



Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal of the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version 2012-2027

Main Report

June 2012



Prepared for

West Lancashire Borough Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report forms the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version.

1.1.2 The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 will replace the existing West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2006) as the Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Borough. The two main purposes of this SA/SEA is to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan and to help people participate in the consultation exercise by providing an assessment of the policies and site proposals within the Local Plan against the SA Framework set out in this document. This allows the Council and the public to identify the potential social, economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan.

Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.1.3 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, a sustainability appraisal (SA) is mandatory for new or revised DPDs. Alongside this requirement, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 sets a statutory requirement for local authorities to carry out a SEA of all planning and land use documents. The 2004 regulations transpose the requirements of the SEA EU Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment) into UK law.

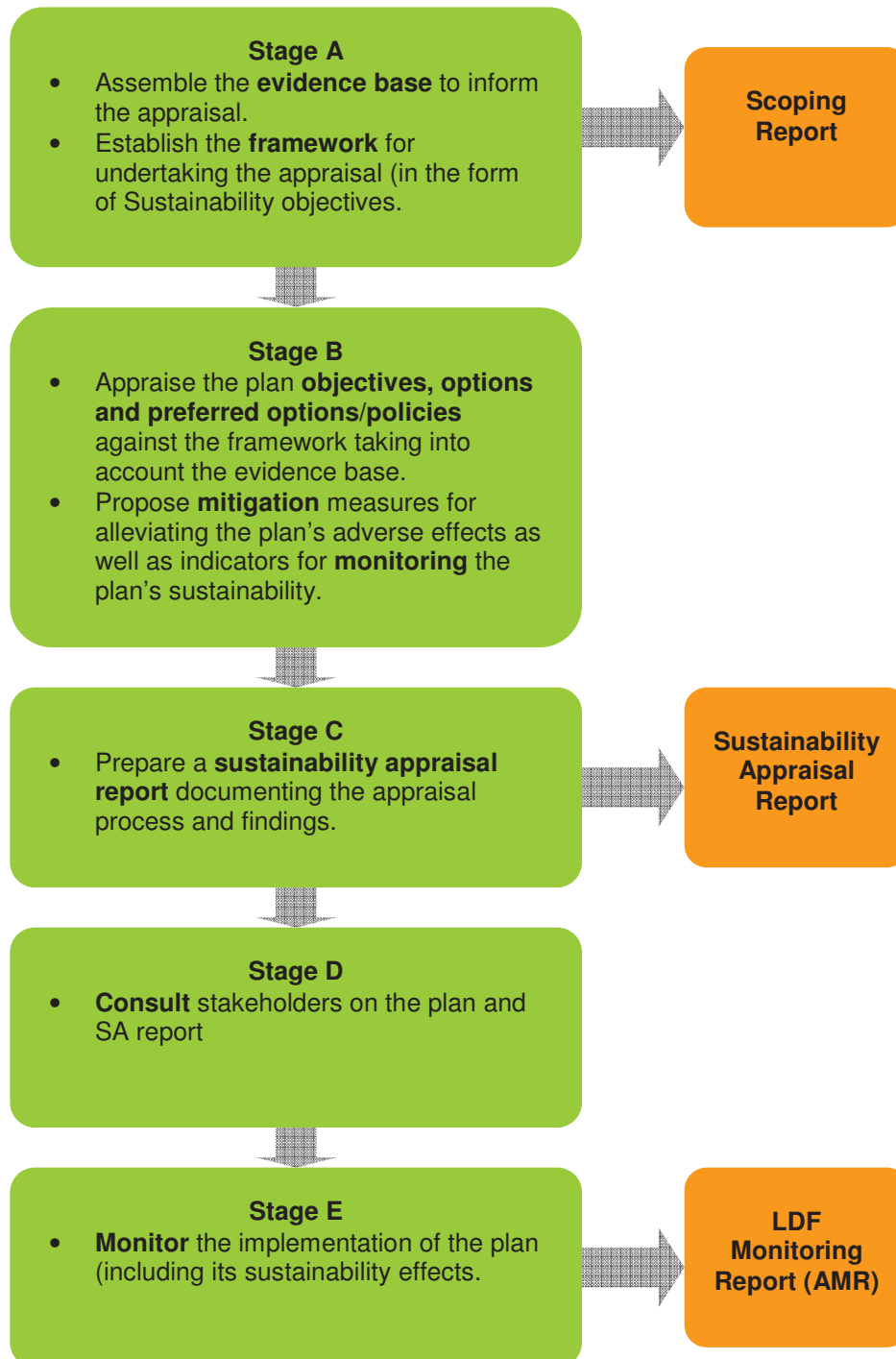
1.1.4 The Government's preferred approach is to combine the requirement to prepare an SEA and an SA into one unified assessment process that considers economic, social, and environmental effects. The Government has published guidance on undertaking SA of LDFs that incorporates the requirements of the SEA Directive which can be accessed from: <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=152450> and is part of the CLG Plan Making Manual.1.

The SA Process

1.1.5 Broadly, the SA process follows a five-stage approach (Figure 1.1).

¹ The combined SA / SEA process is referred to in this report as Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Figure 1.1: Five-stage approach to SA



1.1.6 At the initial Stage A in the SA process the framework for undertaking future appraisals is developed. Generally this requires the generation of a set of sustainability objectives and the collation of an evidence base to inform the appraisal. The framework and evidence base are

presented in a 'Scoping Report' for consultation with stakeholders, including most importantly, the statutory consultees (English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England).

- 1.1.7 A Scoping Report was prepared by West Lancashire Borough Council in February 2008, to be used as the basis for appraisal of the development plan documents that form the West Lancashire Local Development Framework. The baseline data and SA Framework for the Scoping Report was updated in 2009.
- 1.1.8 A review of the Scoping Report was undertaken by Scott Wilson (now URS) in February 2010. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the baseline data was up-to-date and that key sustainability issues had been identified and captured by the SA framework; and finally that the framework provided a logical and practical assessment tool for undertaking further appraisals. Further details of the findings of this review are set out in section 1.5 of this report.
- 1.1.9 Stage B in the SA process is the appraisal itself. This is an iterative process which requires the identification and evaluation of the impacts of the different options open to the plan-makers, including the impacts arising from the preferred options. Mitigation measures for alleviating adverse impacts are also proposed at this stage, together with potential indicators for monitoring those impacts during the plan's implementation.
- 1.1.10 Stage C in the SA process involves documenting the appraisal and preparing the SA Report (this incorporates the material required for inclusion in the Environmental Report under the SEA Directive). Following statutory consultation (Stage D) the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made to the Plan in response to representations. Stage E concerns ongoing monitoring of significant effects.
- 1.1.11 An Interim SA Report was published in 2009 which assessed the West Lancashire Core Strategy Options document and this was consulted upon alongside the Core Strategy Options document during September to October 2009. This report used the SA Framework as revised in 2009. A review of the Interim SA Report was undertaken by Scott Wilson (now URS) in February 2010, alongside the review of the Scoping Report. The aim of the review was to comment on the robustness of the appraisal in light of best practice, government guidance and the regulations.
- 1.1.12 The Scott Wilson (now URS) review found that the Interim SA Report (2009) was of sufficient detail for the sustainability of the options to be considered valid at that stage. However whilst the methodology was considered to be valid for that early stage of the plan making process, the methodology would need to be more robust and detailed for the Preferred Options stage assessment which would follow. (It should be noted that preparation of an Interim SA Report is not a statutory requirement).
- 1.1.13 A further SA report was produced to assess the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (May 2011) and this was consulted upon alongside the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper document in May 2011. This report used the SA Framework developed in the earlier SA Scoping Report, published in 2009.
- 1.1.14 Up until Autumn 2011, the Council were preparing a Core Strategy to replace the existing Local Plan, but in light of the provisions in the Localism Act including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council have now moved towards preparing a new style, single Local Plan document. This new Local Plan supersedes and compliments work done to date on the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy at the Issues and Options and

Preferred Options stages. The new plan will use past evidence, research and consultation undertaken on the Core Strategy to inform the proposals and policies with the Local Plan.

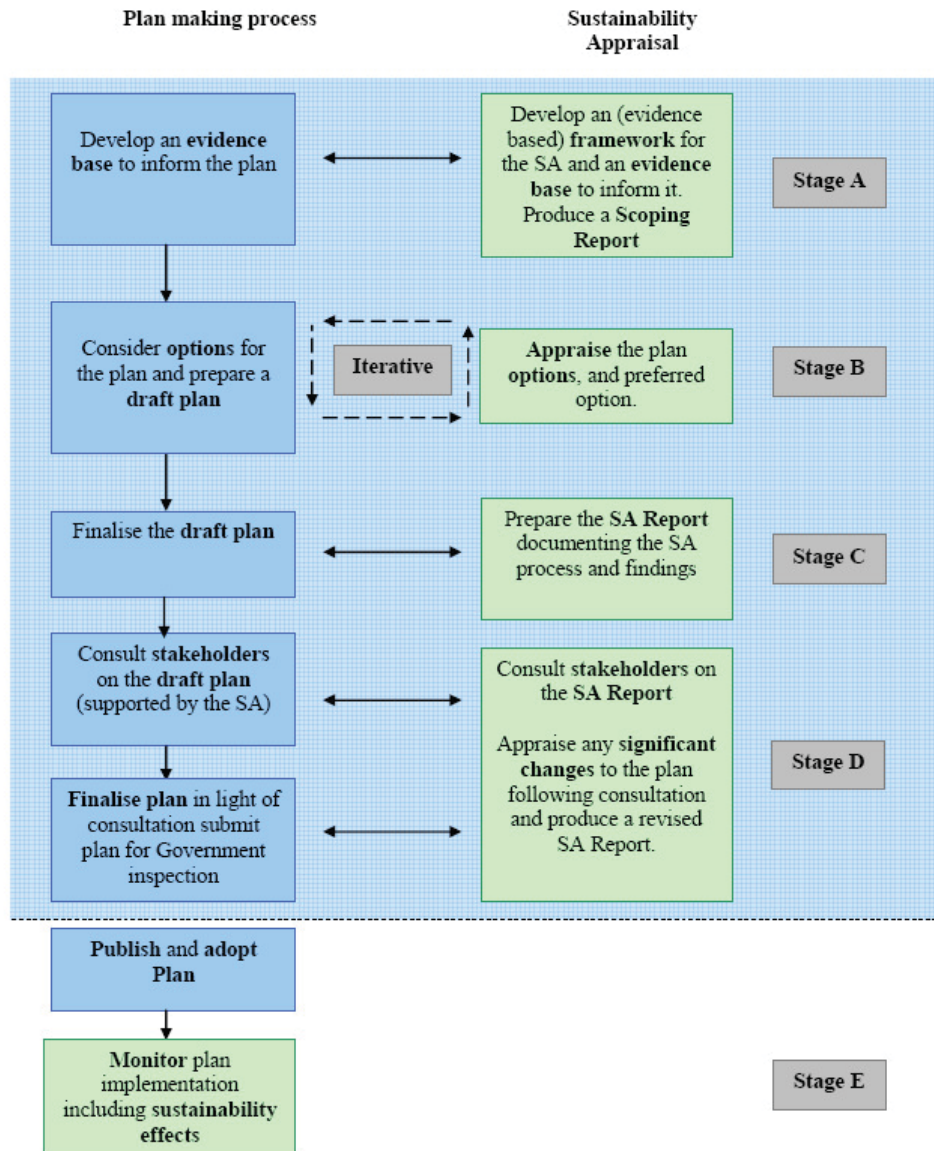
- 1.1.15 As a consequence of this change in approach, a SA report was produced which provided an assessment of the new style Local Plan Preferred Options in November 2011. This was consulted upon alongside the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper in January/February 2012. This report used the SA Framework developed in the 2009 SA Scoping Report.
- 1.1.16 This latest report has reviewed the Publication version of the Local Plan, which represents the Local Plan that the Council wishes to adopt. This publication version is the result of previous consultations on the Core Strategy, and also incorporates policy matters on development management and site allocations, as well as the consultation on preferred options earlier in the year. This Publication SA report will be available alongside the Local Plan Publication version for a final round of comments and representations from members of the public and other stakeholders before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.
- 1.1.17 SA provides a decision aiding process that assists in the development of the plan or programme under development by improving its sustainability, relative to a set of key objectives. The SA is a key element of the evidence base for the plan and should be integrated into the plan preparation process. Most importantly, SA should inform the evaluation of alternatives. Figure 1.2 (below) illustrates how the SA is an integral part of the plan preparation process and should be undertaken in parallel with it.

1.2 SEA Directive Requirements

- 1.2.1 In preparing a new or revised Development Plan Document (DPD), West Lancashire Council must conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the European Directive 2001/42/EC *“on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment”* (the SEA Directive).
- 1.2.2 Following the Scoping Report, there are two levels of appraisal for a DPD: firstly, an appraisal of the DPD objectives (optional) and secondly; iterative appraisals of the content of the DPD – the options put forward during frontloading consultation, the preferred options and, finally, any additional options that arise in finalising the submission DPD. Mitigation and enhancement measures for alleviating adverse effects and maximising positive effects, as well as potential indicators for monitoring the plan’s sustainability are also identified at this stage. The SEA Directive and Environmental Assessment Regulations require the public and the SEA Consultation Bodies to be given *“an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames”* to express their opinions on the draft plan and the accompanying environmental report. When consulting on the Local Plan Publication Version, LPAs must also invite comments on the SA report.
- 1.2.3 This SA report accompanies and assesses the Publication Version (2012) for the West Lancashire Local Plan and meets the SEA Directive requirements to prepare an ‘environmental report’. An ‘interim’ SA report was prepared in 2009 to accompany the Core Strategy Options document (2009). While this report did not meet all the requirements of an ‘environmental report’ it provides helpful background and context for the preparation of this environmental report. A further SA report was produced to assess the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (May 2011) and in November 2012 to assess the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper. A further SA/SEA report will be required to accompany the Submission version of the

Local Plan, should there be any significant changes to the Publication Version before it is submitted.

