CORE STRATEGY EVIDENCE BASE

HOUSING TECHNICAL PAPER

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL

MAY 2012

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper has been prepared to provide further justification and explanation of the proposed housing target set out in the Blackpool Core Strategy: Revised Preferred Option May 2012. The paper draws on information and data from published sources, reviewing the Core Strategy evidence base on housing matters.

1.2 This paper has been produced in May 2012 and sets out a new housing requirement for Blackpool. In doing so it reflects the new agenda in the Localism Act which gives Local Planning Authorities the responsibility of setting their own housing targets in their local plans. Although Regional Spatial Strategies are still awaiting revocation pending the outcome of environmental assessment it is considered not unreasonable to adopt the new approach in the Core Strategy – Revised Preferred Option as the Plan extends over a period of 15 years and its adoption is not expected until December 2013 by which time revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) is likely to have taken place. To develop a 15 year planning framework at this time based on housing figures in the North West RSS which are increasingly outdated and soon to be redundant would be inappropriate.

1.3 This technical paper will subsequently be reviewed when more up-to-date information becomes available.

Blackpool

1.4 Blackpool has an unbalanced housing market, characterised by an oversupply of poor quality one-person accommodation, limited choice of family housing particularly in the inner area, and a shortage of good quality affordable housing across the Borough. The concentration of small, poor quality housing in the inner areas attracts low income and vulnerable households, leading to high levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and unstable, fragmented communities with high levels of transience.

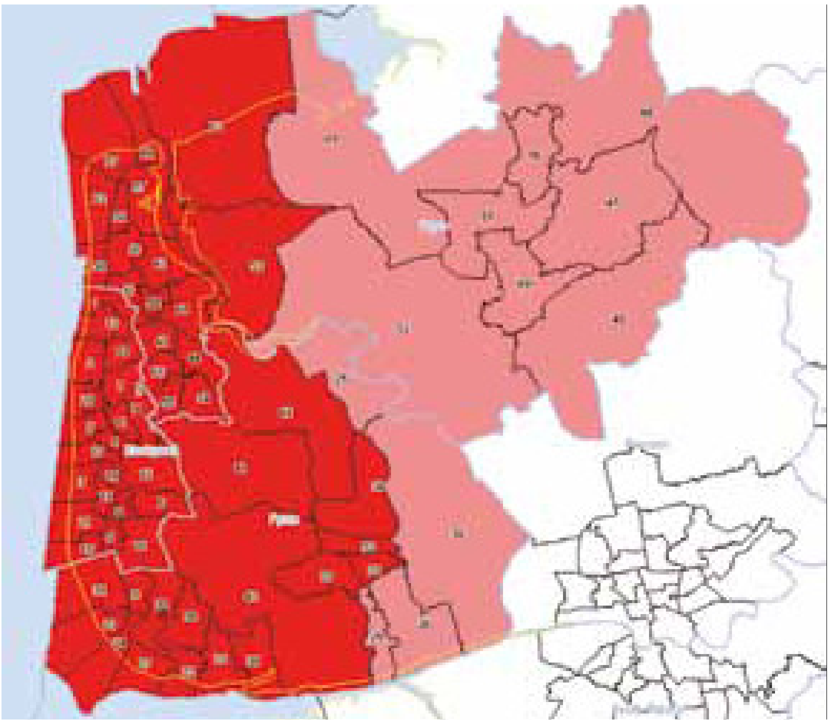
1.5 The Borough has an intensely built-up urban area, approximately 80% of which is developed. Remaining undeveloped lands largely comprise of protected open space which provide important recreational and amenity benefits for residents and visitors or small sites more suited for small-scale (often windfall) development. Blackpool is built up to its northern and southern boundaries, with the few remaining areas of undeveloped open land to the south and east of the town comprising public open space, sites of nature conservation value, Green Belt and Countryside Areas. Due to the intensely built-up urban area, much of this open land has important landscape, nature conservation and environmental value; it is integral to the local distinctiveness of Blackpool and valued by the local community.

Fylde Coast Sub Region

1.6 Blackpool lies within the Fylde Coast Sub-Region, along with the districts of Fylde and Wyre. The area covers 384km and is home to 327,400 residents. The sub-region demonstrates a high level of self containment in terms of housing markets, travel to work patterns and economic functionality, although has always been an area attractive to in-migrants from other parts of the country because of its holiday resorts.

1.7 The Fylde Coast housing market area has been determined by patterns of local migration and travel to work in the Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008. There are strong local connections within the part of the Fylde Coast housing market area coloured red on the map below, comprising Blackpool and the western, mostly urban, parts of Fylde and Wyre. The remaining areas in pink consist of eastern parts of Wyre and Fylde that have greater connection to a wider rural housing market and to Preston.

Figure 1: Fylde Coast Housing Market Area



Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment April 2008

1.8 The Fylde Coast Housing Market Area (HMA) as a whole has a wide range of housing and neighbourhood offers, including some very attractive areas, but there are also some major concentrations of poor quality homes in very unattractive areas. These neighbourhoods contribute to the under-performance of the local economy, whilst in the attractive areas it is difficult for local people on modest incomes to be able to afford to buy or rent a suitable home.

1.9 To ensure we achieve a more balanced housing market the three authorities have undertaken a joint approach to addressing housing issues unrestricted by local authority boundaries.

1.10 The Fylde Coast authorities have been working together on strategic planning issues for many years. For example, the establishment of the Multi Area Agreement in 2009 and the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company in 2010, recently rebranded the Blackpool Bay Area Company in 2011, to support local authority partnership working, coordinate and drive forward shared objectives and deliver a coordinated programme of capital investment. Various joint housing studies have also been produced to inform policy development including the need for new and affordable housing:

- A Fylde Coast Housing Market Assessment 2008 - to provide a robust evidence base to inform the policy approach to be adopted in the individual core strategies. This study is a key document in the Core Strategy evidence base and will be reviewed and updated in 2012 to ensure it is appropriate for examination;

- The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 - to provide a common understanding, vision and set of priorities for housing across the Fylde Coast housing market area to provide a wider understanding of issues and priorities that enables public and private sector partners to develop their work in a clear strategic context.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO SETTING A HOUSING REQUIREMENT

National Planning Policy

2.1 The Government has recently made some significant changes to the planning system that will affect the responsibilities of all local planning authorities. As already referred to in paragraph 1.2 the changes have been introduced through the Localism Act. A key provision of the Act is the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies[1], a consequence of which is that local authorities will be responsible for determining their own housing targets. The Localism Act gives the Government powers to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) once strategic environmental assessments (EA's) are complete. Consultation on the EA's ended on the 20 January 2012. The comments received are currently being considered by Department for Communities and Local Government.

2.2 The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) replaces guidance in Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing, and sets out national planning policy for housing development and guidance on determining a housing requirement. Paragraph 158 and 159 of NPPF states:

" 158. Each local planning authority should ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Local planning authorities should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals.

159. Local planning authorities should have a clear understanding of housing needs in their area. They should:

Prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period which:

- *meets household and population projections, taking account of migration and demographic change;*

[1] The Secretary of State may by order revoke the whole or any part of a regional strategy under Part 5 of that Act.

- *addresses the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);and*
- *caters for housing demand and the scale of housing supply necessary to meet this demand;*

- *Prepare a Strategic Housing land availability Assessment to establish a realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period."*

2.3 To ensure sensible strategic planning across local authority boundaries, the Government has also introduced a 'Duty to Cooperate' requiring councils to work with neighbouring authorities and other bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships on strategic priorities. In response to this a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed between the Fylde Coast authorities of Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council. It sets out a number of strategic planning issues which will be the subject of cross boundary co-operation to ensure that the development plans of each authority are sustainable and deliverable.

Regional Planning Policy

2.4 The North West Regional Spatial Strategy (NWRSS) was published in 2008, having gone through an 'Examination in Public' (EiP) in 2006. The figure for Blackpool in the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy was a total of 8,000 dwellings between 2003 and 2021, an annual requirement of 444 dwellings per annum. This figure was challenging for Blackpool bearing in mind the housing land capacity limitations. The realities of the recent housing market delivery also mean that the longer the current downturn continues, the stronger the likelihood that levels of delivery will fall short of these figures.

2.5 Although the intention was that every RSS would be abolished by April 2012 the current position in May 2012 is that they remain, although they are due to be abolished soon. Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting that much of the evidence upon which the NWRSS was based dates back to the early-mid 2000's, and is becoming increasingly out of date.

Local Planning Policy

2.6 As previously highlighted, Blackpool's limited development land is a significant constraint and this was reflected in the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper (2008). This consultation document set out six alternative spatial options to accommodate 7,500 new homes[2] and 40 hectares of additional employment land to meet Blackpool's future needs. Public consultation and analysis of each option, including the benefits and disbenefits, informed the Preferred Option (2010).

2.7 In considering the options, elements of options 2, 4 and 5 performed strongest. Option 2 targeted growth and development in the inner area, town centre and resort core to achieve the Council's vision for regeneration; although due to the limited lands available, further development in sustainable locations on the edge of the existing urban area would be required. The most sustainable locations were considered to be Marton Moss (option 4) and the M55 hub (option 5). Marton Moss is the only major area in the Borough which remains undeveloped and it was proposed to develop lands to deliver a wide mix of homes. Reflecting the commitment to sub-regional growth at the M55 Hub, option 5 considered that lands in Fylde in conjunction with lands

[2] This figure was based on the NWRSS requirement and is now out of date. Establishing a new target for the number of homes required is the subject of this Housing Technical Paper

in Blackpool could be sustainably developed for a mix of uses to help complement and support Blackpool's economic growth.

2.8 This combination of options established Blackpool's preferred spatial strategy for inner area regeneration complemented by supporting growth on green field land to the south of the urban area.

2.9 Other options considered for future development, but discounted, included urban concentration (option 1) and peripheral suburban expansion (option 3). Whilst option 1 would help achieve the Council's vision for regeneration and promote development in sustainable locations, there were concerns about substantial further intensification of development within the urban area. Option 3 considered peripheral greenfield locations on the edge of Blackpool to help accommodate development requirements; however this raised considerable environmental concerns as it included less sustainable locations to the east of the town, and would have encroached onto Green Belt and Countryside land.

2.10 The Revised Preferred Option (2012) is informed by the Issues and Options (2008) and Preferred Option (2010), including representations received on each document, in addition to the Localism Agenda, NPPF and a draft Memorandum of Understanding between Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre local authorities. Consequently, it no longer promotes some elements of the preferred options (2, 4 and 5). In particular, the Revised Preferred Option proposes a different approach to Marton Moss and the M55 Hub. In terms of the Moss, whilst option 4 was subsequently taken forward as a preferred option, further consultation has established the need to safeguard and enhance the Moss character, which is considered integral to the local distinctiveness of Blackpool and is valued by the local community. The M55 Hub no longer has growth point status, but lands close to Junction 4 of the M55 on the Fylde / Blackpool boundary continue to be recognised as a priority for sub-regional housing and employment growth in the draft Memorandum of Understanding. Further development here, in what is essentially an extension to Blackpool's urban area, would continue to play an important role in complementing and supporting Blackpool's economic growth. Further explanation of Blackpool's employment position is detailed in the Employment Technical Paper.

2.11 This revised approach still aligns with Blackpool's overall spatial strategy - inner area regeneration complemented by supporting growth on the edge of the existing urban area - but there is now a new focus on the enhancement of Marton Moss through the promotion of neighbourhood planning.

Wider Local Strategic Context

2.12 A key plank of the town's strategy for economic improvement, alongside the strengthening of the best of the tourism offer, and diversification of the local economy, is to facilitate the transition of many inner resort areas to higher quality residential communities. As the demand for holiday accommodation started to decline from the 1960s onwards, it became increasingly difficult for guest house owners to make ends meet, and increasingly attractive to let rooms and eventually whole buildings to permanent residents. The dynamic of conversions of former guest houses to poor quality small flats and houses in multiple occupation has continued over the last few decades, and leaves the inner town with a legacy of low value and unattractive homes in former guest houses.

2.13 The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 sets out how new sustainable residential communities will be promoted in inner Blackpool through a range of policy changes and direct intervention. The Fylde Coast Local Investment Plan (LIP) signed with the Homes and Communities Agency in March 2011 provides further detail on the actions that are being taken to support a better residential offer in Inner Blackpool. It demonstrates the links between improvements to the balance of homes and the local community in Inner Blackpool and the success of Blackpool town centre as the Fylde Coast's largest employment location. In particular, it sets out that:

"Action to tackle the unbalanced housing offer in the inner towns delivers added value beyond meeting housing needs…., 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" [Fylde Coast LIP, March 2011, Para 5.16]

2.14 The Council is realistic about what can be achieved, and is encouraging conversion to homes that will be attractive to people on modest incomes within the Fylde Coast housing market. The comprehensive approach initiated over the last three years includes:

Planning policy changes

2.15 The Holiday Accommodation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted by the Council in 2011 sets out the areas in which holiday accommodation uses will be protected, and conversely, where a managed transition from guest houses to residential accommodation will be allowed. The New Homes from Old Places SPD adopted in 2011 provides robust space, character, and amenity standards for conversions of former guest houses. This is a radical change from resisting conversions to residential accommodation to allowing them in many areas, as long as the conversions are to homes with high space and amenity standards. The SPD has already resulted in a number of high quality conversions by private owners.

Housing and planning enforcement

2.16 A comprehensive survey of all 8,000 buildings in Inner Blackpool was carried out in 2010 and established a database for planning and housing enforcement activity. Internal inspections of many of the properties led to an intense period of enforcement according to the risks found. Blackpool's first selective licensing scheme that requires all privately rented properties to be licensed went live on 14th March 2012 in the South Beach area, covering around 900 privately rented properties. Enforcement of the licensing requirement is likely to lead to some property owners having to find new uses for their accommodation or re-modelling it. It is intended that further selective licensing schemes will be introduced in the Claremont and Talbot wards within the next two years. New Fylde Coast HMO Space and Amenity Standards were introduced in 2011, pushing property standards required by enforcement teams in Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre as high as legally possible to support uplift in the character of privately rented accommodation.

