

**MEMBERS INTERESTS 2012**

A Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter considered at a meeting must disclose the interest to the meeting at which they are present, except where it has been entered on the Register.

A Member with a non pecuniary or pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must disclose the existence and nature of that interest at commencement of consideration or when the interest becomes apparent.

Where sensitive information relating to an interest is not registered in the register, you must indicate that you have an interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information.

Please tick relevant boxes

Notes

	<b>General</b>		
1.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 below</i>
2.	I have a non-pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>
3.	I have a pecuniary interest <b>because</b> it affects my financial position or the financial position of a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest or it relates to the determining of any approval consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to me or a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>          <i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>
4.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest (Dispensation 16/7/12) or a pecuniary interest but it relates to the functions of my Council in respect of:  (i) Housing where I am a tenant of the Council, and those functions do not relate particularly to my tenancy or lease.  (ii) school meals, or school transport and travelling expenses where I am a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, and it does not relate particularly to the school which the child attends.  (iii) Statutory sick pay where I am in receipt or entitled to receipt of such pay.  (iv) An allowance, payment or indemnity given to Members  (v) Any ceremonial honour given to Members  (vi) Setting Council tax or a precept under the LGFA 1992	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>
5.	A Standards Committee dispensation applies (relevant lines in the budget – Dispensation 20/2/13 – 19/2/17)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>See the terms of the dispensation</i>
6.	I have a pecuniary interest in the business but I can attend to make representations, answer questions or give evidence as the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak but must leave the room once you have finished and cannot vote</i>

**'disclosable pecuniary interest'** (DPI) means an interest of a description specified below which is your interest, your spouse's or civil partner's or the interest of somebody who you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners and you are aware that that other person has the interest.

**Interest**

**Prescribed description**

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

Sponsorship

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

	This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*"body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest" means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest; "director" includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;*

*"land" excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income; "M" means a member of a relevant authority;*

*"member" includes a co-opted member; "relevant authority" means the authority of which M is a member;*

*"relevant period" means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives notice to the Monitoring Officer of a DPI;*

*"relevant person" means M or M's spouse or civil partner, a person with whom M is living as husband or wife or a person with whom M is living as if they were civil partners;*

*"securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.*

**'non pecuniary interest'** means interests falling within the following descriptions:

- 10.1(1)(i) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) Any body (a) exercising functions of a public nature; (b) directed to charitable purposes; or (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) Any easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
- 10.2(2) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a connected person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision.

**'a connected person'** means

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association, or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph 10.1(1)(i) or (ii).

**'body exercising functions of a public nature'** means

Regional and local development agencies, other government agencies, other Councils, public health bodies, council-owned companies exercising public functions, arms length management organisations carrying out housing functions on behalf of your authority, school governing bodies.

A Member with a personal interest who has made an executive decision in relation to that matter must ensure any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

**NB** Section 21(13) of the LGA 2000 overrides any Code provisions to oblige an executive member to attend an overview and scrutiny meeting to answer questions.

## CABINET

**HELD: 16 JUNE 2015**

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 7.45pm

### PRESENT:

Councillor: I Moran (Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

Councillors:

#### Portfolio

T Aldridge	Older People
Y Gagen	Deputy Leader of the Council & Leisure
J Hodson	Planning
J Patterson	Housing and Landlord Services
K Wright	Health and Community Safety

In attendance: Councillors Furey & Pendleton  
Councillors

Officers:

- Managing Director (People and Places) (Mrs G Rowe)
- Managing Director (Transformation) (Ms K Webber)
- Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration (Mr B Livermore)
- Assistant Director Planning (Mr J Harrison)
- Borough Treasurer (Mr M Taylor)
- Borough Solicitor (Mr T Broderick)
- Transformation Manager (Mr S Walsh)
- Environmental Protection and Community Safety Manager (Mr A Hill)
- Asset Manager (Mr W Berkley)
- Property Services Manager (Mr P Holland)
- Organisational Re-Engineering Manager (Ms. K Warmington)
- Facilities Manager (Mr J Powell)
- Project Support Manager (Ms G Sands)
- Senior Surveyor (Mr K Spencer)
- Principal Member Services Officer (Mrs S Griffiths)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Wilkie (Portfolio Holder for Street Scene) and Wynn (Portfolio Holder for Finance)

### 2. SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of special urgency.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 March 2015 be received as a correct record and signed by the Leader, it being noted that there has been a change in administration since the last meeting.

**5. CONFIRMATION OF PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

- RESOLVED
- A. That the appointment of Cabinet, Committees, and Working Groups for 2015/16, as circulated at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 20 May 2015, with the terms of reference included in the Constitution, be noted.
  - B. That the 'Proper Officer Provisions and Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers', insofar as they are executive functions, and the Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members, as set out in the Constitution, be noted.

**6. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

Consideration was given to the report relating to the following matters requiring decisions as contained on pages 1 – 236 and 257 – 271 of the Book of Reports.

**7. 192-198 ENNERDALE, SKELMERSDALE (FORMER TANHOUSE OFFICE)**

Councillor Patterson introduced the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration which provided an update on the future use of 192-198 Ennerdale, Skelmersdale.

Minute no. 7 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 was circulated at the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services, to grant a lease at a peppercorn rent to the Tanhouse Community Enterprise Ltd. subject to the business plan for 192-198 Ennerdale, Skelmersdale being valid and sustainable.
  - B. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised to obtain all necessary consents and enter into all necessary documentation to facilitate the lease.

**8. APPROVAL OF DRAFT STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY AND AUTHORISATIONS REQUIRED BY THE GAMBLING ACT 2005**

Councillor Wright introduced the report of the Assistant Director Community Services which sought authority to approve the draft Statement of Licensing Policy (required by the Gambling Act 2005) prior to public consultation.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the draft Statement of Licensing Policy attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
  - B. That the Assistant Director Community Services be given delegated authority to publish the draft Statement of Licensing Policy and conduct a period of public consultation prior to returning the final policy for approval before 31 January 2016.

**9. INTERNAL CCTV CODE OF PRACTICE**

Councillor Wright introduced the report of the Assistant Director Community Services which sought approval for a West Lancashire Borough Council internal CCTV Code of Practice.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the Internal CCTV Code of Practice, included as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
  - B. That authority to agree future amendments to the Internal CCTV Code of Practice be delegated to the Assistant Director Community Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

**10. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Borough Treasurer which set out details on the key risks facing the Council and how they are managed.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED            That the progress made in relation to the management of the risks shown in the Key Risks Register (Appendix A) be noted and endorsed.

**11. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Q4 2014-15)**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Transformation Manager which presented performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 March 2015.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED    A.    That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 31 March 2015 be noted.

                  B.    That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate & Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 July 2015.

**12. DRAFT LANDLORD SERVICES DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY**

Councillor Patterson introduced the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration which sought agreement of a draft Landlord Services Disabled Adaptations Policy for consultation purposes.

Minute no. 8 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 was circulated at the meeting.

A motion from Councillor Patterson was circulated at the meeting extending the consultation period until 1 September 2015.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group), the motion and explanation from Councillor Patterson and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the draft Landlord Services Disabled Adaptations Policy be approved for consultation with tenants, residents and key stakeholders, the consultation period to expire on 1 September 2015.
  - B. That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2015.

### **13. USING ONE FOR ONE CAPITAL RECEIPTS**

Councillor Patterson introduced the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration which considered the use of the retained one for one capital receipts.

Minute no. 9 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 was circulated at the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, to maximise the use of the one for one retained capital receipts by using available Council resources, and/or external funds from RSLs or other investors as outlined in option 3 in the report.

### **14. DIGITAL BY PREFERENCE - A NEW APPROACH**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Transformation Manager which advised on a new approach in relation to access to Council services online. Councillor Moran moved that the item be deferred until the September Cabinet meeting to enable Members to more fully understand the issues.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the motion from Councillor Moran and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- That this item be deferred until the September Cabinet meeting in order to enable Members to more fully understand the issues.

**15. STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT (SAMP)**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration which updated on the progress of the Strategic Asset Management Project and sought authority to dispose of assets.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the contents of the report, including the work undertaken by officers to date, and the progress on the assets previously identified for disposal be noted.
  - B. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised to take the actions recommended in Appendix A and B in relation to the 121 sites in the Tanhouse Ward together with land at Brierfield, Liverpool Road and Laburnum Drive in Skelmersdale and Hillock Lane in Scarisbrick, and take any actions necessary to secure disposal of category 1 sites.
  - C. That the sites set out in Appendix D are no longer required for their current uses as set out in that Appendix and that they be appropriated as required for regeneration purposes for the reasons set out in the report.
  - D. That funding of £20,000 be made available from major project reserves to enable sites designated in previous reports as '1 – Seek to Dispose' along with those identified in Appendix A and B, to be progressed further as detailed in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

**16. ORGANISATIONAL RE-ENGINEERING - HOUSING SERVICES (RESPONSE MAINTENANCE AND VOID MAINTENANCE SERVICES) MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Councillor Patterson introduced the joint report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration and the Transformation Manager which presented the findings and recommendations for savings and service improvements in relation to the Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Services.

Minute no. 10 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 was circulated at the meeting.

A motion from Councillor Patterson was circulated at the meeting.



In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group), the motion from Councillor Patterson and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the recommendations for service improvements set out in Sections 1.4, 1.5, 4 and 6 of the Management Report attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.
  - B. That the Assistant Director of Housing and Regeneration and Transformation Manager be given delegated authority to take action in connection with implementing the recommendations referred to at A. above, subject to any additional resource requirements being agreed via the usual budget process.

## **17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

- RESOLVED
- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act and as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **18. MATTER REQUIRING DECISION**

Consideration was given to the report relating to the following matter requiring decision as contained on pages 237 – 255 of the Book of Reports.

## **19. CARETAKING SERVICE REVIEW**

Councillor Patterson introduced the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration which reviewed the Council's caretaking service.

Minute no. 11 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 was circulated at the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED
- A. That the operation of the service in-house be continued.

- B. That the Action plan attached at Appendix C to the report, including the increase in service charges from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015, be approved.
- C. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the Tenant Scrutiny Group (TSG), review the improvements made as a result of the Action Plan in 12 months' time.
- D. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration report back to Cabinet following the review.
- E. That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration thank the TSG for their help with this matter.

Note

No representations had been received in relation to the above item being considered in private.

.....  
LEADER



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(a)**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:  
3 September 2015**

**CABINET:  
15 September 2015**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 1 October 2015**

---

**Report of:** Assistant Director Planning

**Relevant Managing Director:** Managing Director (Transformation)

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J Hodson

**Contact for further information:** Mr S Benge  
(Email [Stephen.benge@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.benge@westlancs.gov.uk))

---

**SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

---

Wards affected: Borough Wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet's approval for the adoption of the Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document as attached at Appendix A to this report.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- 3.1 That the content of this report, the Development in the Green Belt SPD attached at Appendix A to this report, the Consultation Feedback Report at Appendix B, and the Adoption Statement at Appendix C, be considered and that agreed comments be referred to Cabinet.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

- 3.1 That Cabinet consider the contents of the Development in the Green Belt SPD Consultation Feedback Report set out at Appendix B to this report, and the agreed comments of Planning Committee at Appendix D.

- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the Adoption Statement at Appendix C, and adopt the Development in the Green Belt SPD at Appendix A, subject to any amendments made by the Assistant Director Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, following consideration of the Development in the Green Belt SPD by Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as per recommendation 3.3 below.
- 3.3 That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary amendments to the Development in the Green Belt SPD, in the light of agreed comments from Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, before the document is published.
- 3.4 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as this report is being submitted to Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2015.

#### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 4.1 That the content of this report, the Development in the Green Belt SPD Consultation Feedback Report set out at Appendix B to this report, and the Development in the Green Belt SPD at Appendix A be considered, and that agreed comments be referred to the Assistant Director Planning for consideration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
- 
- 

#### **5.0 BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The adopted the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (WLLP) is the development plan for West Lancashire, and sets out the scale, distribution and principles for the development of the Borough up to 2027. The WLLP does not, however, contain a specific policy in relation to development within the Green Belt. Instead it relies on national Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraphs 79-92 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). WLLP policy GN1(b) states: *“Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies”*.
- 5.2 There have been two supplementary planning guidance notes (SPGs) in place since 2000 / 2001 on Green Belt development, namely the Domestic Extensions and Outbuildings and Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt SPG, and the Stable Buildings in the Green Belt SPG. Whilst national Green Belt policy has remained largely unchanged since before 1999, it is considered the two SPGs are in need of updating and combining into a single SPD for clarity. There is also a need to cross-reference WLLP policies that apply to the Green Belt.
- 5.3 A draft Green Belt development SPD was prepared during early 2015. The draft SPD did not vary national policy, but added a local interpretation of national policy by setting out the Borough Council’s position with regard to certain details

not specified in the NPPF, and adding further clarification with regard to certain NPPF Green Belt policies. The purpose of this SPD was to provide:

- A “local take” on the types of development potentially permissible in the Green Belt under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, by advising which WLLP policies will apply to such development; and
- A local interpretation of NPPF terms such as what would constitute “disproportionate additions” to a building in the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 89, bullet 3) or a “materially larger” replacement building (NPPF paragraph 89, bullet 4).

5.4 Significantly, the draft Green Belt SPD did not propose (or allow for) any changes to Green Belt boundaries in West Lancashire, as this can only be done through the adoption of a new Development Plan Document such as the WLLP.

5.5 The draft SPD was approved for consultation by Cabinet in March 2015. Public consultation on the SPD took place for six weeks, from Thursday 14 May – Friday 26 June 2015.

5.6 A total of 65 responses were received. The representations and the Council’s proposed responses are set out at Appendix B for Cabinet to take into account as they consider recommendation 3.1 above. The main points made were:

- Questioning whether it is beyond the scope of an SPD to identify what the Council would consider ‘disproportionate’ or ‘materially larger’;
- The SPD’s consideration of what constitutes previously developed land should match the definition provided within Annex 2 of the NPPF;
- Questioning the 20% increase in volume figure by which a replacement building is judged to be ‘materially larger’ and therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt (as stated in para.89 of the NPPF);
- Questioning the 40% increase in volume figure by which extensions or alterations are judged to be ‘disproportionate additions’ and therefore inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Seeking clarification in relation to the extent to which outbuildings will be included within any volume calculations relating either to the existing or original building;
- Queries regarding the extent to which permitted development rights will be taken into account when calculating potential volumes of existing dwellings; and
- Disagreement with the Council’s approach of reserving the right to remove permitted development rights from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt.

## **6.0 CURRENT POSITION**

6.1 A number of amendments have been made to the SPD in the light of the representations received. These representations are summarised in the

Consultation Feedback Report attached to this report at Appendix B, adjacent to the relevant representation. The amended SPD is at Appendix A to this report.

## **7.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 If Cabinet Members approve the SPD for adoption (subject to any amendments made by the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, as per recommendation 3.3 above); the SPD will become a significant material consideration in all relevant planning decisions once it has been finalised and published on the Council's website after Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS / COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 8.1 The purpose of the Green Belt SPD is to facilitate sustainable development in West Lancashire, consistent with the West Lancashire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 8.2 Ensuring development in the Green Belt is in accordance with policy should help achieve the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy, namely that West Lancashire should be the cleanest, safest, healthiest and greenest place in the country to live, work and enjoy.

## **9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The preparation of the Development in the Green Belt SPD has been resourced through the Planning Service's revenue budgets.

## **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 Not having an up-to-date SPD which provides guidance on Green Belt issues could lead to developers challenging planning decisions relating to Green Belt development, and increase the possibility of unsuitable development in the Borough. The speedy preparation and adoption of this SPD should ensure that the above scenario is avoided.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as Appendix F to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix B – Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Feedback Report

Appendix C – Adoption Statement for Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix D – Minute of Planning Committee, 3 September 2015 (for Cabinet and Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee only) *to follow*

Appendix E – Minute of Cabinet, 15 September 2015 (for Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee only) *to follow*

Appendix F – Equality Impact Assessment







# Supplementary Planning Document Development in the Green Belt

September 2015

**John Harrison, DipEnvP, MRTPI**  
**Assistant Director Planning**  
**West Lancashire Borough Council**



## Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	<b>What is a Supplementary Planning Document?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Sustainability Appraisal</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3</b>	<b>The Green Belt in West Lancashire</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Planning Policy in relation to the Green Belt</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Impact of Development upon the Green Belt</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Green Belt Policies</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>General Principles in relation to redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Policy GB1: Replacement dwellings in the Green Belt</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Policy GB2: Conversion of or Replacement of Non-Residential Buildings in the Green Belt</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Policy GB3: Redevelopment of Vacant Previously Developed Sites in the Green Belt</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Other considerations in relation to residential development on Brownfield land in the Green Belt</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.6</b>	<b>Policy GB4: Alterations and Extensions to Buildings within the Green Belt</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Policy GB5: Stable Buildings in the Green Belt</b>	<b>21</b>

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 What is a Supplementary Planning Document?**

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Green Belt development forms part of the suite of planning documents associated with the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (WLLP or 'the Local Plan'). This SPD is subsidiary to the overarching Local Plan, which provides strategic and development management policies for West Lancashire. Once adopted, the SPD will assist West Lancashire Borough Council in determining planning applications.

This SPD should be read alongside other relevant guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance, the West Lancashire Local Plan, and other SPDs, for example the West Lancashire Design Guide SPD (2008).

Some minor development is permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 without the need for a planning application. Such development is usually known as 'permitted development'. Home owners and developers who are considering such schemes are nonetheless encouraged to refer to the guidance in this SPD when considering even minor development. This guidance clarifies the implications of permitted development on future planning proposals in the Green Belt.

This SPD will not propose any changes to any Green Belt boundaries but will be used when making a judgment on planning applications put before the Council. However all applications will be judged on their merits and on a case by case basis, having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD

### **1.2 Sustainability Appraisal**

Since the Green Belt SPD will be based upon, and consistent with, national policy and does not propose any changes to any Green Belt boundaries, it is not considered that the Green Belt SPD requires its own Sustainability Appraisal or Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### **1.3 The Green Belt in West Lancashire**

West Lancashire is predominantly rural in character, with scattered villages, the market town of Ormskirk, and the new town of Skelmersdale, and comprises the largest extent of highest grade farmland in the North West of England. It is this character and the Borough's proximity to a number of urban centres, including Liverpool and Preston that make it a popular place to live for those commuting both to Merseyside, Greater Manchester and to other parts of Lancashire.

The Green Belt in West Lancashire covers more than 90% of the total land in the Borough. The Green Belt boundaries where West Lancashire borders Sefton and Knowsley were established through the Merseyside Green Belt Plan in 1983. The general extent of the Green Belt elsewhere in West Lancashire was designated through Policy 8(a)(v) of the Central and North Lancashire Structure Plan, adopted in March 1993. Following this, detailed Green Belt boundaries were established around West Lancashire's towns and smaller settlements via a series of area-specific local plans, adopted by the Borough Council.

Map 1 below illustrates the extent of the West Lancashire Green Belt and the settlement areas.



Map illustrating the extent of West Lancashire's Green Belt and settlement areas

Green Belt (West Lancashire)
  Settlements

## 1.4 Planning Policy in relation to the Green Belt

### National Planning Policy

Paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF set out national planning policy in relation to Green Belt. It is clear that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent the uncontrolled spread of urban areas by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and its permanence.

The Green Belt serves five purposes:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The West Lancashire Green Belt Study 2011 demonstrates that virtually all Green Belt land adjacent to the settlements of West Lancashire fulfils at least one of the above purposes of the Green Belt.

In March 2014, the government introduced National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), a web-based planning policy resource. NPPG provides extra detail and guidance to back up the national planning policies set out in the NPPF. NPPG may be updated periodically, but should always remain consistent with NPPF policy.

### Local Planning Policy

The adopted Local Plan does not have a Green Belt policy as such. Instead, Policy GN1(b) states that development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies.

### The approach to considering development within the Green Belt

The approach to considering proposals for development in the Green Belt is to first ascertain whether or not the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt. Case Law<sup>1</sup> recognises that the NPPF does not define what constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Instead it identifies what may be acceptable forms of development (i.e. development capable of being not “inappropriate”), with all other forms of development therefore regarded as inappropriate by necessary implication.

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Fordent Holdings v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 2844 (Admin), paragraph 19

Note that where a proposed development contains individual elements that may be judged “not inappropriate”, these do not make the development as a whole appropriate<sup>2</sup>. Development cannot be seen as acceptable in terms of Green Belt policy, merely because part of it is “not inappropriate”.

The table below sets out the types of development deemed “not inappropriate” in the Green Belt by paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, and highlights the relevant West Lancashire Local Plan policies that apply to such development and/or links to sections of this SPD which provide further information.

---

<sup>2</sup> See *Timmins / Lymn v. Gedling Borough Council* [2014] EWHC 654 (Admin)

Development type	Relevant WLLP Policies and further information
<b>NPPF paragraph 89:</b>	
<i>Buildings for agriculture and forestry</i>	Policy <b>EC2</b> supports the continuing use of rural areas for employment use
<i>Facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation</i>	Policy <b>EN3</b> provides more detail about the Council's approach to providing open space and recreation facilities
<i>Extension or alteration of a building</i>	See section 2.6 on extensions in the Green Belt
<i>Replacement of a building</i>	See section 2.2 for replacement dwellings and 2.3 for all other buildings in the Green Belt
<i>Limited infilling in villages</i>	West Lancashire contains no villages within the Green Belt
<i>Limited affordable housing for local community needs</i>	Under Policy <b>RS1</b> very limited affordable housing (i.e. up to 4 units) may be permitted within the Green Belt where it can be proven that there are no suitable sites within the nearest adjacent settlement, in accordance with the sequential test in Policy <b>GN5</b> . The area of search could be the settlement, ward or parish; it is not necessarily restricted to 'nearest adjacent settlement'.  The Council's Affordable Housing SPD will also provide further detailed advice on this subject.
<i>Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land)</i>	See section 2.3 for conversion of existing buildings, or section 2.4 for the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the Green Belt
<b>NPPF paragraph 90:</b>	
<i>Mineral extraction</i>	Lancashire County Council has responsibility for identifying sites and policies for minerals development in the Borough. The WLLP contains a map showing where Mineral Safeguarding Areas have been designated within West Lancashire in the Adopted Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
<i>Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location</i>	Lancashire County Council is responsible for transport policy within the Borough. The current Local Transport Plan 3 runs from 2011 – 2021. Policy <b>IF2</b> seeks to support the strategic transport priorities for West Lancashire as well as more minor local priorities and specific local issues.
<i>Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order</i>	West Lancashire does not currently have any Community Right to Build Orders in operation. This will be monitored if the situation changes.

## 1.5 Impact of development upon the Green Belt

### Openness

The term openness is taken to mean the absence of buildings or development on over or under the land<sup>3</sup>. Whether a development impacts upon openness is therefore an absolute test and is not concerned with the extent to which development is visible, aesthetically pleasing or camouflaged.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to the openness of the Green Belt, the Council will consider the impact of proposals on a case by case basis and the unique circumstances of the site. Redevelopment proposals should generally have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it, and where possible, have less impact.

In some instances, replacement buildings are desired elsewhere on a site. Sometimes this can have a greater or lesser impact on the perception of openness, dependent on their location. In these cases the Council will assess the existing site and the impact of any existing building. If the new position would not be in keeping with its surroundings, be more prominent or would be less in keeping or would have a greater perceived impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal is less likely to be acceptable. However, if it is considered to have less impact upon openness, this is likely to weigh in favour of the application.

### Very Special Circumstances

If the development is inappropriate, it is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in '**Very Special Circumstances**' which can only exist where the potential harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF paragraphs 87-88).

When attempting to demonstrate 'Very Special Circumstances', the onus is on the applicant to prove that the exceptional nature of the proposal outweighs the harm that it would cause to the Green Belt. Each argument will be judged on its own unique set of circumstances and any accepted case would not necessarily result in a precedent for similar arguments on the same or alternative sites.

Where development is permitted in the Green Belt on grounds of very special circumstances, the Council will reserve the right to remove permitted development rights

---

<sup>3</sup> This approach has been used by Inspectors in West Lancashire cases. E.g. see decision letter for Bannister House Farm, Mere Brow (22 October 2014), paragraph 10 (Ref: APP/P2365/A/14/2217810)

<sup>4</sup> Timmins / Lymn v Gedling Borough Council [2014] EWHC 654 (Admin) paragraph 74



for development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences, or activities such as external storage.

### **Permitted Development within the Green Belt**

There are certain forms of development that householders are able to carry out which do not need planning permission. These are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. However certain types of properties converted to residential use or previously extended may have had their Permitted Development rights removed – this often applies to properties such as barn conversions and other recent buildings (including dwellings that have replaced older buildings)

Householders should consult the Planning Portal website and seek guidance from the Council on the need for planning permission before carrying out any extension or alteration work.

## 2.1. General Principles in relation to redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt

Previously developed land can include vacant land and / or existing buildings.

The NPPF defines previously developed land as:

*“Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure”.*

Previously Developed Land excludes:

- land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;
- land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures;
- land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and
- land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

West Lancashire has a number of previously developed (or ‘brownfield’) sites within the Green Belt. In line with the NPPF, the Council will consider redevelopment proposals of previously developed sites based on their impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it.

The following policies deal with replacement dwellings, replacement non-residential buildings, conversions of buildings and redevelopment of brownfield sites. If the guidance is not followed, proposals are unlikely to be successful unless the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances. Although the policies will be the basis for making a judgment on planning applications put before the Council, it must be stressed that all applications will be judged on their merits on a case by case basis having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD.

## 2.2 Replacement dwellings

### **POLICY GB1 – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**

A proposal for the replacement of an existing dwelling within the Green Belt should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- a) The existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) The total volume of the replacement dwelling should not be more than 20% greater than the dwelling that it replaces;
- c) The replacement dwelling should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials;
- d) The curtilage of the replacement dwelling should be no larger than that established for the dwelling it replaces
- e) The replacement dwelling should be on or close to the footprint of the one it replaces, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative location within the same curtilage will have no adverse impact on openness or achieve significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits.

The applicant must submit to the Council details of the existing and proposed dwellings within a 'Green Belt Assessment', which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing dwelling (or dwellings), as well as any outbuildings
- volume calculations of the proposed replacement dwelling

Detached outbuildings will not be included as part of the volume of the existing dwelling. However, if any outbuildings of permanent and substantial construction are to be demolished in tandem with the demolition of the existing dwelling, an extra allowance may be made in terms of the increase in volume of the proposed dwelling. The extra volume permitted under this 'allowance' will typically be less than the volume of the outbuildings being demolished.

The applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species<sup>5</sup> and their habitat which may be present in the existing building and its curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.

Where appropriate, a condition will be attached to any permission requiring the demolition of the existing property before any replacement is occupied and remediation of the site following demolition of the dwelling.

---

<sup>5</sup> S.41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 defines what are 'protected species'

The Council reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences or activities such as external storage.

### **Justification**

NPPF paragraph 89 bullet point 3 allows for replacement dwellings in the Green Belt, providing the new dwelling is not 'materially larger' than the one it replaces.

The Council considers that a limit of 20% is appropriate in terms of the increase in volume of the replacement dwelling compared with the dwelling it replaces.

Any unused permitted development rights on the existing dwelling will not be taken into account in volume calculations; these are effectively 'forfeited' if a dwelling is replaced.

Regardless of the percentage limits for increases in volume, replacement dwellings will be judged on their impact on the openness of the Green Belt, their design, their siting within the plot and general location. It may be the case that a replacement dwelling is judged to have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared with the existing dwelling, even if the above volume limits have not been breached. Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement dwelling is designed in such a way that its impact on openness is minimised.

If the applicant proposes a replacement dwelling in a different location on the same site as the existing, it will be necessary to demonstrate that there is no increase in the overall visual impact of the building in the landscape. A scheme of remediation of the original house site will also be required and will be linked by condition or legal agreement to any replacement house.

The Council will consider the appropriateness or otherwise of the removal of permitted development rights on a case by case basis. The purpose of the removal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings and other structures from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt is to prevent future cumulative additions that may adversely impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.

## **2.3 Conversion and replacement of non-residential buildings**

There is a varied range of buildings located in the Green Belt which are no longer suitable for their original purposes. The majority are likely to be agricultural buildings but there may also be churches, chapels, schools, public houses, and other buildings for which an alternative use may be sought.

Many of these buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Provided they are structurally sound, conversion of these buildings, for example to employment or community use, visitor accommodation or housing, can safeguard their future. By re-using existing resources, conversions can also meet the aims of sustainable built development.

Conversion of a building is considered to be development which would not lead to effective demolition and reconstruction of the building.

### **POLICY GB2 – CONVERSION OR REPLACEMENT OF NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**

#### **1. Conversion of buildings**

A proposal for the conversion of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The building should be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major change, demolition or extension;
- (b) The proposals will maintain and enhance the character and wider landscape setting and site features;
- (c) The proposals seek to improve the external appearance of the building, in line with the Borough Council's Design Guide SPD;

#### **2. Replacement buildings**

A proposal for the replacement of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt with another non-residential building should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The existing building should be lawful and permanent in nature;
- (b) The total volume of the replacement building should not be more than 20% larger than the volume of the building it replaces;

- (c) The replacement building should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials;
- (d) The replacement building should be on or close to the footprint of the one it replaces, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative location within the same curtilage will have no adverse impact on openness and/or it will achieve significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits.

The applicant must submit to the Council details of the existing and proposed buildings within a '*Green Belt Assessment*', which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing building(s) on site;
- volume calculations of the proposed replacement building(s).

Where appropriate, a condition will be attached to any permission, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings before the commencement of use of any replacement, and remediation of the site following demolition.

For both conversions of buildings and replacement buildings, the applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species<sup>6</sup> and its habitat which may be present in the existing building and its curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.

### **Justification**

Conversions of buildings are permitted under NPPF paragraph 90, provided the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

In the case of traditional buildings, the proposal should retain essential features and detailing such as openings, walls and roofs as well as traditional forms and layouts

There are some buildings which may not be suitable for conversion, for example those of lightweight or less permanent construction such as glasshouses or timber stable buildings; buildings which are structurally unsound, missing substantial sections of wall or roofs; and / or buildings at risk of flooding.

The Council considers that a replacement building which is up to 20% larger than that which it replaces may be appropriate in the Green Belt. Regardless of the percentage limits for increases in volume, replacement buildings will be judged on their impact on the openness of the Green Belt, their design, their siting within the plot and general location. It may be

---

<sup>6</sup> S.41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 defines what are 'protected species'

the case that a replacement building is judged to have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared with the existing building, even if the above Policy GB2 volume limits have not been breached. Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement building is designed in such a way that its impact on perceived openness is minimised.

The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.

## **2.4 Previously developed sites in the Green Belt**

### **POLICY GB3 – REDEVELOPMENT OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT**

Proposals for the redevelopment of previously developed sites within the Green Belt will be permitted provided the proposed development would not have a greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt or on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

The applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species<sup>7</sup> and their habitat which may be present in any existing building(s) and their curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.

#### **Justification**

Policy GB3 is consistent with paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

When determining the impact of the proposed development upon the openness of the Green Belt, the Council would take into consideration a number of issues including:

- Existing and previous buildings which occupy or may have occupied the site, including their size and layout;
- If no longer present, how long ago the buildings occupied the site, and for what period of time.

---

<sup>7</sup> S.41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 defines what are ‘protected species’

## 2.5 Other considerations in relation to residential development on Brownfield land in the Green Belt

In the case of residential development on brownfield sites in the Green Belt, a proportion of the units should be affordable housing in accordance with WLLP **Policy RS2 (Affordable and Specialist Housing)** and WLLP **Policy AH1 (Affordable Housing Requirements)** of the Affordable Housing SPD 2015, if the Policy RS2 threshold for providing affordable housing has been exceeded.

For sites currently or most recently in employment or retail use (e.g. Use Classes A1, B1,B2, B8) or as agricultural/horticultural workers' dwellings, WLLP **Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability)** would need to be satisfied, unless such development were Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

WLLP **Policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers)** permits the re-use of existing buildings within the Green Belt for accommodation for temporary agricultural and/or horticultural workers provided that it complies with other policies in the Local Plan and national planning policy. WLLP **Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy)** states that as a general approach, the re-use of existing buildings within rural areas will be supported where they would otherwise be left vacant. This conforms with paragraph 90 of the NPPF which sets out the re-use of buildings (providing they are of permanent and substantial construction) as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

The Council reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences or activities such as external storage.



## 2.6 Alterations and Extensions to Buildings within the Green Belt

There is a substantial demand to extend dwellings within the Green Belt. Although house extensions can, in principle, be appropriate development within the Green Belt, large extensions can substantially change the original appearance of a rural building and can have a cumulative effect on the character of the Green Belt. The following policy therefore provides guidance on how the Council will assess proposals for extensions to buildings in the Green Belt.

### **POLICY GB4 - ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

Proposals for an extension to an existing building within the Green Belt should satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- (b) The total volume of the proposal, together with any previous extensions, alterations and non-original outbuildings, would not result in an increase of more than 40% above the volume of the original building.
- (c) The design of the extension or alteration is in keeping with the original form and appearance of the building and does not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk, or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials.

The applicant must provide clear evidence of what constitutes the original property and the volume of subsequent and proposed extensions within a '*Green Belt Assessment*' submitted to the Council, which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the 'original' property(-ies), plus any original domestic outbuildings;
- volume calculations (in cubic metres) of any subsequent extensions / outbuildings; and
- volume calculations of the proposal.

Outbuildings of permanent and substantial construction (i.e. generally not sheds or green houses) and other attached covered structures such as car ports or porches will be taken into account in determining whether a proposal complies or not with the requirements of criterion (b) in that the volume of any outbuilding or extension which does not form part of the 'original building' will be taken into account in assessing whether or not the 40% threshold has been reached.

**The 'original building' is defined within the NPPF as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.**

The extension of an existing residential property within the Green Belt should not result in an increase in the residential curtilage.

The Council reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for subsequent development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences or activities such as external storage.

The applicant may also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species<sup>8</sup> and their habitat which may be present in any existing building(s) and their curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.

### **Justification**

Extensions and alterations to buildings in the Green Belt are not considered in national or local planning policy to constitute inappropriate development, providing that any extension or alteration is not disproportionate and therefore, by definition, harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Disproportionate development is defined in the NPPF as that which is 'materially larger' than the original building. The Council considers that any extension or alteration to a building within the Green Belt which exceeds 40% of the volume of the original building to be materially larger and therefore disproportionate.

This figure of 40% is provided as a guide only. There may be cases where an extension of less than this volume would be considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the perceived openness of the Green Belt in certain locations. Figure 1 and 2 (page 20) illustrate examples of extensions of less than 40% of the size of the original property which, due to their form and projection from the original building, may be judged to have a greater perception of negative impact upon openness. Figure 3 on the other hand, illustrates an extension of 40% of the original property. Due to its position in relation to the property, the impact of this form of extension upon the perceived openness of the Green Belt would be substantially less than the extensions in Figures 1 or 2. Similarly, it may be possible to have an extension, similar to that shown in Figure 3, but of marginally more than 40% of the original property, whose impact upon the perceived openness of the Green Belt is also substantially less than the extensions in Figures 1 or 2.

In summary, the prominent or easily visible expansion of a building will detract more from the perceived openness of the Green Belt than would a more concealed or compact form of expansion. For example, the infilling of space between existing parts of the building, so that no further outward projection is involved, would often have no material effect on the perceived openness of the Green Belt. Most outwardly projecting extensions are likely to detract to some degree from the perceived openness of the Green Belt. In some cases very small outward additions to an already disproportionately extended building may often have no further material impact on the perceived openness of the Green Belt and may be

---

<sup>8</sup> S.41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 defines what are 'protected species'

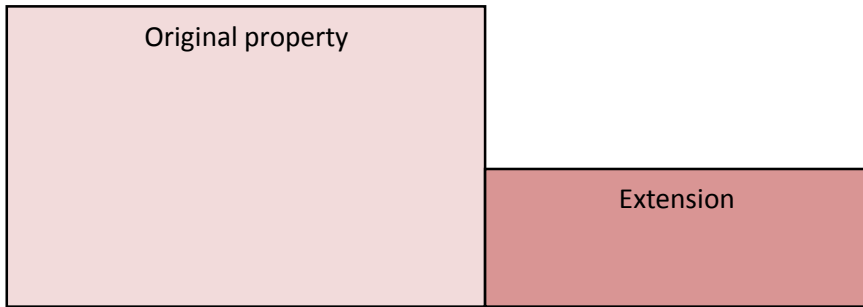
allowed. However it is not possible to set out prescriptive rules in this respect and every case will be examined on its own merits.

Any additions on the site that have been constructed since the 'original' building date will be considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in size of the building when further new additions are being assessed. In the case of residential properties, this includes any building or structure erected as an enlargement of the dwelling for the purpose of additional domestic accommodation, or for a purpose ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling. This approach is taken because small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can cumulatively have a material detrimental effect. In the case of domestic properties, detached outbuildings are included as, despite their detachment, these are considered as extensions. (New detached domestic outbuildings would otherwise constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt).

No development will be permitted in Green Belt areas which would result in the extension of domestic gardens as this is deemed to have a potential impact on openness and conflicts with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

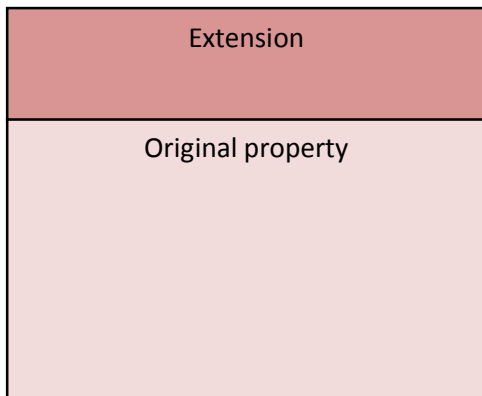
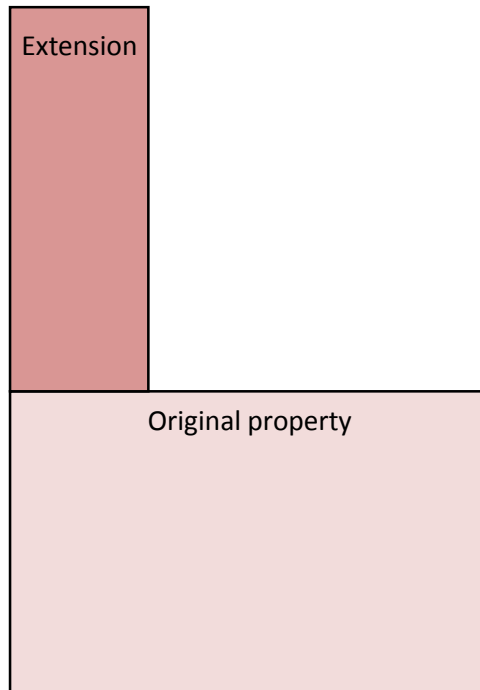
The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.

**Figures 1 -3: Impact of extensions upon the perceived openness of the Green Belt**



**Figure 1**

**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**

## 2.7 Stable Buildings in the Green Belt

The policy below concerns stables used for private recreational purposes only which may be situated in private gardens or open fields within the Green Belt. Commercial riding stables will be subject to different planning policies e.g. WLLP **Policy EC2** (The Rural Economy).

### **POLICY GB5 – STABLE BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**

The number of stables should be appropriate to the intended use and should be kept as small as possible. Applicants should provide evidence to demonstrate the need for the stable building and to justify the amount of accommodation required.

New stables should meet the following criteria:

#### ***Design and scale***

- Stables should normally comprise blocks of single stable depth, opening directly to the outside
- The building should have a maximum height to the roof ridge of 3.5m
- Each stable should have a maximum floor space of 14m<sup>2</sup>
- Tack rooms and hay stores should be of a similar size to that of an individual stable

#### ***Materials***

Stables should be constructed from timber mounted on low brick plinths or with some limited courses of internal blockwork up to a height of 1.3m in order to protect timber walls from damage from the horses.

#### ***Siting***

When siting stable buildings, the following guidelines should be followed:

- The stable building should not be in an open or prominent position and, if possible, should be close to existing buildings;
- The stable building should not require the construction of a long track in order to provide access; this may in itself constitute an engineering operation requiring planning permission;
- The stable building should, however, be an appropriate distance from the façade of any inhabited building, or of the boundary of any garden of any inhabited building not in the same ownership of the stable (to avoid nuisance from smell, noise, etc.); and

The siting of the stable building should not have any adverse effect upon protected wildlife habitats<sup>9</sup> or species, heritage assets or agricultural interests.

---

<sup>9</sup> S.41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 defines what are 'protected species'

### ***Areas of hardstanding***

These areas associated with the stables should be the minimum size necessary for operation.

### ***Landscaping and Boundary Treatments***

Such screening should comprise a mixture of indigenous species of hedge and small trees appropriate to that particular rural setting. Details of landscaping and boundary treatments should be included in any application for a stable building.

### ***Wildlife***

Features such as nesting boxes within the eaves, or holes for birds or bats incorporated within stable buildings, will be encouraged.

### ***Waste Disposal***

Any applications for stable buildings should include details of drainage and methods for storage and disposal of manure.

Exceptions to these sizes and designs will only be accepted in very special circumstances.

### **Justification**

There has been considerable growth in horse riding as a recreational pursuit in recent years. Demand has been stimulated by new facilities associated with farm holdings and by the selling off of individual fields or paddocks. Stable blocks on open, undeveloped land can appear isolated and intrusive and, once established, can lead to the intensification of uses on the site. The objective of this policy is to ensure that new stables are only permitted in locations which are not damaging to the character and appearance of the countryside.

Stables generally tend to be required for relatively short periods of time, with needs varying according to change of ownership or occupation of land or associated dwellings. On this basis, the Council considers it inappropriate that the stables should be constructed of permanent materials such as brick or stone. This may result in them remaining on the site long after they are needed and lead to a proliferation of brick and stone buildings across the countryside, to the detriment of the character and openness of the Green Belt. Instead, materials should help to reduce the impact of such buildings on the character and openness of the Green Belt.

The impact of these buildings can also be reduced by minimising the amount of hardstanding permitted around the stable buildings, in order to prevent the encroachment of development into the open countryside. Stable buildings and hardstanding areas can, if necessary, be screened by vegetation to further reduce their impact on the landscape.

The British Horse Society provide further advice on issues of pasture management in the publication 'Advice on Pasture Management'<sup>10</sup>.

The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.

---

<sup>10</sup> [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)





## Late Information

**Planning Committee: 3 September 2015** (Item 8)

**Cabinet : 15 September 2015** (Item 5(a))

**Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee : 1 October 2015**

### **Item 8 – Adoption of Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document**

The following amendment is proposed to the first paragraph under section 2.5 of the SPD, on p.16 of the SPD (p.466 of the Planning Committee Agenda);

“In the case of residential development on brownfield sites in the Green Belt, where the threshold for providing affordable housing is to be exceeded, a proportion of the units should be affordable housing in accordance with the requirement for the Borough’s Key Service Centres, Key Sustainable Villages and Rural Sustainable Villages in **WLLP Policy RS2 (Affordable and Specialist Housing) of the West Lancashire Local Plan**, and **WLLP Policy AH1 (Affordable Housing Requirements)** of the Affordable Housing SPD 2015, if the Policy RS2 threshold for providing affordable housing has been exceeded. Further detail in relation to the provision of affordable housing in West Lancashire, including as it applies to brownfield sites in the Green Belt, will also be provided in the Council’s forthcoming Affordable Housing SPD.”

The change reflects the fact that the Council is not able to adopt the Affordable Housing SPD alongside the Development in the Green Belt SPD at this time.

Planning Committee should also note that, should this amendment be accepted by Cabinet as part of the adopted SPD, the Adoption Statement (Appendix C to the report on Item 8) will also be amended before publication to reflect this change to the SPD.



# Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document

## Consultation Statement

August 2015

This Consultation Statement comprises two sections:

- A) Schedule of comments received on the 'scope' of the Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the Council's response (January / February 2015);
- B) Schedule of comments received on the Draft SPD, and the Council's response (May / June 2015).

---

### **(A) Comments on the scope of the Development in the Green Belt SPD**

In accordance with Regulation 12(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, West Lancashire Borough Council consulted the following bodies on the scope of the proposed Development in the Green Belt SPD:

- Statutory Consultees ("Specific Consultation Bodies" as defined by Regulation 2 of the above Regulations);
- Locally active planning agents;
- Locally active housebuilders and Registered Providers (as this was a joint consultation on the Green Belt SPD and also on an Affordable Housing SPD).

The table on the following pages records which parties made representations on the scope of the SPD, the issues raised by the said parties, and the Council's response in terms of how these issues were addressed in the draft SPD.

Summary of comments made on Reg 12(a) consultation on Green Belt Issues SPD

February 2015

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
01	Highways Agency	No comments to make	-
02	Sefton MBC	No comments	-
03	The Coal Authority	No comments	-
04	English Heritage	No comments	-
05	Newburgh Parish Council	Concern regarding conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to housing in the Green Belt	<p>Recent changes in the Town &amp; Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2008 (Class MB) allow for agricultural buildings to be converted into dwellings without the need for full planning permission. This is subject to going through a prior notification procedure where details are submitted to the Council. Proposals will need to satisfy a number of criteria and certain restrictions will be imposed on other new agricultural development.</p> <p>Where planning permission is required for the conversion of a non-residential building to residential use, the “higher” / “parent” policies, provided in this case by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), determine what kind of development is permitted in the Green Belt. Those forms of development considered ‘not inappropriate’ (para.89) include the conversion of non-residential buildings within the Green Belt to residential usage, providing certain criteria are met. The SPD will provide these criteria, with the aim of preserving the openness of the Green Belt as far as possible.</p>
06	Marine Management	No comments	-

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
	Organisation		
07	Wrightington Parish Council	Wrightington Parish Council would ask that when preparing these documents, the policies contained within the SPD on Green Belt ensure that Green Belt land can be protected from development by stealth and will continue to only be allowed in very exceptional circumstances and subject to stringent criteria.	<p>The NPPF does consider some development <u>not</u> 'inappropriate' in the Green Belt. This includes agricultural buildings, sports facilities, some extensions, and replacement buildings on previously developed land. These are subject to restrictions which the SPD attempts to clarify.</p> <p>Therefore, while the Council can apply locally specific criteria to control issues such as the form, design and appearance of development within the Green Belt, the precedent for whether development is inappropriate or not is set by national government, rather than the Borough Council.</p>
08	Aughton Residents Group	<p>Aughton Residents Group supports the Planning Department's robust approach to challenging the majority of attempts to convert non-residential buildings within the Green Belt to residential usage. We are concerned however that any perceived weakening of that position within the SPD will be seized upon by landowners and developers. ARG would wish to see the following points addressed within the SPD.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applications seeking to significantly alter the structure of a building, or redesignate it from non-domestic to domestic will be robustly challenged.</li> <li>2. Applications for new build 'agricultural' buildings will be scrutinised against impact on Green Belt in general and local dwellings in particular.</li> </ol>	<p>In response to the numbered comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. See response to Newburgh Parish Council in relation to the concerns about the conversion of non-domestic buildings to dwellings. However the SPD will seek to ensure that applications for conversion preserve any aspects of the structure and design of the building which hold value. It will also restrict alterations and extensions for this same reason, and also to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.</li> <li>2. The NPPF permits the construction of new agricultural buildings in the Green Belt [under a prior notification procedure]. Therefore the SPD has no power to restrict this form of Green Belt development.</li> <li>3. Development on previously developed ('brownfield') land within the Green Belt is not inappropriate development according to the NPPF. Therefore the Council has no power to refuse an</li> </ol>

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		3. Applications relating to 'Brownfield' sites within the Greenbelt will be refused except where exceptional circumstances can be proven as per the National Planning Framework.	application on such a site on this basis alone. However the NPPF requires that this type of development must not have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. The SPD will provide guidance on how this will be assessed.
09	Lancashire County Council	No comments	-
10	Natural England	No comments	-
11	Halsall Parish Council	<p>Halsall Parish Council asks that consideration be given to use brown belt (<i>sic</i>) areas in preference to Green Belt areas.</p> <p>All rural developments should fully take into account proposed changes in surface water drainage in West Lancashire, in particular the proposed flooding of parts of West Lancashire due to the proposed closure of pumping stations into the Alt and Crossens.</p>	<p>The NPPF encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. This is reinforced by the development restrictions placed upon Green Belt land. WLLP policy SP1 makes clear that the need to prioritise brownfield land over greenfield land for development is an important consideration, as does national policy. Similarly, development on non-Green Belt land is prioritised over development on Green Belt land.</p> <p>Such a policy is not considered necessary in the Green Belt SPD as it is covered by 'parent' policies.</p> <p>The specification of surface water drainage treatments is not a matter within the scope of this SPD.</p>
12	Home Builders Federation	No comments	-
13	Lathom South Parish Council	No comments	-

## **(B) Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD**

From 14 May – 26 June 2015, in accordance with Regulations 12(b) and 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, West Lancashire Borough Council consulted the following bodies on the content of the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD:

- All people / organisations on the Council's Planning Policy Consultation Database. This includes all Statutory Consultees ("Specific Consultation Bodies" as defined by Regulation 2 of the above Regulations);
- Locally active planning agents, housebuilders and Registered Providers (as this was a joint consultation on the Green Belt SPD and on an Affordable Housing SPD).

In addition, the consultation on the SPD was publicised by way of a press release to the local media, and an article on the Council's website.

The table on the following pages records which parties made representations on the content of the draft SPD, the comments made by the said parties, and the Council's response, including any instances where it was agreed the draft SPD should be amended.

In all, 65 responses were received from a variety of parties (local individuals, Parish Councils, planning agents, and wider organisations / charities).

The schedule of proposed changes to the SPD is set out in the Development in the Green Belt SPD Adoption Statement, available separately.

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
01	Andrew Cunningham Building Design (Andrew Cunningham, Director)	<p><i>Policy GB1</i> 20% increase for replacement dwellings is too small based on today's space standards requirements (based on Building Regs, including Part M – related to accessibility), WLBC's Policy that new development should adhere to Lifetime Homes criteria which exceeds Part M – e.g. wider stairs, bigger turning areas, large bathrooms etc. Walls are required to be thicker to meet SAP requirements and floor-to-floor heights in some old dwellings are lower than would be acceptable today.</p> <p>Looking back to 'Principles of the Green Belt' (p.6), it would seem contradictory to the spirit of the NPPF to unduly limit good design (and to modern standards) but which might end up being 25-30% larger than that which it replaces. Suggest 30% or 1/3 is a more realistic figure.</p> <p><i>Policy GB2</i> 20% is too onerous a restriction, bearing in mind the current standards that must be worked to. Suggest 30% or 1/3 allows greater flexibility for designers and builders.</p> <p><i>Policy GB4</i> 40% is too onerous a restriction. The previous SPG mentioned 50% for extensions and there is no explanation as to why this has been reduced.</p>	<p><i>Policy GB1 / GB2</i> The figure of 20% has been used in the older SPG and is considered to have worked well over recent years. It is not a prescriptive figure, and if it is demonstrated that it is necessary to go above 20% to meet Lifetime Homes or ceiling height standards (in the case of old, small properties), this will be taken into account when assessing individual cases.</p> <p><i>Policy GB4</i> The Council has for a number of years operated with an SPG policy that had a 50% allowance for extensions, but it has been the view of officers over this period that the 50% allowance was over-generous and needed to be revised downwards. Now that the old SPG is being replaced by a new SPD, this is considered an opportune time to revise the allowance downwards. The reduction in the allowance is only modest, down from 50% to 40%. This allowance is still considered generous, and the SPD makes clear that the figure is a guideline rather than a prescriptive limit.</p>
02	Michael Ashworth	<p>Support the principles regarding the development of the Green Belt set out in the local plan (i.e. that development of the green belt should not be considered unless circumstances are exceptional).</p> <p>I am concerned that should there be any sign of relaxation of the rules that this would give a 'green light' to developers to apply for even more incursion into the Green Belt.</p> <p>The principle of 'openness' should be honoured, particularly as any development is likely to jeopardise the 'openness' of adjacent land, thereby increasing the risk of future further applications for development.</p>	<p>Support noted. The SPD does not seek to deviate from the Local Plan or NPPF in relation to Green Belt policy.</p> <p>With regards openness of the Green Belt, the Council will consider the impact of proposals on a case by case basis, and the unique circumstances of the site.</p>



**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
03	Andrew Atherton	Object to development within the Douglas Valley. Value the openness of the Green Belt.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
04	Peter Atherton	The Green Belt in Douglas Valley is important for nature and educating people about nature. Housing should be built on brownfield land instead.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
05	Barratt Manchester (Simon Artiss, Planning Manager)	<p>The NPPF and NPPG sets out the framework well so there is no benefit in replicating that national policy provides. The SPD should therefore focus upon the situation in West Lancashire. The recently adopted Local Plan relied upon Green Belt release to achieve housing allocations intended to meet its housing needs over the plan period. There are therefore allocations plus a range of Plan B sites, should those plan allocations not deliver housing supply at the required rate to satisfy NPPF requirements on housing supply. The SPD therefore needs to set out the framework for delivering these Plan B sites.</p> <p>In addition, the SPD should not be silent on the need to consider additional Green Belt sites, should allocations and Plan B sites not progress as necessary. It is assumed this would trigger an early review of the Local Plan but the SPD could clarify this matter.</p>	<p>It is not within the scope of this SPD to consider or explore the strategic issue of Safeguarded land (or 'Plan B' sites); that is the function of the West Lancashire Local Plan DPD.</p> <p>The purpose of the Green Belt SPD is to simply to clarify what would constitute 'not inappropriate' development, as listed in paragraph 89 of the NPPF, and how applications for such development would be considered in West Lancashire.</p> <p>The potential for further Green Belt release for development in the future will be assessed at the strategic level.</p>
06	Martin Beattie	The area around Appley Bridge should not be built upon and spoilt for those walking in the area. It would have a negative impact on facilities and services.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
07	Norma Beattie	Development in the Green Belt would cause road congestion, school overcrowding, there are not enough doctors and it would spoil an area of natural beauty.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
08	Dawn Bibby	Strongly disagree with development on all Green Belt areas. Develop would harm wildlife and the views for local people and users of the green spaces.	<p>The NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, except in a small number of cases which it outlines in para.89. The Council must follow this policy when deciding applications for development within Green Belt areas.</p> <p>Nature Conservation designations provide protection to important nature sites – this is not a specific purpose of Green Belt land.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
09	Renee Bligh	<p>It is unacceptable for Green Belt sites to be exploited. Farms are considered for development even though it is apparent that increasing food production is critical if we are to be self-sufficient.</p> <p>Skelmersdale, with its excellent transport links, should have the majority of business estates; otherwise HGV's increase the present traffic problems and extra pollution to both Ormskirk and Burscough.</p>	<p>The West Lancashire Local Plan recognises the importance of agriculture in the Green Belt - Policy EC2 relating to the Rural Economy states that "the irreversible development of open, agricultural land will not be permitted where it would result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, except where absolutely necessary to deliver development allocated within the current Local Plan or strategic infrastructure or development associated with the agricultural use of the land". The SPD cannot and does not seek to amend this Policy.</p> <p>The WLLP sets the priorities for development in the Borough. Almost half of all new development is focussed on Skelmersdale, as the Borough's Regional Town. However Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough form the secondary focus for new development in the Borough, as these towns both have good transport connections and most local services provided for. It is important that development is distributed through the Borough to ensure sustainable development across the Borough.</p>
10	Helen Bolton	Object to development in the Fairy Glen area of the Green Belt.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
11	Susan Brookfield	Green Belt land is gradually being eroded despite large brownfield land being available. Green Belt should be protected and past development sites should be cleaned up and re-used. Planning permission should only be granted on green areas where no brownfield sites exist.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
12	Carol Capstick	Object strongly to any development in the Green Belt. The openness of the Green Belt should be preserved. Other sites on Brownfield land are available. New buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt in accordance with the NPPF. More development would cause increased traffic causing congestion and loss of open land.	The NPPF states that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate; however paragraph 89 does list some exceptions. This SPD aims to clarify how these exceptions will apply in West Lancashire.
13	Frank Capstick	Object to development in the Green Belt. Value the wildlife living here (deer, foxes, squirrels, birds). There must be land available to be built on instead of the Green Belt. Traffic would be increased which would cause more disruption.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
14	Carlotte Chappell, Co-Ordinator, Ormskirk Friends of the Earth	<p><i>Policy GB1</i> If a dwelling of large scale or bulk exists already within the Green Belt, and is already visually intrusive, even a replacement dwelling of the same size would be visually intrusive also, all the more so with one up to 20% larger, which would be significantly bulkier or more intrusive. It is not clear how (b) and (c) would interact in such circumstances.</p> <p>Whilst this policy states there should not be any increase in residential curtilage, the loss of residential curtilage through the dwelling having been replaced and the new dwelling having an increased floor area should not be compensated for by incorporating into the curtilage any previously undeveloped land. Any new access necessary should be within the remaining curtilage of the previous dwelling.</p> <p><i>Policy GB2</i> Whether there is conversion or replacement of a non-residential building in the Green Belt, and new access consequent on an increase in size of the building converted or replaced should not be on previously undeveloped land.</p> <p><i>Policy GB3</i> The phrase "existing development" is misleading where the land is vacant. Would not "previous development" be more appropriate?</p> <p>The policy appears to offer no guidance as to how the efflux of time since the previous development stood (cf Policy GB4) would affect the strength of the policy presumption, and in its present form would appear to be a very subjective criterion.</p> <p><i>Policy GB4</i> Whilst this policy states there should not be any increase in residential</p>	<p>Paragraph 89 of the NPPF permits the replacement of a building, providing it is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. The scope of the SPD is only to provide guidance on what the Council would consider to be 'materially larger' as the principle of replacement buildings is set in national policy – regardless of whether or not the existing building could be considered 'visually intrusive'.</p> <p>Policy GB1 of the SPD resists the increase of residential curtilage. Point (d) states that the curtilage of the replacement dwelling should be no larger than that established for the dwelling it replaces. A new access track would be classed as an engineering operation. This may be considered appropriate development, but only in circumstances where it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. Each application will be judged on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>No; the NPPF uses the phrase "existing development". If land were vacant, a previous use having been demolished, then any new development should have no greater impact on openness than the current (cleared) site, rather than the previous use.</p> <p>Some matters are necessarily subjective, and cannot be covered by a prescriptive policy. Each case is treated on its merits.</p> <p>See second paragraph in the response above.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>curtilage, the loss of residential curtilage through the dwelling having been extended should not be compensated for by incorporating into the curtilage any previously undeveloped land, and any new access necessary should be within the remaining curtilage.</p>	
15	CPRE Lancashire (Jackie Copley, Planning Manager)	<p>Agree with 1.2 that since the Green Belt SPD will be based upon, and consistent with, national policy and does not propose any changes to any Green Belt boundaries, it doesn't require its own Sustainability Appraisal or Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>Recommend that paragraph 2.1 sticks to Planning Practice Guidance wording i.e. Previously Developed Land excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;</li> <li>• land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures;</li> <li>• land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and</li> <li>• land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.</li> </ul> <p>CPRE Lancashire is aware from the latest National Land Use Database figures that West Lancashire has 105.26 hectares of brownfield land, of which 27.29 hectares have been assessed as suitable for housing. It is more sustainable for this wasted resource to be built before greenfields in line with the NPPF to protect Green Belt and protect the openness and permanence, and importantly each of the five purposes should remain unaltered.</p> <p>The Policy GB1 - Replacement of dwellings in the Green Belt (see section 2.2) is not clear. CPRE Lancashire recommends that the SPD introduces some clarity while still being consistent with the NPPF. We suggest that the volume of the existing building should relate to permanent structures.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p> <p>It is agreed that the SPD definition of previously developed land should be amended to match the NPPF, in order to avoid confusion.</p> <p>Comments noted. The WLLP recognises in Policy SP1 the need to prioritise development on brownfield land and protect greenfield land from development. This reflects national policy set out in the NPPF. However, there is not enough brownfield land in West Lancashire to meet the locally-determined targets for residential and employment development. National policy / guidance on viability rules out much brownfield development.</p> <p>Policy GB1 point (a) states that the dwelling should be lawful and permanent in nature., therefore 'temporary extensions' would not fall under this criterion and therefore would be excluded when calculating the total volume of the original property. However</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>Temporary extensions made of corrugated iron/plastic or asbestos board/plastic board or similar material or structures that are not fully enclosed, e.g. carport or lean-to should be excluded.</p> <p>CPRE also suggests that bungalows should not be allowed to become two-storey properties in the Green Belt as the height of buildings impacts on openness.</p> <p>CPRE Lancashire supports the intention of the Council to require applicants to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species which may be present in the existing building. We also support the use of a condition to be attached to any permission requiring the demolition of the existing property before any replacement is occupied.</p> <p>In deciding whether an outbuilding qualifies for inclusion in the estimate of volume of the existing premises, the whole of the outbuilding (not merely part of it) should be within 5 m of the nearest permanent wall of the existing premises.</p> <p>Other corrections: Figures 1 &amp; 2, p. 18(19) – change “Figure 2(b)” to “Figure 1(b)”; change “Figure 3” to Figure 2”</p>	<p>covered areas used for residential purposes, for example porches or car ports will be included.</p> <p>The replacement of a bungalow with a two storey house, or the [upward] extension of a bungalow to create a two storey dwelling would be likely to fall foul of the 20% allowance for replacement dwellings, or the 40% allowance for extensions. The impact on the openness of the Green Belt would be a key factor to be taken into consideration when assessing such proposals.</p> <p>Support for these aspects noted.</p> <p>The SPD has been amended to remove the reference to a 5m distance from the property.</p> <p>Noted – Figure numbering will be amended to clarify.</p>
16	Michael Cunningham, Cunningham Planning	<p><i>Policy GB1</i></p> <p>Point (b) proposes that the volume of replacement dwellings should be no more than 20% greater than the dwelling it replaces but does not refer to Permitted Development Rights. The volume calculation of the existing building should include allowable extensions under PD Rights as these extensions could be carried out without any planning permission and then the building extended by 20%. Logically therefore the total volume of the replacement building should be no more than 20% of the existing building + allowable PD rights and this should be referred to in this section.</p>	<p>Whilst point (b) of the policy does not refer to permitted development (PD) rights, the justification for the policy advises that any unused PD rights on the existing dwelling will not be taken into account in volume calculations, but are effectively ‘forfeited’. This is a stance the Council has taken consistently over recent times and there is not considered to be any reason why it should be changed in this new SPD.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>Bullet point (e) confirms that the location of the replacement dwelling within a residential curtilage can be justified if it achieves significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits. This should also include a relocated building having no greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing building in line with guidance contained in the NPPF.</p> <p><i>Policy GB1 &amp; GB4</i> The volume of the proposal should exclude any subterranean development involved in extending the building as this would not have any detrimental impact on either openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The part of the sentence in brackets is unclear. It is not clear from the wording whether the volume of the original building when calculated will include any outbuildings within 5 metres of the existing dwelling or if the extension to the building of up to 40% would include any outbuildings within 5 metres of the existing dwelling. The interpretation of this part of the sentence is crucial and could have a significant impact on the size of any proposed extension. Reference to part of an outbuilding is also confusing. This could be interpreted to mean part only of an outbuilding rather than the whole.</p> <p>The way in which the council treat detached outbuildings within a residential curtilage is significant in assessing the acceptability of any extensions to the building. The NPPF under Paragraph 89 refers to extensions or alterations to a building it does not appear to include detached outbuildings. This is logical as outbuildings are not "extensions". This issue needs to be clarified to avoid any confusion.</p>	<p>Agreed; wording will be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>Whilst subterranean development may not impact on visual amenity, it can affect the perception of openness of the Green Belt, for example if it requires excavations to the side to provide light. Appeal decisions suggest basements should be included in volume calculations.</p> <p>It is agreed that the wording of Policies GB1 and GB4 needs to be addressed to deal with the issue of outbuildings, and to provide clarity. The SPD will be amended to remove references to parts of outbuildings / outbuildings being 5m from the existing dwelling.</p>
17	Brian Deakin	Development in environmentally sensitive areas will damage wildlife. Local amenities and facilities in Appley Bridge cannot cope with further development. These should be improved. Parking at Appley Bridge Railway Station is dangerous.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
18	Mark Deakin	Object to house building on Green Belt land. Building close to protected woodland is irresponsible and would damage the drainage of the ecosystems. Development would also put pressure on local amenities such as schools, roads and medical facilities.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
19	Pauline Deakin	Object to development in the Green Belt around Appley Bridge as there are not sufficient facilities or alternative means of transport other than the car.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
20	De Pol Associates (Dan Matthewman, Senior Planner)	<p>At p.12 suggests that the Council, where appropriate, will remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt. It is our belief that the proposed policy fails to accord with National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) on the use of planning conditions and cannot be justified. Therefore the wording aforementioned at a para. 1.2 above should be omitted from the policy.</p> <p>Government issued the NPPG in April 2014 on the use of planning conditions which rehearses the same tests for attaching conditions on planning permissions as those which existed previously. Any condition to be imposed on a planning permission must be reasonable, relevant to the development, relevant to planning, precise, enforceable and necessary. The Council’s emerging SPD proposes removal of permitted rights from replacement dwellings in the greenbelt “where appropriate”. However, in so doing, the SPD suggests a lower threshold of ‘appropriateness’ whereas the correct test to justify such a restriction on future development is to demonstrate ‘exceptional circumstances’. The draft SPD is therefore contrary to the NPPG and where exceptional circumstances are not proven, it is clear that the condition will fail to meet the test of ‘necessity’ or ‘reasonableness’.</p> <p>If the Council identified a proposed development site that was so especially sensitive to future development, the Council would be entitled to rely on paragraph 17 of the NPPG providing that it was justified on a case by case basis. The blanket removal of permitted development rights</p>	<p>The phrase, “The Council, where appropriate, will remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt” is considered appropriate. It is not a “blanket removal” of permitted development rights, as claimed by the respondent.</p> <p>It is agreed that NPPG makes clear that such conditions should only be used “in exceptional circumstances”. Whether or not exceptional circumstances exist in a particular case will be one of the considerations when the Case Officer determines whether the removal of permitted development rights is “appropriate” in that individual case.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
		<p>for all extensions and outbuildings is not proportionate and the Class of permitted development rights proposed to be removed must be limited only to those which available evidence suggests will result in a negative effect on the Green Belt.</p> <p>Page 10 of the proposed SPD notes some exceptions which government believed to be appropriate. These exceptions are more fully outlined in the GPDO 2015 itself confirming that permitted development rights do not apply to dwellinghouses which have been granted only by virtue of Class M, N, P or Q of Part 3 of Schedule 2.</p> <p>The only justification to remove permitted development rights from a replacement dwelling is to demonstrate 'exceptional circumstances'. These must be determined on a case by case basis and clearly set out by Officer's considering and determining planning applications. The mere fact that a building is located in the Green Belt does not amount to 'exceptional circumstances'.</p>	
21	Simon Edwards	<p>There should be no development on areas of natural beauty with an abundance of wildlife.</p> <p>These areas often cannot cope with much more traffic, there are not enough schools and virtually no shops or facilities.</p>	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
22	Bridgit Fairhurst	<p>The development of Green Belt in Appley Bridge is wholly inappropriate. – would cause a dangerous increase in traffic levels.</p> <p>Fairy Glen is particularly beautiful and appreciated by both locals and people from further afield for walking and providing an area for nature.</p>	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
23	John Fairhurst	<p>There is already development pressure in the area around Appley Bridge. The current road system and infrastructure in and around the village is already stretched and construction of houses on Green Belt land would be opposed.</p>	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
24	Michael Field	<p>The Green Belt around the villages and small towns of West Lancashire gives them and the area a unique character. There should be no building on this Green Belt.</p>	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.