Figure 1.2: SA Process – How it fits into the process of preparing a DPD



1.2.4 Table 1.1 and the table in Appendix 1 set out a procedural ‘quality assurance’ checklist for evaluating SA reports, based on questions and criteria derived from the SEA Directive, the regulations implementing the SEA Directive in England and the government’s guidance on undertaking SA for LDDs.

Table 1.1: Meeting the requirements of the SEA Directive

Questions for Each Topic	Key requirement of the SEA Directive
<p>What's the policy context?</p>	<p><i>“an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes” (Annex I(a))</i></p>
<p>What are the key sustainability objectives we need to consider?</p>	<p><i>“the environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or member state level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation” (Annex I(e))</i></p>
<p>What's the situation now?</p>	<p><i>“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” (Annex I(b))</i></p> <p><i>“any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC” [NB problems relating to European sites are addressed through the HRA/AAJ] (Annex I(d))</i></p>
<p>What will the situation be without the Local Plan Publication Version?</p>	<p><i>“the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme” (Annex I(b))</i></p>
<p>What will the situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?</p>	<p><i>“the likely significant effects (1) on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors</i></p> <p><i>(1) These effects should include secondary,</i></p>

Questions for Each Topic	Key requirement of the SEA Directive
	<i>cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects” (Annex I(f))</i>
Recommendations for mitigation and/or enhancement	<p><i>“the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme” (Annex I(g))</i></p> <p><i>“The environmental report...shall take into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure” (Article 8)</i></p>

1.3 Structure and Layout of this Report

1.3.1 This report sets out the findings of the SA of the Local Plan Publication Version (2012). The report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** introduces this report and the West Lancashire context, and sets out the key requirements of the SEA Directive and how it has been transposed into this report.
- **Chapter 2** sets out our **methodology** for undertaking the SA.
- **Chapter 3** sets out which of the Local Plan Publication Version policies have been reappraised within this SA/SEA report
- **Chapter 4** relates to the assessment of the **Vision and Strategic Objectives** and how it has been transposed into this report. It also describes how **alternative options** have been considered.
- **Chapters 4-12** set out the **SA findings and recommendations** in relation to the following key issues:
 - **Chapter 5 – Heritage and Landscape**
 - **Chapter 6 – Biodiversity**
 - **Chapter 7 – Water and Land Resources**
 - **Chapter 8 – Climatic Factors and Flooding**
 - **Chapter 9 – Transportation and Air Quality**
 - **Chapter 10 – Social Equity and Community Services**
 - **Chapter 11 – Local Economy and Employment**
 - **Chapter 12 – Housing**
- **Chapter 13** sets out the **appraisal of sites allocated or safeguarded in the Local Plan.**

- **Chapter 14 SA conclusions and our recommendations**
- **Chapter 15** describes the **consultation** to be undertaken on this report.

1.4 West Lancashire, the West Lancashire LDF and the Local Plan

- 1.4.1 The Borough of West Lancashire in the North West of England is the most southernmost Borough within the County of Lancashire, yet is closely associated with Liverpool, being part of the Liverpool City Region area. The Borough covers an area of 134 square miles (34,700 hectares) and has the greatest area of Green Belt land in England (Local Planning Authority Green Belt Statistics: England 2008/09). The Borough has a predominantly rural setting and the majority of people live in the Borough's three main settlements: Skelmersdale (including Up Holland), Ormskirk (including Aughton) and Burscough. There are three distinct rural areas; the Northern, Eastern and Western Parishes, containing a number of villages, the largest of which are Tarleton and Hesketh Bank.
- 1.4.2 West Lancashire is bordered by the Ribble Estuary to the north, Sefton to the west, Knowsley and St. Helens to the south, Wigan, Chorley and South Ribble to the east. West Lancashire is situated within the Liverpool City Region and has strong economic, social, cultural and transport links, particularly with Southport and Liverpool. The Borough also has links to Central Lancashire and Manchester City Regions, particularly with Wigan.
- 1.4.3 There are strong cross-boundary links with settlements in neighbouring authorities, including connections with Orrell (Wigan) at Tontine; Shevington (Wigan) at Appley Bridge; Birkdale (Sefton) at Moss Road, New Cut Lane; Ainsdale (Sefton) at Segar's Lane and Southport (Sefton) at Brown Edge/ Southport Road.
- 1.4.4 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 (Lancashire County Council AMR 2008). The internationally important Martin Mere and Ribble Estuary wetlands are found within the Borough boundaries. Important blue infrastructure includes the River Douglas which flows through the east of the Borough, and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which crosses the Borough from east to west and branches off to the north.
- 1.4.5 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.
- 1.4.6 Some areas of West Lancashire are at risk of coastal and fluvial flooding. Coastal flooding threatens the village of Banks, and flooding from the River Douglas has potential to impact on a number of settlements including Hesketh Bank, Tarleton, Rufford, Parbold and Appley Bridge. Burscough is affected by the threat of surface water flooding, particularly following heavy rainfall.
- 1.4.7 The population of West Lancashire was estimated as 109,839 in the 2007 Mid Year Population Estimates (ONS), a rise of just over 1% since 2001 when the population was 108,378 (Census 2001, ONS). The population is projected to increase to 117,600 by 2031, a 7.1% increase on its level in 2006 (Population Projections 2006, ONS). Approximately one-quarter of residents are currently of retirement age, with this proportion projected to have risen to around one third of residents by 2031. The population age structure varies across the settlements, with the rural areas generally demonstrating a population which is at middle or retirement age, whilst

Skelmersdale has a younger, more varied population structure. This is expected to create a significant challenge in terms of service delivery, providing appropriate housing and ensuring an adequate labour force.

- 1.4.8 There is a significant affordability housing problem in the Borough, particularly in rural areas, with an increase of 85% on the 2001 average house price in 2009, despite the recession (Hometrack 2009). The average property price is now almost 7 times the average income. Around three quarters of dwellings are owner-occupied, with the remaining quarter being rented. There is a poorer choice of housing available in Skelmersdale than in other areas of the Borough.
- 1.4.9 West Lancashire has relatively low levels of multiple deprivation and is ranked the 141st most deprived of the 354 English Council areas. Skelmersdale however, is a significant 'hot spot' of deprivation, with 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) featuring in the top 20% most deprived areas of the country (The English Indices of Deprivation 2007, CLG). The rural 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. In contrast, Parbold, Aughton Park and Tarleton have some of the lowest levels of deprivation in the country. People living in the most deprived areas of the Borough, particularly Skelmersdale, have life expectancies six years shorter than those in the least deprived areas.
- 1.4.10 The majority of the Borough has relatively good road access to the neighbouring towns of Southport, Preston, St Helens, Wigan and Liverpool and there are good connections to the wider motorway network via the M58 and M6. Traffic congestion around Ormskirk Town Centre as a result of the one-way system on the A570 is a major issue however, and congestion and use of HGVs in the centre of settlements is a concern in the Northern Parishes.
- 1.4.11 Three rail lines through the Borough provide links to Liverpool, Preston, Southport, Wigan and Manchester, although interchanging between these lines within the Borough is problematic. There are regular bus services between Southport and Wigan but public transport provision in the remainder of the Borough is poor, particularly in the rural areas. Travel to work patterns reveal that around 57% of West Lancashire residents travel to work within the Borough, 11% to Sefton, 11% to elsewhere within the Liverpool City Region and 6% to the Central Lancashire Authorities (Preston, South Ribble and Chorley) (2001 Census). The most likely origin of commuters who work in West Lancashire are Sefton (10%), Wigan (9%) and elsewhere within the Liverpool City Region (5%).
- 1.4.12 82% of the West Lancashire working age population are economically active, but unemployment has increased over the past 4 years, with unemployment levels highest in Skelmersdale. 15% of the Skelmersdale and Up Holland population claim benefits, equating to 58% of all claimants across West Lancashire. Traditional industries of employment (manufacturing and agriculture) are weakening. West Lancashire has significantly lower levels of people employed as "managers and senior officials", in "professional occupations" and in "skilled trades occupations" (NOMIS 2008).
- 1.4.13 West Lancashire Council's Local Development Framework is the name for the collection of planning documents that govern future land use and development in the Borough. The Framework consists of the Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community

Involvement, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents and will replace the Local Development Plan (West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2006).

1.4.14 The West Lancashire Local Development Framework will include the following LDDs:

- Local Plan (incorporating a Proposals Map) DPD;
- Supplementary Planning Documents – Skelmersdale Town Centre SPD / Masterplan (Adopted 10 September 2008), Design Guide SPD (Adopted 22 January 2008) and Open Space and Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD (Adopted 7 May 2009).

1.4.15 The Local Plan DPD will provide the overarching spatial planning framework for West Lancashire for the period to 2027. The Local Plan Publication Version (2012) builds on earlier consultation documents, including the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper (2012) Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (May 2011) Core Strategy Issues Questionnaire (January/February 2009), the Core Strategy Options Paper published in September-October 2009 and consultation events, including workshops at the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Annual Conference and Spatial Forums in June and July 2008. It builds on the feedback received from these consultations and on new evidence. The Publication Version of the Local Plan document presents the Local Plan that the Council wishes to adopt. It takes on board previous consultations and the release of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012).

1.4.16 The Local Plan Publication Version (2012) contains several key components, including:

- **A Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives:** The vision sets out the aspirations for the development of the Borough by 2027 and overarching objectives for policy development to achieve this.
- **Strategic Policies:** Chapter 4 sets out the strategic policies of the Local Plan which identify a sustainable development framework for the Borough including how much housing and employment should be delivered in the Borough and the location and extent of strategic development sites at Burscough and Skelmersdale;
- **General Development Policies:** These policies provide the overall general development principles and relate to safeguarded land, development viability, settlement boundaries design of new development and the requirement for sequential testing.
- **Key Policy Areas:** The Local Plan Publication Version policies that follow the strategic and general development policies are divided into four broad topic areas including: Facilitating Economic Growth (Chapter 6), Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation (Chapter 7), Infrastructure and Services Provision (Chapter 8), and Sustaining the Borough's Environment and Addressing Climate Change (Chapter 9).
- **Deliverability and Risk in the Local Plan–** Chapter 10 discusses the major issues of deliverability and risk that face the Local Plan and specific policies within it. This chapter also sets out a Plan B for the Local Plan, maintaining flexibility in terms of meeting housing and employment targets, should the preferred policy approach prove to be undeliverable in the Local Plan period.
- **Supporting Documentation:** The Local Plan Publication Version is supported by a wide range of evidence, including a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), Employment Land Review, Retail Study,

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), and an Assessment of Needs and Opportunities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. This SA Report is among the most important of the supporting documents.

- **Setting Locally-Determined Targets:** Appendix D to the Local Plan Publication Version sets out how the Council has sought to identify locally determined targets for the development of housing, employment land, renewable energy schemes and provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, in light of the proposed abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West.

1.4.17 A list of the draft policies appraised in this report is included in Table 1.2 below:

Table 1.2: West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version

Local Plan Publication Version Policies
Strategic Policies
SP1: A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site
General Development Policies
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries
GN2 – Safeguarded Land
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability
GN5 – Sequential Tests
Facilitating Economic Growth
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land
EC2 – The Rural Economy
EC3 –Rural Development Opportunities
EC4 – Edge Hill University
Providing for Housing and Residential Accommodation
RS1 – Residential Development
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation

Local Plan Publication Version Policies
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers
Infrastructure and Service Provision
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth
IF4 – Developer Contributions
Sustaining the Borough’s Environment and addressing Climate Change
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
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment

1.5 The Scoping Report and Evidence Base: Summary

1.5.1 As described in section 1.1 of this report, an SA/SEA Scoping Report for the Core Strategy was prepared in 2008, the baseline for which was subsequently updated in 2009. The Scoping Report identified the policy context, set out baseline information and projected a limited number of trends in the future baseline. It also identified sustainability issues, and on this basis, developed a number of SA objectives – the SA Framework.

1.5.2 A review of the Scoping Report (and Interim Sustainability Assessment Report) was undertaken by Scott Wilson (now URS) in February 2010. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the baseline data was up-to-date and that key sustainability issues had been identified and captured by the SA framework; and that the framework provided a logical and practical assessment tool for undertaking further appraisals. The Briefing Paper identified that there were a number of gaps or lack of depth in the baseline data, including a lack of qualitative data, and that additional data should be sourced in order to appraise future Local Development Documents (LDDs) (particularly to identify more locally specific sustainability issues). Gaps were identified in the following areas:

- Climate change projections (UKCP09 programme²) plus DEFRA local authority CO² emissions;
- Housing stock (housing tenure and type);

² Further information on the UKCP09 programme is available from: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/content/view/868/531/>

- Housing quality, e.g. number of unfit dwellings or % of dwellings meeting Decent Homes standards);
 - Homelessness;
 - Gypsies and Traveller sites;
 - Population structure (population density, age of the population, household sizes);
 - Deprivation;
 - Retail capacity, hierarchy or expenditure;
 - Employment land availability, demand and quality;
 - Employment and skills (resident's occupations or employment distribution across the Borough);
 - Tourist visits;
 - Access to open space.
- 1.5.3 In addition, the 2010 review found that the Scoping Report did not contain any sense of the spatial characteristics of issues, as there was no spatial focus to the baseline data. As a result, it was considered that some of the objectives in the SA framework may not be locally specific enough.
- 1.5.4 A number of procedural concerns were also raised in the review; including the evidence base issues identified above, the lack of interpretation and discussion of the data, including the likely future evolution of the area without the Core Strategy; lack of information on the consultation process and responses; no reference to the LDDs to which the Scoping Report applied; or how the relevant requirements of the SEA Directive had been satisfied. The lack of more detailed data for specific spatial areas would also make it difficult to appraise policies that had localised effects against locally-specific issues.
- 1.5.5 The review recommended that the Scoping Report be updated to include all new and relevant baseline data and to identify the likely future baseline. In preparing such an update, the context review should also be updated to take account of any changes since 2008 and use tables, maps and graphs (depending on the type of baseline data) to show key data and utilise narrative prose to expand upon the basic data provided in tabular format. It was also recommended that data was represented in a more spatial format (i.e. using maps wherever possible) and included the findings of the SHLAA, SHMA, Employment Land and Premises Study, Retail Study, Sustainable Settlement Study, Level 1 SFRA and the Open Space Study, to enhance the amount and depth of baseline data available. This would provide for a more comprehensive assessment of the Core Strategy/Local Plan to be carried out and provide an up-to-date basis for assessment in future appraisals.
- 1.5.6 The review also recommended that the Sustainability Issues and SA Framework should be revisited to ensure that it reflected the new baseline.
- 1.5.7 While such an update has not been undertaken as recommended in the review, the Council have prepared a number of evidence base papers for the Core Strategy/Local Plan, which provide the relevant context, set out the baseline evidence (including maps and figures) and identify the likely future baseline and LDF issues. These papers have been prepared for a number of topic areas, as well as for the key spatial areas across the Borough, and have formed an important source of evidence for the assessment in the SA reports.

