

Wyre Local Plan

Statement of Compliance with the Duty to  
Cooperate

September 2017

## Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
DPOG	Development Plan Officers Group
DTC	Duty to Cooperate
EDC	Economic Development Company
EZ	Enterprise Zone
FCA	Fylde Coast Authorities
FPWMG	Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group
GI	Green Infrastructure
HE	Highways England
HMA	Housing Market Area
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
IDP	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
JAC	Joint Advisory Committee
LCC	Lancashire County Council
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NE	Natural England
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
NR	Network Rail
OAN	Objectively Assessed Need
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SOCG	Statement of Common Ground
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SRN	Strategic Road Network
TfL	Transport for Lancashire
UU	United Utilities

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty on local planning authorities (LPAs) to engage with county councils in England and other public bodies to address strategic cross boundary matters in the preparation of the Local Plan. The public bodies that this 'duty to cooperate' relates to are prescribed in regulation 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and include the Environment Agency; Historic England; Natural England; the Civil Aviation Authority; Homes and Communities Agency; National Health Commissioning Board; Clinical Commissioning Groups; and Highways England.
- 1.2. The duty to cooperate provides a mechanism to ensure that LPAs address strategic planning matters in their Local Plans by ensuring that the right issues are addressed, in the right way and with the right partners.
- 1.3. This document is Wyre Borough Council's Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate. It has been prepared to accompany the Local Plan and explains how the Council considers it has met the duty to cooperate in the production of the Local Plan up to this point. The statement sets out:
  - the strategic cross boundary matters that have been taken into account;
  - the LPAs and other organisations with which the Council has engaged and cooperated with in relation to the identified strategic matters;
  - the format for this cooperation, both to date in preparing the Plan and going forward through implementation of the Plan; and
  - the outcomes of engagement including an indication of the Council's response to the cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters as reflected in the Plan.
- 1.4. This statement should be read alongside the Statement of Consultation which provides a summary of the consultation carried out throughout the plan-making process.

## **2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

- 2.1. Section 110 of the Localism Act introduced the duty to cooperate by amending the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('the Act') to make provision for consideration of the duty in relation to planning for sustainable development in the preparation of Local Plans.
- 2.2. Section 33a of the Act defines the duty and sets out its general requirements. It confirms that the duty applies to all LPAs and county councils in England and to a number of other "prescribed bodies" in relation to planning for sustainable development and the use of land so far as it relates to a "strategic matter" that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas. The Act requires all identified to be proactive and to engage in a constructive manner and on an ongoing basis to ensure effective planning in relation to the strategic matters.
- 2.3. Section 20(5) of the Act, which sets out the purposes of the independent examination of development plan documents, states that one of the key purposes of the examination is to establish whether the LPA has complied with any duty imposed on the authority under section 33A in relation to the preparation of the Plan.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

2.4. The NPPF provides guidance on complying with the duty to cooperate and planning strategically across local boundaries. Paragraph 178 of the NPPF states that the Government expects "joint working on areas of common interest to be diligently undertaken for the mutual benefit of neighbouring authorities" on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries particularly those relating to strategic priorities. To this end, the Framework advises that strategic matters are likely to include:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

2.5. Paragraph 179 states that LPAs should "work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans. Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of this Framework".

2.6. Paragraph 180 emphasises the requirement for county and district authorities to cooperate with each other on relevant issues in two tier areas. It also requires LPAs to "work collaboratively with private sector bodies, utility and infrastructure providers".

2.7. Further guidance on the consideration of the duty to cooperate during the examination of Local Plans is provided by paragraph 181 of the NPPF. This

paragraph explains that LPAs “*will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination*”. It is suggested that this could be demonstrated by a variety of means, such as plans or policies prepared as part of a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding or a jointly prepared strategy which is presented as evidence of an agreed position. Paragraph 181 is however unequivocal that “*co-operation should be a continuous process of engagement from initial thinking through to implementation, resulting in a final position where plans are in place to provide the land and infrastructure necessary to support current and projected future levels of development*”.

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

- 2.8. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was issued in March 2014 to supplement the NPPF. It provides further guidance on a range of issues, including compliance with the duty to cooperate.
- 2.9. Although it does not identify a definitive list of actions that constitute effective cooperation, the NPPG advises that compliance with the duty requires proactive and sustained engagement and an ongoing and focussed approach to strategic planning and partnership working. It also emphasises that effective cooperation is likely to require concrete actions and outcomes and is unlikely to be met by an exchange of correspondence, conversations or consultations between authorities alone.
- 2.10. Although a series of prescribed bodies are defined in legislation, the NPPG recognises that it is important to adopt a pragmatic approach in deciding the area over which cooperation is needed and who to work with. Specifically, it is advised that the LPAs and public bodies that a LPA needs to cooperate with will depend on the strategic matters that are being planned for and the most appropriate functional geography to gather evidence and develop planning policies. The NPPG does however state that although Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are not subject to the requirements of the duty, it states that LPAs must cooperate with these bodies and have regard to their activities when they are preparing their Local Plans, so long as those activities are relevant to local plan making.
- 2.11. The NPPG recognises that the duty to cooperate is a legal test that applies to the preparation of Local Plans and that a Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination if it cannot be demonstrated that the duty has been complied with. Therefore, although it acknowledges that it will not always be possible to reach agreement, the NPPG emphasises that LPAs should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. Accordingly, prior to submitting a Local Plan the LPA should have explored all available options for delivering the planning strategy within their own areas and have approached other authorities with whom it would be sensible to seek to work to deliver the planning strategy.
- 2.12. The NPPG advises that a key element of the examination of a Local Plan will be to ensure that there is sufficient certainty that an effective strategy will be in place for strategic matters when the relevant Local Plans are adopted. It is recommended that one way to demonstrate that there has been effective cooperation on these matters, particularly if Local Plans are not being brought forward at the same time, is the use of formal agreements between LPAs, signed by elected members, demonstrating their long term commitment to a jointly agreed strategy on cross boundary matters.

### **3. WYRE STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

#### **Background**

- 3.1. Wyre is a Lancashire coastal district bounded by the sea along parts of its western and northern boundaries. It shares a common land boundary with the City of Lancaster to the north, with the Boroughs of Ribble Valley, Preston and Fylde to the east and south respectively, and with Blackpool Unitary Authority along the remainder of its western boundary. Wyre, Fylde and Blackpool form the Fylde Coast sub-region which is also known as the Fylde peninsula.
- 3.2. The borough covers an area of approximately 282 square kilometres. The population of Wyre was estimated to be 108,236 in mid-2013; this equates to a 0.5% increase on the 2011 Census figure of 107,749 and a 2.5% increase from the 2001 Census. This represents a relatively small increase in comparison to the national and Lancashire averages which experienced a 7.8% and 3.1% increase respectively between the 2001 and 2011 Census.
- 3.3. Wyre is characterised by a distinct geographical polarity, with a relatively compact urban area situated in the west of the Borough and a large expanse of rural area to the East.
- 3.4. The urban area is located to the west of the River Wyre on a peninsula situated in Morecambe Bay. It is comprised of the coastal towns of Fleetwood, Thornton and Cleveleys, and to the south, slightly inland, the town of Poulton-le-Fylde. These coastal towns are separated by areas of Green Belt. The main rural area settlements with the most extensive service provision are the market town of Garstang, Knott End/Preesall and Great Eccleston. The rural area is itself characterised by a large area of low-lying countryside and farmland, and east of the M6, the Bowland Fells which is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- 3.5. In comparison to neighbouring authorities, especially Lancaster to the north and Preston to the south, Wyre has relatively poor road access. Although the M6 motorway cuts through the eastern part of the Borough, there are no junctions on this stretch of the motorway. The A585 and A6 link the principal towns in the Borough to the motorway network however both of these are single-carriageway roads which experience significant congestion at certain points during peak times.
- 3.6. Public transport provision includes a network of bus routes connecting residents to destinations within the Borough and beyond including Blackpool, Lancaster and Preston. Some settlements do not however have access to a bus and there is only one train station in the Borough.
- 3.7. There are four main towns in Wyre with large retail centres; Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Poulton-le-Fylde located within the urban peninsula and Garstang located in the eastern part of the borough on the A6. All four town centres are relatively healthy town centres; however in January 2017 vacancy rates in Fleetwood were above the regional average and together with Cleveleys above the national average.
- 3.8. 69.1% of the working age population are in employment (2015-2016) which is the 6th highest employment rate (14th being the worst) in Lancashire (including Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool). However, Wyre has a lower employment rate (65.5%) than the North West (71.4%) and nationally (73.7%). Although, in terms of unemployment, Wyre (4.6%) has a lower unemployment rate when compared to the North West (5.3%) and nationally (5.1%).

