

LEP - Enterprise Zone Governance Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 15th September 2021 at 12.00 pm as a Zoom Virtual Meeting

Present

David Holmes OBE

Mark Rawstron

Councillor Mark Smith

County Councillor Aidy Riggott

Observers

Paul Evans – Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

In Attendance

Anne-Marie Parkinson – Programme Manager, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Chris Dyson – Programme Manager, Strategic Development, Lancashire County Council

Hannah Race – Democratic Services Officer, Lancashire County Council

Joanne Ainsworth – Principal Accountant, Lancashire County Council

Nicole Billington – Marketing Officer, Growth and Prosperity Team, Blackpool Council

Phil Green – Director of Growth, Environment and Planning, Lancashire County Council

Rob Green – Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council

Sarah Kemp – Chief Executive, Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Stephen Young – Executive Director of Growth, Environment, Transport and Community Services, Lancashire County Council

Steve Burns – Head of Service Strategic Development, Lancashire County Council

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair, David Holmes, welcomed all present to the virtual meeting and thanked everybody for their attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from David Taylor.

2. Committee Membership

The committee expressed its gratitude to County Councillor Michael Green for his work to support the committee previously.

Resolved: That the appointment of County Councillor Aidy Riggott to the committee, in place of County Councillor Michael Green, be noted.

3. Declaration of Interests

None.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council provided a number of updates on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone. These are minuted under Item 10, where the substantive item on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone was discussed.

6. Reporting to Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Board

No items were identified.

7. Any Other Business

None.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held at 12 noon on Wednesday 8 December 2021.

9. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved: That the meeting move into Part II, Private and Confidential, to consider the remaining reports as they contained information defined as confidential or exempt in accordance with the relevant paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as set out in the reports.

It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

10. Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council presented a private and

confidential report which provided the committee with an update on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone.

The report included updates on activity since the last meeting, including achievements to date, the recent increase in gross number of jobs, the Towns Fund bid, new enquiries into the site's facilities, the construction of new sports fields to allow for highway development, and the recruitment process for the role of Managing Director of Blackpool Operations Limited.

In response to a question about analysis into Gross Value Added (GVA), the committee was informed that assessments of individual developments had not been undertaken, however moving into the next phase of the site's development would allow for this. Roughly 3 and a half years ago the site's GVA was assessed and found to be £2bn over the lifetime of the Enterprise Zone and a recent assessment of the highways project under the Towns Fund had also revealed the project GVA to be £25m. The Chair expressed an interest in assessing the GVA per head capita as an indicator of how Lancashire's Enterprise Zones were performing compared to those of other regions.

It was noted that Colliers had been appointed to act as agents for all four Enterprise Zones, and that early on they would be asked to review the sites' marketing strategy. The importance of Colliers to raising the intentional profile of the Enterprise Zones was recognised.

It was added that Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone had won a series of awards including the Investment Monitor's Economic Zone Sustainable Recovery Strategies Award for 2021 (part of the Barcelona New Economy Week Award) and Editors Choice awards for Advocacy and for Digital Connectivity.

Resolved: That the report, as presented, be noted.

11. Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

Rob Green, Head of Enterprise Zones, Blackpool Council presented a private and confidential report which provided the committee with an update on the Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone.

The report included updates on activity since the last meeting, including achievements to date, progress with the site's Delivery Plan, the planning application by NPL Estates for a residential development, ongoing issues regarding road access across the Fleetwood-Poulton railway line, and personnel changes at NPL Estates resulting in the need to rebuild strong lines of communication.

The Chair requested that a funding plan be included in future updates on the Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone, so that the committee could review possible risks and delays to outcomes, and to identify future funding opportunities and partners.

In response to a question, it was clarified that NPL Estates ran a parallel strategy with separately appointed agents, rather than a joint strategy with Colliers and the other Enterprise Zones, as Colliers' focus would be on the international market. Nonetheless, the importance of collaboration and aligning strategies was recognised.

It was noted that, within the Wyre Local Plan, there had always been a proposal for residential development at the Hillhouse Technology site and that such development provided income to support the site's infrastructure.

The committee thanked Rob Green for the updates provided by the reports on Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zones.

Resolved: That the report, as presented, be noted.

12. Samlesbury Aerospace and Warton Aviation Enterprise Zone: Progress Report

Chris Dyson, Strategic Development Programme Manager, Lancashire County Council presented a private and confidential report which provided the committee with an update on the Samlesbury Aerospace and Warton Aviation Enterprise Zones.

Regarding the Samlesbury site, the report included updates on the total public and private sector investment received to date, the strong relationship with BAE that continued to support and develop a range of activity on site, progress relating to delivery of the North West Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), and the county council's Collaboration Agreement with Electricity North West.

It was noted that updates on the Commercial Development Framework (CDF) for the Samlesbury Aerospace Enterprise Zone would not be included in future reports to the committee as the CDF was now completed and being used to inform other plans and strategies.

The committee was informed that Phase 1 of the site's development was completed and that Phase 2, including the AMRC plot development, was nearing completion. Work regarding Phase 3 – the site's future development – would need to be presented to the committee before an update to the LEP Board. It was highlighted that the committee's next meeting on 8 December 2021 would be too late if Phase 3 works were to begin in November 2021.

In order to maintain the momentum of the site's development and to ensure the continuity of funds to keep contractors on site, it was agreed that an earlier meeting of the committee would be arranged, ahead of the LEP Board meeting on 23 November 2021, so that plans for Phase 3 could be presented. A suitable date would be organised with officers, allowing time for a report(s) to be prepared.

Officers recognised the importance of keeping the Enterprise Zone Governance Committee updated and thanked the committee for its support.

Regarding the completion of the North West AMRC development, it was queried whether a suitable communications strategy had been devised to promote the new facility. During a period of discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- The appointment of Colliers would reap significant benefits;
- An effective communications plan was essential to all Enterprise Zones;
- It was important for the promotion campaign for the North West ARMC to focus on Lancashire;
- The LEP was fully engaged with the AMRC and could adopt a joint approach to marketing;
- The Conservative Party Conference in early October 2021 provided a key opportunity to promote the North West AMRC on a national scale; and
- It would be beneficial to produce a promotion/communications plan with a timetable to the end of the calendar year.

Regarding the Warton Aviation Enterprise Zone, the report included an update on the LEP's sector analysis which would inform future plans for the site.

It was recognised that the promotion of all four Enterprise Zones was crucial. The committee welcomed that 'technology', 'aerospace', and 'aviation' had been dropped from the new branding and it was hoped this would encourage more incumbents and investors.

Resolved: That

- i) The report, as presented, be noted; and
- ii) An extraordinary meeting of the Enterprise Zone Governance Committee be arranged for November 2021.