THE PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

THE PAS RECOMMENDATION	THE PAS SUMMARY	CONTEXT FOR FYLDE	PRIORITY/DEADLINE	LEAD OFFICER
THEME: VISION & LEADERSHIP				
R1 - Set up a politically representative board of councillors and one for senior officers to oversee and input into the production of the next Local Plan period beyond 2032	There is a tension between growth and protecting the environment and heritage. Establish a process to coordinate, capture and agree the focus for the Local Plan beyond 2032. A formal governance structure to set the vision and longer-term aspirations providing clarity and managing tensions between economic growth, the environment and preservation. It will strategically address the housing and homelessness challenges. Obtaining clarity on key strategic issues as early as possible in the plan production process is critical in making the process resilient to changes to the planning system and election cycles.	Post 2023 elections appoint member and officer boards. Draft delivery plan for 2032 Local Plan linked to Corporate Plan.	**Medium** – based on long term planning and long-term time frame. **June 23**	
Actions:	1.1 Establish two Local Plan 2032 Delivery Boards – the officer board to include housing and economic development, elected member board to be determined through the Executive Committee after May 23. (R1) 1.2 Include matters relating to planning as a regular Heads of Service Standing Item to ensure senior officer awareness 1.3 Continue monitor and review of local plan and prepare for drafting of replacement plan to ensure in line with national policy and corporate plan objectives – through the two boards			**AO/MDE**

Outcomes:
   a)   Clarity of focus on vision and long-term aspirations
   b)   Tensions reduced between economic growth, environment and preservation
   c)   Housing and homelessness challenge addressed
   d) Synergy between Local Plan 2032 and Corporate Plan				

R2 - Strengthen the governance structure to give Planning earlier and better strategic oversight of major development schemes.	Embed Planning input much earlier in corporate projects to make planning an enabler not a blocker to development. Giving senior leadership comfort that projects are moving forward positively and improve risk management and ensure processes and protocols are followed.	Compulsory part of corporate project planning process in development.	**High** – quick win because already in progress and significant impact. **June 2023**	
Actions:	2.1 Revise, embed and publish Corporate Project Delivery process to ensure compulsory requirement for planning input (R2).			**AO/CR/MDE**

Outcomes:
   a)   Corporate projects are enabled by early planning input
   b)   Risk management improved
   c) Project plans streamlined				

THEME: SERVICE DELIVERY & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT				
R3 - Delegate decision making among a greater number of staff	The planning department has experienced and competent staff to allow decision making across a greater number of staff. This will reduce failure demand resulting from	Review and redraft all aspects of the service (external support/delivery). Review role	**High** – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity,	**MDE**

	process 'bottlenecks and communications issues. It will empower staff; create capacity and support career development.	& responsibility of each resource mapped to new processes. **Dec 23**	comms, engagement & reputation).	
Actions:	3.1 Appoint Independent consultant to review the process for planning applications and related submissions, including procedures, roles, responsibilities (including opportunities to increase delegation of decisions across the team), management, engagement, customer service etc. external support and best practice from similar local authorities.			**AO/MDE/AS**

Outcomes:
  a) Capacity created/waste, duplication and bottlenecks reduced.
  b) Empowerment and responsibilities consistent with post holders.
  c) Communication and customer service improved.
  d) Increased career development opportunities.
  e) Extensions of time reduced.
  f) Technology used efficiently in delivery of the service.

R4 - Create a clear set of processes for the Development Management Service	It is unclear where responsibility lies for distinct parts of the process creating inconsistencies and an imbalance in the work of senior officers. "Delegating Up" is common. Decisions, queries, complaints, and validation are carried out by senior officers. This raises questions of whether responsibilities and empowerment are in the right places impacting senior officer capacity for reviewing and improving planning processes.	Review and redraft all aspects of the service (external support/delivery). Review role & responsibility of each resource mapped to new processes.	**High** – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation). **Mar 24**	
Actions:	4.1 Produce a development management manual document all processes including any revisions identified through a review of workflows. 4.2 Through appraisals make all employees aware of roles and responsibilities within the team and approved processes.			**AS**