**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
25	Thomas Gibson	Access to any green field sites would surely contravene traffic planning guidance and additional housing would make the current traffic problems much worse in Appley Lane.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
26	Mary Gibson	Why use green belt which has benefits for walkers and wild life? A small area of green belt bordering an ancient woodland SSI is of great benefit to all members of the community mentally and physically.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
27	Thomas Gibson	There seems to be poor demand for further housing in the Appley Bridge area. Additional housing would make the current traffic problems much worse.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
28	Irene Glaze	Development in the Appley Bridge area will result in reduced open spaces for recreation & health; increased & probably over-capacity at schools leading to increased traffic congestion. Development in the Green Belt is often poorly serviced by facilities. Development would also result in the reduction of the hedgerows, reducing insects, small mammals and birds.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
29	Chris Glaze	Green Belt near Appley Bridge stops neighbouring settlements from merging. Development on green belt land should be an absolute last resort. There needs to be more consideration of regenerating areas that are not currently being used properly or have fallen into dis-use, or disrepair. The Green Belt allows people to keep up their fitness levels & enjoy outdoor life.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
30	Carole Halton	Concerned about plans to develop in Appley Bridge/ Douglas Valley area, adjacent to Fairy Glen.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
31	Kenneth Halton	The Green Belt is used for recreation purposes and should be protected. Any development would harm wildlife and facilities would not be able to cope with further development. Green Belt should be protected as it can never be reclaimed.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
32	Richard Hampson	Against Green Belt development - all Green Belt areas should be protected against development, especially when within the borough there are many brownfield sites that would benefit from investment and development. Any developments with Appley Bridge would cause a massive strain on the	WLLP policy SP1 (and national policy) recognises the need to prioritise development on brownfield land. However Policy SP1 also recognises that there is not enough brownfield land in West Lancashire to meet the locally-determined targets for residential

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>road infrastructure for the surrounding area.</p> <p>The Douglas valley and surrounding areas of Green Belt offer a variety of habitats for many wild species of animal and birds. With any development on surrounding Green Belt fields there would surely be a detrimental effect on the ecology of the area.</p>	<p>and employment development.</p> <p>It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p>
33	Phil Hardwicke, Consilium Planning Consultants	<p>The definition of previously developed land should be the same as in the NPPF i.e. land in built up area such as private residential gardens. This means that residential gardens outside built up areas can still be brownfield.</p> <p>Second point in Policy GB3 you use the word vacant. This is not used in the NPPF indeed the NPPF makes it clear that sites can be in continuing use.</p> <p>Guidance on issues such as footprint/ volume would help, as would the status of which buildings can be included <i>[in any]</i> calculations.</p> <p>The SPD should address issues relating to long-term stable use and the status of containers in permanent positions.</p>	<p>The NPPF states that ‘previously developed land’ excludes ‘land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens’. The Council disagrees that as a consequence, private residential gardens <i>outside</i> built up areas should be classed as ‘previously developed land’. (Similarly, the Council considers parks, recreational grounds and allotments are greenfield within and outside urban areas.) This position was supported in a recent Appeal decision (APP/P2365/W/15/3003720, 17 Carr Lane, Tarleton) in which the Inspector concluded: “on the basis of the information before me, it seems logical to me that this land which is attached to a house, would be classed as a private residential garden [if it were] in a built-up area. It would therefore not be categorised as previously developed land as defined in Annex 2 of the Framework”.</p> <p>Agreed; the wording of the SPD will be changed to reflect this.</p> <p>This guidance is provided in policies GB1 and GB4. The wording of the paragraph will be amended to provide additional clarity.</p> <p>The SPD reflects the Council’s experience that private stable buildings tend to be required for relatively short periods of time, with needs varying according to change of ownership or occupation of land or associated dwellings – hence their construction from non-permanent materials. Each case where the siting of a container is an issue will be assessed on its own merits – it is not considered an appropriate issue for the SPD to cover.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
34	Highways England	No comments	Noted
35	Rachel Hirst	I understand that the SPD allows for no changes to current planning regulations regarding the Green Belt in West Lancashire. I believe this to be the correct course, as any changes could allow for encroachment upon the Green Belt from developers.	Support noted.
36	Dorothy Hisley	There has been enough building in Appley Bridge area to the detriment of our local wildlife. Fairy glen is a local beauty spot and would suffer from lack of wildlife.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
37	Historic England	No comments.	Noted
38	Katie Jukes, Secretary of ABCAGE (Appley Bridge Community Against Greenbelt Erosion) Residents' Group	<p>There should be no development within the Green Belt designated areas of Appley Bridge.</p> <p>As per National green belt policies, consideration should be given to use Brownfield areas in preference to Green Belt.</p> <p>Green Belt development should only be allowed in very exceptional circumstances' and subject to strict stringent criteria.</p> <p>ABCAGE is encouraged by West Lancs Planning Department's strong, determined approach to challenging proposed changes of both residential and non-residential developments within the Green Belt designated areas. The group voices its concern that any perceived deviation of this position with the SPD will be taken advantage of by a landowners and developers.</p> <p>Applications for new builds will be scrutinised against the overall impact on</p>	<p>It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p> <p>The WLLP recognises in Policy SP1 the need to prioritise development on brownfield land and protect greenfield land from development. This reflects national policy set out in the NPPF. However, there is not enough brownfield land in West Lancashire to meet the locally-determined targets for residential and employment development. National policy / guidance on viability rules out much brownfield development.</p> <p>Development which is considered 'inappropriate' will only be permitted in 'very special circumstances', as set out in the NPPF para. 87-88.</p> <p>Support noted.</p> <p>The assessment of the impact of a proposed development</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>Green Belt in general and in particular local dwellings and their residents together with visitors to the area.</p> <p>The National Planning Framework states that brownfield sites within Green Belt areas should be strongly challenged except in exceptional circumstances that it far outweighs the impact and damage to the area.</p>	<p>(particularly on openness) will take place as part of the planning application process. The SPD provides further information on how the Council makes decisions on development considered 'not inappropriate' and its effect on the openness of the Green Belt.</p> <p>NPPF paragraph 89 permits the limited infilling, or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land) as long as this would not have a greater impact on openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purpose of including land within it than the existing development. Annexe 2 defines what will be considered 'previously developed land' as well as what is excluded from this definition.</p>
39	Lathom South Parish Council	<p>The document has been heavily weighted towards residential development. More attention should be given in the document to the extension of commercial buildings and new commercial building within existing Green Belt sites. Proposals to develop privately owned car parks and retirement housing schemes should also be covered.</p> <p>Paragraph 1.3 refers to the "new town" of Skelmersdale. It is time to cease the use of this description, since the new town development around the existing town dates back to the 1960s and it is now mature.</p> <p>Page 8 NPPF paragraph 89 comment "West Lancashire contains no villages within the Green Belt". While this might be strictly true, it is also true that there is Green Belt land within existing villages and that there are areas of development overwashed by Green Belt which are generally regarded as belonging to villages.</p>	<p>The majority of development in the Green Belt in West Lancashire over recent years has been residential-related, which is why the SPD concentrates on such matters. Extensions to commercial (and any other) buildings are covered by GB4; new commercial buildings and retirement housing schemes are likely to be inappropriate development, or else would be covered by GB3.</p> <p>The term 'New Town' refers less to the actual age of the settlement of Skelmersdale and more to the recognition of the town's origins as part of the national level town planning solution intended to deal with the issue of congested metropolitan areas. This recognises the common features and challenges it shares with other 'New Towns' of this era. It also differentiates it from the more traditional settlements of West Lancs and recognises its unique characteristics.</p> <p>It is agreed that there are developed areas washed over by Green Belt. However, for the purposes of the WLLP, these areas are not considered to be 'villages'.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p><i>Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt</i>  Sub paragraph e) – we would find it clearer to replace the word “site” on the first line to “footprint”.</p> <p>The reason for requiring “significant environmental improvements” (a highly subjective matter – note the Whitemoss decision) is not clear. It would seem sensible to require “no adverse impact on openness or the environment”, rather than to demand improvements. We have no similar qualms about the requirement for significant road safety benefits.</p> <p>Justification (5th paragraph) we suggest inserting “on the same site” between “location” and “to...” [To read: “If the applicant proposes a replacement in a different location on the same site as the existing, it will be necessary to demonstrate that there is no increase in the overall visual impact of the building in the landscape”.]</p> <p><i>Alterations and Extensions to Buildings within the Green Belt</i>  Sub paragraph b). It is not clear how the 40% increase in volume for extensions and alterations is consistent with the 20% increase in footprint referred to under “replacement dwellings”. There needs to be some consistency of thought linking policy on replacement dwellings with policy on extensions. There also needs to be some recognition that small old buildings need to be brought up to acceptable modern standards, whereas substantial old buildings should be capable of such updating without a significant need to extend.</p> <p><i>Policy GB5 Stable Buildings in the Green Belt</i>  It is not only stable buildings that need to be governed by this section. Kennels and other animal/bird provision have a similar propensity to cause nuisance (including vermin), smell, and noise etc., adverse effects upon wildlife habitats, heritage assets or agricultural interests and the section should be expanded accordingly. It should be made clear that all proposals for such development are covered by the policy.</p>	<p>Agreed; SPD will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>Noted. “Significant environmental improvements” could provide the justification for the choice of an alternative location within the curtilage – it is not a demand or condition. Reference to “openness” will be added to the wording of the policy, consistent with the NPPF.</p> <p>Agreed; SPD will be amended accordingly.</p> <p>The SPD follows national policy, which requires replacement dwellings not to be “materially larger”, and extensions not to be “disproportionate”. There is a difference between these two terms, hence the different figures.  The point regarding small old buildings is acknowledged; this should be taken into account in individual applications (each case on its merits). However, it is not considered necessary to make a distinction in the SPD between old and new buildings.</p> <p>This guidance is applicable to equine development for private use only. Commercial stables will be judged on the same basis as kennels etc. and treated as a business use.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>We recommend that the final sentence of the existing draft should be amended to read “The impact of approved buildings...” to emphasise that such planting would not contribute towards approval (note 1.4 Openness) but is encouraged, in order to soften the impact of new buildings etc.</p>	<p>Whilst there is sympathy with this point, it is not entirely agreed. The same logic could be applied to argue that buildings could be approved without such measures. The wording of the policy as it stands encourages applicants to incorporate such measures (e.g. reduce hardstanding) as part of their application, rather than seeking to control them through planning conditions. Landscaping can be required by condition; reduction in hardstanding cannot.</p>
40	<p>Sophie Marshall, Chartered Rural Surveyor, P Wilson &amp; Company</p>	<p>Section 2.4 refers to 'vacant previously developed sites in the Green Belt'. NPPF para 89 point 5 allows for 'limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings)..'</p> <p>Accordingly, section 2.4 is inconsistent with the NPPF and is more restrictive as it does not incorporate policy for sites in continuing use as permitted by the NPPF.</p> <p>The word 'vacant' should be replaced with 'redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings)' to ensure Section 2.4 is consistent with the NPPF.</p> <p>Section 2.5 also adds an additional requirement to para 89 point 5 of the NPPF by introducing affordable housing. This goes beyond NPPF policy rather than merely providing further guidance/clarification on the use of this policy.</p> <p>In conclusion, I ask that the LPA reword section 2.4 of this SPD as proposed above and remove the affordable housing requirement.</p>	<p>Agreed; the wording of section 2.4 will be amended to more closely reflect the wording of the NPPF.</p> <p>Affordable housing requirements 'off the back' of market housing developments in the Green Belt are covered by the Affordable Housing SPD. This comment has been moved into the representations on the Affordable Housing SPD.</p>
41	<p>Alan McMullin</p>	<p>I submit that the Green Belt in West Lancashire should be preserved on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To safeguard the countryside from encroachment,</li> <li>2. To maintain the strength of existing Green belt boundaries,</li> <li>3. To prevent sprawl outside main settlement areas by keeping land permanently open,</li> <li>4. To provide a protective buffer around areas of significant wildlife and</li> </ol>	<p>Comments noted. It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. Some items in the list are consistent with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, as listed in paragraph 80 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The NPPF goes on to state that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, although paragraph 89 does list some exceptions. This SPD aims to clarify how these exceptions will apply in West Lancashire.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>ecological value such as woodlands like Fairy Glen,</p> <p>5. To preserve the beauty of the landscape for future generations such as the Douglas Valley corridor,</p> <p>6. To preserve INSET villages and protect them from sprawl,</p> <p>7. To conserve productive agricultural land,</p> <p>8. To protect from development parcels of land which have met purposes 1-3 and received RED status in the WLBC Green Belt Study 2011.</p>	
42	Joan McMullin	<p>I submit that the Green Belt in West Lancashire should be preserved on the following grounds:</p> <p>1. To safeguard the countryside from encroachment,</p> <p>2. To maintain the strength of existing Green Belt boundaries,</p> <p>3. To prevent sprawl outside main settlement areas by keeping land permanently open,</p> <p>4. To provide a protective buffer around areas of significant wildlife and ecological value such as woodlands like Fairy Glen,</p> <p>5. To preserve the beauty of the landscape for future generations, such as the Douglas Valley corridor,</p> <p>6. To preserve INSET villages and protect them from sprawl,</p> <p>7. To conserve productive agricultural land,</p> <p>8. To protect from development parcels of land which have met purposes 1-3 and received RED status in the WLBC Green Belt Study 2011.</p>	<p>Comments noted. It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. Some items in the list are consistent with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, as listed in paragraph 80 of the NPPF.</p> <p>The NPPF goes on to state that new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate, although paragraph 89 does list some exceptions. This SPD aims to clarify how these exceptions will apply in West Lancashire.</p>
43	Pauline Melling	<p>We need to keep our Green Belt as it is because once it's gone, it's gone. Roads and schools are at capacity. Green Belt used by wildlife and for leisure.</p>	<p>It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p>
44	Jo Moran	<p>The Appley Bridge/Douglas Valley area is an important area for views, recreation and nature. Oppose development in the Green Belt.</p>	<p>It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.</p>
45	National Trust (Alan Hubbard, Planning Adviser National Trust)	<p>Generally the preparation of up-dated advice on Development in the Green Belt in the form of an SPD is a positive approach to take and one that is supported by National Trust.</p> <p>The Trust would also offer the following more specific comments: 1.1 (...plus 1.4/Page 10 and 2.5 Page 15) It is noted that there is now a new consolidated General Permitted Development Order (SI 2015 No. 596) that</p>	<p>Support noted.</p> <p>Agreed; the SPD will be updated to refer to the new GPDO.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>came into force on 15th April. It would be helpful to up-date the GPDO references in the SPD.</p> <p>The statement "However all applications will be judged on their merits and on a case by case basis." is correct, but is separated from the advice two paragraphs above regarding the NPPF/NPPG/Development Plan etc. It would be useful to add to the end of this sentence "...case by case basis having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD."</p> <p>1.2 - Agreed.</p> <p>1.3 - No comments to make.</p> <p>1.4 - Under 'Very Special Circumstances' in the final paragraph on page 9 we would question whether there might be other forms of development that could constitute 'permitted development' that the Council might wish to restrict by planning condition. For example, in addition to buildings and extensions other operational development such as fences, or activities such as external storage, also have the potential to adversely impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. As currently worded there is a danger that the SPD would be used against the Council if it sought to impose such a condition under those circumstances.</p> <p>2.1 - Generally no comments, but it is noted that the same wording is used at the end of the last paragraph as in 1.1 above regarding judging applications on their merits on a case by case basis. Especially as this text is even more separated from the advice on the Development Plan and the NPPF etc. it is again suggested that the sentence is supplemented with wording such as "...case by case basis having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD."</p> <p>2.2 - Policy GB1 - it is unclear where the figure of 20% in criterion b) is derived from or what the justification is for this parameter. It is noted that the advice elsewhere in Section 1.4 of the draft SPD is that "Redevelopment proposals should generally have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt...". The third paragraph of Section 1.4 is also relevant in this context. On the face of it there is a conflict between these two parts of the draft SPD. Whilst</p>	<p>Agreed; wording of section 1.1 will be amended.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agree – the final paragraph of section 1.4 will be reworded to refer to other forms of development.</p> <p>Agree - the wording will be amended.</p> <p>It is considered that 20% is a reasonable allowance, reflecting the NPPF requirement of being 'not materially larger'. This figure has been used in West Lancashire over recent years for replacement dwellings, and is considered a reasonable allowance.</p>



Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>traditionally planning policy has included some provision to replace an existing dwelling in the Green Belt with a slightly larger one that has usually been on the basis of reflecting any unused permitted development rights that might have resulted in the existing dwelling being extended. However, the proposed Policy GB1 is unclear about how 20% is a 'reasonable' figure in the context of the advice at Section 1.4. Whilst it is stated that the Council considers that 20% 'is appropriate' it appears to this Trust that this proportion is excessive in the context of the NPPF advice that replacement dwellings should 'not be materially larger'. A figure of around 5% would appear to the Trust to be more appropriate. It is noted that the intention is that unused permitted development rights are not to be taken into account. The Trust does not disagree with that approach but would contend that that should be made clear in the Policy itself rather than being left to the supporting text.</p> <p>In the last paragraph on Page 12 we are not sure that 'remediation' is the right, or only, word needed in the last sentence. Fundamentally it will presumably be a requirement to remove the existing dwelling (potentially within a limited time from when the new dwelling is first occupied); and then secondly for the ground to be remediated? "A scheme for demolition of the original house and remediation of the site will also be required" is our suggested alternative.</p> <p>2.3 - Policy GB2 - There is merit in considering adding the word 'demolition' into criterion 1(a), i.e. "The building must be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major change, demolition or extension". Without it there is a prospect of works effectively involving the removal of large sections of wall and re-instating them, including re-incorporating existing features, being argued to comply with the Policy but in practice involving the substantial re-building of the structure - those arguments would include that there has been no major 'change' as the size/mass/materials are all very similar.</p> <p>In terms of Part 2 of the Policy please see the comments above in respect of proposed Policy GB1 and the potential 20% figure - the same concerns and arguments apply here.</p> <p>2.4 - Policy GB3 - Agreed.</p>	<p>Point accepted; wording to be amended to, "remediation of the site following demolition of the dwelling." (It is not considered necessary to submit a scheme for the demolition of the dwelling.)</p> <p>Agree – the word 'demolition' will be inserted as advised.</p> <p>Noted</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>2.5 - No objections to the approach proposed. However, in terms of the presentation it would be helpful if a) all the Policy cross-references included "WLLP" as a prefix, just Policy RS2 does at present, and b) if "WLLP" was also to be in bold font.</p> <p>2.6 - Policy GB4 - In most respects this Policy is agreed...but the 40% figure is a significant concern. Firstly, we believe that if the guidance that is being followed is the reference to 'materially larger' in the NPPF then having 20% in Policies GB1 and GB2 and 40% in GB4 will raise difficulties in the future, with applicants arguing that there is no reason why 40% should not also be the appropriate figure for GB1 and GB2 cases. It is unclear that the distinctions that are attempted in the relevant supporting texts to the three Policies equate to an extra 20% tolerance for extensions. Furthermore the actual 40% figure appears to the Trust to be grossly excessive and clearly goes well beyond what might reasonably be considered to be 'materially larger'...again we would suggest that 5% would be an appropriate figure.</p> <p>2.7 - Policy GB5 - the Policy is generally supported and in particular the approach to the use of timber materials for the bulk of the construction. The Trust would suggest that consideration is given to a further factor in the assessment of proposals and that is the relationship between the number of horses that could potentially be stabled and the size of the paddock area available to them - over-intensive use adversely impacts upon the grazing land. A leaflet from the British Horse Society is attached which sets out the considerations in some detail; whilst it notes that there are a range of factors to take into account its general advice is that "The BHS recommends a ratio of two horses per hectare on permanent grazing (1- 1.5 acres per horse)".</p>	<p>Agreed – ‘WLLP’ will be added in as appropriate. It is not considered necessary to make the text bold.</p> <p>With regard to ‘materially larger’ versus ‘disproportionate’, these are considered to be different degrees of increase in building size. Therefore, having two different figures is considered appropriate. 40% is a reduction from previous SPG policy.</p> <p>Comment noted. Whilst there is sympathy with the point made, it is considered beyond planning, in the sense of determining planning applications. Reference is made, however, to the BHS information guide within the justification to policy GB5.</p>
46	Ged Neil	Concern that Green Belt land is re-termed "protected" land for a period of time and is then built upon.	Protected Land is a separate designation from Green Belt, primarily owing to the preponderance of glasshouse development in the Northern Parishes. There are no plans to redesignate Green Belt land as Protected Land. Furthermore, it is not within the scope of this SPD to alter Green Belt boundaries.

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
47	Stephanie Nuttall	<p>The supplementary guidance for stable buildings is totally at odds with the government recommendations - requires stables to be constructed out of extremely flammable materials and does not allow except in exceptional circumstances the stables to be made from brick which is not as flammable.</p> <p>Further it requires hay and bedding stores to be built directly next to stables, therefore putting high risk flammable products directly next to horses. This again is contrary to advice given by the Fire Service. The LPA should have to have a high regard to information and advice given by both the Fire Service and the Health and Safety Executive in regard to provision of stabling.</p> <p>In my opinion, the LPA have little or no concern or any duty of care towards animal housing and this should be addressed. It may be that those in the Planning Department who have drawn up the Supplementary Guidance for Stable Buildings have no experience of fire prevention, or health and safety issues and perhaps should seek advice from those more suitably qualified and experienced, before finalising the document.</p> <p>It also fails to appreciate that one tack room per development may not be sufficient - i.e. whilst equipment and clothing for one horse will fit in for e.g. 14 metres, it can be expected that a second or third horse might have the same quantity &amp; equipment as the individual horse, and that it may not all fit in that 14 metres.</p> <p>Further if the LPA want tack rooms, in this day and age, insurance companies want it stored in something more substantial than a timber building.</p> <p>Another point is that if farmers are allow steel framed buildings in which to house cattle in the green belt, why can horse owners not have a similar building - i.e. an American barn? The supplementary guidance does not seem to accept that there are other types of buildings suitable for housing horses.</p>	<p>Stables, particularly those in non-commercial use, generally tend to be required for relatively short periods of time, with the needs varying according to change of ownership or occupation of land. On this basis the Council considers it inappropriate that the stables should be constructed of permanent hardwearing materials such as brick and stone that would result in the possibility of their remaining on the site long after they are needed. This could lead to a proliferation of brick and stone buildings across the countryside, to the detriment of the character and openness of Green Belt . Providing horses with adequate shelter must be balanced with the impact of such provision on the openness of the Green Belt.</p> <p>There is no official Government guidance advising on fire risk to stables. British Horse Society guidance provides advice on size only and recognises that they may need to be temporary structures due to Green Belt requirements.</p> <p>A range of fire prevention measures can be taken to reduce the risk of a fire occurring – e.g. ensuring the area is subject to a no-smoking policy, regularly removing dust and any flammable waste, regular inspection of any electrical wiring or appliances. The local fire safety officer can be contacted for further specific advice.</p> <p>Agricultural buildings are considered in national planning policy to be ‘not inappropriate’ development in the Green Belt (para.89), however equine facilities do not fall into this same category. Therefore their impact on the openness of the Green Belt in the proposed location must be taken into consideration.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Representor</b>	<b>Summary of comments</b>	<b>Council response</b>
48	Office of Rail and Road	No comment.	Noted
49	Sylvia O'Neill	Appley Bridge has been Green Belt for many years. There are many more suitable sites for urban development – e.g. areas surrounding towns as opposed to villages. The Green Belt area provides a home to a wide variety of birds and animals. To develop the land would be to lose a valuable recreational facility and important local views. More development would lead to increasing demands on local facilities such as schools and medical facilities.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
50	Dorothy Payne	At Appley Bridge, bordering the very popular Fairy Glen and Appley Lane area, any development would be most detrimental both ecologically and recreationally. The bordering fields of the glen are a natural overflow of flora and fauna of the glen. Many people, some from different areas come to appreciate daily the peaceful atmosphere of the area, including ramblers, dog walkers, joggers, cyclists, children at play, also the less able-bodied who use the pavement/road to enjoy the views from Stoneygate Lane and Finch Lane.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
51	Colin Probert	Too much green belt land has already been lost, through increasing encroachment from housing. The countryside is vital to our health and happiness. Facilities and infrastructure are already overstretched – e.g. schools and parking. Leads to expansion of urban areas at expense of Green Belt. Urban regeneration should be the solution instead.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
52	Cathleen Rainford	Object to development on Green Belt land. Countryside is important for leisure and wellbeing. Provides an important buffer between highly developed areas.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
53	Anthony Rigbye	Object strongly to development in the Green Belt. Traffic congestion would cause local environmental problems and congestion for residents.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
54	Marilyn Rigbye	The Green Belt should not be built upon in the Fairy Glen area. The roads cannot take any more traffic and facilities are not sufficient.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
55	Brian Rimmer	Concern about erosion of Green Belt land around Appley Bridge. Road infrastructure is already stretched beyond its limits.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
56	Doreen Rudd	Concern about surface water and drainage in Appley Bridge. Further development would add to this pressure.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
57	Joan Sammons	Object to development of Green Belt in Appley Bridge. This is for environmental reasons (wildlife, traffic) and to prevent increased crime.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
58	Brian Smith	Important local beauty spots and nature conservation sites (e.g. Fairy Glen) should be surrounded by countryside and not built upon.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
59	Fay Smith	Important nature sites should be protected and remain surrounded by countryside.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
60	Steven Abbott Associates LLP (Alastair Skelton, Partner)	<p>The draft SPD is structured to deal with a number of development types and contains the following “policies” each of which contains detailed criteria to be met and a planning justification. It is abundantly clear that the draft SPD introduces development management policies, and, therefore, goes way beyond what is appropriate to be contained in a supplementary planning document.</p> <p>We would refer the Council to the judgement in the case R RWE NPower Renewables Limited and Milton Keynes Borough Council and Ecotricity (Next Generation) Ltd.</p> <p>The main basis for these representations is drawn from the legislative provisions of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Secretary of State has prescribed documents which “are to be prepared” as “local development documents” in regulation 5(1) of the 2012 Regulations.</p> <p>They are documents which contain statements regarding one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The development and the use of land which the local planning authority wish to encourage during any specified period;</li> </ul>	<p>In response to the main points put forward by the respondent:</p> <p><u>1. Status of the SPD</u></p> <p>This SPD is written to provide clarification of Local Plan policy and a local interpretation of national policy. Contrary to the claims being made by the respondent, who appears to have misunderstood the document, the SPD is intended to function within the legal remit of SPDs, i.e. setting out detailed guidance on Green Belt matters, and being capable of being a material consideration in planning decision making. Nowhere in the SPD is it stated or intended to imply that the document is claiming DPD status, or that it forms part of the development plan for the area.</p> <p>In response to the concerns raised, wording can be added to the introduction to the document to clarify its status, and where necessary, the wording of policies can be amended to reinforce their SPD status.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The allocation of sites for a particular type of development or use;</li> <li>• Any environmental, social, design and economic objectives which are relevant to the attainment of the development and use of land mentioned in paragraph (i); and</li> <li>• Development Management and Site Allocation policies, which are intended to guide the determination of applications for planning permission.”</li> </ul> <p>The content and intent of the draft SPD is unequivocally clear. The document contains detailed policies which are intended to guide the determination of applications for planning permission. This means that as a matter of law the emerging document is a “development plan document/local plan”. There is a clear distinction between a “development plan document/local plan”, in accordance with which planning applications are to be determined unless material considerations indicate otherwise, and other “local development plan documents (including supplementary planning documents)” which can only constitute a material consideration when considering planning applications. It is absolutely clear from the content and tone of the draft SPD that its status is that of a “development plan document” and not a supplementary planning document.</p> <p>In relation to the emerging SPD WLBC is seeking to apply a more flexible approach incorrectly to a document which is clearly a “development plan document” which should and must be subject to independent examination given the additional policy that it seeks to introduce, and the status that it will be given in the determination of planning applications.</p> <p>These aspects are clarified to an extent in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Guidance (NPPG). The glossary to the NPPF defines supplementary planning documents as:</p> <p>Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.</p>	<p><u>2. ‘Parent’ policy</u></p> <p>The respondent states: <i>We would question whether it is possible for an SPD to provide guidance and advice on a policy aspect that does not exist in the adopted Local Plan.</i></p> <p>Policy GN1(b) of the WLLP states, “Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies.”</p> <p>The SPD ‘hangs off’ this reference in the Local Plan to national policy for the Green Belt, providing further detail and clarification to national policy, and indicating which Local Plan policies are relevant to particular scenarios. It is considered entirely appropriate to prepare an SPD providing a local interpretation of policy referred to in the ‘parent’ Local Plan.</p> <p><u>3. Approach to development in the Green Belt</u></p> <p>This is set out on pp6-8 and follows the NPPF: development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless stated not to be so in the NPPF. Several of the types of development specified in NPPF para.89 must also comply with other considerations, including preserving openness or not being materially larger. These are clarified at a West Lancashire level in the SPD.</p> <p><u>4. Private gardens outside settlements</u></p> <p>It is not agreed that residential gardens outside urban areas should be considered as previously developed land (PDL). Following the respondent’s logic would mean parks, recreation grounds and allotments are also PDL when outside urban areas.</p> <p><u>5. Prescriptive policies</u></p> <p>The 20% figure in policies GB1 and GB2 is not ‘prescriptive and inflexible’, but is a guide to indicate how the Council will interpret the NPPF phrase “not materially larger”.</p> <p>The justification to policies GB1 and GB2 makes clear that regardless of the percentage increase in volume, replacement</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>As stated on page 6 of the draft SPD “The adopted Local Plan does not have a Green Belt policy as such.” We would question whether it is possible for an SPD to provide guidance and advice on a policy aspect that does not exist in the adopted Local Plan.</p> <p>One final aspect of concern in relation to legal and procedural matters is the reliance placed upon individual case law and appeal decisions (or comments within them) as providing the basis for the Council’s policy approach. Whilst case law and appeal decisions may be capable of being material considerations they do not and should not be used to formulate policy.</p> <p>The policy approach of the SPD is inconsistent and at odds with national planning policy. It is acknowledged that most development in the Green Belt is strictly controlled by national Green Belt policy. However, the proposed policies with the draft SPD introduce a further level of control and restriction which finds no basis in the NPPF.</p> <p>On pages 6-8 of the draft SPD the Council seeks to set out the approach to considering development within the Green Belt – that approach seems to be based principally on case law provided by <i>Fordent Holdings v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government</i>. In our view reliance on that case is both misplaced and misconstrued by the Council. The <i>Fordent</i> case considered the issue of material changes of use of land and whether such development is inappropriate.</p> <p>It is not entirely clear from the text of the draft SPD what the Council considers the approach to be to development in Green Belt. In our view it is clear that the construction of new buildings of the types set out in paragraph 89 of NPPF are not inappropriate (being specified as exceptions to the general policy statement). For development of those types special circumstances are not required to justify the granting of planning permission.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.1 of the draft SPD sets out general principles in relation to redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt. Private residential gardens in Green Belt can and should be accepted as previously</p>	<p>buildings will be judged on their impact, their design, their siting with the plot, and their general location, and that 20% could be exceeded in individual cases.</p> <p>In response to the concerns raised by the respondent, the wording of the policies will be checked to ensure there is no implication that the policies are prescriptive or are the starting point for determination of planning applications</p> <p><u>6. Vacant land (Policy GB3)</u> It is agreed that for the purposes of Policy GB3, previously developed sites can include sites in continuing use. The policy will be amended accordingly.</p> <p><u>7. WLLP policy GN4</u> The requirement to comply with WLLP Policy GN4 in the case of redevelopment of employment sites stems from WLLP Policy EC2, which is part of the adopted development plan for the area and has been through examination post NPPF. The SPD does not add any policy burden in this sense.</p>

**Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)**

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>developed land.</p> <p>Our main issue relating to Policy GB1 and Policy GB2 relates to the very specific and prescriptive criteria that are applied. Given that the purpose of SPD is to provide guidance such prescription is inappropriate. In particular a rigid 20% volume limit increase is inflexible and prescriptive, and does not reflect the ethos espoused elsewhere in the draft SPD – i.e. that all applications will be judged on their merits on a case by case basis. The range of potential sites across West Lancashire in terms of location, context, setting, etc and the infinite design possibilities mean that, in many cases, an increase of greater than 20% in volume will be wholly acceptable, and will not result in a materially larger building.</p> <p>The title of Policy GB3 referring to “vacant” previously developed sites when national policy applies the approach to vacant/redundant sites and those in continuing use. Use of the word vacant is erroneous and should be deleted.</p> <p>The suggestion that Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability) would need to be satisfied for sites currently or most recently in employment or retail use. The NPPF includes no such requirement. Indeed, the clear inclusion of the complete redevelopment of sites in continuing use as one of the Paragraph 89 exceptions suggests recognition that existing employment sites can be completely redeveloped. Furthermore, it is clear that the thrust of Government policy and thinking is to promote and encourage the redevelopment and recycling of previously developed land. There is no criteria which relates to the need to protect or safeguard current or former employment sites. In our view it would be wrong for the draft SPD to require such a test. The clear intention of Government is that priority is given to the redevelopment of brownfield land for housing, and this should be reflected at a local level.</p>	
61	Patricia Suggett	Object to more development in the Green Belt. Object to the use of Green Belt for solar farms and for loss of hedging and trees. Wildlife should be protected.	Although the NPPF regards the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, paragraph 89 lists a number of exceptions to this which the SPD attempts to clarify. Other comments noted.



Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
62	James Walker	Douglas Valley is an important area of countryside visually. It should be protected from development. Development within the Green Belt would be in violation of the Local Plan which seeks to protect Green Infrastructure and green spaces for the benefit of the community.	It is not within the scope of the SPD to release land from the West Lancashire Green Belt. The document follows NPPF policy in terms of what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
63	Mary Philippa Waterhouse	Do not want development in the Green Belt.	Although the NPPF regards the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, paragraph 89 lists a number of exceptions to this which the SPD attempts to clarify.
64	The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside, (David Dunlop, Conservation Officer for Central & Western Lancashire)	<p>Page 8: The 'List of Types of Development "not inappropriate" in the Green Belt,' does not include nature conservation development. The Wildlife Trust cannot envisage how a change to nature conservation use, per se, would be deemed inappropriate in Green Belt and we suggest that this land use be added to the list, or otherwise incorporated into the SPD; unless there be some clear planning law and/or NPPF constraint that precludes this.</p> <p><i>Policy GB1 and Policy GB2</i></p> <p>The Wildlife Trust welcomes the requirement that a survey of any protected wildlife species will be required. However, the text should go on to state what level of impact would be acceptable and / or what mitigation / replacement provision would be expected as a survey alone will not secure the future of any population found to be present. The survey should include the curtilage of the building as well as the building itself.</p> <p>The term 'protected species' should be defined. We would prefer that definition to refer to S41 of the Natural Environment &amp; Rural Communities Act 2006. Please note that habitats are included as well as species. In the case of buildings and their immediate curtilages none of the 'habitats of principal importance' is very likely to be present, but you may wish to include such habitats for completeness. We recommend that you consult your authority's ecological adviser about which particular S41 habitats and species are most relevant to West Lancashire Borough and its immediate</p>	<p>For the avoidance of doubt and to avoid potential policy conflict, the list of development considered 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt listed in the SPD should remain the same as that provided by the NPPF. The Council takes the view that it would depend on what would be involved in a 'nature conservation development'. This could fall within one of the existing categories – e.g. it may constitute an engineering operation, or a facility for outdoor recreation. In these cases, the development's impact upon openness will be the main consideration, along with whether the proposal conflicts with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt (in the case of an engineering operation).</p> <p>The phrasing will be amended to mention mitigation measures, impacts and to include the curtilage of the building. The precise details of what would be required would be detailed at pre-application or planning application stage. It is not for the SPD to set out this level of detail.</p> <p>A footnote will be added to clarify the definition of a protected species and to include reference to habitats.</p>

Representations on the draft Development in the Green Belt SPD (May – June 2015)

Ref	Representor	Summary of comments	Council response
		<p>surrounds.</p> <p><i>Policy GB3</i> There is no reference here to any criterion that would need to be met in the event of planning permission being considered appropriate. To be consistent, there should be the same requirement for a survey of 'protected' wildlife species (and habitats, if appropriate) and any necessary mitigation / replacement provision.</p> <p><i>Policy GB4</i> Even conversions and extensions have the potential to impact on wildlife (notably bats). To be consistent, the same requirement for a survey / mitigation should be applied to this policy as to the others: see our comments on GB1, GB2 &amp; GB3 above.</p> <p><i>Policy GB5</i> The final bullet point in this policy states that: "The siting of the stable building should not have any adverse effect upon wildlife habitats." This is, perhaps, too all-encompassing as a statement of policy. Every stable building development would have some degree of adverse impact on some form of habitat for some form of wildlife; else it would be taking place in a clinically sterile environment. A similar wording to that suggested for GB1 to GB4 would be more specific, referring as it does to 'protected' wildlife.</p> <p>"Wildlife features such as nesting boxes within the eaves, or holes for birds or bats incorporated within stable buildings, will be encouraged." The Wildlife Trust welcomes this encouragement.</p> <p><i>Justifications</i> There is nothing in any of the justification sections about why wildlife/nature is important. This needs to be remedied.</p>	<p>The same procedure and requirements in relation to nature conservation would apply at application stage, whether the development falls into the 'inappropriate' or 'not inappropriate' category, as per the NPPF.</p> <p>Policy GB4 will be amended to include this requirement.</p> <p>The wording of Policy GB5 will be amended as suggested by the respondent.</p> <p>A sentence can be added to the justification of Policy GB5 to refer to the importance of wildlife / nature.</p>
65	Eric Winstanley	No development in the Green Belt.	Although the NPPF regards the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt as inappropriate, paragraph 89 lists a number of exceptions to this which the SPD attempts to clarify.

**WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)  
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012**

**NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

**In accordance with Regulations 14 & 35 of the Town and Country Planning  
(Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, notice is given that West  
Lancashire Borough Council adopted its Development in the Green Belt  
Supplementary Planning Document on 2 October 2015**

<b>Title of Document:</b>	Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
<b>Subject Matter:</b>	The SPD provides guidance on development within the Green Belt.
<b>Area covered by Document:</b>	The SPD is applicable to any land within West Lancashire Borough designated as Green Belt under the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document.
<b>Adoption Date:</b>	2 October 2015
<b>Modifications (Changes) made:</b>	See Appendix 1 to this Adoption Statement for a schedule of changes made (as a result of consultation or for the purposes of other improvements)
<b>Legal Challenge</b>	Any person aggrieved by the adoption of the Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document may make an application to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of the decision to adopt this Supplementary Planning Document. Any such application must be made promptly and in any event no later than 3 months after the date on which the Supplementary Planning Document was adopted.

**Availability of Documents:**

The adopted SPD, this Adoption Statement and the Consultation Statement are available for inspection by following the link from [www.westlancs.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planningpolicy) and also at the following locations during normal opening hours:

**Council offices**

Opening hours	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WLBC, 52 Derby St, Ormskirk	09:00 – 17:00				09:00 – 16:45	Closed	Closed
Contact centre, Concourse, Skelmersdale	09:00 – 17:00				09:00 – 16:45	Closed	Closed

**Libraries**

Opening hours	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Ormskirk Library, Burscough St, Ormskirk, L39 2EN	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 16:00	Closed
Skelmersdale Library, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6EL	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 19:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 16:00	Closed
Up Holland Library, Hall Green, Up Holland, WN8 0PB	9.30-13:00; 14:00-19:00	9:30-13:00	Closed	9.30-13:00 14:00-17:00	9.30-13:00; 14:00-19:00	9.30-12:30	Closed
Burscough Library, Mill Lane, Burscough, L40 5TJ	9.30-12:30; 13:30-18:00	9:30-12:30; 13:30-17:00	Closed	9.30-12:30; 13.30-17.00	9.30-12:30; 13:30-18:00	9.30-12:30	Closed
Tarleton Library, Mark Square, Tarleton, PR4 6TU	09:30 - 19:00	09:30 - 17:00	Closed	09:30 - 17:00	09:30 - 19:00	09:30 - 13:00	Closed
Parbold Library, The Common, Parbold, WN8 7EA	9.00 - 18:00	9:00-17:00	Closed	9:00-17:00	9:00-18:00	9:00-12:30	Closed

**Further information:**

Further information, or advice, can be obtained by phoning 01695 585046 or by emailing [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

### Schedule of changes made to the Final SPD following public consultation in May / June 2015

Additional inserted text is shown in blue and underlined. Deleted text is shown in ~~blue~~ and ~~struck through~~. Changes have been made either as a result of representations received on the SPD during the public consultation exercise, or in order to improve the clarity of the document.

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
3	Once adopted, the SPD will <u>be used by</u> West Lancashire Borough Council in determining planning applications.	To improve clarity with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
3	Some minor development is permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) ( <del>Amendment and Consequential Provisions</del> ) (England) Order <del>2014</del> <u>2015</u>	To reflect updated policy / legislation
3	However all applications will be judged on their merits and on a case by case basis <del>-, having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD</del>	To improve clarity with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
7	in accordance with the sequential test in Policy <b>GN5</b> . <u>The area of search could be the settlement, ward or parish; it is not necessarily restricted to 'nearest adjacent settlement'.</u>	To improve clarity.
8	The term openness is taken to mean the absence of buildings or development <sup>+</sup> <u>on over or under the land.</u>	To more accurately reflect national policy.
8	If the new position would not be in keeping with its surroundings, <u>be more prominent or</u> would be less in keeping or would have a greater <u>perceived</u> impact upon the openness of the Green Belt,	To improve clarity.
8/9	<u>the Council will reserve the right to remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings to prevent future additions that cumulatively</u> development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. <u>This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences, or activities such as external storage.</u>	To improve clarity.
9	<del>These are set out in the Town &amp; and</del> Country Planning (General Permitted Development) ( <u>England</u> ) Order <del>2008, 2015</del> . However <del>this does not automatically apply to all buildings, for example:</del> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>• buildings not in residential use</del></li> </ul> certain types of properties converted to residential use <u>or previously extended</u> may have had their Permitted Development rights removed	To reflect updated policy / legislation, and to improve clarity.

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
10	<p>Previously <del>developed land does not include</del> <u>Developed Land excludes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;</li> <li>• <u>land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures;</u></li> <li>• land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; <u>and</u></li> <li>• land that was previously <del>developed</del> but where the remains of the permanent <u>structure</u> or fixed surface <del>infrastructure</del> <u>structure</u> have blended into the landscape in the process of time <del>;</del></li> <li>• <del>waste disposal or landfill sites</del></li> </ul>	To more accurately reflect national policy.
10	In line with the NPPF, the Council will consider redevelopment proposals of previously developed sites based on their impact upon the openness of the Green Belt <del>and the purpose of including land within it.</del>	To more accurately reflect national policy.
10	If the <del>criteria in the policies are</del> <u>guidance is</u> not <del>met</del> <u>followed</u> , proposals are unlikely to be successful unless the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances. Although the policies will be the basis for making a judgment on planning applications put before the Council, it must be stressed that all applications will be judged on their merits on a case by case basis <u>having regard to the adopted Development Plan and any other material planning considerations including national planning policy and this SPD.</u>	To improve clarity with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
Policy GB1 p11	<p>A proposal for the replacement of an existing dwelling within the Green Belt <del>must</del> <u>should</u> satisfy each of the following criteria:</p> <p>a) The existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature;</p> <p>b) The total volume of the replacement dwelling should not be more than 20% greater than the dwelling that it replaces <del>Outbuildings within 5m of the existing dwelling will be included within this volume calculation;</del></p> <p>c) The replacement dwelling should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials;</p> <p>d) The curtilage of the replacement dwelling should be no larger than that established for the dwelling it replaces</p> <p>e) The replacement dwelling should be on or close to the <u>site footprint</u> of the one it replaces, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative location within the same curtilage will <u>have no adverse impact on openness or</u> achieve significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits.</p>	<p>To improve clarity with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.</p> <p>To improve clarity.</p> <p>To improve clarity.</p>
Policy GB1 p11	<p>... 'Green Belt Assessment', which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing dwelling (or dwellings); <del>), as well as any outbuildings</del></li> </ul>	To improve clarity.

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
	<p><u>Detached outbuildings will not be included as part of the volume of the existing dwelling. However, if any outbuildings of permanent and substantial construction are to be demolished in tandem with the demolition of the existing dwelling, an extra allowance may be made in terms of the increase in volume of the proposed dwelling. The extra volume permitted under this 'allowance' will typically be less than the volume of the outbuildings being demolished.</u></p>	<p>To improve clarity, in particular with regard to how outbuildings will be considered.</p>
<p>Policy GB1 p11</p>	<p><u>The applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species and their habitat which may be present in the existing building, and its curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.</u></p>	<p>To better reflect national policy.</p>
<p>Policy GB1 p11</p>	<p>Where appropriate, a condition will be attached to any permission requiring the demolition of the existing property before any replacement is occupied <u>and remediation of the site following demolition of the dwelling.</u></p>	<p>To improve clarity.</p>
<p>Policy GB1 p12</p>	<p><u>The Council, where appropriate, will reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt, fences or activities such as external storage.</u></p>	<p>To improve clarity.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement dwelling is <u>particularly well</u>-designed, in such a way that its impact on openness is minimised.</p>	<p>To improve clarity.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>If the applicant proposes a replacement dwelling in a different location <u>on the same site as</u> the existing</p>	<p>To improve clarity.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p><u>The Council will consider the appropriateness or otherwise of the removal of permitted development rights on a case by case basis. The purpose of the removal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings and other structures from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt will is to prevent future cumulative additions that may cumulatively adversely impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.</u></p>	<p>To improve clarity.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p><u>The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.</u></p>	<p>To better reflect national policy.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>... there may also be churches, chapels, schools, public houses, <u>stables</u> and <u>others other buildings</u> for which an alternative use may be sought</p>	<p>To improve clarity; stables are dealt with in a separate policy.</p>

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
Policy GB2 p13	<p>A proposal for the conversion of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt <del>must</del><u>should</u> satisfy each of the following criteria:</p> <p>(a) The building <del>must</del><u>should</u> be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major change, <u>demolition</u> or extension;</p> <p><del>(b) The proposals will maintain the character of the building, retaining essential features and detailing, as well as traditional forms and layouts;</del></p> <p><del>(c)</del><u>(b)</u> The proposals will maintain and enhance the <u>site features, and the</u> character and wider landscape setting <del>of the area and site features</del>;</p> <p><del>(d)</del><u>(c)</u> The proposals <del>will</del> seek to improve the external appearance of the building, in line with the Borough Council's Design Guide SPD-;</p>	To improve clarity, including with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
Policy GB2 p13	<p>A proposal for the replacement of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt with another non-residential building <del>must</del><u>should</u> satisfy each of the following criteria:</p> <p>(a) The existing building <del>is</del><u>should be</u> lawful and permanent in nature;</p> <p>(b) The total volume of the replacement building should not be more than 20% larger than the volume of the building it replaces;</p> <p>(c) <u>The replacement building should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate</u> in terms of design and materials-;</p> <p><u>(d) The replacement building should be on or close to the footprint of the one it replaces, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative location within the same curtilage will have no adverse impact on openness and/or it will achieve significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits.</u></p>	To improve clarity, including with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
Policy GB2 p14	<p>... 'Green Belt Assessment', which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing building(s); <u>on site</u>;</li> </ul>	To improve clarity
Policy GB2 p14	<p>Where appropriate, a condition will be attached to any permission, requiring the demolition of the existing <del>property buildings</del> before <u>the commencement of use of</u> any replacement <del>is brought into use, and remediation of the site following demolition</del>.</p> <p><u>For both conversions of buildings and replacement buildings, the applicant will also</u> be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species <u>and its habitat</u> which may be present in the existing building, <del>and its curtilage</del>. <u>Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.</u></p>	To improve clarity and to better reflect national policy.



Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
14	There are some buildings which may not be suitable for conversion, for example those <u>of lightweight or less permanent construction such as glasshouses or timber stable buildings; buildings</u> which are structurally unsound, missing substantial sections of wall or roofs, <del>ruined beyond recognition, eyesores which should be removed in the interests of landscape conservation;</del> and / or buildings at risk of flooding. <del>Conversion of non-residential buildings to housing should provide acceptable standards of accommodation in terms of room sizes and amenity.</del>	To improve clarity.
15	Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement building is <del>particularly well-</del> designed, in such a way that its impact on <u>perceived</u> openness is minimised.	To improve clarity.
15	<u>The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.</u>	To better reflect national policy.
Policy GB3 p15	<b><u>Vacant previously</u>Previously developed sites in the Green Belt</b>  <b>POLICY GB3 – REDEVELOPMENT OF <del>VACANT</del> PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT</b> Proposals for the redevelopment of <del>vacant</del> previously developed sites within the Green Belt will be permitted	To better reflect national policy.
Policy GB3 p15	<u>The applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species and their habitat which may be present in any existing building(s) and their curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.</u>	To better reflect national policy.
15	the Council would take into consideration a number of issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Previous</del><u>Existing and previous</u> buildings which <u>occupy or</u> may have occupied the site, including their size and layout-;</li> <li>• <del>How</del><u>if no longer present, how</u> long ago the buildings occupied the site, <u>and for what period of time.</u></li> </ul>	To improve clarity.
16	WLLP <b>Policy RS2 (Affordable and Specialist Housing)</b> and <u>WLLP Policy AH1 (Affordable Housing Requirements)</u> of the Affordable Housing SPD 2015, if the Policy RS2 threshold for providing affordable housing has been exceeded.	To improve clarity

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
	<p>For sites currently or most recently in employment or retail use (e.g. Use Classes A1, B1,B2, B8) or as agricultural/horticultural workers' dwellings, <b>WLLP Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability)</b> would need to be satisfied, unless such development were Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (<del>Amendment and Consequential Provisions</del>) (England) Order <del>2014</del>.<u>2015</u></p> <p>WLLP_Policy RS5 (<b>Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers</b>) permits the re-use of existing buildings within the Green Belt for accommodation for temporary agricultural and/or horticultural workers provided that it complies with other policies in the Local Plan and national planning policy. <b>WLLP Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy)</b> states</p>	
16	<p><del>Where new dwellings are permitted in the Green Belt, the</del>The Council <del>will reserve</del><u>reserves</u> the right to remove permitted development rights for <del>extensions and outbuildings in order to prevent future additions that cumulatively</del><u>development which may have an adverse</u> impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. <u>This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences or activities such as external storage.</u></p>	To improve clarity.
Policy GB4 p17	<p>Proposals for an extension to an existing building within the Green Belt <del>must</del><u>should</u> satisfy each of the following criteria:</p> <p>(a) The existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;</p> <p>(b) <del>The total volume of the proposal, together with any previous extensions, alterations and non-original outbuildings, would not result in an increase of more than 40% above the volume of the original building (including, in the case of residential properties, any outbuildings or parts of outbuildings within 5m of the existing dwelling).</del></p>	To improve clarity, including with regard to the function and purpose of the SPD.
Policy GB4 p17	<p>'Green Belt Assessment' submitted to the Council, which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the 'original' property(-ies);<u> plus any original domestic outbuildings;</u></li> <li>• volume calculations (in cubic metres) of any subsequent extensions <u>/ outbuildings;</u> and</li> <li>• volume calculations of the proposal.</li> </ul>	To improve clarity.
Policy GB4 p17	<p><u>Outbuildings of permanent and substantial construction (i.e. generally not sheds or green houses) and other attached covered structures such as car ports or porches will be taken into account in determining whether a proposal complies or not with the requirements of criterion (b) in that the volume of any outbuilding or extension which does not form part of the 'original building' will be taken into account in assessing whether or not the 40% threshold has been reached.</u></p>	To improve clarity.

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
Policy GB4 p18	<u>The Council reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for further extensions and outbuildings to prevent future additions that cumulatively subsequent development which may have an adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. This may include extensions and outbuildings, fences or activities such as external storage.</u>	To improve clarity.
Policy GB4 p18	<u>The applicant may also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species and their habitat which may be present in any existing building(s) and their curtilage. Mitigation measures or replacement provision may be required in order to secure the future of any population found to be present.</u>	To better reflect national policy.
18	There may be cases where an extension of less than this volume would be considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the <u>perceived</u> openness of the Green Belt in certain locations. Figure 1 <del>(a)</del> and <del>(b) overleaf 2 (page 20)</del> illustrate examples of extensions of less than <del>50</del> 40% of the size of the original property which, due to their form and projection from the original building, may be judged to have a <u>greater perception of</u> negative impact upon openness. Figure <del>23</del> on the other hand, illustrates an extension of <del>50</del> 40% of the original property. Due to its position in relation to the property, the impact of this form of extension upon the <u>perceived</u> openness of the Green Belt would be substantially less than <del>either the extensions in Figures 1 or 2.</del> Similarly, it may be possible to have an extension, similar to that shown in Figure <del>1 (a) or (b)-3,</del> but of marginally more than 40% of the original property, whose impact upon the perceived openness of the Green Belt is also substantially less than the extensions in Figures 1 or 2.	To improve clarity.
18	<u>In summary, the prominent or easily visible expansion of a building will detract more from the perceived openness of the Green Belt than would a more concealed or compact form of expansion. For example, the infilling of space between existing parts of the building, so that no further outward projection is involved, would often have no material effect on the perceived openness of the Green Belt. Most outwardly projecting extensions are likely to detract to some degree from the perceived openness of the Green Belt. In some cases very small outward additions to an already disproportionately extended building may often have no further material impact on the perceived openness of the Green Belt and may be allowed. However it is not possible to set out prescriptive rules in this respect and every case will be examined on its own merits.</u>	To improve clarity.
19	Any additions <del>to</del> on the <u>buildingsite</u> that have been constructed since the 'original' building date will be considered cumulatively ... This approach is taken because small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can cumulatively have a material detrimental effect. <u>In the case of domestic properties, detached outbuildings are included as, despite their detachment, these are considered as extensions. (New detached domestic outbuildings would otherwise constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt).</u>	To improve clarity.

Page / Policy	Change to	Reason for change
19	No development will be permitted in Green Belt areas which would result in the extension of domestic gardens as this is deemed to have a potential impact on openness <a href="#">and conflicts with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt</a> .	To better reflect national policy.
19	<a href="#">The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.</a>	To better reflect national policy.
20	<b>Figures 1 &amp; 2: Illustration of the impact-3: Impact of extensions upon the <a href="#">perceived</a> openness of the Green Belt</b>	To improve clarity.
Policy GB5 p21	The siting of the stable building should not have any adverse effect upon <a href="#">protected</a> wildlife habitats <a href="#">or species</a> , heritage assets or agricultural interests.	To better reflect national policy.
23	<a href="#">The British Horse Society provide further advice on issues of pasture management in the publication 'Advice on Pasture Management'.</a>	To improve clarity.
23	<a href="#">The Council has a duty to conserve biodiversity – including a population or habitat – and must consider how wildlife or land may be affected in when making planning decisions about development and land use.</a>	To better reflect national policy.

Adoption of Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document

**MINUTE OF PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**29. ADOPTION OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Assistant Director Planning as contained on pages 445 to 520 of the Book of Reports and to the amendment on page 530 of the Late Information Report.

The purpose of the report was to consider the contents of the report, and its Appendices, the Development in the Green Belt SPD, the Consultation Report and the Adoption Statement.

RESOLVED:           There were no agreed comments to be referred to Cabinet.



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Planning</b>
<b>Completed by: Stephen Bengie</b>	<b>Date: 20/08/15</b>
<b>Subject Title: Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cut back:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	Adoption of a supplementary planning document guiding development within the Green Belt.
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above <b>go straight to Section 3</b></i>  <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above <b>please complete Section 2</b></i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
	Yes/No*
<p>If <b>Yes</b>, provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):</p> <p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i></p>	
<p>If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:</p> <p><i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i></p>	

<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	<p>The Development in the Green Belt supplementary planning document (SPD) will impact primarily upon those owning or having an interest in land or property within the Green Belt.</p> <p>The SPD will inform decisions on planning applications for development in the Green Belt. These could potentially have direct impacts on the general public living, working, travelling, or spending leisure time in the Green Belt.</p>
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	N/A
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <p>Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>No No No No No No No No No</p>
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	<p>Previous engagement with the community and general public in relation to planning policy matters and consultation exercises across the Borough (for example for the Local Plan between 2008 and 2013) show that it tends to be those of a white-British ethnic background and those of older age groups who most actively engage in the process of preparing planning policy. Completed equality questionnaires from those consultation exercises bear this out, but the limited number of such questionnaires completed does not provide sufficient statistical robustness to analyse and use this data meaningfully.</p> <p>Once adopted, it is envisaged the SPD will be used primarily by landowners / developers (i.e. commercial interested parties) seeking to submit a planning application, or by individual property owners with an interest in Green Belt land. Such people can potentially be of any age, gender, disability (or otherwise), belief, sexual orientation and ethnic background, but</p>



	are most likely to be of a white-British ethnic background and an older age group, as identified above.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	<p>The adoption of the SPD will have limited direct impact on any stakeholders other than those who wish to develop Green Belt land, or to protect it from development.</p> <p>Development of Green Belt land, which will be informed and influenced by the SPD once adopted, could potentially impact on a range of stakeholders, most notably landowners and their neighbours, as well as those who travel through, work in, or spend leisure time in the West Lancashire Green Belt.</p>
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	<p>The SPD is not a "service" as such. Comments on the document varied between disagreement with the content of the document, in particular its proposed policies (or with specific details of the proposed policies), and support in principle for the document, or for individual policies.</p> <p>The reasons for the differing support are likely to stem from differing views or objectives of the various respondents. For example, some seek to have land developed, whilst others seek to protect land from development.</p> <p>No specific comments were received regarding how well the Council is fulfilling its Public Sector Equality Duty insofar as it relates to the subject matter of the SPD.</p>
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	<p>Census data for the Borough has been utilised, together with the evidence base for the Local Plan and the consultation feedback from each stage of the Local Plan preparation.</p> <p>Two rounds of consultation have taken place on the SPD. The first was an informal exercise in which a limited number of specific Statutory Consultees, housing developers and local agents were asked about the scope of the SPD. This consultation did not yield statistically significant data that could be used to build up a picture of the prevalence and / or distribution of protected characteristics amongst stakeholders in general.</p> <p>The second was a more formal consultation exercise in which stakeholders on the Council's Planning Policy Consultation Database were consulted on the draft SPD. In addition, a press release was submitted to the local media, and an article placed on the Council's website. 65 responses were received, but few representors completed the "Equalities monitoring" section, and the data obtained was thus inadequate for</p>

	making statistically significant conclusions as to the impact of the SPD on those with protected characteristics.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	<p>Firstly, it is necessary to state that the SPD does not involve any material <i>change</i> to policy, but is a clarification of already-assessed Local Plan and, primarily, national policy.</p> <p>As stated above, once it is adopted, the SPD will be likely to be of relevance to, or affect, landowners / developers seeking to submit a planning application(s), or people travelling through, working in, or spending leisure time in the Green Belt.</p> <p>Such people could potentially be of any age, gender, disability (or otherwise), belief, sexual orientation and ethnic background, and there is no reason to assume that the implementation of the policy should have a disproportionate impact on any of the protected characteristic groups.</p>
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	There is no identified clear-cut negative impact on any particular protected characteristic as a result of the Development in the Green Belt SPD, but the planning application stage will provide opportunity to consider whether the specific individual proposals for development may potentially impact on particular protected characteristics, and to take appropriate action to avoid or mitigate these potential impacts.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions.
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	The policy within the Green Belt SPD will only be reviewed as part of any review of planning policy covering the Green Belt in the future (e.g. a new Local Plan or national guidance). As such, the EIA will only be reviewed at that time. However, as part of the monitoring of the Local Plan and the SPD, the impact on particular protected characteristics will be monitored as far as is possible.

## APPENDIX G

Agenda Item 5(a)

### **Adoption of Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document**

#### **REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the contents of the Development in the Green Belt SPD Consultation Feedback Report set out at Appendix B to this report, and the agreed comments of Planning Committee at Appendix D be noted.
- 3.2 That the Adoption Statement at Appendix C (as amended) be approved, and the Development in the Green Belt SPD at Appendix A (as amended) be adopted subject to any amendments made by the Assistant Director Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, following consideration of the Development in the Green Belt SPD by Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as per recommendation 3.3 below.
- 3.3 That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary amendments to the Development in the Green Belt SPD, in the light of agreed comments from Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, before the document is published.
- 3.4 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as this report is being submitted to Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2015.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(b)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Planning**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson**

**Contact for further information: Helen Hatch (Extn. 5171)  
(E-mail: Helen.hatch@westlancs.gov.uk)**

---

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - PROTOCOL FOR LEVYING SURCHARGES**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for a protocol establishing how the Council will apply surcharges and interest to developers/landowners that fail to follow the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) administrative requirements.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Protocol for handling failures to adhere to the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (as amended) at Appendix A be approved.

2.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Assistant Director Planning to apply the surcharges in accordance with the Protocol and CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced nationally in April 2010 and allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects in their area. The revenue collected

is then used to pay for a wide range of infrastructure that is needed to support new development.

- 3.2 A CIL Charging Schedule was adopted by Council on 23 July 2014 and took effect from 1 September 2014. All developments approved in the Borough, that trigger a CIL liability (the creation of over 100sqm of new build floorspace or the creation of a dwelling), will be charged a levy in accordance with the Council's adopted Charging Schedule. The levy is payable upon the commencement of each development, or a relevant phase, and the revenue collected used to fund infrastructure provision or improvements which are identified as required to support new development in the Borough.

#### 4.0 ADMINISTRATION OF CIL

- 4.1 The CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) govern exactly how CIL should be administered by each charging authority. All procedures must be dealt with in direct reference to the legislation, and the regulations stipulate set penalties that must be imposed where breaches of the administration process occur.
- 4.2 It is useful to approach the administration of CIL like a game of 'tennis' – with a series of notices served repeatedly between the applicant/developer and the Council. Upon the grant of planning approval, and before commencement of the development, the developer is required to serve a number of notices to the Council – to assume liability (to pay CIL), to apply for any relief/exemption and to serve a commencement notice (notifying the Council of the intended commencement date for the development). In return, the Council must acknowledge all notices received, issue a liability notice (setting out the charge due upon commencement) and, following commencement, issue a demand notice requesting payment. The Council must also acknowledge payment(s) and monitor clawback (for up to 7 years) on those sites which are granted relief.
- 4.3 The administration of CIL therefore depends on the correct notices being served at the correct times, and failure to follow this process creates significant additional administrative work for the charging authority (Council) and affects the speed and ease at which CIL revenue can be collected. Subsequently, the regulations state **mandatory penalties** that **must** be applied where the most significant administrative breaches occur. These penalties are designed to act as both a deterrent to anyone thinking they can avoid following the administrative requirements, and to heavily penalise anyone who does indeed try. Unfortunately the CIL Regulations do not distinguish between those who deliberately seek to circumvent the administrative process or avoid payment and those who have made a genuine error in their failure to comply. However, all reasonable measures are taken to make applicants/developers fully aware of the requirements of CIL to prevent inadvertent non-compliance.
- 4.4 The Regulations also grant the Council flexibility as to whether they choose to apply additional penalties through the means of **discretionary surcharges and interest** which **may** be applied.

- 4.5 It is considered that the mandatory penalties awarded through the regulations should provide sufficient scope to both caution against, and penalise, failure to adhere to the CIL administration process. However, the adoption of additional, discretionary surcharges will provide a further incentive for developers to pay promptly (to avoid the imposition of surcharges) and to deter most breaches from occurring in the first place. The surcharge will also help to meet the cost of additional administrative work associated with the enforcement of the Regulations when a breach has occurred. The fact that the application of the surcharge is at the Council's discretion provides the Council with the ability, in appropriate cases, to set aside the surcharge however, in order to ensure a consistent and unambiguous approach, it is my recommendation that the discretionary charges are applied without exception, were there has been a clear failure to comply with the legislative requirements of the CIL Regulations.
- 4.6 In cases of non-payment, or late payment, interest will be calculated and added to the CIL chargeable amount due. The CIL regulations also grant the Council enforcement powers to pursue cases of non-payment. Such enforcement action will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.7 It is within reason that a development could have multiple CIL surcharges imposed on it for incurring successive breaches.

## 5.0 APPLICATION OF SURCHARGES

- 5.1 There are a number of administrative breaches that demand mandatory penalties to be imposed, and these can also incur additional, optional penalties. They are:
- Failure to submit an assumption of liability notice
  - Failure to submit a commencement notice
  - Failure to submit a notice of chargeable development
  - Failure to notify of a disqualifying event
  - Failure to comply with an information notice
  - Failure to make payment, or to make payment on time
- 5.2 For the purposes of clarity and to set out a consistent approach in the application of surcharges, the protocol proposed at Appendix A sets out for each type of breach, when and how the Council would apply the mandatory surcharge required by legislation and the discretionary surcharges that the Council will apply. The proposed discretionary surcharges range from £50 to £2500 (the level of charge is set by the Regulations), and are summarised below.

### Failure to assume liability prior to commencement of a development

- 5.3 Liability must be assumed before a development commences, by submitting an assumption of liability form. This informs the Council who will be responsible for paying the CIL charge.
- 5.4 **Mandatory requirement:** Where this notice isn't received, the Council must identify those person(s) liability defaults to and, where there are multiple

landowners, how liability must be apportioned. This identification will incur significant additional administrative work and costs.

- 5.5 **Discretionary Surcharge:** The Council will therefore apply a surcharge of £50 on each of the persons liable to pay CIL in respect of that development, and/or £500 on each person liable to pay CIL where the Council have to apportion liability.

Failure to submit a commencement notice

- 5.6 A commencement notice must be submitted at least one day before the development commences to inform the Council of the commencement date. This date is used by the Council to issue the demand notice and set the payment instalments against.
- 5.7 **Mandatory requirement:** Failure to submit the commencement notice will place further administrative burdens on the Council, and officers must visit the site to deem a commencement date. Where a commencement notice is not received, and work begins, the Council must withdraw instalments and revoke any relief/exemption granted. Payment is due in full and immediately from the deemed commencement date, and a demand notice will be issued.
- 5.8 **Discretionary surcharge:** A 14 day payment window will be allowed for payment, with the threat that a surcharge will be imposed if payment is not received within this period. It is hoped that this will encourage prompt payment but provide an appropriate penalty if payment is not received. Should payment not be received within the 14 days, the Council will then apply a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount, and re-issue the demand notice for payment.

Failure to submit a notice of chargeable development

- 5.9 **Mandatory requirements:** Some developments may be undertaken through permitted development rights, but still meet the triggers for CIL. In CIL chargeable cases, the developer is required to submit a Notice of Chargeable Development (NCD) to the Council so a CIL levy can be calculated and applied and a demand notice issued. The Council can also request further information to be provided. In the absence of a NCD, the Council must collect all relevant information, prepare a NCD and serve the notice on landowners, along with a liability notice. Various surcharges will be applied here, dependent on if and when a NCD is submitted.
- 5.10 **Discretionary surcharge:** Where an NCD has not been received, but is required, and development is deemed to have commenced, the Council will write to the landowner(s) and issue a request for the NCD to be submitted within 21 days.
- If the NCD is returned within 21 days, a demand notice will be issued. Where the due payment is made within 14 days of the demand notice being issued, surcharges will be waived.
  - If the NCD is returned within 21 days, a demand notice will be issued. Where the due payment is not made within 14 days of the demand notice being



issued, then the Council will then apply a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount, and re-issue the demand notice for payment.

- If the NCD is not submitted, a surcharge of up to £2500 will be applied immediately along with any other penalties, for example having to identify liable persons. A demand notice will then be issued. Further penalties will be applied in accordance with the procedures for non-payment as outlined in paragraphs 5.16 and 5.17 of this report.

#### Failure to notify of a disqualifying event

- 5.11 Applicants can claim for relief/exemption from CIL if their development relates to social housing, self-build housing (whole house), self-build housing (residential extension/annex) or the development belongs to a charity.
- 5.12 **Mandatory requirements:** Where exemption/relief is granted, clawback periods are put in place for 3 or 7 years, dependent on the relief type, to enable the Council to clawback the chargeable amount if a disqualifying event occurs. Relief recipients must notify the Council of such events within 14 days of the event occurring. The Council will then withdraw relief/exemption and confirm this in writing via a demand notice and full payment is then due within 14 days.
- 5.13 **Discretionary surcharge:** Failure to notify of a disqualifying event places the Council at risk of losing some CIL monies otherwise owed to them. Where the Council are not informed of a disqualifying event, a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount, will be imposed for failure to notify of a disqualifying event.

#### Failure to comply with an information notice

- 5.14 **Mandatory provision:** The Council can issue an information notice to seek further information relating to liability apportionment or social housing relief claims. The regulations provide a 14 day period for the request to be complied with.
- 5.15 **Discretionary surcharge:** If a person fails to comply with the request within 14 days, the Council will impose a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £1000, whichever is the lower amount.

#### Failure to pay CIL or failure to pay CIL on time

- 5.16 **Mandatory requirements:** Under the CIL regulations, where a payment, or an instalment, is not received by the date it is due the full, unpaid balance becomes payable immediately. The Council will subsequently issue a demand notice for full payment.

- 5.17 **Discretionary surcharge:** If payment is late, the Council will impose a surcharge of 5% of the chargeable amount, or £200, whichever is the greater amount. The surcharge will be applied at the end of 30 calendar days, the end of 6 months, and the end of 12 months, beginning on the date that payment is due. In accordance with Regulation 87(2), late payment interest will also be calculated, at an annual rate of 2.5 percentage points above the Bank of England base rate.

## **6.0 HOW THE COUNCIL MUST SPEND SURCHARGES**

- 6.1 CIL revenue must be spent in accordance with the requirements of Part 7 of the CIL regulations and apportioned as follows: 5% retained by the Borough Council for administrative costs, 80% retained by the Borough Council to deliver strategic infrastructure and 15% passed to the Parish Councils for use on local infrastructure. The local portion will increase to 25% where Parish Councils have a neighbourhood plan adopted. In those areas that do not have a Parish Council, the Borough Council will retain the local portion and spend it in local areas in consultation with the local community.
- 6.2 Discretionary surcharges and/or interest must be collected as if they are part of the CIL charge, but there are differences in how they must be used. Regulation 88(2) requires that any interest collected should be apportioned in the same way as the CIL charge (5:15:80 split). However, Regulation 88(3) stipulates that surcharge payments are only assigned to administrative and strategic infrastructure funding. The Council will therefore apportion 5% of each surcharge payment received to administrative costs and 95% to strategic infrastructure.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 It is not anticipated that there will be any significant financial or resource implications arising from this report. The application of surcharges and interest provides opportunity for some increased CIL revenue for the Council, which will help to recover the cost of the extra administrative work resulting from the enforcement of the CIL Regulations.
- 8.2 The protocol has been reviewed against the Council's fees and charges policy and is consistent with its requirements. The financial penalties (surcharges and interest) set out through this report serve to penalise non-compliance with the administrative requirements of the CIL regulations and to recover service costs directly from the user, in accordance with statutory legislation.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 The Council need to ensure that CIL revenue can be collected promptly. The regulations provide mandatory measures to deal with breaches in the CIL administration process, and further discretionary penalties applied by the Council can only serve to provide a further deterrent in regard to breaches whilst encouraging prompt payment. There is a risk that without such financial penalties CIL revenue will take longer to collect which will have a negative impact on available funds with which to deliver infrastructure.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There may be a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

### **Appendices**

#### **Appendix A**

Protocol for handling failures to adhere to the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended).

#### **Appendix B**

Equality Impact Statement



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Protocols for handling failures to adhere to the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended).**

CIL is administered in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended), and all procedures must be dealt with in direct reference to the legislation. Where breaches of the administrative process occur, the CIL regulations stipulate set penalties that must be imposed.

However, the regulations also grant the Council flexibility as to whether they choose to apply additional penalties through the means of surcharges. Subsequently, for the purposes of clarity and to set out a consistent approach in our application of surcharges, this protocol sets out those breaches of the administration process where surcharges can be imposed, and how West Lancashire Borough Council (“the Council”), as the charging authority and collecting authority, will implement them.

This protocol will set out the procedure for responding to:

- i) Failure to submit an assumption of liability notice
- ii) Failure to submit a commencement notice
- iii) Failure to submit a notice of chargeable development
- iv) Failure to notify of a disqualifying event
- v) Failure to comply with an information notice
- vi) Failure to make payment, or failure to make a payment on time

#### **How the Council will spend surcharges**

Under Regulation 88, surcharges or interest due must be collected as if it is part of the CIL charge. Any interest paid can be apportioned to the admin, local and strategic funding as per the process for the CIL charge. However, any surcharges paid cannot be apportioned to local councils, and so can only be apportioned to administrative and strategic funding.

The Council will therefore apportion 5% of each surcharge payment received to administrative costs, and 95% to strategic infrastructure.

## **Failure to assume liability prior to commencement of development**

### **Mandatory requirements**

In accordance with Reg 31, liability must be assumed on a chargeable development before that development commences. This must be done by submitting an assumption of liability notice to the collecting authority. That person is then liable to pay the CIL charge upon commencement of the chargeable development.

An assumption of liability notice is also required by the Council before accepting any claims for relief or exemption<sup>1</sup>.

Reg 33 states that if development commences and nobody has assumed liability to pay CIL in respect of that development, then liability must be apportioned between each material interest in the relevant land, and applied in accordance with Reg 34.

In accordance with Reg 71(1), where nobody has assumed liability to pay CIL in respect of the chargeable development, but a commencement notice has been submitted, then payment is due in full on the intended commencement date.

In accordance with Reg 71(2), where nobody has assumed liability to pay CIL in respect of the chargeable development, and a commencement notice has not been received, action defaults to that required under a deemed commencement and payment is due in full immediately on the deemed commencement date.

### **Optional penalties**

Reg 80 states that a collecting authority is able to impose a surcharge for failure to assume liability, where a development has commenced and nobody has assumed liability. This is charged at £50 on each person liable to pay CIL in respect of a chargeable development.

Furthermore, under Reg 81, where a collecting authority is required to apportion liability between each material interest in the relevant land, it is able to impose a surcharge of £500 in respect of each of those interests. The surcharge is payable by the owner of that interest.

A surcharge is not payable under Reg 81 where the Council is required to apportion a surcharge.

Where an assumption of liability is not received, but a commencement notice has been received, the Council will:

- Issue a £50 surcharge on each person liable to pay CIL in respect of that development
- Issue a £500 surcharge on each person liable to pay CIL where the Council have to apportion liability
- Issue a demand notice requesting full payment on the intended commencement date

Where an assumption of liability is not received, and development is deemed to have commenced by the Council, the Council will:

- Issue a £50 surcharge on each person liable to pay CIL in respect of that development
- Issue a £500 surcharge on each person liable to pay CIL where the Council have to apportion liability
- And issue a demand notice in accordance with the penalty process for failing to submit a commencement notice – i.e. payment is due in full on the deemed commencement date

<sup>1</sup> *Reg 31 states liability must be assumed on all chargeable developments, although under Reg 42B and Reg 47 there is no requirement in the CIL regulations for anyone to assume liability before claiming charitable relief or an exemption for residential extensions and annex. However, should a disqualifying event occur later on, the Council will need to know who the liable persons are. Subsequently, it is the Council's decision to require the assumption of liability on all chargeable developments, irrespective of the guidance on exemptions and relief, to bring all chargeable developments into accordance with Reg 31.*

## **Failure to submit a Commencement Notice, prior to commencement of development**

### **Mandatory requirements**

Reg 67 states a commencement notice must be submitted at least one day prior to the development commencing. The commencement notice provides the date of intended commencement, and is used to issue the demand notice and set the payment instalments against.

### **Avoiding doubt**

For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of commencement is set out clearly on the liability notice, and was also reinforced to existing liable parties via letter on 26 February 2015.

A note was also added to Liability Notices in May 2015 to stress the importance for liable parties to ensure that they receive all acknowledgements before starting work. This is to avoid applicants, who may later have penalties imposed on them, claiming that notices were submitted but have been lost in post / by the Council and therefore dispute the application of any surcharge.

### **Inconsistency of approach within the regulations**

Reg 67(1)(A) states that commencement notices are not required in cases of minor development, where an exemption for residential extensions has been granted or where the chargeable amount is zero [before relief or exemption is applied]. However, Reg 42(B)(6), Exemption for residential annexes or extensions: procedure, contradicts Reg 67(1)(A) by stating that the full chargeable amount is due where residential self-build exemption is granted but a commencement notice is not submitted.