- 1.5.8 All of the evidence gathered for the Core Strategy is still appropriate and relevant for use in the preparation of the Local Plan

West Lancashire Green Belt Study 2011

- 1.5.9 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 used to inform the decision making process in relation to the allocation of sites within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper and where new development will be focused. The results of the Green Belt Study have informed the proposed revision of the settlement boundaries through the Local Plan. This revision is needed to establish an up-to-date Green Belt boundary that better reflects the purposes of the Green Belt when considering the land today; and the need to release some Green Belt land in the Borough to enable locally determined housing and employment targets to be met during the plan period.

The Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.5.10 The Government is committed to promoting decentralisation and democratic engagement and giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals³. The Localism Act devolves planning powers to communities to enable them to shape the place they live in, especially through the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans. The onus is on communities to research, consult on and produce their own plans, whilst local authorities will have a 'duty to support', providing technical advice at various stages of the process. Through Neighbourhood Plans there is potential for communities to plan for more housing and employment growth in their neighbourhood than is set out in the Local Plan provided the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 1.5.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. Implementation arrangements are set out in Annex 1 to the Framework. The NPPF is accompanied by technical guidance on flood risk and minerals, and a separate statement on planning policy for traveller's sites.
- 1.5.12 The NPPF sets out twelve 'core planning principles' and introduces "a presumption in favour of sustainable development", which in terms of plan making, is defined as:

For plan-making this means that:

- *Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;*
- *Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted"*

³³ HM Government (2010). *The Coalition: our programme for government* [online] available at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/coalition_programme_for_government.pdf (accessed 1 February 2011).

1.5.13 The Planning Inspectorate has issued guidance for its Inspectors in relation to the NPPF. The guidance includes a list of changes to topic specific policy as highlighted by the DCLG Framework Impact Assessment. These changes are identified as follows⁴:

- Introduction of presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Removal of small scale rural office development from 'town centre first' policy.
- For major town centre schemes where full impact will not be realised within 5 years, impacts should also be assessed for a period of up to 10 years.
- Removal of the maximum non-residential car parking standards for major developments
- Removal of national brownfield target for housing development.
- Require local planning authorities to allocate and update annually a 5 year supply of housing sites with at least 5% buffer (moved forward from later in plan period) and 20% buffer (moved forward from later in plan period) where there is a record of persistent under delivery.
- Removal of national minimum site size threshold for requiring affordable housing to be delivered.
- Increased flexibility for delivery of rural housing to reflect local needs.
- Increased protection for community facilities.
- Minor technical changes to the detail of Green Belt policy.
- Provide more flexibility regarding manner in which local planning authorities meet local requirements for decentralised energy supply.
- Encouragement for local planning authorities to map areas for commercial scale renewable and low carbon energy development opportunity, and then to apply these criteria to other applications.
- Requirement on local planning authorities to take strategic approach in Local Plans to creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Recognition of designation within Local Plans of locally designated sites of importance for wildlife, geodiversity or landscape character.
- Clarification of which wildlife sites should have same protection as European sites.
- Removal of requirement to set criteria and select sites for peat extraction.

1.6 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

1.6.1 The original SA Framework was prepared in 2008 and this was subject to a number of minor modifications in 2009. The 2009 Framework key objectives are reproduced below. The 2009 Framework update did not include any modifications to the sub-criteria, so the 2008 sub-criteria have been used here.

⁴ http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/pins/advice_for_inspectors/nppf.pdf

Table 1.3: The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
Objective 1: To reduce the disparities in economic performance within the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy provide job opportunities in areas with residents most at need? • Will the plan / policy reduce economic disparities within the Borough and at the Regional level? • Will the plan / policy maximise local benefit from investment? • Will the plan / policy meet local needs for employment? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of employment opportunities within the Borough?
Objective 2: To secure economic inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy meet the employment needs of all local people? • Will the plan / policy encourage business start-up, especially from under represented groups? • Will the plan / policy improve physical accessibility to jobs through the location of employment sites and / or public transport links being close to areas of high unemployment? • Will the plan / policy reduce poverty in those areas and communities most affected?
Objective 3: To develop and maintain a healthy labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy address the skills gap and enable skills progression? • Will the plan / policy provide higher skilled jobs? • Will the plan / policy increase the levels of participation and attainment in education? • Will the plan / policy provide a broad range of jobs and employment opportunities?

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
Objective 4: To encourage sustainable economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy help to diversify the Borough's economy? • Will the plan / policy promote growth in the key sectors of the Borough's economy? • Will the plan / policy attract new businesses to the Borough? • Will the plan / policy help develop the Borough's knowledge base? • Will the plan / policy improve the range of sustainable employment sites?
Objective 5: To deliver urban renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy improve economic, environmental and social conditions in deprived urban areas and for deprived groups? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of the built and historic environment? • Will the plan / policy improve the quantity and quality of open space? • Will the plan / policy improve the vitality and viability of Town Centres? • Will the plan / policy deliver Sustainable Communities? • Will the plan / policy deliver regeneration to urban areas and Market Towns
Objective 6: To deliver rural renaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy support sustainable rural diversification? • Will the plan / policy to encourage and support the growth of sustainable rural businesses? • Will the plan / policy promote the economic growth of market towns? • Will the plan / policy retain or promote access to and provision of services?

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
Objective 7: To develop and market the Borough's image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy support the preservation and/or enhancement of high quality built, natural and historic environments within the Borough? • Will the plan / policy promote the Borough as a destination for short and long term visitors, for residents and investors? • Will the plan / policy promote the use of locally produced goods and materials? • Will the plan / policy increase the economic benefit derived from the Borough's natural environment?
Objective 8: To improve access to basic goods and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy improve the access, range and quality of cultural, recreational and leisure facilities including natural green spaces? • Will the plan / policy improve the access, range and quality of essential services and amenities? • Will the plan / policy improve the access to basic goods, promoting the use of those which are locally sourced?
Objective 9: To improve access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy provide for an appropriate mix of housing to meet all needs including affordable? • Will the plan / policy reduce the number of unfit empty homes? • Will the plan / policy support the development and operation of resource efficient housing?
Objective 10: To reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy support community development? • Will the plan / policy improve relations between all members of the community? • Will the plan / policy reduce levels of crime? • Will the plan / policy reduce the fear of crime? • Will the plan / policy identify and engage with hard to reach groups?

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
<p>Objective 11: To reduce the need to travel, improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the need to travel, and improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes. • Will the plan / policy reduce vehicular traffic and congestion? • Will the plan / policy increase access to and opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport? • Will the plan / policy reduce freight movement? • Will the plan / policy improve access to and encourage the use of ICT? • Will the plan / policy improve the efficiency of the transport network?
<p>Objective 12: To improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy improve physical and mental health? • Will the plan / policy reduce deaths in key vulnerable groups? • Will the plan / policy promote healthier lifestyles? • Will the plan / policy reduce health inequalities among different groups in the community? • Will the plan / policy reduce isolation for vulnerable groups in the community? • Will the plan / policy promote a better quality of life? • Will the plan / policy reduce poverty in those areas and communities most affected?
<p>Objective 13: To protect places, landscapes and buildings of historical, cultural and archaeological value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough's landscape strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place? • Will the plan / policy improve access to buildings of historic and cultural value? • Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the accessibility of the landscape across the Borough? • Will the plan / policy protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments?

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
Objective 14: To restore and protect land and soil quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy reduce the amount of derelict, contaminated, degraded and vacant / underused land? • Will the plan / policy encourage the development of brownfield land in preference to Greenfield? • Will the plan / policy reduce the loss of high quality Agricultural land to development? • Will the plan / policy maintain and enhance soil quality? • Will the plan / policy achieve the efficient use of land via appropriate density of development?
Objective 15: To protect and enhance biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Borough? • Will the plan / policy protect and enhance habitats, species and damaged sites? • Will the plan / policy provide opportunities for new habitat creation? • Will the plan / policy protect and extend habitat connectivity and landscape permeability, suitable for species migration?
Objective 16: To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy reduce or manage flood risk? • Will the plan / policy maintain and enhance ground water quality? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of coastal waters? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of rivers and inland waters?
Objective 17: To protect and improve noise air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy maintain or, where possible, improve local air quality? • Will the plan / policy reduce noise and light pollution?

SA Objective (high level objective)	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
<p>Objective 18: To ensure the prudent use of natural resources, including the use of renewable energies and the sustainable management of existing resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy minimise demand for raw materials? • Will the plan / policy support the repair and re-use of existing buildings? • Will the plan / policy reduce the amount of waste generated by development? • Will the plan / policy promote the use of recycled, reclaimed and secondary materials? • Will the plan / policy promote the use of locally sourced materials? • Will the plan / policy minimise the need for energy? • Will the plan / policy maximise the production / proportion of renewable energy? • Will the plan / policy increase energy efficiency (e.g. energy efficiency in buildings, transport modes, etc) • Will the plan / policy minimise the use of fossil fuels?

1.7 A “Whole Plan” Assessment

1.7.1 This Local Plan Publication Version Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken as a “whole plan” assessment. This means that the combined effect of all of the policies together is assessed in terms of their impact on each of the topic areas contained within the report and listed in Figure 1.3. This approach is considered to be more holistic, with only the policies that are likely to have a significant effect on SA Objective(s) within a particular topic area, being assessed in detail (in relation to that topic).

1.7.2 Such policies are assessed together so as to ascertain their impact in combination on the appropriate topic area, hence reflecting the reality of the policies arising from the Publication Version of the Local Plan being adopted and implemented together. Recommendations for enhancing the positive effects and mitigating the negative effects of individual policies on the overall sustainability of the Local Plan are identified as a result of the assessment, together with general improvements that could be made to the policies to make them more sustainable.

1.8 Topic Areas and the Sustainability Appraisal Framework

1.8.1 The matrix set out below explains how the objectives contained within the West Lancashire SA Framework have been allocated to the topics appraised within the SA Report.

Table 1.4: Topic Areas and SA Framework Objectives

Topic Area	Applicable SA Framework Objective(s)
Heritage and Landscape	Objective 13: To protect places, landscapes and buildings of historical, cultural and archaeological value
Biodiversity	Objective 15: To protect and enhance biodiversity
Water and Land Resources	Objective 14: To restore and protect land and soil quality Objective 16: To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk
Climatic Factors and Flooding	Objective 16: To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk Objective 18: To ensure the prudent use of natural resources, including the use of renewable energies and the sustainable management of existing resources
Transportation and Air Quality	Objective 11: To reduce the need to travel, improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes Objective 17: To protect and improve noise air quality
Social Equity and Community Services	Objective 2: To secure economic inclusion Objective 5: To deliver urban renaissance Objective 6: To deliver rural renaissance Objective 8: To improve access to basic goods and services Objective 12: To improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities Objective 10: To reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime
Local Economy and Employment	Objective 1: To reduce the disparities in economic performance within the Borough Objective 3: To develop and maintain a healthy labour market Objective 4: To encourage sustainable economic growth Objective 5: To deliver urban renaissance Objective 7: To develop and market the Boroughs image
Housing	Objective 9: To improve access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing

2 Methodology

2.1 Summary of SA/SEA Appraisal to Date

- 2.1.1 As mentioned previously, a LDF Scoping Report was prepared in 2008 and formally consulted on between September and October 2008. A revision of the baseline information and SA Framework was undertaken in early 2009, and this revised Framework and baseline was used to assess the Core Strategy Options document. An SA/SEA report documenting this assessment was published for consultation in September to October 2009, alongside the Core Strategy Options document. The Scoping Report and Core Strategy Options Report can be accessed from the Council's website⁵.
- 2.1.2 On the basis of the findings of the Core Strategy Options SA Report (2009) and in response to comments received on the Core Strategy Options consultation document, the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (2011) was prepared. This was published for public consultation between May and June 2011. The Preferred Options were accompanied by a SA/SEA Report, which used the same SA framework as the Core Strategy Options SA Report (2009).
- 2.1.3 Following this, West Lancashire Borough Council took the decision to move away from preparing a Core Strategy and to prepare a Local Plan instead. This decision was made in order to reflect the intended changes in plan making signalled by provisions in the Localism Act and in particular in the draft NPPF (which has now been published). The Local Plan Preferred Options was published for public consultation between the 5th January and 17th February 2012 and was accompanied by an SA/SEA Report.
- 2.1.4 The Local Plan Publication Version will be published for public consultation in August 2012 for 8 weeks. The Local Plan Publication will be accompanied by this SA/SEA report which uses the same SA framework as the Local Plan Preferred Options SA/SEA report (2011).

