



# **Planning Peer Challenge Progress Review**

## **Fylde Borough Council**

## **November 2024**

Report Issued 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025

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## 1. Context

- 1.1 A progress review is an integral part of the Planning Peer Challenge (PPC) process. The purpose of the review is to support the planning service in implementing their action plan following the PPC in November 2022.
- 1.2 The main aims of this progress review with Fylde Borough (the Council) were to:
  - Provide feedback to the Planning Service on the progress they have made against the PPC recommendations.
  - Identify any significant changes or challenges that have arisen since the peer team were 'on-site' and consider how best to navigate these in the future.
- 1.3 The Planning Service in Fylde Borough Council has demonstrated that it is open to peer feedback, support, and challenge to help strengthen its ongoing work on improvement.

## 2. Scope of the Progress Review

- 2.1 The following officers took part in this progress review:
  - Martin Hutchings – Planning Advisory Service, Peer Challenge Manager
  - Peter Ford – Development Management Lead, Planning Advisory Service
- 2.2 The team initially completed a desk top review of the latest performance information provided by the Council, including the Councils own "RAG rated" progress report on the action plan, and an updated "position statement" for the planning service. This was also supplemented by relevant publicly available information, including relevant governance reports and decision-making performance information.
- 2.3 Following the desk top review, the peer team spent a full day with the Planning Service on 3<sup>rd</sup> November where they engaged with a range of different planning officers as well as a senior elected Members and the Chief Executive. The peer team also met with local agents / developers and parish councillors.
- 2.4 We appreciated the opportunity to return to Fylde for this progress review. The peer team felt warmly welcomed and received excellent support throughout the day. The team would like to thank all the officers and members involved for their input. During the time since the review team were originally at the Council it is clear that the Council has responded to the recommendations from the peer challenge along with new challenges for the Council and the service.
- 2.5 Our feedback in Section 4 is organised around the structure of the recommendations in the original Peer challenge Report (November 2022).

### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Fylde planning service should be commended for its response following the Planning Peer Challenge (PPC) in November 2022. The service has put together a comprehensive plan to record progress against the recommendations in the PPC report, has been transparent in reporting progress, and has invested in bringing in consultants (Trueman Change) to provide further external scrutiny and ideas to develop a comprehensive response to delivering improvement.
- 3.2 The Planning Service is in a demonstrably stronger position than it was two years ago, having responded well to improvement recommendations with resilience and commitment despite significant challenges. Shortly after the peer challenge in November 2022, the service faced the loss of several experienced key staff, a situation that could have derailed progress. Instead, it worked hard to address resource issues, maintain a stable service, and improve performance. However, progress has not been as swift as hoped. Added to the above, in May 2023, the council revised its committee structure, introducing an Executive Committee and two Scrutiny Committees (Internal and External). These new governance arrangements introduced some delay into the action planning process, the council believes the resulting Action Plan is more robust due to the added scrutiny.
- 3.3 The loss of staff, the restructuring and new membership of the planning committee, and a hiatus in ownership of the Truman Change report has left work to be done in fully embedding the intended changes and fostering continuous improvement. The service is encouraged to finish what it has started.
- 3.4 The service now has the building blocks for long-term success. Performance metrics have improved, and there is real momentum to deliver further efficiencies and embrace opportunities for change. The team has shown itself to be hardworking and innovative, blending the fresh ideas of new staff with the knowledge of longer-serving colleagues. Trusting staff to drive and deliver change, filtering decision making across a greater number of staff, and encouraging collaboration will be essential for continued progress.
- 3.5 With ongoing recruitment—including the restructuring process and the appointment of a new Head of Planning—there is a timely opportunity to foster the right culture. The appointment of a new Head of Planning is key – it is the most senior planning role at Fylde, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and the council is encouraged to continue with its diligent approach to appointing the right person.
- 3.6 The authority has also made strides in key operational areas. The Developers' and Agents' Forum has been very well received, with external stakeholders expressing confidence in the service. Enforcement processes are heading in the right direction and should continue to do so with a focus on consistency and adherence to protocol and processes. Similarly, the 'new look' Planning Committee is bedding in, and continued communication about protocols and being seen to be working to them, will help maintain confidence. Meanwhile, the Local Plan Steering Group (LPSG) is at a pivotal stage; ensuring resources are allocated promptly will be critical. Relations with parishes still needs improving and there remains a level of distrust with the service among some parishes. The peer team considers that there is an appropriate engagement framework in place, and full and continued participation from the council and all parishes will help improve these relations.
- 3.7 The Planning Service is navigating a transformative period, building on strong foundations, a dedicated team, and increasing external recognition of its value. While recent scrutiny, such as the 'Fairhaven Ice Cream parlour' Judicial Review, poses challenges to the robustness of the council's Development Management procedures and governance framework, Fylde's officers and members must remain committed to collaboration, adherence to established processes and protocols, and maintaining openness and transparency. By prioritising a culture of trust,

effective communication, and teamwork, the service will be well-positioned to achieve its goals and drive continued improvement.

