

West Lancashire Local Development Framework

Core Strategy Preferred Options

May 2011



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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The West Lancashire Local Development Framework

1.1.1 How future development will be guided in the Borough will be subject to the plans and policies within the Council's emerging West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF). This is a new way of planning the future of an area and will supersede the current West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2001-16. Introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the new LDF system is built upon the principles of:

- Sustainable development;
- Addressing climate change;
- Spatial planning;
- High quality design;
- Good accessibility; and
- Community involvement.

1.1.2 A key difference compared to the previous Local Plan system is the concept of spatial planning, which does not just take into account land use, but also considers other issues that could indirectly affect, or be affected by, land use, such as health, education and crime.

1.1.3 The West Lancashire Core Strategy is the most important part of the LDF and is the first Development Plan Document (DPD) to be prepared by the Council that will sit within the LDF. The Core Strategy will contain a vision and strategy that will set out how we want West Lancashire to develop over the period to 2027. It will not only make sure that new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable places, but will also provide the framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development to make this possible.

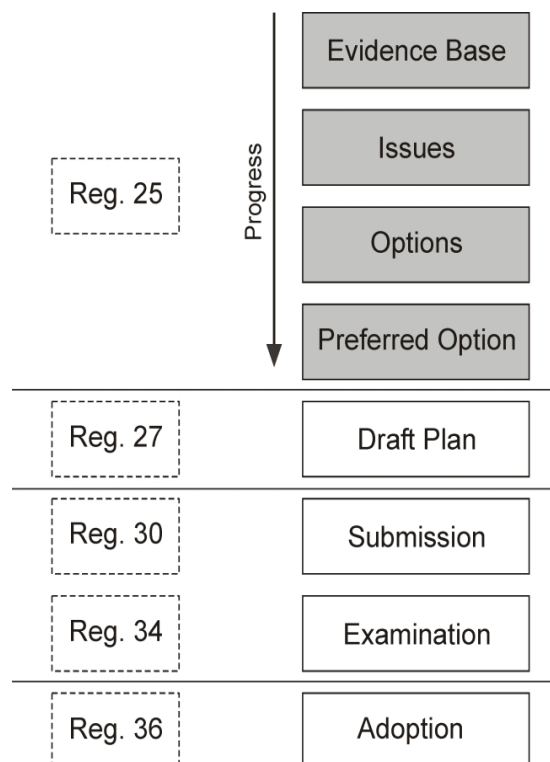
1.1.4 This document provides the Preferred Options that the Council wish to pursue in the Core Strategy, detailing which areas of policy will be covered and what those policy areas will seek to achieve in the way of development. These Preferred Options have emerged following previous consultations on issues facing the Borough (January 2009) and on options for addressing those issues through spatial planning and sustainable development (September 2009).

1.1.5 Within the LDF, alongside the Core Strategy, two further DPDs will be prepared: a Development Management Policies DPD and a Site Allocations DPD. The Development Management Policies DPD will provide more detailed policies on specific matters to help assess planning applications and it is anticipated that the Preferred Options for the Development Management Policies DPD will be consulted upon later this year. The Site Allocations DPD will address site-specific issues and allocations for specific types of development across the Borough and will be prepared following adoption of the Core Strategy.

1.2 Preparing the Core Strategy

1.2.1 The West Lancashire Core Strategy has gone through a number of stages so far in its preparation. These are explained in summary below and in more detail in Appendix A, together with a summary of the consultation responses so far through the preparation of the Core Strategy.

Figure 1.1 The LDF Process



Stage 1: Evidence Base

1.2.2 It is important to gather up-to-date and comprehensive information in order to support the Core Strategy; this is known as the 'evidence base'. We have collected information on a range of topics to directly inform the preparation of policy and this has been summarised in the Summary Evidence Base document, which is a key supporting document to this Preferred Options Paper. It is available on the Council's [website](#).

1.2.3 Although the Council started work on the evidence base back in 2006, it was not until 12th February 2008 that we formally began preparing the Core Strategy. This was marked by consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, which is available to view on the Council's [website](#). Work on the evidence base is ongoing and will continue to be even beyond adoption of the Core Strategy, as it is vital that the Council maintains a thorough and up-to-date evidence base that reflects the changing context of the Borough and informs the evolution of the LDF.

Stage 2: Issues

1.2.4 In preparing the Core Strategy it is crucial to be aware of the issues facing West Lancashire, as identified through the evidence base and through consultation with the public and stakeholders. Consultation on the issues facing the Borough was conducted via workshops at the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Annual Conference and Spatial Forums in June and July 2008, and also the release of the Issues Questionnaire in January/February 2009.

1.2.5 The purpose of the Issues stage was to provide an opportunity for the local community, businesses and other key stakeholders to identify key issues affecting the Borough, and to put forward their views. During this stage, we also met with key organisations and

infrastructure providers to discuss infrastructure constraints across the Borough and how these may affect the deliverability of the Core Strategy. In addition, the Council consulted on the subject of the Core Strategy in August 2009, in terms of what it should contain and to confirm the issues that it should address.

Stage 3: Options

1.2.6 The Options Paper is an important stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy and was published in September 2009 for public consultation. Interpreting the evidence base and the results of consultation during the Issues stage, it presents a draft vision of West Lancashire in 2027, and five alternative strategic options for the future development of the Borough. The options indicate various ways of addressing the key issues and achieving the vision. They also show how settlements might change and the different amounts of development that they may accommodate. The document also contains possible approaches towards key planning issues for the Borough:

- Skelmersdale Town Centre;
- Edge Hill University;
- Affordable housing;
- Gypsy / Traveller sites;
- Older people;
- Infrastructure; and
- Climate change.

Stage 4: Preferred Options

1.2.7 Following the Options stage, this Preferred Options Paper has been prepared, taking into account emerging evidence, changing regional and national planning policy and the views expressed by the public and stakeholders on the strategic options. It essentially sets out a proposed (and preferred) way forward for the Core Strategy in terms of what areas policy should cover and what policy in those areas will seek to achieve. It is vital that you contribute your views on this proposed way forward for the Core Strategy to ensure the best possible planning policy for development in West Lancashire.

Next Steps - Stages 5 and 6

1.2.8 Taking on-board your views from this consultation and any further changes to national planning policy and further evidence base that emerges, this Preferred Option will be used to prepare a Publication Draft version of the Core Strategy for a final round of public consultation (Stage 5) prior to final amendment before submitting the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public (Stage 6). More details on this are provided at the end of this document in the "Next Steps" chapter.

1.3 Technical Assessments of the Core Strategy

1.3.1 It is a statutory requirement that the Core Strategy is subject to several technical assessments during its preparation to ensure that it is addressing the specific issues of sustainability, impact on international sites of biodiversity importance, health, equality and

impact on rural areas. Therefore, the following assessments of the Core Strategy Preferred Options paper have been prepared and are available as part of the public consultation on the Preferred Options:

- A Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- A Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report
- A Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- A Rural Proofing Assessment

1.3.2 The results of these assessments should be used to improve the Core Strategy during its preparation and, in the case of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), should be an integral element of the preparation of the Core Strategy.

1.3.3 To this end, the Council will take on-board any recommendations made in the above assessments as it refines its Core Strategy after the public consultation on the Preferred Options paper. It should also be noted that the consultants preparing the SA report have been working with Council Officers over the last year as the Core Strategy Preferred Options have been prepared, providing input from a sustainability perspective, as is best practice for integrating SA into the Core Strategy preparation process.

1.3.4 The Council would also like to invite any comments the public and stakeholders may have on the above reports as part of the Preferred Options public consultation.

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait and Key Issues for West Lancashire

2.1 A Spatial Portrait of West Lancashire

Introduction

2.1.1 The spatial portrait sets the context for the Core Strategy by illustrating the key characteristics and features of the Borough that are unique to West Lancashire. The Spatial Portrait has been influenced by engagement with the local community and key stakeholders during the earlier stages of the Core Strategy preparation, and key information drawn from data within the Evidence Base, including the thematic and spatial evidence base summary papers.

West Lancashire Borough

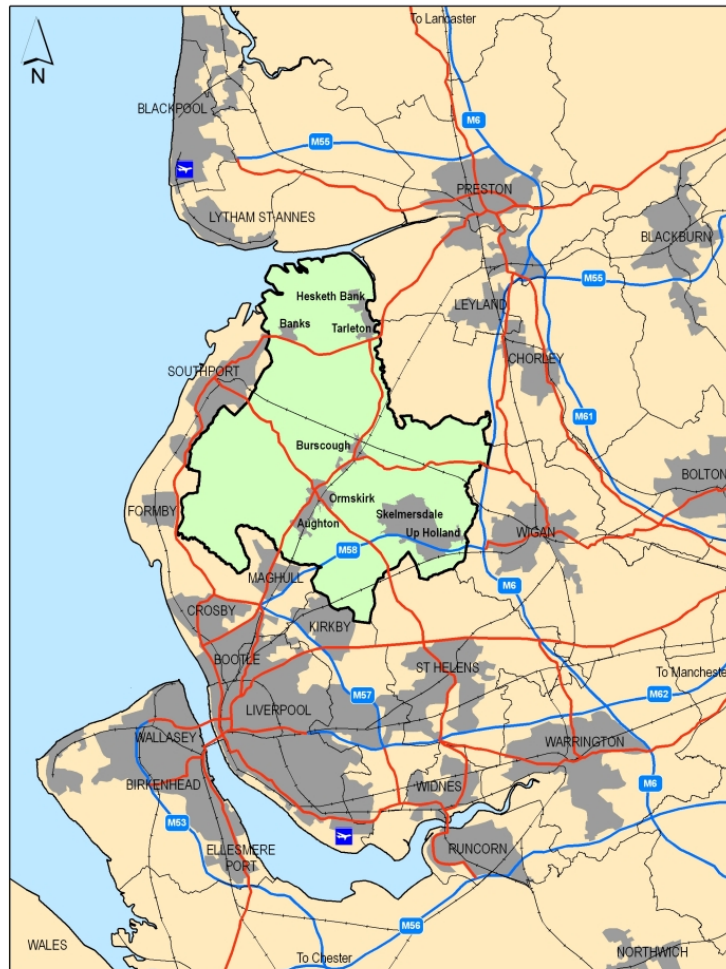
2.1.2 West Lancashire's geographical location in the North West of England is unique. It has a dual identity, being the southernmost Borough in the County of Lancashire, but also located within the Liverpool City Region. The Borough comprises a mix of vibrant towns and villages sitting alongside tranquil countryside and covers an area of 134 square miles (34,700 hectares). It has the greatest amount of Green Belt land in England ⁽¹⁾.

2.1.3 The Borough is predominantly rural in nature, and is widely recognised as an attractive place to live, work and visit. The majority of people live in the Borough's three main settlements: the rapidly maturing New Town of Skelmersdale (including Up Holland); the historic market town of Ormskirk (including Aughton); and the small market town of Burscough. There are three distinct rural areas: the Northern, Eastern and Western Parishes, containing a number of villages, the largest of which are the linear settlements of Tarleton and Hesketh Bank.

2.1.4 West Lancashire is bordered by the Ribble Estuary to the north and the Borough of Sefton to the west. The Boroughs of Knowsley and St. Helens lie to the south, with the Boroughs of Wigan, Chorley and South Ribble lying to the east. West Lancashire is situated within the Liverpool City Region, due to its strong economic, social, cultural and transport links to this area, particularly with Southport and Liverpool. The Borough is also influenced by, and has links to, the Central Lancashire and Manchester City Regions, particularly with Wigan. West Lancashire's location within the sub-region is illustrated by Figure 2.1 showing the West Lancashire Sub-Regional Setting, whilst a more detailed map of the Borough is illustrated by West Lancashire Settlements and Rural Areas below in Figure 2.2.

1 Local Planning Authority Green Belt Statistics: England 2008/09

Figure 2.1 Sub-regional setting of West Lancashire



2.1.5 There are also strong cross-boundary links, as a number of settlements in the Borough physically connect with settlements in neighbouring authorities. In the east these include connections with Orrell (Wigan) at Tontine, and Shevington (Wigan) at Appley Bridge. In the west these include connections with Birkdale (Sefton) at Moss Road and New Cut Lane, Ainsdale (Sefton) at Segar's Lane and Southport (Sefton) at Brown Edge/ Southport Road.

Natural and Built Environment

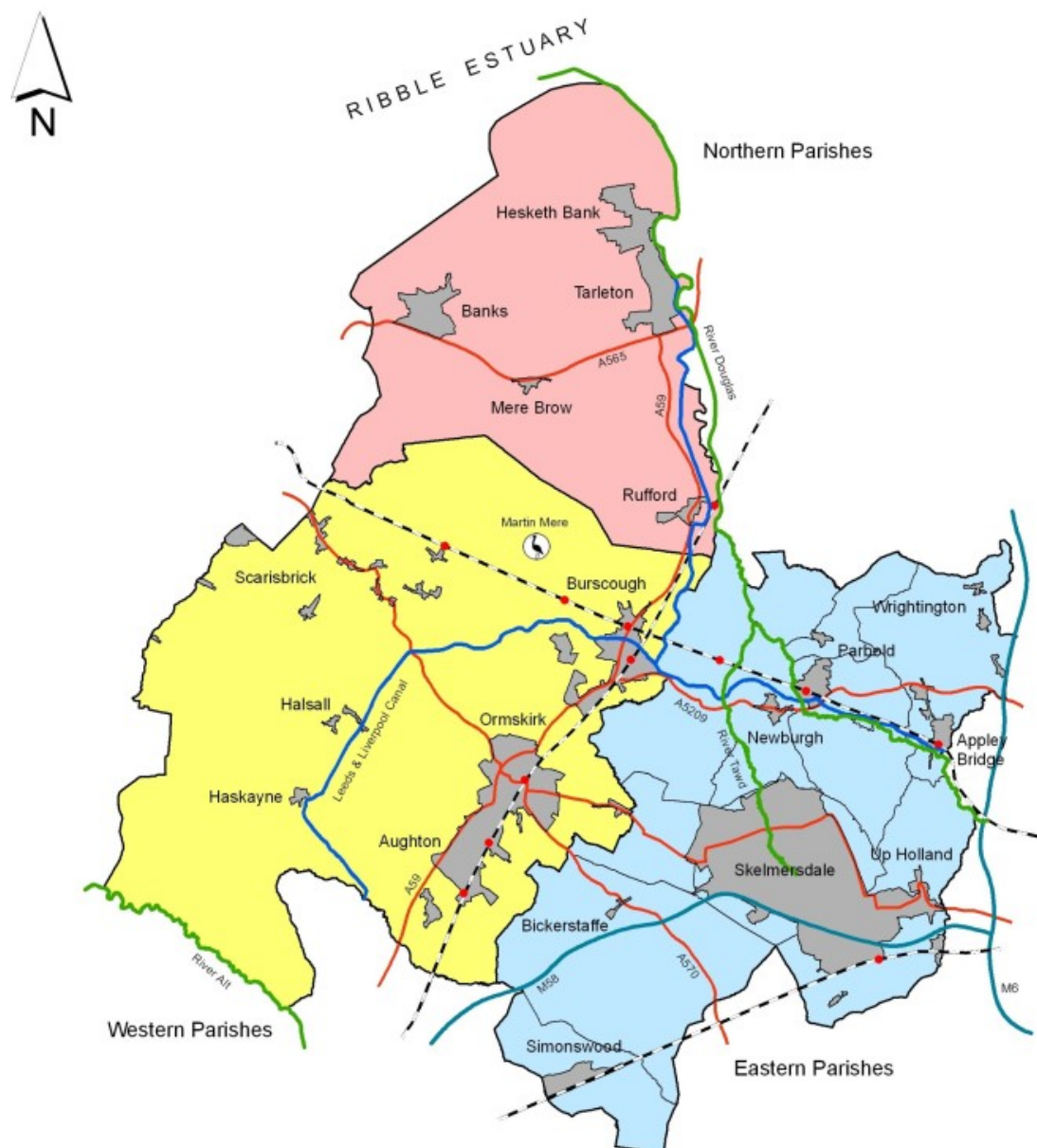
2.1.6 The Borough contains a large proportion of the best and most versatile agricultural land in Lancashire and the highest total area of Wildlife Trust reserves in the County ⁽²⁾. It is home to important wetland sites, including the internationally important Martin Mere and the Ribble Estuary. The River Douglas flows through the east of the Borough, whilst the Leeds-Liverpool Canal crosses the Borough from east to west and branches off to the north. The rural landscape is a mixture of mosslands in the north, west and south, a coastal plain

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait and Key Issues for West Lancashire

in the centre of the Borough, farmed ridges in the east, and coastal marshes in the Ribble Estuary. Two of the highest points in the Borough are Parbold Hill and Ashurst Beacon which provide spectacular views across the city-region to the Irish Sea and the Welsh Mountains.

2.1.7 Some areas of West Lancashire are at risk of coastal and fluvial flooding. The highest risk is found in Banks where it is threatened by coastal flooding. Further threats of flooding affect the south west of the Borough from the River Alt and areas near the River Douglas, which stretches through the Borough from Hesketh Bank in the north to Appley Bridge in the south east. Along its route through the Borough the Douglas passes close to a number of settlements including Hesketh Bank, Tarleton, Rufford, Parbold and Appley Bridge. Other areas of the Borough, such as Burscough, are affected by the threat of surface water flooding, particularly following heavy rainfall. More information on the risks of flooding can be found in the Councils [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) and on the [Environment Agency](#) website.

Figure 2.2 West Lancashire Settlements and Rural Areas



2.1.8 In terms of tourism, the Borough's major attractions include Martin Mere near Burscough (Wildfowl and Wetland Trust), Rufford Old Hall (National Trust) and Ormskirk market. Key areas for recreation include Beacon Country Park in Up Holland, Mere Sands Wood near Rufford, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and a network of rural footpaths. There are a total of 28 conservation areas across the Borough, and some of the key heritage assets include the Grade 1 listed Scarisbrick Hall and Lathom House, listed churches of Ormskirk Parish Church, St. Michael's in Aughton, St. Thomas the Martyr in Up Holland and St. Cuthbert's in Halsall.

Population

2.1.9 The population of the Borough in 2007 was estimated as 109,839 ⁽³⁾. This has risen by just over 1% since 2001 when the population was 108,378 ⁽⁴⁾. The population is projected to increase further to 117,600 by 2031, equating to an additional 7,761 residents and a 7.1% increase on its level in 2006 ⁽⁵⁾. Approximately one-quarter of residents are currently of retirement age. By 2031 this proportion is projected to have risen to around one third of residents, whilst over the same period, the proportion of people aged 15-59 will have dropped from 59% of the population to less than 50%.

2.1.10 There are variations in the population age structure between settlements. In general, the rural areas of West Lancashire are more attractive to people of middle or retirement age, whilst Skelmersdale has a younger, more varied population structure. Inevitably over future years, this will create a significant challenge to the delivery of services, provision of an adequate labour force and a suitable balanced housing stock that takes account of the ageing population.

Housing

2.1.11 The average house price in 2009 in West Lancashire stood at £170,633. This is an increase of 85% on the 2001 average house price, although prices have fallen on average since 2007 as a result of the economic market and recession ⁽⁶⁾. The ratio of house prices to income in West Lancashire has increased each year and the average property price is now almost 7 times the average income. This creates a significant affordability problem for the Borough, particularly in the rural areas where house prices are higher. Some of the highest house prices in the Borough can be found in Rufford, Aughton, Newburgh and Parbold, whilst some of the lower house prices can be found in the central wards of Skelmersdale.

2.1.12 Around three quarters of dwellings are owner-occupied in the Borough, with the remaining quarter being rented. Whilst the Borough proportion of owner-occupied households is higher than national and regional averages, this proportion drops below 50% in the central wards of Skelmersdale. There is also a poorer choice of housing available in Skelmersdale than in other areas of the Borough

3 Mid Year Population Estimates, ONS

4 Census 2001, ONS

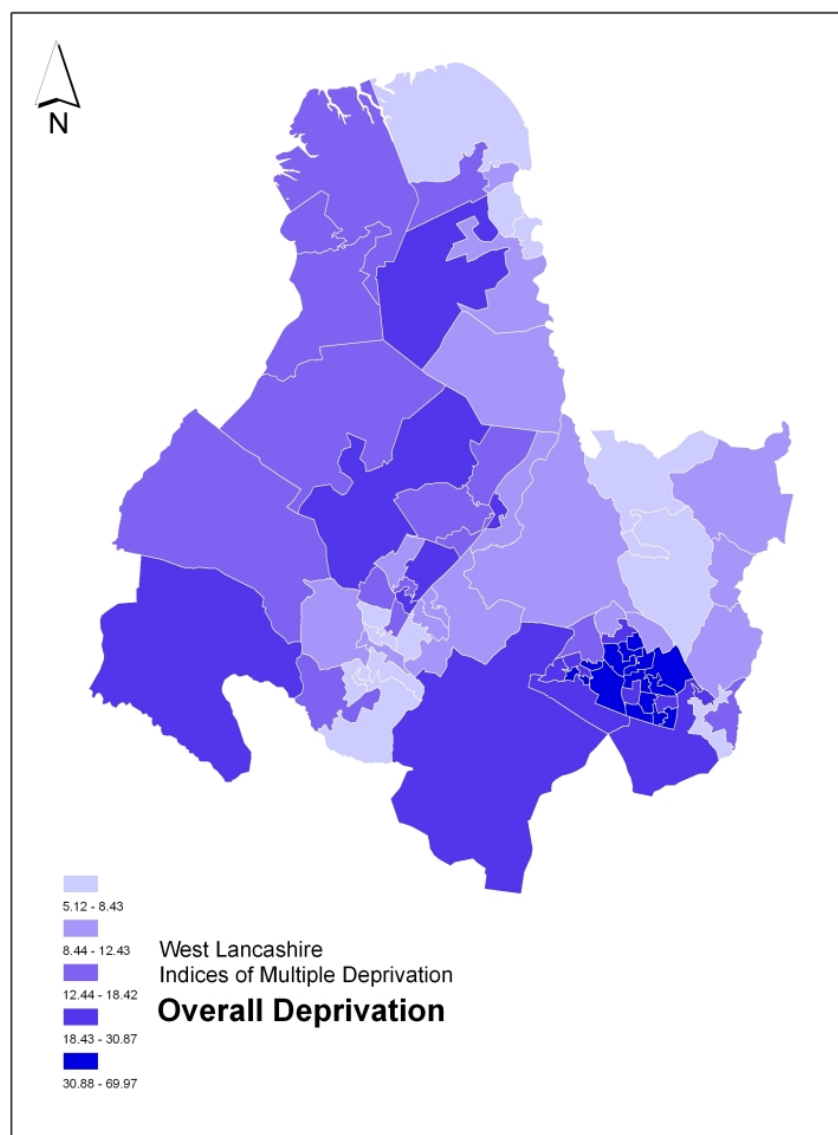
5 Population Projections 2006, ONS

6 Hometrack 2009

Deprivation

2.1.13 West Lancashire has relatively low levels of multiple deprivation, being ranked the 141st most deprived of the 354 English Council areas. However, Skelmersdale is a significant 'hot spot' of deprivation, being the most deprived area in the Borough with 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) featuring in the top 20% most deprived areas of the country ⁽⁷⁾. At the opposite end of the scale, Parbold, Aughton Park and Tarleton have some of the lowest levels of deprivation in the country. This illustrates the stark contrast between Skelmersdale and the rest of the Borough in terms of multiple deprivation, and the need to reduce the gap.

Figure 2.3 Deprivation levels in West Lancashire, Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007



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1:150,000

2.1.14 Some rural areas of the Borough also suffer from certain types of deprivation. For example, the parishes of Downholland, Great Altcar, Bickerstaffe and parts of Scarisbrick are amongst the top 10% nationally most deprived areas in terms of barriers to housing and key local services. This is likely due to their remote locations and high property prices.

Health, Education and Crime

2.1.15 The health of people in West Lancashire is roughly in line with national averages, with life expectancy at 77 years for men and 80 years for women. However, those living in the most deprived areas of the Borough, particularly Skelmersdale, have life expectancies 6 years shorter than those in the least deprived areas. The causes of avoidable deaths of people under 65 can stem from lifestyle choices such as smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise.

2.1.16 Just under a fifth of West Lancashire's workforce has a degree (or equivalent) or higher, in line with national figures. The highest proportions of people with degree level qualifications are found in Aughton, Parbold, Newburgh and Wrightington, which are predominantly dormitory settlements for people commuting to other areas, both within and outside the Borough. Skelmersdale has the highest proportion of people with no qualifications.

2.1.17 Crime rates in the Borough are relatively low compared with other local authorities in England, and these have steadily decreased over the last few years.

Transport

2.1.18 The majority of the Borough has relatively good road access to the neighbouring towns of Southport, Preston, St. Helens, Wigan and Liverpool. There are also good connections to the wider motorway network via the M58 and M6. However, there is a major issue regarding traffic congestion around Ormskirk Town Centre as a result of the one-way system on the A570 and there are significant congestion issues at peak times on the A59 through Ormskirk and Burscough. Problems in the Northern Parishes are also found in relation to congestion and issues with HGV's using the centre of the settlements to access rural businesses, particularly along Hesketh Lane, Tarleton.

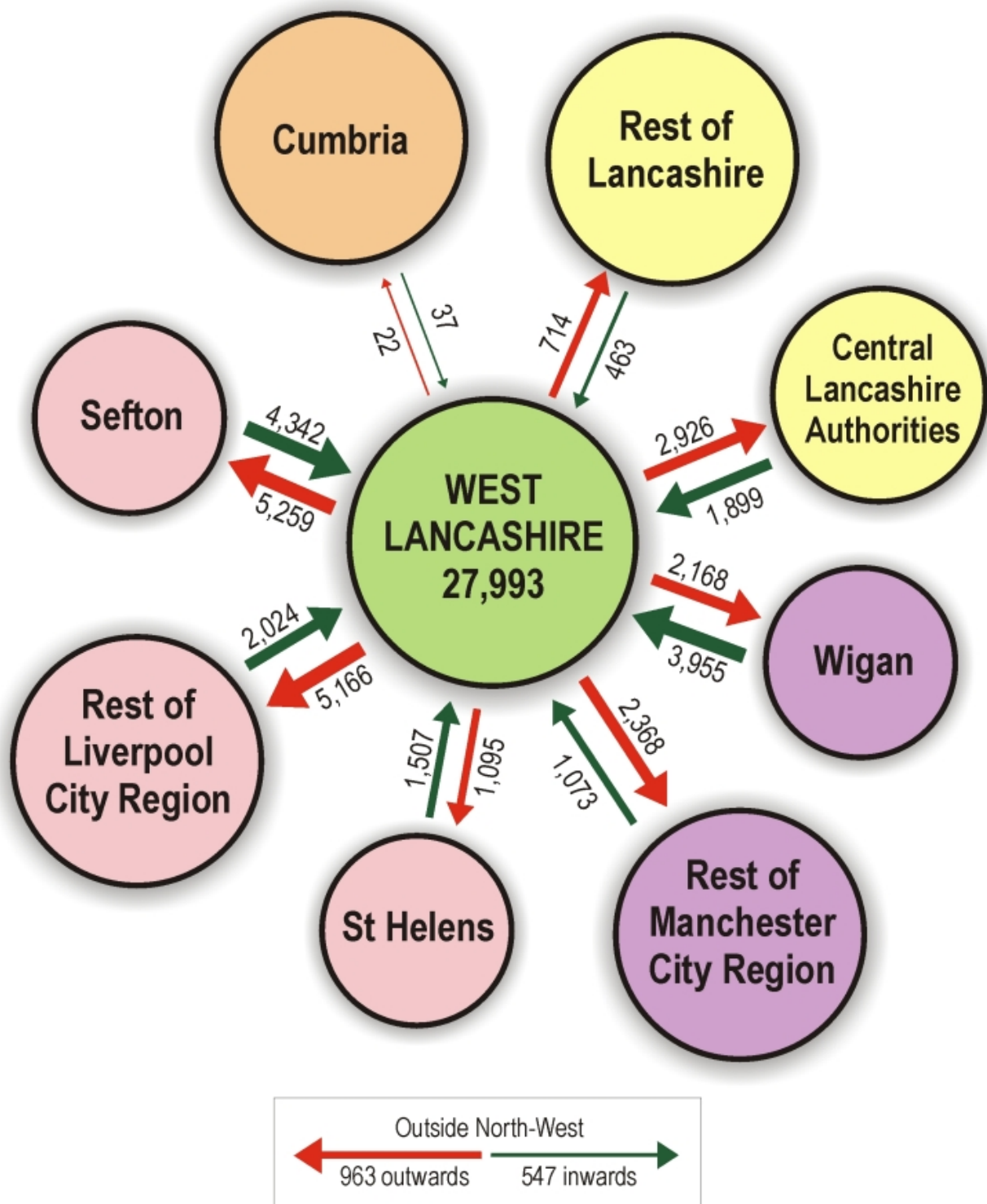
2.1.19 Three rail lines running through the Borough provide links to Liverpool, Preston, Southport, Wigan and Manchester, although interchanging between these lines within the Borough can be difficult. Some services, including that between Ormskirk and Preston, have infrequent services. The largest town in the Borough, Skelmersdale, has no rail provision, with the closest station being located at Up Holland, which itself is only served by an infrequent service and has insufficient parking provision. There are regular bus services between Southport and Wigan, going through Ormskirk and Skelmersdale. However, public transport provision in the remainder of the Borough generally is poor, particularly in the rural areas, with infrequent services and a limited range of destinations.

2.1.20 Patterns of movement illustrate that around 57% of West Lancashire residents travel to work within the Borough, with the most popular outward destinations being Sefton (11%), elsewhere within the Liverpool City Region (11%) and the Central Lancashire Authorities (Preston, South Ribble and Chorley) (6%)⁽⁸⁾. Patterns of inward movement reveal

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait and Key Issues for West Lancashire

that the most likely origin of commuters who work in West Lancashire are Sefton (10%), Wigan (9%) and elsewhere within the Liverpool City Region (5%). This is illustrated by West Lancashire Travel to Work Flows (Source: 2001 Census) below.

Figure 2.3 West Lancashire Travel to Work Flows (Source: 2001 Census)



Employment and Economy

2.1.21 The manufacturing industry in West Lancashire has been in decline and is coupled with a weakening agricultural sector in the rural areas and a stronger concentration of service sectors in Ormskirk. West Lancashire has reasonably high levels, particularly in Skelmersdale, of residents employed as "process plant and machine operatives" whilst there are significantly lower levels of people employed as "managers and senior officials", in "professional occupations" and in "skilled trades occupations" ⁽⁹⁾. In the rural areas of the Borough, agricultural and horticultural employers (including packing industries) play an important role, although these increasingly rely upon migrant or seasonal workers to function.

2.1.22 The Borough is home to a number of international and nationally recognised companies including Pilkington Group Ltd, ASDA, Co-Operative Bank PLC, Matalan PLC and Walkers Snack Foods Ltd, in addition to important local employers such as the Council and Central Lancashire Primary Care Trust. Edge Hill University is also an important asset which brings significant benefits for the local economy.

2.1.23 West Lancashire's retail and night time economy sector is detrimentally affected by a loss of expenditure to other local authorities beyond the Borough, particularly Sefton. At present, more than a third of convenience goods expenditure and 75% of comparison goods expenditure are lost to competing centres outside West Lancashire.

2.1.24 82% of the West Lancashire working age population are economically active. However, unemployment has increased over the past 4 years with unemployment levels highest in Skelmersdale. The greatest number of Job Seekers Allowance and Benefits Claimants are found in Skelmersdale. 15% of the Skelmersdale and Up Holland population claim benefits, equating to 58% of all claimants across West Lancashire.

Skelmersdale (and Up Holland)

2.1.25 Skelmersdale was a small mining town until the establishment of the New Town in 1961 when it accommodated population overspill from the conurbation of Liverpool and wider Merseyside. It has grown considerably since this time and is now the largest and most densely populated settlement in the Borough, with a population of 35,000 people (2001 Census). However, the town has not reached its originally planned capacity of 80,000.

2.1.26 Skelmersdale's New Town status with its 'Radburn' layout brings mixed fortunes to the town. Whilst there is an excellent road network with congestion-free roads and connections to the M58, it is one of the largest towns in the country without a railway station. In addition, the new town housing estates have left a legacy of poor quality housing and poorly designed estates, where pedestrians are segregated from the road system through a network of footpaths, underpasses and footbridges which many people do not feel comfortable using due to the perceived risks of crime. The town suffers from a poor image.

2.1.27 The New Town is divided into clear residential, industrial and retail zones, with 56% of the area being classed as greenspace. The town centre consists of a number of isolated buildings with poor connections, including The Concourse Centre which provides a relatively

limited range of services. The town centre lacks an entertainment and night-time economy and is effectively closed off in the evenings. Consequently, many residents travel further afield to Wigan, Liverpool, Southport and Ormskirk to fulfil their needs.

2.1.28 Skelmersdale suffers from acute problems of multiple deprivation and in particular, the Digmoor area of the town is ranked amongst the top 1% most deprived areas in the country. Some of the more severe problems are linked with low income, high unemployment, poor health and low educational attainment. A significant proportion of residents are employed in the town, particularly in retail and manual work in the manufacturing industries, suggesting that the skills base in the town is low. However, the proposed regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre aims to act as a catalyst to regenerate the wider area of the town to turn about its fortunes.

2.1.29 Up Holland, adjoining Skelmersdale to the east, is, in contrast, a more traditional settlement. With a population of 7,180 (2001 Census), it provides a range of local services, although its residents arguably look more towards Wigan than they do to West Lancashire to meet their needs. Up Holland is easily accessible by bus, but the railway station is a considerable distance from the village centre, and only provides a limited service between Kirkby and Manchester via Wigan.

Ormskirk (and Aughton)

2.1.30 The historic market town of Ormskirk was first established as a settlement in the late Saxon period and is the civic centre of the Borough. Ormskirk, together with Aughton, has the second largest population in the Borough with 31,552 people (2001 Census). The historic character of the town is an important feature and the distinct tower and spire of Ormskirk Parish Church is a unique landmark across the surrounding rural landscape.

2.1.31 Ormskirk provides a full range of facilities and benefits from a hospital, magistrates court, civic hall and a University. The town is located in a strategic transport corridor with both the A59 (Liverpool-Preston) and A570 (St.Helens-Southport) passing through the town. A bypass has been proposed to alleviate the congestion suffered in the town centre, although the probability of this road being built is currently low. Employment in the town is predominantly provided through the town centre businesses, the Council, the Hospital and Edge Hill University. There are also business parks at Burscough Street and Southport Road. However, many residents commute to Liverpool, utilising the high-frequency rail service from Ormskirk. A less frequent rail service is also provided to Preston.

2.1.32 Aughton is located to the south of Ormskirk and is viewed with Ormskirk as a single settlement in planning terms. Although it covers a large suburban area and has a relatively high population, it has no town centre, and relies upon Ormskirk for all facilities, except for some local services. Aughton has two stations at Aughton Park and Town Green, providing a high-frequency rail service to Liverpool and Ormskirk.

Burscough

2.1.33 Burscough is the Borough's third largest settlement with a population of 8,668 people (2001 Census). It began as an agricultural village and developed as an industrial centre with the construction of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the two railway lines in the mid-19th century, deriving its income from milling wheat grown on the agricultural land. Burscough

has developed considerably over recent years, both through new facilities in the town centre, a new supermarket, and the redevelopment of brownfield sites within the settlement, mostly for housing. In addition to the main urban area, Burscough also has a sizeable industrial estate lying a few hundred metres to the west of the town.

2.1.34 Burscough is located on the A59 and has two railway stations: Burscough Junction providing a link between Preston and Ormskirk, and Burscough Bridge Interchange with links to Southport and Manchester. There are also a number of bus routes, with services to Tarleton, Ormskirk, Rufford, Preston and Southport. Close to Burscough is the internationally important Martin Mere Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserve.

The Northern Parishes

2.1.35 The largest settlements in the Northern Parishes are the adjoining linear settlements of Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, located adjacent to the River Douglas, Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the Ribble Estuary. Tarleton is the larger of the two settlements with a population of 5,350 people (2001 Census). It has a good variety of services located in the centre and around St. Mark's Square. The secondary school which serves the wider area is located here although the buildings are in need of improvement. It benefits from being situated on the A59/ A565 corridor, enjoying good road access to Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford, Southport and Preston. A number of bus routes also provide direct links to these locations.

2.1.36 Hesketh Bank is located to the north of Tarleton with a population of 3,873 people (2001 Census). It has provision for basic services and this provision has recently been enhanced by the development of a Booths food store, but it still looks to Tarleton for some of its local and community services, such as the secondary school, library and other retail provision. Only one bus route runs through Hesketh Bank, providing a link between Southport and Longridge, via Preston. As with the surrounding settlements in the Northern Parishes, employment in Tarleton and Hesketh Bank is largely based upon agriculture, horticulture and produce packing industries. There are issues with traffic congestion in the two villages, particularly along the spinal Hesketh Lane /Station Road route. HGVs accessing agricultural and produce packing facilities combine with local traffic, particularly at peak times, and can cause significant problems.

2.1.37 Banks is located in the north west of the Borough along the A565 corridor, near to the border with Crossens (Sefton). It is located in a high flood risk area and has a relatively small population of 3,792 people (2001 Census). There are a limited range of facilities within the village, and bus routes provide links to Southport, Preston and Chorley.

2.1.38 Rufford is a small settlement located on the A59 in the north east of the Borough, with a population of 2,048 people (2001 Census). The village lacks basic facilities and looks to Burscough for many of its services. Rufford is reasonably well served by public transport with its own railway station on the Ormskirk to Preston line, and a number of regular bus services providing links to Southport, Preston, Ormskirk, Burscough, Tarleton and Chorley. Other settlements in the Northern Parishes include Holmeswood and Mere Brow.

The Eastern Parishes

2.1.39 Parbold is the largest settlement in the Eastern Parishes with a population of 3,890 people (2001 Census). It is an attractive village which expanded from a small hamlet based around the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. It lies in the Douglas Valley and is close to Parbold Hill. A range of services are provided in the village, which is essentially a commuter settlement with little local employment. Parbold rail station provides a regular service to Southport, Wigan and Manchester, whilst bus services link Parbold to Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Wigan, Wrightington Hospital and Mawdesley.

2.1.40 Wrightington Parish has a combined population of 4,055 people (2001 Census). Appley Bridge, the largest village in this parish, is located on the eastern border of the Borough adjacent to Shevington (Wigan), and relies heavily upon the services provided on the Wigan side of the border. The village is surrounded by very attractive countryside, and lies beside the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Appley Bridge station provides good rail links to Southport, Wigan and Manchester, but suffers from parking problems, being very popular with commuters.

2.1.41 There are also several smaller settlements dispersed across the Eastern Parishes, including Newburgh, Hilddale, Mossy Lea, Hunger Hill, Wrightington Bar, Crawford and several small villages and hamlets, as well as the Simonswood industrial area.

The Western Parishes

2.1.42 Scarisbrick is a dispersed settlement, incorporating the areas of Bescar, Brown Edge, Shirdley Hill and Pinfold with a combined population of 3,504 people (2001 Census). There are few facilities shared between these settlements, although local residents look towards Southport (Sefton) and Ormskirk for their services. Train stations at Bescar Lane and New Lane, serving Scarisbrick, have a limited service on the Southport-Manchester line. Scarisbrick is located on the main A570 road between Ormskirk and Southport, and has a number of bus routes with regular services to Southport, Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Wigan.

2.1.43 Halsall, Haskayne, Hurlston Green and Carr Cross are small rural settlements with a combined population of 1,873, all with limited facilities, located on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and A5147. Public transport is poor in this area with no train services and only one bus route between Southport and Bootle which runs through Halsall and Haskayne.

2.1.44 Other settlements in the Western Parishes include Westhead, a small linear village between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, and Great Altcar, lying on the mosslands east of Formby.

2.2 Key Issues in West Lancashire

Key Issues in West Lancashire

2.2.1 The spatial portrait for West Lancashire highlights a number of important issues in the area, which are summarised below. The list of issues is limited to those that it is felt are most important and which can be addressed locally through the West Lancashire LDF. The aim is that the list concentrates on locally distinctive issues, although certain issues inevitably apply across much of the country. The issues are not ranked in any particular order of importance or priority.

Key Issues

Skelmersdale	The town suffers from a poor image, areas of deprivation, above average unemployment, below average educational attainment and qualifications, a limited variety of job opportunities and below average health.
Skelmersdale Town Centre	A Masterplan is in place to regenerate the Town Centre, which could kick-start regeneration more widely within the town. If the Town Centre regeneration stalls then different ways of delivering regeneration in the town will need to be sought.
Edge Hill University	The University has expressed a desire to expand; this needs to be done in the most sustainable and acceptable manner. Student accommodation and its integration with the local community is a particular issue in Ormskirk.
Affordable Housing	There is a pressing need for affordable housing across most of the Borough, particularly in the rural areas.
Specialist Needs Housing	In addition to student and older peoples accommodation, sites may be required for seasonal agricultural and horticultural workers and those with disabilities or special needs.
Gypsy/Traveller Sites	The Borough is required by national policy to provide for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Show People.
Older People	An ageing population has implications for accommodation, health care, access to services for older people, and the wider economy as the proportion of working age people decreases.
Infrastructure	There is limited infrastructure capacity to accommodate new development in certain settlements, most notably Burscough, which will affect where new development can go if solutions cannot be found.
Green Infrastructure	The Borough contains nationally significant wildlife sites, as well as open space and recreational facilities. Appropriate access to, and linkages between, these assets need to be maximised.
Health	Although the Borough on the whole enjoys comparable levels of health with the rest of the Country, there are pockets of poor health in certain areas, most notably Skelmersdale.
Retail	A large proportion of retail expenditure by residents of the Borough is lost to places outside of West Lancashire, particularly for comparison goods, reflecting competition from neighbouring centres.
Employment	The Borough has a varied and wide ranging employment base, including strong agricultural, manufacturing and distribution sectors. It is vital for the economy of the Borough that a wide range of job opportunities, in a wider range of sectors, can be created.