Claims for self-build residential extensions must be made using the Planning Portal's *Self-Build Extension Exemption claim form (Form 9)* which states a commencement notice "should be received by the collecting authority prior to the date of commencement of the development" – supporting Reg 42B. Within Form 9's 'Section B: Self-build declaration' the fourth check box requires the applicant to declare that "I will establish whether the charging/collecting authority require a commencement notice to be issued prior to commencing my development" – which seemingly serves to bridge the gap between the requirements of Reg 67(1)(A) and Reg 42(B)(6).

For consistency therefore, the Council will request a commencement notice for all developments except those where the chargeable amount is zero [before relief or exemption is applied]. This requirement is stated on the relevant forms and notices issued through the CIL administration process. The Council will not accept any claims by persons that they were not aware a commencement notice was required.

In the absence of a commencement notice, Reg 68 allows the collecting authority to deem a commencement date. This deemed date is used to inform the date from which payment is due on the demand notice. As the Council has adopted an instalments policy, it will also form the date at which any instalments will be calculated.



As a result of failing to submit a commencement notice, and work commencing, under Reg 71(2) the ability to pay through instalments is withdrawn, and payment is due in full on the deemed commencement date.

Under the regulations governing relief and exemption (42B, 47, 51 & 54B) any relief or exemption which has been granted will also be withdrawn for failure to submit a commencement notice.

### **Optional penalties**

For failing to submit a commencement notice, in accordance with Reg 83, a collecting authority is able to impose a surcharge equal to 20% of the chargeable amount payable, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount. This is an optional penalty.

In this instance, should full payment not be received, the full surcharge would be applied and a revised demand notice issued. Each person known to be an owner of the relevant land would also be informed by the collecting authority of the imposition of the surcharge.

Where liability needs to be apportioned to owners of a material interest, the surcharge must also be apportioned. In all other cases, the surcharge is payable by the person liable to pay the CIL charge.

The collecting authority is able to waive this surcharge if the CIL chargeable amount is paid in full within 14 calendar days from the date of the Demand Notice.

The Council consider that the regulations provide sufficient scope to penalise those persons who do not adhere to the CIL administration process – as the mandatory requirements for failing to submit a commencement notice result in the automatic loss of any relief or exemption granted and/or the loss of payment through instalments. The Council are aware of the impact requiring full payment may have on the viability of a development, and are keen to ensure that the due CIL funds can be received. It is also in the Council's interest to avoid any legal costs required in enforcing payments through the courts. It is for these reasons, that liable persons will be given a 14 calendar day opportunity to pay their CIL charge in full, without the addition of a surcharge.

However, should payment not be received following this 14 calendar day period, then the surcharge will be applied.

Where a commencement notice is not received, and development is deemed to have commenced, the Council will:

- Record a deemed date, and withdraw any relief or exemption granted
- Withdraw any instalment policy granted to that development
- Issue a demand notice requesting full payment on the deemed commencement date
- Allow 14 calendar days for payment to be received in full
- Where payment is not received within 14 calendar days, the Council will add a surcharge in accordance with Reg 83 and issue a new demand notice, requesting payment within 14 calendar days
- Where applicable, surcharges will be apportioned to material interests
- In the event of non-payment, standard enforcement procedures and payment surcharges will apply

## **Failure to submit a notice of chargeable development**

In some cases, development will be authorised through a general consent (permitted rights) but still be of sufficient size or type to trigger a CIL liability under Reg 42. In these cases a notice of chargeable development (NCD) is required.

Most developments permitted under general consent in the Borough, particularly agricultural developments, will not require an NCD because the rate for that use is set at zero and so no charge will result. For most developments that will incur a charge, it is likely that a planning permission would be required. However, there may be cases, particularly conversions to dwellings, which may be dealt with under general consent but trigger a charge under CIL. In these cases an NCD must be submitted.

### **Mandatory requirements**

Under Reg 64, before any development authorised by a general consent is commenced, a notice of chargeable development must be submitted to the collecting authority. This does not apply to minor development (Reg 42), or where no CIL is payable because an exemption for residential extensions was granted, or where the chargeable amount, calculated under regulation 40, is zero. The notice must be accompanied by a plan which identifies the land and relevant building(s). The collecting authority can ask a person who has submitted an NCD to provide further information relevant to assist the authority in calculating the chargeable amount.

Under Regulation 108A, a collecting authority may require any owner of a material interest in any relevant land to provide it with such further information, documents or materials as the collecting authority considers relevant to assist it to ascertain whether a NCD must be submitted under Regulation 64 (2).

Regulation 64(A) sets out the action required where no NCD has been submitted to the authority and the authority deem the development has been commenced. In these cases, the collecting authority must prepare an NCD, along with a plan, and any other information used to calculate the charge, and serve the notice on each person known to the authority as an owner of the relevant land, together with the liability notice served under Regulation 65(3). This action does not apply to those developments that are exempt because they are minor development (Reg 42) or where an exemption for a residential extension has reduced the CIL liability to zero. In order to gather the necessary information to determine whether a NCD is required, authorities are able to request information and are granted powers of entry.

Under Regulation 109, an authorised person may at any reasonable hour enter the relevant land – to ascertain whether a chargeable development has commenced, to display any notice, to ascertain whether there has been a compliance with any requirement imposed, to gather information to calculate the chargeable amount in the case of a NCD submitted or, where no NCD has been submitted, or to gather information in order to ascertain whether a NCD should be submitted under regulation 64(2). A person entering the land must be able to provide evidence of their authority, and state the purpose of their entry before entering.

In accordance with Regulation 108A, before entering the relevant land to gather information in order to ascertain whether a NCD should be submitted, the collecting authority must first request the information in writing.

Authorised persons may not enter any part of the relevant land which is used as a private dwelling unless a justice of the peace has issued a warrant authorising the person to do so.

Regulation 78 allows that a collecting authority may request, by notice given in writing, a relevant person to supply it with information which the authority requires for the purposes of carrying out its functions under these regulations. Information must be supplied within 21 calendar days of the request being made. There are no penalties for failure to comply with a request under Reg 78.

### **Optional penalties**

Under Reg 82, where a NCD is not submitted, the collecting authority is able to impose a surcharge equal to 20% of the chargeable amount payable, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount. Where liability needs to be apportioned between each material interest in the relevant land, the surcharge must be apportioned on the same basis.

Where a notice of chargeable development (NCD) is not received, but is required, and development commences, or is deemed to have commenced, the Council will:

- Issue a demand/request for the NCD to be submitted, along with the CIL Additional Information Form. Request that this is returned within 21 calendar days
- Issue a demand for any other additional information to be supplied in order to ascertain the charge for the development. Request that this is returned within 21 calendar days

On receipt of the NCD

- Calculate charge and issue a demand notice requesting full payment immediately (within 14 calendar days)
- If payment is made within 14 calendar days, waive surcharge of £2500
- If payment is not made within 14 calendar days, add surcharge of £2500 and reissue demand notice. If no payment is received, standard enforcement procedures apply.

If no NCD is supplied after 14 calendar days

- Request any additional information that may be required to ascertain facts required to calculate the charge. This may also include a site visit. Some information may be accessible from prior notification applications.
- Prepare a NCD and serve on relevant persons along with a liability notice.
- Add surcharge of £2500. Apply any additional surcharges – for example surcharges for identifying who the relevant landowners are in order to assign and default liability to them.
- Issue a demand notice
- If no payment is received, standard enforcement procedures apply.

## **Failure to notify of a disqualifying event**

### **Mandatory requirements**

Where exemption or relief is granted, clawback periods are put in place for a period of:

- 3 years following completion (self-build whole house exemption or annex exemption); or
- 7 years following commencement (charitable exemption and social housing relief).

Where a disqualifying event occurs prior to commencement, or within the respective clawback period, and the criteria for granting relief or exemption are subsequently affected, the collecting authority can clawback the full chargeable amount payable on the development.

Disqualifying events are set out in the regulations 42C (residential annexes), Reg 48 (charitable), Reg 53 (social housing) and Reg 54D (self-build whole house). There are no disqualifying events or clawback periods for residential extensions.

Persons should notify the collecting authority where a disqualifying event occurs by giving notice in writing within 14 calendar days of the disqualifying event occurring.

### **Optional penalties**

Under Reg 84, the collecting authority is able to impose a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount payable, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount, for failure to notify the authority of a disqualifying event within 14 calendar days from the date it occurs.

Where the disqualifying event occurs before commencement of the chargeable development then the surcharge is payable upon commencement. In all other cases the surcharge is payable on the day it is imposed, and payable by relevant persons.

Where liability has been apportioned between material interests, any surcharge must be apportioned on the same basis. In all other cases, the surcharge is payable by the person liable to pay CIL in respect of the chargeable development.

Where a disqualifying event occurs pre-commencement and the Council is not notified, the Council will:

- Withdraw relief or exemption, and confirm this in writing
- Apply a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £2500, whichever is the lower amount and issue a revised liability notice.
- Upon commencement, issue a demand notice in line with normal procedures

Where a disqualifying event occurs post commencement or post completion within the clawback period, and the Council is not notified within 14 days, the Council will:

- Withdraw relief or exemption for the dwelling, and confirm this in writing
- Apply a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount, or £2500, whichever is the lower

amount

- Issue a demand notice requesting full payment immediately (within 14 calendar days)
- Follow normal enforcement procedures for failure to pay CIL on time (as set out above)

To monitor disqualifying events the Council will:

- Record all liability notices & relief approvals on the land register
- Received land searches will be checked against CIL records and CIL officer informed

## **Failure to comply with an information notice**

The collecting authority can issue an information notice under Regulation 35 (to seek information on how to apportion liability) or Reg 54 (to seek information in relation to a claim for social housing relief). Such requests must be complied with within 14 calendar days of the notice being served.

### **Optional penalties**

Under Reg 86, the collecting authority is able to impose a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount payable, or £1000, whichever is the lower amount, if a person fails to comply with the request for information after 14 calendar days, beginning with the date on which the notice is served.

Where someone fails to comply with the requirements of an information notice, within 14 calendar days of the notice having been served the Council will:

- Impose a surcharge of 20% of the chargeable amount payable, or £1000, whichever is the lower amount
- This surcharge will then be due for payment upon commencement, and issued in line with the demand notice procedure

### **Alternative information requests**

Regulation 78 allows that a collecting authority may request, by notice given in writing, a relevant person to supply it with information which the authority requires for the purposes of carrying out its functions under these regulations. The Council will write to relevant persons to request information.

Information must be supplied within 21 calendar days of the request being made.

There are no penalties for failure to comply with a request under Reg.78.

## **Failure to pay CIL, or failure to pay CIL on time**

### **Mandatory requirements**

Reg 70 allows for payment of CIL to be made in accordance with an adopted instalments policy, where a person has assumed liability and where a commencement notice has been received. However, where an instalment which is due is not received in full, on or before the date on which it is due, the unpaid balance of all remaining instalments becomes payable in full **immediately**. A revised demand notice must be sent to all persons known to the collecting authority as an owner of the relevant land.

In those circumstances where someone has failed to assume liability Reg 71 sets out that payment is due in full on the **intended** commencement date. Where someone has failed to submit a commencement notice, payment is due in full on the **deemed** commencement date.

### **Optional requirements**

The collecting authority is able to impose surcharges for late payment. This is charged at 5% of the chargeable amount or £200, whichever is the greater amount. This can be applied following each of these set periods: the end of 30 calendar days, the end of 6 months and the end of 12 months, beginning on the date that payment is due.

Under Reg 87 late payment interest can also be applied. This will need to be calculated by the Council's accountants on a case by case basis. Late payment interest will be calculated at an annual rate of 2.5 percentage points above the Bank of England base rate, in accordance with Reg 87(2).

### **Mandatory provisions**

Where payment is not received, and the collecting authority considers it expedient that development should stop until the amount has been paid, it can issue a warning notice (Reg 89), followed by a stop notice (Reg 90). A warning notice must be served first, and it must state the period after which a CIL stop notice may be issued. This must not be less than 3 days or more than 28 days after the warning notice is issued. Warning notices and stop notices, as enforcement action, will be prepared and served in liaison with the Council's legal services and issued by the Development Management enforcement officers. The amount of time granted through the warning notice will be assessed on each individual case basis.

The collecting authority may also apply to the courts for a liability order (Reg 96, 97) in order to recover the monies.

It is acknowledged that in many cases, time will be of the essence for such enforcement action and a timely pursuit of the monies will be required.

Where an instalment or payment is not received on time, the Council will:

- Issue a demand notice requesting full payment is made immediately

Where payment is not received after 30 calendar days of the payment being due, the Council will:

- Impose a surcharge of 5% of the chargeable amount or £200, whichever is the greater amount;
- Apply 30 calendar days' interest to the chargeable amount;
- Reissue a demand notice setting out the surcharges / interest now due in addition to the original payment;

Where payment is still not received after 6 months of the payment being due, the Council will:

- Impose a further surcharge of 5% of the chargeable amount or £200, whichever is the greater amount;
- Apply 6 months' interest to the chargeable amount; and
- Reissue a demand notice setting out the surcharges / interest now due in addition to the original payment.

Where payment is still not received after 12 months of the payment being due, the Council will:

- Impose a further surcharge of 5% of the chargeable amount or £200, whichever is the greater amount;
- Apply 12 months' interest to the chargeable amount; and
- Reissue a demand notice setting out the surcharges / interest now due in addition to the original payment.

At any time after 30 calendar days of the payment being due the Council can:

- Consider the expediency of issuing a warning notice and Stop Notice;
- Where this is considered expedient, notify the solicitor to take the necessary action; and
- Where considered necessary, issue a reminder notice and apply for a liability order.



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Planning &amp; Development</b>
<b>Completed by: H Hatch</b>	<b>Date: 2/7/2015</b>
<b>Subject Title: Protocol for handling failures to adhere to CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes  Protocol setting out how and when surcharges will be applied to CIL administration breaches
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No  The imposition of surcharges may result in a small increase in CIL revenue
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes  The protocol sets out how developers will be charged if a breach in the CIL regulations occurs. The purpose of the protocol is to set out a clear and consistent approach to breaches.
Details of the matter under consideration:	CIL is administered in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the regulations set mandatory penalties that must be imposed where breaches occur. The regulations also grant the council flexibility as to whether they apply surcharges, and so for the purposes of clarity and consistency, this protocol sets out how and when the Council will impose surcharges. Optional penalties also include interest and enforcement action.
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to <b>Section 3</b></i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete <b>Section 2</b></i>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i>	

If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Some land and property developers will be affected by the imposition of the surcharge.  West Lancashire residents. The collection of the surcharge provides opportunities to generate some additional revenue for use on infrastructure projects in the Borough.
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	n/a. Relates only to CIL chargeable developments and those developers that do not follow the administrative requirements.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?  Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>  No No No No No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	Land and property developers who have CIL liable and chargeable developments.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Developers may have to pay surcharges if they do not follow the administrative requirements of the regulations.  Should surcharges be imposed it will result in additional revenue for the Council to spend on infrastructure investment.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	Now CIL is adopted, its management is a mandatory service of the Council but must be undertaken in accordance with the regulations. Most developers are accepting of the need for a CIL charge and follow the requirements. A minority will not and so this protocol is required.

What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	Guidance provided through the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	n/a
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Surcharges will only impact on developers that fail to adhere to CIL requirements. Will not have any impact on protected characteristics.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Impact will only be on those developers who fail to adhere to the CIL requirements. No action, on behalf of the Council, required to mitigate it. Choice lies with developers.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions.  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	As and when, in line with ongoing CIL administration reviews / legislative changes.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(c)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

**Report of:** Assistant Director Planning

**Relevant Managing Director:** Managing Director (Transformation)

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J Hodson

**Contact for further information:** Mr Peter Richards (Extn. 5046)  
(E-mail: peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk)

---

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) FUNDING PROGRAMME  
2016/17**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To propose for consultation the possible options for a CIL Funding Programme for 2016/17 based on the CIL monies anticipated to have been collected by the Council by 31 March 2016.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the updated Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS) provided at Appendix A be noted.

2.2 That the three potential options for spending CIL monies in 2016/17 set out in paragraph 4.11 of this report be approved for public consultation.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council adopted a CIL Charging Schedule in July 2014, and has been charging CIL since 1 September 2014. In March 2015, the Council approved a CIL Governance Framework which set out how decisions would be made on the spending of CIL monies by the Council, amongst other matters. Key to this Framework is the production each year of a CIL Funding Programme to prioritise how the CIL funds raised in a given financial year will be spent the following

financial year, which would be publicly consulted upon before Cabinet make a final decision on the CIL Funding Programme in January of any given year in readiness for spending the monies from April that year.

- 3.2 This report marks the preparation of the first such CIL Funding Programme prepared by the Council and offers possible options on how CIL monies already collected by the Council since 1 September 2014 and those anticipated to be collected by 31 March 2016 could be spent in 2016/17. The options have thus far been prepared in line with the approach set out in the CIL Governance Framework.
- 3.3 A key document in the process of preparing a CIL Funding Programme is the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS). The IDS is a database of infrastructure projects that are planned or desired to take place during the current Local Plan period. It originally formed part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and the CIL Charging Schedule but has become more of a “live” document now, allowing monitoring of all infrastructure projects in the Borough and so monitors how the Local Plan is performing in delivering this key aspect of sustainable development.
- 3.4 Many projects on the IDS should have a connection to new development in that they are needed or demanded because of the new development proposed and being delivered through the Local Plan. However, other projects are not necessarily linked to new development in this way, but are still needed to upgrade existing infrastructure provision or reflect aspirations that infrastructure providers have and which, in some cases, may enable further new development in the future.
- 3.5 In relation to CIL, therefore, the IDS provides the basis for assessing which infrastructure projects CIL monies should be spent on, although it should be clarified that not all projects on the IDS will be eligible for and / or need CIL monies. This is discussed further below.
- 3.6 Infrastructure providers, ward councillors, parish councils and relevant council officers have all been given opportunity to input ideas and suggestions on schemes that could go into the latest update of the IDS, and to update details of schemes that are already in the IDS. This has enabled officers within the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team to update the IDS (see Appendix A) and then, based on the information submitted, to rank proposed schemes to inform recommendations on how CIL monies could be spent.
- 3.7 In terms of CIL monies collected thus far or anticipated to be collected by 31 March 2016:
  - £45,702.59 was collected in 2014/15
  - £66,490.40 has thus far been collected in 2015/16 (at the time of writing this report)
  - A further £63,836 is anticipated to be collected by 31 March 2016

- 3.8 This therefore provides an anticipated total income from CIL by 31 March 2016 of £176,028.99. This total may however increase if a development comes forward sooner which was not anticipated to come forward this year or decrease if a developer fails to pay the required CIL charge when it is due.
- 3.9 Of this total, 5% is allocated to the Council's administrative costs of running CIL and 15% is allocated to the Parish Councils in which the developments paying CIL take place or for the Borough Council to spend within the non-parished areas where there is no Parish Council if a CIL-chargeable development is in a non-parished area (this is referred to as the "neighbourhood" portion in the CIL Governance Framework).
- 3.10 Therefore, based on the current anticipated total, **£141,198.19** of CIL monies is expected to be available to spend by the Council across the Borough in 2016/17 from the 80% of CIL income that the CIL Governance Framework refers to as the "strategic" portion.

#### **4.0 PROPOSED FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17**

- 4.1 The IDS now contains over 100 potential projects but the vast majority are not deliverable within the next year. However, many of those that are not immediately deliverable are projects that will deliver infrastructure that is needed and that might become deliverable in the near future. Therefore, a balance must be struck between funding appropriate and deliverable projects now with the CIL monies available and consideration for "saving" CIL monies to contribute to bigger, more beneficial projects that the infrastructure provider can work towards making deliverable while the necessary CIL monies are "saved up".
- 4.2 In addition, the IDS also serves a function as "living" evidence base to support monitoring and delivery of the current Local Plan and will inform the preparation of the next Local Plan, and so it includes all suggested infrastructure projects in the Borough, regardless of whether that infrastructure is directly related to new development or requires CIL monies to fund it. Therefore, some IDS projects will not meet a local need or demand that has arisen from new development, which is a key test of whether CIL monies can be spent on a project, and / or may not require CIL monies as the scheme has secured funding from another source.
- 4.3 To help inform deliberation on whether a project is eligible for CIL funding and then to assist in prioritising those eligible projects, council officers have used the information collated on each project to assess schemes against six key criteria:
1. Are CIL monies needed to deliver the project?
  2. Does the project meet a local need or demand that has arisen from new development?
  3. Does the infrastructure fall under the Regulation 123 list?
  4. When can the infrastructure be delivered?

5. Does the project help meet at least one of the Council's Corporate Priorities?
  6. Is the project identified within a relevant local strategy, e.g. the Local Plan, the Highways & Transport Masterplan and the Leisure Strategy?
- 4.4 The first criterion ensures that all infrastructure projects on the IDS which do not require CIL monies are separated off at the outset, reducing unnecessary assessment of projects. The second and third criteria are essential as CIL monies can only be spent on infrastructure that meets a local need or demand that has arisen from new development and on types of infrastructure that are on the Regulation 123 list (<http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/media/132578/Regulation-123-list.pdf>). At this point, we have effectively ruled out all infrastructure projects from further assessment which would never receive CIL monies based on the current information.
- 4.5 The fourth criterion is necessary to understand whether the project is deliverable by 31 March 2017 and so might benefit from having CIL monies allocated to it for spending in the next financial year. The fifth and sixth criteria are necessary to help differentiate and prioritise between projects, where several meet all of the first four criteria.
- 4.6 A further consideration is also the cost of the project and what CIL monies are required to deliver it, so as to encourage greater value for money by using CIL monies to lever in other funding.
- 4.7 When applying the above criteria, it has been concluded that at the current time there are only five projects on the IDS that are eligible for and have a need for funding and which appear at this stage to have the potential to be delivered by 31 March 2017. The projects are:

- *New Allotments in Skelmersdale*

This project already has £50,000 of funding allocated to it from the Council's Capital Programme, but further funding would enable the delivery of much-needed further allotment provision in Skelmersdale, especially in light of the planned numbers of new houses in the Skelmersdale area in the Local Plan. Supplementing the Council's Capital Programme allocation of £50,000 with £20,000 of CIL monies would enable the delivery of 50 new allotment plots in total. As such, this project would meet all the key criteria. Delivery of this project is dependent upon planning permission but, should that be granted, the project could be delivered by 31 March 2017.

- *New Allotments in Burscough*

This project requires the allocation of £30,000 of CIL monies to deliver much-needed and much sought-after allotments in the Burscough area (approximately 20 plots), where 850 new homes are planned over the Local Plan period. As such, this project would meet all the key criteria. Delivery of this project is dependent upon identifying a suitable site and any necessary planning permission but, should one be found and planning permission granted, could be delivered by 31 March 2017.



- *Improvements to Public Open Space and associated car parking at Station Approach, Ormskirk*

This project already benefits from £45,000 of Section 106 funding, but requires £15,000 of CIL monies to enable the delivery of the associated car park improvements to encourage people to use the open space. The car parking may also serve a dual function as time goes on to provide additional car parking for Ormskirk train station as increased development of homes in Ormskirk and surrounding areas increases demand for the train services. As such, this project would meet all the key criteria and, subject to any requirement for planning permission, is deliverable by 31 March 2017.

- *Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve*

This project from the Wildlife Trust is already being supported by Downholland Parish Council who has committed £3,700 to install a boardwalk to allow people to access the wet woodland. Up to £8,000 additional funding is being sought to be able to extend the boardwalk further into the woodland. Given recent development in Haskayne and the fact that this is one of only three nature reserves in the Borough, this project would meet all the key criteria (with the exception of being identified within a local strategy) and would be deliverable by 31 March 2017.

- *Halsall Memorial Hall Extension*

This project was submitted by Halsall Parish Council and is to provide additional facilities at Halsall Memorial Hall where the current facilities are insufficient and too small to satisfy the community demands, which will only increase given recent development in Halsall and the two housing allocations in the Parish in the Local Plan. The Parish Council have sought £30,000 of funding from other sources and so is seeking £30,000 of match funding from CIL monies. This project would meet all the key criteria (with the exception of being identified within a local strategy) and would be deliverable by 31 March 2017, subject to detailed design and any necessary planning permission.

- 4.8 All of these projects require fairly small sums of CIL monies. As time progresses, and development occurs throughout the Borough, then the 15% “neighbourhood” portion of CIL that Parish Councils hold (or that the Council holds in unparished areas to be spent in that area) will grow and could be utilised on low cost projects such as these, where sufficient funding is available, or expected to be available, from the “neighbourhood” portion. That being the case, the larger portion of CIL monies that the Council retains can instead be spent on larger, more strategic projects. At the current time, the 15% “neighbourhood” portion has not raised significant funds within the areas that the above projects are located but given major housing allocations in the Local Plan that are due to come forward through the planning process shortly, it is reasonable to assume

that the areas of Burscough, Ormskirk and Halsall may have “neighbourhood” portion CIL monies available in the next few years.

4.9 Looking further ahead to projects on the IDS in the medium-term delivery category (1-5 years) that would be unlikely to be delivered by 31 March 2017, there are a great many projects that the Council could choose to save CIL monies toward, some of which are very significant. Some of the more significant projects in the medium-term delivery category that may require some level of CIL funding (total estimated cost in brackets) are:

- A new Skelmersdale Sports Centre (£12million)
- Improvements to Park Pool, Ormskirk (£5million)
- Improvements to Burscough Sports Centre (£5million)
- Improvements to enhance open space provision in the Tawd Valley in Skelmersdale (£300,000)
- Redevelopment of Birleywood Health Centre, Skelmersdale (unknown, but Health funding likely to provide vast majority of funds)
- Investment in health facilities in Burscough (unknown, but Health funding likely to provide vast majority of funds)
- Investment in health facilities in Northern Parishes (unknown, but Health funding likely to provide vast majority of funds)
- Ormskirk to Skelmersdale Linear Park (unknown)
- River Douglas Linear Park, Tarleton / Hesketh Bank (unknown, but Section 106 funding and on-site delivery within a development site will provide much of the funding needed)
- Provision of a new library in Burscough (unknown)

4.10 Predicting how much CIL income may be collected in future years is extremely difficult given the number of variables involved, not least uncertainty over when sites will actually commence on site (which is when CIL can begin to be collected). However, based on the anticipated delivery of CIL-chargeable housing to 2020 in West Lancashire and a conservative average house size of 80m<sup>2</sup>, a rough estimate of income over the next five years would be in excess of £3million. This is important to consider if the Council is to think about saving CIL monies towards a larger project to be delivered in the next five years.

4.11 Taking into account all of the above information it is therefore recommended that the Council consult on three options for spending CIL monies in 2016/17:

- 1) That the following five projects have CIL monies allocated to them for spending in 2016/17 (with the remaining “strategic” CIL monies saved for spending in future years):

- New Allotments in Skelmersdale (£20,000)
- New Allotments in Burscough (£30,000)
- Improvements to Public Open Space and associated car parking at Station Approach, Ormskirk (£15,000)
- Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve (£8,000)
- Halsall Memorial Hall Extension (£30,000)

2) That fewer projects are prioritised and have CIL monies allocated to them for spending in 2016/17, so that a greater portion of the “strategic” CIL monies can be saved for spending on projects in future years. For example, this could be done on the basis that the “neighbourhood” portion anticipated to be raised in future years is spent on the smaller projects in those areas. This example would leave two projects being funded from CIL monies in 2016/17 (because those projects are in areas where little or no “neighbourhood” portion is anticipated to be raised in the next few years):

- New Allotments in Skelmersdale (£20,000)
- Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve (£8,000)

3) That all “strategic” CIL monies raised by 31 March 2016 are saved for spending on projects in future years.

4.12 Under Option 1, the projects together require £103,000 of CIL monies, although some may well drop out of the shortlist after public consultation if they are not able to show they are deliverable by 31 March 2017. Therefore, any “strategic” CIL monies raised above this figure would not be allocated and can be rolled forward and saved toward projects for delivery in future years. Under Option 2, the amount of CIL monies allocated to spend on projects in 2016/17 would decrease (allowing more CIL monies to be saved) with the exact value depending on which projects are prioritised. Option 3 would see all “strategic” CIL monies raised by 31 March 2016 saved and rolled forward for spending in future years, so no CIL monies would be spent in 2016/17.

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

5.1 Should Cabinet resolve in accordance with the Recommendation at paragraph 2.2 above, the options set out at paragraph 4.11 will be publicly consulted upon. This consultation will include all infrastructure providers, as well as the general public and other stakeholders, and will seek views on the options for spending

CIL monies in 2016/17 put forward or whether other projects in the IDS should be prioritised instead or whether entirely new projects should be considered by the Council.

5.2 The Council will publicise and consult through the following methods:

- Press release
- Information on the Council's CIL webpages and consultation webpages
- Electronic / paper mail out to all consultees registered on the Local Plan consultation database, parish councils and Members
- Electronic mail out to all infrastructure providers
- Printed information available at libraries and council offices
- Electronic and paper based survey forms will be available to complete
- "West Lancs Now"

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

6.1 The delivery of new infrastructure funded by CIL monies will have positive implications for sustainability and contribute to the delivery of the development allocated in the West Lancs Local Plan 2012-2027 in a sustainable manner. Depending on which projects are ultimately selected for spending CIL monies on, various objectives of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy will be contributed towards by these decisions.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There is no additional cost to Council resources of preparing and consulting on a CIL Funding Programme given that any projects prioritised for funding will be funded by CIL monies and, in some cases, match-funded identified by the infrastructure provider from other sources; the administration of CIL (including the CIL Funding Programme) is covered by the 5% administration fee retained by the Council from CIL receipts together with the Planning Services revenue budgets.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

8.1 There are no significant risks related to this report.

## **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Infrastructure Delivery Schedule

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment



## Infrastructure Delivery Schedule - Current Schemes

The information in this IDS is updated regularly based on information from the infrastructure providers. Blank spaces or unknowns indicate that information has not been provided to us.

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
<b>Children, Young People &amp; Schools</b>													
20	Not started	Extension to primary school	Potential extension to increase a 1 form entry to a 2 form entry primary school.	Burscough	LCC - Education		YTF Masterplan SPD	No	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
21	Not started	Increase secondary provision in the Burscough area	Increase secondary provision in the Burscough area	Burscough	LCC - Education		YTF Masterplan SPD	No	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Green</b>													
31	Not started	Community Woodland	New community woodland to be created in Burscough	Burscough	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Parish Council	Local Plan	Yes	No	Beyond 5 years (long term)	£200,000	Not known	£100,000
33	Not started	New Allotments in Newburgh	New Allotments in Newburgh	Eastern Parishes	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		-	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£30,000	No	£30,000
34	Not started	New Allotments in Parbold	New Allotments in Parbold	Eastern Parishes	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Private sector/ Parbold Parish Council	-	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£30,000	No	£30,000
55	Not started	Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve	Installing a boardwalk to allow people to access the wet woodland, creating and installing on site and internet interpretation	Western Parishes	Wildlife Trust	Haskayne Parish Council, Forestry Commission		Yes	Yes	Up to 1 year (short term)	£3700	We intend to use the current funding of £3,700 from the Parish Council to obtain additional funding of £8,000 to extend the boardwalk further into the woodland. We are currently seeking this funding.	Unknown at this stage; this will depend on the amount that can be raised from other sources.
73	Not started	Allotments in Skelmersdale	Provision of new allotment facilities in Skelmersdale	Skelmersdale	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	West Lancs Community Food Growing Initiative	-	Yes	Yes	Up to 1 year (short term)	£50,000	Yes. £50,000 WLBC Capital.	£0. However further funding would allow for further allotment provision

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
81	Not started	New allotments in Burscough	Creation of new allotment facility	Burscough	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	Up to 1 year (short term)	£30,000	Not known	£30,000
107	Not started	Flooding - Hurlston Brook Study	Various improvements to infrastructure to alleviate flooding issues - recommendation of study on Hurlston Brook. In relation to Halsall Lane, Altys Lane, Railway Path, Cottage Lane. Various locations in Ormskirk.	Ormskirk	LCC		-	No	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
108	Not started	Flooding - Surface water study investigation	Surface water study investigation into flooding - Parrs Lane / Prescott Road & Town Green Lane, Aughton	Aughton	LCC		-	No	No	Up to 1 year (short term)	£5000	Unknown	Unknown
109	Not started	Installation of dedicated highway surface water drainage system	Installation of dedicated highway surface water drainage system - Tarleton Highway surface water infrastructure	Tarleton	LCC		-	No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£155,000	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Leisure</b>													
50	Not started	Touring Caravan Pickup Point	New Touring Caravan pick up point at Beacon Country Park	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		-	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£50,000	No	£50,000
69	In progress	Chequer Lane Lake Improvements	Environmental improvements and new recreational facilities including play area, seating and picnic tables, and new fishing platforms	Chequer Lane Lake, Upholland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Leisure Strategy	Yes	Yes	Up to 1 year (short term)	£62,000	Yes. £62,000 from S106 monies.	£0
70	Ongoing	Cheshire Lines Path	Improvements to access, signage, surfacing and interpretation.	Great Altcar/Downholland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Trans Pennine Trail	-	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£40,000	No	£40,000
74	Not started	Playing field drainage improvements in Ormskirk & Burscough	Extensive drainage works to playing fields in Ormskirk & Burscough	Burscough	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Burscough Juniors FC, Burscough Parish Council	Leisure Strategy & Playing pitch strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£240,000	Yes. £65,000 Sport England - secured £77,000 WLBC - secured £98,000 Football Foundation - to be confirmed	£98,000 if Football Foundation funding bid is unsuccessful.

- 400 -



#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
75	In progress	Ormskirk bowling greens	Construction of 2 new bowling greens in Ormskirk	Land adjacent Ormskirk Cricket Club	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Ormskirk Bowling Club / Landowner (Ormskirk School)	New Leisure Strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£176,000	All £176K is available and approved through existing S106 funding.	£0
79	Not started	Richmond Park Pavilion Extension	Extension of existing changing pavilion to accommodate new officials changing facility at Richmond Park, Burscough	Burscough	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services			Yes	No	Up to 1 year (short term)	£20,000	No	£20,000
80	Not started	New changing facilities - Whittle Drive	Improvement / re-building of existing changing facility	Whittle Drive playing fields	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		-	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£60,000	Not known	£60,000
92	Not started	High Sands Play Area, Rufford	Replacement of old play area at High Sands Play Area, Rufford	Rufford	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Site is seen as high value in new Play Strategy	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£40,000	No	£40,000
93	Not started	Aveling Drive Sports Pavilion	Construction of new purpose built pavilion	Aveling Drive, Banks	North Meols Parish Council	WLBC		Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£150,000	Not aware of any	£150,000
95	Not started	Hesketh Avenue sports pavilion	Construction of a new purpose built pavilion	Hesketh Avenue, Banks	North Meols Parish Council	WLBC	-	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£150,000	Not aware of any	£150,000
<b>Social</b>													
8	In progress	Mere Sands Wood Visitor Centre	Extension and refurbishment of Mere Sands Wood visitor Centre to improve public facilities and financial sustainability of attraction.	Borough wide	Wildlife Trust	LCC, WLBC, developer		Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£400,000	£30,000 secured Applications will be made to Heritage Lottery, Lancashire Environmental Fund and charitable trusts for the remainder	Uncertain at this stage; dependent on other funding secured. CIL monies would be used to lever in other funding for grant applications - eg using £2000 to obtain a grant of £20,000

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
9	Ongoing	Playground improvements (various)	Playground Improvements (various)	Borough wide	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Leisure Strategy - Play Strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	WLBC Play Capital - currently £30,000 per year	Unknown
22	Not started	Burscough library	Provision of a new library of appropriate size in central location to support additional development	Burscough	LCC	Developer, WLBC	YTF Masterplan SPD	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
29	Not started	Burscough Sports Centre	The existing sports centre will be upgraded	Burscough	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	LCC / Serco	Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£5,000,000	Not known	£5,000,000
40	In progress	Coronation Park	Coronation Park - final phase of environmental and facility improvements (art, water features, stone wall repairs, flower beds)	Ormskirk & Aughton	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£30,000	No.	£30,000
41	Not started	Park Pool	Improvements to existing facilities	Ormskirk & Aughton	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	LCC/Serco	Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£5,000,000	Not known	£5,000,000
47	Not started	New changing facilities at Tower Hill	New football changing facilities at Tower Hill, Up Holland	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Football Club	Leisure Strategy - Playing Pitch Strategy	Yes	No	Beyond 5 years (long term)	£80,000	No	£80,000
48	Not started	New changing facilities at Chequer Lane	New football changing facilities at Chequer Lane, Up Holland	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	Football Club	Leisure Strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£80,000	Possibly	£80,000
49	Not started	New Visitor Centre at Beacon Country Park	New Visitor Centre at Beacon Country Park	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	LCC	Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	No	Beyond 5 years (long term)	£750,000	No	£750,000
51	Not started	Skelmersdale Sports Centre	New £12 million sports centre to replace the existing sports centre	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	LCC/Serco	Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£12,000,000	No	£12,000,000
58	Not started	Tawd Valley Improvements	Improvements to enhance the Tawd Valley	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services	LCC	Leisure Strategy. Local Plan.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£300,000	Unknown	Unknown
59	Not started	New changing facilities at Bramble Way, Parbold	New changing room facilities at Bramble Way, Parbold	Parbold	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Leisure Strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£50,000	-	£50,000
61	Not started	Hunters Hill Country Park	Improvements to Hunters Hill Country Park	Parbold	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Leisure Strategy	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£60,000	£60,000	No

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
82	Not started	Investment in health facilities in Tarleton, Hesketh Bank and Banks	Upgrade and develop services in this locality to address locality demand constraints and infrastructure issues	Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks	CCCG	NHS Property Services, WLBC	The CCG is currently undertaking a review of its estate infrastructure and capacity needs as a consequence of its developing commissioning strategy and implementation plan. A proposed locality investment plan is currently being worked up by the CCG, NHSE and NHS Property Services.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Final capital costs are being scoped as part of the detailed planning and option appraisal process.	Unknown	Unknown
83	Not started	Redevelopment of Birleywood Health Centre	Upgrade and extension to Birleywood health centre to address locality demand constraints and infrastructure issues	Birleywood , Skelmersdale	CCCG	NHS Property Services, WLBC	The CCG is currently undertaking a review of its estate infrastructure and capacity needs as a consequence of its developing commissioning strategy and implementation plan. This scheme is currently being worked up by the CCG, NHSE and NHS Property services and has been identified as the highest priority.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Final capital costs are being defined as part of the detailed planning process but the likely estimate is circa £2.5 m	Unknown	Unknown

-403-

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
84	Not started	Investment in health facilities in Burscough	Upgrade and develop services in Burscough to address locality demand constraints and infrastructure issues	Burscough	CCCG	NHS Property Services, WLBC	The CCG is currently undertaking a review of its estate infrastructure and capacity needs as a consequence of its developing commissioning strategy and implementation plan. A proposed development is currently being worked up by the CCG, NHSE and NHS Property services.	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Final capital costs are being scoped as part of the detailed planning and option appraisal process.	Unknown	Unknown
94	Not started	North Meols Community Centre	Renovations for existing community centre	Hoole Lane, Banks	North Meols Parish Council	WLBC		Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£15,000	Not aware of any	£15,000
97	Not started	Halsall Memorial Hall Extension	Construction of additional facilities at Halsall Memorial Hall	Halsall	Halsall Parish Council	WLBC		Yes	Yes	Up to 1 year (short term)	£60,000	Match funding applied for (Awards for all) S106 funding for external POS uses. Breakdown to be advised.	£30,000
98	Not started	Improvements to play area/field at Appley Lane South	-	Appley Bridge	Wrightington Parish Council	WLBC Leisure	-	Yes	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
99	Not started	Improved drainage at Mossy Lea playing fields	Improved drainage at Mossy Lea playing fields	Wrightington	Wrightington Parish Council	WLBC	-	Yes	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Social / Green</b>													
30	Not started	New Burscough Park	New Park proposal as part of Yew Tree Farm Development	Burscough	Private developer	WLBC	Local Plan and YTF Masterplan SPD	No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	unknown	developer to fund	nil
77	Not started	Station Approach Open Space	Improvements works to open space at Station Approach, Ormskirk, including car parking	Ormskirk	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services		Local Plan. Leisure Strategy.	Yes	Yes	up to 1 year (short term)	£60,000	Yes. £45,000 from S106	£15,000

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
78	Not started	Station Approach Linear Park	Creation of a green link between public open space sites on the old railway line, Ormskirk	Ormskirk	WLBC Leisure & Cultural services			Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£40,000	No	£40,000
88	Not started	Improvements to Skelmersdale employment areas	Improvements to infrastructure within Skelmersdale employment areas including entrance signage, green spaces, public realm and car parks to improve attractiveness of areas for business purposes	Skelmersdale	WLBC		Economic Development Strategy	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Transport</b>													
4	Not started	Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy	Package of measures to address congestion and movement in Ormskirk.	Borough wide	LCC - Transport	WLBC	West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	unknown	unknown	unknown
24	Not started	Reinstatement of Burscough Curves	Reinstatement of the Burscough Curves to Link Ormskirk - Southport - Preston.	Burscough	LCC - Transport	WLBC, Network Rail, Merseytravel	West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
25	Not started	Electrification Ormskirk - Preston; First phase Burscough Junction	Electrification of the Liverpool - Ormskirk Line to Burscough Junction to open up the Liverpool travel to work area. Second phase to extend Burscough Junction to Preston.	Burscough	LCC - Transport	WLBC, Network Rail, Merseytravel	West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan, West Lancs Local Plan	Yes	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
32	Not started	Appley Bridge Park and Ride	Park and Ride facilities and accessibility improvements at - Appley Bridge	Eastern Parishes	GMPTE	WLBC		Yes	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
36	Not started	Green lane link road	Green Lane Link Road. Required to remove HGV traffic off rural road network in Tarleton.	Northern Parishes	LCC - Transport	WLBC	West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	To be funded through LTP	Nil
39	Not started	Ormskirk bus station	Ormskirk bus station upgrade	Ormskirk & Aughton	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan & LTP	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£1,000,000	Funded through LTP	nil

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
42	Not started	Cycle links between Edge Hill University and Ormskirk rail & bus stations	Upgraded pedestrian links and new cycle links between Edge Hill University and Ormskirk rail & bus station	Ormskirk & Aughton	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan & LTP	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Potential £700k from S106 and LTP monies	Unknown
43	Not started	Tawd Valley cycle path linking Skelmersdale with West Lancs College	Improvement to access through Tawd Valley to link Skelmersdale local neighbourhoods and West Lancashire College / town centre	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LTP	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£472,000	To be funded through S106 monies and LCC	nil
44	Not started	Skelmersdale Movement Strategy	Package of measures to improve connectivity throughout Skelmersdale and open up public realm	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	LCC - Transport	WLBC	West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
45	Not started	Skelmersdale rail connection	Provision of a rail connection, together with a rail/bus interchange and parkway facilities, to serve Skelmersdale, with services to both Manchester and Liverpool	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	LCC - Transport	WLBC, Network Rail, Merseytravel, Merseyrail, Northern Rail	West Lancs Local Plan West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Likely to be funded through LEP or DFT funding	nil
52	Ongoing	Demand Responsive Transport System	Demand Responsive Transport System serving Skelmersdale and Up Holland residents wishing to access employment on the Pimbo estate	Skelmersdale & Up Holland	WLBC	LCC		No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£1000 per annum	None	None
63	Not started	Yew Tree Farm to Burscough Town Centre access improvements	Provide widened footway to cater for cyclists on the west side of Liverpool Road between the new access junction (south of Higgins Lane) to Lord Street and to include pedestrian improvements at the Trevor Road signals.	Burscough	LCC - Transport	WLBC	YTF Masterplan SPD LCC Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
64	Not started	Burscough Town Centre Public Realm Improvements	Public realm improvements and shared space scheme on Liverpool Road between Mill Lane and Bobby Langton Way.	Burscough	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan LTP	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
65	Not started	Skelmersdale Public Transport Connectivity and New Interchange	New bus station and interchange facilities to support cycling and links with rail facility	Skelmersdale	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	Beyond 5 years (long term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
66	Not started	Route management opportunities	Effective route management for HGVS as a result of the Switch Island link road	Borough wide	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
67	Not started	Rural connectivity	Improve rural access by considering how best to provide transport links. Footways to be reviewed and made more attractive for cyclists.	Rural areas	LCC - Transport	WLBC	LCC Transport Masterplan	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
100	Not started	Puffin pedestrian crossing, Ormskirk Parish Church	Construct a staggered puffin pedestrian crossing on the A570 at the junction of Derby Street West / Southport Road / Church	Ormskirk	LCC - Transport		West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£125,000	Unknown	Unknown
101	Not started	Cycle footpath linking to industrial estates in Skelmersdale (Whiteledge South to Nipe Lane)	Cycle footpaths linking to industrial estates. 2 schemes possible. Scheme A - Whiteledge South footbridge to Nipe Lane	Skelmersdale	LCC - Transport			Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Scheme A £79,000 / Scheme B £47,400	Unknown	Unknown
102	Not started	Off road cycle path at Whitehey Lane, Skelmersdale	Off road cycle path at roundabout linking to industrial estate and footway linking to bus stop	Skelmersdale	LCC - Transport			Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£55,300	Unknown	Unknown
103	Not started	Refuge and footway improvement	Refuge and footway improvement on A5147 Wainshar Lane, Haskayne (35m north of Rosemary Lane)	Haskayne	LCC - Transport		LCC Transport and Highways Masterplan	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£40,000	Unknown	Unknown
104	Not started	Zebra crossing at Aughton St, Ormskirk	Construction of a zebra crossing at junction of Aughton St / Bridge St, Ormskirk	Ormskirk	LCC - Transport		LCC Transport & Highways Masterplan	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£35,000	Unknown	Unknown
105	Not started	Burscough Transport Interchange	Relocation of existing library into a larger more suitable premises. Dual project with ticketing and transport office	Burscough	LCC - Transport			Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	£100,000	Unknown	Unknown

-407-

#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
106	Not started	Skelmersdale subway improvements	Urban Art project with local young people to repaint 8 subways	Skelmersdale	LCC - Transport		Issue raised in Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD	No	No	Up to 1 year (short term)	£40,000		£35,000
110	Not started	Cycle footpath linking to industrial estates in Skelmersdale (Nipe Lane to Pimbo Road)	Cycle footpaths linking to industrial estates. Scheme B - Nipe Lane to Pimbo Road	Skelmersdale	LCC - Transport			Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Scheme A £79,000 / Scheme B £47,400	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Transport / Green</b>													
10	Not started	River Douglas Linear Park	New multi use linear park providing an off road path linking Hesketh Bank to Tarleton	Tarleton/Hesketh Bank	WLBC	LCC / EA / Parish Councils/ Canal & Rivers Trust	West Lancs Local Plan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
11	Not started	Ormskirk to Burscough Linear Park	New multi use linear park providing a largely off road path linking Ormskirk to Burscough	Ormskirk to Burscough	WLBC	LCC	West Lancs Local Plan, Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD, Grove Farm Development Brief and West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan	No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	S106 monies from two applications totalling £229k potentially available (£100k received and committed; £129k yet to be received)	Unknown
12	Not started	Ormskirk to Skelmersdale Linear Park	New multi use linear park providing a largely off road path following route of former railway line	Ormskirk/Skelmersdale	WLBC	LCC	West Lancs Local Plan, Firwood Road Development Brief and West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
13	Not started	Banks Linear Park	New multi use linear park providing an off road path following former railway line	Banks	WLBC	LCC	West Lancs Local Plan and West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan	Yes	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
76	Not started	Burscough-Parbold Towpath Improvements	Improvement works to the towpath between Parbold and Burscough, in particular the section between Ring O'Bells Lane and Spencer's Bridge	Burscough / Parbold	LCC	Canal & Rivers Trust	LCC Transport Masterplan LTP	Yes	No	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

- 408 -



#	Status	Project Name	Project description	Location	Lead agency	Delivery partners	Relevant strategies	Infrastructure listed on CIL R123?	Does it meet a need created by new development?	Timescales / Delivery	Anticipated cost	Match funding available	CIL monies required
89	Ongoing	(re) Cycle to Work	Scheme provided for Skelmersdale and Up Holland residents, working on Pimbo or White Moss employment areas, and earning under £25k per annum, to provide them with reconditioned cycles to access work/encourage sustainability	Skelmersdale and Up Holland	WLBC	ExselCIC		No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	£1000 per annum	Funded through S106 monies (Walkers & Maple View)	No
96	Not started	Newburgh-Parbold Canal towpath improvements	Improvements to the towpath between Newburgh and Parbold	Newburgh	Newburgh Parish Council		Delivery of project needs support of Canal & Rivers Trust. CRT have already informed Newburgh Parish Council that the works are not in their implementation schedules, or identified as being necessary works	Yes	No	Unknown	Unknown	No details of any match funding	Unknown
<b>Utilities &amp; Waste</b>													
6	Ongoing	New Lane WWTW	Solution for waste water treatment capacity issue at New Lane	Catchment for New Lane WWTW	United Utilities		Local Plan	No	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	to be funded by UU	Nil
7	Ongoing	Water supply	Upgrade the Southport boreholes and Bickerstaffe water treatment works	Borough wide	United Utilities			No	No	Unknown	Unknown	to be funded by UU	Nil
27	Not started	Burscough drainage	In addition to usual on-site SuDS, surface water removal from existing system	Burscough	Private developer	United Utilities	YTF Masterplan SPD	No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Improvements to be funded by developer	Nil
28	Not started	Ormskirk drainage	In addition to usual on-site SuDS, surface water removal from existing system	Ormskirk	Private developer	United Utilities	Grove Farm Development Brief	No	Yes	1-5 years (medium term)	Unknown	Improvements to be funded by developer	Nil



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Planning</b>
<b>Completed by: Helen Hatch</b>	<b>Date: 13 August 2015</b>
<b>Subject Title: Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding Programme 2016/17</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	The approval of public consultation on the proposed funding priorities for spending CIL monies in 2016/17.
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	-
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	-
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	CIL provides funding to provide or improve infrastructure required as a result of new development and growth in the Borough. CIL expenditure will benefit the residents and

	<p>businesses within the Borough by delivering improvements to infrastructure. Infrastructure projects, identified as suitable for expenditure in 2016/17, have been shortlisted from the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS). The IDS has been compiled through consultation with infrastructure providers. Some schemes on the IDS will need to be delivered in partnership with the infrastructure providers and their deliverability, timescales and costs have been a consideration in identifying project priorities.</p>
<p>If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?</p>	<p>This report seeks approval to consult on the proposed funding priorities for spending CIL monies in 2016/17 but does not seek to make any final recommendations at this stage. Such recommendations will be made following receipt and consideration of consultation responses.</p> <p>The schemes proposed for funding serve to provide or make improvements to public open space, sports facilities and allotments in the Borough which arise as a result of new development. Such projects will be prepared in acknowledgement of equality and diversity to ensure that all groups may access the schemes.</p> <p>Consultation on the proposed schemes for delivery will be available to all, and materials may be accessed online, in libraries and council offices. Materials will be available in large print or translated into other languages upon request. Publicity will be undertaken through a range of media to ensure that protected characteristics groups have the opportunity to respond.</p>
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <p>Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></p> <p>Yes Yes Yes Yes No No No No No</p>
<p><b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b></p>	
<p>In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?</p>	<p>All groups must be given an equal opportunity to respond to consultation.</p> <p>Service-users will include, but not be limited to, members of the public, sports groups and local</p>

	community groups.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Residents of the Borough will be given the opportunity to respond to consultation on which infrastructure schemes should be funded through CIL monies in 2016/17 and whether any CIL monies should be retained and carried into future years to fund costlier schemes.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	This consultation will seek to gather people's views on infrastructure schemes. Comments will be considered in preparing the final recommendations for CIL expenditure in 2016/17.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	An equality survey form will be attached to all comments forms, although will not be a mandatory requirement for respondents to complete in order for their comments to be accepted. Any completed equality surveys will be analysed and reported on.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	-
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	<p>This report seeks approval to undertake public consultation on the proposals for CIL expenditure in 2016/17. It does not seek to make any final recommendations at this stage.</p> <p>Public consultation will provide the opportunity for people with particular protected characteristics to respond on any issues that may potentially affect them should any of the IDS projects be brought into fruition.</p>
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Any negative impacts identified through the public consultation will be considered and action taken to mitigate.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	-  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	Consultation will be undertaken on an annual basis, in line with the CIL Governance

	<p>Framework. Consultation methods will be reviewed annually. All comments we received will be considered in preparing the final recommendations for CIL expenditure in 2016/17. A feedback report will be prepared and published following consultation to document how we have considered all comments and any changes made as a result.</p>
--	--



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(d)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Assistant Director Planning</b>
<b>Relevant Managing Director:</b>	<b>Managing Director (Transformation)</b>
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor J Hodson</b>
<b>Contact for further information:</b>	<b>Ian Bond (Extn. 5167) (e-mail: <a href="mailto:ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk">ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk</a>)</b>

---

**SUBJECT: COMMEMORATION OF FORMER ORMSKIRK RESIDENT WILLIAM HEATON VC WHO RECEIVED A VICTORIA CROSS DURING THE BOER WAR**

---

Wards affected: Derby and Knowsley wards Ormskirk

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To agree upon on the most appropriate way to commemorate the bravery of William Heaton who was the recipient of a Victoria Cross in the Boer War.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That a commemorative plaque in honour of William Heaton be erected within Victoria Park, Ormskirk in accordance with the design description referred to in paragraph 5.6 of this report.

2.2 That Cabinet indicate whether they prefer location A or location B, referred to at paragraph 5.5 of this report, for the siting of the plaque.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Planning in consultation with the Assistant Director Community Services, implement the works arising pursuant to recommendation 2.1 and 2.2 above.

---

---

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In June we received a request from a local historian to consider how the Council might commemorate the life of William Heaton, a former Ormskirk resident, who received a Victoria Cross for his extreme bravery in the Boer War in 1900.
- 3.2 Whilst this is a somewhat unusual request I felt that it was important to undertake and collate further research on the matter and asked the Heritage and Environment Manager to consider the request and come up with an appropriate proposal for Members to consider.

### **4.0 HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 William Edward Heaton was born on the 2nd of January 1875, and baptised at Ormskirk Parish Church. Whilst born in Bickerstaffe In 1891 he is recorded as living at No.3 Court 17, Aughton Street, Ormskirk, in an area of the town centre which is now occupied by the Market Way Car Park.
- 4.2 In the Boer War William served with the 1st Battalion Kings Liverpool Regiment. His Battalion took part in operations leading to the relief of Ladysmith, and in the advance north through eastern Transvaal.
- 4.3 On the 23rd of August 1900 two companies of the Liverpool Regiment went forward to assist the British Cavalry. However on a ridge facing the main Boer positions at Geluk Farm, they pushed too far forwards without support and had to take up defensive positions under heavy fire. After suffering serious casualties and in being in danger of being overrun Private Heaton volunteered to take a message to explain their desperate situation at significant risk to his own life. Had it not been for the courage of William Heaton, the remainder of his company would most likely have been killed.
- 4.4 William was later promoted to Corporal and for his bravery he received his Victoria Cross medal from the Duke of York (later crowned King George V) at Pietermaritzburg on the 14th of August 1901. The Victoria Cross is a military decoration awarded 'for valour in the face of the enemy' and is the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry. His Victoria Cross was one of only 78 awarded during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War campaign from October 1899 to May 1902.
- 4.5 William died on the 5th of June 1941, aged 65, and was buried with full military honours at Ormskirk Parish Church.
- 4.6 Being awarded a VC is a very rare honour for service personnel and from research to date William Heaton is the only person with associations with West Lancashire to be awarded a VC. William's medals including his Victoria Cross are currently on display at the Liverpool Museum.



## **5.0 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 5.1 I am satisfied, that it would be appropriate to commemorate William Heaton's achievement of receiving a Victoria Cross.
- 5.2 The Council however does not have an existing scheme in place which would guide our approach in such matters. Whilst the Government operates a scheme for commemorating people who received the Victoria Cross in the First World War this does not extend to other conflicts and would not apply in this particular case.
- 5.3 The option of placing a plaque at his former house/home is not available and I do not consider there is an appropriate location within the immediate area of his former address at the rear of Aughton Street (Market Way) which would reflect the importance of the matter.
- 5.4 As William survived both the 2<sup>nd</sup> Boer War and WW1, in which he also served, we cannot commemorate his life on the existing war memorials in Coronation Park and Victoria Park in Ormskirk. However given that his act of bravery, and reason for his VC medal, relate to the Boer War, a location within Victoria Park provides some context to his deeds and is in my view the most appropriate option.
- 5.5 As the Boer War memorial itself is a 'Listed' structure great care needs to be given to preserving the memorial and its immediate setting. In this respect as above ground and competing structures would not be appropriate it is proposed that we provide a carved stone (sand stone or granite) plaque within the park close to the existing Boer War Memorial. A suitable location can be found either within the path leading up to the memorial or to the side in an existing mown grassed area (see attached Appendix B for details). In respect to the later a low stone plinth (300-400mm) would be provided for the plaque to help raise it above grass level.
- 5.6 I propose that the design of the plaque, subject to agreement, would be 300mm square with the simple carved inscription i.e. name, date of birth and the date of receiving the VC and including a carved Victoria Cross at its centre based on the one used by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (see Appendix B for details).

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The cost of producing a bespoke designed, ground mounted, stone plaque including fixing is estimated at £500 - £700. An above ground option including an upstanding stone base would increase the cost to approximately £800 - £1000.
- 7.2 The cost of the works can be met from existing budgets.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

- A – Location plan for commemoration plaque.
- B – Proposed plaque and locations.



Possible locations for plaque

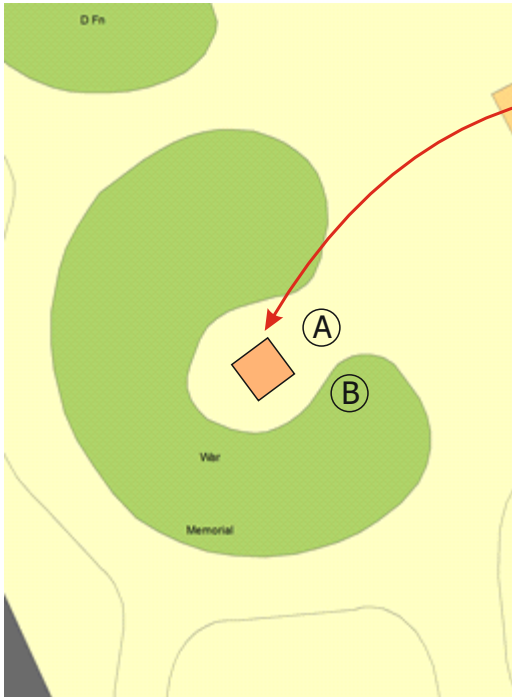
A: In paving, two metres in front of memorial

B: In grass bed to south of memorial

-419-

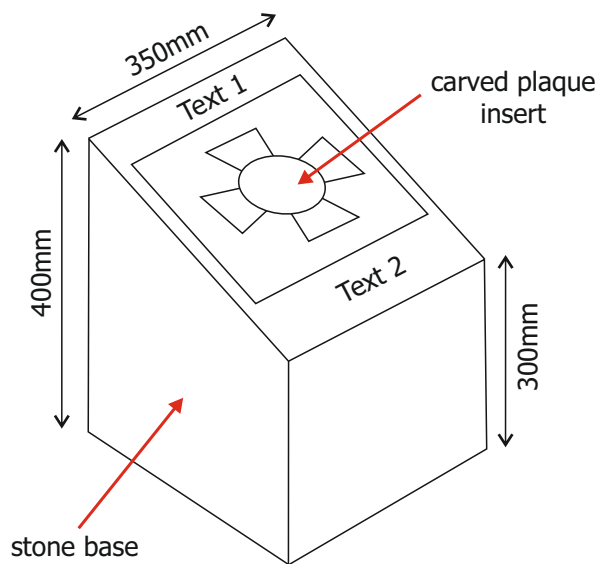


## Appendix B - proposed plaque and locations



Two alternative locations

Option 'B' only



Text 1)  
William Edward Heaton,  
born in Ormskirk 2nd January 1875

Text 2)  
Received the Victoria Cross  
for valour 23rd August 1900



Carved version of Victoria Cross  
used by Commonwealth War  
Graves Commission (CWGC)





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(e)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Assistant Director Planning</b>
<b>Relevant Managing Director:</b>	<b>Managing Director (Transformation)</b>
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor J Hodson</b>
<b>Contact for further information:</b>	<b>Ian Bond (Extn. 5167) (e-mail: <a href="mailto:ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk">ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk</a>)</b>

---

**SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF THE ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTIONS - FULWOOD AND DOUGLAS AVENUE CONSERVATION AREA, TARLETON AND JUNCTION LANE CONSERVATION AREA, BURSCOUGH**

---

Wards affected: Burscough East and Tarleton Wards

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek Cabinet's confirmation of the Article 4(2) Directions in place for both the Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area, Tarleton and the Junction Lane Conservation Area, Burscough.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Article 4 (2) Directions for Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area, Tarleton and the Junction Lane Conservation Area, Burscough as identified in Appendices A and B appended to this report be confirmed.

2.2 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as this matter is one where urgent action is required because of the time limits for the confirmation of the Article 4(2) Direction.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Borough Council has a duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review, from time to time, its Conservation Area designations, and under Section 71 of this Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.
- 3.2 In line with good practice (Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, English Heritage, 2011) the character appraisals for both Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area and Junction Lane Conservation Area have recently been updated. Both these appraisals recommended small extensions to each Conservation Area. The appraisals and their recommendations were open to public consultation during September 2014 and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 11 November 2014.
- 3.3 In both areas the boundary of the conservation area was amended to include new areas/properties. These newly designated areas fell outside the coverage of existing Article 4(2) Directions which bring certain types of minor development under planning control. To maintain our management of these areas Members approved new Article 4(2) Directions to match the newly approved extensions to both named conservation areas at the Cabinet meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The Legislation requires that following the making of the Article 4 Direction the Council is required to undertake a public consultation exercise and thereafter confirm the Article 4 Direction if it is still considered appropriate.

### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Conservation areas that are largely composed of unlisted dwelling houses can be particularly vulnerable to change without additional planning protection. Article 4(2) Directions are an effective tool in the management of Conservation Areas, especially in areas that still have a high degree of intact historic features – this is certainly the case in both the Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area and the Junction Lane Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Under existing planning legislation householders in Conservation Areas are able to undertake alterations to properties without requiring planning permission. These ‘permitted development’ alterations including changing doors and windows, making changes to roofs, erecting a porch, laying down new areas of hardstanding and the erection/demolition of certain fences and walls would not normally come under planning controls. It is recognised that poorly designed and unsympathetic minor alterations can have a cumulative negative effect in Conservation Areas, ultimately undermining their character and appearance and putting their designation at risk.
- 4.3 The boundaries of the Article 4(2) Directions and their context to the relevant Conservation Areas are included on the plans attached in Appendices A and B. Under the procedures the draft Article 4(2) Directions remain in place for up



to 6 months and require the Council to take into account any comments received from the consultation prior to their confirmation.

- 4.4 Neighbour consultation, including a press notice providing details of the draft Article 4(2) Directions, was carried out on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015. No objections or comments were received to either Article 4(2) Directions.

## **5.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 Subject to agreement from Cabinet the Article 4(2) Directions in both Conservation Areas, will be formally confirmed and the residents affected notified of the Council's decision.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The report has no significant links with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Whilst there are not considered to be any significant risks involved in confirming the Article 4(2) Directions proposed in this report an assessment of the potential risks involved is attached in Appendix C.
- 8.2 Article 4(2) Directions provide planning controls over the impacts of minor development on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Failure to apply the Article 4(2) Directions weakens our management of these historic areas and risks the Authority not fulfilling its duty to preserve the historic character and appearance of both Conservation Areas.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this

report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

### **Appendices**

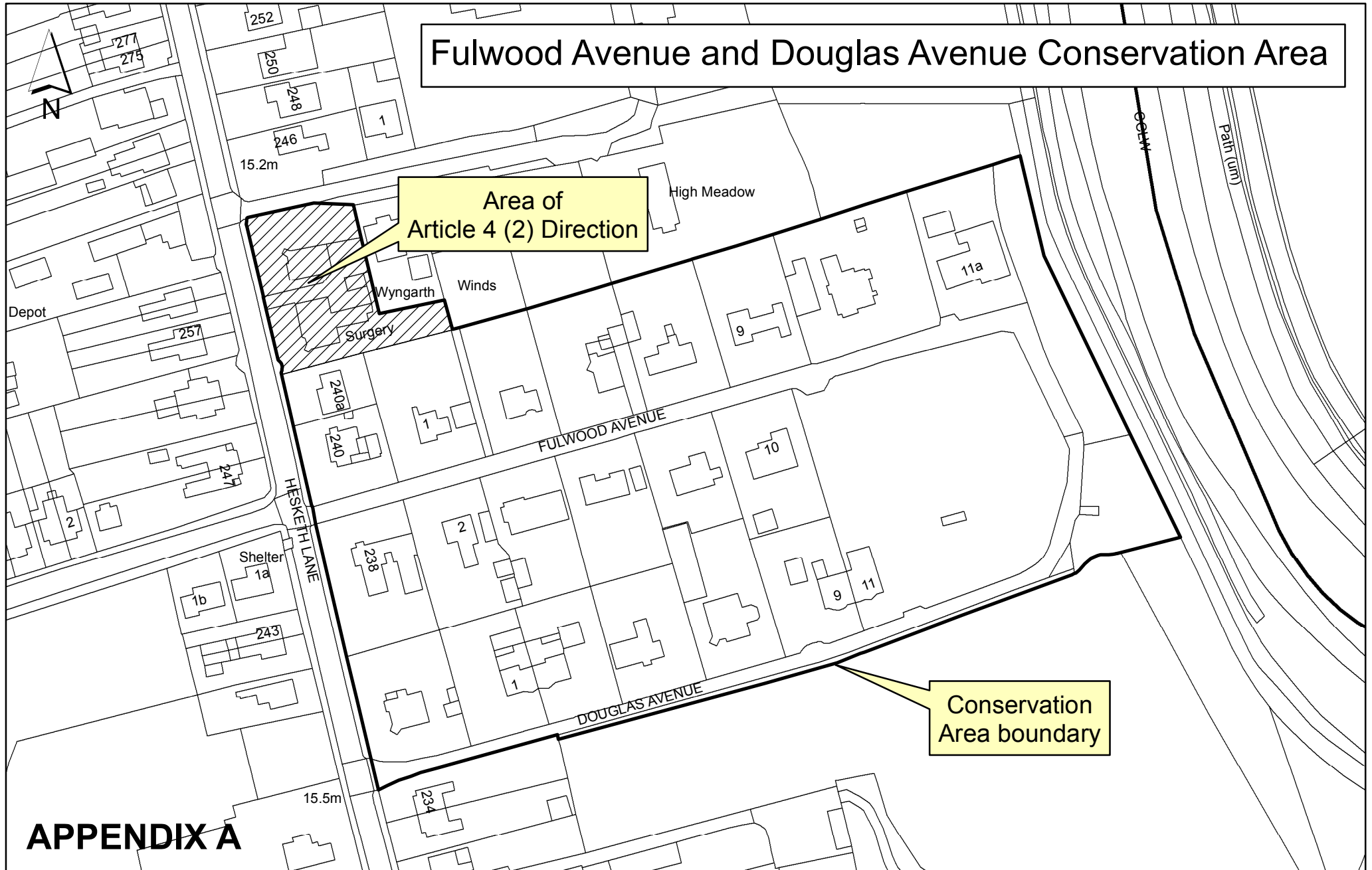
Appendix A Plan and schedule of Article 4(2) Direction Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area, Tarleton

Appendix B Plan and schedule of Article 4(2) Direction Junction Lane Conservation Area, Burscough

Appendix C Potential risks or threats report

Appendix D Equality Impact Assessment

# Fulwood Avenue and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area



## APPENDIX A



## **THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) ORDER 1995 (AS AMENDED)**

### **FULWOOD & DOUGLAS AVENUE CONSERVATION AREA**

#### **DIRECTION MADE UNDER ARTICLE 4(2)**

**WHEREAS** West Lancashire Borough Council ( the Council) being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended (the Order) are satisfied that it is expedient that development(s) of the descriptions(s) set out in Part 1 of the Schedule below should not be carried out in respect of the land described in Part 2 of the Schedule below (the Land) and shown hatched on the plan attached to this Direction (the Plan) , unless planning permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council in pursuance of the power conferred on them by article 4(2) of the Order hereby direct that permission granted by article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development of the type specified in Part 1 of the Schedule below on the Land to the extent permitted by article 4(2)-(5) of the Order unless planning permission is granted by the Council on an application made to the Council.

**THIS DIRECTION** is made the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2015 under article 4(2) of the Order and in accordance with article 6(7) of the Order shall remain in force for a period of six months from this date and shall then expire unless confirmed by the Council before the end of the aforesaid six month period.

#### **THE SCHEDULE**

##### **PART 1**

Class A of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order, consisting of the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse, where any part of the enlargement, improvement or alteration would front a highway, waterway or open space.

Class C of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order where an alteration would be to a roof slope which fronts a highway, waterway or open space.

Class D of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwellinghouse, where the external door in question fronts a highway, waterway or open space.

Class E of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the provision within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse of any building or enclosure, swimming or other pool required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse as such, or the maintenance, improvement or

other alteration of such a building or enclosure where the part of the building or enclosure maintained, improved or altered would front a highway, waterway or open space.

Class F of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of a hard surface for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse as such; or the replacement in whole or in part of such a surface where the hard surface would front a highway, waterway or open space.

Class G of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse or on a building within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse.

Class H of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the installation, alteration or replacement of a microwave antenna on a dwellinghouse or within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, where the part of the building or other structure on which the satellite antenna is to be installed, altered or replaced fronts a highway, waterway or open space.

Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure which would front a highway, waterway or open space.

Class C of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the painting of the exterior of any building or work which fronts a highway, waterway or open space.

## **PART 2**

The Direction relates to the hatched area of land on the attached plan, forming the curtilage and buildings within the curtilage comprising the following properties:

- 242 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton
- 244 Hesketh Lane, Tarleton

**THE COMMON SEAL** of the

**WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

was hereunto affixed in the presence of:-

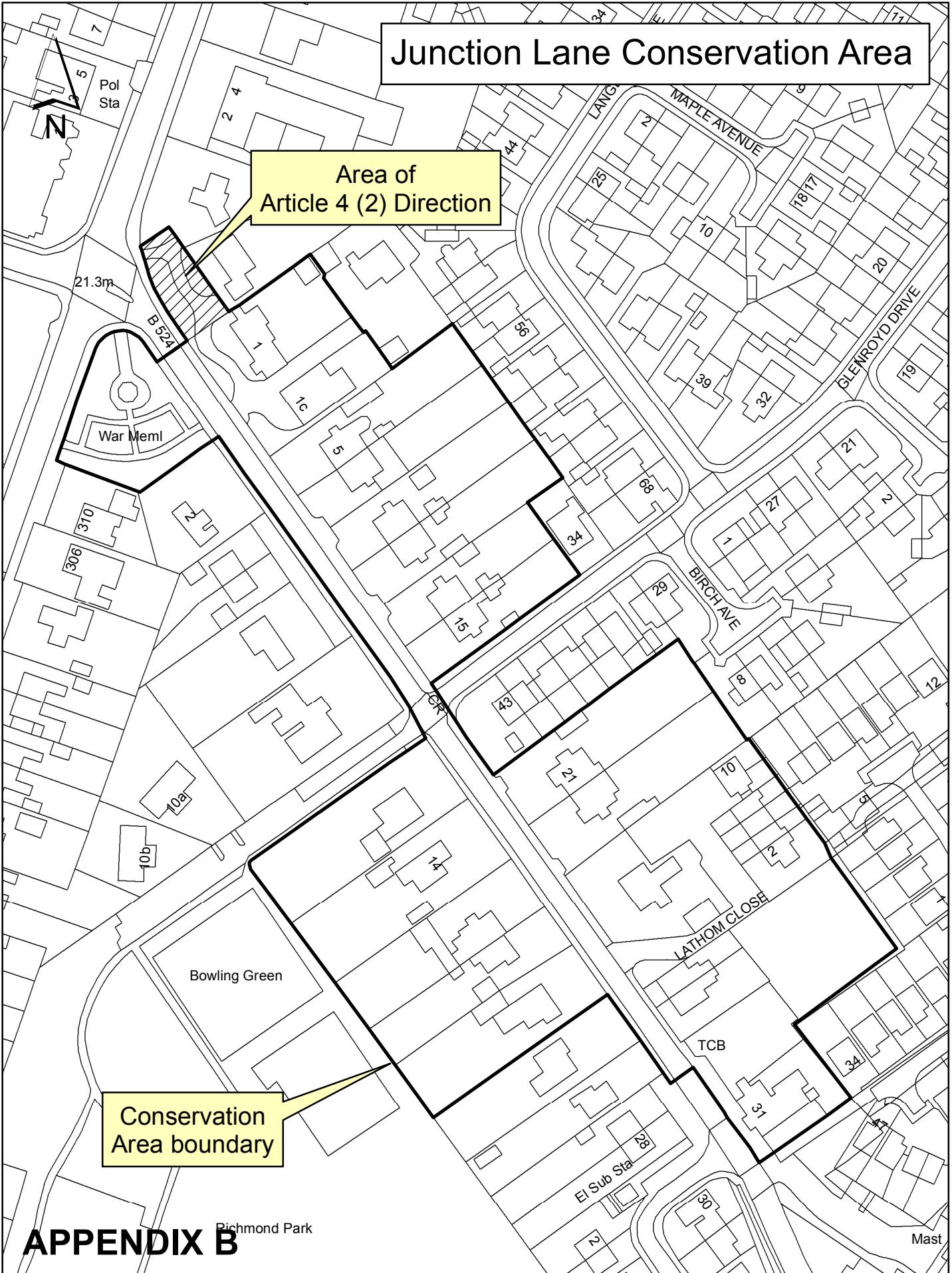
John Harrison (Authorised Officer) Assistant Director Planning, Directorate of Transformation,  
West Lancashire Borough Council.



