

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE  
FYLDE COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN**

**INSPECTOR'S MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS  
(Stage 1 Hearing Sessions)**

**V1 – 6 February 2017**

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**Introduction**

The examination will take place in two stages:

- Stage 1 will cover duty to cooperate, other legal and procedural requirements and strategic matters; and
- Stage 2 will consider all other matters including site allocations.

These matters, issues and questions relate to the **stage 1 hearings** and should be read in conjunction with the Inspector's Guidance Note, initial questions to the Council and the Council's response, all of which can be found on the Examination website <http://www.fylde.gov.uk/council/planning-policy--local-plan-/local-development-framework/www-fylde-gov-uk-examination/>

Further information about the examination, hearings and format of written statements is provided in the accompanying Guidance Note, which should be read alongside these MIQs.

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**Matter 1 – Compliance with statutory procedures and legal matters**

*Issue 1 – Has the Council met the statutory duty to cooperate as set out under Sections 20(5)c and 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004?*

1. What are the relevant strategic matters in relation to this duty?
2. Has the Council maximised the effectiveness of plan-making activities by engaging constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with the prescribed bodies, in the preparation of the Plan in the context of these relevant strategic matters? In particular:
  - a. What has been the nature of any cooperation and have any mechanisms or formal agreements been established? Is the

- Memorandum of Understanding by authorities within the Fylde Coast Housing Market Area (HMA) up to date and effective in this regard?
- b. Has the Council tried to resolve any issues through cooperation and what have been the outcomes?
  - c. Is there robust evidence to support the cooperation activities that have taken place?
3. In light of Wyre Borough Council's statement that they will be unable to meet their own objectively assessed housing need (OAN):
- a. What has been the nature of any cooperation in this regard?
  - b. Has cooperation led to an agreed mechanism for the delivery of unmet housing needs within the HMA?
  - c. In what way has this influenced the Plan?
  - d. Is there an obligation for Fylde Council to ensure that the objectively assessed need for the HMA as a whole is met?
  - e. Should the Plan include a commitment to help meet any unmet housing needs or to review the Plan?

*Issue 2 – Has the Plan been positively prepared in accordance with other legal and procedural requirements?*

4. Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme, including in terms of timing and content?
5. Has consultation been carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the relevant Regulations?
6. Is the plan period of 2011 to 2032 justified? Is the plan period set out with sufficient clarity in the Plan?
7. Does the sustainability appraisal (SA) adequately assess the environmental, social and economic effects of the Plan? In particular:
  - a. Has the SA followed the correct processes in terms of consultation and content?
  - b. Does the SA adequately consider the likely significant effects of reasonable alternatives where these exist, including in respect of the scale of housing and employment provision and the balance between them?
  - c. Have any unreasonable alternatives been noted and if so have reasons been given as to why these have not been selected?
  - d. Does the SA adequately assess the likely significant effects of policies and proposals?
  - e. Is it clear how the SA has influenced the Plan? Is there anything in the SA which indicates that changes should be made to the Plan?

8. Has the requirement for appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) been met? Is it clear how the HRA screening report has influenced the Plan?
9. Has the Plan been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations?
10. Are there any significant departures from national policy in the Plan? If so, have these been justified?

## **Matter 2 – Objectively assessed housing and economic development needs**

*Issue 3 - Is the identified objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) soundly based and supported by robust and credible evidence and is it consistent with national policy?*

11. Does the identified Fylde Coast HMA provide a robust and appropriate basis for assessing housing needs?
12. The SHMA and its Addendums identify the OAN figure for Fylde as a range, based on the 2012-based sub-national household projections (SNHP). The DCLG released its 2014-based SNHP in July 2016. The Council refers to there being only a 1% difference in projected household numbers between the 2012 and 2014-based projections, though this is over slightly different timescales. Further to my initial questions to the Council (EL1.001a), its response (EL1.001b) indicates that the actual increase is less than 1% taking account of the different periods and it is not considered that this has any significant implications for the OAHN. Is this justified by the evidence? Is the use of the 2012-based sub-national household projections as a 'starting point' for identifying the OAHN appropriate? What bearing, if any, would the latest household projections have on the assessment of the OAHN?
13. Is the OAHN range of figures identified in the SHMA soundly based?
14. Does the assessment of OAHN take sufficient account of market signals as well as other market indicators in relation to the balance between the demand for and supply for housing?
15. Has the assessment of OAHN taken account of other factors including vacancy rates and second homes?
16. In relation to affordable housing:
  - a. Is the SHMA's methodology for assessing affordable housing needs robust and in line with Government guidance?

