



AGENDA ITEM: 5(b)

CABINET: 18th January 2011

Report of: Acting Executive Manger Planning

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor M. Forshaw

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SUBJECT: LDF CORE STRATEGY – STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Cabinet Members on the progress of the Core Strategy DPD for the West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF), particularly in relation to the strategic development options for Green Belt release within the Core Strategy, and to determine which of these options should be selected for inclusion in the Preferred Options public consultation document.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet identify two options for strategic development for inclusion in the Core Strategy Preferred Options public consultation document as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The LDF team have been preparing a Core Strategy Preferred Option Paper over the course of 2010. This follows on from initial visioning work and the identification of key issues, undertaken through a series of consultation exercises in 2008/09 and the Public Consultation on the Core Strategy Options Paper in Autumn 2009.

3.2 In the course of preparing the Core Strategy Preferred Option Paper, after assessing all the available evidence, it has become clear that there will be a need to release a relatively small amount of land on the edge of existing settlements that is currently within the Green Belt or designated as “protected” land for strategic development in order to meet the Borough’s targets for housing and employment land over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027). This is due to the

shortage of available and suitable land for development within the existing towns and villages across the Borough.

- 3.3 A range of sites and locations across the Borough that could deliver this housing and employment development have been looked at and consideration given to their suitability in light of all available evidence, including infrastructure provision, impact on the Green Belt and the sustainability of the adjoining settlement. This process has culminated in the identification and preparation of three options for delivering the shortfall in housing and employment land provision over the Core Strategy period.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Significant progress has been made in preparing a Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper, which essentially sets out the key strategic planning policies for the Borough in a “first draft” format for public consultation. The Preferred Options paper identifies the need for the additional provision of 4,500 dwellings and 87 ha of employment land in the Borough over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027).
- 4.2 All but approximately 600 dwellings and 18 ha employment land of these targets can, and should, be provided within the existing built-up areas of the Borough’s towns and larger villages. Therefore, this shortfall needs to be accommodated on Green Belt land or, where suitable, on “protected” land that is open countryside on the edge of some settlements.

5.0 ISSUES

The implications of housing and employment land targets for Green Belt release in West Lancashire

- 5.1 The Core Strategy will set out targets for housing and employment land development over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027), as derived from available evidence and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS). Appendix 1 sets out more detail on how these targets have been arrived at, but the targets are as follows:
- Housing – 4,500 dwellings (or an average of 300 dwellings per year)
 - Employment Land – 87 ha (or an average of 5.8 ha per year)
- 5.2 On the basis of an assumed average density for new residential development of 30 dwellings per hectare (which is the minimum that the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan expects of a housing site and was, until recently, a national minimum target), the target of 4,500 dwellings for the Core Strategy period would require 150 ha of land.
- 5.3 Based on the availability and deliverability of sustainable brownfield and greenfield land within the existing built-up areas of the Borough’s towns and villages (as identified through the SHLAA and other evidence), approximately 3,900 dwellings can be delivered within existing settlement boundaries, disaggregated as follows:

- Skelmersdale & Up Holland – 3,000 dwellings
 - Ormskirk & Aughton – 300 dwellings
 - Burscough – 200 dwellings
 - Northern Parishes – 240 dwellings
 - Eastern Parishes – 80 dwellings
 - Western Parishes – 80 dwellings
- 5.4 This means that at least 600 dwellings (20 ha) will need to be developed on Green Belt land or protected land on the edge of the built-up area if the proposed Core Strategy housing target is to be delivered. This would likely be delivered towards the end of the Core Strategy period once the relevant infrastructure has been put in place and the vast majority of suitable land within the built-up areas has been developed out.
- 5.5 In relation to the 87 ha employment land target, 39 ha can be delivered through the realistic supply of existing Local Plan allocations for employment development and safeguarded land in Skelmersdale, Burscough, Banks and Appley Bridge. A further 30 ha (approx.) could be provided through the regeneration and reconfiguration of parts of the existing industrial estates in Skelmersdale, Burscough and Simonswood. This would leave approximately 18 ha of brand new employment sites to be identified for development in order to meet the Core Strategy employment land target.
- 5.6 Few, if any, sites have been identified within the built-up areas of the Borough's towns and villages that can contribute to the delivery of this additional 18 ha, and so Green Belt land or protected land will need to be identified and allocated to deliver the full employment land target.
- 5.7 Combined, this shortfall of land to deliver the Core Strategy's key development targets will require at least 38 ha of Green Belt land or protected land, plus any land required for complementary infrastructure needs.
- 5.8 While there are sites not designated as Green Belt that are protected land on the edge of the built-up area, the development of such land would, in most cases, have a similar impact as that of developing Green Belt, given that the characteristics of such land are very similar to that of Green Belt, and so it should not necessarily be considered that development on this land would be more appropriate. In addition, these sites are generally located around the villages in the Northern Parishes where there are several significant infrastructure issues that cannot be overcome. This means that large amounts of development could not be considered there, whatever the land availability.
- 5.9 Therefore, regardless of which option is ultimately selected, the development of some Green Belt will be required within the Core Strategy period (i.e. before 2027) and the total amount of land that might need to be released from the Green Belt to deliver this development, taking into account associated infrastructure and other non-residential / non-employment development needs, could be as high as 90 ha.

- 5.10 To put this figure in context, 91% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt, which equates to 34,630 ha. Therefore, the 90 ha that could be considered the maximum Green Belt release during the Core Strategy period represents only 0.26% of the total Green Belt in the Borough.
- 5.11 It should also be noted that, when the Green Belt was established in 1987 around Ormskirk and Burscough, it was never intended to be a designation that lasted forever, but was more an attempt to slow down urban sprawl at that time, protect agricultural land and ensure that what we would now call the most sustainable sites within the built-up area were brought forward for development in preference to greenfield sites in the countryside or on the edge of the built-up area.
- 5.12 In designating this Green Belt, the designation was only ever intended to last between 15 and 20 years (i.e. until between 2002 and 2007), a period which we have now exceeded, and we are seeing the consequences of that now as Green Belt begins to stifle development in the Borough.

Identifying the spatial distribution of development across the Borough

- 5.13 Having identified the targets for residential and employment land development over the Core Strategy period, the Core Strategy must consider how that development should be spread spatially across the Borough. This must have particular reference to:
- where sustainable brownfield and greenfield land is available within existing settlements and whether such land is deliverable for development;
 - the sustainability of a location / settlement for development;
 - the need and demand for housing and employment development in any given part of the Borough;
 - the infrastructure capacity of any given part of the Borough;
 - any aspirations for regeneration / economic development; and
 - the most suitable location for the development of Green Belt land.
- 5.14 Taking into account all the above factors, as set out above, it is anticipated that 3,900 dwellings and 69 ha of employment land can be accommodated within the existing built-up areas of the Borough, with Skelmersdale providing the vast majority of this development (3,000 dwellings and 52 ha of employment land).
- 5.15 As discussed above, totalling up this development and subtracting it from the housing and employment land targets shows a 600 dwelling and 18 ha employment land shortfall that therefore cannot be met within existing settlements in the Borough and therefore must be provided on Green Belt or “Protected” land (currently designated under Policy DS4 in the Local Plan).
- 5.16 Following a thorough evaluation exercise a shortlist of three options for delivering this shortfall in housing and employment land provision during the Core Strategy period have been identified and have come to be known as Strategic Development options. The three Strategic Development options are discussed in section 6 of this report below, but several other possible scenarios have been considered and not been taken forward to this stage because of major constraints or negative impacts associated with them. The following table provides a brief overview of the scenarios that have been considered, and the reasons they have not been taken forward. Not all scenarios could have delivered all 600 dwellings

and all 18 ha of employment land, but even in combination these scenarios were not considered suitable.

Table 5.1: Scenarios considered for Strategic Development, but not taken forward

Potential Scenario	Reasons for not taking forward
Expansion of Skelmersdale / Up Holland	The simple reason for not locating further housing development in the Green Belt around Skelmersdale / Up Holland relates to the level of housing already proposed within the town – providing 3,000 dwellings over 15 years in Skelmersdale / Up Holland is already an ambitious target based on the delivery of housing in the town over the last 15 years, so any further housing would almost certainly result in an undeliverable target. It would also take away housing that is needed in other parts of the Borough.
Expansion of Tarleton / Hesketh Bank	While there is quite a large amount of “protected” (DS4) land around Tarleton / Hesketh Bank, the villages are constrained by several issues (most notably traffic congestion, areas of flood risk and surface water drainage issues) and suffer from a lack of some key services, such as public transport. It would also be difficult to deliver some of the larger areas of “protected” land because they are in multiple ownerships, not all of which would wish to sell their land for development.
Expansion of Banks to the north, west and east	Expansion of Banks to the north, west and east would be very difficult to achieve due to the fact that the vast majority of land on the village’s periphery lies within an area at risk of flooding. The village also suffers from surface water drainage issues and is reliant on other nearby settlements for some key services. However, the southern part of Banks (south of the former railway line) is less constrained by flood risk and so has been considered within one of the shortlisted options in Section 6 (Option C).
Development on the Southport Boundary	A scenario that effectively allows Southport to expand into West Lancashire Green Belt on the Borough boundary (e.g. Brown Edge and Moss Road areas) was considered but parts of the area suffers from significant flood risk and all the area is constrained by deep peat resources that would mean development would require costly piling within the foundations. The land in this location is also Grade 1 agricultural land and is very open, meaning that the loss of Green Belt in this location could be quite harmful.
Expansion of Parbold	Parbold is constrained by several environmental factors that would make development inappropriate or difficult to deliver. The south-western side is restricted by areas of flood risk associated with the River Douglas, the south-eastern side has several Biological Heritage Sites and the north and eastern sides are adjacent to a Conservation Area and adjoin a very attractive landscape that could be negatively impacted by any development. Depending on location, development could also generate significant traffic that would have to travel through the village to access the A5209.

