

Wyre Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
9th November 2015

Wyre Local Plan Preparation Update

1. Update on current Progress on the Local Plan

i. Issues and Options Consultation

Public consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Option finished on the 7th of August. However representations received up to the end of August have been accepted on this occasion due to the importance of community engagement at this stage in the plan process. 759 representations were received which is twice as many as expected. This meant that the task to register and upload the representations onto a database so that they can be viewed on the Council's website was a bigger task than anticipated and was not completed until the end of September. Personal details had to be redacted before the representations were scanned.

The consideration of representations has been given priority and is still on-going. Many representations include sizeable reports; the matters raised need to be summarised and responded to. This is a bigger task than anticipated due to the greater number of representations received as well the size of representations. This is a priority task and therefore other work on the evidence base is being delayed.

ii. Housing Requirement and distribution.

It was reported at the August meeting that establishing a housing requirement following completion of additional work on the housing evidence (SHMA) and evidence relating to flood risk, highways and settlements, has been delayed. Progress has been made in particular with the housing evidence; however there are continuing delays in particular with regards to Highways Evidence. See below under Evidence Base.

iii. Infrastructure Planning and viability work

Meetings with infrastructure providers continue to be held. Since the August Report meetings have been held with the Wyre and Fylde CCG, Blackpool CCG, LCC and Blackpool Education Authorities, LCC Childcare Strategy Officer, Ambulance Service, Highways England, Environment Agency and United Utilities. Meetings have been organised in November with Greater Preston CCGs, LCC Higher Education Team, the Fire Service and Police.

Meetings with Lancashire County Highways and Highways England have been ongoing (see Evidence Base below) but delays in progressing matters have arisen from restructures and staff changes within LCC.

Further meetings with all infrastructure providers will be necessary once the scale and distribution of development has been determined.

Work is progressing on updating the viability evidence. This will feed into the determination of the housing land supply.

iv. Evidence Base

- The Employment Land Review (ELR) update is now complete. Work from the ELR update has fed into the housing modelling and the update of the housing evidence can now progress.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update has now progressed and the update report will be completed in November. The SHMA Update report will determine the objectively assessed need figure for housing which the local plan will need to accommodate. The update includes taking account of the latest published household projections, and reconsiders certain assumptions in relation to job creation and unemployment.
- Completion of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level II has been delayed as the draft assessment was due to be completed by the end of October. The SFRA is being carried out by the Council's engineers and the draft Assessment will need to be forwarded to the Environment Agency, LCC and United Utilities for their comments/endorsements before it can be finalised.
- Progress was made in relation to highways evidence over summer. As agreed with LCC, consultants were commissioned to provide data regarding the impact of new developments on the strategic and local highways network. Completion of the work by the consultants as well as the analysis by LCC has been delayed due to sickness absence of the lead officer at LCC. A project meeting is scheduled next week.
- Meetings were organised for Parish and Town Council ambassadors and ward members for unparished areas to consider a draft of the Settlement Study. The Settlement Study needs to be finalised taking on-board comments from Parish, Town Councils and ward members of unparished areas. Separate information was also sent to Out Rawcliffe PC as Out Rawcliffe is not considered to be a settlement for the purposes of the Settlement Study. No response has been received from Out Rawcliffe PC to date. In addition there is work in relation to settlement boundaries which needs to be done.
- The Green Belt Review has progressed and a final draft of the Report is expected by the end of October.
- The Affordable Housing Needs Study is progressing on schedule. A draft report was received in October and is being considered. It is expected that the Study will be completed in November.
- Gypsy and Travellers – The Government published new Policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation. It is necessary to consider the implications of the new Policy and in particular the new definition of a 'Gypsy' and 'Traveling Showperson'. A meeting has been arranged in November with Fylde Borough Council and Blackpool Council to agree any

further joint work with regards to the evidence on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs.

- Engagement with house builders is on-going. Meetings with five house builders have been held and meetings are being organised with a further three.
- The Local Centre Study update has not yet commenced due to other work pressures.
- Following a meeting with Heritage England, we are now advised that we will have to carry out heritage assessments for allocations in the Local Plan. This is an additional task not previously programmed.

v. Development Management Policies.

As reported in August work has commenced on establishing the 'base line' from previous work on Development Management Policies, however progress with this has been affected by other work pressures connected with the Local Plan. Internal workshops/meetings will be held with sections of the Council including Development Management, Environmental Protection and Housing and external partners/stakeholders.

vi. Duty to Co-operate Meetings

Meetings have now been held with all adjoining local authorities to establish strategic cross boundary issues.

A meeting with the LEP Secretariat has now been organised for early November.

Further meetings with adjoining authorities will be necessary if Wyre is not in a position to meet in full its Objectively Assessed Needs for housing.

vii. Sustainability Appraisal

The next stage in the process would be to assess various housing scenarios as well as the draft policies and proposals in the draft Local Plan.

2. Issues affecting progress

- The volume of responses to the consultation has affected progress in relation to on-going evidence work. Registering and considering the representations has been a much greater task than anticipated.
- Slippage in completing the Employment Land Review update had delayed further work relating to the update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The SHMA is however now on track and expected to be completed mid-November.

- Establishing the Local Plan housing requirement has also been affected by delays in progressing the highways and flood-risk evidence. Information from the SFRA work so far could be used to progress the Local Plan but there is a risk of workloads being duplicated if information changes as the SFRA is finalised.

Continuing delays in relation to highways evidence is a concern. There has not been any formal written advice from LCC with regards highway capacity. It will be difficult to progress the Local Plan and decide on allocations without advice on highway capacity which has been a major issue raised through the consultation. **This matter is critical and could potentially delay the Local Plan programme.** A meeting on highways evidence is scheduled for the 3rd of November.

- Progressing the Local Plan requires engagement with various organisations including the County Council, adjoining authorities and infrastructure providers. These are time consuming tasks and depend on a timely response from the various organisations. For example, to prepare the Infrastructure Plan we will require the input from all the infrastructure providers.

Work with infrastructure providers could not progress to conclusion until the housing requirement and distribution is determined.

- Turnover of staff has affected progress. The officer from Urban Vision assisting on the plan left end of July and a full replacement was not available until mid-September. Also there is currently a vacancy in the team following the resignation of the senior officer in August.
- In addition to the Ministerial Statement published in June requiring that Local Plans should identify areas suitable for wind energy developments, the Government also published new policy relating to Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation. Both require additional work that it would be more appropriate to undertake jointly with Blackpool and Fylde. A meeting has been arranged early November to discuss.

3. Critical Work in the next three months

- Completing the consideration of representations received during the consultation.
- Completing the work on the housing requirement which involves completing key evidence on constraints such as flood risk and highways. This will inform work on Infrastructure Planning and may require further engagement under the duty to co-operate.
- Progressing work in relation to the Development Management Policies.
- Progressing other Evidence work

4. Overall Programme

Although there have been delays with individual tasks at this stage and there is now a need for further evidence it is considered that the overall timetable (adoption in 2017) can still be met. It is important that robust evidence is in place before consulting on the draft plan even if there is a slight delay at the next stage. I do not propose an amendment to the indicative timetable below at this stage.

Initial draft Local Plan	early 2016
Publication draft Local Plan	Spring / early summer 2016
Submission	Summer / autumn 2016
Adoption	mid 2017

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