# Junction Lane Conservation Area

Area of Article 4 (2) Direction

Conservation Area boundary



## APPENDIX B

Richmond Park

Mast



## **THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) ORDER 1995 (AS AMENDED)**

### **JUNCTION LANE CONSERVATION AREA**

### **DIRECTION MADE UNDER ARTICLE 4(2)**

**WHEREAS** West Lancashire Borough Council ( the Council) being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended (the Order) are satisfied that it is expedient that development(s) of the descriptions(s) set out in Part 1 of the Schedule below should not be carried out in respect of the land described in Part 2 of the Schedule below (the Land) and shown hatched on the plan attached to this Direction (the Plan) , unless planning permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council in pursuance of the power conferred on them by article 4(2) of the Order hereby direct that permission granted by article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development of the type specified in Part 1 of the Schedule below on the Land to the extent permitted by article 4(2)-(5) of the Order unless planning permission is granted by the Council on an application made to the Council.

**THIS DIRECTION** is made the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2015 under article 4(2) of the Order and in accordance with article 6(7) of the Order shall remain in force for a period of six months from this date and shall then expire unless confirmed by the Council before the end of the aforesaid six month period.

### **THE SCHEDULE**

#### **PART 1**

Class F of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the provision within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse of a hard surface for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse as such; or the replacement in whole or in part of such a surface where the hard surface would front a highway, waterway or open space.

Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order consisting of the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure which would front a highway, waterway or open space.

#### **PART 2**

The Direction relates to the hatched area of land on the attached plan, comprising the following:



- The former garden wall of no.1 Junction Lane, Burscough, running at the side and front of 1a and 1b Junction Lane, Burscough.

**THE COMMON SEAL** of the

**WEST LANCASHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

was hereunto affixed in the presence of

John Harrison (Authorised Officer) Assistant Director Planning, Directorate of Transformation,  
West Lancashire Borough Council.



## APPENDIX C – Potential risks or threats report

### Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area

Article 4 (2) Direction restriction	Current situation	Implications of Article 4(2) Direction	Risks associated with Art 4 (2) High/medium/low/NA
Erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on dwelling or building in curtilage.	<p>242 Hesketh Lane has two tall feature brick chimneys, one with intact chimney pots.</p> <p>244 Hesketh Lane has two smaller intact brick chimneys complete with chimney pots.</p>	<p>These chimneys should be retained</p> <p>These chimneys should be retained</p>	<p>Low – effect on value probably minimal</p> <p>Low - effect on value probably minimal</p>
Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling	<p>242 Hesketh Lane – no extensions at present. Some UPVC at first floor level, but feature bow/bay windows on ground floor remain wooden. Wooden front door.</p> <p>244 Hesketh Lane – no extensions at present. Most windows at front have been replaced with UPVC but some ground floor windows retain leaded light detailing to upper lights. UPVC front door.</p>	Further loss of original wooden windows should be resisted. Where they have been lost, we should seek improvements in any replacements, using originals elsewhere within the area as the basis.	<p>Some loss has already occurred reducing the risk from further changes. Effect on value minimal.</p> <p>Low due to changes already undertaken.</p>
Alteration of dwelling roof	242 Hesketh Lane has an original 'rosemary red' tile roof.	Original roof coverings should be retained.	Low to medium.

Article 4 (2) Direction restriction	Current situation	Implications of Article 4(2) Direction	Risks associated with Art 4 (2) High/medium/low/NA
	244 Hesketh Lane has an original slate roof.	Original roof coverings should be retained.	Low to medium.
Erection/construction of a porch outside any external door	<p>242 Hesketh Lane has an original flat-roofed porch to the side elevation entrance to the property. No porch to the front entrance.</p> <p>244 Hesketh Lane has an original porch to the front elevation.</p>	<p>Addition of a porch would not be ruled out, providing the design was sympathetic.</p> <p>244 has an existing porch, therefore this shouldn't be too much of an issue.</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Low – already has a porch</p>
Provision within curtilage of a building, enclosure, swimming or other pool incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling or required for the maintenance, improvement or alteration of building or enclosure	<p>242 Hesketh Lane currently has a modest garage set to the side/rear of the property.</p> <p>244 Hesketh Lane has a number of small wooden outbuildings.</p>	Provision of subservient buildings not ruled out – dependent on location and scale.	Low – unlikely to be an issue as Article 4 controls works on frontage.
Creation of hard surfaces within the curtilage of a house incidental to its enjoyment	242 Hesketh Lane has a substantial paved area to the front and side of the property sufficient for several cars screened by a front hedge and garden border which acts as a landscaping buffer.	Both properties have a substantial amount of hard standing – sufficient for providing off-road parking for a family, taking into consideration the size of the properties. Would resist further loss of garden areas which provide some degree of a garden setting.	Low – both properties already have substantial drives.

Article 4 (2) Direction restriction	Current situation	Implications of Article 4(2) Direction	Risks associated with Art 4 (2) High/medium/low/NA
	244 Hesketh Lane has a block paved driveway to the front and side of the property, sufficient for 2 cars.		Low – both properties already have substantial drives.
Installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antenna on house or curtilage	242 Hesketh Lane – none in evidence on front or side elevations.  244 Hesketh Lane - none in evidence on front or side elevations.	Restrictions already exist via Planning on front elevations in Conservation Areas	NA
Erection or demolition of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure within the curtilage	242 Hesketh Lane – Hedge to front boundary.  244 Hesketh Lane – front boundary partially fenced with wide opening for vehicle access	Encourage retention of front hedge.  Existing concrete and wood panel fence a negative feature. Would encourage replacement with hedging or simple low wood panel fence.	Low
Painting of a dwelling or building or enclosure within the curtilage	The exterior roughcast of both properties has been painted white/off white – an appropriate colour.	Encourage retention of existing colour palette.	Low

## Junction Lane Conservation Area

Article 4 (2) Direction restriction	Current situation	Implications of Article 4(2) Direction	Risks associated with Art 4(2) High/medium/low/NA
Creation of hard surfaces within the curtilage of a house incidental to its enjoyment	Both 1a and 1b Junction Lane have a paved area to the front and side of the property sufficient for approx. 2 cars. No.1b also has a garage.	Both properties have a substantial amount of hard standing – sufficient for providing off-road parking for a family, taking into consideration the size of the properties. We would resist further loss of garden areas which provide some degree of a garden setting.	Low
Erection or demolition wall, gates or fences, or other means of enclosure within the curtilage	Surviving garden wall feature – this is the remaining evidence of the large pleasure gardens which originally belonged to no.1 Junction Lane.	This wall with balustrade feature should be retained.	Low – minimal effect on value

APPENDIX D

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Planning</b>
<b>Completed by: Ian Bond</b>	<b>Date: 17/07/2015</b>
<b>Subject Title:</b>	
<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF ARTICLE 4(2) DIRECTIONS - FULWOOD AND DOUGLAS AVENUE CONSERVATION AREA, TARLETON AND JUNCTION LANE CONSERVATION AREA, BURSCOUGH.</b></p>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	To confirm new Article 4(2) Directions in Fulwood and Douglas Avenue Conservation Area, Tarleton and Junction Lane Conservation Area, Burscough.
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i>  <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	

<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Residents of the Conservation Areas affected by inclusion in the areas covered by the new Article 4(2) Directions.
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	N/A
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?  Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>  No No No No No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	N/A
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The Article 4(2) Directions add a further layer of planning restrictions on the properties affected. Consultation with residents affected by the proposals has been undertaken and any comments taken into account, as part of the report, prior to the Council confirming the directions.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	This work follows on from an extensive public consultation exercise relating to the adoption of Conservation Area Appraisals for the two conservation areas.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	The proposals have been informed by the results/evidence provided by the Conservation Area Appraisal work.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	Under the procedures residents affected will be notified of the Article 4(2) Directions and



	a notice will be placed in a Local newspaper.
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Article 4(2) directions remove certain planning 'permitted development' rights from homeowners and therefore can have a negative impact on those residents. However the work has been justified by the Council's duty to preserve the character and appearance of conservation areas. This work helps the Council fulfil that statutory duty.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Homeowners affected by the Directions have the opportunity to apply for planning permission and in some instances apply for compensation if their applications are refused planning permission.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	A risk assessment has been undertaken identifying that the risk of such action is low.
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	We have a general duty to review all the Borough's Conservation Areas from time to time. We currently have a program to review and monitor conservation areas.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(f)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mr B. Livermore (Extn. 5200)**  
**(E-mail: [bob.livermore@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:bob.livermore@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To obtain direction on the priority for investment of the Environmental Improvement Budget.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That in the light of the announcement on the national budget, the Environmental Improvement Budget not be allocated to a specific project until the budget has been reviewed in February 2016.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 At the Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015. The HRA budget was approved which included £100k for Environmental Improvements.

3.2 The detail of how this budget was to be invested was not determined by Council and therefore this report seeks guidance on where Cabinet would like to invest these resources.

## **4.0 OPTIONS**

- 4.1 There are a range of options for investment of these resources and I have attempted to include some of these but, the list is not exhaustive and Cabinet may decide to propose a priority that is not included within this paragraph.
- 4.2 Enhancements in the vicinity of painted/rendered pilot scheme - The HRA budget included a budget of 15k to paint/render some properties in an attempt to improve the appearance of these “no fines” dwellings. One option would be to invest the environmental improvement budget in this area to provide comprehensive enhancement within one area. If this proposal was accepted, a consultation exercise would be undertaken with the local community.
- 4.3 Existing tenant led Environmental Improvement Budget – There is an existing Environmental Improvement Budget which tenants determine the priority for investment. This year’s budget of £51.6k is fully committed and the available budget of £100k could simply be added to this for tenants to determine the priority for investment.
- 4.4 Car Parking – The Service area is often contacted by individuals or groups of individuals about inadequate parking opportunities in various areas. The budget, subject to consultation, could be used to provide a remedy to this situation.
- 4.5 Shrub Beds – There are a number of shrub beds, particularly in Skelmersdale, that either require replanting or removal. The budget, subject to consultation, could be used to start addressing these matters.
- 4.6 Communal Areas – There are a number of communal areas or squares where these could be cleared / weeded where necessary and power washed together with any minor repairs to the hard landscaping.
- 4.7 Sheltered Housing – There are 10 Cat II schemes and 3 Cat I schemes where improvements would be welcomed to paved areas and gardens.
- 4.8 Communal Areas of Flats – Cabinet recognised the need to invest in communal areas of flats and the resources could be used to improve the environment in these areas.
- 4.9 All of the options outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.8 are feasible and would be beneficial but as indicated above, not exhaustive. However, there will be pressure on the HRA from 2016/17 for 4 years and it would be prudent to review the implications of this before committing the budget at this stage.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 In designing any environmental improvements, a key consideration will be to ensure the works can be maintained within future budget streams.
- 5.2 Improving the Environment is in accordance with the Community Strategy.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A budget of £100k is available for the works.
- 6.2 Elsewhere on your agenda is a report which looks at the impact of the National Budget on the HRA. Members could decide to not invest this budget at this stage and use this to protect the HRA in future years.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 A formal Risk Assessment will be carried out on the proposed works once these have been worked up in accordance with any consultation exercise.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 There are a range of options outlined in paragraph 4 if Cabinet wish to invest in environmental improvements however, Members could chose to not invest the budget at this stage or decide on another priority for investment.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A - Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(g)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mr B. Livermore (Extn. 5200)  
(E-mail: [bob.livermore@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:bob.livermore@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL BUDGET – IMPLICATIONS FOR TENANTS AND HRA**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To advise Cabinet of the budget impact on tenants.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the report be noted.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration work with political groups and Tenants in order to bring budget proposals to Council in February 2016.

2.3 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration provide any background information to organisations like Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH), or the District Council Network (DCN) in order to protect the HRA.

2.4 That the report be presented to the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

2.5 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3.1 That the report be noted.

---

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 'Self Financing' was introduced in 2012/13 to the HRA. This meant that, in return for a debt of £88M, the Council would be able to withdraw from the National HRA 'subsidy' system which saw a regular and increasing contribution made by West Lancashire Borough Council into the 'subsidy' system.

4.2 The 'Self Financing' system saw the HRA take on a major debt as indicated in 3.1 above, but as the Council structured its borrowing to make an annual contribution to debt and associated interest which was lower than the former 'subsidy' contribution, this was beneficial to the Council.

4.3 Additionally the Government of the day agreed that rent increases would be 1% above inflation which meant that the Council's Business Plan was healthy and would support major investment in the housing stock together with strengthening the service offered to tenants generally.

### **5.0 CURRENT POSITION**

5.1 This year looks as if it will be the last year that there will be significant financial benefits to the HRA.

5.2 The announcements which will impact are as follows:

- a) Rents to be reduced by 1% per year for the next 4 years.
- b) Introduction of compulsory 'pay to stay' regime for tenants with a household income of over £30K forcing them to pay market rents.
- c) Review of lifetime tenancies to limit their use and ensure households are offered tenancies that match their needs and ensure best use is made of social housing.
- d) Welfare changes which will introduce a reduction in the benefit cap from £26K to £20K.
- e) Freezing of working age benefits for 4 years.
- f) Removing automatic entitlement to housing benefit for new claimants of Universal Credit for 18-21 year olds.
- g) DHP to be limited to £800M over the next 5 years.
- h) Requiring Local Authorities to sell 'high' value properties when these become vacant.
- i) A package of reforms to Tax Credits and Universal Credit, including reducing some entitlements, ensuring claimant are better off in work.
- j) From April 2017, new claimants on ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) who are placed in work related activity groups will receive the same as those claiming Jobseekers Allowance.



## 6.0 IMPACT

6.1 All of the budget proposals will have an impact. At this stage some will be known and others will need to be estimated. I have attempted to weigh the impact for WLBC and its tenants:

- a) Whilst the rent reduction will have a cash impact on the HRA of over £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> next year, this will also have a compounded impact for the following 3 years. Because the Business Plan is based on assumptions of increased income using CPI + 1% the impact will be a loss of £11.3M over the next 4 years. The savings of £11.3M will impact as follows:

2016/17	£1.5M
2017/18	£3.6M
2018/19	£3.6M
2019/20	£2.6M

Looking at the Business Plan over its life, this will have a negative impact of £260M. The HRA will need to find savings of £1.5M next year and identify savings of £11.3M over the next 4 years; in view of this I propose that I work with Political Groups and Tenants to bring suggestions forward so that a balanced HRA can be proposed to Council for budget setting purposes.

- b) The detail on the 'pay to stay' proposals are sketchy. The proposal is that market rents will be charged for households with income over £30K. Additionally, rents charged will be collected by WLBC and given to Government. The impact to tenants may force some to consider buying or moving out of the social sector. The Council will incur costs of enforcing these arrangements and it's unclear whether the Council or the Government will incur any bad debt or payment liability.
- c) The review of lifetime tenancies will no doubt incur administration costs and implement costs which, at this stage, are unknown.
- d) Currently there are 14 households which are affected by the Benefit Cap. Reducing the Cap to £20K from £26K will increase the number of households which will have a potential reduced income. Work is currently in hand to identify those affected. This reduction in income will affect larger households the most and will increase child poverty. Once the scale is known, the impact can be better assessed. Arrears will no doubt increase.
- e) The freeze of working age benefits will hit those on limited income and has the potential to increase arrears and will impact on those in receipt of benefit, particularly if inflation increases over the next 4 years.
- f) Last year we housed around 70 young people between the age of 18-21. If there was no entitlement to Housing Benefit from a business perspective, we would not wish to house this age group as this would force young people into debt. A decision would need to be made on whether housing would be offered and if there were any conditions.
- g) Further work is being undertaken to assess impact on DHP.
- h) The original proposal was that "high value" properties would be sold when these became empty. Initially I believed this would have limited impact because of using North West average prices. However, I understand that the value will be based on the average property price in a specific housing market area. Also, Government Officials are looking at turnover rates and talking about imposing a 'levy' based on churn rates and average "high

value” properties. This is much more concerning to the business plan but, as the picture becomes clearer, I can advise further on this matter.

- i) If tenants have less income there is potential for arrears to increase and greater staff resources and time needed to assist tenants.
- j) The changes to ESA will have the same impact as i) above.

6.2 Overall the position is disappointing with the Business Plan losing £260M over the next 30 years which could have been invested to improve housing conditions and create job opportunities in the area.

6.3 Arrears will undoubtedly increase which will impact on the HRA which will need to be managed to reduce revenue costs, either by reducing staffing, efficiencies or reducing the Capital Investment Programme.

6.4 The next 4 years will see measures having to be introduced to make savings of around £10M in order to balance the books.

6.5 In my opinion, the ‘deal’ agreed by Government for self-financing is now dead in the water and the freedoms and flexibilities we have benefited from will cease; this may be the start of further measures introduced by Government to reduce the impact on Welfare Reform spending. For those tenants who pay full rent and have an income of less than £30K, there is a benefit in the 1% reduction in the rent. Based on a rent of £80pw, the reduction would be 80p pw.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

7.1 See above about the impact. Action as highlighted in 5.2 – 5.4 will need to be taken to ensure the HRA is viable.

7.2 The impact to the HRA is a variance with the Community Strategy.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The financial or resource implications have been highlighted in paragraph 5.

8.2 Further work will need to be undertaken to better quantify the impact so that informed choices can be taken in February on how to bridge the budget gap that will immerge for the HRA over the next 4 years and possibly beyond.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1 Dependant on the assumptions made on the impact to the HRA and corrective action proposal will determine the risks associated for the future. In the Council report in February 2016, Members will need to set a balanced budget with a degree of caution about what the future holds.

## **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

This report is for information and so no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(h)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mr W. Berkley (Extn. 5259)  
(E-mail: [william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: BEECHTREES REVIVAL SCHEME**

---

Wards affected: Digmaor Ward

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the findings of the consultation on the Beechtrees Revival Scheme.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the findings of the consultation be noted.

2.2 That the decision regarding the Beechtrees Revival Scheme be deferred, pending the 2016/17 budget setting process.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 Cabinet agreed a preferred option for consultation on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 to address the sustainability issues with the flats on Beechtrees.

3.2 The Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration was authorised to undertake public consultation on the preferred option and to present a further report to Cabinet.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Consultation has now been carried out and the findings are attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The vast majority of respondents to our consultation are in favour of the Scheme in principle with only 2 people against it.
- 4.3 Council made budget provision in February 2015 to deliver the revival with finances being made available from 2016-2018, totalling approximately £3M.
- 4.4 Changes announced in the summer budget in relation to social housing and in particular rent levels, will have a major impact on the HRA Business Plan.
- 4.5 Officers are currently assessing the full impact of these changes in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and are investigating alternative methods for delivering the Scheme.
- 4.6 Officers do not feel it would be prudent to proceed with the Beechtrees Revival Scheme before an initial review of the business plan is carried out.

#### **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The objective of the Revival Scheme is to ensure the long term sustainability of the flats on Beechtrees and to ensure they form a positive contribution to the Business Plan along with providing good quality homes for our tenants.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A budget of £2,996,000 was allocated to the project by Council in February 2015; this was spread over the course of 3 years starting in the 2016/17 financial year.
- 6.2 As referred to in section 4, the current Business Plan will need to be reviewed and priorities reassessed prior to the project can commence.

#### **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the Scheme Of Delegation to Officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant operational risk registers.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Consultation Beechtrees Revival Scheme

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix C – Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*







## Appendix A

Consultation.  
Beechtrees  
Revival  
Scheme

Report,  
Analysis and  
Findings

"To be a top performing  
landlord within an  
economically vibrant West  
Lancs"

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction and purpose of the report</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chapter 2 Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 3 Questionnaire Response</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Questionnaire Results</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 5 Demographics</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Chapter 6 Consultation event and other forms of consultation.</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Chapter 7 Summary of outcomes</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire</b>	

# 1 Introduction and Purpose of the Report

To assess the suitability of the proposed revival scheme for Beechtrees, Digmaor, a consultation exercise was carried out in March and April 2015.

The proposed plans consist of the full refurbishment of 6no detached blocks of flats, Partial refurbishment of 2no attached blocks of flats and the demolition of 3no attached blocks of flats and 4 houses. The space cleared from the demolitions would be used to build 14no new houses.

The area has suffered for many years with a high turnover of tenancies and high void levels. Combined with high repair costs, this has caused the flats to have a negative NPV (net present value).

The purpose of this report is examine the results of the consultation exercise and other feedback received during the process in order to ascertain if any changes to the scheme need to be made

## 2 Methodology

A consultation pack was sent out in February 2015 to every resident on Beechtrees as well as residents of other estates which may have been affected by the proposed scheme. The purpose of this was to assess the reaction of the residents in the area to the scheme and also to see if any changes could be made to improve the scheme.

The consultation pack itself contained a detailed description of the scheme including architect's drawings and Artists impressions. The reasons for the scheme were also explained as clearly as possible.

A questionnaire was included in the pack which was designed to invite opinions about the scheme and any changes that may be made to improve it. As well as this, a number of other ways to comment on the scheme were given including a dedicated phone number and email, and details of a drop-in consultation event which was held 2-3 weeks after the packs were sent, and was open to all local residents. These points of contact were also included in a press release so that any interested parties were able to comment on the scheme. The pack included a return envelope which was pre-paid to encourage a good response.

To allow more effective analysis of the data, several questions regarding the circumstances of the tenants themselves were included. The survey itself was anonymous but includes an option to include an address to allow any area specific data to be identified and analysed.

The questionnaire was printed and sent using an external web based printing service (iMail) to ensure that all of the packs were received at the same time and in advance of the general press release. The reason for this was to ensure that anyone who would potentially have to vacate their properties would be informed in writing before the scheme was publicly announced.

The questionnaire was distributed using the standard Royal Mail second-class post.

The consultation event was held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at the Evermoor centre close to Beechtrees. There were 22 attendees in total and staff involved in developing the scheme were available to answer questions along with members of staff from the voids and allocations team, and officers involved in similar projects.

Attendees of the consultation event were also asked to complete a questionnaire form if they had not already done so. The form was also available to complete online using survey monkey through a dedicated page on the West Lancashire Website.

The deadline for the consultation was set as 31<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

### 3 Questionnaire Response

This section outlines the responses received in the various forms of the consultation.

Out of the 227 consultation packs distributed, 16 completed questionnaires were returned – this equates to 7%. A further 6 were completed during the consultation event and 2 were completed online via the consultation website.

In addition to this, 3 enquiry forms were completed and notes were taken by officers to record additional views and comments by attendees.

Although the survey was anonymous, 14 of the total 24 respondents chose to give their address.

<b><i>Location of respondee</i></b>	<b><i>Number of responses</i></b>
<b><i>Flats and houses on Beechtrees included in the revival where the tenants will need to move out.</i></b>	9
<b><i>Flats on Beechtrees included in the revival where the tenants will remain in situ.</i></b>	1
<b><i>Houses immediately adjacent to the revival area</i></b>	3
<b><i>Other houses on Beechtrees</i></b>	1
<b><i>No address given</i></b>	10
<b><i>Total responses</i></b>	24

#### Outcomes

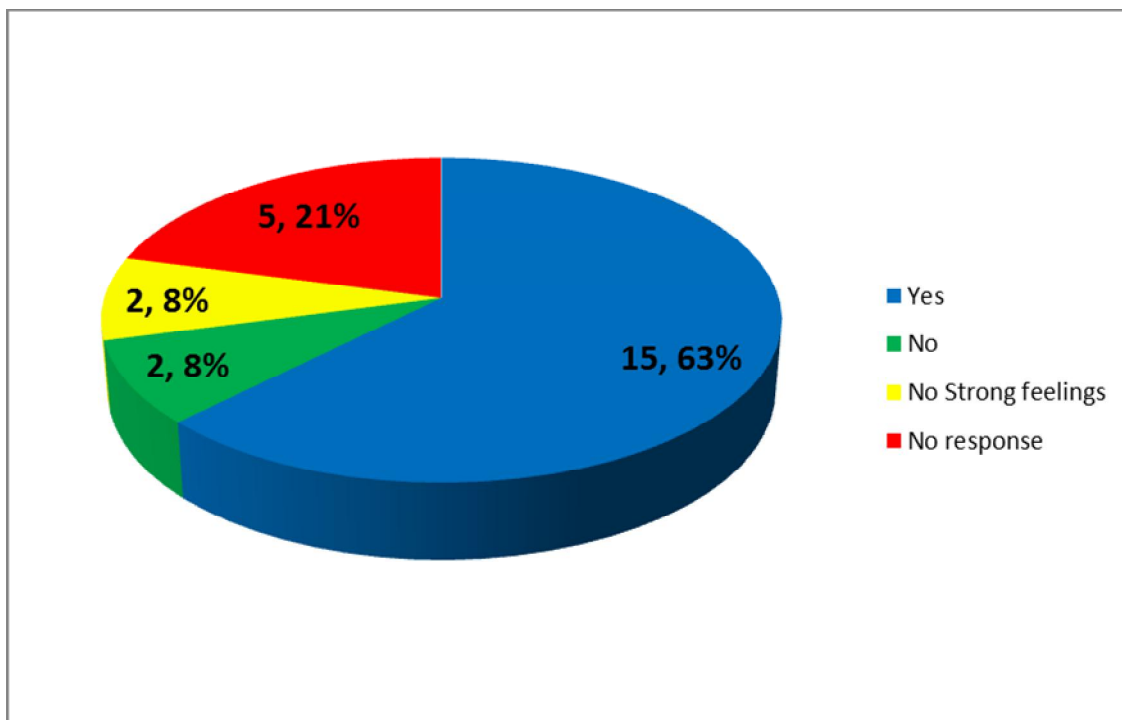
- Due to the size of the survey and the number of returns, the usual confidence level of 95% cannot be achieved within a reasonable confidence indicator. (Actual confidence indicator was calculated as XXXX%)
- Due to the fact that the consultation event and online consultation were open to any interested parties, analysis of the spatial distribution of responses becomes difficult.
- Bearing these limitations in mind, the majority of returns received were from people directly affected by the revival scheme with the largest contingent being tenants who would need to move if the scheme goes ahead in its current form.

## 4 Questionnaire Results:

This section covers the 6 questions asked on the survey, relating to the proposed revival scheme as detailed in the consultation pack.

### Question 1: Do you agree with the Beechtrees revival scheme in principal?

Of the 24 surveys received, there were 19 responses to this question. The chart below shows the results.



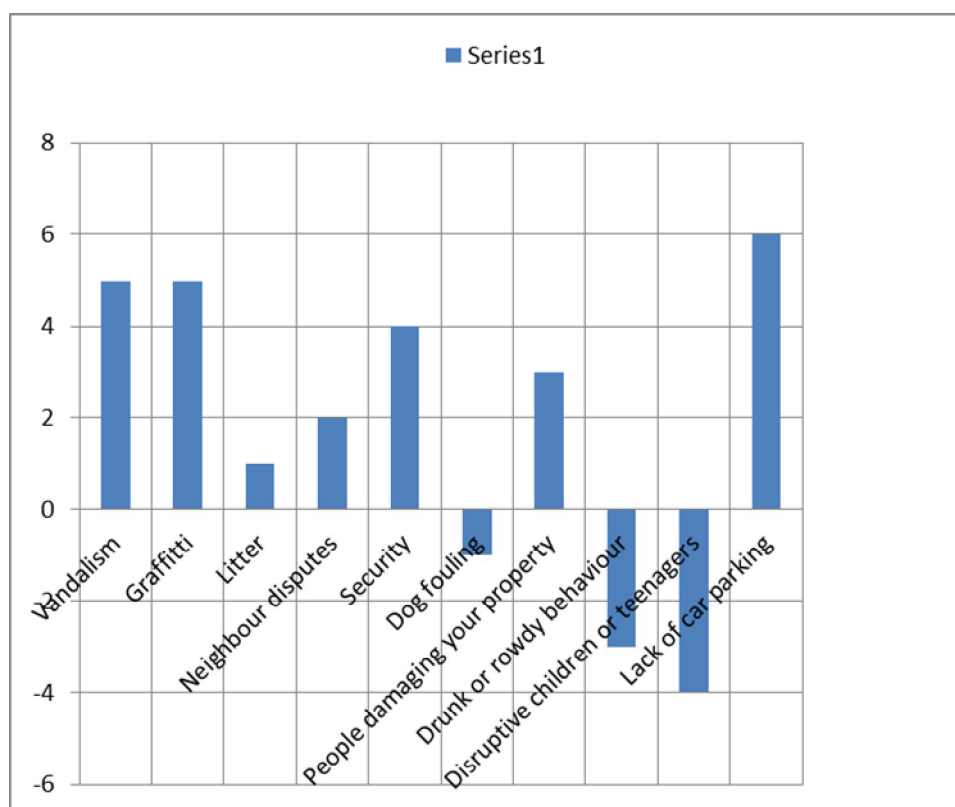
#### Outcomes

- As the chart shows, the majority of responses were largely positive about the scheme in general.
- The negative responses are likely from tenants who would have to move out if the scheme goes ahead in its current form. Information regarding the help and support given to help tenants move are not finalised and so could not be included in the consultation packs sent out. This may have caused some people to feel anxious about the scheme. During the consultation event more detailed information was available thanks to the presence of members of the housing team and officers involved with the Firbeck revival scheme which included a similar demolition element.

## Question 2: what effect do you think the scheme will have on the following problems?

The categories for this question were closely based on the tenant survey which was carried out during summer 2013. The responses to that survey provided information regarding which problems the tenants regarded as most important.

In order to quantify and analyse the data received, the responses were converted into numbers, 1 to indicate a positive effect, 0 for no effect and -1 for a negative effect. This method provides an overall net positive or negative value for illustrative purposes.



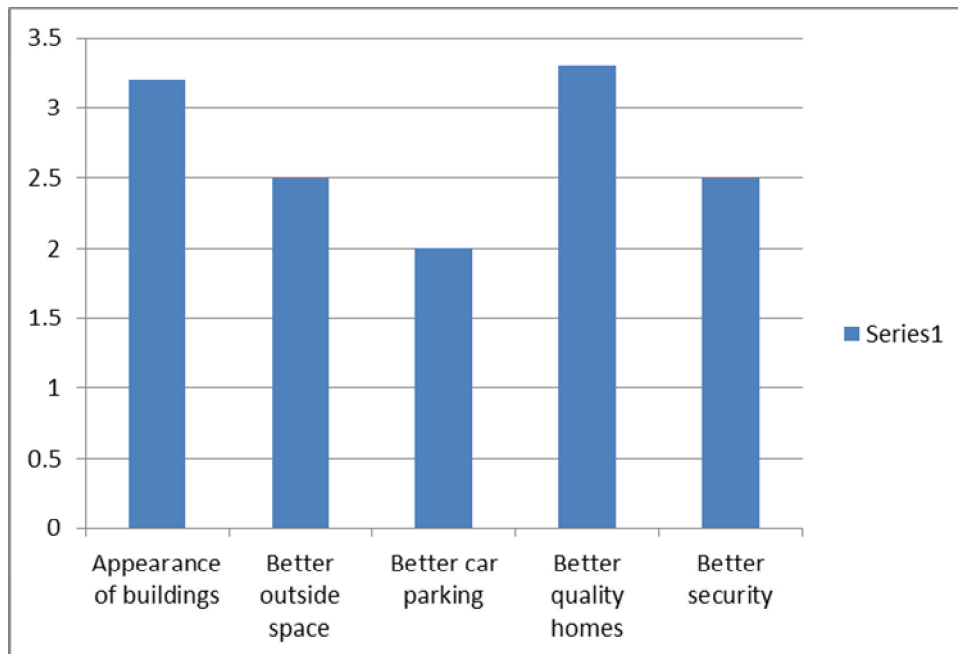
### Outcomes

- The problem on which the respondents felt would be most positively affected by the scheme is lack of car parking. This is likely to be because the new build houses will incorporate parking within the curtilage of the properties. Interestingly, the overall number of off road parking spaces on the scheme would be reduced due to the conversion of the garages along with the bedsits into 2 bed flats.
- The problem on which the respondents felt would be most negatively affected by the scheme is disruptive children or teenagers, closely followed by drunk or rowdy behaviour. It is difficult to see why this might be perceived to be the case other than the fact that houses will be built in place of flats which would provide more family friendly accommodation.
- The other main perceived positive effects were on vandalism and graffiti. This could reflect a feeling that more pride in the appearance of the buildings would be generated by the improvements.

### Question 3: Rank the following from 1 – 5 most positive things about the proposals? 1 = most positive 5 = least

The intention for this question was that each of the answers would receive a rank and therefore provide a score for each answer, the lower the score the more positive aspect of the proposal. Unfortunately the responses varied greatly and there was little consistency in the answering methodology. Some answers received no score, others were ticked, some were answered 'yes' and some were left blank.

In order to analyse this data the numerical scores for each answer were totalled. These numbers were then divided by the number of responses which that particular answer received to give an average score on the scale of 1-5. This was then inverted by subtracting the resulting answer from 5 and the following table shows the results with the highest number representing the most positive response.



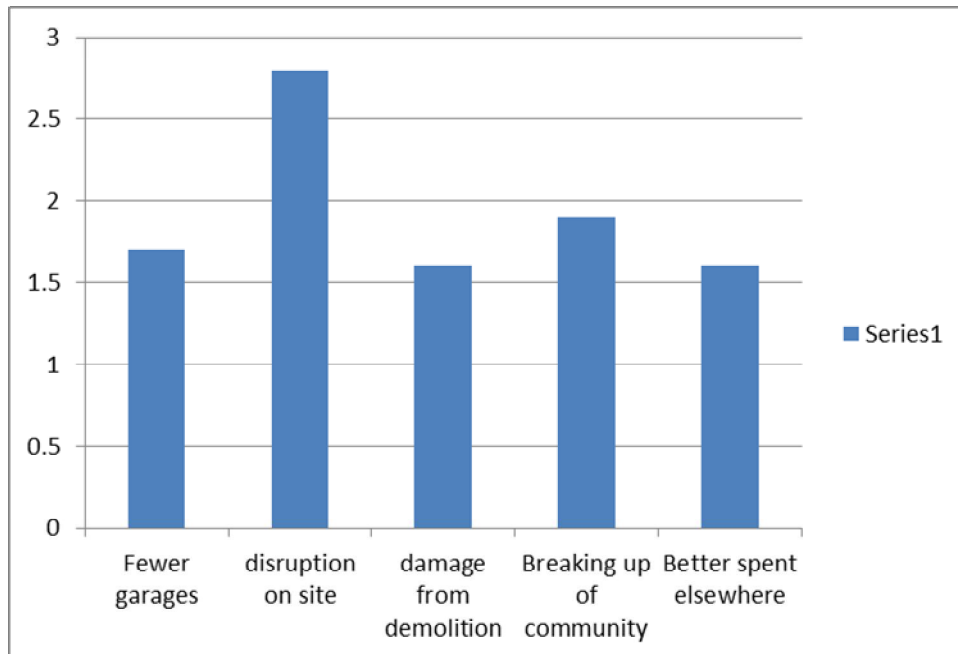
#### Outcomes

- The variation between the scores of each element is not great with all falling between 2 and 3.4. This may be an indication of the inconsistency of answering methodology or simply a reflection of the differing priorities of the responses. Either way no individual scores stand out as high or low.
- Bearing the above in mind the two highest scores relate to the physical aspects of the buildings rather than the external areas or the estate at large.



## Question 4: Rank the following from 1 – 5 biggest concerns about the proposals? 1 = most important 5 = least

As with question 3 above, the variety of answers received was very great and so the same methodology for displaying the answers was applied. The table below shows the results with the higher scores indicating the greater level of concern.



### Outcomes

- The biggest concern of the respondents is the disruption on site. The project is likely to be on site for up to 2 years, during which there will be a variety of activities taking place. Some of these such as the demolition of the flats and the installation of the new gas main will require substantial disruption to the surrounding area. This may include re-routing of pedestrian and vehicle access, noise and dust. Careful consideration will be required at an early stage to try to keep disruption to a minimum.
- The variation between the majority of scores is not great with most falling between 1.6 and 1.9. This may be an indication of the inconsistency of answering methodology or simply a reflection of the differing priorities of the responses.

## **Question 5: What could make the revival scheme better?**

As a narrative response was invited for this question, a variety of answers were received but two ideas were repeated several times throughout the responses.

The first was that the existing tenants should be offered a chance to return to the refurbished or new homes upon completion of the project. This is an opinion which has been expressed throughout the consultation process by phone, in person and in writing. The trend over recent years has been towards transient tenancies on Beechtrees with the majority of tenants moving on within 2 years. There are, however a core of tenants who have been in place for many years and wish to remain in the vicinity. Due to the duration of the works, it may not be practical to action this suggestion as tenants would have to move twice in the space of 2 years and would also not be eligible for a home loss payment. In addition the change in nature of the housing may mean that some existing tenants may not be eligible for some of the new homes.

The second recurring suggestion was that the scope of the refurbishment could be widened to include other properties in the area. Houses on Beechtrees and many of the surrounding areas have been included on recent programmed works contracts including provision of kitchens and bathrooms (scheduled during 2016-17 on Beechtrees) replacement windows and installation of gas boilers to replace electric heating. The proposed refurbishment of the flats in the revival area would go beyond this and improve the external appearance greatly. The amount of owner occupiers on Beechtrees would make any wider revival scheme logistically complicated but it could be considered in the future should funding become available.

## **Question 6: Can you suggest any other ways Beechtrees could be revived?**

As with the previous question, the responses to this question can only be meaningfully expressed as themes rather than specific answers.

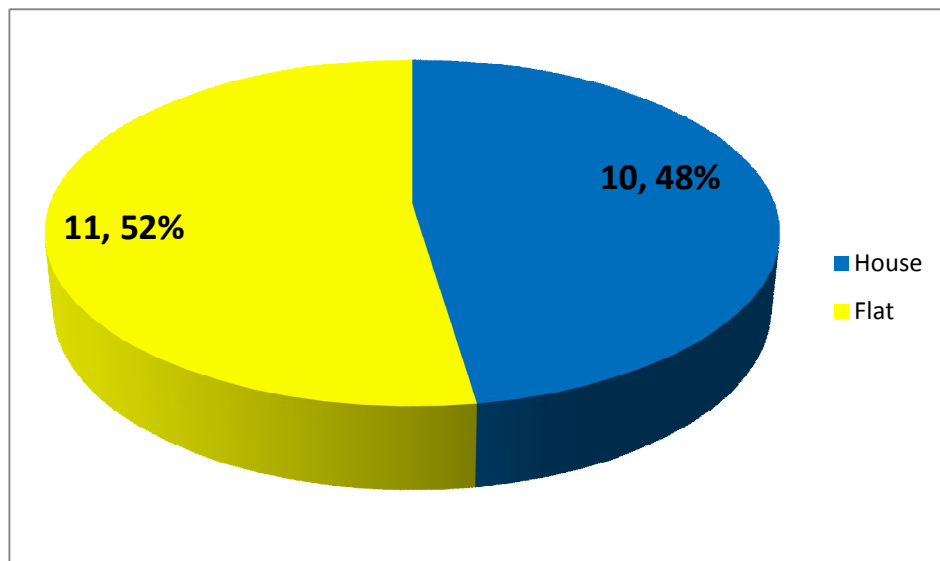
In this case, the main theme was improvements to the landscaping and external areas throughout the scheme and the area generally. Suggestions included the provision of more childrens play areas, replacement of fencing throughout the estate, more soft landscaping and more frequent street cleansing.

Many of these issues will be addressed when the detailed design of the landscaping around the scheme is finalised. Some details were received from the architect as part of the original submission but are currently in sketch form.

## 5. Demographics

This section of the questionnaire deals with the respondents themselves to help demonstrate how indicative of the general population the answers may be.

### Do you live in a house or a flat?



### Outcomes

- As the pie chart shows, just over half of the responses received were from residents of the flats. As flats make up roughly 20% of the total residences of Beechtrees this indicates a much higher relative proportion of residents of flats than houses responded to the questionnaire. This reflects the fact that the people directly affected by the revival scheme are overwhelmingly residents of flats.

## How long have you lived here?

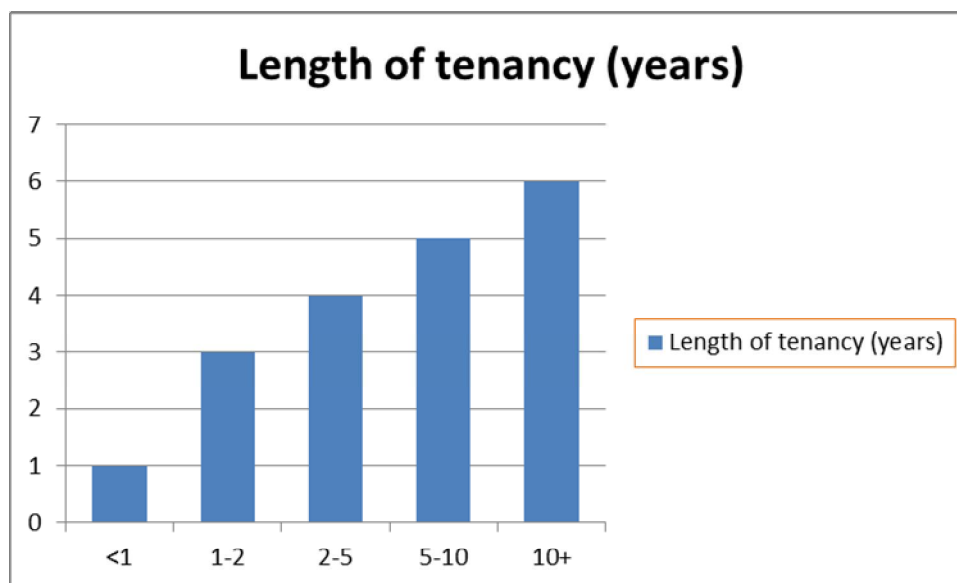
The table below shows the results of the tenant survey carried out in 2013 before the plans for the revival area were announced.

It shows the previously demonstrated trend of short tenancies that the revival scheme was designed to combat.

<b>How long have you lived here?</b>	
<b>Lowest answer received</b>	4 Months
<b>Highest answer received</b>	312 Months
<b>Mean result</b>	59 Months
<b>Median result</b>	30 Months
<b>Modal result</b>	12 Months
<b>Mean result disregarding highest and lowest answers</b>	43 Months
<b>Percentage of answers 36 months or below</b>	64%
<b>Percentage of answers 72 months and below</b>	82%

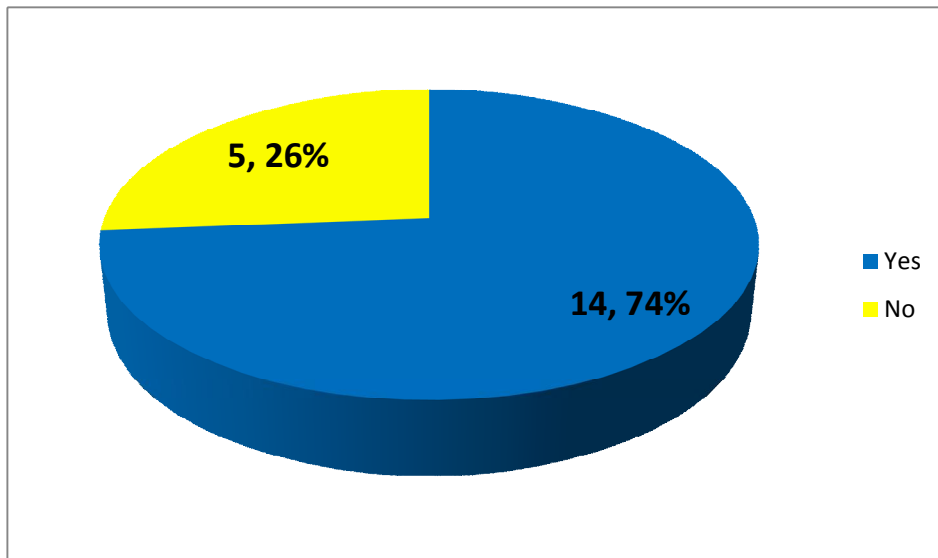
By comparison, the results received from this survey indicate that many of the people who responded to this questionnaire had been resident longer than those who responded to the first survey.

The graph below shows clearly that more responses were received from residents who had lived on Beechtrees for longer. This may further indicate the core of long term residents wishing to actively participate in the revival of the area.



## Do you like living in Beechtrees?

A simple yes or no answer was invited for this question to make it easier to interpret the responses.

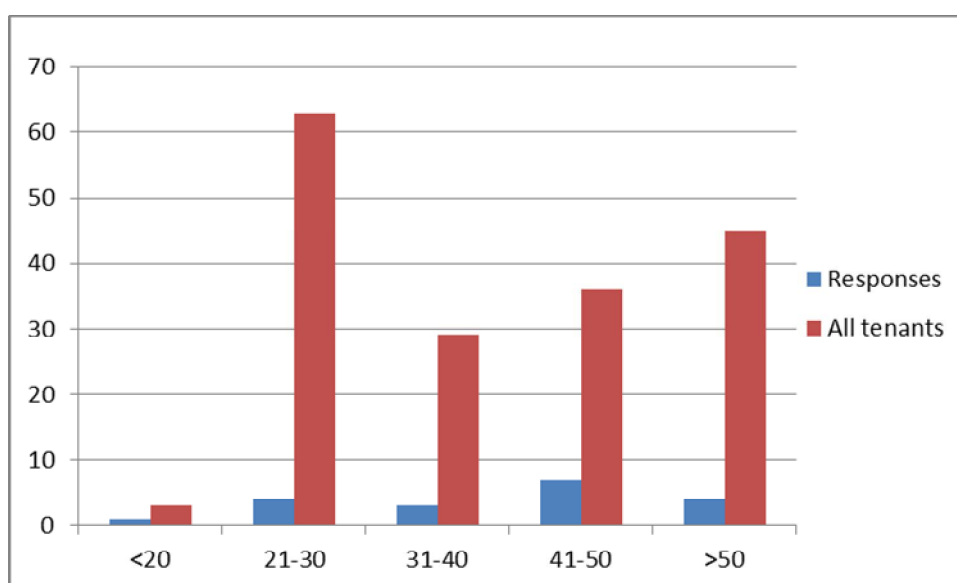


As the chart shows, the majority of people who responded to this survey like living in the area. This further reinforces the positive response received to question 1 and shows that there are merits to living on Beechtrees which would be built upon with the execution of the revival scheme.

## How old are you?

In order to assess how indicative the responses were of the Beechtrees flats at large, the results are shown in comparison to the ages of all of the tenants of Beechtrees. Although the questionnaire was sent to both tenants and homeowners on Beechtrees, and the online questionnaire was open to anybody to fill in, the vast majority of responses appear to have come from the tenants directly affected by the revival scheme as demonstrated in section 3. The data used for comparison in the chart below is based on the 176 registered council tenants on Beechtrees at the time of this report. This represents roughly 75% of the population of Beechtrees which should provide a useful comparison.

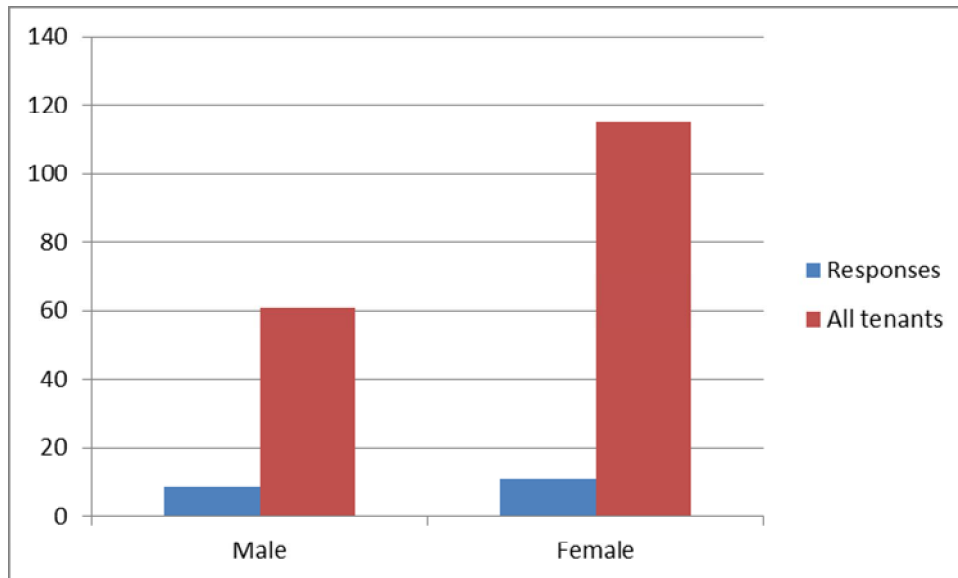
The table below shows the results.



- 5% of the respondents were aged 20 or under whereas the tenants in this category make up 2% of the total.
- 21% of the respondents were aged 21-30 whereas tenants in this category make up 36% of the total.
- 16% of the respondents were aged 31-40 whereas tenants in this category make up 16% of the total.
- 37% of the respondents were aged 41-50 whereas tenants in this category make up 20% of the total.
- 21% of the respondents were aged over 50 whereas tenants in this category make up 26% of the total.
- The most proportionately represented age range was 41-50. The least proportionately represented age range was 21-30 which is also the largest category.
- Due to the very few tenants in the 20 or under category, the responses could be considered statistically insignificant.

## Are you male or female?

As with the previous question, the table below shows the results from the questionnaire responses compared to the overall figures for the Beechtrees tenants.



- Male respondents make up 45% of the responses received while male tenants make up 35% of all of the tenants Beechtrees.
- Female respondents make up 55% of the responses received while female tenants make up 65% of all tenants in Beechtrees flats.
- The data used for this information comes from the rent account names and does not taken into account other members of a household who may be living there.
- Male residents make up roughly 70% of the tenants in the flats on Beechtrees which would be directly affected by the revival scheme. This would explain the apparent higher proportion of male respondents.

## 6. Consultation event and other forms of consultation.

**This section provides an overview of the other forms of consultation, the responses received and the outcomes achieved.**

As stated in section 3, a dedicated phone number, email address and consultation web page were set up in order to make it as easy as possible for any interested parties to have their say. There were several phone enquiries but the email address was not used at all.

The consultation event was used as both a way to answer queries regarding the scheme and a forum to discuss ideas and suggestions. Below are the suggestions received in bullet point form. The issues covered vary and many were repeated throughout the day. For ease of illustration the suggestions are grouped into 3 main categories: 1. Tenant relocation issues. 2. Suggestions for improving the revival scheme. 3. Existing problems which will need to be addressed.

### 1. Tenant relocation issues.

- Higher home loss payments for tenants who had been resident for more than 5 years.
- Offer temporary accommodation during the refurbishment works and return existing tenants to flats.
- Production of a new information pack to explain to tenants who have to move out what their options are.
- Could the works be organised so that the tenants did not have to move out?
- A further consultation event when the plans are finalised. This point was raised by several people.
- Could tenants who have to move out be assisted in finding private rented accommodation?
- Could houses for tenants displaced from Beechtrees be redecorated before moving in.
- Could the new and refurbished houses and flats be reserved for previous tenants of Beechtrees? This point was raised by several people.
- Alerts for tenants regarding new properties available for them to move into.
- Could single bedroom flats which become available be reserved for tenants who have to move out of existing single bedroom flats.



## **2. Suggestions for improving the revival scheme.**

- Could roof lights be added instead of new windows to the communal areas.
- Include a review and refurbishment of foul drainage in the area as part of the scheme.
- Extend kitchens to incorporate previous balcony area.
- Widen flat entrance doors to flats to make it easier to move furniture in.
- Ramps and level access thresholds should be included to the refurbished flats.
- Could CCTV cameras be added to cover the area?
- Steel gates with fob access for security to all blocks.
- Separate children's play areas away from flats.
- Add drying spaces to each block of flats.
- Could the storage areas in the communal areas be retained as there is not enough storage space in the flats?

## **3. Existing problems which will need to be addressed.**

- Surface water drainage and ground movement cause existing problems. Could they be investigated as part of the revival.
- Some tenants are concerned about the fire safety measures in the existing blocks. Could this be upgraded as part of the revival.
- There are ongoing problems with the separation of the landlords electric supply from that of the bedsits.
- Could the houses on Beechtrees be upgraded to match the flats?

## 7. Summary of findings.

**This section includes a brief summary of the findings following the consultation**

The number of responses we had through our various consultation channels was disappointing, with a total of only 24 responses out of 227, which equates to 10.6%.

However, the majority of returns received were from people directly affected by the revival scheme with the largest contingent being tenants who would need to move if the scheme goes ahead in its current form.

Proposals were generally well received with only 2 people disagreeing with the revival scheme in principal.

Some tenants expressed concerns regarding inability to move back once the revival is completed. The revival scheme is currently scheduled to be a 3 year project and it is the view of officers that during this time the majority of tenants would have re-settled in their new home, in addition, home loss payments would be on the basis of permanent displacement.

Limited concerns were expressed regarding the eligibility criteria for home loss payments and one tenant suggested tiered payments depending on the length of tenancies. The proposals are currently based on the statutory minimum payment, plus reasonable expenses if tenants meet the eligibility criteria of 1 year residence.

Some useful suggestions for improving the scheme were made during the consultation which will be considered when the project details are refined and developed.

## Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

**This is an anonymous survey to obtain the views of Beechtrees residents on the upcoming Revival scheme proposals.**

1. Do you agree with the Beechtrees revival scheme?  
(please choose which best represents your opinion and tick the box below)

Yes it is needed	No strong feelings either way	No, I don't think it will be very effective
------------------	-------------------------------	---

2. What affect do you think the revival scheme will have on the following problems:

**Make it better                      No effect                      Make it**

**worse**

	Make it better	No effect	Make it worse
Vandalism			
Graffiti			
Litter			
Neighbour disputes			
Security			
Dog fouling			
People damaging your property			
Drunk or rowdy behaviour			
Disruptive children/teenagers			
Lack of car parking			

3. Please rank the following from 1 – 5 which you think are the most positive things about the proposals? 1 being the most positive 5 being the least

The appearance of the buildings when finished	
Better outside space	
Better parking facilities	
Better quality homes for council tenants	
Better security	

4. Please rank the following from 1 – 5 which are your biggest concerns about the proposals? 1 being the most important and 5 being the least

Fewer garages	
The disruption while the building works are on site	
Concerns about damage from the demolition	
Breaking up of the community as people have to move out	
Money could be better spent elsewhere	

5. What could make the revival scheme better?

--

6. Can you suggest any other ways Beechtrees could be revived?

--

ABOUT YOU:

Do you live in (please tick)

A house	A flat
Address (optional)	Address (optional)

<1 year    1-2 years    2-5 years    5-10 years    >10years

How long have you lived on Beechtrees

--	--	--	--	--

Do you like living in Beechtrees?

Yes	No
-----	----

How old are you?

<20	20-30	30-40	40-50	>50

Are you?

Female	Male
--------	------

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



Directorate: Transformation	Service: Housing & Regeneration
Completed by: W.Berkley	Date:26/8/2015
/Subject Title: BEECHTREES REVIVAL SCHEME	
<b>/1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations):	No
Details of the matter under consideration:	Presentation of the Beechtrees revival scheme consultation and a recommendation to defer the decision pending the 2016/17 budget setting process.
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <i>*delete as appropriate</i>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Residents of Beechtrees, in particular detached flats.
If the work being carried out relates to a	The residents of flats on Beechtrees will be

universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	affected most.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?  Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes Yes No No No No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	The largest demographic in the flats is males between 20-29.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The report recommends the decision regarding the future of the revival be deferred pending the 2016/17 budget setting process. This report does not therefore, directly make a decision that would have any impact.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	The vast majority of respondents to our consultation are in favor of the scheme in principal, with only 2 people against.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	We have offered various channels of consultation, online surveys, questionnaires, drop in events and email.  The vast majority of respondents to our consultation are in favor of the scheme in principal.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	The report recommends the decision regarding the future of the revival be deferred pending the 2016/17 budget setting process. This may result in the residents of properties which were planned to be demolished feeling insecure and

	unable to plan for the future.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Due to the financial position of the HRA, it would not be prudent to make a decision prior to the budget setting process.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	N/A  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	A further equality impact assessment will be produced should the revival scheme progress.







**AGENDA ITEM: 5(i)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mr W. Berkley (Extn. 5259)**

**(E-mail: [william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: BATH/SOWER REPLACEMENT POLICY**

---

Wards affected: All Wards

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To propose a new policy relating to changing baths to showers.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration be granted discretion in applying the policy of changing baths to showers in sheltered accommodation, ground floor flats and bungalows in properties with less than 3 bedrooms.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council agreed a policy on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012 (minute 71, Item C), aiming to reduce the number of bathing related adaptations by changing baths to showers in sheltered accommodation, ground floor flats and bungalows in properties with less than 3 bedrooms, i.e. smaller properties that are easily accessible.

**4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 Whilst the policy is generally well received, some issues have arisen particularly in relation to category 1 sheltered accommodation which is not on the ground

floor and not serviced by a lift. Some tenants in these circumstances have requested to keep the existing bath. Officers feel this would be reasonable on the basis that they have the necessary mobility to access the property. However, the current policy requires the installation of a shower cubical in **all** sheltered properties.

- 4.2 Allowing an element of discretion will allow officers to consider circumstances where application of the policy may not be compatible with sustaining a tenancy and minimizing future adaptation costs.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 It is expected that allowing flexibility within the policy will help sustain tenancies, reducing churn and help consolidate communities.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is projected that the recommendation within this report will be at least cost neutral.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant operational risk registers.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B - Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*

## Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>		<b>Service: Housing &amp; Regeneration</b>	
<b>Completed by: W.Berkley</b>		<b>Date:26/8/2015</b>	
<b>/Subject Title: BATH/SHOWER REPLACEMENT POLICY</b>			
<b>/1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes		
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No		
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No		
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes		
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes		
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes		
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes		
Details of the matter under consideration:	<b>BATH/SHOWER REPLACEMENT POLICY</b> Allowing discretion in applying the policy of changing baths to showers in accessible smaller properties.		
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <i>*delete as appropriate</i>		
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>			
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>			
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Residents of sheltered properties, ground floor flats and bungalows with less than 3 bedrooms.		
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	The change in policy relates to smaller accessible properties.		

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	
Age	Yes
Gender	No
Disability	Yes
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	All tenants.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The change in policy will allow discretion to meet individual tenant's needs.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	Some residents have requested flexibility when changed baths for showers.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	The work will have a positive impact on the residents due to increased flexibility.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	A degree of flexibility will be possible when applying the policy of replacing baths with showers to meet tenant's needs.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	No negative impacts envisaged.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	N/A  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	No further review will be required.



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(j)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mr W. Berkley (Extn. 5259)**

**(E-mail: [william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:william.berkley@westlancs.gov.uk) )**

---

**SUBJECT: OPTION APPRAISAL - EVENWOOD COURT**

---

Wards affected: Tanhouse Ward

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the option appraisal work that has been carried out in relation to Evenwood Court.
- 1.2 To establish a preferred option for implementation.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That option 1 (as detailed in paragraph 5.1) be adopted for implementation utilising the budget of £400k allocated at the Council meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015, to accelerate the kitchen and bathroom programmes and proceed with the replacement lift carriage and new lift and shaft installation, utilising the established lift budget.
- 2.2 That the voids position within Evenwood Court be reviewed 12 months after the implementation of the above option to assess the impact on void levels and identify any further intervention that may be required.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council allocated a budget in 2014 of £174K to install additional lifts to Evenwood Court and Marlborough Court to ensure all category 2 Sheltered properties had lift provision.

- 3.2 The tenders received were in excess of £80k over the original budget estimate of £174K.
- 3.3 The additional lifts would service an additional 13 properties at Evenwood Court and 11 Properties at Marlborough Court.
- 3.4 As demand for properties on Evenwood Court was low, with 13 properties void, Cabinet decided to defer the lift installation at Evenwood Court pending a full option appraisal and offer tenants with mobility issues ground floor accommodation within the scheme were possible.

#### **4.0 OPTION APPRAISAL**

##### **4.1 Net Present Value Analysis (NPV)**

- 4.1.1 In order to assess how Evenwood Court was performing financially a net present value analysis was carried out and is shown in Appendix A. This is an analysis of expected income over an extended period against projected expenditure on management, required capital investment and maintenance, the outcome is then discounted down to current levels. This shows that Evenwood Court has a negative NPV of £498,551.
- 4.1.2 A review of the our data was undertaken to identify the reasons why the area was showing a low value. The main reasons identified were, void income loss, and response maintenance costs.
- 4.1.3 The analysis also demonstrated that Evenwood Court service charges were being subsidised, i.e. the service charges did not fully cover the apportioned costs of the provided supporting services.

##### **4.2 Changes to supporting people funding**

- 4.2.1 There are also a number of challenges facing our sheltered accommodation provision, with the reduction of supporting people funding from LCC, this has resulted in our funding being reduced in total by £190k in 2015/16 and a further £230k reduction is expected in 2017/18. These reductions will result in the subsidy referred to in 4.1 being further increased.
- 4.2.2 A project is however underway to make recommendations which will address the reduction in this supporting people funding with a view to removing all subsidy's and provide a more tailored service for residents by April 2017. It is hoped tenants will be able to choose which services they require and pay accordingly. Consultation will be carried out by LCC with our residents which will inform this project
- 4.2.3 The impact of these changes in terms of general demand for our sheltered accommodation is currently unclear and further work will be carried out to make a full assessment.

##### **4.3 Review of Supply & Demand**

- 4.3.1 There are 46 lettable flats on Evenwood Court, nearby there is an alternative development called Fenney Court which comprises of 48 properties and is run by Housing & Care 21. The Fenney Court void levels are significantly less than those on Evenwood Court. There are currently 9 empty properties on Evenwood Court and 2 on Fenney Court. However, following a conversation with Housing & Care 21s Retirement Housing Manager I understand that 3 of their tenants have recently moved to Evenwood Court.
- 4.3.2 On the housing waiting list there are currently 20 registrations of interest to have sheltered accommodation in the Tanhouse area, with 12 bids for Evenwood Court being made in 2014/2015.
- 4.3.3 An analysis of the void levels over the last three financial years for our Cat 2 sheltered accommodation is shown below. This clearly shows that Evenwood Court and Hall Green Close are significantly underperforming compared to our other Cat 2 schemes with the number of rental days lost per property being 209 for Evenwood Court and 281 for Hall Green Close. The number of void days for Evenwood Court is the highest of all our schemes over the three years reviewed.

Client_Designation		Sheltered			
Row Labels	Count of prty_id	Sum of days_Void	Sum of Number of void periods	Void Days per property	
Bath Springs Court	43	1078	16	25	
Beechwood Court	42	3605	26	86	
Crosshall Court	40	1459	15	36	
Evenwood Court	48	10045	23	209	
Hall Green Close	24	6745	10	281	
Hillock Close	20	208	5	10	
Marlborough Court	51	2526	25	50	
Oakgate Close	40	471	16	12	
Queens Court	17	1997	5	117	
Richmond Court	20	1528	7	76	
The Dell	36	1224	17	34	
Victoria Court	28	1617	11	58	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>32503</b>	<b>176</b>		

- 4.3.4 Of the 9 empty properties we currently have on Evenwood Court 8 are on the first floor that is not serviced by a lift, 7 of which are long term voids and in need considerable investment.

#### 4.4 Appearance

4.4.1 Whilst the scheme is attractive, the approach road is through Evenwood which is a little oppressive, with a large terrace of properties on the main approach road to Evenwood Court.

#### 4.5 Wider Area Potential

4.5.1 There is a large field to the West of Evenwood Court which is known as 'The Clough' and is owned by the HCA.

#### 4.6 Tenant Views

4.6.1 In order to gain a more detailed understanding of how tenants felt about Evenwood Court a consultation exercise was carried out with residents a report of which is detailed in Appendix B.

4.6.2 The most popular feature of the scheme was the safety it provided, the staff and the gardens. The biggest areas of concern were the absence of a lift and a lack of organised activities.

4.6.3 By far the most requested improvement was increasing organised activities, which was felt would bring the community together, with an additional lift being second.

4.6.4 Addressing these issues may result in increased desirability of the accommodation and reduce the void rates.

#### 4.7 Findings

4.7.1 Based on the above research it was felt that the main areas for concern were indeed the absence of a lift in one of the wings, which is depressing demand, that is already not particularly buoyant, and also the limited community activities within the scheme along with potential over supply.

4.7.2 The fact that all but one of the nine void properties in the scheme is on the first floor that is not serviced by a lift is very compelling.

### **5.0 OPTIONS**

5.1 Based on the findings in 4.7 a series of options have been considered and costed:

- Option 1      Replace the existing lift and install an additional lift and work with tenants to improve/establish the committee to encourage social activities, learning from other schemes. Bring forward capital investment in kitchens and bathrooms for Evenwood Court to the 2015/2016 financial year.
- Option 2      Convert the flats on the first floor not serviced by a lift to 2 bedroom flats to increase demand.



- Option 3 Convert the flats in the east wing to 2 bedroom flats, and segregate the scheme to allow a wide range of potential tenants.
- Option 4 Defer decision for a potential wider regeneration opportunity in partnership with the HCA incorporating 'The Clough'.

## 5.2 Option 1

5.2.1 This option includes proceeding with the scheduled replacement of the existing lift and also proceeding with the installation of an additional lift to service an additional 13 properties on the east wing of Evenwood Court. This option would ensure all properties on Evenwood Court were serviced by a lift. In addition it is felt that bringing forward the kitchen and bathroom refurbishment project from 2016-2018 will further enhance the desirability of the scheme, especially the installation of low level shower trays in lieu of the existing baths.

5.2.2 To address the concerns of residents regarding the lack of social activities it is suggested that officers work with tenants to improve/establish the committee to encourage social activities, learning lessons from other sheltered schemes that have an active social scene.

5.2.3 It is anticipated that this option will cost in the region of £142,000 for the new lift and shaft with replacing the existing lift carriage costing £38,000, totalling £180,000. Re-profiling the kitchen and bathrooms will require £318,500.

5.2.4 The advantages of this option are detailed below:

- It will address residents' concerns that the absence of a lift is the cause of the current void levels.
- Provide flexibility in terms of future use of the scheme.
- Will bring Evenwood Court up to the standard of all other sheltered schemes to have 100% lift coverage (Marlborough Court also being addressed this year)
- Make properties more attractive with the installation of new kitchens and Bathrooms and new lift provision.
- Improve the social/community aspects of the scheme.
- Leave opportunities for further intervention if necessary.

5.2.5 The disadvantages of this option are:

- The installation of an additional lift may not have the desired effect to address the weakness in demand.
- Incurs the cost of an additional lift.
- Should the additional intervention of merging properties be required, some kitchen replacement costs could have been avoided.

## 5.3 Option 2

5.3.1 This option is to convert the existing first floor flats not serviced by a lift into 2 bedroom flats, essentially knocking 2 into 1. A similar exercise was carried out in

Bathsprings Court, which proved to be very successful stimulating a great deal of demand, in addition to replacing the existing lift.

5.3.2 To address the concerns of residents regarding the lack of social activities it is suggested that officers work with tenants to improve/establish the committee to encourage social activities, learning lessons from other sheltered schemes that have an active social scene.

5.3.3 It is anticipated that this option will cost in the region of £291,535, plus £38,000 to replace the existing lift.

5.3.4 The advantages of this option are detailed below:

- Make the current low demand properties into 2 bedroom flats, to increase demand,
- Provide 7 refurbished two bedroom flats
- Improve the social/community aspects of the scheme.
- Leave opportunities for further intervention if necessary.

5.3.5 The disadvantages of this option are:

- The costs to convert two flats into one,
- A reduction in the number of lettable units by 5.
- May not have the desired effect to address the weakness in demand.
- Would require the rehousing of approx..5 tenants.

#### 5.4 Option 3

5.4.1 This is an extension of option 2, where in addition to converting the existing first floor flats not serviced by a lift into 2 bedroom flats, the ground floor of the east wing is also converted into 2 bedroom units and the scheme is segregated creating a non-Cat 2 area with its own entrance and reviewing the lettings policy, in addition to replacing the existing lift.

5.4.2 To address the concerns of residents regarding the lack of social activities in the remainder of the scheme it is suggested that officers work with tenants to improve/establish the committee to encourage social activities, learning lessons from other sheltered schemes that have an active social scene.

5.4.3 It is anticipated that this option will cost in the region of £521,757, plus £38,000 to replace the existing lift.

5.4.4 The advantages of this option are detailed below:

- Make the current low demand properties into 2 bedroom flats, to increase demand,
- Provide an additional 12 two bedroom flats
- Improve the social/community aspects of the remaining scheme.

5.4.5 The disadvantages of this option are:

- The costs to convert the flats to two bedrooms in the east wing and segregate.
- A reduction in the number of lettable units by 9.
- May not have the desired effect to address the weakness in demand.
- Would require the rehousing of approx..16 tenants.
- The segregated properties will be subject to the right to buy (RTB).

## 5.5 Option 4

5.5.1 As mentioned in paragraph 4.5, there is a large field to the West of Evenwood Court which is known as 'The Clough' and is owned by the HCA. A local development order is currently being produced by our planning department which will designate this land for housing use. Should the decision on the future of Evenwood Court be deferred then consideration could be given to packaging both Evenwood Court and the HCA site for a larger housing development.

5.5.2 However, due to the low land values in the Skelmersdale area, it is felt that the return to the Council will again, be extremely limited, however this may result in a limited number of new build properties for the Council.

5.5.3 The advantages of this option are detailed below:-

- Could provide an exciting new housing development in Skelmersdale.
- This could result in a limited number of new-build houses being owned by the Council, dependant on the design of the project.

5.5.4 The disadvantages of this option are:-

- It is not envisaged that the Council would receive a receipt for the scheme.
- It may be some time before a programme could be developed with the HCA, casting a shadow over the scheme.
- We would need to rehouse our existing tenants should the scheme be demolished for new-build.
- No further rental income.

