

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item No.
Cllr Gordon McCann, Economy Portfolio Holder and Michael Ryan, Corporate Director of People & Places	Cabinet	12 September 2012	7

Wyre Response to Public Consultations on Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Ribble Valley Local Plans

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of recent public consultations undertaken by adjoining Local Authorities in relation to their emerging local plans, to explain important content of those plans and to outline officer responses that have been made in relation to them on behalf of Wyre Council.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 That Wyre Council's comments regarding the content of the emerging local plans of the adjoining local authorities of Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Ribble Valley have been recorded as formal representations to the respective authorities and are endorsed by members. That the responses form the basis for further discussions and negotiations with these local authorities in relation to their emerging local plans.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That the responses submitted by Wyre Council officers to Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Ribble Valley Councils regarding their draft local plans are noted and endorsed.

4. Background

- 4.1 The planning system has recently undergone further changes in relation to the production of planning policy documents through the introduction of the Localism Act, which received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27 March 2012 and the commencement of new local planning regulations on 6 April 2012. Prior to the publication of these, all Local Planning Authorities were required to prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF) containing a series of documents to provide the planning policy

context for their area. Wyre had made progress under these older arrangements by adopting an Area Action Plan for Fleetwood-Thornton and publishing a draft Core Strategy Preferred Options document. Similarly, neighbouring authorities have progressed their own plans under the system of Local Development Frameworks.

- 4.2 One of the key implications of the national changes outlined above is that all Local Planning Authorities now need to decide how to produce planning documents in a situation of transition. This is generally leading to a rebranding in name and content with a return to the simpler language of local plans to describe plans for the further development of an area that are drawn up by a local authority. Additionally, the NPPF immediately reduced the importance of planning documents that predated 2004 in decision making and will reduce the importance of all Local Development Framework documents (published later than 2004) after March 2013. New local plans therefore need to be progressed urgently and it is within this context that neighbouring authorities have recently undertaken public consultation on the following draft local plans:

Authority	Local Plan	Date of public consultation
Blackpool	Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy Revised Preferred Option	7 June to 20 July 2012
Fylde	Fylde Local Plan to 2030. Issues and Options	7 June to 19 July 2012
Preston	Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (Sites for Preston) Preferred Options	21 May to 2 July 2012
Ribble Valley	Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 Regulation 19 Consultation Draft	4 May to 15 June 2012

- 4.3 Irrespective of the actual document names, each local planning authority now appears to be planning to produce two main local plans to cover their area; the first of these being a strategic plan and the second being a more detailed site allocations and development management policies document. This is consistent with the approach that Wyre intends to take in making the transition from a draft Core Strategy to a draft local plan. In conjunction with Chorley and South Ribble, Preston have already adopted a strategic local plan and are therefore consulting upon their second document whereas all other authorities are consulting upon their first, the strategic document. To aid comparison with our own plan progress it is of note that Blackpool have now reached the same stage as Wyre, Ribble Valley are one stage ahead and Fylde are one stage behind. Lancaster City Council is the only adjoining authority not to have recently carried public consultation on one of their plans. They adopted their Core Strategy in July 2008 and are now drafting separate Development Management and Site Allocations Development Plan

Documents with consultation planned on Preferred Options drafts in September/ October.

- 4.4 Each local plan needs to go through several stages of public consultation and independent examination by a government appointed inspector before it becomes adopted as planning policy for that area and there will therefore be further opportunities to comment upon each of them.
- 4.5 Responses made by officers to each local authority regarding the content of their draft local plans are contained at Appendix 1 and are summarised in the key issues and proposals section below. The council's scheme of delegation authorises officers to be able to take this approach. The reason that responses have been sent prior to consideration by Cabinet is that each local plan consultation is for a different statutory 6 week period so, given our report deadlines, it is not possible to consider the document, report upon it to Cabinet and allow the scrutiny period to end prior to the neighbouring authorities' consultations closing.