Investment in neighbourhood improvement

2.17 In 2011, Blackpool Council carried out external works to the majority of properties in Crystal Road, to change a street just behind the Promenade from predominantly guest house use to predominantly residential character. At the same time, improvements were made to the street scene to create an attractive residential offer. An on-going programme of face lifting works is being carried out in nearby streets to establish a more attractive residential offer.

2.18 Planning is at an advanced stage to support the delivery of around 400 new homes on land owned by Blackpool Council at Rigby Road / Tyldesley Road, establishing a high quality new residential offer in Foxhall.

2.19 Investment by housing associations in the last two years has converted former guest house and HMO properties to provide affordable homes for shared ownership.

Transience pilot in South Beach

2.20 As well as investment in the physical infrastructure and housing stock, the Council is establishing a multi-agency approach to work with individuals in the inner areas who require support to move to less chaotic lifestyles. There is a dynamic in inner Blackpool of people moving frequently from one poor quality flat to another, often to run away from problems or escape rent arrears. Unless people are helped to address their underlying problems and establish a more stable way of life, they will continue to struggle and be disruptive, and the inner areas will always be stigmatised, and not worth property owners investing in. This multi-agency approach is currently being established across Council departments, in conjunction with the Police and health agencies, to focus area-specific services on the South Beach area. It is intended that this will then be rolled out to other parts of inner Blackpool.

2.21 The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 also sets out under the "Quantity" theme how the delivery of more high quality homes, including appropriate new affordable housing will be supported. The approach in Blackpool is set out as:

"There is an overall lack of higher value homes in high quality environments where relatively affluent people can aspire to live. In better suburban locations, and especially new development planned on large sites predominantly on the edge of the existing urban area, the emphasis should be on mid and larger sized semi-detached and detached homes, although this emphasis should be balanced with the need for a wide mix of house types in large developments that help create balanced and sustainable new neighbourhoods.

It is important to provide more affordable housing in Blackpool to meet long term needs at the same time as raising the overall housing offer. This will be carefully spatially focused to support regeneration, and will complement the planned reduction in the quantity of inadequate accommodation for people on Housing Benefit in the private rented sector…….The delivery of affordable housing by housing associations using funding from the Homes and Communities Agency will reflect the same priorities - affordable housing in the inner area should be predominantly shared ownership as a means of creating a stable new housing offer in inner Blackpool through both conversion and new build; there will be a more equal mix of social rented and shared ownership on smaller sites in other parts of the borough; the emphasis on large, strategic sites (generally on the edge of the existing urban area) will be on social rented housing, although initially a substantial element of provision will be off-site through commuted sums to support inner area regeneration. The emphasis of house types for new social rented housing in Blackpool will be two, three, and four bedroom family houses because of a significant under-supply of these kinds of homes compared with demand in the existing social rented stock."

Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009, page 30

3.0 TRENDS IN DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF HOUSING

3.1 This section summarises the evidence on the demand for additional arising from demographic and economic trends. It then considers recent trends in new housing supply, the nature of the existing housing stock, and the potential for a reduction in the numbers of vacant homes to contribute to meeting housing requirements.

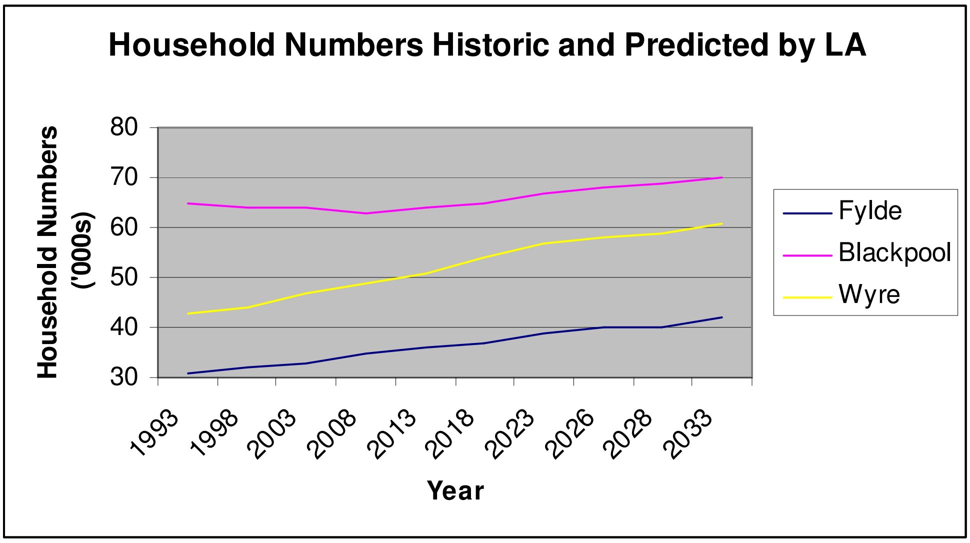
Demand for housing

Demographic factors

3.2 The total number of households in the Fylde Coast area has risen over the last 30 years and is predicted by the Office for National Statistics to continue to rise over the coming decades.

3.3 Historically, the overall growth in household numbers across the Fylde Coast between 1991 and 2001 was 7,791 households (or 779 per annum). Between 2001 and 2006, there was an increase in the number of households across the Fylde Coast of around 5,500 households (or 1,100 per annum). However, it is important to note that none of this growth took place within Blackpool borough. The graph below shows household numbers experienced since 1993 and predicted to 2033. The predicted average household growth for the whole Fylde Coast is 1,050 households per annum between 2008 and 2028, of which 300 per annum are predicted to be in the Blackpool BC area.

Figure 2: Household Numbers Historic and Predicted by LA



Source: CLG, based on ONS 2008 base household forecasts

3.4 Predicted household numbers across the Fylde Coast

Table 1: Predicted household numbers across the Fylde Coast

	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	Ave annual change 2008-2028
Blackpool	63,000	64,000	65,000	67,000	69,000	+300
Fylde	35,000	36,000	37,000	39,000	40,000	+250
Wyre	49,000	51,000	54,000	57,000	59,000	+500
Fylde Coast	147,000	151,000	156,000	163,000	168,000	+1,050

Source: ONS 2008-based projections

3.5 The sources of the predicted average growth of 300 additional households per year (ONS 2008-based projections) from 2008-2028 can be summarised as:

- Reductions in average household size – this accounts for between 190 - 240 additional households per year up to 2028, but the trend is forecast to slow significantly after 2028.

- Net migration – existing net in-migration is expected to increase steadily over time, from 0 additional households currently to 50 each year after 2016, and then up to 160 additional households each year by 2028-2033.

- Natural population change – the reduction in population caused by deaths exceeding births is expected to turn around to become a slight increase over time. The equivalent of 50 households will be gained each year from 2016, although will return to a balance after 2028.

3.6 This produces the following rounded forecasts of household change each year over time:

Table 2: Forecasts for household change each year

	2008-15	2016-21	2022-27	2028-33	Total 2008-33
Average household size	190	225	240	40	**4,360**
Net migration	0	50	110	160	**1,950**
Natural population change	-10	50	50	0	**520**
TOTAL	**200**	**325**	**400**	**200**	**6,830**

3.7 It is important to understand the components of changing numbers of households and the factors that affect future numbers. The key elements include:

(a) Dynamics of average household size

3.8 This is the most significant reason for predicted growth in household numbers in Blackpool. Many of the new households predicted to form each year over the next twenty years arise as a result of general trends towards smaller household sizes.

3.9 The dynamics of smaller average household sizes are strongly linked to an ageing population and a higher proportion of households being small elderly households. The reduction in average household size has been on a similar downward trend since the early 1970s. We can predict with some certainty the future number of households that will be elderly, so this element of future household growth projections is likely to be robust.

3.10 The size of the average household in Blackpool is expected to reduce from 2.23 persons per household in 2008 to 2.08 persons per household in 2028. This is equivalent to around an additional 200 households per year over the period.

(b) Natural population change

3.11 Blackpool has been losing around 100 people each year as a result of more people dying than being born. The loss of population through natural change is expected to have disappeared by 2011, with roughly equal births and deaths each year, and then to move into population growth of around 100 people each year from 2015 with births slightly exceeding deaths (Source: ONS 2008-based projections). 100 additional people through natural change would equate to around 46 additional households at the average household size of 2.18 expected in 2015.

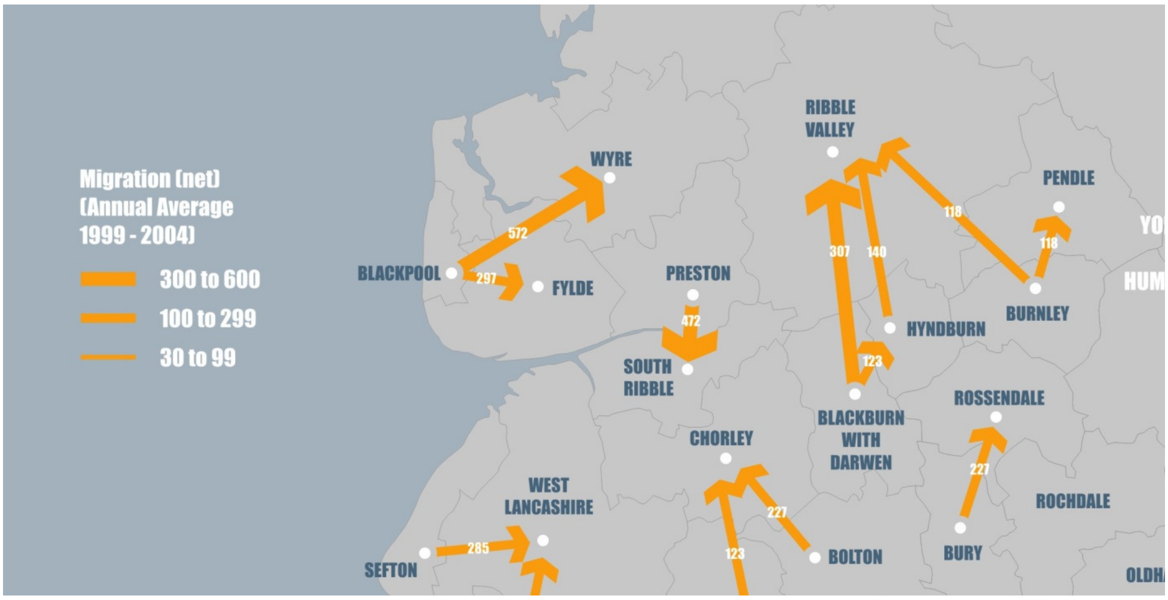
3.12 Natural population change is unlikely to vary much from predictions – there are established patterns of deaths and births that will play out in household formation over the next couple of decades.

(c) Migration

3.13 his is a significant element of demographic change, and overall migration is predicted to rise in importance, leading to the current balance of around the same number of people coming into the borough as leaving it each year moving to a position of around 330 additional people moving in each year in the period 2028-2033. This is equivalent to 0 additional households per year currently, rising to 160 each year in 2028-2033 if the average household size is factored in.

3.14 There is an on-going dynamic of large numbers of people coming to and from Blackpool from across the country, and of people moving within the Fylde Coast from Blackpool to Fylde and Wyre, as illustrated below by information based on NHS patient records:

Figure 3: Patterns of migration



3.15 Domestic migration – more people moving to Blackpool than leaving it within the UK – is predicted to contribute to a rising population in Blackpool. While there is currently a net outflow of people from Blackpool to Fylde and Wyre, as shown on the diagram above, this is more than off-set by more people coming into Blackpool from other parts of the country. Overall, around 500 more people (or 220 more households) move to Blackpool from within the UK each year than leave the borough.

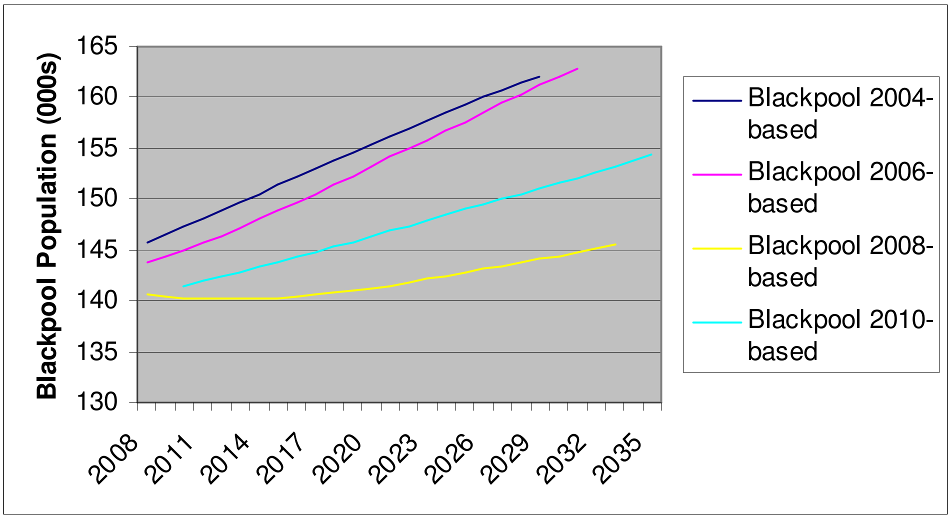
3.16 However domestic net in-migration is currently off-set by 500 more people (or 220 households) leaving for other countries than coming to Blackpool from other countries each year.