Potential Scenario	Reasons for not taking forward
Development on the periphery of other, smaller villages across the Borough	Development on the periphery of the Borough's smaller villages would not be appropriate due to the unsustainable nature of focusing such large amounts of development in such rural locations with access to limited services, especially public transport. Typically, the villages also lie within areas of agricultural, environmental or landscape value and so the importance of protecting the rural character of these villages and their surroundings is a vital consideration.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 The three strategic development options for delivering the shortfall in housing and employment land provision during the Core Strategy period on the edge of existing settlements, together with their pros and cons, are set out below. All three of these strategic development options are deliverable and have their merits in being sustainable options for development. However, all have issues that will either need to be resolved as part of the development or that the Council will need to accept as a “cost” for delivering the wider benefits that the development brings.
- 6.2 It is requested that Cabinet identify, at least two of these three options for consultation. It would be preferable if Cabinet were able to make it clear which is their first choice option and which is their second choice option, together with the reasons for their decision, but a distinction between first and second choice is not critical at this stage. The selected strategic development options, together with the wider Core Strategy Preferred Options document, will also be debated by Members at Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Planning Committee and the LDF Cabinet Working Group before the full Core Strategy Preferred Options document (which will incorporate the selected strategic development options) is formally agreed for public consultation purposes at Cabinet in March.
- 6.3 There is a need to identify two options for consultation because, ultimately, the Core Strategy will need to include what development it proposes to meet the housing and employment land targets (the first choice option) and it will need to incorporate a “Plan B” so that the Core Strategy is able to demonstrate flexibility and is able to respond to any change in circumstances that may arise during the Core Strategy period. It would therefore seem logical that the second choice option for Green Belt release should constitute that “Plan B”.
- 6.4 Looking forward to our Core Strategy period, there are a couple of situations, centred on failure to deliver development, which might arise and that could result in targets not being met. The prime example of this would be if the market does not deliver 3,000 dwellings in Skelmersdale over the Core Strategy period, and so a significant shortfall begins to build up that cannot be met by 2027 in Skelmersdale. In order to address a situation where it becomes clear part way through the Core Strategy period that the Skelmersdale target is not going to be met, an alternative location for that shortfall should be identified now within the Core Strategy as a “Plan B” to enable the Borough-wide targets to be delivered without having to review the Core Strategy. This same principle would apply in

other parts of the Borough if the planned levels of new housing were not being delivered.

The Options for Strategic Development

- 6.5 The three strategic development options that have been arrived at to deliver the shortfall in housing and employment land provision during the Core Strategy period are, **in no particular order**:
- Option A: An Ormskirk Strategic Site (see Plan A in Appendix 2)
 - Option B: A Burscough Strategic Site (see Plan B in Appendix 2)
 - Option C: Several Sites dispersed around the edges of Burscough, Ormskirk and Banks (see Plan C in Appendix 2)
- 6.6 All the options include 8 ha of Green Belt release to the south of Skelmersdale and up to 10 ha of Green Belt release to the west of Burscough for employment land, and all options involve up to 10 ha of Green Belt release to the east of the existing campus in Ormskirk to accommodate the existing and future needs of Edge Hill University.
- 6.7 Table A3 in Appendix 3 sets out the details of each option along with the pros and cons of each option against a range of issues, but a summary of this assessment for each option is provided below.

Option A – an Ormskirk Strategic Site

- 6.8 Option A would involve the following development on 60 ha of Green Belt land to the south-east of Ormskirk on St Helens Road and at Alty's Farm:
- Up to 600 dwellings;
 - 5 ha of high quality employment land;
 - A Sports Village for Ormskirk's sports clubs;
 - Off-Campus Student Accommodation for up to 700 students; and
 - Expansion of the University campus, including new sports facilities.
- 6.9 In order to meet employment targets, under Option A 8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided to the south of Skelmersdale, as well as 5 ha to the west of Burscough.
- 6.10 The Ormskirk Strategic Site could potentially deliver several significant benefits:
- i) *An opportunity to provide purpose-built, off-campus student accommodation for second and third year students separated from the majority of the town in order to off-set any increased requirements for Student HMOs within the town*

Despite some short-term uncertainty over the next 2 or 3 years due to proposed funding changes to higher education, Edge Hill is currently still anticipating further growth in student numbers over the Core Strategy period. Whilst the University's proposals for restructuring the existing campus would enable all first year students that are expected to require accommodation on campus to be able to have this, it is likely that a large proportion of these

students would have to find accommodation in Student HMOs within the town in their second and third years.

By providing purpose-built, off-campus student accommodation so close to the University, Option A would not only off-set any increased demand for HMOs and prevent more affordable housing stock for local residents being taken up by students but may also remove potential issues between students and local residents by locating students away from the vast majority of the town's residents and close to the campus, but still with easy access to services in the town centre.

ii) The development of a Sports Village for the town's sports clubs

This would enable the provision of high quality sports pitches and facilities for the town's Cricket, Rugby, Tennis and Bowling Clubs in one location, with shared built facilities and a new highway access with car park. This would enable efficiencies in space and facilities between the clubs and mean that the land currently used by these clubs within the town could be used for development where appropriate, bringing a capital receipt in to contribute to the costs of the Sports Village. This Sports Village development would provide a significantly improved facility for the whole town for the future.

Initial discussions have suggested the need for the Sports Village to include 2 cricket pitches; 4 rugby pitches and 1 4G pitch for rugby and other sports use; 2-4 indoor tennis courts (which could also be used for indoor cricket nets & indoor bowls) and 7 outdoor courts; and 3 crown bowling greens, including one artificial green for year round use.

All the sports clubs, who have a combined membership of around 1,000 (comprising Rugby 80 adult and 430 junior members, Cricket approx 350 members, Tennis approx 60 members and Bowls approx 95 members), are strongly supportive of the Sports Village proposal.

It will also assist in getting more young people involved in sport with the associated health and wellbeing benefits this would bring and enable closer links between the clubs and the sports development department at the University.

iii) The provision of high quality business / office space

Such high quality employment development on one of the major gateways into Ormskirk would raise the profile of the town and attract businesses offering high quality jobs. The development could also accommodate businesses in those sectors that complement areas of study within the University, e.g. the media sector.

iv) The managed redesign and expansion of the University Campus

The reconfiguration of the Edge Hill campus is ongoing, but is reaching the stage where additional land is required to decant facilities out to in order to allow the redevelopment of the parts of the campus that those facilities currently occupy. These improvements to the campus, including new sports facilities that will be available for public use, are necessary to ensure that the

University has high quality and modern facilities in order to compete in an increasingly competitive market.

While all three options include land for the expansion of Edge Hill, by including this expansion within a strategic development site in the Core Strategy, Option A would enable the Council to set clear boundaries on how much expansion is to be allowed, ensure that sufficient capacity is created on-campus for the Core Strategy period and beyond and to limit the rate of expansion to ensure that on- and off-campus student accommodation can be delivered to limit the growth of student HMOs in the town.

vi) The provision of much needed new housing in Ormskirk, including new affordable housing

Due to the lack of available land in Ormskirk, local planning policy that has restricted housing development over the past decade and the recent effects of the recession, historic housing completions in Ormskirk have been relatively low when compared to other parts of the Borough (especially Burscough) and given that it is the second largest town and civic centre of the Borough.

This, together with increasing numbers of Student HMOs, has meant that demand for housing in Ormskirk has far out-stripped supply. Allocating a strategic site on the edge of the town that will deliver 600 new dwellings would go some way to meeting this pent-up demand.

A proportion of these dwellings would also be affordable, and so meet the latent need for affordable dwellings in Ormskirk.

vi) New housing in Ormskirk will fill Primary Schools places in Ormskirk

There are currently a large number of places in Ormskirk's Primary Schools that are not being taken-up due to falling numbers of primary school age children in the town. By providing such a large number of new dwellings in the town (900 including those delivered within the urban area as well), a proportion of these places will be filled, thereby better using existing resources in the Borough, rather than having to create new Primary Schools elsewhere in the Borough.

vii) The site is in a very sustainable location

The town centre, bus station, two rail stations and both primary and secondary schools are in walking distance of the site, the University Shuttle Bus could be extended to serve the new development and the site has easy motorway access to the M58 (which would be improved by modifications to the A570 corridor), without the need to drive through the town centre and add to the existing congestion there. The possibility of using the University and / or employment area's car parks at weekends as a Park and Ride with the Shuttle Bus Service could also be explored.

- viii) *The development of a strategic site to the south-east of Ormskirk would directly effect very few existing dwellings*

This is especially the case given that the Sports Village (which is essentially the same use as already exists on this part of the site) would be developed behind most of the houses that actually border the site, with only those dwellings on the western side of Alty's Lane and the cul-de-sacs to the north of this (approximately 40 in total) potentially backing on to new built development, although even this could be avoided with sensitive masterplanning of the site.

- ix) *Potential for an on-site renewable energy scheme with community heat and power infrastructure network*

This would serve the entire strategic site, including the existing University campus and possibly other nearby properties, making the development zero, or very low, carbon as well as creating the potential for a feed-in tariff to sell any excess energy back to the grid or at a lower cost locally.

- x) *Potential links with the University's IT infrastructure, especially high-speed broadband*

The University have the best IT infrastructure in the Borough and includes broadband infrastructure that is not available elsewhere in the Borough, or likely to be available in the near future. The University could extend this infrastructure to serve the wider strategic site, especially the employment and student accommodation.

