

## **West Lancashire Local Plan – Preferred Options Equalities Impact Assessment**

### **1.0 General Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is required to be undertaken for all services and policies delivered by Local Authorities, including the Local Plan, in accordance with the Equality Act 2006. The purpose of an EqIA is to assess the impact of a policy, strategy or service in the Borough in terms of race, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

#### **1.2 Background to the Local Plan**

West Lancashire Council have, up to 2011, been preparing a Local Development Framework. However, under the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Councils are now being guided to prepare a Local Plan. The West Lancashire Local Plan will supersede the current West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2002-2016. Like the LDF, the new Local Plan will continue to be based upon the principles of sustainable development, addressing climate change, spatial planning, high quality design, good accessibility and community involvement. Spatial planning 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 Local Plan contains a Vision which sets out how the Council want West Lancashire to be like in 2027. This Vision is consistent with, and builds upon, the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). 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 deliver the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development to make this possible.

The West Lancashire Local Plan will build on the evidence and work prepared through the former Local Development Framework system, to guide development in the Borough. This process has already involved a number of stages in its preparation, including gathering an evidence base and identifying the issues and strategic spatial options for the Borough. In May/June 2011, the Council published their Core Strategy Preferred Options paper, setting out the most sustainable and deliverable strategic planning policy for the development of the Borough to 2027 and asking people to comment.

Following that consultation stage, the Council have now refined and added to the draft policy in that document to formulate the proposed draft policies within the Local Plan. The amendments include adding new development management policies and site allocations, revised housing and employment targets and a revised 'Plan B' option. The Local Plan Preferred Options document has been fully informed by the findings of the evidence base, discussions with key stakeholders and infrastructure providers and public consultation.

### **2.0 Borough summary**

#### **2.1 Population**

West Lancashire is the southernmost Borough in the County of Lancashire. The Borough contains a mix of vibrant towns and villages sitting alongside tranquil countryside and covers an area of 134 square miles (34,700 hectares).

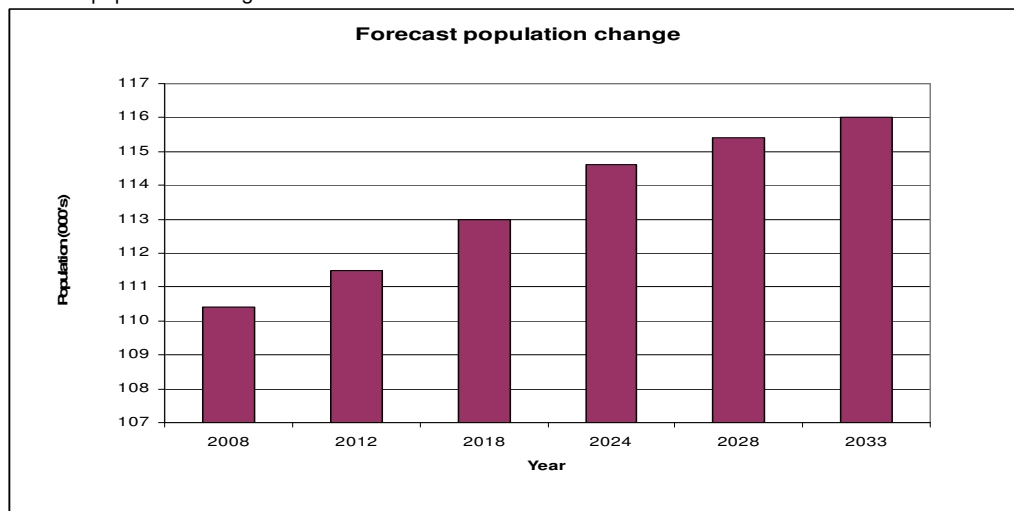
The Borough is predominately rural in nature and the majority of people live in the Borough's three main settlements: the rapidly maturing New Town of Skelmersdale (including Up Holland), the historic market town of Ormskirk (including Aughton) and the small market town of Burscough. There are three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

At the 2001 Census, the Borough had a population of 108,378 people. The majority of residents were found to live in Skelmersdale and Up Holland (37%), Ormskirk and Aughton (25%) and Burscough (8%), followed by Tarleton (5%). There is some variation between settlement areas and the ages of its residents. 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.

