



Investing in our Homes & Community

Fylde Coast Local Investment Plan 2011 - 2014





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FORWARD

This Local Investment Plan for the Fylde Coast sets out how an appropriate supply of new housing, investment in existing homes, and work to improve the attractiveness of residential neighbourhoods across Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre will help deliver prosperity and an improved quality of life for all residents.

The Fylde Coast is an area of extremes – while there are important economic and social connections, there are also great differences between urban and rural areas and between places that are sought after and neighbourhoods that have some of the worst deprivation in the country. This means that while there is a general need to support the local economy and focus investment on actions that make the greatest contribution to overall prosperity, investment also needs to be carefully tailored to the needs of each area.

It is especially important to have a clear set of investment priorities in this time of reduced public expenditure. This Local Investment Plan provides a sound framework for investment by the local authorities themselves, and by other public sector partners, housing associations and private developers, alongside investment from the Homes and Communities Agency. All partners can be confident that investment in the priorities set out in this Plan will strengthen the local economy and provide individuals with new opportunities to prosper.



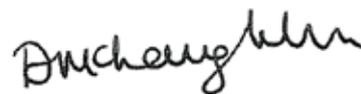
On behalf of Blackpool Borough Council



On behalf of Fylde Borough Council



On behalf of Lancashire County Council



On behalf of the Homes and Communities Agency

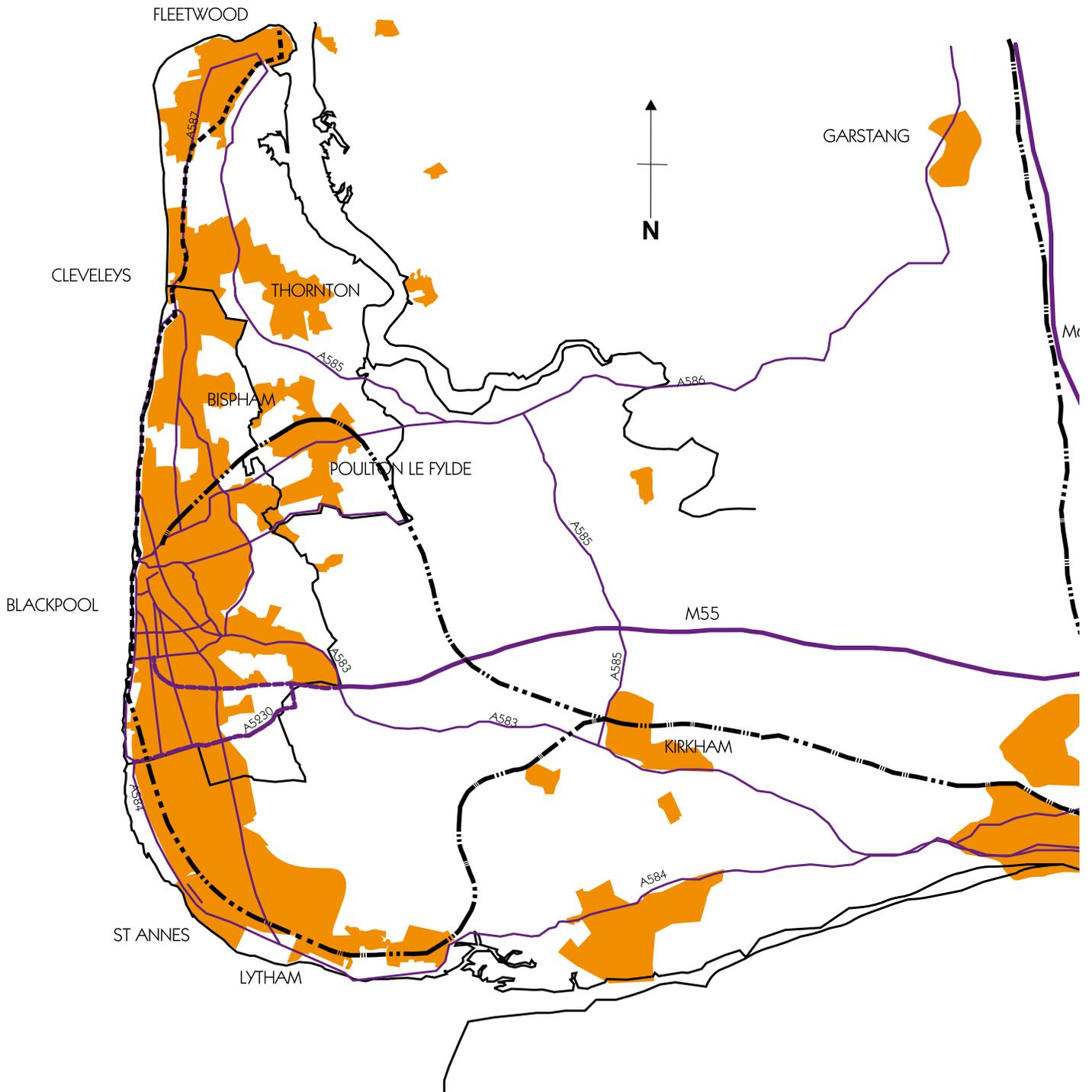


On behalf of Wyre Borough Council



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This first Fylde Coast Local Investment Plan (LIP) has been produced to help to make clear local objectives and delivery priorities for capital investment in housing and regeneration in support of economic improvement across the Fylde Coast area over the 2011 to 2014 period. The LIP has been prepared by Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre Economic Development Company (BFWEDC) working together.
- 1.2 The LIP takes economic priorities and the housing priorities identified in the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy and sets out how they will be delivered through focussed capital investment by public agencies, and by promoting appropriate investment by property owners and developers. It particularly establishes a framework of working between the Fylde Coast partners and the Homes and Communities Agency, shaping the HCA's investment programme in the area, and setting out how the HCA will provide wider support and assistance. The core elements of the Fylde Coast LIP include:
 - The key socio-economic and housing issues and opportunities in the area.
 - Spatial and thematic priorities for capital investment in housing and economic growth.
 - A framework for on-going decision making, and for ensuring effective delivery of our objectives.
- 1.3 The Fylde Coast LIP has been prepared at a time of considerable uncertainty – it is unclear when the economy and housing market will improve, public funding is being cut significantly and new policies and institutional arrangements are being sketched out but the detailed implications are currently unclear. However, the Coalition Government places significant emphasis on local responsibility. The LIP provides a means for local partners to set out a clear plan for investment in local priorities. Delivery will rely on significant investment from the private sector and voluntary sector partners, especially taking advantage of new flexibilities in how affordable homes are built and managed.
- 1.4 The key priorities for housing and regeneration in the Fylde Coast are well established, and the underlying issues will take many years and more than one economic cycle to resolve. It is the investment opportunities that are likely to shift quickly over time, so the details of how priorities are met will need to be reviewed and further developed later in 2011 and on a regular basis over the next three years.



2. OVERVIEW OF THE FYLDE COAST

Introducing the Fylde Coast

- 2.1 The Fylde Coast is a coastal plain in western Lancashire covering the three districts of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. Roughly square-shaped, it is bounded by Morecambe Bay to the north, the Ribble estuary to the south, the Irish Sea to the west, and the Bowland hills to the east. The west coast is almost entirely urban, with 90% of the area's population living in an urban area that runs from Fleetwood in the north, through Blackpool, and down to Lytham St Anne's, with Thornton and Poulton-le-Fylde not far inland. The rest of the area is largely rural but includes the smaller towns of Garstang, Kirkham and Wesham.
- 2.2 With a population of around 320,000 people, inhabiting 152,000 homes and working in 15,000 businesses, the Fylde Coast is a functional economic area with a distinctive employment and housing market, and its own patterns of transport, education and health provision. The nearest urban centres are Preston to the south east and Lancaster to the north east. There is an economic connection to neighbouring areas but the housing market linkages between the Fylde Coast and immediate adjacent areas are relatively slight. However, the area's role as a major holiday destination has always made it attractive to significant numbers of people moving in from other parts of the North West region and the wider UK.
- 2.3 There is a long history of co-operation amongst the authorities covering the three administrative areas of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. Blackpool Council has had unitary status since 1998, and Fylde and Wyre work in a two tier system with Lancashire County Council. There has been an increasing recognition of the scope and potential for closer working between the local authorities in the Fylde Coast. Economic development, tourism, housing, inward investment, business support and employment and skills issues have seen a co-ordinated approach for many years.
- 2.4 A new Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company came into existence in July 2010, and local partners have agreed a shared agenda to promote prosperity across the area. This agenda is supported by this Local Investment Plan, with investment in housing and regeneration a critical element of a successful future for the Fylde Coast.
- 2.5 Key evidence and strategies for the Fylde Coast that are reflected in this Local Investment Plan are available by following the links below:
- [Fylde Coast Housing Strategy](#)
- [Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment](#)
- [Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Evidence Base](#)
- Note that the Fylde Coast Economic Strategy is still in draft form and is yet to be published.

