



# Health Impact Assessment Report West Lancashire Local Plan

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## Summary

In April 2011 a rapid Health Impact Assessment (rHIA) was undertaken on the Core Strategy Preferred Options. The purpose of this was to help make decisions by predicting the health consequences of a proposal being implemented. As a number of changes were made during the transition from the Core Strategy Preferred Options to the Local Plan; not least the introduction of a new set of policies, a second rHIA was required. Key stakeholders were invited to a workshop on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to undertake this.

This report documents the process and findings from this second rHIA workshop on the Development Management and Planning Policies of the West Lancashire Local Plan. It should be viewed in conjunction with The Rapid Health Impact Assessment on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, (April 2011). This can be viewed at; <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/PDF/Final%20report.pdf>

A number of recommendations were established from the first rHIA;

- To maximise opportunities for employment and training
- To develop alternative forms of transport to minimise the increase in traffic
- To ensure that the loss of agricultural land is kept to a minimum and is protected from inappropriate use
- To improve public transport services
- To make full use of existing plans and arrangements
- To ensure the development of high quality housing
- To maximise the opportunities for physical activity and sport in ways that enhance the environment

The rHIA report surmised that the Core Strategy can be viewed as a highly positive venture for improving the health of the West Lancashire population.

The rHIA on the 11<sup>th</sup> November focussed on specific policies within the Local Plan;

### **General Development Policies;**

Settlement Boundaries, Safeguarded Land, Design of Development, Demonstrating Viability & Sequential Tests.

### **Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation;**

Residential Development, Affordable and Specialist Housing, Provision of student accommodation & Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People.

### **Infrastructure and Service Provision;**

Maintaining Vibrant Town & Local Centres, Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice, Service Accessibility & Infrastructure Growth & Developer Contributions.

### **Sustaining the Boroughs Environment and Addressing Climate Change;**

Low Carbon Development & Energy Infrastructure, Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment, Provision of Green Infrastructure & Open Recreation Space, & Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment.

Recommendations identified during this process include the following overarching principles: a flexible and adaptable plan; a co-ordinated approach with joined up thinking on policy development and implementation; to maintain the identity of West Lancashire; importance of community cohesion; mechanism for enforcement of the policies to be considered; ensure isolated groups are catered for and a strong communication of aspirations.

Further to this, six specific recommendations were made. The evidence base supports the implementation of the following recommendations;

- Incorporation of more official and legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People
- Sustainable Waste collections
- Support for renewable energy

Next steps should be to identify the measures to support these recommendations which can be incorporated into the Local Plan.

The remaining three recommendations require further scoping to inform a decision as to whether to include them in the Local Plan;

- Specifying buffer zones between neighbouring uses.
- Health Impact of Mining/slag heaps.
- Implications of Fracking.

## 1. Overview

This report documents the process and findings from a Rapid Health Impact Assessment (rHIA) Workshop held in November 2011 on the Development Management and Planning Policies of the West Lancashire Local Plan. The scope of the report is to document the rHIA results on the West Lancashire Local Plan following the consultation process on the draft Local Development Framework. The report forms the second part of the rHIA process and it should be viewed in conjunction with the rHIA on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, April 2011. This can be viewed at; <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/PDF/Final%20report.pdf>

## 2. Background to the Local Development Framework and Local Plan

The Borough Council had been previously preparing a Core Strategy document to sit within the Local Development Framework (LDF). The new National Planning Policy Framework expects Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Local Plan rather than an LDF. Subsequently, West Lancashire has now moved away from the LDF to produce a Local Plan for the Borough. The new-style Local Plan is built upon the principles of:

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

A key difference of the new Local Plan system, compared to the previous Local Plan, 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. The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 will contain a Vision and Strategy that will set out how the Council wants West Lancashire to develop over the period to 2027.

This Local Plan Preferred Option document includes an updated version of the draft policies that were provided in the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options paper. It also adds some Development Management and Site Allocations aspects, as well as adding brand new policies on specific Development Management issues to help assess planning applications and allocations for specific types of development.

The Local Plan has gone through a number of stages of development, each of which included public consultation;