- 3.9. Wyre is a net exporter of labour. As recorded in the 2011 Census, of 48,558 Wyre residents in employment, 21,657 regularly travelled outside of the Borough to work elsewhere mostly to the neighbouring authorities of Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and Lancaster. At the same time, approximately 10,836 residents of other Boroughs commuted into Wyre to work, again predominantly from the other adjacent local authorities, representing a net outflow of 10,821 workers. This represents a 3.3% increase on the net outflow of workers recorded in the 2001 Census.
- 3.10. Wyre shares a Housing Market Area (HMA) with Fylde and Blackpool. A joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the area was published in February 2014 and an addendum to this report was completed in November 2014. Further addendums have been produced as discussed in the Housing Background Paper. Other adjoining LPAs that are relevant in the context of the duty for Wyre are Ribble Valley and Lancaster which both lie in their own separate HMAs and Preston which forms part of the Central Lancashire HMA which also includes Chorley and South Ribble.
- 3.11. There have been 4,994 new dwellings completed between 1 April 2000 and 31 March 2017 which equates to approximately 291 dwellings per annum.

#### **4. CO-OPERATION IN THE PREPARATION OF THE LOCAL PLAN – ESTABLISHED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

4.1. There are a number of long established and constituted governance arrangements in place that operate across the Fylde Coast and the wider Lancashire areas. These structures have provided a forum that has enabled continuous cooperation and joint working on strategic cross boundary matters between member planning authorities. These structures include:

- LEP (Lancashire Enterprise Partnership)/Lancashire Local Transport Board (Transport for Lancashire (TfL));
- Development Plan Officers Group (DPOG);
- Fylde Coast Memorandum of Understanding Group;
- Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group (FPWMG);
- Flood Forum; and
- Making Space for Water.

#### **Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership**

4.2. The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a creative collaboration of leaders from business, universities and local councils, who direct economic growth and drive job creation. The LEP was established in April 2011 and plays a key role in providing leadership for Lancashire's economy, acting as a catalyst for job creation and economic growth.

4.3. Its working area covers the whole of Lancashire, including the two Unitary Authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. As a result, it represents one of the largest local economies in the North of England, valued at over £23 billion, with over 40,000 businesses employing in excess of 600,000 people, and a population of 1.4 million.

4.4. The LEP is wholly owned by the County Council and its board comprises 16 directors drawn from the private sector, higher education and political leaders from local authorities. The County Council and all 12 districts meet quarterly, at Leaders and Chief Executive level.

4.5. The establishment of the LEP and its management structures has provided a formal basis/forum for cross sector collaboration and alignment on strategic priorities, investment and delivery frameworks across the sub-region. At its meeting on 11 December 2012 the LEP Board has acknowledged its approach to strategic planning and the requirements of the duty.

4.6. In March 2014 the LEP published its 10-year growth plan, the 'Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan: A Growth Deal for the Arc of Prosperity (SEP). Spatially the 'arc of prosperity' includes:

- Lancaster;
- Wyre and Fylde;
- Blackpool;
- Lancashire Enterprise Zone sites at Samlesbury and Warton;
- Central Lancashire;
- Preston; and
- M65 Growth Corridor/East Lancashire (including Blackburn, Burnley and Pendle).



4.7. The Lancashire Growth Deal aims to realise the growth potential of the whole of Lancashire, building on key local economic assets including the universities and colleges, the Enterprise Zone, the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal and high-value business clusters across the county. The growth deal is currently funding a range of infrastructure improvements across Lancashire that will benefit Wyre.

#### **Transport for Lancashire (TfL)**

4.8. In December 2012, in response to the Government's new approach to devolved local transport funding, the LEP Board amended its constitution to establish Transport for Lancashire (TfL). TfL has full, delegated authority to discharge all Local Transport Body functions and provides the opportunity to align strategic transport investments with agreed economic and housing priorities and plans.

4.9. TfL meets on a quarterly basis or more frequently if circumstances dictate and its membership comprises of the Leaders of the three local transport authorities (Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council) together with the Chair and Vice Chair of LEP. In addition, the Department for Transport, Highways England and Network Rail are participating observers.

4.10. The establishment of TfL provides a formal basis/forum for cross sector collaboration and alignment on strategic priorities in relation to transport. It determines the priorities for funding, reviews and approves individual major scheme business cases and ensures effective delivery of schemes within Lancashire's transport investment programme including all transport schemes programmed for delivery through the Growth Deal.

#### **Lancashire Development Plans Officer Group (DPOG)**

4.11. DPOG is a long established group, set up more than 20 years ago, as a forum for information sharing and discussion of all matters relating to development plans including plan making and the preparation of supporting planning policy.

4.12. The group meets quarterly. Its membership includes representatives from all of the Lancashire authorities/districts, Lancashire County Council and more recently, the LEP.

#### **Fylde Coast Memorandum of Understanding Group**

4.13. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Group comprising of Blackpool Council, Fylde Council, Wyre Council and Lancashire County Council has been established to provide for those strategic planning issues which require cross boundary co-operation and collaboration to ensure the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate are met. The groups has an agreed MOU that sets out a commitment to joint working on a range of topics (Appendix 1)

4.14. The MOU working group effectively formalises the ongoing dialogue and co-operation that exists between the four authorities. The group comprises of a Joint Member and Officer Advisory Steering Group to oversee the work under the Duty to Co-operate. An Officer Working Group, which meets on a regular basis, provides support to all joint working arrangements as appropriate to ensure constructive engagement, good communications and transparency.

#### **Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group (FPWMG)**

4.15. FPWMG was set up in 2011 as a partnership between the Environment Agency, United Utilities, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils, Lancashire County Council and Keep Britain Tidy. The group looks at three aspects of water management:

- Coastal Defence
- Bathing Water Quality
- Surface Water Management

4.16. The group meet on a monthly basis and also performs the project officer role for undertaking a number of projects, which have been commenced by the group. Meetings are attended by Officers from the respective organisations and from Fylde by the Head of Technical Services and/or Chief Engineer.

#### **Flood Forum**

4.17. Wyre's Flood Forum brings together the key people involved in flood risk management in the Borough; community members, Wyre Council, Lancashire County Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency.

4.18. The forum meets every three months under to discuss flood risk in the borough and issues raised are referred to the Wyre Making Space for Water Group, a partnership of technical officers from the key agencies who work together to find solutions.

#### **Making Space for Water Group**

4.19. The group consists of representatives from United Utilities, Environment Agency and WBC and meets on a three monthly basis. The group target key actions to work together on with regards to flood risk in the Borough, record actions resolved and how they were resolved, and reports back to the Flood Forum.

#### **Other informal engagement**

4.20. Outside of these formal engagement and cooperation groups the Council has held numerous informal duty to cooperate engagement meetings with the prescribed bodies as detailed in the rest of this statement.

## **5. STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES**

- 5.1. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF identifies a series of strategic priorities which LPAs should address in their Plan making. These are:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
  - the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.
- 5.2. This provides a useful starting point for identifying the strategic planning priorities and cross boundary matters that should be addressed through the Duty to Cooperate. Nevertheless, LPAs strategic planning priorities are linked to the objectives of Local Plan and may therefore differ from those identified in the NPPF. In particular, the priority given to these issues will depend on local circumstances and strategic approaches may not be required in every situation. In addition, strategic planning priorities may also be narrower in nature.
- 5.3. The remainder of this chapter details how neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 were engaged to ensure that identified strategic matters have been dealt with in the preparation of the Local Plan in accordance with the duty to cooperate.

### **Housing Provision**

- 5.4. Wyre shares a HMA with Fylde and Blackpool, and as such these two neighbouring authorities are the key parties which are relevant in the context of the duty for Wyre regarding housing provision. Other adjoining LPAs; Ribble Valley and Lancaster (which both lie in their own separate HMAs) and Preston (which forms part of the Central Lancashire HMA that also includes Chorley and South Ribble) are also important partners. Lancashire County Council as the highways authority and Highways England are also key partners due to the significance this evidence came to play in the development strategy for Wyre.
- 5.5. In 2013 the Fylde Coast Authorities<sup>1</sup> and Lancashire County Council agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with regards to the Duty to Co-operate. This document was updated in 2015. The MoU covers all key issues but of relevance to this key issue the MoU states that the FCA agreed to work together '*to reach a consensus on housing provision across the Fylde Coast sub-region*'. The MoU recognises the Fylde Coast as a HMA and sets the framework for cooperation with relation to housing needs.
- 5.6. The Fylde Coast Authorities cooperated on commissioning a joint Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was published in February 2014. A joint addendum (Addendum 1) to this report was completed in November 2014 which again covered all three authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council