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait and Key Issues for West Lancashire

Green Belt	Most settlements have tight Green Belt boundaries and little room for expansion, limiting the options available for future development.
Agricultural Land	Most of the agricultural land in the Borough is classed within the best and most versatile category. Development pressures in the countryside mean that any land lost to future development is likely to be of the best quality.
Traffic Congestion	Whilst this is not a particularly severe issue overall in the Borough, there are local 'congestion hot-spots' in Ormskirk and Tarleton/Hesketh Bank.
Public Transport	Existing routes serving the Borough could be improved, in particular the connections at Burscough and better links to, and a new station in, Skelmersdale. All areas of the Borough, particularly those which are deficient in access to public transport, need to be provided with appropriate access to shops, jobs and other services via a sustainable public transport network.
Flooding and Climate Change	Some parts of West Lancashire are subject to high flood risk (tidal and fluvial) which could restrict development in those areas.

Chapter 3 A Vision for West Lancashire 2027 and the Spatial & Strategic Objectives

3.1 A Vision for West Lancashire 2027

The West Lancashire of 2027 will continue to be an attractive place where people want to live, work and visit. Major steps will have been made in the regeneration and sustainable growth of Skelmersdale, the long-term stability of Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough and the sustainability of rural settlements.

The Borough will retain its local character but will also capitalise on its highly accessible location within the North West and its links with the three city-regions of Liverpool, Manchester and Central Lancashire. It will readily adapt to change and tackle the major issues of climate change, economic variations, supply of affordable housing and an ageing population.

West Lancashire's rural and urban communities will be stronger and more sustainable. They will maintain their individual identity and offer residents better access to services, facilities and the housing market. New and renovated housing, particularly affordable housing and appropriate housing for the elderly, will be designed to meet people's needs. The public will have improved access to health care, resulting in better standards of health and wellbeing.

Economic development will play to the key strengths and resources of West Lancashire by diversifying the employment base in Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, with small-scale employment opportunities in the rural areas. Employment opportunities and skills training will be targeted at deprived areas to build up a strong and diverse economy across the whole Borough.

The identity and unique landscape of West Lancashire will be valued, sustained and enhanced, enabling people to access and enjoy all that it offers. This will incorporate:

- the Borough's heritage assets (archaeological, built and landscape);
- its important wildlife, habitats and biodiversity;
- its vital agricultural role;
- its green spaces and waterways; and
- its attractive countryside, including the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.

West Lancashire will be prepared for the effects of climate change and be doing its part to reduce reliance on carbon-based technologies in favour of renewable, "green" technologies, thus reducing the effects of climate change and protecting the borough's natural environment. Sustainable modes of transport will have been encouraged and the use of private vehicles will be significantly reduced.

By 2027, the social, health and economic inequalities between **Skelmersdale** and the rest of the Borough will have been reduced. Skelmersdale's image will have been improved markedly by relevant organisations working with the Council on the regeneration and renewal of housing estates and a major town centre expansion scheme providing better retail, leisure, transport and public buildings to serve the whole Borough.

The improved town centre and better quality housing, in terms of design, mix and tenure, will attract new residents to the town and help to meet Skelmersdale's ongoing housing needs. This will, in turn, encourage stronger community and voluntary sector organisations to flourish.

We will have worked with local businesses and education providers, including a rejuvenated Skelmersdale College, to raise educational attainment, enhance training and development opportunities and tackle worklessness, leading to a more skilled local workforce with higher aspirations. Improved industrial estates and provision of new employment land will lead to a greater range of employers and jobs in the town resulting in a better quality and variety of job prospects for its residents and the retention of the trained and skilled workforce.

Improved bus and rail facilities, and a network of usable, well-maintained and safe cycle and pedestrian routes will mean easier access to education, employment and other key services such as health care, helping to reduce health inequalities between Skelmersdale and the rest of West Lancashire.

High quality maintenance of the town's recreational features and extensive areas of green open space, including the Tawd Valley and wooded cloughs, will encourage increased use and enjoyment by townspeople and visitors. This will improve Skelmersdale's image locally and play a part in improving people's general wellbeing and health.

In 2027, the Historic Market Town of **Ormskirk / Aughton** will maintain its important role as a Key Service Centre, providing a good range of retail, leisure facilities and key services for residents of the town and the surrounding rural areas. Edge Hill University will continue to be a key economic driver for Ormskirk with an important role across the Borough and wider sub-region.

The Council and other organisations will have addressed problems of town centre traffic congestion and improved the general attractiveness of the town centre with increased accessibility by public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Ormskirk's links with Liverpool and Merseyside will be strengthened. Rail services to Burscough, Preston and Southport will have been improved, making the town more accessible to other parts of the North West.

Burscough in 2027 will have retained its role as an attractive Key Service Centre, providing a range of facilities for local people whilst still looking towards Ormskirk for certain services. The town's role as a local employment hub for surrounding rural areas will be reinforced with sustainable growth of the industrial and business areas linked to the town centre. Also, Burscough's access to public transport will be enhanced.

Working with utilities providers and developers, the Council will ensure that appropriate infrastructure improvements will be in place for necessary new development. Burscough's tourism and recreational potential will be maximised by drawing on attractive features such as the Leeds-Liverpool Canal heritage, the surrounding countryside and Martin Mere.

In 2027, the **rural areas** of West Lancashire will continue to thrive off a strong agricultural sector, whilst enhancing biodiversity and providing a more diverse and adaptable economy. Appropriate new employment opportunities in the rural areas will include home-based working, facilitated by high-speed broadband. The larger villages within rural areas will be sustainable hubs for local services, at the centre of sustainable rural communities.

The unique landscape and important biodiversity of rural West Lancashire will continue to be valued both for its natural environment and as a recreational resource. Sustainable tourism will be based on the attractive countryside and local heritage (particularly along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, and the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park).

The Northern Parishes area (including Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks, Mere Brow, and Rufford) will continue its important horticultural role. Derelict sites will be regenerated to help meet local housing and employment needs. Development in the flood risk areas will have been managed carefully to avoid increasing the overall danger from flooding.

The Western and Eastern Parishes rural areas will benefit from improved accessibility through good public transport links to Local and Key Service Centres such as Ormskirk and Skelmersdale and neighbouring urban areas such as Sefton and Wigan. The pleasant built and natural environment of these rural areas will be sustained and conserved.

3.2 Spatial & Strategic Objectives

3.2.1 To deliver the Vision for West Lancashire in 2027, as set out above, a number of realistic objectives must be prepared. These objectives must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) so that it can be made clear that the Vision can be delivered and enable progress in achieving the Vision to be monitored.

3.2.2 The initial objectives were prepared for the Options stage of the Core Strategy, and following consultation, have been amended to take into account recommendations and suggestions received through the consultation exercise. The revised Spatial & Strategic Objectives for the Core Strategy are presented below.

3.2.3 Government guidance, contained within Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12), requires the key objectives to be linked with indicators and targets. How these objectives will be monitored (the indicators that will be used) are detailed in Appendix B of this report. As preparation and implementation of the Core Strategy progresses, the indicators and targets may be revised in accordance with Plan-Monitor-Manage guidance.

3.2.4 The objectives embrace the aims and visions of other key strategies and plans important to West Lancashire, including the West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

Objective 1 – Stronger and Safer Communities

To have strong and vibrant communities, in which both young and old people are actively engaged and where people feel safe and secure.

More active voluntary and community sectors will lead to the development of a high degree of community participation and increased pride in neighbourhoods. Crime levels will reduce further, with an active Community Safety Partnership giving residents a greater sense of security.

Objective 2 – Education training and the economy

To create more, and better quality, training and job opportunities to get more people into work

A new Skelmersdale College and improved facilities at Edge Hill University will help provide a highly trained workforce; combined with improved results at secondary school level, particularly in Skelmersdale. Improved and new employment land will be found in the main urban areas, with small scale rural employment opportunities also encouraged through a diversified rural economy.

Objective 3 - Health

To improve the general health of residents and promote social well being through high quality green infrastructure and cultural activities

Residents will be encouraged to live a healthier lifestyle through increased leisure and sports opportunities. Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces will be readily accessible and improved. There will be improved access to health facilities. Social and cultural facilities will be provided to a high standard and be accessible to all communities.

Objective 4 – Natural Environment

To protect and improve the natural environment, including biodiversity and green infrastructure, in West Lancashire.

A range of sites will continue to be protected and enhanced for their biodiversity and geodiversity interest. The number of important sites will be increased where possible and new developments will contribute to increasing biodiversity. The Ribble Estuary will continue to be developed as a site of national and international importance, as will the facilities at Martin Mere. The landscape and biodiversity will be protected and enhanced through management of important features and through appropriate and well designed new developments.

Objective 5 - Housing

To provide a range of new housing types in appropriate locations to meet the needs of West Lancashire's population, including affordable housing and specialist accommodation.

An average of at least 300 new homes a year should be provided to meet the current requirements of strategic planning policy. These will be concentrated on brownfield sites, where available, in the major urban areas where services and transport facilities are greatest. The needs of all sectors of the community will be catered for through the provision of lifetime homes. New extra care facilities will be developed for the elderly and suitable pitches will be found for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Suitable student accommodation will also be provided in Ormskirk to facilitate the growth of Edge Hill University.

Objective 6 – Services and Accessibility

To provide good quality services that are accessible to all, and to promote the vitality and viability of town and local centres which are well linked to their rural hinterlands and neighbouring City Regions. All new development should be located in areas that are accessible and which have a range of services.

The Borough's town and village centres should continue to be attractive centres that provide a range of services for local residents. The important function of the market towns of Ormskirk and Burscough as Key Service Centres will be protected and enhanced. Public transport links through both rail and bus should be enhanced to improve the accessibility of key centres and their links to the centres of City Regions – Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. The regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre through the provision of new retail, leisure, housing, community and educational facilities will be vital to the development of the town as a whole. Development will be located mainly in the centres which have the greatest numbers of jobs and services available and which are accessible by public transport.

Objective 7 – Location of Development and Built Environment

To ensure that development is designed to a high quality and is appropriate for its locality, maximising efficiency in the use of land and resources, avoiding areas of significant constraint and minimising pollution. Heritage assets will be protected and enhanced. The unique character and features of local areas will be protected and reinforced through new development and other initiatives.

Design quality will be greatly enhanced, with all development respecting the local area. The unique heritage of West Lancashire will be protected and enhanced wherever possible. New development will be distributed to appropriate locations across the Borough.

Objective 8 – Climate Change

To mitigate against and adapt to climate change through a variety of measures including correctly locating and designing new development, reducing energy consumption, having sustainable alternative energy sources, and minimising waste and increasing recycling.

New development will be steered to areas which are not at risk of flooding and which are in sustainable locations, will use carbon neutral technology and will make the best use of opportunities for renewable energy provision.

Objective 9 – Skelmersdale

To make Skelmersdale an attractive and vibrant place to live and reduce the social inequalities between the town and the rest of the Borough.

A new regenerated Skelmersdale Town Centre will better serve the needs of its residents and the wider Borough. New housing and improvements to the existing older new town estates and the existing green infrastructure will also take place. Transport links will be improved with more extensive and frequent services and the aim of providing a rail station for Skelmersdale. Health and educational inequalities with the rest of the Borough will also narrow. All these factors will make Skelmersdale a more attractive place to live and will bring in new people to live in the town.

The Importance of Monitoring

3.2.5 Core Strategies have major effects, including social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts. It is therefore essential that core strategies are based on thorough evidence. Evidence, however, is changeable with time, and it is important that data that informs the Core Strategy is monitored to enable the planning system to respond to any changes accordingly.

3.2.6 Monitoring is an essential part of an effective strategy and provides two main roles:

- To set targets or measurable outcomes in relation to what the Core Strategy is seeking to achieve
- To monitor performance as to whether Core Strategy policies are working as intended and, if not, whether they need amending. Contingency plans can also be set to trigger to address the issues.

3.2.7 Monitoring also enables performance to be measured against any relevant national and regional targets in order to highlight any significant differences in performance.

3.2.8 PPS12 states that each Local Planning Authority should produce a Core Strategy which includes a Vision, strategic objectives, a delivery strategy and clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy. Monitoring is an essential part of the planning process forming the cyclical chain of Plan-Monitor-Manage. By monitoring the success of each objective, using indicators, contingency plans can be introduced if policies are failing, or policies can be adapted in light of changing circumstances, thereby enabling the delivery of the strategy to be well managed.

3.2.9 Monitoring of the Core Strategy will be reported through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), published each year. As work is completed on the Sustainability Appraisal, 'Significant Effects Indicators' will also be incorporated into future AMRs.

Chapter 4 An Overview of the Core Strategy Preferred Options

4.1 Structure of the Core Strategy Preferred Options

4.1.1 The Core Strategy Preferred Options are divided into 5 broad topic areas which, all together, contain 17 Policy Areas, as follows:

- The over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites (Chapter 5) - this section includes three Policy Areas, providing the overall Development Framework for the entire Borough as well as details of two Strategic Development Sites that are key to the delivery of the Core Strategy.
- Facilitating Economic Growth (Chapter 6) - provides three Policy Areas promoting economic growth and development of employment land in the Borough, with the second Policy Area focusing on the rural economy and the third focusing on Edge Hill University.
- Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation (Chapter 7) - includes four Policy Areas addressing how development should provide for residential accommodation in general, affordable and specialist housing, student accommodation in Ormskirk and for gypsies & travellers and travelling showpeople.
- Infrastructure and Services Provision (Chapter 8) - sets out the Council's strategic planning policy relating to the need to maintain our town and local centres, promote sustainable transport, deliver infrastructure and accessible local services and ensure developer's contribute to the provision of affordable housing, infrastructure and local services.
- Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change (Chapter 9) - provides the Council's strategic planning policy approach to low carbon development and energy infrastructure, green infrastructure and biodiversity, and enhancing the Borough's distinctive character and ensuring that new development delivers a high quality of design.

4.1.2 Chapter 10 discusses the major issues of deliverability and risk that face the Core Strategy and specific policies within it. Core Strategies must be flexible to be able to cope with changing circumstances over the Core Strategy period and with situations that arise where part of the Core Strategy is not delivered. In particular, Chapter 10 highlights a "Plan B" if the situation arises where it becomes clear that a large amount of anticipated residential and / or employment development is not going to be delivered within the Core Strategy period.

4.1.3 The Preferred Options document is somewhat complicated by the fact that it proposes two slightly different over-arching spatial strategies for the Core Strategy in order to specifically gain the view of the public and stakeholders on two options relating to the distribution of housing development on Green Belt land. These options are explained in more detail in section 4.3 below, but the effect of including these options is that the distribution of the housing target across the Borough's towns and parishes in Policy Area CS1 has two slightly different options and that Policy Area CS3 would only appear in the Core Strategy if the option for a Burscough Strategic Development Site were selected.

4.2 The Core Strategy Preferred Options - Key Messages

4.2.1 Overall, the key message of the Core Strategy Preferred Options is one of sustainable growth, the regeneration of Skelmersdale and the preservation of the Borough's attractive environment and rural character. This is reflected by the fact that over two-thirds of development in the Borough over the Core Strategy period will be focused in Skelmersdale and approximately 90% will be focused within the three Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough.

4.2.2 Aside from the desire to preserve the environment and rural character of the Borough, development in West Lancashire is constrained by various other factors, most notably Green Belt designation, water infrastructure, transport infrastructure and, in certain places, flood risk. Therefore, the overall targets for development of housing and employment have been limited to what is needed in the Borough over the Core Strategy period to meet local needs and in order to deliver the regeneration of Skelmersdale, without any additional, aspirational growth for areas outside Skelmersdale factored into development targets.

4.2.3 As well as the more traditional key planning values of providing housing and employment opportunities and preserving the character and environment of the Borough, the Core Strategy Preferred Options also focuses on newer key planning values that are just as central to delivering sustainable development. These values include:

- addressing Climate Change, be that through how and where we build or through delivering renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure;
- ensuring necessary and desired infrastructure and accessible local services are provided, especially in light of an ageing population; and
- ensuring that development caters for all groups in society equally, such as through the appropriate provision of affordable homes, the provision of sites for Gypsies & Travellers and through the provision of accessible local services to meet local needs and demands.

4.2.4 A key issue that the Core Strategy Preferred Options has had to address is one of releasing a relatively small amount of Green Belt land in the Borough in order to meet development targets and where this release should take place. Releasing Green Belt land for development is never ideal, but given that 91% of the Borough is within the Green Belt, and given the lack of available and viable land for development within the Borough's towns and villages, it is unavoidable if development is to deliver a reasonable amount of housing and employment opportunities to meet the needs generated by natural growth of the Borough's population and by changing social trends.

4.2.5 This Preferred Options paper proposes two options for delivering a small proportion of the housing to be delivered in West Lancashire over the Core Strategy period on Green Belt, as well as proposing to locate 20% of new employment development and a small extension of the Edge Hill University campus in Ormskirk on Green Belt. These options are discussed further in the following section.

4.3 Options for Green Belt Release

The Need for Green Belt Release in West Lancashire

4.3.1 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), it is clear that some development will need to take place on Green Belt land on the edge of the Borough's settlements if the targets for housing and employment land proposed in the Core Strategy Preferred Options are to be delivered.

4.3.2 The development that would need to be delivered on Green Belt would equate to 600 dwellings (assuming a density of 30 dwellings per hectare, this equates to approximately 20 ha of land), 18 ha of employment land, up to 10 ha of university campus extension and any land required for infrastructure associated with these developments. The majority of this development would likely be delivered in the latter half 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.

4.3.3 While there are areas of protected land on the edge of some settlements that are not designated as Green Belt, the development of such land would have a similar impact as that of developing Green Belt, given that the characteristics of such land are that of Green Belt in all but name, and so the presence of this land does not really change the need for release of Green Belt for development. 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 and designation.

4.3.4 Depending on which specific location(s) is selected for Green Belt release for new development, it is anticipated that the maximum amount of Green Belt to be considered for release across the Borough during the Core Strategy period would be in the region of 90 ha, which includes land for housing, employment and infrastructure improvements, as well as the potential expansion of the Edge Hill University campus. 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 Green Belt in the Borough.

4.3.5 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. 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). This period has been exceeded and as a consequence the Green Belt is beginning to stifle our ability to meet the future development needs of the Borough.

Options for the Release of Green Belt

4.3.6 Having established that there is a need for the release of a relatively small amount of Green Belt in the Borough over the Core Strategy period, it is for the Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) to specify where that Green Belt release should take place. Depending on the importance and quantum of development to be considered in any given part of the Green Belt, the precise sites for release can be outlined through a Strategic Development Site in the Core Strategy or through allocating specific sites in the Site Allocations DPD, based on broad "areas of search" outlined in the Core Strategy.

4.3.7 Within this Preferred Options document the Council suggest:

- two options for delivering 600 dwellings on Green Belt land (see Policy Areas CS1 and CS3 in Chapter 5);
- two "areas of search" in the Green Belt in which 18 ha of employment land will need to be delivered (see Policy Areas CS1 in Chapter 5 and CS4 in Chapter 6); and
- an "area of search" for the expansion of the university campus in Ormskirk into Green Belt (see Policy Area CS6 in Chapter 6).

4.3.8 The two options for delivering 600 dwellings on Green Belt land, in summary, are:

- Designating in the Core Strategy a Strategic Development Site in the Green Belt on the edge of Burscough that would also deliver 10 ha of employment land and new community facilities - this site has the potential to deliver several benefits for Burscough but also has severe constraints that must be overcome if development is to be sustainable.
- Distributing 500 dwellings across two or more sites in the Green Belt on the edge of Ormskirk and Burscough (which would also include 10 ha of employment land) and 100 dwellings on one or more sites on protected land in the southern part of Banks - this option would involve the designation of two "areas of search" (on the edge of Ormskirk and Burscough) in the Core Strategy to accommodate this development, actual sites would be identified through a later Site Allocations DPD.

Figure 4.1 Burscough Strategic Development Site

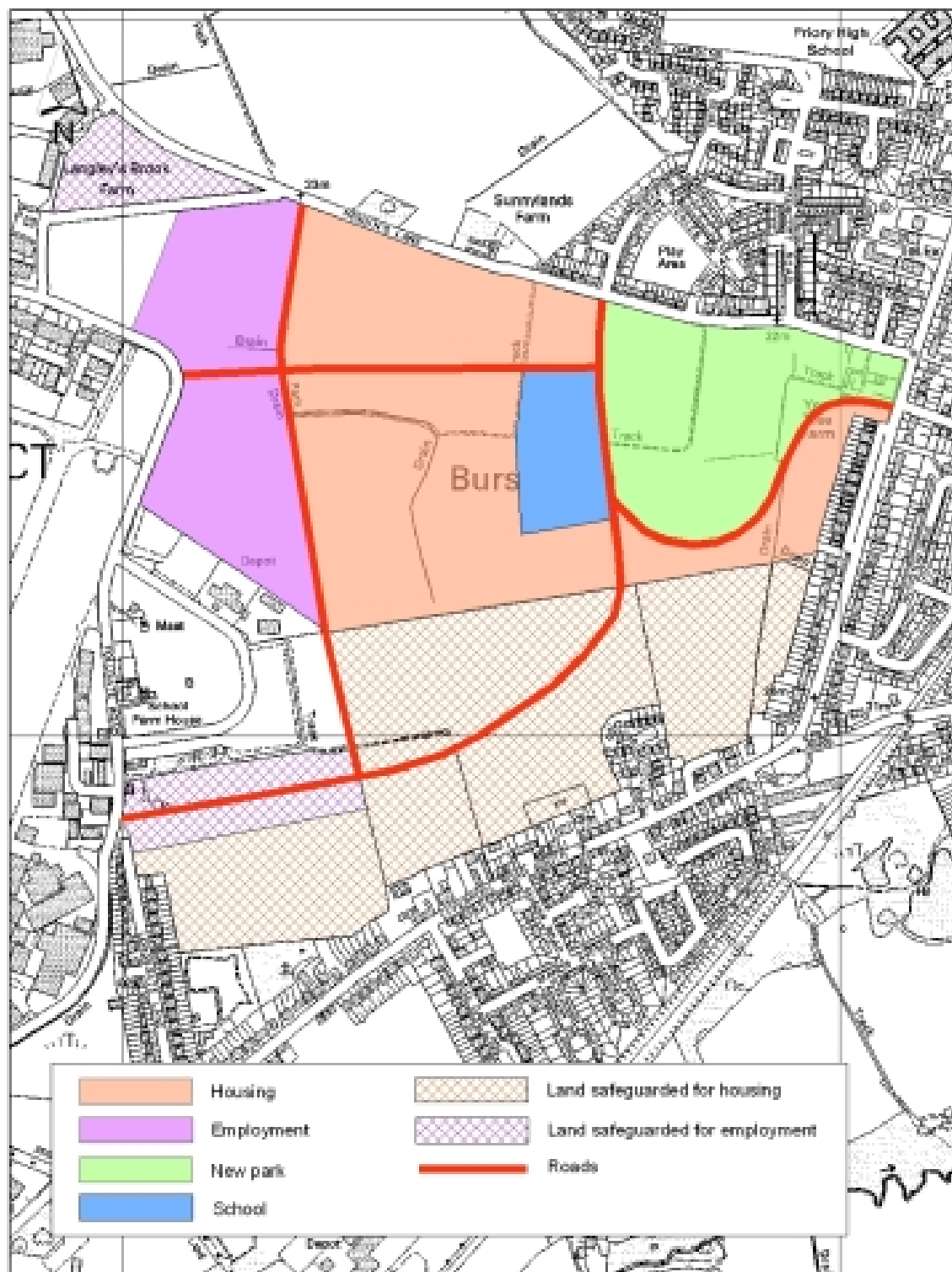
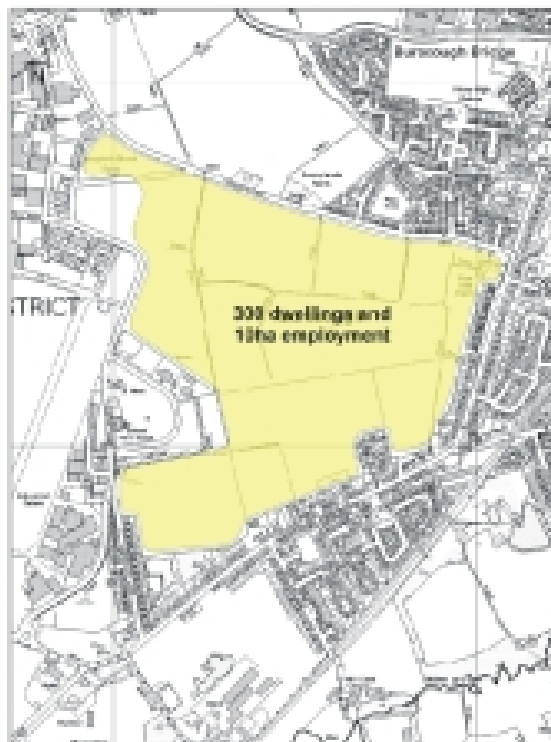


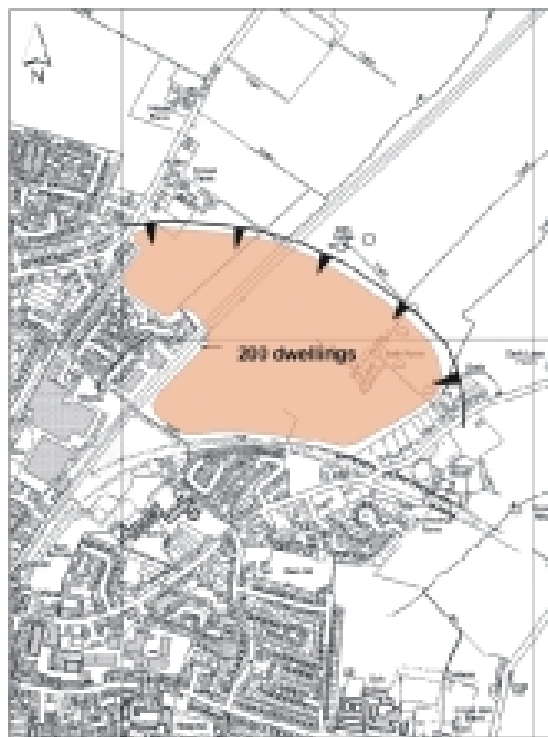
Figure 4.2 Distributing Development across the Borough



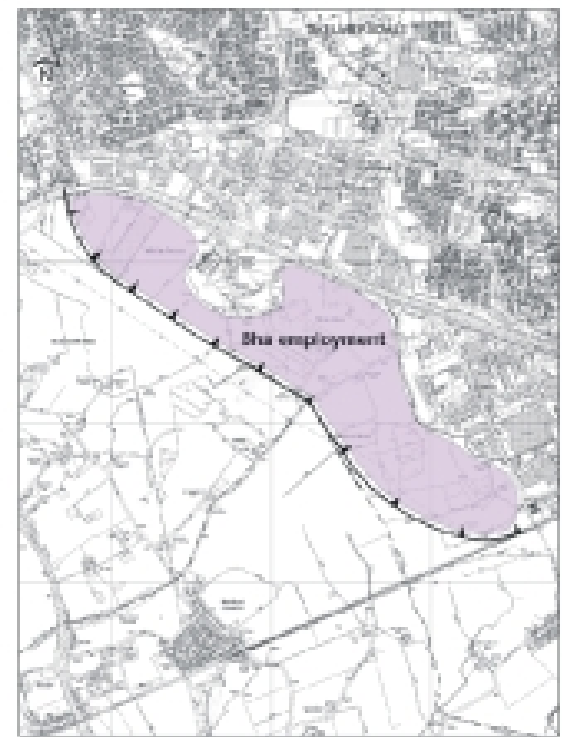
"Area of Search" for mixed-use development in Burscough



"Area of Search" for campus expansion at Edge Hill University



"Area of Search" for residential development in Ormskirk



"Area of Search" for employment development in Skelmersdale

Chapter 4 An Overview of the Core Strategy Preferred Options

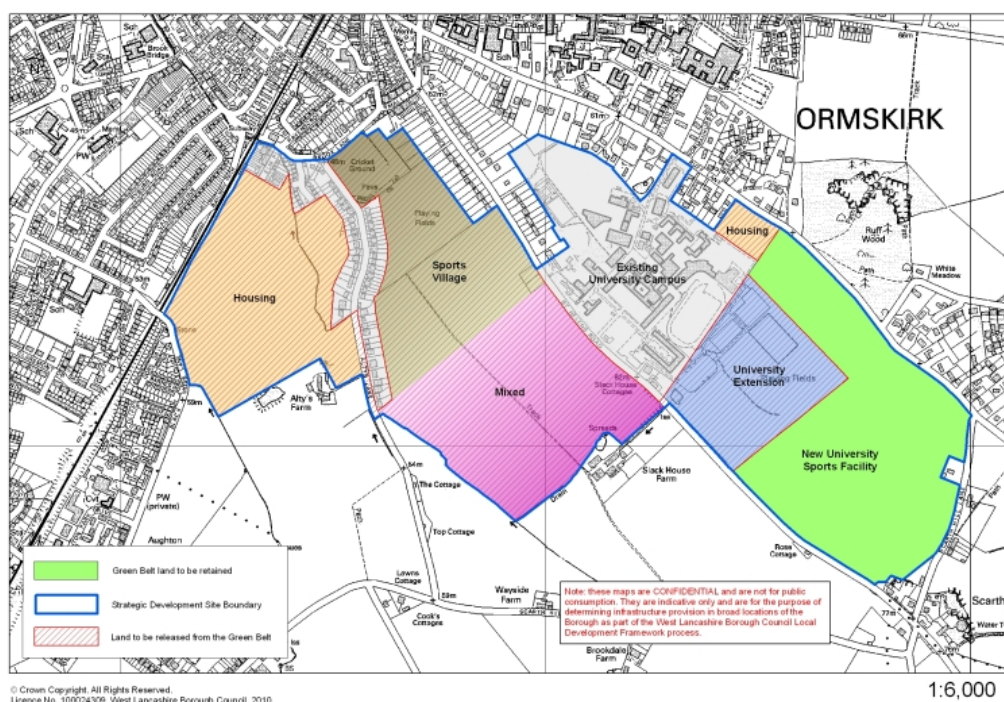
4.3.9 Both options also include a small amount of Green Belt release that would be needed for new employment land on the edge of Skelmersdale, but the specific allocation of a site or sites for this release will be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD. The Core Strategy will only indicate a broad "area of search" to guide the allocation of sites for this smaller release. In addition, if Edge Hill University wish to expand their campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk, this will also involve a small release of Green Belt to the east of the existing campus.

4.3.10 While these two options offer alternative scenarios for development of housing in the Green Belt and it is anticipated that one will ultimately be selected as the preferred option to be incorporated in the final Core Strategy, the option not selected will still form part of the Core Strategy as a "Plan B". This is required to ensure that the Core Strategy is equipped to respond to any unforeseen circumstances that may emerge over the Core Strategy period that results in the housing target for the Borough not being delivered. This "Plan B" is explored in more detail in Chapter 10.

4.3.11 As well as the two options discussed above, a third option was strongly considered but not selected for inclusion as a "preferred" option at this stage. This option would involve a strategic development site on the south-eastern edge of Ormskirk, which would include:

- Development of 600 new dwellings;
- A new technology park for high quality business development;
- A new sports village encompassing new facilities for the town's rugby, cricket, tennis and bowling clubs;
- New, purpose-built, off-campus student accommodation for up to 700 second and third year students;
- The expansion of EdgeHillUniversity; and
- A new highways access off St Helens Road

Figure 4.3 Ormskirk Strategic Development Site



4.3.12 While this option would bring several significant benefits for Ormskirk and the wider Borough, it was felt that the traffic impacts of such a large development on Ormskirk town centre and St Helens Road (A570), along with the loss of high quality agricultural land, attractive views and Green Belt land on the edge of Ormskirk, were considered too negative to take this option forward.

4.3.13 Other options have also been considered for the release of Green Belt around the Borough for new development but have been ruled out on grounds of deliverability, viability and sustainability or due to the very negative impact that development in those locations would have. These options include:

- Releasing land on the edge of Skelmersdale, either as a single, large site or several smaller ones - this option was considered not to be deliverable because the housing market in Skelmersdale has never delivered such a large volume of new houses year-on-year as would be required to deliver all the housing that the Core Strategy would therefore require of the town; and
- Releasing land on the edge of some of the Borough's larger villages, especially in the Northern Parishes - aside from the potentially very negative effect this option might have on the rural character of those villages and the Green Belt, this option is limited by several significant infrastructure constraints that cannot be overcome, including traffic / highways constraints, surface water flooding and a general flood risk in some coastal / estuary areas and would involve more development in less sustainable settlements.

4.3.14 As part of the public consultation on this Preferred Options document, the Council would like to hear the views of the general public in relation to the various options for development in the Green Belt that have been considered by the Council, as set out in this chapter. We would particularly like to hear if you have a preferred option out of those that have been considered or, alternatively, if you would want a completely different option to be included in the Core Strategy.

4.4 Meeting the Objectives

Meeting the Objectives

4.4.1 The Core Strategy must employ policies that work to fulfil the Spatial and Strategic Objectives set out in the previous chapter. The matrix table below illustrates which objectives each policy is seeking to fulfil. Overall, it can be seen that the Core Strategy Preferred Options, if implemented and delivered as proposed, would play a key role in meeting the Spatial and Strategic Objectives and, in turn, would make a key contribution in delivering the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy for West Lancashire 2007-2017, which has directly influenced the Core Strategy Spatial and Strategic Objectives.

Table 4.1 Policies achieving the Objectives

Policy	Objectives								
	1: Stronger & Safer Communities	2: Education, training & the economy	3: Health	4: Natural Environment	5: Housing	6: Services & Accessibility	7: Location of Development & Built Environment	8: Climate change	9: Skelmersdale
CS1: Sustainable Development	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
CS2: Skelmersdale Town Centre	YES	YES	YES		YES	YES	YES		YES
CS3: Burscough Strategic Site		YES	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES	
CS4: Economy & Employment		YES				YES	YES		YES
CS5: Rural Economy		YES				YES	YES		
CS6: Residential Development					YES	YES	YES		YES
CS7: Affordable & Specialist Housing	YES				YES		YES	YES	
CS8: Student Accommodation in Ormskirk	YES				YES		YES		
CS9: Provision for Gypsies Travellers & Travelling Showpeople	YES				YES	YES			
CS10: Town & Local Centres	YES					YES	YES		
CS11: Sustainable Transport	YES	YES	YES			YES		YES	YES
CS12: Local Services & Infrastructure	YES	YES	YES			YES	YES	YES	
CS13: Developer Contributions		YES	YES	YES	YES	YES		YES	YES
CS14: Low Carbon Development & Energy Infrastructure				YES				YES	

Policy	Objectives								
	1: Stronger & Safer Communities	2: Education, training & the economy	3: Health	4: Natural Environment	5: Housing	6: Services & Accessibility	7: Location of Development & Built Environment	8: Climate change	9: Skelmersdale
CS15: Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity	YES		YES	YES				YES	YES
CS16: West Lancashire's Character and Sustainable Design	YES		YES	YES			YES	YES	

Chapter 5 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites

5.1 Policy Area CS1: A Sustainable Spatial Development Framework for West Lancashire

Context

5.1.1 West Lancashire sits in a strategic geographical position, bordering three city-region areas including the Liverpool City Region, Central Lancashire and Greater Manchester. The majority of the Borough looks towards the Liverpool City Region in terms of its service provision and accessibility. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the strength of the links with the Liverpool City Region, its relationship with the other two city regions should be maintained and strengthened by taking advantage of its beneficial geographical location in the North West to ensure a sustainable economic future.

5.1.2 In particular, close links with the spatial planning policies of surrounding authorities, especially Sefton and Wigan, need to be fostered and maintained, to ensure that the reality of daily life in the Borough is reflected in local spatial planning policy. Core Strategy policy reflects the fact that people and services cross borough boundaries and that parts of West Lancashire rely on services outside the Borough, and so cross-boundary linkages are crucial and need to be maintained and encouraged where they are sustainable.

5.1.3 New development also has the ability to directly and indirectly deliver various social, economic and environmental benefits. As such, the spatial development framework within the Core Strategy plays a central role in delivering the vision and objectives of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy for West Lancashire 2007-2017.

5.1.4 A significant proportion of West Lancashire is Green Belt, which serves an important purpose of protecting against urban sprawl and the merging of settlements, while preserving the rural nature of the land. This Green Belt land includes a large proportion of high quality agricultural land, key sites of biodiversity and habitat importance and attractive areas of landscape character.

5.1.5 These positive attributes of the Borough need protecting and managing, whilst not unduly restricting development. In particular, the high proportion of Green Belt land constrains development around the Borough's key settlements and makes meeting future development needs extremely difficult and so it must be recognised that some Green Belt land will be lost to development, where it is most appropriate.

5.1.6 Climate change is a global issue which requires local action. Impacts are already being recognised in the UK – the ten hottest years on record have been since 1990. National and local objectives to address climate change will not be achieved without substantial efforts to mitigate against the impacts of climate change by reducing energy consumption and increasing energy produced from renewable and low carbon sources.

5.1.7 Past emissions mean that some climate change is inevitable and therefore we must adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures and sea levels. Factoring climate risk into decision-making means, for example, changing the way we build our homes and infrastructure, managing water better and adjusting farming practises.

Chapter 5 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites

5.1.8 Delivering “zero carbon” development will not be straight forward and the Council recognises the limitations of setting construction targets and minimum standards within the Core Strategy. Therefore, the approach must be much more strategic, ensuring climate change and energy demands are considered as a fundamental part of the overarching strategy for development in the Borough and within each policy area.

Policy CS1

A Sustainable Spatial Development Framework for West Lancashire

New development in West Lancashire will contribute towards the continuation and creation of sustainable communities in the Borough by being sustainable in its construction and use of resources and in its location and accessibility. New development will be promoted where it is appropriate in terms of the amount and type of development to the settlement it is located within, in accordance with the following Settlement Hierarchy:

Hierarchy		Settlements
Key Service Centres	Regional Town	Skelmersdale
	Borough Town	Ormskirk/Aughton
	Market Town	Burscough
Key Sustainable Village		Tarleton; Hesketh Bank; Parbold; Up Holland; Banks
Rural Sustainable Village		Rufford; Newburgh; Appley Bridge; Brown Edge/Pool Hey; Birkdale/Ainsdale Boundary; Mere Brow; Halsall; Haskayne; Tontine
Small Rural Village		Scarisbrick/Bescar; Shirdley Hill; Holt Green; Stanley Gate; Westhead; Hilldale; Mossy Lea; Hunger Hill; Wrightington Bar; Crawford

The three Key Service Centres of the Borough will take the vast majority of new development, with Skelmersdale a particular focus in order to enable the economic regeneration of the town centre and the town as a whole. Development in rural areas will be restricted to the Key / Rural Sustainable Villages, except where development involves a like-for-like redevelopment of an existing property or the appropriate re-use of an existing building.

All new built development in the Borough will take place within the existing settlement boundaries, except where the release of Green Belt is specifically proposed in the Local Development Framework to meet development requirements or where a specific need for development for a rural use is identified that retains or enhances the rural character of an area.

Chapter 5 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites

Over the life of the Core Strategy (2012-2027) there will be a need for **4,500 new dwellings** (net). Similarly, there will be a need for **87 ha** of land to be newly developed for employment uses over the life of the Core Strategy. These Borough-wide targets will be divided between the different spatial areas of the Borough (depending on whether housing development on Green Belt will be focused in a Burscough Strategic Development Site or dispersed around several sites in Ormskirk, Burscough and Banks) as follows:

	Housing		Employment
	With Burscough Strategic Development Site	With Dispersal of Green Belt Housing Development	
Skelmersdale & Up Holland	3,000 dwellings		60 ha
Ormskirk & Aughton	300 dwellings	500 dwellings	-
Burscough	800 dwellings	500 dwellings	17 ha
Northern Parishes	240 dwellings	340 dwellings	3.5 ha
Eastern Parishes (inc Simonswood)	80 dwellings		6.5 ha
Western Parishes	80 dwellings		-

The above development should initially be prioritised to where there is brownfield land available, followed by suitable greenfield sites within the three Key Service Centres and the Key / Rural Sustainable Villages (including land safeguarded for development on the edge of settlements in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006) and, latterly, when there is no suitable brownfield or greenfield land remaining for development, on sites within the Green Belt that are specifically identified through the Site Allocations DPD or a Strategic Development Site in this Core Strategy.