The Fylde Coast Economy

Table: Fylde Coast Economy Detail

	Blackpool%	Fylde%	Wyre%	NW%	UK%
Manufacturing	7.4	31.6	9.9	11.6	10.2
Construction	3	3.5	6.9	5.2	4.8
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	31.4	19.2	27.8	23.5	23.4
Transport/communications	3	2.4	3.6	5.8	5.8
Finance/IT/business	10.2	17.9	9.2	19.7	22
Public and health	37.3	20.7	35.3	28.2	27
Other services	7.4	3.7	4.8	4.9	5.3
TOTAL	99.7	99.0	97.5	98.9	98.5
Of which, Tourism related	16.4	9.1	9.9	8.2	8.2

Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis

- 2.6 The modern Fylde Coast economy reflects its historical development and its geography. It developed from an essentially rural and fishing economy through railway driven tourism expansion in the Victorian period. Tourism has remained the mainstay, especially in Blackpool, although has been subject to steady decline in recent decades.
- 2.7 The area also contains some major manufacturing industries such as the defence aerospace centre at Warton and nuclear reprocessing at Springfield (both in Fylde). Hillhouse Business Park and Fleetwood Docks and fish processing industry are also significant centres in Wyre. A range of other services have provided some extension of the area's economic base, especially finance, IT, and business services in Fylde. Agriculture continues to be important in the rural areas. Public sector employment as a proportion of the whole is especially significant in Blackpool and Wyre. The breakdown of jobs by key sectors is shown below, with a separate estimation of the proportion of jobs that are tourism related:
- 2.8 Economic performance in terms of growth in GVA/capita has averaged 1.7% per annum across the Fylde Coast in recent years compared with 2.1% across the North West. The absolute level of GVA/capita Fylde Coast economy remains at only 73% of the UK average GVA and our most recent economic forecasts suggest that without intervention, GVA per head in 2018 will not even have reached the 2008 level in the North West region. This low productivity is reflected in low earnings, although there are major variations between Blackpool which has the lowest earnings in Lancashire, and Fylde with close to the highest.
- 2.9 As well as low productivity and earnings in some areas, there are significant problems of worklessness in Blackpool and Fleetwood. For example, economic inactivity is at 28% in Blackpool (UK 21.5%, North West 23.5%). In addition, 35% of the working age population either holds no qualifications or are only qualified to NVQ Level 1.
- 2.10 There are, however, major opportunities for employment creation, such as through the on-going creation of jobs at Hillhouse in the Fleetwood-Thornton area, through the uplift in visits to Blackpool that has been sustained through 2009 and 2010, and improved retail footfall in Blackpool Town Centre. Lytham St Anne's is building on its popularity through the "Classic Resort" initiative.
- 2.11 There are good transport connections via the M6 and M55 from Blackpool and Lytham St Anne's, although road and rail links to Fleetwood remain weak. The area benefits from an international airport.

Key Housing Dynamics

1. The supply of new homes relative to demand

2.12 Growth in the number of households has been significant across the Fylde Coast in the last few years, especially in Fylde and Wyre. This growth arises from smaller average household sizes as the local population becomes older and family structures change, and from rises in the size of the population as more people come to the area than leave it. Demography-based projections predict around 1,700 new households arising in the Fylde Coast area each year. Employment-based projections are much lower, but the area has a relatively large proportion of older people - the proportion of people aged over 65 years in each of the Fylde Coast authorities is above the North West average of 16%, with Blackpool at 19% and both Fylde and Wyre at 23% - and a significant element of in-migration occurs when retired people or younger people without paid work move into the area from the rest of the UK.

Between 2002 and 2006, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre were all in the top 10 of local authorities that movers within the North West move to – in those five years, 34,000 people moved to Blackpool from elsewhere in the North West (equivalent to 24% of the total population of Blackpool), 17,000 moved to Fylde (23% of Fylde’s population) and 23,000 moved to Wyre (21% of Wyre’s population). Blackpool also has very high levels of people moving in to the borough from more than 100 km away – absolute numbers are comparable with the Manchester City Council area. [Source: NWDA Regional Strategy evidence paper 18 (Population Change), 2008]

2.13 There are positive implications to this trend – the very attractive coastal and rural environment across many parts of the Fylde Coast draws in people who contribute to the local economy. Housing markets in the most popular areas are likely to bounce back more quickly when current recession comes to an end. High latent demand also provides a potential market for new homes in regeneration areas, providing the offer is sufficiently attractive. More negatively, in-migration also includes significant numbers of households who are economically dependent, particularly to Blackpool. Wherever significant in-migration occurs, it can put pressure on local services, and helps to push up house prices in the popular areas.

2.14 The supply of new homes across the Fylde Coast has been at a rate significantly lower than future household projections, and has dwindled in the last two years with the reduced availability of credit and falling house prices. This contributes to long term house price rises and rising housing waiting lists.

2.15 The urban areas of the Fylde Coast are already densely developed with few major opportunities for new development apart from in the Fleetwood-Thornton AAP area where former heavy industrial land is available for re-development and in inner Blackpool where poor quality holiday accommodation is moving over to residential uses. In both cases, new development is on the edge of financial viability, and it is challenging to deliver and sell a high quality housing offer without public sector assistance. While these areas are priorities for new housing development, further development is required on the edges of existing settlements if future housing requirements are to be met in a sustainable way close to existing transport infrastructure and services.

Table: Net Housing Completions

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	Total	Average 2006-10
Blackpool	338	264	190	123	915	229
Fylde	168	394	305	145	1012	253
Wyre	261*	317	184	236	998	250
Fylde Coast Total	767	975	679	504	2925	731

* 2006 calendar year

2. The affordability of housing

- 2.16 There are significant problems of housing affordability driven by high prices in suburban and rural areas, and very low incomes in Blackpool and Fleetwood. The ratio of median house prices to median household incomes was 5.05 in Blackpool, 5.32 in Fylde, and 6.87 in Wyre in 2009 compared with a North West average of 5.17. The data in the table below suggests that home ownership is less affordable to younger households in most parts of the Fylde Coast than in England as a whole; many young people are forced to leave the more prosperous areas to find a home.
- 2.17 There are very large differences in house prices between areas, with the least desirable flats in Blackpool worth around £40,000 and similar sized properties in Lytham worth around £200,000. However, areas with the lowest prices would currently only be considered by those with no other choices – there is an opportunity to meet high demand by creating a more acceptable offer in those areas. The graph below shows the average weekly cost of renting or buying a 2 bedroom property at affordable, intermediate and market rates in the different local authority areas:
- 2.18 Private renting has grown in importance in recent years at all levels of the market, especially for people who cannot get a mortgage with less available mortgage credit, and people who need to move but cannot sell their home in a stagnant market. The bulk of the market, however,

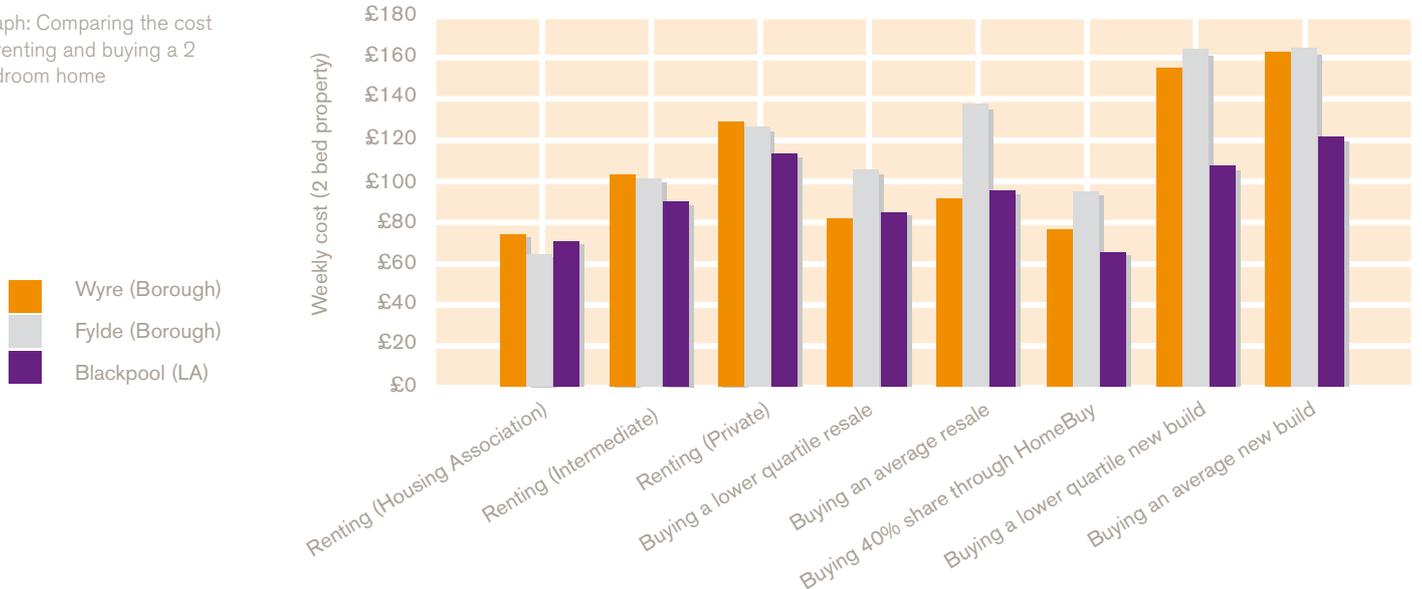
is relatively unattractive accommodation that remains focused on letting to people reliant on Housing Benefit, especially in Blackpool.

- 2.19 The proportions of households who receive Housing Benefit to help meet their housing costs are very high in Blackpool at nearly 30% of all households, and much lower at 11% in Fylde and 12% in Wyre. Significantly, around 68% of people receiving Housing Benefit in Blackpool live in the private rented sector and over 50% in Fylde and Wyre, compared with around 20% nationally. Recent increases in the numbers of people on Housing Benefit (for example, a rise from 16,000 to 19,000 households in Blackpool in the last two years) have mostly been met within the private rented sector, and imply high levels of Local Housing Allowance payments compared with much lower levels of Housing Benefit payments to people living in social rented homes.
- 2.20 The social rented sector accounts for less than 11% of all homes in Blackpool, 6% in Fylde and 7% in Wyre compared with a national average of 18% of homes. The demand for homes in the local social rented sector is higher than it has ever been. Some elements of the social rented stock are imbalanced compared with demand, especially the 73% of re-lets in the Blackpool Council-owned stock that are one bedroom flats or bedsits, and the high proportion of the Fylde stock that is sheltered. There is an especially high need for family-sized homes to rent in most areas.

