

PLANNING PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN

THE PAS RECOMMENDATION	THE PAS SUMMARY	IMPACT / TARGET COMPLETION DATE	LEAD OFFICER(S)
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	<p>There is a tension between growth and protecting the environment and heritage. It is therefore important to establish a process to coordinate, capture and agree the focus for the Local Plan beyond 2032. A formal governance structure will help to set the vision and longer-term aspirations. It will provide 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.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraphs 7.7 – 7.10)</p>	Medium – based on long term planning and long-term time frame.	
Actions:	<p>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)</p> <p>Success = Officer and member local plan boards established</p>	March 2024	AO/MDE
	<p>1.2 Include matters relating to planning as a regular Heads of Service Standing Item to ensure senior officer awareness.</p> <p>Success = Standing Item introduced</p>	July 2023	
	<p>1.3 Continue to monitor and review the local plan and prepare for drafting of replacement plan to ensure in line with national policy and corporate plan objectives – through the two boards.</p> <p>Success = Local plan reviewed/revised ahead of 5-year statutory requirement</p>	December 2025	
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 			

<p>R2 - Strengthen the governance structure to give Planning earlier and better strategic oversight of major development schemes.</p>	<p>Embedding planning input much earlier in corporate projects to make planning an enabler not a blocker to development. This will give senior leadership comfort that projects are moving forward positively and improve risk management and ensure processes and protocols are followed.</p> <p>The governance arrangement could consist of 2 'Boards'. A Planning and Regeneration Board (officers) - this holds more operational / professional focused conversations across service areas. The other board operates at a strategic level. It focuses on bringing the politics and regional considerations together. The operational Board reports to the strategic Board. This ensures that political and strategic considerations feedback directly. This will help keep the Planning Service aligned with the political landscape.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraphs 7.11 – 7.13)</p> <p>Planning should not work in isolation. It should be formally involved from the beginning so that solutions to planning issues are found in a timely manner rather than appearing as surprises later in the process.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraphs 7.14 – 7.15)</p>	<p>High – quick win because already in progress and significant impact.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p>	<p>2.1 Revise, embed and publish Corporate Project Delivery process to ensure compulsory requirement for planning input (R2).</p> <p>Success = Requirement to consider planning implications embedded in delivery framework for corporate projects</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>AO/CR/MDE</p>
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Corporate projects are enabled by early planning input. b) Risk management improved. c) Project plans streamlined. 			

<p>THEME: SERVICE DELIVERY & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</p>			
<p>R3 - Delegate decision making among a greater number of staff</p>	<p>The planning department has experienced and competent staff at all levels. The service can be confident and allow decision making across a greater number of staff. This will help reduce failure demand resulting from process 'bottlenecks and communications issues. It will empower staff; create capacity and support career development.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraphs 8.4, 8.5)</p>	<p>High – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation).</p>	<p>MDE</p>
<p>Actions:</p>	<p>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 (subject to displaying suitable experience to be assessed via the appraisal process)), management, engagement, customer service etc. external support and best practice from similar local authorities.</p>		<p>AO/MDE/ASc</p>

	Success = Independent review of development management processes completed and recommendations successfully implemented.	June 2024	
--	---	------------------	--

Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 different parts of the process. This is 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. This affects-senior officer capacity for reviewing and improving planning processes. (Paragraph 8.6)	High – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation).	
--	--	--	--

Actions:	4.1 Produce a development management manual document all processes including any revisions identified through a review of workflows. Success = Development Management Manual created	June 2024	AS
	4.2 Through appraisals make all employees aware of roles and responsibilities within the team and approved processes. Success = Awareness of roles and responsibilities addressed in staff appraisals	November 2023	

Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. See also Recommendation R8. (Paragraphs 8.7)	High – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation).	
Actions:	5.1 Embed process review in team meetings including documentation of improvement actions that are implemented via updates to Development Management Manual. Success = Staff feedback on processes regularly features in Team Briefing and feedback on suggestions provided	June 2023	AS
Outcomes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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).	Linked to Recommendation R5 A key outcome of service improvement work should be the reduction of Extensions of Time (EoT). EoTs often result in a build-up of applications without a decision. This has a negative effect on the customer experience and service. (Paragraph 8.4.2)	High – essential to address long-term customer service issues (speed, clarity, comms, engagement & reputation).	
Action 6:	6.1 Review reasons for extensions of time (EoT). Success = EoT Review completed	September 2023	MDE/AS
	6.2 Review process to avoid EoT that do not add value. Success = EoT process reviewed, reason for EoT documented, annual review of reasons for requesting EoTs in place	March 2024	
	6.3 Benchmark Fylde’s use of EoT against other Lancashire authorities Success = Use of EoT by other Lancashire Authorities completed	March 2024	