Where greenfield or Green Belt land is required to bring forward a Strategic Development Site that is key to the delivery of the LDF or for the planned expansion of the Edge Hill University campus, it may be appropriate to bring this land forward for development in advance of all brownfield land being developed in order to deliver development targets within the Core Strategy period.

Spatially and economically, Skelmersdale is the priority location for new development at the start of the Core Strategy period in order to enable the delivery of the town centre masterplan and due to the fact that for the first 5 years at least it is anticipated that development in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick will be constrained by a waste water treatment infrastructure issue. In considering the phasing of development and housing land supply, the Site Allocations DPD will reflect this prioritisation.

Chapter 5 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites

The regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre (designated as a Strategic Development Site) will provide new and high quality retail, education, leisure, open space and community facilities for the town, facilitating the wider economic regeneration of the town. In all other locations, local services and facilities will be maintained at their current high level or improved and access to these will be maintained and improved through sustainable transport networks.

Opportunities for grid-connected wind energy development shall be particularly encouraged in areas identified for their resource potential and limited constraints and impacts, where it can be shown that impacts do not undermine the character of the surrounding area. District heating or decentralised energy networks should be provided for more substantial developments unless to do so would be technically or financially unviable and prejudice the delivery of development. Any further opportunities for small and medium-scale renewable energy developments, district heat and decentralised energy networks will be assessed on a case by case basis using the Council's viability assessment tool⁽¹⁰⁾.

While new development that is in accordance with this Core Strategy will be promoted in the appropriate locations, the valuable biodiversity, landscape, heritage and green infrastructure assets of the Borough will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced. Development proposals should also consider the possibility of ground condition issues (e.g. contamination and structural) and mitigate accordingly prior to development.

The significant levels of new development in Ormskirk and Burscough will require improvements to utilities infrastructure, namely waste water treatment and surface water drainage. Any development in the Northern Parishes will require improvements to surface water drainage. All new developments should include, where appropriate, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and include mitigation measures to adapt to the potential effects of climate change.

To avoid unnecessary flood risk, development will be directed away from Flood Zones 2 and 3 wherever possible, with the exception of water compatible uses and key infrastructure. Other land uses and development will only be permitted within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where it can be shown that there are no alternative sites for that development outside of those areas of flood risk, in line with the sequential approach and exception test outlined in national planning policy (PPS25). Flood risk is generally an issue in the Northern and Western Parishes, especially in and around the village of Banks.

Should monitoring of residential and employment completions show that development targets for the Core Strategy period are not being delivered due to unforeseen circumstances or if new evidence emerges that demonstrates a need to increase development targets, the Council may choose to enact all or part of the "Plan B" set out in the Core Strategy (see Chapter 10) by releasing further Green Belt land for development.

10 as proposed within the *Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Study (2010)*

Justification

Sustainable Development and the Settlement Hierarchy

5.1.9 Sustainable development and sustainable communities lie at the heart of national planning policy as the planning system seeks to ensure a sustainable legacy is left for future generations through the way we deliver new development and growth now. In a Borough such as West Lancashire, sustainable development is important in reinforcing the distinction between urban and rural, protecting the natural environment, supporting local agriculture, enabling the economic and social growth of the key settlements and maintaining the character of the area.

5.1.10 To this end, it is vital that sustainable communities of different scales are created and maintained and linked together via sustainable transport networks. The Settlement Hierarchy provided in Policy Area CS1 provides the framework for sustainable communities in the Borough, with the three Key Service Centres being the primary sustainable communities that include all essential services and facilities and many desirable services and facilities, particularly in the case of Skelmersdale, as well as good provision of employment opportunities or sustainable access to them. As such, transport connections to these settlements from the smaller settlements in the Borough must be of a high quality and sustainable.

5.1.11 The Key Sustainable Villages and Rural Sustainable Villages must provide a good number of essential services and facilities, especially the Key Sustainable Villages, as well as some local opportunities for employment, and can therefore be considered sustainable communities, albeit with a dependency on, and sustainable transport connection to, the Key Service Centres for other services and facilities.

5.1.12 The small rural villages have very few, if any, essential services and facilities or employment opportunities and tend to have poorer transport connections with the Key Service Settlements. Therefore, it is accepted that these cannot be considered sustainable communities and development within them should be severely restricted.

5.1.13 The position of West Lancashire within the North West means that it borders seven other Local Authorities and sits at the intersection of three city-regions (Liverpool City Region, Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire) and, in particular, the population of the Borough have close links with the towns of Southport and Wigan and, to a lesser degree, the city of Preston. Therefore, in establishing the settlement hierarchy and level of development in each settlement in Policy Area CS1, the role that these towns and city play in providing accessible services to the population of West Lancashire has been taken into account.

5.1.14 In determining which settlements fall under which level of the settlement hierarchy, reference has also been made to the West Lancashire Sustainable Settlement Study (2010). This sets out what level of provision of local services and facilities there is within each settlement in the Borough and access to services in other settlements in the Borough or across Borough boundaries in Wigan and Sefton. More policy on the provision of local services and facilities and of sustainable transport connections is provided in Policy Areas CS10, CS11 and CS12, while the provision of employment opportunities is addressed in Policy Areas CS4 and CS5.

Focus of development on the Key Service Centres

5.1.15 Based on the need to provide sustainable development and locate it within sustainable communities, it is natural to therefore focus the majority of development on the Key Service Centres. Policy Area CS1 does this and, in particular, focuses over two-thirds of new development in the Borough's only regional town, Skelmersdale. Burscough and Ormskirk together form a secondary focus for new development.

5.1.16 Skelmersdale is necessarily the priority for development on a number of grounds:

- There is a significant need for regeneration and inward investment in the town to address social deprivation issues and to raise the image and profile of the town;
- A new town centre is required to provide modern retail opportunities and accessible local services and facilities in the Borough's only regional town (see Policy Area CS2) – this will require a critical mass of new development and growth to generate investment in the new town centre developments and increase the customer-base for the town centre;
- There is a significant amount of brownfield land available for development as well as a large amount of greenfield land that serves little purpose and is potentially suitable for development; and
- The regeneration of Skelmersdale is listed as a priority within the Sustainable Community Strategy for West Lancashire.

5.1.17 While the precise disaggregation of housing numbers vary between the two options for housing development on Green Belt, it is clear in both options that the neighbouring towns of Ormskirk and Burscough together form a secondary focus for new development in the Borough. This is because, while both Ormskirk and Burscough are constrained by waste water treatment infrastructure and could both be affected by the impact of new development on highways congestion, both towns have good access to sustainable public transport connections (especially Ormskirk) and both already have the majority of local services provided for.

5.1.18 New development in the Key and Rural Sustainable Villages will be restricted to the existing built-up areas of the villages (where land is available and suitable for development) and will not be allowed on Green Belt land surrounding the villages. It is important to enable some development in these villages to provide opportunities for new housing (especially affordable housing) and for local employment opportunities but this must be limited to maintain the rural character of such villages and due to the presence of several constraints, including highways constraints, accessibility via public transport, flood risk and surface water drainage.

5.1.19 New development will, except in very special circumstances, take place within existing settlement boundaries. These will be defined in policy through a subsequent Development Management Policies DPD. These boundaries reflect the existing edge of the built-up area of the settlements. Any development not of a rural nature on non-Green Belt sites outside the settlements (e.g. open land protected by Policy DS4 in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006) will only be permitted if compelling evidence is provided as to the specific need for that development in the locality and that no other alternative sites are viable for development within the settlement boundary.

Residential and Employment Land Figures

5.1.20 The figures for new residential and employment development are discussed in more detail in Policy Areas CS7 and CS4 respectively, but are based on locally-agreed targets. The methods used to identify local housing and employment targets have been set out in Appendix D of this document.

5.1.21 Housing figures are based on a target of 300 new dwellings per annum (net) that has been derived from consideration of available evidence and the constraints and high quality natural and rural environment that the Borough is characterised by. Phasing of the delivery of this housing target will be covered in more detail in a subsequent Site Allocations DPD, but it is apparent that there will need to be a lower target over the first 5 years of the Core Strategy period (perhaps as low as 200 dwellings per annum) to account for the economic climate and the waste water treatment infrastructure issues affecting Ormskirk and Burscough, with a higher target over the remaining 10 years (perhaps as high as 350 dwellings per annum).

5.1.22 The 87 ha target for new employment land in the Borough over the Core Strategy period has emerged via a rigorous process and calculation derived from the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) prepared for Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire.

Prioritisation of brownfield / greenfield land and Protection of the Green Belt

5.1.23 High on the agenda of national planning policy is the need to prioritise development on brownfield (previously developed) land and protect greenfield (undeveloped) land from development, especially Green Belt land. This is highly appropriate given the need for sustainable development and the key principle within sustainable development to wisely use the Borough's existing resources (which includes previously developed land).

5.1.24 However, it is clear that there is not enough brownfield land in West Lancashire to meet the locally-determined targets for residential and employment development. The following table sets out the proportion of the housing and employment targets that should be met through development on brownfield land during the Core Strategy period if the first option for Green Belt development (Burscough Strategic Development Site) were taken forward. Where they differ, the proportions under the second option for Green Belt development (dispersal of development) are provided in brackets.

Chapter 5 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Over-arching Spatial Strategy and the Strategic Sites

Table 5.1 Delivering Development on Brownfield Land

	Employment Land Target (ha)	Brownfield Employment Land Target (ha)	Proportion of Employment Development on Brownfield land	Housing Target (no. dwellings)	Brownfield Housing Target (no. dwellings)	Proportion of Housing Development on Brownfield land
Skelmersdale & Up Holland	60	25	42%	3,000	750	25%
Ormskirk & Aughton	0	0	-	300 [500]	250 [250]	83% [50%]
Burscough	17	7	41%	800 [500]	200 [200]	25% [40%]
Rural Areas (including Simonswood)	10	8	80%	400 [500]	300 [300]	75% [60%]
Overall	87	40	46%	4,500	1,500	33%

5.1.25 Given the shortage of available brownfield land in the Borough, appropriate greenfield land within the built-up areas must also be considered. However, given that a large proportion of greenfield land in the built-up areas serves a function and should be retained as greenfield land and that a proportion of what greenfield land might be considered available for development is located in areas unsuitable for development due to the rural nature or infrastructure constraints, the amount of greenfield land that is considered appropriate for development would not be sufficient to deliver the whole of the remainder of the targets for residential and employment development.

5.1.26 Therefore, in order to meet West Lancashire's locally-determined targets for residential and employment development, it is anticipated that land on the edge of built-up areas that was safeguarded for future development in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006 will need to be developed upon and that some development will also have to take place on Green Belt land.

5.1.27 While this is not ideal, and is only being considered due to the lack of other viable alternatives, development on Green Belt land will be phased towards the end of the Core Strategy period to allow time for other options to emerge (except where required for a Strategic Development Site) and will only be allowed on the most appropriate Green Belt sites adjacent to the existing boundaries of the Key Service Centres.

5.1.28 Only what is required for development in the Core Strategy period will be proposed for removal from the Green Belt and all other Green Belt land will be preserved as Green Belt and protected from development in accordance with PPG2. It is anticipated that no more than 90 ha of Green Belt will be required for release to meet development targets and associated infrastructure. This is only 0.26% of the Green Belt in the Borough and 91% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt.

Renewable Energy developments, Infrastructure and the Environment

5.1.29 In order to provide energy security for the Borough and assist in mitigation against climate change, renewable energy development will be encouraged where it does not cause any unacceptable impacts. Renewable energy development proposals within the Green Belt

will need to demonstrate that the harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by the wider benefits of the development. The Council is committed to achieving the locally-determined targets for renewable energy development set out in Policy Area CS15 through the encouragement of renewable energy installations and decentralised community energy systems in appropriate locations.

5.1.30 Access to services and infrastructure is fundamental to quality of life and healthy communities and is one of the primary ways of influencing climate change. In the first instance, new development should be located where it may take advantage of existing infrastructure and in accordance with the settlement hierarchy. Development should not cause any depletion or harm to the existing infrastructure and where new infrastructure is required, a contribution should be made towards this. The Council will continue to plan for infrastructure provision through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan with key partners. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will form the basis for identifying infrastructure enhancements and provision through the development process. Policy Areas CS11-CS14 address infrastructure issues in more detail.

5.1.31 The Borough's biodiversity, landscape, heritage and green infrastructure assets are considered highly valuable and should be protected from inappropriate and unnecessary development and should be enhanced wherever possible. Development should also be in accordance with national planning policy (PPS5, PPS9 and PPG17) in ensuring that these assets, or their context, are protected and enhanced. Policy Areas CS16 and CS17 address these issues in more detail.

5.1.32 Ground condition may also be a key issue for particular developments on sites where there is a history of contamination and / or structural issues in the ground. As such, mitigation may be necessary prior to any development and developers should investigate their sites fully on these matters prior to proposing a development scheme, in accordance with PPG14 and PPS23. This may be a particular issue in the east of the Borough, in and around Skelmersdale, where there is a history of coal workings, and on the mosslands in the west of the Borough.

5.1.33 In delivering sustainable communities, the Council will ensure that new homes, employment and public places are not exposed to unacceptable levels of flood risk. New development will be required to demonstrate this and how it accords with the guidance set out in PPS25. Regard will be had to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2010 (SFRA) and only in exceptional circumstances may development be located in areas at risk of flooding, as set out in PPS25. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems must be integrated into all new developments where technically feasible in order to minimise the impact of surface water run off.

What You Said

5.1.34 Through the Core Strategy Options Consultation, representations highlighted concern with focusing the vast majority of development within Skelmersdale and with relying on neighbouring authorities to provide development for West Lancashire's needs. There was broad support for the strategic options that provided a secondary focus for development within the Borough alongside a primary focus on Skelmersdale.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.1.35 Spatial Planning Options considered within the Options Paper (September 2009):

- Option 1: Skelmersdale Focus
- Option 2: Skelmersdale & Ormskirk Focus
- Option 3: Skelmersdale & Burscough Focus
- Option 4: Rural Dispersal
- Option 5: Cross Boundary

5.1.36 Whichever option is ultimately selected in the Core Strategy for development on Green Belt land, the spatial development framework will be most similar to Option 3, although it would retain slightly more of a focus on Skelmersdale than Option 3 proposed. Option 3 was not the most supported option in public consultation but issues related to infrastructure, highways, quality of the Green Belt and deliverability mean that other options are less sustainable or have greater negative impacts.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

5.1.37 As the over-arching spatial strategy for the Core Strategy, Policy Area CS1 draws upon the majority of national planning policy, but, in particular, the following Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are most relevant:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- Supplement to PPS1: Planning and Climate Change
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPG14: Development on Unstable Land
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

5.2 Core Strategy Key Diagram

Core Strategy Key Diagram

Figure 5.1 Core Strategy Key Diagram



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5.3 Policy Area CS2: Skelmersdale Town Centre

Context

5.3.1 Skelmersdale is the main settlement in West Lancashire. However, the Indices of Deprivation show that Skelmersdale as a whole suffers from poor health, below average educational achievement and higher unemployment than the rest of the Borough. The town centre offer is currently very poor for a town of this size and sees significant retail leakage to other nearby centres. There is no real night-time economy and the centre lacks the facilities that the people of the town should expect.

5.3.2 The West Lancashire Economy Study has indicated that a revitalised Skelmersdale Town Centre is vital to secure the wider regeneration of the Town. Since 2002 the Council has started the process to secure this town centre regeneration and has seen overwhelming public support for the plans that have been prepared to date. This Core Strategy must now take forward those plans in the light of the current economic conditions and forecasts, to ensure that a realistic and viable scheme can be developed up to 2027.

Policy CS2

Skelmersdale Town Centre - A Strategic Development Site

Proposals for the enhancement, regeneration and redevelopment of Skelmersdale Town Centre within the Strategic Development Site defined on the Proposals Map will be supported. A revitalised Skelmersdale Town Centre is vital to the wider regeneration of the town. All proposals will be expected to conform to the broad masterplan shown at Figure 5.2 below.

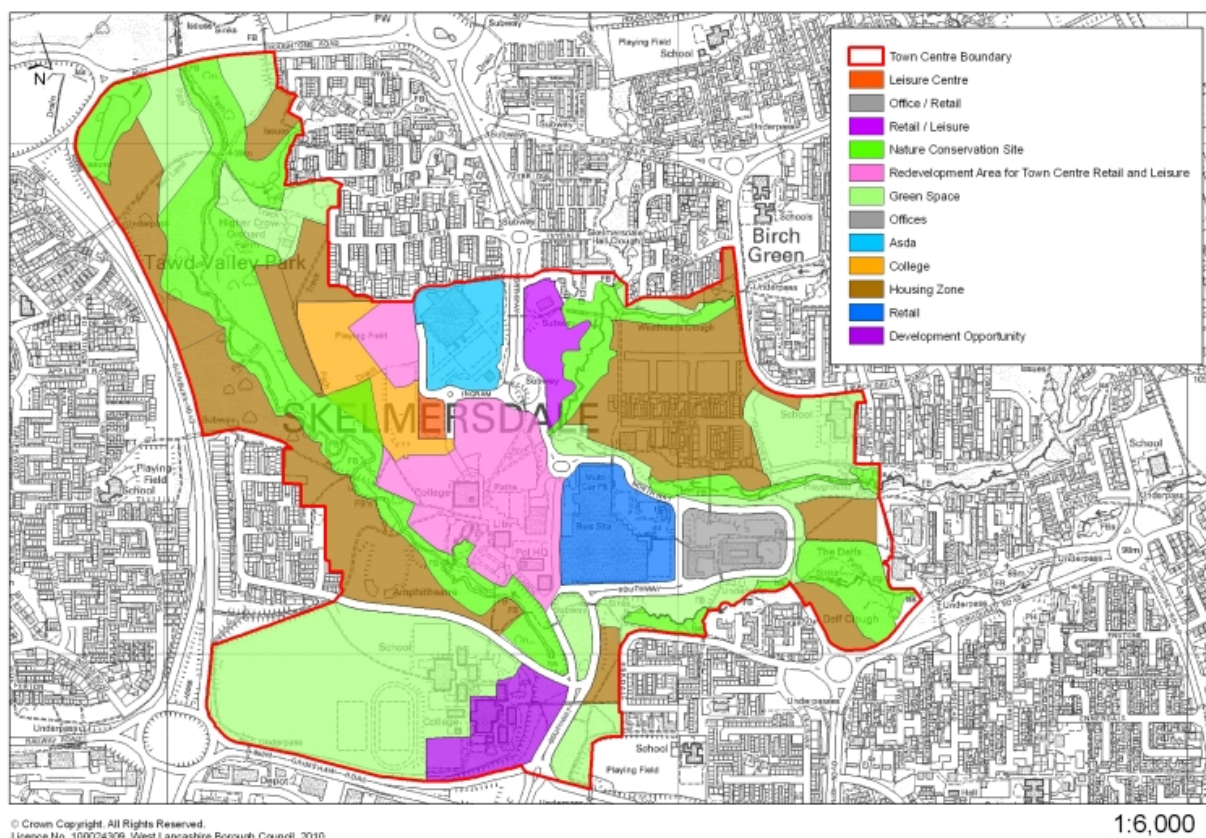
The following should form the key principles for any development proposals:

- Make Skelmersdale a leisure, recreational and retail centre of excellence within the North West
- Ensure that the parks and open space in and around the Town Centre are integral to the regeneration and are more accessible to Skelmersdale's communities and visitors
- Reconnect the Town Centre and the community through the building of new roads and footpaths.
- Increase the number of residents in the Town Centre and diversify the style and range of residential accommodation available.
- Ensure that high quality design will be the key to creating a vibrant Town Centre.

The following are the key development aims of the strategic site:

- A new high street linking the Concourse and Asda / Skelmersdale College to include a range and mix of uses including retailing (food and non-food), leisure, entertainment (including a cinema), office space, residential and green space. It is expected that up to approximately 33,440m² of retail floorspace could be developed to 2027.
- A new supermarket either close to or integrated with the Concourse Centre, or, alternatively, close to the new high street. Should the supermarket be adjacent to the high street an active retail frontage should be maintained and the supermarket should form part of an integrated scheme to deliver an improved retail and leisure offer for the town centre.
- New housing with approximately 1,000 units to be delivered over the Core Strategy period. All housing areas should conform to a Design Code to be developed by the Borough Council. The Firbeck / Findon estates should be redeveloped with high quality market and social housing. If this is demonstrated to not be viable then remodelling work should be done to improve the estate.
- 10% of all housing should be affordable in order to meet local housing needs
- New office development will be permitted within the town centre area indicated on the plan. Retail uses would also be permitted in this area
- Delph House and Whelmar House should continue to be used for office uses, but should redevelopment opportunities occur replacement offices or non-food bulky goods retail would be appropriate.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle linkages into the Town Centre from surrounding residential areas.
- An improved western entrance into the Concourse Centre to link with the new high street and a relocated bus station, and re-use of the top floor of the Concourse to provide office, leisure or retail uses.
- Major improvements to the Tawd Valley to make it a key feature of, and integrate it into, the town centre, with the creation of a Formal Park for the Town Centre adjacent to the Tawd Valley.
- All development to be of the highest quality of design in terms of buildings and public realm, having full regard to the relationships between buildings and spaces.
- The site of the former college is designated as a Development Opportunity Site appropriate for either improved educational facilities, office accommodation or housing development.
- The adjacent Glenburn School site should be enhanced as an educational facility and development will be permitted on the site to allow this to be achieved.

Figure 5.2 Skelmersdale Strategic Development Site



Justification

5.3.3 The regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre is one of the most important priorities for the Core Strategy and is reflected in the Spatial & Strategic Objectives. The Council will work with all the key partners in the Town Centre to secure its implementation within a reasonable timescale. To this end a development agreement has already been signed with St Modwen Properties PLC and the Homes and Communities Agency and widespread consultation undertaken with the public to produce an SPD / Masterplan. This preferred option for Policy Area CS2 refines the work previously undertaken to reflect changes to market conditions, recent developments and recent discussions on deliverability.

5.3.4 The Strategic Development Site set out as the preferred option is larger than that previously outlined within both the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan and the SPD / Masterplan. This is to allow for more housing to increase the ability of the scheme to deliver the public facilities and the high quality open spaces and public realm that are required. The housing is also being delivered in a sustainable location close to the Town Centre and helps meet the Council's housing target. In addition the provision of new housing improves the confidence of investors, such as new retailers. The differences between the Local Plan boundary and SPD 'Project Area' boundary will be rectified so that the Strategic Development Site will accord with the SPD boundary in all respects, other than the extension of housing sites in the Tawd Valley area. This means that the site of St John's RC School will be removed from the Town Centre area and that certain areas of the Tawd Valley, land at Delph Clough and land at Westheads Clough will be included within the Strategic Development Site.

5.3.5 In terms of the actual proposals for the Town Centre core, these have also been amended since the production of the SPD / Masterplan. The key reasons for this are:

- To improve the deliverability of the scheme – there is a need to link the new College building and Asda to the Concourse with a new high street and a new supermarket in this area could be the key to delivering this.
- The new College building has had to be moved slightly from its previously anticipated position. This necessitates a review of the land uses in this area of the Town Centre.
- The desire of the Co-op to have new office accommodation.
- The need to bring more housing land into the scheme to enhance the value and deliverability of the scheme.

5.3.6 As a consequence the following amendments are put forward to the SPD / Masterplan:

- The Asda overflow car park is shown as the preferred location for the wet and dry leisure centre, with a relocation of car parking spaces nearer to the Asda building. Development on this site should provide easy pedestrian links between the College and the Town Centre, and should improve the vehicular access to the College site.
- A site is identified for either major office or retail uses
- Proposals are included for the Delph House and Whelmar House area should development opportunities arise
- There is more flexibility given in terms of the site for a new supermarket.
- The housing areas to the north west of the Town Centre, adjacent to the Tawd Valley, are extended to allow for the delivery of more housing units.

5.3.7 The SPD is still considered up-to-date in most respects, and will continue to be used for considering applications on an interim basis, but it will be updated to bring it in line with the new Strategic Development Site within Policy Area CS2 once the Core Strategy has been adopted.

What You Said

5.3.8 Previous consultation exercises on the SPD / Masterplan have shown strong public support for a town centre regeneration scheme. Support for the regeneration of Skelmersdale was supported when the Strategic Options were considered as was the designation of the Town Centre as a Strategic Development Site. Mixed views were received on whether the boundary should be expanded and on the extent of protection to be afforded to green space.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.3.9 *Alternative Option 1:* a strategic site based on the town centre area as set out in the SPD and using the SPD Masterplan as the Preferred Option.

5.3.10 Reason for rejection: This option has not been taken forward as it is not believed to be viable at this time or in the foreseeable future because market conditions have changed significantly since the Masterplan was developed. In order to achieve a viable scheme changes to what can be realistically achieved have had to be made and more housing areas included to maximise opportunities for new public facilities.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD (2008)

5.4 Policy Area CS3: Burscough Yew Tree Farm

Context

5.4.1 Burscough is West Lancashire's third largest town and has grown substantially over the last 50 years. It benefits from two train stations (one on the Southport-Manchester line and one on the less frequent Ormskirk-Preston line) and is linked by major roads to Ormskirk / Liverpool (A59) and to Junction 27 of the M6 via Newburgh and Parbold (A5209). Burscough suffers from reasonably high levels of out-commuting and is somewhat reliant on Liverpool and Southport for higher-end, comparison goods retail provision, with Burscough town centre being significantly smaller and dominated by a Tesco's supermarket. There is a large industrial estate to the west of the town which provides B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) business premises that draw businesses from across the western and northern parts of the Borough and North Sefton.

5.4.2 Given that the development of so much housing and employment would involve release of Green Belt and developments of various types that would collectively bring several benefits to the town, it is viewed that this would constitute a Strategic Development Site due to it being key to the delivery of the Core Strategy.

Policy CS3

Burscough Strategic Development Site

An area to the west of Burscough has been identified for a Strategic Development Site on the site of Yew Tree Farm that should deliver:

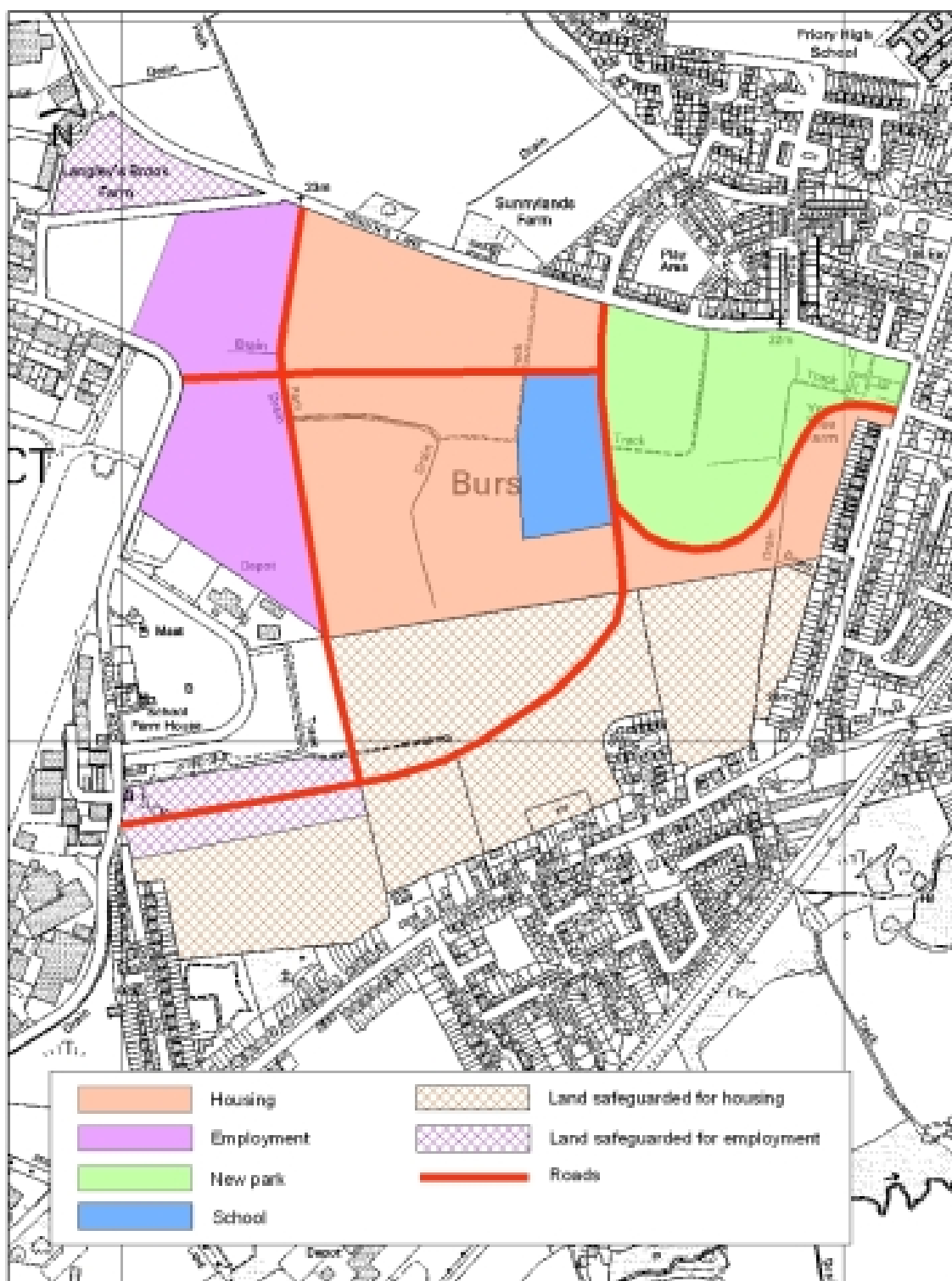
- Residential development (at least 600 new dwellings) and safeguarded land for up to 500 more dwellings in the future (post 2027);
- 10 ha of new employment land as an extension to the existing employment area;
- A new town park for Burscough, with a Management Trust to co-ordinate and fund the maintenance of the park;

- A new Primary School, local convenience shops and a new youth and community centre;
- A decentralised energy network facility, including district heat and energy infrastructure, which will provide heat and electricity for the entire site and possibly beyond the site boundary;
- An appropriate internal road network that ensures that the vast majority of residential traffic generated across the site enters and exits the site on Liverpool Road South (A59) and that the vast majority of employment traffic enters and exits the site on Tollgate Road;
- Traffic mitigation measures to improve Liverpool Road South and protect other local roads and a robust and implementable Travel Plan for the entire site to address provision of, and accessibility to, frequent public transport services and to improve pedestrian and cycling links with Burscough town centre, rail stations and Ormskirk;
- Measures to address the surface water drainage issues in Burscough;
- Financial contributions to improve the health care facilities in the town; and
- Financial contributions to improve public transport services and facilities and to improve cycling and walking facilities.

The Strategic Development Site will involve the release of 65-70 ha of Green Belt to enable development but a proportion of this would be safeguarded land for future development post 2027.

Development in this Strategic Development Site should be of a high quality of design and be of a high standard in relation to energy efficiency in line with Code for Sustainable Homes and Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), the specific level of which will be set in future detailed guidance for this site. The scale and massing of development should be appropriate, given the site's edge of built-up area location, in accordance with the Council's Design Guide SPD.

Figure 5.3 Burscough Strategic Development Site



5.4.3 It is clear from data on development land supply and deliverability that the development of over 1,000 dwellings and at least 17 ha of employment land that must take place in the towns of Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough cannot be met within the settlement boundaries alone. Based on SHLAA data, knowledge of existing employment areas and knowledge of major pending applications, it is estimated that up to as many as 300 dwellings could be provided on sites within the Ormskirk / Aughton settlement boundary and 200 dwellings and 7 ha of employment land could be provided within the Burscough settlement boundary. This therefore leaves 600 dwellings (or 20ha of land, assuming an average density of 30 dwellings per hectare) and at least 10 ha of employment land that must be provided outside the existing settlement boundaries of Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough, in the Green Belt.

5.4.4 If Burscough were to accommodate as much as possible of this additional development, the West Lancashire Green Belt Study identified the Yew Tree Farm site to the west of Burscough as a potentially suitable location for release from the Green Belt. The site does not entirely fulfil any one of the purposes of the Green Belt and it is a logical location for such a large release in Burscough because the site is surrounded on three and a half sides by built development. Development of the site would also enable a direct extension of the existing employment area for new employment land and would essentially fill the gap between the town and the employment area. No other substantial sites around Burscough could accommodate such a level of development without extending the town out into countryside.

5.4.5 In relation to the benefits that this Strategic Development Site brings for the local community:

- The new town park would be an attractive addition for the town, providing several open space and outdoor sports related facilities (although it is vital that the large maintenance costs of such a facility are provided through an appropriately funded Management Trust arranged by a Developer);
- New or improved health, education and other community facilities would also be of benefit to the town;
- The extended employment area would provide important opportunities for new small and large businesses and potentially attract existing businesses from across the Borough (especially the northern and western areas) and from North Sefton to relocate and extend their activity;
- It would enable sustainable living through residents in the new housing having plenty of new employment opportunities close by and improved public transport services enabling better access to the employment opportunities from further afield;
- 35% of the new housing would be affordable housing, in line with Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy, therefore making a significant contribution to the need for affordable housing in the Borough;
- The development could deliver improvements to address surface water flooding issues in the town; and
- It provides an ideal opportunity to incorporate a decentralised renewable energy facility, with district heating and energy infrastructure, that will provide heat and electricity from a renewable source for the entire site, for any additional new development nearby and for some existing properties, including the existing industrial estate and possibly surrounding houses.

5.4.6 There are, however, three key constraints facing such a large development in Burscough:

- The loss of Green Belt and high quality agricultural land;
- A capacity shortage at New Lane waste water treatment works; and
- The traffic impact of the development on local roads

5.4.7 Although the land at Yew Tree Farm is Green Belt and high quality agricultural land, it is not as high quality as many other locations (both in terms of Green Belt and agriculture) and the overall site is well enclosed by existing built development, as discussed above. The issue relating to New Lane waste water treatment works affects all development in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick and so is a key issue for the whole Core Strategy and one that needs addressing as a priority.

5.4.8 In relation to highways and traffic constraints, the Burscough Strategic Development Site will inevitably add a substantial number of vehicles onto the highway network, potentially creating congestion issues locally. In particular, Liverpool Road South itself, Burscough town centre, the junctions between the site and the town centre and the junction of Liverpool Road South and Square Lane (A5209) may all be affected, and there would be increased traffic flows southwards along High Lane (A59) to Ormskirk and Liverpool (possibly affecting traffic congestion within Ormskirk) and eastwards along the A5209 to Newburgh, Parbold and the M6 (Junction 27).

5.4.9 Work is still being undertaken to attempt to predict what impact a Strategic Development Site in Burscough would have on traffic flows, but it is clear that Burscough would benefit from improved public transport connections, especially to Ormskirk and Liverpool, to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads. Development on the Strategic Development Site should contribute towards the improvement of local bus services and rail services, as well as highways improvements.

5.4.10 With regards to the residential development on the Strategic Development Site, 600 dwellings are necessary not only to meet the Borough's housing targets but also to help fund many of the improvements to infrastructure and community facilities discussed in the policy area. However, this land would only start to be developed for residential mid-way through the Core Strategy period and all reasonable opportunities for residential development within the settlement area would first be encouraged. If for any reason 200 dwellings cannot be delivered within the settlement boundary, there is the scope to increase the number of dwellings delivered on the Strategic Development Site through the safeguarded land.

5.4.11 Ultimately, the development of this Strategic Development Site will be a complex process and will need to be co-ordinated across the site to ensure efficiencies and the best possible, integrated development. Therefore, the Council may prepare an SPD or Development Brief specifically for this site, to guide developers and ensure the highest quality of development.

What You Said

5.4.12 Through the Core Strategy Options Consultation in the Autumn of 2009, 30% said that Burscough was an appropriate location to locate significant development but 51% objected to it. Supporters cited the benefits of employment and residential development for the town,

including improved infrastructure, and suggested that Green Belt was less precious to the west of Burscough than in other parts of the Borough. However, even supporters recognised that Burscough was somewhat reliant on Ormskirk for some services, highlighting the need to create sustainable links between the two towns. This was reflected in comments by objectors to large amounts of development in Burscough who felt it would be unsustainable to develop so much in Burscough and that infrastructure improvements would be vital if development did take place. Renewable energy schemes, in general, were supported.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.4.13 *Alternative Option 1:* To spread development that cannot be accommodated within the Borough's existing settlements around several sites in the Green Belt or on protected open land on the edge of Ormskirk, Burscough and Banks. This alternative is the other option for development on Green Belt land put forward in this Preferred Options paper.

5.4.14 *Alternative Option 2:* A Strategic Development Site on up to 60 ha of Green Belt land to the south-east of Ormskirk, encompassing 600 new dwellings, 5 ha of high quality business accommodation, a Sports Village, purpose-built, off-campus student accommodation and the extension to the Edge Hill University campus.

5.4.15 *Reason for rejection:* The anticipated impact of such a large development on the already congested Ormskirk town centre and St Helens Road, together with the visual impact on an important gateway into Ormskirk and the loss of high quality agricultural land and Green Belt raised major concerns about the possible negative impact this alternative would have on Ormskirk, even though it would potentially bring some significant benefits to the town and Borough as a whole.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG2: Green Belt
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

Chapter 6 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Facilitating Economic Growth

6.1 Policy Area CS4: The Economy and Employment Land

Context

6.1.1 West Lancashire, whilst being considered a rural Borough, plays a significant role in the regional economy, contributing £1.2 billion annually towards the wider Lancashire economy. Despite this West Lancashire is in great need of further opportunities to meet employment land requirements up to 2027. This Policy Area seeks to provide a planning framework for delivering this employment development and ensure that the locally-determined targets for the Borough are met in the Core Strategy period, and met as sustainably as possible while delivering the right kind of jobs, in the right sectors and in the right locations.

Policy CS4

The Economy and Employment Land

The delivery of 87 ha of new employment development (B1, B2 and B8 uses) will be promoted in West Lancashire between 2012 and 2027. To meet such a requirement consideration will be given to:

- The delivery of land already allocated for employment development in the Borough, but not yet developed;
- Prioritising redevelopment and regeneration opportunities in existing employment areas relating to vacant or under-used employment land and premises;
- Releasing further land for employment purposes around the settlements of Skelmersdale and Burscough, including 18 ha of Green Belt land; and
- The employment sectors to be expanded and targeted and the necessary job skills needed for the economy to continue to grow.

52 ha of new employment development will be provided in the Skelmersdale area through the development of existing allocations and the regeneration of vacant and under-used premises on Pimbo, Gillibrands and Stanley Industrial Estates as well as the development of existing allocations at XL Business Park and WhiteMossBusinessPark. A further 8 ha will need to be identified in the Skelmersdale area for new employment development after 2020.

At this time, there is no suitable land within the urban area of Skelmersdale and Up Holland to deliver this 8 ha and so there is an intention to identify up to 8 ha of Green Belt land to the south of Skelmersdale, adjacent to the existing urban area, for new employment development after 2020. However, should suitable alternative opportunities for new employment development emerge in the mean time within the urban area, this will be looked upon more favourably than Green Belt release.

The remaining 27 ha of the 87 ha target will be provided through:

- Existing allocations and remodelling of the Burscough industrial estates (7 ha);
- Extension of the Burscough industrial estates into the Green Belt (10 ha);
- Existing allocations and remodelling of Simonswood Industrial Estate (5 ha); and
- Existing allocations and new opportunities for rural employment sites in rural areas (5 ha).

Should the employment land target decrease in the future on the basis of new evidence that emerges over the Core Strategy period, the release of Green Belt for employment development to the south of Skelmersdale and west of Burscough will be restricted in line with that decrease in target. Therefore, Green Belt release for employment development will be restricted to the latter half of the Core Strategy period (after 2020) to allow opportunity for employment land targets to be reviewed if required.

To this end, new employment development on greenfield or Green Belt sites will not be encouraged until it has been demonstrated that all existing allocations for new employment development and regeneration opportunities in existing employment areas within the same spatial area have been maximised.

Mixed-use development will be promoted where such development will not prejudice the Borough's need for business and industrial premises. A flexible approach should be taken to the types of employment uses proposed in or adjacent to established employment areas except at WhiteMossBusinessPark, where only B1 uses will be considered.

Residential redevelopment of existing employment sites will be resisted unless overwhelming evidence highlights the unsuitability and unviability of employment development on a site. Residential development of any sites that are allocated for new employment development through the Site Allocations DPD will not be permitted.

In exceptional circumstances, mixed-use redevelopment of existing employment sites may be permitted in rural areas where employment development alone is proven not to be viable or suitable. However, such mixed-use developments should still maintain a significant element of employment uses.

Employment development in West Lancashire should continue to provide for the advanced manufacturing and distribution industries but should also encourage higher quality business premises and offices for business and professional services, the health sector, the media industry and other sectors related to research and degree courses provided at EdgeHillUniversity. The "green" construction and "green" technology sectors will also be encouraged to locate in West Lancashire and developers should work with such businesses to ensure appropriate premises are provided.