6.11 However, there are four key constraints in relation to the Ormskirk Strategic Site:

- i) *Waste Water Treatment Infrastructure*

This issue constrains all three options and is a matter principally for United Utilities to resolve, but would actually prevent any development in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick from taking place if it is not resolved.

- ii) *The Traffic Impacts of such a large development in this location*

An increase in traffic in the already congested Ormskirk town centre and along the A570 (which can be severely congested at peak times) is inevitable, even though the site is in a sustainable location and despite the probability that a significant proportion of traffic generated by the site will primarily be travelling to and from the M58.

Increased traffic on local roads, such as Scarth Hill Lane, could also be generated by the development, although traffic generated by the site would be encouraged to move through the site and exit onto the A570 wherever possible and Alty's Lane could also be closed off from through-traffic to prevent traffic using Brook Lane and Small Lane.

However, the congestion on the A570 could be partially mitigated for by highways improvements to the A570 and a Park & Ride scheme for the University. Improvements to pedestrian and cycle routes could also be implemented to encourage car users to use more sustainable means to travel to and from Ormskirk town centre although, ultimately, the town centre will still suffer from congestion.

Officers are continuing to work with Lancashire County Council to better understand the potential effects of development options on the highway network and investigate any potential measures to remedy congestion issues in Ormskirk and Burscough and will incorporate all the latest evidence as it is received.

iii) There will be a loss of Green Belt and good quality agricultural land

All three options involve the loss of Green Belt and good quality agricultural land, but the Ormskirk Strategic Site involves arguably the most valuable Green Belt in any of the three options. This is because it fulfils the purposes of the Green Belt (as defined by national planning policy guidance note 2) better than sites in Options B and C by preventing urban sprawl and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. Development would also involve the permanent loss of Grade 1 agricultural land.

iv) Visual Impact

Development on St Helens Road could be seen to detract from an attractive view (to the south) on a main gateway into the town. Any development would need to be designed to a high standard to mitigate for this loss of view and to complement the Ruff Lane Conservation Area across St Helens Road.

Option B – a Burscough Strategic Site

6.12 Option B would involve the development of up to 70 ha of Green Belt land to the west of Burscough (encompassing the land at Yew Tree Farm) and would provide:

- Up to 600 dwellings;
- 10 ha of new employment land;
- A new Park;
- A new Primary School and other community infrastructure; and
- Safeguarded land for future housing or employment development.

6.13 In order to meet employment targets, under Option B 8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale and there would still be a need to manage the existing and future needs of Edge Hill University by planning for the expansion of the St Helens Road campus in Ormskirk to the east (up to 10 ha in the Green Belt).

6.14 The Burscough Strategic Site could potentially deliver several significant benefits for Burscough:

i) The provision of new housing, including new affordable housing

Option B allows for 600 new dwellings and will include land to be safeguarded for the potential development of more dwellings in the future. A proportion of these dwellings will be affordable, meeting a local need for affordable housing.

ii) A 10 ha extension of the existing employment area

This extension will provide an opportunity for new businesses to locate in the area, thereby creating job opportunities locally, and meeting demand for business premises in Burscough and the Western and Northern Parishes of the Borough, as well as the North Sefton area.

iii) A new town park

The Strategic Site would incorporate a sizeable area of land for a large town park for Burscough, possibly of a similar scale to Coronation Park in Ormskirk. To continue this comparison, Coronation Park is a Green Flag park containing traditional play equipment for younger and older children, a Skate Park, a multi-use games area, a bowling green, a duck pond, a pavilion, a bandstand, a wildlife meadow and a large area of grass which can be used for sports pitches. While not all of these facilities may be necessary or appropriate for a new park in Burscough, it gives a sense of the quantity and quality of facilities that could be provided. However, it would be important to ensure that a Development Management Trust was established for the new park using developer contributions so that the cost of maintaining such a park would not ultimately fall upon the Council.

iv) A new single form entry primary school (or at least an extension of an existing school)

Although a new primary school is only required because of the increased demand that the development of the strategic site would generate for school places, it would still be a significant community benefit for Burscough to have a new primary school (or new extension to an existing school). The development of the new school (or extension) would be reliant on contributions from the developer(s) of the Strategic Site.

v) Improved health care facilities

Health facilities in Burscough are in need of improvement, and so the development of such a strategic development site would be able to contribute towards such improvements. By way of example, this could involve improvements to the existing health centre in Burscough.

vi) A new youth and community centre and new local centre

There is the potential for a new youth and community centre within the Strategic Site, offering new community facilities for all ages in the Burscough community, adjacent to a new local centre providing local convenience shops.

vii) Improved Public Transport links

The development of a strategic site in Burscough could potentially fund improvements to public transport. Developer Contributions could be used as a catalyst for investment in rail improvements or, at very least, to contribute towards an improved service between Preston and Ormskirk. Funds could also be used to improve bus services, possibly including a bus service to serve the employment area.

viii) Improved Surface Water Drainage

Option B would deliver such a large level of new development in Burscough that developer contributions could fund solutions to the surface water flooding issues that currently exist in the town, possibly even utilising some of the land on the strategic site to create attenuation ponds.

ix) Potential for an on-site renewable energy scheme with community heat and power infrastructure network

This would serve the entire strategic site, including the existing employment area and possibly other nearby properties, making the development zero, or very low, carbon as well as creating the potential for a feed-in tariff to sell any excess energy back to the grid or at a lower cost locally.

6.15 However, the Burscough Strategic Site does have several key constraints:

i) Waste Water Treatment Infrastructure

This issue constrains all three options and is a matter principally for United Utilities to resolve, but would actually prevent any development in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick from taking place if it is not resolved.

ii) The need to address surface water flooding and drainage in Burscough through the provision of a sewerage holding tank to hold excess run-off

While this is a limitation and constraint upon development, a development of the size of the Strategic Site may be able to fund the improvements necessary to resolve this issue.

iii) The Traffic Impacts of such a large development in this location

While the traffic impact of Option B would likely not be as great as those options which directly affect traffic in Ormskirk, there would still be significant impacts on the A59 through Burscough and the A5209 out to the M6 (via Newburgh and Parbold). In addition, such a large amount of development in Burscough may have some impact on Ormskirk and other, local routes to Ormskirk.

Officers are continuing to work with Lancashire County Council to better understand the potential effects of development options on the highway network and investigate any potential measures to remedy congestion issues

in Ormskirk and Burscough and will incorporate all the latest evidence as it is received.

iv) Rail Infrastructure

Given that there is likely to be little in the way of highways improvements options available that will off-set the above traffic impacts, it becomes even more important that the rail links between Burscough and Ormskirk / Liverpool are improved to take traffic off the roads heading to / coming from the south and to generally better connect Burscough to Liverpool.

Several options are being considered for this, ranging from a simple improvement to the existing Preston to Ormskirk service so that it is more frequent and ties in with the timetable for the Ormskirk to Liverpool services to the full electrification of the line between Ormskirk and Burscough, allowing the Ormskirk to Liverpool service to be extended to Burscough. Other alternatives include re-opening the Burscough Curves to link Southport to Ormskirk, via Burscough.

Further work is currently being carried out to assess the feasibility and indicative costs of these various options, but it is safe to say that, aside from simply improving the existing Preston to Ormskirk service, all options would be very costly and it would be unlikely that developer contributions from the Burscough Strategic Site could deliver the improvements as well as all the other infrastructure improvements required in conjunction with the site. In addition, there can be no guarantee in the current economic climate that the public sector will be able to fund and deliver costly improvements to rail services and infrastructure over the Core Strategy period.

v) There will be a loss of Green Belt and good quality agricultural land

All three options involve the loss of Green Belt and good quality agricultural land, but the Burscough Strategic Site would develop Green Belt that does not fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt as well as the land in Option A and C and losing this land may not be seen as detrimental as other options to the openness of the Green Belt. Development would also involve the permanent loss of Grade 2 agricultural land.

vi) Development of the Burscough Strategic Site would be directly adjacent to over 100 dwellings

In comparison to Option A, Option B would directly affect many more adjacent dwellings (those fronting the A59, Higgins Lane and Lordsgate Lane). Some of this effect might be off-set depending on where the new park was located and by sensitive masterplanning of the site.

vii) The Burscough Strategic Site would not be able to contribute towards a solution to the student accommodation issue in Ormskirk

Even if student accommodation was provided in Burscough instead it would be unlikely to solve the issues in Ormskirk as it is not expected that students would wish to live in Burscough and travel to University and, even if they were willing to, this would create an additional burden on the roads and

public transport between the two towns. However, Option B does include the reconfiguration of the Edge Hill campus in Ormskirk separate from a Burscough Strategic Development Site and this could help resolve existing issues with student accommodation in Ormskirk but Option B would not contribute to the resolution of student accommodation issues created by any growth in student numbers at Edge Hill University.