Outcomes:
  a) Empowerment and responsibilities consistent with post holders
  b) Effective use of resource
  c) Appropriate distribution of workload

R5 - Continue to review processes as part of 'business as usual'.	Often improvement work can become a one-off project. Fylde planners are embedding process reviews as part of their regular team meetings. This creates opportunities to streamline and improve processes. The focus should be on reducing double-handling/protracted sign-off procedures and addressing validation issues.	Review workflow of all aspects of the service (external support/delivery). Review role & responsibility of each resource mapped to new processes.	**High** – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation). **Mar 24**	
Actions:	5.1 Embed process review in team meetings including documentation of improvement actions that are implemented via updates to Development Management Manual.			**AS**
Outcomes:				

a) Empowerment and responsibilities consistent with post holders b) Effective use of resource c) Appropriate distribution of workload				
R6 - Reduce the reliance on Extensions of Time (EoTs).	A key outcome of service improvement work should be the reduction of Extensions of Time (EoT). EoTs result in a build-up of applications without a decision. This has a negative effect on the customer experience and service.	Review workflows of each aspect of the service (external support/delivery).	**High** – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation). **Sep 23**	
Action 6:	6.1 Review reasons for extensions of time (EoT). 6.2 Review process to avoid EoT that do not add value. 6.3 Benchmark Fylde's use of EoT against other Lancashire authorities 6.4 Seek feedback from agents on use of EoT. 6.5 Introduce a performance indicator that measures use of EoT's			**MDE/AS**
Outcome: a) Extensions of time reduced				
R7 - Work through the PAS Development Management (DM) Toolkit. as part of ongoing process and service improvement work.	The toolkit provides a series of improvement challenges for the development management service. It includes ideas for what an 'excellent' DM service looks like to complement a service improvement plan and ongoing process improvement work.	Toolkit can inform workflow review work and used as an ongoing measure – included as service plan action.	**Medium** – initial generic ideas for process improvement then longer-term guide. **Jul 23**	
Actions:	7.1 Complete review of Development Management process utilising PAS toolkit to inform workflow review			**MDE/AS**
Outcomes: a) Toolkit applied to inform process review best practice b) Toolkit embedded as a measure of performance for development management				
R8 - Produce a Planning Service Plan that has clear and direct links to the corporate priorities	The Planning Service needs a clearer sense of its own objectives and priorities, linked ("golden thread") to the corporate priorities so officers can better allocate limited time. The staff appraisal should provide a clear link back to the service plan. An outcome focussed service plan including service standards will help reflect the more pro-active approaches to customer service that is required.	The 'Golden Thread' principle is required in all service plans, post pandemic there will be a review of corporate service planning.	**Medium** – to be embedded as part of the corporate process linking individual outcomes to the Corporate Plan through service planning. **May 23**	
Actions:	8.1 Produce a service plan for the planning service in line with revised corporate procedures and template, linked to the corporate plan objectives and appraisals to establish 'golden thread' from individual to corporate outcome			**Management Team**
Outcomes: a) Planning service objectives and actions linked to corporate priorities b) Appraisals linked to 'outcome focused' service plan c) Proactive approach to customer service.				