Alongside the development of new premises for the above business sectors, appropriate training should be encouraged in West Lancashire, and in Skelmersdale in particular, to ensure that the population of West Lancashire has the appropriate skills to be able to work in these sectors and so reduce worklessness in the Borough and reduce out-commuting. The Council will work with appropriate agencies through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to support opportunities for local people to develop their skills in these sectors. In addition, developers will be encouraged to implement training programmes should it be identified that there is a lack of existing knowledge and skills within a certain sector of employment.

Figure 6.1 Skelmersdale "Area of Search" for new employment land



Justification

The Borough-wide Employment Land Target and its Spatial Disaggregation

6.1.2 The locally-determined employment land target of 87 ha has been arrived at via a thorough analysis of the evidence base and utilises the methodology used in the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (JELPS, January 2010), updated with new information. The basis of calculating the target is that of historic take-up of land for employment development over the past 18 years, including the last two years of employment land take-up not previously available for the JELPS and removing two anomalous years of very high take-up, and so the target is a fair reflection of anticipated need for employment land over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027). Further details on how this target has been derived can be found in Appendix D.

6.1.3 Skelmersdale has been identified as the spatial area most appropriate to take the majority of new employment development within the Core Strategy period because of:

- its accessibility of location;
- the large existing provision of employment premises that promotes a critical mass and shared infrastructure;
- the fact it is the largest settlement in the Borough;
- the inward investment employment development would bring to the regeneration of the town, which would compliment the town centre masterplan;
- the large amount of existing undeveloped allocations (32 ha) and the potential for new employment land being created through the remodelling and regeneration of vacant units in the existing industrial estates (20 ha); and
- The logic of extending WhiteMossBusinessPark and / or Pimbo Employment Area by a total of 8 ha into the Green Belt.

6.1.4 It is still important to spread new employment development across the Borough, where appropriate, in order to spread the economic benefit of inward investment by making job opportunities as accessible to all as possible. As such, further employment land will be identified at Burscough and in rural areas, over and above existing allocations.

Use of brownfield, greenfield and Green Belt land

6.1.5 Existing employment land allocations that remain undeveloped in the Borough from the Replacement Local Plan and that are still realistic opportunities for employment development total less than 40 ha, when taking into account an assumption of what will be developed between 2010 and 2012, the vast majority of which (32 ha) is within Skelmersdale.

6.1.6 Following further detailed survey work of the Borough's largest employment areas it has been identified that a total of 30 ha of land could be made available through the re-modelling, redevelopment and regeneration of existing vacant and under-used employment sites on these estates. The following table sets out the conclusions of this survey work:

Table 6.1 Potential regeneration opportunities within West Lancashire's Employment Areas (Source: WLBC 2010)

Employment Area	Size of Estate (ha)	Regeneration Opportunity (ha)
Pimbo, Skelmersdale	153.62ha	20ha
Gillibrands, Skelmersdale	99.41ha	
Stanley, Skelmersdale	91.49ha	
Burscough	47.90ha	5ha
Simonswood	56.27ha	5ha

6.1.7 However, existing allocations and the regeneration and recycling of existing vacant and under-used employment land will not meet the employment land need for West Lancashire up to 2027. Therefore, it is anticipated that the remainder of the need (18 ha) will need to be met through newly identified sites.

6.1.8 Given the significant constraints on developable land within the existing settlement areas of West Lancashire, there are no known viable brownfield sites within the Borough that could contribute to this need beyond a few small rural sites. In addition, at this time, there are few greenfield sites within the existing settlement areas that are viable for employment development, especially in the Borough's three towns. Therefore, land within the Green Belt will need to be identified to meet this need.

6.1.9 The Core Strategy is a strategic document and therefore does not provide precise details on land allocations. The 18 ha of new employment land will be provided on Green Belt sites in areas of search that have been identified to meet this need:

- Land to the South of Skelmersdale (8 ha) – to meet increasing employment demands in the Skelmersdale area, expansion to the south of the town has been highlighted as the most sustainable option, where the creation of new employment land is seen to be at its most accessible.
- Land to the West of Burscough (at least 10 ha) – Burscough Employment Area is a vital source of employment provision, providing B2 opportunities for the Burscough area and the rural western and northern parts of the Borough, and this need for B2 opportunities is exacerbated by the shortage of available land for such development in North Sefton. However, there are infrastructure constraints connected to the Burscough area, particularly in terms of highways capacity, hence the expansion of this estate has been limited.

6.1.10 Given that all of the new employment land that will need to be provided in the above areas of search will need to be in the Green Belt, based on current constraints within settlement areas, the findings of the West Lancashire Green Belt Study, which was prepared by West Lancashire Borough Council and verified by Lancashire County Council, have been utilised in identifying these areas of search. The Green Belt Study⁽¹¹⁾ identified that the Skelmersdale area of search does fulfil at least one of the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in PPG2 but so do virtually all areas of Green Belt around the Borough's settlements. The west Burscough area of search was found not to fulfil any purpose of the Green Belt. These areas of search have also been identified because they are not as constrained by other factors (such as infrastructure and environmental factors) as other Green Belt areas around the Borough's settlements.

Phasing of Employment Land

6.1.11 Skelmersdale's status as a designated New Town has left the town with an enduring legacy of problems and issues to tackle. Consequently in the past Skelmersdale has been acknowledged as a 'Regeneration Priority Area' recognising the importance of regeneration to solving many of the problems Skelmersdale faces.

11 prepared by WLBC and being consulted upon alongside this Preferred Options document

6.1.12 Whilst this regional designation no longer exists, the importance of regeneration to Skelmersdale remains the same and, in terms of employment requirements, the Core Strategy attaches a significant importance to the delivery of new employment development and regeneration of existing employment areas within the town. Employment areas such as Pimbo and Gillibrands contain a number of plots and units which are either not occupied or are under-occupied. The main reason for this is that they are no longer fit for purpose nor meet modern business / industrial needs, an issue raised both in the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) and the West Lancashire Economy Study (2009). Therefore, priority for new employment development in the Core Strategy period will be given to the development of existing allocations and regeneration of existing employment areas within Skelmersdale.

6.1.13 In addition, new employment development in general across the Borough should first utilise all available brownfield and then appropriate greenfield sites within the existing settlements before development on Green Belt. The only potential exception to this would be development within a Burscough Strategic Development Site. Therefore, any Green Belt release for employment development to the south of Skelmersdale and west of Burscough will be resisted until all available and suitable sites within the existing settlement areas have been developed out and will not be considered at all until 2020 at the earliest. This phasing also deliberately allows for the possibility that employment land targets may be reduced by new evidence that emerges over the Core Strategy period, in which situation, any reduction in the target will directly translate into a reduction in the amount of Green Belt release required to the south of Skelmersdale and / or west of Burscough.

Appropriate uses for new employment sites

6.1.14 All allocated employment areas in the Borough should be considered for a full range of 'B' type uses, including B1 (offices), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution). A flexible approach should be taken to the range of uses proposed in order to best respond to market demand at any given time. The only exception to this would be development within White Moss Business Park, where only B1 would be appropriate given the high quality business premises desired at this location, and some rural sites, depending on the site context.

6.1.15 Residential development is not permitted on sites allocated for new employment development and development of existing employment sites for non-employment purposes will be resisted in order to maintain the Borough's employment land supply and sufficient opportunities for new economic investment in the Borough. Exceptions may be made for mixed-use schemes on rural employment sites, subject to suitability and viability assessment (this is addressed further in Policy Area CS5) and where overwhelming evidence highlights the unsuitability and unviability of employment development on a site.

Promotion of specific Business Sectors and skilling the Borough's population

6.1.16 The West Lancashire Economy Study (2009) identified several business sectors that West Lancashire has successfully provided over recent times and should continue to expand within. These included the advanced manufacturing and distribution industries, business and professional services, the health sector, education and the public sector. In addition, it is recognised that the Borough should seek to promote those sectors related to research and degree courses provided at Edge Hill University, such as the Media Industry.

6.1.17 A further sector that it is anticipated that the Borough could benefit from investment in is that related to the “green” industries. As acknowledged throughout the Core Strategy Preferred Options, the impacts of Climate Change are already being felt and will continue to be. In addition, mankind’s reliance on fossil fuels is already resulting in ever increasing fuel and energy costs as the world’s fossil fuel resources are depleted. As a result of this, those businesses that provide services related to technology that overcomes climate change and reduces dependency on fossil fuels were among the few who grew over the past few years, in spite of the economic recession.

6.1.18 Given West Lancashire’s strategic location on the edge of three city regions, in particular the Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Regions, it is recognised that these major conurbations will be the location for the implementation of much of the new technology related to:

- the retrofitting of new housing stock to be more energy efficient;
- the construction of zero carbon developments;
- the construction of renewable energy schemes; and
- the construction of flood-proof developments.

6.1.19 Therefore, West Lancashire could offer a central base, accessible to the entire North West, for such businesses, and provide business premises at a cheaper price than within the major conurbations.

6.1.20 Key to attracting businesses in all of the sectors above is providing a skilled workforce. Therefore, as important to any promotion of sectors in the Borough as the development of appropriate premises is the need to ensure that the population of West Lancashire, and in particular Skelmersdale, are trained in the right skills to be able work in these sectors. While the Core Strategy cannot directly ensure this training is provided, it would encourage and support any initiatives that do so through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

What You Said

6.1.21 Responses to the Core Strategy Issues Questionnaire in January 2009 identified that the most favoured methods to improve employment opportunities were to promote a greater range of jobs (especially for young people), regenerate existing employment areas, enhance training opportunities through better education facilities and to promote skilled job opportunities. More than one-third of respondents also supported the allocation of land both for existing businesses to expand and also for new businesses to move into the area. The specific comments of individuals to this questionnaire also supported the re-use of brownfield land and, if necessary, the release of Green Belt for employment development and promoted business locating within urban areas and along the M58 corridor.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.1.22 *Alternative Option 1:* To not plan for further employment development other than that already allocated, or to only plan for enough to enable a proportion of the employment land target to be met.

6.1.23 *Reason for rejection:* The consequences of this alternative would be that economic demand, creation of new jobs and investment would not be realised in West Lancashire and, furthermore, that existing businesses seeking to expand may be forced to relocate outside of West Lancashire. This would result in slower growth in the Borough's economy.

6.1.24 *Alternative Option 2:* To promote less employment development in Skelmersdale and more in other parts of the Borough, such as Ormskirk or Burscough.

6.1.25 *Reason for rejection:* This alternative would not support the regeneration of Skelmersdale by taking away inward investment from the town and potential jobs that would be easily accessible for the people of the town, thereby not addressing issues of worklessness in Skelmersdale. This alternative would benefit other towns in the Borough economically but would not necessarily benefit the wider Borough as a whole and would locate employment development in generally less accessible locations. This alternative would still require a large release of Green Belt land.

6.1.26 *Alternative Option 3:* To only promote employment development in Skelmersdale and not in any other part of the Borough.

6.1.27 *Reason for rejection:* This alternative would only benefit Skelmersdale and would limit economic growth in other parts of the Borough. In addition, the Strategic Option within the Core Strategy Options paper that solely promoted development in general within Skelmersdale was not supported in the public consultation exercise. This alternative would still require a large release of Green Belt land.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG2: Green Belt
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk
- The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)
- West Lancashire Rural Economy Study (2006)

6.2 Policy Area CS5: The Rural Economy

Context

6.2.1 Rural West Lancashire is an entrepreneurial place that avoids some of the challenges faced by many rural districts (e.g. declining farming incomes and rural isolation). Businesses located in rural West Lancashire feel it is a good place to do business and there is a higher business start-up rate in rural areas of West Lancashire than in the Borough as a whole and in Lancashire and the North West.

6.2.2 Rural West Lancashire is also a focus for the food industry, with a major cluster based around the horticultural industry in the northern parishes, and 16% of rural businesses in West Lancashire are related to agriculture, which support a wider range of food-related businesses (e.g. food processing, freight or packaging) and around 3,000 jobs (Rural Economy Study, 2006). The Borough also has important clusters in the manufacturing of engineering and construction products.

6.2.3 Therefore, this relatively strong and positive position must be built-upon and protected from some potentially major issues which currently affect the rural economy. These issues include:

- The effect of supermarket practices, labour market stability and long-term consumer trends (e.g. the rise in organic food and the need to reduce air miles) on the food industry
- Skills and labour supply and the quality and quantity of candidates for jobs
- Transport and accessibility for businesses in rural West Lancashire, particularly the poor public transport in rural areas
- The weak tourism infrastructure, despite the presence of the Martin Mere nature reserve which attracts around 140,000 visitors annually and the potential of the Ribble Estuary Regional Park

Policy CS5

The Rural Economy

The Borough contains some of the most versatile agricultural land in the UK and agriculture is a key industry for the Borough. Therefore, development of open, agricultural land will only be permitted where it would not result in the loss of the highest grades of agricultural land, except where absolutely necessary adjacent to the three Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough to deliver strategic development.

Employment opportunities in the rural areas of the Borough are limited, and therefore there will be a general presumption against the loss of employment sites for a non-employment use unless it can be robustly demonstrated that the site is inherently unsuitable for an ongoing employment use. This could include any type of employment use and may not be merely restricted to B1, B2 and B8 land uses.

Whilst no sites will be allocated for employment within the rural areas of the Borough, encouragement will be given to development which provides new investment and job opportunities in rural areas, subject to such proposals being acceptable in the wider planning framework. Any new employment development in rural West Lancashire should be located in an accessible location and in proximity to public transport services.

Pragmatic approaches will be taken to the regeneration of existing rural employment sites in the Borough, such as Alty's Brickworks (Hesketh Bank), Tarleton Mill (Tarleton) and Greaves Hall (Banks). The Council will seek to work with all relevant parties to ensure that a sustainable development solution is delivered that includes a range of uses

and benefits for the local community. In all cases a range of employment, residential and community based uses will be considered for the above sites subject to sufficient viability information being provided as part of an application.

Proposals for new, replacement or extensions to agricultural produce packing and distribution facilities will be permitted in rural areas provided that:

- there is not a more suitable alternative site located within a nearby employment area;
- the proposed use remains linked, operationally, to the agricultural use of the land;
- the majority of the produce processed on the site is grown upon holdings located in the local area;
- the loss of agricultural land is kept to a minimum and, where there is a choice, that the lowest grade of agricultural land is used; and
- traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated on the local road network and will not be detrimental to residential amenity

The sustainable diversification of farms for a wide range of purposes will be encouraged, subject to National Planning guidelines (particularly relating to restrictions imposed by Green Belt). Particular encouragement will be given towards the delivery of renewable and green energy projects and the creation of new tourism opportunities which can be proved to have wider economic benefits for the rural economy, subject to the wider planning policy framework. Existing buildings in agricultural use will only be considered for residential purposes where it meets a specific local need (such as accommodation for agricultural or horticultural workers) and where it can be demonstrated that the building is inherently unsuitable for any other use.

The promotion and enhancement of tourism development in the Borough's countryside will be encouraged through agricultural diversification to create small-scale, sensitively designed visitor attractions and accommodation, taking advantage of some of the Borough's natural assets such as the canal network and promoting new walking and cycling routes including long distance routes and linkages to national networks.

Developers should work with the Borough Council and with all relevant stakeholders to improve the quality and choice of internet broadband in the rural areas of West Lancashire, to provide greater opportunity for a range of business types in rural areas, including the potential for home-working and small, IT based cottage industries.

Justification

6.2.4 A significant proportion of the Borough (over 90%) can be categorised as rural and therefore the development and the preservation of a sustainable rural economy is a high priority within this Core Strategy document.

6.2.5 The evidence base work undertaken for the LDF (e.g. the Rural Economy Study, 2006) highlights the significant contribution that the rural economy can make in terms of investment and job opportunities for West Lancashire. Employment opportunities, whether urban or rural, are a finite resource and once lost for non-employment use, particularly if lost to residential uses, are unlikely to ever come back into an employment generating use.

Therefore, there is a general policy presumption to protect rural employment sites against their loss for non-employment uses unless it can be demonstrated that they are inherently unviable for an on-going employment use and that the only realistic way to secure the sustainable future of the site is for a mix of uses.

6.2.6 No specific new 'rural employment sites' will be identified through the Local Development Framework as this was found to be unhelpful to securing rural employment development when such sites were allocated under the Replacement Local Plan (2006). However, important existing rural employment sites, such as those in the Northern Parishes of Tarleton, Hesketh Bank and Banks, will be dealt with in a pragmatic manner, acknowledging that bringing the site forward for 100% employment use may not be the most sustainable approach to take. Mixed use opportunities should be considered for all these sites, ensuring that whilst some of the site is retained for a sustainable employment use, the remainder of the site provides opportunities to address other local issues, such as affordable housing or provide contributions towards local services and infrastructure schemes.

6.2.7 A significant proportion of employment opportunities in the rural areas come from home-working and small 'cottage' industries, many making use of their own homes or small purpose built units. Therefore, support should be given to the development of such industries and exploring the opportunities that a greater range of internet broadband can provide to rural businesses.

6.2.8 Sustainable agricultural diversification will also be promoted through this Core Strategy as an important aspect of maintaining the rural economy, with the re-use of derelict buildings being encouraged for sustainable uses, such as for rural business, tourism or recreational uses. Agricultural produce packing and distribution facilities are also a key, and sustainable, aspect of modern agricultural processes. Policy Area CS5 therefore allows their development, subject to certain criteria being met.

What You Said

6.2.9 Within the Core Strategy Issues Questionnaire (January 2009), nearly half of respondents identified access to rural employment as an issue in rural areas and nearly 60% identified public transport in rural areas as an issue. While it was recognised that rural businesses will inevitably be less accessible than urban ones, the promotion of rural businesses and high quality employment opportunities was still considered important.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.2.10 *Alternative Option 1:* Allocate rural employment sites in the Site Allocations DPD as a method of stimulating economic growth in the rural areas of the Borough.

6.2.11 *Reason for rejection:* This approach has not proved to be successful in facilitating growth and a number of these sites, at least in part, have been lost to non-employment uses. Therefore, whilst allocation of land, through a future Site Allocations DPD was considered, it was not considered to be the most sustainable approach to economic development.

6.2.12 *Alternative Option 2:* Retain all existing rural employment sites solely for B1, B2 and B8 land uses

6.2.13 *Reason for rejection:* Existing rural employment sites, such as those mentioned at Tarleton Mill, Greaves Hall and Alty's Brickworks, had been under a solely employment allocation under the Local Plan. However, the re-development of these sites solely for B1, B2 and B8 uses is not realistic, and therefore mixed-use schemes provide better opportunities to deliver a wider range of Core Strategy aims in rural locations.

6.2.14 *Alternative Option 3:* Enable the re-use of agricultural buildings for residential purposes

6.2.15 *Reason for rejection:* Sustainable agricultural diversification should be seen as a priority over the loss of rural buildings for a residential use given that, whilst the development of former agricultural buildings for residential could provide short term sustainable option for a landowner, more longer term options should be explored to deliver ongoing income into a farm-holding that allow for a return to pure agricultural use in the future if necessary.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG2: Green Belt
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk
- The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)
- West Lancashire Rural Economy Study (2006)

6.3 Policy Area CS6: Edge Hill University

Context

6.3.1 Edge Hill University is considered a major asset to the Borough of West Lancashire and the town of Ormskirk. The University has grown considerably over recent years and continues to be a major employer in the area. The presence of a large number of students, particularly in Ormskirk, has led to better provision of services and leisure facilities creating direct benefits for the wider community as well as students. A report carried out by Regeneris Consulting (2010)⁽¹²⁾ demonstrated that the University currently contributes £63 million per annum to the local economy and 1340 jobs (FTEs).

6.3.2 Along with the positive aspects of the University being located in the Borough, there are also some issues which have arisen from the continued expansion of this once relatively small educational establishment. The main issues for consideration within the Core Strategy relate to traffic, parking and housing. Traffic continues to be a concern and the impacts are notable across Ormskirk. Housing is also a growing concern within Ormskirk with increasing

12 The Economic Impact of Edge Hill University (June 2010), Regeneris Consulting

student demand leading to less affordable housing for local people. The location of student accommodation has a direct link to resulting transport needs and a holistic approach needs to be adopted when addressing these issues.

6.3.3 A further consideration is that future expansion plans must be tempered with the need to manage impact on the surrounding sensitive Green Belt environment as well as the town.

Policy CS6

Edge Hill University

Through the Core Strategy and subsequent Local Development Documents the Council will seek to maximise the role of Edge Hill University in terms of the employment opportunities it provides, investment in the local area and the up-skilling of the population, but minimise its impacts on Ormskirk and the wider environment.

The following key principles are promoted:

- Supporting the continued expansion of EdgeHillUniversity within the existing campus and via an expansion into Green Belt of no more than 10 hectares, where further compelling evidence demonstrates the need to develop built facilities on Green Belt land and where such development incorporates measures, where appropriate, to alleviate the existing traffic and / or housing impacts;
- Requiring a masterplanned approach to any further expansion;
- Working with the University to develop travel plans and parking strategies to improve the situation on the local road network, possibly including a park and ride facility;
- Concentrating new student accommodation on campus where possible;
- Creating links between the University, local businesses and the community sector, in terms of both information sharing and learning programmes, to ensure that the University continues to contribute to the local economy and social inclusion in the Borough; and
- Ensuring that the benefits of the University and any expansion plans are also directed to those communities where educational attainment is lower through specific programmes, where possible led by private sector employers.

Figure 6.2 "Area of Search" for the expansion of Edge Hill University Campus



Justification

6.3.4 The University is a major asset to the Borough and its continued role in providing a valuable educational service as well as an economic benefit to the local area is essential for the future prosperity of West Lancashire. For this reason, careful consideration is required in relation to the future plans of the University.

6.3.5 Although further growth of the University is generally supported, there are issues which need to be addressed and a balance should be found between expansion and the impact on the surrounding environment and local residents.

6.3.6 Policy CS6 seeks to address this issue by allowing for growth during the Core Strategy period, where necessary, whilst ensuring that existing and potential future problems are addressed. The policy also seeks to direct some of the benefits to those communities most in need of assistance in both educational and economic terms. Greater policy provision will be developed within other Local Development Framework documents in the form of the Development Management Policies DPD, Site Allocations DPD and SPDs.

6.3.7 The Council will work with the University to seek the delivery of a suitable strategy and masterplan for all parties.

What you said

6.3.8 It is widely recognised that Edge Hill is an important asset of the Borough and that expansion of the University would benefit the local economy, as well as public services and facilities. However, it has been suggested that expansion should be balanced by resolving existing (and potential future) issues and problems. Parking, traffic congestion and noise pollution have been identified as key concerns amongst local residents. In addition many people have raised concern regarding the number of homes in Ormskirk which are let to students.

6.3.9 Many people also had concerns relating to use of the Green Belt for University expansion and considered that any released of land should follow a structured approach through the LDF process. Although the general principle of expansion is supported, it should be carried out in a sustainable manner.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.3.10 *Alternative Option 1:* No expansion of the University.

6.3.11 *Reason for Rejection:* This alternative would mean that the university would not be able to deliver high quality facilities and therefore could be less attractive to students. Opportunities to remedy some of the existing issues would also be lost.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPG2: Green Belt
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- The Economic Impact of Edge Hill University (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)

Chapter 7 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

7.1 Policy Area CS7: Residential Development

Context

7.1.1 As with many other local authority areas in England, West Lancashire has seen rising house prices and intensification of affordability problems, increased variation in prices between affluent and deprived areas, pressure to develop on greenfield sites, and more recently, a decline in the market for apartments and a reduction in housing completion rates.

7.1.2 A decade ago, the numbers of dwellings being granted permission and completed in the Borough were well in excess of development plan requirements, which led to the implementation of a restrictive housing policy in 2002. This policy of restraint was also in accordance with regional policy at the time. It lasted from 2002 until 2010 and was successful in the sense that it reduced the housing land “oversupply”, and led to more sustainable patterns of development. However, the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing in 2006 and the adoption of a new Regional Spatial Strategy in 2008 heralded a change in wider housing policy, with an emphasis on the delivery of more housing. This change in policy, combined with a reduction in housing land supply and a growing need for affordable housing in West Lancashire, led to the implementation of a less restrictive “interim housing policy” in July 2010.

7.1.3 The economic downturn from 2008 onwards has resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of new dwellings being completed in West Lancashire. Housing Market studies and work on household forecasts show a continued need for more residential development in the Borough, both for affordable and market housing.

Policy CS7

Residential Development

Subject to other relevant policies being satisfied, residential development will be permitted within the Borough’s settlements as follows⁽¹³⁾:

Hierarchy		Total dwellings	Type of development
Key Service Centres	Skelmersdale	3,000	Key sites include the Town Centre, land at Firwood Road and land at Whalleys. During the first 10 years of the Core Strategy period planning permission for the residential development of any greenfield site in

13 Numbers in square brackets represent the target numbers of dwellings if the “Dispersal” option were to be chosen, where they differ from the Burscough Strategic Development Site option

Chapter 7 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

Hierarchy		Total dwellings	Type of development
			Skelmersdale of one hectare or greater in size, or able to accommodate 30 dwellings or more, will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that the site's development for housing will directly support the Town Centre regeneration programme.
	Ormskirk / Aughton	300 [500]	Residential development on brownfield sites and on greenfield sites not protected by other policies and on Green Belt covered by a Strategic Development Site or an "area of search".
	Burscough	800 [500]	
Key and Rural Sustainable Villages		400 [500] (total)	Residential development on brownfield sites and small-scale residential development (i.e. 10 units or fewer) on greenfield sites, except where specifically allocated in the Site Allocations DPD.
Small Rural Villages		-	100% affordable housing schemes that provide for local needs, or other specialist housing to meet the specific needs of a section of the local community.
Protected Open Land & Green Belt		-	Affordable housing will only be permitted on protected open land where it is proven that there are no suitable sites on land within the settlement. Similarly, affordable housing will only be permitted in the Green Belt where it is proven that there are no suitable sites in non-Green Belt areas. Green Belt development will usually be limited to no more than 5 dwellings.

Management of housing land supply

Should the supply of housing begin to grow too large (i.e. a situation where a significant over-supply of housing relative to housing targets emerges), the Council will seek to restrain housing development in order to manage delivery of housing in line with the housing targets for the Borough. If this situation arises, the mechanisms for doing so are outlined in Appendix E.

Brownfield development

In line with national policy, the priority for housing development within West Lancashire will be on previously developed (brownfield) land. Applicants proposing residential development on major greenfield sites not allocated in the Site Allocations DPD will be required to show that there are no suitable brownfield and/or allocated sites available to provide a similar number of units, either individually or collectively.

Development on garden land

When considering proposals for residential development on garden land, careful attention will need to be paid to relevant policies, including, but not limited to, those relating to the amenity of nearby residents, access, biodiversity, and design.

Density

The Development Management Policies DPD will, if appropriate, set standards for density of residential development.

Provision for all ages

All residential developments should provide an appropriate proportion of units designed specifically to accommodate the elderly. This proportion will be established through a separate Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). In addition, all new homes will be expected to meet the Lifetime Homes Standards, until such time as the Standard becomes mandatory.

Justification

7.1.4 Policy CS7 is intended to facilitate a sustainable pattern of development in West Lancashire, meeting local housing needs and taking account of the capacity of settlements to accommodate more housing. The strategy for distribution of housing in this policy is consistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy CS1, and allows greater flexibility in the type of land housing development will be permitted on in the higher-order settlements than in the smaller settlements. The anticipated numbers of dwellings expected to be delivered in the Borough's different areas under this policy are as set out in the policy above.

7.1.5 Whilst specific sites are to be allocated through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, the evidence base (in particular the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)) indicates that generally there is sufficient potential housing land to deliver the numbers of dwellings specified in Policy CS1, both in individual settlements and in the Borough as a whole. The exception is the Burscough Strategic Development Site (Policy CS3) or other identified "areas of search", where a release of Green Belt land will be necessary to meet the dwellings target.

7.1.6 The pattern for distribution of housing development set out in this policy is considered the most likely to deliver sustainable communities, taking account of the various issues and constraints in and around West Lancashire, including existing patterns of development, the physical geography of the Borough, land availability and infrastructure constraints in specific locations within West Lancashire.

7.1.7 There will be a general presumption against incremental developments on greenfield sites in the Key Sustainable Villages, Rural Sustainable Villages and Smaller Rural Villages which would result in the development of a larger site of more than 10 units. An example would be where a large site was divided up into smaller sites and proposals were submitted for 10 units or less on a piecemeal basis, which would not be acceptable. However, greenfield sites of more than 10 units may be allocated in the Site Allocations DPD.

7.1.8 In certain cases, housing will function as enabling development, with some of the profits from housing development used to procure major benefits for the area and to help deliver important elements of the Core Strategy as a whole, for example the regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre. The contributions expected from the development of major sites will be explored further in the Site Allocations DPD, also paying attention to Policy CS14 (Developer Contributions). Some housing development will not be allowed to go ahead until localised constraints are addressed.

Management of housing land supply and brownfield development

7.1.9 Although recent house building rates in West Lancashire have been lower than annual requirements, the higher rates recorded from 2001-2006 (over 400 dwellings per annum) demonstrate that it will be possible to achieve the overall target for delivering housing over the Core Strategy period, given the right economic conditions. Whilst it is recognised that housing completion rates are influenced to a large extent by the housing market and other external factors, it is considered prudent to exercise some control over the rates at which residential development comes forward, in order to avoid problems with, for example, the provision of infrastructure capacity and other services.

7.1.10 A mechanism has thus been built into the policy and outlined in Appendix E to apply an element of restraint in the light of the supply of deliverable housing land rising too high, and to remove this restraint once housing land supply decrease back to an acceptable level. Restraint may also be applied, if needed, should the Borough's housing requirement be reduced in the future. The housing delivery target for the first five years of the Core Strategy is likely to be lower whilst infrastructure issues are resolved, and higher in subsequent years.

7.1.11 The phasing of sites in Skelmersdale and the Skelmersdale Town Centre Strategic Development Site needs to be planned in order to facilitate the regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre and the delivery of the benefits associated with the Strategic Development Site, and also to take account of infrastructure constraints. The details of phasing will be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD. Skelmersdale will be promoted for development during the first half of the Core Strategy period because of the priority for regeneration and the use of brownfield land, and infrastructure constraints elsewhere in the Borough.

7.1.12 The numbers of dwellings assigned to each settlement, or category of settlement, have been set in Policy CS1 taking into account various factors, including the sustainability of each settlement, and the amount of potential housing land shown in the SHLAA. There is a possibility that exceeding these figures by a considerable margin could result in unsustainable patterns of development across the Borough, or harm to the amenity of individual settlements, for example through increased traffic congestion or pressure on local infrastructure and services. Thus Policy CS7 allows the Council to limit development in these areas once the Policy CS1 targets are reached, if evidence shows that harm is indeed being caused.

7.1.13 Whilst PPS3 sets a national target of 60% of new development to be brownfield, this number is simply not achievable in West Lancashire, given the nature of key development sites, several of which will be greenfield sites, and the corresponding lack of brownfield land to allocate for housing. However, the priority for development in West Lancashire will be brownfield land wherever possible, and developers wishing to build on non-allocated greenfield sites will be required to demonstrate that their proposed development cannot be accommodated on brownfield sites.

Garden land development

7.1.14 The amount of residential development that has been permitted on garden land over recent years in West Lancashire has been relatively low - less than 4% of all units granted consent between 2002 and 2009 were garden land developments. Thus “garden grabbing” is not considered to be a pressing issue, although it is acknowledged that for neighbours of proposed garden developments, the issue can be particularly acute. National and local policies do not allow the development of garden land if neighbours’ amenity would be unacceptably harmed, or if other planning principles were breached. Policy CS7 only allows for garden land development for as long as greenfield development is allowed in the settlement in question (as discussed in the previous paragraph), and subject to stringent caveats relating to design, amenity and other issues.

Density

7.1.15 The Development Management Policies DPD will set minimum density standards to ensure the efficient use of land, and also allows for reasonable levels of amenity, garden sizes, and open space within housing developments.

Provision for all ages

7.1.16 The ageing population of West Lancashire presents a number of challenges, not least the need to cater for an increasing number of older people’s accommodation requirements. Whilst developments aimed specifically towards the elderly will be welcomed in appropriate locations, the Council is unable to influence such schemes coming forward, and thus it is also considered necessary to seek to deliver residential units suitable for elderly people through market housing developments.

7.1.17 This will be done by requiring that an appropriate proportion of residential units in new developments will be designed specifically for the elderly, the precise proportion to be established through a separate SPD. In addition, the Council will expect all new residential units to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standard⁽¹⁴⁾ to provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate people at all stages of life, whether as individuals, couples, families with children or older people, as well as having the capacity to meet the needs of disabled people of all ages.

7.1.18 Various studies have been undertaken into the cost of meeting of the Lifetime Homes Standard. It is estimated at between £545 and £1,615, depending on the dwelling size, whether the changes are incorporated from the outset of the design process and the experience of the housebuilder in this field. The costs are considered to be a modest amount

14 <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/index.php>

above the cost of meeting the mandatory “Part M” Building Regulations, and the long-term benefits of properties meeting this standard outweigh the initial cost involved, as well as making such dwellings more attractive to buyers, and therefore to developers.

7.1.19 It is anticipated that the Lifetime Homes Standard may become mandatory at national level over coming years and so the Council considers it reasonable that all dwellings should meet the Standard now, especially as it makes good business sense.

What You Said

7.1.20 At the Options Stage, we did not specifically consult upon the details of what housing policy should be. When consulting upon the five Options, people gave feedback as to how much development should be directed towards the different settlements in the Borough. This has been addressed in Policy CS1.

7.1.21 We asked about specialist housing, most notably housing for the elderly. The general feeling was that housing specifically for older people does need to be provided, especially in rural areas. There was limited support for “retirement villages” and retirement apartment schemes, with people suggesting a policy approach that required a percentage of units in market housing developments to be units suitable for the elderly. There was support for the “Lifetime Homes” approach, and the adaptation of existing properties so that people are not forced to move as they age.

7.1.22 Although it is not part of the LDF preparation process, we recently consulted upon an Interim Housing Policy for the Borough (spring 2010), which follows a broadly similar approach to Policy CS6. There was general support for the approach in the Interim Housing Policy, in terms of the types of housing to be allowed in the different settlements in the Borough.

Other Alternatives Considered

7.1.23 *Alternative Option 1:* Unrestricted growth – Allow brownfield and greenfield housing development in all non-Green Belt areas of the Borough, with no specific quotas (or “maxima”) for different settlements. This approach could also include permitting infill development within hamlets “washed over” by Green Belt, and conversions of buildings (barns, etc.) within the Green Belt.

7.1.24 *Reason for rejection:* this approach, with its lack of control, could lead to unsustainable patterns of development, with attractive small rural settlements likely to be more popular for developers than the main, most sustainable settlements. Skelmersdale in particular may not attract the levels of investment needed to deliver regeneration.

7.1.25 *Alternative Option 2:* Preservation of Green Belt “at all costs”; meeting requirements in non-Green Belt areas – Allow development on the non-Green Belt land considered currently unsuitable on policy grounds for housing development in the SHLAA, rather than releasing Green Belt land. Such land includes sites designated in the 2006 West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan under Policy DS4 as “Open Land on the Urban Fringe” (most of this occurs in Banks, Tarleton, and Hesketh Bank), land designated under Policy EN8 as Green Spaces (most of this occurs in Skelmersdale), and possibly some employment or recreational sites.

7.1.26 *Reason for rejection:* The settlements of Banks, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank suffer from various constraints (flood risk, water infrastructure, traffic congestion) and significant new development in these areas would exacerbate these problems. There is a shortage of employment land in the Borough, and allowing existing sites to be lost to housing could harm the local economy, or could result in alternative provision being required, including on Green Belt land. Green Spaces make a valuable contribution towards settlements' quality of life, and to lose such land to housing development would be undesirable.

7.1.27 However, it may be appropriate in a small number of cases to allow development on certain Protected Land or Green Space sites as part of a strategy to deliver benefits for the settlement as a whole. There may also be special circumstances where it is appropriate to allow residential development on a site formerly in employment use. These matters will be looked at, if necessary and appropriate, during the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD.

7.1.28 *Alternative Option 3:* Restraint – Restrain housing development in West Lancashire in order to protect Green Belt and other undeveloped land. This may involve not meeting the current 300 dwellings per annum target, or having the Borough's needs met elsewhere in the sub-region.

7.1.29 *Reason for rejection:* At the time of writing this Preferred Options paper, the RSS figure of 300 dwellings per annum is considered the most appropriate requirement for the Borough, having been agreed from the start of the RSS process in 2005/06, and being virtually the same as household growth forecasts. It will help maintain the local economy, and enable the delivery of much-needed affordable housing in the Borough. If evidence gathered in the future indicates that the Borough's housing requirement should change, the Core Strategy figures, and potentially its policies, will be reviewed. The possibility of having neighbouring Boroughs meeting part of West Lancashire's needs was explored during the "Options" stage, and resoundingly rejected by all key parties.

7.1.30 *Alternative Option 4:* Meet development needs via new or significantly expanded settlements – Rather than spreading the sites needed to meet the Core Strategy housing requirement across the Borough, allocate all the land together in one place, either as a new settlement, or as a significant expansion to an existing (small or large) settlement. Thus all the "damage" (loss of undeveloped land) would take place in just one location. Such an approach would also provide good opportunities for "place shaping" and the creation of a new, sustainable community.

7.1.31 *Reason for rejection:* There are no obvious candidate settlements in the Borough for large-scale expansion, each having its own particular issues, whether to do with topography, physical or infrastructure constraints (e.g. Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Banks) or related to the loss of prime agricultural land and other environmental issues. This approach is not consistent with the settlement hierarchy in Policy CS1, and would not deliver regeneration or economic development in existing towns.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

7.1.32 The most pertinent national planning policy document is Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing, but the following documents are also of relevance:

- PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Communities
- PPG2 – Green Belts

7.1.33 In addition, the following locally-produced documents are of particular relevance to this policy:

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2010
- Housing Land Supply in West Lancashire 2010

7.2 Policy Area CS8: Affordable & Specialist Housing

Context

7.2.1 As is the case nationwide, West Lancashire has an acute need for more affordable housing. The Borough as a whole has seen significant increases in house prices over recent years, leaving the average (or median) house price up to nine times the average (or median) wage in the most affluent settlements. The exception is Skelmersdale, where there are many relatively low-priced properties in various parts of the town, and thus in theory a good supply of affordable housing. However, the lowest priced properties in Skelmersdale tend to be one or two bedroom flats or terraced houses, and there is a need for affordable three and four bedroom houses.

7.2.2 A series of studies undertaken between 2000 and 2010 for the Council have consistently shown that to meet affordable housing needs, a considerable number of affordable dwellings would need to be completed each year, the figure often exceeding the annual requirement for housing of all tenures. Clearly it would be almost impossible to deliver such levels of affordable housing, and thus the Borough is faced with a perpetual pressing need to deliver affordable housing.

7.2.3 Affordable housing has proved hard to deliver in West Lancashire over the past decade. Most recently, the economic downturn has had implications for the viability of delivering affordable housing, with development costs (in particular, the cost of borrowing money up-front to finance schemes) increasing, resulting in a corresponding decrease in the percentage of units in a scheme that could be affordable whilst keeping schemes viable. A Court of Appeal ruling in July 2008 (Blyth Valley Council v Persimmon Homes) requires that Local Development Frameworks take account of the viability of schemes when setting affordable housing requirements. The Council commissioned Fordham Research to carry out a study looking specifically at viability, and this research has directly informed the preparation of this policy area.

7.2.4 Another factor in delivering affordable housing in West Lancashire over the past decade has been the restrictive housing policy in place between 2002 and 2010 in West Lancashire (Policy DE1 in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006). Although adopted Local Plan Policy DE3 requires between 30% and 50% of the units in developments of 10 dwellings and over to be affordable, Policy DE1 restricted opportunities to secure affordable housing as part of wider market housing developments because it limited where market housing could be developed. Just 33 affordable units were granted planning permission as part of market housing developments between 2002 and 2009.

7.2.5 Thus, there are a number of challenges when it comes to meeting affordable housing needs in West Lancashire, including the unmet need for affordable housing that will have built-up over recent years. The policy below seeks to meet those challenges as far as possible, taking account of the various constraints described above.

Policy CS8

Affordable and Specialist Housing

Outside of Skelmersdale, affordable and specialist housing will be required as a proportion of new residential developments of 5 or more dwellings, as follows:

Proposed development size (number of units)	Affordable housing requirement (minimum % of units)
5-7	20%
8-9	25%
10-14	30%
15 and above	35%

Within residential developments in Skelmersdale town centre, 10% of units will be required to be affordable, in accordance with Policy CS2. Elsewhere in Skelmersdale, no affordable housing will be required for developments of fewer than 15 units, whilst on sites of 15 or more dwellings, 20% of units will be required to be affordable.

The Council will take account of viability when assessing individual schemes. If a level of affordable housing lower than those set out above is proposed for a specific scheme, the Council will expect robust information on viability to be provided by the applicant. The Council may seek to have such information independently verified in certain cases, with any costs associated with the verification expected to be met by the applicant, before approving a scheme with lower levels of affordable housing than those specified above.

A forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will include a Dynamic Viability Model, which may vary the proportion of affordable housing required on sites from the levels stated above, depending on the viability, costs and expected income of the developments at the time that planning applications are submitted. Similarly, if future Housing Needs Studies indicate a change in the Borough's Housing Need, the SPD may vary the percentage requirements for affordable housing from those specified above.

In accordance with Policy CS7, 100% affordable housing schemes to meet an identified local need will be supported in the Borough's non-Green Belt settlements, and very limited affordable housing developments will be permitted in the Green Belt, but only where it is demonstrated there are no sites available within non-Green Belt areas. The Site Allocations DPD will consider the allocation of sites for 100% affordable housing.

The precise requirements for tenure, size and type of affordable housing units will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the viability of individual sites and local need. Further details will be set out in the Affordable Housing SPD. The Council will usually expect the following:

- Tenure - the majority of affordable housing provided should comprise social rented units, with the remainder intermediate housing.
- Lifetime Homes - the Council expects all affordable units to be built to Lifetime Homes standard.
- On/off-site provision - affordable housing should be provided on the development site, unless there are exceptional circumstances which necessitate provision elsewhere.

Specialist housing for the elderly

Specialist housing for the elderly will be provided in sustainable locations via specific schemes for elderly accommodation (e.g. Extra Care and Sheltered Accommodation), and through the requirement in Policy CS7 that an appropriate proportion of new residential units be designed specifically as accommodation suitable for the elderly.

Justification

7.2.6 The Council has commissioned a series of studies to comprise its evidence base with regard to housing need and demand, affordable housing needs, and the viability of providing affordable housing and Policy CS8 has directly followed the conclusions and / or recommendations of these studies:

- The West Lancashire Housing Market Assessment (2009) was the first of these studies, but some of the conclusions of this study have since been superseded by the conclusions of the following studies, which are based on more recent evidence.
- The Housing Needs Study highlights different levels of affordable housing need in the different settlements, or Parishes, of West Lancashire, including numbers of dwellings, types and size of dwelling (e.g. house or flat, number of bedrooms), and tenure. It identifies an annual requirement of 214 affordable dwellings in the Borough (which would represent 71% of the annual requirement for all residential development in the Borough) but sets a more balanced affordable housing need target of 35% of all dwellings.
- The Affordable Housing Viability Study shows how the viability of housing schemes varies by settlement, by the types of dwellings being built, and by scheme size. The study concludes that a Borough-wide affordable housing requirement of 35% on all schemes of 3 dwellings or more would be viable. It also recommends an 80%:20% tenure split between social rented and intermediate housing.

7.2.7 The “graded” affordable housing requirement set out in the table in Policy CS8 is considered the most appropriate approach in terms of affordable housing requirements and is consistent with the findings of the housing needs and viability studies in relation to the requirement for 35% of dwellings to be affordable. This takes into account economies of scale for larger schemes.

7.2.8 The studies show that affordable housing in Skelmersdale is not such a pressing issue on account of the large number of relatively low priced properties in the town, but that nevertheless, there is a need for larger affordable dwellings (typically 3 bedroom houses), and thus there is a requirement for affordable housing within market housing schemes in Skelmersdale.

7.2.9 The requirement to provide affordable housing will apply to incremental developments on sites which would result in the development of 5 dwellings or more (15 dwellings or more in Skelmersdale) on a larger site. An example would be where a large site was divided up into smaller sites and proposals were submitted for 4 dwellings or less on each site on a piecemeal basis.

7.2.10 Provision of 100% affordable housing schemes, which are usually undertaken by, or in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) is supported across the Borough, except on Green Belt land. The SHLAA demonstrates that there should be a sufficient range of sites in non-Green Belt areas to accommodate RSL schemes across West Lancashire.

7.2.11 Between 2002 and 2010, there have been problems in identifying appropriate sites for affordable housing. It is considered that by allocating a site specifically for affordable housing, RSLs and other deliverers of affordable housing schemes can be given more certainty, and local communities are given more of a guarantee as to how much affordable housing is likely to be provided in the settlement, and where it will be located.

7.2.12 However, it is recognised that securing the allocation of appropriate sites for affordable housing may be difficult, with some landowners unwilling to accommodate such a use and some neighbours opposed in principle to affordable housing being located in their area. Even if sites are allocated, landowners may be unwilling to release their land for such development, preferring to hold on in the hope that the site may be allowed to go for market housing in the future. The possibility of allocating sites specifically for affordable housing will be considered in the Site Allocations DPD.

7.2.13 In line with the Blyth Valley court ruling, the Council will take account of viability when assessing individual schemes. If a level of affordable housing lower than those set out above is proposed for a specific scheme, the Council will expect robust information on viability to be provided by the applicant. The Council may seek to have such information independently verified in certain cases, with the cost of the verification expected to be met by the applicant.

7.2.14 It is expected that a forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will incorporate a “Dynamic Viability Model” that can be used to calculate the potential viability of schemes under different scenarios relating to the percentage of affordable units required. This model is able to take into account changes to the general economic situation, and will output different values for the maximum amount of affordable housing that could viably be provided on a particular site, depending on when the model is run (i.e. under what economic

circumstances). It is anticipated that this Model will be used to periodically review the affordable housing requirements for new development once the SPD is adopted to enable a fair reflection of the economic circumstances at that time.

7.2.15 The affordable housing requirements set out in Policy CS8 are based on the evidence contained in the 2010 West Lancashire Housing Needs Study. If future Housing Needs Studies indicate a change in the Borough's housing need, the SPD will be amended if necessary, to alter the percentage requirements for affordable housing from those specified above, reflecting the most up-to-date information available.

7.2.16 The Affordable Housing SPD will also provide details on the Council's expectations with regard to tenure split, Lifetime Homes Standards, and on/off site provision. With regard to tenure split, the current preference, based on the 2010 Housing Needs Study, is for 80% social rented housing and 20% intermediate housing. However, this may vary in the future depending on future trends and needs and such variations will be reflected in the SPD.

What You Said

7.2.17 During the Core Strategy Options consultation, we asked for people's opinions on affordable housing provision, including whether we should allocate sites specifically for affordable housing.

7.2.18 There were varying views about allocating sites purely for affordable housing, with the majority of respondents supporting the principle of mixed communities, having affordable housing provided as part of market housing schemes, with mixed dwelling types and tenures, close to local services and facilities, and to meet the needs of local people only.

Other Alternatives Considered

7.2.19 *Alternative Option 1:* Variation in affordable housing threshold and percentage requirement – Use a different threshold (as low as 3, or take the national average of 15) and different affordable housing requirements (less stringent, or more stringent).

7.2.20 *Reason for rejection:* Variations in the threshold and requirement have been explored as part of the preparation of the Core Strategy Evidence Base. Whilst a threshold as low as 3 is possible in theory, in practice it is considered that such a stringent threshold would stifle small developments, and thus do little to reduce the shortfall in affordable housing. Conversely, as the majority of recent housing schemes in West Lancashire have been for fewer than 15 units, using a threshold as high as 15 would result in most residential developments not being required to provide any affordable housing, and the potential to secure affordable housing via market housing developments would not be fully realised.

7.2.21 *Alternative Option 2:* Different requirements for different locations – Set different requirements for different settlements across the Borough (i.e. divide the Borough not just into Skelmersdale /elsewhere, but into individual settlements, or groups of small numbers of settlements). Those settlements with the highest house prices would have the highest affordable housing requirements. The threshold could also be varied between settlements.

7.2.22 *Reason for rejection:* The set of figures contained in the policy above is considered complicated enough. To add in different tables for different settlements would make this policy over-cumbersome and difficult to understand. A split between Skelmersdale and the rest of the Borough is considered more than sufficient.

7.2.23 *Alternative Option 3:* Allocate / do not allocate sites for affordable housing – In addition to requiring a percentage of market housing developments above a certain threshold to be affordable, allocate sites in the Site Allocations DPD specifically for 100% affordable housing developments.

7.2.24 *Reason for rejection:* This proposal will be given further consideration in the Site Allocations DPD. The advantages and disadvantages of allocating sites for affordable housing are summarised above in the Policy CS8 Justification.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

7.2.25 Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing is the primary national planning policy relating to Policy Area CS8.

7.2.26 Other Local documents of relevance include:

- West Lancashire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010
- West Lancashire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2009
- Housing Need and Demand Study 2010
- Affordable Housing Viability Study 2010
- Policy Framework Formulation Document 2010

7.3 Policy Area CS9: Provision of Student Accommodation in Ormskirk

Context

7.3.1 Edge Hill University has been located in Ormskirk since 1933, initially as a college of Higher Education, with university status being achieved in 2006. The University has been, and continues to be, a successful and growing institution, with an estimated 23,000 students currently enrolled on its courses in a number of locations across the North West. The growth of the University has brought economic and social benefits to West Lancashire, and to Ormskirk in particular. However, it has also raised a number of issues, mainly related to the accommodation of students within Ormskirk.

7.3.2 Whilst many students live on the University campus in purpose-built accommodation, there are many others who live within the residential areas of Ormskirk. The off-campus accommodation typically consists of rented, often terraced, houses in areas close to the town centre. Over recent years, a significant number of properties have been purchased by landlords, and converted from single family dwellings to “houses in multiple occupation” (HMOs). These properties were often originally family housing at the cheaper end of the scale, and their being taken out of the residential market has had knock-on implications for affordable housing provision in Ormskirk.

7.3.3 In some streets in Ormskirk, the proportion of properties being let to students is so high that the character of the area has changed, and in certain cases there have been problems with insufficient parking provision and anti-social behaviour by a minority of students. Whilst the idea of a sustainable mixed community is attractive, too high a proportion of student HMOs at a local level has been shown to be undesirable in Ormskirk.

7.3.4 Under current planning law, changes of use from a dwelling house to an HMO do not require planning permission. However, local planning authorities are able, if deemed appropriate, to impose an "Article 4 Direction" which would make it necessary to obtain planning permission for changes of use from dwelling houses to HMOs. The Council is in the process of implementing an Article 4 Direction covering Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead which will take effect in December 2011. This should give the Council some control over the number and distribution of further HMOs in these areas, although it will not affect any HMOs already in place at the time the Direction comes into force.

7.3.5 The decision needs to be taken as how best to address the issue of student accommodation. The Council will endeavour to work with the University to ensure that the provision of appropriate accommodation (predominantly on or near the campus) is facilitated for the growing number of students at Edge Hill, and it is hoped that through joint working between the University, landlords and students on a "code of practice", existing problems associated with student accommodation within residential areas can be addressed.

Policy CS9

Provision of Student Accommodation in Ormskirk and Aughton

Proposals for the construction of purpose-built student accommodation will be supported within the University Campus or within any expansion of the campus proposed in accordance with Policy CS6, where the need for increased provision of student accommodation associated with Edge Hill University is demonstrated by evidence. The development of purpose-built student accommodation elsewhere in Ormskirk and Aughton will be restricted, except where:

- an over-riding need for such accommodation is demonstrated;
- demand for the conversion of existing dwelling houses to Student HMOs will be demonstrably reduced; and
- it will not negatively impact the amenity of surrounding uses, especially residential uses.

Proposals to convert existing dwelling houses into rented student accommodation (i.e. a house in multiple occupation (HMO)⁽¹⁵⁾ specifically for students, or a "student HMO") will be carefully scrutinised. When assessing proposals for conversion of a dwelling house to a student HMO, the Council will have regard to the proportion of existing properties in use as, or with permission to become, a student HMO, either in the street

¹⁵ A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is defined as a house or flat occupied by three or more people who rent a property, are not related and share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Where between three and six unrelated people who satisfy the criteria of an HMO, live in a property and share one or more basic amenities, the property falls within Class C4 of the Use Classes Order.

as a whole, or within the nearest 60 properties in the same street, whichever is the smaller. The specific percentages and streets covered by this policy will be set out in the Development Management Policies DPD but the maximum proportion on any street will be no more than 15%.

Justification

7.3.6 The continued success of Edge Hill University is in the interests of the wider community of West Lancashire, with the University delivering overall economic and social benefits to the Borough as a whole. The Council supports in principle the growth of the University, and the provision of sufficient and good quality bed spaces for Edge Hill students, whether in hall-type accommodation on the campus (usually occupied by first year students) or in rented accommodation off the campus. However, the University's growth should not come at unlimited cost, and student numbers should only increase if the students can be accommodated satisfactorily within the Borough without causing unacceptable harm to Ormskirk and Aughton or to any other settlement, whether in terms of the impact of students living locally, or students living elsewhere who commute to and from the University.

7.3.7 The Council has had contact over recent years with local residents groups who have highlighted problems associated with the uncontrolled proliferation of student HMOs within certain areas of Ormskirk. The most appropriate approach towards student HMOs is considered to be to limit the proportion of student HMOs within specific streets to a certain percentage, whilst recognising that in some cases the ideal maximum percentage has already been exceeded during the period where it was not possible to control the conversion of dwelling houses to student HMOs. In these cases, no more student HMOs will be permitted.

7.3.8 The provision of purpose-built student accommodation is supported in general terms, although it is important that such accommodation should be sited in the most appropriate areas. As with HMOs, accommodation for significant numbers of students is not considered appropriate in predominantly residential areas. Land at the existing University campus is considered to be the most appropriate location for student accommodation, but other locations will be considered, where there are adequate parking arrangements, and good access to the University by means of transport other than the private car.

7.3.9 The possibility of allocating land on the campus for student accommodation is raised in Policy CS6. The efficient use of such land will be expected, whilst recognising the need to provide a quality environment on the site. Extra student accommodation built on such land should not be used simply to facilitate an increase in the numbers of students at Edge Hill. Students staying in new purpose-built accommodation in their first year would subsequently need to find accommodation elsewhere (including within student HMOs in residential areas) in their second and third years, and an increase in numbers would exacerbate current accommodation problems.

7.3.10 Different streets within Ormskirk and Aughton have different characteristics. Busy A-roads and through routes are considered more suitable for student HMOs (provided parking can be adequately addressed) than quiet residential streets with low volumes of traffic, which tend to be better locations for the elderly, or for households with children. Also, the proximity of commercial premises, public houses, and facilities such as primary schools are factors

influencing which areas are more appropriate for which types of housing. The categorisation of specific streets and the percentages of properties in them that will be allowed to become HMOs will be set out in the Development Management Policies DPD.

What You Said

7.3.11 While no specific question relating to student accommodation was asked of the public during the Issues and Options stages of consultation for the Core Strategy, responses were received on issues created by student accommodation (especially Student HMOs) in relation to questions on Edge Hill University and the Council have also received many queries through other channels asking how the issue of student accommodation is being addressed. Therefore, it is clear that there is a perceived issue related to the provision of student accommodation in Ormskirk and this policy area is a direct response to the concerns raised and is seeking to better manage the provision of student accommodation in the town.

Other Alternatives Considered

7.3.12 *Alternative Option 1:* No restraint – Allow conversion of properties to HMOs regardless of location or the proportion of properties already in use as student HMOs in the surrounding area.

7.3.13 *Reason for rejection:* The unrestrained conversion of the (often) cheapest available market housing to student HMOs has knock-on effects in terms of affordable housing provision. An uncontrolled number of student properties in an area can in certain cases lead to blight, loss of property value for existing residents, and problems with parking and occasional antisocial behaviour. The Council is aware from discussions with certain residents groups of acute problems in areas where there is already a significant proportion of student HMOs.

7.3.14 *Alternative Option 2:* Full restraint – Do not allow any more conversions of dwelling houses to student HMOs. (It is expected that such an approach would be in tandem with liaison with the University to provide purpose-built student accommodation in suitable locations.)

7.3.15 *Reason for rejection:* It is arguable that having a small amount of student accommodation in certain areas helps achieve sustainable mixed communities. Whilst it would be reasonable not to allow any more student HMOs in certain streets, there are other streets which could in theory accommodate a small number of student HMOs without material harm to the local area. There is a need for student accommodation not just in halls on campus, but also off-campus to meet the varying demand from the student population. In addition, the building of sufficient purpose-built student accommodation would be likely to require significant Green Belt land.

7.3.16 *Alternative Option 3:* Setting aside of areas for up to 100% student accommodation – this approach would restrain the conversion of properties to student HMOs in most areas, whilst allowing complete streets or neighbourhoods to become student HMOs, thus creating “student zones” within Ormskirk.

7.3.17 *Reason for rejection:* Whilst this approach has been shown to work in certain University cities, it is not considered appropriate for Ormskirk, which is a smaller town, and is not considered to have residential areas that could be set aside as student areas without

detriment to, or significant effect upon, the whole town. There is a danger that a “student area” approach can also lead to “ghettos” which are largely empty during summer holiday time.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2010

7.4 Policy Area CS10: Provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Context

7.4.1 Due to West Lancashire being relatively accessible to most parts of the region by motorway, the area has a history of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople setting up encampments. This policy seeks to provide a planning framework for delivering authorised sites which will address the established needs of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople within West Lancashire, whilst providing the Council with the necessary powers to take enforcement action against unauthorised encampments.

7.4.2 There are currently no authorised sites for gypsies and travellers in West Lancashire. However, there are currently two established unauthorised encampments for gypsies and travellers located at White Moss Road in Skelmersdale and also in Pool Hey Lane in Scarisbrick. There is also one authorised site for travelling showpeople located on land off Liverpool Road North in Burscough.

7.4.3 Gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople are unique to the planning system and have experienced difficulties finding suitable sites and stopping places in recent years. It is understood that gypsies and travellers experience the worst health and education status of any disadvantaged group in England. As part of a strong and sustainable community, members of the gypsy and traveller community as well as travelling showpeople have the same rights and responsibilities as any other member of society. Research has shown a link between the lack of good quality sites and poor health and education.

Policy CS10

Provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Number of Pitches

In order to meet the established need for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople within West Lancashire up to 2016 the following number of pitches will be allocated in a separate Site Allocations DPD provided that they are of an appropriate scale and nature to conform to other policies contained within the Core Strategy:

- Up to 15 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers on 3 sites
- Up to 10 transit pitches for gypsies and travellers on 1 site
- Up to 5 permanent plots for travelling showpeople on 1 site

These sites must also be able to accommodate an annual compound increase of 3% in the overall level of residential pitch provision from 2016 to 2027. The 2 sites that are to be allocated for the 15 permanent pitches for gypsies and travellers must also be able to accommodate 6 further pitches beyond 2016 in order to meet the annual compound increase until 2027.

Broad Location

In order to meet the established need of gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople within West Lancashire and in accordance with the consultation responses within the options paper the broad locations in which sites will be selected will be:

- Permanent gypsy and traveller pitches shall be located close to the M58 corridor and within or close to Scarisbrick.
- Transit pitches shall be located close to the M58 corridor.
- Plots for travelling show people shall be located within the Burscough area or close to the M58 corridor.

Criteria

Criteria for the assessment of suitable pitches / plots for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople will be provided in the Development Management Policies DPD and will be based on up to date national planning policy and will take account of local issues.

Justification

7.4.4 This policy was chosen because it is the most likely to provide appropriate sites that will allow gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople to maintain their quality of life and give them reasonable access to facilities and services. The preferred option also meets the requirements of Circular 01/2006 for criteria to be set out in the Core Strategy.

Number of Pitches

7.4.5 The figures for new permanent and transit gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople provision are based on locally agreed targets. The number of pitches was determined based upon information contained within the Lancashire Sub Region Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) published in May 2007, which was prepared as evidence for the now redundant Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review. The study was prepared for all Lancashire authorities (see Appendix D).

7.4.6 Given the experience and patterns of unauthorised encampments experienced and the results of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs survey it is considered that West Lancashire need to find accommodation for 15 permanent and 10 transit pitches for gypsies and travellers, and 5 plots for travelling showpeople, together with an annual increase of 3% in the level of overall residential pitch provision from 2016.

Broad Location

7.4.7 Three broad areas of search for the location of gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople pitches have been identified based upon consultation responses in the Options Paper and also the established need experienced within the Borough. For permanent gypsy and traveller pitches two locations have been identified: close to the M58 and Scarisbrick.

7.4.8 These locations were chosen because they have both experienced historic demand in relation to unauthorised encampments and both currently have unauthorised sites which have been in place for over 5 years. Both of these locations have also been identified by members of the travelling community who have said that their preference would be to stay in the locality as they have built links within the local community and also have welfare issues such as children attending local schools.

7.4.9 Although there have been instances of unauthorised encampments in other parts of the Borough these have occurred within the last year and so cannot be considered to demonstrate a historic established need within West Lancashire.

7.4.10 The M58 also represents a main transport corridor used by gypsies and travellers as well as travelling showpeople and areas near to the M58 were identified during the options consultation as being an appropriate location for permanent and transit pitch provision.

7.4.11 Sites for travelling showpeople have been identified in locations where West Lancashire has experienced a historic need and also along the M58 corridor, which offers the best transport links. Burscough was chosen because it has one established site which has been used by travelling showpeople for over 20 years.

Criteria

7.4.12 A criteria based policy will be developed in the Council's forthcoming Development Management Policies DPD to ensure that any sites for pitches identified in the future are appropriate. The criteria will provide appropriate sites that will allow gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople to maintain their quality of life and give them reasonable access to facilities and services, meet the requirements of national planning policy and allow for local issues to be taken into account.

What You Said

7.4.13 Debate around the Options consultation was mainly centred around the following alternatives; Should the Council consider making the existing pitches permanent, should new sites for gypsies and travellers be located within the settlement area of Skelmersdale or within a Green Belt location off the M58 corridor or are there more suitable locations in the Borough.

7.4.14 Most people believed that sites should be located within the M58 corridor, reflecting where most unauthorised encampments occur at present. There was also support that a site should be considered within the Green Belt.

7.4.15 The issue of travelling showpeople was not discussed at the issues and options consultation although discussions have taken place with the Showman's Guild which represents travelling showpeople. Discussions have suggested that the general location is not important and that an industrial area would be acceptable.

Other Alternatives Considered:

7.4.16 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not allocate any pitches and do not allocate an assessment policy, relying instead upon general planning policies.

7.4.17 *Reason for rejection:* This approach does not meet with national requirements or planning policy and would not ensure that WLBC meet their required need as set out in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. If the Council cannot meet its current needs it would be failing to meet the requirements of Circular 01/2006.

7.4.18 *Alternative Option 2:* Reliance on national advice from Circular 01/2006

7.4.19 *Reason for rejection:* This approach would commit the Council to the identification of pitches for gypsies and travellers and travelling showpeople through a separate DPD. The number of pitches sought would be derived from the results of the Council's evidence base, but would take into account any pitches granted permission in that period. This approach would not contain a criteria based policy but instead the allocation of pitches and determination of planning applications would be solely based on national advice contained within the Circular. There is no guarantee that this approach will deliver the required number of pitches. Although the Circular has been in place for a number of years it has so far failed to deliver any sites in West Lancashire.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3: Housing
- DoE Circular 01/1994 Gypsy sites and Planning
- ODPM Circular 01/2006 'Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Sites'
- Department for Communities and Local Government: Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide
- 2004 Housing Act

Chapter 8 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Infrastructure and Services Provision

8.1 Policy Area CS11: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres

Context

8.1.1 National policy with regard to planning for retail, leisure and town centres is set out in Planning Policy Statement 4. The West Lancashire LDF Core Strategy will generally rely upon the policies contained in PPS4. However, there is one issue in West Lancashire which requires a locally distinctive, more detailed policy, namely the incremental change of units in town and local centres from retail to non-retail uses.

8.1.2 Ormskirk Town Centre functions at present as the primary retail centre for West Lancashire although, hierarchically, Skelmersdale is the highest order centre and is expected to become the primary retail centre in the Borough once the town centre strategic development site has been developed.

8.1.3 Ormskirk is distinctive on account of its twice-weekly market, its pedestrianised shopping area, and its good selection of independent shops, a number of which have been in existence for several decades. Ormskirk town centre has managed to maintain reasonable levels of vitality and viability in spite of external pressures such as the general leakage of trade out of the Borough, out-of-centre retail developments and the effects of the recession.

8.1.4 The purpose of Policy CS11 is to set out the retail hierarchy for the Borough, to define the Primary Shopping Areas of the main town centres, and to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and local centres, by retaining retail uses there. This policy will work in conjunction with national policy, which seeks to encourage town centre, as opposed to out-of-centre, development.

Policy CS11

Maintaining Vibrant Town and Village Centres

Retail and other appropriate development will be encouraged in town and local centres, in line with national policy, and out-of-centre retail will be resisted unless a specific need is proven for it and there is no suitable site for the retail provision proposed within a town or local centre.

The hierarchy of town centres within West Lancashire is as follows:

Table 8.1 Town centre hierarchy within West Lancashire

Level	Settlements in this level
1: Town Centre	Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Burscough
2: Large Village Centre	Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Up Holland, Banks, Parbold

Level	Settlements in this level
3: Small Village Centres and Local Centres	All other centres

The Proposals Map shows the location of all town, village and local centres, and defines the primary shopping areas of town centres. Within the primary shopping areas of town centres, and within local centres, proposals for the change of use from retail (i.e. Class A1 of the Use Classes Order) to other uses will be required to meet the criteria set out in the Development Management Policies DPD. The proportion of units in a retail use within primary shopping areas will be required to be above the percentage set out in the criteria.

Justification

8.1.5 West Lancashire has for several years “leaked” trade to neighbouring local authority areas. This is due to a number of factors, including the lack of any bespoke retail parks in the Borough and the location of major retail facilities, both town centre and out-of-centre, within easy access of the Borough but outside its boundaries. It is accepted that although an improvement to West Lancashire’s retail offer will help retain trade and improve the vitality and economy of the Borough, significant leakage of expenditure to larger centres outside West Lancashire is expected to continue.

8.1.6 Therefore, Policy CS11 does not seek to address the issue of leakage of trade to other areas, but instead focuses on the protection and enhancement of the vitality and viability of the Borough’s town, village and local centres, because this is considered to be especially important in West Lancashire.

8.1.7 The previous Local Plan policy ⁽¹⁶⁾ was criteria-based and sought to limit the change of use of units in the primary shopping area of Ormskirk Town Centre from retail (i.e. Class A1 of the Use Classes Order) to other uses. An informal target of having at least 60% of the units within the primary shopping area in retail use was included in an Appendix to the Local Plan. Over recent years, there have been a number of proposals to change the use of town centre retail units to non-A1 uses such as financial services, drinking establishments and hot food take-away premises. The Local Plan policy and target have in practice been less effective than intended in preventing changes of use from retail to other uses in Ormskirk Town Centre. The Development Management Policies DPD will set out the circumstances in which proposals to change from retail to other uses will be permitted, and will set a target for the proportion of units in retail use within local centres and the primary shopping areas of town centres.

What You Said

8.1.8 There was no specific question in the Options consultation on retail policy. During general discussions, there was general support for the protection and enhancement of Ormskirk and Skelmersdale town centres, and the protection of local facilities and services in rural settlements.

16 Policy DE10 of the Replacement West Lancashire Local Plan 2006

Other Alternatives Considered

8.1.9 *Alternative Option 1: Different Targets* – Rather than applying the requirement of 70% for every town and local centre, have varying targets, according to the settlement and type of centre.

8.1.10 *Reason for rejection:* The imposition of different targets for different areas would make this policy more complicated, and would require a significant amount of evidence to back it up. It is considered that the reasoning provided in the policy justification above with regard to the setting of a target in each place is sound, and that as 70% is judged to work for Ormskirk based on monitoring over recent years, the same target should work in different areas, for the reasons outlined above.

8.1.11 *Alternative Option 2: More detailed restrictions on changes of use* – Class A1 includes a wide range of uses: travel agents, hairdressers, funeral directors, dry cleaners, and internet cafés. Not all of these uses are the same as most people's perception of a traditional "shop" – i.e. where one goes in to buy and carry away a material product. The idea was considered of making this policy more specific, so that a certain percentage of "product shops" is specified, and other service-type A1 uses are treated in the same way as, say Class A2 and A3 uses. In addition, impose restrictions on the number of charity shops.

8.1.12 *Reason for rejection:* It is not clear whether it would be possible in legal terms to have, or to implement, such a policy. Even if it were possible, it would be very complicated to compile sufficiently robust evidence to determine appropriate targets for each centre, and the monitoring and application of the policy would be very time-consuming.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

8.1.13 Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth is the most relevant national planning policy for this policy area.

8.1.14 Other Local documents of relevance include:

- West Lancashire Retail Study 2007
- West Lancashire Annual Monitoring Reports

8.2 Policy Area CS12: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice

Context

8.2.1 West Lancashire is a two tier authority with Lancashire County Council being responsible for transport. The current Local Transport Plan covering Lancashire is the Joint Lancashire Local Plan (LTP2) which runs from 2006-2010. Lancashire County Council is currently in the process of preparing the third Local Transport Plan LTP3 covering a period of 2011-2021. Transport Policies contained within the Core Strategy will aim to support and enhance LTP3.

8.2.2 Transport policies within the Core Strategy will seek to support the strategic transport priorities for West Lancashire, these include:

- Assisting in the ongoing regeneration of Skelmersdale through the delivery of a modern, fit for purpose, public transport system;
- Improving the accessibility of public transport in rural areas;
- Tackling congestion in the Key Service Centres of Ormskirk and Burscough;
- Improving the rail linkages across West Lancashire through the delivery of new rail infrastructure;
- Encouraging sustainable forms of transport; and
- Improving road safety for users and pedestrians.

Policy CS12

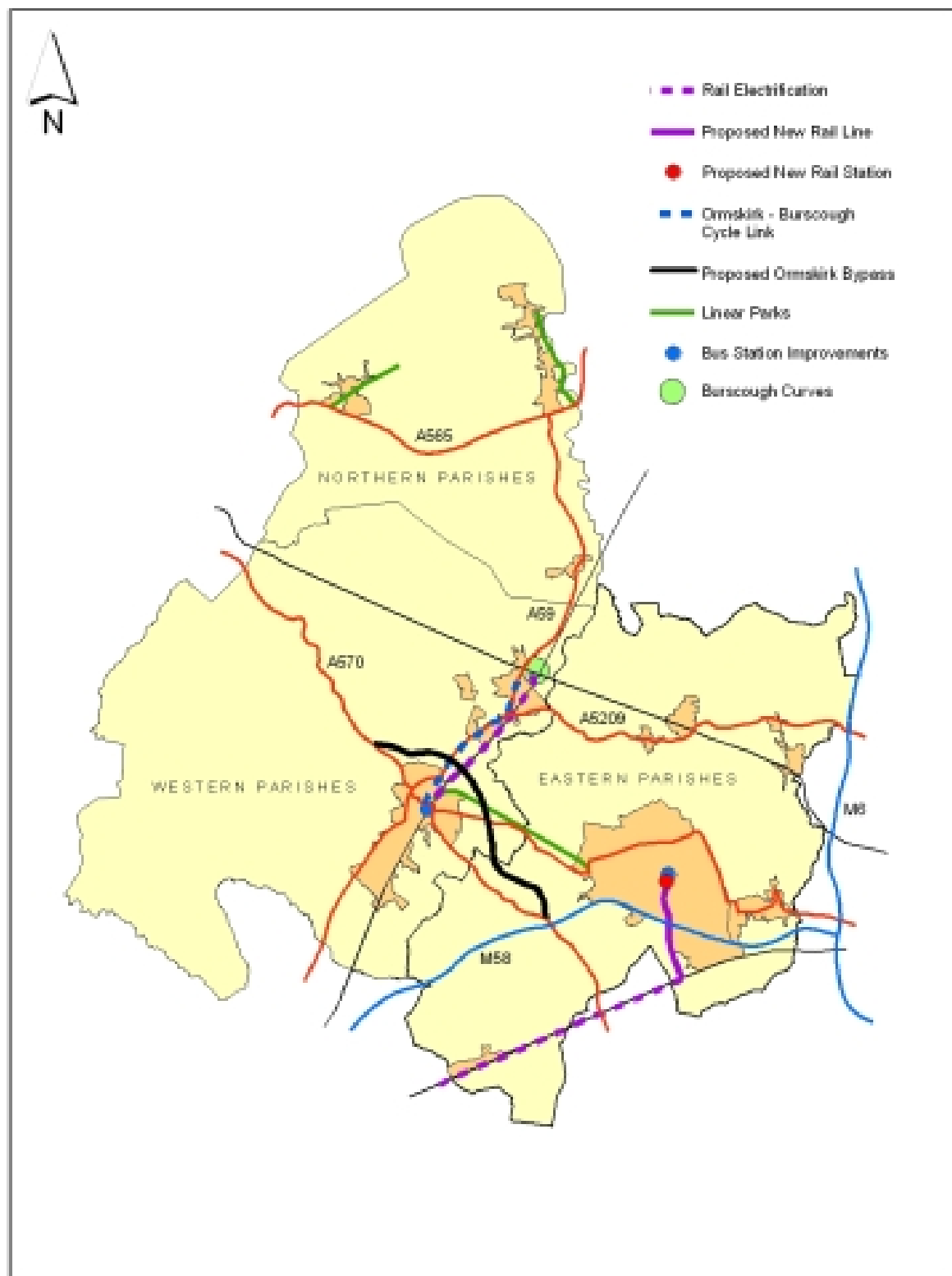
Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice

In order to secure the long term future and viability of the Borough, and to allow for the increased movement of people and goods expected, the Council will work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to improve accessibility across the Borough, improve safety and quality of life for residents and reduce the Borough's carbon footprint. Over the Core Strategy period the Council will seek to:

- improve community health and well-being by providing alternative means of transport such as walking and cycling. This should be achieved through the provision of additional footpaths and cycleways where appropriate;
- reducing the environmental impact of transport through suitable mitigation and design;
- reduce transport emissions such as carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by encouraging greater usage of public transport facilities;
- reduce congestion in the Borough's key service centres to promote competitiveness, with particular reference to Burscough and Ormskirk;
- preparing and actively promoting travel plans for all new developments, including both employment and residential, in accordance with DfT guidance on transport assessments;
- improve public transport to rural parts of the Borough and where appropriate support and implement innovative rural transport initiatives;
- support the shift towards new technologies and fuels by promoting low carbon travel choices and encouraging the development of ultra low carbon/ electric vehicles and associated infrastructure; and
- The Council will also support the delivery of a high quality transport infrastructure by supporting the improvement and creation of new infrastructure such as:
 - The proposed A570 Ormskirk bypass
 - A new rail station in Skelmersdale including new track, and electrification of existing track, as appropriate

- An appropriate rail link made between the Ormskirk-Preston line and Southport-Wigan line
- Electrification of the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough
- The remodelling of the bus station at Ormskirk, providing improved linkages with Ormskirk Railway station
- A new bus station for Skelmersdale town centre
- Improved cycle linkages between Ormskirk and Burscough
- Improved car park management within Ormskirk
- The provision of 3 linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and along the former railway line at Banks
- Any potential park and ride schemes associated with public transport connections
- Any potential green travel improvements associated with access to the Edge Hill University campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk

Figure 8.1 Aspirations for Transport Improvements in West Lancashire



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Justification

8.2.3 Policy CS12 has been set out to ensure that the future transport requirements of the Borough are met. This policy seeks to enhance and preserve the existing transport infrastructure whilst looking to improve where provision is lacking. The policy also seeks to improve sustainable forms of transport to reduce carbon emissions.

8.2.4 The road network in Ormskirk suffers from major problems of congestion caused by traffic running from the M58 along the A570 and through to Southport. The level of congestion reduces the level of safety for local residents and also makes air quality worse. The Council believe that the proposed A570 bypass is a priority scheme and is the Council's preferred option to take through-traffic out of Ormskirk, therefore, reducing congestion in the town centre and speeding up journey times between the M58 and Southport.

8.2.5 Skelmersdale is identified as a regeneration priority area and in order to support regeneration both socially and economically it is essential that the public transport system is improved. Although the town is well served by road links the current public transport links in the town are poor. Skelmersdale is the second largest town in the North West to have no direct access to a railway station. The proposed rail station would provide direct access to Liverpool and Wigan, providing access to jobs, education and training as well as higher order retail and cultural facilities.

8.2.6 Although Burscough is currently served by two rail stations, one on each of the Southport to Wigan and Ormskirk to Preston lines, connectivity between these two routes is poor. The proposed reinstatement of the Burscough Curves and electrification from Ormskirk would allow connectivity between lines and improve accessibility of Burscough to Liverpool and Ormskirk to Southport and Preston. This would be likely to increase rail usage, therefore reducing dependency upon the car. Merseytravel are in the process of conducting work to assess the viability of reinstating these links.

8.2.7 Ormskirk bus station is currently outdated and lacks modern facilities. In addition, the bus station suffers poor links with Ormskirk rail station due to overgrown embankments creating negative perceptions such as a fear of crime which prevents usage. The Council considers that improvement to these facilities would encourage greater usage, ultimately leading to reduced congestion.

8.2.8 The Council believe that improvements to the transport network are essential in helping to deliver local objectives as well as sub regional important projects such as Skelmersdale Vision.

8.2.9 There are many opportunities within West Lancashire to improve the provision for cyclists and pedestrians, including Linear Parks along the disused railway line linking Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, along the banks of the River Douglas between Hesketh Bank and Tarleton and along the former railway line in Banks.

New Development

8.2.10 Government policy requires transport assessments to be prepared in relation to proposals that could have a significant transport impact. For major developments the assessment must look at the accessibility of the site by all modes of transport and include the likely modal split of journeys. It should also give details of the proposed alternative means

of transport for example measures to improve accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce the need for parking. For smaller schemes the plan should simply outline the transport impacts of the development.

8.2.11 The preferred approach will make a contribution to meeting the priorities of the sustainable communities' strategy with emphasis on safety, economic performance, environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing.

8.2.12 The Climate Change Act 2008 commits the UK to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 with an immediate target of 34% reduction by 2020. In order to help meet this target West Lancashire Borough Council has an obligation to reduce carbon emissions caused by transport. Policy CS12 seeks to address the transport carbon footprint by encouraging public transport use, improved transport facilities, low carbon transport infrastructure and walking and cycling where possible.

What You Said

8.2.13 During the options consultation respondents highlighted that there was a sense of social exclusion in many of the rural areas due to a lack of public transport and also that there is a lack of public transport in Skelmersdale, reducing access to jobs. Respondents believed that transport improvements could help deliver new employment areas and link communities to these opportunities. The preferred approach seeks to address all of the concerns highlighted.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.2.14 *Alternative Option 1:* Rely upon policies contained within the Joint Local Transport Plan.

8.2.15 *Reason for rejection:* Although the Council does provide input into Local Transport Plans the plans are strategic documents which take a long term strategic view. Reliance upon this option would not allow West Lancashire Borough Council to use the LTP in a way which works best for the Council. As Local Transport Plans are strategic documents they do not contain guidance which can be used on a development management basis to guide development.

8.2.16 *Alternative Option 2:* Rely upon national advice and policies.

8.2.17 *Reason for rejection:* This option would see future development guided by policies contained within national guidance. Whilst this guidance is relevant it does not account for regional and local issues and would not allow for variations in national policy that may not be in accordance with the Council's spatial and strategic objectives. This approach would also not give the Council the flexibility to protect land for local schemes.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.
- DCLG (ODPM) Planning Policy Guidance 13 Transport
- The Transport Act 2000
- Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2006-2010

- Joint Lancashire Local Transport Plan
- The Climate Change Act 2008
- Merseyside Route Utilisation Strategy 2009

8.3 Policy Area CS13: Accessibility and Provision of Local Services and Infrastructure

Context

8.3.1 A vital element of sustainable development is the provision and delivery of quality local services and infrastructure. Therefore, development should be directed toward those settlements that have a good range of existing services and infrastructure before considering settlement areas where there are deficits requiring investment and improvement.

8.3.2 The Council is preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to ensure that the existing infrastructure capacity in West Lancashire is fully understood, where the gaps currently exist and what will be required in order to deliver the Borough's development needs to 2027. Infrastructure now has a much broader definition and extends from utilities, waste and transport to include green infrastructure such as open space and social and community infrastructure such as education, health services, leisure centres, theatres and public realm.

8.3.3 West Lancashire has both assets and issues in relation to infrastructure capacity. The rural nature of the Borough and managed green spaces ensures access to green infrastructure is generally well provided. Some areas of the Borough benefit from reliable strategic modes of sustainable transport, such as the rail links between Ormskirk and Liverpool every 15 minutes. However, water utility provision in a large part of the Borough remains an issue. Treatment facilities serving Burscough, Rufford and much of Ormskirk and Scarisbrick are currently at capacity and require a strategic approach between the Council and utility provider to ensure an appropriate solution is delivered.

8.3.4 Whilst it is important for West Lancashire to make the most efficient use of infrastructure, it is essential that improvements, such as telecommunications and broadband to serve growing businesses, are identified and that the LDF assists in making these improvements happen.

Policy CS13

Accessibility and Provision of Local Services and Infrastructure

New development will be required to demonstrate that it will support West Lancashire's infrastructure requirements as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, or any additional requirements which may be identified as a result of the proposal. In order to protect, enhance and provide infrastructure across the Borough, proposals for development should:

- be located in accordance with the settlement hierarchy in CS1;
- make the most of existing infrastructure by focusing on sustainable locations with available capacity;

- ensure no negative impacts or depletion to the quality of the existing infrastructure as a result of new development;
- contribute towards improvements to existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure, as required to support the needs of the development;
- demonstrate how access to services will be achieved by means other than the car; and
- demonstrate how the range of local social and community services and facilities available will be suitable and accessible for the intended user(s) of the development.