Option C – the Dispersal of several sites around the edges of Burscough, Ormskirk and Banks

- 6.16 Option C would involve the development of several sites around the Borough (some of which are also in Options A and B), including approximately 45 ha of Green Belt land, and would deliver the following:
- Up to 300 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land in the Green Belt to the west of Burscough;
 - Up to 200 dwellings in Green Belt to the north of Ormskirk;
 - An expansion of the Edge Hill University Campus to the south-east of Ormskirk, within the Green Belt;
 - Up to 100 dwellings on protected “DS4” land in the southern part of Banks; and
 - 8 ha of employment land in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale.
- 6.17 Given that Option C involves the dispersal of the “strategic” development around several sites on the edge of several settlements in the Borough, it is not, strictly speaking, a “strategic” development. Therefore, if Option C is pursued as a Preferred Option in the Core Strategy, it will not allocate specific sites for development in the Core Strategy but instead define “areas of search” in the Core Strategy which will guide the identification of specific sites for the development in the Site Allocations DPD to follow the Core Strategy.
- 6.18 Dispersing development to several locations in the Borough would have several significant benefits:
- It would not negatively impact any one area to the degree that the Strategic Sites do, whether that be through loss of Green Belt, visual impact or the impacts of development (e.g. traffic).
 - It would ensure a more even distribution of housing around the Borough, helping to better meet housing need and demand in all parts of the Borough, including for affordable housing.
 - All the areas of search for residential development are reasonably well served by key services and sustainable transport.
 - Community benefits provided by developments (such as affordable housing, public open space and environmental enhancements) would be spread around several settlements.

6.19 However, there are key constraints with Option C as well:

- It would mean that more areas are affected to some degree, while not being able to guarantee the delivery of infrastructure improvements and mitigation to off-set the impacts of development because no single area of search would be able to deliver the critical mass to enable significant developer contributions towards infrastructure improvements in the surrounding area.
- Banks would ultimately be subject to a relatively high level of development overall in the Core Strategy in comparison to its size.
- There would still potentially be some traffic impacts in Ormskirk and Burscough as a result of the proposed overall level of new development set out in this option.
- It would not contribute to the resolution of student accommodation issues related to any growth in student numbers at Edge Hill University, although it does enable the reconfiguration of the existing campus to help address existing student accommodation issues.
- As Option C only sets out “areas of search”, not specific sites, it is difficult at this stage to define how many existing properties are likely to be affected by the proposals.

A Sustainability Appraisal Perspective on the Options

6.20 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a key element of the preparation of any Local Development Framework (LDF) document and is a statutory obligation on Local Authorities preparing LDF documents. The recommendations of an SA must be considered fully and accorded significant weight in making decisions on the strategy and policy direction of an LDF document, none more so than in relation to the Core Strategy document.

6.21 Having said that, the SA is only one factor in the decision-making process and a Local Authority may wish to move forward in a slightly different direction than that recommended by the SA, or to select an option that is not the most sustainable one, because of other factors. However, this is only appropriate where there is sufficient evidence to justify this move away from the SA recommendations.

6.22 The three strategic development options have been appraised as to their sustainability by independent consultants, URS/Scott Wilson, with the initial assessment provided below only received on the 15th December 2010. More detail on their assessment can be found in Table A3 in Appendix 3, but the summary recommendations of the SA of these strategic development options are set out in the remainder of this section.

6.23 A Scoping Report was prepared by West Lancashire Borough Council in February 2008, to be used as the basis for appraisal of the development plan documents that form the West Lancashire Local Development Framework. The baseline data and SA Framework for the Scoping Report was updated in 2009. Each of the strategic development options have been assessed against this SA Framework.

- 6.24 The SA identified that all the strategic development options are sustainable, provided that developer contributions are secured to deliver the infrastructure necessary to address the issues development faces. However, Option A and B were generally seen as more sustainable than Option C due to the fact that it would be difficult to generate sufficient developer contributions in any one location under Option C to deliver necessary infrastructure.
- 6.25 It is difficult to distinguish between the relative sustainability merits of Options A and B and say which is most sustainable because, while Option A arguably brings greater benefits than Option B, it could potentially also have greater negative impacts. It therefore becomes an even choice between whether the Council wish to see the greatest benefits (and so select Option A) or wish to minimise the negative impacts (and so select Option B).
- 6.26 The 2008 Scoping Report identified the several key issues as the most important sustainability issues for the Borough. The following commentary provides a summary of the findings of the SA report prepared by URS/Scott Wilson, concentrating on how each of these options compares against these key sustainability issues.
- 6.27 *Lack of Affordable Housing* - The provision of affordable homes for local people is a key issue in West Lancashire. The provision of affordable housing must be in the most sustainable location, with close access to services and amenities. Option A is the most sustainable of the three options. Option A is the option most likely to address the needs of students as well as those residents wishing to occupy lower cost housing in Ormskirk, and thus alleviate pressure on affordable housing in Ormskirk. Provision of affordable housing in Burscough and rural areas may be limited by Option A however, due to the lower housing targets in those areas. (Option C is the most sustainable in this respect as it spreads development most broadly). Mitigation of this impact could include an exceptions policy for affordable housing in rural areas. Ormskirk is the most sustainable settlement in the Borough for affordable housing in transport terms, including public transport, which is important for residents accessing jobs and services particularly for those without access to a private vehicle.
- 6.28 *Access to Health Care* - Option A is the most sustainable option as development of the Ormskirk strategic site would not require any improvements to existing facilities, and is the most accessible to existing facilities. Option B and C would both require improvements to existing local health facilities to enable the development.
- 6.29 *Provision of Accessible Public Transport* - Option A and B are the most sustainable options as Ormskirk and Burscough have good access to local services and facilities, and to services, facilities and destinations beyond the Borough boundary. In particular, Ormskirk has the best rail connections to Liverpool and good links by bus to Wigan and Southport, while Burscough has the best rail connections to Southport, Wigan and Manchester. Options A and B are also the most likely to be able to generate development contributions to fund the infrastructure and public transport improvements required to address the congestion generated by the development.

- 6.30 *Protection of land from flooding* - Option A is the most sustainable option in terms of avoiding exposure of new development to flood risk. Option B and C would both require resolution of surface water flooding issues to enable development.
- 6.31 *Protection of Biodiversity* – No significant effects from Option B or C have been identified at this point in time. Ruff Woods Biological Heritage Site lies adjacent to the Ormskirk Strategic Development site, and has been designated due to the fact it provides a home for red squirrels. There is potential for a negative impact from Option A due to the proximity of this development, particularly residential development to this woodland habitat, which will increase disturbance and bring an increased population of domestic cats and dogs. Mitigation measures would include the retention of habitat connectivity, through maintaining any mature hedgerows or lines of trees on site, and maintaining, enhancing or creating new habitat linkages or woodland habitat.
- 6.32 *Disposal of Waste* - No information has been provided about proposed disposal of waste from these sites.
- 6.33 *Promotion of the rural economy* – Options B and C may be the most sustainable options in relation to this issue because they focus more employment development in Burscough, which could be described as sitting at the centre, and in easy reach by road, of several rural areas for people in those rural areas to access employment. There is potential for secondary negative impacts on the rural economy if Options A or B are implemented, as these options may reduce provision of affordable housing in rural areas, due to the lower housing targets in the Northern Parishes compared to Option C, thus reducing ability for rural workers to live close to their place of work. However, an exceptions policy may assist to mitigate this.
- 6.34 *Regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre* - All three options release 8ha of land to south of Skelmersdale for employment use which should have a positive impact on the regeneration of the town. Option A and B (and to a lesser extent Option C) could have the potential to conflict with this objective, as these options provide more attractive employment and housing opportunities elsewhere, potentially drawing prospective businesses and people away from Skelmersdale.

Mitigation Measures recommended by the SA

- 6.35 SA requires mitigation measures to be put forward, in order to mitigate or enhance the identified effects of the proposals and thus improve the sustainability of the proposals. The following mitigation measures have been recommended for inclusion in the detailed policy options which are taken forward.
- 6.36 *Local Economy and Employment* – The focus on Ormskirk in Option A may draw prospective businesses and residents away from Skelmersdale, reducing opportunities to assist in the regeneration of Skelmersdale. Phasing the release of sites should assist to mitigate this. The provision of high quality employment sites in Skelmersdale may not be the best match with local skills. Policy to address this mismatch by improving the skills of local people so that they are able to take up the new job opportunities generated would help to off-set this.

- 6.37 *Social Equity and Community Services* - A policy on development contributions will be needed to support the options taken forward, to ensure that any identified negative affects on community services can be off-set by contributions to meet existing and future need. This is particularly important in the case of Option B.
- 6.38 *Housing* - A policy on exception sites for affordable housing in rural areas would be beneficial to support Options A and B (and possibly C), to off-set potential negative impact in terms of ability to provide affordable housing in rural areas.
- 6.39 *Transportation and Air Quality* – Mitigation will need to be identified as part of development proposals in all options to attempt to off-set the traffic impacts of development and, where possible, improve the existing traffic situation. Policy will be needed to identify and address impacts on Air Quality, particularly in light of the designation of the AQMA in Ormskirk if Option A is taken forward.
- 6.40 *Heritage and Landscape* - Expansion of University campus and development of the Ormskirk Strategic site would be adjacent to Ruff Lane Conservation Area so any development would need to consider the design implications and impact on built heritage, as well as impacts on natural landscapes in this area and mitigate any negative impacts. This applies to Options A, B and C. Mitigation measures to address this might include preparing a masterplan for the site, or design guidance in the form of an SPD.
- 6.41 *Water and Land Resources* - All options require the provision of infrastructure to address wastewater treatment capacity issues and gas reinforcement is required in parts of Burscough and Ormskirk. This mitigation must be provided to support development.
- 6.42 *Biodiversity* - Mitigation of impacts on biodiversity arising from proximity of development to Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site, and Biological Heritage sites to the south of Skelmersdale should be addressed through policy. Ruff Woods has been designated as habitat for red squirrel. Appropriate mitigation measures would include the retention of habitat connectivity, through maintaining any mature hedgerows or lines of trees on site, and maintaining, enhancing or creating new habitat linkages or woodland habitat.
- 6.43 *Climatic Factors and Flooding* - Detailed options taken forward will need to be subject to Flood Risk Assessment, given the identified flood risk in Banks, Alty's Farm and surface water flooding issues in parts of Burscough. Policy should reflect this. In addition, policy on SuDs should be included to address run-off and surface water flooding issues.