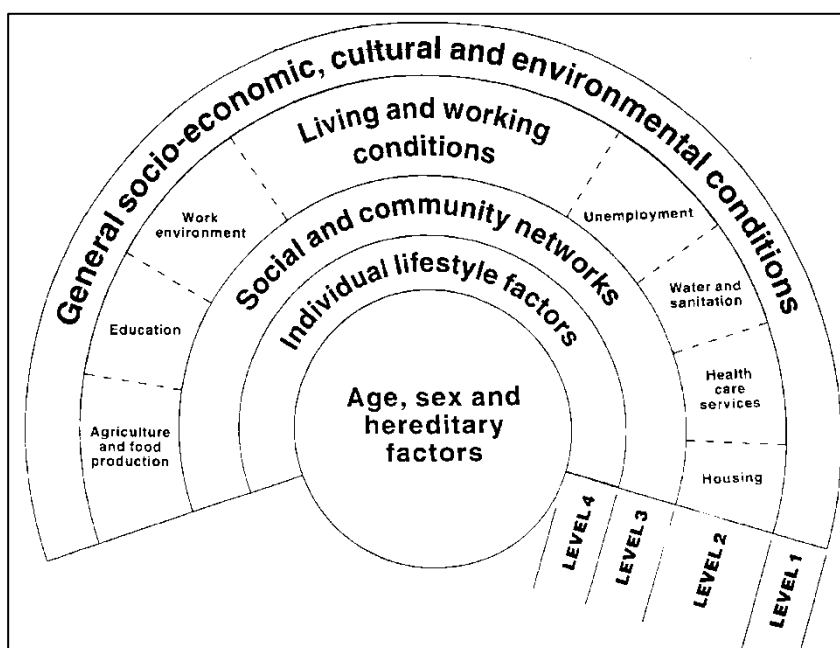
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|--------------------|--|
| <b>Stage one</b>   | <b>Evidence base:</b> the rationale and supporting evidence for proposed plans.  |
| <b>Stage two</b>   | <b>Issues:</b> an opportunity for communities, businesses and other stakeholders to give their views on the issues for the Borough |
| <b>Stage three</b> | <b>Options:</b> development of 5 options to address the issues identified and achieve the Vision for West Lancashire               |
| <b>Stage four</b>  | <b>Preferred options:</b> sets out the preferred choices for further development in West Lancashire.                               |

A rHIA was undertaken on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, at stage 4, in April 2011. The Local Plan has now evolved further based on responses to the Preferred Options Public Consultation exercise, changes to the evidence base and National Planning Policy Context and to incorporate additional policy on Development Management Policies and Site Allocations. Because of this, a further rHIA was required to identify the potential impacts of any of the proposed changes or new aspects of the Development Management Policies.

### 3. The rationale for Health Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment is intended to help make decisions by predicting the health consequences of a proposal being implemented. It should also seek to make recommendations on how positive impacts on health can be enhanced, and negative impacts minimised. It looks at the distribution of health impact and whether certain elements of proposals have a greater impact on certain population groups.

The majority of proposed plans and policies will have an impact on health to some extent. The Social Determinants of Health Model below (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991) highlights the social, economic and environmental impacts on health. Local plans and policies can have significant negative impacts on health if these determinants are not considered. However there is also great potential to positively influence the health of communities by considering the impact of any policies or plans on these factors.



The Social Determinants of Health, Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991

### 4. Summary of findings of rHIA on West Lancashire Core Strategy Preferred Options

#### 4.1 Values underpinning the rHIA

The rHIA was based on a set of key principles which included a broad definition of health that acknowledged the overarching importance of biological, lifestyle, social, environmental, public service and policy influences on health. In addition the below principles underpinned the rHIA;

- Sustainability
- Reduction of health inequalities
- Health protection
- Accessibility
- Health improvement

### **4.3 Recommendations**

A number of recommendations were established from the first rHIA. These are detailed below:

- To maximise opportunities for employment and training
- To develop alternative forms of transport to minimise the increase in traffic
- To ensure that the loss of agricultural land is kept to a minimum and is protected from inappropriate use
- To improve public transport services
- To make full use of existing plans and arrangements
- To ensure the development of high quality housing
- To maximise the opportunities for physical activity and sport in ways that enhance the environment

The rHIA report included details on the evidence base relating to each recommendation and surmised that the Core Strategy can be viewed as a highly positive venture for improving the health of the West Lancashire population. It will support and enhance its potential for economic prosperity, reduction in poverty and reduced levels of crime alongside better health experience for the most vulnerable and independence for those with disability or long term conditions.

## **5. Consultation on the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options**

### **5.1 Summary of LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Findings**

A public consultation on the Preferred Options took place in May and June 2011. A range of mechanisms was used including; leaflets, forums, exhibitions, work in schools, business and parish council briefings, press and social media, an Edge Hill Forum and a Housing Developer Forum. Over 700 formal written representations were received.

A series of high level issues were raised as a result of the consultation;

- Green Belt release was opposed, but some recognised need for its release
- Highest levels of support for Green Belt release were for the Burscough site
- Infrastructure problems need resolving
- Support for regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre
- Levels of housing in Skelmersdale are too high & undeliverable
- Review of housing figures needed
- More flexible policies needed
- Review of timescales and phasing for delivery
- Support for expansion of Edge Hill, but preferably not on Green Belt release
- General support for all policies, including those with a potential to improve health of the Borough.

## **5.2 Results of the Consultation: Health related**

Some specific issues were raised as result of the consultation regarding the impact on health. These included support and demand for:

- Protecting agricultural & recreational land
- Conserving & enhancing biodiversity and environment
- Encouraging 'Natural' tourism – eg Ribble Coast, Wetlands Park
- Providing elderly & specialised housing
- Improvements to public transport, particularly in Skelmersdale, Burscough & rural areas
- Improvements to infrastructure, including drainage & broadband
- Improvements to local services
- Low carbon development & renewable energy
- Promoting good design, reduce crime & fear of crime .
- Preserving & enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure & conservation of cultural assets

There was also an acceptance of Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show people pitches by M58/Scarisbrick.