Table: Housing Affordability

Source: NHPAU	percentage can buy 2008			percentage can afford private rent 2007		
	Under 40 all households	Under 40 Working	Under 40 Family	Under 40 all households	Under 40 Working	Under 40 Family
Blackpool	33.3	39.5	17.2	55.4	63.9	32.1
Fylde	40.8	45.7	22.6	62.8	70.3	48.2
Wyre	38.4	45.1	23.9	58.2	65.8	41.3
England	40.6	45.5	26.1	57.1	64.3	42.7

Graph: Comparing the cost of renting and buying a 2 bedroom home



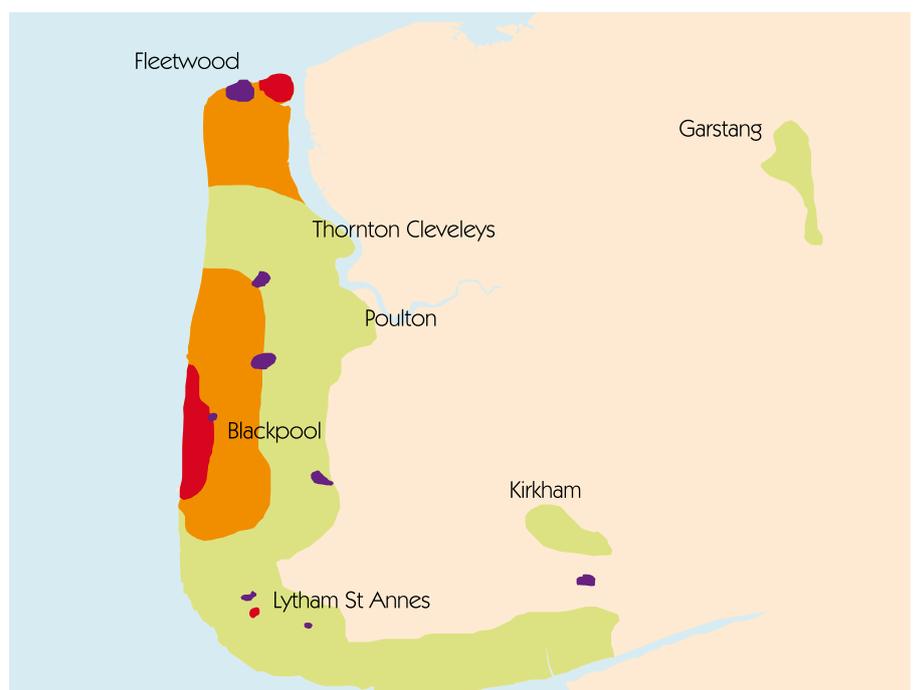
- 2.21 The Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 found that to fully meet the requirements of people already on the social housing waiting list and requirements of newly emerging households who cannot afford to buy or rent in the open market would require 1,400 new social rented homes to be built across the Fylde Coast each year (Blackpool 190, Fylde 610, Wyre 600), compared with a potential supply of 200-250 per year. While around 18,000 households across the Fylde Coast currently live in the private rented sector and receive Housing Benefit, the needs of 1,400 further households each year cannot be met just through rapid expansion of the private rented sector letting to people on Housing Benefit. Indeed, the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy seeks to reduce the dominance of the private rented sector funded by Housing Benefit in the inner towns of the Fylde Coast to promote wider regeneration, and Housing Benefit reforms will reduce landlords' willingness to let to people in the Housing Benefit market where there are alternatives.
- 2.22 The level of vacant homes in the Fylde Coast housing market area was slightly above North West average rates at 4.6% in 2006 compared with a North West average of 4.2%, and a national average of 3.5%. There are relatively high numbers of homes that have been empty for more than 6 months in Blackpool in particular, reflecting the size of the private rented sector, and poor range and quality of homes in some parts of the town. It is important to make effective use of existing properties, and where they are unsuitable for immediate habitation, to convert them into homes that better meet local needs.

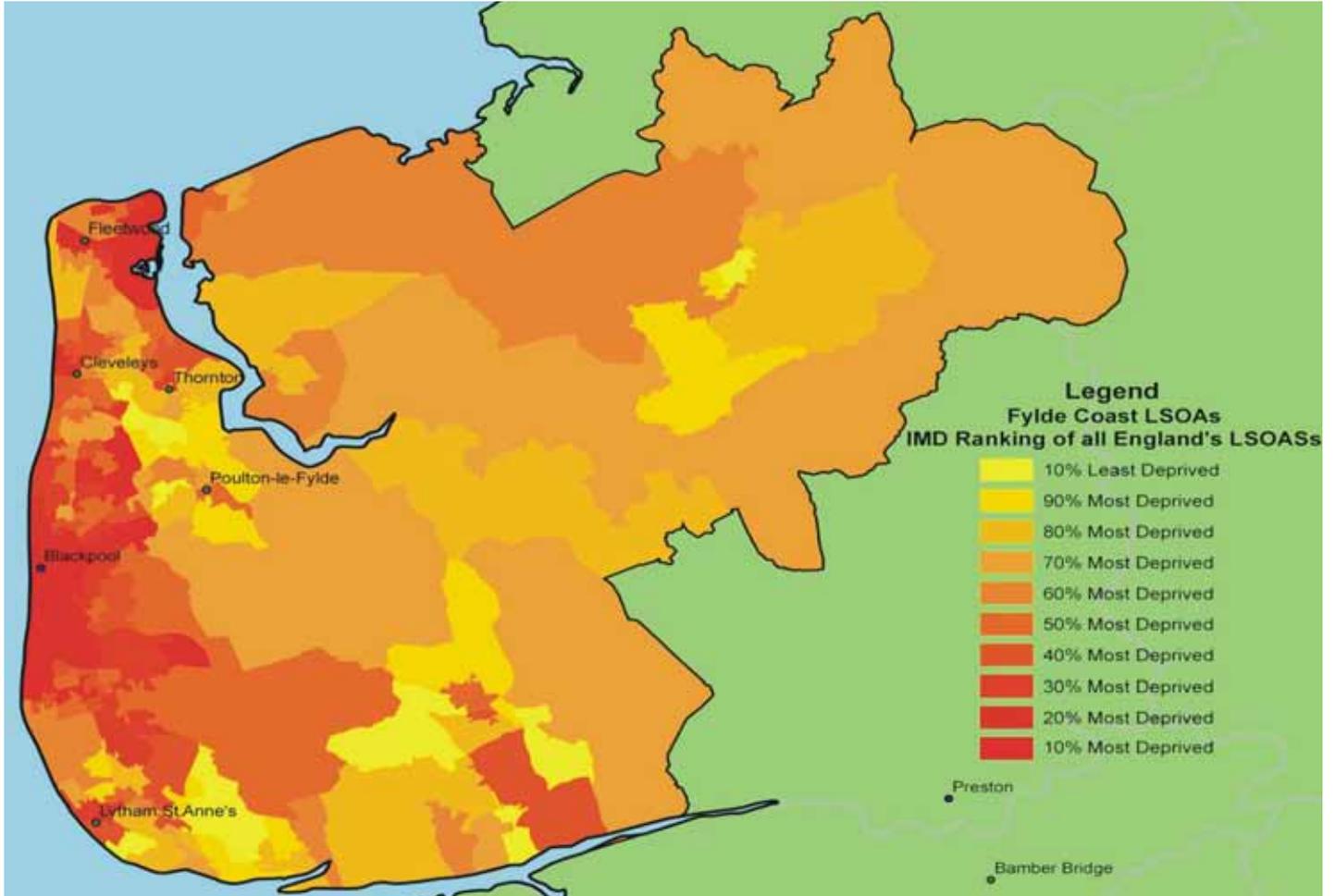
3. The imbalance across the housing market area and concentrations of severe deprivation

- 2.23 Most areas of the Fylde Coast contain popular and attractive housing in stable communities. Many areas are high value with substantial concentrations of wealth creating challenges in the affordability of housing for people on modest incomes.
- 2.24 However, there are severe concentrations of deprivation and poor quality of housing in inner areas of Blackpool and to a lesser extent in parts of Fleetwood. This has significant impacts on the local economy and the costs of local service provision.
- 2.25 Former guest houses continue to drift into residential use as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Blackpool in particular, where easy access helps many economically inactive people from other parts of the country to come and stay. The owners of guest houses will continue to seek alternative uses and will expand the existing 3,000+ HMOs unless the conditions are created that make it more profitable to convert guest houses to family homes that are attractive to the general market rather than a last resort for the most desperate.
- 2.26 The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) exacerbates the situation because it is based on the median market rents of properties across a wide area of the Fylde Coast and is set at a relatively high level for the quality of accommodation offered in inner Blackpool and Fleetwood. This makes letting to people on housing benefit financially attractive compared with alternative uses as struggling holiday accommodation or better quality homes for market rent or sale. While recently announced changes to the LHA will reduce absolute levels, the changes will also reduce alternatives elsewhere and boost demand from tenants for cheap homes in the inner towns, especially shared HMOs.

Map: Fylde Coast Housing Type

- 1. Inner towns dominated by HMOs and private rented sector
- 2. Weak, low value, private residential, typically with smaller terraced or semi-detached housing
- 3. Social housing estates, ranging from highly deprived through to relatively low income but stable
- 4. Prosperous suburban housing, with relatively high house prices and incomes
- 5. Rural areas, with very high house prices





Map: indices of multiple deprivation

4. High support needs in Blackpool

- 2.27 Blackpool has significant social problems as a result of decades of decline in the tourism industry and the attraction of people from other parts of the country who are dependent on public assistance. The structure of the housing stock with a high level of private renting of poor quality accommodation to people on Housing Benefit means that people move around a lot, both within the town, and between Blackpool and other cities. This makes it difficult to maintain effective support, for example through education, health, and social services.
- 2.28 There is a very high requirement for support because of chaotic lifestyles and poor health – for example, homelessness presentations are higher in Blackpool than for the whole of the North East of England. It is important that public services break cycles of social problems and transience by combining assistance for vulnerable individuals with a re-structuring of the housing offer.