## 2.2 Age

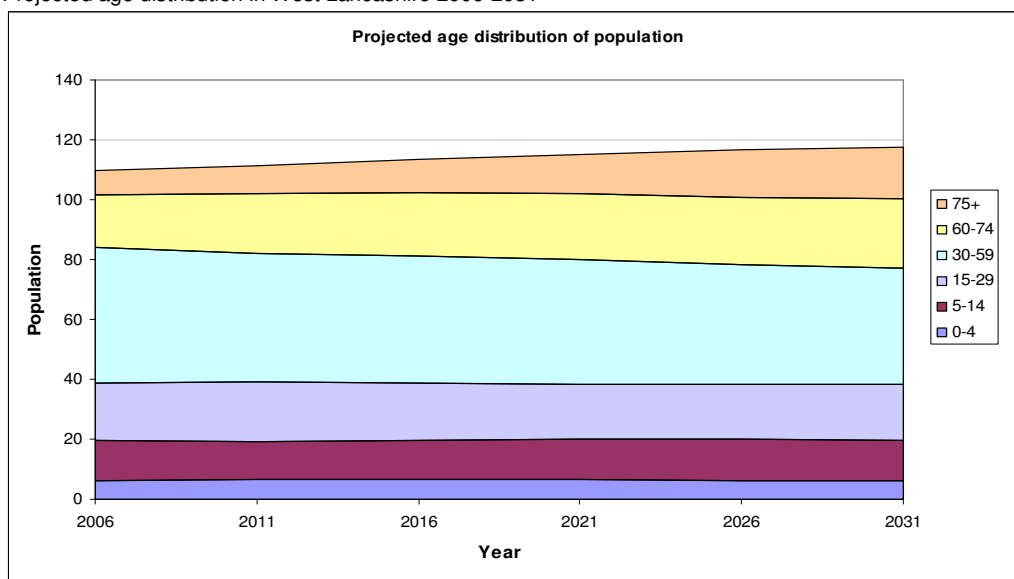
The Borough population is projected to increase by 116,000 by 2033 – a 5% increase on its level in 2008 – equating to an addition 5,600 residents. The main change forecast to the age structure is an increase in the proportion of residents aged over 60 and a decrease of those aged 15-59. The highest increase predicted is to the age category 75+ at over double its 2008 rate. This is much higher than the county and regional change expected.

Forecast population change 2008-2033 in West Lancashire



Source: Population and Social Inclusion Evidence Paper, WLBC 2011 (Population Projections, 2008, ONS)

Projected age distribution in West Lancashire 2006-2031



Source: WLBC 2010 (2008 Mid Year Estimates, ONS)

## 2.3 Ethnicity

At the 2001 Census, 97% of West Lancashire residents described themselves as White British. The remaining 3% were split as follows: 0.5% of the population described themselves as Mixed, 0.4% as Asian/Asian British, 0.13% as Black/Black British and 0.38% as Chinese or other Ethnic group.

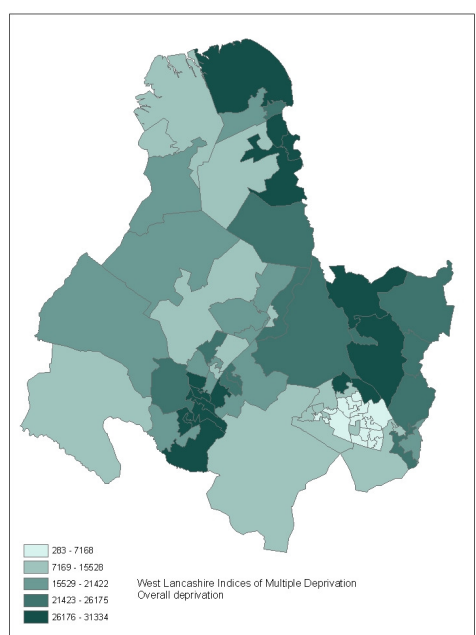
## 2.4 Deprivation

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are made up of seven indicators (income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, housing, access to services). These are then combined to provide an overall score. Scores are then placed in national order from lowest to highest and assigned a rank. The lower the rank, the more deprived an area is.