In the event a deficiency is identified, actions to address the deficiency will be required to enable the development which may otherwise not be supported.

New development that generates a demand for infrastructure will only be permitted if the “essential” on and off-site infrastructure required to support and mitigate the impact of that development is either:

- already in place; or
- there is a reliable mechanism in place to ensure that it will be delivered in a timely manner and to the required standards set by the Council and its partners.

Where appropriate, the Council will permit developers to provide the necessary infrastructure themselves as part of the development proposals, rather than making financial contributions.

New development proposed in the areas of Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick that are affected by the current waste water treatment works capacity issue must be phased to ensure delivery of the development coincides with the delivery of an appropriate solution.

Development proposals for new public facilities and services should be co-located where possible, creating “community hubs” and providing a range of services in one sustainable and accessible location. Where new facilities are required independent of new development, they should be located in the most accessible location available.

Justification

8.3.5 One of the most effective ways of tackling climate change is by supporting and creating sustainable communities. Dispersing services and work places over large areas makes them difficult to serve with public transport or on foot or cycle. In addition, the rural nature of West Lancashire means that isolation to services can be common and is a particular concern which requires consideration through the Core Strategy. In accordance with PPS 1, planning should actively manage patterns of urban growth to make the fullest use of public transport and focus development in existing centres and near to major public transport interchanges.

8.3.6 Planning for infrastructure provision will continue to take place through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) with key partners. The IDP will form the basis for identifying infrastructure enhancements and provision through the development process and will focus on, but is not limited to:

- Utilities and Waste – water supply, foul water sewerage, waste and recycling, energy generation, telecommunications and broadband;
- Transport – highway, rail, bus and cycle network;
- Social and Community – hospital, GP, dentist, children’s centres, schools, further education, emergency services, libraries, youth centres, leisure centres, community halls, local convenience shop, public realm, public house; and
- Green Infrastructure – waterways, parks, natural and semi natural spaces, outdoor sports facilities, allotments, play areas, corridors/footpaths.

8.3.7 In ensuring West Lancashire infrastructure capacity is maximised, development should be located in accordance with the settlement hierarchy outlined in CS1. The IDP identifies that Skelmerdale has a good road network and an existing shopping centre with many essential services but is likely to require an additional primary school to support desired growth targets. Given the aspiration to create a new town centre it is essential that much of the development needs of the Borough are focused on this area in order to contribute to the effective delivery and improvement of the town centre infrastructure.

8.3.8 Where infrastructure deficiencies exist, such as the potential requirement for a new primary school within Burscough to support development growth targets, the Council is committed to achieving a consistent and co-ordinated approach to providing new or improved infrastructure through partnership working. The work with partners will involve other delivery bodies, authorities, developers and other agencies and will be documented in the IDP. West Lancashire Borough Council will use its role to support and facilitate infrastructure provision by taking actions such as pro-active involvement in the development management process and the establishment of an Infrastructure Delivery Group within the Local Strategic Partnership to ensure the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is at the heart of all infrastructure improvements

8.3.9 Given the most pressing infrastructure issue for the Borough is the waste water capacity constraint affecting most of Ormskirk and Burscough settlements and the outlying villages such as Rufford and parts of Scarisbrick, continued liaison with United Utilities is vital. The Council is part of a trial programme with United Utilities which is aimed at improving communication between the stakeholder and Local Planning Authorities. The Council is committed to securing a solution to this issue and has the full support of United Utilities.

What You Said

8.3.10 During the Core Strategy Options Paper Consultation many respondents felt that Skelmersdale offered the greatest opportunity to enable development as it is supported by good infrastructure and would relieve pressure on Green Belt release and the strained infrastructure capacities of other settlements such as Burscough. In addition it was frequently noted that proposals for any moderate development (up to 1000 dwellings) in Burscough or Ormskirk would be of too great a scale and would exacerbate existing infrastructure problems.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.3.11 *Alternative Option 1:* A reactive approach to infrastructure delivery which relies upon a case-by-case assessment of development to secure infrastructure improvements was considered inappropriate.

8.3.12 *Reason for rejection:* This approach is symptomatic of the way infrastructure has been managed historically and lacks the strategic overview which would ensure gaps do not appear in the infrastructure fabric of the Borough.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents

8.3.13 Infrastructure delivery sits within many national planning policies and is a direct requirement within PPS12. The following national planning policy is most relevant to Policy CS12:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk

8.4 Policy Area CS14: Developer Contributions

Context

8.4.1 In the first instance development will be directed towards areas with established infrastructure capacity in line with the settlement hierarchy identified in Policy CS1 in order to support the creation of sustainable communities. However, in order to deliver the Core Strategy and achieve wider sustainability benefits, it will be necessary to direct development to locations where existing infrastructure will need to be upgraded to meet the needs of new development.

8.4.2 Co-ordination and funding of the delivery of new infrastructure and improvement of existing infrastructure is necessary to ensure that development does not place an unacceptable strain upon existing infrastructure. This will be achieved through the development and regular monitoring of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will sit alongside the Core Strategy. The IDP identifies what infrastructure will be required and when it should be delivered. Where it is possible costs and funding for delivery of the infrastructure is identified along with the lead authority in delivering the requirements.

Policy CS14

Developer Contributions

New development will be expected to contribute to mitigating its impact on infrastructure, services and the environment and to contribute to the requirements of the community.

This may be secured as a planning obligation through a Section 106 agreement or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which will be set out within a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The types of contributions that developments may be required to provide include but are not limited to:

- Utilities and Waste (where the provision does not fall within the utility providers legislative obligations);

- Flood prevention and sustainable drainage measures;
- Transport (highway, rail, bus and cycle / footpath network and any associated facilities);
- Community Infrastructure (such as health, education, libraries);
- Green Infrastructure (such as outdoor sports facilities, open space, parks, allotments, play areas);
- Climate change and energy initiatives;
- Affordable housing; and
- Skelmersdale Town Centre Regeneration.

Exceptionally, where provision on-site is not appropriate, the Council will seek the delivery of equivalent community benefits off-site, or a financial contribution in lieu. Equally, where appropriate, the Council will permit developers to provide the necessary infrastructure themselves as part of their development proposals, rather than making financial contributions.

The Council may consider a reduction in the developer contributions required for developments within the Skelmersdale Town Centre Strategic Development Site due to the recognised viability constraints with that key regeneration project.

Justification

8.4.3 All development, regardless of size, places additional demands on services and facilities, impacting on their ability to meet the needs of the community. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which will be set out within a future SPD, will create a system which would pass the cost of infrastructure improvements equally onto all development dependent upon size. This would allow the Council greater autonomy over expenditure to ensure strategic infrastructure aims are met along with localised issues.

8.4.4 When requiring contributions to support infrastructure and sustainable development, it is recognised that in order to deliver the vital infrastructure or improvements to meet specific local need, whilst ensuring a viable development is delivered, the priority of contributions will vary between locations. Details of this will be set out within any forthcoming SPD.

8.4.5 CIL was introduced in the Planning Act 2008 (Part 11) and, from 6th April 2010, regulations were passed that enable local planning authorities to apply CIL on new developments in their areas. The recent Localism Bill has confirmed the role of CIL in securing developer contributions moving forward and so the Council will be exploring the implementation of CIL further. It is considered that having a simplified tariff or levy system increases the efficiency and transparency of planning contributions and removes the uncertain or piecemeal way planning obligations seek to secure infrastructure improvements.

8.4.6 In the interim, Policy CS14 seeks to ensure that no further pressure should be placed on existing infrastructure and infrastructure required to support new development should be delivered in tandem with development schemes. Whilst some of the cost of such infrastructure will be borne by the public and third sectors, equally some of it must be delivered by the developer. Planning obligations when applied in accordance with the guidance in Circular 05/2005 are a key delivery tool in providing the opportunity to overcome any such short falls in infrastructure provision and minimise any additional stress development places upon the infrastructure network. They also provide the opportunity to enhance the quality of proposals on the surrounding environment.

8.4.7 Policy CS14 is the delivery mechanism required to deliver the necessary contributions to support Policies CS8: Affordable and Specialist Housing, CS12: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice, CS13: Accessibility and Provision of Local Services and Infrastructure, CS16: Preserving and Enhancing Green Infrastructure and CS15: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure.

What You Said

8.4.8 Feedback from the previous round of consultation on the Core Strategy Options Paper suggested that the preferred method of obtaining developer contributions was not the primary concern. The main issue was that the approach to infrastructure was addressed and the delivery of any necessary infrastructure was secured.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.4.9 *Alternative Option 1:* Implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) ahead of the completion of the comprehensive national planning guidance.

8.4.10 *Reason for rejection:* The implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy is not the preferred option at this stage of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process. This is predominantly due to the requirement of a robust charging schedule which would benefit from a more strategic sub-regional approach to avoid creating competitive markets and deterring development in certain areas.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents

8.4.11 The function of planning obligations is embedded within many national planning policies, but, in particular, the following Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are most relevant in relation to financial contributions:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk
- ODPM Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations

8.4.12 There is currently also a West Lancashire SPD entitled Open Space and Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD, which addresses developer contributions towards Public Open Space.

Chapter 9 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change

9.1 Policy Area CS15: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure

Context

9.1.1 The planning system has a key role to play in delivering targets for low and zero carbon development in the UK as part of working towards energy security and mitigating the causes of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

9.1.2 In order to mitigate the impacts of climate change, compliance with the energy hierarchy is essential and as such the climate change agenda cuts across several of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Policy Areas:

- **Be lean:** or reduce in terms of using less energy through good design incorporating solutions such as natural lighting and ventilation and passive heating and cooling;
- **Be clean:** or reuse in terms of supplying energy efficiently through improved insulation or by sourcing energy through a decentralised network such as community energy network or a combined heat and power network; and
- **Be green:** or recycle in order to reduce CO2 emissions by using renewable energy techniques.

Policy CS15

Renewable Energy Development

Low Carbon Development

The Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 will be required as a minimum standard for new residential development and conversions, rising to Level 4 in 2013 and to Level 6 in 2016.

New commercial buildings of more than 1000m² will be expected to meet as a minimum standard, the BREEAM 'very good' standard, rising to 'excellent' standard by 2013 and to achieve carbon savings in line with Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 by 2019.

The above standards are in line with the implementation of the revisions to Part L of the contemporary Building Regulations and are a minimum only. Development will be expected to seek to improve CO2 emissions savings above the Building Regulations baseline and set out how improvements are achieved within an Energy Statement as part of the planning application.

Developments not achieving improvements over the baseline energy standards will not be supported unless applicants can demonstrate that it is not feasible or viable to do so.

These standards will apply until a higher national or locally-determined standard is required. Guidance on such standards will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

District Heating and Decentralised Energy Networks

The Council will encourage all major⁽¹⁷⁾ developments to explore the potential for a District Heating Network⁽¹⁸⁾ Or Decentralised Energy Network and will set out details regarding implementation within a Supplementary Planning Document.

Developer Contributions

Where it is not considered to be viable or feasible to either connect to an existing or scheduled District Heating or Decentralised Energy Network or to meet or exceed baseline energy targets in line with the latest Code For Sustainable Homes and BREEAM requirements, applicants may be required to make a financial contribution towards the Council's Community Energy Fund which will be used to contribute to wider low carbon initiatives and tackle fuel poverty.

All Other Energy Infrastructure

Proposals for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes will be supported provided they do not result in unacceptable harm to the local environment which cannot be successfully mitigated. Renewable energy development proposals within the Green Belt will need to demonstrate that the harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by the wider benefits of the development.

Justification

9.1.3 Policy CS15 has been set out to ensure that, through effective Development Management, the Council has the ability to influence the quality of development proposals to promote energy efficiency and sustainable sources of energy supply. The policy also sets out a supportive framework for delivering low and zero carbon energy infrastructure to demonstrate to investors the Council's commitment in delivering energy security and climate change initiatives.

9.1.4 Progress towards 'zero carbon' development will be made through progressive tightening of the Building Regulations. Over time these changes will replace the energy related elements of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) standards and the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREAAM) standards for non domestic buildings. As the Building Regulations change, developers will be dependant on having access to decentralised energy networks to achieve low and zero carbon targets. This will be particularly the case after 2013 when carbon reductions targets for housing development will be a 44% improvement over 2006 standards. It is understood that the Building Regulations are likely to be the preferred mechanism for delivering carbon savings in new development, however, planning has a vital role to play in supporting this.

17 Major development means a proposal for 10 dwellings or more, a commercial building of 1000m² or a site of 1 hectare or more.

18 District heating is a system for distributing heat generated in a centralised location for residential and commercial heating requirements such as space heating and water heating using heat from either a variety of sources including waste heat from industry, fossil fuel, biomass or low carbon fuel sources.

9.1.5 Where it is considered by the developer that it is not viable or feasible to exceed baseline carbon reduction targets or connect to a DH network, this should be raised with the planning authority in advance of submitting a planning application as part of pre-application discussions and then explained in full as part of the application with reference to the factors set out in the supporting text for this policy. No improvement over the baseline target may be acceptable where evidence clearly demonstrates barriers to a higher target.

9.1.6 In order to bring together the planning application and building regulations processes better, the developer should provide the following information to the planning authority in advance of submitting a planning application (i.e. during pre-application discussions):

- Low energy targets for the development;
- Energy options and costs considered;
- Funding sources considered (including the Council Community Energy Fund);
- Total site area (m²);
- Combined building footprint area (m²);
- Related total building floor area(s) (m²);
- Number and type of residential properties; and
- Schedule of non-residential floor areas by type (e.g. commercial or industrial).

9.1.7 This is so that the Council's Building Control team can highlight where any improvements to designs can be made to reduce the development's carbon footprint before planning permission is sought. The applicant can then consider whether this changes the plans for the development and discuss this with the Council's planners prior to submitting their application.

9.1.8 The Green Belt is in place to, amongst other things, safeguard the countryside from encroachment of development and to prevent urban sprawl. PPS22 for Renewable Energy recognises the potential for wind turbines to have an impact on the Green Belt and landscape but requires that local authorities recognise that the impact on the landscape will vary according to the size and number of turbines and the type of landscape involved.

9.1.9 Whilst Green Belt can be considered as a constraining factor for wind energy development, requiring special circumstances to be demonstrated before a wind energy proposal could be deemed acceptable, PPS22 suggests such special circumstances could include the wider environmental benefits associated with the production of renewable energy. Therefore, the Green Belt designation is a consideration but does not entirely rule out renewable energy generation.

9.1.10 A study was undertaken to assess the capacity of different areas of the Borough, and the wider Liverpool City Region, to accommodate different renewable energy solutions. The study also produced a series of locally-determined targets for renewable energy production within each Local Authority area based on the identified capacity.

9.1.11 Table 9.1 shows the targets for West Lancashire to 2020. They have been produced as a result of analysis based on constraints mapping, resource availability and in the case of Combined Heat and Power (CHP), taking into account the likely energy requirements of the Borough in line with the projected housing and employment land targets. Given the National agenda in relation to reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change, the Council has a responsibility to work towards established targets in order to monitor progress.

Table 9.1 Indicative Renewable Energy Generation ⁽¹⁾

Indicative Renewable Energy Generation Size/Type	2010 (MW)	2015 (MW)	2020 (MW)
Onshore Wind Farms (Single, large and small stand along turbines)	22.64	27.44	27.44
Building Integrated Wind	-0.03	0.09	0.24
Biomass CHP	0.63	0.98	1.33
Anaerobic digestion (AD)	0.22	0.66	1.1
Photo Voltaic (PV)	0.02	0.71	1.43

1. The targets include existing installed capacity at July 2009

9.1.12 For reference, the total required target for wind energy of 27.44MW to 2020, could be met through the installation of 5 or 6 large scale 5MW turbines of approximately 124m in height, 11 slightly smaller (albeit still large scale) 2.5MW turbines of approximately 80m in height (equivalent to those along the Port of Liverpool docks), or any other permutation including turbines measuring 15-50m generating up to 800kw. As technology advances the generating capacity of the turbines improves and is likely to require fewer installations in order to deliver the same output.

9.1.13 Given the relatively high wind targets set for the Borough, the Council is seeking to create a proactive and supportive environment which will complement rising building regulation requirements and ensure delivery of this target in appropriate locations, without compromising the environmental quality of the Borough. The Renewable Energy Capacity Study identified two areas of search for large commercial scale grid connected energy, based on resource potential (in relation to wind), and constraints. However, as technology progresses it is considered that the methodology used to identify these areas has already become dated. Therefore, other areas could be equally as viable for large scale wind energy development and so, at this stage, the Council will not be identifying any specific areas for large scale wind energy development.

9.1.14 Setting explicit targets and standards relating to renewable energy delivery within individual developments has many limitations. Therefore, the policy will apply the most up-to-date regional or national targets as a minimum whilst outlining a strict requirement for an improvement, unless it can be demonstrated that to do so would render the development unviable. This will ensure flexibility throughout the lifetime of the Core Strategy. This is in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 1 and its supplement which propose the adoption of sustainable building standards as a simple and effective step towards realising sustainability targets.

9.1.15 The Council also acknowledges the limitations that the existing evidence base offers with reference to understanding the financial viability of renewable energy development within the Borough. Therefore, in order to optimise opportunities for joining up development proposals

and to measure the relative success of energy policy and the commitment to preparing for a low carbon future, the planning authority will monitor all energy projects developed or consented.

What You Said

9.1.16 The provision of renewable energy should be located generally across the Borough rather than being allocated on particular sites. However, some sites or areas identified as appropriate for specific uses, such as wind power, should be allocated provided that it does not outweigh others concerns such as flood risk and biodiversity. The majority of respondents felt that developers should be required to meet a percentage of the energy requirement of new developments from renewable sources and this requirement should be set according to each development so that a development remains viable. It was also recommended that policies should encourage community ownership and/or engagement with schemes and that all approaches should be addressed through other DPDs and SPDs rather than through the Core Strategy.

Other Alternatives Considered:

9.1.17 *Alternative Option 1:* At the Core Strategy Options Stage, the Council considered implementation of a requirement upon developers to meet a percentage of their energy consumption through renewable or low carbon sources.

9.1.18 *Reason for rejection:* This approach lacked a strategic overview to energy supply in the Borough and could result in unviable and piecemeal energy schemes coming forward. Furthermore, building regulations now cover much of this requirement in the need for energy efficiency within development and as such this option was ruled out.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and supporting documents:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1
- PPS: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate (DRAFT)
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS22: Renewable Energy
- PPG2: Green Belts

9.2 Policy Area CS16: Preserving and Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Context

9.2.1 Green Infrastructure is a term used to summarise the variety of functions of open spaces around us including parks, sports facilities, play areas, natural and semi natural open spaces, footpaths or green corridors and allotments and waterways. Good quality green infrastructure can help improve where people live and work, mitigate and adapt to climate change and provide alternative modes of transport. Therefore, both green infrastructure and biodiversity have key roles to play in delivering healthy sustainable communities and are as important as other more traditional forms of infrastructure such as roads or the provision of sanitation.

9.2.2 West Lancashire is predominantly a rural authority with an array of green space and natural assets. The Borough contains some of the best agricultural land in the country and has many sites of biodiversity importance, some of which are designated as important international and national habitats for protected species and plant life.

9.2.3 Whilst the Borough does appear to have an abundance of open green space as a result of the rural setting, the main issues relate to deficiencies in certain types of open space and sports facilities and poor access to open space for local communities. In addition, problems relating to oversupply of poor quality green spaces in areas such as Skelmersdale have led to poor maintenance routines and under utilisation.

9.2.4 To ensure that the future expansion of the Borough goes hand in hand with the provision of green infrastructure the Council intends to produce an Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy to ensure future development makes provision for the right type of green infrastructure and open space in the correct locations.

9.2.5 This policy also seeks to provide an effective planning framework to protect and enhance the Borough's rich biodiversity and ensure that the existing green infrastructure is managed to provide for current and future needs.

Policy CS16

Preserving and enhancing green infrastructure and biodiversity

Biodiversity

The Council will:

- Protect and safeguard all sites of international, national, county and local level importance including all Ramsar, Special Protection Areas, national nature reserves, sites special scientific interest, regionally geologically important sites, biological heritage and nature conservation sites;
- Support the development of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park with the vision that by 2020 the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park will become an internationally recognised area; and
- Provide and support a network of strategic green links between the rural areas, river corridors and green spaces to provide a network of green corridors that will provide habitats to support biodiversity and prevent fragmentation of the natural environment.

Green Infrastructure

The Council will provide a Green Infrastructure and Open Space strategy to ensure development will:

- provide a network of open space, sports facilities and recreational opportunities that meet current and future local community needs, facilitating active lifestyles by providing leisure spaces within walking distance of people's homes, schools and work;

Chapter 9 Core Strategy Preferred Options: Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change

- protect and enhance the existing network of green links, open spaces and sports facilities, and secure additional areas where deficiencies are identified - this will be achieved through contributions to open space as outlined within Policy CS14 Developer Contributions;
- provide open space and sports facilities in line with an appraisal of local context and community need with particular regard to the impact of site development on biodiversity; and
- the Council will seek to deliver recreational opportunities including the proposed linear parks between Ormskirk-Skelmersdale, along the River Douglas at Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and the former railway line in Banks.

Justification

9.2.6 Policy CS16 seeks to effectively protect all parks, natural assets, sports facilities and open space and to manage the existing provision in the most effective way by providing improved facilities and access where they are most needed. The proposed approach also seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and all sites of international, national and regional importance in line with PPS9.

9.2.7 It is essential that the Core Strategy contains a policy placing a requirement upon development to provide appropriate levels of green infrastructure and open space such as parks and sports and play facilities, and that any new development does not harm the Borough's existing provision. Using the results of the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study the Council will produce a Green Infrastructure and Open Space strategy which will help direct improvements to the correct place in order to strengthen the existing network.

9.2.8 It is vital that the right infrastructure is in place to support future growth in the Borough, and this includes green infrastructure. There is a growing and compelling body of evidence substantiating the potential for green infrastructure and open space to contribute to the economic, social and environmental well being of individuals and society. It can help facilitate high quality accessible landscapes, and bring the natural world into every neighbourhood, providing benefits for individuals and community health and wellbeing.

9.2.9 In addition, access to sports and recreational facilities are key to improving health and well being, along with creating social and economic benefits. Therefore, both Policy CS16 and any future Green Infrastructure and Open Space Strategy will focus on the protection of and improvement of access to existing sports and recreational facilities along with the provision of new facilities in areas of identified deficit.

9.2.10 It is also widely acknowledged that green infrastructure and open space has a major role to play in mitigating against and adapting to climate change, for example, urban cooling, encouraging sustainable travel choices and flood alleviation. Through the provision of green corridors the policy can help to overcome habitat fragmentation and increase the ability of the natural environment to adapt to climate change by increasing ecological connectivity. In mitigating the impacts in coastal areas such as the northern parishes of the Borough, a network of green spaces could reduce the risk of flooding by allowing water to permeate through the ground, acting as flood storage areas. In addition, trees and shrubbery can contribute to urban cooling.

What You Said

9.2.11 During the Options consultation views were expressed that the Preferred Option should contribute positively to Green Infrastructure and that Green Infrastructure should be used to mitigate against the effects of climate change. There was also concern that development would take place on green spaces within Skelmersdale, which is seen by some as a defining characteristic of the town.

Other Alternatives Considered

9.2.12 *Alternative Option 1:* Do not provide additional open space and green infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the Borough.

9.2.13 *Reason for rejection:* The Council's evidence base has already highlighted that in some areas there is already a lack of provision for certain facilities such as formal parks in Skelmersdale. Through not meeting the required provision the Council would be failing in its duties to meet the local needs and aspirations of the community as outlined in PPG17.

9.2.14 *Alternative Option 2:* Ensure that additional open space is provided to provide beyond the expected requirements of the Borough.

9.2.15 *Reason for rejection:* This approach would see the Council seeking to provide additional open space and green infrastructure provision above the expected demand. Although this approach would be forward thinking and would provide for the future demands of the Borough, the approach would be unsustainable as the Council cannot ask developers to contribute more than the expected level of demand.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents

- Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)
- The planning and climate change supplement to PPS1 (2007)
- Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) Creating Strong Safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning
- Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7): Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005)
- Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Planning for Open Space, Sports and Recreation: (2002)
- Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25): Planning for Flood Risk
- Green Spaces Strategies: a good practice guide, CABI Space (2005)
- How to create quality parks and open space, ODPM (2005)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan
- West Lancashire Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study (October 2009)
- West Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (October 2009)
- West Lancashire Natural Environment Action Plan
- Tarleton-Hesketh Bank Linear Park Study
- Lancashire Local Transport Plan
- Lancashire Landscape & Heritage SPD

- West Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment
- West Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

9.3 Policy Area CS17: Enhancing West Lancashire's Distinctive Character and Ensuring Sustainable Design

Context

9.3.1 The aim of achieving good design is a key objective of the planning process and the Council is committed to ensuring all development in the Borough is of a high quality which contributes positively to its distinctive character. All development within the Borough is therefore expected to be of the highest design quality, having full regard to the local context within which it sits.

9.3.2 Development proposals should be based upon a proper understanding of the site and its setting and provide a clearly defined assessment of how it will enhance the character and appearance of an area. Specific consideration should always be given to the area's local distinctiveness, its landscape character, any identified historic assets and their settings and those areas sensitive to change.

9.3.3 Enhancing West Lancashire's distinctive character has three main aspects:

- Providing sustainable and high quality development;
- Preserving its cultural and heritage assets; and
- Protecting and creating landscape character.

Policy CS17

Enhancing West Lancashire's Distinctive Character and Ensuring Quality Design

Quality Design

All development will be expected to:

- Provide inspiring and imaginative high quality design;
- create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime;
- respond positively to their setting and to the local distinctiveness of the area in relation to the scale of development, its layout and street pattern, building styles and design, materials and landscaping to ensure that it contributes to creating a 'sense of place';
- ensuring developments are fully integrated with existing streets and paths and that they are safe for pedestrian, vehicles and cycle users;
- create attractive public spaces to promote healthy and inclusive communities, making use of well designed open space, landscaping and public art, where appropriate; and
- minimise the risk from all forms of pollution and contamination.

Cultural and Heritage Assets

The historic environment is central to our cultural heritage and contributes greatly to our sense of local and community identity. It has an aesthetic value and promotes local distinctiveness and helps define our *sense of place*. Importantly by sustaining and enhancing our heritage it can benefit the regeneration of our communities, particularly through leisure, tourism and economic development. All development will be expected to:

- sustain, and where possible, enhance the Borough's heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance, particularly those which are designated (Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Conservation Areas, listed buildings and archaeological remains);
- reflect the importance of the special architectural, archaeological, historic and artistic interest of any heritage asset and/or its setting;
- respond accordingly to the significance of the heritage asset in terms of its design and in particular its scale, height, form, layout and materials used; and
- sustain and enhance buildings which contribute positively to the local character and distinctiveness of the area - particular attention should be given to retaining their significance and/or their setting.

Landscape Character

New development will be required to take advantage of its landscape setting and historic landscapes by having regard to the different landscape character types across the Borough. Development likely to affect landscapes or their key features will only be permitted where there is no unacceptable adverse impact on them. The level of protection afforded will depend on the quality, importance and uniqueness of the landscape in question.

The active use of the Borough's landscapes through leisure and tourism will be promoted where this is compatible with objectives relating to their protection. Proactive management of the Borough's landscape, for the benefit of carbon retention, biodiversity and flood prevention will also be supported.

Justification

9.3.4 The preferred policy option establishes the fundamental need for high quality design for all development in the Borough, reflecting the fact that West Lancashire is an attractive place to live, work and visit. Development should reflect and draw on the local distinctiveness of the area whilst being able to adapt to the changing climate and social and economic conditions.

9.3.5 Developing an understanding of the characteristics of an area and the context should always form part of the work undertaken before drawing up a development proposal. A design led approach will ensure that every proposal, whatever its scale, responds positively to the particular characteristics of a site and its surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness and landscape character.

9.3.6 Development proposals should be accompanied by Design and Access statements and proposals should also have a good understanding of national guidance and principles. Documents and standards to consider will include English Heritage, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Homes and Community Agency (HCA) and the 'Building for Life' standard.

9.3.7 Proposals should also have regard to the Councils Design Guide SPD (January 2008) along with other locally derived documents including the Landscape Character Assessment set out in The Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (1996, updated 2007). Although the latter SPG was originally produced in 1996, then updated in 2007, the content of the document is still relevant today and is likely to be relevant for some time. This is evidenced by the consistency the document has with emerging regional work produced by Natural England and the existing Lancashire County Council Landscape and Heritage SPG.

9.3.8 Good design is also a key element in sustainable development. In seeking to achieve Spatial Objective 7 of the Core Strategy, Policy CS17 will ensure that development in the Borough enhances and protects its local distinctiveness and visual quality, and raises the quality of life for residents and visitors.

9.3.9 West Lancashire has numerous and extensive historic and natural assets. They make a significant contribution to the identity of the Borough and to the quality of life of its residents and visitors. The range of assets includes both statutory designations and sites and areas of regional and local importance. A total of 28 conservation areas and many fine Grade 1 and 2 listed buildings and churches are located within the Borough. Policy CS17 addresses the need to recognise that these assets require protection and enhancement where possible.

What You Said

9.3.10 It was felt that there is insufficient focus on landscape heritage assets and landscape character and that expansion within the Core Strategy should take account of and embrace the dynamics of the natural and built environment and biodiversity and cater for climate change adaptation.

Other Alternatives Considered:

9.3.11 *Alternative Option 1:* Consideration was given to relying solely on national guidance for the protection, conservation and management of the Borough's historic and natural assets and environment.

9.3.12 *Reason for rejection:* This policy approach was subsequently ruled out as this would fail to take into account important local circumstances, locally designated sites and features and would be unlikely to enhance the value of West Lancashire's historic and natural environment.

Relevant National and Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS: Planning and Climate Change – Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1
- PPS: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate (DRAFT)

- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning
- PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment
- Supplementary Planning Document: Design Guide (January 2008)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance (1996, updated 2007)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape and Heritage (July 2006)

Chapter 10 Delivery and Risk in the Core Strategy - a "Plan B"

10.1 Maintaining Flexibility in the Core Strategy

10.1.1 Appendix E sets out the key issues in relation to delivery and risk for each individual policy area in response to the specific concerns that surround each Policy Area. For Policy Areas CS1, CS4 and CS7, these delivery issues often revolve around a similar concern – what if a key site or location for development cannot be delivered? Ultimately, this leaves the outcome of the locally-determined targets for residential and / or employment development not being met, unless a viable alternative can be found. Therefore, while it is hoped that all aspects of the Core Strategy will be deliverable, and they have been selected because the Council believes that they are, it is prudent to have a "Plan B" prepared.

10.1.2 An additional consideration is the fact that the Core Strategy covers a long period (15 years) and, in relation to the locally-determined targets, it is not unreasonable to expect some change in the evidence for those targets over the 15 years, potentially resulting in new targets. Therefore, the Core Strategy should be flexible enough to address these changes, as well as any other reasonable change in circumstance, without a wholesale review of the Core Strategy.

10.1.3 The Council believe that the locally-determined targets that have been proposed in this Preferred Options document are fair and reasonable in light of all the available evidence at this time and it is anticipated that, if there is any change, new evidence over the Core Strategy period will actually point to the need for slightly lower targets for housing and employment, especially given the environmental and infrastructure constraints that the Borough faces. However, it is possible that targets for housing and employment will rise, meaning that new locations for development would need to be identified, and so in this situation the "Plan B" would also provide the flexibility required to accommodate this rise.

10.1.4 In essence, the Council's Plan B for the Core Strategy, should it be required in the future, is to allow development in line with whichever option for Green Belt release is not selected as the preferred one following this consultation, in addition to the preferred option for Green Belt release, i.e. if the Burscough Strategic Development Site is selected as the preferred option, the Plan B would be to bring forward additional land for housing at the Burscough Strategic Site, to the north of Ormskirk and in Banks, and visa versa.

10.1.5 Policy CS1 provides the Council with the ability to enact the Plan B should it become apparent through monitoring that the Core Strategy's development targets are not going to be met. An example of a scenario where this might be required could involve a situation where it becomes apparent that the housing target for Skelmersdale for the Core Strategy period is not going to be achieved, resulting in an overall under-supply of housing in Skelmersdale and the Borough. In this situation, the Plan B can be brought forward for development in order to make up for the deficit in Skelmersdale. The same scenario might also apply if a specific site or location cannot come forward for development as planned for in the LDF because of some previously unforeseen constraint.

10.1.6 Similarly, if targets for housing or employment rise, then Plan B can come into effect to enable the increased targets to be delivered within the Core Strategy period.

Chapter 11 Next Steps in the Local Development Framework

11.1 What Happens Next?

11.1.1 Following the public consultation on this Core Strategy Preferred Options paper, the Council will take stock of all the comments received and amend and refine the Core Strategy as deemed appropriate in light of all available evidence and the views of the public and stakeholders.

11.1.2 This will involve selecting a single preferred option for that development which cannot be accommodated within the existing built-up area of the Borough's settlements (i.e. the "strategic development" on Green Belt land) and identifying another "strategic development option" as the "Plan B" for the Core Strategy and refining other policy areas where comments from the public and stakeholders have raised issues that the policy areas should address, where appropriate.

11.1.3 Following this refinement of the Core Strategy, it is hoped that a Publication version of the Core Strategy (essentially a "final draft" version) will be published for a further round of public consultation towards the end of 2011. The Publication Core Strategy, together with any comments and representations received regarding the Core Strategy, will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for an Examination in Public (EiP). This will be conducted by a Planning Inspector, hopefully during the course of 2012, with a view to determining whether the Core Strategy has been prepared correctly according to legal procedures and whether the document can be considered "sound", and so be adopted by the Council as planning policy.

11.1.4 Alongside the Core Strategy, the Council will also be preparing two further Development Plan Documents (DPDs) to sit within the Local Development Framework (LDF) - a Development Management Policies DPD and a Site Allocations DPD - which are required to go through a similar preparation process as the Core Strategy.

11.1.5 It is hoped that the Council will be preparing the Development Management Policies DPD while still preparing the Core Strategy, with the intention that it will be ready for adoption shortly after the Core Strategy. The Site Allocations DPD will only be prepared following the adoption of the Core Strategy, as it must take direction from the strategic planning policies in the Core Strategy as to where, broadly, sites need to be allocated.

11.2 Responding to this Document

11.2.1 It is vital that the Council gain feedback to this document, both positive and negative, from the West Lancashire public and from stakeholders in order to help us prepare the best possible Core Strategy for West Lancashire.

11.2.2 To that end, between the 12th May and 24th June 2011 there will be various opportunities for people to make known their views to the Council. Opportunities will be well publicised through press releases and press notices in the local Advertiser and Champion newspapers and a Borough-wide leaflet drop to every household as well as appearing on our website and Facebook page. We will also ensure that information is distributed and

available at local libraries. Those people on our consultation database will also receive notification by letter or email. If you wish to join the consultation database please email ldf@westlancs.gov.uk.

11.2.3 People can comment as follows:

Written Representations

11.2.4 People are invited to submit their comments online through our website, by email and by post.

Forums

11.2.5 We will be travelling around the Borough with a series of roadshows, forums and exhibitions where you are invited to come and find out more information, ask questions and give us your views. Businesses will also be able to attend our breakfast business clubs.

Glossary

Glossary

4NW: A partnership working to promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of the North West of England. It is an inclusive organisation, with representation from Local Government, business organisations, public sector agencies, education and training bodies, trade unions and co-operatives together with the voluntary and community sector.

Affordable Housing: Low-cost and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): An annual publication that assesses the Council's progress in preparing LDF documents and the success of its planning policies in achieving their aims.

Biodiversity: The whole variety of life, including genetic, species and eco-system variations.

Brownfield Land: See 'Previously Developed land'.

Climate Change: This is a change in the average weather experienced over a long period, including temperature, wind and rainfall patterns. There is strong scientific consensus that human activity is changing the world's climate and that man-made emissions are its main cause. In the UK, we are likely to see more extreme weather events, including hotter and drier summers, flooding and rising sea-levels increasing the risk of coastal erosion.

Community Involvement: When preparing the LDF, the local authority needs to involve the local community, businesses, landowners, and anyone else with an interest in the area. Ideally these "key stakeholders" should be involved from the start, and right through the LDF preparation process.

Core Strategy: The main Development Plan Document that sets out the long-term spatial vision for the Borough, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision, having regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

CLG (formerly DCLG): The Department of Communities and Local Government sets national policy for planning, as well as local government, housing, urban regeneration and fire and rescue. They have responsibility for all race and equality and community cohesion related issues in England and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales.

Derelict Land and Buildings: Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment. This includes abandoned and unoccupied buildings (including former single residential dwellings) in an advanced state of disrepair, and land damaged by development, but which has been, or is being, restored.

Development Plan Document (DPD): Local planning documents that have "development plan" status. The DPDs that local planning authorities must prepare include: the Core Strategy, Site Allocations, and where needed, Area Action Plans. All DPDs must be subject to rigorous

procedures of community involvement and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the Inspector's binding report. Once adopted, development management decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

ELPS: Employment Land and Premises Study (2009). This examines the availability of land in the Borough for employment use and forms part of the LDF Evidence Base. It will be used to inform the Core Strategy and Site Allocation documents.

Environment Agency (EA): Government agency set up with the aim of protecting or enhancing the environment, in order to play its part in achieving the objective of sustainable development.

Evidence Base: Qualitative and quantitative information gathered by the planning authority, or other organisations, to support preparation of LDF documents.

Government Office North West (GONW): Regional government office responsible for implementing national policy in the region and ensuring consistency of LPA policies and plans with national policies.

Green Belt: Areas of land where development is tightly controlled for the purposes of: restricting sprawl of large built-up areas; preventing neighbouring towns from merging; safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and preserving character and aiding urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Greenfield Land: Land which has not been previously developed, or which has now returned to its natural state.

Green Infrastructure: Network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces, including (but not limited to): hedges, outdoor sports facilities, coastal habitat, grassland and heathland, cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds, agricultural land, allotments, community gardens and urban farms, moorland, village greens, open spaces, degraded land, private gardens, wildlife habitats, parks, fields, open countryside, woodlands, street trees, ponds, lakes, waterways.

Housing Needs Assessment: A survey that estimates the number of households within an area that are in need of affordable housing and/or housing that meets their specific requirements.

Infrastructure: Roads, water supply, sewage disposal, schools and other community facilities needed to support housing, industrial and commercial uses.

Key Service Centre: Towns or villages which act as service centres for surrounding areas, providing a range of services including: retail, leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services. They should have good public transport links to surrounding areas, or the potential for their development and enhancement. RSS Policy RDF2 requires LDFs to identify Key Service Centres in their area.

Local Area Agreement (LAA): A three-year agreement that sets the priorities for a local area, agreed between local and central government. The agreement sets challenging targets for the local areas and how these will be delivered in partnership. The aim is to improve the quality of life for local people.

Local Development Framework (LDF): A term used to describe a folder of planning documents prepared by a Local Planning Authority under the new planning system, including:

- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) - such as the Core Strategy and Site Allocations;
- Supplementary Plan Documents (SPDs);
- Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
- Local Development Scheme (LDS);
- Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Local Development Scheme (LDS): A project plan detailing the timetable for the production of DPDs and SPDs.

Local Planning Authority (LPA): Normally the Borough Council, Metropolitan district or Unitary Authority, but occasionally the County Council with the responsibility of planning for that area.

Local Service Centre: Towns or villages which provide a more limited range of services to the local community.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): A group of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and individuals that are responsible for preparing the Sustainable Community Strategy. Such partners include: the Borough Council, the County Council, the Police, the Fire Service and the NHS.

Multiple Deprivation: The Government collects information to pinpoint pockets of deprivation, or to highlight variations within a wider geographical area. Information is collected on a range of topics to illustrate how deprived an area is, including: income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training; barriers to housing and services; crime; and living environment.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004: Introduced the concept of Local Development Frameworks, built upon the principles of: sustainable development, addressing climate change, spatial planning, high quality design, good accessibility and community involvement.

Planning Policy Statements/Guidance (PPS/PPG): Documents produced by CLG that set out national policies relating to different areas of planning.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) and Buildings: As defined in Annex C of PPS3: "previously developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure".

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): A plan for a region of England, forming part of the development plan for West Lancashire. The North West RSS was adopted in September 2008 and has a role in determining planning applications at a local level, as well as influencing

the development of the LDF being prepared by the Borough Council. It was produced by 4NW and supports, or is supported by, other regional strategies particularly the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy.

Renewable Energy: The generation of heat and power from sources that occurs naturally and repeatedly in the environment.

Safeguarded Land: Land on the edge of certain settlements in West Lancashire allocated under Policy DS3 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan to meet longer-term development needs if necessary. These sites are Greenfield, but not Green Belt.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): carried out in consultation with the Environment Agency (EA) to examine the risk of flooding in the Borough from sea and rivers. It includes information on flood risk areas, flood infrastructure, history of flooding in the Borough and expected future development pressures and their potential impact.

Site Allocations DPD: The designation of land for a particular use within the development plan.