	6.4 Seek feedback from agents on use of EoT. Success = Feedback from agents received	December 2023	
	6.5 Introduce a performance indicator that measures use of EoT's Success = Performance measure for EoT's introduced and reporting (see Action 6.2) in place	April 2024	
Outcome: a) Unnecessary extensions of time reduced			

R7 Work through the PAS Development Management (DM) Toolkit. As part of ongoing process and service improvement work.	Linked to Recommendation R6 above. The toolkit provides a series of improvement challenges for the development management service. It includes ideas for what an 'excellent' DM service looks like. -This could complement a service improvement plan and ongoing process improvement work. (Paragraph 8.8)	Medium – initial generic ideas for process improvement then longer-term guide.	
Actions:	7.1 Complete review of Development Management process utilising PAS toolkit to inform workflow review. Success = PAS DM Toolkit evaluation completed	July 2024	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. These need a direct link ("golden thread") to the corporate priorities. This will allow officers to better allocate their limited time. The staff appraisal process should also provide a clear link back to the service plan. An outcomefocused service plan will build upon the good work that the Service is already delivering and including service standards will help reflect the more pro-active approaches to customer service that the Council desires. (Paragraph 8.9)	Medium – to be embedded as part of the corporate process linking individual outcomes to the Corporate Plan through service planning.	
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 Success = Planning service plan produced	August 2023	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. (Paragraphs 8.11, 8.12)	High – will be integral to a review of workflow with technology reducing waste, duplication, and human input wherever possible = efficient.	
Actions:	<p>9.1 Review & invest in the technology used to deliver the service (R3/R4/R5/R6/R9), Success = IT review completed.</p> <p>9.2 Identify opportunities for development of recently introduced DEF software. / Success = DEF improvements identified and a programme of improvements in place.</p> <p>9.3 Deliver identified improvements to Geographical Information System Software (GIS) / Success = Programme of GIS improvements in place including integration with DEF.</p> <p>9.4 Develop staff to utilise digital upgrades./ Success = Staff training and development completed.</p> <p>9.5 Explore options for a development plans module./ Success = Need for development plans module reviewed and actioned as appropriate.</p> <p>9.6 Secure resources necessary to support investment in software development. / Success =Review of IT resource requirement complete and resources secured.</p> <p>9.7 Roll out of cloud telephony service./</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p>	AO/MDE/AS/JG/RMck

	Success =All staff have access to cloud telephony.	March 2024	
	9.8 Roll out of laptop/tablet/managed device to team. Success = All staff have access to managed devices.	June 2023	
	9.9 Develop working practices to incorporate mobile working. Success = Mobile working solutions reviewed and adopted where appropriate.	March 2024	

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. A Forum allows discussion /resolution of issues. All can agree on a specific and timetabled number of issues / standing items to work on and co-produce. These arrangements is requires year-on-year commitment to work well. Consider various formats that work for all involved and encourages attendance and engagement. (Paragraph 8.14)	Medium – Review of workflow should release capacity to plan and manage a dedicated forum, corporate support will be provided.	
Actions:	10.1 Seek views from regular agents regarding the preferred forum for engagement (including frequency, joint LA forums, time of day) Success = Views of regular agents on establishment of a forum received	December 2023	MDE/Corporate
	10.2 Subject to outcome of action 10.1 establish agents' forum with independent chair Success = Agent's forum established with independent chair (subject to desire of agents)	July 2024	

Outcomes:

- a) Agent & Developer Forum established and engagement in place.