Next Steps and Future Action

- 6.44 Following Cabinet's decision on which of the strategic development options to take forward for public consultation within the Preferred Options document, a full Preferred Options document will be finalised, alongside the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) of that document, and submitted to Cabinet for consideration for public consultation. Subject to Cabinet's approval for consultation, the Preferred Options document and accompanying SA and HRA reports will be put out to public consultation for a statutory six week period.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 7.1 The sustainability implications of the options for strategic development are set out above, having been fully evaluated by Scott Wilson Ltd, the independent consultants preparing the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Core Strategy. The full findings of the SA for the Core Strategy will be made available in a report alongside the main Core Strategy Preferred Options document.
- 7.2 Progressing the Core Strategy, as the key document within the Local Development Framework, will help progress the implementation of key aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Budgetary provision has been made to allow for the Public Consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options. Budgetary provision has also been made to allow for any further evidence base work that may be required following the Public Consultation.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Core Strategy will ultimately be subject to an Examination in Public where a Planning Inspector will ensure that all the correct procedures have been followed in preparing the document and will assess whether the document can be considered “sound” or not. Soundness is assessed in relation to whether the document is:
- justified by the available evidence;
 - deliverable; and
 - consistent with national planning policy.
- 9.2 A key part of the evidence base will also be the Sustainability Appraisal, and so the relative sustainability merits of each option considered throughout the process, and in particular of the Preferred Options, will be an important factor considered by the Planning Inspector.
- 9.3 Therefore, it is important that these factors are taken into account when selecting Preferred Options for the Core Strategy and that the selection of a Preferred Option is fully justified by evidence, otherwise the document could ultimately be found “unsound” by the Planning Inspector.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Three options have been identified to accommodate strategic development as part of the Core Strategy, the key document within the LDF. Cabinet are requested to select two of these three options for inclusion within the Core Strategy Preferred Options document for public consultation.
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Background Documents

Sustainability Appraisal Review of the Strategic Development Options (December 2010) prepared by URS / Scott Wilson – document available from the LDF Team Leader

Equality Impact Assessment

A statutory Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is being prepared for the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, of which the selected strategic development options will form part. The initial findings of this EqIA have been taken into account in the recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Establishing Housing and Employment Land Targets for the Borough

Appendix 2 – Plans of the Strategic Development Options

Appendix 3 – Table A3: The Options for Strategic Development

Appendix 1 – Establishing Housing and Employment Land Targets for the Borough

Housing

Each Local Authority in the North West has been set a target for housing development within the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which the LDF and, in particular, the Core Strategy of each Authority needs to account for in setting local planning policies. In May 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) gave notice of the intention to abolish this regional tier of planning policy, one of the effects of which would be to leave a vacuum in relation to housing targets that Local Authorities would need to fill through the identification of their own targets in their Core Strategy.

At present the RSS is still a part of the Development Plan for the Borough, and will still be so in the future if it is not abolished, but given the Secretary of State's announcement, it seems prudent to work on the assumption that it will be abolished and that West Lancashire will need to determine its own targets for housing and employment land within the Core Strategy. However, in preparing to consult on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, West Lancashire must also continue in line with the RSS targets in case the RSS is not abolished because it is part of the Development Plan and still will be at the time of consulting on the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

Whichever targets are ultimately used, they must be based on robust evidence in order for the Core Strategy to be considered "sound" by the Planning Inspectorate at the Examination in Public and should seek to deliver sustainable development and growth. Should the Planning Inspectorate find the Core Strategy "unsound" it cannot be adopted or used as planning policy and fresh work must be completed on the Core Strategy to make it sound before it is again submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for another costly Examination in Public.

The housing target set by the RSS for West Lancashire is 300 new dwellings per annum (net) and this target was agreed between WLBC and the North West Regional Assembly in 2005, prior to being set out in the Submitted Draft RSS. These targets were based on 2003 ONS population statistics and other evidence available in 2005.

Officers have analysed, and continue to analyse, more recent evidence that is available pertaining to housing targets for the Borough and it is clear that every different approach to estimating household projections arrives at a different answer, some of which result in an annual requirement that is higher than 300 and others which result in an annual requirement lower than 300.

The most recent Household Projections from CLG, which were published at the end of November, provide one such nationally-recognised approach to household projections based on 2008 ONS population statistics. The latest projections suggest that the number of households in the Borough may not increase as much as previously thought over the next 25 years. They project a 6,000 household increase in West Lancashire between 2008 and 2033, which equates to 250 dwellings required per annum. This compares to a projected increase of 7,000 dwellings (291 dwellings per annum) derived from the household projections for 2006-2031.

This reduction can be partially attributed to changes in the methodology CLG use to calculate household projections, in particular the use of revised mid-year population

estimates from 2002 to 2008, which were lower than previously estimated and which included the effect of the start of the economic downturn in 2008. However, it is clear that the latest projections do indicate a slight slow-down in “natural” population growth for the Borough. It should also be noted that CLG Household Projections round figures in their projections to the nearest thousand households, and so there is considerable scope for variance in their projections.

In setting targets for housing development, Local Authorities can move away from these, or any other, projections where evidence or sustainable planning would justify it, either to set a target that is lower than the projections (perhaps to preserve the character of a rural area) and thereby artificially limit any growth, or to set a target that is higher than the basic need in order to enable economic growth or regeneration or account for other demographic changes that the projections may not have accounted for.

It is the view of Officers that any housing target significantly over the existing RSS target of 300 new dwellings per annum would not be appropriate in light of the environmental assets, agricultural base and the general rural character of the Borough, but that a figure in the region of 300 dwellings per annum enables a degree of economic growth as well as meeting the projected growth in population anticipated in the Borough. To reduce this target to somewhere in the region of 250 dwellings per annum would further protect the rural character of the Borough, but possibly to the detriment of economic development and regeneration of the Borough’s urban areas, especially Skelmersdale.

Ultimately, to deliver only 250 dwellings per annum over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027, i.e. 3,750 dwellings in total) would not allow enough housing to be developed in Skelmersdale to deliver the critical mass needed to begin to bring about regeneration of the town, as well as attempt to meet the basic local needs for new housing in other parts of the Borough. Therefore, reducing the housing target in this way would either mean that the regeneration of Skelmersdale would not really take hold or that not enough housing would be built in the rest of the Borough.

In addition, the new CLG Household Projections show how the population of West Lancashire is going to age significantly over the period to 2033, with the number of households where the household representative (main bread-winner) is 65 or over rising from 13,000 to 23,000, i.e. a 10,000 increase in households aged 65 or over compared to the overall increase of 6,000 households. This means that the number of working age households will actually decrease by 4,000.

Therefore, if West Lancashire’s economy is to grow, or even stand still, it will either be reliant on more people commuting into the area to work (or less out-commuting) or on a working-age population migrating into the Borough (be that from elsewhere in the UK or abroad) to take-up the jobs that an ageing population will vacate. If it is the latter then more housing will need to be delivered over and above the CLG projections in order to accommodate those migrant workers.

In light of this, and given the robustness and relevance of available evidence, a target of 300 new dwellings per annum would be the most appropriate figure for use within the Core Strategy as the housing requirement for the Borough, whether the RSS is abolished or not. In this instance, the housing requirement for the Borough for the Core Strategy period (2012-2027, i.e. 15 years) would be 4,500 dwellings.