## 5.6 Option Analysis and Estimated Costs

5.6.1 A summary analysis of the outcomes for each of the options is detailed in the table below, including simple payback periods where appropriate.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>
<b>Reduction in number of flats</b>	0	5	9	48
<b>Number of Properties with New Kitchens and Bathrooms</b>	48	7	12	N/A
<b>New Refurbished 2 Bedroom Flats</b>	N/A	7	12	N/A
<b>All Properties Serviced by a Lift (Y/N)</b>	Yes	No	No	N/A
<b>Potential limited number of new Build Properties (Y/N)</b>	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Larger Development realisation</b>	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Provide Support for Vulnerable Children</b>	No	No	No	No
<b>Number of tenants required to be rehoused</b>	N/A	5	16	39
<b>Overall Estimated Cost / receipt</b>	<b>£498,500*</b>	<b>£329,535**</b>	<b>£559,757***</b>	<b>No Receipt Envisaged</b>

\*This cost includes £318,500 to replace kitchens and bathrooms which are already in the business plan for 2016-2018 the balance of £180,000 will be met from the lift budget.

\*\* This cost includes £32,500 for kitchen and bathrooms which are already in the business plan for 2016-2018, this also includes £38,000 to replace the existing lift which budgeted for with the current financial year.

\*\*\* This cost includes £78,000 for kitchen and bathrooms which are already in the business plan for 2016-2018, this also includes £38,000 to replace the existing lift which budgeted for with the current financial year.

## 5.7 Recommended Options

5.7.1 It is recommended that Option 1 is adopted initially with option 2 & 3 considered in 12 months' time should the void property issues not be resolved.

- It will address residents' concerns that the absence of a lift is the cause of the current void levels.
- Provide flexibility in terms of future use of the scheme.
- Will bring Evenwood Court up to the standard of all other sheltered schemes to have 100% lift coverage (Marlborough Court also being addressed this year)
- Make properties more attractive with the installation of new kitchens and Bathrooms, including low level shower trays and the installation of an additional lift.
- Improve the social/community aspects of the scheme.
- Leave opportunities for further intervention if necessary.

## 6.0 PLANNING

6.1 A planning application for an additional lift has been submitted and approved.

## 7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

7.1 The objective of this report is to ensure the long term sustainability of Evenwood Court, to ensure they form a positive contribution to the business plan along with providing good quality homes for our tenants.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Option 1 totals £498,500, however this includes £180,000 for replacing the existing and installing a new lift, this expenditure is budgeted for within the current financial. The balance of £318,500 to accelerate the kitchens and bathrooms could be met from the allocated £400,000. This would result in a saving for the business plan in coming years.

8.2 Option 2 can be delivered within the established budget.

8.3 Option 3 comes to a total of £559,757. However, this includes £78,000 that is already in the business plan for 2016-2018, and £38,000 to replace the existing lift which is budgeted for within the current financial year. To deliver this option in 2015-2016 will require an additional £121,757, to be expended over the £400,000 budget in the current financial year which would require some short term re-profiling of expenditure.

8.4 No costs for option 4 have been envisaged at this time.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant operational risk registers.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Current NPV Analysis / Void Histories

Appendix B – Tenant Consultation

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix D - Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 10 September 2015 – *to follow*



## Appendix A

### Net Present Value (NPV) Analysis 2015-16

Using the data in our stock condition survey and whole stock NPV analysis carried out in 2012/13, a further analysis was carried out specifically for the Evenwood Court sheltered scheme.

To evidence the void levels, data was extracted from the QL housing Management system, for a period of 3 years from 2012 to 2015. The results in the table below shows a comparison of the number of days void and the number of changes in tenancy a property has had in the 3 year period from 2012 to 2015.

add_1	Property Type	2012-13 days void	2012-13 void instances	2013-14 days void	2013-14 void instances	2014-15 days void	2014-15 void instances
1 Evenwood Court	FLAT	50	1	0	0	0	0
2 Evenwood Court	HSE	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
4 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 Evenwood Court	FLAT	43	2	309	1	167	1
6 Evenwood Court	FLAT	36	1	0	0	0	0
7 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
11 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 Evenwood Court	FLAT	57	2	0	0	2	1
13 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	303	1
16 Evenwood Court	FLAT	364	1	364	1	364	1
17 Evenwood Court	FLAT	63	1	364	1	364	1
18 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
20 Evenwood Court	FLAT	126	1	364	1	364	1
21 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	226	1
22 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 Evenwood Court	FLAT	21	1	364	1	364	1
24 Evenwood Court	FLAT	364	1	364	1	364	1
25 Evenwood Court	FLAT	91	1	364	1	27	1
26 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
27 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
28 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
29 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	113	1	188	1
31 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
32 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
33 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
34 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
35 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	36	1
36 Evenwood Court	FLAT	119	1	364	1	364	1
37 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	8	1	258	1
38 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
39 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
40 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
41 Evenwood Court	FLAT	323	1	364	1	195	1
42 Evenwood Court	FLAT	64	1	0	0	106	1
43 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
44 Evenwood Court	FLAT	42	1	364	1	328	1
45 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	0	0	0	0
46 Evenwood Court	HSE	364	1	364	1	364	1
47 Evenwood Court	FLAT	29	1	0	0	0	0
48 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	99	1	293	1
49 Evenwood Court	FLAT	0	0	22	1	90	1
		2156		4191		4767	
			18		15		20

Average Days Void	3,704.67
Average Void Instances	17.67
Days Void per Dwelling	75.61
Void Instances per Dwelling	0.36

In the financial year 2014/15, it can be seen that 4,767 days rent were lost due to being void for 20 instances or changes in tenancy to 20 dwellings which equates to 41% of the dwellings having a change of tenancy or being continuously vacant in that year. This is considerably greater than in the previous 2 years. From the table it can also be seen that there are 7 properties which have been continuously void for two or more years, which equates to 14% of

the scheme. This has a significant effect on rental income and the level of annual repairs needed for the block.

From the bottom of the table above it can be seen that the average days void per year for the period is 3,704.67 days, with the average instances per year being 17.67. This equates to 75.61 days void per property and 0.36 instances per property per year.

As a comparison the figures for the same period for all of the housing stock can be seen below.

2012-13 days void	2012-13 Void Instances	2013-14 days void Extrapolated	2013-14 Void Instances	2014-15 days void	2014-15 Void Instances
37,016		73,974		43,460	
	846		1,146		811

Average Days Void	51,483.33
Average Void Instances	934.33
Days Void per Dwelling	8.30
Void Instances per Dwelling	0.15

As can be seen for 2012- 15 there are on average 51,483 days lost as void across 934 changes of tenancy. This gives an overall average for all stock of 8.3 days void per property, and 0.15 instances per property.

This is considerably better than the average for Evenwood Court.

A discounted cash flow analysis has been carried out for this option which demonstrates the current position if nothing changes and is based upon the following assumptions;

There is no Initial cost as such, as this option spreads the investment over the 30 years based upon the requirements specified in the stock condition survey.

The inflated cost for this is £2,501,542 or £51,052 per dwelling.

Rate of inflation 2.2%

Discounted cash flow rate 6%

Annual management and Repair cost per dwelling £2,964

Starting rent for 1 bedroom flat from £63.75

Starting service charge for 1 bedroom flat from £34.60

The second and third cycle renewals have been accounted for over the 30 years for Kitchens, Boilers, Heating distribution, Communal doors and Communal Decoration.

The Void days were assumed to be those in the 2014-15 column in the void days table above.

The results of the NPV analysis can be seen in the summary below.

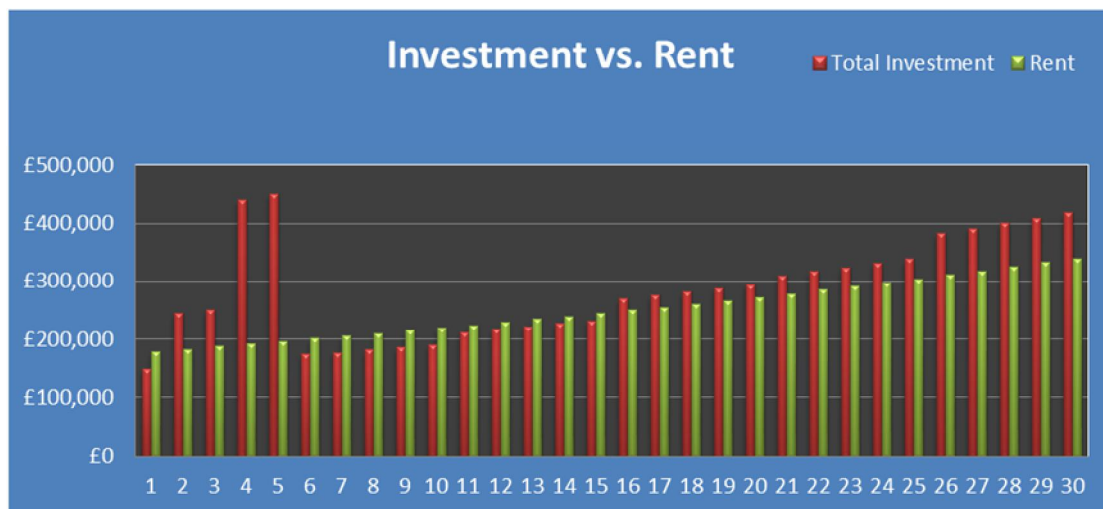
	Total	Per Unit
NPV	-£498,551	-£10,175
STOCK CONDITION INFLATED	£2,501,542	£51,052
MANAGEMENT & REPAIRS INFLATED	£6,081,036	£124,103
RENT INFLATED	£7,552,363	£154,130

The total inflated expenditure over the 30 years including repairs and management costs taken from the NPV analysis spreadsheet is £8,582,578 or £175,154.65 per dwelling. As can be seen from the table above the expenditure exceeds the income of £7,552,363 by - £1,030,215 or -£21,024.79 per property.

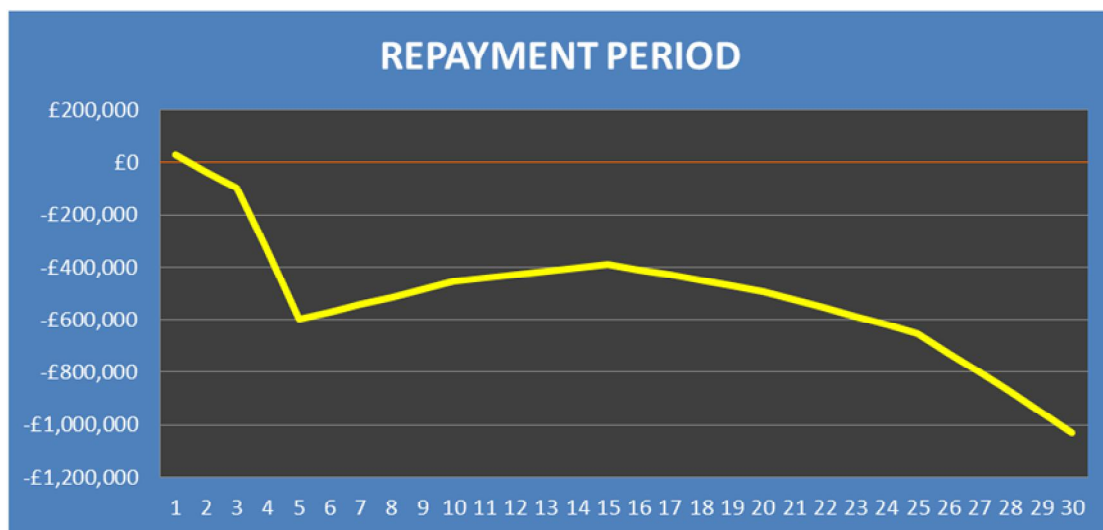


The NPV value in the table above shows that in today's money each flat has a negative worth of -£10,175. This is based on the total expenditure on repairs, programmed works (stock Condition Survey) and management fees and the total income from the rent, all of this is inflated and then discounted down for the 30 year period.

The investment against rent graph below, includes all income and expenditure elements mentioned in the paragraph above, and displays them in a bar graph for each of the 30 years. As can be seen, the expenditure in red is generally greater than the income in green. It also clearly demonstrates that the costs have been inflated, as the rental income in green, rises with a steady gradient.



Using the data from the above graph to populate the Repayment Period graph below, it can be seen that if investment and income were to continue as predicted and the graph extrapolated, the flats would not become cost neutral in next 30 years.



It has to be remembered that this would only be an elemental replacement when predicted failure has occurred, and would not be improving the amenity of the properties or the surrounding area, as could happen with other options. For instance it would not include for thermal upgrades like cavity or loft insulation, or the installation of a new lift to the east block.

Due to the more random form of investment, it would be assumed that the level of repairs would continue at the present level, in part due to the assumed void levels which would be expected to continue at these high levels. Anecdotal evidence for this, from 'Voids and

Allocations' is that they find it difficult to let these properties to new tenants partly due to there being no lift in the east block and the lack of social activities.

This method of investment is not looking at enhancing the amenity of the properties, or rejuvenating the scheme, or targeting specific reasons for vacancy levels, it is purely designed to maintain the scheme at it's current existing condition and standard.

Although potentially a viable option for maintaining the stock at their existing levels, it does nothing for correcting the underlying problems with the scheme, or improving them to raise the standard of Amenity, Fitness or Quality expected by our residents.

**EVENWOOD COURT CONSULTATION**

During the door to door consultation, 21 residents were happy to speak with us and give us feedback on the scheme. 9 of the properties are void and the rest were no accesses.

The residents were asked 3 key questions during our discussion; **What do you like about the scheme? What don't you like about the scheme?** And finally **What improvements could be made to the scheme?** The majority of the residents at Evenwood Court answered all 3 questions and put forward some suggestions.

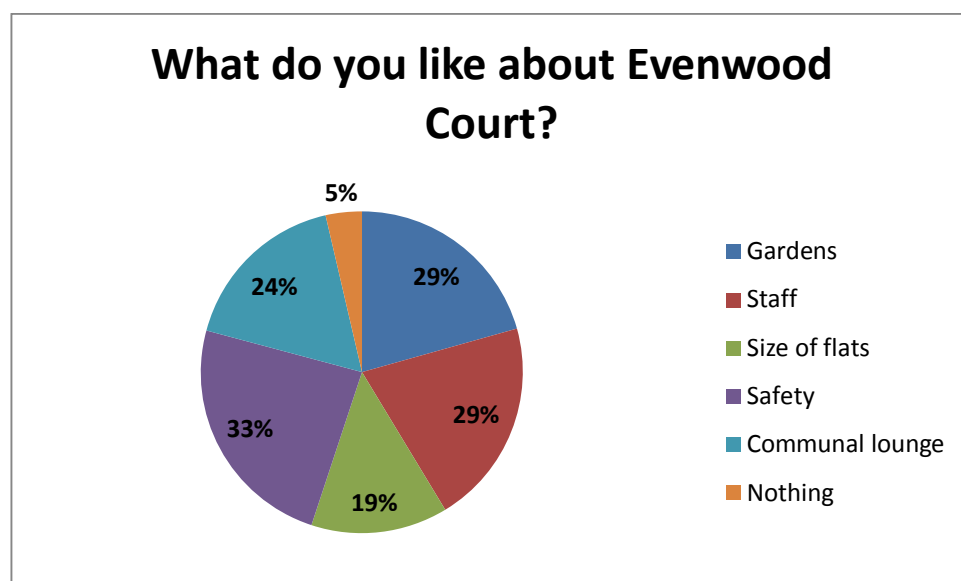
**“What do you like about the scheme?”**

The most common answer we found when asking this question was that the residents of Evenwood Court feel safe. They said safety played a big part in them choosing a sheltered scheme. They liked that there is a Warden on site the majority of the time and they don't have any nuisance callers or anti-social behaviour issues outside the scheme.

Another comment made was that there was an option to use the communal lounge if you wanted to, if not you also had the privacy of your own flat.

The gardens are also a big part of what the residents like about the scheme. Some residents enjoy gardening themselves and take pride in the appearance of Evenwood Court.

29% of residents we spoke to commented on how happy they were with Nick Farley, the warden at Evenwood Court and how helpful he is.



\*Out of the 21 residents asked

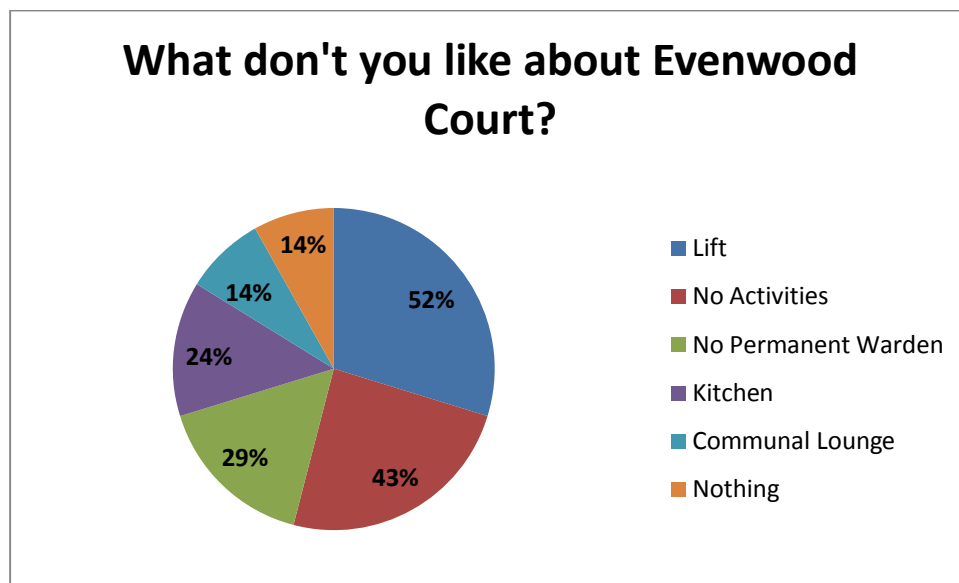
**“What don't you like about the scheme?”**

When asked what they didn't like about Evenwood Court, over half of the residents we spoke to said the lift was a major issue. Residents have strong views and opinions on this matter even those who are not directly affected by the issue i.e. those who live at the opposite end of the building. The main issue presented by the residents was that they were informed that they would be getting a lift installed and then were told this would not be happening. Residents who live on the top floor find it a daily struggle to get up and down the stairs, especially carrying bags of shopping etc. One resident in particular has severe breathing difficulties and has been in and out of hospital during the last few months. He finds it almost impossible to climb up the stairs and his main struggle is taking recycling bags down the stairs to the other side of the building to the bin store.

One resident claimed she felt that if a lift was installed this would improve the issue with void properties on this side of the building.

When speaking to residents in their flats, another issue which came up on more than one occasion was the lack of light in their kitchen. Also, a handful of residents had an issue with the heat detector in their flat. If they don't open their living room windows whilst they are cooking the heat from the oven sets off the detector.

During our conversations, I would ask each resident whether or not they used the communal lounge. The majority of those who did use the lounge regularly, said they were happy with the overall appearance and layout of the lounge however they felt that not enough activities are on offer for them e.g. bingo, quizzes etc. They felt that this would give the scheme more of a community feel and would encourage those who didn't visit the communal lounge to do so.



\*Out of the 21 residents asked

#### “What improvements could we make to the scheme?”

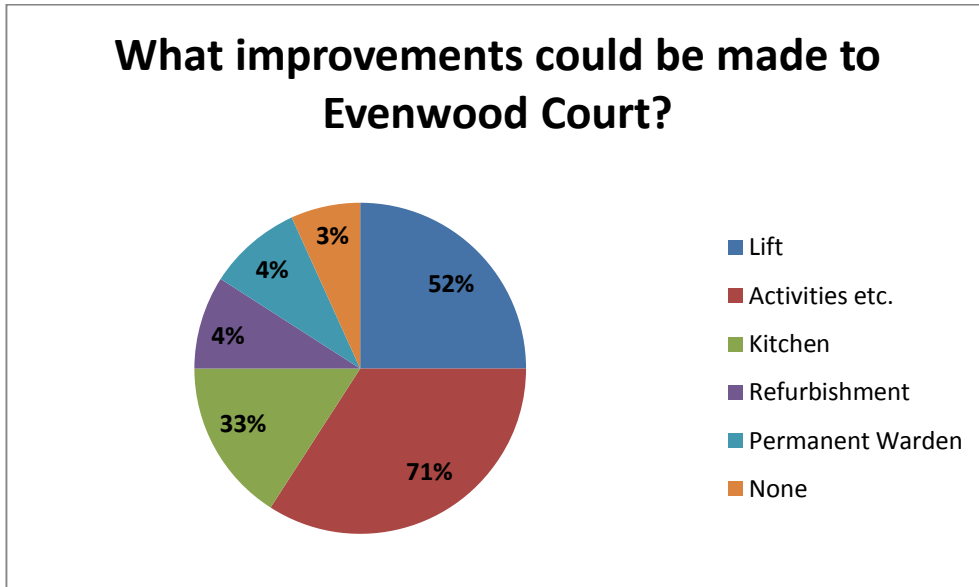
When asked what would improve the scheme, the residents made suggestions in which they feel would benefit everybody at Evenwood Court.

52% of the 21 residents we asked said that they felt installing a lift to the other side of the building would improve the scheme. They also mentioned the void properties could be down to the fact that when viewing a property, elderly people may be put off that there is no lift access to the first floor.

A majority of the residents suggested that group activities, events, trips etc. would improve the scheme and give Evenwood Court more of a community feel which is present in various other sheltered housing schemes.

Most of the residents are happy with the size and layout of their flats however, they do feel that the kitchen could be improved. I informed the residents of Evenwood Court that they are on the programme for new kitchens on the Kitchen replacement programme 2016-2017. The main issue they had with their kitchen is the lack of light coming through. They said having additional natural lighting would benefit their flat immensely. Another issue which residents feel would improve their kitchen would be to have extractor fans installed. This would prevent heat detectors going off unnecessarily.

One resident also made a suggestion of having an entrance to the kitchen from the communal lounge; they said this would make it easier for them when they have visitors etc.



\*Out of the 21 residents asked



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Housing &amp; Regeneration</b>
<b>Completed by: W.Berkley</b>	<b>Date: 12/5/2015</b>
<b>Subject Title: Evenwood Court Option appraisal</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	Option Appraisal - Evenwood Court
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above <b>go straight to Section 3</b></i>  <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above <b>please complete Section 2</b></i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Residents of Evenwood Court

<p>If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?</p>	<p>Residents of Evenwood Court who are over 60 years old.</p>
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <p>Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Yes No Yes No No No No No No No</p>
<p><b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b></p>	
<p>In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?</p>	<p>Residents of Evenwood Court.</p>
<p>What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?</p>	<p>Should the recommended option be agreed, Residents on the first floor of the east wing will benefit from a lift.</p>
<p>What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?</p>	<p>Residents think that a lift will improve the scheme.</p>
<p>What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>The work will have a positive impact on the residents due to the installation of a lift.</p>
<p>If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b></p>	
<p>In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?</p>	<p>Residents with mobility issues will be able to access the entire scheme.</p>



<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	No negative impacts envisaged.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	N/A
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	The progress of installing the lift will be closely monitored, once installed no further monitoring is envisaged at the impact will be positive.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(k)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I. Moran**

**Contact for further information: Mr I. Gill (Extn. 5094)**

**(Email [ian.gill@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:ian.gill@westlancs.gov.uk))**

**Mr D. Carr (Extn. 5122)**

**(Email [dominic.carr@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.carr@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: ORMSKIRK TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY 2015**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the consultation exercise in relation to the draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 and to agree the final version of the Strategy.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the final draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 as attached at Appendix C be approved.

2.2 That the key delivery partners set out at paragraph 5.5 be invited to sign up to the final draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015.

2.3 That the management arrangements for the delivery of the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy, set out in paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5, be agreed and the Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to implement these management arrangements and to make any appropriate adjustments to the management arrangements as required.

- 2.4 That the Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to finalise and publish the final Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 when signed by key delivery partners, and to make any appropriate minor amendments before the document is finalised.
  - 2.5 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised to implement the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015.
- 

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following Cabinet approval of the Draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy in January 2015, the document has been through a comprehensive consultation exercise.
- 3.2 During the twelve week consultation exercise which began on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and completed on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015, officers participated in a number of events to promote the consultation and encourage engagement. These events included holding six exhibitions within Ormskirk across a range of venues with officers attending an exhibition at the Chapel Gallery, three events at Ormskirk Library and a full day at Morrison's together with a business 'Start Up and Growth' event at Edge Hill University. In total officers recorded 252 attendees at these consultation events. Officers have also met with some of the major landowners within Ormskirk, Edge Hill University, Edge Hill Students Union, representatives from Ormskirk Parish Church, as well as meeting with Love Ormskirk, Ormskirk Community Partnership (OCP) and representatives from Business in the Community (BITC).
- 3.3 A dedicated web page was created on the Council's website and details of the consultation exercise were sent to businesses on the Economic Regeneration's business database. Letters were also sent to all businesses in the town centre, as well as a number of other stakeholders including West Lancashire College and Lancashire County Council. Two press releases were issued during the consultation period letting members of the public know when events were taking place and how they can engage in the consultation.
- 3.4 For the purposes of minimising cost and the impact on resources required to input and analyse individual responses, respondents were encouraged to complete an online questionnaire, although some paper copies were also available should individuals have preferred this method. These paper copies were also issued during consultation events if requested by members of the public.
- 3.5 Copies of the consultation documents and questionnaires were also made available at the Council offices in Ormskirk, the Council Customer Service Point in the Concourse, Skelmersdale, and the Investment Centre at Whitemoss Business Park, Skelmersdale, as well as the library and the Chapel Gallery within Ormskirk. In total a 118 responses to the online/paper questionnaire were received.

- 3.6 The Council's Corporate & Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee are currently working on a project entitled 'A Market Strategy for Ormskirk' in which they are examining/reviewing a series of topics which are also covered within the Town Centre Strategy. The recommendations from this project will be reported back to Cabinet for approval and if they are approved can be fed into the implementation of the actions within the Town Centre Strategy.
- 3.7 In addition, a special Members consultation event took place in which Ormskirk Ward Councillors, relevant Portfolio Holders and Opposition spokespeople were invited to discuss the development and implementation of the strategy.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

- 4.1 Appendix A contains an analysis of the responses received to the paper and electronic versions of the consultation questionnaire.
- 4.2 We also received a number of detailed letters and comments from meetings with groups such as OCP, Love Ormskirk, Ormskirk Parish Church, Ormskirk Residents Group, Edge Hill University/Students Union and some key landowners. A summary of these responses can be seen within Appendix B attached to this report.
- 4.3 Given the nature of the document, a good response was received. It was pleasing to note that so many people (252) attended the consultation events to discuss issues with officers with some leaving feedback.
- 4.4 Comments received have generally been supportive and constructive both from the completed questionnaires (118 in total), and the discussions and meetings which have taken place. Of particular note there appears to be overwhelming support for the vision, whilst a large number of respondents believe that Ormskirk gives a negative first impression. Also when asked if respondents could prioritise areas in which they would like to see improvements within the strategy, these were '*Brand, Marketing and Town Centre Management*'; '*Buildings and Place*'; and '*Ormskirk Market*'. All three responses received between 20 and 26%. Out of all the responses received the majority (69%), were received from West Lancashire residents with 18% also received from businesses in West Lancashire.
- 4.5 In addition, some of the key points raised by respondents to the questionnaire included:
- Improving the relationship between Edge Hill University and the town
  - Improving the range of shops available in the town
  - Concerns were raised over the current appearance of Ormskirk Market, and the town generally
  - There appears to be support to encourage a series of events within Ormskirk to encourage visitors and shoppers into the town
  - Concern over the current car parking arrangements and transport generally within the town
- 4.6 To summarise, from the meetings which were held with key stakeholders some of the main points raised included:

- There appears to be support that the Council is developing this Strategy and an understanding that this demonstrates the Council's commitment to the continued success of Ormskirk Town Centre
- A number of respondents said that they believed the Council could help support businesses more by being more flexible
- Some discussion over whether the Council could help attract larger retailers to the town
- There appears to be general consensus that the market requires improving and needs to find a niche
- Transport into and out of Ormskirk should be improved
- The appearance of the town centre needs to be improved to help improve confidence in the town centre
- There was a general consensus that the Wi-Fi coverage in the town centre needs to be improved
- Some respondents said that there are too many actions contained within the strategy and that the strategy should be more concise
- Support for the development of a dedicated town centre management group
- Ormskirk Parish Church, Edge Hill University and Edge Hill Students Union said that they would welcome the opportunity to get more involved in the development and implementation of this Strategy with all groups offering support.

## **5.0 CURRENT POSITION AND PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Following the consultation exercise and the responses received, it is proposed to make a number of minor amendments to the strategy which can be viewed within Appendix B. These include:
- Giving greater priority to utilising Ormskirk Parish Church, as well as other churches within Ormskirk
  - Amendment to the list of key partners to reflect additional organisations the Council has engaged with
  - Slight factual changes to the document including the Ormskirk Improvements Map
  - Reducing and merging some of the actions within the Strategy so that it is more focused and less repetitive
  - Alteration to the vision to make it more locally specific to Ormskirk
- 5.2 These changes have been made to the document and a Final Draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 has been attached to this report as Appendix C.
- 5.3 It is proposed that we get key delivery partners (as set out in paragraph 5.5 below) to sign up to this Final Draft Strategy before the document is finally published. This will ensure that the Strategy is truly a joint partnership strategy and not just viewed as the Council's Strategy. A delegation is sought to allow the final publishing of the Strategy once it is endorsed by the other key delivery partners, and to allow for any appropriate minor amendments to the document that may be required.
- 5.4 A broad structure for engagement and delivery of the Strategy is set out in Appendix D. It is proposed that there will be an Ormskirk Town Centre

Stakeholder Event which will be held once a year with a wide range of stakeholders present to allow feedback on how progress is being made on delivering the Action Plan and to allow an opportunity for stakeholder input. This event will include a wide range of relevant political representatives, council officers, and representatives from the business, resident and voluntary community, and could be led by the Portfolio Holder or Economic Regeneration Champion.

- 5.5 The day to day work of delivering the Strategy will be undertaken by an officer level Ormskirk Town Centre Management Group. This group should involve representatives from the key delivery partners, namely: the Council, Love Ormskirk, Ormskirk Community Partnership, Edge Hill University and Students Union, and Business in The Community (who run the Healthy High Streets Campaign in Ormskirk). There will be separate working groups (e.g. marketing) that will be established to focus on specific areas and report back to the Management Group. Other delivery partners may be asked to attend meetings of the Management Group or working groups as required.
- 5.6 It is proposed that, following every Stakeholder Event, that a report will be prepared for Cabinet to update on progress and to review the Action Plan
- 5.7 The Council is already currently working on a number of initiatives mentioned in the draft Strategy to improve the town centre. These initiatives include:
- Financially supporting the delivery of public realm improvements on Moor Street
  - Monitoring town centre vacancy levels periodically
  - Updating signage and maps across the town centre
  - Painting all street furniture in appropriate colours
  - Assisting with the development of a food and drink festival for September
  - Enhancing flower beds around the town centre
  - Currently in the middle of a programme of resurfacing and improving all Council owned car parks with environmental improvements
  - Made a number of amendments to the parking regimes including increasing the 2 hours parking stay to 4 hours and providing free car parking in the Derby Street car park of a weekend
  - Provided new Christmas lighting for the town centre last year and will provide additional Christmas lighting this year
  - Assisting with the running of Motorfest event
  - Improvements around Coronation Park and providing events in the park
  - Running events and exhibitions at the Chapel Gallery

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 The Draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 has a number of key themes which contain actions. The purpose of this Strategy is to increase the vibrancy of the town centre, supporting growth and developing opportunities in terms of increasing visitor numbers, reducing shop vacancy rates even further, improving the shopping and leisure experience for residents and visitors alike and providing environmental improvements.

- 6.2 The Strategy also aims to improve the appearance and image of Ormskirk town centre, helping to make the town more attractive to both visitors and investors. In turn this should help increase footfall which should help improve the competitiveness and sustainability of the town centre, helping to support existing, as well as create new jobs.
- 6.3 The Strategy aims to help improve and promote the local distinctiveness of Ormskirk Town Centre by helping to provide physical and environmental improvements within the town centre, as well as working to promote Ormskirk's historic character to visitors. By improving the appearance of the town centre, the Strategy should also help reduce the fear of crime helping to make the town centre more accessible to all members of society.
- 6.4 Through the promotion of cultural and other leisure activities, the Strategy should help promote social wellbeing and levels of physical activity helping to reduce health inequality.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 has been produced using existing staff resources, although producing the consultation materials has incurred some costs as will the production of the Final Strategy. At this stage the total cost of all of the actions contained within the strategy are not yet clear and further work will be required to firm up on this position and develop some of the proposals. Initial funding for the strategy (£210,000) has already been agreed from the Environmental / Town and Village Centre Improvement Fund but this may not be sufficient to cover all of the costs involved. In addition, some of this funding has been used to contribute towards work on Moor Street. In addition at the recent (July) Full Council meeting it was agreed that a further £25,000 would be made available to support marketing/branding of Ormskirk town centre. This funding is delegated to the Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration in consultation with the Leader. If further funding is required then this will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet or Council as appropriate. In addition it is hoped that additional resources may also be secured through submitting grant bids, partnership working and investigating opportunities to generate revenue.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant operational risk registers.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.



<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
Sept 2014	West Lancashire Economy Study 2014	ED Study 14
March 2015	West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-2025	ED Strategy 15

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 Questionnaire Analysis
- Appendix B – Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 Consultation Responses Summary and suggested proposed changes
- Appendix C – Final Draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy
- Appendix D – Proposed Engagement & Delivery Structure
- Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment



## Appendix A – Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 Questionnaire Analysis

### Q1) Do you broadly agree with the vision?

Answer Choice	Responses
Yes	72.6%
No	13.3%
Unsure	14.1%

Of the 118 respondents who completed the survey 113 replied to question one. Out of the 113 responses 72.6% agree with the vision. Of those who do not agree or are unsure, some qualitative responses were received for question 2.

### Q2) If you feel the vision does not reflect your view or could be improved, please tell us how you would improve the vision.

In total we received 40 qualitative responses to this question. The responses received vary; however the main areas highlighted include:

Comment	Response
Support for the vision-however concern that some of the objectives appear fragmented	The objectives are designed to be wide ranging look at a number of very different issues in Ormskirk.
The vision needs to reflect engagement and pride.	Pride and community engagement are already referenced within the Vision.
Ormskirk needs a charismatic and dynamic leadership team.	A new town centre management group is proposed within the strategy. It is hoped that alongside the Council this group can help deliver dynamic leadership.
A number of responses were received expressing support for the programme of events planned	No response required.
Council policies tend to be prohibitive rather than supportive of schemes.	This strategy has been designed to be positive whilst acknowledging constraints that exist.
The vision should reflect the aspiration for a broader range of shops.	The strategy seeks to improve conditions of the town centre as a whole so that more shops are attracted to OTC.
A number of specific responses were received regarding improving transport links into as well as within OTC.	Although WLBC are not the transport authority we will work with LCC to seek improvements to all forms of transport affecting OTC.
Comments were received saying that the town centre needs to become more dynamic.	Through the delivery of the actions contained within the strategy it is hoped that Ormskirk will become more dynamic.
A number of comments were received relating to raising the profile of Ormskirks market within the strategy. This including greater reference to the indoor street market.	Throughout the strategy the market is recognised as one of Ormskirks greatest assets.
A number of positive and negative comments were received relating to integration with Edge Hill University.	The strategy specifically aims to improve links with Edge Hill so that the town centre can enjoy the benefits of being in close proximity with a successful University.
In relation to the brand and marketing we should build upon what is already in place and being used	All options will be examined as more detailed work is undertaken.

rather than introduce another website.	
--	--

**Q3) The strategy contains 11 objectives and we would like to get a better understanding of what you think about them. Using the rating scales below, please rank each of the following objectives in terms of how important you think they are, with 1 being very important and 5 being the least important.**

	1- Very important –	2 –	3 –	4 –	5 - Not important –	Total –	Weighted Average –
Improving the town's historic environment and character	70.91% 78.0	20.00% 22.0	6.36% 7.0	0.91% 1.0	1.82% 2.0	110	1.43
Developing an events calendar	33.03% 36.0	31.19% 34.0	25.69% 28.0	6.42% 7.0	3.67% 4.0	109	2.17
Enhancing successful features	54.21% 58.0	30.84% 33.0	14.02% 15.0	0.93% 1.0	0.00% 0.0	107	1.62
Improvements to the public realm and gateways into Ormskirk	52.78% 57.0	29.63% 32.0	14.81% 16.0	0.93% 1.0	1.85% 2.0	108	1.69
Accessibility improvements	47.71% 52.0	33.94% 37.0	13.76% 15.0	4.59% 5.0	0.00% 0.0	109	1.75
Developing a marketing strategy	42.59% 46.0	22.22% 24.0	25.93% 28.0	3.70% 4.0	5.56% 6.0	108	2.07
Building links with and ensuring the town benefits from Edge Hill University	35.51% 38.0	30.84% 33.0	16.82% 18.0	7.48% 8.0	9.35% 10.0	107	2.24
Improving the offer of the markets	59.00% 59.0	29.00% 29.0	10.00% 10.0	1.00% 1.0	1.00% 1.0	100	1.56
Ensuring there is long term management and maintenance of the town centre	78.18% 86.0	17.27% 19.0	1.82% 2.0	2.73% 3.0	0.00% 0.0	110	1.29
Increasing footfall	68.22% 73.0	22.43% 24.0	8.41% 9.0	0.93% 1.0	0.00% 0.0	107	1.42
Helping to make Ormskirk a safer place	50.00% 55.0	32.73% 36.0	14.55% 16.0	1.82% 2.0	0.91% 1.0	110	1.71

Based on the scales of 1 being very important and 5 being the least important, the long term maintenance of the town came as top priority with a weighted average of 1.29 from 110 respondents. This was followed by increasing footfall with a 1.42 average and then improving the town's historic environment and character with a 1.43 average. The lowest priorities are developing a marketing strategy with a weighted average of 2.07 (which is still important) and building links with Edge Hill with an average of 2.24. Overall there were no responses which scored not important indicating that there is support for all the objectives.

**Q4) If you believe that any additional objectives should have been included, please tell us what you think they should be.**

**In total we received 38 responses to this question. These responses have been summarised in the table below;**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
Attracting more affluent shoppers to the town	The Council wants to attract more shoppers to the town centre from all demographics. The town centre must be inclusive to all groups.
Reducing levels of antisocial behaviour	This is already included under the objective helping to make Ormskirk a safe place to live, work and visit.
Make Ormskirk a happening place	We already say that we want to improve the character of the town and night time economy.
Introduce more edge of town car parks to avoid congestion in the town centre.	Given there are a number of issues with car parks which are addressed in the strategy it does not need to be specifically mentioned as an individual objective.
Introduce more leisure facilities such as a cinema and a bowling alley.	Consider altering wording of objectives to specifically mention the leisure offer.
Having free wi-fi is no longer a USP.	The objective says that we will utilise the latest digital technology/social media.
Actively work to reduce the number of charity shops.	Not considered to be a specific required objective.
Improve transport within and into Ormskirk.	Consider amending wording relating to transport as it is currently too specific.
Target more independent retailers into the town	As Ormskirk already has a high number of independent retailers this objective is not required.
Improve links between Edge Hill University and the town so that the town benefits from the commercial spending power of the students.	This is already included as an objective.
Local shops should be able to introduce outside seating.	This is considered too specific to be an objective.
A number of comments related to reducing the number of HMO's in the town.	Not considered to be a required objective
If vacancy levels increase the Council should introduce a concentration strategy to make the town centre feel successful.	Not required at this point in time
Reduce business rates.	Not considered to be a required objective.

**Q5) We would like to know if you support the following proposals within the strategy. Please rank each of the following proposals in terms of how strongly you support them with 1 being strongly support and 5 being strongly do not support.**

	1 - Strongly support –	2 –	3 –	4 –	5 - Strongly do not support –	Total –	Weighted Average –
– Developing a town centre management forum/group	55.56% 60	28.70% 31	11.11% 12	2.78% 3	1.85% 2	108	1.67
– Developing a recognisable brand for Ormskirk	42.06% 45	29.91% 32	21.50% 23	3.74% 4	2.80% 3	107	1.95
– Encouraging staff and students from Edge Hill University to use facilities in the town centre	39.81% 43	28.70% 31	14.81% 16	7.41% 8	9.26% 10	108	2.18
– Developing one town centre website to help attract visitors	57.80% 63	29.36% 32	10.09% 11	1.83% 2	0.92% 1	109	1.59

Out of the proposals considered ‘Developing one town centre website to help attract visitors’ had the lowest weighted average indicating it is strongly supported. However there were also strong levels of support for ‘Developing a town centre management forum/group’ and ‘Developing a recognisable brand for Ormskirk’. However all the proposals scored an average weighting below 3 showing that there is support for all the proposals.

**Q6) Do you believe that the current condition of Ormskirk town centre gives a positive or negative first impression?**

Answer Choices –	Responses –
– Positive	16.13% 15
– Negative	83.87% 78
Total	93

93 respondents provided an answer to this question and 83.87% of these think that the current condition of Ormskirk gives a negative first impression. Just 16.13% think it gives a positive first impression.

**Q7) We would like to get a better understanding of what you think are the biggest issues with the appearance of Ormskirk town centre. Please rank each of the following issues in terms of how important you believe them to be with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important issue.**

1 - most important	2	3	4	5 - least important	Total	Weighted Average
Appearance of occupied shop fronts	61.47% 67	29.36% 32	4.59% 5	2.75% 3	1.83% 2	109 1.54
Physical condition of buildings	54.63% 59	34.26% 37	10.19% 11	0.93% 1	0.00% 0	108 1.57
Vacant shops	83.18% 89	9.35% 10	4.67% 5	1.87% 2	0.93% 1	107 1.28
Condition of car parks	22.64% 24	33.02% 35	33.96% 36	6.60% 7	3.77% 4	106 2.36
Vacant development sites	44.23% 46	27.88% 29	19.23% 20	5.77% 6	2.88% 3	104 1.95
Condition of street surface	55.66% 59	25.47% 27	16.04% 17	0.94% 1	1.89% 2	106 1.68
Amount of street clutter (i.e. signage)	37.50% 39	26.92% 28	22.12% 23	8.65% 9	4.81% 5	104 2.16
Condition of alleyways	44.86% 48	27.10% 29	19.63% 21	5.61% 6	2.80% 3	107 1.94
Appearance of market stalls	57.01% 61	20.56% 22	16.82% 18	3.74% 4	1.87% 2	107 1.73
Character of Ormskirk town centre	74.07% 80	16.67% 18	6.48% 7	2.78% 3	0.00% 0	108 1.38

109 respondents provided an answer to this question. The lowest weighted score was vacant shops at 1.28, followed by the character of Ormskirk at 1.38 which indicates that people thought these two factors constitute the most important issues with Ormskirk town centre. The amount of street clutter and the condition of the car parks were the lowest ranking scores at 2.16 and 2.38. Although these were the lowest, on a scale of 1-5 they were still above average indicating that all the issues considered are seen as important..

**Q8) We would like to know what you think are the priorities for improving Ormskirk’s outdoor street market. Please rank each of the following options to improve the street market in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.**

	1- most important	2	3	4	5 - least important	Total	Weighted Average
Better promotion	30.84% 33.00	38.32% 41.00	24.30% 26.00	2.80% 3.00	3.74% 4.00	107	2.10
Improved appearance	59.63% 65.00	24.77% 27.00	11.93% 13.00	1.83% 2.00	1.83% 2.00	109	1.61
New technology such as the provision of card readers	22.43% 24.00	31.78% 34.00	28.04% 30.00	9.35% 10.00	8.41% 9.00	107	2.50
A more diverse and specialist range of market stalls	73.83% 79.00	15.89% 17.00	4.67% 5.00	2.80% 3.00	2.80% 3.00	107	1.45
Better layout of the market	54.63% 59.00	26.85% 29.00	12.04% 13.00	0.93% 1.00	5.56% 6.00	108	1.76

110 respondents provided answers to this question. The lowest weighted average was 1.45 for a more diverse range of market stalls followed by improved appearance of the market with a 1.61 average. New technology such as card readers scored the lowest at 2.5 although this is still below average.

**Q9) We would like to understand what you think are the main car park issues. Please tell us how strongly you agree with the following statements with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree.**

	1 - strongly agree	2	3	4	5 - strongly disagree	Total	Weighted Average
I would like to be able to pay on exit	31.73% 33	20.19% 21	28.85% 30	9.62% 10	9.62% 10	104	2.45
I would like to see free car parking spaces for shorter periods of time	56.73% 59	19.23% 20	11.54% 12	6.73% 7	5.77% 6	104	1.86
I would like to see the current	57.94%	16.82%	14.02%	10.28%	0.93%		



short stay period extended from 2 hours to 3 hours	62	18	15	11	1	107	1.79
I would like to see the appearance of the car parks improved	11.65% 12	30.10% 31	34.95% 36	15.53% 16	7.77% 8	103	2.78
I struggle to park in Ormskirk town centre due to poor signage	14.00% 14	14.00% 14	29.00% 29	17.00% 17	26.00% 26	100	3.27
The current car parking regimes are confusing	35.29% 36	20.59% 21	14.71% 15	17.65% 18	11.76% 12	102	2.50
I would like to see the introduction of user friendly payment options such as mobile phone top up payment options	22.00% 22	20.00% 20	32.00% 32	14.00% 14	12.00% 12	100	2.74
I would like to see additional car parking in Ormskirk town centre	29.52% 31	21.90% 23	22.86% 24	17.14% 18	8.57% 9	105	2.53

There were 109 respondents who provided responses to this question and lowest weighted average was 1.79 for an extension to the short stay parking. This was followed by free car parking spaces for shorter periods of time(1.86). The least popular options were “struggle to park in Ormskirk town centre due to poor signage” with 3.27 weighted average and, “I would like to see the appearance of the car parks improved” at 2.78.

10) We would like to know what would encourage you to use the town centre between the hours of 5pm and 8pm. Please tell us how strongly you agree with the following statements with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree.

	1 - strongly agree	2	3	4	5 - strongly disagree	Total	Weighted Average
Improved public transport of an evening	43.69% 45	12.62% 13	23.30% 24	11.65% 12	8.74% 9	103	2.29
Evening events such as food and drink festivals	57.94% 62	23.36% 25	11.21% 12	3.74% 4	3.74% 4	107	1.72
More cafes and restaurants	26.67% 28	23.81% 25	26.67% 28	11.43% 12	11.43% 12	105	2.57
Improved outdoor lighting	41.12% 44	32.71% 35	17.76% 19	5.61% 6	2.80% 3	107	1.96
Better promotion of what the town centre has to offer of an evening	50.00% 53	30.19% 32	15.09% 16	4.72% 5	0.00% 0	106	1.75
More shops opening up later	47.62% 50	26.67% 28	19.05% 20	3.81% 4	2.86% 3	105	1.88

109 respondents provided an answer to this question. The lowest weighted average was evening events such as food and drink festivals at 1.72. This is followed by better promotion of what the town centre has to offer of an evening at 1.75. The least popular option was more cafes and restaurants at 2.57.

**Q11) Do you support the proposal to investigate obtaining a footfall monitoring system in the town centre.**

Answer Choices	Responses
–	<b>45.79%</b>
Yes	49
–	<b>11.22%</b>
No	12
–	<b>42.99%</b>
Unsure	46
Total	107

107 responses were received for this question. 45.79% are supportive of footfall monitoring, 11.22% are not supportive and 42.99% are unsure.

**12) If you could prioritise one area where improvements should be delivered within this strategy which area would you choose? (Please tick one).**

Answer Choices	Responses
–	<b>21.30%</b>
Brand, Marketing and Town Centre Management	23
–	<b>25.93%</b>
Buildings and Place	28
–	<b>23.15%</b>
Ormskirk Market	25
–	<b>10.19%</b>
Car parks	11
–	<b>9.26%</b>
Transport and Access	10
–	<b>9.26%</b>
Night-time and Evening Economy	10
–	<b>0.91%</b>
Recording/Monitoring Town Centre Information	1
Total	108

108 respondents provided an answer to this question and the most popular response was improving buildings and place with 25.93% of responses. This was followed by improving the market with 23.15% of responses and then brand, marketing and town centre management with 21.30% of responses. The least popular answer was recording and monitoring town centre information with less than 1% of responses.



**Appendix B Consultation Responses Summary and Suggested proposed Changes**

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>WLBC Officer response</b>
<b>Ormskirk Parish Church</b>	<p>The Parish Church wish to become a partner in the implementation of the Town Centre Strategy.</p> <p>They also wish to work more creatively to support events within the town centre such as Ormskirk Motor fest.</p> <p>They wish to support heritage led regeneration within Ormskirk and to explore opportunities to open the church up to expand visitor offer within Ormskirk.</p>	<p>The Council welcomes the approach of the Parish Church to explore opportunities to use the church in new ways and to try to expand the visitor offer within Ormskirk.</p> <p>Ormskirk Parish Church will be added as a partner within the Strategy and greater emphasis will be added to exploring opportunities to use the church to expand the visitor offer within Ormskirk.</p>
<b>Our West Lancashire</b>	<p>1. Support the Council becoming a greater participant in town centre affairs including such action as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council purchasing key retail units</li> <li>• Introduce a one hours free car parking in Council car parks for all West Lancashire residents</li> <li>• Introduce themed markets for local produce, arts and crafts, possibly on an extra week day.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council may consider purchasing retail units if a positive business can be made and funding is available.</p> <p>Some amendments to the Council’s car parking regime have already been made and to support local shops and further work in relation to car parking will be undertaken if the strategy is adopted.</p> <p>It is agreed that introducing a programme of regular themed markets may be a good idea and the strategy specifically says that this idea will be explored.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ease of payment and top up for car parking is a key factor in encouraging/detering shopping in the town. As mobile phone payment and top u can be implemented for a one off cost of less than £7000, this should be a priority action in the strategy.</li> <li>3. The strategy needs to be backed up by evidence such as properly understanding where visitors to Ormskirk market come from. This evidence should be conducted before money is spent.</li> </ol>	<p>The Council agrees that additional market research is required to fully understand where people come from who visit Ormskirk and why they visit Ormskirk.</p>
<p><b>Ormskirk Residents Group</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They feel that there are too many action points contained within the strategy and that we should concentrate on a smaller number of key actions.</li> <li>2. A dedicated town centre manager is needed to oversee all actions.</li> <li>3. They support a dedicated town centre management forum with representatives from local businesses and the local community.</li> <li>4. Ormskirk currently does not have the variety of shops to attract visitors in large numbers and the market needs to be improved.</li> <li>5. Ormskirk is not as pleasing to the eye as other market towns around the country so environmental improvements and reducing street clutter should be considered along with appropriate consultation with disability</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Officers agree with this comment and intend to amend the strategy accordingly.</li> <li>2. Although we do not feel that a dedicated manager is required at this point a new town centre management forum will be set up and relevant Council officers intend to meet regularly to ensure that town centre management is co-ordinated across the Council, as well as with outside bodies and key partners.</li> <li>3. Agree and already included within the strategy.</li> <li>4. Whilst the Council would like to attract a greater range of shops to Ormskirk TC we can only improve conditions within the town centre in the hope that improved conditions will draw retailers.</li> <li>5. Agree and these actions are already included within the TCS.</li> <li>6. With improvements to Moor street likely to be completed towards the end of summer the Council</li> </ol>

	<p>groups.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Town centre traffic must be regulated and the regulations actively monitored and applied. Car parks must have common and unambiguous regulations.</li> <li>7. Ormskirk, as a historic market town must be promoted emphasising its historical associations and links. To this end consultation with Ormskirk Community Partnership regarding the town's 'Gingerbread' heritage is welcome and hope that consultation with the local Historical Society to inform on the town's varied history is also underway.</li> </ol>	<p>will work with partners to try and impose appropriate traffic regulation orders. We are already looking to align car parking arrangements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. As the TCS was developed officers have already consulted OCP in relation to their proposals for a 'gingerbread' themed project. Whilst this is still being developed officers will continue to liaise with OCP. As the implementation of the TC action plan commences further discussions will all groups take place?</li> </ol>
<b>Ormskirk Resident</b>	Additional wording is suggested within paragraph 1.6 to accurately reflect OCP position with regards to the development of the Ormskirk Market Towns Initiative.	Additional wording will be added to reflect the Market Town Initiative development.
<b>Meetings with key landowners</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support for the development of a strategy as an intervention to prevent town centre decline.</li> <li>2. The Council should play a more active role in supporting the town centre and in particular officers should actively work to encourage retailers to invest in Ormskirk.</li> <li>3. The Council should be more flexible when dealing with larger developers and take a strategic approach to encourage investment.</li> <li>4. Ormskirk does not have a recognised brand and is currently difficult to sell. Branding Ormskirk as a unique town in a similar way to Harrogate, Shrewsbury should be</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted</li> <li>2. Whilst the Council will try and improve conditions within Ormskirk to encourage retailers it is not the role of officers to speak to individual retailers. From speaking with commercial agents officers believe that larger retailers decide where they want to locate their businesses. The TC strategy should help inform this choice by providing new data sets which were previously not available within Ormskirk.</li> <li>3. Whilst the Council does want to encourage larger developments within Ormskirk &amp; West Lancashire generally, national legislation is in place which needs to be adhered to. However through the town centre Management Forum the relationship between the Council and private business may be improved.</li> </ol>

	<p>considered. Ideas included using Ormskirk's agricultural position as a USP</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. To attract larger retailers Ormskirk needs to have an appropriate range of larger, new purpose built units.</li> <li>6. There was agreement that the physical appearance of the town centre should be improved including property owners tidying up their buildings.</li> <li>7. In particular, Ormskirk market was highlighted as needing improvement in terms of the appearance and type of stalls available.</li> <li>8. There was support for encouraging an events calendar to try and increase footfall within Ormskirk.</li> <li>9. Transport into and out of Ormskirk was highlighted as a major concern with issues over congestion being raised. Also highlighted was how the current one way system effectively dividing the town centre.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. The TCS proposes to create a recognised brand for Ormskirk and to market accordingly. A full assessment of the correct brand for Ormskirk will be undertaken if the strategy is approved.</li> <li>5. Where appropriate larger scale development may come forward. However, these will be delivered by the market.</li> <li>6. Although the Council has little control over privately owned buildings the TCS does include conducting building appraisals which can be used to target improvements in the most suitable place.</li> <li>7. The TCS recognises that improvements are required to help improve the market and the strategy proposed a number of interventions.</li> <li>8. Noted</li> <li>9. Although transport is the responsibility of the LCC the Council will continue to liaise with LCC to seek appropriate improvements.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Meetings with Edge Hill Students Union</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edge Hill SU were very supportive of the strategy and said that they wished to have a greater influence within the town centre. They welcomed the opportunity to be involved and wanted to building links between the University and the town.</li> <li>2. In particular the SU wanted to encourage shops within the town centre to work with the SU to encourage students to use them. The SU said they would also like to help</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The strategy supports this approach</li> <li>2. Agreed-this can be taken forward as part of the events calendar.</li> </ol>



	encourage more events within the town centre that would encourage encourage students to use OTC.	
<b>Meeting with Edge Hill University</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edge Hill University said that they believed the TCS was a positive step to helping to revitalise Ormskirk.</li> <li>2. They said they believed the strategy had too many action points and could benefit from reducing them so that the strategy has a clearer focus.</li> <li>3. Concern was raised that the vision is too generic and could be for any town. It should be more specific to Ormskirk.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Noted</li> <li>2. Agreed. The action points within the strategy will be reduced</li> <li>3. The vision will be tweaked so that it is more specific to Ormskirk.</li> </ol>
<b>Love Ormskirk</b>	Love Ormskirk supported the development of the strategy but said that it would be important to involve other groups including the private sector. They also said that the action plan should be reduced so that it is more focused.	As the strategy was developed discussions have taken place with a number of key stakeholders including representatives from the private sector. It is anticipated that the representatives from some of these groups will sit on the OTC Management forum.
<b>Ormskirk Community Partnership</b>	OCP made a number of comments relating to the TCS including discussion about using Ormskirk's history and heritage as its major selling point, improving the appearance of the town to emphasise its historic character, engagement with the proposed gingerbread project.	Although the TCS is still in development it is anticipated that a number of key actions will build upon the heritage of Ormskirk. However, the exact brand for Ormskirk has yet to be developed and should be based on independent evidence.
<b>Additional officer comments</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Foreword is not up to date</li> <li>2. Key partners require updating as there are new</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agreed Foreword to be updated in consultation with new Portfolio Holder</li> </ol>

	<p>groups the Council are working with.</p> <p>3.Objectives require amending</p> <p>4.Photographs within the strategy to be updated</p> <p>5. The Action Plan contains too many actions and can appear repetitive.</p> <p>6. The map requires some updating as conditions within the town centre changed.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Key partners will be amended</li> <li>3. Slight tweaking of objectives.</li> <li>4. New professional photographs to be added</li> <li>5. Agreed the number of actions will be reduced to be more concise and less repetitive.</li> <li>6. A number of minor amendments to the town centre map will be included.</li> </ol>
--	---	--

# Draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015



---

# FOREWORD

Ormskirk is a vibrant and prosperous market town which has been serving the people of West Lancashire and beyond for over 700 years. We are proud of Ormskirk's unique historic character, long established market and of the increasingly successful Edge Hill University. Ormskirk has continued to remain vibrant despite the economic downturn demonstrating the strength and importance of the town centre to the local area and beyond.

Through the development and implementation of this strategy, I hope that Ormskirk town centre will continue to thrive, serving both the people of West Lancashire as well as visitors to the town. This strategy seeks to build upon some of the good work which has been done previously, whilst adding fresh impetus and vigour as we look to the future.

We all know that town centres are changing and now is the time to act to ensure that the town changes with the times. It is my hope that this strategy can help Ormskirk adapt to meet the requirements of these changing times. Although Ormskirk is doing well, through the implementation of actions contained within this strategy and with the support of the public and stakeholders, the town centre will go from strength to strength attracting new businesses and both local residents and visitors from further afield.

## **Councillor Ian Moran**

Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Estates  
West Lancashire Borough Council

---

# PARTNERSHIPS

This strategy is endorsed by the following key partners who agree to work together to deliver the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan alongside West Lancashire Borough Council.

---

# CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Community Working	6
Purpose of this Strategy	7
Property Market Framework & Vacancy Levels	8
Links to planning and other strategies	9
Key Partners	10
Vision & Objectives	12
Brand, Marketing & Town Centre Management	14
Buildings and Place	17
Ormskirk Improvements Map	20
Ormskirk Market	22
Car Parks	24
Transport & Access	27
Night Time/Evening Economy	28
Recording/Monitoring Town Centre Information	31
Appendix A SWOT Analysis	33
Appendix B Summary of action points including key partners and dates	36



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Ormskirk is an attractive and popular historic market town with a successful university in close proximity. The town centre is host to a market on two days of the week, which includes a midweek Thursday market and weekend Saturday market. The market has been operated continuously for over 700 years. Special continental and vintage markets are also held regularly, as well as the impressive annual Ormskirk Motorfest event. The town centre has an attractive airy feel with many historic buildings adding to the character of the town. As well as being host to main street retailers, Ormskirk's strengths lie in its independent retailers, cafes and restaurants. The town centre benefits from its unique features such as the town centre clock dating back to 1876, Ormskirk Parish Church with its origins in the 12th century, Chapel Gallery and Coronation Park in close proximity.
- 1.2** Although popular, the town centre and market could provide a wider offer, appealing to the resident student population and residents living in outlying areas. Although there are a relatively small number of vacant units in the town centre, there is a perception by some residents that the town centre is starting to decline and the condition of some buildings could be improved.
- 1.3** Ormskirk is home to the innovative and dynamic Edge Hill University and with around 4,000 employees contributing an estimated £800 million into the local economy in the last 5 years. The University has also contributed an additional £86 million into the local economy through staff and supplier spend, making the University an important asset to Ormskirk and a real jewel in West Lancashire's crown.
- 1.4** In 2008, Ormskirk was part of a Market Towns Initiative, which included significant community engagement and stakeholder involvement focusing on four key themes; Economy, Environment, Social and Community and Transport and Access. This piece of work resulted in a detailed Action Plan encompassing all these themes.

To take community and stakeholder involvements further, West Lancashire Borough Council in conjunction with West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (WLCVS) oversaw in 2009 the formation of Ormskirk Community Partnership (OCP). This is a voluntary organisation which acts as a voice for Ormskirk giving its residents the chance to have their say. Working with the Council, the partnership continuously addressed the wider ranging actions emanating from the Market Town Initiative Plan, aiming to fulfil its slogan 'Let's Make Ormskirk Better'.

- 1.5** This strategy will include a review of the actions contained within the Ormskirk Market Town Initiative Action Plan, to determine whether there are any outstanding actions that are still relevant to today's economy and will look to build on these where possible.

---

## 2.0 COMMUNITY WORKING



- 2.1** The Council recognises the value and importance in consulting with, and working in partnership with public, private and community/voluntary organisations as well as the local community. Ormskirk is fortunate to have a number of dynamic organisations working to help improve and support the town centre economy including Ormskirk Community Partnership, Ormskirk Community Safety Partnership, Love Ormskirk and OWL Business Focus. This strategy will seek to engage with these organisations to ensure that all stakeholders are working in a coherent manner to help achieve shared goals. In order to ensure that this strategy works it requires support from a range of local groups, as well as the local community and should be seen as a shared strategy.



---

## 3.0 PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

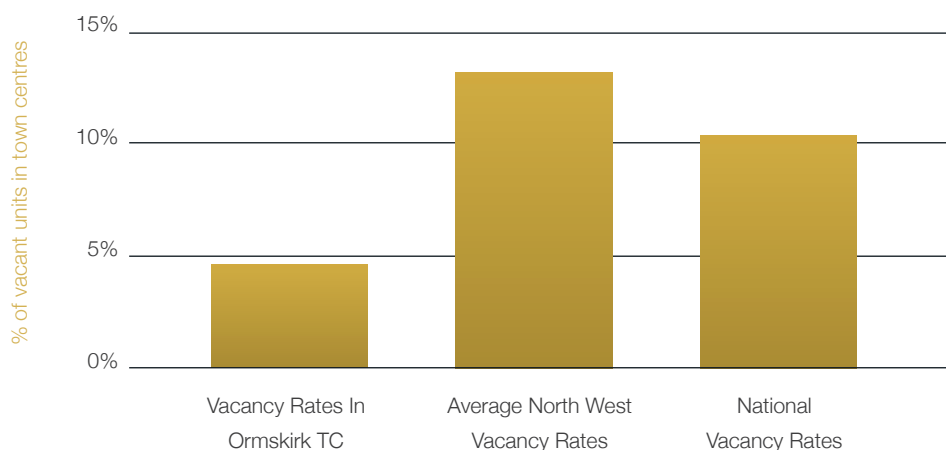


- 3.1** This strategy has been developed in order to help co-ordinate the approach of the Council, local traders and other interested parties and should help create a strong vision and identity for Ormskirk that helps set Ormskirk aside from its neighbouring areas. This vision and strategy should be one that is focused and achievable in the short term, but that also takes a longer, more strategic view. The strategy aims to use innovative methods to bring the history of the town back to life, animating spaces and providing a strong sense of place that will engender pride and community engagement.
- 3.2** With some fantastic transport links into Ormskirk, the strategy aims to capitalise on Ormskirk's unique location attracting people from neighbouring cities including Liverpool, Manchester and Preston.
- 3.3** Following a clear understanding of the current situation, the aim of this strategy is to recognise the town centre's distinctiveness and identify opportunities, with stakeholders and partners, to revitalise the town centre bringing new investment, business and visitors through a co-ordinated campaign and a strong marketing strategy. This approach should ensure the town centre has the right offer of retail, food and drink, community and leisure uses.
- 3.4** This strategy aims to build upon the work of the Ormskirk Market Towns Initiative and taking into consideration external factors such as the current economic climate, the aims and objectives of this strategy will be considered under three key themes:- Economy, Environment and Visitor.
- 3.5** Although Ormskirk town centre can be considered to be 'holding its own' compared to many local high streets, nationally high streets are changing and need to evolve to remain competitive. This strategy can be seen as an intervention to help prevent decline and to put in place an action plan to help Ormskirk prosper.
- 3.6** Although the action plan contained within this strategy is as up to date, it will be subject to change following annual reviews as actions are completed and new actions are required.

## 4.0 Property Market & Vacancy Levels

- 4.1** The buoyancy of the local property market is a manifestation of wider economic trends. Although some of these trends may be outside of our control there are a number of factors that can be influenced locally. This strategy must analyse Ormskirk's ability to compete with similar neighbouring centres and work to position Ormskirk town centre to be as vibrant and attractive as possible.
- 4.2** The UK retail sector is undergoing a fundamental change and this change can be seen in all high streets across the Country, including Ormskirk. The type of retailers in the town centre has changed reflecting national trends. Whilst the Council welcomes opportunities for vacant units to be brought back into use, it will be important to ensure that Ormskirk maintains a varied mix of units providing a mix of retail and non-retail units.
- 4.3** Council records show that in April 2015 vacancy rates for ground floor commercial units in the wider Ormskirk town centre area were 4.8%. Given the current economic climate this is an extremely positive figure and shows that the Ormskirk town centre property market is buoyant. According to Springboard UK (which is a market analysis company) in April 2015 the average vacancy levels were 12.9% for the North West and 10.2% for the national average. *(Source: Springboard, April 2015, Vacancy Rates Survey)*
- 4.4** However, there may still be opportunities to improve the buoyancy of the local property market, reducing vacancy rates further and even improving the types of units that are available providing a greater offer than presently exists. Although in real terms vacancy rates may be low, the perception may be higher, given the prominence of some of the units that are currently vacant. There may also be opportunities for re/development on some sites with and on the edge of the town centre. If these sites could be developed they could add to the offer presently available improving the appearance of the town centre and overall add to the vitality of the town centre. Although many of these sites are in private ownership there may be opportunities to help facilitate development.

**Figure 1:** Bar chart showing vacancy levels in town centres  
*(Source: Springboard, April 2015, Vacancy Rates Survey)*





## 5.0 LINKS TO PLANNING & OTHER STRATEGIES



### National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which includes an economic role.
- 5.2** The NPPF requires that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.

### West Lancashire Local Plan 2012 - 2027

- 5.3** The West Lancashire Local Plan supports growth and development within Ormskirk town centre including supporting the vitality and viability of the town centre. In particular, the following policies are of relevance to Ormskirk town centre:

- GN1 Settlement Boundary
- IF1 Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres
- EN2 Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment
- EN4 Conservation Area
- EC1 The Economy and Employment Land
- EC4 Edge Hill University
- RS3 Provision of Student Accommodation
- IF2 Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice
- GN3 Criteria for Sustainable Development
- GN4 Demonstrating Viability
- GN5 Sequential Tests

### West Lancashire Economic Strategy

- 5.4** Improving Ormskirk as a market town is one of the key asks of the emerging West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy which aims to deliver economic growth across West Lancashire over a ten year time period. Being one of the key asks of the Economic Development Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving Ormskirk and provides a mechanism through which future funding bids can be supported.

---

## 6.0 Key Partners

**6.1** As previously mentioned in order for this strategy to be successful it requires the support and buy in of a number of organisations and interested parties, as well as the wider community.

### **Some of the partner agencies include:**

- Love Ormskirk
- Ormskirk Community Partnership
- OWL Business Focus
- Local business owners/developers
- Property/land owners
- Edge Hill University
- Edge Hill Students Union
- West Lancashire College
- Marketing Lancashire
- Ormskirk market traders
- West Lancashire CVS
- Lancashire County Council
- Jobcentre Plus
- Local press
- Skills, Employment and Training Partnership
- Letting agents
- Ormskirk Parish church/ churches
- Business In The Community (BITC)

### **Healthy High Street Pilot**

**6.2** Love Ormskirk has successfully submitted a bid in which Ormskirk town centre has been chosen as a Healthy High Street pilot area. This pilot will provide Ormskirk with support through engagement with high street champions.

**6.3** The Healthy High Streets programme will provide intensive support over a 3 year period, providing business experience and resources to high street champions. The Healthy High Streets campaign's founding partners include Boots UK, the Co-operative Group, Marks & Spencer and Santander. These groups collaborate with town centre teams to develop and implement activities.

**6.4** Through Love Ormskirk, Ormskirk has been chosen amongst the first group of towns and local teams. Along with other towns, Ormskirk will receive bespoke support. Stakeholders including the Council have already met with representatives from the Healthy High Streets campaign and we intend to use their experience and support to help implement many of the actions in this strategy.



## 7.0 Vision & Objectives

### VISION

Ormskirk town centre will continue to be a vibrant place to serve the people of West Lancashire, with an improved bustling and popular street market and a wide range of shops, bars, restaurants and other leisure attractions set within a high quality attractive environment that has due regard to its history, agriculture and market. The town will continue to be easily accessible by all forms of transport, with improved facilities for cyclists and public transport users, as well as having plenty of accessible parking at a comparatively competitive price.

Links will be made to maximise the benefit of having the successful Edge Hill University within the town. There will be a regular pattern of co-ordinated events and the town will be one of the most advanced locally in terms of I.T. infrastructure. A co-ordinated marketing effort will help publicise the attractions which Ormskirk holds and will make Ormskirk a destination for day trips across the sub-region'.

We believe that the draft Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy contains a strong vision and will help to deliver a town centre we can all be proud of. In order for this strategy to be successful, the vision needs to reflect the views and aspirations of the local community and stakeholders.



**7.1** This image represents the views of the Council in consultation with the views of the local community and traders. It is believed that this vision will help deliver Ormskirk as a sustainable and vibrant town to the benefit of residents, traders and visitors alike.

## Objectives

**7.2** The following objectives have been used to deliver the vision for this strategy:

- Improve the appearance of Ormskirk's historic environment to help sustain and improve the character of the town.
- Deliver and promote a programme of events that will help attract new visitors to Ormskirk. This events programme should be delivered throughout the year when trade would otherwise be at a low level.
- Enhance the features that are already successful for Ormskirk including helping to facilitate improvements to Chapel Gallery in the town centre.
- Secure improvements to the public realm in Ormskirk to help enhance the natural environment and appearance of the town centre and the gateways into it.
- Make it easier for people to access the town by all means of transport and for those with specific mobility issues.
- Working with partners to develop a marketing strategy to promote Ormskirk as a brand, also utilising the latest digital/technology and social media.
- Build links with, and ensure that the town centre maximises the benefits of Edge Hill University.
- Improve the strength and offer of Ormskirk's markets
- Ensure the long term management and maintenance of the town centre as a whole, for shoppers, residents and businesses.
- Increase footfall in the town centre through a variety of initiatives.
- Help make Ormskirk a safe place to live, work and visit.

## 8.0 Brand, Marketing & Town Centre Management

- 8.1** Ormskirk is fortunate in that a number of groups actively work to promote Ormskirk town centre and the efforts and achievements of these organisations needs to be recognised and built upon. Some recent examples include the popular town centre map produced by Ormskirk Community Partnership and the Christmas Markets organised by Love Ormskirk.
- 8.2** However, although there are varied organisations, including different Council departments, working to improve and promote Ormskirk, there is no co-ordinated approach, with development and marketing initiatives tending to be 'ad hoc' and not co-ordinated. Ormskirk currently does not have a recognisable brand identity and there is no comprehensive management strategy for the town.
- 8.3** In order for Ormskirk to compete and prosper this needs to be addressed as soon as possible as a lack of co-ordination could mean that regeneration initiatives become fragmented with different organisations not working towards a common vision and goal.

### Management

- 8.4** In order to ensure the successful management of the town centre, options need to be explored which could include the development of a town centre management forum, in which representatives from specific organisations could monitor the implementation of this strategy and drive forward certain initiatives. This group would need to have clear governance and support from all partners to ensure it did not become a 'talking shop'.
- 8.5** In order to help retailers the Council has introduced a new Retail Relief Scheme to replace the previous business rate discount scheme. The new scheme will provide a discount worth up to £1,000 a year - in both 2014-15 and 2015-16 - to retail premises with a rateable value of up to £50,000. This will provide support to retail premises including pubs, cafes, restaurants and shops.