3.17 Migration is predicted to contribute to increases in Blackpool's population in future, with predictions of more people coming to Blackpool from other parts of the country in future, but no rise in the levels of people leaving the borough. A small constant net loss of population from Blackpool through international net emigration is predicted, although this is hard to predict and there are may be fluctuations in reality.

3.18 The balance of domestic and international migration is the hardest element of demographic change to predict. While migration is predicted not to be as important to changes in household numbers in Blackpool as the trend for reducing average household sizes, what actually happens could be substantially different from what is currently forecasted. The numbers involved - for example nearly 7,800 people (or 3,500 households) coming into the borough and 7,300 people (or nearly 3,300 households) leaving each year – are very large.

3.19 The above figures reflect ONS 2008-based household growth projections, which are the latest available. These vary significantly from earlier household growth projections, and are also likely to be different from 2010-based household projections. The graph below shows the range of ONS population growth projections in recent years, including the latest 2010-based population growth projection for Blackpool that has recently been released. The higher population growth forecast by ONS using 2010-based projections compared with 2008-based projections is likely to mean that household growth projections will also be higher when 2010-based household growth projections are released (expected later this year).

Figure 4: Household Growth Projections



3.20 Note that the RSS target of 444 new homes p.a was informed by 2004-based projections that were significantly higher than more recent projections.

3.21 It is important not to lose sight of the wider picture in other parts of the Fylde Coast housing market area. While the future demographic projections for Fylde broadly match the historic rate of new housing delivery in Fylde, the rate of household growth predicted for Wyre is significantly above past levels of new housing delivery within Wyre itself. New development in Blackpool, and especially on the edges of the borough, is likely to attract interest from people living across the Fylde Coast, and likewise, development in the coastal urban areas of Fylde and Wyre will be equally of interest to people who are currently, or who would otherwise have moved to, Blackpool.

3.22 The balance of households in Blackpool will change significantly towards more households over retirement age and more single person and lone parent households. The detail of these changes in household characteristics, and the impact on the types of homes required, is set out in Section 4 of this Paper.

Economic factors

3.23 The demand from households for appropriate homes is influenced by the performance of the local economy, and in particular the nature and number of jobs accessible to people living in the area. A thriving local economy with rising employment is likely to draw in and retain more households who need to live in the area. Conversely, a lack of employment is likely to lead to a reduction in the demand for homes in the area. However, the links are not always very direct, and Blackpool has a significant minority of households who are not linked to the employment market because they are past retirement age, unemployed, or suffering with limiting long term illness.

3.24 The demand for different types of homes is influenced by the kinds of jobs that are available to people who live in the area. All areas require a mix of different kinds of homes that are suitable and affordable to people with a range of incomes, but the mix required will vary according to the kinds of incomes that can be earned in the local economy.

3.25 The situation is further complicated by the employment market operating across a wider spatial area than individual local authorities, and people on higher incomes being willing to travel further to work than people on lower incomes. This tends to lead to wide variation within employment and housing market areas as people choose between neighbourhoods that all offer sufficient access to employment but are perceived as being more or less desirable as places to live.

3.26 The Fylde Coast operates as a reasonably self-contained housing market area – most people move within the area rather than between the area and neighbouring authorities – but travel to work patterns go well beyond the area, especially to Preston and other parts of Lancashire and to a limited extent, Greater Manchester. Therefore, demand for housing in Blackpool is most influenced by the employment available in the immediate vicinity, but also to a considerable degree by employment elsewhere in the Fylde Coast, and also by employment in Preston and beyond.

Commuting patterns

3.27 The link between where people work and where people live is determined by transport systems and how far people are prepared to travel to different types of jobs.

3.28 Looking at patterns at the borough level, the table below shows the proportion of workers living in each Fylde Coast borough and where they work. Unsurprisingly, most people work in the borough that they live in, but 12% of Blackpool residents work in Fylde, and 8% in Wyre. The most significant other area of work for Blackpool residents is Preston, with around 3% of Blackpool residents working there.

Table 3: Area of Residence/Workplace

Area of residence	Area of Workplace			
	Blackpool	Fylde	Wyre	All Fylde Coast
Blackpool	71%	12%	8%	91%
Fylde	14%	64%	4%	82%
Wyre	22%	7%	55%	84%

Census 2001

3.29 So as the Fylde Coast and Preston provide the employment locations for around 94% of workers who live in Blackpool, it is the economic futures of these areas that are most important in shaping future migration patterns and incomes and influencing housing demand in the borough, although the future in Blackpool itself is by far the most important issue.

3.30 The table above also shows that 22% of Wyre residents and 14% of Fylde residents work in Blackpool, making the future of employment in Blackpool very significant for those boroughs.

Employment Rate and Structure

3.31 Blackpool has a relatively low employment rate among people of working age, but this improved significantly compared with other areas in the five years to 2009:

Table 4: Working age employment rate

	Sep 2005	Rank (out of 406)	Dec 2006	Rank (out of 407)	2008	Rank (out of 379)	2009	Rank (out of 379)
Blackpool	73.1%	404	69.9%	345	68.0%	341	73.1%	254
Fylde	79.1%	125	76.5%	193	84.7%	20	77.8%	133
Wyre	77.2%	198	73.5%	269	75.9%	208	70.3%	308

UK Competitiveness Index

3.31 However, the total number of households in Blackpool receiving Housing Benefit increased from 16,730 in November 2008 to 19,900 by March 2011 (or around 30% of all households).

3.32 Of the people in work, Blackpool has a relatively low proportion in more senior positions and receiving good incomes:

Table 5: Employee jobs by occupation 2009

	Fylde %	**B'pool %**	Wyre %	NW %	UK %
Managers/senior officials	25.3	**12.2**	10.2	14.9	15.7
Professionals	15.7	**7.7**	8.2	12.2	13.4
Assoc prof/tech	14.3	**11.3**	13.7	13.7	14.8
Admin/secretarial	10.9	**15.0**	15.8	11.8	11.2
Skilled trades	7.2	**10.7**	16.6	10.3	10.4
Personal services	8.0	**11.9**	10.0	8.8	8.5
Sales/customer service	7.7	**9.4**	9.5	8.5	7.5
Process operatives	5.0	**6.7**	6.3	7.9	6.8
Elementary occupations	5.9	**14.7**	9.8	11.4	11.3

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey

3.33 Average earnings by individual workers living in Blackpool are low compared with other parts of the Fylde Coast and averages for the North West and England:

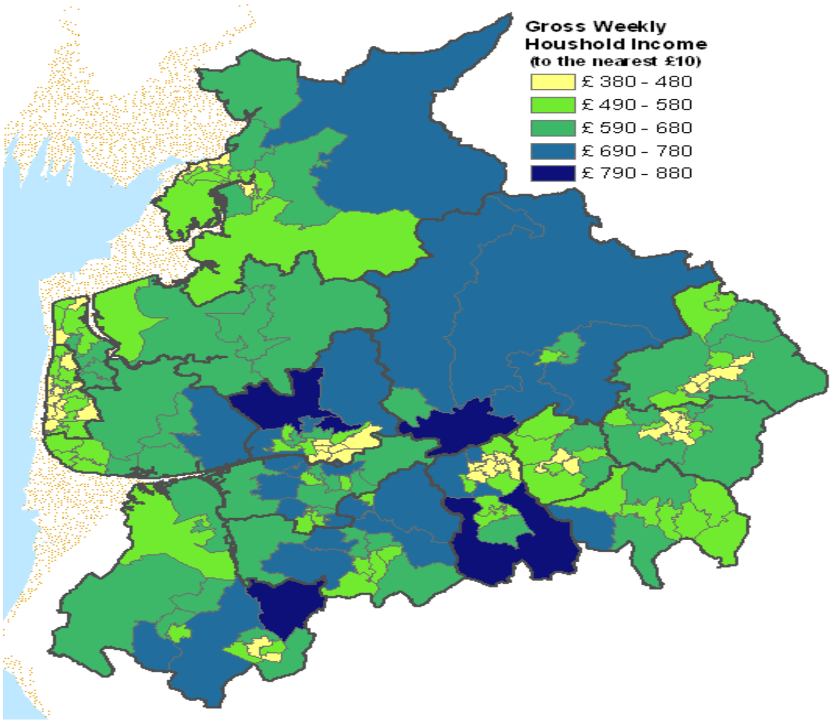
Table 6: Resident-based Weekly Gross Earnings

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Blackpool	**£324**	**£327**	**£324**	**£333**	**£343**	**£352**	**£364**	**£373**
Fylde	£403	£473	£425	£456	£450	£536	£560	£538
Wyre	£342	£393	£402	£425	£422	£415	£418	£423
England	£397	£411	£426	£437	£450	£464	£485	£496
North West	£370	£383	£395	£410	£420	£434	£451	£460

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

3.34 Household incomes are also low in comparison with other areas. The map below shows gross weekly household income 2007/8 across Lancashire. It can be seen that along with other urban centres, much of Blackpool falls within the lowest incomes category. In contrast to every other borough in Lancashire, Blackpool only has the lowest two income ranges within its boundaries, with the more affluent suburban and rural hinterland found in adjacent boroughs rather than within Blackpool itself.

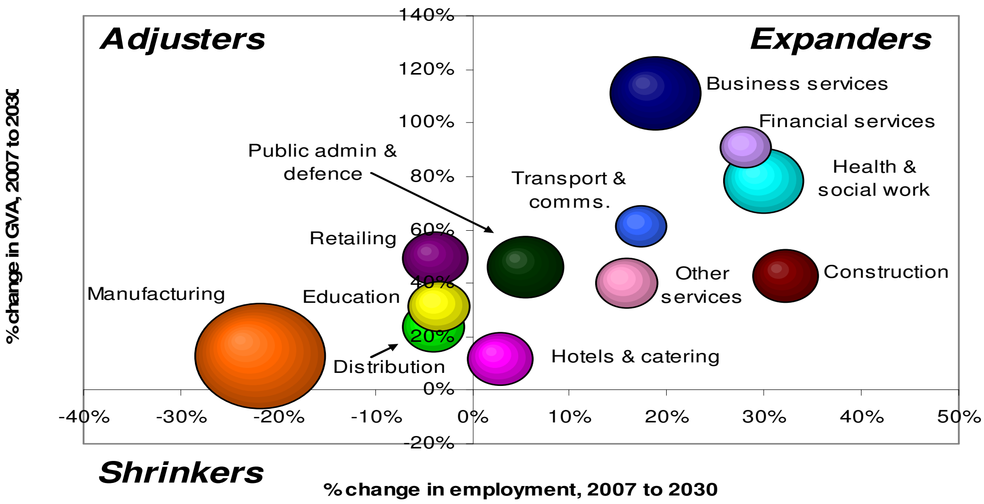
Figure 5: Gross Weekly Household Income



Source: LCC, based on ONS

3.35 Prospects for the future are hard to predict with any certainty, but the diagram below has been developed from data from Cambridge Econometrics, as part of work on the Fylde Coast Economic Strategy. It shows anticipated change in employment and added value of different sectors within the Fylde Coast economy to 2030.

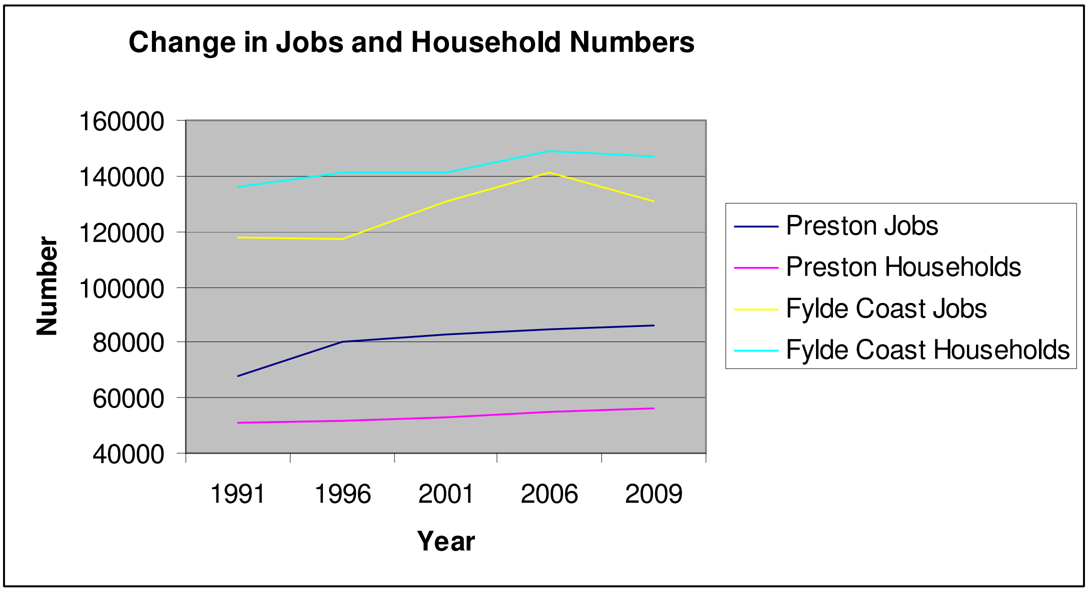
Figure 6: Anticipated change in employment and added value of different sectors within the Fylde Coast economy to 2030



3.36 Blackpool has already lost most of its manufacturing employment, but erosion of manufacturing jobs in other parts of the Fylde Coast could still have a negative impact. Potential increases in health and social care activity reflect demographic changes, but the immediate position is one of decline as reductions in public sector employment work their way through. Business services and construction are predicted to be important future sources of value and employment, with Blackpool starting at a relatively low base.