## 4. Review of Progress on Peer Challenge Recommendations

### 4.1 Recommendations R1, R2 - Councillor / officer Boards for local plan production

- 4.1.1 In response to a recommendation to involve councillors in a more formal and structured way in developing the Local Plan, the council took decisive action by establishing a Local Plan Elected Member Steering Group. This initiative was approved by the Executive Committee on 5 March 2024, marking a significant step in strengthening governance around the Local Plan process.
- 4.1.2 The group's creation underscores the council's commitment to ensuring that elected members play an active role in shaping the Local Plan. A notable strength of the group is its leadership: the Leader of the Council chairs the steering group, a clear demonstration of high-level ownership and seriousness about the Local Plan process. This leadership arrangement sends a strong signal to stakeholders about the council's dedication to creating a robust and collaborative planning framework.
- 4.1.3 The recent Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) highlighted some areas for improvement, including a lack of clarity between the council's overarching vision, its corporate plan, and its governance approach. Establishing the steering group directly addresses these challenges by providing a structured mechanism to ensure alignment between the Local Plan and the broader corporate vision. As the council refines its corporate priorities, the steering group will play a critical role in bridging any gaps and ensuring that local plan strategy and policies are coherent and well-integrated with corporate ambitions and priorities.
- 4.1.4 Since its inception, the steering group has held two meetings, focusing on initial stages of Local Plan development and specific tasks such as responding to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and framing elements of the plan. While the group is not formally constituted in terms of decision-making powers, it has a clearly defined formal role in guiding and advising the Local Plan process.
- 4.1.5 Membership includes representatives from the Planning Committee and the Executive Committee, ensuring a targeted and strategic approach to its work. Recent discussions have addressed specific topics such as the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), illustrating the group's practical role in addressing key planning issues.
- 4.1.6 Overall, the establishment of the Local Plan Elected Member Steering Group is a strong and proactive response by the council's planning service, fostering better collaboration, governance, and alignment with the council's strategic objectives.
- 4.1.7 In response to a recommendation to improve governance and provide earlier and better strategic oversight of major development schemes, the council has taken significant steps to embed planning input at the earliest stages of corporate projects. This approach aims to position planning as an enabler of development rather than a perceived obstacle, fostering a more collaborative and proactive culture within the council.
- 4.1.8 Recognising the value of this shift, the council undertook a review of the Corporate Project Delivery Process, leading to critical changes in how projects involving physical development are managed. A key outcome of this review has been the integration of a

formal requirement for Heads of Service to notify the Planning Team about all new projects at the earliest stages of development. This notification is now embedded in the council's corporate project delivery framework as standard practice.

- 4.1.9 The revised process includes a requirement for the Planning Team to be consulted before the commencement of any project involving physical development. This ensures that planning considerations are incorporated into project design and delivery from the outset. By doing so, the council aims to provide senior leadership with confidence that projects are advancing in a positive and coordinated manner, with risks effectively managed and processes and protocols adhered to.
- 4.1.10 This enhanced governance structure reflects a broader commitment to improving transparency, accountability, and alignment across departments. By embedding planning into the corporate framework, the council is better positioned to manage risk, streamline project delivery, and achieve strategic outcomes that align with corporate priorities.
- 4.1.11 Success will be measured by the smooth integration of planning into project workflows, improved risk management, and the timely and efficient progression of major development schemes. These measures are monitored as part of the council's regular reporting processes, with progress updates shared through the IASC reporting mechanism.

