

West Lancashire Local Plan

2012-2027

Preferred Options



January 2012



Preface	3
Chapter 1 Introduction	7
1.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan	7
1.2 Preparing the Local Plan	8
1.3 Technical Assessments of the Local Plan	10
1.4 Planning Policy on Minerals & Waste Developments	11
Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait	13
2.1 Spatial Portrait	13
2.2 Key Issues	24
Chapter 3 A Vision for West Lancashire 2027	27
3.1 Vision	27
3.2 Spatial and Strategic Objectives	29
Chapter 4 Strategic Policies	37
4.1 A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	37
4.2 Key Diagram	47
4.3 Skelmersdale Town Centre	48
4.4 Yew Tree Farm, Burscough	52
Chapter 5 General Development Policies	61
5.1 Settlement Boundaries	61
5.2 Safeguarded Land	65
5.3 Design of Development	67
5.4 Demonstrating Viability	70
5.5 Sequential Tests	73
Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth	79
6.1 The Economy and Employment Land	79
6.2 The Rural Economy	86
6.3 Rural Development Opportunities	90
6.4 Edge Hill University	92
Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation	97
7.1 Residential Development	97
7.2 Affordable and Specialist Housing	104
7.3 Provision of Student Accommodation	111
7.4 Provision for Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	118

Contents

Chapter 8 Infrastructure and Services Provision	125
8.1 Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	125
8.2 Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	132
8.3 Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	143
8.4 Developer Contributions	146
Chapter 9 Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change	149
9.1 Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	149
9.2 Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment	153
9.3 Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	159
9.4 Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment	166
Chapter 10 Delivery and Risk in the Core Strategy - a "Plan B"	171
Chapter 11 Next Steps	175
Glossary	177
Appendix A Local Plan Preparation	185
Appendix B The Spatial & Strategic Objectives	193
Appendix C Planning Policy Background	207
Appendix D Setting Locally-determined Targets	213
Appendix E Delivery & Risk	221
Appendix F Parking Standards	245
Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map	251

Preface



West Lancashire has a wonderful mix of vibrant towns and picturesque villages, and boasts some of the most beautiful and productive countryside in the UK. It is vital that we manage, guide and encourage development within the Borough to meet the economic and social aspirations of our towns and villages and the communities within them, while protecting our environment for future generations.

The Local Plan Preferred Options represent an important shift in the preparation of a Development Plan Document for West Lancashire, with a new-style Local Plan replacing the Core Strategy that was being prepared as part of a Local Development Framework for the Borough.

This document has been developed by considering all the information provided by the Council's evidence base and the results of previous public consultations on the issues and options and preferred options stages of the Core Strategy preparation and takes into account the latest direction given by the Government on preparing local planning policy.

Ultimately, the Local Plan will directly or indirectly affect all residents and communities within the Borough. Therefore, it is important that we hear from you on what is being proposed in order to help us to make an informed decision on what the final Local Plan should include.

I very much look forward to hearing your views on the proposals and policies within this document.

Councillor Martin Forshaw

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

West Lancashire Borough Council

January 2012

How to Comment

The Council welcomes your comments on all aspects of this document as well as any suggestions you may have for additional or alternative proposals and policies. There are a number of methods that you can use to comment on the Local Plan Preferred Options.

Preferably we would encourage you to make comments through our online Consultation Portal, where you will be able to complete a short survey on the general topic areas covered by the Local Plan as well as being able to make specific comments about particular sections of the document.

Alternatively, written responses will be accepted using forms which can be found at the Council Offices, Libraries and Post Offices, or on the Council's website. The short online survey will also be available on paper upon request or at the same locations.

In addition, the Council are using Facebook to update the public on the consultation programme and as an access point for the consultation material.

All our contact details and website addresses are listed in the table below.

Key Dates

The consultation period will run from Thursday 5th January 2012 until Friday 17th February 2012, allowing you 6 weeks to submit your comments.

Contact Information

If you wish to discuss any aspects of the Local Plan Preferred Options and their potential implications, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the LDF Team through the contact details listed below:

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan

1.1 Future development within the Borough of West Lancashire over the next 15 years will be guided by the plans and policies within the Council's West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 Development Plan Document. This Development Plan Document will supersede the current West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2001-16 and its preparation will fulfil the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 in preparing a Development Plan Document for the Borough, or the proposed new Local Planning Regulations if they are ultimately brought into effect.

1.2 The move to preparing a new Local Plan document for the Borough marks a shift in local planning policy preparation, given that up until now, the Council has been preparing a Core Strategy document to sit within the Local Development Framework (LDF). This change in direction reflects that made at a national planning policy level, where the new National Planning Policy Framework is expected to guide Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Local Plan rather than an LDF.

1.3 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.

1.4 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.

1.5 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. 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.

1.6 This document provides the Preferred Options that the Council wish to pursue for policies within the Local Plan, providing draft policies for consideration through public consultation. These Preferred Options have emerged following previous consultations on a Core Strategy and incorporating further policy matters on Development Management Policies and Site Allocations. These previous consultations covered issues facing the Borough (January 2009), strategic options for addressing those issues through spatial planning and sustainable development (September 2009) and a Core Strategy Preferred Options paper providing draft policies for a Core Strategy document (May 2011).

Chapter 1 Introduction

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

1.8 In due course, for the Publication version of this document, a full amended Proposals Map for the Borough will be prepared to reflect the changes in policy and allocations put forward in this Local Plan. However, for this consultation, only individual settlement plans for those settlements where the Proposals Map will ultimately show significant changes or allocations are included (see Appendix G).

1.2 Preparing the Local Plan

1.9 The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (previously 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.

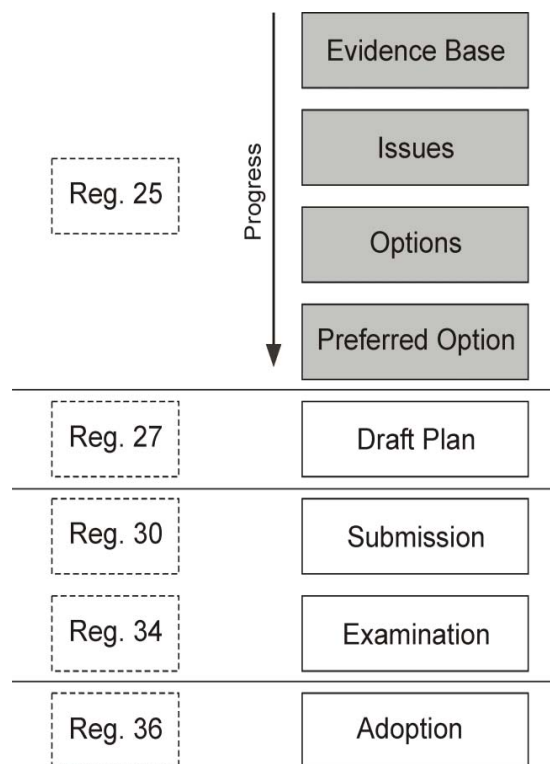


Figure 1.1 The Local Plan Preparation Process

Stage 1: Evidence Base

1.10 It is important to gather up-to-date and comprehensive information in order to support the Local Plan; 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 document. It is available on the Council's [website](#).

1.11 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 Local Plan, 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 implementation of the Local Plan.

Stage 2: Issues

1.12 In preparing a Local Plan 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.

1.13 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 local planning policy. 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

1.14 The Options Paper is an important stage in the preparation of the Local Plan and such an Options Paper for the Core Strategy 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 indicated various ways of addressing the key issues and achieving the vision. They also showed 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

1.15 Following the Options stage, a Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper was prepared for public consultation in May / June 2011, 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 set out a proposed (and preferred) way forward for

Chapter 1 Introduction

the Core Strategy in terms of what areas policy should cover and what policy in those areas will seek to achieve. It also included options for identifying land for release from the Green Belt for development before 2027.

1.16 This Local Plan Preferred Options document provides a further evolution of the previous Core Strategy Preferred Options paper, taking account of the consultation responses received during the previous consultation, changes to the evidence base and the changing national planning policy context and incorporating additional policy on Development Management Policies and Site Allocations.

Next Steps - Stages 5 and 6

1.17 Taking on-board your views from this consultation and any further changes to national planning policy and further evidence base that emerges, these Preferred Options will be used to prepare a Publication version of the Local Plan for a final round of public consultation (Stage 5) prior to submitting the Local Plan and representations received during this final consultation 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 Local Plan

1.18 It is a statutory requirement that the Local Plan 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 Local Plan Preferred Options document 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

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

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

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

1.4 Planning Policy on Minerals & Waste Developments

1.22 Lancashire County Council has responsibility for identifying sites and policies for Minerals and Waste Development in the County. Therefore, Minerals and Waste issues are not covered in the West Lancashire Local Plan, except where they are relevant and pertinent to the sites or policies being proposed. Issues where Minerals and Waste issues will be relevant to the Plan will include:

- The designation of Mineral Safeguarding Areas in the Joint Lancashire Minerals & Waste Development Framework - on sites allocated in this Local Plan, it will be necessary to consider the potential impact that development may have on sterilising those minerals, i.e. preventing them being extracted ahead of development;
- Existing permitted mineral sites where they may have potential to affect the amenity of the public if new housing were to be allowed to develop too close to the boundary; and
- Existing and proposed waste sites which may seek to use employment related sites.

1.23 The following map shows where Peat and Mineral Safeguarding Areas have been proposed within West Lancashire in the Joint Lancashire Minerals & Waste Development Framework. At the time of writing this Local Plan Preferred Options document these Mineral Safeguarding Areas were still draft as they had not yet been adopted into policy.

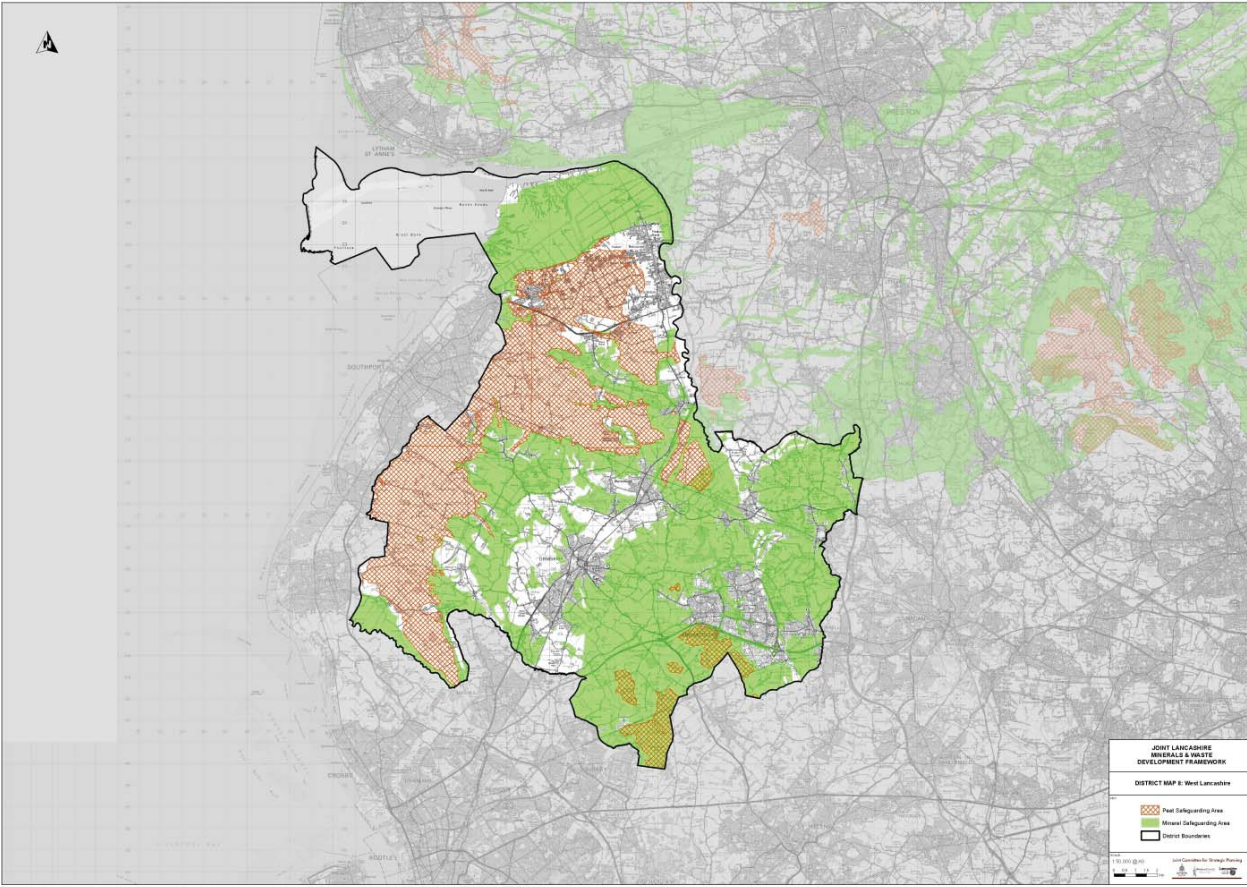


Figure 1.2 Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait

2.1 Spatial Portrait

Introduction

2.1 The Spatial Portrait sets the context for the Local Plan 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 Local Plan preparation, and key information drawn from data within the Evidence Base, including the thematic and spatial evidence base summary papers.

West Lancashire Borough

2.2 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.

2.3 The Borough is predominately 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.

2.4 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 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.

2.5 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.



Figure 2.1 Sub-regional setting of West Lancashire

Natural and Built Environment

2.6 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⁽¹⁾. 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 northwards towards the Lancaster Canal via the Ribble Link. The rural landscape is a mixture of mosslands in the north, west and south, a coastal plain 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.

1 Lancashire County Council AMR 2008

2.7 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 Council's [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(Stage 1 SFRA\)](#) and on the [Environment Agency](#) website. A Stage 2 SFRA is currently being prepared, to explore those flood risk issues in the Borough in more detail.

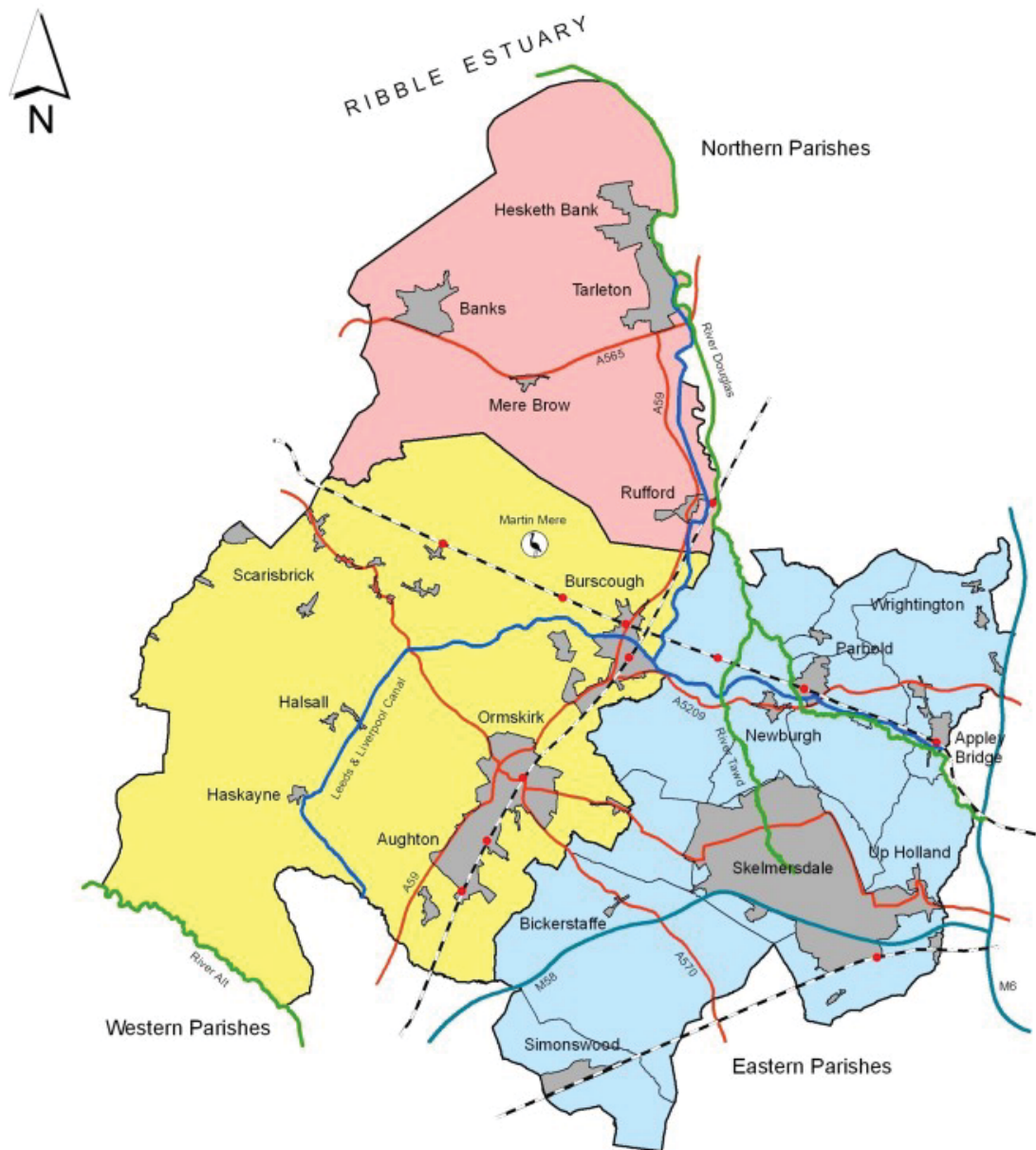


Figure 2.2 West Lancashire Settlements and Rural Areas

2.8 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, Rufford Old Hall and Lathom House, listed churches of Ormskirk Parish Church, St Michaels in Aughton, St Thomas the Martyr in Up Holland and St Cuthberts Church in Halsall.

Population

2.9 The population of the Borough in 2010 was estimated at 110,300 ⁽²⁾. This has risen by just under 2% since 2001 when the population was 108,378 ⁽³⁾. The population is projected to increase further to 116,000 by 2033, equating to an additional 7,622 residents and a 7% increase on its 2001 level. The main change forecast 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 those residents aged 75+ ⁽⁴⁾.

2.10 There are variations in the population age structure between settlements. In general, the rural areas of the 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

2.11 The average house price in 2010 in West Lancashire stood at £194,899. This is an increase of 106% on the average house price in 2001. The ratio of house prices to income in West Lancashire has also increased each year moving from 3.84 in 2001 to 6.78 in 2010 ⁽⁵⁾. This means the average property price is now almost 7 times the average annual 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 are found in the central wards of Skelmersdale.

2.12 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.

2 ONS Mid Year Estimates 2009

3 Census 2001

4 2008 based Population Projections

5 CLG 2011

Deprivation

2.13 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⁽⁶⁾. 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.

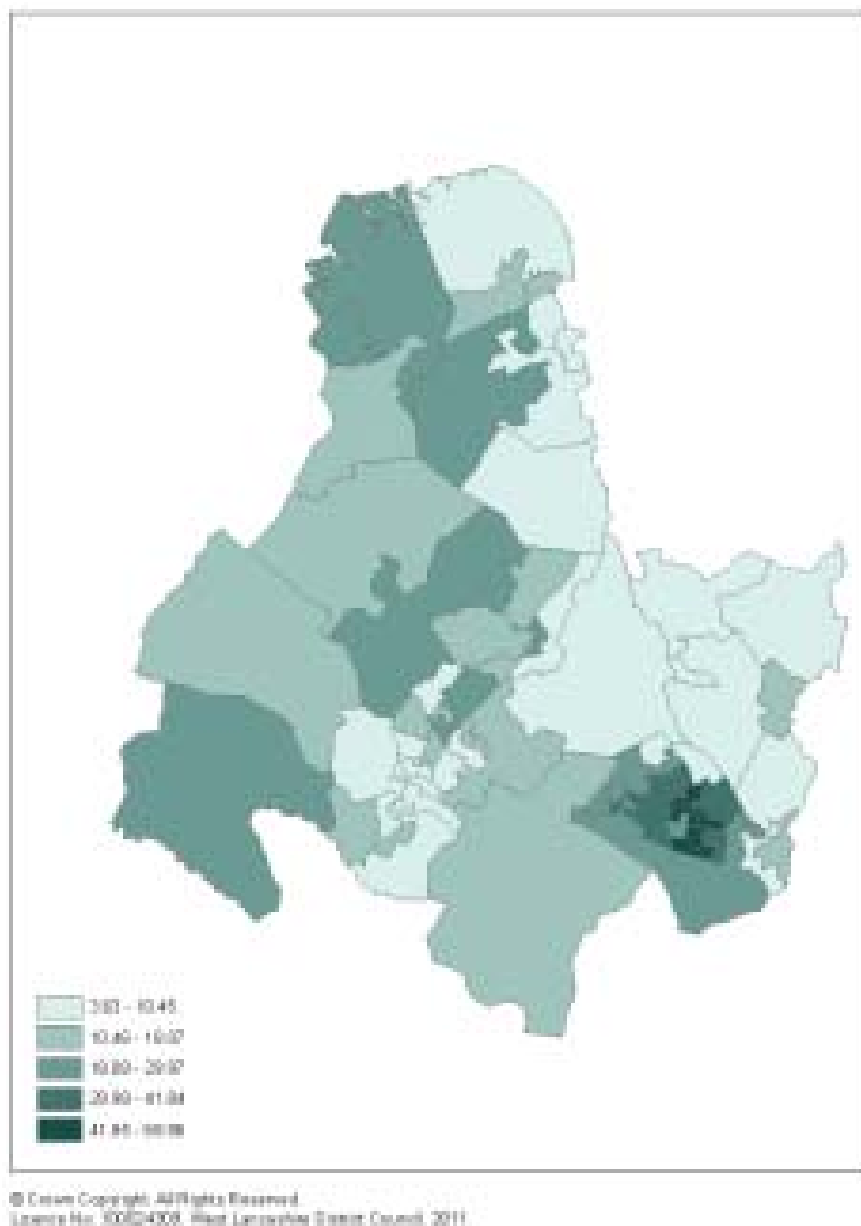


Figure 2.3 Deprivation levels in West Lancashire (IMD 2010)

6 Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010, CLG (2011)

2.14 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

2.15 The health of people in West Lancashire is roughly in line with national averages, with life expectancy at 78 years for men and 81 years for women ⁽⁷⁾. However, those living in the most deprived areas of West Lancashire, particularly Skelmersdale, have life expectancies 8 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.

2.16 Just under a fifth of the Borough'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 predominately dormitory settlements for people commuting to other areas, both within and outside of the Borough. Skelmersdale has the highest proportion of people with no qualifications.

2.17 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

2.18 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 in Tarleton.

2.19 Patterns of movement illustrate that around 57% of West Lancashire residents travel to work within the Borough, with the most popular outward destinations being within the Liverpool City Region (especially Sefton) and, to a lesser degree, the Manchester City Region (especially Wigan)⁽⁸⁾. Patterns of inward movement reveal that the most likely origin of commuters who work in West Lancashire are Sefton and Wigan. This is illustrated by West Lancashire Travel to Work Flows (Source: 2001 Census) below.

7 ONS 2009

8 2001 Census

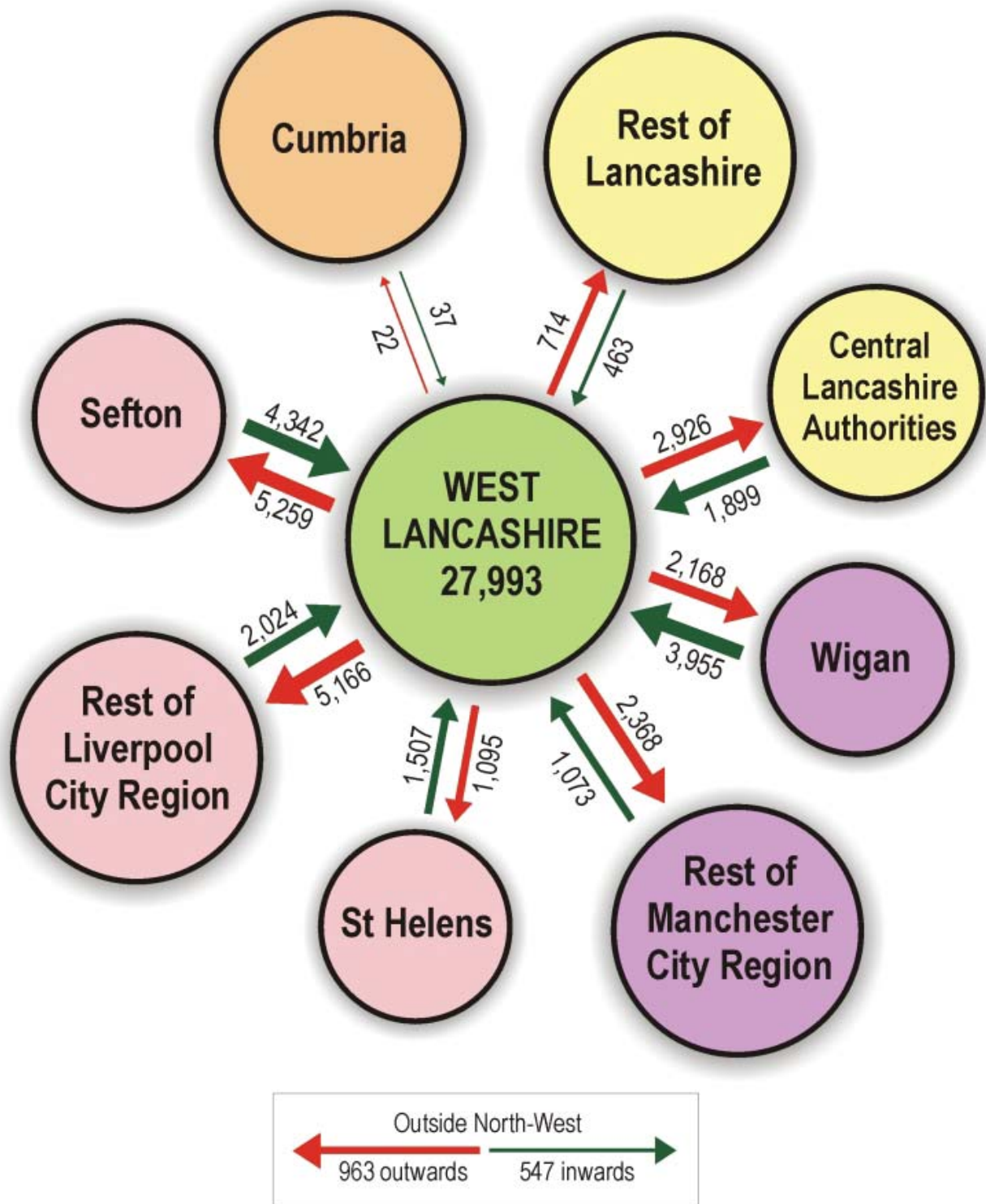


Figure 2.4 West Lancashire Travel to Work Flows (Source: 2001 Census)

2.20 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, there is a lack of accessible public transport in Skelmersdale, particularly to support the employment areas and their workforce. 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.

Employment and Economy

2.21 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. The greatest proportions of workers in the Borough are employed in professional occupations, followed by associate professional and skilled trades. Within the Borough, the lowest proportion of residents are employed in process plant and machine and administration and secretarial posts ⁽⁹⁾. In the rural areas of the Borough, agricultural and horticultural employers (including packaging industries) play an important role, although these increasingly rely upon migrant or seasonal workers to function.

2.22 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.

2.23 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.

2.24 80% of the West Lancashire working age population were economically active in 2010. However, unemployment has increased over the past 4 years with unemployment levels highest in Skelmersdale. The greatest number of Job Seekers Allowance and Benefit Claimants are found in Skelmersdale. Indeed, 15% of Skelmersdale and Up Holland population claim benefits, equating to 58% of all claimants across West Lancashire.

Skelmersdale (and Up Holland)

2.25 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. 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.

9 NOMIS 2011

2.26 Skelmersdale's New Town status with its 'Radburn' layout brings mixed fortunes to the town. 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.

2.27 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.

2.28 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.

2.29 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)

2.30 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.

2.31 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.

2.32 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

2.33 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.

2.34 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

2.35 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.

2.36 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 main 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.

2.37 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.

2.38 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, smaller, settlements in the Northern Parishes include Holmeswood and Mere Brow.

The Eastern Parishes

2.39 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.

2.40 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. Other smaller settlements in the parish are Mossy Lea, Hunger Hill and Wrightington Bar,

2.41 There are also several smaller settlements dispersed across the other Eastern Parishes, including Newburgh, Hilldale, Crawford and several small villages and hamlets, as well as the Simonswood industrial area.

The Western Parishes

2.42 Scarisbrick is a dispersed settlement, incorporating the areas of Bescar, Brown Edge, Hurlston Green, Carr Cross 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. Scarisbrick is served by a train station at Bescar Lane but it has 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.

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait

2.43 Halsall, Haskayne and Shirdley Hill 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.

2.44 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

2.45 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 Local Plan. 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.

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. The provision of affordable housing should also be based on the viability of development to deliver it.
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	Many parts of the Borough suffer from limited infrastructure capacity and solutions need to be provided to enable future development needs to be accommodated.
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.
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

Chapter 2 Spatial Portrait

	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.
Environment / Heritage	The need for development should be balanced with the protection and conservation of the environment. This includes protection of landscape and heritage assets, historic places and the public realm.

Table 2.1 Key Issues

Chapter 3 A Vision for West Lancashire 2027

3.1 Vision

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, 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.

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 West Lancashire 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 useable, 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 wider 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. 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 varied biodiversity of rural West Lancashire will continue to be valued both for its natural environment and as a recreational resources. 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. Inappropriate development in flood risk areas will not have been allowed and where development has been considered appropriate, it will have been managed to ensure it will not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding or exacerbate flood risk elsewhere.

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 and Strategic Objectives

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

3.3 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 Local Plan progresses, the indicators and targets may be revised in accordance with Plan-Monitor-Manage guidance.

3.4 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 West Lancashire 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 the 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 to 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. The priority will be to deliver these on brownfield sites where the sites are available, viable and deliverable. They will also be concentrated, 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 and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Suitable student accommodation will also be provided in appropriate areas within Ormskirk to address the needs generated by 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, and where appropriate their settings, will be conserved 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 low carbon 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

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

3.6 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 Local Plan is seeking to achieve
- To monitor performance as to whether the Local Plan policies are working as intended and, if not, whether they need amending. Contingency plans can also be set to trigger to address the issues.

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

3.8 PPS12 states that each Local Planning Authority (LPA) should produce a Local Plan 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.

3.9 Monitoring of the Local Plan 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' (SEI's) will be incorporated into future AMRs.

Meeting the Objectives

3.10 The Local Plan 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 proposed policy in the following chapters is seeking to fulfil. Overall, it can be seen that the Local Plan 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 Local Plan Spatial and Strategic Objectives.

Policy	Objectives								
	1. Stronger and safer communities	2. Education, training and the economy	3. Health	4. Natural Environment	5. Housing	6. Services and accessibility	7. Location of development and built environment	8. Climate change	9. Skelmersdale
SP1: Sustainable Development Framework	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SP2: Skelmersdale Town Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
SP3: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
GN1: Settlement Boundaries				Yes			Yes		
GN2: Safeguarded Land				Yes			Yes		
GN3: Design of Development	Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
GN4: Demonstrating Viability		Yes					Yes		
GN5: Sequential Tests					Yes		Yes		
EC1: The Economy & Employment Land		Yes				Yes	Yes		
EC2: The Rural Economy		Yes				Yes	Yes		
EC3: Rural Development Opportunities		Yes				Yes	Yes		
EC4: Edge Hill University		Yes			Yes		Yes		
RS1: Residential Development							Yes		Yes
RS2: Affordable & Specialist Housing	Yes				Yes		Yes	Yes	
RS3: Provision of Student Accommodation	Yes				Yes		Yes		
RS4: Provision for Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Yes				Yes	Yes			
IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	Yes					Yes	Yes		

Policy	Objectives								
	1. Stronger and safer communities	2. Education, training and the economy	3. Health	4. Natural Environment	5. Housing	6. Services and accessibility	7. Location of development and built environment	8. Climate change	9. Skelmersdale
IF2: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			
IF3: Services Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	
IF4: Developer Contributions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
EN1: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure				Yes				Yes	
EN2: Natural Environment	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes
EN3: Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes
EN4: Built Environment	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	

Table 3.1 Policies achieving the Objectives

Chapter 4 Strategic Policies

4.1 A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire

Context

4.1 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.

4.2 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. The strategic policies of the Local Plan reflect 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.

4.3 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 strategic policies of the Local Plan play a central role in delivering the vision and objectives of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy for West Lancashire 2007-2017.

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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 4 Strategic Policies

4.8 Delivering “low carbon” development will not be straight forward and the Council recognises the limitations of setting construction targets and minimum standards within the Local Plan. Therefore, the approach must be much more strategic, ensuring climate change and energy demands are considered as a fundamental part of the strategic planning policies for development in the Borough and within each policy area.

Policy SP1

A Sustainable 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 in accordance with the following Settlement Hierarchy, with those settlements higher up the hierarchy, in general, taking more development than those lower down and new development being of a type and use that is appropriate to the scale and character of settlements at each level of the hierarchy.

Hierarchy		Settlements
Key Service Centres	Regional Town	Skelmersdale with Up Holland
	Borough Town	Ormskirk with Aughton
	Market Town	Burscough
Key Sustainable Village		Tarleton; Hesketh Bank; Parbold; 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. Spatially and economically, Skelmersdale is the main location for new development throughout the Local Plan period in order to enable the delivery of the town centre masterplan and the wider regeneration of the town. Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough are also key locations for new development

Development in rural areas will be restricted to the Key and Rural Sustainable Villages, except where development involves a like-for-like redevelopment of an existing property, the appropriate re-use of an existing building or minor infill development.

However, it is anticipated that development on greenfield sites in Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick will be restricted by a waste water treatment infrastructure issue until 2020 and so development will initially be somewhat constrained in these parts of the Borough.

All new built development in the Borough will take place within settlement boundaries (as defined in Policy GN1), except where a specific need for development for a countryside use is identified that retains or enhances the rural character of an area. The settlement boundaries will encompass land previously included within the Green Belt that it is proposed will be released in the Local Plan (2012-2027) and Green Belt boundaries will be amended on the Proposals Maps to reflect the release of these sites. This will include land required for development before 2027, land to be safeguarded for the “Plan B” of this Local Plan and land to be safeguarded for development needs beyond 2027.

Over the life of the Core Strategy (2012-2027) there will be a need for **4,650 new dwellings** (net) as a minimum. Similarly, there will be a need for **75 ha** of land to be newly developed for employment uses over the life of the Core Strategy. These Borough-wide minimum targets will be divided between the different spatial areas of the Borough as follows:

	Housing	Employment
Skelmersdale with Up Holland	2,400 dwellings	52 ha
Ormskirk with Aughton	750 dwellings	-
Burscough	850 dwellings	13 ha
Northern Parishes	400 dwellings	3.5 ha
Eastern Parishes	100 dwellings	6.5 ha*
Western Parishes	150 dwellings	-

* includes 5 ha at Simonswood Employment Area

The above housing and employment land development should initially be prioritised to sites within the existing built-up areas of the three Key Service Centres and the Key / Rural Sustainable Villages (including appropriate greenfield sites). However, it is recognised that in order to meet the above housing and employment land development targets for Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough and to enable a small expansion of the Edge Hill University campus, a small amount of land is proposed for release from the Green Belt in the Local Plan (2012-2027). This land involves three specific sites:

- Yew Tree Farm, Liverpool Road South, Burscough – for 500 dwellings, 10 ha of new employment land and new community infrastructure (see Policy SP3)
- Grove Farm, High Lane, Ormskirk – for 250 dwellings (see Policy RS1)
- Edge Hill University, St Helen’s Road, Ormskirk – 10 ha for new university buildings, car parking and new access road (see Policy EC4)

It is anticipated that the Yew Tree Farm and Grove Farm sites will only begin to be developed from 2020 onwards, allowing time to deliver sites within existing built-up areas first and to resolve waste water treatment infrastructure constraints affecting those sites. It may be appropriate to bring this land forward for development in advance of land within

the existing built-up areas if it is required to ensure delivery of the development targets. However, bringing forward such development in advance of 2020 would be subject to the provision of the appropriate infrastructure required for the development proposals, especially for waste water treatment infrastructure. The planned expansion of the Edge Hill University campus may come forward relatively early in the plan period, subject to the provision of appropriate infrastructure improvements.

The regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre (designated as a Strategic Development Site in Policy SP2) 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.

Proposals for grid connected low carbon energy development will be supported in appropriate locations and all development will be encouraged to mitigate against climate change through sustainable design, use of resources, low carbon energy solutions and where possible, connection to decentralised heat and energy networks. Design and location of development will be required to adapt to the impacts of climate change by avoiding areas at risk of existing and future flood risk and providing Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

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 a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, which is approved by the Environment Agency, identifies that any impact on flood risk, including that associated with ground and surface water flooding, can be mitigated. Flood risk is generally an issue in the Northern and Western Parishes, especially in and around the village of Banks.

While new development that is in accordance with this Local Plan 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 the potential for the presence of mineral resources. Such issues should be mitigated accordingly prior to development and ensure that important mineral resources are not sterilised by development.

Should monitoring of residential and employment completions show that development targets for the Local Plan 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 Local Plan by releasing land for development that has been removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for this purpose.

Justification

Sustainable Development and the Settlement Hierarchy

4.9 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.

4.10 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 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.

4.11 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.

4.12 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.

4.13 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 the cities of Liverpool and Preston. Therefore, in establishing the settlement hierarchy and level of development in each settlement in Policy SP1, the role that these towns and cities play in providing accessible services to the population of West Lancashire has been taken into account.

4.14 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 Chapter 8 of this Local Plan, while the provision of employment opportunities is addressed in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4 Strategic Policies

Focus of development on the Key Service Centres

4.15 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 SP1 does this and, in particular, focuses over half of all new development in the Borough's only regional town, Skelmersdale. Burscough and Ormskirk together form a secondary focus for new development.

4.16 Skelmersdale (including Up Holland) 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 SP2) – 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 environmental 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.

4.17 The neighbouring towns of Ormskirk (including Aughton) 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 and both already have the majority of local services provided for.

4.18 New development in the Key and Rural Sustainable Villages will provide opportunities for new housing (especially affordable housing) and for rural 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.

4.19 New development will, except in very special circumstances, take place within settlement boundaries. The settlement boundaries are defined in Policy GN1 and will be provided on the Proposals Map that will accompany the Local Plan. These boundaries reflect the existing edge of the built-up area of the settlements and encompass land proposed to be released from the Green Belt in the Local Plan.

Residential and Employment Land Targets

4.20 The targets for new residential and employment development are discussed in more detail in Policy Areas RS1 and EC1 respectively, but are based on locally-determined targets. The methods used to identify local housing and employment targets have been set out in more detail in the Housing and Economy Technical Papers that accompany this document but a brief explanation is provided here.

4.21 The residential target of 4,650 dwellings is based on the CLG Household Projections (2008) for West Lancashire (which equates to 260 dwellings a year) plus the deficit that the Borough has built-up between 2003 and 2012 in relation to the target set by the Regional Spatial Strategy (750 dwellings). This equates to an average annual target of 310 dwellings a year over the Local Plan period.

4.22 However, it is apparent that an annual target of 310 dwellings a year will be extremely difficult to meet in the initial years of the Local Plan as the UK economy continues to recover from the recent recession and given that development in a large part of the Borough is expected to be constrained by a waste water treatment infrastructure issue until 2020. Therefore, Table 4.1 proposes staggered annual targets for residential development during the Local Plan period.

4.23 The 75 ha target for new employment land in the Borough over the Core Strategy period has emerged via a calculation derived from the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010) prepared for Halton, Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire based on historic delivery rates for employment land. Development of employment land has slowed dramatically since the recession and is still very low. Therefore, like residential development, a staggered annual target is proposed for employment land development in Table 4.1 to allow the economy time to recover.

	Residential Target	Employment Land Target
2012-2017	260 dwellings a year	2 ha a year
2017-2022	320 dwellings a year	5 ha a year
2022-2027	350 dwellings a year	8 ha a year

Table 4.1 Annual Residential and Employment Land Delivery Targets

Prioritisation of brownfield / greenfield land and releasing land from the Green Belt

4.24 While it has slipped somewhat down the agenda of national planning policy over the last 12 months, the need to prioritise development on brownfield (previously developed) land and protect greenfield (undeveloped) land from development is still an important consideration. 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 land).

4.25 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 Local Plan period.

Chapter 4 Strategic Policies

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	52	25	48%	2,400	800	33%
Ormskirk & Aughton	0	0	-	750	400	53%
Burscough	13	3	23%	850	200	24%
Rural Areas (including Simonswood)	10	8	80%	650	300	46%
Overall	75	36	48%	4,650	1,700	37%

Table 4.2 Delivering Development on Brownfield Land

4.26 Given the shortage of available brownfield land in the Borough and the general lack of available land for development within the existing built-up areas full stop, 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 and a small amount of Green Belt land will need to be released for development.

4.27 While this is not ideal, and is only being considered due to the lack of other viable alternatives, only the most appropriate Green Belt sites adjacent to the existing boundaries of the Key Service Centres have been released for possible development before 2027. Further land will be released from the Green Belt and safeguarded from development (see Policy GN2) to ensure that the Council is complying with national policy in amending Green Belt boundaries so that they will be able to endure beyond the end of the Plan period. Much of this land will also be covered by the “Plan B” (see Chapter 10) and must be released from the Green Belt in case there is a need to trigger the “Plan B”. This involves land on the boundary with Southport as well as on the edge of the Key Service Centres.

4.28 No more than 60 ha of Green Belt will be required for release to meet development and associated infrastructure needs for 2012-2027. This is only 0.17% of the 34,630 ha of Green Belt in the Borough. Taking into account the other land to be removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded, a further 75 ha of Green Belt will also be released, bringing the total Green Belt release to approximately 135 ha, which represents 0.39% of the existing Green Belt.

4.29 Therefore, over 90% of the Borough will still be designated as Green Belt and this will be preserved and protected from development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Renewable Energy Developments, Infrastructure and the Environment

4.30 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 EN1 through the encouragement of renewable energy installations and decentralised community energy systems in appropriate locations.

4.31 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 with key partners through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will form the basis for identifying infrastructure enhancements and provision through the development process. Policies IF1 – IF4 address infrastructure issues in more detail.

4.32 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 the National Planning Policy Framework in ensuring that these assets, or their context, are protected and enhanced. Policies EN2 – EN4 address these issues in more detail.

4.33 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. 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. Developers should also be aware of mineral deposits in the Borough and ensure that development proposals do not sterilise such deposits.

4.34 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 National Planning Policy Framework. 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. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) must be integrated into all new developments where technically feasible in order to minimise the impact of surface water run off.

What You Said

4.35 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.

4.36 In preparing the Core Strategy Preferred Options the Council took this feedback on board and promoted Skelmersdale as the primary focus, with Ormskirk and Burscough together forming a secondary focus. Feedback from consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options guided the Council to consider reducing the level of development in Skelmersdale due to concerns about deliverability and the need to meet development needs elsewhere in the Borough better. This is reflected in Policy SP1.

4.37 Feedback from the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation raised concerns regarding Green Belt release in general and in the specific locations for release consulted upon. The Council are reluctant to release Green Belt as well, but unfortunately there is no other way to meet our development targets and ensure consistency with national planning policy. Therefore, as little Green Belt as possible is proposed for release and the Council have selected the most appropriate locations for this release so as to limit impact on the Green Belt, take advantage of existing infrastructure and be as sustainable as possible.

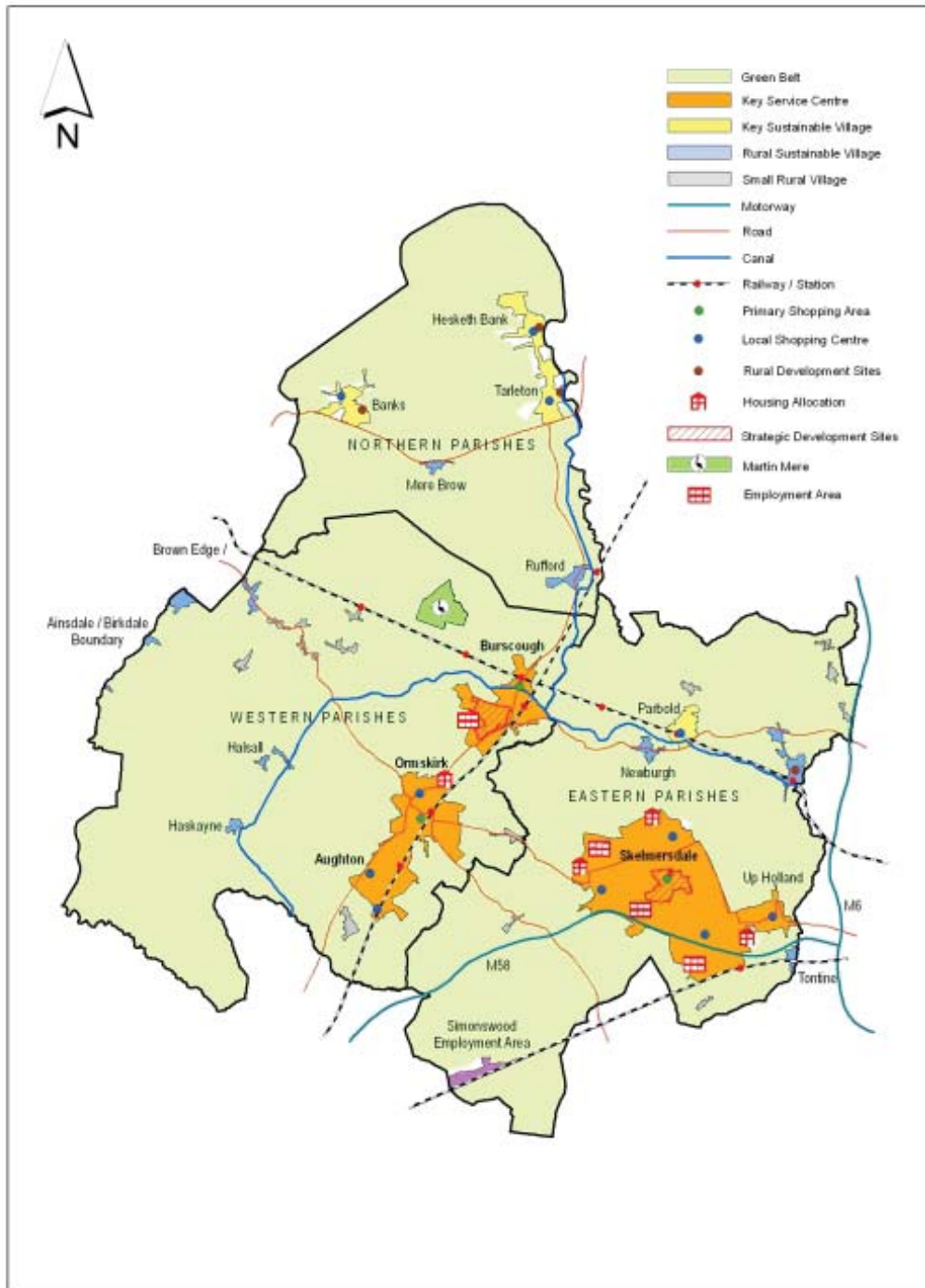
Other Alternatives Considered

4.38 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

4.39 The Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper proposed a strategic policy that was most similar to Option 3. The amendments that have been made to that strategic policy which have resulted in Policy SP1 have meant that this strategic policy is now more a combination of Options 2 and 3.

4.2 Key Diagram



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Figure 4.1 Key Diagram

4.3 Skelmersdale Town Centre

Context

4.40 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.

4.41 The West Lancashire Economy Study has indicated that a revitalised Skelmersdale Town Centre is vital to secure the wider regeneration of the Town. In 2002 the Council 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 Local Plan 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 SP2

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 principles as indicated in the masterplan shown at Figure 4.2 below.

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

- i. Make Skelmersdale a leisure, recreational and retail centre of excellence within the North West;
- ii. 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;
- iii. Reconnect the Town Centre with surrounding communities through the building of new roads and footpaths;
- iv. Increase the number of residents in the Town Centre and diversify the style and range of residential accommodation available; and
- v. Ensure that high quality low carbon design will be the key to creating a vibrant Town Centre.

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

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. New housing with approximately 800 units to be delivered over the Local Plan period. All housing areas should conform to a Design Code to be developed by the Borough Council.
- iv. The Firbeck estate should be improved through the remodelling of the existing housing stock and the provision of new housing and landscaped areas where appropriate, linking to a high quality housing scheme on the adjacent Findon site.
- v. 10% of all new housing should be affordable in order to meet local housing needs
- vi. New office development will be permitted within the town centre area indicated on the plan. Retail uses would also be permitted in this area.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Improved pedestrian and cycle linkages into the Town Centre from surrounding residential areas.
- ix. To ensure maximum practical integration, 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.
- x. Major improvements to the Tawd Valley and the River Tawd corridor 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. In addition, general improvements will be made to green infrastructure in the town along with conserving and enhancing biodiversity.
- xi. To maximise decentralised energy opportunities and low carbon design.
- xii. 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.

Chapter 4 Strategic Policies

- xiii. The site of the former college (adjacent to Glenburn School) is designated as a Development Opportunity Site appropriate for either improved educational facilities, office accommodation or housing development.
- xiv. 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.

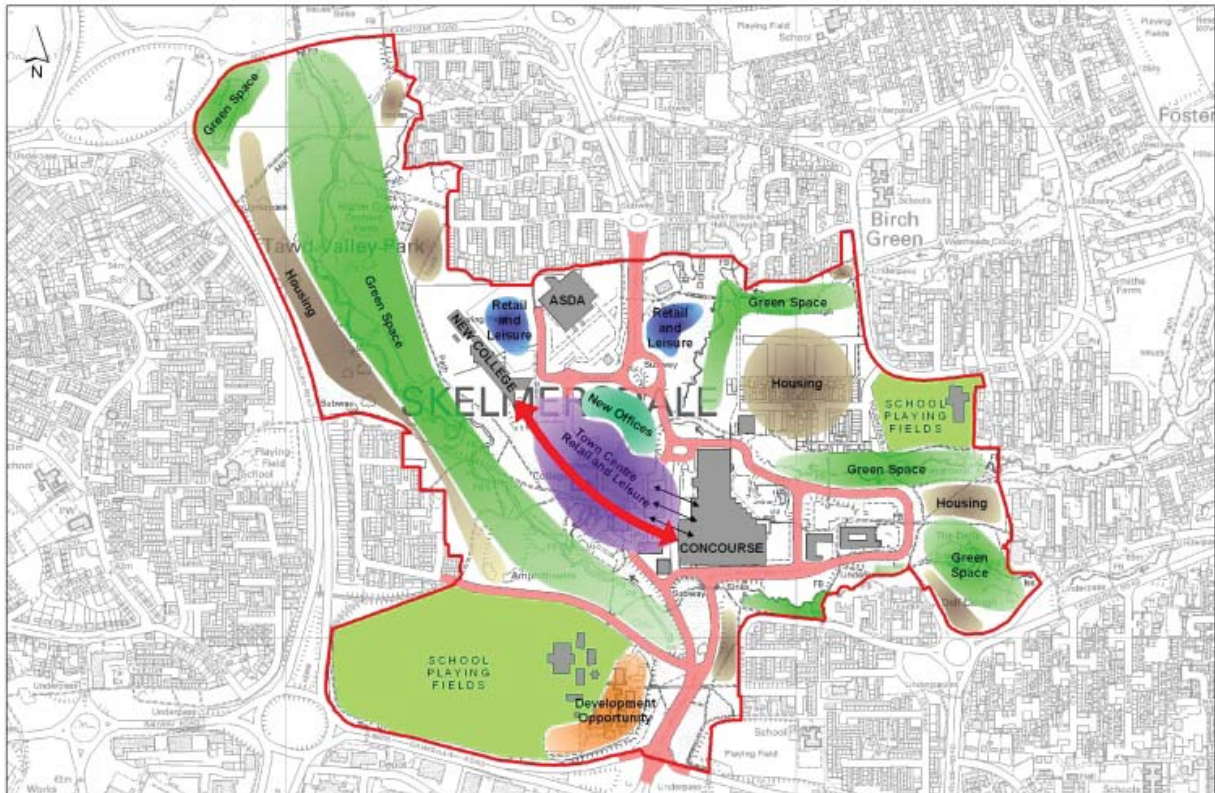


Figure 4.2 Skelmersdale Town Centre

Justification

4.42 The regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre is one of the most important priorities for the Local Plan 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 SP2 refines the work previously undertaken to reflect changes to market conditions, recent developments and recent discussions on deliverability.

4.43 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.

4.44 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.

4.45 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.
- Housing at Firbeck is no longer proposed for redevelopment due to a lack of viability in such a redevelopment scheme. Instead, the estate will be improved through the remodelling of existing housing stock.

4.46 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 SP2 once the Local Plan has been adopted.

What You Said

4.47 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.

Chapter 4 Strategic Policies

4.48 During the Preferred Options consultation there was general support for the improvement of Skelmersdale Town Centre, in particular the provision of a wider range of leisure and retail facilities. However there were also some concerns regarding potential negative impacts on the Concourse Centre and also the ability to deliver residential units within the town centre.

Other Alternatives Considered

4.49 *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.

4.50 *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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD (2008)

4.4 Yew Tree Farm, Burscough

Context

4.51 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).

4.52 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.

4.53 To meet development targets for Burscough a single, large development site has been identified to deliver much of these targets. Given that such a large site would encompass a large amount of housing and employment land together with associated infrastructure, would involve the release of Green Belt and would collectively bring several benefits to the town, it is viewed that it would constitute a Strategic Development Site due to it being key to the delivery of the Local Plan.

Policy SP3

Yew Tree Farm, Burscough - A 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:

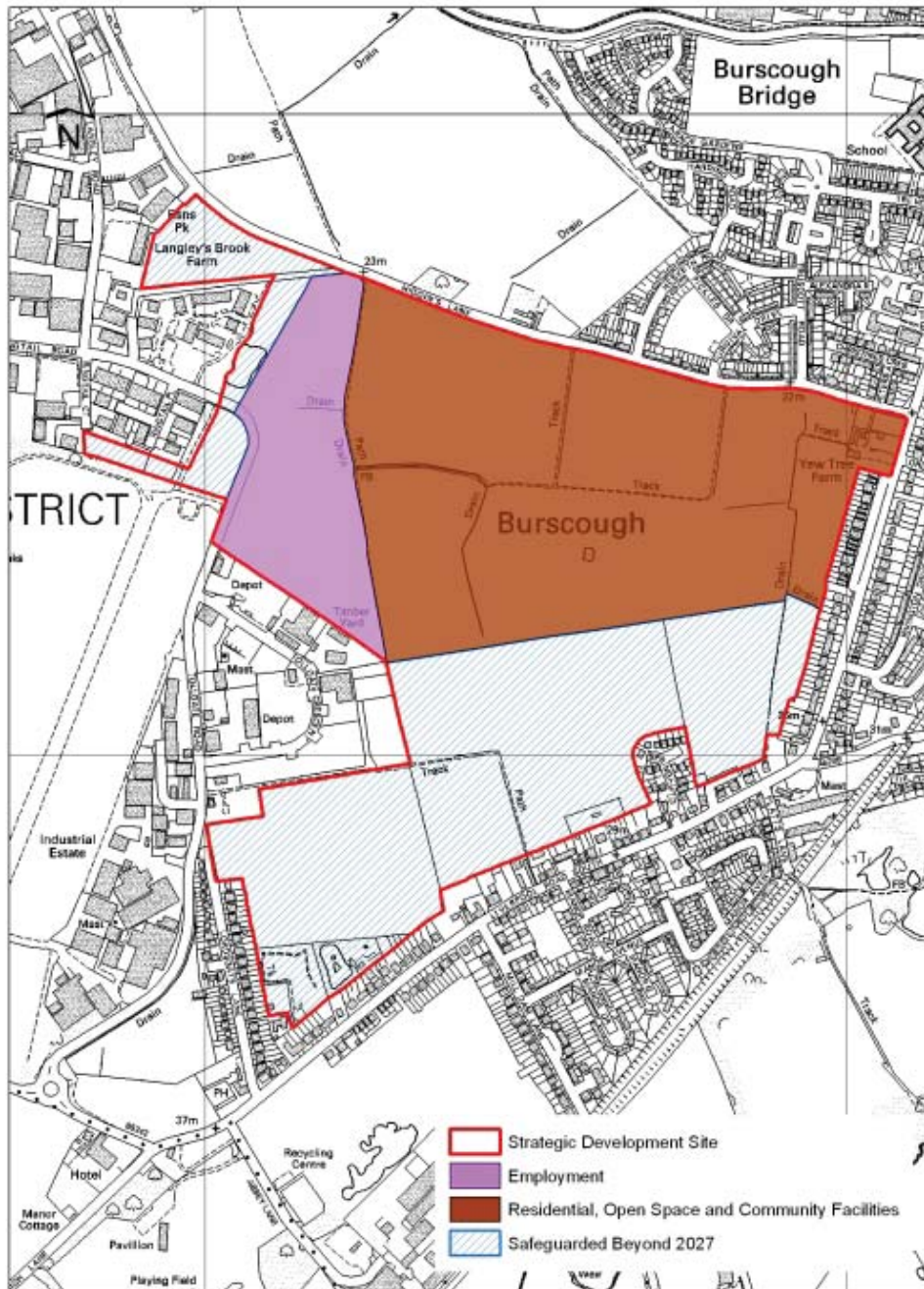
- Residential development for at least 500 new dwellings and safeguarded land for up to 500 more dwellings in the future (post 2027);
- 10 ha of new employment land as an extension to the existing employment area and safeguarded land for up to 10 ha more in the future (post 2027);
- A new town park for Burscough, with a Management Trust to co-ordinate and fund the maintenance of the park;
- A new Primary School and other local community facilities that cannot be appropriately accommodated elsewhere in the town;
- 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;
- Appropriate highway access for the site on Liverpool Road South and Tollgate Road, together with a suitable internal road network;
- Traffic mitigation measures to improve Liverpool Road South and protect other local roads;
- A robust and implementable Travel Plan for the entire site to address the 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 on the Yew Tree Farm site and in Burscough generally to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority;
- Financial contributions to improve the health care facilities and other existing community 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 approximately 74 ha of Green Belt to enable development but at least 30 ha of this will be safeguarded from development until at least 2027. The precise layout of the site will be defined through a separate masterplan that will be prepared in consultation with local residents.

Development on this site will not be able to commence until the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that infrastructure constraints in relation to waste water treatment have been resolved, or can be through development. At this time, it is not anticipated that the waste water treatment infrastructure constraint affecting Burscough will be resolved until 2020 and so development of this site could not commence until this is resolved. If this constraint was to be resolved earlier than 2020, development could also commence earlier provided that all other infrastructure constraints are resolved and that it would not prejudice the delivery of development in Skelmersdale (especially the town centre) or on brownfield sites in Ormskirk or Burscough.

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.

The following plan is purely indicative – precise layout of the site will be determined through a separate masterplanning exercise



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Figure 4.3 Burscough Strategic Development Site

Justification

4.54 It is clear from data on development land supply and deliverability that the development of 4,650 dwellings and 75 ha of employment land as required by Policy SP1 cannot be met within the existing settlement boundaries alone. Based on SHLAA data, knowledge of existing employment areas and knowledge of major pending applications, it is estimated that 3,900 dwellings and 65 ha of employment land could be provided on sites within the existing settlements of the Borough. This therefore leaves 750 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land that cannot be provided within existing settlements and so must be provided in the Green Belt.

4.55 The Strategic Options and Green Belt Release technical paper available on the Council's website sets out the full process that the Council has gone through in assessing the various options for releasing Green Belt to meet this shortfall of development land in the existing settlements. Ultimately, it has been concluded that it would be most suitable to identify one or two large sites to, collectively, accommodate the shortfall in development land in order to ensure that the developments are able to contribute significantly to the improvement of infrastructure and services in the locality of the site.

4.56 In relation to the location of any Green Belt release, it was considered that it would be unsustainable and inappropriate to locate a significant amount of development in the Green Belt on the edge of any of the Borough's villages, therefore leaving only the Key Service Centres as reasonable locations for this release. Skelmersdale / Up Holland was ruled out for further development beyond what is deliverable within the existing settlement due to concerns that releasing Green Belt land on the edge of Skelmersdale would undermine the regeneration of the existing town and because it is not thought that any more than 2,400 dwellings could be delivered in the Skelmersdale area over the next 15 years.

4.57 Therefore, the remaining 750 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land will have to be delivered in the Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough area. The housing and employment land targets set in Policy SP1 for Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough reflect the identification of two sites for this development on Green Belt land, 250 dwellings at Grove Farm on High Lane, Ormskirk and 500 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land at Yew Tree Farm on Liverpool Road South, Burscough. These sites were selected after a thorough site appraisal exercise, which is summarised in Strategic Options and Green Belt Release technical paper.

4.58 In relation to the Yew Tree Farm site specifically, it 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 site, or even any collection of smaller sites, around Burscough could accommodate such a level of development without extending the town out into open countryside.

4.59 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 accessible 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 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 RS2, 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.

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

- The loss of Green Belt and high quality agricultural land;
- Environmental limit constraints at New Lane waste water treatment works;
- Surface water drainage issues in Burscough; and
- The traffic impact of the development on local roads.

4.61 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). In addition, the overall site is well enclosed by existing built development, as discussed above, and its development would only affect the limited views of some adjoining properties.

4.62 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 Local Plan and one that needs addressing as a priority. However, development could not commence at Yew Tree Farm until this issue is resolved. Development of Yew Tree Farm could also fund and facilitate drainage infrastructure improvements in Burscough that would resolve surface water drainage issues in the town.

4.63 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).

4.64 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. Any development of the Strategic Development Site should also contribute towards the improvement of local bus services and rail services, as well as highways improvements.

4.65 With regards to the residential development on the Strategic Development Site, 500 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 Policy SP3. However, it is not expected that this site would start to be developed for residential until 2020, unless key infrastructure improvements enable development to commence sooner.

4.66 While the site is physically capable of delivering a further 500 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land, given that it is anticipated that any improvements to the waste water treatment infrastructure may not be complete until 2020 and given the need to encourage development within the settlement first, it is considered that 500 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land is an appropriate and deliverable level of development for the site. The remaining part of the site will be safeguarded from development until 2027 at least.

4.67 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 will prepare a masterplan specifically for this site, to guide developers and ensure the highest quality of development.

What You Said

4.68 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.

4.69 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.

4.70 Comments received on the option for this site in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper in May/June 2011 mainly objected to the development of the site for 600 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land. Virtually all the objections came from local residents who live immediately adjacent to the site. The same response was received on the alternative Strategic Development Site in Ormskirk, where a large number of local residents who live close to the site objected to the option for that site as well. However, the Dispersal option, which involved less development on the Yew Tree Farm site and development on the edge of Ormskirk and Banks as well, had few objections. None of the options received a great deal of support.

4.71 Therefore, the Policy in SP1 and SP3 reflects most closely the Dispersal option and, as a result, slightly less development is allocated for Yew Tree Farm.

Other Alternatives Considered

4.72 *Alternative Option 1:* To locate the development allocated on Yew Tree Farm in Policy SP3 on an alternative site on the edge of Burscough or around several sites on the edge of Burscough.

4.73 *Reason for rejection:* Any other site on the edge of Burscough capable of accommodating such a large amount of development would involve a significant extension of the town out into the open countryside and would still share similar constraints as those affecting the Yew Tree Farm site.

4.74 While it is conceivable that half a dozen smaller sites on the edge of Burscough could be identified to meet the equivalent of the proposal at Yew Tree Farm, spreading development out in this way would create its own issues, including impacting several parts of the town rather than just one, inevitably a slight extension of the town in more than one location into open countryside and the need to improve infrastructure in several parts of the town rather than just one.

4.75 *Alternative Option 2:* A Strategic Development Site on up to 60 ha of Green Belt land to the south-east of Ormskirk, encompassing a similar amount of housing and employment land, a Sports Village and purpose-built, off-campus student accommodation.

4.76 *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.

Chapter 5 General Development Policies

5.1 Settlement Boundaries

Context

5.1 Strategic Policy SP1 provides an overarching strategy for development, setting out the general levels and types of development that will be permitted in the different settlements in West Lancashire. However, it does not specify the precise extent of these settlements. The most recent settlement boundaries were set in the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006 (WLRLP). It is likely that these boundaries will, in the majority of cases, continue to be the most appropriate for the Borough's settlements. However, where Green Belt sites are proposed to be allocated for development or safeguarded for possible longer-term development, the settlement boundaries will require alteration.

5.2 One related issue is how to carry forward land designated in the WLRLP under Policy DS4 as 'Open Land on the Urban Fringe' (referred to from now on in this policy area as 'Open Land'). Such land is excluded from the Green Belt, but is not considered to be within settlements. Policy DS4 imposed strong restrictions on development, as the land is often open, greenfield and generally in relatively unsustainable locations. Whilst the majority of Open Land should remain outside settlement boundaries, there are a few sites that it would be more appropriate to consider as being within settlements. Open Land that is incorporated within settlements will be safeguarded under Policy GN2: Safeguarded Land. Open Land that remains outside settlement boundaries is marked on the Proposals Map as 'Protected Land', and will be subject to similar constraints to WLRLP Policy DS4, as set out in Policy GN1 below.

Policy GN1

Settlement Boundaries

The boundaries of West Lancashire's settlements, and sites designated as Protected Land, are shown on the Proposals Map and in Appendix G

a) Development within settlement boundaries

Within settlement boundaries, development on brownfield land will be encouraged, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies being satisfied.

Development proposals on greenfield sites within settlement boundaries will be assessed against all relevant Local Plan policies applying to the site, including, but not limited to, policies on settlements' development targets, infrastructure, open and recreational space and nature conservation, as well as any land designations or allocations.

b) Development outside settlement boundaries

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies.

Development on Protected Land will only be permitted where it retains or enhances the rural character of the area, for example small scale, low intensity tourism and leisure uses, and forestry and horticulture related uses.

Small scale affordable housing (i.e. 10 units or fewer), or small scale rural employment (i.e. up to 1,000 square metres) or community facilities to meet an identified local need may be permitted on Protected Land, provided that a sequential site search has been carried out in accordance with Policy GN5. If it is demonstrated that there are no sequentially preferable sites within the settlement boundary, then the most sustainable Protected Land sites closest to the village centre should be considered first, followed by sites which are further from the village centre where a problem of dereliction would be removed. Only after this search sequence has been satisfied should other sites outside the settlement boundary be considered.

Justification

Defining settlement boundaries

5.3 It is considered that the WLRLP approach towards defining settlement boundaries (which itself is a continuation of previous Local Plan policy) remains sound, and that there is no reason for changing this approach. Where settlement boundaries coincide with the Green Belt boundary, the same settlement boundary is proposed in the emerging Local Plan, except where specific sites are to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for development or safeguarded for the longer-term.

5.4 In the case of land designated under WLRLP Policy DS4 ('Open Land'), much of this land lies on the edge of settlements, often forming a buffer between the built-up area and the Green Belt. Under the National Planning Policy Framework, land within settlements is generally to be treated as being suitable for development. Given a judgement has been made under previous Local Plans that much of the Open Land is considered generally unsuitable for development, it would be inappropriate to incorporate it within settlements in this emerging Local Plan. However, a few sites are enclosed by substantial built development on three or more sides, and should be treated as part of the settlement.

5.5 Therefore, the most appropriate approach is considered to be to continue to exclude the majority of Open Land from settlements, but to incorporate a small number of sites which are effectively surrounded by development.

5.6 Changes to settlement and / or Green Belt boundaries (compared with the 2006 WLRLP) have been made at Up Holland, Ormskirk / Aughton, Burscough, Tarleton / Hesketh Bank, Banks and on the Birkdale boundary.

Land within settlement boundaries

5.7 Policy SP1 favours brownfield development, and national policy presumes in favour of sustainable development. Therefore, Policy GN1 supports the development of brownfield land within settlements, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies being satisfied.

5.8 Greenfield land within settlements that is neither safeguarded nor allocated for any specific use, will be subject to all the applicable policies within this Local Plan document. In addition to relevant Local Plan policies, the following considerations may also be taken into account when assessing proposals for development on greenfield sites within settlements.

- The sustainability of the site, including how well it relates to the settlement, and how easy it is to access the settlement centre and other local services on foot or by sustainable modes of transport;
- The extent to which any parts of the site are already developed (for example, greenhouses, or agricultural buildings), and the nature of the development (size, permanence, condition);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, the site's visual, amenity, leisure or recreational value (regardless of whether it is designated as open or recreational space);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, the land's biodiversity value (regardless of any environmental designation);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, tree cover on the site (regardless of whether or not the trees are protected by TPOs);
- If the proposals impact upon the site's visual, recreational, amenity, or natural environmental value, the scope for effective mitigation measures.
- Whether the site includes any Best or Most Versatile agricultural land, and if so, whether the proposed development can be configured in such a way as to minimise the loss or sterilisation of the agricultural land;
- The cumulative impact of successive development proposals in the same settlement, or in the same part of a settlement;
- The scope for provision of community facilities, general improvements to the locality, or other community benefits.

Land outside settlement boundaries

5.9 All land outside settlements in West Lancashire is either Green Belt, or has been designated under WLRLP Policy DS4 as 'Open Land on the Urban Fringe'. In previous Local Plans, the decision has been made not to include land designated under Policy DS4 (and preceding policies) within the Green Belt, primarily on account of the land not having a defensible boundary. Assuming this generally remains the case, it is considered that there should continue to be a distinction between 'Open Land' and Green Belt land in terms of what should be permitted upon it.

5.10 It would be inappropriate to safeguard Open Land outside settlement boundaries, as this could imply that the land is considered suitable for development at some point in the future, and would effectively give it the same status as other former Open Land deemed worthy of inclusion within settlements, which would thereby undermine the setting of settlement boundaries.

Chapter 5 General Development Policies

5.11 Therefore, Policy GN1 is less restrictive than national Green Belt policy, but generally seeks to restrict development on former non-Green Belt land outside settlements to small scale and low intensity uses, or to uses which are appropriate in rural areas, for example horticulture. The uses permitted by this emerging Policy GN1 for former Open Land outside settlements are consistent with Policy DS4 of the previous Local Plan (WLRLP 2006), and represent a continuity in approach.

5.12 Outside settlement boundaries, emerging Local Plan Policy SP1 allows for countryside uses that retain or enhance the rural character of the area. Policy RS1 allows for affordable housing outside settlements only if there are no suitable sites within the settlement. These policies are consistent with what is allowed by Policy GN1 for non-Green Belt land outside settlements.