- b. The Plan recognises that the full amount of affordable housing needed per annum is not deliverable. Has the Council considered the option of a higher housing requirement to assist in delivering more affordable dwellings?
17. Have the needs of particular groups (e.g. the elderly) and types of housing (e.g. private rented, self-build) been satisfactorily assessed?
18. Have employment trends been appropriately taken into account? Is the OAHN aligned with forecasts for jobs growth? (Also see *Issue 4*)
19. In relation to gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, and further to the Council's additional evidence provided (EL1.002) following my initial questions (EL1.001a), what is the objectively assessed housing need up to 2032? Is this new identified need soundly based, consistent with national policy and supported by robust and credible evidence? What implications does this have in relation to the housing requirement for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople as set out in Policy H5?

*Issue 4 – Are the objectively assessed economic development needs clearly identified, supported by robust and credible evidence and consistent with national policy?*

20. Has the functional economic market area been adequately defined?
21. The SHMA assesses a range of economic development forecasts. What are the job needs and role of Fylde economically? What is the objectively assessed economic development need for the Borough?
22. Is the Plan's economic development strategy (based on a continuation of historic land take-up) justified, consistent with national policy and compatible with that for the housing strategy? (Also see *Issue 3*)

### **Matter 3 – Housing and employment requirements**

*Issue 5 – Is the identified overall housing requirement of 7,768 dwellings (370 dwellings per annum) over the Plan period justified and consistent with national policy?*

23. Does the Council's evidence support the use of the figure of 370 dwellings per annum (dpa) as its housing requirement in the Plan? In particular:
- a. Is it a soundly based figure, supported by robust evidence?
  - b. Will it ensure that the Plan meets the full objectively assessed housing needs identified in the SHMA?
  - c. Will it significantly boost housing supply?

24. The soundness of specific land allocations and deliverability of sites to meet the housing requirement will be considered at Stage 2 of the Examination. However, on the basis of the Plan as submitted does it confirm that there is:

- a. a supply of specific deliverable sites to meet the housing requirement for five years from the point of adoption; and
- b. a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth for years 6-10 from the point of adoption?
- c. If you contend that the plan would not provide for either (a) or (b) above (or both) could the Plan be appropriately modified to address this?

*Issue 6 – Whether the amount of employment land (60.6 ha gross as set out in Policy DLF1 and 62 ha net in Policy EC1) is appropriate to meet the objectively assessed needs of the Borough.*

25. Whilst the soundness of individual employment sites will be considered at Stage 2 of the Examination, is the amount of land justified, consistent with national policy and supported by robust and credible evidence?

#### **Matter 4 – Vision, Objectives and Development Strategy**

*Issue 7 – Have the vision and strategic objectives within the Plan been positively prepared; are they justified and consistent with national policy and can they realistically be achieved?*

26 Does the Plan set out a positive vision for the future development of the area? Are the changes proposed to the vision by the Council as additional (minor) modifications necessary for reasons of soundness?

27 Have the strategic objectives within the Plan been positively prepared and are they suitably framed? Does the addition of a further objective to strategic objective 3 as proposed by the Council as an additional (minor) modification have any implications for other parts of the Plan? Is this change necessary for reasons of soundness?

*Issue 8 – Does the overarching development strategy for the Plan present a positive framework which is consistent with national policy and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development within the Borough?*

28 The Plan states that the development strategy locates 83.6% of housing developments within the four strategic locations over the Plan period and 9.7% in non-strategic locations.

- a. Is this strategy and the distribution of development within the Plan period justified? Are the strategic and non-strategic locations soundly based and supported by robust evidence?
- b. Will the development strategy achieve the Council's vision and strategic objectives and deliver sustainable development for Fylde?

- c. Is the development strategy clearly defined within the Plan? Does Policy DLF1 clearly set out the distribution of development?

29 Is the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy S1 justified? Does the evidence suggest that some settlements should be placed at different levels within the hierarchy? If so, what implications would this have, if any, on the development strategy?