- 5.7. Following these joint reports each authority commissioned separately a further addendum to consider the 2012 Sub-National Household projects (SNHP) and further employment land evidence (Wyre Addendum 2). Wyre also commissioned a further report (Wyre Addendum 3) to consider a number of important data releases since the publication of the Addendum 2 report and to reflect the 2017 Employment Land Study Addendum II report. These documents have been shared with neighbouring authorities as they have been produced.
- 5.8. The Fylde Coast SHMA and associated addendum reports provide an assessment of the objectively assessed need (OAN) for market and affordable housing over the plan period. Based on the evidence presented in these reports, the Council has identified a need to provide 9,580 new homes between 2011 and 2031. The Local Plan contains a target of 8,224 new homes over this period, a shortfall of 1,351 units within the Plan period<sup>2</sup>. When taking into account delivery beyond the Plan period the shortfall drops to 965. As explained in the Housing Background Paper Wyre is unable to meet its OAN primarily because of highway constraints.
- 5.9. This situation has implications for the other authorities that form part of the Fylde Coast HMA and for other neighbouring authorities and partners. The OAN for housing and associated housing requirement in the Local Plan has therefore been the focus of joint work with our neighbours and other partners.
- 5.10. As noted above, Wyre has worked with Blackpool Council and Fylde Council to produce the joint SHMA covering the Fylde Coast area. The issue of housing provision has been regularly discussed by the Fylde Coast MoU Officer and Member group. Lancaster, Preston and Ribble Valley Councils were consulted on the Fylde Coast SHMA.
- 5.11. In March 2015 Wyre alerted Blackpool and Fylde of significant constraints and the possibility that Wyre will need assistance in meeting its needs<sup>3</sup>. The issue was reiterated at a meeting with Fylde in May 2015 and Blackpool in July 2015. Throughout 2015 the Council continued to raise this with neighbouring authorities informally whilst working with Lancashire County Council and Highways England to establish the capacity on the local and strategic highway network to support development with deliverable mitigation. The aim was always to maximise delivery of housing within Wyre.
- 5.12. Wyre's inability to accommodate its OAN, was debated in detail at a FC duty to co-operate officers meeting in April 2016<sup>4</sup>. At the meeting it was agreed that Wyre should formally write to Blackpool and Fylde (and all neighbouring authorities) and request assistance in meeting the OAN. Wyre wrote to Fylde on the 4 May 2016, Blackpool on the 5 May 2016, Lancaster on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and Preston on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016.
- 5.13. Both HMA Council's responded stating various reasons why they were not able to assist. Fylde referred to the objection by Highways England (to their Plan) and issues raised by Natural England which may inhibit Fylde from assisting Wyre in meeting its OAN. Blackpool referred to the lack of developable land within their boundaries and to comments made at their Core Strategy examination in Public. Lancaster and Preston also declined to assist.

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<sup>2</sup> Some large allocations will deliver beyond the Plan period at the assumed build out rates.

<sup>3</sup> Fylde Coast Joint Member and Officer Advisory Steering Group Meeting 30 March 2015

<sup>4</sup> FC Officers meeting 5 April 2016

- 5.14. Following this initial exchange of letters Wyre responded seeking further detail on the reasons why its HMA neighbours could not assist. These exchanges culminated in Wyre objecting to the Fylde Local Plan in March 2017. Despite Wyre's objection and attendance at the Examination the Inspector of the Fylde Local Plan found that Fylde had met the Duty to Cooperate. A main modification has been proposed to the Fylde Local Plan to ensure that a review mechanism is triggered if the Wyre Local Plan is adopted with a shortfall.
- 5.15. Wyre has also recently made representations to the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2 consultation. The consultation document did not make reference to the unmet need arising in Wyre and therefore Wyre's response requested that Blackpool should consider the matter of Wyre's unmet OAN and respond to the shortfall accordingly as part of the Local Plan Part 2.
- 5.16. In terms of cooperation with other partners Wyre has met to discuss the allocations with United Utilities, Environment Agency, Natural England and a variety of infrastructure providers. These bodies have also been consulted at formal stages during the preparation of the Local Plan. The discussions have guided the selection of allocations and the specific requirements of the allocation policies.

*Addressing the shortfall*

- 5.17. Wyre has rigorously assessed all opportunities to meet its housing need, including active engagement with its neighbouring authorities. A series of officer meetings took place specifically to discuss Wyre's unmet housing need with neighbouring authorities. Following the receipt of the final draft highways evidence in January 2017 a series of meetings took place specifically to try and resolve the unmet need.

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Invited/attended</b>
6th February 2017	General DTC Officer meeting – agenda item regarding Wyre's unmet housing need	LCC, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre
22nd March 2017	Highways Evidence workshop – LCC were invited to explain and answer any questions adjoining authorities had regarding the evidence	LCC, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre, Preston, Lancaster
5th May 2017	General DTC Officer meeting – agenda item regarding Wyre's unmet housing need.	LCC, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre
5th July 2017	Housing and Employment evidence workshop – Consultants who produced the housing and employment evidence were invited to answer any questions adjoining authorities had regarding the evidence.	LCC, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre, Preston, Lancaster, Turley, NLP
14th July	General DTC Officer meeting – agenda item regarding Wyre's unmet housing need.	Fylde, Wyre, Preston, Lancaster

- 5.18. All HMA authorities are committed to ensuring that the OAN is met within the HMA and both Fylde and Blackpool's respective Local Plans have a trigger for a review should the Wyre Local Plan be adopted with a shortfall. On this basis, whilst there has not been agreement to meet the shortfall within an adjoining authority yet, Wyre

is confident that in the longer run this is likely to occur. It is intended that a further Duty to Co-operate meeting be scheduled following publication to discuss each authority's response to the Publication Local Plan.

- 5.19. Wyre has received a formal request for assistance from Lancaster as the Council is unable to meet its needs within the authority boundary. As Wyre cannot meet its own needs the council has responded to say that assistance cannot be provided.

#### *Outcomes*

- 5.20. There has thus far been no objection by Lancashire authorities to the Fylde Coast SHMA (and addendums) methodology or outcomes. In addition, none of the neighbouring authorities have raised any concerns in relation to the level of housing development proposed in the Wyre. On this basis, the Council is satisfied that the housing requirement contained within the Local Plan does not undermine the strategies of adjoining LPAs.
- 5.21. The Council have sought to ensure that the housing allocations in the Local Plan contribute to a sustainable housing market and none of the neighbouring authorities have raised any concerns about the site allocations contained within the Local Plan.
- 5.22. Although positive engagement has occurred with neighbouring authorities, unfortunately, this has not led to a positive outcome, in the sense that none has offered to assist in meeting the unmet need arising in Wyre. As outlined above Wyre is confident that there are mechanisms in place to ensure other local planning authorities in the HMA will be required to consider the implications, including the need to review their housing policies in due course.

#### *Further Action / Approach to Managing Strategic Issues on an Ongoing Basis*

- 5.23. Throughout plan delivery, Wyre Borough Council will continue to collaborate proactively with its neighbouring authorities and other key partners to ensure the shortfall in delivery is remedied. In addition Wyre will consult neighbouring authorities and other bodies, as appropriate, on planning applications for residential development and consult on any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) or site-specific masterplans which could raise strategic/cross boundary issues with regards to housing.

#### **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People**

- 5.24. In the same way Wyre cooperated with Fylde and Blackpool regarding housing provision the need to address the accommodation requirements of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was also assessed across the Fylde Coast.
- 5.25. In response to the publication of the Government's Planning Policy for Travellers (March 2012), which sets out the broad approach to be adopted and requires all local authorities to provide for a 5 year supply of sites where a such need is identified, The Council cooperated with both Blackpool and Fylde Councils to commission a joint Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. The findings of this assessment were published in October 2014. The evidence does not show a need for Wyre to make provision for new accommodation sites for Gypsy and Travellers but does show a need for 20 plots to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople during the Local Plan period.
- 5.26. The issue of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has been regularly discussed by the Fylde Coast MoU group. There is also a Lancashire wide planning policies for gypsies and travellers and travelling show people forum. This group

considers the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling show people to ensure joined up working, it also provides a forum for sharing best practice.

#### *Outcomes*

5.27. Each of the authorities has identified sufficient land to meet the needs for pitches where they arise, no authority has asked Wyre for assistance in meeting its need for pitches.

#### *Further Action / Approach to Managing Strategic Issues on an Ongoing Basis*

5.28. Throughout plan delivery, Wyre Borough Council will continue to collaborate proactively with adjoining LPAs on the provision of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This will include consulting neighbouring authorities and other bodies, as appropriate, on planning applications for pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where the proposal could raise strategic/cross boundary issues.

#### **Transport**

5.29. Highway capacity is the main constraint to growth in Wyre and as such Wyre has worked exceptionally closely with both LCC (as the Highways authority covering both Wyre and Fylde), Highways England and Blackpool (as neighbouring Highways Authority) to consider and address strategic transport issues and problems. Regular meetings have been held between these parties to develop a robust evidence base setting out the highways constraints in Wyre and to identify the possible mitigation solutions. LCC is a joint highways authority for both Wyre and Fylde, nevertheless Fylde officers have been invited to these meetings to ensure joined up working.

5.30. LCC are responsible for the Local Highway Network and the production of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and its Implementation Plan. The third iteration of the Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was adopted in March 2011 and runs from 2011 to 2021. The LTP refers to the preparation and adoption of Highways and Transport Masterplans. The Fylde coast Masterplan was adopted in July 2015. It sets out the vision for travel and transport in the Fylde Coast.

5.31. In 2015 Wyre set up a highways working group with LCC and Highways England to prepare transport evidence to support the preparation of the Local Plan. During its existence officers of both Fylde and Blackpool have been involved in some of these meetings.

5.32. It became apparent at the working group that two work streams were required; one regarding the Strategic Road Network (SRN), and one regarding the local network.

#### *Strategic Road Network (SRN)*

5.33. Following initial meetings and discussions of the working group in late 2015 Jacobs were commissioned to model the traffic impacts of development scenarios being considered for the Wyre Local Plan. The three spatial options being considered for housing and employment distribution were modelled using GraHAM (Gravity Highways Agency Model). The output of this work is the Wyre Local Plan Support Technical Note (January 2016).