What You Said

5.13 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation in May / June 2011, a variety of views were put forward with regard to how individual settlements should or should not expand. Whilst there has not been a specific consultation before now on the proposed settlement boundaries for 2012-2027, the views put forward during the Preferred Options consultation have been taken into account, along with a series of policy considerations. Policies CS1, CS5 and CS7 of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document set out what types of development would be permitted in rural areas. Few detailed comments were received during the consultation in May / June 2011 regarding suitable uses on non-Green Belt land outside settlements.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.14 *Alternative Option 1:* As all other land outside settlements in West Lancashire is Green Belt, it may appear reasonable to treat former Open Land outside settlements the same way.

5.15 *Reason for rejection:* All land outside settlements in West Lancashire is either Green Belt, or is former Open Land. In previous Local Plans, the decision has been made not to include Open Land (or land designated under preceding policies) within the Green Belt, primarily on account of the land not having a defensible boundary. Assuming this generally remains the case, there should continue to be a distinction between former Open Land and Green Belt land in terms of what should be permitted upon it.

5.16 *Alternative Option 2:* Safeguard, or apply a more relaxed policy to former Open Land.

5.17 *Reason for rejection:* By safeguarding all such former Open Land outside settlements, this would imply that these sites are all considered suitable for development at some point in the future, and would effectively give them the same status as other former Open Land deemed worthy of inclusion within settlements, thereby undermining the setting of settlement boundaries.

5.18 Allowing more development can help achieve the development targets in the emerging Local Plan. However, such a policy would be inconsistent with Policy SP1, which treats built development as generally inappropriate outside settlement boundaries. Also, to have the same policy for land inside and outside settlement boundaries defeats the object of evaluating which Open Land should be inside or outside settlements, and to setting a boundary in the first place.

5.2 Safeguarded Land

Context

5.19 The Local Plan is required to demonstrate flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. In addition, when amending Green Belt boundaries, the National Planning Policy Framework directs Local Plans to have “regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.” (para 138, p.39). Therefore, there is a need to remove some land from the Green Belt and safeguard it for a “Plan B” (to allow flexibility within the Local Plan) and for development needs beyond the plan period (beyond 2027) and to continue to protect some open land that is already outside the Green Belt but is currently protected by Policy DS4 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2006).

Policy GN2

Safeguarded Land

The land identified on the maps in Appendix G as safeguarded land is within the settlement boundaries but will be protected from development and planning permission will be refused for development proposals which would prejudice the development of this land in the future. This safeguarding is necessary for one of the following two reasons:

- It is allocated for the “Plan B” – such land will be safeguarded for the development needs of the “Plan B” should it be required. If the “Plan B” is not required then this land will be safeguarded for development needs beyond 2027.
- It is safeguarded for development needs beyond 2027 – these sites will only be considered for development after 2027 if there are no longer any other suitable sites within the settlement boundaries to meet any identified development needs at that time.

The following sites will be safeguarded from development:

a) “Plan B” sites

- i. Land at Parr’s Lane (east), Aughton
- ii. Land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk
- iii. Land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough
- iv. Land at Mill Lane, Up Holland
- v. Land at Moss Road (west), Halsall
- vi. Land at Fine Jane’s Farm, Halsall
- vii. Land at New Cut Lane, Halsall

b) Safeguarded for beyond 2027

- i. Land at Yew Tree Farm (south), Burscough
- ii. Land at Parr’s Lane (west), Aughton

- iii. Land at Moss Road (east), Halsall
- iv. Land at Guinea Hall Lane / Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks

Justification

5.20 Ultimately, given the need to amend Green Belt boundaries in the Borough to ensure the delivery of the residential and employment development needs and the need to demonstrate flexibility in that delivery of development needs if circumstances change, there is a need to identify safeguarded land within the Local Plan. This land will be protected from development until it is absolutely required to meet development needs beyond this plan period or, if it is assigned as a “Plan B” site, to meet development needs in this plan period if allocated sites fail to deliver the required amount of development.

5.21 In considering how much land is to be safeguarded, regard has been had as to how much land is required for the “Plan B” and what would be a reasonable amount to safeguard for potential development needs beyond 2027. In considering which sites should be safeguarded, a full site appraisal of a number of potential sites was undertaken. A summary of the site appraisal process that has led to the above list of sites is provided in the separate technical paper on Strategic Options and Green Belt Release. This is especially relevant for those sites safeguarded for the “Plan B”.

5.22 The land safeguarded for beyond 2027 has been identified as such for one of two reasons:

- because it is part of a wider parcel of land removed from the Green Belt due to a portion of it being required for the preferred development strategy or the “Plan B”; or
- because it is land previously protected from development by Policy DS4 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2006) which it is still appropriate to protect from development before 2027, but falls within settlement boundaries.

5.23 An example of the former would be Yew Tree Farm (south) in Burscough, where only the northern portion of Yew Tree Farm is required for the Strategic Development Site (see Policy SP3) but the Green Belt amendments must encompass the entire site to ensure that the new boundary of the Green Belt is robust.

5.24 An example of the latter would be the land at Guinea Hall Lane / Greaves Hall Avenue in Banks, which lies within the settlement boundary but is not required to meet the development needs of the Northern Parishes and serves an important function as an area of open land within the southern part of the village.

What You Said

5.25 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation in May / June 2011, it was made clear by many members of the public that the release of Green Belt land was not supported. However, the Council must reluctantly propose amendments to the Green Belt in order to meet development needs and provide flexibility within this plan period and the

next. Also during this consultation, the concept of a “Plan B” was put forward to ensure suitable flexibility. This concept was supported by many in the development industry but greater detail and quantum of flexibility was requested to ensure it was robust.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.26 More detail on the alternative options for sites to be safeguarded is provided within the site appraisal process documented in the separate technical paper on Strategic Options and Green Belt Release. The following sites were among the most viable alternatives considered but which were ultimately ruled out as not being suitable for the “Plan B” or safeguarding and so remained within the Green Belt:

- Land at Holborn Hill, Ormskirk
- Land at Alty’s Farm, Ormskirk
- Land at Slack House Farm, St Helens Road, Ormskirk
- Land at Grove Farm (north), High Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Bath Farm, Greetby Hill / Dark Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Little Hall Farm (the Mushroom Farm), Cottage Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Orrell Lane, Burscough
- Land at Warper’s Moss Lane, Burscough

5.27 Alternative options for the quantity of land to be safeguarded varied from safeguarding no land to safeguarding even more than is proposed in order to accommodate a larger “Plan B” and plan for a potential increase in housing and employment land targets in the next Local Plan. Neither of these alternatives was felt to be appropriate. The former alternative would allow no flexibility within the Local Plan and therefore the plan would not be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and would risk being found unsound.

5.28 The latter alternative would run the risk of amending the Green Belt “just in case” and remove more land from the Green Belt than is likely to be necessary, therefore pre-empting a Strategic Review of the Green Belt. It is the Council’s view that a Strategic Review of the Merseyside Green Belt is required across borough-boundaries to assess what strategic amendments to the Green Belt should be made in order to ensure that the boundary is an appropriate one to last for the next 30 years or more.

5.3 Design of Development

Context

5.29 The aim of achieving good design is a key objective of the planning process and the Council is committed to ensuring that 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.

5.30 Aside from consideration for design of buildings, which ought to be a major consideration when proposing any new development, design features can also deal directly with wider issues such as crime, achieving renewable energy targets, dealing with drainage issues and addressing other environmental concerns such as air quality and lighting, creation of wildlife-friendly habitats, and making buildings accessible to all user groups.

Policy GN3

Design of Development

All development will be expected to be designed to a high standard. Development will be assessed against the following criteria, in addition to meeting other policy requirements within the Local Plan:

1. Quality Design

- i. It is of high quality, imaginative and inspiring design and be in keeping with the West Lancashire Design Guide SPD;
- ii. It respects the historic character of the local landscape and townscape;
- iii. It retains or create reasonable levels of privacy, amenity and sufficient garden/outdoor space for occupiers of the neighbouring and proposed properties;
- iv. It complements or enhances any attractive attributes and/or local distinctiveness within its surroundings through sensitive design, including appropriate siting, orientation, scale, materials, landscaping, boundary treatment, detailing and use of art features where appropriate;
- v. Where the proposal involves extensions, conversions or alterations to existing buildings, its design should relate to the existing building, in terms of design and materials, and should not detract from the character of the street scene.

2. Crime

- i. It creates safe and secure environments which, through design, reduce the opportunities for crime. A crime impact statement may be required in accordance with the Council's validation checklist.

3. Accessibility and Transport

- i. It integrates well with the surrounding area and provides safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle access;
- ii. It prioritises the convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users over car users, where appropriate;
- iii. Parking provision is made in line with the thresholds set out in Local Plan Policy IF2;
- iv. Proposals for developments over a certain size will be required to provide Transport Assessments and Travel Plans as detailed within the Council's Validation Checklist;
- v. It creates an environment that is accessible to all sectors of the community including children, elderly people, and people with disabilities;

- vi. It provides, where appropriate, suitable provision for public transport including bus stops and shelters;
- vii. It incorporates suitable and safe access and road layout design, in line with latest standards.

4. Drainage / Sewerage

- i. It incorporates sustainable drainage systems where feasible, or, where this is not feasible, incorporates features to reduce the amount of surface water run-off by minimising hard surfaces and using porous materials where possible;
- ii. It is designed to prevent sewerage problems.

5. Landscaping and the Natural Environment

- i. It maintains or enhances the distinctive character and visual quality of any Landscape Character Areas in which it is located;
- ii. It provides sufficient landscaped buffer zones and appropriate levels of public open space / greenspace to limit the impact of development on adjoining sensitive uses and the open countryside;
- iii. It minimises the loss of trees, hedgerows, and areas of ecological value, or, where loss is unavoidable, provides for their like for like replacement or enhancement of features of ecological value;
- iv. It incorporates new habitat creation where possible;
- v. It incorporates and enhances the landscape and nature conservation value of any water features, such as streams, ditches and ponds.

6. Other environmental considerations

- i. It is designed to minimise any reduction in air quality;
- ii. It incorporates recycling collection facilities;
- iii. Proposed floodlighting should provide minimum levels of lighting required whilst having regard for any potential adverse impacts and ensuring any light spillage is minimised;
- iv. In coal mining development referral areas, appropriate account is taken of issues relating to the mining legacy. For certain types of development in these areas, a coal mining risk assessment report will be required.

In accordance with the Council's validation checklist, a Design and Access Statement should be submitted with any application for proposals of a certain scale or those on sensitive sites.

Justification

5.31 It is considered that a policy relating to design is essential to maintain existing high standards over the lifetime of the Local Plan. The policy should deal with specific building design, such as siting, materials, amenity etc. However, it should also be recognised that design incorporates many wider aspects which all require consideration at the earliest possible

Chapter 5 General Development Policies

stage when designing a scheme. The Council has an adopted Design Guide SPD which covers matters relating to building design. There is no need to replicate this policy in the emerging Local Plan.

5.32 An all-encompassing policy on design is considered to be the best approach to development management and should take account of: crime and safety, renewable energy and provision of waste facilities, accessibility and transport, drainage and sewerage, landscaping and wider environmental issues such as potential light pollution.

5.33 A more detailed policy is considered more sustainable in the long term and takes account of all potential impacts that a proposal may have in terms of both building and site design and site layout.

What You Said

5.34 Within the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation the need for high quality design was identified as an important aspect of all future development in order to maintain and enhance existing qualities of the Borough.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.35 *Alternative Option 1:* A policy relating specifically to building design.

5.36 *Reason for rejection:* This option has not been taken forward as it is not considered to be a thorough approach to new development. In order for it to be sustainable, design must incorporate all potential aspects which could influence how a scheme is produced.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- Design Guide SPD

5.4 Demonstrating Viability

Context

5.37 A number of Local Plan policies seek to maintain particular uses of land, for example employment uses on employment sites, retail units in town centres, or agricultural buildings in the Green Belt. However, these policies allow for changes of use in some cases, provided it is robustly demonstrated by the applicant that to maintain the former use is no longer viable. The purpose of this policy area is to set out a range of parameters that will enable the Council to make a fair and robust assessment of whether there is a viability case for whatever change of use is proposed.

5.38 In addition, any policy of this nature must facilitate the approach recently set out by Central Government which encourages local planning authorities to be proactive in terms of development proposals and approving planning applications wherever possible, unless the proposal contravenes other local or national policy objectives.

Policy GN4

Demonstrating Viability

1. Applicants proposing the redevelopment of a site (or re-use of a building) for alternative uses not directly in accordance with other Local Plan policies will be required to submit a Viability Statement as part of a planning application. Redevelopment resulting in the loss of any of the following uses, though this list is not exhaustive, will require preparation of a Viability Statement:

- i. Commercial / industrial (B1, B2 or B8);
- ii. Retail (A1); and
- iii. Agricultural workers' dwellings.

2. The Viability Statement should provide proof of marketing and demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of retaining or re-using the site in its current use. The viability case will be considered along with other policy considerations. Proof of marketing should include all of the following criteria:

- i. The land / premises has been widely marketed through an agent or surveyor at a price that reflects its current market or rental value for employment purposes, and no reasonable offer has been refused. For consistency, any commercial / industrial property should also be recorded on the Council's sites and premises search facility. The period of marketing should be 18 months for commercial / industrial, 6 months for retail and 12 months for agricultural workers' dwellings.
- ii. The land / premises has been regularly advertised in the local press and regional press, property press, specialist trade papers and any free papers covering relevant areas. This should initially be weekly advertising for the first month, followed by monthly advertising for the remainder of the marketing period.
- iii. The land / premises has been continuously included on the agent's website, the agent's own papers and lists of commercial / business premises for the marketing period.
- iv. There has been an agent's advertisement board on each site frontage to the highway throughout the marketing period.
- v. Evidence that local property agents, specialist commercial agents and local businesses have been contacted and sent mail shots or hard copies of particulars to explore whether they can make use of the premises.

4. The Viability Statement should also detail the following information:

- i. Details of current occupation of the buildings and where this function would be relocated;

- ii. Details as to why the site location makes it unsuitable for existing uses, including consideration for redevelopment of the site for modern premises of that use – having regard for access/highways issues and potential lack of public transport serving the site;
- iii. Any physical constraints making the site difficult to accommodate existing uses;
- iv. Environmental considerations/amenity issues;
- v. For an employment site, consideration for other employment generating uses such as those relating to tourism, leisure, retail and residential institutions; and
- vi. Consideration of the viability of providing affordable housing on the site, which could meet a specific local need, before consideration of market housing.

In certain cases, for example, where a significant departure from policy is proposed, the Council may seek to independently verify the Viability Statement, and the applicant will be expected to bear the cost of independent verification.

Justification

5.39 The Ministerial Statement which emerged at the end of March 2011, along with the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2011) have made it clear that the Government's broad brush approach to development will focus on facilitating growth and new jobs in sustainable locations and generally on encouraging more residential development, including on vacant employment sites. The aim of these changes is to enable the delivery of much needed housing whilst losing those employment sites which are no longer considered economically viable.

5.40 It is important that the Council has a robust policy in place to respond to this change in emphasis. However, that is not to say that we should freely permit such a change of use, and a robust case must be put forward by the applicant to demonstrate why the site is no longer suitable in its current use. A criteria based approach will form a crucial part of any policy.

5.41 It is considered that the above criteria will ensure that only the least viable sites are permitted to be developed for other uses. Clearly, details of current occupation of a building (including length of time a building or site has been vacant) will provide a good indication of current levels of viability. This will be enhanced with details of marketing to demonstrate a potential lack of interest in a particular site in its current form. There are some sites across the Borough which have historically been used for a certain purpose, but as times have changed, they are no longer suitable for such uses for a number of reasons – these may be relating to access/transport, physical constraints to the site and environmental/amenity issues. The above criteria seek to ensure the applicant considers each of these points thoroughly. The provision of affordable housing is an important criterion to ensure the delivery of such housing to areas of acute need.

5.42 It is considered that the above criteria will ensure a robust marketing exercise which will provide sufficient opportunity for an interested party to enquire about the site in question. The time periods selected for marketing and advertising have been identified using examples of similar policies elsewhere in the North West and they are considered fair and reasonable in light of the current economic climate, and indeed beyond this for the remainder of the plan period. It is also important that there is an element of consistency in how each site is marketed and therefore they should be recorded on the Council's Evolutive Property System, used by all Lancashire local authorities.

5.43 To summarise, if it can be demonstrated that a site or building is no longer viable, in line with the above criteria, there needs to be some flexibility in the uses permitted. Regard should be had for whether, firstly, employment uses are viable, and then, if they are not, whether affordable housing is deliverable on the site. Only if these uses have been proven to not be viable, should market housing be considered as a possibility. Affordable housing requirements will apply to market housing developments on former employment sites.

What You Said

5.44 This policy has emerged as a result of comments and feedback from various stages of consultation and through the development management process. Therefore, we are seeking feedback on this new policy at this stage.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.45 *Alternative Option 1:* Removing this criteria based policy

5.46 *Reason for rejection:* This option has not been taken forward as it is considered crucial that with the changing policy agenda, the Council has a robust policy in place to respond to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made in relation to new development. A criteria based approach is a crucial part of any policy.

5.5 Sequential Tests

Context

5.47 A number of Local Plan policies (for example, parts of RS1: Residential Development, and RS4: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, as well as national policy on retail and town centre uses), require 'sequential tests' whereby developers demonstrate that the site they propose to develop is the most realistic site from a planning point of view, i.e. there are no sites in 'preferable' locations (in terms of a particular policy) that could be developed instead of the site subject to the planning application. For example, when proposing a retail development outside, or on the edge of, a town centre, the applicant should demonstrate that there are no sites within the town centre that could be developed instead. Sequential tests may also be used in proposals for other town centre uses outside town centres and for affordable housing on sites lying outside settlements.

5.48 Whilst sequential tests are relied upon relatively frequently in development management, there has so far been no detailed policy at the local level. Since 2006, the Council has relied on an informal guidance note on undertaking sequential tests, and whilst

this has generally worked satisfactorily, its legal weight is limited, and the note has at times been challenged during the development management process. The purpose of Policy GN5 is to set out clearly the Council's expectations from developers submitting sequential tests. In particular, this policy covers the extent of the 'area of search' for alternative sites, and what will be considered satisfactory in terms of demonstrating whether sites are realistically available or suitable for development.

Policy GN5

Sequential Tests

Sequential tests will be required for the following types of development:

- Retail and other town centre uses on sites outside town centres (in line with national policy)
- Affordable housing, employment uses, or community facilities on Protected Land (Policy GN1)
- Affordable housing in the Green Belt (Policy RS1)
- Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Green Belt (Policy RS4)
- Office developments outside settlement centres (Policy IF1)

In undertaking a sequential site search, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites in preferable locations that could reasonably be expected to accommodate the proposed development within the expected project timeframe.

To achieve a satisfactory sequential test, the Council will expect the following from applicants:

- **Area of search:** This will usually be the settlement, ward or parish in which the proposed development site lies. For major development proposals, the area of search will be wider, and may include the whole Borough.
- **Comprehensiveness of search:** Evidence should be provided of a rigorous investigation of relevant sources of information to find sequentially preferable sites.
- **Availability / viability / deliverability of sequentially preferable sites:** Evidence should be provided to demonstrate that landowners / site occupiers or their agents have been contacted to discuss the possibility of selling or developing the land, and financial information submitted to show on what basis that it would be unviable to proceed with the proposed development on any site rejected on viability grounds.
- **Suitability:** The test should take account of the suitability of sequentially preferable sites to accommodate the proposed development.

Justification

5.49 Sequential site searches are an important development management tool. A satisfactory sequential test should demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that it is appropriate to allow a development proposal in an area where policy usually presumes against such developments. Policy GN5 seeks to strike an appropriate balance between protecting wider policy objectives and facilitating necessary development in West Lancashire. The comprehensiveness of the site search will often be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development. Where a proposed use could set a precedent (e.g. affordable housing in the Green Belt), the search will be expected to be particularly rigorous. Liaison with Council officers is encouraged before, and during, the undertaking of a sequential site search.

5.50 Sequential searches may also be required, where appropriate, for other development proposals not listed in the policy above.

Area of search

5.51 The area of search will usually be the settlement, ward or parish in which the proposed development site lies. Where a site lies very close to the boundary between two wards or parishes, both areas should be considered. Where a site lies close or adjacent to a neighbouring Local Authority area, development sites within that area should be taken into account. In some cases, it may be more practical to consider sites within a certain radius (for example one kilometre, or one mile) from the nearest point on the Local Authority border to the proposed development site, than to consider all sites within a neighbouring settlement. For example, the Ainsdale / Birkdale area, adjacent to the West Lancashire boundary, spreads several kilometres, merging with Southport, and the most reasonable requirement in terms of sequential testing would be to consider sites within a given radius, rather than within the whole urban area.

5.52 In the case of proposals for major development (for example, retail parks), or for uses such as hotels that typically draw from a wide catchment, it is appropriate to extend the search area beyond a single ward, settlement or parish. If judged appropriate, the area of search may include the whole Borough for certain development proposals.

5.53 The area of search for any development proposal can be agreed with Council officers prior to the commencement of any sequential testing work.

Comprehensiveness of search

5.54 Depending on the type of development proposed, applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have rigorously investigated relevant sources of information about alternative sites. For example, in terms of residential development proposals, the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Housing Land Supply reports should be used in the first instance. In the case of proposals for retail or other town centre-type uses, the Council's commercial property register is a useful starting point. These sources of information are all available on the Council's website. Other sources include aerial photographs, and online mapping systems. Council officers may be able to provide information on land ownership for certain sites (e.g. SHLAA sites).

Chapter 5 General Development Policies

5.55 It is possible for certain types of development to be accommodated on more than one smaller site elsewhere, rather than on a single similarly sized site. Where such a “disaggregation” of development is possible, the sequential search should consider smaller sites. Otherwise, the applicant should explain why the proposed development could only be accommodated on a single site. Both the applicant and the Council should demonstrate a reasonable level of flexibility when considering such cases.

Availability / Viability / Deliverability of sequentially preferable sites.

5.56 When considering the availability of sites, written evidence (for example, a letter from the landowner or agent) should be produced to demonstrate that landowners / site occupiers or their agents had been contacted to discuss the possibility of selling or developing their land within the expected project timeframe, and that the owner is either unwilling to sell, or that the asking price is unreasonable or unrealistic. If an unreasonable asking price is cited as a reason for a site not being available, a brief indication would be expected (in many cases, one paragraph would suffice), showing how the asking price would make the proposed scheme unviable.

5.57 Where specific sites have been rejected as being unviable for the proposed development, written evidence would be required to demonstrate that land /business owners had been contacted regarding the disposal of the sites, and sufficiently detailed financial information submitted to show on what basis that it is unviable to proceed with the scheme.

The level of detail in the financial information should be proportionate to the scale or significance of the proposed development. Whilst the Council would expect clear, unambiguous information, it will not impose unreasonable burdens on the applicant.

Suitability

5.58 The suitability of sequentially preferable sites to accommodate the proposed development should be taken into account. Suitability considerations may include policy designations or physical constraints which may mitigate against the development of sequentially preferable sites, and the desirability of ensuring the efficient use of land, i.e. any development proposals should not preclude the development of larger areas land or render parts of it unusable, for example by restricting access.

5.59 If highways issues are cited as reasons why particular sites may not be developable, the Council would expect the relevant highways authority (i.e. Lancashire County Council) to have been contacted for their views on access to the sites and for this to be documented. If difficulties with access to or across land are cited, evidence will be expected that consultation has taken place with landowners on this matter.

Other Matters

Definition of settlement centre

5.60 The town, village and local centres of West Lancashire are defined on the Proposals Map under Policy IF1. However, some of the smaller villages do not have such a centre and in such cases the location and extent of the village ‘centre’ should be agreed in writing with Council officers before the sequential test is undertaken.

5.61 Distances will usually be measured using publicly accessible pedestrian routes, although it should be noted that not all public footpaths are necessarily suitable pedestrian routes. There may be the odd occasion where an ‘as the crow flies’ approach is more appropriate, for example when using a ‘radial’ approach in neighbouring local authority areas.

Validity of information

5.62 Applicants should ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that the sequential test is valid during the expected timescale of the project. The Council’s Borough Planner will confirm, in writing, at what stage the sequential test is satisfied to enable any grant funding bids to be submitted to relevant agencies such as the Homes and Communities Agency.

What You Said

5.63 Policy GN5 appears for the first time in this Local Plan Preferred Options document, and thus it has not yet been consulted upon as part of the Core Strategy / Local Plan. However, an informal guidance note was prepared in 2006, primarily to advise on sequential searches for affordable housing sites. A draft version of this guidance note was sent to several Registered Providers. Few comments were received, and just two minor amendments were made to the document, primarily to clarify the issue of how settlement centres are defined.

Other Alternatives Considered

5.64 *Alternative Option 1:* Rely on national policy, rather than specify a Local Plan policy.

5.65 *Reason for rejection:* National policy on sequential tests for town centre uses was set out in Policy EC15 of Planning Policy Statement 4. This policy was both clear and useful. However, the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework, which has superseded PPS4, has resulted in much of the detail in national policy being removed. Even if PPS4 were to be adopted locally as an SPD, its Policy EC15 does not specify exactly how a sequential test is to be carried out, nor how availability, suitability and viability are to be assessed. Furthermore, it relates specifically to proposals for town centre uses in non-town centre locations, whereas the intended policy for West Lancashire covers other uses, for example housing. Therefore, it is not enough to rely solely on national policy to provide sufficient detail to guide sequential tests in West Lancashire, and a Local Plan policy is deemed necessary.

Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth

6.1 The Economy and Employment Land

Context

6.1 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 over the Local Plan period, and met as sustainably as possible while delivering the right kind of jobs, in the right sectors and in the right locations.

Policy EC1

The Economy and Employment Land

1. Overall provision of employment land:

The delivery of 75 ha of new employment development (B1, B2 and B8 uses) will be promoted in West Lancashire between 2012 and 2027. Such a requirement will be met as follows:

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 White Moss Business Park.

The remaining 23 ha of the 75 ha target will be provided through:

- Existing allocations and remodelling of the Burscough industrial estates (3 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).

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 Edge Hill University. 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.

2. Managing development on employment land:

a) *Strategic Employment Sites* - On the following sites, as detailed on the Proposals Map, the Council will require a mix of industrial, business, storage and distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8):

- i. Pimbo Industrial Estate
- ii. Stanley Industrial Estate / XL Business Park
- iii. Gillibrands Industrial Estate
- iv. Burscough Industrial Estate

On the following Strategic Employment Sites, the Council will permit B1 use classes only:

- v. White Moss Business Park

b) *Other Significant Employment Sites* - On the following sites, as detailed on the Proposals Map, the Council will permit industrial, business, storage and distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8):

- i. Westgate, Skelmersdale
- ii. Chequer Lane, Up Holland
- iii. Ormskirk Employment Area
- iv. Southport Road / Green Lane, Ormskirk
- v. Abbey Lane, Burscough
- vi. Platts Lane, Burscough
- vii. Briars Lane, Burscough
- viii. Orrell Lane, Burscough
- ix. Red Cat Lane, Burscough
- x. North Quarry, Appley Bridge
- xi. Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge
- xii. Simonswood Industrial Estate

c) *Other Existing Employment Sites* - On other employment sites the Council will permit industrial, business, storage and distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8) provided that the proposals will not cause harm to the amenity of other nearby users. The redevelopment

of individual existing employment sites for other uses will be considered where a viability case can be put forward (in line with Policy GN4) and where the provisions of Policy EC2 and EC3 are met, where relevant.

d) The Council will take account of the following factors when assessing all development proposals for employment uses:

- i. The accommodation should be flexible & suitable to potentially meet changing future employment needs, and in particular to provide for the requirements of local businesses and small firms;
- ii. The scale, bulk and appearance of the proposal should be compatible with the character of its surroundings;
- iii. The development must not significantly harm the amenities of nearby occupiers nor cause unacceptable adverse environmental impact on the surrounding area;
- iv. The scale of development should be compatible with the level of existing or potential public transport accessibility, and the on-street parking situation. Where additional infrastructure is required due to the scale of the development, such a development will be required to fund the necessary infrastructure to support it via appropriate means;
- v. The nature of the business sector proposed. The Council will seek to ensure that opportunities are provided for local people and, where necessary, developers will be encouraged to implement relevant training programmes.

Justification

The Borough-wide Employment Land Target and its Spatial Disaggregation

6.2 The locally-determined employment land target of 75 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 19 years, including the last three 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 Local Plan period (2012-2027). Further details on how this target has been derived can be found in Appendix D.

6.3 Skelmersdale has been identified as the spatial area most appropriate to take the majority of new employment development over the Local Plan period because of:

- its accessibility of location;
- the large existing provision of employment premises that promotes a critical mass and shared infrastructure;

Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth

- 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; and
- 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).

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

6.4 Existing employment land allocations that remain undeveloped in the Borough from the Replacement Local Plan (2006) 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.

6.5 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. This would however, rely upon a range of occupiers and owners working together to improve existing utilisation rates and would also be likely to require external funding to facilitate such improvements. For this reason, the Local Plan has to identify realistic opportunities for regeneration which are most likely to go ahead.

6.6 Regardless of this issue, 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 (13 ha) will need to be met through newly identified sites.

6.7 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. There is however a small area of 'safeguarded land' within the settlement of Banks which could account for some of the need, this area is approximately 2 ha. There remains, therefore, a need to identify land within the Green to meet the needs of the Borough over the Local Plan period.

6.8 The Local Plan identifies that 10 ha of new employment land will be provided on Green Belt land in the following location:

- Burscough Strategic Development Site (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.

6.9 Given that this area of new employment land is 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 to inform the decision making process. The Green Belt Study prepared by WLBC identified that land to the West of Burscough was found not to fulfil any purpose of the Green Belt. This site has also been identified as it is 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

6.10 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.

6.11 Whilst this regional designation no longer exists, the importance of regeneration to Skelmersdale remains the same and, in terms of employment requirements, the Local Plan 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 over the Local Plan period will be given to the development of existing allocations and regeneration of existing employment areas within Skelmersdale. It is however recognised that existing plots and units are fragmented and available sites may not always be suitable to accommodate new development proposals.



Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth

Appropriate uses for new employment sites

6.12 All allocated and existing 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.

6.13 The development of non-employment uses will be resisted on *Strategic Employment Sites* and *Other Significant Employment Sites* in order to maintain the Borough's employment land supply and maximise opportunities for new economic investment in the Borough. Exceptions may be made for mixed-use schemes on smaller individual employment sites, subject to suitability and viability assessment (this is addressed further in Policy Area GN4) 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

6.14 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.



6.15 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 Local Plan, 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.

6.16 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.

6.17 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.

6.18 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 provided with suitable employment related training opportunities to enable local people to access employment in these sectors. While the Local Plan cannot directly ensure training is provided, it would encourage and support any employment related initiatives such as apprenticeships, workplace learning and volunteering through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

What You Said

6.19 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.

6.20 Preferred Options consultation in May / June 2011 further highlighted the need for a greater range of jobs and expansion of existing successful employment areas, such as Burscough and Skelmersdale.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.21 *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.

6.22 *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.

Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth

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

6.24 *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 require an even larger release of Green Belt land.

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

6.26 *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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)
- West Lancashire Rural Economy Study (2006)

6.2 The Rural Economy

Context

6.27 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 (Rural Economy Study, 2006).

6.28 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.

6.29 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 practises, 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

6.30 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 Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.

Policy EC2

The Rural Economy

The irreversible development of open, agricultural land will only be permitted where it would not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, except where absolutely necessary to deliver development allocated within this Local Plan or strategic infrastructure.

Employment opportunities in the rural areas of the Borough are limited, and therefore the Council will protect the continued employment use of existing employment sites. This could include any type of employment use, including agriculture and farming, and may not be merely restricted to B1, B2 and B8 land uses. Where it can be robustly demonstrated that the site is unsuitable for an ongoing viable employment use (in accordance with the requirements of Policy GN4), the Council will consider alternative uses where this is in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan. As a general approach, the re-use of existing buildings within rural areas will be supported where they would otherwise be left vacant.

Proposals for new or significant 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 promotion and enhancement of tourism and the natural economy in the Borough's countryside will be encouraged through agricultural diversification to create small-scale, sensitively designed visitor attractions and accommodation which:

- take advantage of some of the Borough's natural and heritage assets such as the canal network and Rufford Old Hall;
- promote walking and cycling routes including long distance routes and linkages to national networks; and
- contribute to the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park and its enjoyment by visitors.

Encouragement will also be given towards the delivery of renewable and green energy projects.

Land allocated for the purpose of Rural Employment is as follows:

- i. Land between Greaves Hall Avenue and Southport New Road, Banks

Mitigation for areas of flood risk and other site constraints will need to be provided.

In addition to the above site, the Council will assess other proposals for rural employment on a site by site basis and having regard for other policies within the Local Plan.

Justification

6.31 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 Local Plan.

6.32 The evidence base work undertaken for the Local Plan (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 through an alternative use.

6.33 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.

6.34 Sustainable agricultural diversification will also be promoted through this Local Plan 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 EC2 therefore allows their development, subject to certain criteria being met.

What You Said

6.35 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.

6.36 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation (summer 2011), the rural economy was again recognised as a crucial part of the wider economy of the Borough. It was considered that new opportunities should be promoted wherever possible.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.37 *Alternative Option 1:* Not allocating any rural employment sites within the Borough. in the Site Allocations DPD as a method of stimulating economic growth in the rural areas of the Borough.

6.38 *Reason for rejection:* It is considered that allocating some rural employment sites is an important method of stimulating economic growth in rural parts of the Borough which may otherwise lack investment. Encouraging investment in rural areas as well as in main settlements is considered to be the most sustainable approach to economic development within the Borough.

6.39 *Alternative Option 2:* Resisting the re-use of agricultural buildings for residential purposes

6.40 *Reason for rejection:* In a rural Borough such as West Lancashire, there is an abundance of underutilised agricultural buildings which are no longer suitable for modern agricultural purposes. In line with guidance from Central Government, a proactive approach should be taken towards the re-use of such buildings, including for residential uses in light of the current shortage of housing land in the Borough. It is considered an important part of the Local Plan to encourage the re-use of such buildings in the interests of sustainability.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)
- West Lancashire Rural Economy Study (2006)
- 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a guide to good practice', English Heritage

6.3 Rural Development Opportunities

Context

6.41 Within rural West Lancashire there are a number of sites which are no longer used for their initially intended purpose, or whose use is now in an inappropriate location, but which have not yet been redeveloped. In most cases, the intention has been to use the sites for employment uses, however this is not always a viable option given the relatively remote locations of the sites in question.

6.42 Whilst it is important to ensure that some rural employment functions are delivered on such sites, it must be recognised that an element of flexibility is required in order to make schemes viable. Mixed use schemes can provide both employment opportunities and much needed housing in rural areas and are therefore considered to be acceptable on some sites. This approach is considered to be important for the emerging Local Plan and is dealt with in this section.

Policy EC3

Rural Development Opportunities

The development of some brownfield sites within more rural parts of the Borough for mixed uses will be permitted in order to stimulate the rural economy and provide much needed housing. High quality design will be essential in such areas.

The following sites are allocated as 'Rural Development Opportunities':

- i. Greaves Hall Hospital, Banks (a site-specific flood risk assessment for this site will be required)
- ii. East Quarry, Appley Bridge
- iii. Alty's Brickworks, Hesketh Bank (not all of this site will comprise built development and a masterplanning exercise will be required)
- iv. Tarleton Mill, Tarleton

On the above named sites a mix of the following uses will be permitted:

- Uses falling into classes B1, B2 and B8;
- Wider employment generating uses where a case can be made to demonstrate that new jobs will be created;
- Residential uses, particularly those meeting an identified need;
- Leisure, recreational and community uses; and
- Essential services and infrastructure.