Employment Land

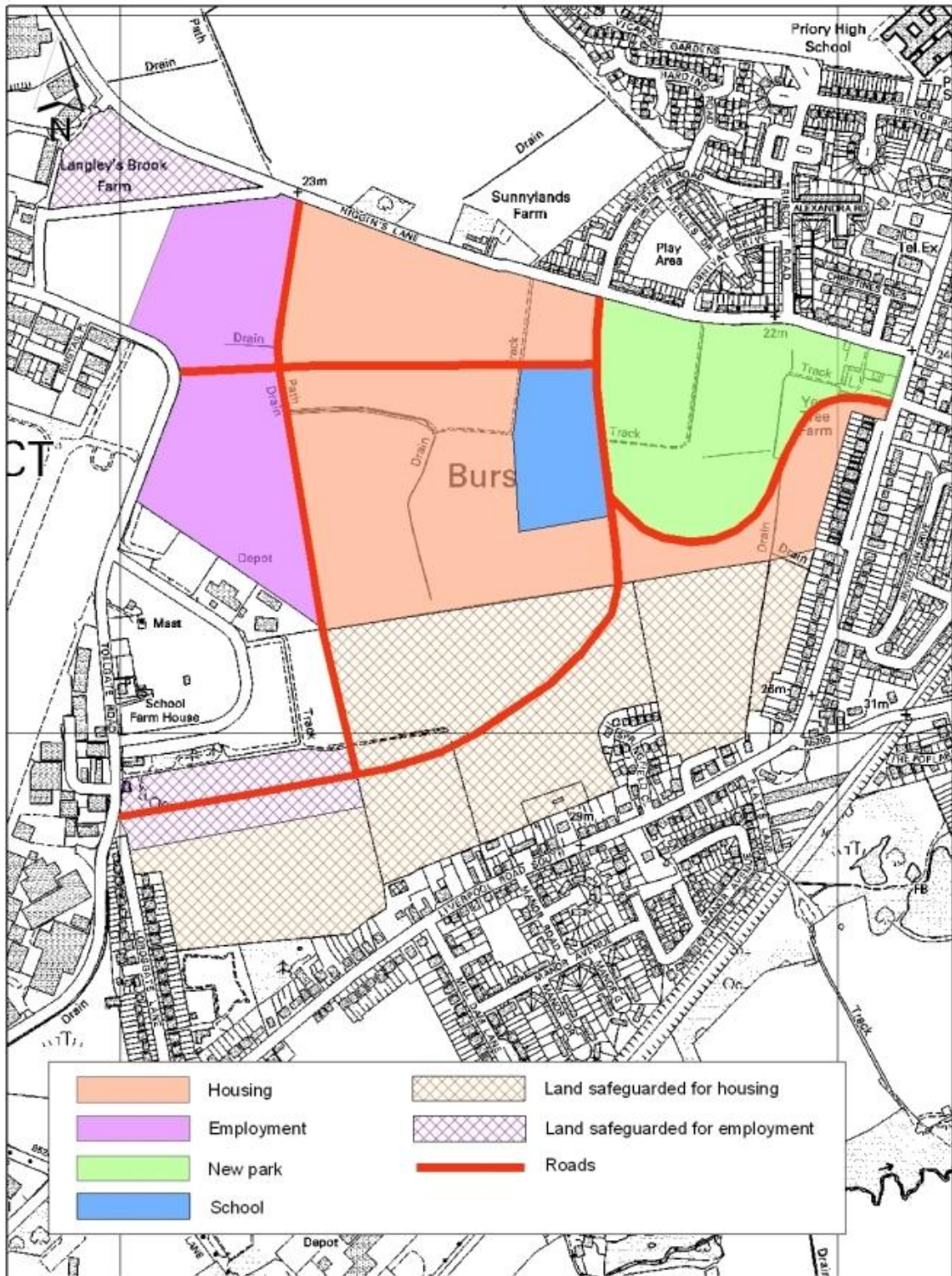
Employment Land targets for West Lancashire have been derived from the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS), which was completed in January 2010 but began in May 2008, with the bulk of the collation of information taking place in 2008. This set an overall target for employment land development from 2010 to 2026 of approximately 150ha. This target was calculated based on historic take-up rates of employment land development between 1992 and 2008.

Since the information used in the JELPS was collated, an additional two years of employment land completions have taken place, therefore updating the historic take-up rate. In addition, several comments have been received on the approach used in the JELPS, questioning whether two anomalous years of very high employment land development should be included in the calculation, given that they involved extremely large developments (such as the distribution warehouses on XL Business Park in Skelmersdale) of a sort that are not being promoted in the Borough over the Core Strategy period.

Therefore, utilising the same methodology as the JELPS, but updating the calculation to take into account these factors, the employment target for West Lancashire over the Core Strategy period has been recalculated and equates to 87 ha.

The employment land target is not disaggregated by employment sector or type of employment land but the West Lancashire Economy Study (2009) identified the type of sectors that should be encouraged to locate within the Borough and the economic policies within the Draft Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper will reiterate this. Some of these sectors require high quality business premises, while others require more general industrial or warehousing premises, and so there is scope to provide both through new employment developments over the Core Strategy period.

Option B – the Burscough Strategic Site



Appendix 3

Table A3: The Options for Strategic Development

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
Locations and Quantum of Development	<p>A Strategic Site to the south-east of Ormskirk encompassing land to the south of St Helens Road, land at Alty's Farm and land to the east of the University campus would be proposed for the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 600 dwellings; • 5 ha of high quality employment land; • A Sports Village for Ormskirk's sports clubs; and • Expansion of the University campus, including new sports facilities. <p>8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided to the south of Skelmersdale, as well as 5 ha to the west of Burscough.</p>	<p>A Strategic Site to the west of Burscough encompassing the land at Yew Tree Farm would be proposed for the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 600 dwellings; • 10 ha of high quality employment land; • A new Park; and • A new Primary School. <p>8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided to the south of Skelmersdale.</p> <p>Expansion of the University campus would be required to the east of the St Helens Road campus in Ormskirk.</p>	<p>Several sites will need to be identified in the Site Allocations DPD within "areas of search" defined in the Core Strategy, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 300 dwellings to the west of Burscough • Up to 200 dwellings to the north of Ormskirk • Up to 100 dwellings on protected "DS4" land in the southern part of Banks <p>10 ha of employment land would also need to be provided to the west of Burscough as well as 8 ha to the south of Skelmersdale.</p> <p>Expansion of the University campus would be required to the east of the St Helens Road campus in Ormskirk.</p>
What the Public said at Issues & Options stage	<p>41% of respondents supported a Skelmersdale and Ormskirk focus at options stage, while 38% objected to it.</p>	<p>30% of respondents supported a Skelmersdale and Burscough focus at options stage, while 51% objected to it.</p>	<p>This option does not correspond directly to any of the strategic options but is a combination of several. Therefore, it is unclear at the moment how the public would respond to this option.</p>

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
Green Belt / DS4 Land and Agricultural Land	<p>60 ha of Green Belt would be released for new development, a Sports Village and the expansion of Edge Hill as part of the Ormskirk Strategic Site.</p> <p>13 ha of Green Belt would be released for employment land in Skelmersdale (8 ha) and Burscough (5 ha).</p> <p>All this land fulfils at least one purpose of the Green Belt, and so would constitute a genuine loss of Green Belt.</p> <p>However, as a whole, the Ormskirk Strategic Site is well contained by the Ormskirk settlement on all but the south-eastern side of the Strategic Site.</p> <p>The Strategic Site is entirely Grade 1 Agricultural Land.</p>	<p>Up to 70 ha of Green Belt would need to be released for development as part of the Burscough Strategic Site.</p> <p>8 ha of Green Belt would be released for employment land in Skelmersdale.</p> <p>10 ha of Green Belt would be released for the expansion of the University campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk.</p> <p>Virtually all this land fulfils at least one purpose of the Green Belt, and so would constitute a genuine loss of Green Belt.</p> <p>However, as a whole, the Burscough Strategic Site is well contained by the Burscough settlement.</p> <p>The Strategic Site is entirely Grade 2 Agricultural Land.</p>	<p>At least 20 ha of Green Belt land would be required to the west of Burscough for housing and employment.</p> <p>17 ha of Green Belt land would be required around Ormskirk for housing and the expansion of the University campus.</p> <p>8 ha of Green Belt would be released for employment land in Skelmersdale.</p> <p>A 4 ha protected land (DS4) site would be required in Banks for housing.</p> <p>Virtually all the Green Belt land to be released would fulfil at least one purpose of the Green Belt, and so would constitute a genuine loss of Green Belt.</p> <p>However, all housing sites would be well contained by surrounding development on at least three sides.</p> <p>The sites are a mixture of Grade 1 and 2 Agricultural Land.</p>
Accessibility and Transport Infrastructure	<p>Pros</p> <p>Ormskirk is the most sustainable settlement in the Borough for transport benefiting from high frequency rail connections to Liverpool and a limited service to Preston and being well served by frequent bus services to Southport, Preston, Skelmersdale and Wigan.</p> <p>Development at the Ormskirk Strategic</p>	<p>Pros</p> <p>Burscough is served by a rail station on the frequent Southport-Manchester line and one on the less frequent Ormskirk-Preston line – however, connectivity between these two stations is poor.</p> <p>The proposed development could contribute to possible rail improvements.</p>	<p>Pros</p> <p>Spreading development around several locations would mean no, single location would suffer from very negative traffic congestion impacts as a result of development.</p> <p>All three locations where housing may be developed on Green Belt are reasonably well served by Bus services and two of</p>

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
	<p>Site would be within walking distance of Aughton Park rail station and of Ormskirk Bus and Rail stations, as well as the town centre and other key services such as schools.</p> <p>Development in Ormskirk could also help deliver the Ormskirk-Skelmersdale Linear Park through commuted sums.</p> <p>A Park & Ride scheme for Edge Hill University could free up capacity on the highway network.</p> <p>Cons</p> <p>The town suffers from severe congestion especially on the town centre ring road and along the A570 (M58 to Southport).</p> <p>Development in Ormskirk would inevitably add to this congestion, especially at peak times, and could result in severe capacity problems on the highways network.</p> <p>However, with possible options such as a Park & Ride scheme for Edge Hill University, there may be the possibility of freeing up capacity on the network to cater for the new development.</p> <p>Ormskirk already has an Air Quality Management Area in Ormskirk town centre.</p>	<p>The Burscough Strategic Site is within walking distance of key services such as Burscough town centre and schools.</p> <p>The development may provide the potential to improve bus services, including to the existing industrial areas.</p> <p>A Park & Ride scheme for Edge Hill University could free up capacity on the highway network.</p> <p>Cons</p> <p>The proposed development in Burscough would cause severe capacity problems on the existing road network – initial consideration of this suggests that there is very little that can be done to improve the highway network and its capacity to off-set this.</p> <p>A development of this size would certainly increase congestion on the A59 affecting Burscough and Ormskirk and also the A5029 heading to the M6 affecting villages such as Parbold and Newburgh.</p> <p>The proposed extension of the Merseyrail network could cost up to £40 million and so any commuted sums from development would not be sufficient to fund these improvements.</p>	<p>the three are in walking distance of rail stations.</p> <p>All three locations have good access to key services, especially Ormskirk and Burscough.</p> <p>A Park & Ride scheme for Edge Hill University could free up capacity on the highway network.</p> <p>Cons</p> <p>Despite spreading the impact, there would still be some negative impacts on traffic congestion, especially in Ormskirk and Burscough.</p> <p>Spreading development across several locations would mean that the commuted sums generated in any one location would likely not be sufficient to fund significant improvements to transport infrastructure in any of the locations.</p>