Full consultation responses are available on the West Lancashire Borough Council Website and comments received have influenced the development of the Local Plan Preferred Option.

## **6. Proposed changes, what's new in the local plan?**

The Local Plan Preferred Option document is structured in a very similar manner to the previous Core Strategy Preferred Options document, and includes the following sections:

- Spatial Portrait and a Vision for West Lancashire in 2027
- Strategic Policies and Strategic Development Sites
- General Development Policies
- Facilitating Economic Growth
- Providing Housing and Residential Accommodation
- Infrastructure and Services Provision
- Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change
- Delivery and Risk – a Plan B

The Local Plan includes amendments to policies in the previous Core Strategy document and brand new policies for Development Management and Site Allocations. It also includes:

- Amendments to Housing and Employment Land Targets
- Selection of a Preferred Option for the release of Green Belt for development - a cross between the two previous options
- An improved and more robust "Plan B" – involving safeguarding of land to ensure future delivery targets can be met
- New Site Allocations for Housing, Employment Areas, Rural Employment and Mixed-Use Rural Development Opportunities
- New Development Management Policies, either as brand new policies or added to existing Local Plan policies



## **7. Rapid Health Needs Assessment on the Development Management Policies**

### **7.1 Purpose**

As a number of changes were made when developing the Local Plan, not least the introduction of a new set of policies, a second rHIA was required. This rHIA should be viewed in conjunction with the first rHIA on the Local Development Framework.

The aims of the process were to;

- Outline the potential positive and negative health and well-being impacts for the population of West Lancashire based on the revisions and additions in the Local Plan Policies
- Identify the population groups likely to be affected by these impacts
- Identify key issues and make recommendations against these issues in order to mitigate health risks or enhance health benefits.

### **7.2 Process**

Key stakeholders were invited to a workshop on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 to undertake a second rHIA. (A list of attendees can be viewed as appendix 2). Several attendees had previously taken part in the rHIA of the Core Strategy Preferred Options. Participants received presentations covering; the changes from a Local Development Framework to a Local Plan, the results of the Preferred Options consultation, the proposed changes to the Local Plan, the Development Management Policies. The results of the first rHIA and the background and tools to conduct a rHIA were also presented.

The rHIA was led and facilitated by Jane Cass, Public Health Specialist and Amy Witherup, Public Health Associate, NHS Central Lancashire. Participants were split into three groups in order to consider the Health Impact of the policies identified as either a) potentially having a significant impact on health or b) having changed significantly or been added since the last rHIA was undertaken. The policies considered by each group were;

#### **Group 1**

##### **General Development Policies**

GD1: Settlement Boundaries.

GD2: Safeguarded Land

GD3: Design of Development

GD4: Demonstrating Viability

GD5: Sequential Tests

##### **Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation**

RS1: Residential Development

RS2: Affordable and Specialist Housing

RS3: Provision of student accommodation

RS4: Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People

#### **Group 2**

##### **Infrastructure and Service Provision**

IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Town & Local Centres.

IF2: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

IF3: Service Accessibility & Infrastructure Growth.

IF4: Developer Contributions

### **Group 3**

#### **Sustaining the Boroughs Environment and Addressing Climate Change**

EN1: Low carbon Development & Energy Infrastructure

EN2: Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

EN3: Provision of Green Infrastructure & Open Recreation Space

EN4: Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment.

Groups were asked to use a screening checklist (Health Impact Assessment Screening template, Lothian NHS Board, Dr M Douglas, can be viewed as appendix 3) to facilitate the identification of potential health impacts of the implementation of each of the Policies. They were then asked to specify whether the anticipated impacts were considered to be positive or negative.

#### **A set of questions were posed to each group to apply to their set of policies:**

- **What impact will the proposal have on lifestyles and wellbeing?** (*Diet and nutrition, exercise and physical activity, substance use: tobacco, alcohol or drugs, risk taking behaviour, education and lifelong learning or skills*)
- **What impact will the proposal have on the social environment?** (*Social status, employment and worklessness, social/family support, stress, income and child poverty*)
- **What impact will the proposal have on equality?** (*Discrimination, equality of opportunity, relations between groups, community cohesion and social capital*)
- **What impact will the proposal have on the physical environment?** (*Living conditions, working conditions, pollution or climate change, accidental injuries or public safety, transmission of infectious diseases*)
- **How will the proposal impact on access to and quality of services?** (*Health care, transport, social services, housing services, education, leisure*)

Groups were then asked to identify which population groups they felt the impacts would have most effect on.

Following this, groups identified key themes and made recommendations to mitigate/enhance the effects. The completed tools and recommendations were used to inform this report.