#### **4.2 Recommendations 3, 4, 5 and 7 - decision making, processes, embedding improvement.**

- 4.2.1 The decision-making processes have seen significant improvement, particularly through efforts to embed better practices and foster continuous improvement. While progress has been made, including more downward delegation of responsibilities, there is still work to do in fully realising the potential of these changes. Empowering team members to take on greater responsibility should remain a priority to ensure decisions are made efficiently and effectively at the appropriate levels.
- 4.2.2 A key factor in embedding continuous improvement is the appointment of the Office Manager role. This position has only been established for 3 months, and properly supported, will be essential for establishing and maintaining efficient processes, maintaining performance information, and creating the Development Management (DM) manual. By taking on these responsibilities, the Office Manager helps the planners to focus on decision-making.
- 4.2.3 Staff involvement is another critical area for success. Engaging team members in the creation and implementation of improvement ideas fosters ownership and innovation. The service still needs to work out how to integrate insights from the Truman Change business process review into ongoing improvement work, and properly follow up on the work carried out as part of the Development Management Challenge Toolkit sessions. The peer team was told by some staff that they had not seen the final Truman Change report and were unaware of the outcome of the Development Management Challenge Toolkit sessions. It is important that the outcomes of these areas of work are owned by staff and their recommendations are aligned to ensure they contribute meaningfully to achieving better processes and outcomes.

4.2.4 Finally, there is a clear appetite among staff for taking on additional responsibilities and challenges. This raises the question of whether managers are being overly protective in their delegation approach. Encouraging a culture where team members are trusted and supported to step up can drive professional growth, enhance engagement, and create a more resilient and capable workforce.

#### **4.3 Recommendation R6 - Reduce the reliance on Extensions of Time (EoTs).**

4.3.1 The planning service completed a review of the reasons for extensions of time (EoTs) on 26 September 2023 and a process is in place to carry out an annual review of reasons for requesting EoTs. This management and oversight is a very positive response to the recommendation and is resulting in improvement.

4.3.2 Since the peer challenge in November 2022 the planning service has reduced the use of extensions of time (EoTs) on Majors from 75% to 68%. On Minors/Other applications the use of EoTs has increased slightly from 39% to 44%. Whilst more work is needed to bring down the percentage of applications with EoTs many planning authorities have significantly increased their reliance on extensions of time in the past 2 years. The further work needed by Fylde to address the use of EoTs is relatively modest in the context that many councils are operating at well above 60% for non-Majors.

4.3.3 The Government has recently announced that it will continue to allow councils to include EoTs in their measurement of an application being “in time” but will review this position in the future. The Government intends to focus on enhancing the transparency of planning performance data through the Planning Performance Dashboard. This will allow for the active identification of underperforming local authorities, including authorities who are excessively using EoTs and will seek improvements from those authorities. Fylde, by virtue of its response to this recommendation, are in a stronger position than many to be able to respond to any withdrawal of the extension of time option by government.

4.3.4 Fylde’s analysis of the reasons for EoTs showed that 40% are as a result of delays caused by ‘amended plans’. This could be related to a number of issues, including poor initial submissions; lack of robustness in the validation process; and, more positively, a willingness for the council to work with applicants to achieve a positive outcome. – In reality it is likely to be a combination of all three. Many councils take a very robust approach with applicants and do not negotiate amendments, but instead deal with such matters as part of a pre-application process. Fylde appears to have a good relationship with its agents through the agents’ forum and therefore this forum could be a good way of addressing issues with applications and having a constructive discussion about the better use of pre-applications to negotiate better initial planning application submissions.

#### **4.4 Recommendation R8 - Produce a Planning Service Plan that has clear and direct links to the corporate priorities.**

4.4.1 The recently produced service plan is a concise and clear document that effectively establishes a golden thread linking its objectives to the priorities of the corporate plan. This alignment ensures that the service plan reflects the organisation’s strategic goals and provides a solid foundation for guiding efforts across the team.



- 4.4.2 To maintain the plan's relevance, it is essential to ensure that the supporting data is kept fresh and regularly updated. This will help the plan remain a dynamic tool that can respond to changing circumstances and continue driving informed decision-making. Additionally, while the plan identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), these need further development—particularly the inclusion of clear, measurable targets—to effectively track progress and performance.
- 4.4.3 Strengthening the connection between the service plan and the staff appraisal process is another area for improvement. Aligning individual objectives with the broader goals outlined in the service plan can enhance accountability and ensure everyone is working towards shared priorities. This alignment could also provide clearer guidance for staff development and performance management.
- 4.4.4 Finally, the organisation should focus on improving how the results of the service plan are communicated. Celebrating successes and transparently addressing areas for improvement will help build trust, keep staff motivated, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. Making these updates will ensure the service plan remains a valuable and actionable tool for driving service delivery and improvement. In a practical sense this could include a process of showing how lessons have been learnt both from complaints received and compliments given about the service provided. It could also include learning , both positive and negative, from appeals decisions and any legal challenges.