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 As identified in Section 1.7 above, a "whole-plan" assessment approach has been used, which considers the effects of the Local Plan as a whole on each SA topic, by highlighting those policies that will have effects on the topic and discussing how they will combine to affect the SA topic. Broadly speaking, this requires three over-arching sections in the SA Report.
- 2.2.2 The first section includes the introduction and this methodology chapter, followed by a chapter where the testing of the Local Plan Vision and Objectives against the SA Objectives is reported. A summary matrix demonstrates which policies have "significant effects", "less significant effects" or "little or no effect" against each of the SA objectives, and this is included in Appendix 2.
- 2.2.3 The second section of the report documents the assessment stage. Each SA objective has been assigned to the most relevant topic(s). The detailed methodology for the topic chapter assessments is set out below.
- 2.2.4 The third section of the report provides a "Summary Conclusions" chapter that draws together the findings of the individual topic chapter assessments to identify the key effects of the Local Plan as a whole and summarise the recommendations made. This chapter also identifies the cumulative effects which arise across topics and the cumulative effects in combination with other

⁵ <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/>

plans and programmes, existing and proposed. Finally, the monitoring chapter sets out recommendations for the Council’s approach to monitoring the implementation of the Local Plan and its effects.

Topic Chapter Assessments

2.2.5 Set out below is a quick description of the main components of the topic based assessments.

(i) Introduction

2.2.6 The thematic topic is introduced with a brief overview of the range of issues which are considered.

(ii) What is the policy context?

2.2.7 This section is linked to the context review information collected in the Scoping Report and Core Strategy / Local Plan Evidence Papers. The main findings of the context review as they relate to each topic are summarised.

(iii) What is the situation now?

2.2.8 This section details the key baseline sustainability issues identified in the Scoping Report (and any updated baseline information, including the Core Strategy / Local Plan Evidence Papers) that are relevant to the assessment (e.g. those components likely to be affected by the Local Plan). The saved planning policies (and any other relevant Council policies) are also referred to, where they have an effect on the current situation.

(iv) What will the situation be without the plan?

2.2.9 This section reports on the ‘business as usual scenario’, as required in the ODPM SA Guidance. The effect of the saved planning policies (and any other relevant Council policies) are considered in terms of how they will affect the future situation – this is usually a declining effect, as policies become out of date and are replaced.

(v) What will the situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

2.2.10 This section identifies those policies that have an impact on the SA objective(s), as identified in the matrix in the introductory section. A basic table is used to present this information, using the following key, as set out below:

Table 2.1: Example of table used in: ‘What will the situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version’ section

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Section	Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
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Heritage and Landscape	A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
	Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
	Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
	Settlement Boundaries	
	Safeguarded Land	

2.2.11 The matrix is used to ‘screen out’ those policies which have little or no effect on individual topics. This allows the assessment to focus on those policies with a significant effect and, to a lesser degree, the policies with a less significant effect.

2.2.12 The assessment is narrative in nature, and looks at policies in combination, rather than in silo’s. So, for example, the discussion considers the effects of the Local Plan Publication Version (by which we mean those policies identified as having a significant or less significant effect on this specific topic) in a cumulative and synergistic manner. This includes long / medium / short term effects and whether the policies have any effects specifically on certain spatial areas (which some obviously will do).

2.2.13 The majority of the findings of the Local Plan Preferred Options SA/SEA report (November 2011) remain valid as the policy meaning, direction or effects arising from a number of the Preferred Options remain the same in the Local Plan Publication version. However, where there have been significant changes, the policy has been re-appraised within this SA/SEA report. A full account of which policies have been reappraised is set out in Table 3.1 in chapter 3 of this report.

(vii) Recommendations for mitigation and/or enhancement

2.2.14 This section records the changes required to mitigate and enhance effects. This approach ensures that the ‘whole plan’ assessment does not miss some of the subtleties that in-depth policy appraisal allows, without replicating the disjointed assessment that results from considering policies in silos.

(viii) Summary of Impacts

2.2.15 A summary table sets out the type of impact (short to medium, long term, permanent versus temporary, secondary), the areas most likely to be affected, the results of the assessment of the Publication Version policies, and the in-combination effects with other plans and programmes.

2.2.16 The “Summary of Impacts” chapter deals with all of the requirements of the SEA Directive and tells the story of the predicted effects, both positive and negative. If and where effects may vary between different parts of the Borough, this has been identified. A discussion on the relative spatial sustainability of the Local Plan is provided. Secondary effects are also required to be identified by the SEA Directive. These will mainly be the “less significant effects” but the key concept is that they are *indirect* impacts. A section has been included that identifies the secondary factors required to reach sustainable outcomes. For example, a healthy population depends on several factors including:

- Provision of adequate housing;
- A thriving economy;

- Low pollution and access to open space;
- Lack of flooding; and
- Adequate social infrastructure.

2.2.17 This section ties together the sustainability effects identified in the summary tables. A brief section is also included to discuss changes through the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond this, addressing the temporal nature of effects. The summary of cumulative and synergistic effects looks at both the performance of the policies together (the ‘plan assessment’) (see Figure 2.1), as well as the performance of the Local Plan Publication Version in combination with other initiatives undertaken in the wider sub region (e.g. promoted in the Local Transport Plan etc) (see Figure 2.2). A table is used to present this information for each SA objective.

Figure 2.1: Example of table use to assess the performance of the plan in combination with other initiatives

	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version	Situation with neighbouring adopted Core Strategy	Situation in combination with the local transport plan	Etc
To protect, enhance and manage biodiversity	Better management of environmental resources, development contained in specific areas, adequate space for recreation etc.... should allow recovery of sites etc	Neighbours have a lack of open space and no biodiversity features but high growth – People likely to use space in West Lancashire	LTP includes a proposal for a major new road by a key biodiversity site	

Figure 2.2: Example of table used to assess cumulative effects of policies together

	Plan policy 1	Plan policy 2	Plan policy 3	Plan policy 4
SA Objective 1				
SA Objective 2				
SA Objective 3				

2.3 Difficulties Encountered

2.3.1 The SEA Directive requires an acknowledgement of any difficulties - such as technical difficulties or data gaps - encountered in undertaking the assessment and in compiling the required information.

2.3.2 In February 2010, a review was undertaken of the Scoping Report. This identified a number of data gaps which are present in the scoping report, and these are identified at section 1.5 of this report. While the Scoping Report has not been updated to address these data gaps, a number of Core Strategy / Local Plan Evidence Papers have been prepared, which address these data gaps. These papers have therefore been referenced alongside the Scoping

Report, although it should be noted that this evidence has not informed the SA Framework that has been used as the basis for this assessment.

- 2.3.3 A key issue in undertaking the appraisal of the DPD is the strategic nature of the Local Plan, the uncertainty surrounding precisely how the strategic direction will be implemented in practice and the degree to which objectives will be delivered (particularly since many different partners are involved in its delivery). A key assumption has been made that the policies in the Local Plan will be fully implemented (i.e. they have been taken at 'face value'). However, having identified this, where tensions between priorities are evident or it appears clear that full implementation will be problematic, or involve trade-offs, this has been highlighted.
- 2.3.4 There remains a degree of uncertainty as to whether the policies in the Local Plan Publication Version will be a significant enough response to the challenges which are faced in relation to adaptation to climate change, and the fundamental change which is required to achieve a low carbon economy and society. The policies in the Local Plan have yet to be tested, and close monitoring will be required to see whether this response will be sufficient. This is an issue not just for West Lancashire, but for every local authority.
- 2.3.5 A further difficulty in undertaking the appraisal of the Local Plan Publication Version is the current uncertainty surrounding the national and regional policy framework. In particular, the proposed abolition of the Regional Strategy has had a substantial impact on the policy framework within which the Local Plan Publication Version has been prepared. Furthermore, the recently published National Planning Policy Framework has also had a significant impact on the approach taken to preparing the Local Plan Publication Version.

3 SA/SEA of Local Plan Publication Version Policies

- 3.1.1 Table 3.1 below indicates which policies in the Local Plan Publication Version have been reappraised. Some policies did not need to be reappraised through the SA process due to limited changes to the policy meaning, direction or effects arising from those policies which were appraised at the Preferred Options stage. Where a policy has not been re-appraised, the conclusions reached in the Preferred Options SA report (November 2011) remain valid and relevant.

Table 3.1: SA implications of the changes between the Local Plan Preferred Options and Local Plan Publication Version Document

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
SP1: A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	<p>The model wording relating to the “presumption in favour of sustainable development” prepared by the planning inspectorate has been added at the start of the policy to take account of key changes set out within the NPPF.</p> <p>Slight amendments in the wording of the existing policy text have also been made.</p> <p>A series of bullet points have been added within the policy wording relating to the delivery of sustainable development in West Lancashire.</p> <p>Policy wording related to proposals for grid connected low carbon energy development, flood risk and sustainable drainage systems have been removed from the policy.</p>	<p>It is considered that the changes made to the policy since the Local Plan Preferred Options stage (in particular, the addition of the model wording relating to the “presumption in favour of sustainable development”) could potentially change the effects of the policy and its impacts on the SA Objectives.</p> <p>Policy should be reappraised</p>
SP2: Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	<p>A series of slight amendments have been made to the policy wording.</p> <p>A reference to the findings of the recent West Lancashire Retail Study Update (December 2011) has been added to the justification of the policy.</p> <p>Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
SP3: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	<p>Additional sections have been added to the policy relating to:</p>	<p>The addition of extra sections within the policy will have a minor positive impact on a number of the sustainability topic areas. However, there</p>

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A linear park/cycle route linking the site with the wider Ormskirk to Burscough linear park/cycle route; • The phasing of the employment aspect of the development; and • The need to consider any impacts on nearby heritage assets. <p>Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2011 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
GN1: Settlement Boundaries	<p>Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
GN2: Safeguarded Land	<p>Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
GN3: Criteria for Sustainable Development	<p>The name of the policy has been changed from "Sustainability and Design of Development".</p> <p>A number of minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification.</p> <p>A new section on "reducing flood risk" has been added to the policy wording as a result of amendments made to policy SP1. Supporting text relating to flood risk, ground conditions and Sustainable Drainage Systems has also been added to the justification.</p>	<p>It is considered that the changes made to the policy since the Local Plan Preferred Options stage (in particular, the addition of the policy wording relating to flood risk) could potentially change the effects of the policy and its impacts on the SA Objectives.</p> <p>Policy should be reappraised</p>

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
GN4: Demonstrating Viability	Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
GN5: Sequential Tests	Within the policy wording accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers and proposals at risk from flooding have been added to the list of types of development where sequential tests will be required. Additional clarification has been provided within the justification in relation to areas at risk of flooding Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	The addition of extra types of development that would require a sequential test within the policy will have a minor positive impact on a number of the sustainability topic areas. However, there have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
EC1: The Economy and Employment Land	Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
EC2: The Rural Economy	An additional section has been added to the policy wording and justification relating to the delivery of high speed broadband to support the rural economy. A number of minor amendments have also been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	The addition of a section within the policy relating to the delivery of high speed broadband to support the rural economy will have a Minor positive impact on the Local Economy and Employment topic area. However, there have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
EC4: Edge Hill University	Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
RS1: Residential Development	The policy wording relating to Small Rural Villages has been altered to allow housing developments of more than 4 dwellings as long as they are at least 50% affordable (or more accurately as much affordable as is viable). This change has been implemented to take account of the NPPF. Additional text has also been added relating to “provisions for all ages”. The text sets out the need to encourage development proposals for accommodation designed specifically for the elderly within settlements. Minor amendments have been made to the other sections of the policy wording and justification.	It is considered that the changes made to the policy since the Local Plan Preferred Options stage (in particular, the altered policy wording relating to housing development in small rural villages) could potentially change the effects of the policy and its impacts on the SA Objectives. Policy should be reappraised
RS2: Affordable and Specialist Housing	The policy title has been changed (originally it was “Affordable Housing”). An additional bullet point has been added to the policy wording in relation to the Council’s expectations for the size and type of affordable housing required in West Lancashire.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
	Minor amendments have been made to other sections of the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	
RS3: Provision of Student Accommodation	Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
RS4: Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople	Additional clarification has been added to the policy relating to proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites. Proposals are now required to comply with the requirements of the sequential test set out in Policy GN5. Minor amendments have been made to other sections of the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.	The addition of a section within the policy relating to sequential test requirements for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will have a minor positive impact on a number of the sustainability topic areas. There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal
RS5: Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	New Policy	As this is a new policy, it will need to be appraised.
IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Towns and Local Centres	An additional section has been added to the policy wording relating the need for an impact assessment. Additional wording, to reflect the NPPF, has also been added relating to the change of use of A1 floorspace in Skelmersdale town centre. Reference to the Council's retail and leisure study (published in December 2011) has been added to	The addition of a section within the policy relating to the change of use of A1 floorspace will have a minor positive impact on the local economy and employment topic area. There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage. No need for further appraisal

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
	<p>the justification for this policy.</p> <p>Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	
IF2: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	<p>A cross reference to Policy EN2 has been added to the policy, which emphasises the need for major transport schemes to have regard to biodiversity and provide appropriate mitigation measures.</p> <p>Within the justification, additional sections have been added relating to the delivery of a cycle network within West Lancashire and car parking standards.</p> <p>Minor amendments have also been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>The addition of a section within the policy relating to the protection of areas of biodiversity as part of major transport schemes will have a minor positive impact on a number of the sustainability topic areas. However there have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
IF3: Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	<p>Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
IF4: Developer Contributions	<p>Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
EN1: Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	<p>A new sub-section has been added to the policy wording relating to the potential for wind energy development within West Lancashire.</p>	<p>The addition of a section within the policy relating to the potential for wind energy development in West Lancashire will have a significant impact on</p>

Local Plan Publication Version	Change to Local Plan Policy since Local Plan Preferred Options Stage (January 2012)	SA Implications
EN2: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment	<p>Minor amendments have also been made to the policy wording and justification.</p> <p>More detail has been added in relation to the creation and protection of trees, hedgerows and woodland within the policy. A section relating to protecting the most versatile agricultural land has also been added within the policy.</p> <p>Minor amendments have also been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>a number of the sustainability topic areas.</p> <p>Policy should be reappraised</p> <p>The addition of a section within the policy relating to the protection and enhancement of areas of woodland value and the most versatile agricultural land will have a minor positive impact on a number of the sustainability topic areas. There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
EN3: Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	<p>There have been a few minor amendments to the policy wording.</p> <p>A number of additions have been made to the justification. These additions relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The protection of school playing fields, formal recreational sites and allotments; • The delivery of a linear park; • The delivery of off road cycle/pedestrian route between Ormskirk and Burscough; and • The provision of open space and recreational facilities. 	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>
EN4: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment	<p>Minor amendments have been made to the policy wording and justification. Overall, the emphasis and direction of the policy remains the same.</p>	<p>There have been no significant changes to the effects and direction of the policy since the January 2012 Preferred Options stage.</p> <p>No need for further appraisal</p>

4 Assessment of the Local Plan against the SA Framework and Consideration of Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section tests the compatibility of the Local Plan objectives against the SA framework (Task B1). This section also describes how alternatives to meeting the Local Plan objectives have been developed by the Council through the plan making process and how these have been appraised (Task B2).