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
Utilities Infrastructure	<p>A major waste water treatment capacity issue would need to be resolved to allow any development in Ormskirk or Burscough – any development could not commence in these areas until 2017 at the earliest.</p> <p>Gas reinforcement required in parts of Ormskirk.</p> <p>Ormskirk and Skelmersdale do not have SDSL for business broadband but Ormskirk Strategic Site could benefit from the University’s high quality IT infrastructure.</p>	<p>A major waste water treatment capacity issue would need to be resolved to allow any development in Ormskirk or Burscough – any development could not commence in these areas until 2017 at the earliest.</p> <p>Gas reinforcement required in parts of Burscough.</p> <p>Burscough and Skelmersdale do not have SDSL for business broadband.</p>	<p>A major waste water treatment capacity issue would need to be resolved to allow any development in Ormskirk or Burscough – any development could not commence in these areas until 2017 at the earliest.</p> <p>Gas reinforcement required in parts of Burscough and Ormskirk.</p> <p>Burscough and Skelmersdale do not have SDSL for business broadband.</p>
Flood Risk	<p>Some localised flood risk issues on Alty’s Farm, but could be developed around.</p>	<p>No flood risk issues with Burscough Strategic Site, other than surface water flooding issues that would need resolving in parts of Burscough.</p>	<p>Banks is heavily affected by flood risk issues but there are a few sites in the southern part of Banks that have large areas not at risk of flooding.</p> <p>Surface water flooding issues would also need resolving in Banks.</p>
Ground Conditions	<p>No known issues related to Ground Conditions</p>	<p>No known issues related to Ground Conditions</p>	<p>No known issues related to Ground Conditions</p>
Renewable Energy Potential	<p>The level, type and density of development associated with an Ormskirk Strategic Site could mean that a decentralised energy network powered by</p>	<p>The level, type and density of development associated with a Burscough Strategic Site could mean that a decentralised energy network powered</p>	<p>Spreading development around several locations would likely mean that there would not be a critical mass on any single site that would make a decentralised</p>

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
	<p>a renewable heat and power source would be feasible and commercially viable, resulting in a low or zero carbon development and possibly providing heat and power for existing uses nearby, such as the existing University campus and Ormskirk Hospital.</p> <p>Any expansion of existing employment areas to the south of Skelmersdale or west of Burscough could incorporate a renewable energy source that could heat and power new and existing employment uses, if it would be feasible or commercially viable.</p>	<p>by a renewable heat and power source would be feasible and commercially viable, resulting in a low or zero carbon development and possibly providing heat and power for existing uses nearby, such as the existing Burscough employment areas.</p> <p>Any expansion of existing employment areas to the south of Skelmersdale or west of Burscough could incorporate a renewable energy source that could heat and power new and existing employment uses, if it would be feasible or commercially viable.</p>	<p>energy network powered by a renewable heat and power source feasible or commercially viable.</p> <p>The combination of housing and employment development to the west of Burscough may make it viable, but likely at the cost of other developer contributions.</p> <p>Any expansion of existing employment areas to the south of Skelmersdale or west of Burscough could incorporate a renewable energy source that could heat and power new and existing employment uses, if it would be feasible or commercially viable.</p>
Environmental / Landscape / Heritage	<p>Ormskirk Strategic Site would be adjacent to Ruff Lane Conservation Area and Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site and so development would need to compliment these areas and not negatively impact them.</p> <p>There are some Biological Heritage sites to the south of Skelmersdale that any employment development would need to avoid any impact on.</p>	<p>No significant impacts from Burscough Strategic Site.</p> <p>Expansion of University campus would be adjacent to Ruff Lane Conservation Area and Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site and so development would need to compliment these areas and not negatively impact them.</p> <p>There are some Biological Heritage sites to the south of Skelmersdale that any employment development would need to avoid any impact on.</p>	<p>No significant impacts from any of the areas of search.</p> <p>Expansion of University campus would be adjacent to Ruff Lane Conservation Area and Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site and so development would need to compliment these areas and not negatively impact them.</p> <p>There are some Biological Heritage sites to the south of Skelmersdale that any employment development would need to avoid any impact on.</p>

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Sports / Open Space Provision	<p>Any housing development will generate an additional demand over and above what public open space is already provided, unless there is a local over-provision.</p> <p>Ormskirk Strategic Site could deliver a new Sports Village on St Helens Road for Ormskirk's sports clubs, with links to, and support from, the sports faculty at Edge Hill.</p> <p>University campus expansion will involve new, high quality sports facilities, which will be open to the public as well as University users.</p>	<p>Any housing development will generate an additional demand over and above what public open space is already provided, unless there is a local over-provision.</p> <p>Burscough Strategic Site could deliver a large new Park for Burscough with several key open space facilities, as well as local community sports facilities (MUGA).</p> <p>University campus expansion will involve new, high quality sports facilities, which will be open to the public as well as University users.</p>	<p>Any housing development will generate an additional demand over and above what public open space is already provided, unless there is a local over-provision.</p> <p>It is questionable whether any of the levels of housing development within each area of search would be able to deliver anything over what is needed to meet the demand generated by the new housing (i.e. small open spaces within the developments).</p> <p>University campus expansion will involve new, high quality sports facilities, which will be open to the public as well as University users.</p>
Community Infrastructure	<p>None proposed or needed as part of Ormskirk Strategic Site proposals, although Club House within the Sports Village may serve a community facility function and the co-location of several sports clubs may lead to greater community cohesion and a new community hub for the town.</p> <p>The level of housing development in Option A would boost pupil numbers in Ormskirk Primary Schools, where numbers are falling.</p>	<p>Burscough Strategic Site would generate the need for a new Primary School in Burscough and would need to deliver this as part of the proposals.</p> <p>Improvement to local health facilities would also be required in Burscough.</p> <p>Burscough Strategic Site proposals could incorporate youth / community facilities.</p>	<p>Housing development in Burscough area of search would generate the need for a new Primary School, but it is questionable whether a housing development of this scale could deliver a new school as part of development proposals.</p> <p>Improvement to local health facilities would also be required in Burscough.</p>

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Employment Uses & Sectors	<p>Ormskirk Strategic Site would enable an opportunity to develop 5 ha of high quality business accommodation in Ormskirk, across the road from the University campus and in sectors complementary to some of the courses studied at Edge Hill.</p> <p>Depending on the precise location, employment development in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale could involve high quality business accommodation to complement what is, and will be, provided at White Moss Business Park.</p> <p>Employment development in the Green Belt to the west of Burscough will likely be of a more standard industrial / warehousing type (as currently exists in the employment areas), although some high quality accommodation may be possible if there is demand.</p>	<p>Employment development in the Green Belt to the west of Burscough will likely be of a more standard industrial / warehousing type (as currently exists in the employment areas), although some high quality accommodation may be possible if there is demand.</p> <p>Depending on the precise location, employment development in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale could involve high quality business accommodation to complement what is, and will be, provided at White Moss Business Park.</p> <p>With this option, no new employment development will be promoted through the LDF in Ormskirk at all.</p>	<p>Employment development in the Green Belt to the west of Burscough will likely be of a more standard industrial / warehousing type (as currently exists in the employment areas), although some high quality accommodation may be possible if there is demand.</p> <p>Depending on the precise location, employment development in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale could involve high quality business accommodation to complement what is, and will be, provided at White Moss Business Park.</p> <p>With this option, no new employment development will be promoted through the LDF in Ormskirk at all.</p>
Edge Hill University and Student Accommodation	<p>All options allow for the expansion of the University campus into Green Belt, providing new sports facilities, car parking, a new access road and approximately 5 ha of land for built development, ostensibly for new teaching facilities and first year student accommodation.</p> <p>The Ormskirk Strategic Site would also include the development of purpose-built</p>	<p>All options allow for the expansion of the University campus into Green Belt, providing new sports facilities, car parking, a new access road and approximately 5 ha of land for built development, ostensibly for new teaching facilities and first year student accommodation.</p> <p>However, this option does not provide scope for purpose-built student</p>	<p>All options allow for the expansion of the University campus into Green Belt, providing new sports facilities, car parking, a new access road and approximately 5 ha of land for built development, ostensibly for new teaching facilities and first year student accommodation.</p> <p>However, this option does not provide scope for purpose-built student</p>

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	off-campus student accommodation for up to 700 second and third year students, on the southern side of St Helens Road. This would alleviate demand for student HMOs in the rest of the town.	accommodation for second and third year students unless it can be provided on campus. This would mean that there would be continued and increasing demand for student HMOS in Ormskirk.	accommodation for second and third year students unless it can be provided on campus. This would mean that there would be continued and increasing demand for student HMOS in Ormskirk.
Affordable Housing	Such a large amount of housing development in Ormskirk could result in a good level of new affordable housing being provided in the town, thereby meeting the need and demand for such housing, especially in light of Student HMOs having taken up a good proportion of the cheaper housing stock in the town. Provision of affordable housing in Burscough and rural areas may be limited by the lower housing targets in those areas.	Such a large amount of housing development in Burscough could result in a good level of new affordable housing being provided in the town, thereby meeting the need and demand for such housing. Provision of affordable housing in Ormskirk and rural areas may be limited by the lower housing targets in those areas.	By spreading housing development round the Borough more, this option may enable more affordable housing to be delivered across the Borough and therefore meet demand and need across the Borough.
Market Deliverability of Housing	This option would result in a housing target of 900 dwellings in Ormskirk / Aughton over the 15 year Core Strategy period. This is 300 dwellings higher than that delivered over the last 15 years in Ormskirk / Aughton, but this historic delivery could be seen to be a reflection of constraints on housing development in Ormskirk / Aughton due to planning policy and a lack of available development sites. In addition, due to the waste water treatment infrastructure issues affecting	This option would result in a housing target of 800 dwellings in Burscough over the 15 year Core Strategy period. This is 100 dwellings higher than that delivered over the last 15 years in Burscough, but this historic delivery could be seen to be a reflection of constraints on housing development in Burscough due to planning policy and a lack of available development sites. In addition, due to the waste water treatment infrastructure issues affecting	This option would result in housing targets of 500 dwellings in Ormskirk / Aughton, 500 dwellings in Burscough and 500 dwellings in rural areas over the 15 year Core Strategy period. This is easily deliverable based on historic delivery of housing in the Borough, which has totalled over 3,000 dwellings outside of Skelmersdale / Up Holland over the last 15 years. Due to the waste water treatment infrastructure issues affecting Ormskirk /