Employment generating uses will be required to make up a reasonable proportion of the overall site in the interest of the rural economy. This will be determined on a site by site basis and in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Justification

6.43 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 Local Plan document.

6.44 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. It is considered that requirement of a reasonable amount of employment uses on each site will contribute to sustaining the rural economy whilst allowing significant flexibility to ensure that viable schemes can come forward. It is considered inappropriate to specify a percentage of employment uses as each site will need to be considered individually.

What You Said

6.45 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.

6.46 During the Preferred Options Consultation in summer 2011, similar issues were raised in relation to the need for more rural employment. However, it was also highlighted that greater provision of services, infrastructure and affordable housing were required in rural parts of the Borough. As a result, the above policy has been created to draw out the importance of these current issues.

Other Alternatives Considered

6.47 *Alternative Option 1:* Retain all existing rural employment sites solely for B1, B2 and B8 land uses

6.48 *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 services for people in rural locations.

Chapter 6 Facilitating Economic Growth

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- The Joint Employment Land and Premises Study (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)
- West Lancashire Rural Economy Study (2006)
- 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: a guide to good practice', English Heritage

6.4 Edge Hill University

Context

6.49 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)⁽¹⁰⁾ demonstrated that the University currently contributes £63 million per annum to the local economy and 1340 jobs (FTEs).

6.50 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 Local Plan 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 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.

6.51 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.



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

Policy EC4

Edge Hill University

Through the Local Plan the Council will seek to maximise the role and benefit of Edge Hill University as a key asset to the Borough, in terms of the employment opportunities and community benefits it provides, investment in the local area and the up-skilling of the population, whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impacts on Ormskirk and the wider environment.

The following key principles are promoted:

- i. Supporting the continued growth, development and improvement of Edge Hill University and its facilities within the existing campus and via an extension into the Green Belt to the south east of no more than 10 hectares, where such development incorporates measures to alleviate any existing or newly created traffic and / or housing impacts;
- ii. Requiring a masterplanned approach to future development within the Green Belt;
- iii. Working with the University to develop travel plans and parking strategies to encourage sustainable travel and improve access to the campus;
- iv. Improving the University accommodation offer and concentrating new student accommodation within the existing and / or extended campus in accordance with Policy RS3;
- v. 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
- vi. Where possible, ensuring that the benefits of the University and its future growth and development are also directed to those communities where educational attainment is lower through specific programmes, and where possible and appropriate, led by private sector employers.

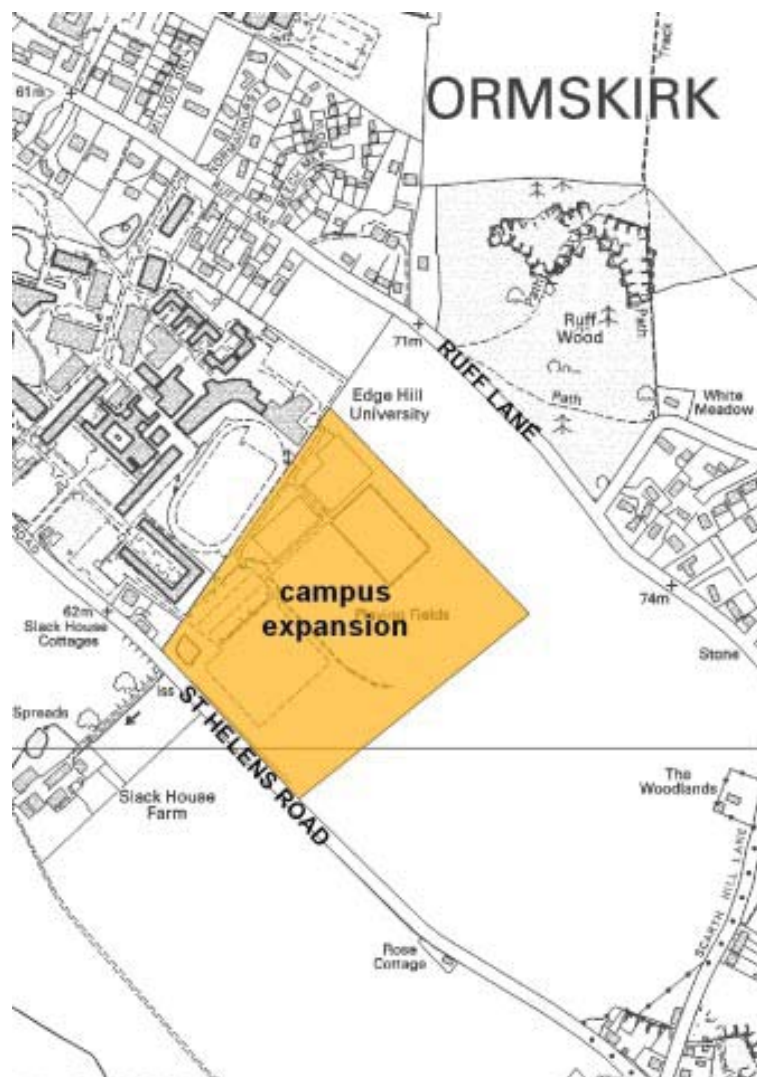


Figure 6.1 Proposed Expansion of Edge Hill University Campus

Justification

6.52 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.

6.53 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.

6.54 Policy EC4 seeks to address this issue by allowing for growth during the Local Plan 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.

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

What you said

6.56 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.

6.57 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 by many, it should be carried out in a sustainable manner.

6.58 In addition, during the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation there was significant objection from local people to Green Belt release at Edge Hill University.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

6.60 *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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- The Economic Impact of Edge Hill University (2010)
- West Lancashire Economy Study (2009)

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

7.1 Residential Development

Context

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

7.2 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 in the Borough. 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.

7.3 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. Central government policy continues to prioritise the delivery of housing nationwide.

Policy RS1

Residential Development

a) Development within settlement boundaries

Subject to other relevant policies being satisfied, residential development will be permitted within the Borough’s settlements as set out below.

Within **Key Service Centres, Key Sustainable Villages and Rural Sustainable Villages**,⁽¹¹⁾ residential development will be permitted on brownfield sites, and on greenfield sites not protected by other policies, subject to the proposals conforming with all other planning policy.

11 Key Service Centres, Key and Rural Sustainable Villages and Small Rural Villages are as defined in the West Lancashire settlement hierarchy in Policy SP1.

The following sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, are specifically allocated for residential development:

- (i) Skelmersdale Town Centre
- (ii) Yew Tree Farm, Burscough
- (iii) Grove Farm, Ormskirk
- (iv) Land at Firswood Road, Lathom / Skelmersdale
- (v) Land at Whalleys, Skelmersdale
- (vi) Chequer Lane, Up Holland

Within **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, will be permitted.

b) Development outside settlement boundaries

On **Protected Land**, small-scale affordable housing (i.e. up to 10 units) may be permitted where it is proven that there are no suitable sites within the nearest or adjacent settlement, in accordance with Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests).

Within the **Green Belt**, very limited affordable housing (i.e. up to 4 units) may be permitted where it is proven that there are no suitable sites in non-Green Belt areas, in accordance with Policy GN5.

c) 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.

d) Density

The density of residential development within West Lancashire should be a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare, subject to the specific context for each site. Densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will only be permitted where special circumstances are demonstrated. Higher densities (in the order of 40-50 dwellings per hectare, or more, where appropriate) will be expected on sites with access to good public transport facilities and services.

When considering the possibility of high density development, the Council will seek to ensure that there is no unacceptable negative impact on local infrastructure or highway safety, and that adequate open space can be provided. The achievement of higher residential densities should not be at the expense of good design nor of the amenity of the occupiers of the proposed or existing neighbouring properties.

e) Provision for all ages

In order to help meet the needs of an ageing population in West Lancashire, the Council will expect that at least 20% of units within residential developments of 15 or more dwellings should be designed specifically to accommodate the elderly, except in cases where it is clearly inappropriate to do so.

Until such time as it becomes mandatory, new homes will be expected to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard, except where it is demonstrated that it would clearly be inappropriate for particular dwellings to meet the Standard.

f) Management of housing land supply

Should the supply of housing begin to grow too large (i.e. a situation emerges where there is a significant over-supply of housing relative to housing targets, either for the Borough as a whole, or for an individual settlement), and if it is clear that the over-supply of housing would cause harm to local or wider policy objectives, or towards the amenity or environment of a specific settlement, the Council may consider implementing some form of restraint, either Borough-wide or settlement-specific, provided this is clearly necessary and appropriate.

Justification

7.4 Policy RS1 is intended to facilitate a sustainable pattern of development in West Lancashire, meeting local housing needs and 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 areas of West Lancashire. The strategy for distribution of housing is consistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in Policy SP1. There is greater flexibility in the higher-order settlements than in the lower-order settlements in terms of the types of site upon which housing development will be permitted.

7.5 The evidence base (in particular the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) indicates that, in general terms, there is sufficient potential housing land to deliver the numbers of dwellings specified in Policy SP1, both in individual settlements and in the Borough as a whole. The exceptions are Burscough and Ormskirk, where a release of Green Belt land will be necessary to meet the dwellings target.

7.6 The phasing of sites in Skelmersdale 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. As set out in Policy SP1, Skelmersdale will be promoted for development during the first half of the Local Plan period because of the priority for regeneration, and infrastructure constraints elsewhere in the Borough.

7.7 In certain cases, housing will function as enabling development, with some of the profits from residential development used, for example, to procure major benefits for the local area and / or to help deliver important elements of the Local Plan as a whole, for example the regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre.

7.8 There is scope for a proportion of the Borough's housing need to be met through bringing empty residential properties back into use. However, the expected number of such cases is likely to be modest, as the percentage of empty homes in West Lancashire is low.

Garden land development

7.9 The amount of residential development that has been permitted on garden land over recent years in West Lancashire has been relatively low. Only 4% of all units granted consent between 2002 and 2011 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 RS1 only allows for garden land development subject to stringent caveats relating to design, amenity and other issues.

Density

7.10 Applying a minimum residential density standard for West Lancashire helps ensure the efficient use of land, a limited resource. In particular, the efficient use of brownfield land, land within the most sustainable parts of settlements, and, in a more general sense, land within areas excluded from the Green Belt, will help minimise the need to develop Green Belt land and greenfield land within settlements.

7.11 The former Borough-wide (and national) minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare has worked well over recent years, especially in suburban-type developments, which are expected to make up the majority of West Lancashire’s housing development over the Local Plan period. A lower density of development could lead to a less efficient use of land.

7.12 It is recognised that there is scope for the 30 dwellings per hectare density to be exceeded by a significant amount in certain parts of West Lancashire, in particular close to the centres of the larger settlements, where there tend to be the highest levels of services and facilities, and where developments of more than two storeys would be acceptable. Achieving higher densities of residential development should not be at the expense of good design, highway safety, or amenity - both of the occupiers of the proposed housing, and of those living nearby. There may also be cases where higher density schemes are not the most suitable, for example where the local infrastructure would not be able to cope with the impact of a significant number of new homes, or where open space standards could not be met.

7.13 Similarly, there may be cases where it is acceptable to permit a density lower than 30 dwellings per hectare, for example backland or infill schemes where, in the interests of neighbours’ amenity, 30 dwellings per hectare would be unacceptable; replacement dwellings, where the original dwelling has a large curtilage; and schemes in low density areas where new higher density development would not be in keeping with its surroundings.

Provision for all ages

7.14 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 requiring that a proportion of residential units in new developments should be designed specifically for the elderly.

7.15 The 2008-based population projections indicate that 43% of households in West Lancashire could comprise people aged 65 and over by 2033. If insufficient accommodation is provided for such people, this could lead to inefficient occupation of larger dwellings suitable for families (rather than a single pensioner, or pensioner couple), as well as potential hardships with regard to bills for pensioners occupying larger properties. It would be impractical to attempt to achieve a proportion of 43% of dwellings in West Lancashire being designed for the elderly. However, a requirement that 20% of new dwellings in schemes of 15 units or more be designed for the elderly should strike an appropriate balance between meeting the obvious need for more accommodation suitable for elderly persons, and providing flexibility for housing developers. Such accommodation need not be traditional sheltered accommodation or similar, but could be individual private dwellings that are designed specifically for the elderly.

7.16 In addition, the Council will expect new residential units to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standard 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.

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

7.18 Where it can be demonstrated that it is clearly inappropriate for the Lifetime Homes Standard to be met for a particular property, the Council may consider waiving the requirement to meet the standard in certain exceptional cases.

Management of housing land supply

7.19 The target numbers of dwellings for each settlement, or category of settlement, have been set in Policy SP1 taking into account various factors, including the sustainability of each area, infrastructure provision (or the capacity to provide infrastructure during the Plan period) and the amount of potential housing land shown in the SHLAA. There is a possibility that exceeding settlement targets by a considerable margin could result in unsustainable patterns of development across the Borough, and / or harm to the amenity of individual settlements, for example through traffic congestion or unacceptable pressure on local infrastructure and

services. Policy RS1 therefore allows the Council to consider limiting development in different settlements if evidence shows that harm is being caused by the dwelling targets being exceeded by a considerable margin.

7.20 At present, there is a shortage in housing land supply, and the challenge for at least the first few years of the Local Plan will be to deliver the Plan's development targets. Through the 'Plan B', there is scope for releasing more land in 2017 and 2022, should this be deemed necessary. Conversely, in the unlikely event that housing land supply should, at some future point, significantly exceed requirements (either through a sustained surge in development rates, through a reduction in housing requirements as a result of future population data and household forecasts, or through a combination of these two scenarios), it is considered prudent for there to be scope in the Local Plan, should monitoring information confirm this to be necessary and / or appropriate, for the temporary implementation in future of some form of management of housing land supply. It is recognised, however, at the time of writing this Local Plan, that, given the housing land undersupply, the difficult economic conditions, and the government's Growth Agenda, the likelihood of there being any need for restraint during the Plan period seems remote.

What You Said

7.21 A significant number of comments were made on Policy CS7 (now Policy RS1) in the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation in May / June 2011. Points made, and views expressed included:

- The former target of 3,000 dwellings for Skelmersdale is unachievable. Less housing should be provided in Skelmersdale, and more should be allowed in rural settlements.
- Safeguarded land and "OpenLand on the Urban Fringe" (Policy DS4 of the 2006 WLRLP) should be considered for development before Green Belt land.
- Mixed views were put forward with regard to the proposed development sites and / or areas of search in Skelmersdale, and in the Green Belt at Ormskirk and Burscough.
- There should be changes to Green Belt policy to allow barn conversions and live-work units were recommended.
- There were three objections by developers to the requirement to meet the Lifetime Homes Standard in every new dwelling.
- There should be a specific percentage requirement for elderly persons' accommodation, rather than relying on applications for such developments being submitted, or the meeting of the Lifetime Homes Standard.
- A definition of 'major greenfield site' is needed.
- The requirement in Policy CS7 that all brownfield sites be considered for housing before developing a non-allocated greenfield site should be amended.
- Three respondents objected to the proposals for introducing restraint in the future if judged necessary.

- Housing targets should be considered minima, rather than limits.
- Caveats are required with respect to the development of garden land for housing.

Other Alternatives Considered

7.22 *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.

7.23 *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. Local infrastructure is unlikely to be able to cope with unrestrained development.

7.24 *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 “OpenLand 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.

7.25 *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 generally be undesirable.

7.26 *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.

7.27 *Reason for rejection:* At the time of writing this draft Local Plan the RSS figure of 300 dwellings per annum remains the legal requirement for the Borough. It is also considered appropriate for the Borough, and should help maintain the local economy, and enable the delivery of much-needed affordable housing. If evidence gathered in the future indicates that the Borough’s housing requirement should change, there is scope in the Local Plan for a variation in the strategy for releasing housing land. 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.

7.28 *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.

7.29 *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 SP1, and would not deliver regeneration or economic development in existing towns.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

7.30 The following locally-produced documents are of particular relevance to this policy:

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2011 update
- Housing Land Supply in West Lancashire 2011

7.2 Affordable and Specialist Housing

Context

7.31 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.

7.32 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 sometimes 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.

7.33 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

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

Court of Appeal ruling in July 2008 (Blyth Valley Council v Persimmon Homes) requires that local development plans take account of the viability of schemes when setting affordable housing requirements. In 2009, 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.

7.34 Another factor influencing the delivery of affordable housing in West Lancashire over the past decade has been the restrictive housing policy in place between 2002 and 2010 (Policy DE1 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006). Although WLRLP 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 market housing developments because it limited where market housing could be developed. Just 33 affordable units were granted planning permission in the Borough as part of market housing developments between 2002 and 2009.

7.35 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 RS2

Affordable Housing

Outside of Skelmersdale, affordable and specialist housing will be required as a proportion of new residential developments of 8 or more dwellings, as follows:

Proposed development size (number of units)	Affordable housing requirement (minimum % of units)
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 SP2. 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, with up to 30% on greenfield sites on the edge of the built-up area.

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) may 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 Policies GN1 and RS1, 100% affordable housing schemes to meet an identified local need will be supported in the Borough's non-Green Belt settlements; small scale affordable housing developments (i.e. up to 10 units) may be permitted on non-Green Belt land outside settlements, provided that a sequential site search for sites within settlement areas has been carried out in accordance with Policy GN5; and very limited affordable housing developments (i.e. up to 4 units) may be permitted in the Green Belt, provided that a sequential site search for sites within areas excluded from the Green Belt has been carried out in accordance with Policy GN5.

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. Such off-site provision should be provided in the locality of the development site.

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 RS1 that, in schemes of 15 dwellings or more, 20% of new residential units should be designed specifically as accommodation suitable for the elderly.

Justification

7.36 The Council has commissioned a series of studies to comprise its Local Plan evidence base with regard to housing need and demand, affordable housing needs, and the viability of providing affordable housing. Policy RS2 has directly followed the conclusions and / or recommendations of these studies:

- The West Lancashire Housing Market Assessment (2009) was the first of these studies, although some of the conclusions of this study have since been superseded by the conclusions of the studies below, which are based on more recent evidence.
- The Housing Needs Study (2010) 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 and deliverable affordable housing need target of 35% of all dwellings.
- The Affordable Housing Viability Study (2010) 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.

7.37 The “graded” affordable housing requirement set out in the table in Policy RS2 is considered the most appropriate approach in terms of affordable housing requirements. It is consistent with the findings of the housing needs and viability studies in relation to the requirement for 35% of dwellings to be affordable, although the 35% requirement is applied to a higher threshold than the Viability Study indicated would be possible. This reflects the challenging economic times that the UK currently faces and so seeks to ensure that smaller residential schemes are not made unviable by onerous affordable housing requirements.

7.38 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). There is thus a requirement for affordable housing within market housing schemes in Skelmersdale.

7.39 The requirement to provide affordable housing will apply to incremental developments on sites which would result in the development of 8 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 7 dwellings or less on each site on a piecemeal basis.

7.40 Where exceptional circumstances exist and it is deemed appropriate, off-site provision of affordable housing may be considered as an alternative to on-site provision. In such circumstances, that off-site provision should be provided in the locality, i.e. within the same parish as the development site, or within the same settlement in non-parished areas.

7.41 Provision of 100% affordable housing schemes, which are usually undertaken by, or in partnership with Registered Providers (RPs), 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 RP schemes across West Lancashire.

7.42 In line with the BlythValley 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.

7.43 A forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) may 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.

7.44 The affordable housing requirements set out in Policy RS2 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.

7.45 The Affordable Housing SPD will also provide details on the Council's expectations with regard to tenure split, the proportion of the elderly accommodation (required by Policy RS1) that should be affordable, 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, a new ‘affordable rent’ tenure was introduced by central government in Spring 2011, whereby rents are set at 80% of the market rent for the locality. The full impact of the introduction of this new tenure will become apparent over coming months, and any necessary variations in the details of the affordable housing policy will be reflected in the SPD.

What You Said

7.46 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation in May / June 2011, a variety of views were put forward with regard to affordable housing provision. Developers tended to be of the opinion that the threshold at which affordable housing was required (8 units) was too low, and should be increased to 10 or 15 units, and that the percentage requirements (up to 35%) were too high. Others suggested that the percentage requirement should be raised higher. Two respondents suggested that there should also be a percentage requirement

for elderly persons' accommodation. The flexibility of the policy and the proposed use of the "Dynamic Viability" model were supported. A few respondents were sceptical about whether schemes for 100% affordable housing were deliverable.

Other Alternatives Considered

7.47 *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).

7.48 *Reason for rejection:* Variations in the threshold and requirement have been explored as part of the preparation of the Local Plan 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. It is recognised that affordable housing provision may affect the viability of schemes, especially smaller developments, and thus the viability of individual schemes will be taken into account under Policy RS2.

7.49 *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.

7.50 *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 sufficient.

7.51 *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 specifically for 100% affordable housing developments.

7.52 *Reason for rejection:* It is not considered appropriate to allocate specific sites for 100% affordable housing development in this Local Plan, given the likely (small) size of the sites involved. However, if affordable housing delivery proves difficult in future, the option of allocating specific sites for affordable housing can be explored at a future date.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

7.53 Local documents of relevance include:

- West Lancashire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2011 update
- West Lancashire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2009
- Housing Need and Demand Study 2010

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

- Affordable Housing Viability Study 2010
- Policy Framework Formulation Document 2010

7.3 Provision of Student Accommodation

Context

7.54 The success and 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.

7.55 Whilst many students live on the University campus in purpose-built accommodation, or are mature students living outside the town, there are a significant number of others who live within the residential areas of Ormskirk. The off-campus accommodation in Ormskirk 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.

7.56 In some streets in Ormskirk, the proportion of properties being let to students as HMOs 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 HMOs at a local level has been shown to be undesirable in Ormskirk.

7.57 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. An Article 4 Direction covering Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead is intended to 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.

7.58 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 students of 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 RS3

Provision of Student Accommodation

a) Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

Proposals for the construction of purpose-built student accommodation will be supported within the University Campus or within any extension of the campus proposed in accordance with Policy EC4, 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:

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

When assessing the potential impact of purpose-built student accommodation on the amenity of the surrounding areas, the Council will also have regard to the presence of any HMOs in the vicinity.

b) Houses in Multiple Occupation

When assessing proposals for conversion of a dwelling house to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)⁽¹²⁾, the Council will have regard to the proportion of existing properties in use as, or with permission to become, an HMO, either in the street as a whole, or within the nearest 60 properties in the same street, whichever is the smaller. Where levels of HMOs reach or exceed the percentages specified in the table below, proposals for further HMOs will not be permitted. The Council will also have regard to any purpose-built student accommodation in the same street, or section of the street.

Category	Max %	Description of street	Streets
Category A	15%	Typically A- and B- classified roads and other important routes in Ormskirk which tend to have the highest levels of traffic and are within easy walking distance from the University.	Aughton Street (section outside Primary Shopping Area), Moor Street (section outside Primary Shopping Area), Park Road, Derby Street West, Knowsley Road, Stanley Street, St. Helens Road, Wigan Road.
Category B	10%	Typically unclassified roads that have relatively high levels of through traffic, and / or roads with a significant amount of	Burscough Road, Burscough Street (section outside Primary Shopping Area), Southport Road (section east of County Road

12 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. However, for the purposes of Policy RS3, the definition of HMO may also include any house or flat occupied by seven or more unrelated people who rent the property and share one or more basic amenities. Where the conversion of a dwelling house to rented accommodation for seven or more people requires planning permission, then Policy RS3 will apply.

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

Category	Max %	Description of street	Streets
		non-residential uses present, within reasonable distance of the University, usually further away than Category A roads.	only), County Road, Derby Street, Green Lane, Hants Lane, Moorgate (section outside Primary Shopping Area), New Court Way, Railway Road (section outside Primary Shopping Area), Ruff Lane.
Category C	5%	All other streets in the Ormskirk area covered by the Article 4 Direction on HMOs (or in any other areas covered by other Article 4 Directions in the future).	-

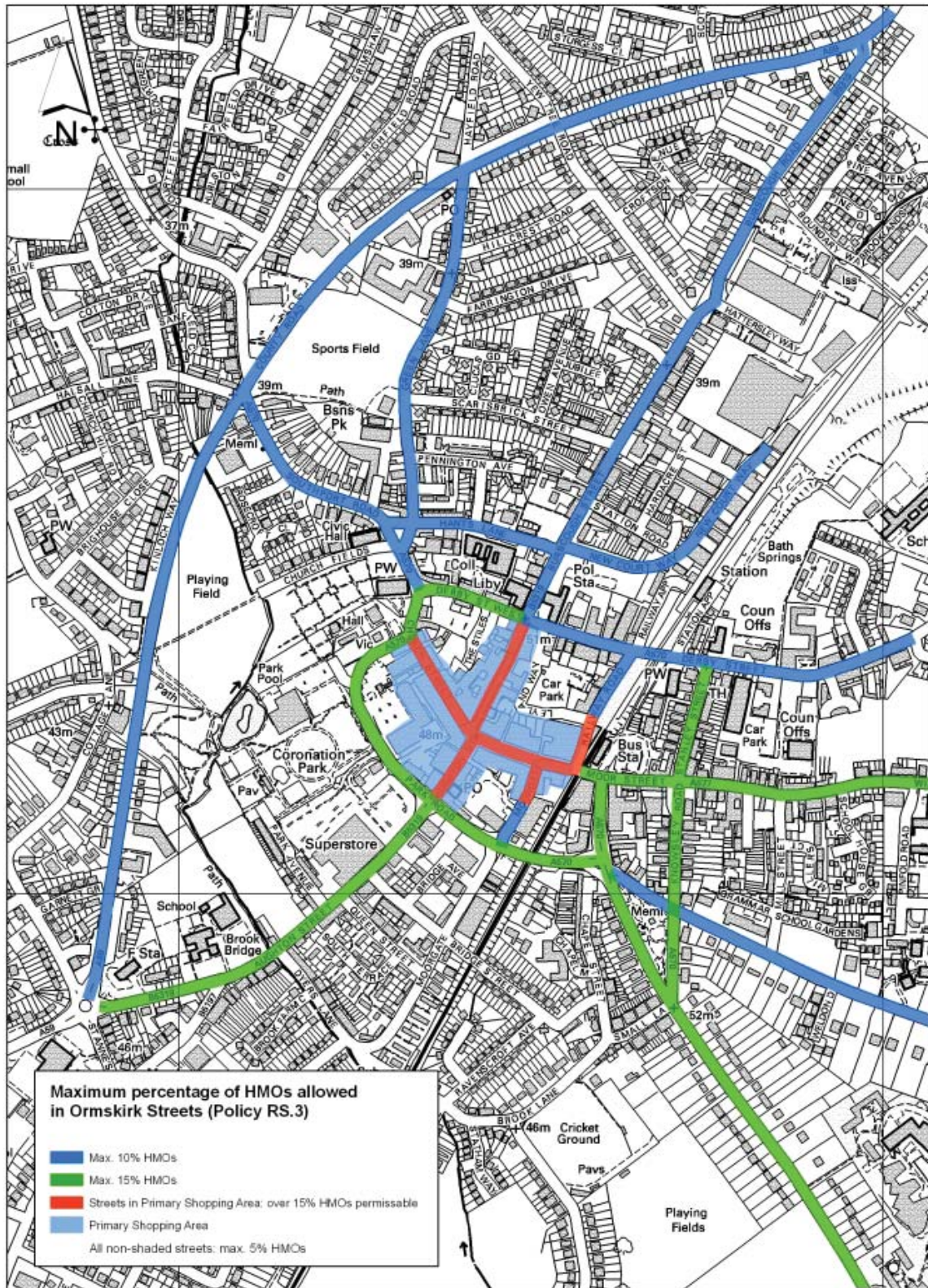
Figure 7.1 below shows the above streets.

Within the primary shopping area of Ormskirk, as defined on the Proposals Map, a greater proportion than 15% of residential properties above ground floor level will be permitted to function as HMOs, subject to there being no unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of the primary shopping area or on the supply of accommodation for other town centre uses (for example, offices, or storage for ground floor retail units).

When assessing proposals for changes of use to HMOs, regard will be had towards any potential clustering of HMOs and the effects of this on nearby properties.

The Council will not permit the conversion to HMOs of any new housing built in Ormskirk following the adoption of the emerging Local Plan, regardless of its location, and notwithstanding the limits in the above table, other than that created as part of purpose-built student accommodation.

This policy is applicable in conjunction with an Article 4 Direction relating to HMOs and covering Ormskirk and Aughton. If in future years, there is evidence that HMOs are becoming an issue in settlements outside of Ormskirk and Aughton, and Article 4 Directions are implemented to cover such areas, the principles of Policy RS3 will apply to such areas.



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1:5,000

Figure 7.1 HMO percentages in Ormskirk

Justification

7.59 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 development 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, any development of the University should not have an unacceptable impact, and student numbers should only increase in future 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 further afield who commute to and from the University.

7.60 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 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.

7.61 The allocation of land on the campus for student accommodation is raised in Policy EC4. The efficient use of such land will be expected, whilst recognising the need to provide a quality environment on the site. The Council will seek reassurance that any extra student accommodation will not lead to an increase in demand for HMOs in residential areas (for example from students staying in on-campus accommodation in their first year and needing to find off-campus accommodation elsewhere in subsequent years).

7.62 The Council has had contact over recent years with local residents groups who have highlighted problems associated with the uncontrolled proliferation of HMOs within certain areas of Ormskirk. The most appropriate approach towards HMOs is considered to be to limit the proportion of 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 HMOs. Once the percentage limit is reached, no more HMOs will be permitted under this policy.

7.63 If, in addition to HMOs, there exists any purpose-built student accommodation in the same street (or amongst the nearest 60 residential properties in the street), this will be taken into account when assessing the likely impact of any proposed new HMO. It may be the case that, even if the HMO percentage limit is not exceeded, planning applications for HMOs may be refused if their likely impact, combined with any purpose-built student accommodation nearby, is judged to be unacceptable. The number of occupants in a proposed HMO may also be taken into account when assessing potential impact.

7.64 Outside the Primary Shopping Area of Ormskirk, an overall limit of 15% for the proportion of HMOs is considered to strike an acceptable balance between the need to accommodate students within Ormskirk, and the need to maintain acceptable levels of residential amenity. The lower limits of 10% and 5% reflect the different characteristics of the streets to which they apply. Busy A-roads and through routes are considered more suitable for 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. Given the recognised need for student accommodation in general terms, it is not considered appropriate to completely exclude HMOs in particular streets. The lowest proposed limit of 5% is just one unit in twenty, and any negative effects associated with the conversion of properties to HMOs are likely to be acceptable at such a low density.

7.65 If all types of unit are considered (commercial, retail, etc.) it could be the case that the actual percentage of HMOs amongst the residential properties in certain streets might be significantly higher than the HMO limit for that type of street, which could lead to unacceptable loss of amenity for residents. Given one of the main objectives of this policy is to protect residential amenity, the units to be considered when calculating percentages of HMOs should be restricted to just the residential units in a particular street.

7.66 Within the primary shopping area of Ormskirk Town Centre, the environment is predominantly commercial rather than residential. In this area, it should be possible to accommodate a higher proportion of HMOs than 15% (taken as a proportion of residential units) without there being unacceptable effects on the amenity of town centre residents. It is important, however, to ensure that conversion of accommodation to HMOs does not result in any significant loss of space for other appropriate town centre uses, for example offices, or storage for ground floor shop units, that would undermine town centre viability and vitality.

7.67 New housing is being proposed in Ormskirk in the Local Plan and this will involve the release of Green Belt land. This housing is intended to meet local needs. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to specify that none of this new housing should subsequently be converted to HMOs, otherwise further Green Belt release would be required to meet local needs, especially given that new student accommodation will be provided on an extended Edge Hill University campus (see Policy EC4).

7.68 This policy is applicable in conjunction with an Article 4 Direction relating to HMOs and covering Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead. If in future years, there is evidence that HMOs are becoming an issue in settlements outside of Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead, and Article 4 Directions are implemented to cover such areas, the principles of this policy will apply to such areas. Variations between different streets in other Article 4 areas can be set out in future Supplementary Planning Documents, where necessary.

What You Said

7.69 As mentioned above, the Council has had ongoing contact with local residents groups regarding the proliferation of HMOs in Ormskirk. The Council is also in regular liaison with Edge Hill University. Residents groups and the University participated in the consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options document, and made a number of representations. There was general support for the limiting of the proportions of HMOs in the Ormskirk area. It was requested that clustering and the number of students in each HMO be taken into account, and that new accommodation on the University Campus should not be used primarily to facilitate an increase in students. Edge Hill University provided clarification with regard to student numbers, and how they expected these to vary with time, as well as explaining how new accommodation on Campus was aimed at meeting current, rather than future accommodation needs.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

7.71 *Reason for rejection:* The unrestrained conversion of the (often) cheapest available market housing to 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 HMOs.

7.72 *Alternative Option 2: Full restraint* – Do not allow any more conversions of dwelling houses to 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.)

7.73 *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 HMOs in certain streets, there are other streets which could in theory accommodate a small number of HMOs without material harm to the local area. There is a recognised 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.

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

7.75 *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 does not appear 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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2010
- West Lancashire Borough Council Article 4 Direction on HMOs in Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead, December 2011

7.4 Provision for Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Context

7.76 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 unauthorised sites. 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 sites.

7.77 There are currently no authorised sites for gypsies and travellers in West Lancashire. However, until recently there were two established unauthorised sites for Gypsies and Travellers located at Pool Hey Lane in Scarisbrick and also White Moss Lane South in Skelmersdale. The site at Skelmersdale became vacant in early 2011. There is also one authorised site for Travelling Showpeople located on land off Liverpool Road North in Burscough.

7.78 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. Research has shown a link between the lack of good quality sites and poor health and education. As part of a strong and sustainable community, members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, as well as Travelling Showpeople, should have the same rights and responsibilities as any other member of society.

Policy RS4

Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

1. Number of Pitches

In order to meet the established need for Gypsies and Travellers and travelling Showpeople within West Lancashire the following number of pitches/plots should be provided by 2027:

- Up to 21 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on up to 3 sites
- Up to 14 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on 1 site
- Up to 7 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople on 1 site

2. Broad Location

These sites should be broadly located as follows:

- 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 Showpeople shall be located within the Burscough area or close to the M58 corridor.

Provision should be made in the above locations only, unless it can be demonstrated that appropriate sites cannot be provided in these locations.

3. Criteria

a) Proposals for establishing of Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will only be considered if:

- i. The intended occupants must meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as defined within Circular 01/2006 and 04/2007 and any replacement documents
- ii. The site will provide no more than 15 pitches

b) Proposed sites must be located sustainably and must meet the following criteria:

- i. The site must be within 1 mile of a motorway or a Class A road, with the road access onto the site being of a sufficient quality and size to enable access onto and off the site by heavy vehicles such as trailers or static caravans
- ii. The site must be located within 1 mile (or 20 minute walk) of public transport facilities and services in order to access GP's and other health services, education, jobs and training and local services
- iii. The location will not cause a significant nuisance or impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties
- iv. Proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites should be well planned and include soft landscaping and play areas for children where suitable

c) In order to ensure that the health and safety and quality of life of the intended occupants is protected, sites must meet the following:

- i. Sites will avoid contaminated land unless it can be demonstrated that suitable mitigation measures can be delivered
- ii. Sites must be on stable and level land suitable for caravans
- iii. Sites must provide a safe environment for the intended occupants
- iv. Sites must be capable of providing adequate access to all emergency vehicles
- v. Sites will not be considered in areas defined as flood zone 2 or 3 on Environment Agency maps

- vi. Sites must have access to sanitation facilities, a mains water supply and drainage or the applicant must demonstrate that they can be provided
 - vii. Consideration needs to be given to the health and safety of potential residents, particularly that of children. Where there are potential issues (including proximity to tips, electricity pylons, industrial areas etc) individual risk assessments must be carried out
- d) As well as meeting the above criteria, sites for travelling show people will be allowed to accommodate mixed use yards, i.e they can accommodate both caravans and space for storage and equipment.
- e) A transit site will be considered providing it meets the above criteria and does not exceed the number of pitches required by this policy and provided that the applicant can demonstrate that they can and will enforce a suitable time limit on how long pitches are occupied.
- f) Sites will not be considered within the Green Belt unless applicants can demonstrate that there are no other suitable sites within the locality within settlement areas. This must be done by complying with the requirements of the sequential test as per Policy GN5 Sequential Tests.