---

## Developing a Brand

- 8.6** The historic buildings and layout of Ormskirk is generally recognised by the people of the town and visitors as some of its greatest assets. This special historic character creates a sense of pride of place and affects how people use and are attracted to the town.
- 8.7** Working with partner organisations, Ormskirk's brand needs to be clearly defined and marketed. This brand needs to build upon the current strengths of the town, including the historic character, but also needs to be locally distinctive. Once decided upon, all organisations promoting Ormskirk need to agree and sign up to promoting this brand.
- 8.8** This brand should be developed through a marketing group/forum which could be a sub group of the overall town centre management group. Once this brand has been established it will be extremely important to ensure that it is actively promoted through as many mechanisms as possible, including a town centre website, promotional literature, information boards and public artwork etc.

## Promotion and Events

- 8.9** In order to promote Ormskirk and develop a brand, Ormskirk town centre should ideally have one comprehensive website which is regularly updated and acts as a 'one stop shop' for town centre activities/events arranged by any key town centre organisations. The development of an events calendar should form part of the remit of the marketing sub group. This website must also be represented on social media including Twitter feeds and Facebook. This website may also have the capability for developing a contact database where users are regularly updated regarding events and activities taking place in the town centre.
- 8.10** Access to free Wi Fi is increasingly important for visitors to a town. Although large parts of Ormskirk town centre are covered by a free Wi Fi network, there is no promotion of this facility and many shoppers/visitors do not realise it exists. Opportunities exist to make better use of this technology including promoting the facilities which are available.
- 8.11** Some smaller scale improvements to gateways into the town centre could also make a big improvement including updating information boards and the information contained within them, in addition to environmental improvements.

## KEY ACTIONS

- Develop a town centre management forum/group with a clear governance structure to monitor progress and implement other actions in this strategy. This group will set up appropriate sub groups to deliver specific actions contained within the strategy.
- The Council will assess how staff resources can be made available to support town centre initiatives.
- Monitor the new retail relief scheme to assess how successful it has been and whether it should be continued beyond 2016.
- Set up a Marketing Sub Group involving local stakeholders to:
  - Develop a brand for Ormskirk that all parties can sign up to and a marketing campaign with clearly defined outputs.
  - Develop a dedicated website for Ormskirk town centre and make arrangements to ensure that this webpage is regularly updated. This website should be mindful of existing websites promoting Ormskirk.
  - Investigate how Ormskirk town centre can be promoted using social media.
  - Promote the existing free Wi Fi available in Ormskirk town centre and investigate opportunities to improve/extend this facility.
  - Work with partners to develop and promote events such as town centre trails.
  - Work with Edge Hill University and the Students Union to develop events that will engage the student population, as well as staff, to use Ormskirk town centre.

### Conclusion

- 8.12** The marketing and management of the town centre is currently fragmented and acts as a barrier to growth and development. In order for Ormskirk town centre to be successful it is essential that the marketing, management and branding of the town centre can be resolved. This must be done before other initiatives in this strategy are taken forward.
- 8.13** In order for any marketing strategy to work, it is essential that all partners are fully supportive and take ownership of the strategy. This strategy cannot be the responsibility of one organisation, due to the importance of the interventions needed and the amount of resources required.

---

## 9.0 Buildings and Place

- 9.1** Ormskirk has an attractive, historic town centre which boasts a number of listed buildings and is also located within a Conservation Area. The town centre maintains much of its historic character giving the town a unique sense of identity which helps distinguish it from neighbouring towns. This heritage has great benefits for Ormskirk and, if integrated and promoted correctly, can be used as a focus for positive change and regeneration.
- 9.2** Although the town centre generally looks attractive, a minority of the buildings appear to require some maintenance and there are some development sites where works on site have halted or indeed never started. Some vacant units are in prominent positions and in particularly poor repair.
- 9.3** The appearance of the condition of the physical environment in an area can really effect the perception of that area; this is particularly true for visitors and investors. If a town gives a positive first impression it increases the likelihood of return visits. This is true for both day-visitors and shoppers. A positive physical environment gives a perception of pride in an area and helps an area appear safe and inviting.
- 9.4** The Council is currently undertaking building appraisal work to highlight the prominence and condition of buildings in the town centre, so that the Council and partners can focus any available resources to those areas where it would provide the greatest benefit. These appraisals will provide a snapshot of the current state of the buildings and could also help track the deterioration or improvement of properties and prove an important monitoring tool. Although the Council is aware of the most important and prominent buildings, we have limited information on their condition. This appraisal work will help identify the most appropriate locations to help target resources, whether this is financial or in terms of officer time.
- 9.5** In addition, some gateways into Ormskirk could benefit from improvement/development and some of the main shopping streets in the town could benefit from refurbishment works/maintenance.
- 9.6** Like many towns in the United Kingdom the ownership of buildings and land within the town centre is fragmented, being mainly in the hands of a large number of private owners. Whilst some property owners are pragmatic in their approach, some property owners can be difficult to contact and work with to deliver improvements. The Portas Review said that ‘fragmented ownership is one of the main disadvantages of the high street. For many it is the primary constraint on change.’ Unfortunately, the Council has limited powers to force landlords to conduct maintenance, with the exception of the most severe cases where enforcement powers may be used.



**9.7** The amount of street furniture, including shop 'A' boards, lamp posts, benches, council signs etc. further detract from the character of the town centre, making the main shopping streets appear cluttered. Although many of these items serve a purpose, some are unnecessary and with better management could be reduced. Some items could be removed, repositioned, camouflaged or be potentially combined. This approach to reducing street clutter will require street audits to assess the problem, as well as careful planning and coordination with interested parties; however, this approach could significantly improve the appearance of the street scene and enhance the historic character.

**9.8** The Council is currently working with Lancashire County Council to secure major environmental improvements along Moor Street, which is at the heart of Ormskirk's retail centre. As part of this exercise, a consultation event was undertaken in June (2014). Major renovations have recently taken place on Moor Street, with new street furniture, a designated event space and bespoke artwork which all reinforce the character of the town. The new layout of Moor Street is also having a positive impact upon the market, helping to formalise the location for stalls. These improvements have improved the attractiveness of the town centre and it is hoped they will act as a catalyst to encourage further investment and development. The Council will continue to monitor public realm in the town.

## Conclusion

**9.9** Ormskirk is unique in that it still maintains a number of historic buildings and has a unique character setting it aside from neighbouring towns. This historic character should be protected and where possible enhanced so that it can be used as a tool for attracting visitors and investors.

**9.10** Although a series of measures/actions have been identified which will improve the physical appearance of the town centre and build upon the heritage/brand of Ormskirk, there may be difficulties in delivering some of the proposals. Many of the proposals are reliant on factors which are beyond our control, for example co-operation from landlords, availability of finance and market conditions.

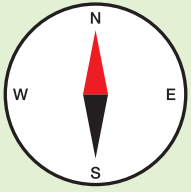
## KEY ACTIONS

In order to help improve the physical environment of the town centre, including improving the appearance, the Council, along with partners, is going to actively work to:

- Identify the key potential development sites that should be brought forward which are causing the greatest negative perception of the town and start a dialogue with the relevant landowner/freeholder to encourage suitable developments in line with the Council's planning policy and aspirations.
- If development opportunities cannot come forward in the short term, it will be important to try and ensure that sites are at least made to look visually more attractive so that they no longer create a negative perception of the town.
- Identify the current condition of all buildings through a buildings appraisal.
- Investigate funding opportunities to improve the external appearance of buildings and the public realm.
- Where buildings have been identified by the Council as being of significance and their physical condition has suffered, the Council will contact the owners of the property, highlighting their condition and offering guidance/advice on how to adequately maintain these buildings.
- Explore opportunities to reduce the levels of street clutter in the town centre.
- As a pilot, and working with property owners, the Council will look to clean up and provide some form of public art within one of Ormskirk's alleyways. This artwork should be part of a community engagement project and should fit in within a brand which has yet to be established for Ormskirk. If this pilot is successful it should be rolled out across all of Ormskirk's alleyways where agreement can be reached with property owners.
- Work with LCC to secure maintenance to some high streets which could benefit from improvement.

## LONG TERM ACTIONS

- Bring forward development sites. This may involve the Council using its own land or swapping land to help facilitate a better standard of development.
- The Council should consider options for acquiring land/property if landowners cannot be found or will not engage in dialogue.



## ORMSKIRK IMPROVEMENTS MAP

Indicative plan showing potential opportunity areas within Ormskirk town centre.



**Key**



Event Space



Potential development sites



Car Park enhancement opportunity



Bus station improvement site



Proposed new car park

## 10.0 ORMSKIRK MARKET



- 10.1** It is clear that the historic market in Ormskirk is a key asset, bringing tradition and vibrancy to the town, whilst helping to distinguish Ormskirk from neighbouring areas. The market is enhanced by the pedestrianised nature of the town centre, providing a large yet open shopping environment. The market sells a wide variety of products but has traditionally been known for its locally grown fruit and vegetables, as well as butchers and fishmongers selling local produce.
- 10.2** As well as the traditional outdoor markets on a Thursday and Saturday, Ormskirk is also home to a permanent indoor market and has also hosted special continental and vintage markets on a regular basis. These special markets are also sometimes held in the Chapel Gallery.
- 10.3** Although both the Thursday and Saturday markets are proving popular, the Saturday market tends to attract less stalls and visitors than the Thursday market. This is partly due to the fact that there is greater competition locally for markets on a Saturday and also as markets tend to compete with larger retail centres for Saturday trade. In addition, the current layout of the market can appear cluttered, as some stalls tend to creep forward and extend onto pedestrian areas which can cause congestion for pedestrians and detract from a pleasant shopping experience.



- 10.4** As part of the redevelopment of Moor Street, some work has already been done to investigate how the market should best be laid out to accommodate the needs of the market traders, local shops, pedestrians and local shoppers. This work should continue and when a suitable solution is found it should be consulted on.
- 10.5** Although both markets are popular, appropriate opportunities still exist to better promote the market and this could be done with the development of a new brand for Ormskirk.
- 10.6** In order to diversify the appeal of the Saturday market which is not as popular as the Thursday market, consideration should be given to working with Edge Hill University to investigate if a section of the market could be used as student stalls, encouraging students to use the market and town centre.
- 10.7** Alternatively, encouraging a hub of new market stall holders who specialise in a particular area, for example; arts and crafts may help create a niche market which could help the Saturday market compete against other mainstream retail competition.
- 10.8** In order to ensure that the market remains as popular and competitive as possible and in consultation with the stall holders, the Council will consider investigating in infrastructure such as high quality, uniform stall covers, card payment systems and new electrical hook up points.

## KEY ACTIONS

In order to take the market forward consideration should be given to:

- Assessing other markets to understand the best practise that could be applied to Ormskirk Market.
- Looking for opportunities to continue to promote the market to a wider area. Ormskirk is close to a number of urban conurbations and could potentially become a shopping destination of choice for specialist locally grown/farmed produce.
- Looking at opportunities to expand the appeal of the Saturday market, considering looking at opportunities to link in with and promote the market to Edge Hill University students/new traders.
- Consider attracting new specialist stall holders to create a niche market of a Saturday.
- Consider bringing forward an events programme of guest markets/vintage markets, subject to available resources.
- Work to improve the physical appearance of the market in regards to layout and introducing new, uniform stall covers.
- In consultation with the market traders, consider the introduction of new infrastructure to ensure the market has up to date facilities.

### Conclusion

- 10.9** Ormskirk's markets are successful and do attract people into the town helping to create a unique selling point for Ormskirk. However, by exploring the interventions above the market should continue to thrive and may even attract new customers who traditionally may not have used the market. The market will also be a key consideration in developing a brand for Ormskirk.

## 11.0 Car Parking

- 11.1** The Portas Review highlighted the importance of parking for a successful high street. The role of car parks in the town centre is a multi-functional role serving a variety of purposes and includes supporting local shops and businesses, providing a service for local residents and visitors, generating an income and enhancing leisure opportunities for local residents. In order to better serve the town centre we believe that it is vital for this strategy to look to manage car parking provision in a holistic way.
- 11.2** The cost of car parking, as well as business rates etc, has helped to reduce the competitiveness of town centres generally, compared to out of town developments and some e-commerce retailers who do not have similar constraints.
- 11.3** Ormskirk town centre is well served with a number of predominantly Council owned car parks. At present there are 11 Council owned car parks providing approximately 750 parking spaces. As well as Council owned car parks there are a number of privately owned car parks which currently provide sufficient car parking spaces for visitors to Ormskirk.
- 11.4** The Council has a number of short stay car parks providing parking for up to 2 hours, as well as a number of longer stay car parks and some free car parks. In addition, there are a number of private car parks located around the town centre who charge for car parking.
- 11.5** Although the Council does have some free car parks these tend to be smaller and located in slightly out of centre locations which tend not be favoured by shoppers or visitors to the town centre. Although the cost of Ormskirk's town centre car parks are similar to the cost of similar sized towns locally, there is still an additional cost to visiting Ormskirk that is not found in most out of town retailers.

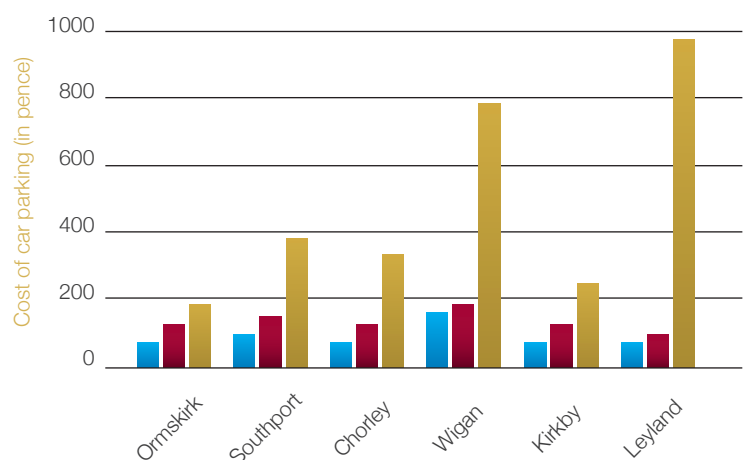
### Comparative costs of car parks

- 11.6** Although prices vary from car park to car park within Ormskirk the average cost of a town centre car parking space is 70p for up to one hour, £2 for up to 4 hours and up to £3 for up to 9 hours. This compares very favourably to neighbouring towns, as shown in Figure 2.

- Key**
- Cost for up to 1 hour
  - Cost for up to 2 hour
  - Cost for 6 hours plus

(Figure 2 - Comparative cost of car parking in Ormskirk compared to neighbouring areas)

**Source: Figures taken from local council websites**



- 11.7** Although Ormskirk is well served by car parks, some of the car parks are difficult to locate due to the one way system which surrounds the town. This can be further complicated due to the fact that some car parks are long stay and some are short stay. In addition, some of the car parks may offer a poor first impression of Ormskirk to visitors, partly due to the presence of neighbouring derelict/vacant sites, and some car parks could be improved to make them more visually attractive.
- 11.8** The Council has recently upgraded some car parks, including Park Pool and Wheatsheaf car parks, and these upgrades have significantly improved the appearance of the car parks.
- 11.9** With some Council and privately owned car parks located in close proximity there are issues relating to confusion over parking costs and regulations.
- 11.10** Additionally, there are issues over how the public pay for their car parking. The Council car parks in Ormskirk only have pay on entry formats, whereas some members of the public prefer pay on exit facilities which provides flexibility allowing shoppers to be able to stay longer if required. In order to make the car parks as user friendly as possible a range of payment options should be considered including mobile top up facilities.



## KEY ACTIONS

The Council needs to work together with private car park operators and shop owners to develop a comprehensive strategic car park strategy that will help support the vibrancy of the town centre. This should include:

- Reviewing the current pricing strategy of the town centre car parks. In particular, reviewing if offering free car parking for shorter periods of time (such as half an hour) would help attract shoppers who may want to pick up one or two items.
- Investigate the introduction of new car park technology where you pay on exit as opposed to paying on entry.
- Review if the Council should alter the time periods of the short and long stay car parks.
- Some of the Council's car parks could benefit from some environmental improvements in order to help improve their appearance and overall visitor experience of visiting the town centre. This should include updating Ormskirk town centre's information boards, planting trees, resurfacing some areas and possibly new artwork in appropriate areas.
- Better signage of car parks so visitors can easily distinguish between car parks including considering intelligent signage.
- Investigate the possibility of introducing additional user friendly payment options such as mobile payment top up systems.
- Promote the fact that Ormskirk has plenty of car park provision at competitive prices.
- In the longer term there may be opportunities to consider increasing the capacity of some car parks, for example extending car parks into vacant development sites or introducing multi-story/deck car parks. This may offer opportunities to develop other car parks which may have development potential.

### Conclusion

- 11.11** The management of car park provision in Ormskirk is critical to ensuring the success of the high street. Whilst the position in Ormskirk is relatively healthy compared to some areas, improving the experience for shoppers is essential to maintaining existing and attracting new customers. Also as shopping habits change and the high street is used in different ways it will be important to ensure that the management of the town's car parks can be as adaptable as possible.

---

## 12.0 Transport & Access

- 12.1** Ormskirk is an extremely well connected town with good road and rail links. However, at certain times, Ormskirk does suffer from problems of congestion with the A570 running through the town carrying traffic accessing Southport from the M58. Additionally, there is room for improvement with the current rail service to Preston being infrequent, and the current one way system acts as a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 12.2** Lancashire County Council (LCC) have recently published their Highways and Transport Masterplan in which they say that they will produce a 'Movement Strategy' for Ormskirk including an innovative bicycle hire scheme centred on the university. The strategy will also focus on how removing longer distance traffic from the town can be a catalyst for making public transport, cycling and walking modes of choice in the town.
- 12.3** Many public transport interchanges are the first and last place a visitor sees when they visit Ormskirk and therefore it is important that these places leave a good impression. This includes Ormskirk bus station which requires updating.
- 12.4** The Borough Council has worked with Lancashire County Council to investigate and develop a number of schemes which will improve transport provision in Ormskirk and will continue to work with LCC as the 'Movement Strategy' for Ormskirk is developed.

### KEY ACTIONS

Working with the County Council the Borough Council will:

- Seek to ensure that the aspirations for Ormskirk town centre are supported in the development of LCC's 'Movement Strategy' for Ormskirk.
- Explore opportunities to improve Ormskirk bus station to provide a modern, fit for purpose facility. This should include improving the existing linkage between the bus and rail station.
- Develop an integrated cycle and pedestrian link from Ormskirk train station to Edge Hill University providing the required infrastructure to enable students to get to the university by bike. This scheme should also help improve the link between the bus and train station and reduce congestion.

### Conclusion

- 12.5** As LCC are the transport authority for West Lancashire it will be extremely important to ensure that we liaise to ensure that the aspirations of the strategy are fully integrated into the development of the Ormskirk 'Movement Strategy'.

## 13.0 NIGHT TIME/EVENING ECONOMY



- 13.1** With town centres changing, it is becoming clear that having a vibrant and safe night time/evening economy is a crucial element to the success of the town centre. No longer are town centres being seen as locations which close at 5pm. As well as the traditional night time economy the evening/leisure economy is becoming critical to meeting the demands of modern consumers.
- 13.2** Ormskirk has a prosperous night time economy with a good selection of restaurants, bars, pubs and other late night establishments. This helps diversify Ormskirk's appeal and extend the use of the town centre beyond the traditional 5 o'clock threshold. The evening/leisure economy is used by both residents, visitors and students with some facilities being located slightly out of the main town centre.
- 13.3** This night time economy is supported in part by the student population within the town, who tend to use these establishments more mid-week, whereas the majority of local residents tend to use the town centre night time establishments at the weekend.
- 13.4** The town centre is well policed and feels safe with a number of agencies working together through Ormskirk Community Safety Partnership to help provide assistance, protect residential amenity and ensure community safety. Ormskirk town centre is well served with CCTV, as well as being patrolled by police, community support officers and street pastors.
- 13.5** In order for the town centre to be able to meet the needs of both the day time, evening and late night economy the town centre will have to be attractive, safe and versatile.
- 13.6** With growing numbers of students at Edge Hill University and increasing numbers of student properties located within or close to the town centre there is still opportunity for growth, particularly in the evening/leisure economy between the traditional day time and night time operational hours i.e. When traditional shops and offices close at 5pm and when pubs and restaurants become busy around 7-8pm. The Association of Town Centre Management (TCM) commissioned a Retail Trading Hours Study which has shown that sales between 5pm and 8pm are typically 50% more than those between 9am and 11am. This represents an opportunity for growth which has not been fully exploited in Ormskirk.

- 13.7** In order to help facilitate this change, a number of actions will need to take place to help boost the evening economy making it more attractive to both retailers and members of the public. In order to do this a series of events could be co-ordinated between relevant partners to ensure that any events/festivals are supported by retailers. One such example could be food and drink festivals. Such festivals could be supported if the Council had facilities such as a pop up entertainment space, outdoor seating etc.
- 13.8** In order to help support the evening and night time economy, one possible solution could be to provide a new permanent lighting system which could help improve public safety whilst also improving the appearance and ambiance of the town of a night. This could be in the form of a suspended lighting above the town centre illuminating buildings and pavements.
- 13.9** Consideration will also need to be given to supporting public transport in the evening to allow both members of the public and workers to be able to get to and from Ormskirk of an evening. This should include links within West Lancashire as well as with neighbouring areas.

## KEY ACTIONS

In order to help facilitate and support the change from the traditional day time to night-time economy the Council needs to:

- Work with local retailers to consider temporary periods where shop owners are encouraged to open up later into the early evening anchored by events such as late night entertainment, evening markets, outdoor food and drinks festivals.
- Continue to work with other agencies including the police, street pastors and Edge Hill University to ensure that the town centre is a safe place for all to visit.
- Continue to liaise with Lancashire County Council and public transport providers to ensure that Ormskirk is well served by public transport provision in an evening.
- Investigate the introduction of new permanent lighting within the town centre to provide a safe and effective night time environment.

### Conclusion

- 13.10** The night time and evening/leisure economy in Ormskirk is relatively strong, however, it does have the potential for growth. In particular, the evening economy has a lot of potential to fill the void left between the normal shopping hours and the traditional night time economy. By improving the evening/night time economy we have the ability to enrich the offer of Ormskirk town centre for both residents and visitors, attract new visitors and could prevent residents and visitors going to neighbouring centres. However, it will be important to ensure that this growth is balanced and does not come at the expense of local residents.

## 14.0 Recording/Monitoring Town Centre Information

- 14.1** In order to effectively monitor if the actions within this strategy have had a positive effect upon the town centre, a range of data sets will be required. Before we introduce measures in this strategy to bring about improvement in the town centre it will be important to know what the current situation is.
- 14.2** The Council has recently started conducting surveys of the town centre showing vacancy levels. These surveys are conducted quarterly and will provide a valuable record providing comparative data which can be compared over time.
- 14.3** However, in order to effectively monitor the health of the town centre, a range of different data sets will be required. As well as vacancy rates, we can obtain figures showing how well Council owned car parks are performing and we may be able to obtain some data from some public transport providers, giving an indication of visitor numbers. Additional data may also be available from local estate agents and shops who may provide information about the strength of the market.
- 14.4** Despite the level of information available, there is a gap in this data, with no footfall figures available. Although footfall does not always equate to sales, it can be seen as one of the key indicators of a healthy high street. In addition, through obtaining footfall figures, we can compare the strength of Ormskirk town centre compared to similar sized towns.
- 14.5** In order to effectively manage and monitor how initiatives work within Ormskirk town centre, consideration should be given to the introduction of a footfall monitoring system which comes with an associated cost. These monitoring systems are now used in many town centres providing data which helps with the management of the particular town centre.
- 14.6** A footfall monitoring system could allow the Council to monitor and interpret the amount of visitors using the town centre. This could also help to identify trends which could help direct future initiatives. There may even be possibilities to look at benchmarking where comparisons could be made between the footfall within Ormskirk and other similar towns across the Country, and use such data as a marketing tool.

### KEY ACTIONS

Working with partners the Borough Council will:

- Continue to monitor vacancy levels across the town centre.
- Investigate the different footfall monitoring systems available on the market with consideration given to purchasing a suitable system for Ormskirk town centre.
- Subject to available resources, work with local businesses to assess the strength of Ormskirk's property market.
- Work with Healthy High Streets campaign to investigate if major retailers in Ormskirk can provide any footfall data which could be used to help assess the strength of Ormskirk town centre.

### Conclusion

- 14.7** As retail habits change it will be important to ensure that the town centre is adaptable and responsive and that we can monitor which interventions are delivering the greatest benefit. This will be important to ensure that we know where best to target available resources. The monitoring of effective data will be crucial in identifying trends which may help highlight issues that can be addressed before they become larger problems. Although this strategy contains a number of possible actions, without effective monitoring we will not be in a position to know if these actions are delivering positive results.



# Appendices

## A&B



---

# STRENGTH WEAKNESS OPPORTUNITY AND THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS



## Strengths

- Ormskirk town centre has excellent access with good bus and rail links, as well as good car parking areas with the ability to attract people from the local area as well as further afield.
- Ormskirk is a historic Lancashire market town with a unique character that could appeal beyond the local area.
- Ormskirk has a large number of national retailers and service providers including Morrisons, Tesco, Iceland, Home and Bargain, Boots, Dorothy Perkins, New Look, Clarks, Costa Coffee, Hallmark, RBS, Natwest, HSBC, Wetherspoons, O2, Superdrug, Argos, Aldi, WH Smith, Marks & Spencer, Timpson, Card Factory, Holland & Barrett, Tony & Guy and Specsavers amongst others.
- Ormskirk has an impressive number of independent retailers selling quality produce including independent butchers, fruit and veg shops, cafes and gift shops.
- The town centre hosts two successful markets on a Thursday and Saturday bringing in many repeat shoppers.
- There are a number of retail and leisure facilities within close proximity to the town centre including Park Pool, Coronation Park, Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk Parish Church, Ormskirk Cricket Ground, Ormskirk Civic Hall and a number of recreational sports facilities etc.
- Ormskirk town centre has a large amount of car parking spaces with a number being provided by the Council and a number being provided privately.
- Ormskirk is a well policed town with a number of safety measures including policing, CCTV and street pastors amongst others.
- Ormskirk has a large student population with the successful Edge Hill University located close to the town centre.
- Ormskirk has a safe feel good factor and is an inviting town centre.



## Weaknesses

- Although Ormskirk has a number of car parking spaces there is little free car parking especially for short stay car parking. Although longer stay car parks may suit people who wish to spend a number of hours, there is little car park availability for people who wish to visit for a short period of time or even drop off visitors.
- The appearance of Ormskirk town centre appears cluttered with a number of obstacles including illegal advertisements as well as Council proliferation.
- Due to the physical nature of shops within town centres which tend to be smaller, some retailers larger, more flexible out of town units which may also have lower business rates.



## Opportunities

- Although Ormskirk has relatively good transport connections with regular rail services to Liverpool and services to Preston, as well as bus services to Wigan, Skelmersdale, Tarleton, Southport and Liverpool; connections between the bus and rail station could be improved along with the design and appearance of the bus station.
- Ormskirk is a historical market town and has some character buildings; however, some of these buildings are in a poor state of repair with many buildings appearing to lack basic maintenance such as having clean gutters and painted buildings.
- Although Ormskirk town centre does host a number of events including Ormskirk Motor Fest the town centre could play host to many more events. The town centre benefits from having Coronation Park located very close to the town centre. The park has the potential to host larger events such as Proms in the Park, sporting and other competitions which could increase the footfall of the town centre.
- The town centre has the potential to offer additional retail and residential space with some development opportunities still being available and significant capacity for residential accommodation above the ground floor of many retail units.
- Significant improvement could be made within Ormskirk to the public realm. The current public realm is in a poor condition and could benefit from refurbishment and greater utilisation.
- Ormskirk has several active representative groups including 'Love Ormskirk' and 'Ormskirk Community Partnership' who can partner with the Council to help deliver initiatives.
- Ormskirk has significant outdoor space which is currently not utilised as well as it could be. Potential ideas to improve this space could include encouraging outdoor eating and drinking space.



## Threats

- Although Ormskirk has a small number of vacant properties, the vacant properties tend to be located in prominent positions within the town centre and appear to be in a poor condition in need of investment.
- Competition from neighbouring and out of town shopping centres. Out of town shopping centres offer a convenience for car based shoppers that is difficult for most town centres to compete with.
- The current trend of fewer retailers having a presence on the high street and where there is a presence it tends to be in larger centres.
- A number of national retailers have vacated Ormskirk in recent years.

## APPENDIX B: INDICATIVE ACTION PLAN SHOWING POSSIBLE KEY DELIVERY PARTNERS AND ANTICIPATED TIMESCALES

Key Action Area	Action Point	Key Delivery Partner	Estimated Timescale
Brand, Marketing & Town Centre Management	Develop an Ormskirk Town Centre Management Group with a clear governance structure and set of aims and objectives. This group should set up appropriate sub groups to deliver specific actions contained within the strategy.	Key Partners/Ormskirk Town Centre Management Group	2015-2016
	Develop a marketing strategy for Ormskirk. This should include establishing and promoting an appropriate brand for Ormskirk, developing an events calendar, delivering marketing campaign(s), establishing a dedicated town centre website, investigating opportunities to utilise social media and a comprehensive free Wi-Fi service across the town centre.	Marketing Sub Group	2015-2020
	Monitor the new retail relief scheme to assess how successful it has been and if it should be rolled out beyond 2016.	Marketing Sub Group	2015-2020
	The Council will assess how staff resources can be made available to support town centre initiatives.	WLBC	2015-2020
Building & Place	Monitor the condition of buildings in the town centre.	Building & Public Realm Sub Group	2015-2020
	Investigate the role of arts and culture in the animation of the street scene, whether it is on a temporary or permanent basis. Looking at improving the buildings, streets and alleyways', seeking to create a unique sense of place while celebrating local identity.	Building & Public Realm Sub Group	2015-2020
	Consider bringing forward options for acquiring land/property if a positive business case can be made.	Building & Public Realm Sub Group	2015-2020
	The Council will continue to work with developers and landowners to bring forward appropriate development sites to enhance the appearance of Ormskirk town centre. Where development sites cannot come forward it will be important to ensure that these sites are at least made to look visually more attractive.	Building & Public Realm Sub Group	2015-2020
Ormskirk Market	Work to improve the physical appearance and appeal of Ormskirk's markets by improving the layout, range of stalls, stall covers and introduction of new infrastructure to ensure the market has up to date facilities.	Market & Car Park Sub Group	2015-2020
	Investigate opportunities to expand the appeal of the Saturday market considering looking at opportunities to link in with and promote the market to Edge Hill University students/traders and attracting new specialist stall holders to create a niche market.	Market & Car Park Sub Group	2015-2020
	Consider bringing forward an events programme of guest markets/vintage markets subject to available resources.	Market & Car Park Sub Group	2015-2020

Key Action Area	Action Point	Key Delivery Partner	Estimated Timescale
Car Parks	Conduct a comprehensive car parking review. This should include a review of pricing, new technology and capacity of car parks.	Market & Car Park Sub Group	2015-2020
	Improve the overall appearance of all town centre car parks. This should include updating signage, environmental improvements, resurfacing, as well as considering opportunities for new artwork in appropriate locations.	Market & Car Park Sub Group	2015-2020
Transport & Access	Explore opportunities to improve access and movement into, as well as within Ormskirk town centre. This should include the delivery of new transport projects within the town centre.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
	Improve the current service on the Ormskirk to Preston rail line so that it is more regular and therefore more user-friendly.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
	Explore opportunities to improve Ormskirk bus station to provide a modern, fit for purpose facility. This should include improving the existing linkage between the bus and rail station.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
	Development of a much improved pedestrian and cycle network around the town including links to the University.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
	Work with Network Rail to explore opportunities to increase/improve car parking facilities at Ormskirk rail station to provide a better park and ride facility.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
	Seek to ensure that the aspirations of Ormskirk's town centre are supported in the development of LCC's 'Movement Strategy' for Ormskirk.	WLBC/LCC	2015-2020
Night Time/Evening Economy	Consider opportunities to improve the evening/night time economy within Ormskirk. This should include working with local retailers to consider temporary periods where shop owners are encouraged to open up late anchored by events such as evening entertainment, evening markets and outdoor food and drinks festivals.	Marketing Sub Group	2015-2020
	Investigate the introduction of new permanent lighting within the town centre to provide an attractive, safe night time environment.	Marketing Sub Group	2015-2020
Recording/Monitoring Town Centre Information	Explore all opportunities to gain appropriate data/information to understand and monitor the health of Ormskirk town centre.	Marketing Sub Group	2015-2020



**West Lancashire Borough Council**  
52 Derby Street, Ormskirk L39 2DF  
**T:** 01695 577177 **W:** [www.westlancs.gov.uk](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk)  
**E:** [customer.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@westlancs.gov.uk)

# ORMSKIRK TOWN CENTRE PROPOSED ENGAGEMENT & DELIVERY STRUCTURE

## **Ormskirk Town Centre Stakeholder Event**

Annual Event to feedback on progress and get stakeholder input

(Invitees to include wide range of political, business, community & voluntary sector representatives)

## **Ormskirk Town Centre Management Group**

Officer level group meeting every 3 months to oversee delivery, get feedback from Working Groups and discuss strategic issues



## **Stakeholder Working Groups**

Groups to be convened with key stakeholders as required. Possible Working Groups to include

- Marketing
- Building & Public Realm
- Market & Car Park
- BID





# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Housing &amp; Regeneration</b>	<b>Service: Economic Regeneration</b>
<b>Completed by: Dominic Carr</b>	<b>Date: 3.8.15</b>
<b>Subject Title:</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	Adoption of the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015 following consultation
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	The implementation of the strategy will help generate economic, social and environmental improvements within the town centre helping to support existing businesses as well as attracting new investment. The implementation of the strategy should also help increase access and opportunities within the town centre for all.
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e.	

who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	The town centre strategy is a cross cutting document which should help improve conditions for residents and visitors, as well as supporting existing and new businesses. The strategy will also include involvement from the community and voluntary groups, the private sector as well as University and Student Union.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?  Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes No Yes No No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	N/A
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	All responses to the consultation exercise have been taken on board and where appropriate incorporated into the Strategy. In terms of individual actions, it is difficult at this stage to answer this question however this will be picked up when individual actions within the Action Plan are taken forward following anticipated adoption by Cabinet in June 2015.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	N/A The question will be more relevant once actions within the strategy have been implemented.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	A 12 week consultation exercise was undertaken in which a number of consultation events were held engaging with members of the public. In addition, officers have held meetings with a number of key stakeholders. The responses and feedback received has been used to amend the final town centre strategy.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to	If the strategy is approved additional data will

be gathered, please specify:	be required before implementing some of the actions within it.
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	If the strategy is approved the actions contained within it should have a positive impact in terms of increasing accessibility to a range of services for all.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	N/A
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	The consultation exercise ended on the 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2015 with all responses being analysed and relevant amendments being taken into account. The amended strategy will be put before Cabinet at the 16th June Cabinet meeting.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(I)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Moran**

**Contact for further information: Georgina isherwood (Extn: 5123)  
(Email:georgina.isherwood@westlancs.gov.uk)**

---

**SUBJECT: STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

---

Borough Wide Interest

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Strategic Asset Management Project and to seek authority to dispose of assets.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the contents of the report, including the work undertaken by officers to date, and the progress on the assets previously identified for disposal be noted.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised to take the actions recommended in Appendix A in relation to the 90 sites in the Moorside Ward together with the windfall site at Laburnum Drive in Skelmersdale South, Appendix B, and take any actions necessary to secure disposal of category 1 sites.

2.3 That the sites set out in Appendix D are no longer required for their current uses as set out in that Appendix and that they be appropriated as required for regeneration purposes for the reasons set out in the report.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Strategic Asset Management Project commenced in September 2010 and to date asset reviews have been completed for the following wards;

Burscough West	Ashurst
Knowsley	Parbold
Wrightington	Digmoor
Birch Green	Scarisbrick
North Meols	Aughton & Downholland
Newburgh	Derby
Skelmersdale North	Scott
Rufford	Aughton Park
Tanhouse	Moorside

- 3.2 Some of the assets have development potential and, where appropriate, planning applications have been submitted to secure their enhanced value. At the 16th September 2014 Cabinet meeting, authority was given to adopt a new ward mapping delivery plan and in accordance with this the appraisal of assets within Burscough East began in July 2014. Also at this meeting authority was given to adopt a new Member consultation process which means that Ward Councillors are consulted on a face to face basis prior to and following their Ward being appraised. The Portfolio Holder is also consulted in the same manner following the completed appraisal of assets within a ward.

#### 4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 As per the approved Ward Delivery Plan, the Moorside Ward was appraised during the months of April 2015 to June 2015. This Ward has a large number of Council owned assets, requiring the assessment of 90 sites. Officers met with both Ward Councillors prior to and upon completion of all site appraisals. The Ward Councillors raised no objections to the recommendations being put forward as outlined in Appendix A. In total 3 sites have been identified for disposal, and these are identified on the plans attached as Appendix C. Of these sites, 1 has previously been authorised for disposal at the Cabinet meeting in September 2012 with the other having potential for residential development. The category 2 sites, of which there are 7, require further investigatory work in terms of development with adjacent sites or retention until clawback has reduced significantly. Clawback is a payment made to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It applies to land within Skelmersdale which was transferred into the Council's ownership but with the agreement that should it be sold on the open market, a percentage of the receipt has to be paid to the HCA. At present the majority of clawback stands at 50% with a yearly decrease of 2%. Previous correspondence with the HCA has confirmed that they have maintained their stance and are not willing to reduce the percentage of clawback.
- 4.2 It was reported at the June 2015 Cabinet meeting that Officers had undertaken a very broad sweep of all remaining wards to ascertain if there were any "easy win" windfall sites. From this exercise 3 were identified as category 2's to dispose of in the future but 1 of these sites, land adjacent to 15 Laburnum Drive in Skelmersdale South, is now ready to bring forward for disposal. Investigatory surveys were required in relation to historic mining issues on the site and Officers are now in receipt of a Coal Mining Risk Assessment for the land which does not preclude development of it. The opinion of Ward Councillors has been sought and a site meeting has taken place. Of those which responded, no

overriding objections were received. Authority is now sought from Members to dispose of this site (Appendix B).

- 4.3 Currently work is being undertaken by officers in Housing to look at the future options for the Council's garages across the Borough. This is exploring options to ensure the efficient use of stock and improve the satisfaction for tenants. Within the Moorside ward alone there are a high number of Council-owned garages and this was the same within the Tanhouse, Skelmersdale North, Digmoor and Birch Green Wards. Given that this current work is being undertaken, all of the garages within Moorside have, at this point in time, been categorised as 3's i.e. to retain.
- 4.4 The Council acquires and holds property for various statutory purposes in order to perform its functions. The process of changing the purpose for which it is held is described as appropriation. The general power to appropriate is set out in Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act") which empowers the Council to appropriate land for any purpose for which it is authorised if it is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation. The current use of the sites considered for disposal under the SAMP process do not provide the best use of the land/buildings. Many of these sites could be better utilised for alternative purposes, as defined by the SAMP process. These include those sites set out in Appendix D. It is necessary to appropriate these sites from their current use to regeneration purposes. The appropriation of land as part of the SAMP has been an integral process since the project began and enables all capital receipts from any sales to be held in the Council's General Revenue Account. The spending of the income from these sales is not restricted to projects or works within a particular Service Area and thus could be utilised for a number of reasons e.g. housing, leisure, regeneration etc.
- 4.5 Since the June 2015 Cabinet meeting, work has been continuing on sites previously approved for disposal. This can be summarised as:
- The sale of the site at Hillock Lane in Scarisbrick has been completed and the sale of land at Garnett Place in Skelmersdale is progressing.
  - Offers have been accepted on the sites at Hoole Lane in Banks, Sephton Drive in Ormskirk and Elmers Green Lane in Ashurst.
  - Planning permission has been granted, subject to the signing of a s106 agreement, for outline residential development on the former Westec House site and full planning permission for a dwelling on the site at Trevor Road in Burscough.
  - The site at Trevor Road in Burscough is currently being marketed.
  - A planning application has been submitted for residential development at Tarlswood in Skelmersdale North. Officers met with one Ward Councillor on site and obtained views via email from the other. Neither raised any objections to the proposal being put forward.
  - Two pre-application enquiries have been submitted to Planning for consideration in relation to potential residential developments.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Officers will continue to work towards mapping wards in accordance with the ward mapping delivery plan agreed at the September 2014 Cabinet meeting.

5.2 Where sites have been identified for disposal and agreed by Cabinet, Officers will continue to progress sites through the pre-application and planning application stages.

5.3 In accordance with the previously agreed Ward Mapping Delivery Plan, the next ward to be considered is Burscough East.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS**

6.1 The outcomes of the Strategic Asset Management Project and the nature of any scheme that comes out of this project will ultimately ensure a number of key objectives of the Community Strategy are met, including providing affordable housing, young and older people, the economy and jobs and better environment, plus cross cutting themes such as reducing deprivation in our communities.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Securing the enhanced valuation of assets to be disposed will continue to require resources e.g. pre-application submissions, planning application fees, surveys and the professional drawing of plans when required etc. It has been reported previously to Cabinet that as a long term measure there will be a need to pump prime the project by the retention of a small percentage of future capital receipts or a budget being made available from revenue resources.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

8.1 As previously reported, the project has demonstrated that many of the assets held by the Council have the potential for development or for utilising the land in a different way. If this potential is realised, their value will be significantly enhanced either financially or as a benefit to the community. In some cases there will be opportunities to generate capital receipts from their disposal and in other instances benefit to the local community is achieved through the creation of new or improved functional usage of land, such as the creation of allotments. If the assets are not considered in a timely fashion, taking into consideration other important areas of work, this could represent a significant loss of capital receipts for the Council or the reduction in value if a successful adverse possession claim is made by a third party.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS**

9.1 It is important to continue to roll out the Strategic Asset Management Project across the Borough to enable all assets to be identified and assessed, but equally officers need to spend time working on assets categorised as 1 for pre-applications and planning applications. The project will ultimately ensure the asset register is fully up to date and the continued ownership of all the assets is challenged to determine those that are suitable for further development are identified and progressed.



## **Background Documents**

West Lancashire Strategic Asset Management Plan, which is available at:  
[www.westlancs.gov.uk/living\\_in\\_west\\_lancs/regeneration\\_projects/action\\_plans.aspxn](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/living_in_west_lancs/regeneration_projects/action_plans.aspxn)

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

The previous Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for the Cabinet report prepared for the September 2010 meeting will suffice for this report as the content of the project remains the same.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A - Moorside Recommendations
- Appendix B – Windfall Site
- Appendix C - Location plans of category 1 sites
- Appendix D - Land to be appropriated



## APPENDIX A

### Strategic Asset Management–Moorside Recommendations

Site Ref	Site Location	Recommendation	Category
MOO1.1	Land adjacent to Digmaor Parade	Authority to dispose authorised September 2012 Cabinet	1*
MOO4.5	Land to rear of 14-20 Castlehey	Dispose	1*
MOO2.1	Brierfield land to the front of 16-32	Authority to dispose in future authorised at June 2015 Cabinet	2
MOO2.10	Land to south of 2 Carfield	Dispose in Future	2
MOO2.11	Carfield land adjacent 49	Dispose in Future	2
MOO8.1	Land to front of 2a Blaydon Park, Skelmersdale	Dispose in Future	2
MOO8.3	Land at junction of Nixons Lane & Digmaor Road	Dispose in Future	2
MOO8.4	Landscaping to front of 96 Moor Drive	Dispose in future	2
MOO9.2	Land south of 2-14 Brierfield	Dispose in future	2
MOO1.2	Land south of Birleywood Health Centre	Retain	3
MOO1.3	Car park south 153-157 Birleywood	Retain	3
MOO1.4	Land to east of Digmaor Parade	Retain	3
MOO1.5	Land to rear of 2-12 Birleywood	Retain	3
MOO1.6	Car park to south of Community Centre	Retain	3
MOO1.7	Land rear 98-114 Birkrig	Retain	3
MOO1.8	Land rear of 2-12 Birkrig	Retain	3
MOO1.9	Land rear of 1-13 Birkrig	Retain	3
MOO1.10	Car park to front of 27-35 Birkrig	Retain	3

MOO1.11	Landscaping front 168-172 Birkrig	Retain	3
MOO1.12	Digmoor Parade Shopping Centre	Retain	3
MOO1.13	Digmoor Community Centre	Retain	3
Moo1.14	Garages within Birkrig and Birleywood Estates	Retain Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO1.15	Remaining Landscaping within Birleywood and Birkrig Estate	Retain	3
MOO2.2	Land rear 338-350 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.3	Land adjacent to 280 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.4	Land to front of 314-320 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.5	Land front 290-300 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.6	Land front 244-250 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.7	Land front 82-86 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.8	Land rear 10-18 Carfield	Retain (small community garden/allotment)	3
MOO2.9	Land front 2-8 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.12	Land adjacent 15 Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.13	Land south of Hope High School	Retain	3
MOO2.14	Remaining garages within Carfield Estate	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO2.15	Remaining landscaping within Carfield	Retain	3
MOO2.16	Carfield Meeting Room	Retain	3
MOO3.1	Car park adjacent 388 Blakehall	Retain	3
MOO3.2	Blakehall land south of 346	Retain	3
MOO3.3	Blakehall land south of 288	Retain	3
MOO3.4	Land to south of 154 Blakehall	Retain	3

MOO3.5	Remaining landscaping at Blakehall & Birleywood North, Moorside	Retain	3
MOO4.1	Land adjacent to 122 Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.2	Land adjacent to 124 Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.3	Land adjacent to 46 Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.4	Land rear of 1-13 Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.6	Landscaping to east of Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.7	Land rear of 35-53 Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO4.8	Garages at Castlehey	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO4.9	Remaining landscaping within Castlehey	Retain	3
MOO5.1	Land to front of 5-9 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.2	Land to front of 1-3 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.3	Land to north of 31 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.4	Land to north of 35 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.5	Land to north of 107 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.6	Car park adjacent to 109 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.7	Land adjacent to 117 Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.8	Land adjacent to 4 Back Lane	Retain	3
MOO5.9	Remaining landscaping with Charnock	Retain	3
MOO5.10	Remaining garages within Charnock	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO6.1	Land to front of 162-168 Cherrycroft	Retain	3
MOO6.2	Land adjacent to 58 Cherrycroft	Retain	3
MOO6.3	Land north of 53-61 Cherrycroft	Retain	3

MOO6.4	Land north of 45 Cherrycroft	Retain	3
MOO6.5	Remaining garages at Cherrycroft	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO6.6	Remaining landscaping within Cherrycroft	Retain	3
MOO7.1	Garages adjacent to 31 Colinton	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO7.2	Land north of 29 Colinton	Retain	3
MOO7.3	Land north of 57-67 Colinton	Retain	3
MOO7.4	Garage court north of 72 Colinton	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO7.5	Land north 124-158 Colinton	Retain	3
MOO7.6	Play area to north 100-122 Colinton,	Retain	3
MOO7.7	Land adjacent to 304b Ormskirk Road	Retain	3
MOO7.8	Land south Holland Moor School	Retain	3
MOO7.9	Land front of 52-64 Cornbrook	Retain	3
MOO7.10	Garages South of 52 Cornbrook	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO7.11	Garages north of 14 Cornbrook	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO7.12	Land rear of 218-228 Ormskirk Road	Retain	3
MOO7.13	Garages front of 47-49 Cornbrook	Retain – subject to Housing Option Appraisal referred to in paragraph 4.3	3
MOO7.14	Remaining landscaping within Colinton and Cornbrook	Retain	3
MOO8.2	Land north Blaydon Park, Skelmersdale	Retain	3
MOO8.5	Allotments to rear of 96 Moor Drive	Retain	3

MOO8.6	Land rear 80 Moor Drive, Digmaor	Retain	3
MOO9.1	Land east of 32 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.3	Land south 203-217 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.4	Land south 121-133 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.5	Land south 1-7 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.6	Land south 9-19 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.7	Land front 71-73 Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.8	Remaining garages at Brierfield	Retain	3
MOO9.9	Remaining landscaping at Brierfield	Retain	3

### **Key to scoring**

1- DISPOSE - Assets which have development potential which we would seek to dispose of with or without planning permission. Assets which could be sold to adjoining owners e.g. pieces of land to enable curtilage extensions.

(\* denotes sites believed to have a value of more than £20,000)

2 - DISPOSE IN FUTURE - Assets that have a worth which cannot be realised at the present time e.g. existing tenancy or lease agreements.

3 - RETAIN - Assets which should be retained.





## APPENDIX B

### Strategic Asset Management– Windfall Sites Recommendation

Site Ref	Site Location	Recommendation	Category
SS6	Land adjacent to 15 Laburnum Drive, Skelmersdale	Dispose	1



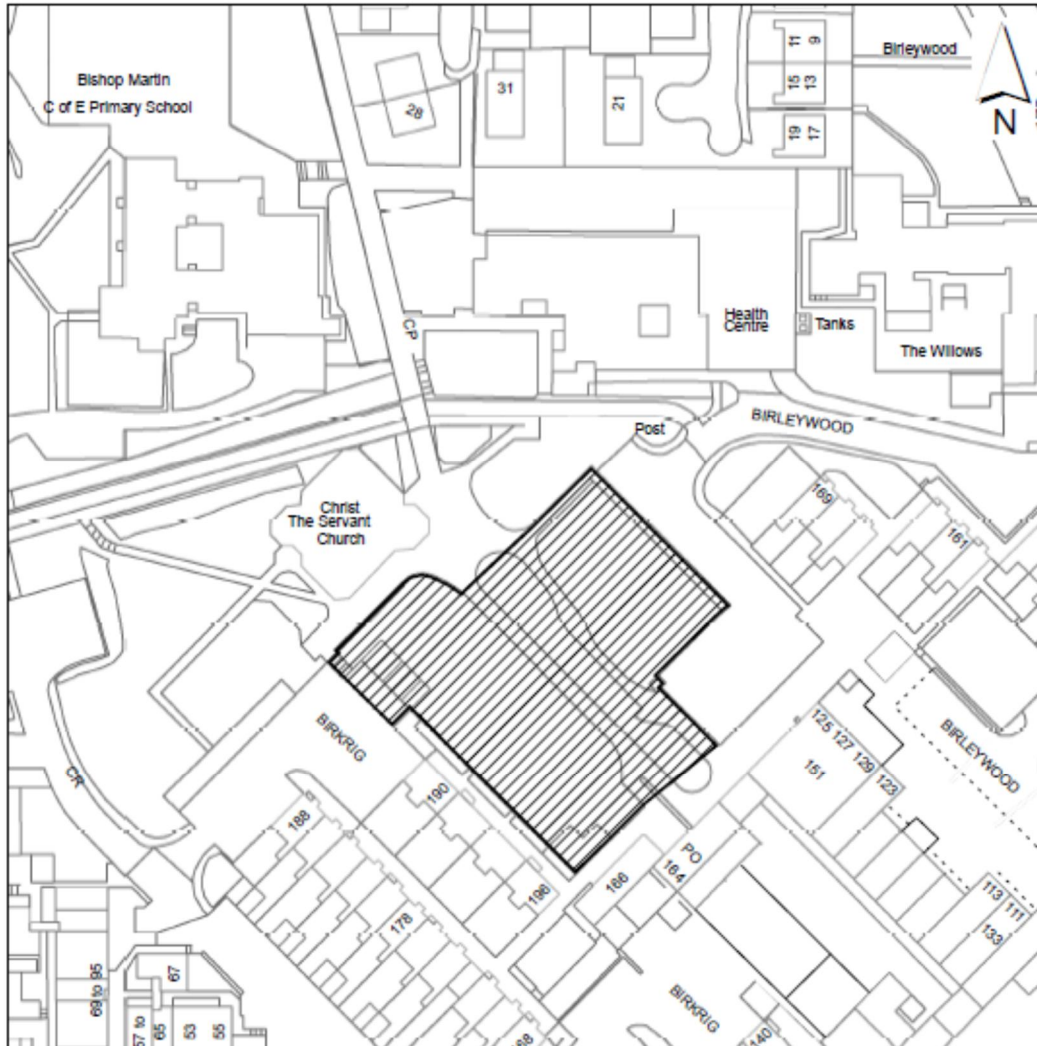
# APPENDIX C

## Location Plans of Category 1 Sites which are to be appropriated

### APPENDIX C

#### Location Plans of Category 1 Sites which are to be appropriated

C1 - Site ref MOO1.01 - Site to west of Digmoor Parade, Birleywood, Skelmersdale



## West Lancashire Borough Council

MOO 1.01

26/08/2015

SITE TO WEST OF DIGMOOR PARADE, BIRLEYWOOD, SKELMERSDALE  
DEEDS C1005 LA734493, HR46 LA942625, HR47 LA956818 & C1258 LA294432  
Area hatched black 0.29 ha (0.72 acres)

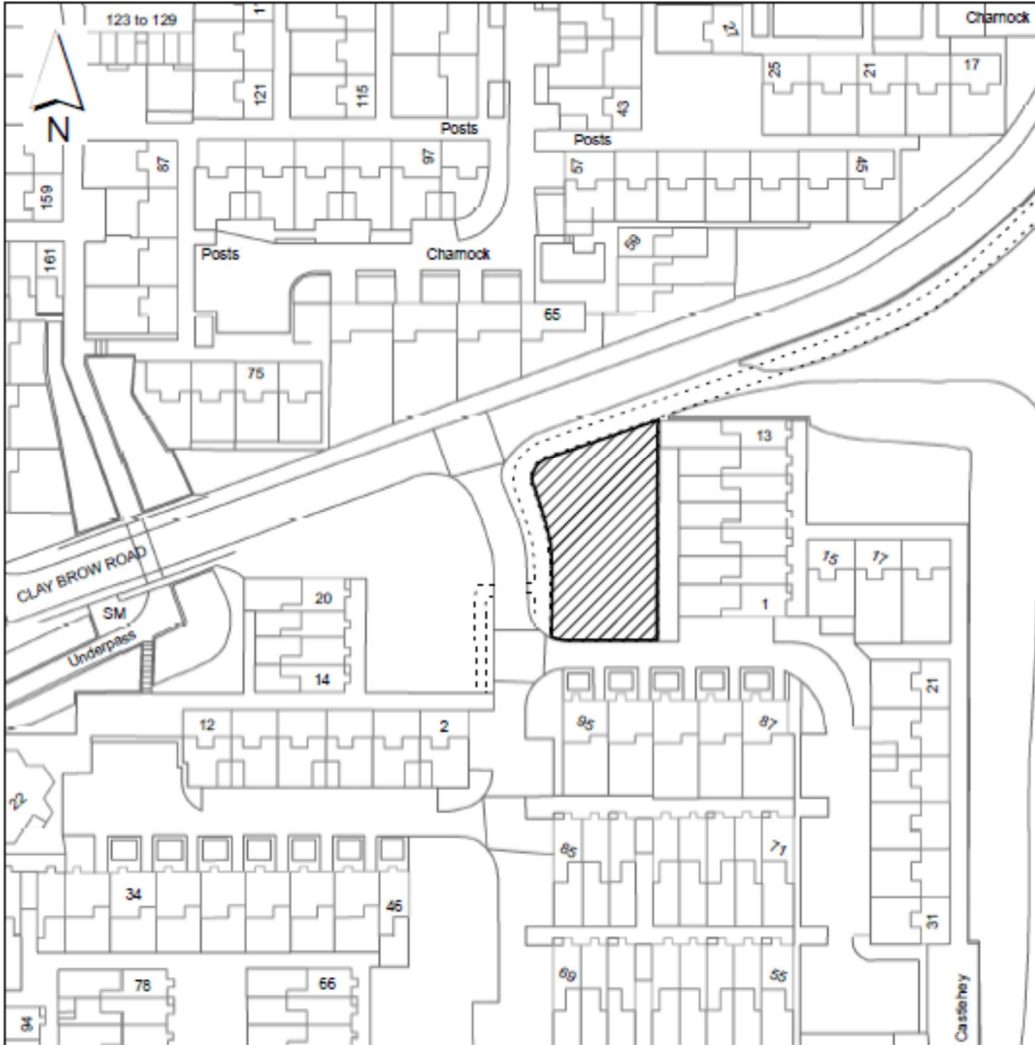
Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Licence No. 100024309.

Scale 1:1,000

APPENDIX C

Location Plans of Category 1 Sites which are to be appropriated

C2 - Site ref Moo 4.05 - Land rear 1 - 13 Castlehey, Skelmersdale



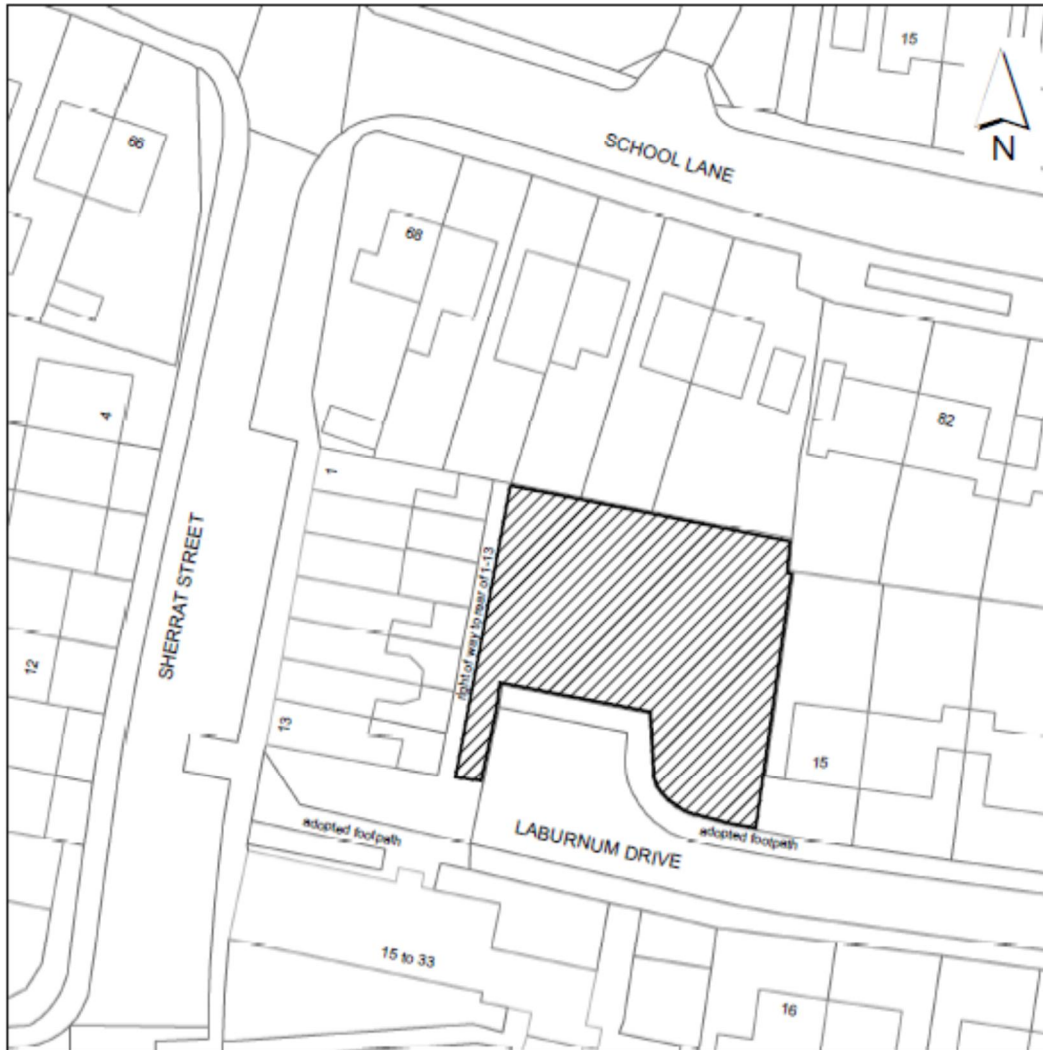
**West Lancashire Borough Council**

MOO 4.05	26/08/2015
LAND REAR 1-13 CASTLEHEY, CLAY BROW, SKELMERSDALE WN8 9DU DEEDS C660(11) & HR52 LA940379      Area hatched black 818 sqm	
Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Licence No. 100024309.      Scale 1:1,000	

APPENDIX C

Location Plans of Category 1 Sites which are to be appropriated

C3 - Site ref SS6 - Land adjacent to 15 Laburnum Drive, Skelmersdale



**West Lancashire Borough Council**

SS 6

28/08/2015

LAND AD TO 15 LABURNUM DRIVE, OLD SKELMERSDALE WN8 8HA  
DEED HR34 LA957634 Area hatched black 621 sqm

Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved. Licence No. 100024309.

Scale 1:500



## APPENDIX D

### Land to be Appropriated

<b>Site Ref</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Current Use</b>
MOO 1.1	Site to west of Digmaor Parade, Birleywood	Housing and Estates
MOO 4.5	Land to the of rear of 1 – 13 Castlehey	Housing
SS6	Land adjacent to 15 Laburnum Drive, Skelmersdale	Housing







**AGENDA ITEM: 5(m)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
1 October 2015**

---

**Report of: Borough Treasurer**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director People and Places**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor C. Wynn**

**Contact for further information: Liz Fearn (Ext. 5605)  
(E-mail: [liz.fearn@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:liz.fearn@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2014/2015**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide a summary of the capital outturn position for the 2014/2015 financial year.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the final position, including slippage, on the Capital Programme for the 2014/2015 financial year be noted and endorsed.

2.2 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st October 2015.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3.1 That the final position on the Capital Programme for the 2014/2015 financial year be noted.

---

**4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 Members have been kept informed of the financial position of the Capital Programme with regular monitoring reports. The last such Report was presented to Cabinet in March and Executive Overview and Scrutiny in April and reported on

a Capital Programme of £17.386m. This report provides Members with the final position on capital schemes for the 2014/15 financial year.

- 4.2 It should be noted that the final accounts for the 2014/2015 year are subject to audit and the figures contained in this report are, potentially, subject to change. However, the Audit is nearing completion and no issues have been raised on the capital programme to date. Members will be informed in due course of any significant matters arising from the Audit.
- 4.3 The position on the current year's Programme for 2015/2016 is discussed elsewhere on this Agenda.

## 5.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The Capital Programme of £17.386m at the end of the 2014/2015 financial year is analysed by Service in Appendix A. The key result for the year is that good progress has been made in delivering schemes.
- 5.2 The total capital expenditure for 2014/2015 was £13.102m which represents 75% of the total Budget for the year. This compares to recent programmes as indicated in Table 1:

Year	Expenditure £m	Budget £m	% Spend against Budget
2014/2015	13.102	17.386	75%
2013/2014	15.129	19.503	78%
2012/2013	10.241	13.362	77%
2011/2012	8.845	12.659	70%

- 5.3 In total spending was £2m less than 2013/2014 but £2.9m more than 2012/2013 with the percentage spend of 75% being in line with expectation and trend. The largest single area of the Programme is the Housing Public Sector which achieved a total spend of £10.9m or 79% of its budget. Head of Service comments on the progress made on capital schemes are set out in Appendix B.

## 6.0 SLIPPAGE OF EXPENDITURE APPROVALS

- 6.1 100% spend against the Budget is never anticipated due mainly to reasons beyond the Council's control. For example, some schemes are reliant on a significant amount of match funding and external contributions, and others are demand led or dependant upon decisions made by partners.
- 6.2 Schemes that are not completed within the financial year for which they are scheduled are slipped into the following financial year along with their unused expenditure and resource approvals. The total slippage figure for capital schemes from 2014/2015 is £3.273m. An analysis of schemes with a significant amount of slippage is provided in Appendix C.

## 7.0 SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES

- 7.1 There will always be some variances between the original estimated cost of a capital scheme and its final position and the Council has established budgetary management and control procedures in place to minimise such variances. While there have been a number of over and under spends this year, in total expenditure was £1.011m under budget, which is a variance of around 6%, which was primarily due to variances on the Housing Public Sector Programme. An analysis of significant variances by scheme is provided in Appendix D.
- 7.2 The variance on the Housing Public Sector programme was the result of a range of different factors including funding no longer being required, underspends, contract savings, and schemes being delivered through different routes. It is intended that £457,000 of this variance will be used to fund additional spending on heating systems, and a further £40,000 will be used for the Stubb Block refurbishment scheme at Egerton / Enstone, subject to Council approval later in the year.

## 8.0 CAPITAL RESOURCES

- 8.1 A breakdown of the budgeted resources of £17.386m identified to fund the programme is shown in Appendix A. The main area of the capital resources budget that is subject to variation is in relation to capital receipts. These are the useable proceeds from the sale of Council assets (mainly houses under Right to Buy sales) that are available to fund capital expenditure. These receipts can vary significantly depending on the number and value of assets sold.
- 8.2 35 Right to Buy Council House sales were generated against the target of 50 for the year with further revenue received from the sale of land. This is analysed in Table 2 below:

Year	Estimate £'000	Actual £'000	% Received against Budget
Right to Buy Sales	325	300	92%
Other Sales	250	273	109%
Total	575	573	100%

- 8.3 Estimates for the year are based on historical averages as the actual pattern of sales is volatile. In this respect while the number of Council house sales was significantly below the target, this has been compensated by an increase in the average value of usable receipts from each sale.
- 8.4 In addition to the Usable Capital Receipt figures shown above, the Council is also able to retain a proportion of the proceeds generated by Council House sales for specific purposes. In this respect, by the end of the financial year £0.139m had been generated for "One for One Replacement Funding" and £0.326m was generated for "Debt Funding".

## 9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 9.1 The Capital Programme includes schemes that the Council plans to implement to enhance service delivery and assets. Individual project plans address sustainability

and Community Strategy issues and links to Corporate Priorities. The Capital Programme also achieves the objectives of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities by ensuring capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.

## **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

10.1 Capital assets shape the way services are delivered for the long term and, as a result, create financial commitments. The formal reporting of performance against the Capital Programme is part of the overall budgetary management and control framework that is designed to minimise the financial risks facing the Council.

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality impact assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

- A Capital Expenditure and Resources Compared to Budget
- B Heads of Service Comments
- C Analysis of Significant Slippage
- D Analysis of Variances
- E Minute of Cabinet 15 September 2015 (Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee only) – *to follow*

**2014/2015 CAPITAL PROGRAMME  
EXPENDITURE AND RESOURCES BUDGET  
AT OUTTURN**

Service	Budget Approval	Actual		Variance		Slippage	
	£'000	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>							
Housing and Regeneration							
Public Sector Housing	13,907	10,946	79%	-1,010	-7%	1,951	14%
Housing Strategy	336	192	57%	0	0%	144	43%
Property Management	222	168	76%	0	0%	54	24%
Regeneration	107	15	14%	-10	-9%	82	77%
Community Services							
Private Sector Housing	625	628	100%	8	1%	5	1%
Other Community Services	945	698	74%	5	1%	252	27%
Planning	209	102	49%	0	0%	107	51%
Street Scene	231	189	82%	-2	-1%	40	17%
Corporate Services							
Financial Services	28	13	46%	0	0%	15	54%
Transformation	378	131	35%	-2	-1%	245	65%
Central Budget Items	398	20	5%	0	0%	378	95%
	<b>17,386</b>	<b>13,102</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>-1,011</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>3,273</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>							
Capital Grants	890	1,091	123%	240	27%	39	4%
HRA Financing	9,461	8,687	92%	-774	-8%		0%
HRA Borrowing	3,974	1,525	38%	-498	-13%	1,951	
GRA Financing	308	219	71%	-9	-3%	80	26%
GRA Borrowing	75	0	0%	0		75	
Capital Receipts	2,678	1,580	59%	30	1%	1,128	42%
	<b>17,386</b>	<b>13,102</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>-1,011</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>3,273</b>	<b>18%</b>



**CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2014/2015**  
**HEADS OF SERVICE COMMENTS**

<p><b>Public Sector Housing</b></p>
<p>Explanations for significant slippage have been included in Appendix C. Slippage has occurred in the main on Windows and Doors due to removal of asbestos, Stubb Blocks due to design specifications and Heating systems due to late contract start on site. There has been slippage also in Disabled Adaptations, Electrical Works, Environmental works and professional fees.</p> <p>There has, however, been a significant overspend on replacement Heating Systems so as to ensure compliance with our statutory duty to maintain provision of hot water and heating, an overspend on bathrooms due to volumes exceeding expectation and an overspend on Firbeck revival programme. These overspends have, however, been offset by underspends elsewhere within the capital programme.</p>
<p><b>Housing Strategy</b></p>
<p>This budget has been earmarked for contributions to various sites that have attracted HCA funding and/or will be provided by our registered provider partner. Each site is different and delivery and timing is affected by various factors and this can create an element of slippage. The second development using this budget has commenced and will provide 31 affordable units consisting of 25 bungalows and 6 apartments to be completed early next year.</p>
<p><b>Regeneration and Estates</b></p>
<p>The culverts scheme has largely been completed pending a final review.</p> <p>The Green Shoots scheme has been approved by Council and the procurement of the contractor has been completed, the scheme is set to commence over the summer months.</p> <p>The site which was damaged by fire at Gorsey Place is set for clearance imminently, Proposals for its redevelopment will be considered and reported upon in due course.</p>

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2014/2015**  
**HEADS OF SERVICE COMMENTS**

<b>Property Management</b>
<p>The Corporate Property Programme comprises a number of projects within Property Services which were mostly completed within the financial year. Slippage has been caused predominately by the postponement of works at locations which are due to undergo larger scale works in 2015/16. Delays were also caused by the retirement and replacement of the Facilities Manager and the unavailability of materials required to carry out certain other projects.</p>
<b>Planning</b>
<p>There are a number of schemes that are on-going or remain to be implemented therefore the funding will need to be slipped into the new financial year. Slippage is also required to fund the replacement scanner and quotations are currently being sought.</p> <p>The Free Tree Scheme has been popular once again, and is complete for the year with a small overspend against budget being financed from a Revenue contribution. Demand for both Conservation Area Enhancement Grants and Buildings at Risk has been lower than anticipated and unused budgets have been slipped into the next financial year.</p> <p>Slippage is required to fund the new database to monitor S106/CIL as the scheme has not yet been completed in full.</p>
<b>Street Scene</b>
<p>Replacement Blue Bins have been purchased and distributed to households and the scheme is now complete. The remaining budget for this has been declared as a variance.</p> <p>Preliminary scoping works for the in cab communication system have been taking place and the initiative is scheduled for development over the course of the summer.</p>
<b>Corporate Services</b>
<p>Progress made on delivering Parish Capital Schemes rests with individual Parishes and is not within the direct control of the Borough Council. The unspent balance on this budget has, therefore, been slipped into the new financial year.</p> <p>An ICT strategy has been agreed and the necessary funding put in place to deliver it. While expenditure by the year end was limited, the strategy should ensure that key issues will be addressed, and the unused budgets at the year end have now largely been committed against specific projects.</p>



**CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2014/2015**  
**HEADS OF SERVICE COMMENTS**

<p><b>Community Services - Private Sector Housing</b></p>
<p>Both schemes in the Housing Private Sector Programme are demand led and expenditure each year can vary accordingly. The Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme budget was delivered in full and there was a small overspend which has been financed, while there was a small underspend on the Renovation Grant Scheme which has been slipped into 2015/2016.</p>
<p><b>Other Community Services</b></p>
<p>Good progress was made in delivering improvements to Ormskirk Car Parks and schemes for Parish Play Areas, the Leisure Trust scheme and Parks and Open Spaces.</p> <p>There has been some slippage on the West Lancs Play Strategy where there is a plan in place to use these approvals in the new financial year, CCTV where camera installation is now progressing, and Flood Alleviation Schemes where drainage studies are continuing and which are dependent on external consultants.</p> <p>It is expected that the Moor Street project will be completed during 2015/16.</p>
<p><b>Central Budget Items</b></p>
<p>Detailed proposals on the use of the Environmental / Town and Village Centre Improvement Fund were considered by Council in February and Cabinet in March. This budget has now been fully allocated to individual projects which should be implemented during the course of the 2015/16 financial year.</p>



**2014/2015 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN**  
**HEADS OF SERVICE ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT SLIPPAGE**

Scheme	Amount of Slippage	Reason for Slippage
	£'000	
<b><u>GENERAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</u></b>		
ICT Development Programme	195	Various ongoing ICT schemes and projects will be completed in the next financial year
Leisure/Public building enhancements	53	This comprised a number of outstanding small projects. The retirement and replacement of the Facilities Manager delayed the commencement of a number of projects.
Economic Regeneration Schemes	75	The Green Shoots capital scheme was approved by Council in July, procurement work has been completed and the scheme is set to commence in due course.
West Lancs Play Strategy	135	Delays due to initial site identification and subsequent consultation and design processes
CCTV	75	Delayed due to lengthy negotiations to identify camera locations.
Capital Contingency/Environmental Town and Village Centre Improvement	378	Funding for various schemes and projects that was specifically considered and confirmed at the March cabinet meeting
Affordable Housing	144	Expenditure dependent on external partners.
<b><u>HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME</u></b>		
Disabled Adaptations	81	Slippage and retentions held as a result of completing eight extensions within the year.
Environmental	56	Committed to fund small environmental schemes agreed with tenants
Heating Systems	84	Project overrun due to delayed start of contract
Window & Door Replacement	1,071	Project overrun due to delays as a result of asbestos removal to properties
Stubb Block Refurb Egerton/Enstone	196	Project started late in the financial year due to design revisions
Fees	105	Amount required for professional fees to enable slipped capital works to progress
Equipment Replacement Sheltered Housing	200	Re provision of Council approved Programme



**2014/2015 CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN**  
**HEADS OF SERVICE ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANT VARIANCES**

Scheme	Amount of Variance	Reason for Variance
	£'000	
<b>HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>		
Bathrooms	143	Budget overspent due to higher volume of bathrooms completed
Energy efficiency measures	-154	Underspend released to support other elements of the capital programme
Heating systems	457	Overspend due to carrying out essential heating replacements to comply with our statutory requirement to provide hot water and heating
Window & door replacement	-401	Tender return less than budgeted for. Release of accruals for historic contracts not to be expended
Sheltered upgrades	-83	Underspend on programme. Underspend released to support capital programme
Ferndale external insulation & roofing	-189	Scheme developed through a different route alongside Firbeck development. Budget released to support rest of capital programme
Structural works	-129	Demand led structural works lower than budget. Underspent budget released to support other capital programmes
Capital contingency - Voids	-77	Contingency budget for void capital works lower than expected. Balance of budget release to fund overspends elsewhere in capital programme
Capital contingency - other	-129	Contingency budget for Day to Day capital works lower than expected. Balance of budget release to fund overspends elsewhere in capital programme
Firbeck revival	196	Overspend matched by increased Energy Efficiency Grant
Fees	-252	Underspend due to vacancies
Equipment replacement sheltered housing	200	Re provision of Council approved Programme





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(n)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
01 October 2015**

---

**Report of: Borough Treasurer**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director People and Places**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor C. Wynn**

**Contact for further information: Liz Fearn (Ext. 5605)  
(E-mail: [liz.fearn@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:liz.fearn@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2015/2016**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide an overview of the current progress on the Capital Programme.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That Members note the progress on the Capital Programme as at the end of July, 2015.

