re-opening the High Streets Fund. Four individual groups meet fortnightly for each of the Town Centres consisting of Councillors, Council Officers and Business Representatives.

Officers have provided support and advice to premises ahead of opening, with continued support taking place via visits and direct communications.

Shop counts and Business Health Checks have taken place in the four town centres. The Health Check has centred on the support businesses require to aid responses to Covid-19 measures and to gauge specific business support to aid survival, topics have included Access to Finance, Growth Planning and Marketing. Referrals to providers were made and interventions for those concerned have been initiated. Statistical data gathered from this exercise has been shared with the Town Centre Groups. A further Town Centres Health Check is taking place during September and will continue on a bi-monthly basis for the remainder of 2020.

Manual Footfall counting took place in August for each Town Centre. The data from this will be shared with each group once the Council is in receipt of our Dashboard from Springboard. Footfall counters will be placed into each Town Centre in October 2020.

The need to social distance has resulted in some temporary road closures namely in Cleveleys and Garstang, and this is being reviewed weekly with officers and with the partners we are working with.

Webcams are to be installed within each Town Centre to provide a visual projection of the Town Centres in real-time to aid social distancing at peak periods. Sound systems are being installed to provide safety reminders to visitors whilst creating an improved atmosphere via music for visitors when visiting their chosen Town Centre.

Below is a summary position statement on the various Covid-19 grant schemes in Wyre Borough:

<b>FUND:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>	<b>VALUE OF GRANTS ISSUED:</b>
Small Business Grants Fund	1849	£18,490,000
Retail, Hospitality, Leisure Fund	493	£8,695,000
Discretionary Grants Fund	138	£1,069,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>£28,254,000</b>



Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2020
Recommendation:	To note the report.

## **1. Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: Progress Report**

### **a) Masterplan**

Work continues on the revised delivery plan and the revised masterplan for the Enterprise Zone and airport which has been held up by Covid-19 but remains on target for presentation to Blackpool Council's Executive in October before presentation to the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Whilst there have been substantial cost reductions as a result of the omission of the former Bomber Factory (Squires Gate Industrial Estate) from mainstream expenditure, other costs have risen as designs and site investigations have been progressed and Enterprise Zone Lifetime income projections have been hit by delays in getting Phase 1 into full play. However, there are now good prospects for grant funding being secured from the Towns Fund (up to £10m) and Growth Deal, with financed projects indicating a small forecast surplus over the lifetime of the project after the cost of Prudential Borrowing.

The approved marketing strategy will continue to be implemented for the Enterprise Zone and where appropriate will be updated upon completion of the masterplan update. Work is also being undertaken in partnership with Lancashire's other Enterprise Zones to appoint an internationally focussed property agent.

Interviews were held for the two project manager posts but no appointments were possible. The job descriptions are being revised and they will be re-advertised in the autumn. One post is to be funded by Fylde Borough Council and one by Blackpool Council.

### **b) Fiscal Incentives**

Work is progressing to lobby Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek an extension of Enterprise Zone fiscal benefits which are due to expire in November 2021 for rates relief and November 2023 for Enhanced Capital Allowances.

With full Local Enterprise Partners support officers have joined nationally with The Local Enterprise Partnership Network to put a proposal to HM Treasury. Officers would seek an extension of business rates relief to 2025/26 as a low cost focus and engine for post Covid-

19 economic recovery and growth, and to recognise the delays in all Enterprise Zones being able to bring forward enabling infrastructure.

A questionnaire was issued to all 45 UK Enterprise Zones and 20 have been returned to use as evidence for the proposal. By the time of this meeting, a draft case will have been presented to the Treasury with the final submission due by the end of September, hopefully in time to be considered in the next spending review.

### **c) Current Activity Phase One**

Planning consent was secured from Fylde Borough Council for the grass sports pitches on 20 May 2020 and the main contractor STRI is progressing well and ahead of programme and on track for the pitches to be ready for the start of the August 2021 season.

The second of three planning applications designed to release the Common Edge Sports pitches has been prepared, but submission is being delayed to allow resolution of outstanding issues in respect of the Playing Pitch Strategy and securing Sport England approvals. Soundings are also being taken from the Football Foundation to see what grant funding they may now be able to offer. This application will provide for new car parking and changing room facilities to serve the new grass pitches and a floodlit 3G pitch, which will serve both Football and Rugby League. The application will be submitted during September in anticipation of work being able to commence in January 2021 and with the core facilities being available for use in September 2021.