Justification

7.79 This policy 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 and 04/2007 for criteria to be set out in the Local Plan.

Number of Pitches

7.80 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).

7.81 Given the experience and patterns of unauthorised sites 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

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

7.82 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.

7.83 These locations were chosen because they have both experienced historic demand in relation to unauthorised sites and both have had, until recently, 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, such as children attending local schools.

7.84 Although there have been instances of unauthorised sites 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.

7.85 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.

7.86 Broad locations for Travelling Showpeople have been identified 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 with permission which has been used by Travelling Showpeople for over 20 years.

Criteria

7.87 There is a requirement within Circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 that a criteria based policy should be set out within Local Plans. The specific criteria were derived to ensure that when sites are allocated they maintain a suitable quality of life for residents. These sites should provide reasonable access to facilities and services, meet the needs of national guidance and must not cause an adverse impact upon neighbouring uses.

7.88 The specific criteria contained within the Policy contains a local interpretation of guidance contained within national guidance including both circulars 01/2006 and 04/2007 and also communities and local government guidance on designing traveller sites.

7.89 Communities and Local Government Guidance 'Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites- A Good Practise Guide says that ideally sites should consist of a maximum of 15 pitches unless there is clear evidence that a larger site is preferred by the Gypsy and Traveller Community. It recommends that sites with a maximum of 15 pitches is conducive to providing a comfortable site which are easy to manage.

7.90 Although it is desirable that no sites are located within the Green Belt there is an acceptance that, given the constraints upon available land located within West Lancashire and the failure to deliver any authorised sites so far, there may be no alternative but to have development in Green Belt locations. In order to control and prevent development on Green Belt sites that do not demonstrate exceptional circumstances (i.e that there are no other deliverable sites within non Green Belt locations within the particular locality) a requirement to meet the sequential tests set out in Policy GN5 has been included

What You Said

7.91 Debate during the Options consultation mainly centred around whether the Council should consider making the existing pitches permanent, whether new sites for Gypsies and Travellers should be located within settlements or within a Green Belt location off the M58 corridor or whether there are more suitable locations in the Borough.

7.92 Most people believed that sites should be located within the M58 corridor. There was also support that sites within the Green Belt should be considered.

7.93 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.

7.94 During the Preferred Options consultation there was general support for the Council's approach, however this was subject to detailed consideration being given to the criteria for this policy, which have now been included.

7.95 There was also some concern raised that a criteria based approach should have been included in the Core Strategy to make the policy effective.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

7.97 *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.

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

7.99 *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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- DoE Circular 01/1994 Gypsy sites and Planning
- ODPM Circular 01/2006 'Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Sites'
- DCLG Circular 04/2007 Planning for Travelling Show People
- DCLG: Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide
- 2004 Housing Act

Chapter 7 Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation

- DCLG: Guidance on managing anti-social behaviour related to Gypsies and Travellers (March 2010)
- North West Regional Spatial Strategy (Sep 2008)
- Submitted Draft North West Plan Partial Review (July 2009)

Chapter 8 Infrastructure and Services Provision

8.1 Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres

Context

8.1 National policy with regard to planning for retail, leisure and town centres is set out in Planning Policy Statement 4, which is being replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework. The West Lancashire Local Plan will generally rely upon national policy with regard to the promotion and protection of town centres. 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.

8.2 At present, Ormskirk Town Centre functions 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.

8.3 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 'hold its own' and 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.

8.4 The purpose of Policy IF1 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 an appropriate percentage of retail uses there, and by encouraging the retention and viability of other recognised town centre uses, such as commercial, leisure and cultural facilities. This policy will work in conjunction with national policy, which seeks to encourage town centre, as opposed to out-of-centre, development.

Policy IF1

Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres

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

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

Level	Settlements in this level
1: Town Centre	Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Burscough

Level	Settlements in this level
2: Large Village Centre	Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Up Holland, Banks, Parbold
3: Small Village Centres and Local Centres	All other centres, as defined on the Proposals Map

Town Centre Hierarchy within West Lancashire

The Proposals Map shows the location of all town, village and local centres, and defines the primary shopping areas of town centres.

Within local centres and the primary shopping areas of town 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 following criteria:

- The proposal, when taken cumulatively with other existing or consented non-retail uses, does not have a detrimental effect upon the vitality and viability of the centre;
- The proposal retains a ground floor shop front with windows and display;
- Any proposed non-A1 use should, wherever possible, have operational hours that include at least a part of traditional opening times (i.e. 9am – 5pm). Uses that involve operational hours in the evening or night should not create inappropriate disturbance to residents or other users of the town centre and surrounding areas;
- There is evidence that the unit has been marketed as a retail unit in accordance with Policy GN4.

At least 70% of ground floor units within each local centre and primary shopping area should remain in Class A1 retail use. A unit within a primary shopping area should only be released from a Class A1 retail use if at least 70% of the units within the immediate area⁽¹³⁾ and within the centre as a whole are in Class A1 use. The Council will not necessarily take the approach of allowing all proposals for change of use away from A1 until the proportion of units in A1 use drops down to, or below, 70%.

When assessing the effect upon the vitality and viability of the centre (i.e. the town centre primary shopping area or the local centre), the following factors should be taken into account:

- The size (amount of floorspace) of the unit proposed for change from retail to other uses and whether this is significant in relation to the total retail floorspace of the centre as a whole;

13 “Immediate area” is defined as: the local centre as a whole, or, in the case of primary shopping areas, anywhere within a 50m radius of the main entrance of the unit in question, including other streets within the primary shopping area, but excluding land outside the primary shopping area.

- The extent of alternative provision in the centre and in the wider area, including the range of retail units remaining, and their size, type and quality;
- The level of demand for retail units in the centre;
- The nature of the immediate area;
- Whether conversion of the unit in question would cause the proportion of A1 uses to drop to around, or less than, the target (70%) of ground floor units in the immediate area, or in the centre as a whole;
- Any traffic / highways issues that may arise from certain A1 uses, especially in a pedestrianised area such as Ormskirk town centre; and
- Whether the proposed use is a typical town-centre use, and the likely contribution it would make towards the vitality and viability of the centre compared with the original retail unit.

In the case of proposals to bring a Class A1 retail unit that has been vacant for six months back into non-A1 use, the Council will consider whether the loss of inactive A1 floorspace for another active use outweighs any negative impact associated with loss of the A1 floorspace.

Other uses in Town Centres

Within town centres, a diversity of uses will be encouraged outside the Primary Shopping Area, and above ground floor level within the primary shopping area, in order to maximise centres' vitality and viability, to encourage an evening economy, and to improve safety and security by increasing natural surveillance of the centre. Such uses may include cultural facilities, restaurants and cafés, drinking establishments and nightclubs, financial and professional services, offices and residential uses, student accommodation, as well as uses relating to non-residential institutions and leisure / recreation uses that are appropriate in a town centre.

Office development will be encouraged within or on the edge of the town centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, and on sites allocated for Class B1 development. Office uses will be permitted elsewhere within settlements, provided that they comply with other Local Plan policies, they are of a suitable scale, and they do not have an unacceptable impact on their locality, for example in terms of traffic generation. New office developments should be readily accessible by public transport. Proposals for office developments of more than 1,000 m² outside town centres should demonstrate that there are no town centre sites that could be developed, in line with Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests). Any proposals for office developments within the Primary Shopping Area will still be subject to the policy above regarding the change of use from retail (Class A1) uses.

Justification

8.5 West Lancashire has always “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.

8.6 Therefore, Policy IF1 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.

8.7 The previous Local Plan policy (Policy DE10 of the Replacement West Lancashire Local Plan 2006) (WLRLP) 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.

Assessing impact on vitality and viability

8.8 The criteria listed in Policy IF1 have been drawn up in the light of experience in assessing planning applications for change of use away from A1 retail in Ormskirk since the adoption of the 2006 WLRLP. The main purpose of Policy IF1 is to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town, village and local centres.

8.9 The impact resulting from the loss of a retail unit will vary according to:

- The unit’s size in relation to the centre (or primary shopping area) as a whole, and the extent of alternative provision in the centre. For example, the loss of the only large unit in a centre would have greater impact than the loss of a more prevalent average-sized unit.
- The level of demand for retail units in the centre. Where there is high demand for retail units, changes away from A1 use should be resisted. Where there is little or no demand for A1 uses, then other economic activity in the town centre could help maintain vitality.
- The nature of the immediate area. It could be the case that in large centres, the centre as a whole is vital and viable, but less vital / viable pockets exist in certain locations.

- Traffic / highways issues that may arise from certain A1 uses. For example, for a take-away type use, there may be issues created by delivery vehicles or customers' vehicles.
- The alternative use proposed. Different uses contribute towards vitality and viability to different extents.

8.10 Retention of a ground floor shop front helps minimise the impact of changes of use away from retail by maintaining a retail-like “look” in the street, and allowing for easy conversion back to retail in the future if necessary. Having the operating times of non-retail uses coinciding with, or overlapping, the retail uses' operating times will aid vitality and viability by maximising potential footfall during shop opening hours. Marketing should help identify or secure appropriate new occupiers for empty or “relocating” retail units, thereby continuing the retail use of such units.

Area of Assessment

8.11 In defining the ‘immediate area’, the most appropriate approach is considered to be “radius-based” (i.e. all units within X metres), the radius being taken from the main door of the unit in question. This would be simple to agree with developers, and would mean that the “alleyways” would not be missed in assessments. Where at least half of a unit lies within the given radius, this unit should be taken into consideration in any calculations.

8.12 50 metres is considered the most practical radius to use. Anything smaller (e.g. 30m) may not “capture” many units, whilst larger radii could lead towards the whole primary shopping area being considered, which could defeat the purpose of assessing the “immediate area”.

8.13 In the case of village and local centres, which tend to be small, the whole centre should be included in the assessment. In the case of any multi-storey shopping centres (e.g. the Concourse, Skelmersdale), the area to be assessed should be restricted to the storey on which the retail unit is located.

Percentage of units to be in Class A1 use

8.14 In terms of a ‘target percentage’ of units to be in Class A1 use, the previous target of 60% in Ormskirk is considered to be too low in that although the proportion of units in the primary shopping area (PSA) of Ormskirk has been well above 60% in recent years (West Lancashire Annual Monitoring Report 2010, p53), and the centre is ‘holding its own’, there are localised parts of the PSA where there is a relatively high proportion of units in non-retail use (for example, the eastern end of Moor Street). Setting a target of 60% would in effect allow the conversion of several more retail units away from Class A1 use in Ormskirk, and a likely associated reduction in vitality and viability.

8.15 By increasing the target to 70%, this policy will still allow for some flexibility and appropriate changes of units in Ormskirk town centre from retail to other uses, but should prevent significant numbers of retail units being lost. A higher target (e.g. 75% or 80%) is considered over-stringent and may lead to more vacant units, rather than vital and viable retail centres.

8.16 This approach for Ormskirk is also considered appropriate for the rest of West Lancashire. As Skelmersdale is the highest-order settlement according to the hierarchy set out in Policy CS1, its primary shopping area should have at least the same level of protection as Ormskirk's. Burscough is dominated by a food superstore, and the vitality and viability of the small units in its primary shopping area need to be carefully supported. Given the lower number of units in local centres, the change of use of just one unit can have significant impact on the remainder of the centre, and thus the maintenance of a high proportion of units in retail use is important.

Use Classes Order

8.17 The target takes account of the current national definition of what constitutes a Class A1 use. If the Use Classes Order is subsequently revised, and the proportion of units in town and local centres defined as retail varies as a result, the target in this policy may be revised accordingly.

Vacant units

8.18 The vitality and viability of town centres in general has been affected by the recent difficult economic climate. If proposals involve bringing a vacant unit (formerly Class A1) back into use, the Council will consider whether any negative impact associated the unit lying vacant longer-term (i.e. on account of permission to change use not being granted) outweighs the loss of inactive A1 floorspace for another active use. This would most likely be the case when the unit in question had been vacant for many months and efforts to market it for retail use had proved fruitless. The Council would expect written evidence of the marketing to be provided before granting permission for a change away from retail use (see the criteria above, and Policy DM8), especially where the proportion of units in the centre in question was close to the target for that centre.

First (and higher) floor properties within centres

8.19 Promoting the use of premises above ground floor level in town centres and larger local centres for a diverse range of appropriate uses can enhance the vitality and viability of the centres by maintaining activity there, even after the shops have closed in the evening. It is important to ensure that the operation of potential future retailers on the ground floor is not compromised (e.g. by removing storage space).

Office Uses

8.20 Office uses are appropriate in or close to town and village centres, and can help contribute towards vitality and viability as workers access local shops and services during their time spent in the centre. Town centres tend to be easily accessible by sustainable forms of transport. Office uses of an appropriate scale will therefore be encouraged in town and village centres.

8.21 As office uses provide economic benefits, they will also be permitted elsewhere within settlement areas, provided other relevant policies are satisfied. By requiring that they be accessible by public transport, the impact on the area in terms of traffic congestion can be reduced. Limiting schemes to a scale in keeping with the locality should minimise the possibility of negative impacts on neighbouring uses. It is considered unreasonable to require

sequential tests to be undertaken for minor office development (i.e. up to 1,000 m² floorspace), but applicants proposing larger developments should demonstrate that they have first considered sites within or adjacent to town centres.

Operational hours

8.22 One further consideration is the operational hours of the proposed use. While it is important to keep a range of active uses in town centres at a range of times, it is important that the primary use of a town centre (i.e. shopping) is not undermined by a plethora of units that are closed during the day and only open in the evening, giving the impression during the day that the town centre is under-used. Hence, any proposed non-A1 use should have operational hours that include at least a part of traditional opening times (i.e. 9am – 5pm) wherever possible.

8.23 Uses that involve operational hours in the evening or night should not create inappropriate disturbance to residents or other users of the town centre and surrounding areas.

What You Said

8.24 Few comments were made on the Town Centres policy during the Preferred Options consultation. 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. One respondent advised that the policy should cover other town centre uses in addition to retail.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.25 *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.

8.26 *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.

8.27 *Alternative Option 2: More detailed restrictions on changes of use* – Class A1 includes a wide range of uses: travel agents, hairdressers, funeral directors, sandwich bars, 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. It could possibly be argued that some A1 uses contribute less to town centre vitality and viability than "typical" or independent and specialist convenience and comparison shops. GOAD subdivide Class A1 into more specific categories, and consideration could be given to making Policy IF1 more specific, limiting conversions away from certain GOAD categories. In addition, impose restrictions on the number of charity shops.

8.28 *Reason for rejection:* It is not clear whether it would be possible in legal terms to have, or to implement, such a policy. It would go beyond the provisions of the Use Classes Order and thus may require an Article 4 Direction or similar legal tool. 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 supporting documents

- West Lancashire Retail Study Update 2011
- West Lancashire Annual Monitoring Reports

8.2 Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

Context

8.29 West Lancashire is a two tier authority with Lancashire County Council being responsible for transport. The current Local Transport Plan Local Transport Plan 3 was adopted in March 2011 and runs from 2011-2021. Transport Policies contained within the Local Plan will aim to support and enhance this LTP.

8.30 Transport policies within the Local Plan will seek to support the strategic transport priorities for West Lancashire, as well as more minor local priorities and specific local issues. 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.

8.31 Government policy allows local authorities to set their own parking standards and Lancashire County Council have indicated that they do not intend to provide future parking standards at the County level. The standards applying to West Lancashire were previously set out in a Supplementary Planning Document to the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2005. However, the adoption of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy in 2008 (RSS) rendered the Structure Plan obsolete. RSS Policy TR2 contained parking standards of its own, although they did not cover every type of development. The RSS is intended to be abolished in the near future. National parking standards are contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13). However, as with the RSS, this guidance does not cover every type of development. The NPPF will replace this and doesn't set policy standards. Therefore there is a need for locally derived targets that are comprehensive and locally specific.

Policy IF2

Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

1) Transport Infrastructure

a) 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 Local Plan period the Council will seek to:

- i. 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 (including towpaths) where appropriate;
- ii. reducing the environmental impact of transport through suitable mitigation and design;
- iii. reduce transport emissions such as carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by encouraging greater usage of public transport facilities;
- iv. reduce congestion in the Borough's key service centres to promote competitiveness, with particular reference to Burscough and Ormskirk;
- v. preparing and actively promoting travel plans for all new developments, including both employment and residential in accordance with DfT guidance on transport assessments; and
- vi. improve public transport to rural parts of the Borough and where appropriate support and implement innovative rural transport initiatives and 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.

b) The Council will support the delivery of and not allow development which could prejudice the delivery of the following schemes:

- i. the proposed A570 Ormskirk bypass;
- ii. a new rail station in Skelmersdale including new track, and electrification of existing track, as appropriate;
- iii. an appropriate rail link made between the Ormskirk-Preston line and Southport-Wigan line;
- iv. electrification of the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough;
- v. the remodelling of the bus station at Ormskirk, providing improved linkages with Ormskirk railway station;

- vi. a new bus station for Skelmersdale town centre;
- vii. improved cycle linkages between Ormskirk and Burscough;
- viii. improved car park management within Ormskirk;
- ix. the provision of 3 linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and along the former railway line at Banks;
- x. any potential park and ride schemes associated with public transport connections;
- xi. any potential green travel improvements associated with access to the EdgeHillUniversity campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk; and
- xii. use of the land at the railway pad at the West Quarry, AppleyBridge for a small-scale rail facility.

c) Developments adjacent to, or affecting, rail lines (including resulting in a material increase or change of character of the traffic using a rail crossing of a railway) will only be permitted with the agreement of Network Rail.

2) Parking Standards

a) Residential Development

Proposals for residential development will be required to meet the following standards for car parking provision:

<i>Type of development</i>	<i>Number of parking spaces (per dwelling)</i>	<i>Cycle Parking Provision (in developments with communal parking only)</i>	<i>Disabled Parking Provision (in developments with communal parking only)</i>
Dwellings with 1 bedroom	1	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings
Dwellings with 2-3 bedrooms	2	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings
Dwellings with 4+bedrooms	3	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings

b) Non-Residential Development

Parking standards for non-residential developments are set out within Appendix F.

The Council will support development which seeks to encourage the use of public transport. Locations that are considered more sustainable and well served by public transport by the Council may be considered appropriate for reduced levels of parking provision.

Proposals for provision above or below the recommended parking standards will be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify a deviation from the policy. These local circumstances will include:

- i. The location of the development – urban / rural, within walking or easy cycling distance of a range of services and facilities;
- ii. The proposed use;
- iii. Levels of local parking provision, and any local parking congestion issues;
- iv. The distance to public transport facilities, and the quality (frequency / reliability / connection to main routes or interchanges) of the public transport provision in question;
- v. The quality of provision for cyclists: cycle parking, dedicated cycling facilities, access points to site, quality of design and provision;
- vi. The quality of provision for pedestrians; and
- vii. Evidence of local parking congestion.

Consideration will be given to allowing proposed developments to share car parking spaces where these joint developments have communal car parks and where it can be demonstrated that the different uses have peaks of usage that do not coincide.

3) Electric Vehicle Recharging Points and Reducing Transport Emissions

In addition to the above, developments will also be required to provide Electric Vehicle Recharging (EVR) points and a Low Emissions Strategy statement.

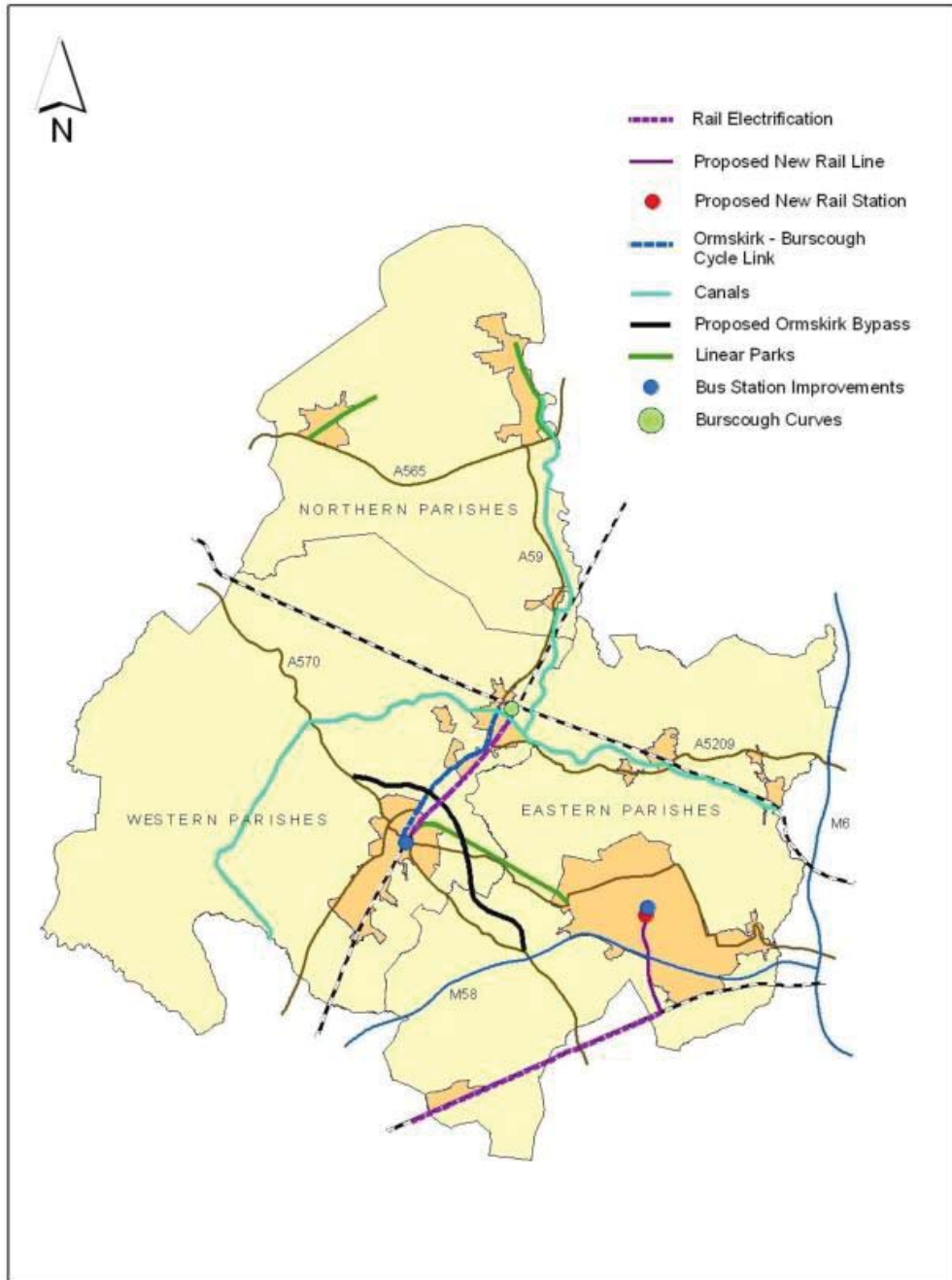
Where a Transport Assessment, a Transport Statement or a Travel Plan is required (as advised in PPG 13 and LTP3), a Low Emission Strategy statement should be integrated within this work, explaining actions for carbon reductions and reductions in toxic air pollutant emissions. This requirement will mostly apply to larger developments.

In order to support the development of the LES statement, information on the types of mitigation measures and low emission technologies and a national toolkit will be available online to guide applicants in the future (<http://www.lowemissionsstrategies.org>). This will help assess the amount of transport emissions resulting from the proposed development. Developers will be able to assess the costs, effects and benefits from adopting low emission fuels, technologies and infrastructure

Chapter 8 Infrastructure and Services Provision

EVRs will be required for all types of new developments that require parking provision. The minimum provision of parking bays and charging points for Electric Vehicles in new developments will be as follows:

All dwelling houses with at least one off-street parking space or garage space integral to the curtilage of the property:	One charging point per house.
All residential properties served by communal parking areas for the use of those properties only:	At least one or 10% (whichever is the greater) of parking spaces must be marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with an adequate charging infrastructure and cabling for each marked bay
All other development:	At least one or 10% (whichever is the greater) of parking spaces must be marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with an adequate charging infrastructure and cabling for each marked bay



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Figure 8.1 Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice

Justification

8.32 Policy IF2 has been set out to ensure that the future transport requirements of the Borough are met and that the correct parking standards are in place. 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.

Transport Infrastructure

8.33 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. However, it is recognised this project may not be affordable during the plan period.

8.34 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 after Leigh 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.

8.35 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 Wigan. 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.

8.36 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.

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

8.38 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.

8.39 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. This Policy 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.

8.40 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 IF2 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.

Car Parking Standards

8.41 As government policy requires that local authorities set their own car parking standards a comprehensive and locally-specific set of parking standards is required in the emerging Local Plan for West Lancashire, that will best deal with the Borough's specific parking-related issues. Given some of the specific parking problems experienced in parts of West Lancashire in recent years this approach is welcomed.

8.42 The Council believes that providing the right parking facilities in the right place can have major impacts upon an area. Some of the benefits include helping to promote the vitality and viability of town centres, attracting businesses to an area, and reducing congestion. On-street parking can add to congestion by hindering traffic movement, and can present a potential danger for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users; therefore the provision of off-street parking is usually desirable. The limiting of (free) parking spaces can be used as a means to encourage a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport, although such restrictions usually need to be applied at a regional level to work successfully. Thus a second issue is finding a balance between providing adequate levels of parking, and helping encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.

8.43 In March 2010 an Examination in Public took place into the Partial Review of the RSS, which contained proposed changes to the car parking standards in RSS Policy TR2. The proposed changes were largely agreed across authorities (including those in Lancashire). The EIP Panel Report, published in response to a Freedom of Information request, recommended amongst other things that local circumstances be taken into account when setting local parking standards.

8.44 This policy has been set to utilise the recommendations as set out in the draft RSS Partial Review. These standards were largely agreed across Lancashire and the Council only had a few minor modifications which were felt necessary to take account local circumstances. These changes include not reducing the Higher and Further Education Establishment requirements from 1 space per 15 students (as recommended in the submitted

draft for the partial review) to 1 space per 10 students. In addition, parking standards were added for University halls of residence. Given the presence of Edge Hill University, a specific criterion was felt necessary to cater for its needs.

8.45 West Lancashire is committed to reducing carbon emissions and, in particular, to reducing emissions caused through transport. As well as seeking to encourage walking and cycling the Council is committed to introducing electric vehicle recharging points so that low carbon travel can become a reality.

8.46 The Council supports 'Access for All' and both PPG13 and the NPPF places a requirement upon Local Authorities to seek to provide suitable parking provision for disabled people. As such this policy area will address provision of parking for disabled drivers, as well as cyclists.

Electric Vehicle Recharging Points and Reducing Transport Emissions

8.47 The Council believes that a Low Emissions Strategy Statement can provide a package of measures to help mitigate the transport impacts of development by encouraging the accelerated uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies in and around a development. It is believed that they can complement other design and mitigation options, such as travel planning.

8.48 The introduction of Electric Vehicle Recharging points is seen as an important and deliverable way of reducing transport emissions. Road transport is the third biggest source of carbon emissions nationally. Although there are different types of low emissions vehicles on the road electric vehicles have several advantages, these include:

- As they run off batteries and electric motors they produce no vehicle exhaust or carbon emissions at the point of use.
- They use energy in a far more efficient way than standard engines
- Electric vehicles have the potential to be zero-emission vehicles' if powered by renewable electricity, and create almost no noise.

8.49 Through the delivery of EVR points the Council is ensuring that West Lancashire will be in a position to take full advantage of this new technology by having a modern fit for purpose transport infrastructure. EVR points are being rolled out across the North West region and the Country as a whole and in most cases a domestic 13a socket fixed to an internal/external wall should cost less than £100 (based on 2011 prices).

What you said

8.50 During the Preferred 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. This policy seeks to address all of the concerns highlighted.

8.51 During the Core Strategy Options consultation, we did not ask any specific questions regarding parking standards; however we did ask questions relating to Edge Hill and the specific issues that parking at the university causes in and around Ormskirk. We also asked for people's opinions on whether they support sustainable forms of transport.

8.52 There were varying views with regards to Edge Hill but it was apparent that parking at the University was a particular issue. Many residents said that parking at student homes was a cause of concern and that more students should travel to the University via public transport. In the whole residents supported the use of greater forms of sustainable transport.

8.53 This policy has sought to address all of the concerns.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

8.55 *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. Also the LTP contains no guidance with regards to parking standards.

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

8.57 *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. With regards to parking standards there is a gap in the national guidance and local issues are not taken into account. In addition the NPPF will reduce detail contained within PPG13.

8.58 *Alternative Option 3:* Adopt minimum parking standards - this option would ensure that a development has at least a minimum amount of parking spaces with no maximum level set.

8.59 *Reason for rejection:* Although this approach would allow for developers to go above and beyond the minimum level set, and should help reduce off street parking, it would also be unsustainable in that it encourages use of the car and would therefore be contradictory to the requirements of PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development. Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4) advises that local planning authorities should set maximum parking standards ensuring alignment with policies in the Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

8.60 *Alternative Option 4:* Adopt maximum parking standards as recommended in PPG13 - PPG13 Annex D formerly set out maximum parking standards for non-residential development. Although this approach does have some merit, providing clear coherent guidance which would be consistent with that of other authorities,

8.61 *Reason for rejection:* This approach would not provide the Council with the flexibility to make changes to account for local circumstances. In some cases, maximum parking standards are too restrictive and there may be instances where it would be desirable to see additional parking spaces provided. In January 2011, following the government's Localism Agenda, PPG13 Annex D was amended and the requirement for local planning authorities to set out and apply maximum car parking standards for residential development was removed.

8.62 National research carried out for CABE has demonstrated that designs for residential development should adopt a realistic approach to average levels of car ownership. Attempts to restrict car ownership previously in order to promote more sustainable forms of transport have largely proved unsuccessful and levels of car ownership have not fallen. As a result, problems of off street parking, congestion, conversion of front gardens and difficulties for pedestrians have occurred.

8.63 *Alternative Option 5:* Adopt a flexible approach - as argued above, in seeking to provide enough car parking spaces for all users of new developments, minimum parking standards would have been too accommodating and may have resulted in less willingness for the Borough's residents, employees and visitors to use public transport.

8.64 *Reason for rejection:* Whilst such a policy may be appropriate in more rural, isolated areas, it would be inappropriate in areas which have a good public transport network. Conversely, maximum standards are inappropriate in certain cases. Therefore a flexible approach is considered most appropriate, whereby maximum standards are generally applied, but there is scope for these standards being exceeded where necessary.

8.65 *Alternative Option 6:* Use the standards set out in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan - this approach would see the Council using the existing standards contained within the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan.

8.66 *Reason for rejection:* The standards set out in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan were adopted in March 2005 and are seen as being largely out of date. PPG13 no longer has maximum parking requirements and some of the parking standards have been superseded by amendments to PPG13 Annex D. As it is important to ensure a consistent approach when it comes to parking standards, using the standards of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan is not seen as being appropriate.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- Joint Lancashire Local Transport Plan 3
- Joint Lancashire Structure Plan SPG 'access and parking' (March 2005)
- DCLG (ODPM) Planning Policy Guidance 13 Transport
- The Transport Act 2000
- The Climate Change Act 2008 Merseyside Route
- Utilisation Strategy 2009

- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Spatial Strategy Submitted Draft

8.3 Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth

Context

8.67 A vital element of sustainable development is the provision and delivery of local services and infrastructure. 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.

8.68 The Council has produced 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 support delivery of the Borough's development needs to 2027. Infrastructure now has a much broader definition and includes physical, social/community infrastructure and environmental/green infrastructure.

8.69 West Lancashire has both assets and issues in relation to infrastructure capacity and these must be enhanced and resolved through development. One of the key issues in the Borough is drainage of waste water. Waste water treatment facilities serving Burscough, Rufford, Scarisbrick and much of Ormskirk are currently close to capacity in terms of environmental limits. This means that the treatment of additional waste water generated by new development cannot be managed at the existing treatment plant and will require a solution to be delivered by the utility provider who is the statutory undertaker.

8.70 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 Local Plan assists in making these improvements happen.

Policy IF3

Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth

Development will be required to provide essential site service and communications infrastructure and demonstrate that it will support infrastructure requirements as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

In order for West Lancashire to protect and create sustainable places for communities to enjoy, proposals for development should:

- i. make the most of existing infrastructure by focusing on sustainable locations with the best infrastructure capacity;

- ii. ensure no negative impacts or depletion to the quality of the existing infrastructure as a result of new development;
- iii. where appropriate, contribute towards improvements to existing infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure, as required to support the needs of the development;
- iv. where appropriate, demonstrate how access to services will be achieved by means other than the car; and
- v. where appropriate, 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.

New development proposed in the areas of Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and Scarisbrick that are affected by limitations on waste water treatment, must be phased to ensure delivery of the development coincides with the delivery of an appropriate solution which meets the standards of the Council, the Undertaker and the Regulators.

The Council will support the delivery of broadband and communications technology to all parts of the Borough and will encourage and facilitate its use in line with national policy.

Community Facilities

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.

The loss of any community facilities such as (but not limited too) pubs, post offices, community centres and open space will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the facility is no longer needed, or can be relocated elsewhere that is equally accessible by the community.

Justification

8.71 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 Local Plan

8.72 Planning for infrastructure provision in West Lancashire is an ongoing process through the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and partnership working with stakeholders. The IDP will form the basis for identifying infrastructure requirements needed to support development 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, canal 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, theatres, public realm, public house; and
- Green Infrastructure – waterways, parks, natural and semi natural spaces, outdoor sports facilities, allotments, play areas, corridors/footpaths.

8.73 In ensuring West Lancashire’s infrastructure capacity is maximised, development should, in the first instance, be located where there is existing infrastructure capacity. Where infrastructure deficiencies exist, 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.

8.74 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 development. .

8.75 The most significant infrastructure issues for the Borough are traffic and transport and waste water treatment capacity which affects most of Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford and parts of Scarisbrick.

8.76 Policy IF2 sets out how the Council will begin to tackle the issues relating to traffic and transport. However, the delivery of a solution to resolve the waste water treatment capacity issue is the responsibility of United Utilities. As the statutory undertaker, United Utilities will be required to resolve this issue and provide adequate sewerage to meet the needs of customers and support development growth. The Council has an established working relationship with United Utilities and will continue to work with them in order to support the delivery of a suitable resolution in an acceptable timescale.

What You Said

8.77 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper Consultation, many respondents supported the approach to protection and enhancement of all types of infrastructure requirements. There was a great deal of concern regarding existing infrastructure pressures and deficiencies which have resulted through the organic growth of development in previous years across the Borough and in particular, Ormskirk and Burscough and the Northern Parishes. It is hoped that a policy to manage the impact of all development on infrastructure will begin to address this pattern.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.78 *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.

