



planning advisory service



# **Fylde Borough Council**

**Peer Challenge Feedback  
(5-7 October 2022)**

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# Programme for today

- Introductions
  - Peer challenge process
  - Findings
    - summary of key strengths and recommendations
  - Next steps
  - Questions and Discussion
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# The peer challenge team

- **Helen Martin**, Director of Regeneration & Enterprise, Dudley Council
  - **Richard Purcell**, Assistant Director of Planning, North East Derbyshire District Council
  - **Councillor Linda Robinson**, Vice-Chair of Planning and Regulatory Committee, Worcestershire County Council (Former planning chair and Leader at Wychavon Council)
  - **Garreth Bruff**, PAS Principal Consultant
  - **Martin Hutchings**, PAS Principal Consultant
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# Peer Challenge

- PAS Invited by the council – as ‘critical friends’
  - Not an inspection or audit, not a pass/fail
  - Familiarised ourselves with the Planning Service based on self-assessment, wider document review, on-site interviews, focus groups, attended committee.
  - Made very welcome - people have been open and honest.
  - Superbly organised – thanks to Alex, Jo & Marcus
  - What you hear is what we’ve been told and seen
  - Intensive process, still some thinking to do
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# You asked us to look at...

- Planning Policy
- Engagement – councils, consultees, public
- Operational practices, decision making – flow
- Enforcement
- Training and support

*We've examined these across some broad themes:*

1. Vision and leadership
  2. Service Performance & Management
  3. Community & Partner engagement
  4. Achieving outcomes
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# Context

- Large, diverse place - *“a little bit of Cheshire on the Lancashire Coast”*
  - Not immune to deprivation
  - Impressive record, impressive portfolio of projects, some great design examples, performing well
  - Ethos and culture understood, people like working here
  - Recent reorganisation is positive, needs to bed down, some gaps may have been left
  - Engaged communities esp. Parishes, Town Councils
  - Growth ambitions sit slightly uncomfortably in places next to other corporate priorities
  - Boundary changes – good signs of preparation
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## Over - arching messages

- Good people, hard working, knowledgeable members & officers
  - Policy is delivering, next plan review is an opportunity to engage members and communities
  - Vision and development ambitions beyond the immediate/medium term
  - Planning's role and place in delivering corporate and development priorities needs to be embedded
  - Planning delivery & performance – many opportunities to deliver on efficiencies/change agenda and the 'customer first', 'staff empowerment', ethos
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## Over - arching messages

- Enforcement – (1) agree: priorities & strategy (2) Communicate: role Vs expectations. (3) Link up better
  - ‘Moment in time’ with Parishes, Town Councils, residents
  - Members – encourage more structured involvement e.g. pre-application, plan making
  - Training needs to be ongoing
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# Vision & Leadership

## Strengths

- Visible leadership and direction
  - Strong support for the review and open to change
  - Customer Focus runs through the organisation
  - Leadership are aware of many of the issues and already addressing some.
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# Vision & Leadership



## Recommendations

- Culture – planning as an enabler/break silos. Placemaking.
  - Learning organisation – complete the feedback loop
  - Governance – pipeline prioritisation and change requests.
  - Visibility – local plan as spatial interpretation of council vision/plan. Greater involvement. What next?
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# Service Delivery and Performance



## Strengths

- National Performance statistics are good.
  - Staff dedicated to good service delivery
  - Up to date Local Plan
  - Some great designed outcomes delivered
  - Working relationships with agents
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# Service Delivery & Performance



## Recommendations

- Structure of DM service area
  - Procedures for DM functions
  - Application call-in and terms of delegation
  - Digital solutions
  - Enforcement priorities and protocols
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# Planning Committee



## Strengths

- Rigorous and comprehensive reporting
    - Quality of presentations, consistent approach
    - Logical, reasoning, narrative approach
  - Member contributions authentic & constructive
    - Understanding of issues, pertinent questions and clarifications, awareness of impacts on place
    - Ownership of decisions and Local Plan
  - Credible working meeting
    - respectful behaviour (no legal officer interventions!)
    - warm & welcoming (officer briefed public gallery)
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# Planning Committee

## Recommendations

- Be more selective on items for Committee
    - solve Parish/Town Council issues **earlier** in process
    - more information, earlier to reduce objections and call in?
  - Be more confident, seek more from members
    - value added approach
    - Refresh make up, clear distinction policy and DM decisions
    - wider ownership of plan and planning
  - Empower the team – who attends?
  - Improve the “customer experience”
    - better screen, order papers, sequencing of items
    - Live webcast
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# Community & Partnership working



## Strengths

- Up to date Local Plan
  - Partner councils, housing, infrastructure, Enterprise Zones, Town Centres
  - Supplementary Planning Documents
  - Political relationships – working well, esp. Committee
  - New Investment Zone
  - Legal – Blackpool Committee, shared lettings
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## Recommendations

- Parishes, Town councils – better communication, training
  - Have all residents got a voice?
  - Agent's forum – use PAS Review output to kick start?
  - Satisfaction surveys
  - Web cast committee
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# Achieving outcomes

## Strengths

- Up to date Local plan (under – appreciated?); vision is clear, well articulated
  - SPDs are strengthening existing policy
  - Strong delivery e.g. affordable housing
  - Attracting funding, infrastructure projects
  - Good quality developments, ‘pushing’ design quality e.g. Aldi
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# Achieving outcomes

## Recommendations

- Local Plan to 2032, will need review soon
  - Housing need needs 'nuancing' e.g. growing homeless and B&B issue
  - Over-reliance on small number of employers?
  - Customer satisfaction, customer communications
  - Celebrate success – lots to shout about
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# Recommendations 2012 Review



- Not ignored
  - Action taken / outcomes not communicated
  - Some items have moved on e.g. Local Plan
  - Items that would benefit from continued attention:
    - DM Committee arrangements (R3, R4)
    - DM Process and procedures review (R5)
    - Planning's corporate role (R7)
    - Understanding the views of service users (R11)
    - Re-promotion of Neighbourhood Planning (R12)
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## Next steps

- Draft report within 3-4 weeks
- Council comments; final report

### *Actions*

- Publish report, ownership of the recommendations
  - 6 month review
  - PAS Support:
    - Peer team, Councillor training, Development Management Challenge (toolkit), GIS training, Local Plan review support
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# Questions and discussion

over to you...

...and thanks

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