5. Large and growing numbers of older people who require support and care services

- 2.29 As noted above, the in-migration of older people, especially to attractive parts of Fylde and Wyre provides an economic boost to the area. But by 2031, it is projected that 33.0% of the population of Fylde will be over 65 years of age, compared with 30.7% in Wyre, and 23.1% in Blackpool. The North West average in 2031 is predicted to be 22.4%. [Source: ONS Mid-year estimates]. This presents a challenge to ensure that older people's needs are met as they become frailer. This includes social care, but also includes adaptations to enable people to continue to live within their own homes, and the planning of an appropriate range of accommodation.

3. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision, Strategic & Operational Aims

- 3.1 The draft **Fylde Coast Economic Strategy** brings together the sub-regional and local aspirations in a shared vision:

By 2030, the Fylde Coast will have a dynamic and diversified economy with opportunities for everyone. Visitors will come from every walk of life to enjoy the classic seaside, family attractions and new cultural offerings. It will be a creative and fantastic place to live, invest and do business.

The strategy sets out the need to improve the attraction of the area to visitors as the tourist economy remains a core element of future prosperity, but also establishes the need to promote new employment in a wide range of expanding industries.

- 3.2 The delivery of this vision focuses on 9 strategic priorities as set out below:

1. A productive visitor economy for the future

– increasing the value of the visitor economy and making the offer more attractive to a wider demographic.

2. Provide the physical infrastructure for a mixed economy

– providing a core of high quality office space, quality industrial sites, improved rail links, improved north-south roads, and further developed air services.

3. A vibrant private sector with confidence to invest.

4. A skilled workforce for the future, making sure our youngest have the best possible start – better outcomes for deprived families with chaotic lifestyles, and support for parenting and child health to improve life chances across generations.

5. A skilled workforce for today – Jobs and skills for a new economy – improved basic and Level 1 and 2 skills, assisting people to get into the labour market, and focusing holistically on conditions and aspirations in deprived areas.

6. A housing market that drives change

– developing more stable and prosperous communities in the inner towns, and sufficient accommodation in all areas that is affordable and attractive to workers in the local economy.

7. Opportunity for all – tackling the most deprived neighbourhoods – improving quality of life and reducing concentrations of poverty in the inner towns and social housing estates. This is to be achieved by helping families, getting people back into work, raising skills and wages, tackling crime and ASB, and diversifying the housing offer.

8. A Green, Sustainable Fylde Coast

– reducing carbon use by improving the building stock, capitalising on strengths in environmental technologies and exploit the potential for renewable energy generation.

9. A new view - Better places and stronger perceptions of the Fylde Coast

– promoting distinctiveness and quality of place, especially on sea fronts and town centres. This is to attract and retain graduates and working families as residents as well as supporting tourism.

- 3.3 The local authority partners have agreed to work alongside partners in other parts of Lancashire to bid for a Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to help deliver the vision of the economic strategy. It is anticipated that the business-led LEP will co-ordinate major projects and infrastructure across Lancashire, while allowing for leadership and delivery at the level of the Fylde Coast and Lancashire's other functional economic areas. It will create the right environment for business success and economic growth by tackling issues such as economic development, tourism, planning, housing, local transport and infrastructure priorities, employment and enterprise and the transition to the low carbon economy.

- 3.4 Housing has a role to play in supporting most aspects of economic improvement in the Fylde Coast. Some of the principal areas where improvements to the housing offer will help deliver the vision of the Fylde Coast Economic Strategy are:

• **A productive visitor economy**

Deprived neighbourhoods, anti-social behaviour, and unattractive environments provide a very poor backdrop to the core tourist assets and have a direct and strongly negative impact on the tourist economy. Housing investment will focus on creating a much better residential offer around the resort areas, and in Blackpool in particular, facilitating the transition of surplus guesthouse accommodation to a new, high quality, residential offer. This is essential to the rejuvenation of the tourism industry.

• **Provide the physical infrastructure for a mixed economy**

Ensuring that there are homes affordable to local workers in high value areas, and especially rural areas, helps to reduce commuting as well as maintaining vibrant local communities. Providing a more attractive housing offer close to the major employment centres, and not just in the suburbs, also has the potential to significantly reduce pressure on local transport networks. The spatial priorities for housing investment have been planned to deliver most new homes within easy reach of the key centres for employment growth.

• **A skilled workforce for the future**

Providing stable accommodation and preventing homelessness is a prerequisite for working with families and young children and improving their life chances.



- **A skilled workforce for today**

Constructing new homes and investing in the maintenance of the existing housing stock directly provides jobs and training at an accessible level, and forms a valuable component of the Fylde Coast economy.

- **A housing market that drives change**

Providing sufficient homes at the right levels in the market that help make appropriately sized, high quality, housing affordable to people working within the local economy will support existing and new businesses. There is already a broad range of homes at different prices across the housing market area as a whole, but the new supply is currently not keeping pace with requirements and there are significant areas without a good choice (for example the dominance of small flats and HMOs in the inner towns), or where prices are out of reach of most people working locally (for example in rural areas).

Promoting demand for services from local businesses through investment in raising the quality of deprived neighbourhoods – concentrations of deprivation provide little support for the wider services-based economy, and associated social problems and transience present a major cost to the public sector. Addressing these conditions creates economic independence and a stronger local market for business growth.

- **Opportunity for all - tackling the most deprived neighbourhoods**

Creating neighbourhoods across the Fylde Coast that are self-sustaining economically, and that provide a supportive environment for improving education, skills, and health will contribute to long term prosperity. In particular, reducing the transience associated with the poor quality private rented sector will help support better educational attainment. Housing investment will be focussed to help ensure that all neighbourhoods offer acceptable housing choices, and provide a positive and healthy living environment.

- **A green, sustainable Fylde Coast**

Improving the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock forms a key element of carbon reduction, maintains health, and enables households to spend more of their resources on other things.

- **A new view - better places and stronger perceptions**

More attractive residential neighbourhoods, especially in the inner towns, play an important part in changing perceptions and drawing in residents and visitors from a broader demographic.

Housing Strategy

Table: Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Objectives

Fylde Coast Economic Strategy Aim: Housing		
FCHS Objective 1: Quantity	FCHS Objective 2: Quality	FCHS Objective 3: People
Meet long term demand for housing.	Reduce the numbers of poor quality private rented homes in inner Blackpool.	Provide new opportunities for people at risk of homelessness.
Provide more affordable homes.	Enhance the residential offer in inner Blackpool and Fleetwood.	Meet the changing requirements of older people/those requiring long term care.
Maintaining a sustainable community life in rural settlements.	Reduce concentrations of deprivation on large social housing estates.	
	Raise the quality of the private rented sector.	
	Improve housing conditions for people who are vulnerable.	

[Click here for more details Fylde Coast Housing Strategy.](#)

- 3.5 The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy was agreed in October 2009 and brings together local priorities for housing under three objectives of Quantity, Quality and People (see table above).
- 3.6 The priorities set out in this Local Investment Plan reflect those agreed within the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy. The LIP develops more detail on the relative priorities for capital investment and how the broad objectives and actions in the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy will be delivered, alongside wider investment in economic improvement.
- 3.7 The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy is also reflected in the Lancashire Housing Strategy which was agreed across the Lancashire area (the County Council area plus Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen) in 2010.



Strategic Alignment

- 3.8 There is a high degree of alignment within the Sustainable Communities Strategies for the districts in the Fylde Coast with broad thematic priorities identified and key stakeholders involved across the areas.

[Click here for more details](#)

[Blackpool Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

[Fylde Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

[Wyre Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

[Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy](#)

Planning Frameworks

- 3.9 All three Local Planning Authorities are developing their Local Development Frameworks and Core Strategies and have jointly commissioned various studies in order to establish evidence in support of their plans.

[Click here for more details](#)

[Blackpool Local Development Framework](#)

[Fylde Local Development Framework](#)

[Wyre Local Development Framework](#)



4. PRIORITIES FOR HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Thematic Priorities

- 4.1 Not all of the priorities from the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy require significant capital investment; the emphasis for some of them is on new policy tools and improvements in service delivery. Where capital investment is required, the investment will come from a range of public and private sector sources. Capital investment from the public sector will only be used where it is essential and acts as a catalyst for investment by private developers, property owners, and householders.
- 4.2 The Fylde Coast partners have undertaken a review of the 10 priorities contained in the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy to assess their contribution to economic growth and competitiveness, and have also considered the urgency of capital investment in the period 2011 – 2014. The criteria used were:
- Scale of contribution to economic growth and competitiveness,
 - Providing a range of quality housing that is affordable to workers in the local economy.
 - Reducing concentrations of deprivation that decrease residents' opportunities and life chances.
 - Improving the attractiveness of the area as a place to live, visit, and as a place to do business, and supporting local services.
 - Necessity and urgency of capital investment within the period 2011-14.
- 4.3 This assessment shows the highest priority for capital investment in 2011-14 for work to:
- Enhance the residential offer in inner Blackpool and Fleetwood, with a wider range of house types and increased owner occupation.*
- It is critical for the prosperity of the Fylde Coast as a whole, and particularly Blackpool and Fleetwood, that a more balanced, stable, and attractive housing offer is established in the inner towns. The on-going transition of former guest houses in Blackpool to residential use, as the demand from holiday makers for old-style B and Bs reduces, must especially be well managed. If not, the potential for stable neighbourhoods that provide housing for workers in the local centre, a market for local services, and complement higher value tourism, will be lost to continuing transience and deprivation.
- Reduce concentrations of deprivation on large social housing estates.*
- Council-built estates across the Fylde Coast have some of the highest levels of deprivation, and poor physical environments must be tackled alongside improved management and support to provide residents with decent opportunities in life.
- Meet the long term demand for housing by increasing rates of new house building.*
- Affordability problems will be entrenched and economic opportunities lost unless there is sufficient high quality housing being built in the Fylde Coast area.
- Provide more of the affordable homes that are in the highest demand, including affordable homes in rural areas to help maintain a sustainable community life.*
- The availability of affordable housing is extremely limited in many areas of the Fylde Coast. Sensitive development of the affordable homes in most demand are essential to maintain community life and meet the basic needs of many households who cannot find suitable accommodation in the private rented or owner occupied tenures.
- 4.4 In addition to the thematic priorities for capital funding that strongly support economic improvement, there is a further need to ensure that the particular housing needs of the most vulnerable people are met. The rising local population of older people and continuing need to care for people with disabilities mean that capital investment will continue to be made in adaptations to existing homes that maintain independence and promote a high quality of life.