8.79 *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. It would also be unsound in relation to the delivery of the Local Plan.

8.4 Developer Contributions

Context

8.80 Co-ordination and funding of the delivery of new infrastructure and infrastructure improvements is necessary to ensure that development does not place an unacceptable strain upon existing infrastructure and communities. This will be achieved through the development and regular monitoring of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will sit alongside and informs the Local Plan. 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 and partner delivery authorities.

8.81 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. Furthermore, it is likely that not all infrastructure identified as necessary will have allocated funding and it will be necessary for development to contribute to the delivery of this infrastructure and assist in plugging the funding gap.

Policy IF4

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, where the development would otherwise be unacceptable and through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), at such a time when the Council has prepared a Charging Schedule.

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

- i. Utilities and Waste (where the provision does not fall within the utility providers legislative obligations);
- ii. Flood prevention and sustainable drainage measures;

- iii. Transport (highway, rail, bus and cycle / footpath network, canal and any associated facilities);
- iv. Community Infrastructure (such as health, education, libraries, public realm);
- v. Green Infrastructure (such as outdoor sports facilities, open space, parks, allotments, play areas, enhancing and conserving biodiversity);
- vi. Climate change and energy initiatives through allowable solutions;
- vii. Affordable housing; and
- viii. Skelmersdale Town Centre Regeneration.

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

Justification

8.82 All development, regardless of size and scale, places additional demands on services and facilities, impacting on their ability to meet the needs of the community. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will create a system which would pass the cost of infrastructure improvements pro rata onto those developments above the 100sqm threshold and of a type that it has been found to be viable to charge CIL to. This would allow the Council greater autonomy over expenditure to ensure strategic infrastructure aims are met along with localised issues.

8.83 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 Localism Bill has confirmed the role of CIL in securing developer contributions and has increased the flexibility of the CIL framework. The Council is investigating the preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule and will shortly be undertaking a viability assessment to inform this process.

8.84 The introduction of a CIL charging schedule will not remove the requirement for Section 106 planning obligations which will remain to be used in accordance with the tests set out within the CIL regulations. Planning obligations are a key delivery tool in providing the opportunity to secure financial contributions which will mitigate against the localised impacts of development which would otherwise render the proposal unacceptable in planning terms.

8.85 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies particular issues in relation to infrastructure requirements within the Borough to support the Local Plan and ensure delivery of sustainable communities and economic growth. The CIL and Section 106 agreements will be vital in supporting the delivery of infrastructure along with other streams of funding. In particular

transport improvements are key to securing sustainable growth in Skelmersdale and creating the means for people to live and work in Skelmersdale and to access the wider area and region.

8.86 Policy IF4 is the delivery mechanism required to deliver the necessary contributions to support Policies RS2: Affordable and Specialist Housing, IF2: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice, IF3: Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth, EN1: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure, EN2: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment, EN3: Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space and EN4: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment.

What You Said

8.87 Feedback from the previous round of consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper identified a need for a fair and reasonable approach to developer contributions which was in line with the latest regulations governing CIL and Section 106 Planning Obligations. The feedback also suggested it was unreasonable to seek lower contributions within Skelmersdale as this is the settlement with some of the greatest infrastructure needs, particularly transport and community infrastructure. Any reduction should be viability evidenced.

Other Alternatives Considered

8.88 *Alternative Option 1:* Continue to collect contributions on an ad hoc basis through Section 106 agreements only and do not implement CIL.

8.89 *Reason for rejection:* Choosing not to implement CIL is not the preferred option as relying on Section 106 Planning Obligations alone could seriously limit the ability of the Council to plan for and deliver strategic infrastructure in the Borough.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

8.90 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:

- The Planning Act 2008 (Part 11)
- The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2011-10-21
- The Localism Bill (Chapter 2 Community Infrastructure Levy)
- ODPM Circular 05/2005: Planning Obligations

8.91 There is currently also a West Lancashire Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled Open Space and Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD, which addresses developer contributions from residential developments towards Public Open Space.

Chapter 9 Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change

9.1 Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure

Context

9.1 The planning system has a key role to play in delivering targets for low and zero carbon development in the UK in order to work towards energy security and assist in mitigating the causes of climate change through reducing greenhouse gas emissions. New development in West Lancashire will have regard to the principles set out within Policy EN1 in order to assist in meeting the national targets to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 34% on 1990 levels by 2020 and to achieve 15% of our energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020.

9.2 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 Local Plan Policies:

- **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 district heating network; and
- **Be green:** or recycle in order to reduce CO₂ emissions by using renewable energy techniques.

Policy EN1

Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure

1. Low Carbon Design

The Council will mitigate against and adapt to climate change by requiring all development to:

- achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 as a minimum standard for new residential development and conversions, rising to Level 4 and Level 6 in line with the increases to Part L of the Building Regulations;
- achieve the BREEAM 'very good' standard as a minimum for new commercial buildings of more than 1000m², rising to 'excellent' and "zero carbon" in line with the increases to Part L of the Building Regulations;

- iii. contribute financially to a Community Energy Fund, such as the Council's Community Energy Fund, through 'Allowable Solutions', for all new residential development, when carbon compliance cannot be achieved on site in line with the final Part L building regulation increase (expected 2016);
- iv. be resilient to climate change by incorporating shading and SuDS and locating it away from areas at risk of flooding, unless it can be demonstrated through a flood risk assessment that it satisfies the sequential test and the exception test, where applicable, as set out in national policy.

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 set out how improvements are achieved within an Energy Statement as part of any planning application. These standards will apply until any other national or locally-determined standard is required.

2. Low and Zero Carbon Energy Infrastructure

The Council will deliver climate change mitigation and energy security measures by:

- i. requiring all major developments to explore the potential for a district heating or decentralised energy network, particularly on those sites of strategic importance;
- ii. requiring development located where a decentralised or district heat network is planned to be constructed and sited to allow future connectivity at a later date or phase;
- iii. using funds from the Community Energy Fund to support carbon saving projects; and
- iv. supporting proposals for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes provided they can demonstrate that they will not result in unacceptable harm to the local environment which cannot be satisfactorily addressed and which is not outweighed by the benefits of such proposals. Renewable and low carbon 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

9.3 Policy EN1 aims to ensure that the Council's commitment to mitigate and adapt to climate change can be achieved. Through effective Development Management, Policy EN1 will influence the quality of development proposals and 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 which will assist West Lancashire in reducing CO₂ emissions and in moving towards a low carbon economy.

9.4 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 (BREEAM) 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.

9.5 West Lancashire Borough Council participated in the Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (October 2010) which examined the potential for renewable energy generation in the sub-region. The study was in 2 stages and considered the viability of different forms of energy generation, identified possible constraints and set out suitable areas of least constraint and the greatest resource. The study also identified possible renewable energy generation targets, derived from the Regional Spatial Strategy targets and disaggregated based upon the Boroughs capacity to generate.

9.6 The results identified a significant capacity for wind energy generation within the Borough and the Stage 2 analysis applied constraints mapping in order to identify areas of least constraint and greatest potential. Two areas for commercial scale wind energy potential were identified in West Lancashire, with the caveat that there would need to be additional analysis as the study did not account for landscape impacts or localised feasibility.

9.7 The study also identified that Ormskirk Town Centre could be a potential energy priority zone for district heating. This is primarily due to the major energy users such as the swimming pool, hospital and other public buildings that would be required to ensure a network would be feasible. Retrofitting district heating and decentralised energy can be costly and is much more deliverable within new developments. Therefore, Policy EN1 requires all major development (developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1000sqm) to explore the potential of district heat and decentralised energy systems and particularly the strategic sites allocated within this plan.

9.8 A further study was produced in April 2011 for the Lancashire Authorities and is still being finalised in relation to targets for potential renewable energy generation capacity. The Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study analysed the outcome of the Northwest Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Capacity Study (2010) in order to produce data at a more local level for each Lancashire Local Authority. The initial findings of the study for West Lancashire also identified significant potential for wind energy generation within the Borough with a total capacity of 1630 MW for renewable energy which accounts for about 16% of the overall renewable energy capacity in Lancashire.

9.9 When finalised, the Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study will set out a target for the expected amount of renewable energy that is deployable within the Borough. Policy EN1 aims to encourage low carbon development that sources its energy from renewable sources and also encourages planning for energy delivery on a broader scale than individual households. This will assist in the Council fulfilling any deployment capacity targets and mitigating climate change impacts.

Chapter 9 Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change

9.10 The findings of the studies will be referenced within a future Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will also provide greater detail and guidance on how developments can adapt to and mitigate against climate change. The SPD will be consistent with the Local Plan and / or National Policy and include further detail regarding 'Allowable Solutions' once the national framework on this is completed.

9.11 Wind energy development potential is significant within West Lancashire and developers are required to provide evidence to support their proposals considering the following;

- Singular or cumulative impacts on landscape character and value;
- Impact on local residents (including flicker noise and shadow flicker);
- Ecological impact including migration routes of protected bird species
- Impacts on land resources including agricultural land and areas of deep peat;
- Impacts on the historic environment and assets;
- Community benefits of the proposal;
- Impacts on aviation navigation systems and communications.

9.12 The evidence will be required to demonstrate that any impacts can be satisfactorily addressed but need only be proportional to the scale and nature of development.

9.13 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.

9.14 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. However, PPS22 suggests such special circumstances could include the wider environmental benefits associated with the production of renewable energy. This is consistent with the approach within the latest Draft National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, the Green Belt designation is a consideration but does not entirely rule out renewable energy generation.

9.15 The Council acknowledges the limitations that the existing evidence base offers with reference to understanding the environmental and landscape capacity for renewable energy development within the Borough. Therefore, the Council relies upon the landscape character information set out within the Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History SPG in order to assess the possible landscape impacts of any proposals. This will need to be given due regard when submitting proposals that could have an impact on the landscape. Furthermore, 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 and the carbon compliance of new developments, particularly major proposals (developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1000sqm).

What You Said

9.16 Many respondents to the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper noted that the Council should not seek to impose a higher requirement than the national requirement for low carbon building standards without evidence. It was also noted that some form of spatial direction for developers in terms of large scale commercial energy would be beneficial. Many respondents welcomed the Council's support for renewable energy development and low carbon design whilst maintaining regard for the Green Belt.

Other Alternatives Considered:

9.17 *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.

9.18 *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.

9.2 Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

Context

9.19 West Lancashire is a predominantly rural authority with an array of natural assets including green spaces, landscapes, land resources and some of the most valuable habitats to a wide range of protected species. Many of which are designated as important international and national habitats.

9.20 The Borough's land resources include some of the best agricultural land in the country, vast areas of deep peat and many opportunities for recreational access for residents. These natural assets combined with the historic buildings and settings mean that West Lancashire has some of the most important landscape character areas in the region. It will be important to ensure that any development respects and enhances the special historical and environmental significance of areas of landscape importance

9.21 These spaces, assets and landscapes are multi-functional and contain a variety of roles, including helping to provide amenity space, improving the visual aspects of the Borough, preserving the countryside and providing a high quality, attractive landscape which helps make West Lancashire an attractive place to live, work and visit.

9.22 Policy EN2 provides an effective framework to balance the need for conservation and protection of the Borough's natural assets including biodiversity, land resources and landscape character against the need to meet development requirements. Striking a balance will ensure the Borough's natural assets are managed for West Lancashire's current and future needs.

9.23 Some of the detail contained in national planning policy set out in Planning Policy Statements (and Planning Policy Guidance Notes) is due to be lost, when PPSs and PPGs are replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework. Any necessary provisions in these documents that have particular significance for West Lancashire Borough should also be contained within a new Local Plan policy.

Policy EN2

Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

Development proposals which seek to enhance, preserve and improve the biodiversity or geological value of West Lancashire will be supported in principle. In order to do this development must meet the requirements set out below:

1. Biodiversity

The Council will:

- i. 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 and biological heritage and nature conservation sites;
- ii. 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
- iii. 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.

In addition to the provisions of national and European law, and the requirements of national planning policy, development must adhere to the provisions set out below.

a) Nature Conservation Sites

This policy applies to all presently designated nature conservation sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, and to any sites or networks that may be identified in the future by appropriate agencies.

Development that would directly or indirectly affect any County Biological Heritage Site, Local Nature Reserve, Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Site or Local Nature Conservation Site, will be considered only where it is necessary to meet an overriding local public need.

Where development is considered necessary adequate mitigation measures and compensatory habitat creation will be required through planning conditions and / or obligations, with the aim of providing an overall improvement in the site's biodiversity value. Where compensatory habitat is provided it should be of equal area, if not larger and more diverse than what is being replaced.

Where there is reason to suspect that there may be protected species on or close to a proposed development site, planning applications should be accompanied by a survey assessing the presence of such species and, where appropriate, making provision for their needs.

b) Damage to nature conservation assets

The following definition of what constitutes damage to natural environmental assets will be used in assessing applications potentially impacting upon assets:

- i. Loss of the undeveloped open character of a part, parts or all of the ecological framework;
- ii. Reducing the width or causing direct or indirect severance of the ecological framework or any part of it;
- iii. Restricting the potential for lateral movement of wildlife;
- iv. Causing the degradation of the ecological functions of the ecological framework or any part it;
- v. Directly or indirectly damaging or severing links between green spaces, wildlife corridors and the open countryside; and
- vi. Impeding links to ecological frameworks recognised by neighbouring planning authorities.

c) Trees and Hedgerows

The Council will encourage the creation of new woodlands where appropriate. Development will not be permitted that would directly or indirectly damage existing mature or ancient woodland, veteran trees or species-rich hedgerows. All development should:

- i. Include appropriate tree planting which should integrate well with existing mature trees (both new and existing trees should be maintained by the owner of the site);
- ii. Promote an increase in tree cover where it would not threaten other vulnerable habitats;
- iii. Avoid encroachment into the canopy area or root spread of trees considered worthy of retention; and
- iv. Replace any trees lost on a like-for-like basis.

d) Land Resources

Development will have regard to the conservation of the Borough's deep peat resources.

Development on the most important agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are no other sites suitable to accommodate the development. This excludes land that has an environmental importance or designation or that provides habitat for protected species.

e) Coastal Zone

Development within the Borough's Coastal Zones, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be limited to that which is essential in meeting the needs of coastal navigation, amenity and informal recreation, tourism and leisure, flood protection, fisheries, nature conservation and / or agriculture. Development will not be allowed which would allow the loss of secondary sea embankments.

Development in Marine areas as defined by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) must be in line with Marine Policy Statements and Marine Management Plans.

f) 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 it makes a positive contribution to them. The level of protection afforded will depend on the quality, importance and uniqueness of the landscape in question as defined in SPG Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance and any subsequent documents.

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.

In addition, development will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- i. The development maintains or enhances the distinctive character and visual quality of the Landscape Character Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, in which it is located;
- ii. It respects the historic character of the local landscape and townscape, as defined by the Areas of Landscape History Importance shown on the Proposals Map; and
- iii. It compliments or enhances any attractive attributes of its surroundings through sensitive design which includes appropriate siting, orientation, scale, materials, landscaping, boundary treatment, detailing and use of art features where appropriate'.

Justification

9.24 This Policy seeks to protect the biodiversity of the Borough, through preventing the loss of important natural habitat and wildlife corridors whilst also protecting and providing important recreational facilities for local residents. West Lancashire provides important habitats for a number of protected species including many varieties of birds, water voles and red squirrels whose habitat has to be protected and managed sensitively.

9.25 Government Guidance in Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation places a statutory duty upon the Council to maintain, protect and restore any conservation sites found within Special Protection Areas for birds (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites (Wetlands of International Importance). PPS 9 also requires planning policies avoid, mitigate or compensate for harm but seek always to enhance and restore biodiversity and geology.

9.26 Although there is significant national designation protecting the natural environment within West Lancashire this national guidance may be removed with the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). If this occurs there will be a vacuum in policy to protect sites of local importance and therefore their protection will be reliant upon local plan policies. Furthermore, whilst the most important habitats tend to be protected by law in addition to national planning policy, there are a number of locally-designated environmental sites in West Lancashire that do not enjoy any protection. This policy aims to create a framework which will address these issues and protect any wildlife sites not covered by national policy or law.

9.27 Trees and hedgerows are protected through separate government legislation as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Tree Regulations 1999 and Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The Council understands that the contribution that trees, either as woodland or individual specimens and hedgerows make to the landscape is significant. In particular the range of benefits for wildlife and people they provide as well as helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. The Council acknowledge the high biodiversity value of ancient woodland and the fact that it is an irreplaceable habitat. Although West Lancashire is a rural authority the Borough has relatively low woodland cover. This is due to the agricultural nature of the Borough. Although the Borough has some wooded areas and hedgerows, these have declined over recent years, particularly due to modern farming practises. The Policy seeks to protect existing tree cover and provide additional woodland where appropriate.

9.28 Deep peat deposits are an important resource because of the unique habitat and biodiversity that they encourage. Extraction or degradation of peat also results in the release of CO₂ into the atmosphere.

9.29 A further consideration for the Local Plan will be to seek to protect nationally important agricultural land and the Borough's deep peat resources. West Lancashire has some of the best agricultural land in the country which is not only important nationally but is also of national significance. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has said that agricultural land graded as being grades 1, 2 and 3a is the most versatile. PPS7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' states that the presence of the best and most versatile land should be taken account of alongside other sustainable considerations.

9.30 Much of the Ribble Estuary provides habitats for nationally and internationally important wildlife and consequently benefits from protection such as being located within Special Protection Areas or in an area designated as being of Special Scientific Interest. However, the area which has been identified on the proposals map as being a Coastal Zone does not benefit from this protection. Due to the flat open nature of this area, developments can be particularly visually intrusive as well as being harmful to the environmental sensitivity of the locality. As such, this policy seeks to restrict development other than that meeting the specific criteria stated in the policy.

9.31 Planning Policy Statement 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas requires that Local Development Frameworks resist development which could have a detrimental impact upon the landscape. PPS7 states that 'criteria based policies should be used to assess the impact of development upon the landscape'. As such there is little alternative but to have a criteria based policy.

9.32 West Lancashire has many historic and important landscapes which are recognised for their special cultural, horticultural, historic and landscape qualities. Scarisbrick Hall Park is a site included on the national register of gardens and parks of special historic interest and adds to the character of the Borough. With an increased pressure from developers it is important to protect these areas to ensure that the character is not inherently affected.

9.33 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes landscape protection, management and planning, and European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns, villages and open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection. Although at present, no widely accepted classification of European landscapes exists, work at a national, sub-regional and local scale level contributes to delivering the commitment to the binding ELC.

9.34 Proposals should have regard to the Council's Landscape Character Assessment set out in The Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (1996, updated 2007). Although this 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 that the document has with emerging regional work produced by Natural England and the existing Lancashire County Council Landscape and Heritage SPG.

What You Said

9.35 It was felt that during the Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation there was insufficient focus on landscape heritage assets and landscape character and that 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. It was also requested that ancient woodland protection should be incorporated into the policy as well as the creation of new woodland.

9.36 There was also criticism that Policy CS16 did not recognise that there may be situations where loss of green space is appropriate in terms of development proposals and they recommended that the wording should be changed to reflect this. Surplus supplies should

be recognised as well as deficiencies. Similarly, it was felt that the policy should reflect that there may be situations where a loss or partial loss of biodiversity sites could be regarded as appropriate.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

9.38 *Reason for rejection:* This policy approach was subsequently ruled out as this would

9.39 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 natural environment and landscape character. Also the proposed NPPF may remove protection contained within the existing policies.

9.40 *Alternative Option 2:* Do not protect existing natural assets and landscape character.

9.41 *Reason for rejection.* This approach would have been contrary to national planning policy and would have allowed locally and regionally important natural habitat and landscapes to have been lost. The rural character of West Lancashire is also one of the reasons West Lancashire is unique and an attractive place to live, work and visit. In addition, given the amount, quality and regional importance of the Borough's prime agricultural land, a local policy that goes beyond the provisions of PPS7 is considered necessary.

Other Local Planning Policy and Supporting Documents

- Marine & Coastal Access Act & Marine Licensing System (2011)
- Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Lancashire Landscape and Heritage DPD
- West Lancashire Open Space, Sports and Recreational Study (October 2009)
- West Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (October 2009)
- Tarleton-Hesketh Bank Linear Park Study
- Skelmersdale-Ormskirk Linear Park Study

9.3 Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space

Context

9.42 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, allotments and the inland waterways and canal network. Good quality green infrastructure can help improve where people live and work, mitigate and adapt to climate change, provide alternative modes of transport and can help assist in regeneration as well as helping to attract visitors and improve the visitor economy. Therefore, green infrastructure has a key role to play in delivering healthy sustainable communities and is as important as other more traditional forms of infrastructure, such as roads or the provision of sanitation.

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

9.44 The Council is committed to improving Green Infrastructure within the Borough and aims to provide high quality facilities which will fulfil a number of roles. This policy should help in delivering an integrated network of multi functional green infrastructure, with specific sites identified for conservation, enhancement or inclusion in the network.

Policy EN3

Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space

1. Green Infrastructure

The Council will:

- i. provide a green infrastructure strategy which supports the provision of a network of multi functional green space including open space, sports facilities, recreational and play opportunities, flood storage, habitat creation, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, food growing and climate change mitigation. The network will facilitate active lifestyles by providing leisure spaces within walking distance of people's homes, schools and work;
- ii. require development to contribute to the green infrastructure strategy and enhance as well as protect and safeguard 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 IF4;
- iii. 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
- iv. seek to deliver new 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.

2. Open Space and Recreation Facilities

- a) Development should be strongly resisted if it results in the loss of existing open space or sports facilities (including school playing fields) unless the following conditions are met:
 - i. The open space has been identified by the Council as being under used, poor quality or poorly located;

- ii. the proposed development would be ancillary to the use of the site as open space and the benefits to recreation would outweigh any loss of the open area; or
 - iii. Successful mitigation takes place and alternative, improved provision is provided in the same locality. This should include improvements to the quality and quantity of provision to the benefit of the local community.
- b) Development will not be permitted where:
- i. Development would effect the open characteristic of the area
 - ii. Development would restrict access to publicly accessible Green Space
 - iii. Development would adversely effect biodiversity in the locality
 - iv. Development would result in the loss of Green Spaces, Corridors and the Countryside
 - v. The open space contributes to the distinctive form, character and setting of a settlement
 - vi. The open space is a focal point within the built up area
 - vii. The open space provides a setting for important buildings (being listed or of local historic importance) or scheduled ancient monuments
 - viii. Proposals contradict other policies contained within the Local Plan
- c) Development for outdoor sports and recreational facilities will be permitted within settlement boundaries providing that the facility is required and supported by local residents and does not conflict with other policies contained with the Local Plan. Appropriate development for outdoor sports and recreation facilities may be permitted in the Green Belt in accordance with national policy.
- d) Where a deficiency in existing open recreation space provision is demonstrated, new residential development will be expected to provide local open space on-site (where appropriate) or a financial contribution towards off-site local open space to meet the demand for such open space created by the new development.
- e) Facilities for informal countryside recreational activities are proposed at the following sites, as shown on the proposals map:
- i. Hunters Hill, Wrightington
 - ii. Parbold Hill, Parbold
 - iii. Platts Lane and Mill Dam Lane, Burscough

f) Proposals will also be developed to protect and improve facilities at the following existing countryside recreation sites shown on the proposals map:

- i. Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale
- ii. Tawd Valley Park, Skelmersdale
- iii. Fairy Glen, Appley Bridge
- iv. Dean Wood, Up Holland
- v. Abbey Lakes, Up Holland
- vi. Ruff Wood, Ormskirk
- vii. Platts Lane Lake, Burscough
- viii. Chequer Lane, Up Holland

g) New children's play areas are proposed on sites shown on the Proposals Map at:

- i. Latham Avenue, Parbold
- ii. Tabbys Nook, Newburgh
- iii. Redgate, Ormskirk
- iv. Elm Place, Ormskirk
- v. Land East of Eavesdale, Skelmersdale
- vi. Bescar Lane, Bescar
- vii. Pickles Drive, Burscough

Justification

9.45 This Policy seeks to effectively protect all parks, natural assets, sports facilities and open space and to manage the existing provision in the most effective way. It looks to provide improved facilities and assess where they are most needed. The proposed approach also seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity in line with PPS9. This policy also considers whether areas of open space which no longer provide any value and are underused may be appropriate for other uses

9.46 It is essential that the Local Plan contains a policy placing a requirement upon development to provide appropriate levels of green infrastructure and open space, and that any new development does not harm the Borough's most valued existing provision. The

West Lancashire Open Space Sports and Recreation study (Oct 2009) makes a number of recommendations and identifies where there is an under/oversupply of different types of typologies (open space) within different parts of the Borough. Using the results of this 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 where appropriate.

9.47 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. As such the Policy 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.

9.48 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

Linear Parks

9.49 The Council wants to carry forward for 3 Linear Parks linking Hesketh Bank to Tarleton/Rufford, Skelmersdale to Ormskirk and the former railway line in Banks. The proposed Linear parks are intended to provide a variety of uses from forming important wildlife corridors to providing opportunities for informal recreation facilities to providing off road transport corridors. These 3 routes are all based on traditional transport corridors and their development has been supported in Lancashire LTP3.

9.50 The river Douglas and Leeds-Liverpool canal are important waterways within West Lancashire and these 2 corridors meet within the proposed Linear Park. The development of this Linear Park is within the concept of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.

9.51 Following consultation there has been support within the local area for this concept. Working with Lancashire County Council, local Parish Council's and the local community the Borough Council has been working to complete initial Feasibility work to bring this concept forward. Much of the site is within individual landownership and work is currently being undertaken to identify the individual landowners. The proposed linear park will provide an off road route to the main secondary school in Tarleton.

9.52 The proposed Ormskirk to Skelmersdale Linear Park follows the former disused railway line linking the towns which closed in the 1960's. Although the Council owns part of this line much of the route is within private ownership and some of the route has been built upon. This route will provide many of the same benefits as the Tarleton to Hesketh Bank

linear park but will also provide an important transport corridor between the towns. This route provides opportunities to build upon the environmental importance of the route for the flora and fauna which already exists.

9.53 Additional feasibility work is required to bring this scheme forward and there will need to be a resolution to the land ownership issues.

9.54 The creation of the Banks linear park would see the creation of a link between Banks and the wider Countryside. This route may have potential to provide a wider link between Southport and Hesketh Bank as well as fitting within the concept of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park concept. Further feasibility work is required to bring this proposal forward.

Open Space and Recreational Facilities

9.55 The proposed allocated sites contained within the policy are located at significant locations within the Borough and fulfil a variety of functions including providing attractive landscapes, environmental habitat and recreational space. These spaces are owned by the Council and it is felt that their development will help to relieve the recreational pressure on surrounding countryside. The provision of play areas will help provide such spaces for children in areas where there is currently a lack of facilities.

9.56 This list of sites is not exhaustive and it is expected that some new residential developments will result in a deficiency of open space and recreation facilities in the locality, or be in a location where a deficiency already exists. In such an instance, the development will be expected to provide sufficient open space on-site, where possible and appropriate, to meet the demand created by the development or, if it is not possible or appropriate, to provide a financial contribution in-lieu of an on-site provision towards an equivalent provision off-site in the locality of the development.

What You Said

9.57 During the Options stage 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.

9.58 During the Core Strategy Preferred Options Stage there was criticism that Policy CS16 does not recognise that there may be situations where loss of green space is appropriate in terms of development proposals and they recommended that the wording should be changed to reflect this. Surplus supplies should be recognised as well as deficiencies. Similarly, it was felt that the policy should reflect that there may be situations where a loss or partial loss of biodiversity sites could be regarded as appropriate.

9.59 There was a call for geodiversity to be included within the policy, and the delivery of a green infrastructure. Support should be given to promote more diverse flora and fauna across West Lancashire. The contribution of the historic environment should also be acknowledged. It was requested that ancient woodland protection should be incorporated into the policy as well as the creation of new woodland.

9.60 This Policy has sought to acknowledge all of these concerns.

Other Alternatives Considered

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

9.62 *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.

9.63 *Alternative Option 2:* Ensure that additional open space is provided to exceed the expected requirements of the Borough.

9.64 *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.

9.65 *Alternative Option 3:* Meet the recommendations of the current Open Space, Sports and Recreational Study 2009.

9.66 *Reason for rejection:* Although this approach would meet the current requirements of the Borough it would not be able to help deliver for the requirements of the predicted population increase expected during the Local Plan period. This approach may also be unrealistic given the difficulties in providing the required sites in some areas. Although meeting the requirements of the Open Space, Sports and Recreational Study will be an important element of the policy, the recommendations contained within the study are not sufficiently robust to be able to form policy on their own.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- 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)

9.4 Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment

Context

9.67 West Lancashire has a wealth of historic buildings and places, which contribute greatly to the distinctive character and appearance of the local environment. Our built heritage provides a huge resource that can play an important role in the future of West Lancashire. By sustaining and enhancing our heritage it can benefit the regeneration of our communities, particularly through leisure, tourism and economic development and importantly by preserving it we are contributing to a more sustainable future.

9.68 Achieving good design is a key objective of the Local Plan and will contribute to better places for people to live in. The Council is committed to ensuring all development contributes positively to the Borough's distinctive character and is of the highest design quality, having full regard to the local context within which it sits.

Policy EN4

Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment

1. Quality Design

High quality and inclusive design will be required for all new developments and will be expected to:

- i. be inspiring and imaginative;
- ii. be adaptable to climate change through construction principles;
- iii. create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime;
- iv. contribute to creating a 'sense of place' by responding positively to the setting and local distinctiveness of the area in relation to the scale of development, site layout, building style and design, materials and landscaping;
- v. fully integrate with existing streets and paths to ensure safety for pedestrian, vehicles and cycle users;
- vi. create attractive public spaces to promote healthy and inclusive communities, making use of well designed open space, landscaping and public art, where appropriate; and
- vii. minimise the risk from all forms of pollution, contamination and land instability.

2. Cultural and Heritage Assets

The historic environment has an aesthetic value and promotes local distinctiveness and helps define our sense of place. In order to protect and enhance historic assets whilst facilitating economic development through regeneration, leisure and tourism, the following principles will be applied:

a) There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets. Regard should be had for the following criteria:

- i. development will not be permitted that will adversely affect a listed building, a scheduled monument, a conservation area, historic park or garden, or important archaeological remains;
- ii. development affecting the historic environment should seek to preserve or enhance the heritage asset and any features of specific historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest;
- iii. in all cases there will be an expectation that any new development will enhance the historic environment in the first instance, unless there are no identifiable opportunities available; and
- iv. in instances where existing features have a negative impact on the historic environment, as identified through character appraisals, the Local Planning Authority will request the removal of the features that undermine the historic environment as part of any proposed development.

b) Substantial harm or loss of a listed building, park or garden will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. the substantial harm to, or loss of significance of, the heritage asset is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss; or the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;
- ii. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term that will enable its conservation (evidence of appropriate marketing and reasonable endeavours should be provided in line with Policy GN4);
- iii. conservation through grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is not possible; and
- iv. the harm to or loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.

c) There will be a presumption in favour of the protection and enhancement of existing buildings and built areas which do not have Listed Building or Conservation Area status but have a particular local importance or character which it is desirable to keep. Such buildings or groups of buildings will be identified through a Local List which will be adopted by the Council.

d) Heritage Statements and / or Archaeological Evaluations will be required for proposals related to, or impacting on, the setting of heritage assets and/or known or possible archaeological sites, in order that sufficient information is provided to assess the impacts of development on historic environment assets, together with any proposed mitigation measures.

e) Where possible, opportunities to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change will be encouraged. Re-use of heritage assets and, where suitable, modification so as to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development will be permitted where appropriate. The public benefit of mitigating the effects of climate change should be weighed against any harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Justification

9.69 Policy EN4 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.

9.70 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 sense of place.

9.71 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.

9.72 Proposals should also have regard to the Councils Design Guide SPD (January 2008) along with other locally derived documents including West Lancashire Heritage Strategy 2009. The Heritage Strategy aims to provide an overview of how the Council will preserve the historic environment of the Borough and promote awareness of the value of our shared heritage. The Council also maintains an "At Risk Register" which it will continue to monitor and keep up to date.

9.73 West Lancashire has numerous and extensive historic assets including 28 Conservation Areas and 12 scheduled ancient monuments which are all identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map. In terms of buildings, West Lancashire is home to around 600 buildings on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. The Council also maintains its own a list of buildings of local importance which is updated periodically and available on the website. The range of assets includes both statutory designations and sites and those of regional and local importance.

What You Said

9.74 It was suggested during the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper Consultation that the policy could be more place specific and include how the Local Planning Authority will respond to heritage assets at risk and to ensure it was in accordance with all national planning policy statements and guidance. There was also a request to make reference to Historic Parks and Gardens and how heritage can contribute to tourism and leisure.

Other Alternatives Considered

9.75 *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.

9.76 *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.

Other Local Planning Policy and supporting documents

- 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"

Maintaining Flexibility in the Local Plan

10.1 Appendix E sets out the key issues in relation to delivery and risk for each individual policy. For Policies SP1 and RS1, 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 target for residential development not being met, unless a viable alternative can be found.

10.2 Therefore, while it is hoped that all aspects of the Local Plan will be deliverable, and they have been selected because the Council believes that they are, it is prudent to have a "Plan B" prepared in case a key site(s) for residential development does not come forward for development during the plan period. Policy SP1 provides the Council with the ability to enact such a "Plan B" should it become apparent through monitoring that the Local Plan's residential targets are not being met.

10.3 An additional consideration is the fact that the Local Plan 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 Local Plan should be flexible enough to address these changes, as well as any other reasonable change in circumstance, without a wholesale review of the Plan.

10.4 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 Local Plan period will actually point to the need for slightly lower targets for residential development, especially given the environmental and infrastructure constraints that the Borough faces. However, it is possible that targets for residential development 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.

10.5 In essence, the Council's "Plan B" for the Local Plan involves the release of land from the Green Belt and its allocation as safeguarded land. This land would be safeguarded from development until certain triggers are reached. Until these triggers are reached the land will be protected from development in a similar way to Green Belt (see Policy GN2) and in such a way as to not prejudice the possible future development of this land if the "Plan B" is triggered. The triggers would be as follows:

- Year 5 review of housing delivery

5 years after the base date of the Local Plan (i.e. in 2017), the Council will compare the amount of housing delivered during the first 5 years of the Plan to the target for those first 5 years. If less than 80% of the housing target has been delivered (less than 1,040 dwellings, compared to the 1,300 dwelling target), then land can be released from that safeguarded for "Plan B" to enable development to an equivalent amount to the shortfall in housing delivery. However, all other options for meeting this shortfall should be considered before the release of any "Plan B" land (e.g. whether other allocated sites could be brought forward sooner than originally planned)

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

- Year 10 review of housing delivery

10 years after the base date of the Local Plan (i.e. in 2022), the Council will compare the amount of housing delivered during the first 10 years of the Plan to the target for the first 10 years. If less than 80% of the housing target has been delivered (less than 2,320 dwellings, compared to the 2,900 dwelling target), then land can be released from that safeguarded for "Plan B" to enable development to an equivalent amount to the shortfall in housing delivery.

- The housing target increasing as a result of new evidence

If, at any point during the 15 year period of the Plan, the Council chooses to increase its housing target to reflect the emergence of new evidence that updates the existing evidence behind the housing target and which would undermine the existing target, then an appropriate amount of land will be released from that safeguarded for "Plan B" to make-up the extra land supply required to meet the new housing target for the remainder of the Plan period.