### 7.3 Results

Groups completed tools for each individual policy, for the purpose of this section they have been grouped into; General Development Policies, Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation, Infrastructure and Services and Sustaining the Boroughs Environment and Addressing Climate Change, and references to any specific policies have been noted. Population groups anticipated to be affected are highlighted in grey.

#### 7.3.1 General Development Policies

<b>General Development Policies</b>		
GD1: Settlement Boundaries. GD2: Safeguarded Land GD3: Design of Development GD4: Demonstrating Viability GD5: Sequential Tests		
<b>Area of impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Lifestyle</b>		
<b>Social environment</b>	Flexible attitude to new uses of existing buildings that are no longer viable i.e. pubs converted to residential use (All groups)	
<b>Equality</b>		
<b>Physical environment</b>	Better design of communal waste storage (wheelie bins); safer, easier for bin lorries, better environment (All groups) Opportunity through GN4 to remove inappropriate employment uses in residential areas? (All groups)	More space required for recycling – less normal space Transport issues reduce employment opportunities Lack of transport (particularly in Skelmersdale) increases use of personal cars & CO2 emissions (All groups)  Few restrictions on student accommodations which creates safety risks, fire etc. (Students)
<b>Access to and quality of services</b>		

### 7.3.2 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

<b>Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation</b>		
RS1: Residential Development RS2: Affordable and Specialist Housing RS3: Provision of student accommodation RS4: Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People		
<b>Area of impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	No provision for allotments- many health benefits and environmental benefits (All groups)	Green spaces close to homes to encourage people to walk(All groups)
<b>Social environment</b>	Housing in cul de sacs as apposed to alleyways is desirable Housing overlooking green space is desirable Improved community cohesion when a mix of housing styles is used (All groups)	
<b>Equality</b>	Limiting student accommodation would have a beneficial effect on community cohesion (Students)	No specific policy promoting specialist accommodation for disabled people(People with disabilities)  Safety issues with unofficial traveller sites (Travellers)
<b>Physical environment</b>	Lack of policy to provide buffer zones between residential and industrial development and discourage bad neighbours (All groups)	Safety issues with unofficial traveller sites (Travellers)
<b>Access to and quality of services</b>		

### 7.3.3 Infrastructure and Services

<p>IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Town &amp; Local Centres.            IF2: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice            IF3: Service Accessibility &amp; Infrastructure Growth.            IF4: Developer Contributions</p>		
Area of impact	Positive	Negative
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<p>IF1 Diet and nutrition – greater choice shops, more accessible, financial accessibility (all groups)            Education – greater knowledge of diet and nutrition – (unemployed, young, elderly, students)            Greater facilities, vibrant town centre – less youth crime/substance use etc. – (young people new businesses)            Less car dependent – (all groups)            IF2 Improvement in activity levels and health benefits            Safe cycle routes needed            Improved access to education/employment,            Access to better amenities – food shops etc.</p> <p>IF3 Broadband connection – better health knowledge            Access to basic amenities – health implications</p>	<p>IF1 Potential fragmented development encourages car use</p> <p>IF3 Broadband – isolated communities, poor use of town centres, less vibrant</p>
<b>Social environment</b>	<p>IF1 Better facilities – more employment – (working age, unemployed)            Better facilities – improved social status, less social division – (vulnerable groups)</p> <p>IF4 Improved community safety            Improved access to sports facilities</p>	<p>IF1 Balancing development to ensure one area doesn't lose out</p>
<b>Equality</b>	<p>IF2 Improved access transport for all</p>	
<b>Physical environment</b>	<p>IF2 Reduction in car use e.g. pollution            Reducing congestion – accidents</p>	<p>IF2 Public transport – greater transmission of infectious disease</p>
<b>Access to and quality of services</b>	<p>IF2 Improved access to all services            General wellbeing – greater access to facilities</p>	

### 7.3.4 Sustaining the Boroughs Environment and Addressing Climate Change

<b>Sustaining the Boroughs Environment and Addressing Climate Change</b>		
EN1: Low carbon Development & Energy Infrastructure EN2: Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment EN3: Provision of Green Infrastructure & Open Recreation Space EN4: Preserving & Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment.		
<b>Area of impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<p>EN1 Encourage cycling/walking Air quality improvement Creation of jobs Reduction in landfill Less demand for health services</p> <p>EN2 Encourage healthy lifestyles – use of green corridors for leisure/keep fit Free leisure activities – physical and mental health Encourage local (?organic) food production through protection of agricultural land Trees reduce CO2 levels – protection of wildlife etc. Sustainability –protecting health and environment, historic, built and natural</p> <p>EN3 Better quality housing and buildings Better environment, cheaper, encouraging healthy lifestyles Better design and reduces fear of crime Shade trees provide protection and shade, reduce climate change</p> <p>EN4 Better quality housing and buildings Better environment, cheaper, encouraging healthy lifestyles Better design and reduces fear of crime Shade trees provide protection and shade, reduce climate change</p>	<p>EN1 Need to consider additional recycling e.g. food</p> <p>EN3 Ensure provision of supporting facilities e.g. toilets – problems? Costs?</p>

