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Blackpool local plan development scheme

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1.0 What is a local development scheme

1.1 Local Planning Authorities are required under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) to produce and keep up to date a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out, amongst other information, a timetable for the preparation of development plan documents (i.e. local plans) for their authority area.

1.2 The LDS has to be publically available so that local communities and interested parties can keep track of Local Plan progress. This updated LDS February 2025 replaces the July 2022 LDS and a summary of the amendments made to the document are set out in Appendix 1.

2.0 The Blackpool development plan

2.1 The Blackpool Development Plan comprises various documents known as **development plan documents (DPDs)** which set out the Council's policies for achieving economic, social and environmental objectives where they affect the development and use of land.

2.2 These DPDs are statutory documents and are subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State. Once adopted decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with these DPDs unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.3 **Table 1** below provides an overview of the documents that currently comprise the Development Plan for Blackpool.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

2.5 The Council has a joint arrangement with Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council whereby the three authorities jointly produce Minerals and Waste planning policy. In practice, Lancashire County Council staff carry out the large majority of the work and the two unitary authorities make a financial contribution to the County Council. The process is steered at officer level by a technical officer group and a chief officer group consisting of one representative from each authority. At Member level, the process is steered by a Joint Advisory Committee. A separate Development Scheme exists for the joint Minerals and Waste planning documents. Information related to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan can be accessed on the [Lancashire County Council website](#) [opens a new window].

Marnton Moss Neighbourhood Plan

2.6 Neighbourhood plans provide an opportunity for local people to influence development in the areas where they live or work. Neighbourhood Plans become part of the development plan and the policies within them are used in determining planning applications within the relevant Neighbourhood Plan Area. A key criteria for a neighbourhood plan brought forward in Blackpool is that it is in general conformity with the overarching strategic policies in the Blackpool Local.

2.7 At the time this LDS comes into effect the only neighbourhood plan in Blackpool is the Marnton Moss Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted in November 2023

2.8 Further information on this plan can be found on the [Neighbourhood Planning](#) page [opens a new window] of the Council's website.

3.0 The new Blackpool local plan – Proposed timetable

3.1 This LDS sets out the timetable for the preparation of a new Blackpool Local Plan.

3.2 The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy was adopted by the council on 20 January 2016 however, there is a legal requirement^[1] to review local plan policies at least every 5 years from the date of adoption to ensure policies remain up to date and conform to national guidance.

3.3 In 2021 a scoping review of the core strategy was undertaken which highlighted that a full update of this plan was needed. Work then commenced on the review which focussed on background work updating socio-economic data and other important evidence to assist informing the vision, strategy and policy direction of the new plan.

3.4 At the same time, work on the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document continued and this document was adopted by the council in February 2023.

3.5 Whilst Part 2 of the Local Plan is recently adopted, the council intend that the new Blackpool Local Plan will be a single document including strategic policy, site allocations and development management policies as advised by government in the [National Planning Policy Framework Section 3 – Plan Making](#).

3.5 Table 2 sets out the anticipated timetable for the production of the new plan.

Task	Specification	Timeline
1	Updating Evidence ® Updating and collecting evidence to inform the strategy, objectives and policy in the new plan	Ongoing
2	Scoping ® Preparation of Project Initiation Document	Autumn 2025
3	Plan visioning and Strategy Development ® Drafting of document setting out key issues and options emerging from evidence base to include visioning and strategy options ® Consultation with the community and key stakeholders on Issues and Options document (Mandatory 8 weeks)	January 2026 to December 2026 January 2027 to March 2027
4	Evidence gathering and drafting the Plan ® Preparation of-draft plan including ongoing evidence gathering	April 2027 to March 2029
5	Engagement, proposing changes, submission ® Consultation on the draft plan (mandatory 6 weeks) ® Proposing changes following consultation and submission	April 2029 to June 2029 July 2029 to February 2030
6	Examination Examination in public by an examiner appointed by the Secretary of State	March 2030 to August 2030
7	Finalisation and adoption Finalising any outcomes of the Examination and Adoption of the plan by full Council	September 2030 to February 2031

3.6 Various stages of plan production set out in Table 2 will be reported to the Council Executive and full Council as appropriate in accordance with the current regulations and the Council's constitution. The time required for reporting procedures has been taken into account in the timetable.

Evidence base

3.7 In terms of Task 1 the following evidence has been updated and undertaken jointly with our neighbouring authorities, Fylde and Wyre Borough Councils:

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 – June 2024
- Joint Fylde Coast Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpersons Accommodation Study - July 2024;
- Joint Fylde Coast Economic Needs Update and Employment Land Review - November 2024.

3.8 In addition a joint Retail and Leisure Assessment and Capacity Study with Blackpool and Wyre has been undertaken and is expected to be completed in Spring 2025.

3.9 Other key pieces of evidence base work to be commissioned and to commence in the Spring of 2025 are:

- Blackpool Housing Needs Assessment, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Green Belt Review to inform accommodating the revised housing target for Blackpool of 585 dwellings per annum; and
- Blackpool Tourism Economy Updated and Visitor Accommodation Study.

Monitoring and Review

3.10 The Local Development Scheme will be monitored on an annual basis from

1st April to the 31 March as part of the Authority Monitoring Report which can be viewed on the Council's website.