5. Key Issues and Proposals

- 5.1 In order to fill the gap created by the removal of the regional tier of planning section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 requires all authorities to undertake a duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development. This includes requiring local authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in the preparation of local plans with other nearby local authorities. Whilst a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is currently being drafted between the Fylde Coast authorities in relation to strategic planning issues which require cross boundary co-operation and collaboration there is no such arrangement immediately planned with other adjoining authorities (Lancaster, Preston and Ribble Valley). However, Lancashire County Council has recently been approached in connection with taking a county wide approach to co-operation and collaboration.
- 5.2 Officers are of the opinion that the duty to co-operate extends beyond the proposed Fylde Coast authorities' Memorandum of Understanding and therefore each letter of response from Wyre promotes a need to work together on a variety of policy matters. To not do so would be likely to render each authority's emerging local plans 'unsound' when considered by an independently appointed government Planning Inspector. Whilst Wyre officers carried out informal consultation with all adjoining authorities prior to undertaking formal public consultation upon the draft Core Strategy Preferred Options between April and May this has not been reciprocated and the lack of engagement with Ribble Valley particularly gives cause for concern given the advanced stage of production of their plan.
- 5.3 Nevertheless, officers have taken an approach of seeking change through co-operation rather than being critical of the other authorities emerging local plans and the main issues raised can be summarised as

follows. In relation to Ribble Valley and Preston a key issue relates to the proposed levels of development and, in conjunction with those proposed in the Wyre Core Strategy, a consideration of the effects upon highway infrastructure around the M6, M55 and A6 where they converge at Broughton. Officers therefore advocated a need for the authorities to work together with Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency. This is likely to include fresh consideration of the proposed Broughton bypass in Preston's area in conjunction with a transport master planning exercise currently being undertaken by Lancashire County Council.

- 5.4 The response to Ribble Valley's draft Local Plan also seeks further discussions in relation to Gypsy and Traveller needs and this should be done in conjunction with other adjoining authorities as it is a highly relevant matter to all. National planning policy contained within the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) Guidance for Traveller Sites (March 2012) indicates that local authorities should work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs.
- 5.5 In terms of Fylde and Blackpool, there is a need to further consider the infrastructure effects, including highways and wastewater capacity particularly, of potential development around the junction 4 area of the M55. Other matters where there is the need for further discussions between Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre relate to local housing and infrastructure requirements, traffic modelling and employment land. It is of note that both Blackpool and Fylde Councils intend to reduce their annual housing requirements compared to those in the shortly to be abolished adopted Regional Spatial Strategy. In Blackpool's case the intention is to decrease their requirement from 444 to 300 and Fylde intend to reduce from 306 dwellings per annum to 278. All locally derived housing figures must be supported by strong evidence in order for the local plan containing them to be considered as sound and it is important to ensure that there are no adverse consequences from this for Wyre.
- 5.6 As indicated above, full details of officers' responses to each local authority are contained at Appendix 1. These responses will form the basis for further discussions, negotiations and joint working with the authorities in relation to strategic planning matters.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no implications of this report.
Legal	All local plans will be subject to legal compliance under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Localism Act 2011.
Community Safety	There are no implications of this report.

Equality and Diversity	There are no immediate implications of this report, however the request by Wyre for authorities to work collaboratively on Gypsy and Traveller needs should assist equality in future accommodation provision.
Sustainability	Each local authority's plan will have been prepared with reference to a separate Sustainability Appraisal and should therefore build upon environmental and sustainability objectives relating to the future planning of their areas.
Health and Safety	There are no implications of this report.
Risk Management	The National Planning Policy Framework states that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date planning permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh benefits or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. Each of the respective local authorities therefore currently risks being vulnerable to planning applications that may not form part of an informed locally based strategy being taken through planning appeals. Furthermore, under a worst case situation, not giving close attention to and, where necessary, commenting upon other authorities' draft plans runs the risk of Wyre being disadvantaged by the content of those plans in the future.
Asset Management	There are no implications of this report.
Climate Change	There are no direct implications of this report.

Report Author	Telephone No.	Email	Date
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List of Background Papers:		
Name of Document	Date	Where available for inspection
Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy Revised Preferred Option	May 2012	Planning Policy, Room 5, Civic Centre
Fylde Local Plan to 2030. Issues and Options	June 2012	Planning Policy, Room 5, Civic Centre
Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (Sites for	May 2012	Planning Policy, Room 5, Civic Centre

Preston) Preferred Options		
Ribble Valley Core Strategy 2008-2028 Regulation 19 Consultation Draft	May 2012	Planning Policy, Room 5, Civic Centre

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Wyre Council officers' letters of response to the emerging Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Ribble Valley Local Plans.