<b>Social environment</b>	<p>EN1 Jobs – increase in renewable industry</p> <p>EN2 Encourages social interaction Enhances free leisure facilities Some employment opportunities Reduces stress</p> <p>EN3 Provide employment</p> <p>EN4 Provide employment</p>	
<b>Equality</b>	<p>EN2 Provision of free leisure activities – reduces health inequalities Need to ensure awareness and green transport to facilities Map of footpaths/cycle paths would be beneficial</p> <p>EN3 Access to all regardless of cost, encourages social cohesion Cheap, accessible</p> <p>EN4 Access to all regardless of cost, encourages social cohesion</p>	EN1 Discriminates against those who can't afford improvements to existing homes
<b>Physical environment</b>	<p>EN1 Reduce pollution – improve environment Reduction in fuel costs, warmer homes – health benefits for elderly</p> <p>EN2 Protection of natural environment resources, biodiversity, wildlife, landscape Provision of better areas to live in Encourage reduction in climate change e.g. trees</p> <p>EN3 Protects assets, provides identity and character protected Social interaction encouraged</p>	EN1 Noise of wind turbines/impact of other renew schemes on people – visual impairment etc.

	EN4 Protects assets, provides identity and character protected	
<b>Access to and quality of services</b>	EN2 Better living conditions, fewer mental health problems	EN4 Possible impact on prohibiting development due to sensitivity of heritage assets

It was generally felt that EN1-4 would not affect specific groups, instead it would target all of the population.





### 7.3.4 Key Themes and Recommendations

Chapter 5 General Development Policies Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation	
Key themes	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge Hill University               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What if it shrinks?</li> <li>○ What if it grows?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Gypsy and Travellers</li> <li>• Sustainable Waste collection and recycling</li> <li>• Community Cohesion               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mix of housing</li> <li>○ Open space</li> <li>○ Safer Alleyways</li> <li>○ Allotments</li> <li>○ Buffer zones between neighbouring uses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the plan be more flexible and reactive to the changing national policy and local needs for higher education?</li> <li>• More official and legal sites that can be planned and managed.</li> <li>• Communal Community Collection Centres</li> <li>• Policies for design need to ensure community cohesion is delivered</li> <li>• Can policy specify Buffer zones for this purpose</li> </ul>

<b>Chapter 8 Infrastructure and Service Provision</b>	
<b>Key themes</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinated approach</li> <li>• Importance of town/local centres</li> <li>• Communication (Partners, land owners, developers)</li> <li>• Similar potential excluded groups within each policy</li> <li>• Demographic Variations (e.g. young people in Skelmersdale)</li> <li>• Accessibility is key</li> <li>• Education is important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joined up thinking between areas, uses, applying policy</li> <li>• Ensure they remain vibrant – improved rather than maintained</li> <li>• Clear aspirations need to be set out for facilities provided.</li> <li>• Ensure more isolated groups are catered for e.g. elderly, unemployed, disadvantaged.</li> <li>• Policies need to reflect different circumstances</li> <li>• Policy needs to be co-ordinated on a Borough wide level and beyond</li> <li>• Promote links to jobs, health, and regeneration.</li> </ul>

**Chapter 9 Sustaining the Borough’s Environment and Addressing Climate Change**

Key Themes	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies positively enhance health and well being.</li> <li>• Support for policies and integration of recreational and natural assets into development.</li> <li>• Reduce climate change</li> <li>• Reduce demand on health services</li> <li>• Support for renewable energy</li> <li>• Work with others to encourage re-cycling and build this into new developments – reduce waste (e.g. food waste)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All policies incorporated into (now) all residential developments</li> <li>• Maintain identity of West Lancs</li> <li>• Ensure policies are enforced, higher profile! Better communication of available natural/recreational resources – modern media</li> <li>• Consider ways of delivering improvements to those who can't afford e.g. solar/wind energy</li> <li>• Tawd Valley – Mining/Slag heaps – consider impact on health?</li> <li>• Fracking implications and policies to be considered.</li> </ul>

The identified recommendations can be split into overarching principles and more specific tasks which will require attention during the continued development and implementation of the Local Plan. They should be read in conjunction with those from the rHIA on the Core Strategy Preferred Options.

**7.5 Overarching principles;**

- A flexible and adaptable plan
- A co-ordinated approach with joined up thinking on policy development and implementation – Borough wide and beyond
- To maintain the identity of West Lancashire
- Importance of community cohesion
- Mechanism for enforcement of the policies to be considered.
- Ensure isolated groups are catered for
- Strong communication of aspirations

## 7.6 Recommendations to take forward as action

1. Incorporation of more official and legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people.
2. Investigation into the feasibility of specifying buffer zones between neighbouring uses.
3. Sustainable waste collections and recycling with Communal Community Collection Centres.
4. Further investigation into mining/slag heaps and their impact on health.
5. Implications of fracking and the Development Management Policies to be considered.
6. Support for renewable energy – consider ways of delivering improvements to those who can't afford e.g. solar/wind energy.