5.34. At the request of Blackpool Council following concerns about the impact on the Local Highways network in Blackpool a number of additional junctions were "switched on" in the modelling.

5.35. All members of the highway working group were involved in the production of this report and following its publication provided comments on the findings. Highways England commented that following the study there was still a need to understand what level of development the SRN could support safely and sustainably and the spatial distribution of this development in relation to the SRN and those junctions affected.

5.36. After meeting to discuss the implications of the Jacobs report Highways England commissioned evidence from CH2M to assist Wyre in determining the spatial strategy it should adopt from the perspective of impacts upon the strategic road network (SRN). The evidence consisted of:

- Evidence Base Report –provides a summary of the findings of the main Study report (see below) and presents its key findings and caveats.
- Study Report –details the modelled, operational analysis that was undertaken of the key SRN junctions within the A585(T) corridor and route links based upon the development quantum and location reflective of ‘Scenario 1’. The Study Report also utilises an existing traffic model to assess the impacts of sites within the emerging Fylde Local Plan upon M55 Junction 3 together with those in the emerging Wyre Local Plan.
- Study Tool - a spreadsheet that can be used to identify the carrying capacity of junctions in the Borough depending on the amount of housing anticipated with and without mitigation measures.

5.37. The final SRN evidence base outlined above has been shared with all neighbouring HMA authorities as part of DTC discussions regarding the inability of Wyre to meet its OAN.

5.38. As part of ensuring that “no stone is left unturned” in trying to meet the OAN the potential for a new junction on the M6 has also been investigated. This has involved further liaison with HE and LCC. It has been agreed that this is not a feasible option and a statement of common ground to this effect has been agreed.

#### *Local network*

5.39. Alongside the evidence produced regarding the capacity of the SRN LCC produced a detailed assessment on the capacity of the local highway network. There was extensive liaison between the Wyre and LCC as this report was drafted regarding the methodology to be adopted and findings of the study. The production of this report coincided with LCC placing holding objections on a number of applications on the A6 corridor in Wyre.

5.40. Whilst drafting the local highways evidence it became apparent that a more detailed study focussing solely on the network in and around Poulton would be required. As a result LCC commissioned Jacobs to produce the Poulton congestion study, the findings of which are reflected in the final LCC report.

5.41. The draft report was shared with both Fylde and Blackpool for their comment and input. In February 2017 the LCC Implications for housing developments within the proposed Wyre Local Plan report was published. This report set out a number of mitigation measures that are reflected in the IDP.

5.42. Using both the HE spreadsheet tool and the LCC report the Council identified the distribution of housing growth that appears in the Publication Local Plan. The spatial distribution of the Plan is essentially dictated by the highways constraints. The



Strategy is inherently reliant on a number of highways mitigation measures being delivered, this will involve continued cooperation between Wyre LCC and HE.

- 5.43. The mitigation measures required are all reflected in the publication draft IDP, to which both LCC and HE contributed. Ongoing cooperation is now focused on securing the necessary funding for the mitigation measures identified in the IDP.

#### *Outcomes*

- 5.44. Highways constraints have formed the main stumbling block in terms of the progression of the Plan over the last three years. This has required continued cooperation with all parties detailed above to resolve and move forward. The key outcome from the continued engagement between these bodies is a Publication version of the Plan that is supported by LCC and HE.
- 5.45. Wyre Council and HE have also signed a Statement of Common Ground setting out the agreement between the parties that a new junction on the M6 is not a feasible option to deliver more housing in Wyre.
- 5.46. The successful bid for Regional Investment Strategy Funds for the highway works identified in the IDP has been achieved through close working with the relevant local planning and highway authorities with Highways England.

#### *Rail*

- 5.47. As part of ensuring that “no stone is left unturned” in trying to meet the OAN the Council has also cooperated with Network Rail to explore the option for new and improved rail services in the Borough. As outlined in the IDP it is not considered feasible to create a new rail link to Fleetwood or create a new station at Garstang. As outlined in the IDP these options will be kept under review with Network Rail over the Plan period.

#### *Further Action / Approach to Managing Strategic Issues on an Ongoing Basis*

- 5.48. Continued joint working is taking place with LCC and Highways England to source funding for the uncommitted schemes as outlined in the IDP. All parties are confident that funding will be found for the remaining projects but this will require on going engagement and continuing cooperation.
- 5.49. Continued joint working is taking place with LCC, Fylde Council and Blackpool Council in implementing the delivery of projects identified in the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan.

#### **Employment**

- 5.50. The Borough’s functional economic area extends well beyond its administrative boundaries and covers the administrative areas of Fylde and Blackpool (across a joint housing and economic activity area). The economic functionality of the Fylde Coast is apparent through the strong travel to work patterns exhibited between the three authorities.
- 5.51. In 2010 a Fylde Sub Region Employment Land Review was agreed by Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils which sets out the position in terms of employment land availability. Wyre subsequently produced a further Employment Land Study, published in 2012.
- 5.52. The findings of this additional work have been shared and discussed with the Fylde Coast authorities at the regular DTC meetings. Members of the Blackpool, Fylde and

Wyre Economic Development Company (EDC) have also attended these meetings. The EDC is a private sector organisation with representatives from the three Fylde coast sub-region local authorities and Lancashire County Council. The company was set up to promote economic development, driving growth and inward investment across the Fylde Coast, as well as delivering on specific economic issues for the local authorities in the area. Wyre sites on the EDC Board.

- 5.53. In addition, the Council has cooperated with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), (a strategic body that represents a wide cross-section of interests that include private, voluntary and community sectors and all Lancashire authorities, including Lancashire County Council), in securing Enterprise Zone (EZ) status for four separate sites across Lancashire, including Hillhouse Technology Enterprise Zone within Wyre. Members of the LEP have attended the Fylde Coast DTC meetings where relevant.

#### *Outcomes*

- 5.54. Wyre has identified sufficient land within its boundaries to meet the identified employment needs. No neighbouring authority has asked Wyre for assistance in meeting their need for employment land.

#### *Further Action / Approach to Managing Strategic Issues on an Ongoing Basis*

- 5.55. Throughout plan delivery, Wyre Borough Council will continue to collaborate proactively with adjoining LPAs on the provision of employment land. This will include consulting neighbouring authorities and other bodies, as appropriate, on planning applications for employment purposes where the proposal could raise strategic/cross boundary issues.

#### **Education**

- 5.56. The Council has collaborated with the LCC as the Education Authority to identify the impacts of planned growth on education. LCC has calculated the need for improved and expanded facilities in the provision of primary and secondary educational needs generated by the proposed level of development in the borough.
- 5.57. Wyre has also cooperated with representatives at the Education Authority who cover nursery and childcare provision and further education. It became apparent at the further education meeting that many pupils from Wyre accessed further education facilities in Blackpool. Therefore due to the cross boundary implications of further education the Council also met with representatives from Blackpool Education Authority to discuss the impacts of growth on further education institutions within Blackpool.

#### *Outcomes*

- 5.58. As a result of this engagement land has been reserved for the provision of expanded and new school facilities in some of the allocations. It is anticipated that cooperation will continue throughout the Plan period to ensure that sufficient education infrastructure is provided.

#### **Health**

- 5.59. Primary Health Care in Wyre is commissioned and delivered by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). There are three CCGs covering Wyre, NHS Fylde & Wyre CCG, NHS Morecambe Bay CCG (formerly NHS North Lancashire CCG) and NHS Greater Preston CCG. The council met with representatives of each CCG and directly with NHS England to discuss the implications of housing growth within Wyre on several occasions. Most residents and future residents are anticipated to access primary health care at a GP surgery within Wyre, there is some overlap with

practices outside of the Borough but within the CCG areas though this is not considered significant.

- 5.60. The Council also met directly with some GP practices in the borough to discuss specific implications for their practice of local growth.

#### *Outcomes*

- 5.61. As a result of this engagement land has been reserved for the provision of expanded GP facilities in some of the allocations. It is anticipated that cooperation will continue throughout the Plan period to ensure that sufficient health services are provided.

#### **Historic environment**

- 5.62. Historic England has been consulted throughout the preparation of the Local Plan. A meeting was held in late 2015 to discuss Historic England's comments on the Issues and Options document, the proposed allocations and the site selection process to avoid impact on the historic environment and incorporation of heritage mitigation if relevant.

#### **Retail, Leisure and other commercial development**

- 5.63. Wyre Council has co-operated with Blackpool and Fylde authorities to establish the retail hierarchy across the Fylde Coast and the appropriate retail needs in terms of future comparison and retail floor-space, through undertaking a Joint Retail Study for the Fylde Coast in 2011, with an update in 2013. The study provides an assessment of the quantitative and qualitative needs and retail spending patterns for the Fylde Coast sub-region.

- 5.64. Each authority involved in the study is intending to meet their own retail needs throughout the Plan period. The comparison needs of residents are met within the Borough and by larger centres outside of the Borough for example at Blackpool and Preston.

- 5.65. Throughout plan delivery, Wyre Borough Council will continue to collaborate proactively with adjoining LPAs on the retail provision and impact assessment. This will include consulting neighbouring authorities and other bodies, as appropriate, on planning applications for retail development where the proposal could raise strategic/cross boundary issues.

