

Fylde Council Local Plan to 2032

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT

MATTER 4

VISION, OBJECTIVES AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Stage 1 Hearing Sessions

March 2017



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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?

Both the Vision for Fylde and the five Strategic Objectives within the Plan are considered to have been positively prepared, as they are based on sound evidence which has sought to address the Borough's objectively assessed needs. The Council considers that the Vision and Strategic Objectives appropriately address the needs of local residents and those in the neighbouring authorities through the provision of market and affordable housing, the growth and diversification of employment opportunities and addresses the needs of particular groups such as the elderly, whilst also protecting the natural and historical environment.

In addition, the Council considers the Vision and Strategic Objectives are justified; they are based on a strong up to date evidence base which highlights Fylde's local distinctiveness, and informed by key issues facing the Borough, together with the responses received from the community throughout the six stages of consultation and engagement.

Furthermore, the Council consider that both the Vision and Strategic Objectives are consistent with national policy and set out how the Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development throughout the Plan period. They provide positive approaches towards development, the promotion of growth particularly in the proposed four Strategic Locations for Development, and recognise the benefits these will bring to local residents, not only in Fylde but also neighbouring authorities, employees and visitors to the Borough. Supporting text and justification to the majority of the proposed policies also set out how they will be delivered, which is also addressed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (SD003) and the ongoing monitoring of the Plan as set out in Appendix 8: Performance Monitoring Framework and the yearly Authority Monitoring Report (ED008).

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?

26.1 Yes, the Council considers that the Plan sets out a positive, appropriate, justified and effective Vision for future development within the Borough to 2032. The Vision has been developed throughout the Plan preparation process, and has been amended at various stages in response to comments received via the various consultation stages, the recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal (SD004a page 37-38), other technical documents and the challenges and opportunities facing Fylde over the coming Plan period, in line with paragraph 150 of the Framework.

26.2 The changes proposed to the Vision by the Council in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (SD014) are not necessary for reasons of soundness. The minor modification referred to in regards to paragraph 4, is only a minor factual correction as the site "is within" the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone and not "close to". The minor modification relating to paragraph 8, is simply an additional sentence, in order to update existing information for clarity and accuracy purposes.

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?

27.1 The strategic objectives cover the key strategic matters relevant to the Plan, and meeting them will deliver the Vision for Fylde to 2032. These have been appropriately produced, developed initially at the Vision, Issues and Objectives stage in 2011, where the Council sought views from local communities and statutory consultees and other stakeholders with specific reference to the strategic objectives. Following this stage the strategic objectives were revised as a result of each consultation, and although the core goal and text of the strategic objectives have remained basically the same, they have altered in order to resolve the issues identified.

27.2 The strategic objectives have been prepared with the three main dimensions of sustainable development in mind, i.e. economic, social and environmental, in line with the Framework, whilst also relating these three aspects to the objectively assessed needs of the Borough. The strategic objectives have been informed by up to date evidence and tested extensively through the various stages of consultation, and amended accordingly if required. The council consider that they represent local aspirations balanced against the key issues of the Borough.

27.3 The Council considers the overall growth and spatial strategies provide a positive framework for the Borough consistent with national policy and will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

27.4 The proposed additional bullet point for Strategic Objective 3, is aligned with *Policy T1: Strategic Highway Improvements*, however, the Council do not consider that this bullet point would have any significant implications for this specific policy or other parts of the Plan. The proposed addition as set out in the Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (SD014) is not considered necessary for reasons of soundness, but is simply a factual bullet point for clarity, to address and reflect a currently pursued scheme, which recognises a change in circumstance that is already referred to elsewhere within the Plan.

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?**

28a.1 The strategy and distribution of development set out in the plan has developed from the earlier Issues and Options stage of plan preparation, being a hybrid option developing over a series of interim stages, each of which has been subject to sustainability appraisal and full public consultation exercises. The strategy spreads development around the four most sustainable locations in the borough. The evolution of the strategy in this form was supported by the SA process, which identified sustainability advantages in locating strategic development at each of the four locations. Explanation is given in the SA to the Preferred Option (EL3.010, pages 52-55, pages 62-65 of the pdf).

28a.2 There are some corrections needed to the numbers shown in Table 2 against the Trajectory in Appendix 2 of the plan. The actual housing numbers and proportions (at base date 31st March 2016), in accordance with the Trajectory are as follows:

Location	Total housing	Percentage of total supply
SL1 Lytham & St. Annes	1839	23.3%
SL2 Fylde-Blackpool Periphery	2311	29.3%
SL3 Warton	840	10.6%
SL4 Kirkham Wesham	1141	14.4%
SL5 Non-strategic locations	762	9.6%
Allowances and unallocated	1007	12.8%
Total	7898	

28a.3 Recent appeal decisions granting permission to additional strategic sites will alter the balance of these figures. These are an additional 170 dwellings at Kirkham/Wesham (of which 95 were recorded in proposed minor modification MNR009); and an additional 490 dwellings at Warton. However, given that other permissions have occurred through the year, it is proposed to give a more detailed update at the Examination Hearing.

28a.4 To a considerable extent, the development strategy reflects the distribution of sites that are committed, or where the council has resolved to approve an application subject to a Section 106 agreement. Strategic sites that remain as allocations are supported by a willing developer. The focus on sites which have been brought forward, supported by other deliverable sites, demonstrates that the plan will be effective.

28a.5 There is not a peppering of rural villages with services throughout the rural area, as might be found in other regions. The seven villages identified as Tier 1 Larger Rural Settlements and Tier 2 Smaller Rural Settlements represent the full complement of rural settlements that have any significant service provision. Outside these, the population of the rural area is very sparse, and the hamlets found are very small and have very few services. This is reflected in the results of the assessment in the Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper (ED002). The identification of the non-strategic locations is therefore robustly justified.