Spatial Priorities

- 4.5 Strategic Spatial Development Areas have been identified as the initial focus for economic development activity. Many of these areas will also form the focus of capital investment in housing and regeneration. The areas are shown on the map opposite.
- 4.6 Investment to support the local economy by providing an improved housing offer will be focussed to support these areas as follows:

1. Fleetwood and Thornton

This area covers North Fleetwood, including the town centre, Docks, and fish processing industries, and extends down the Wyre estuary to Hillhouse - an area of significant job creation through re-development of the former ICI site. Most of the area falls within the Fleetwood – Thornton Area Action Plan 2009, and which is the focus of new housing provision in Wyre, making use of brown field land to provide high quality new homes close to new and existing employment locations. The area is also a priority for regeneration, with investment in new and existing homes in North Fleetwood playing an important role in reducing deprivation there, alongside new job creation and an improved seaside environment to strengthen the visitor economy.

Key housing investments:

1,300 new homes in the Fleetwood-Thornton AAP area over the next 10 years.

Acquisition and conversion of HMOs in North Fleetwood.

Face lifting and environmental improvement in North Fleetwood.

Investment to improve existing social housing estates in Fleetwood.

Enforcement of repair, management, and amenity standards in the private rented sector.

Intensive neighbourhood management in North Fleetwood.

2. Central Blackpool Approach & Blackpool Town Centre

Blackpool is the largest employment centre in the Fylde Coast, and remains the UK's largest seaside resort. However, visitor numbers have declined from a high point in the 1970s, and there is less demand for longer stay vacations, leading to an over-supply of traditional guest house accommodation. A key element of the town's strategy for a successful economic future is a managed transition from guest house to residential uses in some former resort areas, and a transformation in the range and quality of the residential offer at the heart of the town.

Key housing investments:

New homes in South Beach on publicly assembled sites.

Enable the conversion of guest houses and HMOs into family homes for sale, focussing initially on South Beach.

Face lifting in South Beach.

Planning policy changes to allow more appropriate changes of use from guest houses to family-sized homes.

Enforcement of local space and amenity standards in the private rented sector, use of licensing regimes, and planning enforcement to control changes of use from holiday accommodation to residential.

Area management and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Tackling the high turnover and unpopularity of Queens Park estate.

3. M55 Hub area & Blackpool International Airport Corridor

This area that straddles the boundary between the boroughs of Blackpool and Fylde is an important employment area, but also offers the largest opportunity in the Fylde Coast for new employment and housing close to high quality transport links and within easy reach of the centres of Blackpool and St Anne's. A high level master plan for sustainable new housing and employment at the M55 hub has been completed, and is now being tested through the development of Core Strategies in Blackpool and Fylde.

Key housing investments:

Significant numbers of high quality new homes to be delivered by private developers over the next 20 years, including contributions to new affordable housing.

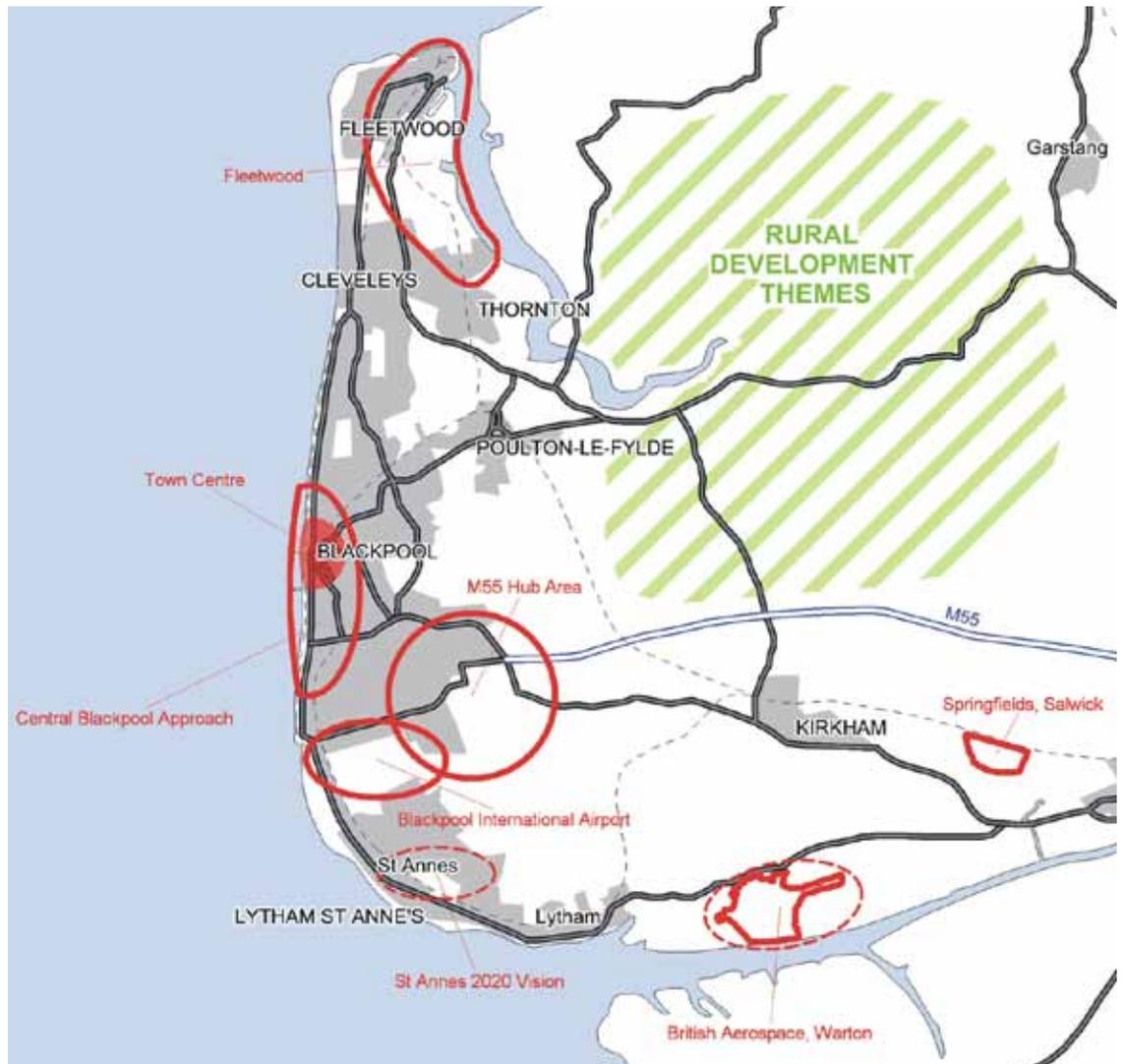
Effective management of development through the adoption of new planning policies.

Environmental improvements to make improve the attractiveness of the existing Mereside estate.

4. Lytham St Anne's Centre

Lytham St Anne's is a significant employment centre and investment in the town centre environment in St Anne's has consolidated a popular shopping and leisure offer. Lytham St Anne's is also an attractive area to live, although has a concentration of HMOs in Central Ward, St Anne's. Investment in housing in Lytham St Anne's will help ensure that homes are available that are affordable to workers in the local economy.

Map: Fylde Coast



Key housing investments:

- New affordable housing provision to meet high needs.
- Acquisition and conversion of existing properties to provide affordable housing.
- Enforcement of space and amenity standards in the private rented sector.
- Improving access to private rented homes.
- Environmental improvements to Kilnhouse Lane estate.

5. Rural Areas

The rural areas of the Fylde Coast provide attractive environments for business, and valuable services to their local communities. To maintain a sustainable community life, it is important that young people and people working locally can afford an appropriate home, and so the focus of investment in housing will be on providing small developments of affordable housing for rent and shared ownership.

Key housing investments:

- New affordable housing provision to meet high needs.

- 4.7 The British Aerospace site in Warton and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Springfields site in Salwick are identified as Strategic Spatial Development Areas because they are important sites for employment and value creation, but they are not a focus for housing investment in the plan period.
- 4.8 There are further spatial priorities for investment in areas of existing social housing which have high concentrations of deprivation. Residents should live in communities and environments that foster aspiration, and some estates could make a greater contribution to the area's housing offer by becoming more attractive to working people on lower incomes. In addition to the Fleetwood estates, Queens Park, Mereside and Kilnhouse Lane that are listed above, Grange Park in Blackpool, and Lower Lane, Freckleton are priorities for regeneration.
- 4.9 The especially severe need for more affordable housing in most parts of Fylde and Wyre indicated by the Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment means that investment in new affordable housing provision will be supported in all parts of Fylde and Wyre and not just within the spatial priority areas of Lytham St Anne's, Fleetwood-Thornton, and the rural areas.