## 7.7 Recommendations and the Evidence Base

**Recommendation 1:** Incorporation of more official and legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people

### ***Evidence***

The relationships between Gypsies, Travellers and Local Authorities are variable across the UK. Whilst progress in meeting the needs of these groups has been made in some areas, in others accommodation issues remain and social tension can result. (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009).

In terms of health and education, Gypsies and Travellers are one of the most deprived groups in Britain. The average life expectancy is 10 years lower than the national average. Research into inequalities experienced by these groups has found that current sites are often located in unsuitable areas, and the following inequalities occur;

- Economic inclusion and access to employment
- Access to and experience of healthcare
- Social care, Education and other public services
- Policing and criminal justice
- Racism and discrimination
- Domestic violence (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009)

The national shortage of specific sites and constant pressures of being moved on have huge impacts on health (Improvement and Development Agency, 2011). One of the major benefits of providing adequate accommodation is the impact this can have on community relations. Communities and Local Government have developed a good practice guide to designing Gypsy and Traveller sites and recommend that sites should be; safe and sustainable, easy to manage and maintain, of decent standard and support harmonious relations. (Communities and Local Government, 2008)

West Lancashire has a history of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people setting up encampments. Currently there are no authorised sites in the Borough for

Gypsies and Travellers. The Local Plan recognises the rights of this group, along with the link between a lack of good quality sites and poor health education. The provision of authorised sites has the potential to positively benefit the health of Gypsies and Travellers and also residents of the Borough.

**Recommendation 2:** Investigation into the feasibility of specifying buffer zones between neighbouring uses.

### ***Evidence***

A buffer zone is a tract of land between two differently zoned areas, for example a park between a commercial and residential area, in order to minimise contributions of any adverse effects to neighbouring uses. Examples of buffer zones used in LDF policies include; between motorways and neighbouring uses, protection of nature, and preservation of heritage sites.

The benefits of buffer zones include; identification of where impacts on sites may be an issue, aiding the development of proposals which suggest mitigation measures and the provision of an opportunity for partnership working to manage areas and developments.

Buffer zones would provide a method to identify where impacts on sites may be an issue, so provide a useful tool in implementing the recommendations of a rHIA within planning policy. For example it may specify a buffer zone between residential and industrial areas providing protection from odour, dust, noise and visual impairments.

Further scoping is required in West Lancashire as to the need for buffer zones and specific intentions of use. It is recommended that a rationale for buffer zone use is developed.

**Recommendation 3:** Sustainable waste collections and recycling with Communal Community Collection Centres.

### ***Evidence***

Most people in the UK are living in a manner which is not sustainable (Lyons, M., Lurina, P. & Harrsm, J., 2009). Waste disposal can have adverse impacts on local air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable Waste Management is vital for; conserving natural resources, preserving unnecessary emission of greenhouse gases and protecting Public Health and natural ecosystems. (Improvement and Development Agency, 2011).

Climate Change has been identified as a serious threat to Public Health. Recycling can contribute significantly to a reduction in carbon emissions and therefore the health consequences associated with climate change. (Department for Food & Rural Affairs, 2009).

Whilst the links between sustainability and health are apparent, much of the evidence base on recycling and health focuses on the health impacts of those living near to, or working with recycling. With increased recycling, evidence suggests a need to monitor the health of recycling workers more closely. Further research is required into the health benefits of recycling. Evidence to date suggests indirect health benefits derive from; decreased carbon emissions, energy and raw materials used

and the diversion of materials away from landfill. Individual and community benefits include; the links with composting, gardening, healthy eating and physical activity. (Lyons et al. 2009).

A recent report into recycling and public health identified one of the biggest barriers to be gaining planning permission and licensing for new recycling initiatives. A Local Plan which supports the development of recycling would therefore help to address one of the most challenging barriers. This is consistent with recommendations in guidance for sustainable planning highlighting the importance of integration of local waste management opportunities in new developments. (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006).

This recommendation supports the Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire and is consistent with the identified principles of Sustainable Development and addressing Climate change.

**Recommendation 4:** Further investigation into mining/slag heaps and their impact on health.

### ***Evidence***

West Lancashire and its neighbouring Boroughs have a mining history. Lancashire at present remains a nationally important county for minerals.

Slag heaps are generally used as a waste removal mechanism. There is little evidence specific to the impact of slag heaps on health. Environmental impacts include; difficulty for vegetation to take root, sloping and acid erosion causing pollution to rivers and streams.

Evidence into the impact of mining and health is split into two main bodies; the impact on health at the time of mining (e.g. pollution, traffic, noise, health risks to miners) and the 'coalfield' health effect, where the scale and suddenness of job losses in the eighties and nineties left communities experiencing difficult socioeconomic conditions and the associated poor health status. (Riva, M., Terashima, M., Curtis, S., Shucksmith, S. & Carlebach, S., 2011).