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APPENDIX 1

Wyre Council officers' letters of response to the emerging Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Ribble Valley Local Plans.

Please ask for: Planning Policy Team
Telephone No. 01253 891000
Email: planningpolicy@wyre.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 17/07/2012

Dear Ms Saleh,

Comments on Blackpool Local Plan, Part 1: Core Strategy – Revised Preferred Option

Thank you for consulting Wyre Council on the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy – Revised Preferred Option.

The Fylde coast authorities are currently in the process of preparing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to help facilitate cross boundary co-operation and collaboration and to ultimately ensure the requirements of the Government's 'duty to co-operate' are met. As such, the duty to co-operate is an overriding consideration when reviewing the Core Strategy - Revised Preferred Option document.

Policy CS15: Gypsy and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

Proposed criteria based Policy CS15 is supported as it will allow for the assessment of proposals that come forward for unexpected need and will provide the basis to allocate sites in a Site Allocations DPD. However, the existing criteria should be expanded in line with CLG guidance to allow for a more thorough assessment of sites by including additional criteria related to flood risk and highway safety.

'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' published by CLG in March 2012 indicates that whilst local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need, they should also work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need. In line with national policy and the requirements of the duty to co-operate, Wyre Council is keen to commence discussions with the other Lancashire authorities and Lancashire County Council about the feasibility of undertaking a county wide Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation needs assessment.

Policies CS3: Economic Development and Employment and CS25: South Blackpool Employment Growth

It is acknowledged that an update to the Employment Land Review evidence base will be prepared before the Pre-Submission document is prepared. However, it would be helpful if there was more clarity in the supporting text of Policy CS3 and in Policy CS25 regarding the scale of 'major' employment development envisaged at land close to Junction 4 of the M55.

It is recognised that the proposed development of the Junction 4 area could create sub-regional employment opportunities and economic growth. Economic development in this area, which is close to Wyre Borough, should be carefully considered to enable infrastructure limitations in this

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area to be addressed and ensure that the sub-regionally important site at Hillhouse is not adversely affected. In addition, the accessibility of the Junction 4 area is currently regarded as poor and a 'major' employment development is likely to generate a number of new trips which could significantly increase traffic flows from Wyre to the Junction 4 area. Given existing congestion on routes such as the A585(T) clarification regarding the scale of development proposed at the Junction 4 area of the M55 is needed to allow for detailed highway modelling of the potential impacts of proposed development on the local and strategic highway network.

As acknowledged in paragraph 8.34 in the supporting text of Policy CS28: South Blackpool Transport and Connectivity, the duty to co-operate requires joint working between Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils regarding cross boundary transport issues. We consider it prudent for Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils to work together with Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency to plan for the effects of proposed development upon the highway network in the South Blackpool area.

Policy CS10: Planning Obligations

The reference in Paragraph 5.132 to co-operating with adjoining authorities to support the delivery of sub-regional infrastructure is supported and will be pursued under the duty to co-operate.

Strategic Housing Market Needs of the Fylde Coast Sub-region

In light of the sub-regional nature of the Fylde coast housing market, the ongoing update to the 2008 Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the duty to co-operate, we consider it prudent for Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre Councils to discuss further how the housing needs of the sub-region are to be met strategically across the three local authority areas. Such a discussion is required to help ensure that sub-regional housing needs are met collectively through local housing requirements and to avoid a situation arising whereby individual or neighbouring authorities face pressure to make additional housing provision in their area, in order to address any unmet needs from outside their own area.

Projected Household Growth Figures

The projected household growth figure of 6,000 by 2027 outlined in paragraph 2.6 and the projected additional dwellings figure of 4,500 by 2027 outlined in paragraph 5.9 are difficult to correlate and consequently require further clarification.

I confirm that Wyre Council wish to be informed of all future stages of plan preparation.

Yours faithfully

Lyndsey Regan
Planning Policy Officer

Please ask for: Planning Policy Team
Telephone No. 01253 891000
Email: planningpolicy@wyre.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 19/06/2012

Dear Mr Hayward,

Comments on Sites for Preston- Preferred Options Consultation May / July 2012

Thank you for consulting Wyre Council on the Site Allocations and Development Management Preferred Options DPD.