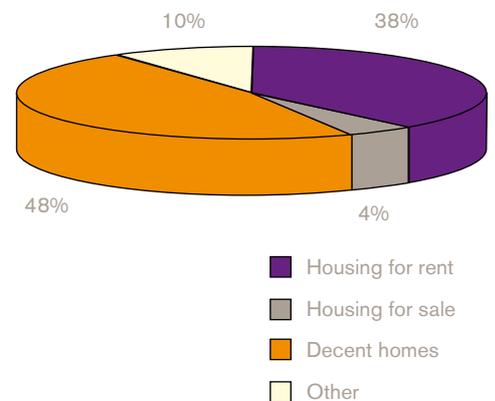
5. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Recent Investment in the Fylde Coast

- 5.1 In addition to the direct investment in new employment centres set out under the spatial priorities above, further significant capital investment in the Fylde Coast area has helped to support the delivery of economic and housing objectives, especially through the strengthening of the public realm in the town centres and sea fronts:
- New coastal defences in Blackpool and Cleveleys that provide an attractive new seaside environment as well as keeping the sea at bay.
 - Sea Change funding to improve the sea front at Fleetwood.
 - £80 million to acquire and refurbish Blackpool Tower, Winter Gardens and other tourist attractions.
 - Town centre improvements in St Anne's.
 - £85 million to renew the Blackpool to Fleetwood tramway, to re-establish it as an efficient transport system, while maintaining the heritage elements popular with visitors.
 - Commitment to electrification of the railway line from Blackpool North and Poulton to the West Coast mainline.
 - Building Schools for the Future programme for two new secondary schools in Blackpool, including St Mary's at Grange Park.
 - New walk-in health centres across Blackpool.
- 5.2 The HCA has invested in a range of new housing, improvements to existing homes, and regeneration activity, over the last three years in the Fylde Coast area, as follows:

Blackpool:	£16,473,000
	PLUS £38 million Decent Homes
	PLUS £7 million to support a Blackpool leisure assets package
Fylde:	£11,709,014
Wyre:	£7,019,938
Total:	£80,201,952

- 5.3 The 42% of the funding that has been used to subsidise new affordable housing for rent and sale has helped to maintain investment in new construction and meet a critical need for homes for local people. 48% of the funding has delivered Decent Homes improvement works to the existing Council housing stock in Blackpool. This major investment represents a one off catching up in improvement works, with local housing associations also investing their own resources to improve their own housing stock over the last few years. However, there has been relatively little investment by the HCA over the last three years to support the key priority of enhancing the residential offer in inner Blackpool and Fleetwood, so a re-balancing of investment is required.
- 5.4 Further investment of nearly £4 million for new affordable housing became available from the HCA in late summer 2010. Fylde Coast partners worked together to identify schemes that were deliverable within the HCA's tight timescales and that best met strategic priorities. The programme has been split to help deliver regeneration in Blackpool through new homes from the conversion of former guest houses and HMOs and from the demolition of unpopular Council flats, and to deliver new affordable homes in Fleetwood and in rural Wyre.
- 5.5 The co-operative approach, and split in responsibilities between local partners who identified strategic projects and the HCA who carried out detailed assessments of value for money, design, and deliverability, provides a model for on-going working under the Fylde Coast LIP.



Breakdown of HCA investment in the Fylde Coast 2008-11

Investment programme 2011–14

- 5.6 The balance of public investment required going forward has been considered and reviewed against criteria based on the Government's five case model. The broad options considered were to weight the investment programme towards EITHER:
- Regeneration in deprived neighbourhoods, OR
 - Delivering new homes and addressing housing affordability, OR
 - Improving the repair of the existing housing stock.
- 5.7 The conclusion of the review was that the overall investment programme should balance regeneration in deprived neighbourhoods with the delivery of new homes. This will best meet thematic and spatial priorities and achieve the greatest private sector leverage. An emphasis on these options should deliver both the highest regeneration priorities and address the needs for more affordable housing and increased numbers of new homes. These options can work together well within any one spatial priority area, and especially in areas like North Fleetwood and Inner Blackpool where new homes are an essential component in creating attractive and prosperous places.
- 5.8 There remains a need to make some public capital investment in the repair of the existing housing stock, particularly:
- Completion of the Decent Homes programme for the Blackpool Council owned housing stock.
 - Supporting action under local empty homes strategies.
 - Adaptation of existing homes to assist vulnerable people, such as through Disabled Facilities Grants and the work of the Care and Repair agencies (aka Home Improvement Agencies).
- 5.9 There is also a need to invest some limited capital resources in meeting the need for specialist accommodation for vulnerable people. In particular, there are some needs for accommodation for socially excluded groups, such as people who are homeless, and potentially accommodation-based provision for recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. This provision is valuable in addressing key social issues that blight the lives of the individuals affected and the wider community.
- 5.10 The October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review made it clear that the HCA's overall capital budget will be cut substantially. The remaining budget will be directed to the funding streams set out below, and the priorities for the use of each of the funding streams in the Fylde Coast area are as follows:
- National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) - New affordable housing model and shared ownership**
- 5.11 The HCA has confirmed that all new grant funding allocations for affordable housing in 2011-14 will be directed towards the provision of a new model that allows providers to charge rents at up to 80% of the market rent for the properties that they are constructing, alongside a small element of shared ownership. Around £2.3 billion will be available over 4 years, with an average rate of grant funding at around £30,000/unit; this is equivalent to half the grant that has recently gone into each new social rented home.
- 5.12 The housing will be allocated in the same way as social rented housing is currently allocated, so in the Fylde Coast will be allocated through the new Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings system that is due to go live in summer 2011. This allows some flexibility to prioritise particular groups for homes let under the new model through local authority level Area Lettings Plans.
- 5.13 The full details of the new model are yet to be published, but it is expected that housing associations will be asked to submit package bids to the HCA in spring 2011 setting out all of the affordable housing that they wish to build over the next four years anywhere in the country. They will, however, have to break down their bids by LIP area.
- 5.14 The Fylde Coast's current priorities for the development of new affordable homes in 2011-14 are set out in the table opposite. Any other opportunities that arise will be assessed against the objectives and thematic priorities set out in Sections 3 and 4.
- 5.15 The Fylde Coast Economic Strategy makes it clear that action to tackle the unbalanced housing offer in inner Blackpool is especially important, and also emphasises the need for more affordable housing in rural areas, and the need for regeneration on deprived social housing estates. Investment in these areas is essential to achieving a prosperous economic future for the Fylde Coast, and investment by the HCA through the NAHP funding stream should be weighted in favour of these particular investment priorities.

Table: Priorities for new affordable homes 2011-14

Area	Type of Development	Outputs/Tenure	Wider outcomes
Crystal Rd/ Rawcliffe St, South Beach, Blackpool	Conversion of former guest houses to family homes.	Family-sized homes for shared ownership and new affordable rent model with allocations focussed on people in low-paid work.	Supports the establishment of a higher quality residential offer close to Blackpool town centre, and an environment for a better visitor economy.
Tyldesley Rd/ Rigby Rd, South Beach, Blackpool	New build affordable homes as part of wider market development.	Family-sized homes and high quality apartments for shared ownership and new affordable rent model with allocations focussed on people in low-paid work.	Supports the establishment of a higher quality residential offer close to Blackpool town centre, and an environment for a better visitor economy.
Existing Council estates, Blackpool	Demolition of poor quality small flats and development of new build family homes.	Family-sized homes for affordable rent that are currently in limited supply.	Supports the improvement of deprived estates by removing flats that are unpopular and have high turnover.
Lytham St Anne's	Refurbishment of problematic properties.	High quality flats for affordable rent to meet housing needs.	Supports improvement in the housing stock and better management.
Lytham St Anne's	New build affordable homes.	Mix of new homes for affordable rent to help address high housing needs.	Promoting balanced communities.
Rural Fylde	New build affordable homes.	Mix of new homes for affordable rent to help address high housing needs.	Promotes vibrant and economically active rural communities.
North Fleetwood	Conversion of former guest houses / HMOs to family homes and high quality apartments.	Family-sized homes and high quality apartments for affordable rent with allocations focussed on people in low-paid work.	Supports wider neighbourhood management work to achieve improvement in North Fleetwood.
Fleetwood – Thornton AAP area	New build homes.	Mix of new homes for affordable rent to help address high housing needs.	Supports the delivery of new market homes that will help regenerate Fleetwood and former industrial sites, alongside new employment locations.
Rural Wyre	New build affordable homes.	Mix of new homes for affordable rent to help address high housing needs.	Promotes vibrant and economically active rural communities.

5.16 Action to tackle the unbalanced housing offer in the inner towns delivers added value beyond meeting housing needs, as set out in Sections 3 and 4, and particularly delivers:

- A better context for the tourism industry that is at the heart of the local economy
- More balanced communities that inspire residents to do well through training and employment.
- Reduced in-migration of people who are economically inactive to live in poor quality private rented accommodation.
- A reduced call on public services and finances.
- Homes close to employment centres that reduce commuting and provide a base of demand for local businesses.
- Homes that promote mental and physical health through higher space standards and better property conditions.