The Lancashire County Council Website hosts details of mineral and waste sites in West Lancashire, including the history of the site and current permissions granted for use of sites. Due to the limited evidence base on the impact of slag heaps on health and the lack of reference to this in relation to specific developments in the policies, further consideration of this is outside the scope of this rHIA. Should this be an on-going consideration, a specific piece of work would need to be undertaken to identify the location and current status of slag heaps in West Lancashire and assess the potential health impact specific to that locality.

**Recommendation 5:** Implications of Fracking and the Development Management Policies to be considered.

Fracking is a process of shale gas extraction. Evidence from the United States suggests shale gas extraction brings a significant risk of ground and surface water contamination. A report by the Tyndal Centre for Climate Change Research (2011) suggests that until the evidence base is developed a precautionary approach to this technique is required in the United Kingdom.

The process is regulated by three government bodies; Department of Environment and Climate Change, Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency, and is also subject to Local Planning Permission being granted. At present, exploration work is taking place at five sites in Lancashire, including one in Beconsall, West Lancashire. The Department of Environment and Climate Change have issued exploration licenses for this and the Environment Agency has been involved in assessing risk of water contamination from this exploratory work. Further detail can be viewed on the Environment Agency website. At this stage there is not thought to be a risk of water contamination from the exploratory stage.

There is public concern about the health and environmental risks of the Fracking process, which is subject to much media attention, particularly in the United States. Should the work in Lancashire reach a development stage, it will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prior to any permission being granted. It is recommended that a Health Impact Assessment is carried out in conjunction with the EIA to consider factors such as; risks of water contamination, pressure on water supplies, proximity of activity to population centres, land demands, traffic and pollution, in the context of health.

**Recommendation 6:** Support for renewable energy – consider ways of delivering improvements to those who can't afford e.g. Solar/wind energy.

### ***Evidence***

The Government is committed to increasing the proportion of energy we use from renewable sources. This will increase the security of energy supplies in the UK and provide opportunities for investment in new industries. (Department for Environment and Climate Change, 2011).

The development and use of renewable energy sources is part of the strategy to address climate change. The Public Health threat of Climate change has been alluded to under recommendation 3, Sustainable Waste Management. Climate Change is predicted to result in an increase in deaths, disability and injury from extreme temperature and weather conditions, heat waves, floods and storms including health hazards from chemical and sewage pollution. The Public Health impact of climate change is significant on an international scale. (NHS Confederation, 2007).

Measures and policies intended to reduce climate change can help reduce health inequalities and vice versa. Fuel poverty is an example of how addressing climate change via renewable energy can have a positive impact on the health of individuals in West Lancashire.

Fuel poverty can be defined as 'having to spend 10% or more of a household's net income to heat a home to an adequate standard of warmth. (The Marmott Review Team, 2011). Whilst bringing all homes up to a minimum standard of thermal efficiency would have the strongest impact on the poorest households, fuel poverty does not just affect those on low incomes. Those in rural areas are also at risk due to rare access to mains gas and the age of the buildings. (Boardman, B., 1991). The elderly are also more at risk of winter deaths due to increased vulnerability to cold weather due to existing medical conditions and weaker temperature control. (El-Ansari, W. & El-Silimy, S., 2008).



Improving energy efficiency of homes is one of the strategies recommended to reduce fuel poverty. The levels of deprivation in parts of West Lancashire, predominance of rural areas and an aging population means tackling fuel poverty in West Lancashire provides an opportunity to positively influence the health of a number of residents of the Borough. The inclusions in policy EN1 to support Sustainable Development are therefore welcomed. Caution should be taken to minimise risk of health inequalities by consideration of specific interventions/support for those most at risk of fuel poverty.

## 8. Conclusion

The rHIA process increases awareness of health considerations associated with the policies. The consultation responses on the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Options demonstrate that residents and other stakeholders are aware of and concerned about potential health impacts. Many of the issues raised during the consultation mirror those identified during the session, specifically;

- Low carbon development and renewable energy
- Recreation and natural assets
- Green infrastructure and protection of cultural assets

The rHIA process identified a greater number of potential positive health impacts than negative ones. This demonstrates the wide scope in which the Local Plan can support West Lancashire residents to achieve and maintain good health.

The evidence base supports the implementation of the following recommendations;

- Incorporation of more official and legal sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People
- Sustainable Waste collections
- Support for renewable energy

Next steps should be to identify the measures to support these recommendations which can be incorporated into the local plan. Further to this, supporting actions, outside of the scope of the Local Plan process should be identified and steps taken to implement these via other strategic mechanisms.