Detailed design work on the changing room and car parking is progressing in parallel with the planning application with a view to being able to tender the contract in the last Quarter.

Further detailed design work also continues on the Common Edge Road upgrade led by Blackpool Highways team. An outline planning application for the highways and commercial use of the current Common Edge Playing fields will be submitted once a number of property issues have been resolved with third party occupiers and the location of a new primary substation agreed with Electricity North West.

Ground condition surveys for the eastern gateway access road have now been completed and will enable design to progress to establish the final alignment of the road. The access road will be constructed in phases commencing from Amy Johnson Way, to enable early release of non-playing field land.

A public consultation is planned in Q4 2020 to inform local residents and the wider Enterprise Zone business community and stakeholders of the proposals and progress to date, but ability to undertake this in a meaningful way which allows full two way dialogue with all stakeholders, has been restricted by Covid-19 requirements. Further consideration is being given as to how this may be best hosted, and it may be undertaken alongside a required consultation on the Blackpool Playing Pitch Strategy.

#### **d) M55 Link Road**

Efforts continue to have this project funded and it is now included in the Getting Building Fund programme, and whilst it was not possible to extend funding via the Growth Deal it is now anticipated that a full funding package will soon be in place to allow work to progress, this will include a contribution of up to £1m from the Enterprise Zone, with Fylde generated Enterprise Zone business rates growth monies being hypothecated to this.

#### **e) Initial Development**

Funding for a 40,000 sq ft development to be occupied by Multiply Components Ltd was approved Blackpool's at Executive on 13 July 2020 and Eric Wright Construction will undertake construction on a Design and Build contract starting on site in September for a nine month build for a targeted October 2021 opening.

A total of £800,000 Growth Deal funding has now been approved by Local Enterprise Partnership, subject to formal a Grant Funding Agreement, to cover abnormal development cost and a 25 lease for the unit has been agreed with Multiply Components Ltd who manufacture Carbon Fibre-based technologies for the health sector. A ground breaking ceremony is planned for 2 October 2020 with possible ministerial attendance.

A number of minor issues remain to be resolved prior to commencement of work including the diversion of 33kva electricity cable and diversion of fibre optic cables at the site entrance, but it is expected that all matters will be satisfactorily resolved within a few weeks.

The development which will allow Multiply to generate 85 high quality jobs in the medical technology/advance materials sectors, will also raise an anticipated £75,000 business rates growth receipt annually. The development will be held as a long term investment by Blackpool Council who will fund the development via Prudential Borrowing.

#### **f) Current Planning Applications**

Three live planning applications are currently being considered by Blackpool Council, the first for a proposed development of a 20MW gas fired power generation facility, which continues to encounter problems related to impact upon aeronautical activity, an application for a small fibre switching data centre to support roll out of superfast broadband across the Fylde coasts and a retrospective application for construction of a cement batching plant at the Squires Gate Industrial Estate, which is attracting a degree of local objection on environmental impact grounds.

Work is continuing apace on the construction of a 1400m<sup>2</sup> facility for exhibition designers Love Expo and the build is due for completion in September. A tenant has been found for the smaller portion of the development not required for occupation by the developer.

### **g) Squires Gate Industrial Estate (Former Wellington Bomber Factory)**

The new owners of Squires Gate Industrial Estate have started work subdividing units and at least 12 new occupiers have been identified, work is progressing to resolve technical issues relating to planning permissions, building regulation and fire certification, whilst individual rating assessments are still to be put in place for individual units.

The Enterprise Zone team continues to engage constructively with the owners of the property but communications with the owners are sporadic and usually centre on large space floor enquiries passed on from Enterprise Zone marketing. Whilst some jobs are undoubtedly being created and eventually rates income will be derived, it is difficult to actively promote the asset at this time.

### **h) Communications Infrastructure**

Work has continued to support the installation of the new transatlantic fibre optic telecommunications cable, part of the North Atlantic loop from New York to Denmark, being developed by Aqua Comms. Cable ducting has been laid from the proposed landing point to the base station constructed at Blackpool Airport with a further expansion of the network under the Local Fast Fibre Network (LFFN) programme at the planning stage. The subsea landing cable is now expected late early October 2020 dependent on weather conditions in the Irish Sea. All Council planning and legal consents are in place.

Blackpool Council and BITC are leading a series of planned workshops to develop a digital strategy for Blackpool and to clearly identify market sectors leading to the development of an operational business plan.