The Land Safeguarded for "Plan B"

10.6 As per Policies SP1 and GN2, this document proposes the release of land from the Green Belt for three reasons:

- To meet development needs in this Plan period
- To be safeguarded for potential development needs beyond 2027
- To be safeguarded for the "Plan B", should it be triggered – if it is not triggered this land will be safeguarded for potential development needs beyond 2027

10.7 The "Plan B" should allow for at least 15% extra on top of the 15-year housing target being proposed in the Core Strategy (15% of 4,650 dwellings = 698 dwellings). This percentage is based on the need to ensure that even the largest of our housing sites in the Local Plan (Skelmersdale Town Centre) is virtually covered by the flexibility of the "Plan B", should it fail to be delivered.

10.8 The land safeguarded for the "Plan B" in Policy GN2 is made up of the following sites:

Site	Site Area (ha)	Potential Housing Capacity
Land at Parr's Lane, Aughton	10.0 ha	200 dwellings
Land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk	1.0 ha	10 dwellings
Land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough	3.6 ha	60 dwellings
Land at Mill Lane, Up Holland	4.0 ha	120 dwellings
Land at New Cut Lane, Halsall	2.4 ha	70 dwellings

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

Land at Fine Jane's Farm, Halsall	2.2 ha	60 dwellings
Land at Moss Road, Halsall	8.0 ha	240 dwellings
Total	31.2 ha	760 dwellings

Table 10.1

10.9 More detailed analysis of each of the above sites is provided in the separate technical paper on Strategic Options and Green Belt Release.

10.10 Should the "Plan B" be triggered during the Local Plan period, the Council will review the "Plan B" sites and consider which site(s) are most suitable for development at that time in order to meet the identified shortfall.

Other Alternative Sites Considered

10.11 The following sites were also considered for inclusion as part of the "Plan B" but were ultimately found to be less suitable for a "Plan B" than those selected above:

- Land at Holborn Hill, Ormskirk
- Land at Alty's Farm, Ormskirk
- Land at Slack House Farm, St Helens Road, Ormskirk
- Land at Grove Farm (north), High Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Bath Farm, Greetby Hill / Dark Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Little Hall Farm (the Mushroom Farm), Cottage Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Yew Tree Farm (south), Burscough
- Land at Orrell Lane, Burscough
- Land at Warper's Moss Lane, Burscough

10.12 More detailed analysis of each of the above alternative sites is provided in the separate technical paper on Strategic Options and Green Belt Release.

10.13 The above preferred "Plan B" sites and the alternative sites are all located on the edge of Ormskirk, Aughton, Burscough, Up Holland or Birkdale (Sefton boundary). These sites were shortlisted for more detailed analysis because they were considered to have the most potential for delivery and the most advantages associated with their development, coupled with less impact on the Green Belt. Other sites on the edge of these settlements were felt to have too greater impact on the Green Belt if released.

10.14 Sites in other parts of the Borough were not assessed in detail due to their broad location being ruled out for "Plan B" because of deliverability / market concerns (e.g. Skelmersdale), infrastructure constraints (e.g. Northern Parishes) or their general unsustainable location (e.g. rural areas).

Chapter 11 Next Steps

Responding to this Consultation Document

11.1 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 Local Plan for West Lancashire.

11.2 To that end, between the 5th January and 17th February 2012 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 special feature in the Champion Newspaper on 5th January, as well as appearing on our website (www.westlancs.gov.uk/2027) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/yourwestlancashire2027).

11.3 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.

11.4 People can comment on the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper as follows:

Written Representations

11.5 People are invited to submit their comments online through our online consultation portal, by email and by post. A response form is provided on our consultation portal (for online completion) and website (for downloading) and is available on paper at Council offices, local libraries and post offices across the Borough.

11.6 We also have a short survey that members of the public and stakeholders can complete either online on our consultation portal or on paper (copies available as above). The survey asks multiple choice questions on all aspects of the Local Plan Preferred Options.

Public Events

11.7 We will be travelling around the Borough with a series of 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 club.

11.8 For more information on the Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and on the schedule of consultation events, please visit www.westlancs.gov.uk/2027 or get in touch with us on any of the contact details provided in the preface of this document.

What Next?

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

11.10 This refined Local Plan document will be made available for formal representations as a Publication version of the Local Plan over the Summer of 2012. The Publication version provides a version of the Local Plan which is the Council's preferred final document (essentially a Final Draft version).

11.11 The Publication Local Plan, together with any formal representations received during the consultation period over the Summer of 2012, will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in October 2012 for an Examination in Public (EiP). This will be conducted by a Planning Inspector over approximately 9 months, usually including a Hearing lasting approximately 2 weeks, with a view to determining whether the Local Plan has been prepared correctly according to legal procedures and whether the document can be considered "sound", and so be adopted by the Council as the Development Plan Document for West Lancashire.

11.12 The ultimate decision for adopting the Local Plan will lie with the full Council, which will make a decision on adoption following receipt of the Inspector's Final Report on the Examination in Public and his / her views on the "soundness" of the Local Plan. It is hoped that the Local Plan will therefore be adopted no later than July 2013.

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.

Anaerobic Digestion: A biological process that produces a gas principally composed of methane and carbon dioxide otherwise known as biogas. These gases are produced from organic wastes such as livestock manure, food processing waste, etc.

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 ecosystem variations.

Biomass: Also known as biofuels or bioenergy, is obtained from organic matter either directly from plants or indirectly from industrial, commercial, domestic or agricultural products. The use of biomass is classed as a 'carbon neutral' process because the carbon dioxide released during the generation of energy from biomass is balanced by that absorbed by plants during their growth.

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM): BREEAM is a nationally and internationally recognised environmental assessment method and rating system for non-domestic buildings. It was first launched in 1990 and sets the standard for best practise in sustainable building design, construction and operation and is a recognised measure of a building's environmental performance.

Brownfield Land: See 'Previously Developed land'.

Carbon footprint: This is a measure of the impact our individual activities have on the environment, and in particular climate change. It relates to the amount of green house gasses produced in our day-to-day lives through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation etc.

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.

The Climate Change Act 2008: This Bill became law in 2008 and aims to create a new approach to manage and respond to climate change.

Code for Sustainable Homes: The Code is the national standard for the sustainable design and construction of new homes. The Code aims to reduce our carbon emissions and create homes that are more sustainable.

Community Hub: A Community Hub can mean something different depending on the community. In West Lancashire, the broad definition is a multi-use building which may be community-run and is proactive in enabling a range of services to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): CIL was introduced by the Planning Act 2008 and came into force on 6 April 2010 through the CIL Regulations 2010. It is a new planning charge that local authorities in England and Wales can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods need/want - for example new or safer road schemes, park improvements or a new health centre. The system is very simple. It applies to most new buildings and charges are based on the size and type of the new development.

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.

Department for Transport: The Department for Transport are the government department responsible for transport across the United Kingdom.

Derelict Land and Buildings: Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that 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): This is a local planning policy document that is given statutory weight by the Local Planning Regulations. All DPDs must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement and independent examination by the Secretary of State. Once adopted, development management decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Electric Vehicle Recharging Points EVRs: Electric Vehicle Recharging Points are a network of charging points that provide power for electric vehicles.

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.

Gypsy: Members of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. In this document it is used to describe English (Romany) Gypsies, Scottish Travellers, Welsh Travellers and Eastern European Roma. English Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1988.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA): Assessments carried out to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in terms of residential and transit sites, and bricks and mortar accommodation.

Gypsies and Travellers: As defined for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004, in this document it includes all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, Eastern European Roma and other Travellers who adopt a nomadic or semi-nomadic life.

Habitats: Are ecological or environmental areas that are inhabited by a particular species of animal, plant or other type of organism. It is the natural environment in which an organism lives, or the physical environment that surrounds a species population.

Health and Wellbeing: A definition of the general condition of a person in terms of mind, body and spirit

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.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP): The IDP is a supporting document to the Local Plan. Its purpose is to provide background evidence regarding the physical and social infrastructure likely to be needed to support identified development in the Borough over the plan period. It sets out a baseline assessment of existing infrastructure provision and provides an indication of the existing capacity and shortfalls of all types of infrastructure. The document will be updated and monitored regularly and will assist in future delivery of infrastructure requirements. The IDP relies on the input of infrastructure partners and stakeholders and is therefore only as accurate as the plans of our partners.

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.

Linear Parks: Are linear parcels of land used as public parks providing recreational uses including walking and cycling

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, to include:

- 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.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) : Local Transport Plans are strategic documents which set out the local transport priorities in the long term. The current Local Transport Plan for Lancashire, Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) runs from 2011 to 2021. This LTP consists of a 10 year overarching strategy, supported by 3 year rolling implementation plans. Lancashire County Council is the transport authority representing West Lancashire and has prepared a joint document with Blackpool Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council.

National Nature Reserve: These are areas that are protected for their importance for their importance to wildlife and natural features. These sites are managed by Natural England. These sites often contain rare species or nationally important species of plant, insects, butterflies, birds, mammals etc.

Travel Plan : These are a package of measures produced by employers to encourage staff to use alternative means of transport than single occupancy car-use. Such plans include, for example, car sharing schemes, improving cycling facilities, dedicated bus services or restricting car parking allocations.

Transport Assessments: A Transport Assessment is a comprehensive and systematic process which sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. They identify what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Low Carbon Development: Low-carbon developments consist of buildings which are specifically engineered with the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in mind. So by definition, a low carbon building is a building which emits significantly less carbon dioxide than regular buildings.

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.

Photovoltaics (PV): The direct conversion of solar radiation into electricity by the interaction of light with the electrons in a semiconductor device or cell.

Pitches: An area on a Travellers' site developed for a family unit to live. On socially rented sites, the area let to a licensee or a tenant for stationing caravans and other vehicles.

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.

Plots: Areas on yard for Travelling Showpeople to live. As well as dwelling units, Travelling Showpeople often keep their commercial equipment on a plot.

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".

Unauthorised site: Land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers without the appropriate planning or other permissions. The term includes both unauthorised development and encampment

Ramsar sites: These are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention.

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. Central Government intend to abolish the regional tier of planning, subject to a Sustainability Appraisal of the implications of removing the RSS policies. Until that time, the RSS remains part of the development plan, and this Local Plan requires to have regard to its policies, in particular its housing requirements.

Registered Provider A provider of social housing, registered with Tenant Services Authority under powers in the 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act. This term replaced 'Registered Social Landlord' (RSL) and encompasses housing associations, trusts, cooperatives and companies.

Renewable Energy: Energy which comes from natural resources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, and geothermal heat, which are renewable (naturally replenished).

Safeguarded Land: Land on the edge of certain settlements in West Lancashire formerly allocated under Policy DS3 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan to meet longer-term development needs if necessary. A similar safeguarding policy will apply in this new Local Plan, with land either being safeguarded for "Plan B" sites, or for beyond the end of the new Plan period (2027).

Section 106 Agreement: Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement and is a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.

Settled Community: Term used to describe non-Gypsies and Travellers who live in traditional housing

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".

Special Protection Areas (SPA): These are sites which are strictly protected in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive. These sites are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, and for regularly occurring mitigation species.

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 planning policy documents 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 Local Plan Evidence Base.

Shadow flicker: This occurs when the sun passes behind the hub of a wind turbine and casts a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, shadows pass over the same point causing an effect called 'shadow flicker'.

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

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 Local Plan 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.

Transit site / pitch: A site pitch intended for short term use, with a maximum period of stay

Travelling Showpeople: People who organise circuses and fairgrounds and who live on yards when not travelling between locations. Most travelling showpeople are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

WLRLP: West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan; The most recent adopted development plan for West Lancashire, adopted in July 2006. This will be replaced by this new emerging Local Plan, once it is adopted.

Appendix A Local Plan Preparation

The Local Plan

As explained in the Introduction to this document, the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 will replace the existing West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2006) as the Development Plan Document for West Lancashire. Up until Autumn 2011, the Council were preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace the existing Local Plan, but with the proposals in the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council have moved toward preparing a new style, single Local Plan document.

The new Local Plan will be different from the existing Local Plan in that it will draw from the LDF approach in the way policy is constructed and worded but, unlike the LDF system, it will be a single document. All the work carried out to-date on the LDF (the Core Strategy, Development Management Policies DPD and Site Allocations DPD), including public consultation, is still relevant to the preparation of a single Local Plan, and has directly informed this document.

The Local Plan may be supplemented by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in due course, but these will cover very specific areas of policy in detail that the Local Plan cannot, and will not carry the same weight as the Local Plan itself in making planning decisions. Currently, the Council have adopted three SPDs: the Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD, the Design Guide SPD and the Open Space and Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD. Other SPDs may be prepared at a later date in accordance with suggestions in the policies of this Local Plan.

Annual Monitoring of the Local Plan and SPDs will continue in a similar format to the Annual Monitoring Reports prepared over recent years as part of the LDF approach, measuring the Local Plan's success in delivering the spatial and strategic objectives set in Chapter 3 and Appendix B of this document.

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

Appendix A Local Plan Preparation

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;
- 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.

Preferred Options Paper (May-June 2011)

In May-June 2011, the Council again conducted a series of consultation exercises on the Preferred Options paper. The Council consulted through four forums and four exhibitions across the Borough, written representations and surveys (paper and online). In addition, local schools in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale were also involved in the consultation process. To discuss specific issues in more detail, LDF officers also met separately with housing developers, local businesses and some selected groups representing those who could be affected by Edge Hill.

741 written representations were received online, via email or by post. 224 surveys were completed and submitted. Over 300 people attended the forums and exhibitions. From the views gathered, it was clear that there is support for the majority of policies within the document, although some review and adjustments were recommended.

Wide opposition was received in relation to the release of Green Belt land for development purposes. It was felt that levels of residential development in Skelmersdale are too high and undeliverable and subsequently need to be re-examined. From those development options presented, Burscough (Option 1) received the most support. High levels of support were also received for the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre.

There was support for the expansion of Edge Hill University, although there were objections to the use of Green Belt land for future development. It was recommended that the policies should be more flexible to cope with all the varying factors that can influence development and that housing figures should be reviewed. It was felt that a review of how the Local Plan could be delivered, including its timescales for the release of land and phasing of development, was required, along with putting a flexible and robust Plan B in place.

Summary of Key Issues Identified through Consultation

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
<p>West Lancashire Borough</p>	<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
<p>Skelmersdale</p>	<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
Ormskirk (and Aughton)	<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 <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. ● Brownfield sites cannot accommodate much development and consequently there should be possible consideration of developing edge-of-settlement Green Belt sites;

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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; ● 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.

Area	Issues identified through the LDF consultation exercises
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 and Strategic Objectives

The suggested spatial and strategic objectives for West Lancashire's Local Plan explain how the Vision can be achieved. These objectives also embrace the objectives set out within the Sustainable Community Strategy. 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 Local Plan and those of the SCS and other more widely-collected Council indicators, 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 Local Plan 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 produce and publish an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) each year. The AMR is a key component of the Local Plan 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 Local Plan are being achieved.

To achieve this, the Annual Monitoring Report looks at a range of national and local indicators.

It is proposed that the objectives of the Local Plan 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 raised 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

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLCBC target by 2027
Serious Acquisitive Crime rate to reduce	WLBC	NI16	-	-	1,135 offences	-	-	-	950 offences

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 West Lancashire 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

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C to increase	DCSF	-	1997 figure stood at 42.2%	-	61.9%	-	-	73%	75%
Proportion of working age population in employment/ unemployed	NOMIS / WLBC AMR	CX07	79.0%	75.5%	77.8%	82.2%	79.7%	-	80%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economically active ● Employed ● Unemployed 			74.7%	72.7%	75.8%	77.7%	76.1%		75%
			5.3%	4.9%	4.4%	5.7%	6.5%		Less than 7%
Worklessness	NOMIS	-	2.7%	2.8%	2.5%	4%	4.1%	-	Less than 2.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proportion of JSA claimants 									
VAT Registrations as % of total business stock	NOMIS	-	8.8%	7.2%	9.2%	-	-	-	9%
Amount of employment land and floorspace developed annually	WLBC AMR	EC1-4	3.11ha	5.44ha	1.44ha 16,852sqm floorspace*	2.4ha	0.5ha 31,236sqm	0ha 3,659 sqm	To meet requirements. Rolling average.

Table 1

*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 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.

Targets

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
Amount of available greenspace lost to development	WLBC AMR	ENV01	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
Number of customer taking part in health improvement facilities	WLBC	WL12a	31,216	32,218	42,461	42,575	-	12,927	To be set

Table 1

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

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
Improved local biodiversity - active management of local sites	WLBC	NI197	-	-	5% (at Lancashire level)	-	-	26%	50%
Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity including i) priority habitats 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.	99.5%	99.5%	99.5%	99.5%

Table 1

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. The priority will be to deliver these on brownfield sites where the sites are available, viable and deliverable. They will also be concentrated, 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 and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. Suitable student accommodation will also be provided in Ormskirk to address the needs generated by Edge Hill University.

Targets

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLCB target by 2027
RSS target for new homes to be met (Net)	WLBC	NI154	202	344	81	130	109	72	6000 in total (Average 300 per annum)
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	WLBC	NI155	12	5	11	13	32	19	-
Proportion of new homes on brownfield land 2012-2027	WLBC AMR	HG06	79.1%	75.2%	69.1%	72%	73%	87%	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	0	0	14 permanent & 10 transit gypsy pitches, 5 travelling showpeople pitches.

Table 1

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 town centres which have the greatest numbers of jobs and services available and which are accessible by public transport.

Targets

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
Vacancy levels in Ormskirk, Burscough and Skelmersdale	WLBC AMR	EC8	-	-	2.7%	-	6.2%	-	Reduction in percentage figure by 2027
● Vacant floorspace in Burscough					4.6%		8.3%		
● Vacant floorspace in Ormskirk					11.6%		13.6%		
● Vacant floorspace in Skelmersdale									
Proportion of new developments completed within 1km of 5 key services (GP, post office, primary school, food shop, bus stop)	WLBC AMR	SD1	-	-	91% permissions	94% completions	75% completions	94% permissions	75% completions or permissions
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	-	98% completions	-	90% of new development

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLCB target by 2027
Proportion of new developments granted and completed in the principal urban areas and main towns	WLCB AMR	SD3	-	-	55% completions	69% permissions	93% permissions	94% permissions	75% completions or permissions

Table 1

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, and where appropriate their settings, will be conserved 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

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 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	0	0	To be zero

Table 1

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 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

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLCB target by 2027
Number of permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality	WLCB AMR	ENV07	0	0	8	-	1	0	Zero (all problems should be resolved / mitigated)
Renewable energy capacity installed by type (in MW)	WLCB AMR	ENV09	-	-	-	-	-	-	To increase
Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area	WLCB	NI186	7.2 tonnes (Lancashire)	-	-	5.9	-	-	To reduce from 2005 baseline level

Table 1

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.

Targets

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
All age all cause mortality rate (deaths per 100,000 population per year)	ONS via WLBC	NI120	-	M731 F542 (District)		M712 F 552 (District)	-	-	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 requirement of Regeneration project
Proportion of population with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No qualifications ● NVQ level 1 	NOMIS	-	13.1% 83.4%	17.4% 79.8%	14.8% 78.3%				Gap to narrow between Borough ward areas.

Target description	Data source	Existing indicator	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	WLBC target by 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NVQ level 2 ● NVQ level 3 ● NVQ level 4 			68.8% 47.5% 31.7%	65.8% 43.3% 22.0%	59.9% 41.6% 20.2%				Overall proportion with no qualifications to decrease, all others to increase.

Table 1

Appendix C Planning Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in draft in July 2011 and is expected to be adopted in early 2012, if not sooner.

The NPPF has been created to replace the original Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes and the subsequent Planning Policy Statements (PPS) in the form of one concise document. The NPPF aims to provide a consolidated set of priorities within the following key topic areas:

- **Protecting and enhancing the environment:** Green Belt and natural environment, green space designation, sustainable transport, biodiversity, noise and light pollution, climate change, access to the coast, communications infrastructure and minerals;
- **Promoting sustainable growth and prosperity:** Sustainable growth, presumption in favour of sustainable development, duty to co-operate;
- **Planning for strong, healthy and vibrant communities:** Housing, town centres, neighbourhood planning, historic environment, design.

The main aims of the NPPF are to remove obstacles to growth and take a proactive approach towards development during a post-recession era.

The NPPF includes policy on a range of topics and types of development which directly informs the preparation of local planning policy and which local planning policy should be consistent with. However, until such time as the NPPF is adopted, the existing PPG's and PPS's remain as national planning policy with which local planning policy should be consistent.

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 it is expected that the RSS / RS will no longer form part of the development plan by the time the Council submits a Local Plan for Examination.

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](#).

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 and is nearing completion. 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](#).

Lancashire Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2021)

The Lancashire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) was adopted in 2011, setting out plans for transport for the years 2011 to 2021. LTP3 aims to address the transport challenges faced in Lancashire, as well as the wider sustainability priorities set out in Ambition Lancashire, framed by the Government's national transport goals. There are 7 goals to helping to achieve this objective, these are:

- To help secure a strong economic future by making transport and travel into and between our major economic centres more effective and efficient and by improving links to neighbouring major economic areas and beyond;
- To provide the public with safe and convenient access to the services, jobs health, leisure and education opportunities that they need;
- To improve the accessibility, availability and affordability of transport as a contribution to the development of strong and cohesive communities;
- To create more attractive neighbourhoods by reducing the impacts of transport on our quality of life and by improving the public realm;
- To reduce the carbon impact of Lancashire's transport requirements, whilst delivering sustainable value for money transport options to those who need them;
- To make walking and cycling more safe, convenient and attractive, particularly in the more disadvantaged areas of Lancashire, bringing improvements in the health of Lancashire's residents; and
- In all that they do, to provide value for money by prioritising the maintenance and improvement of Lancashire's existing transport infrastructure where it can help deliver our transport goals.

Appendix C Planning Policy Background

The LTP proposes a number of priorities for West Lancashire which will assist in meeting the objectives outlined above. Such priorities include:

- Improving access to and from Skelmersdale as a focus for regeneration and economic growth;
- Improving cycle and pedestrian routes in Skelmersdale;
- Improving links to Ormskirk as a market town where key services and employment opportunities may be lacking.

Further details on the LTP can be found at [Lancashire Local Transport Plan](#)

Implementation plans which will seek to deliver the above priorities are now being produced.

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;

Appendix C Planning Policy Background

- 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 legislation that emerges out of the 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 Option for the Local Plan sets out how those targets that have been applied in the Preferred Option have been arrived at and on what evidential basis.

Housing Targets

The housing target set by the RSS for West Lancashire was 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. If this target were applied to the full 15 years of this Local Plan, the overall housing target for the Local Plan would be 4,500 new dwellings plus any undersupply in relation to this target in recent years.

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 2010, provide one such nationally-recognised approach to estimating future household needs, based on 2008 ONS population statistics⁽¹⁴⁾. 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 incorporating an additional 4% to allow for vacant homes and second homes. This compares to a projected increase of 7,000 dwellings (291 dwellings per annum) derived from the household projections for 2006-2031.

This reduction can be partially attributed to changes in the methodology CLG use to calculate household projections, in particular the use of revised mid-year population estimates from 2002 to 2008, which were lower than previously estimated and which included the effect of the start of the economic downturn in 2008. However, it is clear that the latest projections do indicate a slight slow-down in "natural" population growth for the Borough. It should also be noted that CLG Household Projections round figures in their projections to the nearest thousand households, and so there is considerable scope for variance in their projections.

14 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

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.

The Merseyside Overview Study provided housing projections that tailored the CLG Household Projections a little to reduce the scope for variance over the 25 years of projections. This provided an average figure over the Local Plan period of 267 dwellings per annum. Therefore, the Council have concluded that an average figure of 260 dwellings per annum would provide a reasonable basis for housing targets over the plan period, which equates to 3,900 dwellings over the 15 year period.

The RSS deficit over the years 2003-2012 must be added to this base figure in order to make up the undersupply and unmet need for housing in the Borough over that period. It is estimated that, by 1st April 2012, this deficit will be approximately 750 dwellings.

It is the view of the Council that any housing target significantly over the existing RSS target of 300 new dwellings per annum would certainly 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 and the unmet need for housing over the past decade.

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, or result in insufficient development to meet local needs in other parts of the Borough.

Therefore, the Council have arrived at a 15 year housing target of **4,650 dwellings**, which averages out at 310 dwellings per annum (although Policy SP1 staggers the annual target for housing delivery over the 15 years to ensure a more realistic and deliverable target). This is based on the 260 dwellings per annum base projection, multiplied by 15 years and then with the RSS deficit of 750 dwellings added to it ((260 dwellings per annum x 15 years) + 750 dwelling deficit = 4,650 dwellings).

More detail on this calculation of locally-determined housing targets is provided in the Housing Technical Paper provided as background evidence to this Local Plan.

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.

Appendix D Setting Locally-determined Targets

Since the information used in the JELPS was collated, an additional three years of employment land completions have taken place, therefore updating the historic take-up rate to better reflect the economic recession, 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 Local Plan 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 Local Plan period has been recalculated. The table on the next page sets out the calculation of this updated target.

Utilising the updated average take-up rate, a basic employment land target for the Local Plan period (2012–2027) can be identified as follows:

Basic Employment Land Target for 2012–2027 = 4.15 ha x 15 years = 62.27 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 therefore provides a figure of 74.72 ha.

Therefore, the locally-determined target for employment land development in West Lancashire from 2012 to 2027 has been set at **75 ha**.

More detail on this calculation of locally-determined employment land targets is provided in the Economy Technical Paper provided as background evidence to this Local Plan.

Appendix D Setting Locally-determined Targets

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
2005/06	3.11
2006/07	5.44
2007/08	1.44
2008/09	2.4
2009/10	0.5
2010/11	0.37
Total	115.82
Average take up rate 1992-2011	6.12
Average take up rate 1992-2011 (minus anomalous years)	4.15
Employment land target for 2012-2027	62.27
Target with 20% buffer	74.72

Historic take-up of Employment Land in West Lancashire

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)

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 Local Plan Preferred Option, Policy Area RS4 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 RS4 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:

Appendix D Setting Locally-determined Targets

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.

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.

Appendix D Setting Locally-determined Targets

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.

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

A Development Plan 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 Local Plan Preferred Options will be delivered over the Local Plan period (2012-2027), what the key risks to that delivery may be, the implications of these risks and how the Local Plan will be flexible enough to respond to these risks.

Policy SP1: A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>Policy SP1 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).</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>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 <u>before</u> any development can take place in a large part of the Borough, as well as by the fact that the Local Plan period will begin as the global, national and regional economy is still struggling to recover from the recent recession.</p> <p>As such, delivery of development, especially residential development, will be slower in the first half of the Local Plan period (hence the reduced residential and employment land targets to 2017 discussed in the justification for Policy SP1) but more intense in the latter part of the Local Plan period (hence the higher targets after 2017). This phasing of delivery will also have a spatial dimension, with no development expected to be delivered on greenfield sites in those areas affected by the Waste Water Treatment issues in at least the first five years of the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>The deliverability of a sustainable 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 the Local Plan Preferred Options 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre - that is wholly or partially not delivered • The delivery of key infrastructure improvements - that they are not delivered, especially the Waste Water Treatment infrastructure improvements • The rate of development delivery continues to be lower than targeted due to a slow recovery from recession

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 Local Plan 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 not 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 on greenfield sites 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.

Ongoing low levels of development

Should the market not deliver development at the rate targeted in the Local Plan, the Council will fail to meet its targets, most notably the 5-year Housing Land Supply. This may result in less appropriate applications for housing development gaining planning permission as the Government seeks to stimulate house-building.

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 may need to be located elsewhere in the Borough, ultimately resulting in further loss of Green Belt to development via the "Plan B", 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.

Ongoing low levels of development

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 release land from the "Plan B" to attempt to stimulate the development required.

Policy Area SP2: 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 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.

<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>Policy SP3: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough</p>
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>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 SP3, 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.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>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 Local Plan period, possibly not even until 2020.</p>
<p>Risks</p>

<p>The Strategic Development Site becomes undeliverable due to a hitherto unidentified constraint or because the waste water treatment issues cannot be resolved within the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>The Strategic Development Site cannot be delivered, leaving a shortfall in housing and employment development in the Borough over the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>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 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 for residential development in such circumstances.</p>

Policy Area GN1: Settlement Boundaries
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>The setting of boundaries will be carried out as part of the Local Plan preparation process, and does not involve “delivery” as such. The remainder of the policy guides development within and outside settlements, and will be delivered through the Development Management process.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>The policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>There is a risk of challenge to the policy, and the policy being undermined, for example through an appeal decision. The policy is linked to other policies (i.e. it refers to other relevant Local Plan policies being complied with), and there could be a risk of “knock-on effects” to other policies.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p>

Appendix E Delivery & Risk

Undermining of this policy could result in inappropriate development inside settlements (e.g. on certain greenfield sites), or outside settlement boundaries.
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>A positive attitude towards appropriate development across the Borough should help ensure a sufficient supply of land, e.g. for housing and employment. This should help minimise the pressure to develop similar uses on less appropriate land, and should reduce the risk of Policy GN1 being challenged or undermined.</p>

Policy Area GN2: Safeguarded Land
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>The Local Authority</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>That the policy is undermined and fails to protect the allocated land from development. [it should be noted that this is unlikely, barring a major change in national planning policy]</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>The safeguarded land, being greenfield in nature, would be more attractive to developers and most likely be developed before less attractive brownfield land, possibly preventing the regeneration and redevelopment of these sites. It would also become difficult to reserve the “Plan B” sites for the eventuality that the “Plan B” is triggered, thereby limiting the flexibility of the Local Plan.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>Should Policy GN2 be undermined in some way, there is very little that can be done to continue to protect this land other than a full Local Plan review which provides an even more robust safeguarded land policy.</p>

Policy Area GN3: Design of Development
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>The Local Authority and developers, through the development management process.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>The risk associated with this policy is the failure to deliver high quality, appropriately designed schemes across the Borough should this policy not be applied consistently.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>Buildings or schemes which are substandard in terms of design quality could lead to unsustainable development with a significantly shorter lifespan than if they are designed with due regard to the requirements set out in Policy GN3. This could be a particular issue in areas in need to regeneration.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>Detailed dialogue between officers and developers/land owners during the planning application process to ensure that the policy is fully adhered to and only high quality schemes are delivered.</p>

Policy Area GN4: Demonstrating Viability
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>The Local Authority</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>

Appendix E Delivery & Risk

Risks The risk associated with this policy is the failure to consider viability when determining planning applications.
Implications of the Risks Failure to fully apply this policy could result in some economically viable sites for a particular use being lost to another more profitable use at the demand of the landowner or applicant. This would result in development taking place in the interests of profit and not in the best interests of the population of the Borough.
Contingencies for the Risks Early dialogue between officers and applicants and making use of the Council's database of sites currently being marketed via the Regeneration and Estates team.

Policy Area GN5: Sequential Tests
Who will Deliver the Policy This policy will be delivered through the Development Management process.
Phasing for Delivery The policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.
Risks The risk associated with this policy is that inadequate sequential searches for sites are carried out, and the results of substandard searches influence planning decisions.
Implications of the Risks Substandard sequential site searches could lead to development being permitted in less than optimal locations, and, consequently, to preferable sites (in planning terms) remaining undeveloped. This could lead to unsustainable patterns of development, and in certain cases could delay or undermine regeneration.
Contingencies for the Risks

Communication with applicants and developers throughout the planning application process, including dialogue before, during, and after the undertaking of sequential site searches should help ensure that the searches are carried out robustly to the satisfaction of the Council, and that only the best available sites are developed.

Policy Area EC1: 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 EC1 will run throughout the Local Plan period.

Risks

There is one key deliverability risk associated with Policy Area EC1 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 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 Local Plan period, and would therefore not grow economically as well as anticipated.

Contingencies for the Risks

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 EC2: 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 Local Plan 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.

Contingencies for the Risk

A stronger policy is added to the Local Plan, perhaps by allocating sites for existing and new rural employment development. 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 – See Policy EC3: Rural Regeneration Sites.

Policy Area EC3: Rural Regeneration Sites

<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>This policy will be delivered by the local authority, working closely with landowners and developers.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will be delivered throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>Economic viability issues may mean that the sites identified are not considered suitable for employment uses and landowners may seek to pursue more profitable uses at the expense of rural employment opportunities.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>Limited new rural employment opportunities would be created.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>Ensuring that the policy is applied properly throughout the Local Plan period resulting in some employment uses being developed on each site.</p>

<p>Policy Area EC4: Edge Hill University</p>
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will need to be implemented throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p>

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 local planning policy and a masterplanned approach should be adopted. Working with the University and other interested parties throughout the Local Plan 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 RS1: Residential Development

Who will Deliver the Policy

Delivery of Policy RS1 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.

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.

<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 SP1.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>If insufficient housing is delivered in Skelmersdale, meet the Borough’s housing targets in more desirable market areas. This could 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. The “Plan B” sets out a way of managing the release of land outside of Skelmersdale in as sustainable a manner as possible, if development targets are not met elsewhere during the first five and ten years of the Plan period.</p> <p>If greenfield sites are developed earlier than planned, negotiate “planning gain” from new developments to address the most pressing infrastructure problems, and “make do” to the best of the Council’s 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.</p>

Policy Area RS2: Affordable & Specialist Housing
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>Affordable and specialist housing will largely be delivered through Registered Providers and other providers of affordable and specialist housing, the Council, and private developers in conjunction with market housing schemes.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>Delivery of this policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p>

Appendix E Delivery & Risk

<p>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.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>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.</p>

<p>Policy Area RS3: Provision of Student Accommodation</p>
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>The policy's emphasis is on restraint, rather than delivery. It will be implemented through Development Management decisions.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>The policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>One risk associated with this policy is the a lessening of the ability of the Development Management process to control the proliferation of HMOs through grants of permission on appeal. There is also a risk of there being insufficient land for purpose-built student accommodation.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p>

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 the 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.

Policy Area RS4: Provision for Gypsies & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Who will Deliver the Policy

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 Local Plan 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 through the development management process sites may not come forward within non Green Belt locations and that sites within the Green Belt may be deemed inappropriate.

Implications of the Risks

If sites do not come forward within built up areas and sites are deemed inappropriate within the Green Belt there is a risk that West Lancashire may not be able to meet the current needs of the Gypsy and 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.

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 there are no suitable sites within the built up areas then applications within the Green Belt may be required. As such there is a criteria within the policy that Green Belt sites may not be considered provided that applicants can demonstrate through the sequential approach that there are no suitable locations elsewhere in the locality.

Policy Area IF1: 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 Local Plan 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.

<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>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.</p>

Policy Area IF2: Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>Policy CS12 will be delivered by the Borough Council and County Council who are the transport authorities.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>The policy will run throughout the Local Plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>If the major schemes identified do not receive funding there is a risk that the schemes will not be delivered within the Local Plan period. The results of this would mean that there would be greater reliance upon the car resulting in congestion increasing in many areas</p>

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.

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 IF3: Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth

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

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 Lan which effectively inhibits growth of Burscough the northern parts of Ormskirk and the rural areas of Scarisbrick and Rufford. Improvements to this network are not yet identified in United Utilities spending plans and as such the Council has engaged with United Utilities to ensure the profile of this issue is raised and a strategic resolution is derived.

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 Lan treatment works.

Contingencies for the Risks

The constraint issue with waste water is already severe. As existing planning permissions are implemented in the period from now until the adoption of the New Local Plan, the constraint issue will become exacerbated. United Utilities are regulated by the Environment Agency and must therefore work fast to resolve this issue. This pressing need for resolution is considered to elevate the importance of the issue and potentially give some credence to any future bids on behalf of West Lancashire by United Utilities.