Overall, West Lancashire is ranked 141<sup>st</sup> out of 354 local authorities in England. This places it within the 40% most deprived districts nationally. However, varying levels of deprivation can be found within the Borough. Almost one in five (or 20%) of the Super Output Areas (SOAs) in West Lancashire fall within the worst 20% nationally. Regeneration should be aimed at tackling deprivation in these areas.

Skelmersdale is the most deprived area in the Borough with 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) (60%) featuring in the most 20% most deprived areas nationally. The wards of Birch Green, Digmaor, Moorside and Tanhouse all have LSOAs featuring in the top 1-20%. In contrast, other parts of the Borough, such as Parbold, Aughton Park and Tarleton, generally have low levels of deprivation.

Overall deprivation in West Lancashire, 2010



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1:134,841

Source: *Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010, CLG (2011)*

Income deprivation is highest in Skelmersdale, along with employment, crime, health and education deprivation. Living environment and housing deprivation are highest in the rural areas of the Borough, including Bickerstaffe, Aughton & Downholland and Scarisbrick.

## 2.5 Gender

### Population

There is a higher proportion of women to men in West Lancashire which follows the national averages. In the 2001 Census, there was no option to state a Transgender status.

Gender	West Lancashire		England
	Population	Percentage	Percentage
Men	52,237	48%	49%
Women	56,141	52%	51%

Source: 2001 Census (ONS)

### Life expectancy

Life expectancy for both genders has increased since 2001. In keeping with national trends, women live longer than men. Life expectancy for men and women in West Lancashire is higher than that for the North West, but equal or lower than the national rate.

Life expectancy is poorest in the Skelmersdale wards of Digmaor, Birch Green and Tanhouse. The highest expectancies are found in Knowsley, Newburgh and Halsall. Life expectancies in the latter areas are in excess of 8 years of the deprived areas of the Borough.

Life expectancies in West Lancashire 2001-2009

	Males			Females		
	2001-03	2005-07	2007-09	2001-03	2005-07	2007-09
West Lancashire	75.8	77.7	78.4	79.4	80.6	80.8
North West	74.8	76.0	76.6	79.4	80.4	80.8
England	76.2	77.7	78.1	80.7	81.8	82.2

Source: Population and Social Inclusion Evidence Paper, WLBC 2011 (Population Projections, 2008, ONS)

### Economic Activity

Overall, 56,500 people in West Lancashire are economically active (2010). The proportion of people economically active in West Lancashire is higher than the regional and national rates at 80%. 54,100 are in employment (76%). The Borough's unemployment rate has increased over the past 4 years and is in keeping with the national trend. This illustrates an increase in unemployment levels as a result of the economic markets and recession.

There are more men than women economically active with 86% of the male working age population economically active, compared to 74% of women. However, the figure for males in employment has decreased since 2005/06 whilst the figure for females in employment has increased.

Rates of unemployment vary across the Borough, being highest in Skelmersdale with an average rate of 10.6% in 2001. The lowest unemployment levels are in the rural areas, particularly Hesketh-with-Becconsall and Tarleton (2.1% and 2.6% respectively).

### JSA Claimants

More men claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) than women in West Lancashire, which matches the trends for the North West and Great Britain.

