

## **Wyre Local Plan (2022-2040)**

### **Issues and Options Consultation**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

##### **What is a Local Plan?**

A Local Plan is a document produced by the local planning authority for an area – in this case Wyre Council - in consultation with local people and the many other organisations whose activities influence or are affected by what happens in the borough. Local Plans are used to assess and decide on planning applications. They set out where and how development takes place through a series of policies and maps. The policies guide whether planning applications are considered acceptable or not. They aren't just about where new homes and jobs should go – although this is always an important part of a local plan – but also about identifying areas which need protecting or improving. It is an important document and has as a major influence on how the local area will change, develop, look and feel in the future.

##### **What is the process of creating a new Local Plan?**

There are a number of different stages to the plan preparation process:

- evidence gathering.
- informal consultation and engagement (known as regulation 18). This includes the current Issues and Options consultation.
- review of comments received.
- drafting and consulting on a draft Local Plan (known as regulation 19).
- review of comments received and amendments to the Plan is required.
- submission to the government of the final draft Local Plan.
- public examination of the final draft Local Plan by a government appointed Planning Inspector.
- modifications to the Local Plan if this is required by the Inspector.
- adoption of the Local Plan by the Council.

##### **Why does Wyre need a new Local Plan?**

The government expect local plans to be up-to-date and reviewed every five years. Our current Local Plan provides a strong framework which will continue to help, steering new development to the places we have planned it and to stop inappropriate

development. However, we are required to keep the local plan up to date and review the evidence it is based on to prevent the local plan becoming out-of-date. The current plan was adopted as Council policy in 2023 but was based on the previous version from early 2019. If we were to continue to follow the current plan it would become out-of-date.

### **What happens if we don't keep the Local Plan up-to-date?**

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council would lose control over where development can and cannot happen. Wyre could be subject to speculative development proposals. These proposals may result in unsustainable, unplanned, piecemeal development across the Borough without the required supporting infrastructure. There's also a risk that if we fail to produce an up-to-date Local Plan, central government may intervene and prepare the Local Plan itself.

### **Why are you consulting people now?**

We will be working on the new Local Plan over 2024 and into next year. We are currently at the Issues and Options stage, which includes setting out potential sites for development. We want to hear your views on the key issues facing the borough between now and 2040.

### **What is the Issues and Options document?**

The Issues and Options document explains the key issues for the new Local Plan and either recommends the approach we think we should take or sets out a range of options to address the issues. It contains a series of 28 questions designed to provide some structure to the comments you may wish to make. The Issues and Options document is not a new Local Plan – that comes later. We are consulting on the Issues and Options document over the period Monday 29 July to Tuesday 10 September 2024 (see below for further details).

### **Are you considering building in the Green Belt?**

No. Wyre only has Green Belt on the peninsular not in the rural part of the borough. The current consultation does not propose building on Green Belt. The Green Belt is proposed to stay the same. Development in Wyre will, however, require building on greenfield land simply because we have a very limited amount of previously developed land and a large part of the borough is rural in character.

### **Will the Local Plan keep settlements separate?**

The existing Local Plan contains Areas of Separation which, as the name suggests, limits development in these areas to make sure individual settlements do not merge. It is intended to maintain this policy. However, please note the option below of creating a new settlement, possibly by extending an existing settlement, which may impact on this approach if this was an option the Council decided to pursue.

### **Why do we need more housing – haven't we already got enough in Wyre?**

The current Local Plan end date is 2031 and it is likely that current housing allocations from the existing Local Plan, that covers the plan period 2011-2031, will contribute significantly towards meeting the development needs of the new Local Plan which has an end date of 2040.

In addition, the government remains committed to boosting the supply of housing nationally. To do this, local authorities need to set a target for the number of homes to be built. The government's "standard method" for calculating local housing needs is based on national population and household forecasts and the affordability of housing. The latest calculation points to a need for 275 homes per year in Wyre between 2022 and 2040 – equivalent to 4,950 homes. However, this figure includes homes already being built and homes with planning permission so the amount of new housing we need to find new land for is less.

The scale of site allocations for housing that are needed for the new local plan are unknown at this stage. It is estimated that around 1,400 additional homes may be needed.

The Issues and Options document identifies potential sites to build approximately 8,862 homes which significant exceeds the estimated need of around 1,400 additional homes. Therefore, only around 15% of the homes identified as a potential option at this stage are likely to be required for the new Local Plan.