4.1.2 The key tool in any Sustainability Assessment (SA) is the SA Framework, which sets out the SA Objectives against which the Plan or Programme will be assessed. The West Lancashire SA Framework updated in 2009 includes 18 SA Objectives, which have been divided and grouped into 8 “topics” which provide a more readily comprehensible assessment. However, the actual assessment is still relevant to the SA Objectives that sit within each topic.

4.1.3 At the start of this assessment, it is useful to assess the Local Plan Publication Version against the SA Framework at a very strategic level, to aid the more detailed subsequent assessment. This chapter sets out that “high-level” assessment, firstly looking at the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan Publication Version and then, secondly, considering which policies in the Local Publication Version (2012) will affect which SA Objectives. This latter aspect enables the topic chapters to focus on those policies which most affect the SA Objectives within it, essentially “screening out” those policies that have little or no effect.

4.2 Testing the Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives

4.2.1 As a first step in assessing the sustainability of the Local Plan Publication Version, the overarching Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives that set the tone of the Local Plan are assessed.

The Spatial Vision

4.2.2 The Spatial Vision identifies the aspirations of the Local Plan, what the end goal is and any spatial variations within that desired end state, including the role West Lancashire should play in the wider sub region. The vision:

- Promotes social and physical regeneration and sustainable growth in Skelmersdale;
- Seeks to retain West Lancashire’s local character but 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;
- Maintains the Historic Market Towns of Ormskirk / Aughton and Burscough as Key Service Centres, with Edge Hill University continuing to be a key economic driver with an important role across the Borough and wider sub-region;
- Identifies that 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;

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

4.2.3 The Key Diagram is consistent with the text of the Spatial Vision. In relation to the SA Framework, this Spatial Vision is compatible with many aspects of the framework and establishes the spatial picture as to where the Local Plan is seeking to locate different types of development. In accordance with national policy there is clear focus on minimising the cause and effects of climate change.

The Strategic Objectives

4.2.4 The Strategic Objectives provide more depth and identify measurable targets for the Spatial Vision. The matrix in Appendix 2 provides the assessment of these objectives against the SA Framework. Each Strategic Objective is consistent with at least one topic area (and therefore SA Objective) and, similarly, each topic area covers at least one Strategic Objective, meaning that, as a whole, the Strategic Objectives address the SA Framework.

4.2.5 It is clear from the matrix that several Strategic Objectives address many of the topic areas, particularly Social Equality and Community Services, Water and Land, and Local Economy and Employment. This reflects the implicit consideration given to environmental, economic and social factors throughout the Local Plan policies.

4.3 Assessing the Policy Impacts

4.3.1 The matrix in Appendix 3 sets out which topics each policy has “significant”, “less significant” and “little or no” effect upon, based upon what the policy text includes and how likely this is to effect the SA Objectives within each topic. This is not an assessment of whether the effects are positive or negative, but purely a consideration of the likely significance of any effect of a policy on a given topic. This will allow the topic chapter assessments that follow this chapter to focus on those policies that actually affect that topic in their “whole-plan” assessment.

4.4 Consideration of Alternatives (Task B2)

4.4.1 In preparing the Local Plan Preferred Options (2011) the Council considered reasonable alternative approaches to achieving the vision and objectives of the DPD and in particular, alternative strategic spatial options, although alternative thematic and development management policies may also be important.

4.4.2 The Council’s preferred approach – as set out within the Local Plan Publication Version – has been developed over several years through a process of options appraisal and consultation. Options appraisal has been the role of SA. As shown in Figure 3.1, there have been five stages of appraisal (including this current stage). At each stage, the appraisal has either:

- Considered a number of options with a view to informing the selection of a preferred option; or
- Considered a proposed approach, with recommendations made relating to modifications to the approach or more wholesale changes (i.e. the selection of an alternative approach).

4.4.3 Set out below is an introduction to each of the appraisal stages (i.e. Stages 1-5).

Figure 4.1: The Iterative SA / Plan Making Process



Appraisal Stage 1 – Issues and Options

4.4.4 The first stage of the appraisal examined the issues and options paper, which set out an early vision of the LDF's Core Strategy. Using the evidence base and in consultation with local people and other interested parties, the most important planning-related issues in the area were identified and a vision was set out for the Borough. Five separate options for future development within West Lancashire were set out within the document, which are set out below:

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

4.4.5 An Issues and Options SA Report was prepared in September 2009, which considered the performance of each option in terms of the sustainability context, baseline and key issues. The SA Report identified that Option 1 delivered the best opportunity for sustainable development, concentrating the majority of investment and development in the Borough's designated regional town (Skelmersdale). Appendix 6 presents a summary of the appraisal findings from the SA Report.

Appraisal Stage 2 – Strategic Development Options

4.4.6 In December 2010 an initial SA review was undertaken of the strategic development options for the Core Strategy (now the Local Plan), as set out in the Draft Cabinet report for 18th January 2011: 'Cabinet Report – LDF Core Strategy – Strategic Development Options', submitted by the Acting Executive Manager of Planning. The three strategic options contained in this report were assessed against the 2009 Sustainability Appraisal Framework and the findings of this assessment recorded in a report entitled: 'West Lancashire Borough Council SA Review of Strategic Development Options', December 2010.

4.4.7 The three strategic development options set out in the Cabinet report were as follows:

Option A – an Ormskirk Strategic Site

4.4.8 Option A would involve the following development on 60 ha of Green Belt land to the south-east of Ormskirk on St Helens Road and at Alty's Farm:

- Up to 600 dwellings;
- 5 ha of high quality employment land;
- A Sports Village for Ormskirk's sports clubs;
- Off-Campus Student Accommodation for up to 700 students; and
- Expansion of the University campus, including new sports facilities.

- 4.4.9 8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided to the south of Skelmersdale, as well as 5 ha to the west of Burscough.

Option B – a Burscough Strategic Site

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

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

- 4.4.11 8 ha of employment land would also need to be provided in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale and expansion of the University campus would be required to the east of the St Helens Road campus in Ormskirk (up to 10 ha in the Green Belt).

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

- 4.4.12 Option C would involve the development of several sites around the Borough, including approximately 45 ha of Green Belt land, and would deliver the following:

- Up to 300 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land in the Green Belt to the west of Burscough;
- Up to 200 dwellings to the north of Ormskirk and an expansion of the Edge Hill University Campus to the south-east of Ormskirk, all within the Green Belt;
- Up to 100 dwellings on protected “DS4” land in the southern part of Banks; and
- 8 ha of employment land in the Green Belt to the south of Skelmersdale.

- 4.4.13 Option C involved the dispersal of the “strategic” development around several sites on the edge of several settlements in the Borough and was not, strictly speaking, a “strategic” development. If Option C was pursued, specific sites for development would not be allocated; instead “areas of search” would be defined in the Core Strategy; to guide the identification of specific sites for the development in the Site Allocations DPD.

- 4.4.14 The appraisal identified that all three strategic development options would be sustainable, provided that developer contributions could be secured to deliver the infrastructure necessary to mitigate the adverse effects that the development would generate if undertaken in isolation. Option A and B were considered more sustainable than Option C because it would be difficult to generate sufficient developer contributions in any one location under Option C to deliver the necessary infrastructure to mitigate the adverse impacts.

- 4.4.15 However it was more difficult to distinguish between the relative sustainability merits of Option A and Option B because although Option A arguably would bring greater benefits than Option

B, it would also have the potential to have the greatest negative impacts, particularly in relation to impacts on the transport network. Option B's benefits were not as pronounced as Option A, but this was off-set by the lesser negative impacts.

- 4.4.16 Appendix 6 presents a summary of the appraisal findings and recommendations from the 'West Lancashire Borough Council SA Review of Strategic Development Options', December 2010.

Appraisal Stage 3 – Core Strategy Preferred Options

- 4.4.17 The third stage of appraisal involved appraising the policies presented within the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (2011). The Preferred Options Paper set out proposals and policies for new development in West Lancashire until 2027. The proposals and policies set out the potential for: new housing; new jobs; regeneration in Skelmersdale; expansion of Edge Hill University; new and improved utilities, services and transport; Green Belt release; and renewable energy.
- 4.4.18 The spatial development framework for West Lancashire was also set out within the Preferred Options Paper. Policy CS1: A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire identified two broad strategic options, both requiring Green Belt release to accommodate 600 dwellings on Green Belt land. The first option focused housing development in Burscough as a strategic development site (600 dwellings on a strategic development site and 200 elsewhere in the built-up area of Burscough) and the second dispersed housing growth across several sites in Ormskirk, Burscough and Banks (essentially options B and C from above). The second option would distribute 500 dwellings across two or more sites in the Green Belt on the edge of Ormskirk and Burscough and 100 dwellings on one or more sites on protected land in the southern part of Banks. In both options, Skelmersdale was the priority location for new housing and employment. Both of these options were appraised in this report.
- 4.4.19 An 'SA of the Core Strategy Preferred Options' was prepared and published for consultation alongside the plan document. A "whole-plan" assessment approach was used to appraise the Preferred Options, which considered the effects of the Core Strategy as a whole on a series of SA topics, by highlighting those policies that would have effects on the topic and discussing how they would combine to affect the SA topic. Appendix 6 presents a summary of appraisal findings and recommendations from the SA Report.

Appraisal Stage 4 – Local Plan Preferred Options (2012)

- 4.4.20 The fourth stage of appraisal involved appraising the policies presented within the Local Plan Preferred Options. Following the preparation of the Core Strategy Preferred Options, West Lancashire Borough Council took the decision to move away from preparing a Core Strategy and to prepare a Local Plan instead. This decision was made in order to reflect the intended changes in plan making signalled by provisions in the Localism Act and in particular in the draft NPPF (which has now been published).
- 4.4.21 The Local Plan Preferred Option set out a series of strategic policies which identified a sustainable development framework for the Borough including how much housing and employment should be delivered in the Borough and the location and extent of strategic development sites at Burscough and Skelmersdale. A series of general development policies that provide general development principles and strategic and general development policies relating to housing, infrastructure and sustaining the Borough's environment and addressing climate change were also set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options.

- 4.4.22 An 'SA of the Core Local Plan Preferred Options' was prepared and published for consultation alongside the plan document. Appendix 6 presents a summary of appraisal findings and recommendations from the SA Report.

Appraisal Stage 5 – Local Plan Publication Version

- 4.4.23 In May 2012, the Council presented URS with a working draft of the Local Plan Publication Version Document. The plan was appraised against the SA Framework and findings and recommendations have been made. This process and the findings of this appraisal are set out within this report.

5 Heritage and Landscape

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The various townscapes and landscapes that characterise much of the Borough offer environments that greatly enhance West Lancashire’s local distinctiveness. There is a mixture of rural landscapes throughout the Borough, which contribute to its attractiveness. There is also a range of historic monuments and landscapes, listed buildings and conservation areas throughout West Lancashire.

5.1.2 Landscapes can be areas designated for their natural beauty and/or ambience but can also be ‘ordinary’ places that are not given statutory protection. Urban landscapes have an important role to play in the quality of people’s lives, therefore acknowledging and enhancing ‘townscapes’ is important.

5.1.3 The Borough of West Lancashire also has a rich and varied heritage. Heritage can be considered to include a number of aspects⁶ including monuments (architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting etc.), groups of buildings (groups of separate or connected buildings) and sites (works of man or the combined works of nature and man).

Identification of the applicable SA Objective

5.1.4 This section outlines the Sustainability Objectives that have been identified as being relevant to the Heritage and Landscape topic area.

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
13	To protect places, landscapes and building of historical, cultural and archaeological value	<p>Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough’s landscape strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve access to buildings of historic and cultural value?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the accessibility of the landscape across the Borough?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments?</p>

⁶ UNESCO (1972) CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE, Article 1 Available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>. Accessed on the 25th August 2010

5.2 What is the Policy Context?

5.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the heritage and landscape topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

5.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. Two of the twelve core planning principles set out in the NPPF emphasise the need to conserve the natural and historic environment. In achieving sustainable development, a key theme set out within the NPPF is to conserve and enhance the historic and natural environment. The NPPF sets out the need for local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy in their local plans for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The NPPF also highlights the need to protect and enhance valued landscapes.