The areas of most relevance to Wyre are the northern and western areas of the City as shown on the respective individual Proposals Maps. The M55 (via the A585) and the A6 are the main highway routes into Wyre from the south of the Borough and as such the impacts on the capacity of them from development proposed in the Preferred Options DPD is a key consideration for Wyre. The 'duty to co-operate' is an overriding consideration.

Highways Infrastructure

The Wyre Core Strategy Preferred Options (2012) proposes 550 new dwellings and 16 hectares of employment land at Garstang and Catterall by 2028. The Ribble Valley Publication Draft Core Strategy (2012) proposes 560 new dwellings at Longridge by 2028 and a further 816 at other settlements within the Borough. It is also noted that Samlesbury has achieved Enterprise Zone status. The totality of these proposals with those proposed for North West Preston in the Site Allocations and Development Management DPD will place additional demands upon the existing highway infrastructure particularly around the M6, M55 and A6 where they meet at Broughton.

Therefore in order to avoid increasing demand and congestion on a very busy highway network and ultimately increasing the journey time from the motorway network to Wyre, it is essential that improvements to highways infrastructure are made to serve the proposed significant residential developments at the Former Whittingham Hospital (650 dwellings), North West Preston (2500 dwellings) and Cottam Hall and Former Brickworks (1300 dwellings). The proposed phasing of these sites in the Preferred Options document is supported, as is criteria based Policy MD2.

It is noted that completion of the Highways and Transport Master Plan led by Lancashire County Council is scheduled for September 2012 and following this, more detailed proposals for additional supporting infrastructure for development at North West Preston will be prepared. Wyre Council consider it prudent for Ribble Valley, Preston and Wyre Councils to work together with Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency to plan for the effects of proposed development upon the highway network in the Broughton area.

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Broughton Bypass – Policy IN1

It is recognised that whilst the alignments for the Broughton Bypass are safeguarded in the Preferred Options DPD through Policy IN1, the development of the Bypass will be subject to fresh consideration as a result of the proposed development of North West Preston and the Highways and Transport Master Plan's appraisal of highways infrastructure in the surrounding area. Ultimately, it is crucial that this work concludes with a deliverable solution which will reduce existing congestion in Broughton and the surrounding area and support for the increased demand on the network as a result of the developments proposed in the Preferred Options DPD.

As above Wyre Council consider it prudent for Ribble Valley, Preston and Wyre Councils to work together with Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency to alleviate existing congestion and plan for effects from proposed development upon the highway network in the Broughton area.

Proposals Map

A minor 'typo' to point out is the reference to 'Beacon Fell National Park' instead of 'Beacon Fell Country Park' on the Proposals Map.

Yours faithfully

Lyndsey Regan
Planning Policy Officer

Please ask for: Neil Macfarlane
Telephone No. 01253 891000 (switchboard)
Email: neil.macfarlane@wyre.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 18 July 2012

Dear Sir / Madam,

Representations regarding the Fylde Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

Thank you for consulting Wyre Council upon the above document. Officers of Wyre Council wish to make the following comments.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is currently being prepared by the Fylde Coast authorities. In order to comply with the duty to co-operate we consider it prudent for Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre Councils to collectively discuss a variety of matters further including Gypsy and Traveller needs, infrastructure requirements particularly in relation to wastewater, traffic modeling, employment land and housing.

How the housing needs of the sub-region are to be met strategically across the three local authority areas needs to be considered in light of the sub-regional nature of the Fylde coast housing market and the update to the 2008 Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Such a discussion is required to help ensure that sub-regional housing needs are met collectively through local housing requirements and to avoid a situation arising whereby individual or neighbouring authorities face pressure to make additional housing provision in their area, in order to address any unmet needs from outside their own area.

Officers await the inclusion of employment land figures into the spatial options for development before expressing an opinion upon these different options. Notwithstanding this, we consider that there are currently notable infrastructure constraints in relation to option 5 (Equal Focus upon Lytham St Annes and land on the south east edge of Blackpool) that would need to be addressed in a timely and co-ordinated manner for that option to be deliverable.