4.0 Resources

Staffing

4.1 The Blackpool Local Plan will be produced by the Council's Planning Strategy Team. The team currently comprises 3 officers:

- Head of Planning Strategy
- 1 Principal Planner
- 1 Graduate Assistant Planner

4.2 The team will take the lead role in developing the local plan and project managing its preparation. The Team will liaise closely with a number of other council services for expertise in developing the plan including:

- Development management
- Housing
- Growth and prosperity projects tea,
- Economic development
- Transport
- Culture and heritage
- Public health
- Education
- Leisure services
- Corporate climate change
- Legal services

4.3 Consultants will be engaged on specific projects where there is a lack of capacity or where specific external expertise is required. (Paragraph 3.9 above refers).

Budget

4.5 The cost of producing the new Blackpool Local Plan will be met from existing and future service budgets. Joint funding and

support in kind will be actively sought by the department from external organisations, for example with neighbouring local authorities, where there is a mutual interest in the work being carried out.

5.0 Risk assessment

5.1 The production of a local plan requires consideration of the potential risk involved in its preparation. These risks may be local matters such as changes in staffing levels or political / administrative changes to those of regional or national significance including publication of revised government guidance.

5.2 Table 3 below identifies the main risks to programme slippage their impact and likelihood of occurrence together with contingency and mitigation measures.

Risk		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Change in Legislation	Numerous changes have been made by Governments to the planning system over recent years, including plan making and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework. It is highly likely that other changes and guidance will be forthcoming over the LDS period. These changes need to be addressed and can cause delay.	High	High	Liaising with the relevant Government department, keeping up-to-date with new policy and legislation and assessing how this may impact on the Local Plan. This is largely out of the authority's control however where possible await outcomes of various consultations and any pending changes at a national level where possible prior to commencement of regulatory stages; and ensure documents are updated to ensure compliance with legislation.
Capacity of the Planning Inspectorate	A lack of capacity within the Planning Inspectorate to cope with demand nationwide could cause delay to the examination of a DPD.	High	High	Keeping in touch with the Inspectorate and advise them of requests for Examinations at the earliest possible time. However, this risk is largely out of the authority's control.
Other External Bodies	The development of DPDs involves complex arrangements for co-operation, consultation, engagement and evidence gathering. Failure on the part of other bodies to respond on time or to provide inadequate responses which require subsequent clarification could cause significant delay to work programmes.	High	High	Programming work to accommodate likely delays. However, this risk is largely out of the authority's control.
	Difficulty of achieving joint working with			

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Problems arising from joint working; compliance with the duty to co-operate.	High	High	Close working with neighbouring authorities at an officer and member level to detect issues early in the process; ensure clear, transparent working arrangements; include flexibility in the Local Plan timescales.
Staff resources/ turnover/absence	High	High	<p>Local Plan timetable should be set on realistic basis taking into account the staff resources available;</p> <p>Re-appoint as soon as possible when a post is vacated;</p> <p>Ensure flexibility of staff within the Planning Service enabling secondment from other planning-related teams in the Council to help with workload;</p> <p>Some elements of work can be undertaken by consultants;</p> <p>Difficulties of staff recruitment and retention can be addressed by improving pay and reward packages.</p>
Political Direction /Management	High	High	Early consultation and information sharing with Members including through the Members and Officer Local Plan Working Group to ensure member 'buy-in' to the policies and proposals in Local Plan Documents and gain a better understanding of the process to secure an up to date plan which is compliant with national guidance and to reduce the likelihood of late amendments being required.
			Seek advice from PINS at key Gateway stages (if confirmed) of the plan-making process;

Risk		Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Soundness	Local Plan or other supporting documents fail test of soundness which would significantly delay process.	Low	High	Ensure robust evidence base; and Have regard to the soundness self-assessment toolkit and procedural implications.
Legal Challenge	Legal challenge to document could see Local Plan quashed. Post adoption of a Local Plan, there is a six week challenge period. There is potential for newly adopted plans to be challenged, placing a degree of uncertainty over the status of the policies and proposals.	Low	High	Ensure procedures, Acts and Regulations are complied with to reduce risk of challenge. Engage Gateway stages (if confirmed) of the plan-making process with the Planning Inspectorate to reduce the risk. Resist challenges made through the Courts where they are not well founded.
Programme slippage	Unforeseen work unrelated to the Local Plan requires Strategy Team expertise and takes team resource away from progressing the plan.	High	High	Sufficient flexibility is included in the Local Plan timescales. Revise LDS where necessary. Ensure sufficient resources available to complete future stages.

Appendix 1

- Section 15 (9A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that the changes made in updating the LDS should be made publically available. Therefore a summary of the changes made is set out below:

Summary of amendments

- LDS updated to reflect adoption of the Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies in February 2023
- LDS updated to reflect the adoption of the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan November 2023
- The Scoping Review of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy has been updated to set out a new timetable for the production of the new Blackpool Local Plan to reflect the revised staffing resource
- Amendments to the timetable in Table 2 of the updated LDS February 2025 compared to the LDS July 2022:

Key dates

LDS July 2022 Stage	LDS February 2025 equivalent stage	Amendment
Publication Consultation (Regulation 19)	Draft Plan consultation	September to October 2024 amended to April to June 2029

Submission to Secretary of State	Submission to Secretary of State	December 2024 amended to February 2030
Examination	Examination	March 2025 amended to March/August 2030
Adoption	Adoption	December 2025 amended to February 2031

- LDS updated to reflect adoption of the Affordable Housing SPD in July 2023; and information on the preparation of the Public Art SPD removed as work on this SPD is on hold due to resource issues.

Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended) and NPPF 2024 paragraph 34.

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