### **i) Fibre Blackpool**

The Fibre Blackpool campaign continues to promote the roll out a local full fibre network for improved, gigabit capable, broadband internet connection to residents and businesses on the Fylde Coast. The dedicated website [www.fibreblackpool.com](http://www.fibreblackpool.com) has received over 260 enquiries registering interest in the scheme and various suppliers are now active in the Blackpool area. The Enterprise Zone marketing officer will provide marketing support for any co-op members for the benefit of Enterprise Zone businesses. Discussions are now underway to secure extension of the Local Full Fibre Network along the coast to serve Wyre and Fylde, particularly the rural areas of both authorities.

### **j) Marketing**

Marketing Lancashire has commissioned new proposals from Barbers for Phase 2 of the Enterprise Zone website and the marketing officer continues to chase a start date. Work is needed to ensure the material is fully accessible for anyone with disability. Additional administrator rights have been obtained on elements of the Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster web site to ensure regular news updates are posted and linked to Enterprise Zone social media accounts, but further improvement is possible.

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 edition is planned by the end of September containing good news stories.

Although large physical events are still prohibited by social distancing measures, the Marketing Officer has been working with NW Insider Magazine on a Northern Enterprise Zone Online Conference which is planned for 23 October 2020. The Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster will be sponsoring the event with David Holmes from BAE confirmed as Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster spokesperson for the panel. The aim is to raise awareness of the Enterprise Zones successes and to galvanise further support for the national fiscal benefits extension campaign to the Treasury. Now is an ideal opportunity to throw the spotlight on the benefits the Enterprise Zones can bring to the local economy and how they can be useful in the Covid recovery effort.

Enquiries of since the last meeting have as anticipated been slow due to the impacts of Covid-19 but are starting to show some signs of picking up in the past few weeks. Some enquiries of note have included:

- 6-7000 m2 with 6 loading bays for surgical mask and medical equipment production and distribution
- Enquiry for TV/film studios
- DIT Singapore Vertical Farm
- DIT Dutch engineering company
- Data centre enquiry
- 1000 m2 for Foodbank
- 5,700 sq ft enquiry for an advanced manufacturer for the food production industry

#### **k) Blackpool: The Place for Business**

The online communications campaign came to the end of the initial 12 months contract with external agency collaboration Clarity/Diva. A tender was advertised on the NW Chest portal for a new 12 month marketing campaign and Whistlejacket London have been appointed to progress the campaign to the next stage of development. The team are currently undertaking a series of interviews with Fylde Coast stakeholders which will inform the next 12 months campaign strategy.

### **l) Blackpool Airport**

Best and Final offers for an Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) and operational tenders will be submitted by the end of September with a decision to be taken by the Blackpool Airport Operations Board at special meeting in October. There have been slight delays in agreeing final contract terms and updating the spec following further meetings with remaining bidders.

The airport has remained fully operational during the Covid-19 crisis, primarily to support offshore operations whilst airfields at Barton, Warton and Carlisle have closed, but also hosted a flight of private aviators and BAE staff who are on standby to operate NHS support flights at short notice. The airport is now fully operational.

Architects Cassidy + Ashton are progressing the initial feasibility/option studies for the replacement of old aircraft hangars and associated aircraft parking aprons as a first step toward opening up the frontage of Squires Gate Lane for new business park development. Their work will also include studies on the provision of a new control tower, fire station and administration facility, possibly to be located south of the main runway,

Spirit have confirmed their contract presently held by Babcock will transfer to NHV from 1st December. NHV the successful bidder for the new contract will commence base operation mid-August, initially occupying Hangar 1 East until the main hangar used by Babcock becomes available.

Airport management contractors RCA have revamped the website so that it can now be easily viewed on mobile devices and will step up social media activity in the coming months. Marketing is being carried out by RCA and the council continues to provide additional support fielding media enquiries.

New airport estate signage has been costed and will the upgrade will be implemented in the coming months as many of the estate boards are out of date and in a poor state of repair.

### **m) Third Party Development**

The only construction presently underway is the development on land to the east of Seneca House off Amy Johnson Way due for completion early autumn.

To date:

- A total of 321 live enquiries are currently logged for Blackpool Enterprise Zone.
- Some 91 businesses have located to the Enterprise Zone since April 2016.
- A gross cumulative total of 1492 jobs have located to the Enterprise Zone, this figure includes jobs to the area, safeguarded jobs within Blackpool and construction full time equivalent jobs.



**n) Project Team**

The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone Project Team was hosted online and the next meeting is due to take place on Friday 15 September 2020 on MS Teams.