Finally, officers believe that there are two minor factual inaccuracies in the Local Plan. First, the M55-Norcross link is referred to as the Blue Route in the document but we understand that the former terminology is preferable because the proposed route is a composite of options. Secondly, we now understand that United Utilities have reviewed the case for a new a wastewater treatment works at Singleton and this is no longer their preferred approach to addressing wastewater capacity issues in the area.

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I confirm that Wyre Council wish to be informed of all future stages of local plan preparation.

Yours faithfully

Neil Macfarlane

Please ask for: Neil Macfarlane
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Email: neil.macfarlane@wyre.gov.uk
Our Ref:
Date: 15 June 2012

Dear Sir / Madam,

Representations regarding the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (Regulation 19) Consultation

Thank you for consulting Wyre Council upon the above document. In order to ensure that the Plan is sound officers of Wyre Council wish to make the following comments which relate to the duty to co-operate in the preparation of local plans and requirements for the Local Plan to be justified and consistent with national policy. These comments specifically relate to:

- 1) The distribution of development and associated transport matters; and
- 2) Gypsies and Traveller policies.

Distribution of development and associated transport matters

The following comments relate to Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) and Key Statement EC1 (Business and Employment Development).

It is noted that 560 new dwellings are planned at Longridge by 2028, a further 816 at other settlements within the borough and that Samlesbury has achieved Enterprise Zone status. Preston City Council are proposing a number of housing sites around the north of Preston as part of their Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD and the Wyre Core Strategy Preferred Options proposes 550 new dwellings and 16 hectares of employment land at Garstang and Catterall by 2028. The totality of these proposals will place additional demands upon the existing highway infrastructure particularly around the M6, M55 and A6 where they meet at Broughton.

Whilst the aforementioned Preston DPD Preferred Options safeguards the Broughton bypass Wyre Council officers understand that this matter will be given fresh consideration as part of a strategic level Transport Masterplan which is being undertaken by Lancashire County Council. Given that the publicly available evidence base for the Ribble Valley Core Strategy does not appear contain a Transport/ Highway assessment of the advocated distribution of development it is considered prudent for Ribble Valley, Preston and Wyre Councils to work together with Lancashire County Council and the Highways Agency to consider and, if necessary plan for, any effects upon the highway network in the previously mentioned area. This would ensure that the respective local plans are justified and therefore sound.

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Gypsy and Traveller policies

The following comments relate to Key Statement H4 (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation) and Key Statement DMH2 (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation).

National planning policy contained within CLG Guidance for Traveller Sites (March 2012) indicates that whilst local planning authorities should make their own assessment of need for the purpose of planning, they should work collaboratively to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need. Paragraphs 9a and 9b of the guidance refers to the need to identify deliverable sites (for the first 5 years) and developable sites or broad locations (years 6 to 10) and, where possible, for years 11-15.

Officers are of the view that there is a need for collaborative working between authorities adjoining Wyre on this matter, including Ribble Valley.

With regard to Key Statement H4 and the justification specifically, Wyre officers consider that there should be greater clarity in relation to the longevity of the current evidence base (GTAA 2008) compared to the time period coverage of the Core Strategy and the Housing and Economic Development DPD. Current evidence appears to cover a time period to 2016 so will not be sufficient to identify both deliverable and developable sites in the local plan. The planned regularity of updates to the GTAA/ needs assessment required to cover the plan period should be indicated and specifically it should be established how this may relate to the need to review the Housing and Economic Development DPD. For example, the justification to Key Statement H4 states that there is no need to identify sites for Travelling Showpeople in Ribble Valley but it should also state that this applies to the period until 2016 and that needs beyond 2016 (and therefore for the majority of the Plan period) are to be established through updates to the GTAA/ needs assessment.

Key Statement DMH2 is a criteria based policy and its purpose to provide criteria to determine proposals comprising unexpected needs and to be used as a basis to allocate sites in the Housing and Economic Development DPD should be expressed explicitly. Additionally, the existing criteria should be expanded in line with CLG guidance to allow thorough assessment of sites by including additional criteria such as flood risk, integration of a proposal with the surrounding area, highway safety and the need for the provision of essential services.

I confirm that Wyre Council wish to be informed of all future stages of local plan preparation.

Yours faithfully

Neil Macfarlane