Therefore, the perceived risk of none delivery is likely to be lower than initially expected. However, in the event the improvements do not happen, two possible contingencies could occur. The first is that the level of development proposed for the area affected by waste water constraints could be significantly reduced and re-distributed to other parts of the Borough not currently constrained by utility provision. The second is the potential to explore onsite waste water treatment facilities for some development within the affected area.

Policy Area IF4: 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.

Phasing for Delivery

Appendix E Delivery & Risk

<p>The policy will run throughout the plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <p>Economic conditions fail to improve allowing the economic viability case to be made for specific developments, leading to reduced or no financial contributions towards on-site infrastructure improvements.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p> <p>Existing pressures upon localised infrastructure would be exacerbated and new pressures and demands would be created as a result of new development.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>The introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule will allow the upfront costs of strategic infrastructure to be factored into development costs early on in the development process so that it may be accommodated within the land values. The delivery of CIL is non-negotiable once it has been adopted and will ensure some financial contributions are secured in order to support infrastructure.</p>

<p>Policy Area EN1: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure</p>
<p>Who will Deliver the Policy</p> <p>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 for engagement between the Council, developer and energy providers. The policy will also be dependent upon co-ordination between development management and building control to ensure developers are challenged in order to deliver carbon saving in line with regulations beyond the planning remit.</p>
<p>Phasing for Delivery</p> <p>This policy will run throughout the plan period.</p>
<p>Risks</p> <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>

Large scale development within the Borough will continue to rely upon centralised energy generation.

Contingencies for the Risks

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).

Policy Area EN2: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment

Who will Deliver the Policy

This Policy will be delivered through a combination of bodies including the Borough Council, the County Council, along with a number of agencies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and private developers

Phasing for Delivery

This Policy will run throughout the plan period

Risks

This Policy is dependent upon a number of stakeholders including individual landowners, private organisations and businesses. There is a risk that given the economic conditions there will be reduced resources to deliver elements within the strategy.

Also over the plan period there may be development pressure upon environmental and ecologically sensitive sites

Implications of the Risks

In the current economic climate, funding is becoming scarce, which may place additional pressure on organisations which manage environmentally sensitive sites to not be able to manage these sites to the standards they have previously been. As such these sites may no longer provide appropriate habitat for environmentally sensitive species.

Future aspirational schemes such as the River Ribble Regional Park may also not be able to fully realised.

With development pressure likely to increase there may be direct impacts upon environmentally and ecological sites causing a reduction in habitats for environmentally sensitive species.

Contingencies for the Risks

In these difficult economic times there is little that can be done to influence the funding and management of privately owned sites. The Council can however continue to liaise with private sites encouraging greater management. Through this policy clear direction on protection of sites is provided.

Policy Area EN3: Preserving and Enhancing Green Infrastructure and Open and Recreational Space

Who will Deliver the Policy

This Policy will be delivered through a combination of the Borough Council and County Council, along with environmental agencies and private developers.

Phasing for Delivery

The policy will run throughout the plan period.

Risks

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.

<p>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 spots and recreation facilities the Borough could lose existing facilities and fall below the current demand requirements.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Contingencies for the Risks</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

Policy EN4: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment
<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>During periods of economic decline, high quality and low carbon design and character enhancement are often viewed as an optional extra which may be overlooked.</p>
<p>Implications of the Risks</p>

Poor quality design and architecture will be produced which will inevitably dilute the quality of character within the Borough. Low carbon development will not be delivered.

Contingencies for the Risks

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.

Appendix F Parking Standards

Car Parking Standards

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
A1	Shops	Food retail	1 per 16 sqm	1 per 15 sqm	1 per 14 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 140 sqm (min 2 spaces)	1 per 350 sqm (min 2 spaces)	-	-	-
			1 per 22 sqm	1 per 21 sqm	1 per 20 sqm					-	-	-
			1 per 60 sqm	1 per 45 sqm	1 per 40 sqm					-	-	-
A2	Financial and professional services	Non-food retail	1 per 35 sqm	1 per 32 sqm	1 per 30 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	-	-	-
		Retail warehouse	1 per 35 sqm	1 per 32 sqm	1 per 30 sqm					1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	-
A3	Restaurants and cafés	Restaurants, cafés, snack bars, fast food and drive through	1 per 8 sqm of public floorspace	1 per 6 sqm of public floorspace	1 per 5 sqm of public floorspace	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 50 sqm (min 2)	1 space per 125 sqm	Negotiated on a case by case basis	Negotiated on a case by case basis	-
A4 A5	Drinking establishments Hot food takeaways	Public houses / wine bars other drinking establishments										

Table F.1 Car Parking standards

Appendix F Parking Standards

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
B1	Business	Office, business parks, research and development	1 per 40 sqm	1 per 32 sqm	1 per 30 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 300 sqm (min 2)	1 per 750 sqm (min 2)	-	-	
		Call centres	1 per 40sqm (starting point for all discussions)	1 per 32sqm (starting point for all discussions)	1 per 30sqm (starting point for all discussions)	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 300 sqm (min 2)	1 per 750 sqm (mind 2)	-	-	-
B2	General Industry	General Industry	1 per 60 sqm	1 per 48 sqm	1 per 45 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 450 sqm (min 2)	1 per 100 sqm (min 2)	-	-	
B8	Storage and distribution	Storage and distribution	1 per 100 sqm	1 per 100 sqm	1 per 100 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 850 sqm (min 2)	1 per 2000 sqm (min 2)	-	-	

Table F.2

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses	1 per bedroom including staff parking provision	1 per bedroom including staff parking provision	1 per bedroom including staff parking provision	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 10 guest rooms (min 2)	1 per 25 guest rooms (min 2)	Negotiated on a case by case basis	1 (Hotels only)	
C2	Residential Institutions	Residential care homes / nursing homes	1 per 4 beds	1 per 5 beds	1 per 5 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 40 beds (min 2)	1 per 100 beds (min 2)	-	-	
		University halls of residence and	1 per 2 beds	1 per 2 beds	1 per 2 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 10 beds (min 4)	1 per 50 beds (min 2)	-	-	

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
		purpose built student accommodation										
		Sheltered accommodation	1 per 2 beds	1 per 3 beds	1 per 3 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 beds (min 2)	1 per 50 beds (min 2)	-	-	

Table F.3

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
D1	Non residential institutions	Clinic and health centres (excluding hospitals)	1 per 2 staff plus 3 per consulting room	1 per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room	1 per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	2 per consulting room (min)	1 per 2 consulting rooms (min)	-	-	
		Creches, day nurseries and day centres	1 per member of staff	1 per member of staff	1 per member of staff	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 4 staff = 1 per 200sqm (min)	1 per 10 staff	Negotiated on a case by case basis	Negotiated on a case by case basis	
		Schools (primary and secondary)	1 per classroom	2 per classroom	2 per classroom	Case by case	Case by case	1 per 5 staff + 1 per 3 students	1 per 10 staff	Case by case based on demand for school buses	1	
		Art galleries, museums, libraries	1 per 40 sqm	1 per 25 sqm	1 per 20 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	Case by case	1	
		Halls and places of worship	1 per 10 sqm	1 per 6 sqm	1 per 5 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 50 sqm (min 2)	1 per 125 sqm (min 2)			

Appendix F Parking Standards

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
D2	Assembly and leisure	Higher and further education	1 per 2 staff	1 per 2 staff + 1 per 10 students	1 per 2 staff + 1 per 10 students	Case by case	Case by case	1 per 5 staff + 1 per 3 students	1 per 10 staff + 1 per 10 students	Case by case	1	
		Cinemas, bingo and casinos, conference centres, music and concert halls	1 per 10 seats	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	
		General leisure, dance halls (not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums	1 per 25 sqm	1 per 23 sqm	1 per 22 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2 seats)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	

Table F.4

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)			Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	C	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
Miscellaneous Sui Generis		Theatres	1 per 10 seats	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	
		Motor car showrooms	1 per 60sqm internal showroom	1 per 52 sqm internal showroom	1 per 50sqm internal showroom	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of 2 spaces	-	-	
		Petrol filling stations	1 space per pump	1 space per pump	1 space per pump	1 space minimum	-	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of 2 spaces	-	-	

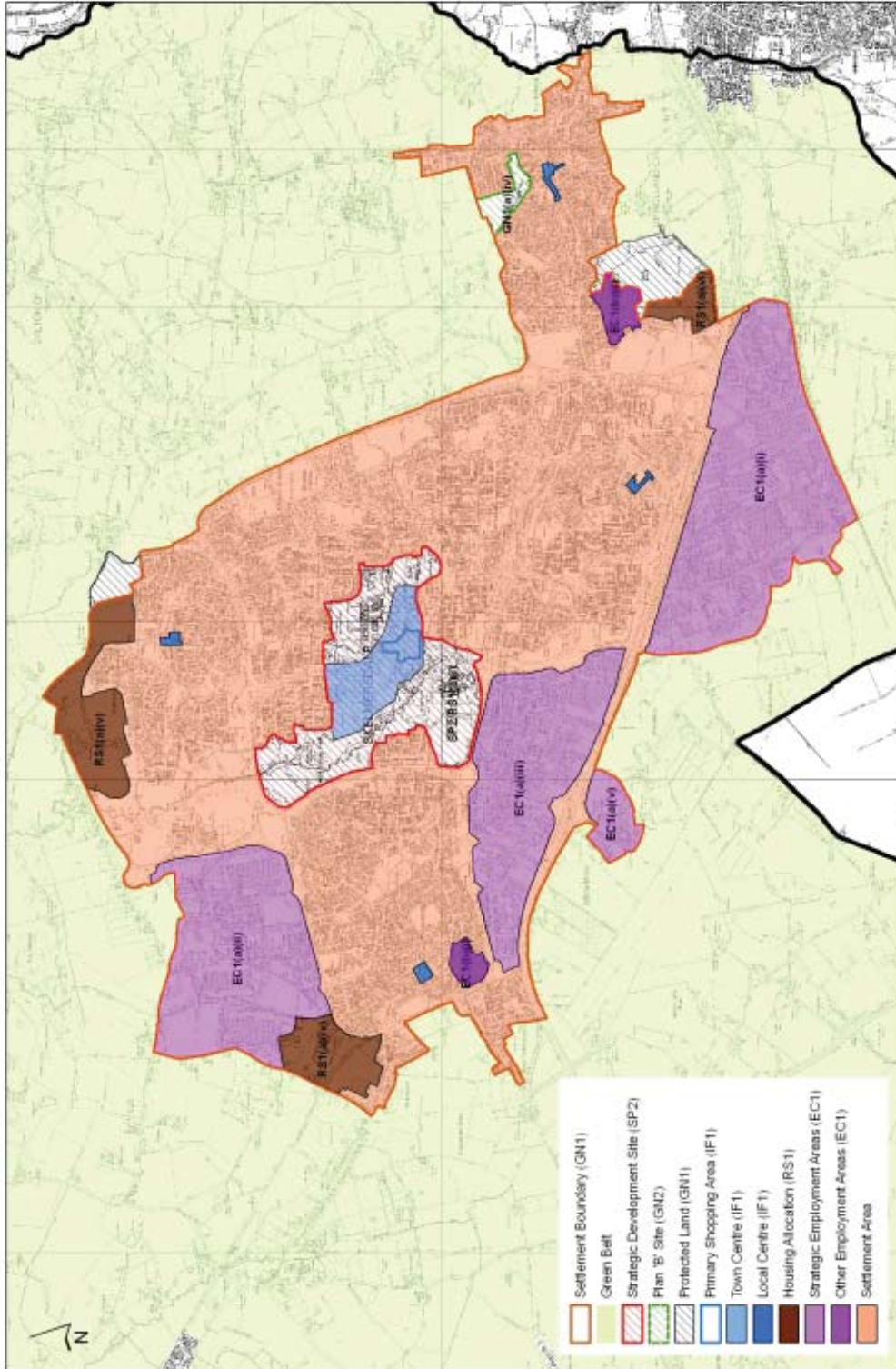
Table F.5

Area Accessibility Area	Location
A	City and town centres in metropolitan areas Regional town and city centres
B	Non-metropolitan key service centre town centres District or local centres in metropolitan areas
C	All other areas

Table F.6 Area Accessibility Categories (to be used in conjunction with table F2)

Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map

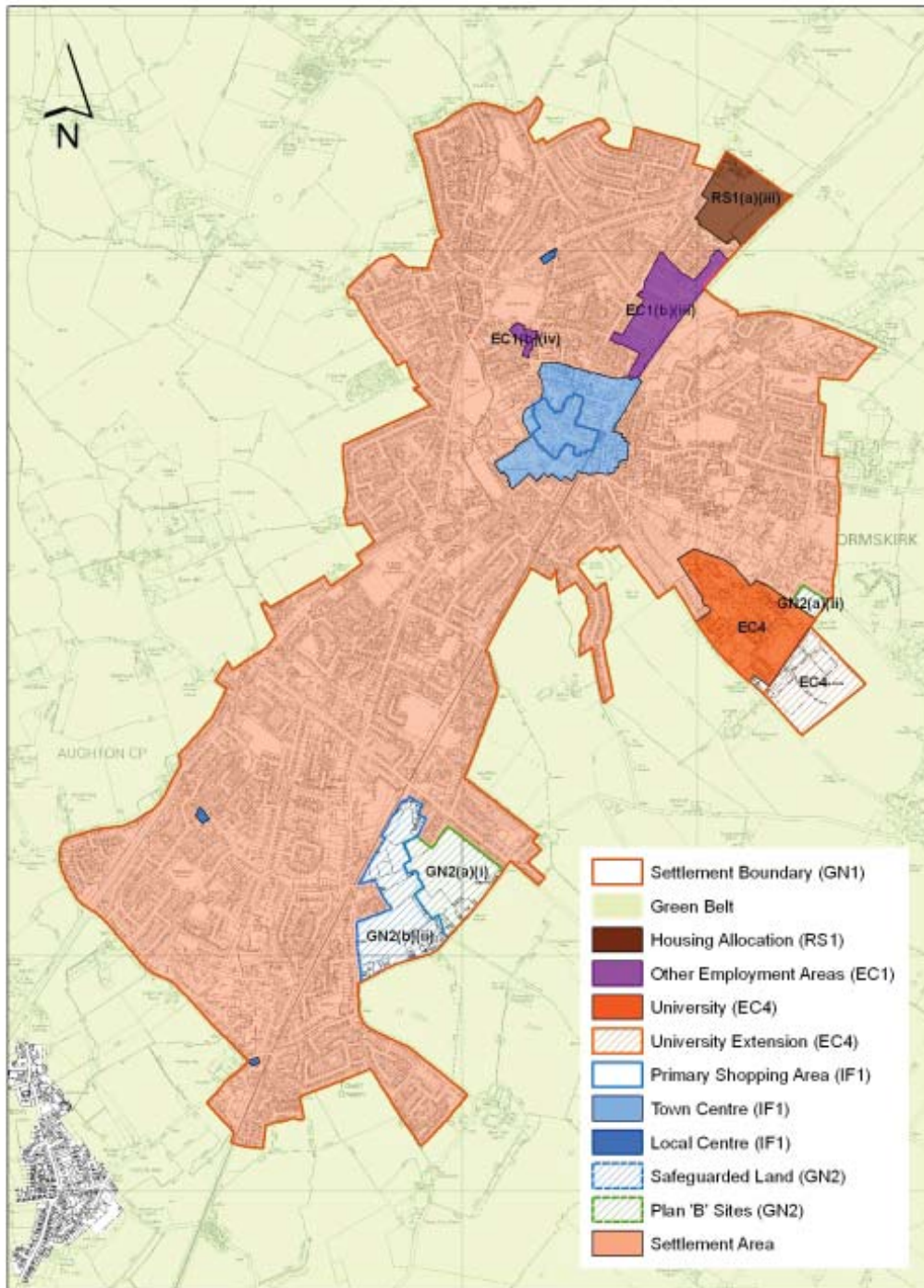
The following plans set out proposed changes to the Proposals Map should the draft policies in this document be taken forward by the Council. The maps focus on the settlement areas where any relatively significant change to the Proposals Map is proposed. In all other areas of the Borough very little, if anything, will change on the Proposals Map based on the draft policies in this document. A full version of the Proposals Map will be prepared for the Publication version of the Local Plan, and made available for representation, prior to the Local Plan being submitted for Examination in Public.



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Map G.1 Proposals Map Amendments - Skelmersdale with Up Holland

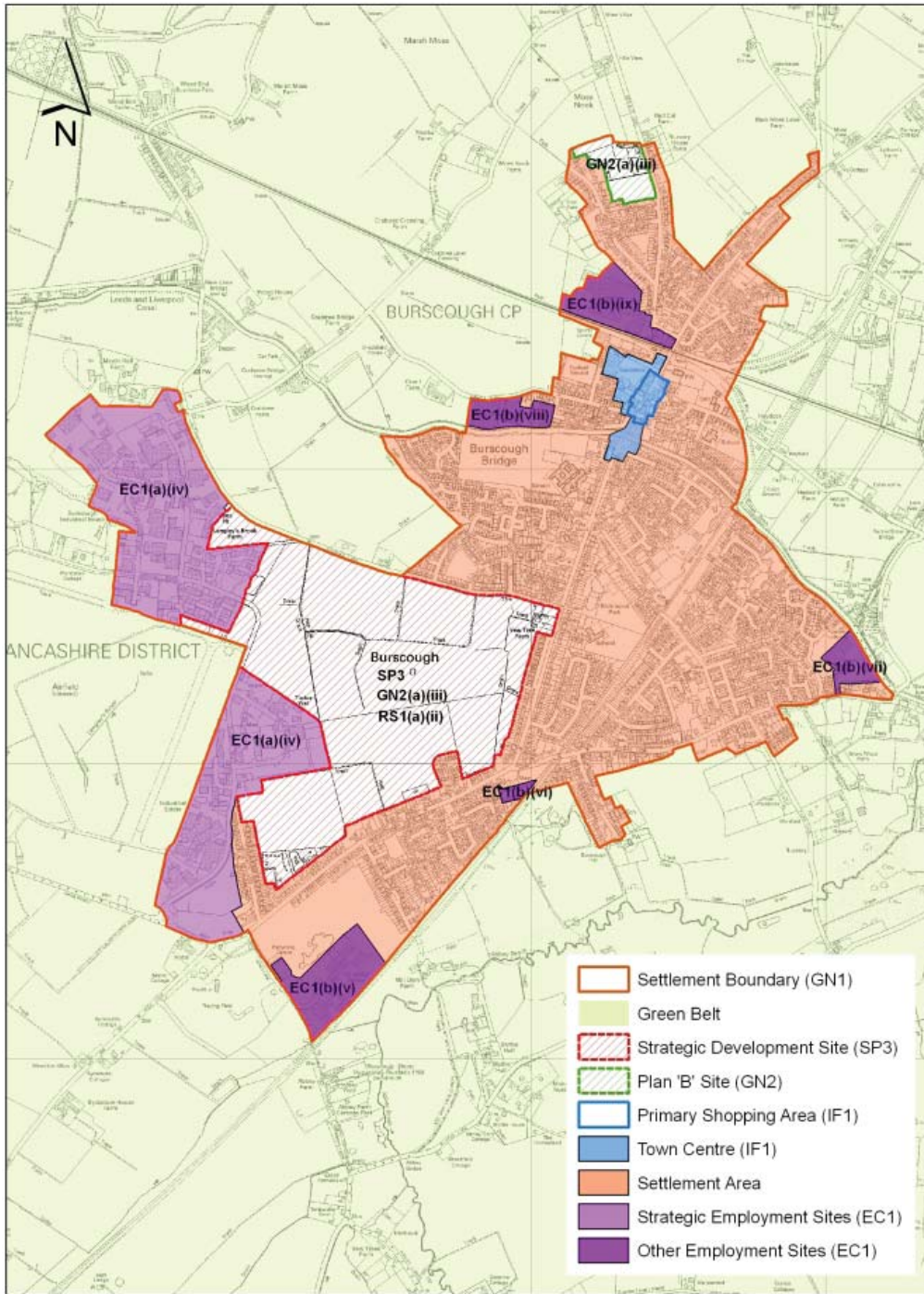
Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



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Map G.2 Proposals Map Amendments - Ormskirk with Aughton

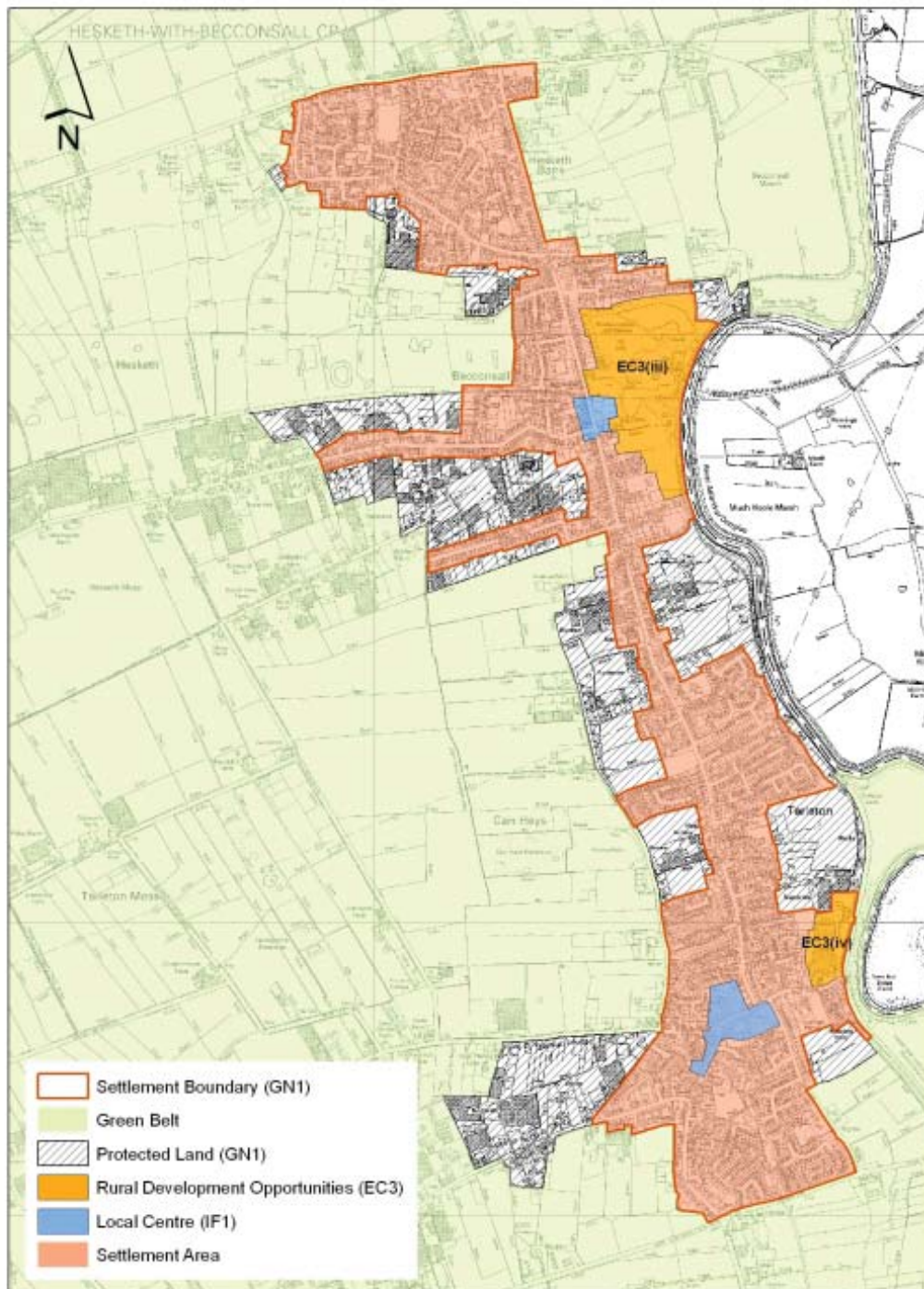
Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



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Map G.3 Proposals Map Amendments - Burscough

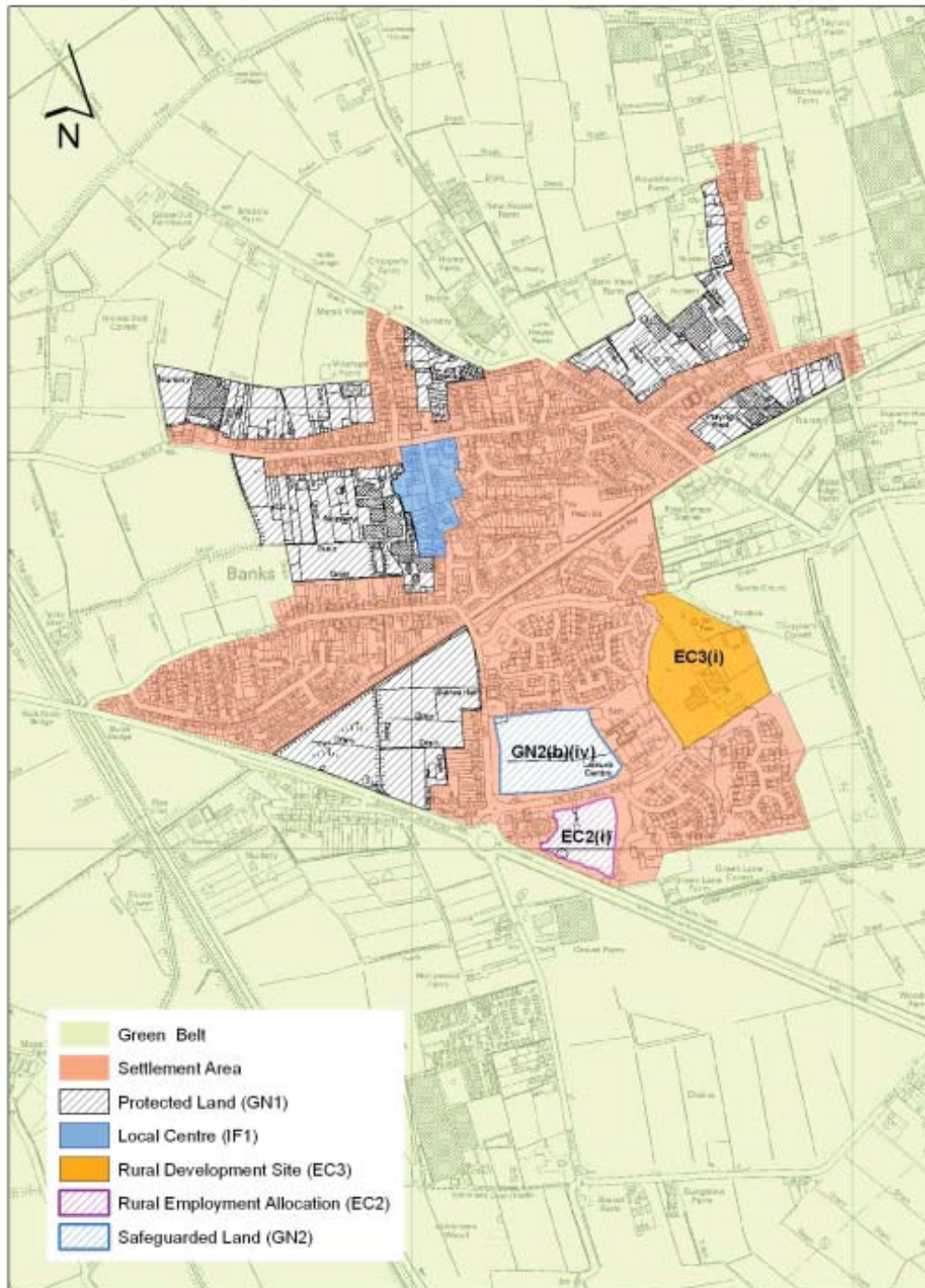
Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



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Map G.4 Proposals Map Amendments - Tarleton & Hesketh Bank

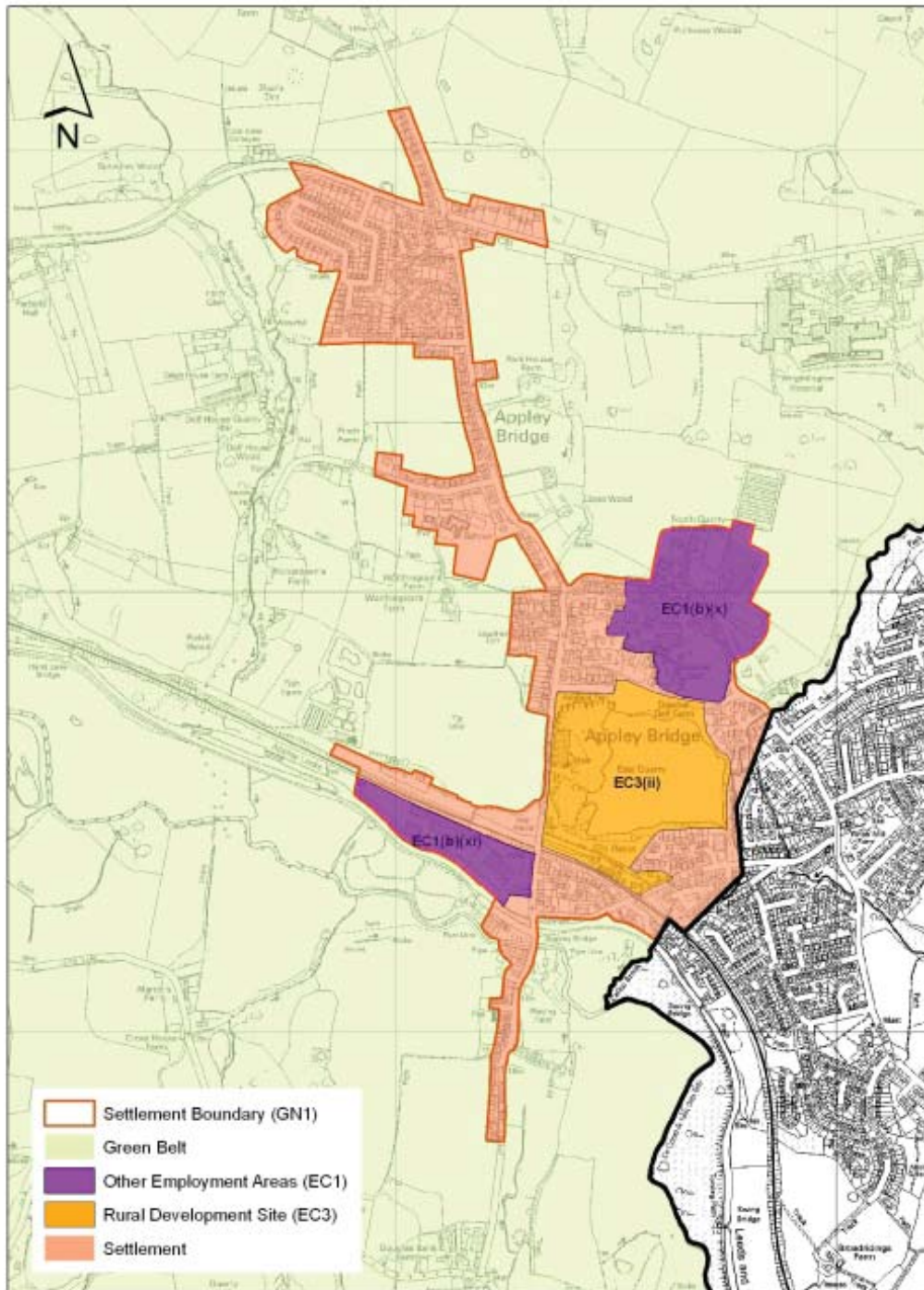
Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



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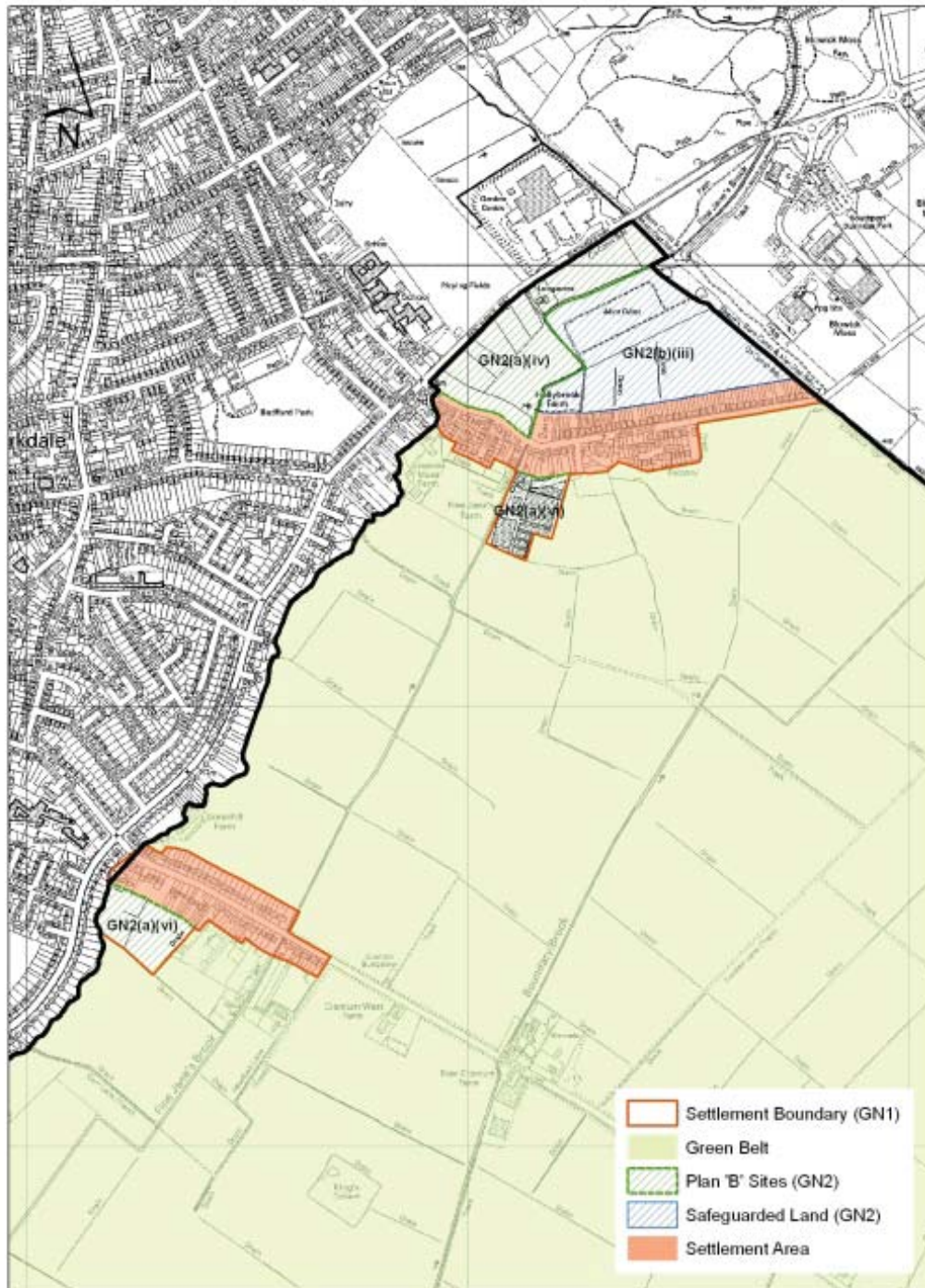
Map G.5 Proposals Map Amendments - Banks

Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



Map G.6 Proposals Map Amendments - Appley Bridge

Appendix G Key Amendments to the Proposals Map



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Map G.7 Proposals Map Amendments - Southport Boundary

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