**o) Risk Register**

The Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone risk register is currently under review with our corporate risk team given recent events and is available on request. It is also regularly reviewed by the accountable body's own project board.

**Report Author**

**Rob Green Head of Enterprise Zones**

[Rob.green@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:Rob.green@blackpool.gov.uk)

**07500 786402**

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Report to:	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board
Report Author:	Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2020
Recommendation:	To note the report.

## **Hillhouse Enterprise Zone: Progress Report**

### **a) BACKGROUND AND COVID UPDATE**

Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone came into existence with effect from 1 April 2016 and has just entered its fifth year of its programmed 25 year lifespan. Located entirely within the Borough of Wyre, it offers both Enhanced Capital Allowances (which expire in November 2023) and Business Rates Relief as fiscal incentives (which expires in March 2021). Wyre Borough Council acts as the accountable body and have to date accumulated approaching £1m in retained business rates growth. The Enterprise Zone has a target of growing employment on the site from the current 1,650 to over 3,000 by 2035.

Progress at the Enterprise Zone has been limited in recent months as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. The recent closure of the Vinnolit facility which employed 60 staff will have a significant negative impact upon the business rates baseline, however there has been interest in the available commercial units that will become available on their departure.

Negotiations for the purchase of the vacant property and site vacated by Vinnolit are progressing and whether the units are retained or demolished over the next 12 months, this will become a new opportunity releasing new sites for development and should result in a long term net increase in employment.

The effects of Covid has seen a proposal for a 6 acre, 262,000 sq ft (24,000 sq m) energy from waste plant, promoted by a major UK based plc fall through as a direct result of difficult economic trading conditions the company has faced over recent months, however there are high hopes that an alternative operator/developer can be identified.

Global polymer solutions supplier Victrex, which is a FTSE 250 company with a 900-strong workforce, circa 600 of whom are based at the Enterprise Zone, has opened consultation with staff, with 79 redundancies expected across operations at its Thornton Cleveleys HQ by October 2020.

However, on a more positive note Forsa Energy were finally able to start their build on site in Feb/March and although the pace has been slower, work is still moving ahead on their 55,000 sq ft (300 sq m) peak demand facility.

Hillhouse site has been able to remain open and offering full facilities management services throughout the pandemic however, manufacturing output of the tenants on site has been adversely affected, with some staff furloughed and reported difficulties from some occupiers in maintaining supply flows.

#### **b) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Finalisation of the implementation and delivery plan has again been delayed as it is amended to reflect both the closure of the Vinnolit facility and the loss of the proposed Waste to energy plant, but also the progression of proposals by NPL Estates for an initial phase of speculative development totalling 6,100m<sup>2</sup> which would in part, assist the decanting of existing businesses from the old international business centre releasing that site for redevelopment.

NPL, who have secured an in principle offer of 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 Borough Council by the end of October 2020.

The project requires some local enabling infrastructure, including site access road, upgrade of utilities, replacement and relocation of the existing gatehouse and an extension and repair to Hillhouse's water ring main and electricity supply mains. The project has been allocated some funding £630,000 from the Getting Building Fund, with additional match funding provided by Wyre Borough Council and NPL. Formal confirmation of funding is dependent upon completion of the Local Enterprise Partnership's due diligence process but is also expected to be confirmed shortly. Funding of £200,000 has also been approved by Wyre Borough Council to support the extension of the Local Full Fibre Network broadband fibre optic network to the site gates, with NPL committing to further expenditure to progress the extension of the fibre optic broadband capability throughout the Enterprise Zone site.

Further clarification has also been obtained on the phasing and costings of the wider on and off site infrastructure costs and for individual development plots and modelling in a revised draft delivery plan which will be completed by the end of October. This will be presented to Wyre Borough Council in November 2020 for approval as the accountable body and then to the Economic Prosperity Board, the Economic Zone Governance Committee, Local

Enterprise Partnership and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in turn.

## **c) MARKETING**

### **Newsletter**

Quarterly Enterprise Zone newsletters continue to be circulated delivering up-to-date information for Enterprise Zone businesses and work continues to engage more people to sign up to the newsletter. Newsletter information also refers back to business support on both the Enterprise Zone website and includes details of Wyre Borough Council's dedicated business support team for local help and advice.

### **Marketing Strategy**

A marketing strategy has been prepared for inclusion in the Delivery Plan. When the Delivery Plan is completed, a communications campaign will be drafted to support site activity.