Total JSA (Job Seekers Allowance) Claimants (April 2010)

	West Lancashire (numbers)	West Lancashire (%)	North West (%)	Great Britain (%)
All people	2662	4.1	4.5	4.1
Males	1920	5.7	6.4	5.6
Females	742	2.4	2.5	2.4

Source: NOMIS 2011

## Earnings

Median gross weekly pay in West Lancashire has steadily increased since 2003. The rate of pay for men has increased by 20% since 2003, whilst women has seen an increase of 23%. Overall, wages have increased by 25%. There is still a difference in the average rates of pay between men and women, although this can be explained to some degree by a greater proportion of women being employed in part time jobs. Women are also more likely to be employed in lesser-paid jobs such as secretarial and administrative work.

Overall rates (for both genders) in 2010 in West Lancashire were higher than Lancashire but lower than the North West and Great Britain rate.

### Median gross weekly pay in West Lancashire

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Male	£362.00	£401.70	£421.30	£391.00	£417.30	£421.90	£421.90	£432.80
Female	£206.00	£217.20	£250.80	£263.30	£263.20	£321.00	£321.10	£253.90
Both	£294.30	£324.80	£319.90	£333.00	£376.60	£379.10	£388.60	£369.30

### Median gross weekly pay in West Lancashire, North West and Great Britain – All people

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Lancashire	£314.90	£319.00	£331.80	£331.10	£353.10	£366.10	£362.90	£364.70
North West	-	-	-	-	-	£372.10	£372.90	£378.40
Great Britain	-	-	-	-	-	£390.00	£398.60	£405.70

- means no data is available

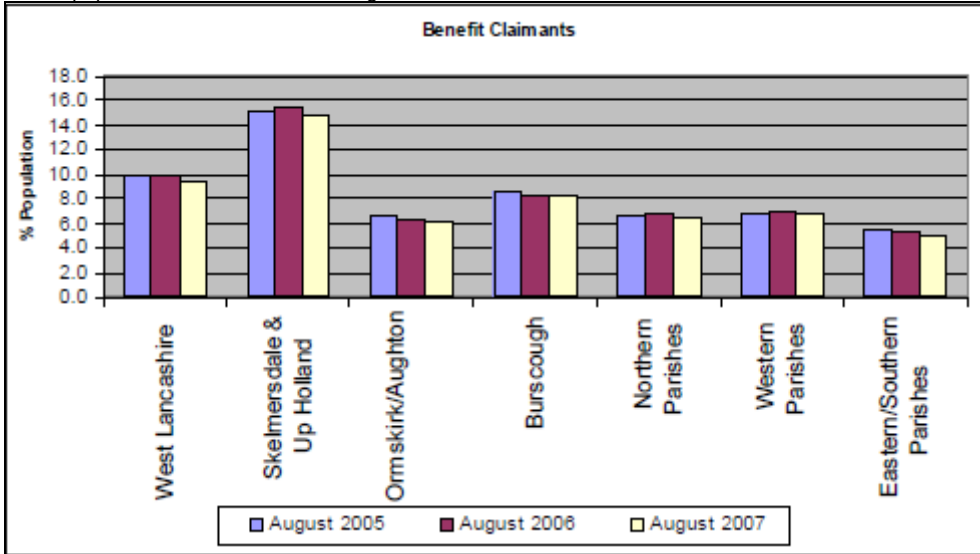
Source: Lancashire Profile (2011)

## 2.6 Disability

### Benefit Dependency and Disability Allowance Claimants

Across West Lancashire, the proportion of residents claiming DWP benefits has remained at between 9.5%-9.9% across the three year period. At a more localised level, it is evident that a comparatively high (15%) proportion of the Skelmersdale and Up Holland population is claiming benefits, this equates to nearly 58% of all claimants across West Lancashire. Benefits include carer's allowance, disability living allowance, incapacity benefit, income support/pension credit, job seekers allowance and severe disablement allowance.

