

Report to: Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Prosperity Board

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Hillhouse Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

Masterplan and Baseline Report

The Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone Masterplan is available [here](#).

It has been sent to the Enterprise Zone Governance Committee to note and approve the masterplan for submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

MARKETING

Strategy - A draft Marketing Strategy for Hillhouse Enterprise Zone has been prepared and will be circulated to the Project Team for comment.

Signage – The first sign has been erected at the entrance to the site at the gatehouse. The second sign, which will be situated on Bourne Road has had the poles installed and once the ground has settled the sign will be erected later this week. The third sign, which will be the most prominent position can now go ahead. We were awaiting for the many housing developers signs to be removed. This has now happened and so another application for advertising consent has been submitted.

Promotional Drone Video – We have commissioned a local drone videographer to promote the EZ and the businesses sited within it including the Burnhall site. The story board has been completed and we have a number of businesses signed up to take part. We are just awaiting for some final permissions as there are a number of ‘no fly zones’ on the site. The video will be approximately three minutes long and will mainly show aerial footage of the site and the potential development opportunities. It will also include some ground videography entering the operational side of some of the businesses with short interviews and commentary. This is an exciting innovative project designed to showcase the Enterprise Zone, and show the footage to prospective interested parties looking to relocate to the site. For marketing purposes, the finished video will be made available to all EZ occupants, will be displayed on the www.hillhouseez.com website and the Wyre Council web pages, shared by social media and used at property and investment shows.

Newsletter – The second EZ newsletter will be out later this month.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

We have not yet been able to meet with the Managing Director due to unforeseen circumstances, but another meeting has been set up in May to understand better the phasing and costings of the individual development plots. A first draft will be considered by the council before being finalised. There are early issues that have been identified:

State Aid

- Wyre Council received a report, which has led to further questions being asked. Once we have a more robust draft Implementation Plan we will then approach them for some further detailed advice on the site.
- We will continue to work with Genecon and NPL Group to develop the plan however this will likely now slip until the Summer for completion

Workshop

A workshop took place on Tuesday 14th May at Wyre Council Offices. The main discussion was around the emerging Implementation Plan and how this is driven forward. As accountable body the council will have delivered everything required by the original MOU. However, to move the site forward it would need further intervention from the council in terms of planning, promoting and delivering the Implementation Plan. The workshop gave council officers a better understanding in terms of the state aid issues, the infrastructure projects required to open up the site, site wide assessments that are required and the land ownerships on the site.

RISK REGISTER (see attached draft Register)

A current high risk issue is the development of the Western Link Road to unlock development land in the northern zone of the EZ. This infrastructure project has been costed within the Implementation Plan at approximately £2m. Issues include:

- State Aid – State Aid advice is currently being procured, which will assist in the development of the Implementation Plan. It is currently unknown what effect State Aid may have on the development of this major infrastructure project.
- Gap Funding – The Implementation Plan will identify gaps in terms of funding some of the initial infrastructure projects such as the access road. A funding strategy will need to be in place to support the delivery plan, which would look at potential funding opportunities from current major land owners, public sector bodies or central government.
- Network Rail – The access road has to cross part of the Network Rail Fleetwood to Poulton line, which is currently not in use. Communication with Network Rail is difficult and with a recent restructure in the project team it's been unclear who at Network Rail is dealing with the issue. We are continuing to contact them on a regular basis.

- Fiscal Benefits – As a result of the protracted process with Network Rail we do run the risk of not being in a position to offer fiscal benefits in the northern part of the EZ owing to the current issues regarding the access road.
- The Western Link Road Project has been submitted to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership as a Priority Pipeline Project via the LEDOG.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITY

- i) More detailed State Aid advice required
- ii) Complete Implementation Plan by Spring 2019
- iii) Complete Marketing Strategy by Spring 2019
- iv) Complete promotional drone video by June 2019
- v) A flood risk assessment to be commissioned for the entire site
- vi) A transport assessment be commissioned for the entire site
- vii) An Environmental and Ecology study to be commissioned for the entire site
- viii) The planning application process for the gas fired power station, will be monitored and support offered as appropriate

ENDS