R11 - Enforcement priorities and protocols need to be made clear.	Members and town/parish councils 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. The service should refresh and make available the Enforcement Policy statement, setting out what types of planning breach are a high priority and what options there are to resolve breaches. (Paragraph 8.15)	Medium – work already in progress can be quick win.	
Actions:	11.1 Refresh of the enforcement policy and process when a breach occurs that is approved through new governance arrangements from May 23 Success = Enforcement policy reviewed and considered by Executive Committee	March 2024	MDE/AS/KH
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. (Paragraph 8.16)	Medium – online should be first point of contact wherever possible avoiding need for human input for straight forward / transactional elements of the service.	
Actions:	12.1 Review (and continue to review) general content of planning pages to ensure up to date and relevant Success = Content of planning web pages reviewed and updated	April 2024	MDE/AS/JG/ST
12.2 Benchmark information against other authorities Success = Review of other local planning authority web pages completed	March 2024		
12.3 Promote interactive elements of website (application progress monitoring, need for planning permission) Success = Interactive pages promoted through website/social media and regular communication with stakeholders	April 2024		

Outcomes:

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

<p>R13 - Committee practices and procedures should be kept under review. This will ensure an ongoing, open, and engaging experience for the public.</p>	<p>Planning Committee is the service's 'shop window'. It demonstrates how planning and place-shaping decisions are made. The Fylde Planning Committee observed was exemplary in many ways (see Paragraphs 8.16-8.21). There are 'continuous improvement' opportunities that will allow more time for the strategic, larger, and more contentious schemes. Paragraphs 8.25 – 8.26 contain suggestions for items to keep under review, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proportionate approach to the detail contained in officer reports and presentations. This will allow officers and members more time to focus on and debate the main issues. • Getting member's valuable input outside of the committee setting. e.g. in pre-app discussions, through technical briefings or developer's forums. Each well before an application comes to committee. • The boundary changes represent opportunities to broaden the planning experience and knowledge of a wider group of members. • Opportunities for junior case officers to gain experience by presenting at Planning Committee. This is also an opportunity to free up senior officer time. • Reviewing the application call-in terms. Resolve Parish/Town Council issues through discussion or the provision of information (rather than at committee). <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraphs 8.10, 8.25)</p> <p>Recording and broadcasting the Planning Committee live will encourage a wider audience for planning decisions. This is standard procedure at most councils. It will help make the process much more transparent for stakeholders and communities. Having access to recordings can also serve as a good improvement and training tool.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraph 8.26)</p>	<p>Medium – incorporate in current governance review for new council from May 2023.</p>	
<p>Actions:</p>	<p>13.1 Review existing committee procedures, including frequency of meetings, time of day and live broadcast of proceedings, content of reports, introduction of technical briefings, broadening the range of officers presenting to committee, reviewing the application call in terms.</p> <p>Success = Full review of committee procedures completed, and recommendations implemented at next annual review of constitution</p> <p>13.2 Carry out review of committee practice and procedure at least annually.</p> <p>Success = Annual review of practice and procedure takes place</p>	<p>May 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p>	<p>IC/MDE/AS</p>

	13.3 Review current scheme of delegation and arrangements for resolving town and parish council referrals ahead of committee meetings. Success = Scheme of delegation reviewed and any revisions implemented	February 2024	
	13.4 Ensure members of the Planning and Executive Committees receive frequent appropriate training Success = Annual member training programme in place	April 2024	
	13.4 Ensure members of the Planning and Executive Committees receive frequent appropriate training Success = Annual member training programme in place	April 2024	
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, Doncaster Council has a customer feedback survey that goes out on individual decisions. An agent/developer Forum is another way of obtaining customer feedback (see Recommendation R10). (Paragraph 9.9)		
	14.1 Carry out regular (consistent to allow year on year comparison) customer feedback survey with assistance of corporate services team. Success =Annual customer feedback survey has been conducted	December 2023	GB/ASc
Actions:	14.2 Document survey and ad-hoc customer feedback for inclusion to service update / improvement. Success = All feedback collated and considered in annual service update	April 2024	
	14.2 Document survey and ad-hoc customer feedback for inclusion to service update / improvement Success = All feedback collated and considered in annual service update	April 2024	