### **Why can't the existing housing stock be used to accommodate population growth?**

The Council needs to plan for an increasing population and increasing number of households. Most existing houses for sale are occupied whilst the borough has a very low level of empty properties. Owing to a combination of demographic factors

there simply aren't enough houses in the borough to accommodate the likely growth in people requiring housing.

The Council is aware that many people see houses for sale and therefore wonder why more are needed. The simple answer is that we have a growing population and growing number of households – partly as a result of people moving into the borough, often for work; partly as a result of a growing trend towards smaller households; and partly as a result of people living longer (which reduces turnover within the existing housing stock).

**What about infrastructure? We need new GP surgeries, schools, public transport, power supplies, drainage.**

We understand that there are wider issues around the ability of existing infrastructure to accommodate new development. The Local Plan is not just about new homes and jobs; we also need infrastructure including schools, GPs, public transport, roads, utilities, parks and leisure facilities to support that growth. It is a fact that the provision of many of these services is outside of the control of the Council. Medical practices for example are the responsibility of the relevant Integrated Care Board. However, the plan will set out clearly what infrastructure provision is needed to support development through an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). This will include an assessment of the current provision within the area. It will consider the infrastructure needed to support the scale and location of new development being suggested. The IDP will ensure that the necessary infrastructure providers are involved in the plan preparation process. In some cases, new development may pay towards new or improved infrastructure to support the development. In some cases, we will be able to require new development to pay towards new or improved infrastructure to support the development. However, new development cannot pay to resolve existing shortages – only towards resolving any extra demand arising from the development itself.

**Won't growth just encourage more out-commuting and increase congestion?**

Local economic growth is important if the borough is to be a sustainable place that plays its role in the regional and national economy. It is recognised that there is considerably more out-commuting of the borough's residents to places of work outside of the borough than there are people coming into the borough to work. However, much of the commuting is relatively local with the strongest links between the urban

peninsula and Blackpool. The plan cannot control where a private individual does and does not work. However, it can promote increased employment in the borough and therefore increased opportunities for local residents to work in local places.

### **How will the Local Plan meet the needs of local people?**

We want to make sure our residents, in particular our young people, have access to affordable housing. The current Local Plan requires housing development above a certain size to provide an element of affordable housing – up to 30% of the units built in most of the borough. This would include low-cost home ownership, based on models such as shared ownership; and a proportion of properties for affordable rent and managed by housing associations. However, Wyre has an aged and ageing population. It is also vital we meet the needs of our ageing population as well. The current Local Plan requires that 20% of new houses on most development should be designed for older people and those with restricted mobility. This could include bungalows, easy access homes, sheltered/supported housing and wheelchair accessible homes. It is expected that this policy will continue.

In addition, the new Local Plan will aim to support new jobs and businesses, so that Wyre is an attractive place to work and invest in. And it aims to provide excellent community facilities – new schools, medical centres, shops and roads – all of which will support thriving communities.

### **How were the sites shown on the maps identified?**

Most sites have been put forward by landowners and other interested parties in two Call for Sites exercises held in 2022 and 2023. These were held to assist with the identification of potential land for development. Anyone was able to suggest a site – they did not have to own or have a direct interest in the land. Other sites have been identified by officers conducting a site search process and from previous site assessment work undertaken for the current Local Plan.

### **Haven't you already decided which sites to include in the plan? Will you need all of the sites shown in the report?**

No decision has been made about which sites should be included in the new Local Plan. We will not need all of the sites shown in the Issues and Options document. It is a starting point not an end point. That's one of the reasons we would like your help in deciding which are the most appropriate locations that could be developed.

**Will the sites that are eventually chosen automatically get planning permission?**

No. Any planning application to develop a site will still be subject to the relevant planning procedures and assessed accordingly. The purpose of the 'potential sites' process is to focus on where future development could take place.

**There is a lot of talk about development – why does the Council not acknowledge the importance of the local environment and the quality of the countryside?**

The Council agrees that the high quality of much of the environment within Wyre is something that should be celebrated and where possible protected. The Local Plan will protect important ecological, environmental and heritage designations and will attempt to limit the impact of development on the quality of our countryside. The vast majority of Wyre's countryside and open space will still exist by the end of the Plan period in 2040. In reality, however, the Council also has to plan for a growing population and to meet economic needs. There is only a limited supply of land within the existing towns and villages so some development into the existing countryside is inevitable. The Issues and Options document has been produced to generate discussion on how best this might be achieved and how the Council should balance development with environmental protection.

