



Ms R Psillidou  
 Planning Policy and Economic Development Manager  
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*Our Ref:*

*Your Ref:*

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*Date:* 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

Dear Ms Psillidou,

#### **RE. WYRE LOCAL PLAN & DUTY TO CO-OPERATE**

I am writing to you following the recent Duty to Co-Operate Officers meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016. During the meeting you explained that highways evidence was still awaited detailing the reasons why Wyre would be unable to meet its objectively assessed need for housing. This letter is intended to clarify the information that Fylde Council would need to be provided with if it is to consider your request for assistance in meeting your Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) by providing housing sites in Fylde.

To date, the development strategy for Wyre has not been seen. It is anticipated that the strategy would include a full explanation of the constraints, including highways capacity. It would be unusual for evidence supporting a strategy to be presented without even any outline of the strategy, or the alternatives to it that have been considered, being readily apparent. However, the following comments are based on the approach that it is understood is being taken.

We understand that the highways evidence to be brought forward is to be centred on A585/A588 (Breck Road) junction. We would expect that this evidence would provide an understanding of the limits to development that result from this capacity restriction. We would expect that this evidence would address all reasonable development strategies for Wyre that would deliver the full OAN and how their delivery would be constrained by the limited capacity of this specific junction.

The proposed Windy Harbour – Skippool major scheme currently being promoted by Highways England is likely to have a significant impact on traffic flows on the A585 corridor and at its junctions, and may lead to alterations in the routes taken by traffic, for instance between Over Wyre and Blackpool. We would expect all such effects of this scheme to have been considered, in relation to the impacts of any potential development strategy.

It is understood from previous correspondence and Duty to Co-Operate meetings that the emerging plan will include provision of a new Normoss to Little Singleton distributor road, to which Fylde Council has indicated in-principle support. Clarification will be required on how the effects of this proposed road on the wider road network have been considered, in particular potential displacement of traffic from the A585/A588 junction. The submitted Fylde Local Plan to 2032 and the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport

Masterplan both make provision for the “Blue Route” major road scheme: we would welcome consideration of the integration of the proposed distributor road into the “Blue Route” proposal.

We would also expect that sustainable transport projects that could have an impact on mitigating the impact of traffic in the A585 corridor will have been considered and evidence provided on the potential effects as part of your highway evidence.

Wyre Council has, in the letter of 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 sent to the Chief Executive of Fylde Council, requested that Fylde Council should allocate land in order to meet the shortfall in the number of new homes that Wyre Council states that it is unable to accommodate, to meet Wyre’s OAN. The OAN is based on economic forecasts for Wyre. Therefore, it can be reasonably expected that any homes justified outside Wyre to meet Wyre’s OAN would result in journeys into and out of Wyre for employment and other purposes. We would expect that the impact on the road network of those homes which Wyre Council proposes be located in Fylde , including the particular highway pinch points identified as constraints, will have been assessed as part of any work undertaken. Evidence would need to be provided, that homes so located would not have any significant detrimental impact on those parts of the highway network that are stated to represent a constraint on development, based on the high economic growth forecast on which the OAN is predicated. Further, we would need an indication of the broad area within Fylde where such homes could be located if they are to contribute to supporting Wyre’s economic growth aspirations, whilst not having detrimental impacts on the highways concerned, backed up by highways evidence.

It would also be expected that evidence be presented as to why transport should be a constraint in those parts of Wyre outside the peninsula area/A585 corridor. Whilst the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan provides background, we would expect evidence demonstrating consideration of questions such as the following:

- What level of development will be possible on the A6 corridor once the Broughton bypass is complete?
- What engineering solutions to the capacity problem of M55 Junction 1 have been considered and what effect would they have on the level of development that could be accommodated?
- What effect would sustainable transport solutions/mitigation have on the level of development that could be accommodated, and what have been considered e.g. parkway station at Brock?
- What other highway schemes have been considered that would mitigate impacts of development, and what effect would they have on the amount of development that could be accommodated?
- How will changes to traffic flow patterns that will follow the completion of the Preston Western Distributor road provide relief within the A6 corridor, and how would this affect the amount of development that could be accommodated?
- What range of development strategies have been considered and how are each impacted by the constraints identified?

It is anticipated that evidence would be provided detailing what level of development would be necessary to provide sufficient funding for a key piece of transport infrastructure. If such a strategy is rejected, it is expected that the reasons for its rejection would be clearly stated and backed by evidence.

In respect of other evidence, the Green Belt study of 2016 is acknowledged. Fylde Council recognises the importance of the Green Belt to Wyre, and that given the importance afforded to Green Belt land in national policy, release of sites beyond those identified in the study is unlikely to be acceptable.

In respect of flood risk, it is understood that a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been completed, but this does not provide conclusions as to the availability of sufficient sites in the borough to accommodate development to meet the OAN. Clarification will be required as to the reasons why land in Flood Zone 1 could not be used.

It is stressed that the above evidence is likely to be regarded as essential in supporting Wyre's development strategy within your Local Plan, irrespective of any cross-boundary concerns.

In consequence of any conclusions on highways evidence that are reached, it will be necessary for the following questions to be answered, with supporting evidence, in order to provide a summary position:

1. Is Wyre's OAN set at the correct level?
2. Is it reasonable for Wyre to seek to meet its OAN in full, given the apparent significant constraints to delivery?
3. What quantum of the OAN is Wyre looking to be accommodated in Fylde, as opposed to other neighbouring authorities?
4. Can that quantum be accommodated sustainably within Fylde?

It should be clearly understood that this letter is simply to help explore the evidence that will be presented. Any decision of Fylde Council relating to the provision of homes, allocation of land or provision of cross-boundary infrastructure would be for the members of Fylde Council to make. The Fylde Local Plan to 2032 has been submitted for examination in public and any decision to include a significant number of homes to assist Wyre would require a new development strategy for Fylde. In order that the progress of the Fylde Local Plan is not compromised, any decision to provide homes to assist Wyre would therefore have to be through a later version of the plan, or an early review, following adoption of the submitted plan. Fylde Council is committed to continuing to work with Wyre in the development of its Local Plan and supporting evidence.

I look forward to our meeting, which I understand you will arrange, for the presentation and discussion of the evidence. We would be happy for representatives of Highways England and Lancashire County Council Highways to be in attendance in support, if you would consider that helpful. In the meantime if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Tel. 01253 658460.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area of the letter.

**Mark Evans**  
**Head of Planning & Regeneration**