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	<p>Interaction with Town and Parish Councils is important. It helps ensure effective community interaction with the Planning system. The need for better communication between the council and its communities is recognised. The council is keen to improve things. The recommendations in this report will help improve customer service. The Peer Challenge process should also be a catalyst for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training for council and Town/Parish Council Members. • Facilitating community involvement early on in master planning, and/or through Neighbourhood Plans. • Establishing a pro-active and structured approach to engaging with Town and Parish Councils. A re-think is required to the purpose and outcomes of the current regular Town and Parish Council Forum alongside an annual training programme. (Paragraphs 9.11 – 9.13) 		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.
Actions:	15.1 Review existing parish liaison group meetings with parish and town councils Success = meeting arrangements for parish liaison groups has been reviewed	November 2023	TM/MDE
15.2 Establish training plan for parish and town councillors following May 2023 election Success = Town and parish council training plan in place	November 2023		
15.3 Promote the opportunities available through neighbourhood planning Success = Neighbourhood planning session with town & parish council's has taken place	December 2023		
15.4 Review process for objections from town and parish councils Success =Process for considering comments of town and parish councils has been completed	November 2023		
Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (it is also proposed that S106 may operate only on large schemes). (Paragraphs 10.9)	Medium – officers monitoring progress and outcomes from the Bill ahead of review and levy proposal.	
Actions:	16.1 Implement the Infrastructure Levy contained in the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill once enacted by parliament Success = Infrastructure Levy has been successfully introduced in line with national legislation and Guidance	Subject to introduction of legislation	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. As well as Recommendation R16The council should also implement the recommendations of the Section 106 audit. The priority recommendations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuity/resources (just one member of staff is currently involved in monitoring payments and spend) • better documented procedures • better monitoring of the collection and status of section 106 monies (Paragraph 10.10)	Medium – audit actions published and will be matched with actions from PAS review to complement and avoid duplication.	
Actions:	17.1 Implement the 8 recommendations of the Sn 106 internal audit report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedural guidance, • service level agreements 		MDE/AS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity arrangements • Reporting of collection of 106 funds • Approval affixation • Approval status of agreements on website • Listing of agreements via website • Spending of monies <p>Success = The 8 recommendations of the 106 Audit have been actioned.</p>	April 2024	
--	---	-------------------	--

Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recommendations of Section 106 audit implemented b) Infrastructure Levy implemented 			
--	--	--	--

R18 - Investigate how closer working relationships can be forged with the Housing Team.	<p>Fylde’s Housing Team expressed a desire to work more closely with Planning to address a rapidly growing homelessness problem. This is a corporate issue that links into the Borough’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Paragraph 10.8)</p>	Medium – ongoing role of Heads of Service through regular engagement, include as a bespoke connection that is required.	
Actions:	<p>18.1 Review need for affordable housing in the borough through the completion of an Affordable Housing Needs Survey</p> <p>Success = Affordable Housing Needs Survey has been completed</p>	March 2023	MDE/JG/KR
	<p>18.2 Review tenure of affordable housing required to address local issues and reduce reliance on temporary (B&B) accommodation through revisions to the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>Success = Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document has been updated and adopted by the council</p>	April 2024 (subject to Scrutiny Review)	

Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Planning is embedded as a core service and part of the authority linked to other strategic services such as housing (homelessness). 			
---	--	--	--

LEAD OFFICERS

AO – Allan Oldfield Chief Executive	AS – Andrew Stell Development Manager	ASc – Alex Scrivens Corporate Performance and Engagement Manager
CR- Charlie Richards Head of Regeneration and Projects	GB – Gemma Broadley Head of Corporate Service	IC – Ian Curtis Head of Governance
JG- Julie Glaister Planning Policy Manager	KH – Katie Halpin Senior Planning Enforcement Officer	KR – Kirstine Riding Housing Services Manager
MDE – Mark Evans Head of Planning	RMc – Ross McKelvie ICT Manager	ST – Sally Thompson Research and Information Officer
TM – Tracy Manning Deputy Chief Executive		

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The overall effectiveness of the action plan in delivering improvement in the planning service will be judged, year on year, against the following performance indicators:

Indicator	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2027/28
Minor applications determined within 56 days.	90.91%				
Major applications determined within 91 days.	98.02%				
Other applications determined within 56 days.	97.45				
Average length of time (in days) to determine planning applications.	TBC				
Percentage of applications subject to an extension of time.	43%				
Number of complaints upheld by the Ombudsman.	2 (of 4)				
Percentage of planning appeals won.	75% (6 of 8)				

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Date	Changes
0.1	March 2023	Draft improvement plan as considered by Planning Committee on 8 March 2023
0.2	August 2023	Amendments for consideration by Mini-Spotlight Review Scrutiny Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full recommendation supporting text added and Context for Fylde deleted.• Deadlines adjusted, allocated to individual actions and "priority" changed to "Impact".• Indicators of Success and Monitoring Framework added.• Document control and page number footer added.• Lead Officer roles added.• Formatting updates.
0.3	August 2023	Mini-spotlight review Scrutiny Panel recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target dates reviewed and amended• Actions expanded to aid clarification• Quantum added to appeal performance target