R9 - Provide additional investment in the planning service to bring it up to date with the technology and cyber-security needs of a modern planning service.	Officers need to be confident in the new back-office IT system. It needs investment to get it fully functioning. There is presently a potential data-gap risk in the system. There are also processes and technology that need updating. This includes access to digital plans, telephony, and web-access kit available off-site. Some staff use their own technology; this represents a potential data-security risk.	Review the use of the computer system and link to workflow review – new processes driven by the technological capability. Benchmark best practice with other users of the same system. Provide the required technology.	**High** – will be integral to a review of workflow with technology reducing waste, duplication, and human input wherever possible = efficient. **Jul 23**	
Actions:	9.1 Review & invest in the technology used to deliver the service (R3/R4/R5/R6/R9), including: / Identify opportunities for development of recently introduced DEF software / Deliver identified improvements to Geographical Information System Software (GIS) / Develop staff to utilise digital upgrades / Explore options for a development plans module / Secure resources necessary to support investment in software development / Roll out of cloud telephony service / Roll out of laptop/tablet/managed device to team / Develop working practices to incorporate mobile working			**AO/MDE/AS/JG**
Outcomes: **a)** Technology maximised and used efficiently to deliver the service				
R10 - Establish an Agent's/Developer's forum, with an external chair	A Developer Forum will help communication between the Planning Service and its customers enabling the discussion /resolution of issues. Agree a specific and timetabled number of issues / standing items to work on. This requires year-on-year commitment to work well. Consider various formats that work for all involved and encourages attendance and engagement.	Key method of stakeholder engagement that needs to be in place.	**Medium** – Review of workflow should release capacity to plan and manage a dedicated forum, corporate support will be provided. **Sep 23**	
Actions:	10.1 Seek views from regular agents regarding the preferred forum for engagement (including frequency, joint LA forums, time of day) 10.2 Subject to outcome of action 10.1 establish agents' forum with independent chair			**MDE/Corporate**
Outcomes: a) Agent & Developer Forum established and engagement in place.				
R11 - Enforcement priorities and protocols need to be made clear.	Stakeholders are unclear about how enforcement works and why some things are not considered important enough to enforce. The service needs to help stakeholders understand the process, the priorities, and the practicalities of carrying out enforcement action so that expectations are clear and can be managed. Refresh and publish the Enforcement Policy statement, setting out what types of planning breach are a high priority and what options there are to resolve breaches.	Policy reviewed, repackaged, and published with case study / examples.	**Medium** – work already in progress can be quick win. **Jun 23**	
Actions:	11.1 Refresh of the enforcement policy and process when a breach occurs that is approved through new governance arrangements from May 23			**MDE/AS/KH/AR**

Outcomes:
   a)   Enforcement policy published
   b) Approach to enforcement understood by all stakeholders				

R12 - Optimise the council's webpages as an engagement tool and promote it as such.	The council website can provide service users with up-to-date information on planning applications. The website is not used by agents as much as it could be. Keeping it up to date and relevant, will drive more traffic to it and away from planning officers. It needs to be promoted to agents and customers.	Overhaul of planning web pages required at Fylde. Ongoing resource / digital links from planning system to keep pages dynamic and relevant for users.	**Medium**– online should be first point of contact wherever possible avoiding need for human input for straight forward / transactional elements of the service. **Dec 23**	
Actions:	12.1 Review general content of planning pages to ensure up to date and relevant 12.2 Benchmark information against other authorities 12.3 Promote interactive elements of website (application progress monitoring, need for planning permission)			**MDE/AS/JG/ST**

Outcomes:
   a) Updated website that is relevant, informative, and user-friendly
   b) Website and digital channels used by stakeholders, especially agents/applicants.				

R13 - Committee practices and procedures should be kept under review. This will ensure an ongoing, open, and engaging experience for the public.	Planning Committee is the service's 'shop window'. It demonstrates how planning and place-shaping decisions are made. There are 'continuous improvement' opportunities that will allow more time for the strategic, larger, and more contentious schemes.	Member and officer development of agenda. Review and monitor of procedures through governance group.	**Medium** – incorporate in current governance review for new council from May 2023. **Dec 23**	
Actions:	13.1 Review existing committee procedures, including frequency of meetings, time of day and live broadcast of proceedings. 13.2 Carry out review of committee practice and procedure at least annually. 13.3 Review current scheme of delegation 13.4 Ensure members of the Planning and Executive Committees receive frequent appropriate training			**IC/MDE/AS**

Outcome:
   a) Live webcasting of planning committee meetings
   b) Agenda developed by members/officers
   c) Procedures monitored through new governance arrangement				