Heritage Protection Review White Paper (2007)

5.2.3 The paper sets out a vision of a unified and simplified heritage protection system which will provide more opportunities for public involvement and community engagement. Some of the key objectives within the document include the need to develop a unified approach to the historic environment, maximise opportunities for inclusion and involvement and support sustainable communities by putting the historic environment at the heart of an effective planning system.

Regional Policy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

5.2.4 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that heritage and landscape assets are protected throughout the region. The plan incorporates a number of measures that aim to:

- Improve the built and natural development through conserving the region's heritage;
- Protect, conserve and enhance historic environment and landscape of the region.
- Protect environmental quality through understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes.

Sub Regional Policy

A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Assessment (2000)

5.2.5 The landscape strategy for Lancashire (prepared by Lancashire County Council) has two elements. The landscape character assessment provides an objective description and classification of the Lancashire landscape. The landscape character assessment forms the basis for the evaluation and guidance provided within the Landscape Strategy.

Local Policy

Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area (Re-appraisal 2008/2009)

- 5.2.6 The purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal is to describe and review the elements that contribute to the special character and historic interest of that Conservation Area. The initial appraisal of the Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area was carried out in 1999/2000. However, as the Conservation Area had seen a great deal of development, it was considered necessary to have a re-assessment of the built environment. The Conservation Area re-appraisal looks at the history and development of the Conservation Area, work implemented within the area since 1999/2000 and proposals for future management.

West Lancashire Supplementary Planning Document: Design Guide (2008)

- 5.2.7 The design guide supplementary planning document (SPD) provides an overview of the design principles and sets out the expectations the Council has in relation to considering planning applications and carrying out its duty as a local planning authority. The SPD sets out three key aims including: to promote the highest standard of building design for all types of developments; to provide a 'good practice' benchmark to guide prospective developers and assist in the assessment of planning proposals; and to help deliver a more attractive and sustainable environment in West Lancashire.

West Lancashire Borough Council Heritage and Conservation Strategy (2009)

- 5.2.8 The Heritage and Conservation Strategy provides an update of the existing strategy prepared in 2003. The strategy aims to re-affirm the Council's commitment to the historic environment and build on the work already carried out in delivering its heritage function. The strategy is intended to be a framework for heritage based activity and will guide planning policy and decision making within the Council's planning function.

West Lancashire Supplementary Planning Guidance: Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance (Updated August 2007)

- 5.2.9 This guidance has been prepared to assist developers to take account of local distinctiveness and minimise the environmental impacts of development. The guidance identifies the key landscape characteristics for each specific Natural Area in the Borough and suggests mechanisms for minimising the impact of development in each of these areas.

5.3 What is the Situation Now?

Heritage⁷

- 5.3.1 There are around 600 buildings on the statutory lists of buildings of architectural or historic interest located within West Lancashire. Figure 5.1 below shows the location of Listed

⁷ This information is taken from the Cultural Heritage and Landscape thematic paper prepared by West Lancashire Borough Council in 2010.

Buildings within the Borough. There are also 12 scheduled monuments⁸ located within West Lancashire that mostly date from the medieval period. These are:

- Scarisbrick Park Holy Well
- Boar's Den Bowl Barrow
- Scarisbrick Park Wayside Cross
- Rufford Moated Site
- Halsall Rectory
- Moated site at Bickerstaffe Hall
- Burscough Augustinian Priory
- Earthworks in Spa Roughs Wood
- Moated site of Scarisbrick Hall
- Up Holland Benedictine Priory
- Wrightington Bridge
- Cross Hall Moated Site.

5.3.2 There are also many historic landscapes that are recognised for their special cultural, horticultural, historic and landscape qualities. Scarisbrick Hall Park is included on the national register of gardens and parks of special historic interest.

5.3.3 There are 28 Conservation Areas in West Lancashire. These are areas of particular architectural or historic interest that are protected. The character of a Conservation Area is made up of its buildings, trees and open spaces, street pattern, landmarks and other features. Change within Conservation Areas is often necessary to accommodate the demands of modern living and the challenge is how to preserve their special local character rather than detract from it. Figure 5.1 below shows the location of the Conservation Areas located within the Borough.

Landscape⁹

5.3.4 West Lancashire is predominately rural in nature, widely recognised as an attractive place to live, work and visit. 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). 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 region to the Irish Sea and Welsh Mountains. Key areas for

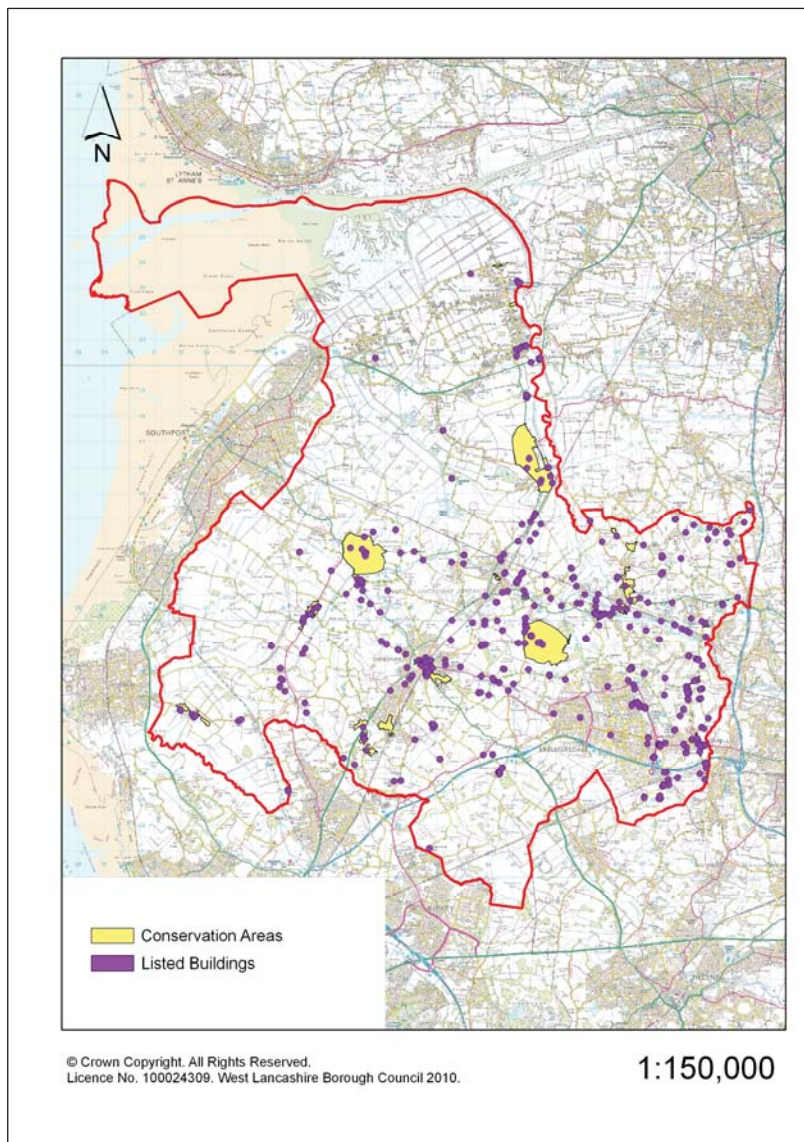
⁸ Scheduled monuments are archaeological sites that are legally recognised as being of national importance. These can range in date from the prehistoric period to the 20th century, can take many different forms including buildings, earthworks or a crop mark in a field. They include ruins above ground as well as remains that lie below ground level.

⁹ This information is taken from the Cultural Heritage and Landscape thematic paper prepared by West Lancashire Borough Council in 2010.

recreation include Beacon Country Park in Up Holland, Mere Sands Wood near Rufford, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and a network of rural footpaths.

5.3.5 There are a range of landscape types located throughout West Lancashire, including: upland fringes and ridges; settled sandlands; coalfield farmlands; urban; valley meadowlands, settled mosslands; marine levels; saltmarshes; and estuaries/firths. There are also a number of areas within the Borough that have been identified for their landscape importance. These include: the South Western mosses; Martin Mere and Environs; the Northern Mosses; the Douglas Valley; Rufford and Holmeswood Ridge; Clieves Hill and Scarisbrick; Aughton and Bickerstaffe; Ormskirk, Burscough and Lathom; Upland Type Mosses; Wood Pasture; Coastal Zone (reclaimed marshes); and Coastal Zone (Saltmarshes).

Figure 5.1: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas within West Lancashire (Source: WLBC 2010)



Effect of existing policies on current situation

- 5.3.6 There are a number of existing policies contained within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) that have a positive impact on protecting areas of landscape value. Policy DS 4 (Open Land on the Urban Fringe) sets out measures to ensure that the rural character of the Borough is protected through not permitting development on open land on the edge of settlements or on land outside of the Green Belt. Furthermore, policy GD1 (Design of Development) identifies the need to ensure that any new development maintains or enhances the character and quality of areas of landscape character and policy EN9 (Protection of Trees and Woodlands) sets out measures to ensure trees and woodlands within the Borough are protected.
- 5.3.7 There are also a number of policies within the Replacement Local Plan that aim to protect/enhance areas of heritage value within West Lancashire. Policy EN5 (Buildings of Historic Importance) provides measures to ensure that Listed Buildings located within the Borough are protected and policy EN5 (Conservation Areas) identifies the need to protect Conservation Areas. The need to protect the Borough's archaeological heritage and areas of historic landscape character is also set out within the plan by policies EN6 (Archaeological Heritage) and EN7 (Historic Parks and Gardens).

5.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 5.4.1 The following section sets out the likely future evolution of the heritage and landscape baseline if the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version is not adopted.
- 5.4.2 It is likely that areas of heritage and landscape value located within West Lancashire will face pressure from new development that is likely to occur throughout the Borough in the future. However, restrictive covenants that exist for some of the built heritage within the Borough (i.e. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) should ensure that some areas of heritage value are protected. The policies within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan will provide some level of protection to existing areas of heritage and landscape value within the Borough until these policies are replaced. However even under the transitional arrangements of the NPPF, such policies will carry little weight if they are inconsistent with the NPPF. Potential new sites that could be identified as having value over the plan period may require additional protection that is not available through the policies in the Replacement Local Plan. There is also likely to be increased pressure from the potential impacts of climate change on heritage and landscape features if they are not managed effectively.
- 5.4.3 The Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area re-appraisal contains new proposals for the future management of the Conservation Area, which will help to ensure that this area is appropriately managed in the future. Conservation Area Character Appraisals have also been carried out for all 28 Conservation Areas in West Lancashire, which will help to protect the value of these areas in the future.

5.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

5.5.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on Heritage and Landscape features in the Borough in a variety of ways. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the policies on the theme of Heritage and Landscape.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	
EC4 – Edge Hill University	
RS1 – Residential Development	
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	
IF4 – Developer Contributions	
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	
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	

G

General Comments

- 5.5.2 Ten policies within the Local Plan Publication Version were judged to have a significant effect on the heritage and landscape topic area. The sustainable location of new development through the allocation of housing and employment sites and the implementation of a number of Local Plan policies will help ensure that new development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version is unlikely to pose a threat to the heritage assets and key landscape areas located within West Lancashire. A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt and Greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report¹⁰ highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during and beyond the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.
- 5.5.3 There are policies within the Local Plan Publication Version which are likely to assist to negate any potential negative impacts of new development on heritage and landscape. In particular, policies EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment), EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) act as overarching policies in relation to this topic area. They specify that key heritage assets should be sustained and where possible enhanced and that new development should protect/enhance the landscape character of West Lancashire.

Impact of New Development

- 5.5.4 The Local Plan Publication Version sets out the need to deliver new development within West Lancashire across the plan period (2012-2027). The level of development required in the Borough is set out in policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire). The policy states that there will be a need for 4,650 new dwellings (net) as a minimum and 75ha of land for employment uses over the period of the Local Plan.

Land for Green Belt release in the Local Plan (2012-2027)

- 5.5.5 In order to meet 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). The three sites specific sites identified in the plan are: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough; Grove Farm, Ormskirk; and Edge Hill University, Ormskirk. The West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) found that neither of the sites at Yew Tree Farm or Grove Farm fulfilled the purpose of Green Belt land. However, the study found that land at Edge Hill University fulfilled just one purpose of Green Belt land. In addition, none of the sites are considered to hold any landscape character value.
- 5.5.6 Therefore, the impacts on landscape are unlikely to be significant. However, it is recognised that impacts on landscape character and the wider environment will still need to be assessed at planning application stage.

“Plan B” sites and Safeguarded Land

- 5.5.7 A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt land. Importantly, 6 out of 7 “Plan B” sites are located in the Green Belt (set out in policy GN2 – Safeguarded Land) and the Grove Farm site is also located in the Green Belt. These sites

¹⁰ Please refer to Chapter 12 for a full description of the site appraisals and the consideration of alternative sites.

have been subject to a site specific SA as documented in this report. It is considered on the whole that the development of these sites is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on landscape character in the Borough, as the majority of sites are well screened or enclosed and appropriate mitigation will allow for any potential adverse impacts to be minimised. However, it is recognised that impacts on landscape character and the wider environment will still need to be assessed at planning application stage.