#### **4.5 Recommendations R9, R12 - IT Investment, website**

- 4.5.1 Significant progress has been made in enhancing the IT systems that support the service, with resources secured through a combination of corporate and service-specific budgets. These investments have allowed for targeted upgrades to IT access and improvements in back-office systems, ensuring that the infrastructure is in place to support more efficient workflows and better service delivery.
- 4.5.2 The DEF planning system has been a particular focus, with a programme of software improvements already in motion. Staff training in the use of the DEF software was completed ahead of the revised target date, ensuring that the team is well-prepared to make the most of the updated system. Additionally, a programme of Geographic Information System (GIS) enhancements is underway, with efforts centred on better integrating GIS with the DEF system to streamline operations further.
- 4.5.3 All staff now have access to managed devices, such as laptops and tablets, following the successful completion of the roll-out in November 2023. The introduction of cloud telephony is also progressing, though the full roll-out has encountered slight delays and remains a few months behind schedule. Nevertheless, these tools are helping to modernise communication and support more flexible working practices.
- 4.5.4 Mobile working solutions have been introduced for the Enforcement Team, who are trialling the technology as part of a pilot ahead of a potential broader roll-out to the entire Development Management Team. While the trial has demonstrated promising initial results, it has become clear that a longer testing period is needed to fully assess the solution's capabilities. As a result, the target for completing the trial has been extended to December 2024.

4.5.5 Despite these advancements, challenges remain. While the IT infrastructure has improved, further work is needed to build staff confidence in the reliability of the technology, particularly when working off-site. Ensuring that systems are robust, user-friendly, and dependable will be critical to unlocking the full potential of these investments and achieving seamless mobile and remote working.

#### **4.6 Recommendation 10 - Agents Forum**

4.6.1 During November 2023, Fylde Council sought the views of 53 planning practices that regularly submit planning applications to the Council regarding the potential re-establishment of a Planning Agents' Forum. Although the response rate was limited, the feedback demonstrated sufficient interest to justify reinstating the forum.

4.6.2 The inaugural meeting of the Planning Agents' Forum was held on 13 June 2024, and the forum is scheduled to meet three times annually moving forward. The initial session received positive feedback and agents are supportive of a platform where they can engage directly with the planning service. A session on Biodiversity Net Gain was specifically noted as being particularly useful by attendees.

4.6.3 The agents have embraced the forum's objectives and are now taking steps to appoint a chair from within their group, demonstrating their commitment to its success. This early momentum underscores the goodwill and positivity surrounding the forum, but it also highlights the importance of maintaining its focus and impact as it develops.

4.6.4 To ensure the forum's effectiveness, the planning service should ensure that it produces clear and structured agendas. These should include forward-looking topics to keep participants informed about upcoming developments and initiatives from the planning service, as well as standing items such as service performance updates and a "you-said-we-did" approach to ensure accountability and transparency. The agents' forum has made a good start to foster stronger collaboration and continuous improvement in the planning process.

#### **4.7 Recommendation R11 – Updated, clearer enforcement priorities and protocols**

4.7.1 The council adopted a Local Enforcement Plan on 28 October 2024. The plan aims to provide a structured framework for enforcement activities, ensuring consistency, clarity, and prioritisation of resources. However, the plan's success hinges on both members and officers fully understanding and adhering to its processes.

4.7.2 The enforcement plan sets out a clear and rational set of priorities for taking enforcement action. It also emphasises the need to follow established processes to ensure consistency. Members must take ownership of the new plan and respect its structure, avoiding actions that circumvent the enforcement team or disrupt workflows.

4.7.3 Officers need to be supported to focus on priorities outlined in the plan, ensuring that enforcement actions target the most pressing issues. Organisational capacity limits the number of notices that can realistically be served, and there is a lack of understanding among some members about the enforcement process that very often involves negotiated solutions to resolve planning compliance matters without the need for issuing formal enforcement notices.

4.7.4 Public and member perceptions include concerns about inconsistency and a belief that enforcement activity is insufficient. Informal routes to resolve issues before formal enforcement actions are often misunderstood or overlooked, leading to

underappreciation of the team's efforts. While the new enforcement plan reflects an improvement and provides clearer guidance, some members have expressed a preference for more prescriptive measures.

