

# **Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies**

**Examination in Public**

**Blackpool Council Opening Statement**

December 2021





## **BLACKPOOL COUNCIL**

### **BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN PART 2: SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES – EXAMINATION HEARINGS**

**OPENING STATEMENT: 6 December 2021**

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Welcome to Blackpool.

1. Thank you for giving the Council the opportunity to present a brief opening statement, to provide an overview of The Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document to set the context for the examination.

#### **Blackpool context**

2. Blackpool is the U.K.'s largest and most popular seaside resort, located in the North West of England on the Fylde Coast peninsula; covering an area of around 35km<sup>2</sup> with 11.5km of seafront; a resident population of 138,400 and an employed workforce of around 64,200.
3. Intensely urban and compact in form, it is characterised at its heart with the Resort Core (some 5km<sup>2</sup>) and adjoining town centre. Behind the seafront lies numerous guest houses and small hotels beyond which are the residential suburbs and 10 employment areas including the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone in the south of the Borough which straddles the boundary with our neighbouring authority Fylde.
4. Limited areas of countryside lie on the eastern edge of the Borough and the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area lies in the south east where a Neighbourhood Plan is currently being developed by the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum.
5. Blackpool is surrounded by the neighbouring authorities of Fylde and Wyre and together the 3 authority areas support around 331,700 residents and an employed work force of around 138,200. This sub region demonstrates a high level of self-

containment in terms of housing markets, travel to work patterns and economic functionality. As a result of this, working cooperatively together on strategic and cross boundary issues for the three authorities is long standing and is specified in the Fylde Coast Memorandum of Understanding and the Statement of Common Ground for the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2.

### **Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy**

6. The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy was adopted in January 2016 and was developed specifically to address key challenges facing Blackpool as a resort with a declining tourism spend which has led to an under-performing economy and a legacy of acute socio economic and physical deprivation.
7. Planning and the Plan-led system is recognised by the Council as having an integral role to play in achieving Blackpool's ambitions and is a key part of a wider jigsaw of initiatives targeting and addressing key issues of transience, homelessness, health and well-being and worklessness.
8. The Core Strategy has been effective in delivering on the long term Vision in terms of homes, jobs and regeneration whilst protecting key assets from inappropriate development and promoting sustainable growth.

### **Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies**

9. The Council believe that the Local Plan Part 2 aligns with the Core Strategy and provides a sustainable suite of site allocations which deliver the housing and employment requirements; and includes a suite of bespoke development management policies which will replace all the 'Saved' policies in the 2006 Local Plan and which respond to the unique local circumstances that exist in this historic seaside resort.

### **Soundness and legal compliance**

10. The Local Plan Part 2 has been developed responding to the dynamic planning context that has occurred over the period the plan has been produced and the Council

considers that Part 2 is consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Blackpool Local Part 1: Core Strategy. In addition the Council considers that the legal requirements for the production of this Part 2 plan have been met.

11. The Council believes that it has submitted a plan which has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate and a Statement of Common Ground has been submitted signed by neighbouring authorities and the Marine Management Organisation. With respect to the legal and procedural requirements we have an evidence base underpinning the development management policies which we consider is proportionate and robust and Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessments that have been undertaken throughout the plan's preparation.
12. Considerable consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of Part 2 with around 1340 consultees being contacted including all relevant statutory consultees, key stakeholders across the Council, key external partners, neighbouring authorities; local communities, residents and businesses.
13. The plan has been well received at each stage of consultation. The Regulation 18 Scoping Document consulted upon in June/July 2017 received 35 responses. The informal Consultation Paper consulted upon during June/July 2019 and which presented a draft plan generated 75 responses. Thirty five of these responses were related to a proposed Traveller and Travelling Showman site. Other comments related to loss of playing fields; the proposed locally set threshold for retail and leisure assessments; detailed issues related to heritage; and comments on the Countryside Area Designation. Eleven policies received no comment.
14. With respect to the Regulation 19 (submission) document 25 responses were received raising around 85 issues on different aspects of the Plan and supporting documents. Twenty one of the 42 development management policies either received no objection or received comments of support. Comments raised by Historic England and Natural

England have been resolved through signed Statements of Common Ground and with Sport England through a letter of comfort.

15. We believe that we have produced a document that is sound and along with other key local strategies and initiatives will assist in tackling key issues affecting Blackpool and deliver the changes that residents, businesses and visitors wish to see. That said we have formally invited the Inspector to propose modifications to the Plan if they are considered to be necessary to make the plan sound.
  
16. Finally I would like to thank the tireless efforts of the Planning Strategy and Transport Policy Teams in developing the Local Plan Part 2 ; the support of our Councillors throughout the process, in particularly Councillor Lynn Williams as Portfolio Holder and Councillor Mark Smith. The Council Team look forward to working constructively with the Inspector in what we hope is a successful examination.
  
17. Thank you.