3.37 Considering the history of employment change (Source: Lancashire CC using ONS and Annual Business Survey) and comparing it with change in the total number of households (Source: ONS) shows the following patterns:

Figure 7: Change in Jobs and Household Numbers



3.38 Preston has many more jobs than households living within the borough, showing its importance as an area to which residents of other areas commute (not just from the Fylde Coast). There has been significant growth in jobs there, accompanied by slightly slower growth in the total number of households. The Fylde Coast has more households than jobs. Growth in the numbers of jobs was faster than growth in household numbers between 1996 and 2006, but there has been a marked fall in the total number of jobs since 2006.

3.39 There appears to have been some relationship between the number of jobs and the number of households in the Fylde Coast and in Preston, but it is not a direct one – for example, recent falls in the number of jobs in the Fylde Coast have not led to an equivalent fall in the number of households. In the whole period from 1991 to 2009, the total number of jobs in the Fylde Coast increased by 13,000 (of which 6,000 were in Blackpool). The total number of households in the Fylde Coast increased by 11,000 in the same period, although none of this overall increase in household numbers in this period was in Blackpool. For Preston, there was an increase of 18,000 jobs and 5,000 households.

3.40 As part of work to develop the North West Strategy, 4NW engaged Cambridge Econometrics to produce Regional Economic Forecasting Panel projections for changes in employment in each local authority area in March 2010. The table below shows the projected change in employment in Fylde and in the wider area where Fylde residents work.

Table 7: Projected change in employment

	Change in Employment 2006-2015	Change in Employment 2015-2030	Total Change in Employment 2006-2030	Annual Average 2006-2030
Fylde	+800	+3,400	+4,200	180
Blackpool	-3,700	+5,500	+1,800	70
Wyre	-700	+1,800	+1,100	50
Preston	+2,100	+4,500	+6,600	280

3.41 The overall projected employment growth in Fylde and Preston is modest but among the highest levels in Lancashire. Overall projected employment growth in Blackpool and Wyre is significantly less, but this reflects losses in employment between 2006 and 2015, much of which has already taken place. The growth predicted between 2015 and 2030 is expected to be relatively strong in Blackpool and the wider area, with 5,500 additional jobs in Blackpool (370 p.a), 10,700 across the whole Fylde Coast (710 p.a), and a further 4,500 inn Preston (300 p.a).

3.42 A move back into increasing numbers of jobs after 2015 would probably not at first drive an increase in household numbers, with many jobs taken up by existing households who are currently unemployed or under-employed, but would in time support household growth. It must also be considered that numbers of jobs are also significantly driven themselves by the size of the resident population, especially jobs providing services to local people.

Economic Factors - Conclusions

3.43 We need a stock of housing that provides the kinds of homes that workers in the local economy need and want. Having the right balance of housing, a high quality housing offer, attractive neighbourhoods, and ensuring that homes are sufficiently affordable provides an essential underpinning to economic prosperity.

3.44 A large minority of Blackpool residents are reliant on benefits and are not in work. Those that are in work tend to have jobs that are less senior and lower paid than most other parts of the North West region.

3.45 While the number of jobs in Blackpool increased by 6,000 between 1991 and 2009, the number of households in Blackpool did not increase. The unemployment rate in Blackpool reduced in this period (from 5,600 claimants in Oct 1991 to 4,200 in Oct 2009), but not enough to explain where all the new workers came from. This suggests an increase in commuting as people working in Blackpool increasingly looked to live elsewhere, and especially in neighbouring Fylde and Wyre. This is backed up by evidence of established patterns of local migration out of Blackpool and into surrounding areas of Fylde and Wyre. There is likely to be a continuing demand from Blackpool residents to move to Fylde and Wyre if they can afford it; but it also seems fair to assume that a proportion of the people who work in Blackpool who currently move to Fylde and Wyre to find a better living environment would live in Blackpool if a more attractive residential offer was available.

3.46 The outlook for employment in Blackpool and neighbouring areas where Blackpool residents work is in the long term positive. However, employment losses have taken place recently with 2000 jobs lost in Blackpool between 2006 and 2009, and another 1,700 losses predicted between 2009 and 2015. Taken together with limited growth in the rest of Fylde Coast and Preston, this suggests very weak demand for housing coming from employees working in the local economy in the next few years, but stronger demand after 2015.

Supply of housing

Housing Delivery

3.47 The net numbers of homes developed over the last 8 years are as follows:

Table 8: Net numbers of homes developed

Year	New Build	Permitted Conversions	Total	CLDEs & Other 'Deemed' Conversions	Total Additions to Dwelling Stock
2003-04	112	122	234	-	234
2004-05	270	43	313	-	313
2005-06	290	109	399	-	399
2006-07	259	79	338	-	338
2007-08	183	81	264	50	314
2008-09	81	109	190	150	340
2009-10	57	66	123	100	223
2010-11	246	48	294	30	324
2003-11	1498	657	2155	330	2485
Average p.a	187	82	269	82 (2007/8-10/11)	311

Source: Blackpool Housing Monitoring Report

3.48 Total new build housing developments in Blackpool decreased from an average of 273 homes each year (2004-7) to 106 homes each year (2007-10), with just 57 in 2009-10. The higher number of new build homes in 2010/11 is almost entirely accounted for by a high number of publicly funded affordable housing developments completing in the year.

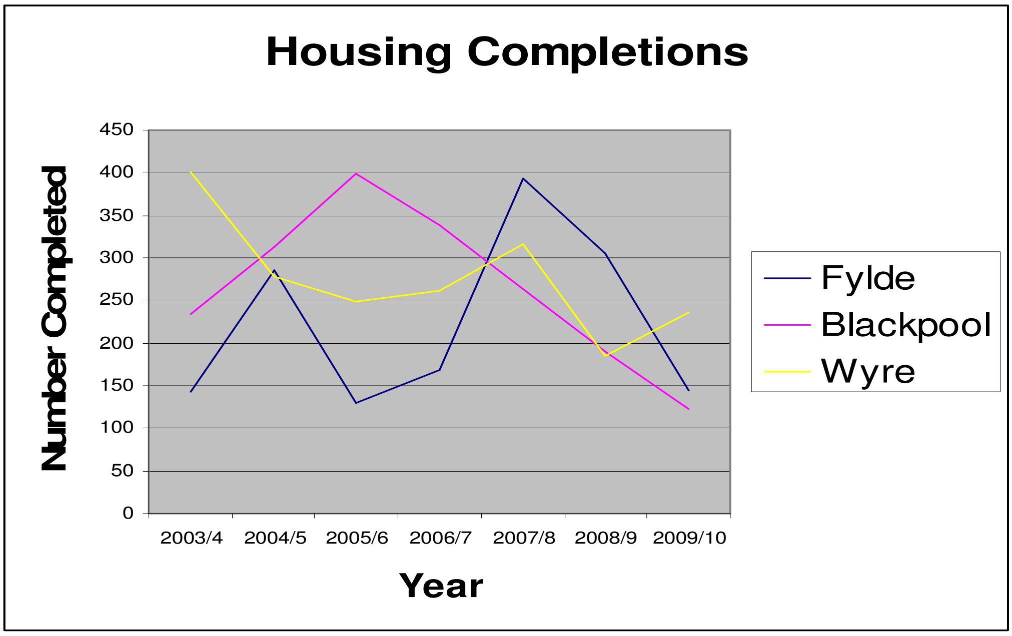
3.49 Looking more widely across the Fylde Coast, delivery has been as set out below:

Table 9: Fylde Coast Housing Delivery

	03/4	04/5	05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	09/10	Total	Average each year
Fylde	142	285	130	168	394	305	145	1569	224
Blackpool	234	313	399	338	264	190	123	1861	266
Wyre	401	278	249	261	317	184	236	1926	275
Fylde Coast Total	777	876	778	767	975	679	504	5356	765

LA annual monitoring reports

Figure 8: Housing Completions



3.50 Completions also reduced significantly in Fylde and Wyre between 2007/8 and 2009/10.

3.51 A large proportion of the new supply in Blackpool has consisted of flats - just over half of new build homes have been flats, and the level of conversions has remained high, largely from holiday to residential use, and predominantly to flats. The result is that Blackpool's housing development profile is becoming increasingly comprised of new flats and conversions, with a narrow range of other new dwellings. The pattern of gross new build completions over the last 8 years is set out in Table 10:

Table 10: Gross New Build Completions

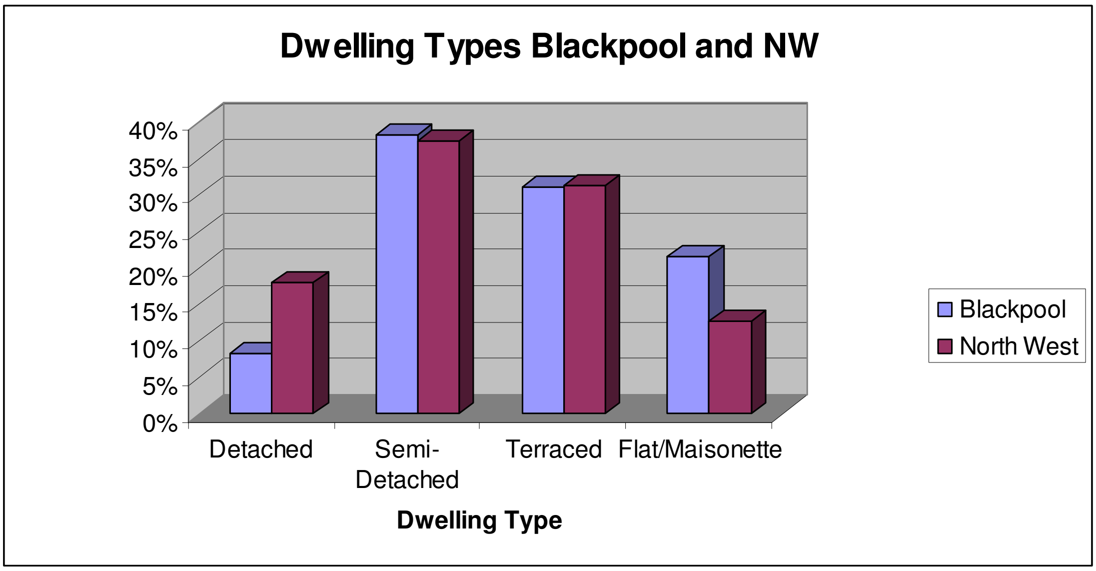
Year	Detached	Semi-Detached	Terraced	Flats	Total
2003-04	46	6	26	97	**175**
2004-05	53	76	70	116	**315**
2005-06	48	36	43	187	**314**
2006-07	31	30	96	154	**311**
2007-08	18	38	15	117	**188**
2008-09	2	8	44	31	**85**
2009-10	9	6	12	32	**59**
2010-11	10	44	46	148	**248**
2003-11	**217**	**244**	**352**	**882**	**1695**
% of total new build completions	**13**	**14**	**21**	**52**	**100**

Note that differences in numbers between this table and that at paragraph 3.48 are because this table provides gross figures rather than the net figures in the table at 3.48.

Balance of existing housing stock

3.52 Blackpool has a much lower proportion of detached houses, and a much higher proportion of flats, than the North West average:

Figure 9: Dwelling Types Blackpool and NW



3.53 The Census 2001 provided information on the sizes of properties in the borough broken down by the total number of rooms. This is set out below, with neighbouring authorities and the North West average for comparison:

Table11: Size: Proportion of homes of different sizes

	1-2 Rooms	3-4 Rooms	5-6 Rooms	7+ Rooms
Fylde	2.8%	28.0%	43.2%	26.1%
Blackpool	**4.7%**	**30.3%**	**50.4%**	**14.6%**
Wyre	1.8%	26.0%	51.5%	20.7%
North West	2.3%	26.9%	52.1%	18.7%

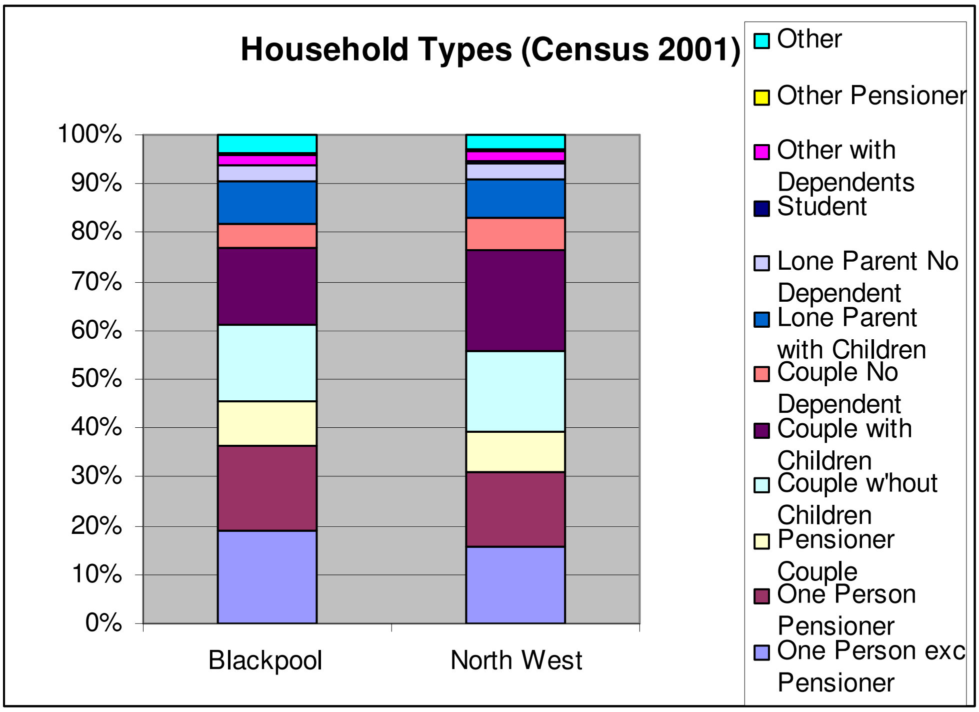
Source: Census 2001

3.54 Blackpool has a larger proportion of its housing stock made up of small homes than other areas locally and the North West average. Although this information is now 10 years old, the fundamental situation will not have changed much since then because of the low rate of new development compared with the number of homes in the existing housing stock. If there has been any change, there is likely to be even greater emphasis on small properties because of the predominance of flats developments in recent years.