#### **Green infrastructure, open space sport and recreation**

- 5.66. The Council is proposing open space standards in policy HP9. These standards were developed through the Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment and the Playing Pitch Strategy which both form part of the wider Green Infrastructure Study.

- 5.67. Sport England were consulted throughout the preparation of the open space policy of the Local Plan and were involved in the preparation of the Wyre Playing Pitch Strategy and Open Space Audit. These two documents were developed through ongoing engagement with a range of key partners including local sports clubs, Sport England, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) and local schools.

- 5.68. Wyre and its neighbouring authorities intend to continue to conserve and enhance natural habitats, biodiversity and landscapes of importance that form the Green Infrastructure network through continued joined up working. Wyre has recently been consulted on the Blackpool Green Infrastructure Strategy and has fed into this document.

- 5.69. The wider GI network has been considered across the county by the Lancashire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), of which Wyre is a member. The LNP was established in July 2012 and comprises representatives from the voluntary, private and public sectors from across the county, including prescribed bodies, Natural England and the Environment Agency, and all local authorities. Its objective is to create a healthy natural environment in Lancashire by championing and embedding natural value in local decision-making and ensuring delivery is not limited by administrative boundaries. An emerging Lancashire Ecological Network has been identified on behalf of the LNP and continued work with the LNP will be reflected in updates to the GI evidence base.
- 5.70. In addition Wyre has cooperated with its neighbours through the Forest of Bowland AONB Partnership. The AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has representatives of LCC, all local authorities, Natural England, RPSB, Environment Agency and United Utilities and the Ramblers Association. The JAC acts as a forum for communication between constituent authorities and other interested parties in all matters relating to the AONB. Discussions have been had in relation to having a common AONB policy however due to the differing timescales of the Plans this has not been possible.

### **SA/SEA/HRA**

- 5.71. The process of undertaking Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has also involved several of the specific bodies.
- 5.72. Initial discussions were held with Natural England (NE) in May 2016 regarding the scope of the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). Work commenced on the HRA with the production of a Screening Report that was issued to NE for consultation in September 2016. The Screening report was based upon a refined version of the Local Plan Issues and Option that reflected the emerging evidence and development constraints. A further screening exercise that provided initial findings from bird record analysis was undertaken and presented as part of a technical note. This was issued to NE for further consideration in December 2016 and a follow up meeting held in January 2017. This feedback was considered and integrated into a draft Habitat Regulation Assessment report and reissued to NE for further consultation in May 2017. Following further discussion and agreement with NE, the HRA Report was finalised. This included a package of mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects on Morecambe Bay SPA.
- 5.73. The SA process commenced in the summer of 2014 with a Scoping Report that set the scope and SA framework. A six week consultation with Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England on the Scoping Report was undertaken and the consultation comments were considered and used to update the SA framework. In summer 2015, a SA of the Local Plan Issues and Options was undertaken which appraised the emerging vision and objectives and draft development and policy area options. This version of the SA was also made available as part of the public consultation of the Local Plan Issues and Options document and the comments have been considered and integrated into the SA and Publication Local Plan.

### **Other Infrastructure**

- 5.74. A number of the prescribed bodies have been engaged and involved in the production of the IDP. The Council has met with each of the relevant providers (as outlined in the IDP) to discuss the infrastructure needs arising from the planned development. Their participation in the preparation of the IDP (and the Local Plan) in

turn helps them to inform their business plans and to plan and finance the delivery of infrastructure that they have a legal obligation to provide.

## 6. KEY RELATIONSHIPS

- 6.1. The duty to co-operate requires Wyre Borough Council to co-operate with other LPAs and bodies prescribed in regulation 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations.
- 6.2. As explained in section 5 throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council has proactively engaged with other LPAs and prescribed bodies on cross boundary matters via the governance structures described. These bodies have also been asked for their views at formal engagement events during the preparation of the plan, the preparation of key evidence/background documents and at regular meeting arranged to specifically discuss potential strategic matters.
- 6.3. The following summary table identifies the relevant local authorities and other prescribed bodies that Wyre have worked with on strategic issues when preparing the Local Plan and shows the nature of our cooperation.

### Summary of Engagement with Neighbouring Authorities and Prescribed Bodies

Name of Duty to Cooperate Body	Nature of Cooperation
Blackpool Borough Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Duty to Cooperate meetings and Officer and Member level under the FCA MOU. Discussions regarding unmet OAN Input to scope of evidence documents, sharing of draft transport evidence and attendance at transport meetings Joint commissioning of and / or officer input into the production of evidence base studies including: - the SHMA in order to determine respective OANs Retail needs assessment Gypsy and Traveller Study Infrastructure Delivery Plan Cooperation at EDC Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Fylde Borough Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Duty to Cooperate meetings and Officer and Member level under the FCA MOU. Discussions regarding unmet OAN Sharing of draft transport evidence and attendance at transport meetings Joint commissioning of and / or officer input into the production of evidence base studies including: - the SHMA in order to determine respective OANs Retail needs assessment Gypsy and Traveller Study Cooperation at EDC Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Lancaster City Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Duty to Cooperate meetings Discussions regarding unmet OAN Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Preston City Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Duty to Cooperate meetings

Name of Duty to Cooperate Body	Nature of Cooperation
	Discussions regarding unmet OAN Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Ribble Valley Borough Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Duty to Cooperate meetings Discussions regarding unmet OAN Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Lancashire County Council	Representations to the consultation stages of the Local Plan Provided draft Local Plan policies to the LCC for input Duty to Cooperate meetings and Officer and Member level under the FCA MOU. Joint commissioning of and / or officer input into the production of evidence base studies including: - the Highways evidence base Infrastructure Delivery Plan Ongoing engagement at DPOG
Environment Agency	Provided draft Local Plan policies to the EA for input EA involved in commissioning of consultants t produced L2 SFRA EA formally consulted at each stage of the Local Plan. EA input into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
Natural England	Provided draft Local Plan policies to the NE for input Engagement regarding draft allocations Input to the SA / HRA Meetings to discuss emerging evidence documents Consultation at key stages.
Historic England	Engagement meeting and consultation at key stages.
Highways England	Meetings as part of Highways working group Involvement in the preparation of evidence base studies, Consultation at key stages. Engagement regarding draft allocations Preparation of SOCG regarding new M6 junction Ongoing cooperation to apply for funding bids
Civil Aviation Authority	No specific issues raised - consultation at key stages
Homes and Communities Agency	No specific issues raised - consultation at key stages
Clinical Commissioning Groups & NHS England	Meetings, and input into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Engagement regarding draft allocations Consultation at key stages.
The Office of Rail Regulation	No specific issues raised - consultation at key stages
Marine Management Organisation	Meeting to discuss Local Plan and the Marine Plan to ensure linkages are made Consultation at key stages
Local Nature Partnership	Consultation at key stages.
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership	LEP attendance at MOU group meetings Consultation at key stages. Ongoing cooperation to apply for funding bids
United Utilities	Meetings, and input into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Provided draft Local Plan policies to the UU for input Engagement regarding draft allocations

<b>Name of Duty to Cooperate Body</b>	<b>Nature of Cooperation</b>
Network Rail	Meetings and input into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Sport England	Meetings and input into Playing Pitch Strategy and in turn the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Provided draft Local Plan policies to the SE for input Consultation at key stages



## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1. Wyre Borough Council has engaged in extensive cooperation with other relevant local authorities and organisations covered by the Duty to Co-operate on the strategic issues affecting the Borough. It is considered that the Duty to Cooperate, as set out in Section 33a of the 2011 Localism Act has been fully discharged.
- 7.2. This statement has outlined the considerable and diligent effort placed on strategic cross-boundary issues by the Borough Council. This has involved joint working on joint technical studies and seeking to resolve the significant constraints affecting Wyre.
- 7.3. The process of cooperation will not end with the adoption of the Plan. The need for further cooperation on cross-boundary issues has been identified where appropriate in this paper, and there will also be a need for cooperation to facilitate the delivery of the Plan. The ongoing Duty to Co-operate engagement identified in this Plan will be reported through annual updates to the Authority Monitoring Report.
- 7.4. Although agreement has not yet been reached for the unmet housing need for the city to be accommodated elsewhere, constructive discussions are ongoing with the aim of achieving positive outcomes.

**DUTY TO CO-OPERATE**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**BETWEEN**

**BLACKPOOL COUNCIL,**

**LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL,**

**FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND**

**WYRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**April 2015**

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

- 1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) updates the first MOU dated August 2013 between Blackpool Council, Fylde Council, Wyre Council (to be referred to as the Fylde Coast Authorities (FCAs) for the purpose of this MOU) and Lancashire County Council (LCC).
- 1.2 This update refreshes the evidence base; the strategic issues, in particular with reference to housing and transport matters; the governance arrangements; and also includes some minor textual changes to improve clarity.
- 1.3 The MOU provides for those strategic planning issues which require cross boundary co-operation and collaboration to ensure the requirements of the Government's 'Duty to Cooperate' are met and that the local plans of the FCAs are sustainable, deliverable and found 'sound' at examination. It formalises the ongoing dialogue and co-operation that currently exists between the four authorities.
- 1.4 The MOU will also guide the approach that the FCAs and LCC take with respect to responding to strategic planning applications and nationally significant infrastructure projects.
- 1.5 The following sections of the MOU provide:
  - Context on the Government's requirement regarding the Duty to Cooperate;
  - Background on the Fylde Coast Peninsula and its geographical and economic characteristics;
  - Cross Boundary Issues - highlighting strategic areas of agreement, including existing co operation and collaboration between the FCAs and LCC and areas for continued and future co-operation, to fulfil the Duty to Co-operate;
  - Governance arrangements.