- 4.7.5 The departure of the council's planning solicitor has created a potential gap in legal expertise, which is crucial for formal enforcement action. Other members of the legal team are taking on that role and are now providing support at planning committee.
- 4.7.6 IT systems and equipment are not fully reliable for remote working. The current case management system, while effective, suffers from old data inputs and stability issues when accessed outside the office. Tablets used by officers are insufficiently equipped for tasks like uploading photographs, further hampering efficiency.
- 4.7.7 To ensure the effective implementation of the Local Enforcement Plan, the council must:
- Strengthen training and communication to improve understanding of processes among both members and officers.
  - Address IT and equipment issues to enhance operational efficiency.
  - Reinforce adherence to the enforcement process and improve member engagement with its priorities.
  - Explore options to fill the gap in legal expertise to support the enforcement team's work.

By tackling these challenges, the council can maximise the plan's impact and build greater confidence in its enforcement activities.

#### **4.8 Recommendation R12 - Optimise the council's webpages**

- 4.8.1 The council has made significant progress in optimising its planning webpages as an engagement tool, with several initiatives already implemented and further improvements underway.
- 4.8.2 Key updates have been made to the functionality of planning application pages, addressing specific areas highlighted by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Team. Additionally, a comprehensive review of the wider planning content on the website is ongoing. Recognising the need to align with proposed changes to the English planning system, the full rollout of updated content is now scheduled for completion by December 2024.
- 4.8.3 As part of the review process, the council examined planning webpages from other local authorities and identified best practice examples to guide the redesign of Fylde's web pages. These insights will ensure the updated webpages provide a user-friendly and effective model for public engagement.
- 4.8.4 Further improvements have focused on enhancing communication with agents, applicants, and interested parties. Standard letters have been updated to include clear instructions on how to track planning applications online. This feature has been actively promoted through stakeholder forums, helping to raise awareness and improve user experience.
- 4.8.5 These steps demonstrate the council's commitment to leveraging digital tools to enhance accessibility, transparency, and engagement in the planning process.

#### **4.9 Recommendation R13 - Planning Committee**

4.9.1 A comprehensive review of the Planning Committee procedures is underway, with recommendations scheduled for implementation at the next annual review of the council's constitution. While several procedural refinements have already been introduced based on feedback from the PAS Team, further formal review work is planned for completion by December 2024. Implemented refinements include:

- Junior officers presenting more agenda items.
- Improved structuring of committee reports.
- Public availability of meeting proceedings via YouTube.
- Providing estimated start times for individual items.

4.9.2 In June 2024, a review of delegation schemes operated by other councils was reported to the IASC, with an initial completion target of September 2024. However, the government has signalled its intent to consult on changes to councils' approaches to scheme of delegation through the proposed Planning and Infrastructure Bill. This could include a national scheme that would focus planning committees' efforts on major applications. Consequently, Fylde Council has decided to pause its review of the delegation scheme until the outcomes of the national initiative are clarified.

4.9.3 The May 2023 local elections resulted in a significant change in the composition of the council's Planning Committee. A number of long-serving councillors either chose not to stand for re-election or did not retain their seats. Additionally, governance changes within the council have led to a committee with many newer members who bring less experience to planning discussions compared to their predecessors.

4.9.4 To address this, all committee members and substitutes have undergone initial training, and an **ongoing programme of member development** has been established. This aims to build the necessary expertise and ensure effective decision-making in line with the council's responsibilities. This approach is to be applauded and follows national best practice. The council will also need to be mindful of proposed changes in the training requirements for Planning Committees that are likely to be introduced through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

#### **4.10 Recommendation 15 - take proactive steps to improving working relationships with Town and Parish Councils**

4.10.1 An initial induction training session for town and parish councillors has been conducted, providing a foundation for their involvement in planning matters. However, further efforts are needed to ensure training opportunities are properly established, accessible, and inclusive for all parishes.

4.10.2 Feedback from parish councils indicates mixed experiences. While some report strong relationships with the planning service, particularly with regard to the neighbourhood planning support, others feel that their recommendations are met with a 'box-ticking' approach rather than substantive improvements. Some parishes have observed no noticeable changes in the council's approach, which has contributed to a sense of disengagement in certain areas. Despite commitments to improve the online delivery of planning information, this promise has not yet been fulfilled, leading to frustration among some parish councils.