SMART Objectives: The Government requires that objectives must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Spatial Planning: Under the former planning system, we were almost exclusively concerned with land use. Spatial planning is a wider concept that does not just take into account land use, but also considers other matters that could indirectly affect land use, or be affected by it, e.g. health and education, deprivation, crime and social inequality, climate change, flooding and the natural environment, transport and infrastructure, the rural economy and agriculture, cultural heritage and urban design. Put another way, spatial planning looks at places and how they function. The LDF system represents a new way of planning, or "place-shaping".

Specialist Needs Housing: Providing suitable accommodation for specific sections of the community, including: seasonal agricultural workers; the elderly or retired; and students.

SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest): Sites with statutory protection of national and international importance.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A document that sets out how the Council will involve the community and other stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of all DPDs, SPDs and on planning applications.

SHLAA: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009). This examines the availability of land in the Borough for residential use and forms part of the LDF Evidence Base. It will be used to inform the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): These cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific. They provide further detail on policies in a Development Plan Document or the RSS.

Sustainability Appraisal: Development Plan Documents are subject to a "Sustainability Appraisal", examining how the policies and proposals in the DPD would be likely to impact upon the economy, the environment, transport, and the community. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS): Document prepared by the West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership, the principles of which outline the needs and priorities of the community, and which also shapes the activities of the organisations within the partnership to fulfil those needs and priorities. The Core Strategy must accord with the SCS.

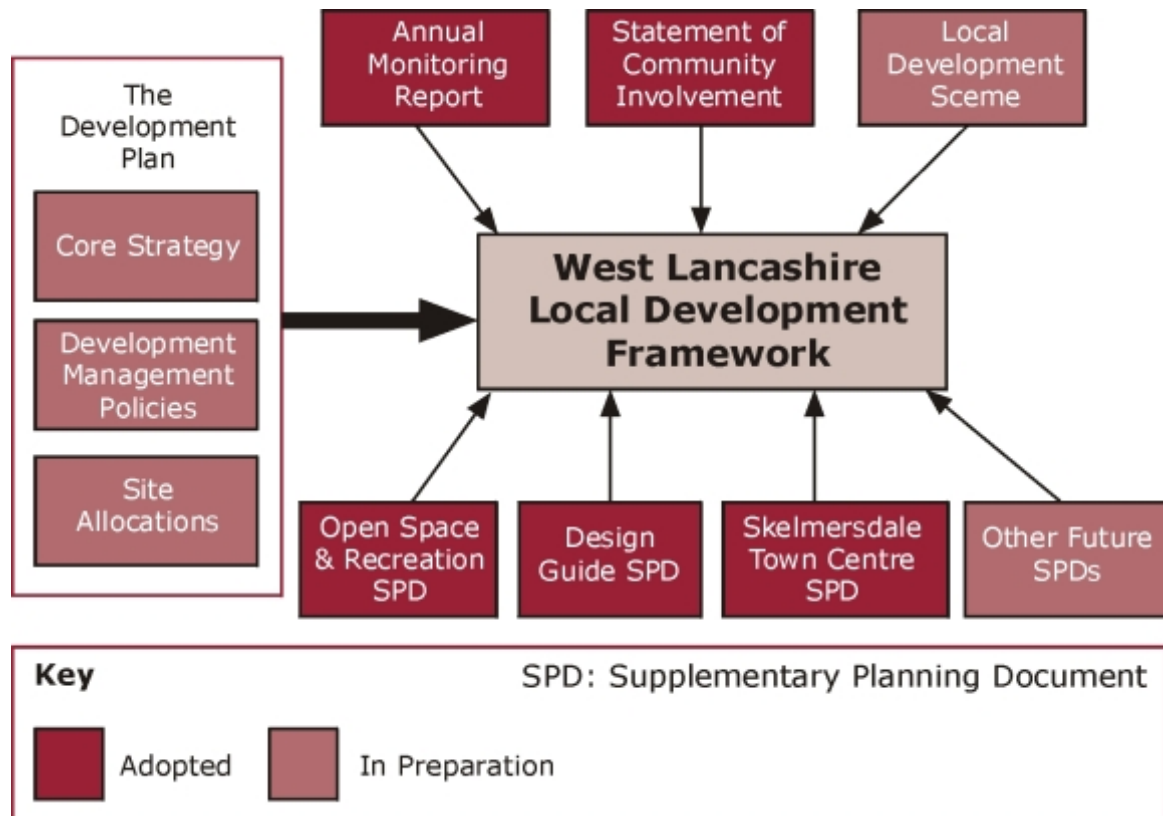
Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

WLRLP: West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan; The current development plan for West Lancashire prepared under the previous planning system and adopted in July 2006. This will be replaced once the Core Strategy is adopted.

Appendix A: LDF Preparation

The Local Development Framework Structure

As explained in the Introduction to this document, the West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF) is a collection of spatial planning documents which guide the development of the Borough. This is illustrated by West Lancashire's Local Development Framework Structure below.



The most important part of the West Lancashire LDF is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD). The Core Strategy forms the statutory development plan for West Lancashire and is the first DPD to be produced by the Council. It will contain a Vision and Strategy which set out how West Lancashire will develop over the period to 2027 and it will not only make sure that new homes, jobs and shops required by communities are located in the most sustainable locations, it will also deliver the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development to make this possible.

The Development Management Policies DPD will be prepared broadly alongside the Core Strategy and will also form part of the Development Plan. The Site Allocations DPD will also become part of the Development Plan and will allocate sites for specific uses within the Borough, such as for housing or employment. Preparation of this document will commence once the Core Strategy is at an advanced stage. A Proposals Map will illustrate all the spatial policies of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs on a base map of the Borough.

The Core Strategy, Development Management Policies and Site Allocations DPDs will also be supported by any other documents that the Council feels appropriate to expand upon the policies contained within these documents. Currently, these include the Supplementary

Appendix A: LDF Preparation

Planning Documents (SPDs) for the Skelmersdale Town Centre Masterplan, for the Design Guide and for the Open Space and Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments. Other SPDs may be prepared at a later date.

Other documents within the LDF include:

- the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which monitors the success of the policies within the LDF, the progress against relevant targets and indicators and the progress of preparation of LDF documents;
- the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how the public will be involved in the preparation of LDF documents; and
- the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out a project plan timetable for the preparation of LDF documents.

Results of Public and Community Consultation for the Core Strategy

The Council has sought to involve the local community from the earliest stage of LDF preparation, including key stakeholders, groups and individuals, in order to assist in defining the key issues facing West Lancashire and to consider how they can be addressed through the Core Strategy. The Council has involved the community directly in the preparation of the Core Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership Annual Conference, the Spatial Forums and the Issues Questionnaire. Full results from these three exercises can be viewed in Feedback Reports on the Council's [website](#), whilst a summary of the key issues is outlined in Summary of Key Issues Identified through Consultation.

Local Strategic Partnership Annual Conference (June 2008)

In June 2008, the Council held workshops for members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) at their Annual Conference at the West Lancashire Investment Centre, Skelmersdale, which was themed around the topic of "Regenerating the Community through Partnership Working". The LSP is a voluntary partnership and is represented by over 80 members in public, private and voluntary organisations. The aim of the event was to ensure that the LDF takes careful consideration of the themes, objectives, priorities and projects within the LSP's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-17 and also to ensure that the LDF can be delivered by key partners.

At the conference, a short presentation was given to explain the LDF and its importance to the LSP and the local community. LSP members were then allocated to one of six workshop groups to discuss issues specifically relating to that area, including three Borough-wide groups and individual groups for Skelmersdale, the Market Towns (Ormskirk and Burscough) and the remaining rural area of West Lancashire. During the workshops, the following four activities were conducted:

- SWOT analysis: to establish the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the area;
- Identification of key issues: to identify the most important issues of the area;

- Vision of the area in 15-20 years: to predict how the area might be in the future, by building upon the identified strengths and to tackle recognised issues;
- Settlement Hierarchy: to determine how much development settlements within the Borough should potentially receive, based upon the outcomes of earlier activities.

Spatial Forums (July 2008)

In July 2008, the Council held three "Spatial Forum" events held at key locations across the Borough in Tarleton (Northern Parishes), Skelmersdale (Skelmersdale and Eastern Parishes) and Ormskirk (Market Towns and Western Parishes). The events were well attended by around 250 people who represented a diverse mix of local residents, landowners, businesses, voluntary organisations, community action groups, developers and Councillors. The Spatial Forums were set up as an informal consultation exercise to test whether the issues raised at the LSP Annual Conference were broadly correct, and also to look at specific areas of the Borough in more detail. Similar to the LSP Annual Conference, a short presentation explaining the importance of the LDF was given, followed by a second presentation into a SWOT analysis of the area, aided by relevant maps and statistics in order to stimulate discussion. The workshops which followed were designed to gather people's views on:

- What are the most important issues for each area of the Borough;
- A 'Vision' - how we would like the Borough to be in the future; and
- How we might work towards achieving this Vision.

Issues Questionnaire (January-February 2009)

In January-February 2009, the Council conducted an "Issues Questionnaire" forming the first stage of written consultation for the LDF. Although the responses received at the LSP Annual Conference and Spatial Forums were valuable, it was recognised that those who put their views forward merely represented a small number of people with an interest in the future development of West Lancashire. Therefore the Issues Questionnaire was made available to open up consultation and provide a further opportunity for key stakeholders and the wider community to put forward their views. The main method of making comments was through the Council's online consultation portal, although paper copies were made available at deposit points across the Borough and distributed to those who required them.

Around 100 people responded to the questionnaire who were able to comment on the whole Borough or on a specific area of interest to them. The Issues Questionnaire presented similar questions asked at the Spatial Forums, and took them a step further by putting forward early options on spatial topics such as:

- Draft SWOT analyses and Vision statements;
- Future development needs and settlement expansion;
- Providing more land for housing, specialist accommodation and employment;

Appendix A: LDF Preparation

- Transport and accessibility;
- The environment, climate change, flood risk and recreation and tourism; and
- Rural issues.

Options Paper (September-November 2009)

In September-November 2009, the Council conducted a series of consultation exercises on the Options Paper. There were six 'Spatial Forum' events held at key locations across the Borough (Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Burscough, Banks, Scarisbrick and Parbold) which were well attended by residents, businesses, community groups, developers and Councillors. In addition, the Council also undertook written consultation for the LDF where people could submit comments by web portal, email or post.

Over 800 written representations were received from 188 respondents and over 250 people attended the Spatial Forums. Analysis of the comments made it clear the majority of people opposed Options 1 and 5 being taken forward as the Preferred Option. Option 1 would focus too much development in Skelmersdale to the detriment of all other areas of the Borough whilst Option 5 would focus too much development outside of the Borough and neglect the interest of West Lancashire.

The general consensus favoured a hybrid of Options 2, 3 and 4 focusing the majority of development in Skelmersdale, enabling regeneration, development in Ormskirk and Burscough to support the service functions of the settlements, enabling improvement to infrastructure and responding to the demand for housing and employment. Some development would also be allowed in rural areas.

Other representations highlighted the importance of improving infrastructure, providing affordable housing and specialised accommodation and developing renewable energy schemes. There was support received for the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre and the expansion of Edge Hill University.

Summary of Key Issues Identified through Consultation

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
West Lancashire Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links with neighbouring authorities and cross boundary partnership working • Regeneration of Skelmersdale • Transport links within the Borough; • Need to find the Borough's "Unique Selling Point"; • Quality of life; • Reduction in funding; • Enhancing the community; • Impact of the wider economic climate. • Lack of suitable housing for the ageing population; • Affordable housing required throughout the Borough, not just in areas of deprivation. • Importance of Green Infrastructure • Importance of tackling climate change • Need for Sustainable development • Green Belt boundaries constraining development and should be reviewed • Improving public transport • Protection of heritage assets • Reducing deprivation • Improving health and narrowing inequalities • Providing gypsy and traveller sites in the right locations
Skelmersdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport; • Image of the town; • Lack of town centre facilities. • Sufficient land available in the settlement areas to provide more homes; • Original New Town plan should be "finished off" by developing the land at Whalleys and in the town centre; • Support for the town centre Masterplan;

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre proposals would bring in more investment and have the potential to turn around the negative perceptions of the town. • Failure in the past to deliver schemes to improve the town; • Lack of a railway station; • Footpaths are difficult to follow, forcing people to walk along roadways; • Poor maintenance, landscaping and layout of open green spaces. • Attracting employment and provision of training
Ormskirk (and Aughton)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport links and congestion; • Affordable Housing; • Edge Hill University; • Protection of agricultural land; • Sewerage and surface water issues. • Mixed feeling over the expansion of the settlement area; • Limited land exists within the settlement to meet any significant demands for housing and employment; • Mix of views expressed over the future development and expansion of Edge Hill University. • Little interaction between Edge Hill University and the town, and other 'student issues'; • Shortage of adequate sites in town centre to attract further retail or other services; • Nearest adult accident and emergency Hospital is at Southport; • Town cramming and over development of the urban settlement; • Threat of Ormskirk Bypass not being built and increasing congestion.
Burscough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport links and congestion; • Affordable Housing; • Edge Hill University; • Protection of agricultural land; • Sewerage and surface water issues.

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownfield sites cannot accommodate much development and consequently there should be possible consideration of developing edge-of-settlement Green Belt sites; • Network Rail's proposed improvements to the local railway should be supported, particularly increased services and the reinstatement of the Burscough Curves; • Leeds-Liverpool Canal and Martin Mere are valuable environmental and recreational assets which should be protected and improved. • Burscough has witnessed quite a lot of recent development; • Reinstate Burscough Curves, to provide a connection between the Ormskirk-Preston and Southport-Manchester lines; • Maximise the potential of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal heritage.
Northern Parishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable rural housing; • Lack of investment in services and infrastructure; • Consultation at grass roots level. • Limitations of existing infrastructure; • Small-scale development for employment and affordable/ local housing could be allowed; • Stimulation of new employment opportunities would reduce reliance upon the agricultural and horticultural industries; • "Open Land on the Urban Fringe" could be considered for development, if it could bring significant regeneration benefits and would remove a state of dereliction; • Expansion into the Green Belt is not appropriate, given the high potential for flood risk in this area; • Support for a Ribble Estuary Regional Park and a Tarleton/ Hesketh Bank Linear Park. • Dereliction around settlements from the decline in horticultural industries; • Flood risk issues are an important consideration in the location of new development; • Traffic congestion in Tarleton and Hesketh Bank at peak times.
Eastern Parishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable rural housing; • Lack of investment in services and infrastructure;

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation at grass roots level. • Mix of views over potential expansion into the Green Belt. • Villages are surrounded by Green Belt which offers little scope to expand in order to accommodate its local population and businesses.
Western Parishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable rural housing; • Lack of investment in services and infrastructure; • Consultation at grass roots level. • Further development should be concentrated on infill sites, rather than the expansion into the Green Belt. • Erosion of village life through closure of services; • Restrictive settlement boundaries constrain development.

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Spatial & Strategic Objectives (Draft Indicators)

The suggested spatial and strategic objectives for West Lancashire's Core Strategy explain how the Vision can be achieved. These objectives also embrace the objectives set out within the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and some of the objectives link with the targets set out within the LAA. The Government requires that key objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound), and all the key objectives set out below have been developed to meet these measures.

Each of the spatial and strategic objectives presented in this report has a clear set of indicators assigned to it. Due to the close relationships between the objectives of the Core Strategy and those of the SCS and the LAA, a number of the indicators are shared which has the advantage of removing the need to collect additional data and providing a consistent data source. The indicators will be used to monitor and manage the success of the Core Strategy in delivering its aims. Policies that are not performing as intended can be flagged up and remedial action taken.

It should be noted that the indicators set out in this Appendix are provisional and targets are liable to change as a result of changing data and revisions to other documents and policies.

How will we monitor these objectives?

Under the current planning system, local planning authorities must submit an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Government each December. The AMR is a key component of the LDF and measures the success of policies against a series of national and local indicators. It aims to show whether policies are achieving their objectives and whether sustainable development is being delivered, whether policies have had their intended consequences, whether the assumptions and objectives behind policies are still relevant, and whether the targets in the LDF are being achieved.

To achieve this, the Annual Monitoring Report looks at a range of national (Core Output) and local indicators. Core Output Indicators were designed as part of the monitoring framework to collect data on national planning policies and sustainable development objectives. In addition to this, West Lancashire also collects data for local indicators, specific to the Borough.

It is proposed that the objectives of the Core Strategy will be monitored and reported through the AMR using the indicators presented in this report, following adoption of the final strategy. It should be noted that targets to the end of the Plan period can be difficult to determine and so, subsequently, targets may need to be revised as the plan period progresses.

Monitoring guidance recognises the need to update national and local indicators where necessary to reflect changes in policy and monitoring requirements. National and local targets may also be reviewed. Subsequently, indicators presented here are liable to amendment in the future.

Objective 1 – Stronger and Safer Communities

To have strong and vibrant communities, in which both young and old people are actively engaged and where people feel safe and secure.

More active voluntary and community sectors will lead to the development of a high degree of community participation and increased pride in neighbourhoods. Crime levels will reduce further, with an active Community Safety Partnership giving residents a greater sense of security.

Targets:

Table .1

<u>Target Description</u>	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08*	2008/09 ***	LCC LAA target 2010/11	WLBC Target by 2027
% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality to increase	WLBC	NI 4	-	-	32%	Pending	32%	38%
Participation in regular volunteering to increase	WLBC	NI 6	-	-	16%	Pending	18%	20%
Serious Acquisitive Crime Rate to reduce	WLBC / Lancs Constabulary	NI 16	-	-	1,135 offences	Pending	1,101 offences	950 **
% of people aged 65+ satisfied with home and neighbourhood	WLBC	NI138	-	-	Not provided	Pending	Not provided	-

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

* From LAA_Indicators (LCC). Figures derive from 2007 BVPI Survey results.

** LCC predict a deficit of 11 offences per year 2008/09 – 2010/11. Projecting this to 2027 gives a total of 925 offences in 2027.

*** Awaiting 2008/09 NI figures. Young/old issue target ???

Objective 2 – Education training and the economy

To create more, and better quality, training and job opportunities to get more people into work

A new Skelmersdale College and improved facilities at Edge Hill University will help provide a highly trained workforce; combined with improved results at secondary school level, particularly in Skelmersdale. Improved and new employment land will be found in the main urban areas, with small scale rural employment opportunities also encouraged through a diversified rural economy.

Targets:

Table .2

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	WLBC Target by 2027
Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C to increase	DCSF	-	(In 1997 figure stood at 42.2%)	-	61.9%	-	70%
Proportion of working age population in employment / unemployed	NOMIS / WLBC AMR	CX07	79.0%	75.5%	77.8%	-	80%
• Economically active			74.7%	72.7%	75.8%	-	75%
• Employed			5.3%	4.9%	4.4%	-	Less than 5%
• Unemployed							
Worklessness	NOMIS	-	2.7%	2.8%	2.5%	4%	Less than 2.5%

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	WLBC Target by 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of JSA claimants (Include Incapacity benefits?) 							
VAT registrations as % of total business stock	NOMIS	-	8.8%	7.2%	9.2%	-	10%
Amount of employment land and floorspace developed annually (inc creation of jobs)	WLBC AMR	EC1-4	3.11 Ha	5.44 Ha	Land = 1.44 Ha F/S = 16,852sqm *	-	To meet RSS/LDF requirements. Rolling average?

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

* cannot compare like for like 2005-2008 due to removal of thresholds

Objective 3 - Health

To improve the general health of residents and promote social wellbeing through high quality green infrastructure and cultural activities

Residents will be encouraged to live a healthier lifestyle through increased leisure and sports opportunities. Green spaces will be readily accessible and improved. There will be improved access to health facilities. Social and cultural facilities will be provided to a high standard and be accessible to all communities.

Targets:

Table .3

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA Target 2010/11	Target by 2027
Self reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	WLBC	NI119	-	-	73.9%	Pending	76.9%	80%
% of residents satisfied with sports / leisure facilities	WLBC	BVPI119a	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting	Awaiting	-	To be set
Amount of available greenspace lost to development	WLBC AMR	ENV01	-	-	0	0	-	0
Number of customers taking part in health improvement activities	WLBC	WL12a	31,216	32,318	42,461	42,575	-	To be set

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 4 – Natural Environment

To protect and improve the natural environment, including biodiversity and green infrastructure, in West Lancashire.

A range of sites will continue to be protected and enhanced for their biodiversity and geodiversity interest. The number of important sites will be increased where possible and new developments will contribute to increasing biodiversity. The Ribble Estuary will continue to be developed as a site of national and international importance, as will the facilities at Martin Mere. The landscape and biodiversity will be protected and enhanced through management of important features and through appropriate and well designed new developments.

Targets:

Table .4

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicators	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08 figure	2008/09	LCC LAA Target 2010/11	Target for 2027
Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites	WLBC	NI 197	-	-	5% (at Lancashire level)	Pending (WLBC level)	14% (at Lancashire level)	To be set
Change in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including i) priority habits and species (by type) and ii) areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value.	WLBC AMR	ENV08	-	-	99.5% of SSSIs in favourable or recovering condition. No further information has been available.	-	-	To maintain 2007/08 levels till 2027

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 5 - Housing

To provide a range of new housing types in appropriate locations to meet the needs of West Lancashire's population, including affordable housing and specialist accommodation.

An average of at least 300 new homes a year should be provided to meet the current requirements of strategic planning policy. These will be concentrated on brownfield sites, where available, in the major urban areas where services and transport facilities are greatest. The needs of all sectors of the community will be catered for through the provision of lifetime homes. New extra care facilities will be developed for the elderly and suitable pitches will be found for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Targets:

Table .5

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA Target for 2010/11	Target for 2027
RSS target for new homes to be met (Net)	WLBC	NI154	202	344	81	130	-	6000 in total (Average 300 per annum)
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	WLBC	NI 155	12	5	11	13	22	-
Proportion of new homes on brownfield land 2012-2027	WLBC AMR	HG06	79.1%	75.2%	69.1%	72%	-	Minimum of 65% to be on brownfield land *
Proportion of new homes complying with the Building for Life standard	WLBC AMR	HG09	-	-	-	-	-	All homes on sites with a capacity greater than 10 dwellings by 2027
Number of gypsy and traveller pitches provided	WLBC	RSS	-	-	0	0	-	14 Permanent + 10 transit gypsy pitches

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA Target for 2010/11	Target for 2027
								5 travelling show people pitches. As per RSS requirements by 2027

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 6 – Services and Accessibility

To provide good quality services that are accessible to all, and to promote the vitality and viability of town and local centres which are well linked to their rural hinterlands and neighbouring City Regions. All new development should be located in areas that are accessible and which have a range of services.

The Borough's town and village centres should continue to be attractive centres that provide a range of services for local residents. The important function of the market towns of Ormskirk and Burscough as Key Service Centres will be protected and enhanced. Public transport links through both rail and bus should be enhanced to improve the accessibility of key centres and their links to the centres of City Regions – Liverpool, Manchester and Preston. The regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre through the provision of new retail, leisure, housing, community and educational facilities will be vital to the development of the town as a whole. Development will be located mainly in the centres which have the greatest numbers of jobs and services available and which are accessible by public transport.

Targets:

Table .6

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08 figure	2008/09	Target by 2027
Vacancy levels in Ormskirk, Burscough & Skelmersdale	WLBC AMR	EC8	-	-	2.7% 4.6% 11.6%	-	Reduction in percentage figure by 2027
Vacant floorspace in Burscough							
Vacant floorspace in Ormskirk							
Vacant floorspace in Skelmersdale							
Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a hospital, a GP, a	WLBC AMR	SD05	97% (excluding hospital)	95% (excluding hospital)	96% (excluding hospital)	-	95% (excluding hospital)

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08 figure	2008/09	Target by 2027
primary school, a secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre							
Proportion of new developments completed within 400m of a bus stop / 800m of a rail station	WLBC AMR	SD2	92% completions	77% completions	84% completions	-	90% of new development

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 7 – Location of Development and Built Environment

To ensure that development is designed to a high quality and is appropriate for its locality, maximising efficiency in the use of land and resources, avoiding areas of significant constraint and minimising pollution. Heritage assets will be protected and enhanced. The unique character and features of local areas will be protected and reinforced through new development and other initiatives.

Design quality will be greatly enhanced, with all development respecting the local area. The unique heritage of West Lancashire will be protected and enhanced wherever possible. New development will be distributed to appropriate locations across the Borough

Targets:

Table .7

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicators	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Target for 2027
Proportion of new housing development to meet the CABE Building for Life 'Very Good' standard by 2027	WLBC AMR	HG9	-	-	-	-	All new housing on sites with a capacity greater than 10 dwellings
Number of listed buildings demolished, heritage assets, networks or settings lost	WLBC AMR	ENV2 & 3	0	0	0	0	To be zero

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 8 – Climate Change

To mitigate against and adapt to climate change through a variety of measures including correctly locating and designing new development, reducing energy consumption, having sustainable alternative energy sources, and minimising waste and increasing recycling.

New development will be steered to areas which are not at risk of flooding, in sustainable locations, will use carbon neutral technology and will make the best use of on-site renewable energy sources.

Targets:

Table .8

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA Target 2010/11	Target for 2027
Number of permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality	WLBC AMR	ENV07	0	0	8	Pending	-	Zero (all problems should be resolved/mitigated)
Renewable energy capacity installed by type (in MW)	WLBC AMR	ENV09	-	-	-	Pending	-	To increase.
Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area	WLBC	NI 186	7.2 tonnes (Lancashire)	-	-	Pending	12.5% reduction on 2005 baseline (Lancashire)	To reduce from XX baseline level.
Adapting to climate change	WLBC	NI 188	-	-	-	Level 0 (Lancashire)	Level 3 (Lancashire)	-

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Target Description	Data Source	Existing Indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA Target 2010/11	Target for 2027
Tackling fuel poverty	WLBC	NI 187						

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Objective 9 – Skelmersdale

To make Skelmersdale an attractive and vibrant place to live and reduce the social inequalities between the town and the rest of the Borough.

A new regenerated Skelmersdale Town Centre will better serve the needs of its residents and the wider Borough. New housing and improvements to the existing older new town estates and the existing green infrastructure will also take place. Health and educational inequalities with the rest of the Borough will also narrow. All these factors will make Skelmersdale a more attractive place to live and will bring in new people to live in the town.

Targets:

Table .9

Target Description	Target by	Source	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA target 2010/11	Target for 2027
All age all cause mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 population per year)	ONS via WLBC	NI120	-	M731 F542 (District)	-	-	M657 F499 (District wide)	Gap to narrow between Borough ward areas. Currently Gap of 10 years between most and least deprived
New retail floorspace in Skelmersdale	WLBC	-	-	-	-	-	-	To be at least 20,000 sqm developed since 2009
Number of new homes delivered in Skelmersdale (including mix)	WLBC	-	-	-	-	-	-	To meet requirements of Regeneration project

Appendix B: The Spatial & Strategic Objectives

Target Description	Target by	Source	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	LCC LAA target 2010/11	Target for 2027
Proportion of population with:	NOMIS	-	13.1%	17.4%	14.8%	-	-	Gap to narrow between Borough ward areas.
• no qualifications			83.4%	79.8%	78.3%	-		Overall proportion with no qualifications to decrease, all others to increase.
• NVQ Levels 1			68.8%	65.8%	59.9%	-		
• NVQ Levels 2			47.5%	43.3%	41.6%	-		
• NVQ Levels 3			31.7%	22.0%	20.2%	-		
• NVQ Levels 4								

N.B. LAA targets do not extend past 2011. 2027 targets, where provided, are provisional estimates only. Further partnership working, at an appropriate time, is required between the LAA, the LDF and other relevant departments and organisations to finalise targets.

Appendix C: Planning Policy Background

National Planning Policy

Overarching national planning policy is delivered through the original Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes and the subsequent Planning Policy Statements (PPS) which are gradually replacing the PPGs. The objectives of national policy are to deliver sustainable development, having regard to:

- The creation of sustainable communities;
- Managing environmental assets;
- Resource management and utilisation;
- The development of the economy; and
- Tackling climate change.

PPS1 sets out the Government's policy objectives and encompasses how spatial plans should be produced for development in a sustainable manner. Its supplement sets out the role spatial planning should play in contributing to the reduction of climate change. PPS12 also sets out how local planning authorities should place shape and deliver development.

All PPGs and PPSs are listed below; full details of these can viewed on the Communities and Local Government (CLG) [website](#):

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development;
- PPS1 Supplement: Planning and Climate Change;
- PPG2: Green Belts;
- PPS3: Housing;
- PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth;
- PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment;
- PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas;
- PPG8: Telecommunications;
- PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- PPS10: Planning for Sustainable Waste Management;
- PPS12: Local Spatial Planning;
- PPG13: Transport;
- PPG14: Development on Unstable Land;
- PPS15: Planning and Flood Risk;
- PPG16: Archaeology and Planning;
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation;
- PPG18: Enforcing Planning Control;
- PPG19: Outdoor Advertisement Control;
- PPG20: Coastal Planning;
- PPS22: Renewable Energy;
- PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control;
- PPG24: Planning and Noise; and
- PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.

Regional Plans

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West ("the RSS") was adopted in September 2008. This Plan set the housing requirement for each local authority area in the North West (in the case of West Lancashire: 300 net new dwellings per annum from 2003 onwards), set employment land requirements (albeit at sub-regional rather than district level), and defined the settlement hierarchy for the area. It contained a wide range of policies, including a specific policy framework for the Liverpool City Region, in which West Lancashire is situated.

On 6 July 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and Regional Strategies with immediate effect under Section 79 of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. As a result, RSS and RS were no longer to form part of the development plan.

The decision to revoke RSS and RS has been challenged in the courts. As a result, at the time of writing this document, the RSS / RS have been reinstated as part of the development plan. However, notwithstanding the court rulings, the government has restated its intention to abolish the regional level of planning through the Localism Bill. Thus, at the time of consultation on this document, it is expected that the RSS / RS will no longer form part of the development plan. However, the policies within the Core Strategy continue to have regard to the RSS housing requirement (see [Appendix D](#)), the settlement hierarchy, and the inclusion of West Lancashire within the Liverpool City Region.

Sub-Regional Plans and Strategies

Ambition Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy (2005-2025)

Prepared by the Lancashire Partnership, Ambition Lancashire influences spending decisions and service planning, encourages partners to work together to meet identified needs and add value to each other's actions, enables partners to lobby and influence together on behalf of Lancashire, and helps shape the Local Area Agreement in Lancashire. Its vision is as follows:

Ambition Lancashire

To position Lancashire by 2025 as an area of outstanding opportunity, combining a world-class economy with a breathtaking environment and exceptional communities.

Lancashire's towns, cities and rural areas maintain their separate identities, but interdependence is strengthened through strong economic, social and environmental connections.

Ambition Lancashire is built upon the two principles of:

- Narrowing the gap: between areas and within communities, in terms of wealth and poverty, educational achievement and underachievement, and high and low ambition; and
- Active and involved citizens and communities, making it easier for them to achieve their ambitions, enrich their lives and meet their needs more closely.

There are a number of key priorities within Ambition Lancashire to achieve its vision and principles, including:

- Economy;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Education, training and skills;
- Environment; and
- Community safety.

More information on the Ambition Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy can be found on The Lancashire Partnership's [website](#).

Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) (2008-2011)

Developed by the Lancashire Partnership, all local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships in Lancashire (excluding the Unitary Authorities) have signed up to the LAA, which was formally signed by the Government in March 2006. The LAA addresses local priorities with a view to improving services and quality of life for all. The priorities relate to the economy, environment, education training and skills, health and wellbeing, and community safety.

It is important that the West Lancashire Local Development Framework, along with the West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy, assist in the delivery of the Lancashire LAA. This will result in the improved wellbeing and increased Government investment in West Lancashire and in the County as a whole. More details on the LAA can be found on The Lancashire Partnership's [website](#).

Mid-Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement

West Lancashire Borough Council is currently in discussion with South Ribble, Chorley, Preston and Lancaster Councils regarding the draft Mid-Lancashire Multi Area Agreement (MAA). The MAA provides a platform to promote a shared services agenda delivering shared cost savings through collaborative working. This Core Strategy is being developed to reflect the priorities of the MAA.

Lancashire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (2009-2021)

This sets the broad direction for minerals and waste planning in Lancashire by identifying the amount of new minerals extraction and waste management capacity that will be needed over the plan period, and by indicating broad locations for such uses.

The responsibility for allocating specific minerals and waste sites has been devolved to the Minerals & Waste Site Allocations DPD, which is currently under preparation by Lancashire County Council. It is likely that this will lead to the allocation or safeguarding of specific sites within West Lancashire. Further details may be found on the Lancashire Minerals and Waste [website](#).

Appendix C: Planning Policy Background

Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2 (2006-2010)

In 2005 Lancashire County Council prepared its second Local Transport Plan (LTP), setting out plans for transport for the years 2006 to 2010. The LTP was developed to meet the wider social and economic objectives of the County Council, and in particular the aim to make Lancashire a place where people can travel safely and easily. It seeks to achieve seven key objectives:

- Reduce Road Casualties;
- Improve access to jobs and services;
- Improve air quality;
- Improve the condition of transport infrastructure;
- Reduce delays on journeys;
- Increase journeys by bus and rail; and
- Increase active travel.

The LTP proposes a number of schemes for West Lancashire which will assist in meeting the objectives outlined above. Such schemes include:

- A570 Ormskirk Bypass;
- Quality Bus Route between Wigan - Skelmersdale - Ormskirk - Southport;
- Cycling schemes in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk;
- Ormskirk traffic and car park management system; and
- Community Rail Improvements in West Lancashire.

Further details on the LTP can be found at [Lancashire Local Transport Plan](#)

Although LTP2 is currently in place Lancashire County Council are in the process of preparing the next Local Transport Plan, LTP3, which they hope will be adopted by the end of March 2011. LTP3 has been developed in partnership between Lancaster County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Its strategy will be long-term strategy (2011-2021) and will have a 3 year rolling implementation plan for each MAA area.

Lancashire Climate Change Strategy (2009-2020)

Prepared by the Lancashire Climate Change Partnership, this strategy sets out a carbon dioxide reduction target of 30% by 2020, from a 1990 baseline. The strategy shows in detail where these savings are predicted to come from and how they can be achieved. Further details can be found on the Lancashire Climate Change Partnership's [website](#).

Local Plans and Strategies

West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy

The West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2007-2017 was prepared by the West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) following a review of the 2003 Community Strategy. For full details and to view the Sustainable Community Strategy, please visit the Council's [website](#). The SCS vision is as follows:

West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership - Improving Quality of Life for All

We will do this by working together to be:

- The cleanest, safest, healthiest and greenest place in the country to live, work and enjoy;
- A place where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute; and
- A place with excellent, easily accessible and sustainable jobs and services.

A number of objectives have been developed which include:

- To improve safety and ensure people feel safe;
- To build on the solid foundations of a strong voluntary and community sector and to develop community participation and pride in our neighbourhoods;
- To improve health outcomes, promote social wellbeing for communities and reduce health inequalities for everyone;
- To provide more appropriate and affordable housing to meet the needs of local people;
- To provide good quality services that are easily accessible to all;
- To contribute to sustainable development through the wise use of natural resources;
- To provide opportunities for young and older people to thrive;
- To create more and better quality training and job opportunities to get more people into work; and
- To protect and improve West Lancashire's environment including safeguarding our biodiversity.

Through the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Strategic Partnership will concentrate a small number of priority projects that will require partnership working. These include:

- Skelmersdale Vision;
- Market Towns Project;
- Safer Stronger Communities;
- Rural Economy Study;
- Vital Villages / Parish Plans;
- Inspire Project;
- Affordable Housing Strategy;
- Integrated Transport; and
- Energy Management.

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

In line with the new Government's agenda to see decisions that directly affect local issues to be taken by local people and in expectation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West being abolished through Localism Bill, West Lancashire Borough Council has sought to identify their own targets for the development of housing, employment land, renewable energy schemes and the provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Show People. Such targets must be based on evidence of need and deliverability to be considered sound in planning policy terms and this appendix to the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy sets out how those targets that have been applied in the Preferred Options have been arrived at and on what evidential basis.

At present, the RSS is still a part of the Development Plan for West Lancashire, and so any targets set within it for West Lancashire are currently still relevant and the Core Strategy should be consistent with them. Fortunately, the latest evidence used to determine targets locally in expectation of the RSS being abolished arrives at a set of targets that is also still consistent with RSS policy and targets, and so whether the RSS is ultimately abolished or not, what has been set out in this Core Strategy Preferred Options document will still be relevant.

Housing Targets

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 future household need 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 estimating future household needs, based on 2008 ONS population statistics⁽¹⁹⁾. 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

19 It is important to stress that Household Projections are not forecasts, but an indication of what would happen if recent trends were to continue over the coming 25 years. They should not be treated as forecasts.

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

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 Targets

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, of which 60ha could be provided by existing employment land allocations that have yet to be developed. This target was calculated based on historic take-up rates of employment land development.

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, and the situation surrounding some of those undeveloped sites allocated in the Replacement Local Plan (2006) has also changed. 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) 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. The table below sets out the calculation of this updated target.

Historic take-up of Employment Land in West Lancashire

Year	Take-up Rates (ha)
1992/93	1.6
1993/94	1.6
1994/95	2.5
1995/96	7
1996/97	10.2
1997/98	17.3
1998/99	4.8
1999/2000	2
2000/01	4.5
2001/02	5.8
2002/03	12.62
2003/04	28.32
2004/05	4.69

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Year	Take-up Rates (ha)
2005/06	3.11
2006/07	5.44
2007/08	1.44
2008/09	2.4
2009/10	0.5
Total	115.82
Average take up rate 1992-2010	6.43
Average take up rate 1992-2010 (minus anomalous years)	4.83
Employment land target for 2012-2027	72.47
Target with 20% buffer	86.96

Utilising the updated average take-up rate, a basic employment land target for the Core Strategy period (2012–2027) can be identified as follows:

Basic Employment Land Target for 2012–2027 = 4.83 ha x 15 years = 72.47 ha

Employment Land Review Guidance suggests that adding a 20% buffer onto this basic target provides for the uncertainty in predicting how the economy will grow in future years. Adding 20% on to the basic target provides the Employment Land target. Therefore, the locally-determined target for employment land development in West Lancashire from 2012 to 2027 is **86.96 ha**.

Due to development on some of the sites and changes to development proposals on other sites, the amount of land that is currently allocated for employment development through the Local Plan but that still remains undeveloped and that constitutes a realistic supply is 41.74 ha (see following table). Factoring how much of this land could be expected to be developed between now and the start of the Core Strategy period provides us with a realistic supply available at 2012/13 of 38.85 ha.

Existing Employment Land Allocations in West Lancashire

Site Ref	Name	Size (ha)	Unrealistic land supply (ha)	Reason
DE5.1.12	Selby Place (Site D), Stanley Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	0.47	0.47	Developed 08/09

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Site Ref	Name	Size (ha)	Unrealistic land supply (ha)	Reason
DE5.1.13	Selby Place (Site K), Stanley Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	0.84	0.84	Developed 08/09
DE5.1.14a	North of Asda (XL Plot E), Stanley Extension Site, XL Business Park, Skelmersdale	1.89*		
DE5.1.14b	South of Asda, Stanley Extension Site, XL Business Park, Skelmersdale	6.14*		
DE5.1.14c	North of Comet DHL, Stanley Extension Site, XL Business Park, Skelmersdale	11.2*		
DE5.1.15	Gardiners Place (Site 4), Gillibrands Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	1.7	1.7	Operational land / in use
DE.5.1.16	Gardiners Place (Site 5), Gillibrands Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	1.3		
DE5.1.17	Whitemoss Business Park, Skelmersdale	8.25	0.83	Developed 08/09
DE5.1.18	Cobbs Clough Road, Skelmersdale	9.82	9.82	To be developed for non-employment
DE5.1.2	Pimbo Road (Site M), Pimbo Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	3.5		
DE5.1.20	Tollgate Road, Burscough Industrial Estate	3.49	0.17	Developed 08/09
DE5.1.21	Tollgate Road/Merlin Park, Burscough Industrial Estate	0.59	0.59	Developed 08/09-09-10
DE5.1.22	Ringtail Road, Burscough Industrial Estate	0.27	0.27	Operational land / in use
DE5.1.23	North Quarry, Appley Bridge	0.66		
DE5.1.24	Simonswood Site 1, Simonswood Industrial Park	5.02	5.02	Operational land / in use

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Site Ref	Name	Size (ha)	Unrealistic land supply (ha)	Reason
DE5.1.26	Greaves Hall, Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks	5.21	3.21	Owner pursuing non-B class uses
DE5.1.27	Ormskirk Hospital	0.24	0.24	Owner pursuing non-B class uses
DE5.1.5	Priorswood Place (Site R), Pimbo Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	0.71		
DE5.1.7	Staveley Road (Site F), Stanley Industrial Estate, Skelmersdale	3.6		
DE11	Skelmersdale Town Centre Regeneration	5		No net addition of employment land in latest Masterplan
Total		69.9	28.16	
Total Realistic Supply at 2010/11		41.74		
Assumed land take-up 2010-2012 from existing allocations			2.89**	
Total Realistic Supply at 2012/13		38.85		

* Discussions with landowners have led to a 6.05 ha increase in the total size of land originally allocated at XL Business Park.