## 2.0 CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Government introduced through the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) a 'Duty to Co-operate' on strategic planning and cross boundary issues.
- 2.2 The Duty to Co-operate applies to all local planning authorities, County Councils and a number of other public bodies and requires a continuous process of engagement and cooperation on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. This is to ensure strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and the process should also involve consultation with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships.
- 2.3 Local planning authorities are expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their plans are submitted for examination. If this is not achieved the Government has indicated that authorities run the risk of their Local Plans being found 'unsound' at Examination.
- 2.4 In particular, the Duty:
- relates to sustainable development or use of land that would have a significant impact on at least two local planning areas or on a planning matter that falls within the remit of a county council;
  - requires that councils set out planning policies to address such issues;
  - requires that councils and other bodies engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to develop strategic policies in the preparation of local plan documents and activities that can reasonably be considered to prepare the way for such documents;
  - requires councils to consider joint approaches to plan-making.
- 2.5 Paragraphs 178 -181 of the NPPF gives further guidance on 'planning strategically across local boundaries' and highlights the importance of joint working to meet development requirements that cannot be wholly met within a single local planning area, through either joint planning policies or informal strategies such as infrastructure and investment plans.
- 2.6 The NPPF requires that each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan and decision-making is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. As part of our approach to working cooperatively, the authorities will consider the best means of gathering information and intelligence on a strategic cross-boundary basis to ensure consistency of data and its interpretation and application to development planning.

### **3.0 THE FYLDE COAST PENINSULA – SUB REGIONAL FUNCTIONALITY**

- 3.1 The Fylde Coast sub-region encompasses the area covered by the unitary authority of Blackpool Council and the two-tier area covered by Lancashire County Council and the district councils of Fylde and Wyre. The area stretches from the Ribble Estuary in the south to Morecambe Bay in the north and the Forest of Bowland moorlands in the east. The area covers 384 sq km and is home to 327,400 residents.
- 3.2 The Fylde Coast sub-region demonstrates a high level of self-containment in terms of housing markets, travel to work patterns and economic functionality.
- 3.3 The Fylde Coast housing market area is broadly determined by patterns of local migration and travel to work patterns. There are strong local connections within that part of the Fylde Coast housing market area comprising Blackpool and west Fylde and Wyre. The remaining areas of Wyre relate to a wider rural housing market with the A6 corridor and eastern Fylde relating more strongly to Preston.
- 3.4 The economic functionality of the Fylde Coast is apparent through the strong travel to work patterns and employment with a shared tourism and cultural offer; regionally and nationally significant advanced manufacturing (BAE Systems at Warton and nuclear processing at Westinghouse, Springfields); the Department for Work and Pensions; and a shared infrastructure including Blackpool Airport, coastal tramway and strategic highway and rail networks.
- 3.5 This economic coherence was reflected in the establishment of the Multi Area Agreement in April 2009 and the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company (EDC) in April 2010, to support local authority partnership working, co-ordinate and drive forward shared objectives and deliver a co-ordinated programme of capital investment.
- 3.6 The landscape across the sub-region is broadly similar, largely falling within the Lancashire and Amounderness Plain National Character Area (NCA), but with a portion of the North Wyre coast within the Morecambe Coast and Lune Estuary NCA. The sub-region encompasses part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

## 4.0 CROSS BOUNDARY ISSUES

### Context

4.1 Paragraph 156 of the NPPF sets out strategic issues where co-operation might be appropriate including:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape/habitats and the importance of European sites.

4.2 The priority given to these issues will depend on local circumstances and strategic approaches may not be required in every situation.

4.3 Working together on strategic planning issues is not new to the FCAs and LCC. Engagement on issues of common concern with respect to housing, employment land and transport infrastructure have been ongoing for many years.

4.4 Currently, the spatial planning policies of the FCAs are being reviewed through the development of local plans. Whilst the Duty to Co-operate proposes that neighbouring authorities should consider joint approaches to plan making, the authorities have decided to develop separate Local Plans, albeit closely aligned, due to the different stages of the local plan process at which each authority finds its self and having regard to the unitary status of Blackpool Council.

4.5 To undertake a joint local plan would further delay the adoption of an up to date plan for each authority. The coalition government has advised local planning authorities to ensure that they get up to date local plans in place as soon as possible. Without an up to date plan, development decisions will be made on the basis of the NPPF, with the presumption being 'yes' to sustainable development unless 'any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be

restricted'. This could result in development being approved which does not have the support of the authorities.

- 4.6 Lancashire County Council (LCC) is responsible for the delivery of transport infrastructure and services within Fylde and Wyre districts directed by the Local Transport Plan and Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan; as well as education and social care provision and new responsibilities relating to flood risk and health. This also involves working with Blackpool at a strategic level to ensure a co-ordinated approach to infrastructure and service delivery. LCC's involvement is therefore critical in the development and delivery of the FCAs' local plans.
- 4.7 With respect to waste management and the provision of minerals, LCC and Blackpool Council as minerals and waste authorities have a long standing relationship of working together in preparing; monitoring and reviewing the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Lancashire. The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and an Onshore Oil and Gas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is under preparation.
- 4.8 The FCAs and LCC acknowledge that addressing cross-boundary issues is essential if sustainable development is to be delivered at a local level and economic growth and social and environmental well-being for the sub-region is to be achieved. Those strategic issues which are considered to need cross boundary co-operation are set out below. The 'Key Issues' which are highlighted at the end of each section are not exclusive. The Duty to Co-operate is an ongoing process, as issues and the policy approach are agreed other issues will arise which will need to be addressed. This memorandum will be reviewed and updated as appropriate in accordance with the governance arrangements set out at the end of this document.

### **Housing**

- 4.9 The housing offer on the Fylde Coast has an important role in supporting the sub-region's economy. The Fylde Coast housing market area (HMA) as a whole offers a wide range of housing and neighbourhoods, including some very attractive areas, but there are also some major concentrations of poor quality homes in very unattractive neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods contribute to the underperformance of the local economy, whilst in the attractive areas it is difficult for local people on modest incomes to be able to afford to buy or rent a suitable home.
- 4.10 To achieve a more balanced housing market the FCAs have undertaken a joint approach to addressing housing issues unrestricted by local authority boundaries. This has included appointing a Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Manager in October 2007 to develop and manage the sub-regional approach to housing and inform policy development.



4.11 Joint housing studies have been produced to inform policy development, including the need for new and affordable housing:

- the **Fylde Coast Housing Market Assessment Study (December 2013) published February 2014** (including Addendums) - to provide a robust evidence base to inform the policy approach to be adopted in the individual local plans. This study is a key document in the Local Plan evidence base and updates the previous 2008 Fylde Coast SHMA. It is accompanied by two Addendums which relate to the 2012 ONS Population and Household projections which were released in October 2014 and February 2015 respectively
- the **Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009** - to provide a common understanding, vision and set of priorities for housing across the Fylde Coast housing market area to provide a wider understanding of issues and priorities that enables public and private sector partners to develop their work in a clear strategic context

4.12 In considering housing need and requirements, the FCAs also need to address the accommodation requirements of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Government's Planning Policy for Travellers (March 2012) sets out the broad approach to be adopted and requires all local authorities to provide for a 5 year supply of sites where a such need is identified. In response to this the FCAs jointly commissioned consultants Opinion Research Services to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and the findings were published in October 2014. The assessment established a need for additional sites across the Fylde Coast including 81 traveller pitches and 14 plots for Travelling Showpeople to 2031.