3.55 There is a particular concentration of small properties in the inner area of Blackpool, with much of the housing stock there made up of conversions from former guest houses into small flats.

3.56 Blackpool has an emphasis on smaller households than the North West average, with over 60% of all households made up of single people and couples without children. This can be seen as matching the profile of small homes, but the profile of homes also reflects the low incomes and low values in the borough, with relatively few large homes that people with significant resources would aspire to live in.

Figure 10: Household Types



3.57 The tenure mix of existing homes in Blackpool is skewed towards private renting when compared with other areas, with particular concentrations in the inner town. It is estimated that the private rented sector now accounts for 25% of all homes in Blackpool, compared with a national average of around 14%.

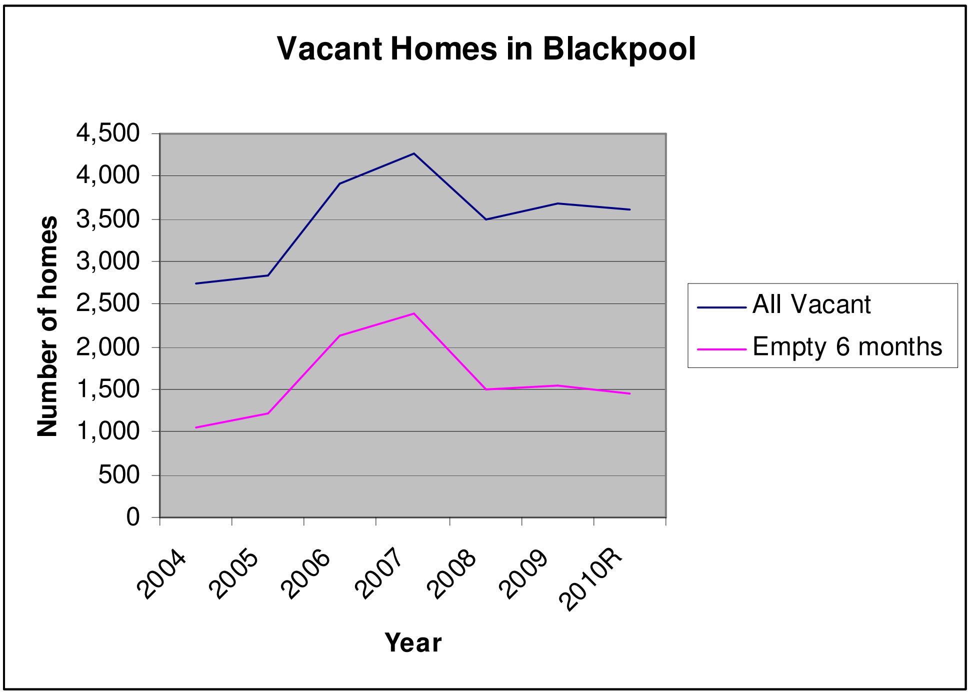
3.58 Around 80% of privately rented homes in Blackpool are let to recipients of Housing Benefit, and nearly 60% of tenants receiving Housing Benefit in the private rented sector live in rooms in shared houses or bedsits / flats with one bedroom (Source: LA Housing Benefit records).

3.59 The existing stock of affordable housing rented by the Council and housing associations is relatively small in Blackpool compared with other areas and the North West average. There are 7,255 social rented homes in Blackpool out of a total of 69,820 homes (Source: CLG, 2010), equivalent to 10.4% of homes. This compares with a North West average of 18.64% of homes.

Vacancy rates within the existing stock

3.60 Council Tax records show that the number of vacant homes in Blackpool rose significantly between 2004 and 2007, but has declined slightly since then. This is shown in the graph below:

Figure 11: Vacant Homes in Blackpool



Source: CLG Live Table 615 based on Council Tax database

3.61 In 2010, the 3,605 vacant properties amounted to 5.16% of the whole housing stock, compared with an average vacancy rate in the North West in 2010 of 4.39%. The proportion of homes vacant for more than 6 months in Blackpool in 2010 was 2.09%, compared with a North West average of 2.14%.

3.62 Generally it is considered that an overall vacancy level of 3% is normal, representing a small amount of flexibility in the housing stock while homes are bought, sold, and re-let. So there are potentially a further 2% of homes in Blackpool (or around 1,400) that represent excessive vacancy.

However, many of these may be inappropriate for immediate occupation without extensive refurbishment or conversion.

3.63 It should also be noted that the levels of vacancy in houses in multiple occupation are hard to assess accurately, and this is further complicated by the changing use of guest house accommodation, where vacancy rates are very much higher.

4.0 THE TYPES OF NEW HOUSING REQUIRED

4.1 New housing adds a relatively small number of homes to the existing housing stock each year, but over a long time helps to shape the character of a place, and determines how well the local community can meet its housing requirements and aspirations. It also provides a significant element of the homes available for purchase each year, so has a disproportionately high impact on the offer available to prospective home buyers.

4.2 This section considers the evidence on the types of new homes required in Blackpool, bringing together evidence on changes in local housing demand with priorities for promoting a sustainable local economy. In particular, it addresses the issues of the mix of new homes required and the requirements for affordable housing.

Mix of new homes

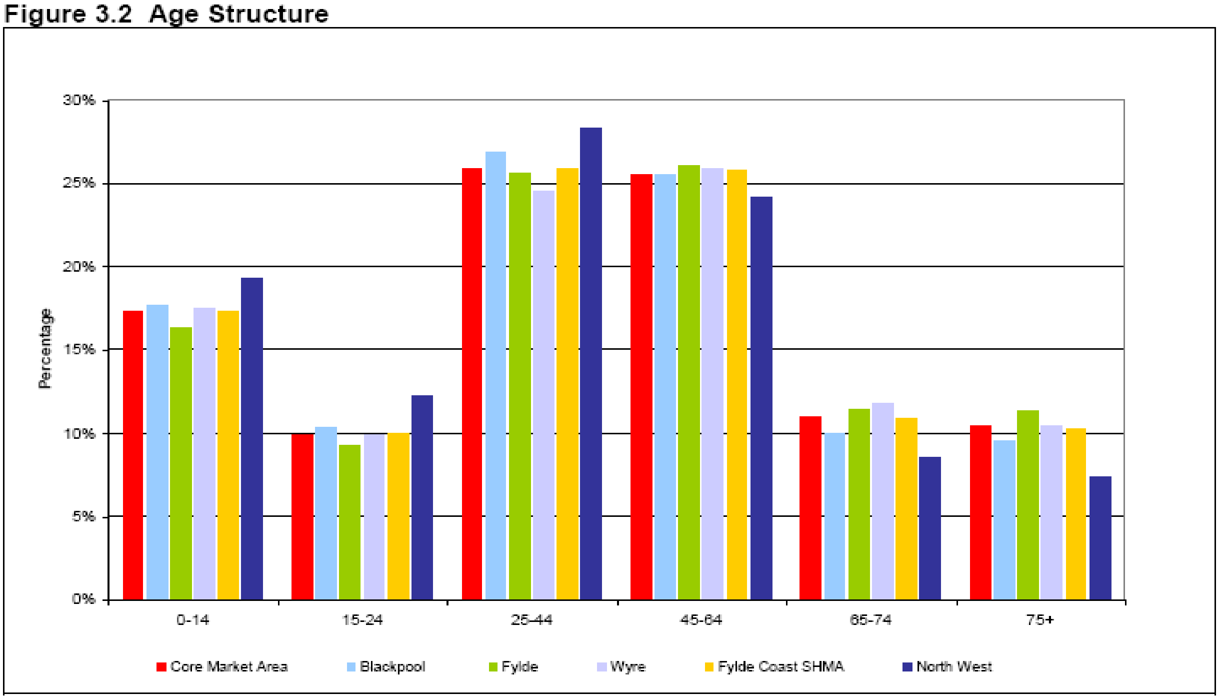
4.3 Important changes in the structure of households in the future, and therefore of potential housing requirements, are predicted. These include:

An increasing older population

4.4 Blackpool has a population that is on average older than most other parts of the North West, but slightly younger than other parts of the Fylde Coast:

Figure 12: Age Structure

Figure 3.2 Age Structure

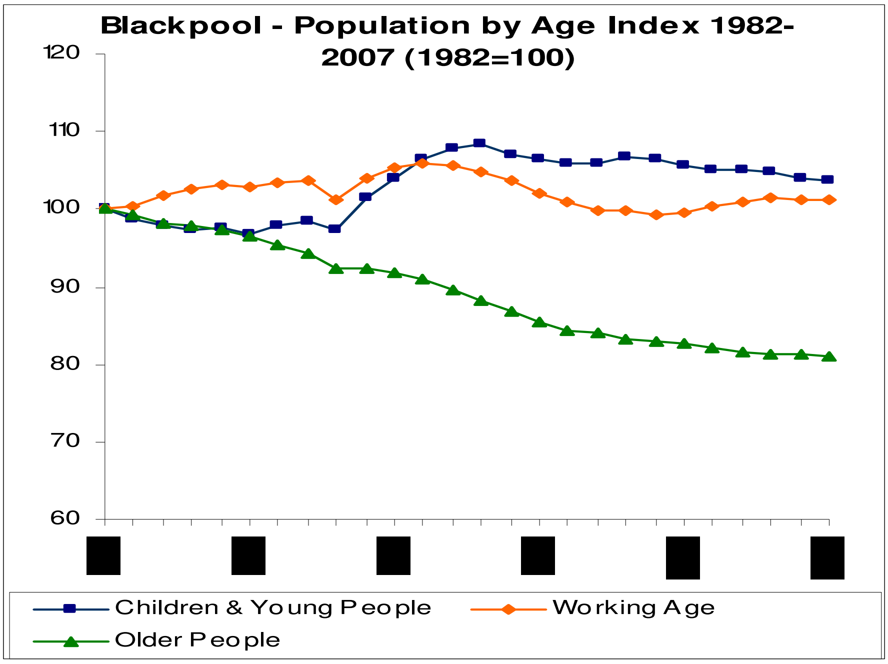


Source: Census 2001

Source: Fylde Coast SHMA 2008, using data from Census 2001

4.5 However, over the last twenty years, the number of older people in Blackpool has actually declined, in contrast to most other parts of the UK. The borough used to have an even older population profile as it was a popular retirement destination. But its attraction to older people has reduced, while neighbouring parts of Fylde and Wyre remain very popular with older people. The changing profile of the Blackpool population between 1982 and 2007 is shown below:

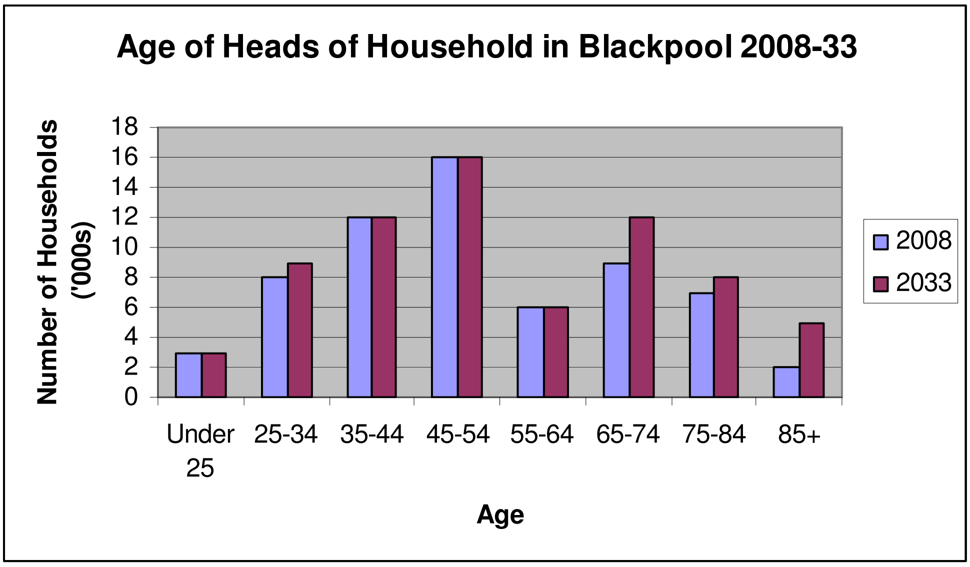
Figure 13: Blackpool Population by Age



Source: ONS 2007 mid-year population estimates)

4.6 Nevertheless, as in the country as a whole, the numbers of older people in the Blackpool population are forecast to grow significantly over the coming decades through ageing of the resident population. The graph below shows that ONS predicts that most of the growth in numbers of households in Blackpool will be growth in households headed by people in the older age groups:

Figure 14: Age of Heads of Households in Blackpool 2008-33

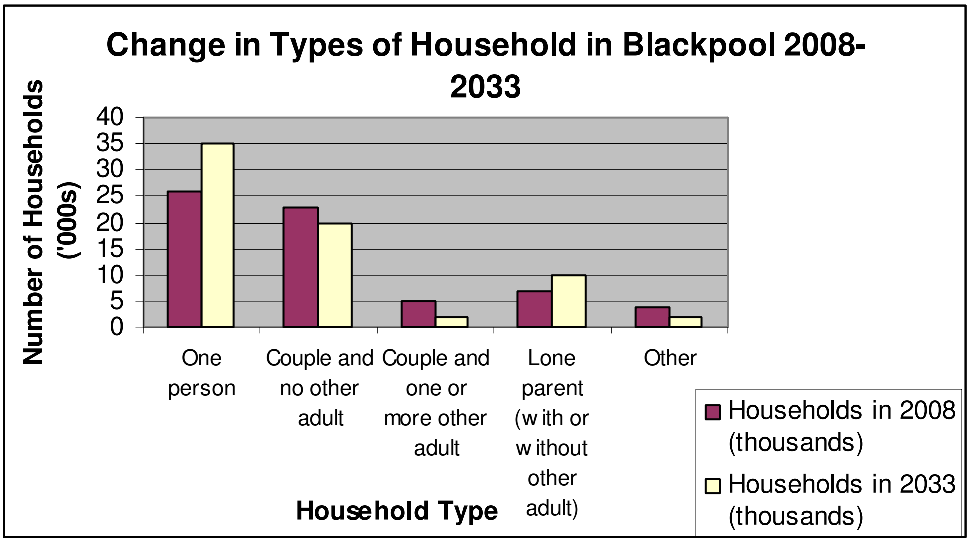


Source: CLG, based on ONS 2008-based projections

Average Household Sizes Reducing

4.7 There will also be corresponding changes in household composition that affect the kinds of homes that will be required in future. The graph below shows the breakdown of types of households in Blackpool in 2008 using ONS data and predicts how this will change by 2033 according to ONS estimates. Note that, with the exception of “One person”, all of the categories may contain a number of children (and the “Lone Parent” category always does). There is predicted to be an especially significant rise in the number of single person households – from 26,000 in 2008 (41% of all households) to 35,000 households in 2033 (50% of all households).