** This assumes there will be a similar annual average take-up of employment land in 2010-2012 as there has been in 2007-2010 (1.45 ha per annum), due to the economic climate.

This figure is then subtracted from the realistic supply at 2010/11 to provide the realistic supply at 2012/13, as it is assumed that any supply in the period 2010-2012 will come from the existing allocated supply of employment land.

This means that 48.11ha of land (86.96 ha target minus 38.85 ha realistic supply at 2012/13) needs to be identified through the LDF for employment land development in addition to that already allocated and not developed which can be retained as realistic supply. Through a study of the Borough's industrial estates conducted in July 2010, it is estimated that up to 30 ha of this additional land could be provided through the regeneration and reconfiguration of parts of the existing industrial estates in Skelmersdale, Burscough and Simonswood, leaving 18 ha of brand new employment sites to be found. The Preferred Options of the Core Strategy show this being provided for through the Ormskirk Strategic Site, through new sites that extend existing employment areas in Skelmersdale and Burscough and a small amount in rural areas.

Renewable Energy Targets

The North West Sustainable Energy Strategy sets out a requirement that at least 10% of the electricity which is supplied within the Region should be provided from renewable energy sources by 2010 (rising to at least 15% by 2015 and at least 20% by 2020).

To achieve this, and in line with Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy (PPS22), the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West set out a series of indicative capacity targets for the region. The approach set out in the North West Sustainable Energy Strategy reinforces the relevant policies in the RSS and as such the Council considers the Strategy to be robust and comprehensive.

The intention to revoke the RSS was announced on the 6th July 2010. However, the evidence behind its policies, including that for indicative capacity targets for renewable energy is still relevant. This is due to the information being the most up-to-date relating to capacities in the North West. Further work has been undertaken by the Local Authorities within the Liverpool City Region based on the original North West capacities to refine the targets and disaggregate them to a Local Authority level. The Council considers that this refinement process strengthens the appropriateness of the use of them within the Core Strategy Preferred Options. This work has been undertaken within the Joint Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study.

The initial RSS targets can be viewed in the table below which is taken from the Joint Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study and includes targets for the Merseyside, Halton and Warrington and Lancashire areas

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Regional Spatial Strategy Renewable Energy Targets for The North West

	2010			2015			2020		
	Number of schemes			Number of schemes			Number of schemes		
	Merseyside	Lancashire	Halton and Warrington	Merseyside	Lancashire	Halton and Warrington	Merseyside	Lancashire	Halton and Warrington
On shore wind farms / clusters	2 (15)	11-16 (195)	1 (7.5)	2 (15)	13-20 (232.5)	1 (7.5)	2 (15)	13-20 (232.5)	1 (7.5)
Single large wind turbines	6 (9)	7 (10.5)	2 (3)	10 (15)	11 (16.5)	3 (4.5)	10 (15)	11 (16.5)	3 (4.5)
Small stand alone wind turbines	8 (0.24)	10 (0.3)	2 (0.06)	12 (0.36)	15 (0.45)	3 (0.09)	12 (0.36)	15 (0.45)	3 (0.09)
Building mounted micro wind turbines	190 (0.19)	205 (0.205)	65 (0.065)	1900 (1.9)	2050 (2.05)	650 (0.65)	3800 (0.36)	4100 (4.1)	1300 (1.3)
Biomass fuelled CHP / electricity schemes	1 (4)	1 (9)	1 (2.1)	2 (9)	2 (14)	1 (2.1)	2 (9)	3 (19)	2 (4.2)
Biomass co-firing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Anaerobic digestion of farm biogas	1 (2)	1 (2)	0	1 (2)	3 (6)	0	2 (4)	5 (10)	-
Hydro-power	0	2 (0.1)	0	0	2 (0.1)	-	0	2 (0.1)	-
Solar photovoltaics	190 (0.38)	205 (0.41)	65 (0.13)	4750 (9.5)	5125 (10.25)	1625 (3.25)	9500 (10)	10250 (20.5)	3250 (6.5)
Tidal energy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wave energy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy from waste	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Landfill gas	7 (13.5)	14 (20.2)	5 (34.4)	3 (9.7)	7 (14.3)	2 (30.5)	0	4 (1.2)	0
Sewage Gas	2 (2)		2 (1)	2 (2)		2 (1)	2 (2)	?	2 (1)
Thermal treatment of municipal / industrial waste	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 (40)	?	1 (10)

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Due to the sub-regional approach to targets in the Joint Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study, there was a need to disaggregate the Lancashire targets to establish an indicative proportion of the overall target that West Lancashire can realistically contribute. In order to do this, percentage factors were developed. For example, onshore wind is affected by how much unconstrained land is available for development of turbines and it was calculated that West Lancashire contained 11% of the total amount of unconstrained land within Lancashire. Equally, building integrated wind was directly related to the amount of buildings within the Borough which could be measurable by population. It was calculated that West Lancashire contained 7% of the total population of Lancashire. The following table identifies all percentage factors that were applied to West Lancashire:

Disaggregation of sub-regional targets

Technology	Factor Type	Description	Factor %
Onshore Wind	Land Area	The capacity for onshore wind is constrained by land area and subsequently the area of unconstrained land. Therefore a land area factor was used to identify the proportion of land within West Lancashire in relation to the total area of the Lancashire sub region.	11
Building Integrated Wind	Population Density	The capacity of building integrated wind is constrained by the amount of buildings in areas of suitable wind speeds and that are not over-shadowed by other buildings and landscape. Therefore a population density factor was used to identify the proportion of buildings within West Lancashire in relation to the total area of the Lancashire sub region.	7
Biomass CHP	Population Density	The capacity for biomass CHP is related to heat loads thus is related to the amount of buildings in the area. A population density factor was used to identify the proportion of buildings within West Lancashire in relation to the total area of the Lancashire sub region.	7
Anaerobic digestion (AD)	Land Area	The capacity for AD is constrained by the amount of animal waste produced and, by extension, the area of agricultural/ farmland need for livestock farming. Therefore a land area factor was used to identify the proportion of land within West Lancashire in relation to the total area of the Lancashire sub region.	11
Photovoltaics (PV)	Population Density	The capacity for PV is related to the amount of buildings in the area, as the technology is roof mounted. Therefore a population density factor was used to identify the proportion of buildings within	7

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Technology	Factor Type	Description	Factor %
		West Lancashire in relation to the total area of the Lancashire sub region.	

Following the revision to the sub regional targets to ensure that they fit the geographical coverage of the study area, further refinements to the targets were undertaken. The final targets for West Lancashire are displayed in the table below. They have been disaggregated in consideration of the results of the constraints mapping, resource availability and, in the case of Combined Heat and Power (CHP), taking into account the derived energy trajectory for the Borough.

The final targets for West Lancashire are displayed in Table 15.5 below. They have been disaggregated in consideration of the results of the constraints mapping, resource availability and in the case of Combined Heat and Power (CHP), taking into account the derived energy trajectory for the Borough.

West Lancashire Borough Council Renewable Energy Generation Targets⁽²⁰⁾

Indicative Renewable Energy Generation Size / Type	2010 (MW)	2015 (MW)	2020 (MW)
Onshore Wind Farms (Single, Large and Small Stand Alone Turbines)	22.64	27.44	27.44
Building Integrated Wind	-0.03	0.09	0.24
Biomass CHP	0.63	0.98	1.33
Anaerobic Digestion (AD)	0.22	0.66	1.1
Photo Voltaic (PV)	0.02	0.71	1.43

Provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Circular 01/2006 sets out national policy on planning for gypsy and traveller caravan sites and, among other intentions, aims to ensure the following:

- *"e) to underline the importance of assessing needs at regional and sub-regional level and for local authorities to develop strategies to ensure that needs are dealt with fairly and effectively;*
- *f) to identify and make provision for the resultant land and accommodation requirements;*
- *g) to ensure that DPDs include fair, realistic and inclusive policies and to ensure identified need is dealt with fairly and effectively;*
- *h) to promote more private gypsy and traveller site provision in appropriate locations through the planning system, while recognising that there will always be those who cannot provide their own sites;"*(paragraph 12)

²⁰ The above targets include existing installed capacity at the time of July 2009

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

Alongside this Circular, the 2004 Housing Act requires Local Authorities to estimate their current and future need with regards to Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

In the Core Strategy Preferred Options, Policy Area CS9 addresses provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, including a quantified requirement for Gypsy & Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots. These are based upon information gathered in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment commissioned by the North West Regional Assembly on behalf of a number of Lancashire authorities including West Lancashire. Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have contributed in the process of preparing this GTAA.

In 2007 The GTAA for the Lancashire sub region suggested a need for 17 permanent pitches for Gypsies & Travellers and 3 plots for Travelling Showpeople in West Lancashire for a period between 2006-2016. There was also an identified need for transient pitches but this was not split down by local authority.

In 2008 4NW commenced work on a Partial Review of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) covering a range of topics, including the number of Gypsy & Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots required in each Local Authority. In July 2009, Draft policies were submitted to the Secretary of State and an Examination in Public (EiP) was held in March 2010.

The submitted draft of this document set targets for West Lancashire to allocate 15 permanent and 10 transient pitches for Gypsies & Travellers and 5 pitches for Travelling Showpeople, together with an annual increase of 3% in the level of overall residential pitch provision. West Lancashire Borough Council supported this allocation.

Although the Partial Review was never completed the information contained within the revised Partial Review and the evidence from the GTAA represent the most up-to-date evidence for the requirements for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in West Lancashire, hence Policy Area CS9 puts forward the above targets for provision that were included in the Draft Partial Review of the RSS.

The following is a brief summary of how these targets were arrived at for West Lancashire:

An assessment of gypsy and traveller accommodation needs was commissioned in 2006 – *The North West Regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Service*. This report was commissioned by a team of researchers from the Salford Housing and URBAN Studies unit at the University of Salford, assisted by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham and AVT-interventions, with research support from members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

This assessment was undertaken by conducting:

- A review of available literature, data and secondary sources;
- A detailed questionnaire completed by housing and planning officers;
- Five sub regional focus groups with key stakeholders; and
- A total of 182 household interviews with Gypsy and Travellers from a range of tenures and backgrounds.

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

The approach adopted used existing guidelines for the assessment of accommodation need for gypsy and travellers as well as travelling show people, together with an approach evolved out of consultation with key stakeholders including gypsy and travellers, the showman's guild, Traveller Education services and local authority officers.

Five North West sub regions were set up including:

- Cheshire
- Cumbria
- Greater Manchester
- Merseyside

This study identified that for Lancashire there was a requirement for an additional 205-231 residential pitches for between 2006-2016 plus 7 pitches for travelling showpeople.

Decisions upon the level of provision at a Local Authority level were set out at the sub-regional level, informed by an assessment of need. This assessment calculated that there was a need for 17 residential pitches and 3 pitches for travelling show people across West Lancashire.

In January 2009 4NW started a period of engagement with Stakeholder representatives on an Interim Draft Policy on the scale and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller pitches and an Interim Draft policy on the scale and distribution of Travelling Showpeople plot provision.

This interim policy set out requirements for West Lancashire of 20 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers for 2007-2016, and for 5 transient pitches over the same period.

The figures differ to those originally set out in the Lancashire GTAA because of the following reasons:

- The figures have been increased to address the issue of 'hidden' overcrowding, which had been raised as an issue by the Gypsy and Traveller community in earlier consultation.
- The geographical distribution of the pitch numbers has been broadened so that greater choice will be available for gypsies and travellers in the future. The GTAA tended to look at a 'need as it arises' approach, based upon the bi-annual count for gypsy sites.

The draft policy also increased the number of travelling showpeople pitches from 3 to 5 up to 2016, based on more up-to-date and accurate information provided by the Lancashire and North Wales section of the Showman's Guild which was based on survey work conducted in June 2007.

In consultation 4NW sought support off the individual local authorities regarding pitch numbers. Due to a lack of evidence regarding revised figures the Council put forward a revised figure of 14 permanent pitches and 10 transient pitches as an alternative. The Council supported the allocation of 5 pitches for Travelling Showpeople.

The Council put forward a figure of 14 permanent pitches based upon the number of unauthorised pitches then based within West Lancashire. The Council believed that this figure accurately represented the demand for gypsies and travellers based within the Borough.

Appendix D: Setting Locally-determined Targets

A revised figure of 10 transient pitches was sought as historically West Lancashire has evidence that unauthorised transient gypsies and travellers often set up camps of more than 5 caravans. The Council believed that to discourage unauthorised encampments and to make it easier to direct gypsies and travellers to a transient site an increased figure of 10 pitches would be more appropriate.

Although it is very difficult to estimate the future level of demand for pitches and plots, the best assumption that can be made is the household growth rate of 3% a year compound. Household growth rates of 3% a year were suggested as appropriate in *Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Sites in England, ODPM 2003*.

Following the Council's comments a submitted draft was published. The submitted draft reduced the permanent figure for gypsies and travellers from 20 to 15 and the number of transient pitches was increased from 5 to 10 for 2007 to 2016. The Council supported these figures and they were submitted to the Examination in Public held in March 2010.

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

A Core Strategy document must be deliverable and must take account of the risks to delivery that it may face over the lifetime of the document. This appendix sets out, policy by policy, how the Core Strategy Preferred Options will be delivered over the Core Strategy period (2012-2027), what the key risks to that delivery may be, the implications of these risks and how the Core Strategy will be flexible enough to respond to these risks.

Policy Area CS1: A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire

Who will Deliver the Policy

CS1 provides the over-arching spatial strategy for development in the Borough, and so delivery of the policy will involve a variety of partners, most notably the Private Sector / Developers (as the vast majority of development will be private sector led), Infrastructure Providers (where new infrastructure is required) and the Council and other Public Sector agencies (who will often have a key role in facilitating development).

Phasing for Delivery

The overall timescale for the delivery of development in the Borough is complicated somewhat by the necessity to deliver improvements to Waste Water Treatment Infrastructure before any development can take place in a large part of the Borough, as well as by the fact that the Core Strategy period will begin as the global, national and regional economy is still recovering from the recent recession.

As such, delivery of development, especially residential development, will be slower in the first half of the Core Strategy period (hence the reduced targets to 2017 discussed in the justification for Policy Area CS1) but more intense in the latter part of the Core Strategy period (hence the higher targets after 2017). This phasing of delivery will also have a spatial dimension, with no development expecting to be delivered in those areas affected by the Waste Water Treatment issues in the first five years (at least) of the Core Strategy period.

Risks

The deliverability of a sustainable spatial development framework for West Lancashire is reliant on a range of factors, some of which are more certain than others. Where possible, these factors have been worked around in preparing these Preferred Options for the Core Strategy but, given a degree of uncertainty in relation to some factors, there is an inevitable degree of risk in the strategy. This risk focuses around three key areas:

- The delivery of the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre - that is wholly or partially not delivered

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

- The delivery of key infrastructure improvements - that they are not delivered, especially the Waste Water Treatment infrastructure improvements
- The release of Green Belt for new development - that it is deemed inappropriate for Green Belt to be released for new development in the Borough by a Planning Inspector or the Secretary of State

Implications of the Risks

Skelmersdale Town Centre

Any development, especially residential development, that is delivered in Skelmersdale places an increased burden on an already poor quality town centre and the sustainability of Skelmersdale as a regional town is significantly reduced. The basis on which Skelmersdale is allocated the lion's share of development in the Core Strategy is that it will benefit from a regenerated town centre to serve such a large amount of new development (as well as existing development). Should the town centre be regenerated, the justification for locating so much development in Skelmersdale may be weakened.

In addition, the attraction of developing in Skelmersdale could be reduced without the town centre regeneration, potentially leading to new residents travelling out of the Borough for services (e.g. to Wigan) or potentially leading to low demand for new development in Skelmersdale, and therefore the need to allow development elsewhere in the Borough instead in order to achieve development targets. Social inequalities between Skelmersdale and the rest of the Borough will be made far worse in this situation.

Key Infrastructure Improvements

Should United Utilities not be able to provide the infrastructure to divert a proportion of waste water away from New Lane WWTW to Hoscar WWTW, any new development in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick would result in excess discharge from New Lane into Martin Mere. Therefore, it would be difficult to justify any new development in either town until infrastructure improvements are made.

Release of Green Belt

West Lancashire would have to identify land in less appropriate (and highly constrained) locations for development or accept that it would not be able to meet its locally-determined targets for housing or employment, as there is not sufficient available and suitable land for development outside of the Green Belt.

Contingencies for the Risks

Skelmersdale Town Centre

On a retail and provision of local services level, there is no alternative for Skelmersdale or to locate such a town centre development elsewhere in the Borough. On a wider, general development level, residential development (and possibly employment development) may need to be located elsewhere in the Borough, ultimately resulting in further loss of Green Belt around Ormskirk or Burscough and / or the expansion of one or more of the Key

Sustainable Villages, despite major infrastructure constraints. The Plan B proposed in Chapter 10 of this Preferred Options paper explores the most appropriate alternative in such circumstances.

Key Infrastructure Improvements

All development within West Lancashire would need to be focused in Skelmersdale, Aughton and the Northern Parishes, barring the small amount allocated to other rural areas where other infrastructure constraints allow. Therefore, Skelmersdale would be the only town in the Borough to benefit significantly from new development. However, in reality, this alternative is not sustainable due to the fact that it would not meet housing and employment needs across the Borough and is not deliverable as it is highly unlikely that the housing market in Skelmersdale could deliver so many houses year-on-year. As such, the only realistic contingency if waste water treatment infrastructure improvements could not be delivered would be a reduction in the Borough's development targets.

Release of Green Belt

West Lancashire would either need to accept that it cannot deliver its locally-determined targets and reduce the targets accordingly (thereby losing out on significant economic, social and environmental advances and benefits that would have been created by the additional development) or seek to undertake an ambitious and expensive regeneration of urban areas to intensify levels of development to meet locally-determined targets without developing in the Green Belt or locate development on "protected" land in unsustainable and severely constrained locations within the Northern Parishes.

Policy Area CS2: Skelmersdale Town Centre

Who will Deliver the Policy

Delivery of Policy CS2 will be reliant upon a number of bodies including the Council (officers and members), the Homes and Communities Agency, other public agencies and private sector developers. St Modwen have been selected as the preferred development partner.

Phasing for Delivery

A full financial appraisal of the scheme is currently being undertaken, and this will provide evidence as to its deliverability and of the timescale over which it will be deliverable. The scheme will rely on a return of the private sector housing market in Skelmersdale.

Risks

If the scheme set out in the SPD was retained and not amended then there is a risk that this would never be delivered, even if the economy does recover, due to the changing nature of the retail market and opportunities being taken elsewhere. Even if the scheme

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could ultimately be achieved, this would take many years and would leave a significant amount of semi-derelict land at the heart of the town centre and leave the College and Asda segregated from the Concourse over this period.

There is also a risk that if Skelmersdale does not grow it will be unable to compete with neighbouring centres (e.g. Wigan and St Helens) that have seen, and will continue to see, retail growth.

Implications of the Risks

Any development, especially residential development, that is delivered in Skelmersdale places an increased burden on an already poor quality town centre and the sustainability of Skelmersdale as a regional town is significantly reduced. The basis on which Skelmersdale is allocated the lion's share of development in the Core Strategy is that it will benefit from a regenerated town centre to serve such a large amount of new development (as well as existing development). Should the town centre be regenerated, the justification for locating so much development in Skelmersdale may be weakened.

In addition, the attraction of developing in Skelmersdale could be reduced without the town centre regeneration, potentially leading to new residents travelling out of the Borough for services (e.g. to Wigan) or potentially leading to low demand for new development in Skelmersdale, and therefore the need to allow development elsewhere in the Borough instead in order to achieve development targets. Social inequalities between Skelmersdale and the rest of the Borough will be made far worse in this situation.

Contingencies for the Risks

On a retail and provision of local services level, there is no alternative for Skelmersdale or to locate such a town centre development elsewhere in the Borough. On a wider, general development level, residential development (and possibly employment development) may need to be located elsewhere in the Borough, ultimately resulting in further loss of Green Belt around Ormskirk or Burscough and / or the expansion of one or more of the Key Sustainable Villages, despite major infrastructure constraints.

Policy Area CS3: Burscough Strategic Development Site

Who will Deliver the Policy

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Delivery of the Burscough Strategic Development Site is reliant on the Private Sector / Developers bringing forward residential and employment development proposals in line with Policy Area CS3, including delivering, or making contributions towards, infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure providers will also play a key role in delivery, especially United Utilities for the waste water treatment infrastructure, Lancashire County Council in relation to a new school and any highways improvements and Network Rail for any rail improvements.

Phasing for Delivery

Due to the waste water treatment issues, no development can take place on Burscough Strategic Development Site until the issue is resolved. Therefore, delivery will likely take place in the latter part of the Core Strategy period and almost certainly not until after 2017.

Risks

The Strategic Development Site becomes undeliverable due to Green Belt release not being permitted or due to the identification of a hitherto unidentified constraint or because the waste water treatment issues cannot be resolved within the Core Strategy period.

Implications of the Risks

The Strategic Development Site cannot be delivered, leaving a shortfall in housing and employment development in the Borough over the Core Strategy period.

Contingencies for the Risks

West Lancashire would either need to accept that it cannot deliver its locally-determined targets and reduce the targets accordingly (thereby losing out on significant economic, social and environmental advances and benefits that would have been created by the

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

additional development) or redistribute the residential and employment development to other parts of the Borough. The Plan B proposed in Chapter 10 of this Preferred Options paper explores the most appropriate alternative in such circumstances.

Policy Area CS4: The Economy & Employment Land

Who will Deliver the Policy

The policy will need to be delivered by private sector businesses / developers working alongside the Council who will ensure its successful implementation.

Phasing for Delivery

Delivery of Policy CS4 will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

There is one key deliverability risk associated with Policy Area CS4 that would affect new employment development in each of the Borough's three towns, and that is that the release of Green Belt for new employment development was not permitted.

Implications of the Risks

Depending on Green Belt release, this could have a significant effect on the Borough's ability to meet its locally-determined employment land target, as current evidence identifies that 15-17 ha of this target would need to be delivered on Green Belt land because of the limited availability of land for development within the Borough's settlement areas. In this situation, the Borough would not be able to deliver all the new employment development that is needed over the Core Strategy period, and would therefore not grow economically as well as anticipated.

Contingencies for the Risks

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Essentially, if no Green Belt release for new employment development is permitted across the Borough, then there is no alternative (barring development of all undeveloped space within the settlement areas (i.e. public open space, which would not be an acceptable proposal) and the Borough would not be able to deliver its locally-determined target for employment development. However, if it is just the case that Green Belt release is not permitted for new employment development in one of the three areas of search, then the alternative would be to instead seek further Green Belt release in the other areas of search or identify a new area of search. This would, of course, be dependent on viability in light of other constraints in those areas of search.

Policy Area CS5: The Rural Economy

Who will Deliver the Policy

The policy will need to be delivered by private sector businesses / developers working alongside the Council who will ensure its successful implementation.

Phasing for Delivery

Delivery of this policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

Risks associated with the Rural economy relate to loss of land for other uses and the limiting nature of the rural environment. More existing rural employment sites could be lost to residential uses on the grounds of viability. In addition, the wide range of environmental assets that are located in the Borough could pose a risk to development in rural areas by limiting opportunities for new development.

Implications of the Risks

The amount of land given over to rural employment uses gradually dwindles and rural areas become even less sustainable. Insufficient land is developed for rural employment uses.

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Contingencies for the Risk

A stronger policy is added to the LDF, perhaps by allocating sites for existing and new rural employment development in the Site Allocations DPD. Identify specific rural areas or sites within policy where it is considered there are the least environmental constraints and promote rural employment in those areas / sites through policy.

Policy Area CS6: Edge Hill University

Who will Deliver the Policy

The University will be responsible for delivering any planned growth. Working alongside Council officers, the University will also be responsible for managing the impact of the high number of students accessing the campus and using the town of Ormskirk.

Phasing for Delivery

This policy will need to be implemented throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

Risks associated with Edge Hill University relate to adverse impacts of any planned growth. It is widely recognised that Edge Hill is an important asset of the Borough and that expansion of the University would benefit the local economy, as well as public services and facilities. However, expansion should be balanced by resolving existing (and potential future) issues and problems. Parking, traffic congestion and noise pollution have been identified as key risks. In addition many people have raised concern regarding the number of homes in Ormskirk which are let to students. The use of the Green Belt to accommodate expansion plans is a further risk.

Implications of the Risks

The risks identified could lead to more congestion in and around Ormskirk, a lack of choice in terms of housing for local people and potentially unnecessary development within the Green Belt if a carefully planned approach to expansion is not adopted.

Contingencies for the Risks

A carefully planned expansion strategy should be developed through the LDF and a masterplanned approach should be adopted. Working with the University and other interested parties throughout the Core Strategy period will be crucial.

The alternative in relation to Edge Hill University is to resist any further expansion plans. This alternative would mean that the university would not be able to deliver high quality facilities and therefore could be less attractive to students. Opportunities to remedy some of the existing issues would also be lost.

Policy Area CS7: Residential Development

Who will Deliver the Policy

Delivery of Policy CS7 is largely reliant on the Private Sector with developers and/or landowners bringing forward residential development proposals in line with the policy, including delivering, or making contributions towards, infrastructure improvements, especially on larger sites.

Phasing for Delivery

Delivery of this policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Management of housing land supply

Housing permissions and completions will be carefully monitored on a quarterly basis. If the supply of deliverable housing sites rises to more than 40% above a five year supply, permissions for residential development in settlements outside of Skelmersdale will be limited to brownfield or 100% affordable housing schemes, or housing to meet the specific needs of a section of the community. This restraint will be dropped, and the types of housing listed above will be permitted, once the deliverable housing land supply reduces to no more than 20% above a five year supply.

The phasing of development of major sites in the three main settlements will be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD. If housing permissions or completions within the Key Sustainable Villages, Rural Sustainable Villages and Smaller Rural Villages exceed the targets for these areas set out in Policy CS1, there will be a presumption against the further granting of permission for market housing in these areas, unless it can be demonstrated that the continued development of these settlements will not cause any harm, individually

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or cumulatively, to the overall strategy of this plan or to the delivery of sustainable communities in West Lancashire, and will not create or add to infrastructure constraints locally.

The above mechanisms may also be used should housing targets be reduced at some point in the future as a result of new evidence.

Risks

There are two main risks to the success of this policy: firstly, the phasing of development does not turn out as anticipated or desired by this policy; and secondly, geographical patterns of development are not as anticipated or desired by this policy.

Implications of the Risks

Firstly, in terms of phasing of development, there are two possibilities. More housing than anticipated is built on attractive sites early in the plan period, which are developed in advance of key infrastructure. Unsustainable patterns of development result, and pressure on roads and other infrastructure is intensified. Alternatively, house completion rates never meet required levels, resulting in an overall housing shortfall, and housing need (in particular, affordable housing need) increasing to unmanageable levels.

Secondly, in terms of the geographical patterns of development, market forces or Central Government decisions (e.g. appeal decisions) mean that development takes place in a different, less sustainable, pattern from that set out in Policy CS1.

Contingencies for the Risks

If insufficient housing is delivered in Skelmersdale, meet the Borough's housing targets in more desirable market areas. This would ultimately result in loss of Green Belt around Ormskirk or Burscough and /or the expansion of one or more of the Key Sustainable Villages, despite major infrastructure constraints.

If greenfield sites are developed earlier than planned, negotiate "planning gain" from new developments address the most pressing infrastructure problems, and "make do" to the best of our ability. If completion levels are too low, work proactively with developers to deliver sufficient levels of housing in the right places – maybe taking a more flexible approach to planning gain demands, in order to increase the viability and the attraction of developing certain sites, and in order to deliver sufficient levels of housing in the most sustainable and beneficial places.

Policy Area CS8: Affordable & Specialist Housing

Who will Deliver the Policy

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Affordable and specialist housing will largely be delivered through Registered Social Landlords and other providers of affordable and specialist housing, the Council, and private developers in conjunction with market housing schemes.

Phasing for Delivery

Delivery of this policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

Insufficient affordable housing is delivered due to problems with identifying sites and / or securing planning permission for market housing, funding difficulties for affordable housing providers, opposition to schemes, or demonstration that provision of reasonable numbers of affordable dwellings is unviable.

Implications of the Risks

Affordable housing needs in the Borough become even more pressing due to the increasing and unmet demand, resulting in overcrowded households (“hidden homeless”), people moving out of the Borough to access affordable housing elsewhere, with knock-on effects such as longer commuting patterns and more traffic, decline in the local economy, and, in extreme cases, homelessness.

Contingencies for the Risks

Where schemes are failing to be delivered, relax affordable housing requirements so that more schemes become viable. Where viability figures show that lower than desired percentages of affordable housing are deliverable, or where RSLs are experiencing difficulty in finance, take a proactive approach towards development (e.g. by relaxing other demands) to secure more affordable housing units. The possibility of the Council directly delivering affordable housing could also be explored.

Policy Area CS9: Provision of Student Accommodation in Ormskirk

Who will Deliver the Policy

The policy's emphasis is on restraint, rather than delivery. It will be implemented through Development Management decisions.

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Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

One risk associated with this policy is the inability of the Development Management process to control the proliferation of HMOs, either due to a large number of dwellings being converted before the coming into force of an Article 4 Direction, or through grants of permission (including on appeal) once an Article 4 Direction is in place. There is also a risk of there being insufficient land for purpose-built student accommodation.

Implications of the Risks

An increase in the number and proportion of HMOs could in certain cases lead to further problems associated with some student areas, for example noise, litter and parking issues, and to a reduced quality of life for nearby residents. In addition, the number of lower priced properties in the area could decrease as these are converted to HMOs.

In the case of there being insufficient land for student accommodation, more students are forced to find alternative accommodation, either in HMOs within Ormskirk or in accommodation further afield. This could lead to problems recently experienced in parts of Ormskirk being experienced in other settlements, including a decline in lower-priced properties available, and traffic-related issues. If a greater number of students live further from the University, there may be an increase in unsustainable patterns of behaviour and traffic congestion in Ormskirk.

Contingencies for the Risks

Work with Edge Hill University and Community and Residents Groups to seek to address and alleviate any problems that might arise as a result of high concentrations of student HMOs in specific areas, and to identify suitable land for purpose-built accommodation, possibly with the Council adopting a slightly more flexible approach to the siting of such accommodation. Encourage the University to consider the possibility of "decentralisation" of some of its education functions, with certain functions or departments of the University being located in other settlements.

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Policy Area CS10: Provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Who will Deliver the Policy

Providing sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be delivered through the Site Allocations DPD. Sites will be delivered by a combination of bodies including the local authority, the county council, private land owners, members of the gypsy and traveller community and members of the showman's guild as well as private companies/ registered social landlords who may be involved in running sites. Who delivers the sites will depend upon the type of site and the size of the site.

Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

Delivering appropriate sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople has traditionally been an issue that can cause conflict between the settled and travelling community. With the complexity of delivering sites that can meet the needs of the settled as well as travelling community there are many areas of risk that could threaten the delivery of this policy.

As West Lancashire is predominantly a rural authority with proportionally more green belt than any other authority the site selection process may identify sites which are located in the Green Belt. There is a risk that the Secretary of State or the Planning Inspectorate determines that it is inappropriate for development to take place on Green Belt land.

Implications of the Risks

If the Secretary of State or the Planning Inspectorate rules that it is inappropriate to develop on Green Belt land which has been identified through the site selection process and all other alternative has been ruled out West Lancashire may not be able to meet the current needs of the Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community.

If West Lancashire could not allocate any suitable sites there is a risk that the Council would not be able to meet the requirements of Circular 01/2006. If no suitable sites are found the Council would be failing to provide mixed sustainable communities, which is a requirement of national planning policy, and this would weigh heavily against the Council when seeking to take action against unauthorised encampments.

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If no suitable sites are identified applications will have to be addressed on a case by case basis, potentially leading to an uncoordinated delivery of sites leading to an uncoordinated delivery of sites.

Contingencies for the Risks

If Green Belt release is not granted by the Secretary of State applications for gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople provision would have to be determined on a case by case basis following the guidance contained within Circular 01/2006, potentially leading to an uncoordinated delivery of sites.

Policy Area CS11: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres

Who will Deliver the Policy

This policy will be implemented through the Development Management process.

Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period.

Risks

As a result of continuing economic difficulties, leakage of expenditure to neighbouring areas, and the failure of this policy to work as intended, town and local centre vitality and viability suffer.

Implications of the Risks

Many town and local centre units change, either to “lower grade” functions, such as charity shops, or away from A1 type uses. The number of units open for business in the daytime decreases with an increase in take-aways and wine bars, etc. There are more “dead frontages” in town centre streets. All of this has an impact on vitality, with fewer people visiting the centres, lower footfall, etc., which impacts on viability as trade decreases. The remaining traditional retail uses suffer, and some are forced to close, resulting in unsightly empty units, which exacerbates the situation, with those people who are able to choosing to travel elsewhere to shop, which eventually leads to town centres failing.

Contingencies for the Risks

Take a more relaxed approach in implementing this policy, allowing change from A1 uses where the alternative is vacant units. Work pro-actively to improve the offer of town centres, with an improved local environment, easier access by all means of transport, and special features or events to make the centre distinctive. Support and capitalise on features such as markets.

Policy Area CS12: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice

Who will Deliver the Policy

Policy CS12 will be delivered by the Borough Council and County Council who are the transport authorities.

Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the Core Strategy period

Risks

Inevitably delivering an improved, modern, fit for purpose transport strategy to meet the needs of West Lancashire will be dependant upon a number of factors which could jeopardise the strategy. There is a risk that there will be a lack of capital funding to deliver larger projects, which is particularly important given the state of the economy. Also with government cuts there is a risk that there will be a withdrawal of services jeopardising the existing transport infrastructure in vulnerable locations such as rural areas.

Implications of the Risks

If the major schemes identified do not receive funding there is a risk that the schemes will not be delivered within the core strategy period. The results of this would mean that there would be greater reliance upon the car resulting in congestion increasing in many areas of the Borough. There would also be a risk that levels of deprivation would increase, in particular in areas such as Skelmersdale where access via public transport to jobs, as well as education and cultural facilities, is crucial.

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Many rural bus services are unprofitable to run and only survive due to subsidies provided by the County Council. If Council budgets are reduced there is a possibility that there will be a reduction in the subsidies available to operate effective rural bus services. If these subsidies are removed and the bus routes are no longer able to operate there will be an increase in social and economic exclusion as access to services and jobs is reduced.

Currently, congestion in parts of Ormskirk and Burscough and some parts of the rural areas has the potential to threaten any growth proposals by creating capacity issues which may be considered unacceptable.

Development in Ormskirk and Burscough along with some of the smaller rural settlements could be restricted, further exacerbating shortages of housing and employment land opportunities.

Contingencies for the Risks

If major infrastructure schemes cannot be delivered to improve transport within the Borough it must be accepted that congestion will increase and the social and economic problems experienced within the Borough will continue. Alternative schemes such as improving bus services and improvements to the transport networks will need to be explored although it is acknowledged that alternative schemes can only deliver limited benefits.

Without subsidies from County Council many rural bus services will end. Innovative solutions involving private sector investment will need to be explored. This may include expanding schemes such as 'West Lancashire Dial-a-Ride'.

If transport improvement cannot be delivered across the Borough, development within West Lancashire would need to be focused in Skelmersdale as this is considered to have a robust road network with good strategic links to the motorway corridors. Such an alternative is unlikely to be deliverable given the housing market in Skelmersdale.

Policy Area CS13: Accessibility and Provision of Local Services and Infrastructure

Who will Deliver the Policy

Delivery of this policy is largely reliant upon the utility providers and in particular United Utilities. The Council will work to ensure a good relationship is maintained with all providers and communication is frequent and open.

Phasing for Delivery

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This policy will run throughout the plan period although the waste water infrastructure works will not happen until beyond 2015 due to United Utilities spending periods.

Risks

The main risk to West Lancashire with regard to infrastructure is the provision of adequate water treatment facilities by the utility provider. The Council is aware of the existing stress placed upon the treatment works at New Lane which effectively inhibits growth of Burscough and the northern parts of Ormskirk. Improvements to this network are not yet identified in United Utilities spending plans and as such the Council has engaged with United Utilities and the Government Office to raise the profile of this issue and ensure a strategic resolution is derived. However, the risk remains that the provision of a new waste water treatment works will never be delivered.

Implications of the Risks

Development within Burscough and the main settlement area of Ormskirk may be restricted in the event United Utilities is not able to provide an appropriate solution to the waste water capacity constraint at the New Lane treatment works.

Contingencies for the Risks

All development within West Lancashire would need to be focused in Skelmersdale. The exception would be for small amounts allocated to rural areas without major infrastructure constraints and possibly some development in Aughton which is not constrained by the waste water treatment capacity issue. Such an alternative is unlikely to be deliverable given the housing market in Skelmersdale.

Policy Area CS14: Developer Contributions

Who will Deliver the Policy

This policy will be driven by the Council through Development Management and negotiation but is dependent upon several factors, the most significant being economic viability, which is subject to wider market conditions beyond the control of planning and the LDF.

Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the plan period.

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

Risks Economic conditions fail to improve allowing the economic viability case to be made for specific developments, leading to reduced or no financial contributions towards infrastructure improvements.
Implications of the Risks Existing pressures upon infrastructure would be exacerbated and new pressures and demands would be created as a result of new development.
Contingencies for the Risks The Council continues to use planning obligations and section 106 agreements to secure, where possible relevant measures to mitigate the impact of development.

Policy Area CS15: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure

Who will Deliver the Policy This policy will be largely dependent upon partnership working in order to deliver it. This is due to the complex nature of low carbon energy infrastructure and the need to engage the Council, developer and energy providers. The policy will also be dependent upon the development management approach and Building Control to ensure developers are challenged in order to deliver carbon saving in line with regulations beyond the planning remit.
Phasing for Delivery This policy will run throughout the plan period.
Risks

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

<p>Decentralised heat and energy schemes are dependent upon up front funding and delivery from a lead organisation (usually an energy supplier) who may be unwilling to engage dependent upon the certainty of development viability in a particular area.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>Large scale development within the Borough will continue to rely upon centralised energy generation.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>The Council will be required to ensure other methods of decentralised energy are pursued such as community wind schemes, biomass boilers and solar PV. Education of developers and the community will be pivotal to this action, in order for the Council to raise awareness of financial incentives such as Feed in Tariffs (FITS).</p>

Policy Area CS16: Preserving and Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>This Policy will be delivered through a combination of the Borough Council and County Council , along with environmental agencies and private developers.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>The policy will run throughout the plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p>

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

The deliverability of the strategy will be reliant upon a range of factors which will inevitably have an associated risk. These factors can be summarised as:

- The delivery of key development scheme that can contribute to open space and green infrastructure improvements;
- The loss of existing green spaces for development could compromise the strategy; and
- Private landowners may not deliver/allow delivery to take place on their land.

Implications of the Risks

In the current economic climate it is unlikely the deliverability of green infrastructure schemes will be funded through public finances. As such, the provision of linear parks, new sporting facilities and other improvements will be reliant upon contributions from developers looking to deliver large development schemes. If these schemes cannot be delivered then the Council cannot ask for contributions for open space improvement or community infrastructure and this therefore removes the finance to deliver many of the proposed schemes.

In order to meet the Borough's housing needs Green Belt release is required. If the Secretary of State or the Planning Inspectorate deem it inappropriate that substantial development should take place in the Green Belt then development may be forced onto greenfield sites, such as open green space. If development occurred on greenfield sites not only would the Borough not be able to meet its future requirements for outdoor sports and recreation facilities the Borough could lose existing facilities and fall below the current demand requirements.

Many of the proposed schemes will require the co-operation of private landowners. If private landowners objected to the proposal then delivery of schemes such as the proposed linear parks may be compromised.

Contingencies for the Risks

In uncertain funding times such as these the delivery of many projects will be dependent upon contributions from developers. If these developments do not come forward then there may be no opportunity to meet current or future requirements for outdoor sports and recreational facilities. If this happens greater pressure will be put upon existing facilities and recreational facilities. In order to mitigate against the effects of additional pressure improved management of these facilities will be required.

Where funding is still in place to deliver schemes there may be additional problems such as requiring private land. Ideally the Council would like to work with the co-operation of landowners. However, in order to secure the delivery of major schemes, compulsory purchase order may be required or, if appropriate, alternative sites sought.

Appendix E: Delivery & Risk in the Core Strategy

Policy Area CS17: Enhancing West Lancashire's Distinctive Character and Ensuring Sustainable Design

<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>Development Management will be required to encourage developers to produce well designed schemes in order to deliver this policy.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will run throughout the plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>Given the current and fluctuating economic climate, design and character enhancement are often viewed as an optional extra which may be overlooked. Policy CS16 is largely subjective, particularly in relation to sustainable design measures. It does not specify how far a proposal must go in order to qualify as a sustainable design which addresses the issue of climate change.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>Poor quality design and architecture will be produced which will inevitably dilute the quality of character within the Borough and do little to address the impacts of climate change.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>Adoption of the Code for Sustainable Homes to allow a clear and measurable system within the planning framework to enable the Council to require specific interventions and building design standards in order to address climate change</p>

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