Work continues with Lancashire County Council to appoint a joint international agent for all four Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster sites by January 2021, however the team agrees that the need for end product and individual development plots to bring to market would be beneficial to any commercial property sales strategy.

### **Website**

Marketing Lancashire have now engaged with Richard Barber and Co. to discuss phase 2 of the Enterprise Zone websites, phase 2 of the overarching Invest in Lancashire site and options around the integration of Evolutive (discussing with Growth Lancashire). Officers continue to chase confirmation of draft proposals and implementation of new website features. The team will look to update any brochures and marketing material in line with any new website design over the next 12 months where required.

A news page on the website has now been created with administration rights available to the Marketing Officer and the page will be used to promote good news stories and development milestones on the site.

### **Events and PR**

Although large physical events are still prohibited by social distancing measures, the Marketing Officer has been working with NW Insider Magazine on a Northern Enterprise Zone Online Conference which is planned for 23 October 2020. The Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster will be sponsoring the event with David Holmes from BAE confirmed as Lancashire Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Cluster spokesperson for the panel. The aim is to raise awareness of the Enterprise Zones successes and to galvanise further support for the national fiscal benefits extension campaign to the Treasury. Now is

an ideal opportunity to throw the spotlight on the benefits the Enterprise Zones can bring to the local economy and how they can be useful in the Covid recovery effort.

### **Hydrogen Steering Group**

Further Hydrogen Hub meetings have been put on hold until further notice due to furloughed key members of the group. These will be re-established once social distancing restrictions are lifted.

### **d) SITE ACTIVITY**

#### **Vinnolit**

NPL are undertaking feasibility studies to assess the options to refurbish to meet required EPC standards, with some initial interest having been registered from a PVC pipe manufacturer.

#### **Forsa Energy**

Construction work is ongoing for a new 20MW Short Term Operating Reserve (STOR) gas turbines, planning consent having been granted in 2017.

### **d) JOB CREATION**

It is anticipated that a number of construction jobs to be created in this next quarter due to the start on site by Forsa Energy. The team continues to chase confirmation of how many construction full time equivalent jobs are currently on site and work will continue to make connections with Hillhouse tenants.

### **e) HILLHOUSE ENTERPRISE ZONE BOARD AND PROJECT TEAM MEETINGS**

A further Project Team meeting will be arranged with a wider group of stakeholders including Hillhouse tenants and various local stakeholders once this can be achieved in compliance with social distancing measures. A smaller virtual project team will be established in the coming months to ensure some momentum is maintained.

### **f) COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE**

Funding of £200,000 has now also been approved by Wyre Borough Council to support the extension of the Local Full Fibre Network broadband fibre optic network to the site gates, enabling NPL to extend the infrastructure throughout the site.

### **g) ENTERPRISE ZONE FISCAL BENEFITS**

Work is progressing to lobby Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to seek an extension of Enterprise Zone fiscal benefits which are due to expire for Hillhouse in November 2021 for rates relief and November 2023 for Enhanced Capital Allowances.

With full Local Enterprise Partners support officers have joined nationally with The LEP Network to put a proposal to HM Treasury. Officers would seek an extension of business rates relief to 2025/26 as a low cost focus and engine for post Covid-19 economic recovery and growth, and to recognise the delays in all Enterprise Zones being able to bring forward enabling infrastructure.

A questionnaire was issued to all 45 UK Enterprise Zones and 20 have been returned to use as evidence for the proposal. By the time of this meeting, a draft case will have been presented to the Treasury with the final submission due by the end of September, hopefully in time to be considered in the next spending review.

#### **h) RISK REGISTER**

The Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone risk register is currently under review with Wyre Borough Council's corporate risk team given recent events and will be available on request at the next meeting. It is also regularly reviewed by the accountable body's own project board.

#### **FORTHCOMING ACTIVITY**

- i) Complete Delivery Plan by end October 2020
- ii) Procure specialist State Aid advice once IP completed
- iii) Complete updated Risk Register by end September 2020 [delayed by COVID 19]
- iv) A flood risk assessment to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding
- v) A transport assessment be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding
- vi) A utilities assessment to be scoped and commissioned for the whole site subject to identification of funding
- vii) An Environmental and Ecology study to be scoped and commissioned for the entire site subject to identification of funding
- viii) Local Full Fibre Network fibre to connect to meet me point at new Enterprise Zone Gatehouse by March 2021
- ix) Utility repair and upgrade works to be completed end February 2021
- x) Planning application for new gatehouse and 6100m<sup>2</sup> speculative B1/B2 development to be submitted by end of October

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