5.17 The cost of delivering new affordable housing in the inner towns and through new homes in rural areas can be relatively high. The reasons for relatively high costs in areas like inner Blackpool include high acquisition costs because of the density of existing uses and existing Housing Benefit-driven yields, and high works costs because of the size of the existing buildings, need for extensive conversion, and history of poor maintenance. In rural areas, costs are high because of high land prices. Despite these relatively high costs, the average cost of a new affordable housing unit across the Fylde Coast is still expected to be equivalent to other parts of the North West because the costs of conversion/refurbishment schemes and rural schemes are balanced by relatively low costs of other types of schemes, such as new build in suburban areas and development on existing social housing estates. Local authorities in the Fylde Coast will assist in cost effective delivery by making available existing land in public ownership, especially where land is available through the re-development of unsuitable social housing in Blackpool.

Funding to tackle empty homes

- 5.18 The Government has announced an Empty Homes Fund of £100 million that is to be made available from April 2012. The use of the funding is still subject to discussion. In the Fylde Coast, the funding would be used to make a valuable contribution to our regeneration work in the inner towns, helping to find sustainable solutions for problematic empty properties, contributing to a better housing offer and making best use of existing homes.

Decent Homes funding

- 5.19 £2.1 billion has been made available nationally to fund improvements to Council-owned homes to reach the Decent Homes Standard. Funding is still required to complete the programme of improvement to the Blackpool Council owned housing stock. Blackpool Council has bid for resources to continue its improvement programme in 2011-14, and will also review how it can use the opportunities arising from the proposed reform of the Housing Revenue Account system to maximise further investment in existing homes.

Property and Regeneration fund

- 5.20 A national fund of £1.3 billion is currently available for investment in property and regeneration schemes. It is anticipated that the fund would be used alongside the new affordable housing programme to facilitate new build residential development at Tyldesley Road/Rigby Road in inner Blackpool. The total development would consist of around 400 new homes that will establish a high quality new housing offer in the heart of the town. Part of the site has already been assembled by the Council, and the property and regeneration fund will help support major private investment.
- 5.21 Blackpool BC has resolved to use the opportunity that arises from the introduction of the New Homes Bonus to help fund the new homes at Tyldesley Road/Rigby Road alongside the HCA's property and regeneration funding and grant funding for affordable homes on the site. Blackpool BC will raise a significant capital contribution that will form the majority of the gap funding required for high quality new development through prudential borrowing on the basis of the income stream anticipated over the next six years from the New Homes Bonus.

Mortgage rescue funding

- 5.22 Funding will be available from the HCA to continue to assist individuals struggling to meet mortgage payments and keep their home, as part of a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness. This will benefit homeowners threatened with re-possession across the Fylde Coast.

Funding for specialist assistance

- 5.23 The HCA will be available to provide support in specialised areas of work, such as financial models that assist development. More detail on the areas where support is especially required in the Fylde Coast to implement new delivery tools is set out in Section 6.
- 5.24 Taking into account the thematic and spatial priorities and the options assessment of how the capital funding programme should be balanced, and considering the balance of HCA investment that is likely to be made available, a summary of HCA investment priorities in different areas of the Fylde Coast in 2011-14 is shown the table opposite.
- 5.25 Capital investment and support from the HCA will complement investment by Fylde Coast partners, together with the use of regulatory powers and effective service delivery. The table overleaf sets out how all of the priorities of the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy will be delivered, showing the role of HCA capital investment and support where it is required, alongside other actions and resources.
- 5.26 This Fylde Coast LIP sets out clear investment priorities based on an understanding of the underlying local issues. Fylde Coast partners will be working to address the key challenges as set out above, and will respond to the opportunities presented by national policies and priorities as they emerge. While the details of these opportunities are still to be announced, and short term achievement of outcomes could be slowed by reductions in public capital funding, as well as by pressures on revenue funding in local government, this LIP for 2011-14 will lay the foundations for the achievement of longer term outcomes that are critical for the future prosperity of the Fylde Coast area. The table on page 31 shows how housing outcomes will be complementary to wider economic improvement.

Summary of key HCA investment priorities for 2011-14 by area

Area	Thematic Priorities	Description of schemes
Fleetwood and Thornton (and wider suburban Wyre).	Regeneration (North Fleetwood) Delivering new homes (rest of area).	Conversions of existing HMOs to better quality affordable housing for rent and shared ownership Face lifting and environmental improvement - HomeBuy Direct to support early delivery of new homes in AAP area. New affordable homes in AAP area and wider suburban Wyre.
Wyre rural affordable housing.	Delivering new homes.	New affordable housing for rent and shared ownership.
Inner Blackpool - New Housing Developments.	Regeneration Delivering new homes.	Mixed use development of Tyldeley/Rigby Road development opportunity site to establish an attractive new residential offer in the heart of South Beach.
Inner Blackpool - Guesthouse/HMO Programme.	Regeneration.	Street level targeted investment to enable and facilitate conversion of guesthouses and HMOs to quality family homes.
Existing Blackpool Council owned land.	Regeneration Delivering new homes.	New housing provision as part of estate regeneration plans including clearance of surplus one bed units and replacement with new mixed tenure family homes.
Blackpool Existing Social Housing.	Improving the repair of the existing housing stock.	Decent Homes programme completed.
M55 Hub/Blackpool Airport Corridor.	Delivering new homes and addressing housing affordability.	New homes to help meet the demand for homes in the Fylde Coast.
Lytham St Anne's (and wider suburban Fylde).	Delivering new homes.	New affordable housing for rent to meet high needs. HomeBuy Direct to support delivery of new homes.
Fylde rural affordable housing.	Delivering new homes.	New affordable housing for rent and shared ownership.
Tackling problematic empty properties.	Improving the repair of the existing housing stock.	Investment in interventions that bring empty homes back into productive uses within the local housing market, targeted at those with the biggest negative impacts.
Specialist supported housing.	Meeting the needs of vulnerable people.	Limited new accommodation-based support for socially excluded client groups where there is an existing under-provision.



Table: Delivery of Housing Priorities
 - Improved Services and Capital
 Investment

Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Objective 1: Quantity			
Priorities	Investment by Fylde Coast partners	Use of Policies/Service Delivery	HCA Investment and Support
<p>Meeting long term demand for housing.</p> <p>Provide more affordable homes.</p> <p>Sustainable community life in rural settlements.</p>	<p>Delivery of new homes by the private sector.</p> <p>Publicly owned land released for affordable housing development at nil or sub-market values.</p> <p>Community and charitable trusts providing land and funding.</p> <p>Financial services for first time buyers provided by the local authorities.</p>	<p>Planning policy development to release significant housing sites in sustainable locations, balancing regeneration in the inner towns with controlled suburban green field development, and limited development in rural areas.</p> <p>Development of a framework for developers' contributions to community infrastructure over a 10-15 year time period at the M55 hub.</p> <p>New affordable homes built as a result of planning requirements. A significant number of affordable homes are being delivered by this route in Fylde and Wyre, with significant financial contributions negotiated in Blackpool.</p> <p>Pro-active surveys and community planning. An extensive survey and public consultation on affordable housing needs across rural areas of Wyre has been completed in 2010.</p> <p>Effective use of existing stock in all tenures, including action to bring empty homes back into use in the private sector, and to address under-occupation in the social rented sector.</p>	<p>Site assembly, preparation, and infrastructure development. Some sites require public sector intervention because of multiple ownership, poor ground conditions, or requirements for major new drainage and road infrastructure.</p> <p>New affordable homes built with grant subsidy. The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy sets out the details of the kinds of affordable homes required in different locations.</p> <p>Specialist advice in preparing financial frameworks to support new development.</p> <p>Funding to help tackle empty homes, providing capital contributions to do essential works to bring properties back into use.</p>

Table: Delivery of Housing Priorities
- Improved Services and Capital
Investment

Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Objective 2: Quality			
Priorities	Investment by Fylde Coast partners	Use of Policies/Service Delivery	HCA Investment and Support
Reduce the numbers of poor quality private rented homes in inner Blackpool.	Investment in acquisitions of land and property for development and conversion to homes for sale by the local authority.	Housing and planning policies, enforcement, and licensing to control conversions to HMOs, allow appropriate conversions to quality residential, and ensure high property and management standards in the private rented sector.	Direct acquisition and investment to convert or re-develop to high quality family-sized homes for sale in targeted areas.
Enhance the residential offer in inner Blackpool and Fleetwood.	Environmental improvement/face lifting/ external works funded by the local authority.	Work to tackle anti-social behaviour, including the introduction of selective licensing in inner Blackpool.	Gap funding new homes to make viable high quality homes for sale New shared ownership homes.
Reduce concentrations of deprivation on social housing estates.	Delivery of new homes by the private sector.	Area management and investment in wider local facilities and services through effective partnerships with the voluntary sector and well targeted public service provision.	Shared ownership is an important tool to get more stability in the inner towns.
Raise the quality of the private rented sector.	Investment in existing housing stock and environments by social landlords.	Local Housing Allowance reform – Continuing to press Government to set LHA so that it is more sensitive to local markets and does not provide high returns to owners of very poor accommodation.	Face lifting and environmental uplift in targeted areas.
Improve housing conditions for people who are vulnerable.	Social rented stock re-modelling and re-development where existing homes do not meet needs, do not promote balanced communities, and/or require refurbishment that is uneconomic.	Enhanced housing options and support services to help vulnerable residents, building on the existing Blackpool Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazer	External works to private properties to enhance residential character in targeted areas.
	Private landlords' investment in their homes.	Fylde Coast-wide Landlord Accreditation to encourage landlords to provide a higher quality offer	Decent Homes investment to improve the quality and attractiveness of properties owned by Blackpool Council.
	Home repair assistance to the most vulnerable households across the Fylde Coast.	Facilitate investment in rented accommodation Facilitate access to energy company funding by delivering the Fylde Coast and Lancaster Affordable Warmth Strategy	
		Advice and referral to/ from health and social care agencies Revise allocations policies as part of the introduction of Fylde Coast Choice-Based Lettings, planning for more balanced communities Tackling worklessness through services to help residents back into work, and work with tenants by social landlords.	