Figure 15: Change in Types of Households in Blackpool



Conclusions on the Mix of New Homes Required

4.8 The existing housing stock already has an emphasis on small homes compared with other areas, and especially an emphasis on flats. In order to meet projected future changes in household sizes, new homes should include smaller units, but this must be balanced with the need to address the lack of larger homes within the existing housing stock.

4.9 As set out in Section 2, the local economic and housing strategies focus on creating a better housing offer that will help improve Blackpool’s economic and social profile, rather than simply accepting and responding to existing patterns of demand. This is because the patterns of demand are themselves partly driven by the housing stock and neighbourhood character, especially in inner Blackpool. A legacy of small flats poorly converted from former guest houses, and unattractive neighbourhoods, coupled with people wanting to move into Blackpool without jobs from deprived urban areas across the country has led to extreme concentrations of deprivation.

4.10 This is not to deny that deprivation is fundamentally the result of a long-term reduction in demand for guest houses in Blackpool, and general economic challenges, but poor quality guest house conversions have exacerbated the impact. Managing conversions of former guest houses to deliver high quality homes suitable for a range of household types, and facilitating the creation of a higher quality housing and neighbourhood offer is essential to encourage more stable and prosperous communities, and support the local service economy.

4.11 The mix of new homes required by planning policy needs to differentiate between inner neighbourhoods of Blackpool that experience particular problems because of the poor mix of existing homes, and the rest of the borough. The mix also needs to respond to the different characters of different areas and the potential to build and sell homes to different markets; for example, even if a much more attractive neighbourhood environment is created in inner Blackpool, new homes there will appeal to a particular part of the market that is different from the potential market for lower density suburban housing.

4.12 As well as focusing on re-balancing the mix of homes available in inner Blackpool, there is a general requirement for new homes in the rest of Blackpool to meet housing aspirations, and not just minimum needs. This can be achieved through high quality design, and by ensuring a broad mix of different kinds of homes that will appeal to a range of household sizes.

4.13 There is a particular need for homes that are suitable for the predicted future growth in the population of older people. This can be achieved by ensuring that all homes are designed to enable use by people with limited mobility, and to provide specialist housing for older people in appropriate and attractive locations.

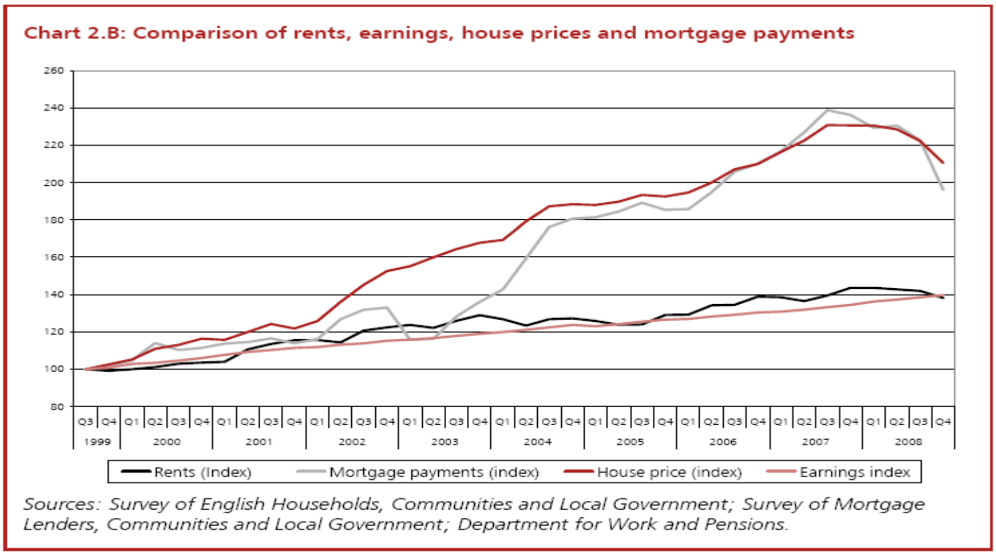
Affordability

4.14 Affordability is a product of both household incomes and the cost of housing to rent and buy. As noted in Section 3 above, household incomes are especially low in Blackpool, but the stock of social rented homes is also relatively small, and most households receiving assistance with their housing costs through Housing Benefit find a home in the large private rented sector.

4.15 New homes offered for sale or rent at market prices in Blackpool are relatively unaffordable in relation to incomes in Blackpool, but relatively affordable compared with market prices and incomes in the housing market area as a whole.

4.16 Nationally, over the last 10 years the cost of buying a house has risen in relation to real wages, making purchasing a house less affordable and leading to a rise in private renting. While this was exacerbated by the high price rises up to 2007 and has been partly re-balanced since, house prices rising faster than real incomes is part of a long-term trend experienced since the early 1970s. Market rents have tended to be much more closely aligned to real incomes. The changes since 1999 are shown in the graph in figure 16:

Figure 16: Comparison of rents, earnings, house prices and mortgage payments



Source: "Investment in the UK Private Rented Sector", HM Treasury, Feb 2010)

4.17 The ratio between the price of an average priced home in Blackpool compared with the average income in Blackpool has followed a similar trend as follows:

Table 12: Ratio between the price of an average priced home in Blackpool compared with the average income

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Blackpool	3.13	3.31	3.86	4.93	5.49	6.24	6.24	6.28	5.05	5.13
North West	3.19	3.43	3.94	4.84	5.38	5.68	5.81	5.54	5.17	5.23

4.18 The latest estimates of housing costs compared with incomes in each Fylde Coast local authority show that a significant proportion of the local population cannot afford to buy a suitable home at market prices:

Table 13: % of households priced out of market if mortgage available at 3.5 times income (July 2010)

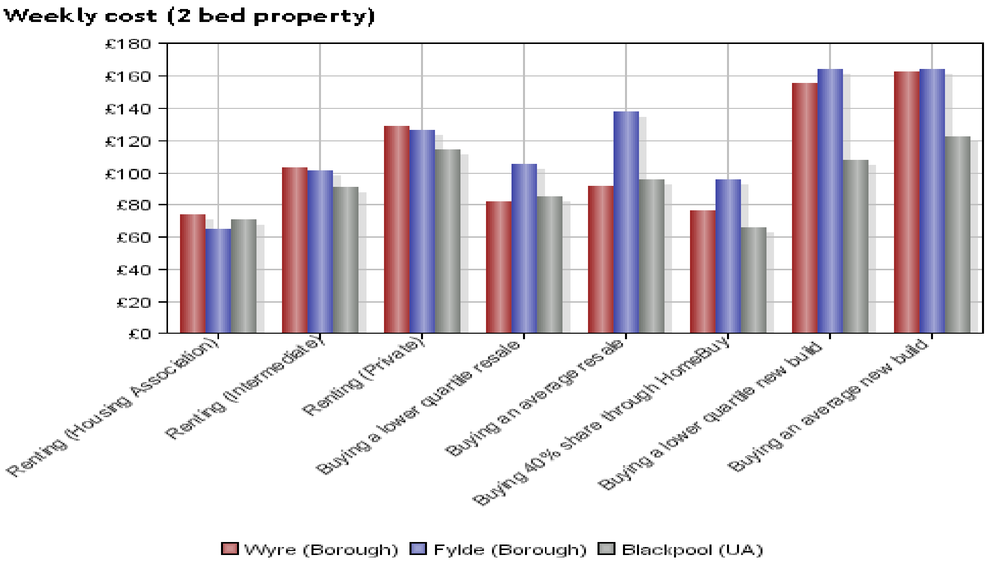
	Fylde	Wyre	**Blackpool**
First Time Buyer households - Terraced houses	47.77%	30.41%	**35.59%**
All owner occupiers - Terraced houses	36.93%	30.41%	**21.62%**

Source: Hometrack

4.19 The cost of a typical 2 bedroom home to rent or buy in Blackpool (alongside Fylde and Wyre) is as set out below. To rent from a housing association costs around 60% of the cost of renting privately.

It is significantly more affordable to buy a new home using Homebuy (the name for shared ownership schemes) than to buy the same home outright. The cost of buying an average existing 2 bed home is shown as less than private renting here because it is assumed that a typical deposit has already been paid, and interest rates were especially low in 2010. Many prospective purchasers struggle to meet lenders' requirements for a sufficient deposit, income, and credit record.

Figure 17: Weekly Cost (2 Bed Property)



Source: Hometrack, July 2010)

4.20 Analysis of incomes in relation to housing costs for the North West Housing Market Assessment (Nevin Leather Associates for 4NW, 2008) showed that in Blackpool, around 20% of households could not afford to rent from the local authority without further financial assistance, around 27% of households could not afford to rent from a housing association without further financial assistance, and around 52% of households could not afford to rent privately without further financial assistance.

4.21 The current experience in Blackpool is that 31% of households receive Housing Benefit to help meet housing costs that they cannot afford to meet themselves, with two thirds (13,920) of these households living in the private rented sector (Source: DWP, March 2011). The number of households receiving Housing Benefit in Blackpool has grown dramatically in recent years, from 12,700 households in December 2002 (20% of all households) to 20,200 households in June 2011 (31% of all households).

4.22 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 190 additional social rented homes to be provided in Blackpool each year. The SHMA is being updated later in 2012, and these requirements are likely to reduce because of lower recent household growth projections, but it can be seen that it is unlikely that such high numbers of new affordable homes can be delivered. The target set out in the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy 2009 for new affordable housing delivery in Blackpool is 100 additional affordable homes per annum.

4.23 There is also a need to re-balance the existing stock of social rented housing to reflect the profile of needs. The breakdown of social rented homes by size, compared with housing needs from the waiting list in Blackpool was set out in the Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 as:

Table 14: Size Requirements of Households in Need Compared with Social Housing Re-lets

Size	Households in Need	Profile of Re-lets
Bedsit & One Bed	50%	73%
Two Bed	33%	17%
Three Bed	12%	10%
Three Plus Bed	6%	1%
Total	100%	100%

Source: Fylde Coast SHMA 2008

Conclusions on Affordability

4.24 Buying an appropriate home, or privately renting one without any public subsidy, is out of the reach of a substantial minority of Blackpool households, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. This is because average incomes are very low. There is a major challenge to meet the growing housing needs of a deprived local population.

4.25 It could be argued that there is no need for further affordable housing provision because rising housing needs can be met by the private rented sector, paid for through Housing Benefit. However, Blackpool already has a very large private rented sector (25% of all homes) which is dominated by the Housing Benefit claimant “market”. It would be undesirable to increase this provision further because of the de-stabilising effect that it can have in areas where private renting at the bottom of the market accounts for up to 50% of all homes. In these areas, there is an emphasis on small flats that do not necessarily meet the needs of different household types in the resident population. Also, the lack of security of tenure offered by the private rented sector is unsuitable for many families with children and older people.

4.26 The objective of meeting housing needs has to be balanced with the objective of improving the balance and quality of the housing offer. Improving the quality of homes in inner Blackpool could in the long term reduce the availability of inexpensive accommodation in the private rented sector.

4.27 It is therefore important to continue to provide new affordable housing, and especially to meet the need for homes that are in the shortest supply in the existing social housing and private rented stock. These are predominantly two and three bedroom houses, with a small number of larger family homes.

4.28 In order to prevent an even greater concentration of deprivation in inner Blackpool and on social housing estates, and to provide more choice, additional affordable housing to rent should be provided in other parts of the borough.

4.29 Affordable shared ownership housing can enable households to buy their own homes when they would not otherwise be able to do so, and locating shared ownership homes in regeneration areas helps to establish a more stable community, and encourage people in work to live in those areas.

5.0 HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

5.1 The SHLAA is one of the key studies underpinning the Core Strategy housing policies. The SHLAA identifies and records potential housing sites across Blackpool to accommodate growth over the next 15 years. The study provides a mechanism to support the phased delivery of housing sites, supporting the 'plan monitor and manage' approach.

5.2 Blackpool Council completed its SHLAA in May 2008, following consultation on a draft SHLAA. The consultation included an invitation for suggested sites and comments on the methodology. The full SHLAA methodology is attached in appendix 1

5.3 In preparing the Blackpool SHLAA 2008, the Council considered potential housing sites from the following sources:

Sites in the planning process within the SHLAA include:

- Existing housing allocations in the Blackpool Local Plan on which development had not commenced at 1st April 2008.
- Sites currently with planning permission.
- During the period October 2004 to April 2007 the Council adopted a restrictive policy controlling the release of land for housing development as Blackpool's levels of completions were at that time exceeding the statutory housing requirement. As a result a number of housing proposals submitted were refused on the ground of 'oversupply' alone. These sites have been included within the SHLAA.