**We will work together to:**

- **reach a consensus on housing provision across the Fylde Coast sub-region;**
- **establish a more balanced and wider housing choice in the Housing Market Area;**
- **promote a strong and distinctive sustainable pattern of settlement growth that supports each area's needs;**
- **reach a consensus on the accommodation needs of Gypsy, Traveller and travelling Showpeople communities across the Fylde Coast sub-region;**
- **agree complementary/joint approaches to the delivery and accessibility of affordable housing.**

## **Economy – Business and Industrial Development**

- 4.13 There are strong links between the FCAs in terms of travel to work patterns and employment, which warrant the joint consideration of future employment development for the sub region.
- 4.15 The size of the Fylde Coast economy is around £4.8bn – some 2% of the North West economy but productivity per head significantly underperforms the Lancashire and England average, reflecting the predominance of the tourism sector. However the sub-region does contain significant specialism in advanced manufacturing in Fylde - aerospace at Warton, identified in 2012 as an Enterprise Zone, nuclear processing at Springfields, accounting for almost half the industrial business lands in the sub-region and advanced chemical manufacturing at Hillhouse, Thornton.
- 4.16 Other strengths exist in food processing and environmental technologies. Environmental technology including Global Renewables at Thornton and fish processing associated with Fleetwood docks contribute significantly to employment in Wyre. The public sector and government agencies are also substantial providers of jobs in the sub-region along with insurance providers Axa and Aegon in Fylde.
- 4.17 Decline in GVA and employment has been a shared experience across the FCAs. However they recognise the need to strengthen, promote and enhance the tourism offer whilst at the same time further develop the other key sectors referred to above, with a need to persuade existing businesses in these sectors to grow and to provide the right conditions for other firms to invest.
- 4.18 Crucial to this is the provision of quality development sites to support new business growth. The peripheral location of the Fylde Coast within the North West makes it critical to provide a portfolio of sustainable employment opportunities to improve economic performance. The FCAs have recognised the need to capitalise on the particular assets, strengths and opportunities of the sub region as a whole. In 2010 a Fylde Sub Region Employment Land Review was agreed by Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre which sets out the current position in terms of employment land availability. Updating this in 2012 Fylde Council commissioned consultants to carry out an Employment Land and Premises Study and Wyre Council undertook an Employment Land and Commercial Leisure Study. In 2015 Wyre commissioned an update of the employment land elements of the Employment Land and Commercial Leisure Study. Blackpool Council has undertaken an updated Employment Land Study which was published in June 2014. Additionally BE Group were jointly commissioned in 2013 by Fylde and Blackpool Councils to undertake an employment land appraisal study relating to land on the Fylde/Blackpool boundary around Whitehills and Junction 4 of the M55 and specific sites in south Blackpool.

- 4.19 The Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre EDC has commissioned Genecon consultants to develop the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Local Growth Accelerator Strategy focused on delivering economic change at the sub-area level across the Fylde Coast in line with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Growth Plan and Strategic Economic Plan.

**We will work together to :**

- **undertake joint consideration of future employment development for the sub-region in response to the strong links between the FCAs in terms of travel to work patterns and employment;**
- **agree the sub-regional employment land requirement;**
- **agree the strategic priorities for land use with the aim of attracting major new economic development to help strengthen the Fylde Coast economy;**
- **promote sustainable solutions at key strategic sites and corridors:**
  - **Blackpool Airport corridor – Blackpool/Fylde boundary including newly designated Enterprise Zone;**
  - **The Enterprise Zone at BAE Systems – Warton – Fylde;**
  - **Hillhouse International Business Park – Wyre;**
  - **Central Business District – Blackpool Town Centre;**
  - **Junction 4 of the M55 – Fylde/Blackpool boundary;**
  - **A6 Corridor/Garstang – Wyre**

## **Retail**

- 4.20 Retailing is a key strategic issue over which the FCAs collaborate and in September 2007 White Young Green were commissioned by Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre authorities to carry out the first sub-regional retail study for the Fylde Coast. The study, which was published in June 2008, was undertaken to provide an in-depth analysis of the retail provision within the main centres of the Fylde Coast Sub-Region, including an assessment of the extent to which the centres were meeting the retail needs of the local population and the role of the local shopping network and the sub-regional shopping hierarchy.
- 4.21 This 2008 study was updated by Roger Tym and Partners – the ‘Joint Fylde Coast Retail Study 2011’ in order to reflect significant changes since the first study. These include major new developments, in particular the extension to the Houndshell Shopping Centre in Blackpool; economic changes; forecast retail expenditure growth rates; and changes in national guidance at the time with respect to the publication of PPS4 (December 2009) and the test of soundness for Local Plan Documents in PPS12 (June 2008), now superseded by the NPPF.
- 4.22 The 2011 study provides evidence to inform the local plans of the FCAs with respect to:
- a. the retail role of towns within the Fylde Coast and their position in the retail hierarchy;
  - b. potential future development needs for each authority; and
  - c. definition of the town centres within the Sub-Region which are Blackpool, Lytham, St Annes, Kirkham, Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Poulton-le-Fylde and Garstang.
- 4.23 The 2011 study has been endorsed by each of the FCAs to be used as appropriate evidence base on which to inform policy in their local plans.
- 4.24 To address over-trading issues of particular convenience stores highlighted in the 2011 study, Fylde and Wyre jointly commissioned Peter Brett Associates (formerly Roger Tym and Partners) to undertake additional work to assess the impact on future convenience expenditure capacity in their areas. It also provided the opportunity to extend the consideration of future floorspace needs for an additional 4 years to 2030 to reflect Fylde and Wyre’s Local Plan periods.

**We will work together to:**

- **reach a consensus on the retail hierarchy and roles of towns within the Fylde Coast Sub-Region;**
- **provide evidence to effectively resist retail applications which are not in accordance with the retail hierarchy contained in the development plans of the FCAs.**

**Transport**

- 4.25 Developing a more sustainable and efficient transport network across the Fylde Coast is vital for our economic prosperity and our social and environmental well being. Our sub-regional transport infrastructure needs to support our economic priorities and effectively integrate with future development locations to reduce the need to travel, making it safe and easy for Fylde Coast residents to access jobs and services; for visitors to access and enjoy the tourism and cultural offer; and for business to be attracted to invest in the sub-region.
- 4.26 The transport infrastructure of the Fylde Coast comprises road, rail, tram, air and potential port links supported by a comprehensive network of footpaths, canal, cycle routes and bridleways.
- 4.27 At the heart of the transport network is the M55 linking Blackpool with the M6 north of Preston. This is supported by the principal road network including the key routes of the A583 (Preston - Kirkham - Blackpool), the A584 (Freckleton/Warton –Lytham St. Annes-Blackpool), the A585(T) (M55 Junction 3 to Fleetwood), A6 (Preston – Garstang – Lancaster), the A586 (A6 to A585) and A588 (A585 through Wyre East Rural to Lancaster).
- 4.28 The North Fylde rail line connects Blackpool North, Poulton-le-Fylde and Kirkham with frequent and fast services to Preston. This line has recently been electrified which will increase the potential; for modal shift to relieve the road network enhance and may see through services by using Pendolino trains by 2017. There are a total of twelve railway stations in the sub-region, most of which are situated on the south Fylde line which connects to Blackpool South station and the Pleasure Beach and serves Lytham and St. Annes with an hourly service to Preston.

- 4.29 The Blackpool Tramway system runs for some 11 miles along the coast from Starr Gate in south Blackpool to north Fleetwood linking to Blackpool North and South stations although the interchange between the two is currently poor. The tramway has seen recent significant investment with a comprehensive upgrade completed in 2012, providing a modern accessible transport system which carried some 4.3 million passengers in the year ending October 2013. Through Sintropher funding, work has been undertaken to assess the development of tram services linked to the national rail network. The Blackpool North Tram option proposes a 700m extension from the promenade at North Pier along Talbot Road to Blackpool North rail station. The intention is to create an interchange between the tram and rail, increasing accessibility and connectivity between destinations along the Fylde Coast tramway and the national rail network.
- 4.30 Until October 2014, Blackpool Airport operated regular charter and scheduled flights throughout the UK and to various European destinations. In addition, whilst the Port of Fleetwood ceased ferry services in 2010 it maintains its capacity for ferry Roll On Roll Off (RORO) and has potential as a maintenance base for the off-shore energy sector, including wind turbines.
- 4.31 Whilst the transport infrastructure for the Fylde Coast could be considered as comprehensive there are major strategic challenges which need to be addressed to improve our economic competitiveness. These include:
- The A585(T) corridor which presents a significant bottleneck at Singleton crossroads and other local problems for connectivity between the M55 and Fleetwood
  - Congestion on the A585 between the M55 and Fleetwood could undermine future economic development activity of the Fleetwood -Thornton Development Corridor (to which the adopted Fleetwood-Thornton Area Action Plan, is applicable)
  - The A6 corridor and in particular Junction 1 on the M55 is close to capacity which could limit future growth along the A6 corridor beyond planned growth in North Preston
  - In the south access to the BAE Systems site at Warton needs to be improved to allow redundant brownfield land to be suitable for future development. Such connectivity issues act as a barrier to communities accessing employment. In response to this the Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan proposes a Western Distributor road around Preston linked to a new Junction 2 on the M55 to accommodate significant housing development in northwest Preston and improve access to the Enterprise Zone site

- Access to the Warton Enterprise Zone from the wider Fylde Coast can be problematic in particular from Wyre, trips taking around 50 minutes from Fleetwood to Warton outside peak holiday season and significantly longer within season. In addition public transport is also limited
  
- Public transport connectivity is relatively poor with limited rail connectivity between some of the key urbanised areas and coastal and market towns of Wyre and Fylde and the wider North West. Heavy rail connectivity to St Annes and south Blackpool is restricted by a single track line with trains only running once every hour in both directions. The propensity of those in the South Fylde rail line catchment area to use rail is well below the national average. There is a real need to increase service frequency and reliability, meeting transport demand from Lytham St Annes and supporting regeneration in south Blackpool. In addition, a lack of suitable interchange means the tram system is currently disconnected from the rail infrastructure. At Preston, interchange between services is made more difficult by poor platform access between main line platforms and those serving the Fylde Coast
  
- Blackpool Airport, now designated within an Enterprise Zone is a considerable sub-regional asset and there is a need to ensure that the economic potential of this asset is maintained. Currently public transport access to the airport is relatively poor. There is no rail station and at present no buses directly serve the site. If the airport is to truly appeal, there needs to be investment in transport infrastructure to the site from not only across the Fylde Coast but also from places such as Preston

4.32 Local transport planning priorities for Lancashire and Blackpool captured in the Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan will play an important part in addressing these strategic challenges. As well as the strategic issues presented above, this will consider important issues of rural connectivity, bus infrastructure and coach travel and the promotion of cycling.