Table: Delivery of Housing Priorities - Improved Services and Capital Investment

Fylde Coast Housing Strategy Objective 3: People			
Priorities	Investment by Fylde Coast partners	Use of Policies/Service Delivery	HCA Investment and Support
<p>New opportunities for people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Meet changing requirements of older people and those requiring long term care.</p>	Investment by charities in facilities and services for people who are socially excluded.	Pro-active housing options services.	Capital investment in supported housing where there are acute needs for accommodation-based support.
	Investment by social landlords in re-configuring existing sheltered and supported housing.	Rent bonds to facilitate access to appropriate private rented accommodation.	Mortgage Rescue funding support.
	Home repair assistance to help people to stay healthy in their homes.	Tenancy support by social landlords and with private sector tenants Specialist housing-related support.	
	DFGs and social landlords' contributions to physical adaptations.		

Table: Housing and Economic Outcomes Over Time

	Housing Outcomes	Economic Outcomes
<p>First 3 years Stabilisation and early change</p> 	<p>Ending the escalation in numbers of HMOs.</p> <p>Effective private rented sector enforcement/management.</p> <p>Intensive housing options/tackling worklessness.</p> <p>Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings for improved letting of existing housing.</p> <p>Updated planning policy frameworks .</p> <p>Investment in social housing stock to reach the Decent Homes Standard.</p> <p>More affordable housing where it is in shortest supply, including rural areas.</p> <p>Land and property acquisition in regeneration areas, and initial development of family homes for sale.</p>	<p>Improved skills and reduced long term worklessness assisted by reducing transience through stable and better quality housing and neighbourhood environments at lower levels in the market.</p> <p>Improved educational attainment, linked to reductions in concentrations of deprivation and more balanced communities.</p> <p>Movement to a higher value tourism offer, with higher quality tourist accommodation, supported by the creation of a more stable and higher value residential offer in the immediate vicinity.</p> <p>Developed rural economy, assisted by homes affordable to local workers on modest incomes.</p>
<p>4 – 10 years Early change</p> 	<p>Re-development and conversions to produce significant pockets of attractive homes for owner occupation in inner Blackpool.</p> <p>Significant improvement in levels of deprivation in Blackpool and Fleetwood.</p> <p>Completion of re-modelling and diversification of social housing estates.</p> <p>Higher levels of new development and affordable housing provision.</p> <p>More general reduction in numbers of poor quality private rented homes in inner Blackpool and transition to sustainable residential neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>Improved transport connections assisted by a focus of new housing development close to employment centres/transport nodes.</p> <p>New business start ups, and existing high value manufacturing retained within the area, assisted by the further development of attractive housing at every level of the market.</p>
<p>10 – 20 years Entrenching permanent change</p>	<p>Easing of affordability problems.</p> <p>Significant improvements in the state of repair and energy efficiency of the existing housing stock.</p>	



6. FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY

New Delivery tools

- 6.1 The current economic and public policy context, driven by the need to reduce overall public expenditure, presents new challenges and demands the development of new approaches. Some of the key areas where new thinking is required, with assistance from the HCA, are:
- The focus of investment on new affordable housing with rents at up to 80% of market levels. The HCA can assist by facilitating thinking on the use of the new model between local authorities and housing providers, and by ensuring that grant funding allocations reflect agreed needs and strategic priorities. In developing local tenancy strategies and policies, local authorities and housing associations will need to develop their understanding of the role and affordability of housing at different rent levels within the market. The HCA can assist as the local authorities and housing association partners consider the use of fixed term tenancies, conversion of existing homes to higher rents, limitations on waiting list registration, and how transfers of existing tenants will be balanced with allocations to new tenants.
 - The Regional Growth Fund is an opportunity to invest in new employment, and work to deliver an improved residential offer in focussed areas of the inner towns would support employment growth. In particular, working with private landlords and tenants to create a more stable community and supporting individual tenants to get back into work could be part of a Regional Growth Fund programme.
 - There remains a challenge to deliver more home ownership in regeneration areas with no major uplifts in values anticipated in the next few years, and pressure from developers to release green field land. Support is required from the HCA to work out how to overcome the financial obstacles to investment and home purchasing, as well as how best to bring forward investment in surrounding neighbourhood environments.
 - There is a challenge to assist working households to get access to mortgage finance when the average deposit for first time buyers has risen to over 25%. Blackpool Council is actively developing a scheme with Lloyds TSB to provide a “helping hand” that gives first time buyers access to preferential mortgage deals, which can potentially be linked to specific new developments, as well as to the general housing market.
- There is also a need to influence the new national policy on Housing Benefit that is likely to reduce the availability of private rented accommodation in popular areas and force tenants to move into the least popular areas. This will make it more difficult to deliver the strategic priority of reducing concentrations of poor quality private renting, including HMOs, in the inner towns. HCA support is required in presenting the challenges faced in the inner towns of the Fylde Coast.
- 6.2 The responses to the emerging public policy changes will progress over the next few months as the details emerge, and be reflected in updates to this Local Investment Plan. The HCA will have an important role to play in sharing best practice from other areas.

Strategic Commissioning and Delivery Capacity

- 6.3 New strategic commissioning arrangements have recently been established across the Fylde Coast between the local authority and housing association partners, building on the last three years' work of the Fylde Coast Housing Partnership. Most social rented housing across the Fylde Coast is owned by five major housing associations and a recent comprehensive assessment of the capacity and expertise of each organisation to deliver our local housing objectives has informed the selection of partners in each area. Investment in affordable housing and regeneration has increased significantly in the Fylde Coast in the last few years, and all of the local authorities and housing association partners have staff experienced in managing the delivery of major programmes.
- 6.4 Under the new arrangements, the strategic priorities set out in the Fylde Coast LIP are set out in further detail at the level of each local authority, and a partnership agreement is signed between each local authority and its selected housing association partners. Lead housing association partners are agreeing Area Delivery Plans that reflect strategic priorities and local issues, and agree clear actions for each area as follows:
- Blackpool:**
Inner – Great Places,

Outer – Muir, Major projects – Great Places, Muir, and Regenda.
- Fylde:**
All areas – Great Places, Muir, and Progress Housing Group.
- Wyre:**
Fleetwood – Great Places, Regenda (and Places for People in a stock management role),

Urban areas outside Fleetwood – Great Places, Regenda, and Progress,

Rural areas – Great Places, Regenda.
- 6.5 Projects identified within each local authority area through these arrangements will be brought through local authorities for consideration as a priority for funding from the HCA. A Programme Board of senior officers from the local authority partners, together with the EDC and representatives of the HCA has been successfully established to oversee the development of this LIP and to allocate NAHP resources made available from September 2010. It will continue to determine which projects should be supported through available HCA funding programmes. To be supported, projects must fit within the list of HCA investment priorities in the LIP, show a strong contribution to thematic and spatial priorities, and demonstrate that they are deliverable within the required timeframe.
- 6.6 Project delivery, together with wider performance in supporting local housing objectives, will be monitored through the newly formalised partnership arrangements at the level of each local authority. The Fylde Coast Programme Board will meet regularly and maintain an overview of delivery of HCA funded projects, identifying and addressing any risks to successful delivery of both the investment programme and strategic objectives. The work of the Fylde Coast Programme Board is overseen by the Board of the Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre Economic Development Company, which includes representatives of each of the local authorities.
- 6.7 There are a number of developer Registered Providers who are based or currently working in the Fylde Coast area. Regular liaison with developer Registered Providers at the level of the whole Fylde Coast will ensure that developers are aware of strategic priorities and the nature of projects that will be funded through the HCA in the Fylde Coast area. The same criteria of strategic fit and deliverability will be applied to projects put forward for HCA funding by developer Registered Providers, and developers will be required to work with housing association partners or Blackpool Coastal Housing on future management arrangements.

Value for Money

- 6.8 The HCA has responsibility for assessing the value for money offered by individual projects submitted for HCA funding. This process focuses on unit costs and grant requirements compared with benchmarks of the costs of providing affordable housing elsewhere. However, some priorities in the Fylde Coast, such as the conversion of existing buildings in the inner towns, are more expensive than others and the HCA must take into account the additional outcomes achieved from investing in these priorities, as set out in Section 5, when making their assessments.
- 6.9 The balance of priorities set out in this LIP is the optimal balance to address the housing needs and support the future prosperity of the Fylde Coast area. Value for money can be assured as long as the delivery mechanism is operating efficiently, and works are being carried at sufficient quality and the lowest possible cost for that particular type of intervention, and revenue appraisals are making fair assumptions of risk and viability. The HCA will consider the detailed costs and development assumptions on a project by project basis.

Monitoring & Review

- 6.10 Outcome targets have been agreed within the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy, and these remain relevant in allowing progress in achieving long term objectives to be monitored. It is not possible to set more specific output targets linked to the Fylde Coast Local Investment Plan until there is more certainty on the resource allocation for the area in the 2011-14 period. Once resources are known, it will be necessary to agree output targets that reflect the resources being allocated and the precise shape of the investment programme.
- 6.11 Responsibility for setting output targets for the LIP and monitoring progress in delivering them will sit with the Fylde Coast Programme Board. The Programme Board will also be responsible for instructing updates of the LIP to reflect the development of further clarity in public policy and resources, and thereafter to review delivery mechanisms in the light of experience and changing housing market circumstances.
- 6.12 The broad objectives derived from the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy have already been subject to an equalities impact assessment and detailed public consultation. The Programme Board will assess the impact of the investment programme under the Fylde Coast LIP on different sections of the local community once the investment programme is better defined.

For further information
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