- 5.5.8 In addition to the “Plan B” sites, Policy GN2 identifies four sites to be safeguarded for use beyond 2027. These sites include: land at Yew Tree Farm (South), Burscough; land at Parr’s Lane (West), Aughton; land at Moss Road (east), Halsall; and land at Guinea Hall Lane/Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks. Although three of these sites fall within the Green Belt, the site specific SA in this report indicates that none of the sites are located in areas of any significant landscape value.
- 5.5.9 New built development in the Borough is expected to take place within the settlement boundaries. A number of amendments to the settlement boundaries in the 2006 West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan are put forward in the Local Plan Publication Version. In some cases the boundaries now encompass land previously within the Green Belt but which adjoin existing settlements. Policy GN1 (Settlement Boundaries) highlights the need for new development on Green Belt and Greenfield sites within settlement boundaries to comply with any land designations and allocations. The policy also highlights that new development outside settlement boundaries will only be permitted where it retains or enhances the rural character (i.e. small scale, low intensity tourism and leisure uses and forestry and horticulture related uses). Both of these measures will help to ensure that areas of heritage and landscape value within the Borough are protected as part of delivering new development over the plan period.

Protection of Heritage and Landscape Assets

- 5.5.10 In order to mitigate the impacts of new development within the Borough, the Local Plan Publication Version includes measures that will have a significant positive impact on the protection of key heritage assets and areas of landscape character when considering the location and type of new development within West Lancashire. Policy EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment) is the overarching policy within the Local Plan Publication Version in relation to the protection of built heritage assets throughout West Lancashire. The policy identifies the importance of delivering high quality built development that protects and enhances cultural and heritage assets. Policy EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment) incorporates a number of measures that aim to ensure the landscape character of West Lancashire is protected as part of delivering new development in the Borough.
- 5.5.11 Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) sets out comprehensive criteria relating to the design of new development. The policy states that new development should be of a high standard in order to complement and/or enhance the local distinctiveness of West Lancashire; and should respect the historic character of the local landscape and townscape. The policy also highlights the need for new development to maintain or enhance the distinctive character of any landscape character areas in which it is located. The implementation of this policy will lead to a significant positive impact on this SA topic area.
- 5.5.12 A number of other proposed policies also contribute to this objective. Policy SP1 highlights the importance of locating new development in appropriate locations, whilst ensuring the need to

- protect valuable landscape and heritage assets. The policy also provides a cross reference to policies EN2 – EN4.
- 5.5.13 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with measures relating to the presumption in favour of Sustainable Development (as identified in the NPPF) within policy SP1, and not with the other policies in the LDF, the impact on the heritage and landscape topic should be one of a less significant but positive effect. A number of policies in the NPPF (in particular section 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land, section 11 – conserving and enhancing the natural environment and section 12 – conserving and enhancing the historic environment) would positively address the need to conserve places of historical, cultural and landscape value.
- 5.5.14 Policy SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site) highlights the importance of delivering high quality design in terms of buildings and the public realm within Skelmersdale. The need to preserve and enhance green infrastructure within the Borough is identified within policy EN3 (Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space).
- 5.5.15 Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) sets out the need to ensure that any development on the Yew Tree Farm site considers its impact on nearby heritage assets and implements appropriate measures to mitigate any negative impacts. This will contribute towards ensuring that heritage assets in the area are protected.
- 5.5.16 Policy EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure) identifies a series of measures for controlling the development of the low and zero carbon energy infrastructure in West Lancashire. The Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study identified capacity for 27.44 MW of wind energy generation within the Borough, which dependent upon location could potentially have a negative impact on the landscape character of West Lancashire. However, policy EN1 sets out a series of criteria relating to potential wind energy development within West Lancashire that aims to prevent such impacts through new developments.
- 5.5.17 Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy) identifies the key role that the rural economy will play in terms of investment and job opportunities within the Borough. There is the potential for new development within rural areas of the Borough to pose a threat to the landscape character of the Borough. However, the policy acknowledges the importance of ensuring development does not lead to the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 5.5.18 Policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) sets out a series of criteria that will need to be satisfied before non permanent accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers is permitted. One of the criteria is that accommodation should not have any impact on the landscape and should protect that character of the local area. This will contribute towards a less significant positive impact in relation to protecting areas of heritage and landscape value.

5.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 5.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report. Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication

Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:

- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to heritage and landscape than the alternative options.
- The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: **a more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to the development of accommodation in inappropriate locations that could have a significant negative impact on areas of heritage and landscape value.

5.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

5.7.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to the heritage and landscape theme.

Mitigation of Negative Effects

5.7.2 The potential negative effects on the topic area of heritage and landscape can be summarised as follows:

- A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt land. However, the West Lancashire Green Belt Study and site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.

5.7.3 In terms of mitigating the potential negative impacts that new development could have on heritage assets and key landscape areas, the Local Plan Publication Version provides sufficient measures. The implementation of policies EN2, EN4 and GN3 will be key to mitigating negative impacts. It is acknowledged that development on Green Belt land is only being considered due to the lack of brownfield land within West Lancashire and that new development is necessary in order to deliver economic and social benefits within the Borough.

Enhancement of Positive Effects

5.7.4 Potential positive impacts on the topic area of heritage and landscape can be summarised as follows:

- A number of policies (including SP1, EN2, EN3 and GN3) identify the importance of protecting key heritage assets and areas of landscape value over the plan period.

5.7.5 There are no further recommendations to enhance the positive effects of the Local Plan Publication Version.

5.8 Monitoring

5.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version Paper on heritage and landscape, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- Number of Conservation Areas within the Borough;

- Number of Listed Buildings demolished;
- Number of Listed Buildings in West Lancashire on the 'At Risk' register
- Grade I and II* Listed Buildings at risk of decay;
- Number of planning permissions refused on the basis of design;
- Number of up to date Conservation Appraisals; and
- Number of refusals due to impact on landscape character/designation.

5.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	<p>Ten Local Plan Publication Version policies were judged to have a significant effect on the heritage and landscape topic area. The sustainable location of new development through the allocation of housing and employment sites and the implementation of a number of Local Plan policies will help ensure that new development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version paper is unlikely to pose a threat to the heritage assets and key landscape areas located within West Lancashire. A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt and greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.</p> <p>There are policies within the Local Plan Publication Version which are likely to assist to negate the any potential negative impacts of new development on heritage and landscape. In particular, policies EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment), EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) act as overarching policies in relation to this topic</p>	<p>The situation with the implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version alongside other existing plans and programmes will be very positive. The NPPF and the Landscape Strategy for Lancashire have a particularly positive impact on protecting areas of landscape value within West Lancashire. The NPPF also emphasises the need to conserve areas of heritage value.</p> <p>The positive impact would be further improved if further Conservation Area appraisals/management plans are prepared for all the Conservation Areas in the Borough.</p>

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	area. They specify that key heritage assets should be sustained and where possible enhanced and that new development should protect/enhance the landscape character of West Lancashire.	
Long term (beyond 2027)	Four sites are safeguarded for use beyond 2027 in the Local Plan. Although three of these sites fall within the Green Belt, the site specific SA in this report indicate that none are located in areas that would significantly impact the landscape character of West Lancashire	Emerging plans, programmes and strategies recognise the value of proactive management of key features.
Areas likely to be significantly affected	The areas that are most likely to be affected are the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, which are located throughout the Borough. The Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and landscape located in and close to Ormskirk and Skelmersdale are most likely to be affected due to the level of development that is proposed in these two areas.	
Permanent vs. Temporary	Effects on heritage and landscape features can be immediate upon the development of new uses nearby and are usually permanent, as the landscapes/townscapes and, especially, the heritage assets cannot always recover from the negative effects, at least not without great cost once the development is removed. However, the impact on the local landscape can be softened through incorporating landscaping into new development, through planting trees and shrubs.	
Secondary or indirect	Development in the vicinity of areas of heritage and landscape value could have negative secondary effects through the indirect effects caused by additional traffic / congestion and reduction in air quality (pollutants can cause damage to building structures). Furthermore, any negative effect arising from a changing climate and increased flooding may pose an increased risk to heritage and landscape assets within West Lancashire.	

6 Biodiversity

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Biodiversity is the term given to the diversity of life on Earth. This includes the plant (flora) and animal (fauna) species that make up our wildlife and the habitats in which they live. It also includes micro-organisms and bacteria. Formally, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines biodiversity as:

The variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part, this includes diversity within species, between species and ecosystems¹¹.

6.1.2 As well as being important in its own right, we value biodiversity because of the ecosystem services it provides, such as flood defence and clean water; and the contribution that biodiversity makes to our wellbeing and sense of place.

6.1.3 The following chapter assesses the sustainability of the Local Plan Publication Version in relation to biodiversity.

Identification of the applicable SA Objective

6.1.4 This section outlines the Sustainability Objectives that have been identified as being relevant to the Biodiversity topic area.

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub- Criteria
15	To protect and enhance biodiversity	<p>Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Borough?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy protect and enhance habitats, species and damaged sites?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy provide opportunities for new habitat creation?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy protect and extend habitat connectivity and landscape permeability, suitable for species migration?</p>

6.2 What is the Policy Context?

6.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the biodiversity topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

¹¹ CBD (no date). *Convention on Biological Diversity* [online] available at: <http://www.cbd.int/> (accessed 3rd September 2010).

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 6.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. One of the twelve core planning principles within the NPPF sets out the need for planning to contribute towards conserving and enhancing the natural environment. A key theme of the NPPF is to conserve and enhance the natural environment through minimising the impacts of new development on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

- 6.2.3 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act provides legislation for the protection of the natural environment in Britain. More specifically, it legislates in relation to nature conservation, wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and Broads, rights of way and inland waterways.

Regional

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

- 6.2.4 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that biodiversity assets are protected throughout the region. The plan incorporates a number of measures that aim to:
- Maintain and enhance the quantity and quality of areas of biodiversity value and key habitats throughout the region;
 - Deliver national, regional and local biodiversity objectives and targets for maintaining the extent, restoring and expanding habitat and species populations; and
 - Delivering Green Infrastructure to maintain and improve areas of biodiversity value.

Sub-Regional Policy

Lancashire County Council Biodiversity Action Plan (2008)

- 6.2.5 The Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) sets out the conservation priorities and actions needed to protect the biodiversity of the county as well as indicating who is responsible for undertaking specific actions in relation to individual species. It is made up of many individual species and habitat plans, setting out the threats faced and detailing the conservation action required and the organisations responsible.

Local

Wildlife Action Plan for West Lancashire Borough (2002)

- 6.2.6 The Wildlife Action Plan for West Lancashire identifies and addresses the key issues affecting wildlife in West Lancashire and seeks to complement the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan. The document addresses the maintenance and enhancement of key habitats and key species, the influence of water management practices, the impact of coastal changes and their management, the fragmentation and isolation of habitats and elements of the landscape and the consideration of wildlife and landscape issues in land use planning.

6.3 What is the Situation Now?

6.3.1 This section of the chapter looks at the existing baseline in terms of biodiversity assets (including biodiversity designations, habitats and species) present within West Lancashire. The West Lancashire Local Plan will be required to incorporate policies that will continue to protect and enhance the existing habitats and species identified in the Borough and promote the extension and creation of new habitats.

Biodiversity Designations

6.3.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are the country's best wildlife and geological sites and need active management to maintain their conservation interest. There are six SSSIs located within West Lancashire, which are set out in the table below:

Table 6.1: SSSIs located within West Lancashire (Source: WLBC 2010)

SSSI	Area (ha)	Reason for designation	Condition ¹²
Martin Mere, Burscough	119.3	Internationally important site for wildfowl and migrating birds	Favourable
Mere Sands Wood, Rufford	41.0	Geological importance	Favourable
Ravenhead brickworks, Up Holland	21.9	National geological importance	Unfavourable/No Change
Ribble Estuary	9226.3	Internationally important site for wildfowl and migrating birds	Favourable
Downholland Moss	21.79	It is a key reference site for establishing relative sea level changes in north-west England during the period from about 8000 4000 yrs B.P.	Favourable
Wrightington Bar Pasture	1.33	It is important as one of the few remaining species-rich unimproved grasslands in Lancashire and represents the largest flushed example of this community type in the county. This vulnerable habitat is becoming increasingly rare both nationally and in Lancashire due primarily to agricultural intensification.	Unfavourable/No Change

6.3.3 The Ribble Estuary is designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR). NNRs represent many of the finest wildlife and geological sites within the country. There are also two Local Nature Reserves (LNR) located within West Lancashire, which are sites of local importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment, located at Haskyane Cutting and Mere Sands Wood.

6.3.4 Martin Mere, the Ribble Estuary and the Alt Estuary are all designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA), which are sites that contribute to the 'Natura 2000' network of habitats of European importance. SPAs are areas which have been identified as being of international

¹² Information on the condition of SSSIs located within the Borough is taken from the Natural England Website. Available at: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/sssi/default.aspx> (accessed 3rd September 2010).

importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within the European Union Countries. The three SPAs in West Lancashire are also designated as Ramsar sites, which are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar convention, which provides for the conservation and good use of wetlands.

- 6.3.5 Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHSs) is the name given to the most important non-statutory wildlife sites in Lancashire. BHSs contain valuable habitats such as ancient woodland, species-rich grasslands and bogs. Within Lancashire, there are at present over 1100 BHSs covering 25000 ha, with a number located in the West Lancashire Borough. In total, BHSs take up around 8% of the County area.

Habitats

- 6.3.6 The Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan identifies a range of species that inhabit West Lancashire and need to be protected, including the slow worm, common toad, common frog, great crested newt, adder, common lizard, water vole, hedgehog, brown hare, harvest mouse, daubentons bat, noctule bat, pipistrelle bat, eel, river lamprey, sea lamprey, brown trout and bullhead.

Effect of existing policies on current situation

- 6.3.7 The West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) contains a number of policies to protect and enhance key areas of biodiversity value within the Borough. In particular, Policy EN1 (Biodiversity) states that the biodiversity of the Borough will be protected through not allowing development which would destroy or adversely affect important wildlife habitats. The policy also highlights the importance of protecting nature conservation sites, wildlife corridors and protected species. Policy DS1 (Location of Development) highlights that development will not be permitted on open spaces, which are of value for nature conservation unless it is part of a scheme that provides an overall benefit to the local community in social, environmental or economic terms. Policy GD1 (Design of Development) identifies the importance of ensuring the design of development does not lead to the loss of areas of ecological value. Other important existing policies include: Policy EN8 Green Spaces, EN9 Protection of Trees and Woodlands, SCI1 Sports, Recreational, Leisure and Cultural, SC2 Recreational Facilities and SC3 Linear Parks.