Sites outside the planning process within the SHLAA include:

- The Urban Potential Study, completed in 2004 All sites which remain undeveloped are included in the SHLAA
- The Blackpool Employment Study (2007) has been undertaken and concluded that all the main existing allocated employment estates should generally remain in employment use. In a small minority of locations potential was identified for redevelopment of longstanding vacant sites and these potential housing opportunities have been identified in the SHLAA.
- During 2007, a comprehensive survey of all non-allocated smaller scale business and industrial sites was also undertaken. Where appropriate, although many are currently in use, a number of these sites have been included within the SHLAA where it is considered they could have potential to accommodate housing at some stage over the next 15 years.

5.4 It is not possible for the SHLAA to identify every site that will be developed for housing over the next 15 years, and unanticipated sites inevitably will come forward in the future. However, the SHLAA findings are reviewed on a continuing annual basis in conjunction with the Council Housing Monitoring Report and this review allows for new and unanticipated sites to be taken into account as they become available for development. Published alongside the SHLAA and on the Blackpool Council website is a 'New Site Identification Form' available for the public to suggest any new sites which could potentially be included in a future review of the SHLAA.

5.5 The most recent review in 2011 provides a full revised schedule of sites to reflect the position on 1st April 2011.

5.6 All identified sites have been assessed in terms of their deliverability, developability and potential capacity. This means a comprehensive estimate of potential housing delivery, between 2011 and 2026 has been achieved.

5.7 The SHLAA identifies a potential net capacity 3624 that could be delivered over the 15 year period commencing April 2011.

Table 15: Summary table of SHLAA findings

	Total Supply	0-5 Yrs	6-10 Yrs	11-15 Yrs
Planning permissions	**1196**	425 BF 476 GF 901	18 BF 240 GF 258	0
Sites without Planning Permission	**2428**	224 BF 40 GF 264	699 BF 477 GF 1176	927 BF 98 GF 1025
Total	**3624**	**1165**	**1434**	**1025**

BF - Brownfield
GF - Greenfield

Housing potential of Windfall Sites

5.8 Residential monitoring of housing supply and the analysis of past completion records show the continuing importance for Blackpool of windfall sources to its supply of housing. The tightly constrained boundary and already intensely built up existing urban area, mean housing site opportunities are very limited compared to most other areas in determining options for future development. Since 2003, 82% of net new housing has been sourced from windfall sites, with a significant proportion (40%) of these windfall completions sourced from the conversion of existing buildings; the annual breakdown is shown in the table below. The supply of housing through conversion of former holiday accommodation, in particular, forms a substantial component of new housing development. The Blackpool SHLAA includes an allowance for 1,000 further conversions to 2026, which cannot be site specific.

Table 16: Completions on Windfall Sites 2003-11

Year	Net Conversion Windfall Completions	Total new dwellings (net completions)
2003/04	122	234
2004/05	43	313
2005/06	109	399
2006/07	79	338
2007/08	131	314
2008/09	259	340
2009/10	166	223
2010/11	78	324
2003/11	987	2485

Source: Table 4a, Housing Monitoring Report 2011

5.9 The SHLAA identified a potential supply of 1,725 net additional dwellings that could be delivered over 5 years to 2016. This figure includes new-build sites with planning permission, sites identified in the SHLAA and existing conversion planning permissions.

5.10 In the past few years the housing market across the UK has suffered a significant downturn. Across the UK, new residential developments have been shelved as falling values affect viability or access to finance dries up. Many house builders have been left with unsold stock and have been working hard to find solutions to unlock the cash in such developments. In the current environment there is a significant issue with the viability of housing development as a whole. Sales values are especially low in many parts of Blackpool, making residual land values and profit margins very low or negative once the costs of building are taken into account. In these circumstances, development is effectively impossible while sales values remain at current levels. Falling sales values have therefore had an especially severe impact on new build start and completion rates in Blackpool. This should be reflected in the assessment of the target for the overall number of homes to be delivered in the next 15 years.

5.11 The future prospects for increasing the level of house building activity in the short term remain uncertain. The Government's new policy framework will seek to incentivise a substantial upturn in development but the most likely prospect in the foreseeable future is of relatively stable prices without significant uplift for several years, with a slight rise in the volumes of housing sales as the general economic situation eventually improves.

5.12 The recent reduction in Government spending on housing and regeneration since 2010 is a further reason why it will be challenging to deliver high numbers of new housing completions in Blackpool. In some cases, new build and conversion projects in inner Blackpool have been supported by public funding to achieve regeneration objectives. Completions supported by public funding are likely to be fewer in the short term than in the last few years, at least until public finances recover. While housing needs and the strategic priorities of regeneration and supporting growth remain the same, the scale and pace at which this is likely to be delivered will be reduced.

5.13 A limited supply of land, the continued downturn in the housing market, and reduced prospects of public funding to support regeneration, all significantly constrain the potential new housing supply in Blackpool.

5.14 A key consideration in the delivery of new homes is the infrastructure needs associated with such development. To address this an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is being prepared alongside the Core Strategy. The Plan describes the current infrastructure provision and any additional needs across the borough. The Plan includes information on:

Physical infrastructure - transport, utilities, telecommunications, renewable energy water, waste and the historic environment.
Social infrastructure - affordable housing, access to jobs and services, health provision.
Green infrastructure - parks and opens Space, leisure facilities.

5.15 A key infrastructure constraint identified in the Plan relates to surface water drainage and the inadequate capacity of the existing sewage network with the need to ensure that proposals for new development have no adverse effect on the bathing water quality along the Fylde Coast.

5.16 The proposed way forward for the remaining lands at Marton Moss has taken account of the views set out in representations that the Council has received to the various consultations that have taken place during 2010. The consultations have highlighted the value placed on the open and semi rural character and appearance of the Moss by the community. The proposed neighbourhood planning approach therefore provides the community with the opportunity to directly determine the future for their area improving the interest and value of the Moss lands. The Core Strategy does not propose any housing development on the remaining lands on the Moss unless this emerges through the neighbourhood planning process.

6.0 HOUSING REQUIREMENT SCENARIOS

6.1 To determine a target for the number of new homes that should be provided in the borough, three options have been considered. These are set out and assessed below to understand the likely impact on achievement of the borough's economic, social, and environmental objectives.

Option 1 - Limited new development focussed on meeting the needs of existing residents – 200 units per annum

6.2 This option would only respond to that element of predicted household growth that comes from a move to smaller average household sizes. It would meet the needs of the existing Blackpool population.

Option 2 – Meeting identified needs – 300 units per annum

6.3 This option seeks to meet current household projection forecasts for Blackpool and reflects the levels of new homes delivered by the market over the last few years.

Option 3 – Encouraging higher population growth – 450 units per annum

6.4 This option seeks to encourage a growth in the numbers of households in Blackpool above existing projections by creating an attractive housing offer that will retain more Blackpool households and attract more households from within the wider Fylde Coast housing market area to move to Blackpool. It is similar to the housing delivery target previously set for Blackpool by the North West RSS.

Core Strategy Goals

6.5 The Core Strategy is underpinned by four goals. Each goal is supported by a number of strategic objectives which the Council will seek to achieve by 2027. The appraisal of the options set out in the three tables below reflects their contribution to the delivery of the four goals:

Goal 1: Sustainable regeneration, diversification and growth.
Goal 2: Strengthen community wellbeing to create sustainable communities and reduce inequalities in Blackpool's most deprived areas.
Goal 3: Regeneration of the town centre, resort core and inner areas to address economic, social and physical decline.
Goal 4: Supporting growth and enhancement in South Blackpool to meet future housing and employment needs for Blackpool and the Fylde Coast.

6.6 The following tables summarise the benefits and disbenefits of Option 1, 2 and 3

Table 17: Option 1 Limited new development focused on meeting the needs of existing residents

Option 1	**Limited new development focused on meeting the needs of existing residents**
Housing Requirement	200 dwellings per annum
What are the benefits and disbenefits of Option 1?	
Benefits:	Disbenefits:
✓ Due to the lower number of homes, enables the largest percentage of development on previously developed land and therefore the least amount of development on undeveloped 'greenfield' land. ✓ Relatively easy to deliver given capacity constraints ✓ Less additional pressure on existing physical and social infrastructure. ✓ Likely to have a limited impact upon the landscape, heritage and character of the Borough and offers the greatest potential to protect the district's most valuable landscape and heritage assets. ✓ Likely to have a limited impact on biodiversity and has the potential to protect the district's most valuable biodiversity assets.	× Does little to support economic growth by providing a higher quality housing offer in Blackpool, a better context for tourism in the inner town, and significant numbers of new homes close to employment locations. × Will provide limited progress in balancing the housing market and addressing inequalities associated with poor quality and choice of homes. × Will not deliver sufficient numbers of new market and affordable homes to meet predicted housing requirements. × Slower progress in delivering inner area regeneration. × Would provide very limited funding towards the development of additional physical and social infrastructure.

Table 18: Option 2 Meeting identified needs

Option 2	**Meeting identified needs**
Housing Requirement	300 dwellings per annum
What are the benefits and disbenefits of Option 2?	
Benefits:	Disbenefits:
✓ Provides some opportunities for economic growth ✓ Provides opportunities to deliver Inner Area regeneration ✓ Enables a balance of development on previously developed land and on undeveloped 'greenfield' land. ✓ Enables the delivery of a more balanced housing market that will address inequalities associated with poor quality and choice of	× Could have some negative impact on the town's open space, countryside areas and landscape character of the borough (dependent on location). × Has potential to generate adverse impacts on air/water quality, resource consumption and waste. × May result in less ability to finance Inner Area regeneration through New Homes Bonus etc than the higher growth option.

homes. ✓ Should be deliverable despite capacity constraints. ✓ Meets predicted total housing requirements. ✓ Enables some improvements to health, education, transport and other facilities and services. ✓ Could provide some opportunities for large scale renewable energy provision. ✓ Strong consideration of the landscape, heritage and character of the Borough and offers the potential to protect the district's most valuable landscape, heritage assets and biodiversity.	

Table 19: Option 3 Encouraging higher population growth

Option 3	**Encouraging higher population growth**
Housing Requirement	450 dwellings per annum
What are the benefits and disbenefits of Option 3?	
Benefits:	Disbenefits:
✓ Provides significant opportunities for future economic growth. ✓ Provides significant opportunities to deliver Inner Area Regeneration, creating more sustainable and safer neighbourhoods. ✓ Enables the delivery of a more balanced housing market that will address inequalities associated with poor quality and choice of both. ✓ Could create significant new communities. ✓ Reduces the number of people commuting into the Borough for work. ✓ Provides opportunities for new infrastructure provision. ✓ Could provide some opportunities for large scale renewable energy provision.	× It is likely to have a negative impact on the town's open space, countryside areas, green belt and landscape character of the borough (dependent on location). × Has potential to generate adverse impacts on air/water quality, resource consumption and waste. × Likely to have the greatest impact on biodiversity and could lead to development in areas that would impact on the district's most valuable biodiversity assets. × Could be undeliverable because of constraints on development in Blackpool – new housing has not been delivered at this level at any time in recent years. × Investment may be disproportionately concentrated on the edge of the urban area because insufficient sites would come forward quickly enough in the inner area. × Is likely to put some increased pressure on health, education, transport and other existing services and infrastructure (dependent on location of development). × Transport situation could worsen in some cases. × May lead to a negative social impact in some areas in South Blackpool e.g. Marton Moss - the distinctive character of the area is valued by the community.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Sections 1 – 5 above set out the local context, policy framework, and housing demand and supply issues in Blackpool, and can be summarised as follows:

7.2 Section 1 – Blackpool has concentrations of deprivation and a housing stock skewed towards small homes in a densely developed urban area, but sits within the wider context of the Fylde Coast housing market area.

7.3 Section 2 – Blackpool BC is developing its Core Strategy in response to a changing national and regional policy environment. There is a clear local strategic and investment framework focused on the creation of sustainable residential communities in the inner town, balanced with meeting aspirations for higher quality homes across the borough.

7.4 Section 3 – The balance of households in Blackpool partly results from the conversion of former guest houses in the inner town into small flats. The number of households living in Blackpool has not increased in recent years despite growth in the numbers of jobs, reflecting a growth in commuting into the town by people who cannot find an attractive housing offer within the borough itself. Blackpool residents have low earnings on average, with over 30% of households reliant on financial assistance to meet their housing costs through Housing Benefit.

7.5 Section 4 – Future predicted growth in household numbers is likely to be characterised by households that are single person or single parent and by households over retirement age. There is a continuing need for more affordable housing because of the high number of households with low incomes and the heavy reliance on the private rented sector to meet housing needs.

7.6 Section 5 – The current and future supply of new homes is constrained by the lack of appropriate development land within the borough boundaries, the poor viability of development in low value areas, reductions in public investment in regeneration, and lack of existing drainage capacity.

7.7 An appraisal of the options for overall housing numbers is set out in Section 6, informed by the Core Strategy Goals. The option that has the best balance of benefits and disbenefits is option 2 – Meeting Identified Needs – 300 units per annum. This option seeks to deliver homes to meet the latest (2008-based) ONS household growth forecasts. It will enable a continuing focus on delivery of a better housing offer in inner Blackpool, while allowing some new development on the edge of the existing urban area to meet the market demand for a high quality alternative to existing homes. It also limits the impact on Blackpool's environmental assets.