2.2 That Call In is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1st October 2015.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3.1 That Members note the current progress on the Capital Programme.

---

**4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 It is an agreed policy and best practice that monitoring reports are produced on a regular basis to ensure that Members are kept informed of the financial position of the Capital Programme. This is the first such report for the 2015/2016 financial year.

## **5.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGETS**

- 5.1 A Capital Programme totalling £23.706m was approved at Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015. Slippage totalling £3.27m from the 2014/2015 Programme is included for consideration elsewhere on this Agenda and has been added to the 2015/2016 Programme. The Capital Programme for 2015/2016 is, therefore, now £26.98m and this is analysed by Service in Appendix A.

## **6.0 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

- 6.1 Normally, new capital schemes are profiled with relatively low spending compared to budget in the early part of the financial year with increased spending as the year progresses. This reflects the fact that many new schemes have considerable lead in times, for example, because of the need to undertake a tendering process and award contracts at the start of the scheme. Other schemes are dependent on external partner funding and these schemes can only begin once their funding details have been finalised.
- 6.2 This pattern has been repeated in the current year with £2.23m of expenditure having been incurred by the end of July. This compares to £2.15m at the same point in 2014/2015 and £2.058m in 2013/14.
- 6.3 All capital schemes will be reviewed over the coming months and a Revised Medium Term Programme will be reported to Members in the Autumn taking into account new information and recent developments. Once this review has been completed it is then anticipated that most schemes will progress and spend broadly in line with their budget targets by the year end.
- 6.4 The Capital investment required to deliver the updated Greenshoots scheme, that was agreed at the July Council meeting will be £1.704m based on external borrowing of 50% and 50% funding from reserves. The scheme will mainly be completed in the 2015/2016 financial year with the remainder completed by Summer 2016.

## **7.0 CAPITAL RESOURCES**

- 7.1 Total budgeted resources for the year are £26.98m. This is analysed in Appendix A and includes funding for slippage.
- 7.2 The main area of the capital resources budget that is subject to variation is in relation to capital receipts. These are the useable proceeds from the sale of Council assets (mainly houses under Right to Buy legislation) that are available to fund capital expenditure. These receipts can vary significantly depending on the number and value of assets sold. The budget for usable capital receipts to be generated from Council House sales in the year is set at £605,000 based on an anticipated 40 sales. By the end June there had been 3 sales, which had generated £36,000 of usable receipts. This was significantly below the expected level of sales, although the pattern is volatile, and a further 4 sales were completed in July. If this low level of sales continues for the remainder of the year then the



income target will not be met, and consequently this area will be kept under close scrutiny.

- 7.3 In addition to receipts from council house sales the Council also has a programme to sell plots of its land and other assets under the Strategic Asset Management Plan. The budget for this in the 2015/2016 Programme is £100,000, and by the end of July there had been one land sale that had taken place for £20,000.
- 7.4 Overall budgeted capital receipts from in year asset sales provide a relatively small proportion of the total funding for capital schemes. If the level of receipts from asset sales continues to be below the budget target, then this position will be taken into account as part of the process for reviewing and updating the three year capital programme.

## **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY.IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 8.1 The Capital Programme includes schemes that the Council plans to implement to enhance service delivery and assets. Individual project plans address sustainability and Community Strategy issues and links to Corporate Priorities. The Capital Programme also achieves the objectives of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities by ensuring capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Capital assets shape the way services are delivered for the long term and, as a result, create financial commitments. The formal reporting of performance against the Capital Programme is part of the overall budgetary management and control framework that is designed to minimise the financial risks facing the Council. Schemes within the Programme that are reliant on external contributions or decisions are not started until funding is secured and other resources that are subject to fluctuation are monitored closely to ensure availability.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality impact assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

- A Capital Programme Service Budgets  
B Minute of Cabinet 15 September 2015 (Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee only) *to follow*



**2015/2016 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**  
**EXPENDITURE AND RESOURCES BUDGET**  
**as at July 2015**

Service	Budget
	£'000
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Public Sector Housing	20,951
Housing and Regeneration	
Housing Strategy	465
Property Management	258
Regeneration	1,244
Community Services	
Private Sector Housing	737
Other Community Services	1,510
Planning	133
Street Scene	40
Corporate Services	
Financial Services	65
Transformation	495
Environmental/Centre Improvement Fund	447
Unallocated Capital Spend	634
	<b>26,979</b>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	
Capital Grants	863
GRA Financing	959
HRA Financing	8,773
HRA Borrowing	11,767
Capital Receipts	3,666
1 4 1 Housing Receipts	99
GRA Borrowing	852
	<b>26,979</b>





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(o)**

**CABINET: 15 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE:  
15 OCTOBER 2015**

---

**Report of: Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Head of Service: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran**

**Contact for further information: Ms A Grimes (Extn. 5409)  
(E-mail: [alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Q1 2015/16)**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 30 June 2015.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 30 June 2015 be noted.

2.2 That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate & Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2015.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3.1 That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 30 June 2015 be noted.

---

---

## **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Members are referred to Appendix A of this report detailing the quarterly performance data.
- 4.2 34 data items are reported quarterly, two of these are data only. Of the 32 PIs with targets reported:
- 18 indicators met or exceeded target
  - 4 indicators narrowly missed target; 4 were 5% or more off target
  - 2 indicators have data unavailable at the time of the report (*NI 191: Residual household waste; NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting*)
  - 4 indicators do not have data reported for Q1 (NI195a-d).

As a general comparison, Q1 performance in 2014/15 gave 14 (from 32) indicators on or above target (to enable a comparison this does not include outturn information for WL08a, WL18, or WL24 as these indicators either do not have targets or are no longer monitored quarterly for 15/16).

- 4.3 Improvement plans prepared by service managers are already in place for those indicators where performance falls short of the target by 5% or more for this quarter, if such plans are able to influence outturn and will be relevant for future monitoring purposes.
- 4.4 These plans provide the narrative behind the outturn and are provided in Appendices B1-B3. Where performance is below target for consecutive quarters, plans are revised only as required, as it is reasonable to assume that some remedial actions will take time to make an impact.
- 4.5 For those PIs that have flagged up as 'amber' (indicated as a triangle), an assessment has been made at head of service level based on the reasons for the underperformance and balancing the benefits of implementing an improvement plan versus resource implications. This is indicated in the table.
- 4.6 The performance indicator data appended to this report details the council's quarterly performance against key performance indicators. The performance information aims to help demonstrate performance against the corporate priorities as well as providing some service-specific information. The full suite of indicators for 2015/16 was agreed by Cabinet in March 2015. Annual outturn for the full suite is reported to Council within the Annual Report.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The information set out in this report aims to help the Council improve service performance and is consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy aim of providing good quality services that are easily accessible to all.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report. Monitoring and managing performance information data helps the authority to ensure it is achieving its corporate priorities and key objectives and reduces the risk of not doing so.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Quarterly Performance Indicators for Q1 April-June 2015/16

Appendix B – Current Improvement Plans

B1: TS24b: Average time to re-let local authority housing-Supported Needs

B2: WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre (seconds)










B3: WL121 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence

Appendix C – Minute of Cabinet 15 September 2015 (*to follow*) Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee only

















## APPENDIX A: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Icon key					
PI Status		Performance against same quarter previous year			
	OK (within 0.01%) or exceeded	18	 Improved	15	
	Warning (within 5%)	4	 Worse	8	
	Alert (by 5% or more)	4	 No change	5	
	Data only	2	/	Comparison not available	4
	Awaiting data	2		Awaiting data	2
N/A	Data not collected for quarter	4			
Total number of indicators		34			



### Shared Services<sup>1</sup>

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q1 15/16 vs Q1 14/15	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
ICT1 Severe Business Disruption (Priority 1)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.0%			
ICT2 Minor Business Disruption (P3)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	98.0%	100.0%	99.0%	97.0%			
ICT3 Major Business Disruption (P2)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.0%			
ICT4 Minor Disruption (P4)	98.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	97.0%			
B1 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events <sup>2</sup>	7.12	7.66	8.31	7.44	6.79	7.66	8.23	6.62	8.89	12.00			
B2 Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (payments received)	£43,041	£84,613	£123,567	£170,909	£34,524	£82,895	£130,906	£203,868	£67,408	£43,040			







PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q1 15/16 vs Q1 14/15	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
R1 % of Council Tax collected	28.33%	55.47%	82.85%	95.32%	28.95%	56.11%	83.60%	96.03%	29.64%	27.96%		↑	✓
R2 % council tax previous years arrears collected	4.66%	11.71%	16.94%	20.94%	3.38%	12.36%	27.34%	33.56%	8.97%	5.00%		↑	✓
R3 % of Non-domestic Rates Collected	27.89%	58.57%	84.58%	95.53%	30.75%	58.26%	83.29%	96.40%	28.09%	27.6%		↓	✓
R4 % Sundry Debtors % of revenue collected against debt raised	48.23%	66.83%	71.07%	90.05%	62.59%	79.34%	86.49%	90.73%	72.00%	45.75%		↑	✓

### Housing & Regeneration





PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
HS1 % Housing repairs completed in timescale	97.20%	96.57%	96.46%	96.68%	96.36%	95.86%	96.58%	97.36%	97.04%	97.00%		↑	✓
HS13 % LA properties with CP12 outstanding	0.07%	0.04%	0.01%	0.1%	0.1%	0.04%	0.06%	0.1%	0.05%	0%	Target based on legal requirement for all eligible properties to have certificate. Reported performance is an average from months in the period and equates to around 3 properties. No plan has been prepared but we continue to focus on rigorous procedures to ensure compliance.	↑	⬮
TS1 Rent Collected as a % of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f) <sup>3</sup>	97.58%	97.58	98.25%	98.47%	99.2%	98.04%	98.18%	98.65%	102.3%	97.00%	A higher level of rent payments were collected in the first two weeks of the financial year compared to 2014/15. As these were non-collection weeks, no rent debit was raised and any payments received reduced the arrears position in full. A higher than anticipated rent collection rate in Q1 was therefore achieved.	↑	✓
TS24a GN Average time taken to re-let local	53.61	49.52	58.10	65.74	30.25	18.19	22.77	29.42	26.63	28.00		↑	✓







PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
authority housing (days) - GENERAL NEEDS													
TS24b SP Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days) - SUPPORTED NEEDS	29.94	64.73	98.01	62.31	79.20	41.39	65.66	92.24	60.33	50.00	Improvement plan attached at Appendix B1		

### Planning







PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 157a Processing of planning applications: Major applications	30.00%	77.78%	54.55%	85.71%	100%	76.92%	44.44%	62.50%	100%	65.00%			
NI 157b Processing of planning applications: Minor applications	87.50%	84.62%	82.43%	72.15%	74.67%	70.00%	70.59%	80.88%	72.22%	75.00%	Outturn is above the government target of 65%. Head of Service's amber assessment: no improvement plan required.		
NI 157c Processing of planning applications: Other applications	91.61%	93.02%	92.99%	84.35%	79.83%	76.10%	84.51%	88.71%	85.03%	85.00%			

### Transformation



PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
BV8 % invoices paid on time	97.21%	97.03%	97.75%	96.24%	96.53%	98.44%	98.73%	99.27%	99.06%	98.24%			
WL19b(ii) % Direct Dial calls answered within 10 seconds <sup>5</sup>	79.55	80.18	80.49	81.82	82.01	81.50	82.13	82.28	81.30	82.21	Head of Service's amber assessment: no improvement plan required.		







PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
WL90 % of Contact Centre calls answered	87.3%	93.6%	92.6%	91.3%	93.1%	93.6%	91.1%	91.6%	90.6%	91.0%	Head of Service's amber assessment: no improvement plan required.		
WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre (seconds)	47.00	17.00	25.00	34.00	20.00	24.00	44.00	31.00	43.00	30.00	Improvement plan attached at Appendix B2		
WL121 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence <sup>5</sup>	2.63	2.74	2.88	1.87	1.71	1.93	2.32	2.76	2.61	2.02	Improvement plan attached at Appendix B3		

### Description Community Services

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
WL08a Number of Crime Incidents	1,281	1,403	1,449	1,329	1,312	1,277	1,277	1,105	1,120		Cabinet approved a change to 'data only' for 2015/16 reporting.		
WL_18 Use of leisure and cultural facilities (swims and visits) <sup>6</sup>	293,167	313,674	243,378	326,547	310,875	315,366	254,704	322,129	314,915		Cabinet approved a change to 'data only' for 2015/16 reporting.		

### Street Scene

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 191 Residual household waste per household (Kg) <sup>7</sup>	114.84	111.36	140.5	134.38	133.82	125.47	129.69	124.57		123.48	Awaiting external confirmation of data		
NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting <sup>7</sup>	52.35%	42.16%	39.93%	37.10%	50.88%	49.70%	41.66%	40.74%		47.58%	Awaiting external confirmation of data		

PI Code & Short Name	Q1 2013/14	Q2 2013/14	Q3 2013/14	Q4 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Current Target	Comments	Q4 14/15 vs Q4 13/14	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Litter	N/A	.83%	1.67%	.16%	N/A	1.17%	1.00%	0.33%	N/A	1.61%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1.	/	/
NI 195b Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Detritus	N/A	7.09%	2.70%	2.47%	N/A	2.75%	2.50%	8.89%	N/A	5.00%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1.	/	/
NI 195c Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Graffiti	N/A	.33%	.00%	.17%	N/A	.33%	2.17%	1.00%	N/A	1.00%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1.	/	/
NI 195d Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Fly-posting	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	N/A	0.00%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1.	/	/
WL01 No. residual bins missed per 100,000 collections	64.78	63.54	65.40	134.20	90.52	87.07	85.20	74.23	80.3	80.00	Head of Service's amber assessment: no improvement plan required.		
WL06 Average time taken to remove fly tips (days)	1.05	1.07	1.08	1.12	1.12	1.06	1.08	1.09	1.07	1.09			
WL122 % Vehicle Operator Licence Inspections Carried Out within 6 Weeks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Managed through LCC/BTLS contract. Contractual targets are annual. Quarter targets are provided as a gauge for performance only. Improvement plans are not provided since actions planned to improve performance are discussed and managed through contractual monthly Quality of Service meetings.

<sup>2</sup> B1: The PI reports cumulative progress to the annual target, not 'within quarter' performance.

<sup>3</sup> TS1: For 2014/15, this replaced BV66a with a simplified calculation. A direct comparison with 2013/14 outturn is therefore not possible, but data is provided for reference/information.

<sup>4</sup> NI157a: For 2014/15, following updated guidance from DCLG, the 13 weeks period is not counted in those cases where a time extension is agreed with the applicant. A direct comparison with previous year quarter outturn is therefore not possible, but data is provided for reference/information.

<sup>5</sup> WL19bii / WL121: Data does not include BTLS seconded staff.

<sup>6</sup> WL18: from Q1 2014/15, Community Resource Centre (CRC) data is no longer included. Data from 2013/14 has been restated without CRC to allow comparison with previous performance.

<sup>7</sup> NI191-192: Data is provided to WLBC with a time lag due to time involved to confirm final figures.

'NI' and 'BV' coding retained for consistency/comparison although national reporting no longer applies.

Following the annual review of PIs, the following changes to QPIs were approved by Cabinet for 2015/16:

TS1 Rent Collected – target changed to 97% from 99.83%; WL90 % of Contact Centre calls answered – target changed to 91% from 90.6%; WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers – target changed to 30 from 26.25s; NI 191 Residual household waste per household – target changed to 495 from 493.91kg; NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting – target changed to 50% from 47.58%; NI 195b Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of detritus) – target changed to 5% from 7.33%; NI 195c Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti) – target changed to 1.00% from 1.11%; WL01 missed bins – target changed to 80 from 70; WL08a Number of Crime Incidents & WL\_18 Use of leisure and cultural facilities – reported as data only; WL24 Building Regs within 5 weeks – annual outturn only.

<b>PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	TS24b - Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days) - SUPPORTED NEEDS
<b>Reasons for not meeting target</b>	
<p>Two long term voids have been relet during the quarter which adversely affects average number of days to relet.</p> <p>For a number of years the Council has been experiencing low demand across many of its sheltered housing schemes. Two properties let in Quarter 1 had been empty for over 6 months due to the lack of demand for sheltered accommodation. Letting these properties skews the performance figures.</p> <p>If these were to be excluded the quarters performance would be on target at 29.52 days.</p>	
<b>Brief Description of Proposed Remedial Action</b>	
<p>Options Appraisals of sheltered schemes have been commissioned.</p> <p>All investment in Category II sheltered schemes will be considered in light of the Council's Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>An open day has taken place at Evenwood Court, Tanhouse and further promotional exercises to stimulate demand will be undertaken.</p> <p>Declassification of some additional sheltered schemes has been completed.</p>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Loss of rental income	
<b>Priority</b>	
High	
<b>Future Targets</b>	
<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
Options Appraisals	Ongoing
Asset Management Planning	Ongoing
Promotion of low demand schemes	Complete
Declassification programme	Complete

<b>PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	WL108 Average waiting time for callers to the Contact Centre (seconds)
<b>Reasons for not meeting target</b>	
<p>It should be noted that the target was missed by 13 seconds. During the period, we have had a vacant post due to maternity leave and long term staff sickness. Agency staff have been recruited to provide sickness absence cover, although it does take some time to adequately train temporary staff on the services we deliver.</p>	
<b>Brief Description of Proposed Remedial Action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued training of agency staff.</li> <li>• Reshaping workloads to maximise resources within the team.</li> <li>• Continued close monitoring of call handling times together with any future sickness within the team.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
The vacant post has now been filled.	
<b>Priority</b>	
High	
<b>Future Targets</b>	
The target was increased to 30 seconds for 2015/16.	
<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>	<b>Task Completion Date</b>
See above comments.	Ongoing.



<b>PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>WL121 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence</b>
<b>Reasons for not meeting target</b>	
<p>The Council's target for 2015/16 is to achieve (not more than) 8.08 working days lost per employee, measured on a rolling 12-month basis. This equates to a quarterly target of 2.02 days per full time equivalent (FTE). The overall annual outturn figure, however, 31 March 2015 showed an annual outcome of 8.74 days per FTE.</p> <p>The current Quarter 1 period shows an outturn figure of 2.61 against the 2.02 days lost per FTE quarterly target.</p> <p>All cases are being closely managed, but unfortunately long term absence cases are difficult to resolve quickly due to the often complex nature of them. The HR team and Managers continue to work closely with staff and trade unions to facilitate speedy returns.</p>	
<b>Brief Description of Proposed Remedial Action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads of Service will continue to closely monitor sickness levels within their respective service areas and take urgent action as necessary in line with the Sickness Absence Policy</li> <li>• The Council will continue to focus on providing detailed management information to assist managers in identifying all short-term cases of sickness absence which have exceeded the agreed 'trigger' levels, together with all on-going long-term cases of sickness absence.</li> <li>• The HR team will continue to meet with individual Heads of Service, where appropriate, to provide advice and support to ensure managers have the continued skills and confidence to address absence issues appropriately.</li> <li>• The Council will continue to work closely with the Occupational Health provider (OH Assist)</li> </ul>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Timely interventions and practical support from the HR Team and OH Assist will continue to be needed by managers, which can make a real positive difference to attendance levels.	
<b>Priority</b>	
High	
<b>Future Targets</b>	
Continue with existing target.	
<b>Action Plan: Tasks to be undertaken</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
See proposed remedial action (above)	Ongoing





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(p)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mrs L. McGarry (Extn. 5233)  
(E-mail: [leigh.mcgarry@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:leigh.mcgarry@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: DRAFT COUNCIL TENANTS' FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To approve the Draft Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy for wider consultation with residents, partners and external stakeholders.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Draft Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy (Appendix 1) be approved for wider consultation with residents, partners and stakeholders; the consultation period to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015.

2.2 That the results of this exercise be reported back to Cabinet.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The Council has identified the need to focus upon sustainable regeneration and growth within the Borough as a Corporate Priority. Preparing for Universal Credit (UC) and Financial Inclusion are key work streams within this and a multi-agency UC Task Group has been working to minimise the impact of UC on affected households within West Lancashire through a range of initiatives including improving pathways to employment and training, and personal budgeting support for tenants.

- 3.2 In addition to this, work has been undertaken to develop a Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy targeted at our most vulnerable and financially excluded tenants and will support them to manage better financially. This strategy will link into any plans the Council develop to assist residents of the Borough.
- 3.3 Adopting and implementing the Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy will help ensure that those affected receive the right advice and support to retain their home and quality of life; without experiencing disproportionate financial pressure.
- 3.4 The strategy has many facets and therefore it is essential that residents, partner organisations and stakeholders have the opportunity to comment or contribute to the strategy and Members are now asked to approve the draft for wider consultation.
- 3.5 This strategy is aligned to the Digital Inclusion Strategy and will target those tenants most in need to ensure that they have access to channels and advice that will maximise their income.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Implementation of the Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy will have significant positive impacts for the sustainability of the Council's housing tenancies.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy will support the Council's ability to collect revenues. This is particularly relevant for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and could have a major impact on the HRA Business Plan.
- 5.2 The action plan can be delivered within existing resources. Further negotiations are taking place with the Credit Union to agree if the Council can make a financial contribution. If this is sensible, a further report will be brought back to Members for approval.

#### **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The development of the Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy will mitigate against the loss of rental income to the HRA and changes brought about by Welfare Reform. These wider changes have been through a risk assessment process and are reported as a key risk to Cabinet.

---

---

#### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is set out at appendix 2 to this report.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Draft Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 - List of Stakeholder Consultees'



Draft

Council Tenants'

Financial Inclusion Strategy

2015

Author:	Project Support Manager
Owner:	Bob Livermore
Date created:	August 2015
Next review date:	August 2016

## **Why do we need a Financial Inclusion Strategy?**

Too many of our residents are excluded from, or are unable to engage with, the financial services necessary to play a full part in modern society: managing money, absorbing financial shocks and planning and providing for the future. The Financial Inclusion Commission defines a financially inclusive society as “one in which financial services are accessible to all, easy to use and meet people’s needs over their lifetime. Financial inclusion also means that people have the skills and motivation to use financial services, and to benefit meaningfully from them.”

Financial exclusion is a problem for many households. Financial services are an essential part of everyday life. People need to manage day-to-day financial transactions, such as receiving income, paying bills and buying goods. They may also need to meet one-off expenses, such as family holidays and Christmas expenses or to meet the need of less predictable expenses, such as burglary or white goods breaking down.

If people experience difficulty accessing and using financial services it can mean that they are stopped from fully participating in society and may have to pay a ‘poverty premium’, for example not being able to access cheaper deals on utilities (which are usually linked to direct debit payments which can only be made with a bank account), or experiencing difficulty accessing online deals and comparison tools. Exclusion from affordable loans leaves people who need a loan with no option but to use high-interest credit. Without a bank account, individuals using agencies to cash cheques may be charged 7-9% of the value of the cheque, plus a transaction fee. These individuals would also not be able to obtain contract mobile phones, and would instead have to rely upon pay-as-you-go phones with more expensive usage fees. Financial exclusion might make it difficult for people to move into work, as many employers will only pay wages into a bank account. It may also be the case that those who have accumulated high debts face the risk that their workplace earnings will be pursued by creditors.

This has knock-on effects on a person’s mental wellbeing as the consequences of problem debt can be stress, depression and a sense of insecurity. There are also social costs of feeling excluded from mainstream society. Financial exclusion removes choices and opportunities from families and communities and is known to exacerbate poverty.

Tenants in social housing are disproportionately affected by financial exclusion and it is estimated that they make up around 60% of all financially excluded people. The Chartered Institute for Housing (CIH) has stated that “The housing sector is in a unique position to help financially excluded people. Housing organisations are trusted intermediaries for tenants and have knowledge of and access to a large number of financially excluded households. Therefore the housing sector should tackle financial exclusion; this should be done in a strategic, evidence-based way which is embedded across the whole organisation.”

Financial exclusion is not just an individual problem. A whole community can suffer as a result of under-investment in financial services and the wider issues which are caused or contributed towards by financial exclusion. It is therefore important that, as a local authority and housing provider, we prioritise tackling financial exclusion and invest in solutions to resolve the issues facing our communities.



The Council's vision is:

"To be a council to be proud of – delivering services that are lean, local and fair".

The Council's Values:

We will deliver our vision by continuing to be an innovative organisation which:

- Prioritises customers and the services that are most important to quality of life
- Works as one council to provide a joined up approach
- Is open and accountable in the way that it makes decisions
- Develops and values employees
- Promotes equality and diversity, and
- Works in partnership to benefit the Borough

The Housing and Regeneration Service vision is:

"To be a top performing landlord in an economically vibrant West Lancashire".

This is supported by 6 aims:

- Customers first
- Business growth and regeneration
- Driving value for money
- Employee engagement (people)
- Community focus
- Quality homes

The implementation of this Strategy will help us to achieve a number of our aims, and ultimately help us to realise our vision of being a "top performing landlord in an economically vibrant West Lancashire".

### **Tenant Profile – who is this strategy targeted towards?**

One of the fundamental requirements for delivering services to our customers in a more efficient and effective way is to understand more about West Lancashire Borough Council tenants.

The Mosaic Public Sector (socio-demographic segmentation) tool can be used to understand the demographic, financial and lifestyle attributes of our tenants. It combines extensive data sources (e.g. Electoral Role, DVLA, Shareholders Register, PAF, Land Registry, Lifestyle Surveys) with Public and Private sector overlay data, such as British Crime Survey, Hospital Episode Statistics, MORI Financial Survey, and British Market Research Bureau TGI Survey, to improve our understanding of our tenants.

Housing and Regeneration worked with Experian to gather Mosaic data. This was then overlaid with data already held by the service area including demographic data, surveys, feedback from focus groups and consultation exercises, service usage data, and 'complaints, compliments and comments'. This resulted in the creation of ten bespoke segments that share distinguishing characteristics or profiles and provided us with a comprehensive

understanding of the tenants making up those segments. This provides the foundation for delivering better and more accessible services to our customers.

Customer segmentation data gives us further insight into the issues causing financial exclusion for WLBC tenants. It allows us to identify groups of tenants who are most susceptible to financial exclusion and the likely key drivers of financial exclusion for those tenants.

Of the 10 segments identified for West Lancashire Borough Council tenants, six have issues which make them susceptible to financial exclusion or to experiencing financial difficulties, and three of these are a particular priority as they are facing such levels of financial difficulty that they are struggling to pay their rent. As well as the negative impact on the individual families concerned, this also has an impact on our wider tenant base as there is less money available for us to deliver services and to make investments in the property portfolio. It also increases the risk of communities becoming less sustainable, as tenants move on from unaffordable properties. These groups are described in more detail below.

#### *High Priority Tenant Segments:*

##### **Segment 7: Vulnerable Young Families Reliant on Benefits**

Segment 7 is comprised of vulnerable young families on low incomes. They are found living in semi-detached houses or terraces, and are often single parent households. Unemployment is high and many are reliant on benefits. Segment 7 households are the second most likely to be in arrears. This group is one of the most deprived in West Lancashire, and the most likely to have a CCJ. Incomes are low, unemployment is an issue and many residents are struggling to manage financially. Many people are recipients of benefits, such as Job Seekers Allowance and Lone Parent Benefit. Of all the West Lancashire segments, residents of Segment 7 are the least likely to have a direct payment account, and as a result are the least likely to pay their rent by direct debit.

##### **Segment 5: Ethnically Diverse Young Tenants**

Segment 5 is comprised of very young singles and families living in terraced houses. Although residents in this segment are often struggling financially, they are more typically found renting privately rather than relying on the council for accommodation. Segment 5 tends to be quite ethnically diverse, and tenants are unlikely to have lived in their homes for very long. Adults in this segment are likely to be in employment, although some are full-time students. Those who are in employment tend to be at the beginning of their careers and so they are on only average salaries at present. However, this group are unlikely to be in receipt of benefits, which may explain why these households are the most likely of all segments to be in rent arrears. Tenants in this group are more likely to have a direct payment account, so do not adhere to the definition "financially excluded". However, large numbers of individuals within this group will have no access to such an account, and due to this the other difficulties experienced by them are likely to be exacerbated.

##### **Segment 6: Very Young Singles on Low Incomes**

Segment 6 is the youngest of all West Lancashire segments, and consists of ethnically diverse singles on very low incomes. Households in this segment are unlikely to have children and the majority of residents live in flats. Tenants in this segment are the most

transient of any segment. Segment 6 is one of the poorest segments, with notable levels of unemployment. As a result benefit uptake is above average in this segment, in particular Housing Benefits and Job Seekers Allowance. Those that are in employment are likely to be in routine occupations. These are people who are unlikely to have any savings and are struggling on their income. Of all West Lancashire segments, segment 6 tenants are one of the least likely to pay their rent by direct debit. Tenants in this group are as likely as other tenants to have access to a direct payment account, so are not technically “financially excluded” in that sense, but as above, there will be large numbers of individuals within this group who have no access to such an account, and therefore their other difficulties are likely to be intensified.

#### *Lower Priority Tenant Segments:*

##### **Segment 4: Elderly Singles in Sheltered Accommodation**

Segment 4 is the oldest of all West Lancashire segments, containing elderly singles on very low incomes. Residents of this segment typically have very poor health and commonly live in sheltered accommodation, often in flats or bungalows. Residents in this segment are retired and generally on very low incomes. This segment is far more traditionally found to be dependent on social housing. Most are reliant on state pensions and may also be in receipt of benefits such as Pension Credit. However, residents are likely to have accrued some savings in the form of ISAs and so are typically only entitled to partial benefits. Tenants are unlikely to be in household arrears and are the most likely of all segments to pay their rent by direct debit, and more than the average number have access to a direct payment account so this group are not technically “financially excluded”. However, large numbers of individuals within this group will have no access to such an account, and due to this the other difficulties experienced by them are likely to be exacerbated.

##### **Segment 8: Blue Collar Couples Approaching Retirement**

This segment consists of older families and couples approaching retirement age, living in terraced housing. Households have average incomes and are commonly in right-to-buy areas. Residents in this segment are careful with money and some are recipients of housing benefits. As this group is approaching retirement age, some have already given up work. Those that are still in employment often have occupations in the manufacturing industry. Whilst incomes are only average, residents are careful with their money, so the majority are just about getting by on what they earn. However, some in this segment have CCJs issued against them. They are unlikely to choose to pay their rent by direct debit and are more likely to not have a direct payment account, so are technically within the definition of “financially excluded”.

##### **Segment 9: Low Income Older People on Benefits**

Segment 9 is comprised of older people who are retired or approaching retirement age. A majority of people live in single person households and have low incomes. Residents typically live in low value housing, often in semi-detached houses or occasionally terraces. Poor health can be a problem in this segment, with some residents having a long-term sickness or disability. Household income tends to be low within these segments, with some people finding it difficult to cope on their earnings. Whilst some residents have already retired, the number of working age people who are unemployed or are permanently sick or disabled is above average. As a result, there are a high number of benefit recipients.

The evidence above highlights that some of our tenants are experiencing severe financial difficulties, high levels of financial stress and financial exclusion. The data collected to inform the Economic Development Strategy provides us with insight into some of the factors influencing this:

### **Income/Financial struggle**

West Lancashire is divided into a number of Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs). 17 of the LSOAs in the Borough are within the top 30% most deprived nationally, 19 are within the top 20% and 7 are within the top 10%. The major concentrations of deprivation are in Skelmersdale.

The number of benefits claimants in West Lancashire has fallen considerably in recent years, with Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants now below national averages. However, Skelmersdale has the highest levels of JSA claimants and unemployment in the Borough, due to some wards with significant levels of deprivation. Around 70% of claimants in the Borough are from one of the eight Skelmersdale and Up Holland wards.

Although the public sector and manufacturing sector account for the largest employment sectors in the Borough, there is also a high concentration of employment across lower value sectors, such as transport and storage.

As such, West Lancashire has the lowest workplace median gross weekly earnings (£440.60) when compared to the comparator districts, even though it has the highest resident median gross weekly earnings (£505.80). This is likely to be due to a high proportion of residents travelling out of the Borough for work, typically to well-paid jobs in the city regions of Liverpool, Manchester and Preston.

### **Skills/Jobs mix**

Only 25% of working age West Lancashire residents are qualified to degree level, compared to 34% across Great Britain. This is reflected in the higher concentration of lower value sector employment across the borough and the relatively low workplace weekly earnings. This is highlighted further in Skelmersdale, where 16% of residents (age 16 and above) are qualified to level 4 and above, compared to 25% across West Lancashire and 27% nationally. There are also a particularly high proportion of residents with no qualifications, representing around 30% of the Skelmersdale population. Again, this closely reflects Skelmersdale's occupational structure amongst resident jobs which is more concentrated in lower value occupations such as process plant, machinery and elementary occupations. Just 8% of all jobs in Skelmersdale are in manager, director and senior official positions, compared to an 11% England average, and 20% of all jobs are in professional, associate professional and technical positions compared to 30% nationally.

The proximity of West Lancashire to the City Regions of Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, which have larger, growing and successful economies and employment opportunities; the borough's narrow employment base, which offers fewer opportunities and a lower wage economy; and the Borough's good road and motorway infrastructure and the train links in some parts of the borough, which enables easy commuting, all contribute to around 22,000 West Lancashire residents travelling outside the Borough for work. With the inflow of 19,800 workers from other areas, the borough experiences a net outflow of around 2,200 workers. This points to opportunities to better retain our resident labour force by creating more highly skilled employment opportunities. It also highlights a need to better develop our resident workforce by improving skills levels and improving opportunities for employment in higher skilled roles.

## Transport

Although the borough has strong road and motorway networks and train links in some areas, the lack of public transport in other areas of the borough may be contributing to the lack of viable employment opportunities. This is particularly evident in Skelmersdale, where there are low levels of car ownership and no train links to the neighbouring City Regions. Public bus services do serve the town, however, connecting to other towns within and outside of the Borough is often mentioned as one of the key challenges facing potential employees due to the costs and frequency of services. The Economic Development Strategy cites plans to develop a rail station in Skelmersdale town centre which would serve both Liverpool and Manchester, providing direct access to employment opportunities in both Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

The lack of public transport may also impact upon an individual's financial circumstances as some consequently spend more money on taxis to navigate the borough for socialising/training/work.

The lack of accessible transport links for large portions of the community also highlights the importance of digital connectivity, particularly given the rural nature of large areas within the borough.

## Strategic Aims

The following strategic aims have been drawn from the needs analysis conducted using the customer insight data relating to our tenants and the economic data relating to the borough.

Issue	Strategic Aim
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of financial stress and many finding it very difficult financially</li> <li>• Reliance on state pension</li> <li>• Some with no access to bank accounts</li> <li>• Low household incomes</li> <li>• In rent arrears and high levels of debt</li> </ul>	<p>Tenants and applicants able to access financial support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of financial stress</li> <li>• Changes in payments and claim procedures under Universal Credit</li> <li>• Low household incomes</li> <li>• Reliance on benefits</li> </ul>	<p>Help tenants and applicants to understand and prepare for financial changes</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low and high level debts</li> <li>• No access to bank accounts</li> <li>• Reliance on illegal lenders</li> </ul>	<p>Other financial solutions available e.g. credit unions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some employed and some in more skilled jobs</li> <li>• Some well-educated, some students</li> <li>• Higher car ownership in some areas</li> <li>• Low levels of household income</li> <li>• Some in low level occupations</li> <li>• Some using public transport for work</li> <li>• Some areas with very high unemployment</li> <li>• Some areas with high levels of benefit dependency</li> </ul>	<p>Better access to jobs/training – skills and transport solutions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some have no car access and use public transport for work</li> <li>• Some employed full time, but many in routine / low-level occupations</li> <li>• Many qualified to a high level</li> <li>• High unemployment in some areas</li> </ul>	<p>Better job opportunities for tenants and applicants</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High unemployment in some areas</li> <li>• Drugs, alcohol and mental illness issues</li> <li>• Some permanently sick or disabled</li> <li>• Crime problems</li> <li>• School-age children</li> <li>• Mobility problems and poor health</li> </ul>	<p>Access to other advice e.g. health, childcare</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some on waiting list are already struggling financially</li> <li>• Evictions can add to financial stress and levels of indebtedness</li> <li>• Lack of governmental assistance to singles under 35</li> </ul>	<p>Applicants are “tenancy ready”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility problems and poor health</li> <li>• Low levels of car ownership</li> <li>• High use of internet for purchasing /communications in some areas</li> <li>• Social networking users</li> <li>• Low household incomes</li> <li>• High debts</li> <li>• Some areas with low levels of internet use</li> <li>• Preferences for SMS communication in some groups</li> <li>• Some groups likely to be in rent arrears</li> </ul>	<p>Tackle digital exclusion and provide technical solutions</p>

What the issue is:

Many tenants are finding things very difficult financially and experiencing high levels of financial stress. A large number of households have an income of less than £20,000. Many are reliant on benefits or are on very low incomes. Some are in rent arrears or have other low or high level debts. Some have no access to bank accounts so are technically financially excluded.

Current situation:

We currently have a Rent and Money Advice service offering support and assistance to new and existing tenants and applicants regarding finances, personal budgeting, benefits, debts, help with applications in relation to urgent needs, food banks and disabilities. The team present tenants and applicants with a range of options and advice regarding financial products available to them, and encourage tenants and applicants to set up a bank account. Some of the groups most affected by financial exclusion are our younger tenants, and this group are potentially going to be further affected with welfare reform proposals.

Case Study A:

“John has learning difficulties and attended our customer service point requiring assistance. He was being pressured from a utility company for outstanding payments and was struggling to pay his rent. After a number of calls to the company it was established that they had the incorrect dates of occupation and John received a refund for the difference.

An 'entitled to' calculation was also completed which resulted in an application for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support being made along with an application to backdate his claim six months. The backdate request was successful which resulted in a large credit being applied to his rent account. This not only cleared his housing arrears but put his rent account into credit.”

What more needs to be done:

- More widely promote the services available to tenants and applicants and ensure access for all in need, including the development of a brand identity for Financial Inclusion communications to improve accessibility.
- Provide advice and guidance in areas where those in need feel comfortable or where they regularly visit e.g. The Zone, schools/colleges, children’s centres, community centres and faith groups.
- Explore the use of advertising for financial support services in a more coherent manner across the borough, e.g. customer service points, college TV screens, internet and with third sector organisations.
- Provide early support to prospective tenants who are on the waiting list prior to them beginning their tenancy, including encouraging the take-up of bank accounts and financial support and assistance.
- Undertake a cost/benefit analysis of the provision of this service to provide a business case to support its future direction
- Strategically plan to ensure funding is available for the continued provision of this service if necessary.

- Develop a system to easily identify those who are at risk of financial exclusion and financial vulnerability and to base any targeted work on these findings.
- Strategically plan for the next generation of school leavers through the provision of financial education, particularly in local schools and colleges, with likely further-reaching benefits for their families and peers as messages are taken from the session and communicated to others.

FIS2: Tenants and applicants will understand and be able to prepare for welfare reform, benefit changes and other factors influencing their financial position

What the issue is:

Welfare reform has brought significant changes to the benefits system, including the way in which benefits are paid under Universal Credit and the stipulation that the claim must be made online. The housing element of the benefit being paid directly to the tenant is expected to impact on our collection rates, as tenants may not be skilled or experienced in managing their income in this way. Many of our tenants are reliant on benefits and have low household incomes and high levels of financial stress. Many have also accrued rent arrears.

Current situation:

There are certain groups of people who are not eligible to access financial support in relation to housing, such as single people under 35 years old. For these people it is important to ensure that by offering them a tenancy in one of our properties we are not increasing any financial pressures they may be experiencing. It is also important to ensure that we are issuing timely communications regarding any changes brought about by initiatives such as welfare reform, to enable our tenants to adequately prepare. There is currently limited information on the council's website regarding the changes to the benefits system and it might be that customers are nervous of engaging with the information which is there due to the 'official' look and feel of it. We currently offer only two dates on which a direct debit payment may be processed. This means that a tenant may receive their benefit at one point in the month and then be in a position where this money needs to be retained in their account until their rent is paid by direct debit, possibly weeks later.

What more needs to be done?

- Planned, targeted and ongoing communication regarding welfare reform and benefit changes including the promotion of information on the website and consistent branding/marketing.
- Better information provision on the website to improve financial inclusion for our residents, including signposting to other agencies and organisations who may be able to provide support.
- Review arrears procedures to ensure we can anticipate payments and issue timely reminders.
- Promote rent payment methods available.



- Increase the number of payment dates available for direct debit to ensure ease of payment
- Implement digital inclusion strategy, specifically the promotion of online services and digital engagement with tenants.

FIS3: Tenants and applicants will have other financial solutions available to them e.g. credit unions

What the issue is:

Many tenants have low or high levels of debt, often with high interest rates due to a lack of products available to them. Many tenants do not have access to a bank account, so are unable to access other financial products, but may need access to credit for one off purchases. They may also require access to safe savings solutions.

Current Situation:

Our research suggests that a large number of tenants have no access to a bank account, yet they report having high levels of debt. This suggests that there could be issues with illegal lending. Advice is currently being provided to tenants regarding payday and other high interest lenders and illegal lending, but tenants are nervous to discuss and tackle the subject of illegal lending. Tenants paying rent without a bank account will struggle to build a credit history, and will therefore have only limited access to other banking products. Now that a credit union is operating in the district we need to maximise opportunities to work with them and consider the potential to financially support their establishment, enabling tenants to benefit from their savings accounts and low cost loans.

What more needs to be done?

- Support and provide funding for the provision of a credit union for West Lancashire
- Approach other housing associations to understand whether this provision meets a joint need and identify any potential funding contributions.
- Explore other community organisations who might provide financial services and affordable credit to tenants, applicants and residents.
- Explore the use of Experian to develop a better understanding and to enable tenants and applicants to build a credit history.
- Investigate and develop a business case to support other purchasing options for tenants and applicants in relation to furniture/household items e.g. Smarterbuys
- Identify ways to promote the council's contents insurance scheme and options for the use of this.
- Continue to provide advice to tenants regarding payday and other high interest lenders and information regarding alternative financial support for short term or urgent assistance.
- Promote awareness of payday and illegal lenders on the website

FIS4: Tenants and applicants will have better access to jobs/training – skills/transport

What the issue is:

There are a large number of tenants who are employed full time, and many who are well educated to further education and degree levels, but there are large numbers in low level/routine occupations with very low incomes and who are struggling financially. There is very low level car ownership within some groups and people rely upon public transport for work. Much has been done to support workless residents in West Lancashire, particularly through the West Lancashire Challenge Project, and there are now only 225 residents on Job Seekers Allowance. This means that those remaining without work often have very complex, wide-ranging issues which are acting as barriers to employment. It could also mean that some residents are in employment which is not best suited to their level of skill/education.

Current situation:

We currently work closely with partners and local businesses to create pathways to work for workless residents in the borough. The Financial Inclusion team are developing links with the West Lancashire College who provide courses for those who are out of work, including CV workshops and confidence building sessions. At present we are unable to refer to this service directly and must advise the tenant of its availability should they wish to request the service from JobCentre Plus. However, the eligibility criteria for this assistance is strict and could act as a barrier to aiding some of our tenants in need. It would be worthwhile exploring other organisations which we may be able to signpost to for these services and building up a database of organisations offering services of this kind. The Economic Development Strategy identifies plans for a railway station in Skelmersdale, which although a long-term plan, would help address some of the issues associated with residents in the most deprived wards in the borough accessing employment elsewhere.

What more needs to be done?

- The Demand Transport service is not sustainable without funding. The use of Section 106 monies to support its continuance where appropriate should be promoted.
- Signpost tenants and applicants to transport initiatives which may already be in place via the Skills, Training and Employment Partnership e.g. public transport and cycling schemes.
- Explore ways to promote better paid jobs to those already in work.

**FIS5: Tenants and applicants will have better job opportunities available to them (more skilled and better paid jobs in local area)**

What the issue is:

Many tenants are well educated but are currently employed in low level jobs. Large numbers of residents travel outside the borough for work and workers from other areas travel in. There is a mismatch of skills for the jobs in the local area, although there is the

educational potential for these to be filled. There is also a need to improve employment opportunities in higher skilled roles for our residents to retain our resident labour force and improve local incomes.

Current situation:

The Economic Development Strategy includes plans to improve the employment opportunities in the borough, particularly around the Skelmersdale wards where tenants and applicants have low level car ownership, through creating the right environment for growth in the area. Initiatives such as the Skelmersdale Town Centre scheme focus on meeting the economic needs of the borough by encouraging local recruitment. We are continuing to work with partners to up-skill residents ready for job opportunities coming to the area e.g. job fairs and work closely with businesses to encourage them to take on local labour and apprentices.

What more needs to be done?

- Continue to link up economic redevelopment approaches with financial inclusion initiatives to ensure options are available for our tenants in finding appropriate work opportunities.

#### Case Study B:

“Lynsey and Paul had two small children and rented their home from the local authority, but due to Paul being made redundant and losing their main income, they had fallen into arrears with their rent.

We supported them in prioritising and reducing non priority debts to more manageable payments to creditors and by maximising their income ensuring they gained their full benefit entitlement. Paul received support with his job searches, updating his CV, and assistance applying for local jobs. Paul was eventually successful in obtaining a job.

With our support Lynsey and Paul were able to understand how to prioritise their budgets according to their income as well as accessing employment support which in turn increased their household income. This enabled them to pay their rent and reduce their arrears on a weekly basis preventing further recovery action.”

FIS6:

Tenants and applicants will be able to access advice on wider areas e.g. health, childcare

What the issue is:

Many tenants have mobility problems and poor health and some have drugs, alcohol and mental health issues. This can act as a barrier to work and can exacerbate financial stress experienced. In some areas of the borough there are high levels of unemployment and large numbers of families with school-age children. Many of these tenants and residents are educated to a high level and some have a degree. Childcare may therefore be posing a barrier to working and increasing household incomes.

Current situation:

Advice is provided through the Rent and Money Advice service regarding a wide range of issues from signposting to agencies who deal with mental health and disability issues, to providing advice and assistance in regard to wider health issues, such as alcohol and drugs where relevant. It would be beneficial to develop our links with these agencies further to enable us to more effectively assist a larger number of tenants. Health issues are also addressed in the pathway to work provided by the Challenge Project. Free childcare is

available to children of those meeting particular criteria. Some parents are unaware of the childcare options available to them.

What we need to do to address it:

- Make links with partners to strengthen partnership working in this area.
- Provide signposting and work with organisations who can assist with regards to a wide range of health issues, including mental health, disability, or drugs and alcohol.
- Optimising sources of funding to provide tenancy support/floating support for complex needs.
- Provide advice on free childcare places to tenants, applicants and residents.
- Promote known childcare solutions on the website.

FIS7: Applicants will be “tenancy ready”

What the issue is:

There are some groups of tenants who may be struggling financially but who are not entitled to government assistance. Some of those on our housing waiting list are already finding it difficult to manage their finances. Evictions on the basis of non-payment of rent can add to financial stress and levels of indebtedness and so as a housing provider, we could be worsening someone’s financial position by providing a tenancy they will be unable to financially sustain.

Current situation:

Our allocations policy sets out an upper income threshold and a savings threshold for those wishing to rent our properties. In addition to this, increased priority for housing is given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to contribute to the Borough’s economic growth as working households or who make a contribution within communities through the award of a ‘plus’ status within each band, enabling them to appear above other applicants with the same level of housing need. We also stipulate that tenants may not be qualified to rent our properties due to “unacceptable behaviour, and one of the examples of this would be the accrual of rent arrears which could lead to the seeking of a possession order. We need to better understand the reasons for tenancy failure and to take these into account when developing tenancy management and sustainability solutions for these groups.

Tenants wishing to let a property can be offered rent and money advice at the start of their tenancy, and are signposted to other agencies who may be able to provide further assistance.

What more needs to be done?

- Use Experian data to segment the waiting list.

- Review reasons for tenancy failure and measures to address/prepare for this.
- Improve pre-tenancy affordability checks with applicants prior to acceptance onto the waiting list.
- Strengthen and develop links with other service providers, linked to the client groups which are identified as at risk of failure.
- Improve links with youth projects, children’s centres and early years support providers.
- Explore training and development for staff to promote understanding of the specific needs of particular groups such as younger tenants, highlighting the need to keep in regular contact and developing relationships with them to enhance tenancy sustainability, helping them to live independently, budget efficiently and manage their relationships with their neighbours.

Case Study C:

“Rebecca was a 19 year old renting her flat through a housing association. She had TV licence arrears, Council tax arrears, Water arrears, and an eviction notice from her landlord (for arrears of £1800). We discovered an entitlement to a housing benefit backdate and successfully applied for this, which credited £312 back to her landlord. We then helped her suspend the eviction, and set up a payment arrangement with her landlord, reducing her arrears by £1500.

We also set up a payment plan for her TV licence and water arrears. We helped her to apply for council tax support and negotiated with the bailiffs pursuing her debts to pass it back to the welfare team.”

FIS8: Fewer tenants and applicants will experience digital exclusion and all tenants and applicants will have the opportunity to access technical and digital solutions in relation to paying their rent

What the issue is:

Many tenants have mobility problems and poor health. There is low level car use/ownership across the borough. Large numbers of tenants are likely to be in rent arrears, have high levels of other debt and are experiencing difficulties managing their finances on low household incomes. Universal Credit has been introduced as an online only application process, and large numbers of our tenants do not currently use the internet. Some tenants do use the internet, and prefer to transact and interact online and through SMS. There is a need to develop more efficient ways of delivering services as local government strives to become more and more lean and as a council we are conscious of making the most effective use of the rent and service charge money paid to us by our tenants.

Current situation:

We are developing a Digital Inclusion Strategy which will identify the needs of our residents, and recommend developing opportunities for them to engage and transact with the council online. It also recommends projects to extend wifi access across the borough including community wifi and wifi in public spaces and working with partners to provide IT support to some of our digitally excluded tenants and applicants and to provide programmes aimed at promoting digital job searches and applications. We also have in place arrangements with

community centres to promote getting online for benefits/online access. We have begun to use social media for promoting properties which are “To Let”.

What more needs to be done?

- Develop the use of Social Media to promote properties and expand it to include information on sustainability e.g. key things to consider prior to agreeing to a tenancy. Also explore the use of advertising financial support services on other community social media pages.
- Consider the development of a mobile application to engage with tenants and applicants with regards to financial support and signposting and for personal budgeting.
- Develop a mobile application for tenants’ rent accounts, similar to a banking mobile application, to provide balances, information regarding when rent is due and the ability to pay through the application.
- Identify particular areas of support required e.g. most people able to use smartphones but need support with application forms, online banking etc and work to address these.
- Develop and promote solutions to engage with us via a range of channels including SMS/Online/applications.
- Use specific user groups for consultation on the development of services.

## Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy: Action Plan

Strategic Aim	Action	Managed By	Assigned To	Due Date	Priority
FIS1: Tenants and applicants will be able to access financial support including advice on benefits and debts	More widely promote the services available to tenants and applicants and ensure access for all in need, including the development of a brand identity for Financial Inclusion communications to improve accessibility.	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace / Pamela Holstein	31/01/16	Med
	Provide advice and guidance in areas where those in need feel comfortable or where they regularly visit e.g. The Zone, schools/colleges, children's centres, community centres and faith groups.	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace / Cliff Talbot	Ongoing	Med
	Provide early support to prospective tenants who are on the waiting list prior to them beginning their tenancy, including encouraging the take-up of bank accounts and financial support and assistance.	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace / Cliff Talbot	Ongoing	High
	Strategically plan to ensure funding is available for the continued provision of this service if necessary, including undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of the provision of this service to provide a business case to support its future direction.	Jane Maguire	Jane Maguire / Carl Wallace	31/12/15	High
	Develop a system to easily identify those who are at risk of financial exclusion and financial vulnerability and to base any targeted work on these findings.	Peter Morrison	Peter Morrison	31/03/16	High
FIS2: Tenants and applicants will understand and be able to prepare for welfare reform, benefit changes and other factors influencing their financial position	Planned, targeted and ongoing communication regarding welfare reform and benefit changes including the promotion of information on the website and consistent branding/marketing.	Carl Wallace	Carl Wallace / Pamela Holstein	Ongoing	High
	Review arrears procedures to ensure we can anticipate payments and issue timely reminders.	Jane Maguire	Donna Ager	30/06/15	High
	Promote rent payment methods available.	Jane Maguire	Leigh McGarry / Jane Maguire / Donna Ager / BTLS / Peter Morrison / Andy Bryan / Craig Round	Ongoing	High

Strategic Aim	Action	Managed By	Assigned To	Due Date	Priority
	Increase the number of payment dates available for direct debit to ensure ease of payment	Jane Maguire	Leigh McGarry / Jane Maguire / Donna Ager / BTLS / Peter Morrison / Andy Bryan / Craig Round	31/12/2015	High
	Implement digital inclusion strategy, specifically the promotion of online services and digital engagement with tenants	Peter Morrison	Pamela Holstein / Jane Maguire	Ongoing	High
FIS3: Tenants and applicants will have other financial solutions available to them e.g. credit unions	Support and provide funding for the provision of a credit union offer for Council tenants' in West Lancashire.	Leigh McGarry	Jane Maguire/Carl Wallace	31/12/15	High
	Promote other community organisations who might provide financial services and affordable credit to tenants.	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace	31/03/16	Med
	Explore the use of Experian to develop a better understanding and to enable tenants and applicants to build a credit history.	Peter Morrison	Peter Morrison	31/03/16	Med
	Investigate and develop a business case to support other purchasing options for tenants and applicants in relation to furniture/household items.	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace / Donna Ager	31/12/15	Med
	Identify ways to promote the council's contents insurance scheme and options for the use of this.	Jane Maguire	Pamela Holstein	31/03/16	Low
	Continue to provide advice to tenants regarding payday and other high interest lenders and information regarding alternative financial support for short term or urgent assistance including the website.	Carl Wallace	Carl Wallace	30/06/15	High
FIS4: Tenants and applicants will have better access to jobs/training – skills/transport	Signpost tenants and applicants to transport initiatives which may already be in place via the Skills, Training and Employment Partnership e.g. public transport and cycling schemes	Jane Maguire	Carl Wallace / Cliff Talbot	Ongoing	Med
	Continue to link up economic redevelopment approaches with financial inclusion initiatives to ensure options are available for our tenants in finding appropriate work opportunities.	Jane Maguire	Paula Huber / Sarah Blackhall	Ongoing	High
	Provide information regarding free childcare places to tenants, applicants and residents.	Jane Maguire	Sarah Blackhall / Pamela	30/06/15	Med



Strategic Aim	Action	Managed By	Assigned To	Due Date	Priority
			Holstein		
FIS5: Tenants and applicants will have better job opportunities available to them (more skilled and better paid jobs in local area)	Promote known childcare solutions on the website.	Jane Maguire	Pamela Holstein	30/06/15	Med
FIS6: Tenants and applicants will be able to access advice on wider areas e.g. health, childcare	Provide signposting and work with organisations who can assist with regards to a wide range of health issues, including mental health, disability, or drugs and alcohol.	Jane Maguire	Pamela Holstein / Sarah Blackhall / Carl Wallace	30/06/15	Med
	Optimising sources of funding to provide tenancy support/floating support for complex needs.	Leigh McGarry	Leigh McGarry	30/09/15	Med
	Review reasons for tenancy failure and measures to address/prepare for this.	Leigh McGarry	Nicola Bradley / Jane Maguire	31/07/15	High
	Improve pre-tenancy affordability checks with applicants prior to acceptance onto the waiting list.	Leigh McGarry	Nicola Bradley/ Jane Maguire/ Carl Wallace	Ongoing	High
FIS7: Applicants will be "tenancy ready"	Strengthen and develop links with other service providers, linked to the client groups which are identified at risk of failure.	Leigh McGarry	Nicola Bradley/Jane Maguire	Ongoing	High
	Improve links with youth projects, children's centres and early years' support providers.	Leigh McGarry	Nicola Bradley/ Jane Maguire/ Lorraine Ney	31/6/16	Med
	Explore training and development for staff to promote understanding of the specific needs of particular groups such as younger tenants. (highlighting the need to keep in regular contact and developing relationships with them to enhance tenancy sustainability, helping them to live independently, budget effectively and manage their relationships with their neighbours)	Leigh McGarry	Nicola Bradley/ Diane Evans/Jane Maguire/ Donna Ager/ Lorraine Ney	Ongoing	High
	Develop the use of social media to promote properties and expand it to include information on sustainability e.g. key things to consider prior to agreeing to a tenancy. Also explore the use	Jane Maguire / Peter Morrison	Pamela Holstein	30/11/15	High

Strategic Aim	Action	Managed By	Assigned To	Due Date	Priority
	of advertising financial support services on other community social media pages.				
	Develop an 'app' for tenants' rent accounts, similar to a banking mobile app to provide balances, information regarding when rent is due, ability to pay and provide signposting for financial support.	Leigh McGarry	Andy Bryan/ Peter Morrison/Jane Maguire	31/03/16	High
	Identify particular areas of support required e.g. most people able to use smartphones but need support with application forms, online banking etc and work to address these.	Jane Maguire / Peter Morrison	Pamela Holstein	31/03/16	High
FIS8: Fewer tenants and applicants will experience digital exclusion and all tenants and applicants will have the opportunity to access technical and digital solutions in relation to paying their rent	Develop and promote solutions for engagement via a range of channels including SMS/Online/apps. Use specific user groups for consultation on the development of these services.	Jane Maguire / Peter Morrison	Pamela Holstein	Ongoing	High

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Housing and Regeneration</b>		<b>Service: Housing</b>	
<b>Completed by: Siân White</b>		<b>Date: 25/03/2015</b>	
<b>Subject Title: Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy</b>			
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:		Yes	
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:		No	
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:		No	
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:		No	
Is a programme or project being planned:		Yes	
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:		Yes	
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):		Yes	
Details of the matter under consideration:		The Strategy aims to address the issues contributing to the financial exclusion of tenants and residents in West Lancashire, to enable them to play a full part in modern society. The Strategy is evidence-based and needs driven. It sets out 8 Strategic Aims which will help to achieve Financial Inclusion across the borough. It is accompanied by an action plan detailing how the aims will be met.	
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):		N/A	
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>		N/A	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>		N/A	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on,		Financially excluded tenants and residents	

i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	in West Lancashire.
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	Although the strategy puts in place a number of measures which will be available and will provide assistance to all residents of West Lancashire, we have identified that the three groups of tenants who are the most financially excluded tend to be young. There is also a focus on some ethnic minority groups as members of one of the most financially excluded groups are likely to be from ethnically diverse backgrounds. In addition to this, the strategy has particular relevance for the disabled and for women as disability and childcare have been identified as potential barriers to financial inclusion.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	
Age	Yes
Gender	Yes
Disability	Yes
Race and Culture	Yes
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	New tenants, existing tenants, residents on Jobseekers Allowance, tenants who are struggling financially. Use of the service is based on financial need.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	One of the strategic aims is that the assistance available will be marketed more widely so that more tenants are able to access the service. The impact of the service will be that tenants and residents will be less likely to be financially excluded and will be better off financially. The council will also be able to make more effective use of available resources through a higher level of rent collection and reduced rent recovery costs. This will have a positive impact on all tenants and residents.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	We will be undertaking some work to collect information regarding residents' satisfaction with the service.

<p>What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>The strategy has been based on needs analysis which used Experian customer segmentation data and evidence from the Economic Regeneration Strategy to identify financial exclusion drivers and trends, and make recommendations regarding the needs to be addressed.</p>
<p>If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:</p>	<p>Having identified that the three groups who are most likely to be the most financially excluded include the young and those from minority ethnic groups, further work was undertaken to understand whether there are any particular reasons that these groups are more susceptible to financial exclusion and to building up rent arrears, or whether there are any particular approaches which may be helpful in addressing their needs which should be included in the strategy. The strategy has been updated to reflect this. Analysis of whether these groups are proportionately using the service currently has also been undertaken and it has been found that young tenants in financial arrears are using the service proportionately with tenants in other age groups who are in financial arrears.</p> <p>Following approval of the draft strategy, a wider consultation exercise is recommended with a number of agencies involved in supporting the financially excluded, including Age UK, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Help Direct.</p>
<p><b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b></p>	
<p>In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?</p>	<p>The implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact for the groups identified.</p>
<p><b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b></p>	
<p>If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).</p>	<p>No negative impact has been found. If any negative impact is identified, the strategy will be revised to include actions to mitigate this where possible.</p>
<p>What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?</p>	<p>The EIA will be refreshed as the strategy is refreshed, to ensure that any negative impacts are able to be addressed.</p>
<p><b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b></p>	
<p>When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?</p>	<p>The EIA will be refreshed when the strategy is reviewed and updated.</p>



**Consultation for Draft Council Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy**

<b>Group Name</b>
Access Matters
Action for Blind People
Age Concern Central Lancashire
Age UK Lancashire
Alcohol/Drugs Groups?
Alzheimers Society
Barnardo's - Young Carers Service
Carers UK
Children's Centre - First Steps
Children's Centre - Hesketh with Becconsall
Children's Centre - Moorgate
Children's Centre - Park
Children's Centre - St John's Children's Centre and Extended School
Children's Centre - The Grove Youth, Community & Children's Centre
Children's Centre - Upholland
Churches Together in Lancashire
Churches Together in Ormskirk
Crane Education Foundation
Deafway
Disability Advice West Lancs
Disability Equality (NW) Ltd
Disability First
Edge Hill University
Endeva
Enterprise4All (NW) Ltd
Faith Network
Galloway's Society for the Blind
Help Direct
ICANN (Independent Community Advocacy Network North)
Information Centre for Young People
Jobcentre Plus
Lancashire BME Pact
Lancashire Constabulary
Lancashire Council of Mosques
Lancashire County Council
Lancashire County Council - Lancashire Youth Council
Lancashire Deaf Service
Lancashire GRT Practitioners Network
Lancashire Learning Disability Consortium
Lancashire LGBT Centre Group
Lancashire Secular Humanists
Lancashire West Citizens Advice Bureau
Lancashire Wide Network for Minority Ethnic Women
Learning Stars
Making Space Lancashire
Moving On Lancashire
Navajo Consultative Partnership - Diversity Unit
Ormskirk Hard of Hearing Association
Preston & Western Lancs Racial Equality Council
Rainbow Generation
Rosie Cooper
Sefton and West Lancashire Deaf Childrens' Society
Skelmersdale Action for Youth Forum
Stonham Housing Association
SW Lancs Independent Community Advice Network
The Birchwood Centre
The Zone - involved in early consultation
Twinkle House
West Lancashire Carers Centre
West Lancashire College
West Lancashire Debt Advice
West Lancashire Shopmobility Limited
West Lancs Ark
West Lancs Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)
West Lancs Pensioners' Forum
West Lancs Positive Living
Young Lancashire







**AGENDA ITEM: 5(q)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration/Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Pamela Holstein (Extn. 5048)**

**(E-mail: [pamela.holstein@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:pamela.holstein@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY 2015-18**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the Digital Inclusion Strategy 2015-18 and action plan attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Digital Inclusion Strategy 2015-18 (Appendix 1) and action plan be adopted.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The internet has transformed almost every aspect of life, revolutionising communication and business. It is reshaping government through enabling remodelling of the way public services are delivered.

3.2 Importantly for West Lancashire is the lead taken by the UK Government on 'Digital by Default' public services and Welfare Reform. Not only is West Lancashire, like all UK local authorities, expected to follow this lead, but the authority has also to manage the effect of transforming delivery of public services on its residents.

3.3 While the internet provides broad benefits, by helping to address social and economic issues like reducing isolation and improving health, 14% of West

Lancashire residents (approximately 10,000 individuals) do not have the skills or inclination to use the internet (Office of National Statistics). This affects their ability to search for work or to apply for benefits. With the introduction of the online only Universal Credit application process and Universal Job match it is vital that all West Lancashire residents have the skills and understanding to use the internet, not only to save money but to apply for benefits, search for work and have an attractive skill level for employers.

- 3.4 If residents of the Borough do not have the skills and access to the internet, the Council's ability to collect revenue across all service areas will eventually be compromised, this is particularly true for Housing Services and could have a major impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. In addition to this, communities most in need will be increasingly cut off from the means of self-support and wealth generation. Actions in this strategy will compliment what we are trying to achieve with the Financial Inclusion Strategy in ensuring that tenants have the skills that they need to find work, claim benefits, use online services to save money maximising the financial capacity of the communities of West Lancashire.
- 3.5 This strategy aims to address the key elements of 'Digital Exclusion' and provide an equality skill level which will help with the access to public services for all communities throughout the Borough.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 There are no significant negative sustainability impacts associated with this report. There is potential for positive impacts such as tenants sustaining tenancies, and more money in the local economy.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Digital Inclusion Strategy 2015-18 will ensure the Council is able to continue to pursue its objectives during the period of austerity. For the Housing Service, in particular, it is critical to the HRA Business Plan that the service has the ability to ensure that income is easily collected and it offers a range of ways to make that collection. In addition, because of the changes announced in the budget in July 2015, the service area needs to ensure that it can deliver services in a more effective and efficient way and deliver cost reductions as part of this service delivery. This strategy will ensure that as the Council inevitably moves more services online tenants and vulnerable groups such as disabled or older people will be in a position to access these.
- 5.2 There is a small budget of £20K designed to investigate some of the options suggested in the Action Plan. Any costs arising from implementation of this plan will be carried out using current resources or included in the budget setting process.

## **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The development of the Digital Inclusion Strategy and associated action plan mitigates against the risks that the Council will not deliver its aspirations in terms of channel shift and savings and efficient delivery of services going forward.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1- Digital Inclusion Strategy 2015-18

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment





**Digital Inclusion Strategy  
2015-2018**

## Introduction

The internet has transformed almost every aspect of public, private and work life. It has underpinned our new economy; from changing the way every workplace communicates to creating entire new industries. It is reshaping government through enabling remodelling of the way public services are delivered and providing transparency through open data.

In the current economic climate, with increasing pressures on public expenditure, significant long-term savings and efficiencies can be made through increased use of online services by customers. Along with demographic changes and increasing citizen expectations, digital delivery of public services offers the public sector an opportunity to meet these diverse demands. The efficiency savings generated by increasing the number of online transactions mean that some local authorities are able to divert more resources, to improving the quality of services and support those most in need.

However, recent research published by the Cabinet Office states that 20% of Britain's population is offline or lack the basic digital skills required to gain the benefits of the internet.<sup>1</sup>

In order to maximise the online use of public services, it is necessary to engage this section of the adult population who are currently "digitally excluded"; they are also likely to be amongst the heaviest users of public services.

This strategy sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council will tackle this issue and increase digital inclusion over the next three years by helping residents become capable of using the internet and benefiting from it.

---

<sup>1</sup> From volumes to value, An outcomes framework for measuring the benefits of digital inclusion, June 2015

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Aims of this strategy .....	4
Who is digitally excluded and what does it mean?.....	5
The business case for tackling digital inclusion .....	6
UK Government commitment to this agenda .....	6
Where we are now?.....	8
Digital Inclusion Best Practice .....	9
Go On Campaign.....	9
Go On West Lancashire Potential Partners .....	9
Partnership model .....	10
SWOT Analysis of digital inclusion within WLBC .....	11
Digital Inclusion Strategy - Critical Success Factors.....	11
Commitments of this strategy .....	12
Action plans .....	12

## **Aims of the Strategy**

The aims of the Digital Inclusion Strategy are:

- To increase the proportion of residents in the borough who have basic online skills and access to the internet.
- To increase the proportion of residents using West Lancashire Borough Council's online services (with the long-term aim of enabling the authority to save money on the way it delivers services to residents).

This strategy is critical to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the Housing & Regeneration Service Financial Inclusion Strategy; successful take-up by tenants of the new online Universal Credit and Universal Jobmatch is fundamental to the service areas need to maximise rental income and support tenants into employment. This strategy has been developed with reference to a number of key plans and reports, including Lancashire County Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy and the UK Government Digital Inclusion Strategy so that it aligns to regional and national policy, and with the Digital Deal Challenge Fund Evaluation as this provides best practice across the sector.

The Digital Inclusion Strategy will also support and contribute to the aims of the annual Digital Development Plan. While the Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure that residents have the skills and access to the internet to enable them to choose digital as their channel of preference, the annual Digital Development Plan, part of a new Digital by Preference approach, sets out in detail the steps the Council will take to improve and extend online services. Ensuring they are easy to use for customers and cost-effective for the Council, and to digitise internal processes to increase efficiency and contribute to savings.



## Who is digitally excluded and what does it mean?

UK-wide there is 80% internet adoption; half of these are fully digitally skilled while half can perform some functions online but would like to increase their skills.

The remaining 20% of the population are 'digitally excluded': they have no plans to go online; they may be lapsed users or have no interest in the internet, do not see the benefits and lack confidence to seek help.<sup>2</sup>

Digital exclusion can affect people in all sections of the community. National research shows that the majority of digitally excluded citizens fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Aged 60+
- Living in social housing
- Disabled
- Homeless
- Ex-offenders
- Socio-economic group D & E (casual or lowest grade workers, pensioners, and others who depend on the welfare state for their income, semi and unskilled manual workers)

These groups are more likely to be affected by the main causes of digital exclusion; financial, educational and lack of confidence.