The remaining three recommendations require further scoping to inform a decision as to whether to include them in the Local Plan;

- **Specifying buffer zones between neighbouring uses.** Further work is required to ascertain the specific needs for buffer zones in west Lancs. A rationale should be developed specifying their proposed uses.
- **Mining/slag heaps.** The evidence base on slag heaps and their impact on health is limited. A specific piece of work would need to be undertaken to identify the location of slag heaps in West Lancs and assess potential health impact specific to that locality.
- **Implications of fracking.** Appropriate licences and measures to mitigate risk of water contamination have been taken at the exploration stage. On-going involvement of regulatory bodies and liaison with Public Health will be key should this reach a development stage. The requirement to undertake an EIA presents an opportunity to also undertake elements of health impact assessment making this a fully integrated process.

For further information on the Health Impact Assessment Workshop contact Jane Cass at [jane.cass@centrallancashire.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.cass@centrallancashire.nhs.uk) or information on the rHIA Report contact [amy.witherup@centrallancashire.nhs.uk](mailto:amy.witherup@centrallancashire.nhs.uk)

For further information on the Local Plan contact Peter Richards at [peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk)

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## Appendix 1 Programme

# Rapid Health Impact Assessment Workshop West Lancashire Development Management Policies

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November 10am – 1pm  
White Moss Business Centre Skelmersdale

## Programme

9.45am	<b>Arrival, refreshments</b>
10.00am	<b>Welcome, introductions and outline of the morning; housekeeping –</b> Jane Cass, NHS Central Lancashire
10.10am	<b>Where we were, Where we are now</b> Peter Richards, West Lancashire Borough Council
10.15am	<b>Results of the LDF Consultation</b> Helen Rafferty, West Lancashire Borough Council
10.25 am	<b>Proposed Changes: What's New in the Local Plan</b> Peter Richards, West Lancashire Borough Council
10.30am	<b>The Development management policies</b> Ella Gartland, West Lancashire Borough Council
10.45am	<b>Results of the First HIA</b> Amy Witherup, NHS Central Lancashire
10.50am	<b>HIA Methodology and Tools and Considering the Wider Determinants of Health</b> Amy Witherup, NHS Central Lancashire
11.00am	<b>Identifying population groups and positive and negative impacts of the policies</b> <i>Refreshments will be served during this session</i>
12.15pm	<b>Identifying &amp; agreeing the key themes and recommendations</b>
12.45pm	<b>Feedback and Evaluation</b>
1.00pm	<b>Close</b>

## **Appendix 2 List of Attendees**

West Lancashire Borough Council (Members of the LDF Team)  
NHS Central Lancashire (Members of the Public Health Team)  
West Lancashire College  
Lancashire County Council  
Southport and Ormskirk Integrated Care Organisation  
Local Resident  
Borough Councillors  
Parish Councillors  
Lancashire Fire and Rescue  
West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service

## Appendix 3: HIA Tool

### Policy:

<b>Which Groups of the population do you think will be affected by this proposal?</b>	
(The word proposal is used below as shorthand for any policy, procedure, strategy or proposal that might be assessed)	What positive and negative impacts so you think there may be? Are there any impacts about which you feel uncertain? Which groups will be affected by these impacts?
<b>What impact will the proposal have on lifestyles?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diet and nutrition</li> <li>• Exercise and physical activity</li> <li>• Substance use: Tobacco, alcohol or drugs</li> <li>• Risk taking behaviour</li> <li>• Education and lifelong learning or skills</li> </ul>	
<b>What impact will the proposal have on the social environment?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social status</li> <li>• Employment (paid or unpaid) and worklessness</li> <li>• Social/family support</li> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Income and child poverty</li> </ul>	
<b>What impact will the proposal have on equality?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Equality of opportunity</li> <li>• Relations between groups</li> <li>• Community cohesion and social capital</li> </ul>	
<b>What impact will the proposal have on the physical environment?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living conditions</li> <li>• Working conditions</li> <li>• Pollution or climate change</li> <li>• Accidental injuries or public safety</li> <li>• Transmission of infectious disease</li> </ul>	
<b>How will the proposal impact on access to and quality of services?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Social services</li> <li>• Housing services</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul>	
<b>Key issue</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	

## Appendix 4 Evaluation

11 evaluations were completed and returned

### 1. Did today's workshop meet your expectations?

Yes	10
Partly	1
No	

### 2. How clear were the introductory presentations?

Poor	
Fair	
Good	3
Very Good	7
Excellent	1

### 3. How prepared did you feel for today's workshops?

Poor	
Fair	2
Good	5
Very Good	4
Excellent	

### 4. How was the timekeeping of the programme?

Poor	
Fair	
Good	2
Very Good	8
Excellent	1

### 5. Is there anything else we should have included?

Yes	2
Partly	
Everything was covered	9

Although time keeping was good I think the event could have been improved by extending to give time to explore

### 6. How would you rate the standard of the venue/domestic arrangements?

Poor	
Fair	
Good	2
Very Good	5
Excellent	4

### 7. Further comments on the day in general

Very useful and informative

How was involvement of this ever circulated? At Area Committee level its often perceived that Parish Councils are not fully involved.

As a newcomer to the area I found the event very useful in gaining an appreciation of local issues  
Poor accessibility to venue by non car modes