



Mr M. Dakeyne
Inspector, Wyre Local Plan Partial Review (2011-2031)
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Our Ref: Wyre PR Hearing
Your Ref:
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Dear Mr Dakeyne

Examination Hearing Statement: Wyre Local Plan Partial Review (2011-2031)

Thank you for inviting Fylde Council to participate in the Examination of Wyre Council's Local Plan Partial Review. In seeking to avoid excessive repetition, we refer to the contents of our original representation (SDPR09, pages 214-217 of the pdf) taken as a whole, and the specific comments within, which remain relevant (subject to the comments below relating to statement of common ground). However, we offer brief comments below on the MIQs relevant to the matters previously raised, which we trust will assist.

Matter 1 Issue 2: The Duty to Co-operate

3. Does the LP (and/or the supporting information such as the DtC statement) need to be modified to reflect the position that Wyre can now meet all of its housing need, notwithstanding the provisions of the Partial Review of Fylde Local Plan?

Fylde Council has requested changes to the plan along the lines stated in the question. However, Fylde Council considers this to be only a matter of soundness for the plan, not of legal compliance, and therefore is most properly dealt with under Matter 2 Issue 1: see below, within that section of our response.

In respect of the specific comments that we made in the original representation concerning the Statement of Common Ground and Duty to Co-Operate Statement, these reflect changes proposed by Fylde Council to the plan for soundness. The Statement of Common Ground was amended between publication and submission, through engagement between the councils, so that the differing positions taken were made clear.

Matter 1 Issue 3 The Sustainability Appraisal and its consideration of reasonable alternatives

4. Does the SA meet statutory and legal requirements in relation to the assessment of reasonable alternatives? In particular should the SA have assessed, as reasonable alternatives, housing

requirements in excess of the local housing need figure?

The Sustainability Appraisal objective for housing is “4. To ensure housing provision meets local needs”; the first sub-objective within this is “Ensure that there is sufficient housing to meet identified needs in all areas” (section 4.2.4 of the Sustainability Appraisal SDPR03, page 67 of the pdf). However, nowhere within the SA is it acknowledged or recognised that the housing requirement figures in the WLPPR fall short of meeting Wyre’s housing needs for the period 2011-2019, and that as submitted, the WLPPR relies on these being met outside Wyre. The SA of the polices as presented should have included such a recognition, and appraised this situation. It should then have included, as a reasonable alternative, a version of the WLPPR with an adjusted housing requirement that met all needs within Wyre (479 x 8 plus 296 x 12). Fylde Council would expect, in line with the assumption made in the Framework, that meeting needs within the Borough where they arise would score more highly for sustainability. If the plan is revised in line with matters discussed later in this response, this matter would fall away as there would not be a need to consider the sustainability of delivering housing need in the neighbouring Borough.

Matter 2 Issue 1: Housing Need and Requirement

1. In principle and taking into account the contents of the WLP, is it justified for the WLPPR to use the standard method as a basis for the housing requirement rather than undertaking a new housing needs assessment?

Fylde Council supports Wyre Council’s use of the standard method in its assessment of local housing need, as consistent with the adopted Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review). We consider this to be a new housing needs assessment following paragraph 61 of the Framework.

The housing requirement should be based on meeting needs, in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework. Housing needs for the earlier part of the plan period was 479 dwellings per annum. As the Wyre and Fylde local plans address the same housing market area, it is considered that the plans should be consistent in their approach in applying the new Framework. Accordingly, the housing requirement in the WLPPR should meet Wyre’s identified needs throughout the plan period.

2. If the use of the standard method is justified, for what period should it apply?

Fylde Council commented in the original representation on this, just to draw attention to the fact that whilst the proposed start date for the standard method by Wyre is the same date as used by Fylde, it is not consistent in the timing of the assessment of need (in Fylde’s case it was not back-dated; the year chosen was the latest when Fylde’s Housing Needs and Requirement Background Paper was produced, and the standard method calculated for that year). The comment was made only to point this out, not to advocate one approach over another.

3. Taking into account that the standard method should be taken as the minimum, do the circumstances exist to support an uplift on the housing figure derived from the standard method?

For Fylde’s Partial Review, the Inspector concluded that there was no justification to plan for a higher housing need figure and that the use of the standard method figure was justified (paragraph 26 of EDPR09). Fylde Council does not consider that the circumstances of Wyre are materially different.

6. How should the 380 dwellings provided through the Fylde LP Partial Review to meet Wyre's needs be accounted for?

The 380 dwellings arose as a shortfall between the original housing need figure of 479, and the original housing requirement figure of 460, giving a shortfall of 19 dwellings per annum for each of the 20 years of the plan period 2011 to 2031. Assuming a base date of 2019 for the standard method, the need figure becomes 479 for 2011-2019 and 296 for 2019-2031. This gives a total need figure in Wyre for the plan period of 7,384 (instead of 7,232 used in Wyre's housing requirement figure in paragraph 4.1.6 and Policy SP1). This leaves a shortfall of 152 (8 x 19). The remainder of the 380 falls away as the need figure for the years 2019-2031 is reduced from 479 to 296 so the shortfall does not arise for those years.

Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that *"a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area..."* and *"b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."*

In addition, Policy LPR1 of the adopted WLP states that *"The Local Planning Authority will bring forward a partial review of the Plan with the objective of meeting the full Objectively Assessed Housing Needs..."*

In the Statement of Common Ground SDPR07a), the councils agree that the overall approach leaves Wyre without any shortfall. However, Wyre Council considers that the unmet need figure is not a matter for the WLPPR, because *"The unmet need figure of 380 dwellings has been addressed by the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (Incorporating Partial Review)"* (paragraph 10.3). Fylde Council's view (paragraph 10.4) is that, as sufficient sites are provided in the WLPPR to give a supply of 9,423 dwellings, there is no unmet need (i.e. the previous need to identify an additional 380 dwellings across the plan period falls away), but this needs to be clearly reflected in the plan.

If the WLLPR is to lead to the adoption of a housing requirement that falls short of meeting Wyre's objectively assessed needs, which continues to require unmet need to be met in Fylde, it should be justified in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Framework and the detailed provisions of Policy LPR1 (omitted above for brevity). Fylde Council's view is that it would be a simple matter to adjust the housing requirement to make clear that all needs can be and are met in Wyre, without the necessity for any such justification. Without justification (including through sustainability appraisal as noted in our response to Matter 1 Issue 3) or such an adjustment, the plan as published is considered to be unsound.

In the absence of this justification, the following changes are suggested to the plan:

- Paragraph 1.2.6 gives the overall requirement of 7,232 based on 460 and 296 as based on housing needs but omits consideration of the need of 479 between 2011 and 2019. Some further explanatory text to clearly distinguish between needs and requirements, and revision to the figures to give a total of 7,384 is suggested. This could be a suitable point to explain how the 380 shortfall that provides the reason for Policy LPR1 is addressed: 152 through the plan, 228 through the reduction in the need figure for 2019-31, so that no shortfall remains.

- Paragraph 1.2.7 suggests that OAN/OAHN can be used interchangeably with housing requirement. As the figures for need and requirement between 2011-19 are different, this needs clarification: at present, it implies that the shortfall never existed. If the shortfall is to be addressed through an addition to the housing requirement of 13 dwellings per annum for 2019-31, the need and requirement figures would be different for this period also. It is suggested that the paragraph should precisely describe the difference rather than leave the matter confused as currently.
- Paragraph 4.1.6 states that the OAHN is 296 for the period 2011-2031. This is confused, as it implies the need figure calculated for 2019 is backdated to 2011. The paragraph should clarify the 479 figure for 2011-19 and 296 for 2019-31.
- Paragraph 4.1.12 has been amended to say that the plan delivers the housing requirement; however, it could also say that it delivers OAHN (providing that the necessary modification is made to the housing requirement).
- Paragraph 4.1.18 states that the local plan seeks to deliver a minimum of 7,232 dwellings; this should be amended to 7,384 in order to meet needs (this presents no difficulty as the plan provides for 9,423, giving a margin of 2,039).
- Paragraphs 4.1.21 and 4.1.22 have been deleted, which formerly referred to the shortfall; these could be an alternative point (to 1.2.6 noted above) for the necessary explanation as to how the shortfall that provides the reason for Policy LPR1 and the Partial Review is addressed.
- Policy SP1 (3) states that the Local Plan will deliver 7,232 dwellings; it should be 7,384 to accord with Policy LPR1 as stated.
- Paragraph 7.1.2 (new) a single need figure is quoted going forward, then new footnote 38 states that the housing requirement is based on the old and new housing requirements, without reference to the earlier 479 need figure. This should be more fully explained, and produce the 7,384 figure, in order to demonstrate that needs are met.
- Policy HP1 states that the Local Plan will deliver 7,232 net additional dwellings; this should be 7,384 if it is to meet needs and therefore accord with Policy LPR1 as stated. This could be achieved through altering the minimum requirement by 13 additional dwellings for 2019 onwards.
- Paragraph 9.2.1 states that the Local Plan ensures that sufficient deliverable land is available for a minimum 7,232 net dwellings; 7,384 would meet needs rather than requirement as stated and ensure compliance with Policy LPR1.
- Performance monitoring indicator PMI9 refers to 7,232 but 7,384 would be necessary to meet needs.

In the event that it is considered that no provision for the shortfall should be included within the housing requirement, the plan should acknowledge that the previous shortfall is addressed through headroom in the amount of housing delivered in the plan, and therefore provision by Fylde is no longer required, notwithstanding it not being included in the requirement.

In the event of it not being considered appropriate to state that the shortfall is addressed by the means discussed above, Fylde Council would request that the plan includes a paragraph clearly

acknowledging the existence of the previous shortfall of 380 dwellings, its reduction to 152 dwellings through the WLPPR, and the provision made in the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 (incorporating Partial Review) to provide for it through an increased housing requirement, in order to demonstrate how Policy LPR1 has been addressed.

It remains at present the intention for Fylde Council officers to attend the Examination; if there is any change to this we will let you know.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Mark Evans
Head of Planning