Tackling digital exclusion involves addressing the main challenges that stop people going online:

- **access** - the ability to actually go online and connect to the internet
- **skills** - to be able to use the internet
- **motivation** - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing
- **trust** - a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online
- **cost** – being able to afford broadband connectivity and internet enabled devices

To make sure the web is truly available for everyone, we need to provide more than just access. We need to equip West Lancashire residents with the skills, motivation and trust to go online, be digitally capable and to make the most of the internet.

## What is Digital Inclusion?

Digital inclusion is defined in terms<sup>3</sup> of:

- **Digital skills** - being able to use computers and the internet, to communicate, share information such as filling in forms, find things such as jobs, transact, i.e. use online banking and stay safe
- **Connectivity** - access to the internet, devices and a WiFi/Broadband signal
- **Accessibility** - services should be designed to meet all users' needs, including those dependent on assistive technology to access digital services.

Go ON UK<sup>4</sup>, the UK's leading national digital skills charity, has outlined the basic digital skills. This definition was redefined in January 2015, becoming more complex to reflect the changing pace of technology. Possessing digital skills is defined as having the following abilities:

---

<sup>2</sup> From volumes to value, An outcomes framework for measuring the benefits of digital inclusion, June 2015

<sup>3</sup> Cabinet Office & GDS, Government Digital Inclusion Strategy, December 2014

- **Managing information** – Find, manage and store digital information and content
- **Communicating** – Communicate, interact, collaborate, share and connect with others
- **Transacting** – Purchase and sell and use digital government services, organise finances
- **Problem solving** – Increase independence and confidence by solving problems and finding solutions using digital tools
- **Creating** – Create basic digital content in order to engage with digital communities and organisations.

## **The Business Case for tackling digital exclusion**

It is cheaper for local authorities to provide services online than by phone or personal visit; Socitm (Society of IT Managers) published average channel cost figures for local authorities in its 2013 report “Doing better with less”; face-to-face £8.15; phone £2.59; web £0.09.

However, savings will only be achieved if people use the online services that the council provides, in preference to using the phone or making a personal visit combined with a fully digital back office. By tackling digital exclusion, equipping local people with the skills and confidence they need to use the internet, and making them aware of the online services that the council offers, the council will drive up use of online services and so contribute to savings.

An important business driver is the need, for example especially in an era of welfare reform, to help and encourage West Lancashire residents to maximise their household income through the effective take up of benefits online as well as using digital technology to gain employment, and to achieve savings on household bills and other spending.

A digital inclusion strategy can help to boost skills and provide the experience to access training and support as well as promoting health and wellbeing among isolated communities, particularly among older people.

### **Benefits of digital inclusion:**

- Drives education attainment (helping children with school work, monitoring their online activity)
- Enabling access to online health information and services
- Enabling access to online public services including benefits
- Social benefits
- Providing opportunities to save money
- Providing opportunities to find and apply for jobs

## **UK Government commitment to digital inclusion**

The UK government’s Digital by Default approach aims to have everyone who can be, online in the next five years. The government is rolling out Universal Credit, which requires people to submit online applications. Additionally online job searches via Universal Jobmatch will be a

---

<sup>4</sup> Go ON UK is jointly leading a cross-sector partnership focused on increasing UK digital inclusion It focused intense campaigns on three national areas, one of which was the North West. Stemming from this, a six month Go On Lancashire project ran between September 2014 – February 2015

condition of receiving benefit and claimants will require a 'gov.uk' account or be subject to sanctions.

The government is investing in world-class internet access and digital infrastructure, including public investment of over £1 Billion to boost coverage of superfast broadband across the UK.

Government Digital Service (GDS) was set up to make government digital services and information simpler, clearer and faster, by putting users' needs before the needs of government, resulting in GOV.UK, simplification of online services.

## **Where we are now?**

The latest figures<sup>5</sup> show that West Lancashire has between 85 – 89% of internet users against a UK average of 87%. This means that between 11 – 15% of the borough's population do not use the internet, compared to a UK average of 12.6%.

Based on 2013 population data, this equates to approximately 10,000 digitally excluded individuals in West Lancashire.

At this stage there are no detailed local figures about West Lancashire residents' access to the internet and use of it. Action to collect these is included in the 2015/16 action plan through a survey of residents, which will provide baseline information. Further surveys in future years could help measure the success of initiatives and track changes.

Libraries have been running digital training for the past five years and they are just some of the UK Online Centres offering free online access and training in the borough. Government funding to assist with the Universal Credit pilot has provided this support. A campaign conducted during Spring Online in April 2015, tested the response in West Lancashire communities to an online campaign. The learning from these events has been used to inform this strategy.

## **Digital by Preference**

While the Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure that residents have the skills and access to use digital as their channel of preference, the Digital by Preference approach focuses on the work that needs to be undertaken by the Council to provide easy to use, accessible services online.

In 2014, the Council invested in a major website redesign, creating a mobile friendly approach. This is supported by Browse Aloud software, an accessible web reader for users with no or limited vision who struggle to read; it also provides translations.

For a number of years the Council has taken a 'click, call, come in' approach to customer service, which aims to make the digital channel the first choice for customers and promote channel shift. The number and range of online services has steadily increased as a result of this and now more than 100 services and payments are provided via the website. Data is collected to measure take-up of the online services and payments; actions to extend data measurement are included in the action plan to support the Digital Inclusion activity.

An annual plan, the Digital Development Plan (formerly the web improvement plan) sets out in detail further proposed improvements to the website and online services as part of the Digital by Preference approach with the aim of continuing to provide more services online and improve the delivery of existing online services. A number of the proposed improvements in the Digital Development Plan will support the Digital Inclusion Strategy by improving the website and online services and making them easier to use for customers. The Digital Development Plan is therefore referenced in the action plan in this strategy.

---

<sup>5</sup> ONS, Internet use by NUTS 3 area, Quarter 1 2014

## Digital Inclusion Best Practice

Initial digital inclusion projects across the UK have been quantified and assessed and provide valuable learning experiences for the implementation of digital inclusion in West Lancashire. Best practice shows that the most effective way to reach hard to reach groups is through referrals. This means directing people identified as being in need to services that can help them rather than expecting them to self-select those services. The following criteria has been drawn up by the Government Digital Service (GDS) as best practice and the West Lancashire Borough Council action plan aims to address these issues.

1. Start with user needs – not our own. Tailor support around the unique barriers that stop people going online, and adapt to people's needs which change over time. Services need to be built for the user, not for local government.
2. Improve access – stop making things difficult. Provide simple, low cost options for those who are socially and economically excluded to get online. The most digitally excluded are often the most socially and economically excluded, and could benefit the most from going online. Making the practical steps of going online easy and affordable makes a huge difference to people who are new to the internet.
3. Motivate people – find something they care about. Bring digital into people's lives in a way that benefits them; helping them do things they care about and can only do online. Pushing people to do something that doesn't interest them doesn't work.
4. Keep it safe – build trust. Make it easier to stay safe online by providing simple and straightforward advice and tools. This is a particular barrier for older and less affluent residents.
5. Work with others – don't do it alone. Work with partners to maximise expertise, experience and resources to better meet user needs
6. Focus on wider outcomes – measure performance.

## Go On Campaign

Government Digital Service makes the point that collaboration across all sectors is the way forward and this is the planned approach in West Lancashire, as set out in the action plan.

Following the Go On North West and Go On Lancashire campaign, successful partnership working with Community-i West Lancashire and Lancashire Libraries pointed to the opportunity to recruit more partners who are currently working on their own digital inclusion agendas, and co-ordinating and strengthening the campaign.

## Go On West Lancashire – proposed partnership approach

Networking to date suggests that the community, the third sector and statutory bodies across West Lancashire are keen to link to the digitally excluded and that there is support for the establishment of a Go On West Lancashire network, providing a partnership approach to Digital Inclusion with the aims of:

- Empowering everyone in West Lancs to reach their digital potential.
- Sharing initiatives, expertise and work jointly on digital inclusion initiatives.
- Sharing best practice and deliver thought leadership on digital skills throughout West Lancashire.
- Promoting Digital Inclusion initiatives across the borough.

There are different audiences with different needs across the borough; therefore a 'one size fits all' campaign may not be as effective as taking a different marketing approach for each audience. This would be facilitated by a partnership approach, which will facilitate co-ordinated campaigns, with the potential for events in a wide mix of venues such as libraries, community centres, health centres and other local UK Online centres, and with promotion through grassroots community organisations.

Establishing a Go On West Lancashire partnership is a key action in the 2015/16 action plan.

Go On West Lancashire potential partners:

- Lancashire County Council (LCC)
- West Lancashire College (WLC)
- Edgehill University
- UK Online Centres
- Community Centres
- West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Job Centre Plus
- UK Online
- Parish Councils
- West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- One West Lancashire
- Community-i

### Partnership model



## SWOT analysis of digital inclusion within West Lancashire Borough Council

Looking at the current situation within the authority, the table below presents an overview of the strengths that the organisation has and the barriers that need to be overcome to enable it to move forward with digital inclusion.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment at senior level</li> <li>• Political commitment from all parties</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited resources</li> <li>• Digital communications activity needs authority-wide leadership and investment</li> <li>• Some software currently not capable of delivering our requirements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital inclusion role offers opportunities to improve communications and services</li> <li>• Funding streams are available</li> <li>• Partnership opportunities with statutory bodies, third sector, etc. to work together on digital inclusion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting left behind by technology</li> <li>• Losing willing customers through poor online experience</li> <li>• Reductions in funding / budgets</li> </ul>

## Digital Inclusion Strategy - critical success factors

Critical success factors are those elements that need to be in place in order to ensure the success of the project. Below is an analysis of potential issues and related contingencies.

Critical success factors	Why it is important	Mitigation/contingencies
Successful partnerships	Digital inclusion needs a partnership approach to be successful and sustainable	Partners currently being sought, connections made with county council and Go On UK
Management and political support	To ensure the strategy is effectively resourced	Keep management and members on side with regular updates of successes, achievements. Appoint a political champion of digital inclusion and sign the Digital Skills Charter.
Budget	Projects need to be resourced	A £20K budget has been allocated to the Digital Inclusion project for 2015/16. External funding and support is also available

## **Commitments of this Strategy**

- Helping break down barriers for people who are digitally excluded and supporting them to build the digital capability they need to fully benefit from being online
- Bringing together a wide range of different stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors to align plans and coordinate activities in order to maximize impact for and sustain support for individual citizens
- Working closely with stakeholders to identify and deliver creative approaches to getting people online to achieve the shared 'outcome' of digital inclusion
- Achieving sustainable change for the digitally excluded
- Ensuring the use of digital technology is embedded in the habits of residents

## **Action plan**

An annual action plan will be prepared to deliver the aims of the strategy.

The 2015/16 action plan is attached at Appendix A.

This is set out in five sections: corporate actions; actions that address three of the main barriers to digital inclusion: connectivity, skills and accessibility; and communications.

The action plan will be reviewed in March/April 2016 order to inform the preparation of the 2016/17 action plan.

## **Measuring success**

One of the actions set out in the plan is consultation in early 2016 to measure assess internet use and access. The results of this survey will provide figures that can be used to measure success of the implementation of the strategy in future years.

A single shared framework has been developed by Government Digital Service. It aims to provide comparable findings and produce evidence about what works to make it easier to share best practice, providing consistent, common robust measures across public and third sectors. West Lancashire Borough Council will participate in the pilot of this framework.

Additionally, the implementation of the strategy will be measured in a variety of ways:

- For some actions, success will be measured by completion within the year.
- Feedback will be gathered from partners along with any statistics and figures they have.
- Increasing use of online services compared with telephone access and personal visit.



## Appendix A: 2015/16 Action Plan

1. CORPORATE	Detail/Issues	Who can do this? Lead /involving	Priority (1 – 3)	Cost
Make digital inclusion part of wider WLBC policy, programmes and digital services	Sign Digital Skills Charter	Cabinet	1	Nil
	Nominate a political representative to act as digital inclusion champion	Cabinet	1	Nil
	Add digital inclusion agenda to Corporate Business Plan	Transformation Manager (TM)	1	Nil
	Ensure that the Digital Inclusion Strategy is aligned with the Digital by Preference approach (subject to Cabinet approval).	TM Each service needs to link Digital Inclusion into their communications and digital plans	1	Nil
Continue to improve and develop the Council's website and online services (annual digital development plan)	Proposed improvements are set out in the digital development plan, including investigating the potential for service delivery via an app in Housing and Regeneration.	TM / Comms and Consultation (C&C) / Housing Communications and Digital Inclusion Officer (HCDIO)	1	Officer time Possible budget implications
Define the needs and attitudes of residents, and set benchmarks	Conduct baseline survey of use and attitudes in West Lancashire as part of the Citizen and Stakeholder Survey 2016. This will provide baseline figures that will inform action plans and form the basis of research, which will help assess the success of digital inclusion initiatives.	TM / C&C / HCDIO	1	TBC. (Funding may be available in corporate consultation budget)
	Extend data gathering to compare use of online services with traditional service access to track trends and measure success	TM / C&C / Customer services / HCDIO	2	Officer time Possible budget implications

Establish Go ON West Lancashire partnership	Bring together community, third sector and statutory bodies across West Lancs in a Go ON West Lancs network, providing a partnership approach to digital inclusion	HCDIO	1	Officer time
<b>CONNECTIVITY</b>				
To improve residents' access to IT equipment and broadband / WiFi	Investigate the possibility of 'cleaning' and donating older IT equipment to residents	Led by HCDIO / In partnership with Lancashire CC and BTLS	2	
	Install 'free' community WiFi to two trial locations	Working group formed (Performance and Project Manager / Tenant Participation/ HCDIO) In partnership with BT	1	£6 per home per month.
	Investigate ways to help residents get cheaper broadband deals from suppliers	Led by HCDIO / In partnership with Lancashire CC and BTLS	2	Officer time
	Investigate UK Online assistance / partners / initiatives	Led by HCDIO in partnership with Go On West Lancs*	1	Officer time
	Prepare a 'how to' bidding pack for equipment and support aimed at community groups and third sector organisations	HCDIO	3	Officer time
	Conduct audit of IT equipment in Sheltered Housing and develop action plan to address any needs arising from this	HCDIO / Sheltered Housing Team	1	Officer time Possible budget implications
	Survey of IT wants, needs and attitudes in Sheltered Housing	HCDIO / Sheltered Housing Team / TP Team	2	Officer time
	Investigate development of new wireless hotspots in public spaces such as town centres, parks and public buildings.	HCDIO / in partnership with Leisure Services	3	Officer time

	Assess use of existing WiFi hotspots and further promote their use.	HCDIO	2	Officer time
<b>ACCESS</b>				
To improve accessibility of WLBC website to maximise its use (as set out in digital development plan)	On-going review of site accessibility via Siteimprove	C&C / HCDIO	1	Officer time
	Promote browse aloud	C&C/ HCDIO	1	Officer time
	Remove PDFs from website and transfer contents to web pages	C&C/ HCDIO	2	Officer time
	External user testing programme focusing on accessibility to identify the user experience (UX) barriers specific to WLBC.	C&C	2	Officer time
	Complete further accessibility improvements to the website as set out in digital development plan	C&C	3	Officer time
<b>SKILLS</b>				
To increase the proportion of residents in the borough who have basic online skills	Investigate potential for customer service team to act as 'Digital Champions'	TM / Customer services	3	Officer time
	Take part in national promotions such as Spring Online & Get Online Week in order to raise awareness and improve skills	HCDIO with Go ON West Lancs and partners	1	Officer time
	Create a network of trained, community based Digital Champions to teach and promote digital skills	HCDIO with Go ON West Lancs partners	1	Possible budget implications
	Partner with a training provider to support tenants to gain skills	HCDIO with Go ON West Lancs partners	1	Possible budget implications
	Investigate use of volunteers from Edge Hill University to give IT support to older people	HCDIO with Go ON West Lancs partners	2	Officer time
	Investigate programs aimed at	HCDIO / West Lancs College /	3	Officer time

	promoting digital jobs	Schools		
	Investigate digital workshops / events aimed at school age children and young people	HCDIO / West Lancs College / Schools	3	Officer time
	Investigate digital workshops / events aimed at older teens and adults	Housing Communications and Digital HCDIO / West Lancs College / Schools / Community Centres / Associations	3	Officer time
	Link adults to online financial advice and money saving web services	Financial Inclusion Officer (referrals)	1	Officer time
	Set up user testing group among tenants	HCDIO	1	Officer time
	Refer potential business skills development opportunities to Regeneration Team	HCDIO / LCC / Regeneration Team	2	Officer time
	Promote successes through award schemes	HCDIO	3	Officer time
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>				
Raise awareness among residents / tenants of the Council's online services	Develop awareness campaign, using e.g. press, social media, advertising, newsletters, meetings, workshops etc	C&C / HCDIO	1	Possible budget implications
Raise awareness among residents /tenants of the importance of digital skills, technology, online safety, universal credit etc	Develop campaigns using a range of methods e.g. social media, partnership approach.	HCDIO / C&C	1	Officer time

	Encourage residents to sign up for text and email services offered by local emergency services such as Police and Ambulance services to encourage use of digital technology.	HCDIO/Go ON West Lancs	2	Officer time
Publicise workshops / online skills events	Maximize attendance at events organised for tenants /residents.	HCDIO / C&C	1	Officer time
Extend use of social media by Housing Services to support digital inclusion agenda	Trial use of Facebook in Housing Services to publicise	HCDIO	1	Officer time
Embed digital inclusion communications into all routine communications activities	Link digital inclusion with services' communications and publicity plans	C&C / HCDIO	1	Officer time

\* Partnership with Go On West Lancs include:

Lancashire County Council

Lancashire Police

Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)

West Lancashire Borough Council

Department of Works and Pensions (DWP)

Quarrybank

West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group

Edge Hill University

West Lancashire Community



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>		<b>Service: Housing &amp; Regeneration</b>	
<b>Completed by: Pamela Holstein</b>		<b>Date: 4 August 2015</b>	
<b>Subject Title: Digital Inclusion Strategy 2015-2018</b>			
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes		
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No		
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No		
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes		
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes		
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes		
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes		
Details of the matter under consideration:	The strategy sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council will increase digital inclusion over the next three years by helping people become capable of using the internet and benefiting from it.		
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):			
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>			
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>			
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	All members of the public in West Lancashire who are users or potential users of council services will be covered by the strategy.		
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	Aged 60+; Living in social housing or homeless; Disabled		

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	
Age	Yes
Gender	No
Disability	Yes
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	All members of the public in West Lancashire who are users of council services will be covered by the strategy.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	To increase the proportion of residents in the borough who have basic online skills and access to the internet.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	Some customers currently have skills and equipment that enable them to transact with the Council online, accessing services 24/7. They could be considered to have the ability to enjoy a better level of service since they are not limited to 9-5 opening hours and having to physically visit council buildings to undertake transactions.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	Data from the Tinder Foundation and Go ON UK (national digital inclusion charities) have indicated the key user groups that will be impacted.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	Further data on internet access and the use of online services at micro level is needed.
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	The strategy aims to make a positive impact, particularly on the age and disability protected characteristics.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	The strategy will not have a negative impact on any community in the Borough.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions needed



**7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?

The assessment will be reviewed by the Communication & Digital Inclusion Officer as part of the annual review of the action plan.





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(r)**

**CABINET: 15 SEPTEMBER 2015**

---

**Report of: Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor I Moran and Councillor C Wynn**

**Contact for further information: Mrs S Walsh (Extn. 5262)  
(E-mail: shaun.walsh@westlancs.gov.uk)**

---

**SUBJECT: DIGITAL BY PREFERENCE – A NEW APPROACH**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To obtain approval for the 'Digital by Preference' approach as detailed within the appended report (this item having been previously deferred by Cabinet at it's meeting on 16 June 2015).

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the 'digital by preference' approach set out in the attached report at Appendix 1 be approved.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND/CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 Subsequent to Members' deferment of this item, further consideration has been given to potential savings from this initiative as part of the wider policy options work and it is estimated that approximately £50K per annum could be achieved as a result of best endeavours by DSH and senior managers.

---

**Appendices**

1. Report of the Transformation Manager





**AGENDA ITEM:**

**CABINET: 16 JUNE 2015**

---

**Report of: Transformation Manager**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Portfolio holder: Councillor I Moran and Councillor C Wynn**

**Contact for further information: Shaun Walsh (Ext 5262)**

---

**SUBJECT: DIGITAL BY PREFERENCE – A NEW APPROACH**

---

**Wards affected: Borough wide**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To advise Cabinet of a new approach to drive forward channel migration i.e. increasing the number of customers who access Council services online and reducing contact by phone and personal visit.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the 'digital by preference' approach set out in this report be supported.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 Self service offers efficiencies for organisations by minimising officer input into customer transactions. It also has the potential to increase the speed of service delivery through automation, and to extend the accessibility of services 24/7.

3.2 In recognition of the fact that it is cheaper to deliver services digitally than by phone or personal visit, the Council has for a number of years put the digital channel at the forefront of service delivery with its 'click, call, come in' approach. Through its organisational re-engineering projects, web improvement plans and communications activities it has made significant progress in making services available online and in driving up their use.

- 3.3 The Council now has around 100 services available online and through its website provides downloadable forms for many more, along with a huge range of information. An online payment system is also provided.
- 3.4 Nationally, the pace of progress towards digital channel shift has increased exponentially. Key drivers for this change include the need for organisations to become ever more efficient, particularly during the current austerity regime; advances in technology and its increasing affordability; the rising demand for 24/7 service; and the growing ability of customers to use digital access channels, particularly via mobile devices.
- 3.5 “Digital’ can be defined as the technologies that allow people without specialised programming skills to interact directly with other people and organisations via the internet, using a computer, mobile device, kiosk or other interface. Private and public sector organisations, including the UK government, are putting increased investment into digital in order to keep pace with demand and maximise savings. It is therefore important that the Council is not left behind.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The likelihood of further government funding reductions, with continuing pressure to reduce spending and become ever more efficient, means that the Council must make renewed efforts to maximise savings from channel migration.
- 4.2 Internal factors also combine to demonstrate that this is an appropriate time for the Council to take a fresh approach:
- Work is now underway on a corporate Digital Inclusion Strategy, which will set out actions to boost the number of residents with online skills and internet access, and increase the number of customers using the Council’s website and online services.
  - The new website has been successfully launched and the 2015/16 web improvement plan is currently being developed, informed by the 2015 review of Council websites carried out nationally by SOCITM, the Society of IT Managers. A new intranet is also being provided.
  - The recommendations of the recent OR review in relation to digital service provision in Housing Services are being implemented, while the overall OR project has been concluded.
  - The recently-adopted ICT Strategy provides a foundation for the Council’s approach to digital service delivery.
- 4.3 As part of this ongoing work, it has become clear that there are still many Council services that could be provided online, but which currently are not; and that many current online services would benefit from being made easier to use (and therefore more attractive to customers) with reduced need for officer intervention. In addition, the Council needs to ensure any mobile working initiatives that are introduced are integrated where possible with existing systems to provide maximum efficiency. At the same time, the Council needs to be more proactive in persuading people to use online services.
- 4.4 Potential savings and efficiencies will not be realised unless the Council allocates resources to these activities. A dedicated post of Digital Executive will

be created, with a specific skill-set, to lead on channel migration and ensure there is a joined-up, integrated and corporate approach across all service areas.

## **5.0 DIGITAL BY PREFERENCE**

- 5.1 The Digital by Preference (DBP) approach will focus on the following objectives:
- Identifying high volume front-line services that are not currently available online, and working with service managers and BTLs to provide them online, whilst ensuring the new services are as fully transactional as possible (i.e. with minimal officer intervention).
  - Reviewing the services and payment facilities that the Council currently provides online to ensure they are as fully transactional as possible whilst being easy for customers to use. This will involve working with customers to test online services and gather feedback.
  - Investigating and delivering improvements to internal services and functions, including introducing new mobile working initiatives and reviewing current projects, to ensure that there is a joined-up, integrated approach that will contribute to savings by reducing officer intervention/double handling of processes and transactions.
  - Supporting further promotion of online services (both existing and new services), to drive up self serve by customers.
  - Reducing contact in person and over the phone within Customer Services and in back offices.
- 5.2 In terms of these objectives, it is proposed that priority will be given to the services which have the most front-line interaction with customers and which offer the greatest opportunity for savings.
- 5.3 Some key areas for DBP that have already emerged from the work set out in 4.2, and which will require specific resource input over the next few years, include:
- Provision of customer log-ins on the website. This was identified as a priority in the 2014/15 web improvement plan and it has been agreed that logins will be introduced initially for tenants, to enable them to access their rent accounts and set up direct debits etc as recommended in the recently-concluded OR review of Landlord Services. It will subsequently be rolled out to all customers to enable them to, for example, access their council tax accounts; request and pay for services without needing to repeatedly enter their personal details; check on the progress of previous service requests etc.
  - Introducing online benefit applications, and online services in relation to council tax and business rates.
  - Improvements to make online services and payments work well on mobile devices such as smart phones.
  - Ensuring that the Council maximises the use of web chat and social media to deliver services, in order to improve online service provision and streamline internal functions in line with increased customer demand.
- 5.3 A Project Initiation Document (PID) has been prepared to guide the implementation of the DBP programme. This will see the establishment of a Project Board involving the Managing Director (Transformation), the Assistant

Director Housing and Regeneration, and the Transformation Manager to approve plans and resources and monitor progress.

- 5.4 The project requires the appointment of a dedicated Digital Executive to deliver the DBP programme. This new post will report directly to the Transformation Manager, while working in close liaison with the Customer Services Manager (CSM), the Consultation and Communications Manager (CCM), and Heads of Service/Service Managers across the Council, together with outside service providers if required.

## **6.0 EXAMPLES OF THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL DELIVERY**

- 6.1 The LGA 2014 report “Transforming local public services using technology and digital tools and approaches” gives a range of examples from councils across the country, some of which are set out below:-
- 6.2 Harrow provides a MyHarrow account with scalable authentication requiring proof of identity appropriate for the transaction customers want to complete. It is designed for mobile devices and 30% of transactions are now carried out in this way. A web chat ‘pop up’ to help website users, which is fully integrated with the CRM, helped the council save £1.55 million in contact costs over four years.
- 6.3 Hammersmith and Fulham developed a secure online self-service portal with single sign-on for a range of services including council tax, benefits and environmental reporting. 70% of all households registered and the portal achieved £1.15 net savings per annum.
- 6.4 Barking and Dagenham achieved 100% digital shift for benefit claims. Claim processing was reduced from 42 days to 12 days. There was a 75% reduction in avoidable contact along with £671k annual savings.
- 6.5 Lewisham reported a 33% reduction in call centre activity over five years, saving £0.5million, following the launch of a web app and mobile apps to enable residents to report environmental issues such as fly-tipping and graffiti and monitor progress on them. The app was fully integrated with back-office systems, and was also used by the front-line workers.
- 6.6 Missed bins: Solihull MBC integrated in-cab technology with a new online service, and the council’s CRM in the contact centre, and succeeded in reducing by 46% the number of missed bins reported by residents. (Source: Socitm insight briefing 55.)
- 6.7 Leeds City Council saved £18,360 in just eight months after introducing live web chat. Customer service advisors interact with customers while they are online, guiding them through transactions and preventing the need for them to phone or visit the council i.e. a positive impact on both front and back office workloads. The Leeds experience shows that customers who are assisted by web chat are more likely to use online services again in future, and their feedback has helped further improve the website.



- 6.8 Telford and Wrekin Council saved £5,000 in contact costs over just three months after launching an app to enable residents to report problems in their streets. This is integrated into back-office systems and linked to customers' accounts.
- 6.9 Providing services digitally is in line with the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty to deliver services that will help to overcome discrimination and disadvantage. The website is accessible, and therefore enhancing the range and quality of services that are available digitally will help the council to meet its commitments to minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and to take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people. An Equality Impact Assessment of the Digital by Preference project has been completed and is attached at Appendix A.

## **7.0 POTENTIAL SAVINGS**

- 7.1 Nationally, there is agreement that providing services digitally is far cheaper than by phone or personal visit, demonstrating a sound business case for channel shift. Socitm (Society of IT Managers) published average channel cost figures for local authorities in its 2013 report "Doing better with less" which again evidenced that migrating customers to the digital channel is the most cost effective way to deliver business.
- 7.2 One approach to calculating potential savings just within the front office/Customer services environment is to assess how much would be saved if a proportion of customers switched from phone and/or personal visit to online service access. Although up-to-date transaction costs for the Council are not yet available, analysis using 2011/12 Council figures gives an indication of the scale of possible savings as an example: based on around 150,000 phone calls dealt with by Customer Services alone in 2011/12, a 10% migration to online service could result in estimated efficiency savings of around £27,000. It should also be noted that the central capital ICT budget can assist with any ICT costs involved on a year by year basis.
- 7.3 In addition to the phone calls that come in via Customer Services, many other calls go directly to back offices. These are not taken account of in the savings calculation in 7.2 above. The DBP project will, by switching services online, assist in reducing these calls and so free up staff time, making a further contribution to savings.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The new post of Digital Executive will be at the level of PO3, meaning a likely total annual cost (including with on costs) in the region of £47,000. The first year's cost of this post will be met from the MSR Reserve in order to provide a lead in time for cashable savings to be delivered. And, whilst it is difficult to confirm the exact speed at which improvements can be implemented and therefore cash savings realised, any additional funding required to further pump-prime this project will be subject to further approvals as necessary. Clearly however, as the project gathers more and more momentum, the cashable savings delivered from this initiative will steadily increase, thereby more than

meeting the cost of this post, as well as directly contributing to the Council's corporate objective of balancing the budget and providing the best possible services within the resources available. So, although it is not possible at this early stage to identify the specific budgets from which the cashable savings will be achieved, or the timescales; it is expected that increased use of self serve by customers, accompanied by full integration with back-office systems, will result in cashable savings in Customer Services as well as, possibly, in other service areas.

- 8.2 As this project develops and a work programme is put in place there may be a need for associated investment in IT to maximise the benefits of this new approach. The central capital ICT budget will be used to provide this funding, but if any additional resources are required then this will be the subject of future reporting to Members as appropriate.

## **9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 9.1 Channel shift will contribute to the Council's priority of 'balancing the budget and providing the best possible services within the resources available.' Moreover the drive to deliver services digitally keeps pace with the changing needs and aspirations of customers, who increasingly expect 24/7 service access via their preferred service access method. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for and is attached at Appendix A.

## **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 If the Council fails to invest resources in the Digital by Preference approach, the Council will not maximise savings and efficiencies, and will fail to keep pace with customer expectations in the rapidly-changing digital environment.

## **11.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 11.1 The new 'Digital by Preference' approach set out in this report will help the Council keep pace with customer expectations and changes in technology while maximising efficiency and making long-term savings and helping the Council to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act.

---

---

Appendix A: Equality Impact Assessment

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate:</b> Transformation	<b>Service:</b> Transformation
<b>Completed by:</b> E. Leigh	<b>Date:</b> 17.04.15
<b>Subject Title: Digital by Preference</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	“Digital by Preference” sets out a new approach to drive forward channel migration i.e. to enable more people to use technologies such as internet, computer, smartphone to interact with the council.
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:	

<i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	The stakeholders are all the residents of West Lancashire, and all businesses because they all carry out some transactions with the Council.
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	The project involves transforming the way we deliver services and enable customers to access them, and this involves universal services e.g. council tax as well as services that are specific to some customer groups e.g. benefits, housing.
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out? Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes No Yes Yes No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	All West Lancs residents and businesses are users of Council services and interact with the Council to pay bills, request services and seek information.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The Digital by Preference project will make more services available through the website, where they are presented in a way which is accessible for people with disabilities. This will make it easier for stakeholders to interact with the Council and give them more choice in how they do so.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	The Citizen Survey measures satisfaction with some key services, and also with the way the Council runs things generally (68% satisfied), and how it keeps people informed. (57% satisfied.) 45% agree the Council provides value for money. We also know that 55% of residents have visited the Council website in the last

	<p>year and 49% have phoned the Council. We have figures for the numbers of website visits, payments and online forms, and also for the number of people who phone the contact centre. We do not yet have data about satisfaction with the method of providing services e.g. whether they are provided digitally or not.</p>
<p>What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>The satisfaction data is from the 2015 Citizen Survey. This survey has included some people from the protected characteristics groups.</p> <p>Performance data from Customer Services and Communications and Consultation has been used in assessing current use of access channels.</p> <p>Customer Services manage a list of customers who have requested information in other formats e.g. Braille, large print.</p>
<p>If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:</p>	<p>It is proposed that consultation regarding use of the internet and other technologies, and satisfaction with access channels, be undertaken as part of the Citizen and Stakeholder survey in early 2016.</p> <p>It is also planned to do some user testing of the website with people with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b></p>	
<p>In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?</p>	<p>By providing more services digitally, i.e. online through the website, the Council will make it easier for people with disabilities to access them.</p> <p>The website is designed to be accessible for people with disabilities. For example, people with visual problems can enlarge the print so they can read it more easily. The Council also provides the 'Browsealoud' feature which will read website text to aloud to a user who cannot see.</p> <p>The website can also be automatically translated into a variety of languages.</p>

	<p>Browsealoud will also provide oral translations. This makes services accessible to people who do not speak English.</p> <p>The website is available 24/7 and people can use it from the comfort of their own home, or via a mobile device while on the move. Making more services and information available digitally will therefore make them more accessible for people with mobility problems, for elderly people who may not be able to get out and about, and for people can't contact the council during standard working hours.</p>
<p><b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b></p>	
<p>If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).</p>	<p>The Council's approach is 'Digital by Preference' and we will continue to provide services in a variety of ways so that people who can't use digital technologies can continue to access our services. Also, as part of its digital inclusion work and communications activities, the Council is encouraging and assisting more people to go digital and reap the benefits.</p>
<p>What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?</p>	<p>No other actions are required.</p>
<p><b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b></p>	
<p>When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?</p>	<p>The assessment will be reviewed at the end of March 2016 by the Transformation Manager and the Digital Manager.</p>



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(s)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Community Services/ Assistant Director Planning**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (People and Places) /  
Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Cllr. Y. Gagen/Cllr. J. Hodson**

**Contacts for further information: Mrs P Campbell**

(E-mail: [paula.campbell@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:paula.campbell@westlancs.gov.uk))

**Mr S. Kent**

( E-mail: [stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk))

---

**SUBJECT: USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES IN BURSCOUGH AND ORMSKIRK**

---

Wards affected: Burscough, Derby

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider proposals regarding the use of Section 106 monies received from housing developers for the enhancement of public open space and recreation provision in Burscough and Ormskirk

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That approval is given to the use of S106 monies for the funding of the projects identified in paragraphs clause 5.1 and 5.2 of this report.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will recall that under policy LE.13 of the Local Plan, developers must provide open space facilities as part of housing developments or the Council can require a commuted sum for the provision of new or the enhancement of existing areas of public open space within its area.
- 3.2 In February 2011 an Officer Section 106 Agreements – Public Open Space

Working Group was established to co-ordinate the receipt of the commuted sums, seek views of Parish or ward Councillors, and report to Cabinet on proposals for the use of the S106 funding.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The S106 Working Group have received bids for Burscough and Ormskirk (Derby ward).

4.2 The following funds are currently available in the Burscough area :-

- £40,000 from development at Pickles Drive/Furnival Drive  
Section 106 agreement states to be used “for the purpose of upgrading and enhancement of facilities on the existing public open space at Pickles Drive/Furnival Drive, Burscough”
- £15,463 from the development at 5 Moss Lane
- £2,209 from the development at 82 Orrell Lane

4.3 The following funds are currently available in Derby ward, Ormskirk :-

- £60,909 from the development at Ormskirk Hospital  
Section 106 agreement states to be used “to create or improve a nearby area of public open space.”

#### **5.0 PROPOSALS**

5.1 In Burscough it is proposed that S106 monies be used to enhance the existing multi use games area (MUGA) located on land adjacent to Hesketh Avenue. The works will include a much needed enhancement of the MUGA through the provision of new and improved recreational equipment (including seating, and boundary fencing). The estimated cost of the proposed works is approx. £40,000.

5.2 In Ormskirk it is proposed that S106 monies be used to upgrade land at Station Approach. The works will involve the construction of new pathways and access points, installation of park furniture (including benches and picnic tables), habitat management (including tree thinning, path and vegetation clearance), information boards, and public artwork. The estimated cost of the proposed works is approx. £45,000. These works will contribute towards the Council's aspiration set out in its Local Plan and the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan, to provide a Linear Park between Ormskirk and Burscough. .

5.3 The Assistant Director Planning offers the view that the proposed use of Section 106 monies is in accordance with planning policy and the terms of the Section 106 Agreements and consequently supports the proposals.

#### **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**



- 6.1 The project will support the Council's strategic aims in respect of improving access to quality facilities, providing facilities to improve the health and quality of life of the community and ensuring access to a wide age range.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The estimated total capital costs of the proposals is £85,000 which can be covered by the Section 106 funds currently available.
- 7.2 On completion of the Burscough facility the play area will be included as part of the Council's inspection and maintenance schedule within existing budgets.
- 7.3 On completion of the Ormskirk facility at Station Approach the maintenance of the site will be undertaken by the Council utilising existing parks and public open space revenue provision.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Section 106 funds need to be spent in accordance with criteria set out in the related planning agreements and usually within a set time from payment. If the Council does not spend the monies in accordance with the set criteria then they will be repayable to the developer. This risk can be mitigated by assessing all projects proposals prior to commencement to assure compliance and working in partnership with the applicants to ensure criteria is adhered to.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendix  
1. EIA



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Community Services</b>		<b>Service: Leisure, Cultural &amp; Arts</b>	
<b>Completed by: Paula Campbell</b>		<b>Date: 06/02/2015</b>	
<b>Subject Title: Use of Section 106 monies – Cabinet Report, September 2015</b>			
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>	
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No		
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	Yes		
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes		
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes		
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes		
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes		
Details of the matter under consideration:	The provision of play and recreation facilities		
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>		
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>			
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>			
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Local communities		
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	Young persons		

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
Age	Yes
Gender	No
Disability	No
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	Project not commenced
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Increased provision of play and recreation facilities
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	Consultation process carried out to support the projects
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	Liaisons with Parish and local Ward Councillors
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Increased recreation activities for the benefit young people and local community
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	N/A
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	On-going monitoring and liaisons with Parish Councils, local Ward Councillors and local communities affected.  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	September 2016. Reviewing officer – Paula Campbell.



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(t)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Community Services/Assistant Director  
Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Directors: Managing Director (People and Places)/  
Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor Y. Gagen & Councillor I. Moran**

**Contact for further information: Steve Kent (Extn 5169)  
(E-Mail [stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk))  
Rachel Kneale (Extn.2611)  
(E-Mail: [rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL ASSETS - MANAGED FISHING LAKES**

---

Wards affected : Burscough East, UpHolland

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To propose revised arrangements for the management of the Council's fishing lakes.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the new asset management arrangements, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.2 of this report, are applied to the Council's fishing lakes identified at Appendix 1.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Community Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to give effect to the revised management arrangements at 2.1, subject to all necessary consents and approvals being.

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council's Fishing Lakes at Platts Lane, Burscough, Abbey Lakes, Upholland, and Chequer Lane, Upholland are classed by the Council as Community Assets. It is possible that Clubs or Community Organisations could

manage these assets for the benefit of their members and the wider community. In some situations these Clubs and Organisations are often best able to determine those elements of investment and improvement to the assets which will benefit those wishing to use them the most. Significantly these Clubs and Organisations are able to access external funding which is not available to the Council.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 At present there are two types of arrangement in place to deal with the management of the fishing lakes. The Council directly manages the sites at Abbey Lakes and Chequer Lane in UpHolland, whilst the site at Platts Lane in Burscough is jointly managed by the Council and Burscough and District Angling Club (BDAC).

4.2 At Platts Lane the lake and immediate surrounds are managed by BDAC, whilst the wider site, including trees, woodlands, grassland and access, is managed by the Council. BDAC have now requested that the Council consider revising the management arrangements at Platts Lane, in line with that now adopted for the Council's managed allotment sites, whereby BDAC would undertake agreed maintenance functions at the site for which they would use the rent monies previously payable to the Council.

#### **5.0 ISSUES**

5.1 On 12 October 2008, the government produced a paper entitled "Advancing Assets for Communities", which explains how to optimise the community benefit of publicly owned assets, by considering options for greater transfer of asset ownership and management to community groups.

5.2 This proposed scheme would support the desire of BDAC to widen their involvement in the management of the Platts Lane Lake site, and steer new management arrangements for the Council's two lake sites in Up Holland.

#### **6.0 PROPOSALS**

6.1 The Assistant Director Community Services will determine whether BDAC who presently have a joint management role at Platts Lane Lake are constituted sufficiently well to extend their management role, are minded to assume this responsibility, and are currently undertaking their joint management role in a satisfactory manner. The appropriate terms will be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager for inclusion within their new lease.

6.2 In respect of the two fishing lakes in Upholland, where a new club/organisation is being established and is not yet constituted in an acceptable manner but indicates that they are willing to become so then they will be provided with assistance in this regard. Once this has been completed they will be offered terms for an initial 12 month period, to be followed by a longer 7 year lease if the initial arrangements are judged by the Assistant Director Community Services to be working in a satisfactory manner.

- 6.3 All of the above arrangements have been subject to the relevant title being inspected to see if there is any restriction or prohibition on the disposal as proposed.
- 6.4 Appropriate lease terms would include responsibility on the Club/Organisation for lake maintenance and management, wider site maintenance to be agreed, day ticket collection and bailiffing, site security, and insurance. The lease would also contain the right for the council to terminate should the land be needed for development or other purposes.
- 6.5 One requirement of the lease will be that the membership of the body who hold the lease produces an annual report in January which details how they propose to spend the rent monies which would otherwise be payable to the Council. This will be considered by the Council's Assistant Director Community Services to determine if the proposals will, in his opinion enhance the Community Asset. If a report is not submitted or the officer is not able to certify that the proposals are acceptable then the rent falls due in the normal manner.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposals may result in the Council not receiving the annual rental income which it receives from Platts Lane Lake of £300 ground rent and approximately £1,800 per annum from day ticket income. Potential future income of approximately £1200 from the two Upholland sites may also be foregone (see Appendix 1)
- 7.2 Conservation and access management and maintenance at its fishing lakes is currently undertaken through the Council's Ranger Service and Grounds Maintenance Team and therefore an increased input from the Club/Organisation to undertake some of this work will create additional capacity within the Councils revenue budgets. There will also be a small administrative saving if the rents and day ticket income no longer need to be collected.
- 7.3 The new arrangement should make it more likely that the Community Groups will be able to attract external funding. Many grants for environmental improvements, community and volunteer development, and community devolvement of recreational facilities are available but a significant proportion of these require application from the community group itself.
- 7.4 The arrangement has worked well in other local authorities and has resulted in the Community Groups expending far more money on the Community Asset than the rental income forgone by the Council, thus improving the asset and creating a sense of ownership for the service users.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Should there be insufficient clubs/organisations willing or able to assume responsibility for these community assets the Council would have to investigate and implement alternative management arrangements.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The proposed management arrangements have worked well for the allotments and fishing lakes in other authorities resulting in an enhanced asset and there is no reason to suppose that West Lancashire will be any different.
- 9.2 Fishing Clubs generally have a commitment to a site for a significant period. It is hoped that they will embrace the opportunity to take greater control of the facility which they utilise.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

#### **Appendices**

1. Council Fishing Lakes



**APPENDIX 1**

**Council Fishing Lakes**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Area of lake (Hectares/Acres)</b>	<b>No of Fishing Platforms</b>	<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Income actual/potential (ground rent + fishing rental)</b>	<b>Managed by club Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Platts Lane Lake. Burscough	0.89ha/2.20a	32	Burscough and District Angling Club	£2,100	Y	
Abbey Lakes, Upholland	1.36ha/3.35a	27	None	£800	N	Seek new club involvement
Chequer Lane Lake, Upholland	0.24ha/0.59a	13	None	£400	N	Seek new club involvement





**AGENDA ITEM: 5(u)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Community Services/ Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (People and Places) /  
Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Cllr. Y. Gagen/Cllr I. Moran**

**Contacts for further information: Mrs R. Kneale**

**(E-mail: [rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk) )**

**Mr S. Kent**

**( E-mail: [Stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.kent@westlancs.gov.uk) )**

---

**SUBJECT: ALLOTMENT LEASES**

---

Wards affected: All Skelmersdale wards

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval to extend the lease term for the Councils two statutory allotment sites in Skelmersdale.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the Assistant Director Community Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to extend the lease term of Skelmersdale Horticultural Society and Liverpool Road Allotment Society(respectively) from 7 years to 25 years, as identified at paragraph 5.1, subject to all necessary consents and approvals being obtained.

---

---

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In 2010 a report was presented to Cabinet (Operational Assets – Managed Allotment Sites – 16 March 2010) which set out a process for new management arrangements for all of our allotments following a Government White paper in 2008 entitled Advancing Assets for Communities. Our report looked to support

this initiative by seeking and supporting, devolved management for our allotments, and authorisation was given for new management arrangements for allotment societies. These arrangements included setting standard terms for Society leases of 12 months for new societies and 7 years for established and capable societies.

- 3.2 This process has proven successful with most of our allotments now under some level of devolved management, and all of the sites fully occupied with waiting lists.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 Skelmersdale Allotment Society (SHS) manage the Council owned allotment site at Houghtons Road Skelmersdale. Liverpool Road Allotment Society (LRAS) manage the Council owned allotment site in Liverpool Road, Skelmersdale.( see appendix 1 – Skelmersdale Allotment Sites). Both of these societies have been operating on these sites for many years, SHS since 1985 and LRAS since 1984, undertaking devolved management of the facilities, and between them provide plots for almost 50 local residents. They have both operated efficiently and through their voluntary input have contributed significant time, skill and resources, including attracting external grant funding, to help develop well managed allotments that are a great asset to the community.

4.2 In line with current policy both of these Societies have been given or offered 7 year leases for their sites. However, both Societies have requested that the duration of their leases be extended to 25 years. The reasoning for this request is:-

4.2.1 Both Societies are keen to develop their sites and keep the standards as high as possible. Without financial support from the Council they rely upon external grant aid. Many grant funders, including the Big Lottery, require security of tenure to allocate significant grants, of 20-25 years, and this is a similar situation for many of the other larger grant distributors.

4.2.2 As both Societies have already been in existence for substantially longer than 7 years (SHS – 30 years, and LRAS - 31 years) and have managed their sites well throughout that time, they feel that they warrant this longer term lease.

4.2.3 The two sites managed by these Societies, at Houghtons Road and Liverpool Road, Skelmersdale are the only two Council owned sites that are officially classified as Statutory sites, with the protection that affords, and the Societies feel that the longer lease term requested would better reflect this status.

#### **5.0 PROPOSALS**

5.1 It is proposed, therefore that, in order to support the Societies aims of attracting grant funding and to reflect the standing and capabilities of the Societies and their sites approval be given to extending the duration of their leases to terms of 25 years.

#### **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 The project will support the Council’s strategic aims in respect of improving access to quality facilities, providing facilities to improve the health and quality of life of the community.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Longer security of tenure would increase the ability of the allotment societies to access external grant funding. This would support the ability of the societies to continue fully devolved management of the sites.
- 7.2 The subject allotments are statutory by designation and therefore enjoy legal protection under the Allotments Act 1925. Statutory Allotments may only be disposed of by a local authority if the Secretary of State provides his consent.
- 7.2.1 “Such consent ... shall not be given unless the Minister is satisfied that adequate provision will be made for allotment holders displaced by the action of the local authority or that such provision is unnecessary or not reasonably practicable.” The Council has shown its support for allotments and therefore, of S123 of the Local Government Act, members may be satisfied that the provisions namely the social, economic benefits are met.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The allotment societies concerned feel that the increased lease term would help them to access funds that they require to continue devolved management and without this their devolved management responsibilities could be unfeasible. If the societies terminated their leases and handed the management function back to the Borough Council there would be increased resource implications for the Council.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Skelmersdale Allotment Sites

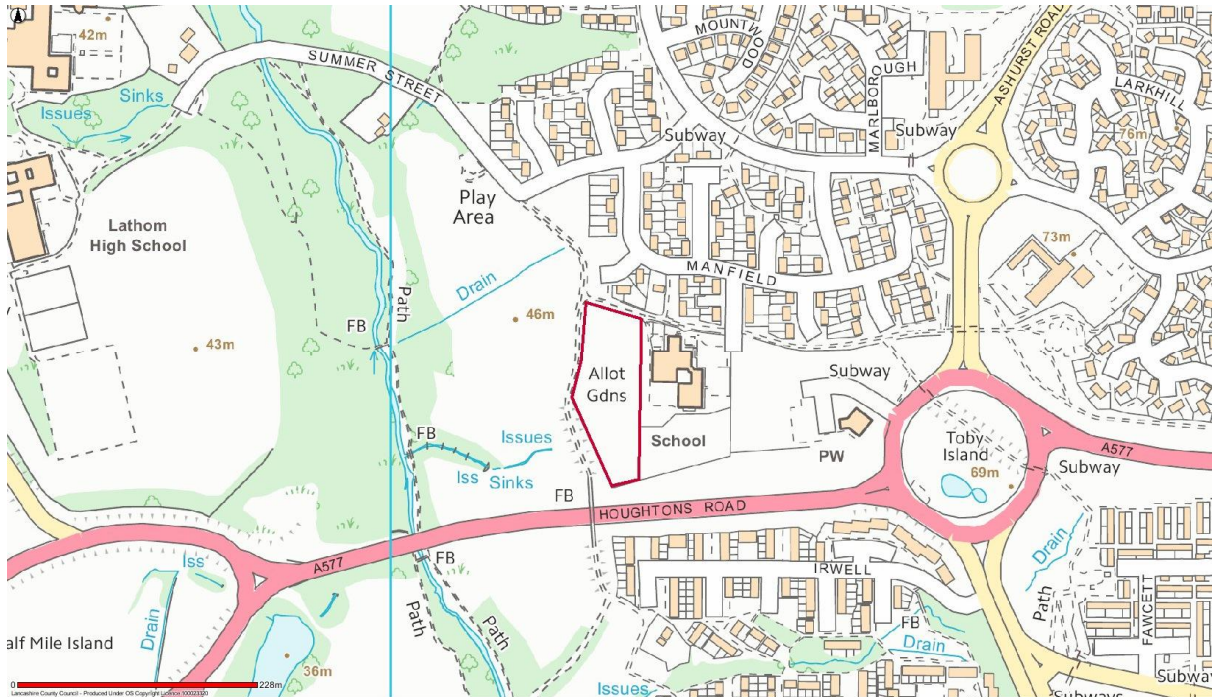
### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.



# Appendix 1 – Skelmersdale Allotment Sites

## Houghtons Road Allotments



## Liverpool Road Allotments







# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Community Services</b>	<b>Service: Leisure, Cultural &amp; Arts</b>
<b>Completed by: Stephen Kent</b>	<b>Date: 30/07/2015</b>
<b>Subject Title: Allotment Leases</b>	

## 1. DESCRIPTION

Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
	Yes
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	No
Details of the matter under consideration:	Extension of lease terms on the 2 statutory allotment sites owned by the Council from 7 to 25 years

*If you answered **Yes** to any of the above go straight to Section 3*  
*If you answered **No** to all the above please complete Section 2*

## 2. RELEVANCE

Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	

## 3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Local allotment societies
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	Significant percentage of older generation

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	
Age	Yes
Gender	No
Disability	No
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	Local community for growing healthy food and healthy outdoor activity
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Increased ability to secure external grant funding to improve/develop the sites
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	Community fully supports allotment provision. Increased external funding would create better provision for community use
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	None
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Better/more secure allotment provision would particularly impact positively on the older population
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	N/A
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	On-going monitoring. <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	September 2016. Reviewing officer – Stephen Kent



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(v)**

**Cabinet: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Extraordinary Council:  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

---

**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)  
Managing Director (People and Places)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor I. Moran  
Councillor J. Patterson  
Councillor C. Wynn**

**Contact for further information: Miss Tina Iball (Extn. 5197)  
(E-mail: [christina.iball@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:christina.iball@westlancs.gov.uk))**

---

**SUBJECT: INVESTMENT IN SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAICS (PV) ON COUNCIL  
HOUSING STOCK**

---

Wards affected: Borough wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present the potential environmental and financial benefits, for the Council and its tenants, offered through the installation of solar PV on Council housing stock, together with the associated risks. Also, to seek relevant approvals to invest up to £4.440million in solar PV installations on Council owned housing, subject to the project delivering a minimum 4% rate of return on investment and completion of a procurement exercise.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the opportunities, benefits and risks of investing in solar PV technology be considered and noted.

2.2 That Council be recommended to approve borrowing of up to £4.440M for investment in solar PV on Council housing stock, subject to a minimum 4% rate

of return being achieved and noting the comments at paragraph 4.6 of this report.

- 2.3 That, subject to Council approval of funding, delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration to procure, contract and install solar PV on suitable Council housing stock and to take all steps necessary to complete the project.
- 2.4 That call-in is not appropriate as the matter is to be considered at full Council and the relevant project must proceed without delay to secure the relevant outcomes sought.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- 3.1 That the opportunities, benefits and risks of investing in solar PV technology be considered and noted.
- 3.2 That borrowing of up to £4.440m be approved for investment in solar PV on Council housing stock, subject to a minimum 4% rate of return being achieved and noting comments at paragraph 4.6 of this report.
- 3.3 That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration to procure, contract and install solar PV on suitable Council housing stock and to take all steps necessary to complete the project subject to paragraph 3.2 above.

---

---

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Solar PV is a reliable and well established method of generating electricity, suitable for a vast number of homes in the UK. The Government's Feed-in Tariff (FiT) scheme currently guarantees index linked income payments for every KWh of renewable electricity generated by a solar PV system for 20 years. Despite reductions in the FiT rate since its launch in 2010, the significant reductions in capital costs to install solar PV technology means that it still provides a good investment opportunity that can provide positive cash flows and attractive rates of return. However, the FiT rates paid by the Government are continuing to be reduced over time and consequently, it is important that any investment in solar PV that the Council wishes to make should take place as quickly as possible.
- 4.2 The Council has previously installed solar PV on a small number of its buildings including the Derby Street offices. This investment has delivered a positive experience based on the income generated and the energy savings achieved. This report now considers a far larger investment in solar PV on Council houses, bungalows and flats.
- 4.3 A Blue Sky solar suitability assessment has been undertaken to identify those properties within the Council's housing stock that would be best suited to solar

PV. Using a combination of accurate, high resolution aerial photography, height data and solar irradiation information, the Blue Sky assessment compiled the key solar suitability statistics of all properties, including roof orientation, roof pitch, useable roof area and potential solar panel array size and produced a list of properties that will provide the maximum gain in terms of generation and income.

- 4.4 Solar PV offers an opportunity for the Council to support its tenants by reducing the cost of their electricity bills, helping those struggling in fuel poverty and protecting them against electricity price increases over the next 20-25 years. Council tenants living in houses and bungalows selected to receive a solar PV installation could benefit from savings on their energy bills by utilising the renewable electricity as its generated. Depending on the size of the property, this could range from anything between £100 - £200 a year. It is proposed that solar PV installed on flats is connected to the landlords supply. The reasoning behind this is set out later in the report.
- 4.5 The carbon savings achieved from displacing fossil fuel based electricity with that from a renewable energy supply would also have a positive impact on helping to tackle climate change, meeting national renewable energy targets and increasing security in our energy supplies.
- 4.6 On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2015, the Government announced a Consultation paper on the FiT proposing changes which would significantly reduce the rate of FiT from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. This could potentially undermine this initiative. The results of the consultation will not be known for at least 28 days. I am therefore proposing that Members give authority to invest up to £4.440M and that an appropriate minimum rate of return of 4% be used. If the Government do not reduce the FiT as proposed, this will enable the proposals in paragraph 5 to be carried out in full. If the Government do however reduce the FiT, work will cease in December. If this situation does occur, I anticipate that up to 1054 houses and bungalows will benefit but flats could need to be excluded. I will not proceed with this work unless the minimum rate of return is achievable.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The results of the suitability assessment are set out in Table 1 below. As illustrated, the Council has over 2,934 properties suitable for solar PV, which would require an £8.75M investment package to fully deliver. However, it is recommended that the investment is limited to £4.440M based on the 1,434 properties that have a south / south west / south east orientation for the following reasons:
- It is best practice that the scale of investment in a specific area is limited so that risk exposure is controlled (you shouldn't put all of your eggs in one basket).

- The more investment that takes place in solar PV there may be less scope there is for investment in other service areas such as economic development and regeneration activities and leisure.
- East and West facing properties produce a lower energy output and consequently a lower rate of return, and would not meet the target 4% rate of return for this project.
- The higher the number of properties included in the project, the longer it will take to complete, which is likely to produce a lower rate of return given that the FiT income is reducing over time.

<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Property Type</b>	<b>No. of Properties</b>	<b>Total Install Cost</b>
South	Houses and Bungalows	378	1,064,486
South	Flats	190	730,740
South West/ South East	Houses and Bungalows	676	1,914,178
South West/ South East	Flats	190	730,740
<b>PROPOSED TOTAL</b>		<b>1434</b>	<b>4,440,144</b>
East	Houses and Bungalows	946	2,745,628
West	Houses and Bungalows	554	1,564,546
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>2,934</b>	<b>8,750,318</b>

**Table 1: Investment Summary**

5.2 While the installation of solar PV is taking place on Council housing, it is proposed that the cost of the capital investment is funded from the General Revenue Account (GRA) rather than the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA is not in a position to make this investment because it is subject to a Government imposed borrowing cap, and its available borrowing has already been fully allocated through the HRA Business Plan. The GRA is however in a position that it can take out the required borrowing, and in return it should receive a net rate of return of at least 4% after allowing for capital financing costs. Details on the business case for this investment are set out in the finance section below.

## **6.0 CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 Legal powers are available including those under Section 11 (1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to establish such generating and other installations as it thinks FiT for the purpose of producing electricity. That power extends to the installation of solar PV panels, and under regulations

(the Sale of Electricity by Local Authorities (England and Wales) Regulations 2010), there is power to sell any electricity generated. The exercise of these powers is subject to compliance with any requirements in Part 1 of the Electricity Act 1989, which does not present any difficulty and the generation of power and feeding it back to the grid under the FiT regulations, as proposed in this report, do not engage those licensing requirements.

- 6.2 Under s.74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council is required to keep a Housing Revenue Account, of sums falling to be credited or debited in respect of houses and other buildings provided under Part II of the Housing Act 1985, and land which has been acquired or appropriated for the purposes of that Part. The properties where the solar PV panels are to be located are held by the Council for housing purposes and thus within the Housing Revenue Account. In implementing and operating the project, the Council would be discharging functions under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, rather than the Housing Act 1985, although it would impinge on those housing functions. The main beneficiaries of the project would be those council tenants who would benefit from the free electricity generated and also the landlord in respect of electricity use in common parts for the flats. The scheme would also have a positive environmental impact which would benefit the whole area as well as generating an income through the FiT.
- 6.3 In such circumstances it is considered appropriate that the GRA can pay for and receive income from installations on HRA properties. Any costs incurred by the HRA, e.g. staff time in managing and maintaining this initiative will be recharged against the projected costs and income from this scheme.
- 6.4 Tenancy agreements for each property fitted with solar PV will need to be varied. This will require a variation to be drawn up to cover issues such as ownership, tenant co-operation for access and on-going maintenance, tampering and damage etc. The installation of solar PV will not be compulsory, but the benefits offered to tenants are expected to provide a low refusal rate.
- 6.5 Should a tenant exercise their right to buy a council house that benefits from solar PV, the Council would look to ensure the panels remain on the property, under the Council's ownership, by way of a lease agreement that would be signed during the right to buy process. This way, the Council is guaranteed the return on investment from the FiT and the tenant continues to benefit from free electricity. Whilst these issues will be time and resource intensive at the early stages of the project and to some extent as on-going work, it is considered achievable. Suitable adjustments will be made to reflect this position as necessary in the Right to Buy (RTB) valuation process.
- 6.6 The contract(s) for the supply and installation of the panels will be over the EU threshold so the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 will apply. The contract will be procured in accordance with the regulations.

- 6.7 The works can be carried out under Permitted Development so there will be no requirement for planning permission.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 This project would have a positive effect on various sustainability considerations. Installing solar PV on our properties would improve housing quality and help tackle local fuel poverty levels through reductions on tenant's energy bills. Whilst the properties chosen to benefit from solar PV will be primarily based on roof orientation, fuel poverty levels across our housing stock will reduce as a result of this project.
- 7.2 It is inevitable that there will be tenants that are disappointed that their property has not been selected for solar PV. In these cases it will be made clear that, whilst we are looking to help as many households as possible, the project does have to be financially viable for the Council and is based around a business plan that can only accommodate a certain number of properties. Investment from the HRA could be considered for initiatives to benefit tenants who are excluded from this scheme in future years.
- 7.3 The carbon savings associated with displacing fossil fuel based electricity with that from a renewable source should be given significant weight. Reducing the use of carbon intensive fuels reliant on finite resources will help to tackle climate change, meet national carbon reduction and renewable energy targets and promote sustainability. The average 3KW solar PV system will save an estimated 1,237kg/CO<sub>2</sub>/year. This project is therefore likely to deliver carbon savings of approximately 1,774 tonnes a year, if fully completed.
- 7.4 Decentralised energy supplies and self-sufficient energy generation need to increase in the future if we are to have security in our energy supplies and protect the Council and our tenants from increasing energy prices and the risk of climate change.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The initial capital investment required for this project has been estimated at £4.440m. A financial assessment has been prepared on this basis in Appendix 2 with the assumption that this cost will be funded by prudential borrowing from a lender such as Public Works Loan Board, at a fixed interest rate of 2.9% and a 20 year term. This analysis shows that the project should deliver a net cash income of £141,899 to the GRA in the first full year of operation increasing to around £200K in subsequent years. The payback period to recoup the investment would be 10.6 years.
- 8.2 If Members wished to use available capital resources or reserves to fund this project then it would generate an additional saving of just under £8,000 per £100,000 funding from this source.



- 8.3 Timescales will be a significant influence on the success of this project. We will need to act quickly to ensure installations are fitted and registered prior to any reduction in FiT rate. As a result, we would need to install as soon as possible following project approval. This will have significant resource implications on finance, legal and property services teams but is considered achievable. There will also be on-going resource implications such as system monitoring, tenant enquiries, general maintenance and documentation for changes to tenancies and right to buy sales. Clearly, if the Government change the FiT arrangements and if less properties are fitted with solar PV, then the income will reduce but so too will the investment. The recommendation at 2.2 and 3.2 cater for this and ensure that there will be at least 4% rate of return achieved.
- 8.4 Procurement of both materials and installation are in-hand to be competitively procured through the OJEU compliant Procure Plus Framework. Through these arrangements, materials can be procured through a direct award process which could be undertaken relatively quickly, however this is not appropriate for installation works which would need to go through a mini tender process. Realistically, this will take 3 weeks for completion. All framework contractors are MCS accredited to supply and install solar PV.
- 8.5 Tenant education will be a large part of this project, to ensure that tenants change their behaviour to utilise the benefits that solar PV can provide and maximise savings on their energy bills. This, along with continual monitoring of the systems, will be a large demand on staff resources, especially in the initial stages of delivery, however this can be delivered by existing resources.
- 8.6 Operation and Maintenance costs of £50 per installation per year, RPI linked at 3% per annum, have been included in the financial model. This £50 also allows for online system monitoring and failure alerts, a sinking fund for inverter replacement after year 10 and a system check every 5 years.
- 8.7 Cost information is based on robust market intelligence for labour and materials, subject to the comments made above. Generation data modelling has been found to underestimate in the majority of cases so we can be confident that income figures will be achieved.
- 8.8 Installations on blocks of flats would be sized in accordance with roof space per block, not per property. It isn't financially viable to install smaller systems linked to each property. As a result, the electricity generated will feed into the landlord's (i.e. Council's) supply, providing further savings on Council energy bills that haven't been accounted for in the above figures. Whilst the roof space of a flat doesn't form part of a tenancy, a variation may be required for tenants living in the upstairs flats, should the loft space be accessed through their property. There will be no significant impact on service charges as a result of this project. If the Government's proposals on part of the consultation arrangements on Fi T are implemented, it is likely that no work will be able to be carried out to flats in any event.

- 8.9 The FiT figure has been calculated using solar PV generation data and the deemed export tariff. The figures provided have been modelled on predicted FiT levels in six months' time (March 2016), accounting for a predicted 7% drop in FiT levels, as has typically been seen over recent years. Timescales are therefore an important factor for this project as the FiT will drop further on a quarterly basis. Equally important is the Government's consultation on reducing FIT from 1/1/16.
- 8.10 The total install costs are based on current market value, however the recent Government consultation has already resulted in volatility in the market and significant increases in materials costs are expected over the following weeks. Pre-ordering materials, secured by deposit, will protect the Council from this inevitable increase as demand for products intensifies. Placing a deposit on materials at an early stage will also ensure materials will be in place at the end of September 2015 and, more importantly, secure the rate for all required materials without re-stocking charges, should the full amount of installs not be delivered. The business case will be refined once definite costs have been secured for both materials and install, following a competitive tendering exercise.
- 8.11 The insurance implications of installing solar PV to Council housing have been investigated and are expected to result in minimal increases to our existing premiums.
- 8.12 An advanced survey will be undertaken to ensure that the roof will have the load bearing capacity to have solar PV installed. Therefore, not all properties identified will be capable of being included in the proposal.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Such a significant investment obviously comes with a risk however; this risk has been mitigated as far as possible. Whilst the sun's energy obviously can't be guaranteed, the models used to estimate solar PV generation utilise location specific weather and sunlight hours to generate the data as accurately as possible.
- 9.2 The materials specification is of a very high quality, further guaranteeing generation as far as possible. The panels are guaranteed for 12 years and the inverters (which convert Direct Current to Alternating Current) are guaranteed for 10 years. The output from the solar PV systems is guaranteed for 20 years. All parts and labour are covered for the first five years and the business case for this project includes cost for replacing inverters, if necessary, after 10 years.
- 9.3 Generation data modelling has been proved to be conservative so all income figures are prudent and considered achievable. We also have first-hand experience that this is the case from the seven PV systems the Council have invested in over the last four years. These have been closely monitored since installation and have been found to be exceeding generation and income predictions.

- 9.4 There is also a risk that Government could choose to close and/or reduce the FiT scheme at any point during the 20 years. This would leave the Council with the principle debt to be repaid. By keeping our investment under £4.440M, this should allow the project to be rolled out fairly quickly, minimising the risk associated with the proposed reduction in FiT from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016. It also allows other investment projects to be undertaken within the prudential borrowing regulations, so success isn't dependant on one project. It is expected that, as with other schemes, any commissioned and registered systems receiving FiT would be honoured for the full 20 years should the FiT scheme be closed in future years.
- 9.5 Permission to install solar PV also needs to be granted from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO), which in our area is Electricity Northwest. They need to check that the existing electricity grid is capable of withstanding the additional supplies that the new systems will generate and may refuse certain properties on this basis. Initial enquires with the DNO have established that there are no issues. The delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Regeneration will allow any variations.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 2 - Solar PV Investment Figures



## Equality Impact Assessment Form

<b>Equality Impact Assessment Form</b>	
<b>Directorate: Transformation</b>	<b>Service: Housing and Regeneration</b>
<b>Completed by: Tina Iball</b>	<b>Date: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015</b>
<b>Subject Title: Solar PV</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	Yes
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	Yes
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	No
Details of the matter under consideration:	Installation of solar PV to provide tenants in eligible properties with free electricity generated.
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i></p>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	
<p>If <b>Yes</b>, provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):</p> <p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i></p>	

<p>If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:  <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i></p>	
<p><b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b></p>	
<p>Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?</p>	<p>Tenants living in eligible properties selected for a PV installation.</p>
<p>If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Disability</li> <li>Race and Culture</li> <li>Sexual Orientation</li> <li>Religion or Belief</li> <li>Gender Reassignment</li> <li>Marriage and Civil Partnership</li> <li>Pregnancy and Maternity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> <li>N</li> <li>No</li> <li>No</li> <li>N</li> <li>No</li> <li>Yes</li> </ul> <p>These characteristics have been selected as they are most likely to be at home during the day to utilise the electricity as its generated.</p>
<p><b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b></p>	
<p>In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?</p>	<p>We don't currently have Solar PV on any residential properties.</p>
<p>What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?</p>	<p>Tenants in properties Fitted with PV will benefit from free electricity generated and see reductions on their energy bills, helping to tackle fuel poverty.</p>
<p>What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?</p>	<p>Properties will be selected based on the basis of their orientation and size. Some tenants will therefore benefit when others won't.</p>

What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	No consultation has been undertaken to date but will be should the project receive approval.  Depending on the size of the property, eligible properties can hope to save between £50 and £200 a year on their energy bills.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	None
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Tenants will benefit from free electricity generated and see reductions on their energy bills, helping to tackle fuel poverty.  There will be no identified negative impact on tenants.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	Should a tenant be adamant they do not want solar PV on their home, they will be removed from the project.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No further actions are planned at this time.
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	This assessment will be reviewed during consultation with tenants.

**APPENDIX 2**  
**SOLAR PV PROJECT FINANCIAL APPRAISAL - CASH FLOW**  
**ANALYSIS**

Year	Capital Investment	Borrowing	Principal Repayment	Interest Cost	Operation and Maintenance costs	Officer time / Other costs	Equipment Replacement / Deterioration	Income	Net cash flow
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]
0	-4,440,144	4,440,144							0
1			-222,007	-128,764	-71,700	-25,000	0	589,371	141,899
2			-222,007	-122,326	-73,851	-25,750	0	601,158	157,224
3			-222,007	-115,888	-76,067	-26,523	0	613,181	172,697
4			-222,007	-109,450	-78,349	-27,319	0	625,445	188,321
5			-222,007	-103,011	-80,699	-28,139	0	637,954	204,097
6			-222,007	-96,573	-83,120	-28,983	0	650,713	220,030
7			-222,007	-90,135	-85,614	-29,852	0	663,727	236,119
8			-222,007	-83,697	-88,182	-30,748	0	677,002	252,368
9			-222,007	-77,259	-90,827	-31,670	0	690,542	268,779
10			-222,007	-70,820	-93,552	-32,620	-119,344	704,352	166,009
11			-222,007	-64,382	-96,359	-33,599	-122,924	718,440	179,168
12			-222,007	-57,944	-99,250	-34,607	-126,612	732,808	192,389
13			-222,007	-51,506	-102,227	-35,645	-130,410	747,464	205,670
14			-222,007	-45,067	-105,294	-36,714	-134,322	762,414	219,009
15			-222,007	-38,629	-108,453	-37,815	-138,352	777,662	232,406
16			-222,007	-32,191	-111,706	-38,949	-142,503	793,215	245,859
17			-222,007	-25,753	-115,057	-40,117	-146,778	809,080	259,367
18			-222,007	-19,315	-118,509	-41,321	-151,181	825,261	272,928
19			-222,007	-12,876	-122,064	-42,561	-155,716	841,766	286,541
20			-222,007	-6,438	-125,726	-43,838	-160,387	858,602	300,205
Total	-4,440,144	4,440,144	-4,440,144	1,352,024	-1,926,606	-671,770	-1,528,529	14,320,157	4,401,084

Average net surplus	220,054
Payback period	10.6 years

<u>-</u> Column	<u>Key Assumptions</u>	Value
-	Numbers of properties	1,434
[1]	Assumed Project lifetime - years	20
[2]	Capital investment cost - estimate	£4,440,144
[3]	Long term borrowing	£4,440,144
[4]	Annual debt repayment - borrowing is repaid in equal instalments over project lifetime	£222,007
[5]	Interest rate on borrowing	2.90%
[6]	Operation and maintenance costs per property in year 1 of £50 Costs then increase by inflation each year	£71,700 3.0%
[7]	Cost of officer time spent on managing scheme in year 1 / other costs (estimate) Costs then increases by inflation per year	£25,000 3.0%
[8]	Equipment replacement / deterioration - Year 10 - 2% of initial capital cost uplifted by inflation Cost then increases by inflation each year	£119,344 3.0%
[9]	Year 1 income figure - see overleaf Income is index linked so assume increases by inflation each year	3.0%
	Module degradation assumed at 1% per year	-1.0%
	Annual change in income is then	2.0%