**Why do the approaches being considered include a new settlement?**

This is only an option, and no decision has been made on how the development needs of the borough will be met. We have to demonstrate that we have considered all reasonable options. One option is to look at areas beyond existing towns and villages, or significantly expand an existing settlement, if we are to be able to deliver all the homes, jobs and services that people in the borough need. However, this is simply one option amongst several.

**How can I find out more?**

As part of the Issues and Options consultation a series of drop-in sessions are being held in August attended by our staff. At these exhibitions, you can view information about potential sites for housing and employment with the opportunity to ask questions. We have made a lot of information available online at

<https://www.wyre.gov.uk/local-plan>

If you don't have access to the internet, you can look at paper copies of all the consultation material at the Council offices in the Civic Centre at Poulton-le-Fylde and the public libraries during the consultation period (during normal opening hours).

The drop-in sessions are as follows:

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
Thornton YMCA	Monday 5 August	2.30 to 7pm
Garstang Library	Thursday 8 August	1.30 to 6.30pm
Forton Village Hall	Monday 12 August	2.30 to 7pm
Great Eccleston Village Centre	Tuesday 13 August	2.30 to 7pm
Stalmine Village Hall	Wednesday 14 August	2.30 to 7pm
Fleetwood Marine Hall	Thursday 15 August	2.30 to 7pm
Poulton-le-Fylde Community Hall, Vicarage Road	Saturday 17 August	10am to 2.30pm

The un-staffed exhibition boards will also be available to view during normal office hours at the Council offices in the Civic Centre at Poulton-le-Fylde between Wednesday 21 August and 5pm Tuesday 10 September 2024.

### **How do I respond to the Consultation?**

Consultation material will be available on-line and in the public libraries (not the mobile library) and Wyre Civic Centre Reception between Monday 29 July and 5pm Tuesday 10 September 2024 (during normal opening hours). Comments can be made using the official response form that can be accessed on-line at

<https://www.wyre.gov.uk/local-plan>

Alternatively, respondents can write to the Planning Policy team with their comments by e-mail at [planning.policy@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@wyre.gov.uk) or by letter to Wyre Council, Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, FY6 7PU.

People will also be able to post comments in special ballot boxes which will be located in the reception at the Wyre Civic Centre and the borough's libraries (not the mobile library). If you are writing to the Council, it would be helpful if you can refer to the questions in the Issues and Options document you are responding to.

### **I don't use the internet or email – how can I respond to the consultation?**

We understand that not everyone has access to or is comfortable using the internet. You can provide your comments in writing directly to the Planning Policy team

(address above). You can also post comments in the comment boxes at each of the libraries (not the mobile library).

### **Will you be consulting with neighbouring local authorities about your proposals?**

We have regular discussions with neighbouring local authorities about issues of mutual interest. Neighbouring council's are also invited to respond formally to the Issues and Options consultation.

### **Can the Issues and Options document be used to make decisions on planning applications?**

The Issues and Options document will have very limited weight in the determination of planning applications as it does not set planning policy – it is the first step in a process of developing planning policy. The fact that land is shown as a potential development site does not convey any degree of acceptance that a site is available for development or that the Council would be supportive of development if a planning application were to be submitted. If a person submits a planning application on a site identified in the Issues and Options document, it will need to be determined according to current local and national planning policy.

### **How long is this all going to take?**

Preparing a new Local Plan takes time. Apart from the fact that we need to collect lots of information ('evidence') to justify the proposals and policies that the plan will eventually contain, we need to allow time for local people and other organisations to have their say. There are also government regulations setting out a number of stages and timescales with which we have to comply. We hope to have a draft revised Local Plan ready for consultation by spring 2025. Currently we anticipate having a final plan that the Council will adopt during 2025 that will undergo an independent examination by a Government appointed Planning Inspector.

### **What happens next?**

After this consultation closes, we will look carefully at all of the responses received and will summarise these in a consultation report, together with our response. The responses we receive and the issues raised will feed into a draft Local Plan which itself will be the subject of further public consultation. If you have any further questions or comments about this briefing or the process of creating a new Local Plan, please contact us at: [planning.policy@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@wyre.gov.uk) or 01253 887373.