28a.6 For information, the strategic locations and the number of homes planned for each, corrected to the numbers in paragraph 28a.2 above, are shown on the map attached as Appendix 1 to this document. This shows that the distribution is not concentrated, as implied by the initial part of question 28, but spread between the four most sustainable locations in the borough, with no single location accommodating more than 30% of the total housing. The plan therefore follows the principles of sustainable development, with all sustainable settlements making a contribution to the housing delivered by the plan.

b. Will the development strategy achieve the Council’s vision and strategic objectives and deliver sustainable development for Fylde?

28b.1 Both the Vision for Fylde and the Strategic Objectives will ensure that Fylde will continue to develop as a vibrant, prosperous place to live, and are focussed on providing sustainable development

and growth for the Borough. The Council at an early stage took the decision to focus the majority of this growth around the four Strategic Locations for Development, as these areas provide the most sustainable locations for access to transport, employment and areas of growth; away from Green Belt, protected biological sites and flood zones. It is considered that the balance of development over the four strategic locations will ensure the deliverability of the plan as a whole. The % figures are not intended to be rigidly and precisely applied, but rather act as a strategic aim for the spatial distribution of housing in the Local Plan.

28b.2 The spatial distribution is based on a clear vision and grounded in close community engagement. Extensive consultation has been undertaken within the rural communities to understand what people in these communities wanted, what they hoped to see improved and how they pictured their particular rural community to look like after and during the Plan period. As such the Council considers that the Plan meets with the aspirations of the rural settlements and is in line with the Government's recently published Housing White paper "Fixing our broken housing market", as it states on page 22 para 1.1 "*Up-to-date plans are essential because they provide clarity to communities and developers about where homes should be built and where not, so that development is planned rather than the result of speculative applications*".

28b.3 Reference to rural communities being able to "*grow and making it easier to build new settlements*", in the Housing White paper "Fixing our broken housing market", (pages 18 and 21), appears to be a recurring theme, and the Council considers that through its proposed planned growth in Fylde's rural communities (which for a borough the size of Fylde are few in number) and the proposed Whyndyke Farm scheme, which will see a new Garden village created on the edge of Blackpool, (providing 810 new homes and 20 hectares of non-residential development), it is already achieving the Government's vision of planning for the right homes in the right places.

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

28c.1 Policy DLF1 sets out the overall amount of housing and employment development proposed, the identity of the strategic locations and non-strategic locations for development, and makes an allowance for windfalls and small sites. The strategy concentrates development within the four strategic locations of Lytham St. Annes, Fylde-Blackpool Periphery, Warton and Kirkham/Wesham. Policy S1 goes further in describing the role and function of the different settlements.

28c.2 The balance of development between the locations is set out in detail in Table 2 within the supporting text to Policy DLF1, on the Policies Map, and is detailed in the Housing Trajectory (Appendix 2). It should be noted that, as a consequence of recent appeal decisions, there is a degree of adjustment to be made to the overall quantity of housing and its distribution shown in Table 2; however the strategy remains as defined by policy DLF1.

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?

29.1 The Council considers the settlement hierarchy as set out in Policy S1 to be justified and sound. The hierarchy of settlements was principally derived from the consideration of the existing layout of development and distribution of existing centres, which was initially carried out at the "Preferred

Option Stage”, which focussed on the existing built up areas of Lytham & St. Annes, Freckleton & Warton, Kirkham & Wesham, and the Fylde-Blackpool Periphery. It was considered that these areas were the most sustainable given their adaptability and suitability to growth and their populations, and their greater levels of services and facilities, as opposed to the much smaller less accessible unsustainable rural settlements. The Sustainability Appraisal (SD004a page 41) also predicted no major effects, either positive or negative for Policy S1 and the Proposed Settlement Hierarchy. Additional technical work carried out in the Settlement Hierarchy Background paper (ED002) assisted the Council in defining more precisely those rural settlements that could suitably accommodate higher levels of growth (Tier 1) as opposed to the smaller Tier 2 settlements, in line with the spatial development strategy and the broad principles of sustainable development.

29.2 The Settlement Hierarchy Background paper (ED002) provides an assessment of the available services in each settlement of the borough, giving an understanding of the ease of access to facilities that new occupants of developments would enjoy, and therefore the relative sustainability of those locations for development. The document involves the scoring of each settlement according to a series of criteria, including population, and various facilities including access to medical and education facilities, and derives from this an overall score which are then used to rank the settlements into order. Following this the relevant settlement is then classified to the appropriate settlement hierarchy.

29.3 Questions have been raised in relation to the scoring of the individual criteria. It is acknowledged that, as the study was undertaken in March 2016, there may be some instances where the provision of individual services have altered. Most notably, there have been reductions in some bus services and library closures. However, the reclassification of an individual settlement on the basis of an alteration to provision level of an individual service would not be sound. Whilst there is always likely to be some fluctuation in the provision of individual services, the Council’s view is that the overall assessment of the individual settlements remains robust and sound.

29.4 In regards to evidence suggesting some settlements be placed at different levels within the hierarchy, evidence did contradict the settlement hierarchy as set out in Policy S1 of the Revised Preferred Option Plan, and following the conclusions of the Settlement Hierarchy Background paper (ED002) the settlement of Elswick was removed from the Tier 1: Larger Rural settlements and placed in the Tier 2: Smaller Rural settlements due to its severe lack of services and reduced employment opportunities.

29.5 In addition, the Council produced The Rural Proofing Assessment (SD009 pages 10 and 12) which concludes that Policy S1: The Proposed Settlement Hierarchy, helps steer development to more sustainable rural communities and restricts development where it would have a detrimental, unsustainable impact on the existing infrastructure and facilities of rural areas.