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	<p>Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough, the 900 dwellings would, at best, only be able to be delivered over the last 10 years of the Core Strategy period, once infrastructure issues have been resolved.</p> <p>This would require 90 units a year to be delivered, which is higher than any single year in Ormskirk / Aughton over the past 15 years, albeit that this historic delivery has been restricted.</p>	<p>Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough, the 800 dwellings would, at best, only be able to be delivered over the last 10 years of the Core Strategy period, once infrastructure issues have been resolved.</p> <p>This would require 80 units a year to be delivered in Burscough. This figure was exceeded in 3 of the last 15 years and so may be achievable given that constraints to housing development will have eased.</p>	<p>Aughton and Burscough, the 1,000 dwellings required in these towns would, at best, only be able to be delivered over the last 10 years of the Core Strategy period, once infrastructure issues have been resolved.</p> <p>This would require 100 units a year to be delivered in Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough. This figure was exceeded in 6 of the last 15 years and so may be achievable given that constraints to housing development will have eased.</p>
Impact on Neighbouring Properties	<p>Approximately 40 dwellings directly adjacent to areas of built development on the site – approximately 50 more would be adjacent to the Sports Village.</p>	<p>Over 100 dwellings are directly adjacent to the site; possibly as many as 150 depending on how much of the site is developed.</p>	<p>Difficult to define given that this option only involves “areas of search”, however, it is likely to be a larger number than other options because it will ultimately involve more sites.</p>
Land Ownership	<p>Land for development within the Ormskirk Strategic Site is all owned either by Lord Derby’s Estate or Edge Hill University. Both landowners are supportive of the developments proposed through the Strategic Site and therefore would not restrain development.</p>	<p>Land for development within the Burscough Strategic Site is all owned by, or under option to, one landowner who is supportive of the developments proposed through the Strategic Site and therefore would not restrain development.</p> <p>However, other landowners are involved on those sites involving an option and these landowners could restrain development if they wished to.</p>	<p>Given that the areas of search could identify one or more suitable sites for housing development, multiple landowners could be involved in delivering housing development, so it is difficult to assess this option against this issue at the moment.</p>

	Option A: Ormskirk Strategic Site	Option B: Burscough Strategic Site	Option C: Dispersal of Sites
<p>Sustainability Appraisal View</p> <p>Please note that this is a summary of the full appraisal.</p>	<p><u>Overall SA Assessment</u></p> <p>Option A is a sustainable option (provided that developer contributions are secured to deliver the infrastructure necessary to overcome the issues development faces) and it and Option B are considered the most sustainable options of the 3 strategic development options.</p> <p><u>Economic:</u></p> <p>Option A maximises local benefit from investment in the University and Sports Village, to the benefit of local residents and students, but also the wider West Lancashire community.</p> <p>Option provides the broadest range of jobs and employment opportunities, including the opportunity for clustering of sectors to support the University.</p> <p>Option A may draw prospective businesses and employees away from Skelmersdale.</p> <p><u>Social:</u></p> <p>Option A maximises local benefits in terms of provision of community infrastructure through provision of the Sports Village and increasing viability of</p>	<p><u>Overall SA Assessment</u></p> <p>Option B is a sustainable option (provided that developer contributions are secured to deliver the infrastructure necessary to overcome the issues development faces) and it and Option A are considered the most sustainable options of the 3 strategic development options.</p> <p><u>Economic:</u></p> <p>Option B will improve the range of sustainable employment sites and attract new businesses to the Borough although will not necessarily promote growth in key sectors of the economy, or make the most of the opportunities for clustering with the University.</p> <p>Option B may draw prospective businesses and employees away from Skelmersdale.</p> <p><u>Social:</u></p> <p>Development may improve sustainability of Burscough community but will require the provision of an additional school, and improvements to local health facilities.</p>	<p><u>Overall SA Assessment</u></p> <p>Option C could be a sustainable option if developer contributions are secured to deliver the infrastructure necessary to overcome the issues development faces in several locations but because this is unlikely it is considered the least sustainable option of the 3 strategic development options.</p> <p><u>Economic:</u></p> <p>Option C will improve the range of sustainable employment sites and attract new businesses to the Borough although will not necessarily promote growth in key sectors of the economy, or make the most of the opportunities for clustering with the University.</p> <p>Option C may draw prospective businesses and employees away from Skelmersdale.</p> <p><u>Social:</u></p> <p>Development less likely to address community infrastructure requirements as there will be no strategic site developer contributions to fund significant</p>

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	<p>local schools by boosting pupil numbers. It does not require any additional community infrastructure.</p> <p>Option A is most likely to address housing needs in Ormskirk, including the needs of students.</p> <p><u>Environmental:</u></p> <p>Option A has potential to enhance or have a negative impact on the built heritage of the Ruff Lane Conservation Area, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout of the development - these impacts can be mitigated / addressed at the non-strategic level.</p> <p>Impact on landscape is more likely to be negative, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout. While localised impacts will be felt in the vicinity of the development, this option safeguards other areas of the Borough by concentrating development adjacent to existing built up areas.</p> <p>Ormskirk is the most sustainable settlement in the Borough for transport, but the negative effects of traffic generation, congestion and air quality in Ormskirk are likely to arise – adding to the issues that already exist. However, with possible options such as a Park &</p>	<p>Option B may deliver a community park but this would be incumbent on the development.</p> <p>Option B will address housing need and affordable need in Burscough, but will not address student housing need in Ormskirk.</p> <p><u>Environmental:</u></p> <p>Option B has potential to enhance or have a negative impact on the built heritage of the Ruff Lane Conservation Area, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout of the development, but these impacts can be mitigated / addressed at the non-strategic level.</p> <p>Impact on landscape is more likely to be negative, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout. While localised impacts will be felt in the vicinity of the development, this option safeguards other areas of the Borough by concentrating development adjacent to existing built up areas.</p> <p>The proposed development in Burscough would cause capacity problems on the existing road network – which may be difficult to mitigate.</p> <p>Option B would increase congestion and therefore impact negatively on local air</p>	<p>improvements in one location.</p> <p>Option C most likely to meet affordable housing needs across the Borough but less likely to address student housing need in Ormskirk.</p> <p><u>Environmental:</u></p> <p>Option C has potential to enhance or have a negative impact on the built heritage of the Ruff Lane Conservation Area, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout of the development, but these impacts can be mitigated / addressed at the non-strategic level.</p> <p>Impact on landscape is more likely to be negative, depending on the sensitivity of the design and layout. Localised impacts will be felt in the vicinity of the development at Ormskirk, Burscough, Skelmersdale and Banks. Option C is less likely to safeguard other areas of the Borough because it spreads development more thinly across the Borough.</p> <p>Spreading development around several locations would mean no single location would suffer from very negative impacts as a result of increased vehicular traffic and congestion (and subsequently impacts on air quality and rise in noise</p>

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	<p>Ride scheme for Edge Hill University, there may be the possibility of freeing up capacity on the network to cater for the new development.</p> <p>Potential for negative impact on Ruff Woods woodland habitat, including due to an increased population of domestic cats and dogs.</p> <p>Option A is the most sustainable option in terms of least risk of exposing new development to flood risk.</p> <p>Feasibility of a decentralised heat and power network to serve the strategic site would minimise the need for energy, and maximise production / proportion of renewable energy.</p> <p>Option A results in loss of Grade 1 agricultural land and soil quality.</p>	<p>quality and increase noise pollution.</p> <p>No significant impacts on biodiversity are likely to arise from development of the Burscough Strategic Site although this will require further detailed investigation. May be some impact from University expansion on Ruff Woods.</p> <p>Development of a strategic site in Burscough may provide an opportunity to reduce or manage flood risk in Burscough through funding by developer contributions.</p> <p>Feasibility of a decentralised heat and power network to serve the strategic site would minimise the need for energy, and maximise production / proportion of renewable energy.</p> <p>Option B results in loss of Grade 2 agricultural land and soil quality.</p>	<p>pollution) as a result of development.</p> <p>However, despite spreading the impact, there would still be some negative impacts on traffic congestion, especially in Ormskirk and Burscough and the commuted sums generated in any one location would likely not be sufficient to fund significant improvements to transport infrastructure in any of the locations.</p> <p>No significant impacts on biodiversity are likely to be caused from any of the areas of search included in Option C although this will require further detailed investigation. May be some impact from University expansion on Ruff Woods.</p> <p>It will be difficult to resolve surface water flood risk constraints at Banks and Burscough without development contributions of a strategic scale.</p> <p>Unlikely to be a critical mass on any single site that would make a decentralised power and energy network viable without developer contributions.</p> <p>Option C results in loss of Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land and soil quality.</p>