7.8 However, a phased approach over the next 15 years is required. This would slightly reduce the planned delivery in the first five years, raise it to the target number in years 5 - 10 and compensate for a slow start by increased delivery in years 10 – 15. The reasons why this approach is required are:

- Demographic and job growth projections show more limited growth in the first five years or so, with household numbers and new employment rising more quickly after 2018 and 2015 respectively.

- The current economic and housing market situation is depressed, with limited growth in wages and employment, low volumes of transactions in the housing market, and small annual declines in real house prices. This is likely to remain the case for several years and will inhibit demand for new homes. The situation has an especially large impact on the delivery of homes in lower value parts of the borough, where development returns are marginal. It is expected that the situation will eventually improve later in the 15 year plan period.

- Public finances are currently tight, with plans to reduce the annual public finances deficit over the next five years or so. This has resulted in a reduction in the capital subsidy available for housing and regeneration, and may limit the ability to deliver new homes over the next five years. There is likely to be more scope for public capital funding beyond the first five years.

- Current infrastructure constraints and particularly the lack of capacity in many parts of the local drainage network will take several years to resolve. However, this should not be a constraint on housing development later on in the 15 year period.

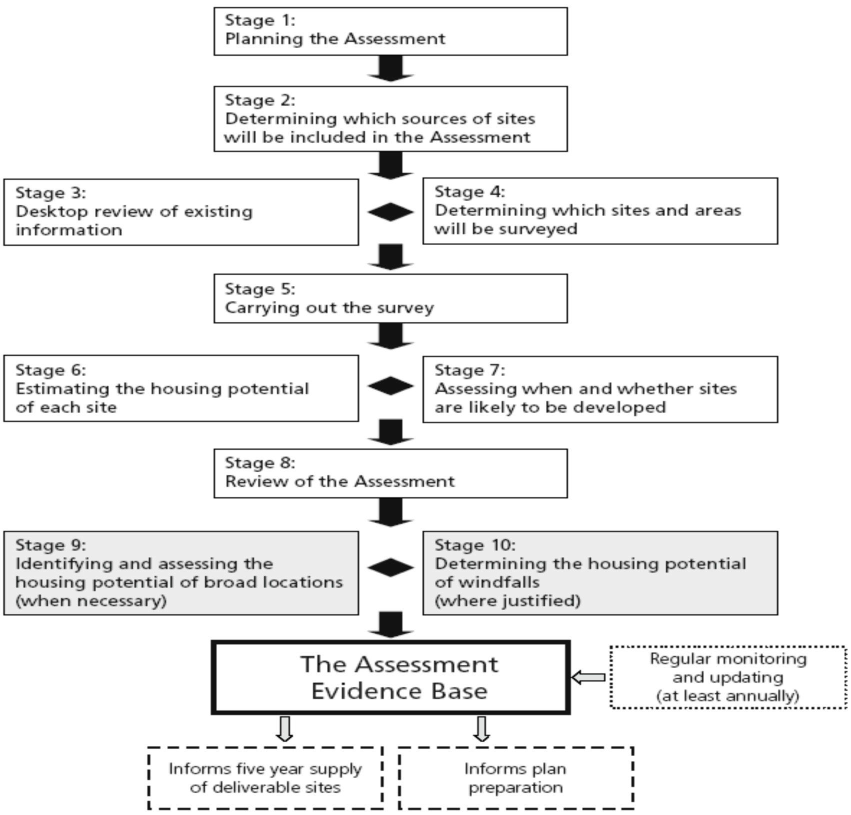
Appendix 1

<u>Methodology - SHLAA 2008</u>

The methodology to identify sites to meet future needs has followed the broad approach to SHLAA's contained within the Government's 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance'. The guidance does however give scope for LPA's to undertake differing approaches to meet the requirements.

Figure 1 identifies the main stages in the preparation of an SHLAA. The diagram shows that whilst the stages should generally be carried out in order, certain stages can be carried out in parallel. The Blackpool SHLAA is complete, and now forms part of the LDF evidence base. This section will briefly describe the methodologies that were undertaken to meet the requirements of each stage of SHLAA preparation.

Figure 1: Stages for the preparation of a SHLAA



<u>Stage 1: Planning the Assessment</u>

In broad terms a common approach to SHLAA was agreed between the three authorities comprising the Fylde sub-region. Each authority has undertaken a SHLAA for its own administrative area, ensuring accordance with requirements placed through PPS3 and the Government's practice guidance.

Once each authority in the sub-region has completed the SHLAA process, and the findings have been evaluated and published, a Joint SHLAA Overview Statement will also be produced summarising the key findings for the Fylde Sub-Region as a whole.

Stage 2: Determining which Sources of Sites will be Included in the Assessment

Figure 2 (next page) is taken from the Government's practice guidance and covers the types of sites that should be included within an SHLAA.

Figure 2: Sources of sites with potential for housing

Sites in the planning process
• land allocated (or with permission) for employment or other land uses which are no longer required for those uses • existing housing allocations and site development briefs • unimplemented/outstanding planning permissions for housing • planning permissions for housing that are under construction
Sites not currently in the planning process
Examples: • vacant and derelict land and buildings • surplus public sector land • land in non-residential use which may be suitable for re-development for housing, such as commercial buildings or car parks, including as part of mixed-use development • additional housing opportunities in established residential areas, such as under-used garage blocks • large scale redevelopment and re-design of existing residential areas • sites in rural settlements and rural exception sites[13] • urban extensions[14] • new free standing settlements[14]

In preparing the Blackpool SHLAA, the Council has considered all the above sources of housing potential sites and more, and has endeavoured not to exclude sites from the process at any stage. The focus of the study has been to identify potential sites within the existing urban area that do not have a current planning permission.

The substantially increased housing development requirement for Blackpool in the NWRSS and the limited remaining lands within Blackpool as a whole, however, has meant that consideration has also been given to identifying potential new development land outside of the existing urban area. The approach taken in Blackpool is that all areas of land outside the existing urban area have been looked at as part of the SHLAA, comprising:

Lands at Marton Moss
West of Staining & Mythop Road

These lands have all been looked at in Stage 9 of the process to ensure Blackpool can meet its housing requirement, since it has been crucial to understand the level of potential that can be generated from the existing urban area before any decisions on the extent of development required outside the urban area can be made.

Table 1 identifies the types of sites that have been excluded from the assessment. These sites are in general excluded due to overriding policy considerations relating to conservation and environmental protection. Otherwise, and in geographic terms, there are no locations within Blackpool that are not included within the SHLAA, sites are considered across the town.

Table 1: Areas excluded from the SHLAA

Excluded Area	Justification
SSSI's	National Policy advises against development that would have an adverse impact on nationally and internationally important nature conservation sites.
Green Belt	Local policy restricts development within the greenbelt to agriculturally related uses, recreational uses and other uses appropriate to a rural area to safeguard its open character.
Conversions, Flats Above Shops e.t.c.	These sources will be considered as part of a windfall supply in Stage 10 of the study.

Stage 3: Desktop Review of Existing Information

Table 2 lists all the sources explored to identify sites with suitable housing potential as at 1st April 2008. The status of the sites (in terms of whether planning permission has been granted or development has started) is therefore accurate to this date.

In identifying sites, no minimum site size threshold has been imposed. Therefore sites with capacity for only one dwelling, or sites already occupying buildings, are included in the survey.

Table 2: Sources of sites contained within the SHLAA

Sites in the Planning Process	Purpose
Housing allocations not yet subject to planning permission	To identify sites
Planning permissions/sites under construction	To identify sites
Planning application refusals	To identify sites – particularly those applications rejected on the grounds of prematurity
Other Sources of Information to Identify Sites	**Purpose**
Urban Potential Study 2004	To identify buildings & land & constraints to delivery
Previously allocated opportunity sites	To identify sites
Local Planning Authority Employment Land Review	To identify sites & surplus land
Backland industry sites	To identify underused sites, surplus land and undesirable uses
Sites submitted by consultees via the SHLAA consultation process	To identify sites
Site surveys, ordnance survey maps, aerial photographs	To identify sites

Sites in the planning process within the SHLAA therefore include:

Existing housing allocations in the Blackpool Local Plan on which development had not commenced at 1st April 2008.

Sites currently with planning permission at 1st April 2008.

During the period October 2004 to April 2007 the Council adopted a restrictive policy controlling the release of land for housing development as Blackpool's levels of completions were at that time exceeding the statutory housing requirement. As a result a number of housing proposals submitted were refused on the ground of 'oversupply' alone. These sites have been included within the SHLAA.

Sites outside the planning process within the SHLAA include:

The Urban Potential Study, completed in 2004 to inform the current adopted Local Plan provided an earlier comprehensive assessment of sites within the urban area – a number of which have since been developed or have planning permission for development. All other sites which remain undeveloped are included in the new SHLAA (this includes a number of earlier housing opportunity sites that were provisionally allocated during the early stages of producing the current Local Plan. These sites were subsequently deleted due to the then adequate capacity of housing allocations to deliver requirements).

The Blackpool Employment Study (2007) has been undertaken and concluded that all the main existing allocated employment estates should generally remain in employment use. In a small minority of locations potential was identified for redevelopment of longstanding vacant sites and these potential housing opportunities have been identified in the SHLAA.

During 2007, a comprehensive survey of all non-allocated smaller scale business and industrial sites was also undertaken. Where appropriate, although many are currently in use, a number of these sites have been included within the SHLAA where it is considered they could have potential to accommodate housing at some stage over the next 15 years.

Stage 4: Determining Which Sites and Areas will be Surveyed

During April 2008 all the sites that have been identified in the SHLAA were surveyed. This included all sites with an existing planning permission, previously identified potential sites and any new sites proposed or sites suggested during the SHLAA consultation period in February/March 2008.

Stage 5: Carrying Out the Survey

Basic information, as stated within the Government's practice guidance, was collected for all sites. Aspects such as site size, boundaries, current and surrounding use and character of the surrounding area have been recorded. In many cases, especially for sites already identified, this information was already known, and therefore the emphasis of the survey was to assess any visible physical and environmental constraints to development or policy/ownership restrictions, to inform later stages of the SHLAA and help determine the deliverability and developability of specific sites.

Stage 6: Estimating the Housing Potential of Each Site

The method for calculating potential capacity for each site has taken account of two important aspects of each site – the location and the area of the site. Where there is an outstanding or previous planning application for a specific number of dwellings for an appropriate form of development of a site, then that figure has generally been used to inform the housing capacity of these sites. For all other identified sites, density multipliers have been used to estimate the housing potential of each site.

Whilst it is acknowledged that this method of calculating potential capacity cannot be considered wholly accurate for individual specific sites, it simply ensures that an approximate, realistic and indicative total capacity figure can be attained in the most practical and manageable way. In addition, the application of varied densities and banded gross/net ratios follows better practice and minimises errors in calculations of potential capacities.

Density Multipliers

The density multipliers in Table 3 have been applied to each site, dependant on their location within Blackpool:

Table 3: Density Multipliers

Location	Density Multiplier (Dwellings per hectare)
Town Centre & Inner Area	100
Elsewhere in the Built Up Area	50

In simple terms, if a site is located within the ‘Defined Inner Area’ as identified in the Local Plan, the location density for ‘Town Centre & Inner Area’ will apply. In all other cases the ‘Elsewhere in the Built Up Area’ density will apply. These densities have been arrived at through detailed analysis of densities achieved on sites completed in these two areas in recent years.

Gross/Net Ratio

The second part of the calculation of estimated potential takes account of the net developable area of the site. This works on the principle that the smaller the site, the greater the potential for the site to make use of existing roads/facilities, and therefore a greater proportion of the site can be developed for housing. The gross/net ratios adopted in the Blackpool SHLAA are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Gross/Net Ratios

Site Size (ha)	Development Ratio (Net Developable Area)
< 0.4 ha	100%
0.4 – 2 ha	80%
2.1 – 4 ha	70%
> 4 ha	60%

The calculation of estimated housing potential for a particular site is then calculated using a simple formula:

Site Area (ha) x Gross/Net Ratio x Location Density
= Housing Potential Capacity

Stage 7: Assessing When and Whether Sites are Likely to be Developed

Assessing the ‘Suitability’, ‘Availability’ and ‘Achievability’ of a site allows conclusions to be drawn as to whether a site is Deliverable, Developable or Not Currently Developable. Information on physical/environmental constraints and policy/ownership restrictions help inform this assessment.

The Government’s practice guidance states that a Deliverable site is one which is available now, offers a suitable location and that there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years from adoption of the plan. A Developable site offers a suitable location with a reasonable prospect that it will be available and could be developed at a specific point in time. Where it is unknown when a site could be developed it should be regarded as Not Currently Developable.

The overall assessment of a site, as described in paragraph 3.23, is arrived at by utilising constraint information to determine how suitable, available and achievable a site is. A site currently holding planning permission for residential development has been assumed as Deliverable.

Stage 7a: Assessing Suitability for Housing

A site has been considered suitable for housing development if it offers a suitable location taking account of policy restrictions, physical limitations, environmental conditions and potential impacts of development. Also each identified site has been subject to an assessment of accessibility to basic services – a sustainability checklist.

Stage 7b: Assessing Availability for Housing

A site has been considered available for development when on the best information available there is confidence there are no legal or ownership problems. Survey work undertaken and responses to consultation have provided the knowledge needed to determine the availability of most of the sites identified.

Stage 7c: Assessing Achievability for Housing

A site has been considered achievable for housing where there is simply a prospect of housing development at a particular point in time. Essentially, all sites included in the Blackpool SHLAA are deemed 'achievable'.

Stage 7d: Overcoming Constraints

Very few sites identified in the SHLAA have any known constraints, certainly not those sites assessed as Deliverable. A key role of the LDF and planning process is to help overcome the constraints identified on sites that may come forward in the longer term.