THEME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP WORKING				
R14 - Introduce a more structured approach to obtaining and using customer feedback.	The Planning Service's approach to feedback should align with the corporate approach. The evaluation of customer feedback should form part of the performance reporting process, a customer feedback survey that goes out on individual decisions.	Key stakeholder engagement being developed corporately for all customer facing services. Bespoke surveys carried out when feedback identifies specific issue.	**Medium** – in progress with the corporate co-ordinated survey across customer facing services. Quick win opportunity. **Sep 23**	
Actions:	14.1 Carry out regular (consistent to allow year on year comparison) customer feedback survey with assistance of corporate services team 14.2 Document survey and ad-hoc customer feedback for inclusion to service update / improvement.			**GB/ASc**
Outcomes:				

| | a) Structured regular customer questionnaires/surveys |
| b) Engagement with service improvements based on identified customer need |
| c) Corporate approach to customer care incorporated into agreed processes. |

R15 - Take proactive steps to improving working relationships with Town and Parish Councils	The need for better communication between the council and its communities is recognised. The council is keen to improve things. A re-think is required to the purpose and outcomes of the current regular Town and Parish Council Forum alongside an annual training programme.	Training, forums, and workshops for parish representatives. Establish regular comms / updates through a review of workflow and tech use / web pages.	**Medium** – existing engagement is mixed in terms of outcomes; this will be built on and improved through a review of workflow releasing capacity and improving access. **Jul 23**	
Actions:	15.1 Review existing parish liaison group meetings with parish and town councils 15.2 Establish training plan for parish and town councillors following May 2023 election 15.3 Promote the opportunities available through neighbourhood planning 15.4 Review process for objections from town and parish councils			**TM/MDE**
Outcomes: a) Parish & Town Council liaison improved b) Relations with Parish and Town Councillors strengthened c) Opportunities for place-shaping increased d) Annual training programme delivered				
THEME: ACHIEVING OUTCOMES				
R16 - Review the approach to developer contributions.	Fylde does not operate the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relying on Section 106 (S106) developer contributions. The Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) has a provision for an 'Infrastructure Levy'. The Infrastructure Levy will operate similarly to CIL in that it will be for infrastructure requirements across the borough, rather than a site-specific S106 agreement (S106 may operate only on large schemes).	Review policy to introduce Infrastructure Levy based on Levelling Up Bill – objective to achieve option for contribution to generic levy. Review co-ordination and management of developer contributions to include finance.	**Medium** – officers monitoring progress and outcomes from the Bill ahead of review and levy proposal. **Subject to introduction of legislation**	
Actions:	16.1 Implement the Infrastructure Levy contained in the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill once enacted by parliament			**MDE/JG**
Outcomes: a) Infrastructure Levy implemented b) Monitoring and reporting of developer contributions published				
R 17 - Deliver the recommendations of the review/audit of Section 106 arrangements carried out in September 2022.	The Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (LURB) is proposing changes to developer contributions. The way Section 106 operates may change. The council should also implement the recommendations of the Section 106 audit.	Include the audit actions in the service plan, deliver quick wins, address any through a review of workflow and other actions from the PAS review.	**Medium** – audit actions published and will be matched with actions from PAS review to complement and avoid duplication.	

			As targets in 106 action plans	
Actions:	17.1 Implement the 8 recommendations of the Sn 106 internal audit report			**MDE/AS**

Outcomes:
  a) Recommendations of Section 106 audit implemented
  b) Infrastructure Levy implemented				

R18 - Investigate how closer working relationships can be forged with the Housing Team.	Fylde's Housing Team expressed a desire to work with Planning to address increased homelessness. This is a corporate issue that links into the Borough's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.	Included in Heads of Service agenda as part of their remit to engage service areas more effectively, remove silos and duplication.	**Medium** – ongoing role of Heads of Service through regular engagement, include as a bespoke connection that is required. **Sept 23**	
Actions:	18.1 Review need for affordable housing in the borough 18.2 Review tenure of affordable housing required to address local issues and reduce reliance on temporary (B&B) accommodation			**MDE/JG/KR**
Outcomes: a) Planning is embedded as a core service and part of the authority linked to other strategic services such as housing (homelessness).				