**We will work together to:**

- **identify and carry forward a programme of cost effective viable improvements along the A585, working with the Highways Agency to remove the last remaining pinch-points along the route;**
- **consider the need for and the means to provide new direct, high standard road links between the M55 motorway north to Norcross and south to St. Annes to relieve road congestion and improve connectivity to potential areas of growth and development;**
- **to identify and deliver necessary improvements along the A6 corridor to support new growth and development;**
- **support the sustainable development of Blackpool Airport including working to explore the potential to develop commercial aeronautical activity and improvements to surface access by public transport;**
- **Support improvements to Preston Station, Blackpool North and other stations and maximise the opportunities presented by rail electrification and HS2 for rail travel and commuting;**
- **support further improvements to and better integration of the sub-regions train and tram networks to assist north-south movements along the coast from Fleetwood to Starr Gate and south to Lytham and St. Annes;**
- **Consider the opportunities presented by significant new road infrastructure in Central Lancashire, including the prospect for a new road crossing of the River Ribble;**
- **seek a common approach to parking standards across the sub-region.**



## **Surface Water Drainage and Waste Water**

- 4.33 Water infrastructure capacity is a key cross boundary issue which will directly affect the delivery of built development across the Fylde Coast. The main issues relate to surface water drainage; the capacity of the existing sewage network and the need to ensure that proposals for new development have no adverse effect on the bathing water quality along the Fylde Coast. This is a vital issue as the quality of our beaches and bathing water underpins our tourism offer and our future economic prosperity.
- 4.34 Recent studies have been undertaken to inform the evidence base including the Central Lancashire and Blackpool Outline Water Cycle Study completed in April 2011. Whilst this study covers those authorities in Central Lancashire and Blackpool which were included in the Growth Point area, the study provides an assessment of the flood risk planning data, foul drainage, surface water management water resources and infrastructure issues including information on the wider Fylde Coast area. In addition, as part of its role as a Lead Local Flood Authority, Blackpool has recently produced a Blackpool Surface Water Management Plan researching and aligning all data, information and legislation, in liaison with United Utilities and the Environment Agency on critical capacity issues, with a focus on existing assets, identifying flood risks, mitigation measures and with the view to developing an on-going implementation plan. This plan will include wider consideration of cross-boundary surface water infrastructure and drainage issues along the coastal belt in order to generate and develop sustainable drainage measures. Lancashire County Council is the Lead Flood Authority for the Fylde and Wyre area and works closely with the FCA's to identify and address key flood risk management needs. The County recently produced the Lancashire Flood Risk Management Strategy for 2014 to 2017, which also includes the Blackpool area.
- 4.35 From the evidence base it is clear that the main cross boundary issues relate to network capacity issues which are contributing to surface water flooding and spills of untreated waste water into the Irish Sea, putting at risk Fylde Coast bathing waters under the new bathing water legislation due to come into force in 2015.
- 4.36 It is therefore imperative that the FCAs and LCC agree a supportive approach to surface water and waste water management to ensure that the economic prosperity of the Fylde Coast is not compromised and that the future development requirements of the sub-region can be accommodated. This includes the approach to ad hoc development not compromising the delivery of required infrastructure improvements to address the capacity issues of the Fylde Coast.
- 4.37 In recognition of the issues surrounding water management the Fylde Peninsula Water Management Group (FPWMG) was set up in April 2011. The Group is a partnership comprising the Environment Agency, United Utilities, the FCAs, Lancashire County Council and Keep Britain Tidy. The purpose of the group is to provide a sustainable and integrated approach to the management of coastal protection; water quality (including bathing waters), surface water drainage (including flooding) and development.

- 4.38 The Partnership established a set of guiding principles to work towards:
- Work together to develop a strong evidence base so we can prioritise what is important for the area;
  - Use this evidence to demonstrate how environmental improvements can deliver real and lasting social and economic outcomes;
  - Cooperate to identify and deliver innovative solutions;
  - Unlock new funding streams and align investment plans to deliver real value for money;
  - Develop an agreed programme of works that delivers real and lasting change.
- 4.39 The FPWMG has also produced a ten point action plan which sets out the work that is needed to deliver long term improvements to bathing water quality across the Fylde Peninsula

**We will work together to:**

- **agree a common approach to surface water and waste water management, including the approach adopted to ad hoc development, to ensure the delivery of required infrastructure improvements needed to accommodate future development requirements is not compromised.**

### **Natural Environment**

- 4.40 The Fylde Coast sub-region is characterised by a wide variety of natural environmental assets, from intertidal mudflats to the high Bowland fells, and including all of Lancashire's surviving natural sand dune systems. There is a range of overlapping wildlife designations including sites of international, National and local importance which seek to conserve natural habitats and/or species. Six designated sites of international importance (including Ramsar, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)) fringe the coastline. There are ten nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which include Morecambe Bay, Ribble Estuary, River Wyre. Offshore there is a Marine SAC (Liverpool Bay) and Marine SPA (Shell Flat and Lune Deep) and a nationally important Marine Conservation Zone (Fylde). There are also 111 locally important Biological Heritage Sites (BHSs), five Local Geo-diversity Sites

and pockets of ancient woodland. Part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies within the sub region.

- 4.41 The sub-region is covered by two Local nature partnerships (LNP): Morecambe Bay LNP and Lancashire LNP. In addition, the Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area (NIA) was one of twelve designated in 2012, with the aim of improving the landscape for nature, the community and visitors.
- 4.42 A core planning principle of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This should be considered at a strategic level as landscape-scale networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure cross administrative boundaries and development in one area can have a potential effect upon natural assets in another. Green infrastructure is defined by Natural England as a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. An ecological network for Lancashire, including the whole of the sub region, has been identified on behalf of the Lancashire LNP and made available through Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN). LERN, which is hosted by the County Council, supports the environmental information and intelligence needs of public, private and third sector organisations operating in Lancashire, as well as members of the public. Access to LERN data and services is covered by a separate MoA.
- 4.43 To determine the environmental impact and effect on European designated sites, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC and the Habitats Directive respectively require assessments of plans and projects of neighbouring authorities to be considered, so requiring co-ordination and sharing of information at the Fylde Coast sub-regional level.
- 4.44 The sub-region is also characterised by relatively small but strategically important areas of Green Belt between i) Fleetwood, Thornton and Cleveleys ii) Thornton, Cleveleys, Poulton-le-Fylde and Blackpool iii) South Blackpool and St Anne's, iv) Lytham and Warton, v) Freckleton and Kirkham and vi) Staining and Blackpool / Poulton-le-Fylde. Any substantial strategic changes to Green Belt boundaries would need to be undertaken as part of a holistic sub-regional review and there is not currently any evidence of a requirement for such a review to take place.

**We will work together to:**

- **conserve and enhance natural habitats, ecological networks and landscapes of importance; and**
- **develop a strategic network of green and blue infrastructure across the sub-region.**

## 5.0 GOVERNANCE

5.1 The Duty to Co-operate requires that councils engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis. There is therefore a need to establish governance arrangements and protocols to ensure that the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate are met and that the FCAs can demonstrate at examination of their Local Plans that appropriate and constructive co-operation has taken place to ensure sustainable outcomes to strategic planning issues.

5.2 Governance arrangements under this MOU will comprise:

A Joint Member and Officer Advisory Steering Group to oversee the work under the Duty to Co-operate. The Terms of Reference for the Group are as follows:

- a) **To facilitate the Fylde Coast Authorities in meeting their Duty to Cooperate by discussing matters of common interest in relation to strategic planning on the Fylde Coast as a whole and to make recommendations to each Local Planning Authority and the County Council as necessary;**
- b) **To review as necessary and keep up to date the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fylde Coast Authorities;**
- c) **To collaborate on the development of planning, economic development and transport policy where appropriate to achieve consistency of approach**
- d) **To commission joint studies relating to strategic matters and the development of planning policy in each individual Local Authority and ensure that the evidence base remains up to date;**
- e) **To discuss and resolve as far as is possible cross boundary issues to make recommendations to each individual authority and the County Council as necessary;**
- f) **To keep each Local Planning Authority and the County Council informed on the development and review of planning, economic and transport policy in each individual Authority area;**

- 5.3 The group will be chaired on a rotational basis by a Member of one of the four authorities. The Council Leaders and Chief Executives will have the remit to appoint up to two appropriate representatives to act on their behalf as necessary. All meetings will be minuted to provide an ongoing evidence of co-operation
- 5.4 An Officer Working Group will provide support to all joint working arrangements as appropriate to ensure constructive engagement, good communications and transparency, seeking innovative sustainable solutions to strategic issues