Proportion of population in each area claiming benefits within West Lancashire



Source: West Lancashire Economy Study 2009 (Nomis, 2007)

## 2.7 Religion

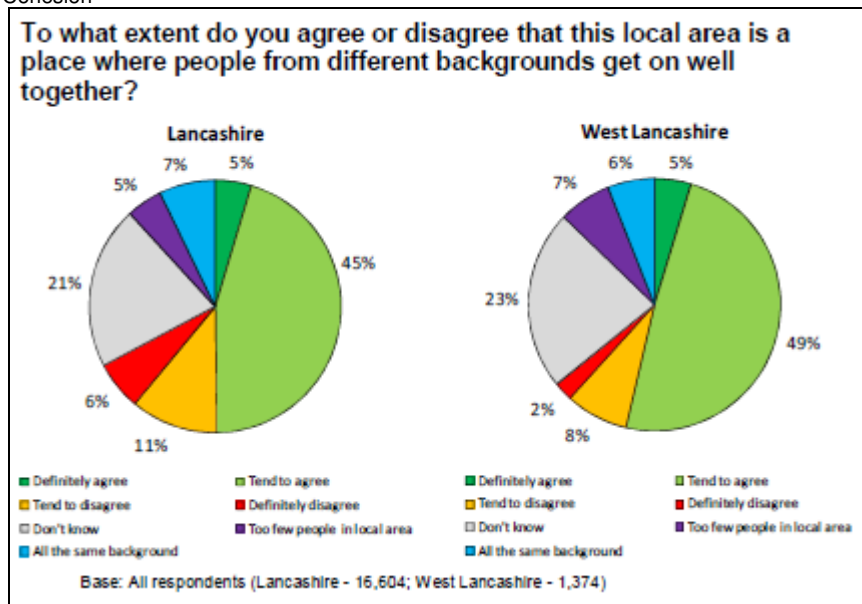
83.7% of West Lancashire state they are Christian, with a further 15.4% stating no religion or choosing not to respond. Of the remainder, 0.2% are Hindu, 0.18% Muslim, 0.1% Buddhist, 0.05% Sikh, 0.04% Jewish and 0.15% any other religion.

Source: 2001 Census, ONS

## 2.8 Community Cohesion

Excluding the proportion answering 'don't know', 'too few people in local area' and 'all the same background', the proportion agreeing that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the local area in West Lancashire is 84% and provides a key measure for community cohesion. West Lancashire performs better than the Lancashire figure of 74%.

Community Cohesion



Source: Lancashire Place Survey 2008, LCC

In addition, 67% of residents of West Lancashire felt they belong to their neighbourhood (Places Survey 2008, LCC).

### **3.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

- 3.1 The Local Plan contains a total of 24 policies, focusing on strategic policies, general development policies, facilitating economic growth, providing residential accommodation, providing infrastructure and services, sustaining the environment, addressing climate change and providing the general framework to ensure sustainable development. Some of the policies also contain site allocations. Some of these policies will have little or no impact on equality issues, but most will have the potential for some direct or indirect impact on equality issues.
- 3.2 To undertake the EqIA, each of the policies has been examined in relation to the potential impacts the policy could have on these equality groups. Comments and assessments of each policy are provided in Table 1. However, the overall impact of the Local Plan on each group is summarised below.

#### **Gender**

- 3.3 The policies within the Local Plan Preferred Options are designed to mitigate any discrimination between genders. It is important that equal opportunities are available for men and women. Policy EC1 encourages a range of employment opportunities, employment patterns (Full time / Part time / Flexi Time), sectors, skills and pay to provide opportunities and flexibility for both genders. Housing policies also acknowledge and cater for any differences that may arise due to gender, such as differing household compositions (single household, lone parent, cohabiting and married couples, families).