4.10.3 To strengthen collaboration and community engagement, the council should continue to focus on:

- Enhancing communication through scheduled meetings of the District Parish Planning Forum and consider improved access to training opportunities to help ensure ongoing dialogue and support for parish councils.
- The provision of improved online information to meet expectations and improve accessibility.

#### **4.11 Recommendation R16 - Review the approach to developer contributions.**

4.11.1 At the time of the peer challenge in November 2022 Fylde did not operate the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) has a provision for an 'Infrastructure Levy'. The Infrastructure Levy will operate similarly to CIL in that it will be for infrastructure requirements across the borough, rather than a site-specific S106 agreement (it is also proposed that S106 may operate only on large schemes). It was recommended that the council consider whether looking at an approach to developer contributions more akin to the proposed Infrastructure Levy so that it could consider getting processes etc in place prior to a 'big switch' away from section 106.

4.11.2 Provisions to introduce an Infrastructure Levy are included in the Levelling-up and regeneration Act 2023. Government carried out a technical consultation to inform the design of the Levy and of regulations that will set out its operation in detail. The response to the consultation has not yet been published and so no further work to progress this action has been undertaken at the time of carrying out the peer challenge progress review.

#### **4.12 Recommendation 17 - Deliver the recommendations of the Developer Contributions review report September 2022**

4.12.1 The local planning authority has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations from the review of Section 106 (s106) arrangements conducted in September 2022. These actions aim to enhance transparency, streamline processes, and improve monitoring and reporting.

4.12.2 In April 2024, the authority introduced internal s106 procedure guidance to provide clarity and consistency in handling agreements. To strengthen collaboration, the process was amended to require developers to covenant directly with the County Council, ensuring a more robust approach to managing obligations. Additionally, a dedicated s106 monitoring software package was procured, enabling wider staff access to monitoring information and supporting better oversight.

4.12.3 Regular reporting has also been embedded into the governance framework. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan is now presented to members annually, complemented by six-monthly s106 update reports reviewed by the Internal Audit Sub-Committee. A 'RAG' (Red-Amber-Green) monitoring system has been introduced to track deadlines, with regular updates provided to Internal Audit.

4.12.4 Efforts to improve transparency and user experience include updating the IT system with an additional 'status code' to enhance tracking capabilities. The authority also revised its website, removing expired pages and ensuring that s106 details are now included on relevant application pages.

4.12.5 One recommendation—to maintain a signed copy of all s106 agreements for audit trail purposes—was not accepted, as the authority determined that agreements

completed in 'counterpart' are acceptable for their purposes.

4.12.6 These measures collectively strengthen the authority's s106 processes, enhancing accountability, improving communication, and ensuring the timely delivery of infrastructure projects linked to planning obligations.

**4.13 Recommendation 18 - Investigate how closer working relationships can be forged with the Housing Team.**

4.13.1 The local planning authority has taken meaningful steps to foster closer collaboration between the Planning function and the Housing Team, addressing shared priorities such as affordable housing and homelessness. This initiative aligns with the Borough's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, reflecting its importance as a corporate issue.

4.13.2 To better understand local needs, an Affordable Housing Needs Survey was completed on schedule and reviewed by both the Environment, Health and Housing Committee (on 24 January 2023) and the Planning Committee (on 8 March 2023). This survey has provided valuable insights into the demand for affordable housing across the borough, informing planning policies and strategic decisions.

4.13.3 Building on this foundation, the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was reviewed and updated. A Task and Finish Group of the Internal Audit Sub-Committee considered proposed amendments to the SPD on 8 April 2024. Following further review by the Executive Committee, the revised SPD was adopted on 25 April 2024.

4.13.4 These actions demonstrate the council's commitment to strengthening the synergy between Planning and Housing, ensuring that affordable housing policies effectively support the Borough's broader efforts to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

## 5 Conclusions and next steps

- 5.4 It is clear to the peer team that the recommendations of the original Planning Peer Challenge in the Council have been taken seriously. A comprehensive action plan was developed by the Council and whilst we have established that there are some limitations to the RAG rating of the plan progress has been made across each of the recommendations.
- 5.5 As highlighted in this report, most of the recommendations in the November 2022 peer challenge report require an initial response and ongoing activity to maintain and deliver the objectives of the recommendations in the medium to long term. The PAS peer team believes that Fylde has made significant progress and has good building blocks in place to focus on its improvement journey. PAS is committed to continuing to work alongside the Council to support the ongoing development of the planning service.
- 5.6 For any questions about the original Planning Peer Challenge or this progress review please contact:

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