#### **Age**

- 3.4 The Local Plan Preferred Options should bring positive improvements for any age. In particular, however, given the Borough's increasing and ageing population, it is particularly important that policies cater for the needs of the elderly. Policy IF2 is designed to improve accessibility through transport improvements, which will help the elderly and young who are more reliant on public transport. Policy IF3 states that services, used by young and old, will be provided where demand and need dictates, including Schools and GPs. Policies such as EN3 encourage both the young and old to get involved in sports activities and using the environment. Sport facilities can also be targeted to different age groups.
- 3.5 Employment policies aim to ensure that equal employment opportunities and training are provided for all age groups, including the young and old as well as the working age population. As the aged population increases, opportunities should be provided to enable those who want to work longer to do so, thereby supporting the economy. The residential policies work to deliver appropriate housing to provide for changing needs across age boundaries, including different household compositions, new forming households, students and the changing needs of the elderly and young. Providing further purpose-built student accommodation should 'free up' more affordable market homes for the resident population that would otherwise be converted to student accommodation, whilst catering towards the needs of students.

## **Ethnic Background and Religion**

- 3.6 The majority of policies within the Local Plan Preferred Options will have similar impacts on groups of all ethnic backgrounds and religion. However, it is important that the more subtle requirements of different groups are catered for, or at least not limited, by planning policy, where applicable. Given the strategic nature of the Local Plan, these subtle requirements (which are often pertaining to detailed matters) are neither limited nor actively catered for in most cases, but some policies do allow, and even encourage, provision of some requirements related to different ethnic groups.
- 3.7 In particular, RS4 relates to provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and seeks to provide an appropriate amount of pitches in the most suitable and sustainable locations in the Borough.
- 3.8 RS1 relates to the development of housing, and encourages a mix of types and size of house to be provided. This would enable affordable larger family dwellings to be developed where there is need or demand created by an ethnic group.

## **Disability**

- 3.9 The proposed policies should ensure that access is available to all and disability groups are catered for. Transport improvements and car parking provision need to take account of the needs of the disabled and services will be provided where demand and need dictates. Under EN4 and GN3, good design should promote functional buildings and spaces that are accessible, safe and inclusive for both able and disabled people. Under RS1 and RS2, housing should accommodate for the needs of the disabled and the changing needs of occupants, including the elderly. Homes should be adaptable and adhere to Lifetime Homes Standards. Improving the economy and physical accessibility will also work to benefit people with disabilities.

## **Sexual Orientation**

- 3.10 The EqIA has no information available with which to assess the impacts of the Local Plan Preferred Options on sexual orientation, or more specifically on those members of the community defined as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender. However, it would not be expected for the policies to specifically have either negative or positive impacts on these groups that are any different from other sexual orientation groups.

## **Socio-economic Status**

- 3.11 The policies within the Local Plan Preferred Options aim to encourage sustainable development and improve social and economic prospects for West Lancashire. Furthering local employment and training opportunities through EC1 will work to decrease worklessness, improve economic prosperity and reduce social exclusion and inequalities. Improving retail through Policy IF1 in West Lancashire will also help to improve the local economy and increase jobs. The promotion of active transport modes and public transport will have positive impacts on improving health, accessibility and reducing inequalities for those who do not own a car (in particular this is Skelmersdale and the rural areas). Provision of new services and facilities will have a positive benefit on reducing inequalities (IF2 and IF3)
- 3.12 Under Policy RS1, the provision of mixed housing will reduce inequalities to types, sizes, tenures and affordability of homes. The provision of affordable homes under RF2 means that opportunities are increased for sections of the community to own and rent their homes where normal market conditions would prevent them from doing so. Providing more student accommodation, under Policy RS3, will enable more homes to remain accessible to the general market.



- 3.13 Policy SP2 will provide a focal point for work to regenerate Skelmersdale, as this is the main area of the Borough with the most socio-economic disadvantages and the highest rates of deprivation. It is hoped that this policy will achieve sustainable, wide-reaching, positive improvements to health, education, employment and training opportunities, housing, retail and environment and work to reduce deprivation levels in the most affected areas.



Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
GN1: Settlement boundaries	To encourage development within settlement boundaries and prioritised on brownfield land.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. .	Neutral
GN2: Safeguarded land	To protect areas of 'safeguarded' land from development, other than through the Plan B.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. .	Neutral
GN3: Design of development	To ensure development meets high standards of design, including energy, waste, crime, accessibility and transport.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will ensure that design can accommodate changes to need – eg elderly and young and that services and transport are accessible.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will ensure that design accommodates disabled needs.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral / Positive
GN4: Demonstrating viability	To prove developments are viable	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral
GN5: Sequential tests	To require sequential testing for certain development types to demonstrate no alternative sites in more preferable locations are available.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will ensure development is in the most sustainable locations, ensuring access for all ages.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will ensure development is in the most sustainable locations, ensuring access for disabled is considered.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral / Positive

Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
EC1: The Economy & Employment Land	To deliver 75ha of new employment development, to encourage growth of economy and encourage higher quality industries and premises. To encourage training to enable population of Borough to access jobs, reducing worklessness and out-commuting.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Men and women's pay and employment equalities should be evened out. A range of employment patterns (FT PT), sectors and skills should be encouraged to provide opportunities for both genders.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. It should ensure equal employment opportunities are provided for all age groups, including the young and old and working age population	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Design of buildings to ensure that appropriate access is available for all. Improving the economy and physical accessibility will benefit people with disabilities.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Increase in employment opportunities will decrease worklessness and improve social and economic prosperity. Local employment opportunities should reduce social exclusion and inequalities.	Neutral / Positive

EC2: The Rural Economy	To limit development that will affect the highest grades of agricultural land and protect employment To encourage employment development in the rural areas in accessible areas, to regenerate existing rural sites and support the sustainable diversification of farms. To encourage tourism and improve broadband.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral
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Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
EC3: Rural Development Opportunities	To support development on some brownfield sites in rural areas for mixed uses to stimulate the rural economy and provide housing.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral
EC4: Edge Hill University	To support the expansion of Edge Hill University, working to improve transport, encourage on campus student accommodation and create business and educational links.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will typically accommodate young students (18-21) but will also cater for mature students. Will improve educational attainment opportunities through forging links with communities and businesses.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Should ensure that access is available for the disabled, including transport.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Business links and working with communities with low educational attainment should increase prospects for those of low socio-economic status. Growth of Edge Hill will improve local economy and area.	Positive

Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
RS1: Residential Development	To deliver residential development, locating development in the most sustainable settlements. To encourage brownfield development and set a minimum density. To ensure housing meets requirements for the elderly and are adaptable with age.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Housing should cater for different household compositions including one person, lone parent, cohabiting and married couple households.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Will ensure that appropriate housing is provided for changing needs across age, including single persons, families and the elderly	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Policy encourages a mix of types and sizes to address all needs, for example some ethnic groups may require larger homes. Neighbourhoods should be mixed and sustainable.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Should ensure that access is available for the disabled, and the elderly. Should adhere to Lifetime Homes Standards. Houses should be adaptable.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Mixed housing will reduce inequalities to types, sizes, tenures and affordability.	Positive.
RS2: Affordable & Specialist Housing	To require larger developments to encompass affordable housing of differing types, sizes and tenures. To provide specialist housing for the elderly in sustainable locations.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community, including the elderly, new forming and young households and families. Supports housing for the elderly.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Affordable homes mean that opportunities are increased for sections of the community to own and rent their homes.	Positive
RS3: Provision of Student Accommodation	To support purpose built student accommodation on specified sites. Restrictions will be imposed on the conversion of existing dwellings houses into houses in multiple occupation.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Providing further student accommodation should 'free up' more market homes	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Providing further student accommodation should 'free up' more market homes	Neutral

Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
RS4: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	To provide accommodation for gypsies and travellers and Travelling showpeople.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Locating sites near services and infrastructure enables gypsy & traveller communities to achieve access.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community.	Neutral
IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	To encourage retail in town and local centres and to control changes from A1 use to other uses. To encourage diverse uses above ground flood level of buildings and encourage an evening economy.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Improving retail in West Lancashire will improve the local economy and increase jobs.	Neutral
IF2: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice	To assist in the ongoing regeneration of Skelmersdale through delivery of a modern public transport system, to improve the accessibility in rural areas, to tackle congestion and improve the rail links across the Borough. To encourage sustainable transport and improve road safety.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	P. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Improving accessibility through transport improvements may help the elderly and young who are more reliant on public transport.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Transport improvements need to take account of the needs of the disabled	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Promotion of active transport modes and public transport will have positive impacts on health, improve accessibility and reduce inequalities for those who do not own a car (Skelmersdale, rural areas)	Neutral / Positive





Policy Title	Policy aims	Adverse (A), Positive (P) or Neutral (N) effects on Equality groups						Comments
		Gender	Age	Ethnic Background	Disability	Religion	Socio-economic status	
EN2: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's natural environment	To protect and safeguard important biodiversity sites, to provide and support strategic green links.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	Neutral
EN3: Provision of green infrastructure and open recreation space	To provide a network of open space and recreational opportunities, to protect green links and spaces. To safeguard land from future development that may jeopardise key schemes.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	Neutral
EN4: Preserving and enhancing West Lancashire's built environment	To promote good quality design, to protect cultural and heritage assets and promote and protect the landscape character of the Borough.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community. Good design will improve accessibility, safety and inclusiveness for disabled people.	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	N. Will address the needs of all sections of the community	Neutral

## **4.0 Conclusion and Findings**

- 4.1 The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that, overall, West Lancashire's Local Plan Preferred Options policies are supportive of equality groups. Indeed, assessment shows no adverse effects on equality groups, with the effects of the policies predicting neutral or positive results.

### **Housing**

- 4.2 The Policies have been designed to provide housing to cater for different household compositions and needs arising from changing ages and disabilities. Housing will be encouraged to adhere to Lifetimes Homes Standards, ensuring that houses are adaptable to changing needs. Providing housing of mixed types, tenures and sizes will help to reduce social inequalities whilst ensuring affordable homes are available on the market means that opportunities are increased for sections of the community to financially access housing. The provision of specialist housing supports the needs of the elderly, disabled and special needs. Ethnic groups such as Gypsy & Travellers will also be able to identify legal and safe sites on which to locate.

### **Employment, Economy and Retail**

- 4.3 The Local Plan aims to improve the economy of West Lancashire and encourage sustainable and economic growth. Providing a range of employment patterns, sectors and skills will provide opportunities for all. Equal employment and training opportunities should be provided for all ages of the community, encouraging older people to remain in work as the aged population increases. An increase in employment opportunities and economic growth will decrease worklessness and improve social and economic prosperity. Local employment opportunities will reduce the need to commute to outlying areas and reduce inequalities. Improving retail and night-time economies will also help to improve the economy of West Lancashire.

### **Transport & Services**

- 4.4 Delivering new and improved transport, services and infrastructure will benefit all sections of the community. In particular, transport improvements will help the elderly and young who are more reliant on public transport, as well as those residents who do not have access to private transport (particularly in Skelmersdale). Improvements need to take account of the needs of the disabled. Improvements to active transport modes will have positive impacts on health and reduce inequalities. Services will be provided where need and demand dictate and will have positive benefits for the surrounding areas.

### **Environment and Social**

- 4.5 Measures to reduce climate change and encourage environmental improvements will bring benefits to all sectors of the community. Good design will help improve accessibility, safety and inclusiveness, including that for the disabled, young and elderly. The regeneration of Skelmersdale will bring significant benefits to health, education, housing, retail and the economy and reduce deprivation levels in the town. Given the wide-reaching effects of environmental and social policies, it is difficult to identify how specific equalities groups will be affected differently from others, if at all, though all should be affected positively.
- 4.6 The EqIA has no information available with which to assess the impacts of the Local Plan Preferred Options on sexual orientation. However, it would not be expected for the policies to specifically have different impacts on different sexual orientation groups.