6.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 6.4.1 The following section sets out the likely future evolution of the biodiversity baseline if the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version is not adopted.
- 6.4.2 In the absence of the Local Plan proposed policies the saved policies of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2026) would be used when considering development proposals (until such time as they can no longer be saved). However even under the transitional arrangements of the NPPF, such policies will carry little weight if they are inconsistent with the NPPF. As highlighted in the previous section, the Replacement Local Plan contains a number of policies to protect sites of biodiversity value (including habitats and species) in the future. However, if new sites of biodiversity value are identified in the future, the existing policy framework will not provide sufficient protection, especially in light of the predicted impacts of long term climate change.

6.4.3 The condition of the SSSIs located within the Borough is shown in Table 5.1. Apart from the Ravenhead Brickworks SSSI, which is in an unfavourable/no change condition, the SSSIs in the Borough are in a favourable condition. The condition of the SSSIs in West Lancashire is likely to be at risk in the future without the plan. The predicted effects of climate change, especially increased flooding are a particular threat to sites of biodiversity value within the Borough. Without new policies to tackle climate change the risk to vulnerable habitats may increase further.

6.4.4 Without the new local plan, the pressure on sites of biodiversity value (including habitats and species) will be increased, which could lead to a detrimental impact on these areas. The increase in housing and projected population growth in the Borough could also increase the pressure on the existing transport infrastructure and demand on natural areas for outdoor leisure and recreation. This could potentially have a negative impact on biodiversity through a reduction in air quality from vehicle emissions, and disturbance to sensitive species through recreation. Without evolving controls on pollution from all sources there is an increased risk that habitats are at risk from contaminants through airborne, waterborne and soil based pathways.

6.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

6.5.1 The proposed policies in the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on sites of biodiversity value in the Borough. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the proposed policies on biodiversity.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
EC4 – Edge Hill University	Orange
RS1 – Residential Development	Orange
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	Light Blue
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	Light Blue
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	Light Blue
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	Red
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	Light Blue
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	Orange
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	Light Blue
IF4 – Developer Contributions	Orange
EN1 – Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	Orange
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment	Red
EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	Red
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	Orange

General Comments

6.5.2 Thirteen of the policies within the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version are anticipated to have an impact on biodiversity. The level of new development proposed within West Lancashire, the potential development of Greenfield Land and the potential release of Green Belt pose a risk to biodiversity assets within the Borough. A potential risk to local biodiversity is new development on Green Belt and Greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report¹³ highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during and beyond the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the any areas of biodiversity value located in the Borough.

6.5.3 Policies SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) and, in particular, EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) should help to mitigate risk. Improvements in air quality that should occur as a result of the implementation of policies IF2 (Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice) and EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure) could have a less significant positive impact on biodiversity assets through a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Construction and operation of new transport infrastructure could potentially have a significant negative impact on biodiversity assets, which should be considered when development proposals come forward.

Level of New Development

6.5.4 Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) sets out the level of development that is proposed throughout West Lancashire across the plan period (2012-2027). The policy states that there will be a need for 4, 650 new dwellings (net) as a minimum and

¹³ Please refer to Chapter 12 for a full description of the site appraisals and the consideration of alternative sites.

75ha of land for employment uses over the period of the Local Plan. The vast majority of new development is planned to take place in the three key service centres of the Borough (Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough).

- 6.5.5 A potential risk to key areas of biodiversity value within the Borough is the level of development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version, particularly development proposed on Green Belt land. However, it is recognised that a number of policies provide sufficient measures to enable new development to be delivered at the same time as ensuring that biodiversity is protected where possible.

- 6.5.6 In order to mitigate any potential negative impacts of new development, Policy SP1 aims to ensure that new development is located in appropriate locations to enable valuable biodiversity to be protected. The strength of the policy in relation to the protection of biodiversity assets is enhanced through the inclusion of a cross reference to policies EN2 – EN4 and through the inclusion of a section that highlights the importance of new development being in accordance with the NPPF.

Land for Green Belt release in the Local Plan (2012-2027)

- 6.5.7 In order to meet 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). The three specific sites identified in the plan are: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough; Grove Farm, Ormskirk; and Edge Hill University, Ormskirk. The West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) found that neither of the sites at Yew Tree Farm or Grove Farm fulfilled the purpose of Green Belt land. However, the study found that land at Edge Hill University fulfilled one purpose of Green Belt land. None of the sites are considered to have any known areas of biodiversity value or protected species present on them that could be adversely affected by new development.

- 6.5.8 Therefore, the impacts on biodiversity are unlikely to be significant. It is recognised that impacts on biodiversity and the wider environment will still need to be assessed at the planning application stage.

- 6.5.9 The site at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough (Policy SP3) could potentially have a detrimental impact on the Martin Mere SSSI, SPA, and Ramsar site. Increased development in this location is likely to lead to an increase in the numbers of visitors to the site (due to the increased population in Burscough), which could lead to a detrimental impact. Furthermore, additional development in this location would lead to increases in traffic in and around Burscough. This could have a significant negative impact on sensitive ecosystems in Martin Mere through an increase in carbon emissions.

- 6.5.10 The potential negative impact on the Martin Mere SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site was also identified within the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the West Lancashire Local Plan Preferred Option.

- 6.5.11 Policy EC4 (Edge Hill University) proposes an extension to Edge Hill University. Although there are no statutory biodiversity sites close to Edge Hill University, the site is adjacent to Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site. There is potential for a negative impact on this woodland habitat through an increase in users of the Ruff Woods site from the university.

“Plan B” sites and Safeguarded Land

- 6.5.12 Six out of seven “Plan B” sites are located in the Green Belt and the Grove Farm site is also located in the Green Belt. These sites have been subject to a site specific SA in this report and it is considered on the whole that the development of these sites is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on biodiversity. The majority of sites are located away from areas of biodiversity value and where they are located close to sites of biodiversity value appropriate mitigation will allow for any potential adverse impacts to be minimised. However, it is recognised that impacts on biodiversity and the wider environment will still need to be assessed at the planning application stage.
- 6.5.13 In addition to the “Plan B” sites, Policy GN2 identifies four sites to be safeguarded for use beyond 2027. These sites include: land at Yew Tree Farm (South), Burscough; land at Parr’s Lane (West), Aughton; land at Moss Road (east), Halsall; and land at Guinea Hall Lane/Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks. Although three of these sites fall within the Green Belt, the site specific SA in this report indicates that there are no known areas or species of biodiversity value present on them that could be adversely affected by new development.
- 6.5.14 New built development in the Borough is expected to take place within the (revised) settlement boundaries. A number of amendments to the settlement boundaries in the 2006 West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan are put forward in the policies within the Publication Version. In some cases the boundaries now encompass land previously within the Green Belt but which adjoin existing settlements. Policy GN1 (Settlement Boundaries) highlights the need for new development on Green Belt and Greenfield sites within settlement boundaries to comply with any land designations and allocations. This will help to ensure that areas of biodiversity value outside the settlement boundaries are protected.

Protection of Biodiversity Assets

- 6.5.15 The overarching policy for protecting areas of biodiversity value across the plan period is policy EN2. The policy aims to protect and safeguard all sites of international, national, county and local level importance (including RAMSAR sites, SPAs, NNRs, SSSIs, Regionally Geologically Important Sites, Biological Heritage and Nature Conservation sites) when delivering new development within West Lancashire. The policy also supports the development of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park and identifies the need to provide and maintain a network of green corridors that will provide habitats to support biodiversity. The implementation of policy EN2 will have a significant positive impact on the Biodiversity topic area.
- 6.5.16 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with policy SP1 (particularly the section relating to the presumption in favour of sustainable development), and not with the other policies in the LDF, the impact on the biodiversity topic should be one of a less significant positive effect. It is considered that the reference in the policy to “specific policies in the framework which indicate that development should be restricted” alongside the provision in the NPPF which relates to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ (section 11) should provide adequate protection for biodiversity in the plan area.
- 6.5.17 Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) sets out comprehensive criteria relating to the design of new development. The policy identifies the need to: avoid the loss of trees, hedgerows and areas of ecological value; incorporate new habitat creation where possible; and incorporate and enhance the nature conservation value of any water feature. The implementation of this policy will ensure that the need to protect biodiversity assets is considered as part of delivering new development in West Lancashire.

- 6.5.18 Policy EN3 (Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space) identifies the importance of delivering green infrastructure throughout West Lancashire over the plan period. This includes the provision of a network of multi functional green space including open space, sports facilities, recreational and play opportunities, flood storage, habitat creation, footpaths and cycleways, food growing and climate change mitigation). The delivery of green infrastructure in West Lancashire will have a significant positive impact on protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the Borough.

Transport Provision

- 6.5.19 Policy IF2 (Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice) sets out a number of policy measures (including promotion of public transport use, railway extensions and ultra low carbon/electric vehicles), to promote the use of sustainable forms of transport within the Borough, as opposed to the private vehicle. This will have an indirect positive impact on biodiversity assets through a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. There could potentially be negative impacts upon biodiversity and habitat corridors resulting from construction and operation of major new rail infrastructure and the A570 Ormskirk bypass within Policy IF2. However, the policy highlights the need for rail infrastructure and proposals for the A570 Ormskirk bypass to have regard to biodiversity and provide appropriate mitigation measures as recommended by policy EN2.

Renewable Energy Development

- 6.5.20 Policy EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure) regulates proposals for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes so that they do not result in unacceptable harm to the local environment which cannot be satisfactorily addressed. The facilitation of sustainable renewable energy development will also have a significant positive impact on biodiversity by reducing carbon dioxide emissions over the longer term. Furthermore, the policy sets out a series of criteria relating to potential wind energy development within West Lancashire that will ensure ecological impacts are minimised (including impacts on migration routes of protected bird species).
- 6.5.21 Policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) sets out a series of criteria that will need to be satisfied before non permanent accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers is permitted. One of the criteria is that accommodation should not have any impact on the wildlife of the local area. This will contribute towards a positive impact of little or no effect in relation to protecting biodiversity.

6.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 6.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:
- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to biodiversity than the alternative options.

- The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: a **more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to the development of accommodation in inappropriate locations that could have a significant negative impact on biodiversity.

6.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

6.7.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced to improve the sustainability of the policies as they relate to biodiversity.

Mitigation of Negative Effects

6.7.2 The potential negative effects on biodiversity can be summarised as follows:

- New development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version over the plan period (including housing, employment land and renewable energy) may pose a threat to the biodiversity assets located within West Lancashire.
- A potential risk to local biodiversity is new development on Green Belt and Greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report¹⁴ highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during and beyond the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.
- Development on Burscough Strategic Development site could potentially have a significant negative impact on Martin Mere SSSI, SPA, and RAMSAR site through an increase in visitors to the site and increased traffic in and around the area.
- Although there are no statutory biodiversity sites close to Edge Hill University, the site is adjacent to Ruff Woods Biological Heritage site. The expansion of Edge Hill University may lead to a less significant negative impact on this woodland habitat through an increase in human activity and disturbance.
- There could potentially be significant negative impacts on biodiversity and habitat corridors from construction and operation of the aspirational rail infrastructure and the A570 Ormskirk bypass proposals within Policy IF2.

6.7.3 In terms of mitigating the potential negative impacts that new development including development within the Green Belt and Greenfield land could have on biodiversity assets, the Local Plan Publication Version identifies sufficient measures. The implementation of policies SP1, EN2 and GN3 will be key to ensuring that these negative impacts are mitigated. It is acknowledged that development on Green Belt and Greenfield land is only being considered due to the lack of Brownfield Land and that new development is necessary in order to deliver economic and social benefits within the Borough.

Enhancement of Positive Effects

6.7.4 Potential positive impacts on biodiversity can be summarised as follows:

- Policies SP1, EN2 and GN3 will help to ensure that biodiversity assets are protected over the plan period.

¹⁴ Please refer to Chapter 12 for a full description of the site appraisals and the consideration of alternative sites.

6.8 Monitoring

6.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on biodiversity, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- Change in areas of populations of biodiversity importance, including (i) change in priority habitats and species by type and (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, sub-regional or local significance;
- Number of planning applications with conditions to ensure works to manage/enhance the condition of SSSI/SAC/SPA/Ramsar features of interest.
- Area of SSSI in adverse condition as a result of development;
- Number of planning applications where protected species are considered;
- Number of planning applications with conditions imposed to ensure working practices and works to protect/enhance protected species;
- Number of planning applications which result in the need for a protected species licence in order to be carried out;
- Number of BAP habitats created/managed as a result of granting planning permission;
- % of area of land designated as SSSIs within the local authority in favourable condition;
- Number and status of RAMSAR sites within the Borough;
- Number and status of SSSIs sites within the Borough;
- Number and status of Biological Heritage Sites within the Borough;
- Number of RIGS sites within the Borough;
- Number and status of LNCS sites within the Borough;
- No. of developments including landscaping schemes to benefit biodiversity;
- Loss of designated habitat.

6.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version		Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	<p>Thirteen of the policies within the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version are anticipated to have a significant positive impact on biodiversity. The level of new development proposed within West Lancashire, the potential development of Greenfield Land and the potential release of Green Belt pose a risk to biodiversity assets within the Borough. A potential risk to local biodiversity is new development on Green Belt and greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during and beyond the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.</p> <p>Policies SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) and, in particular, EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) should help to mitigate risk. Construction and operation of new transport infrastructure could potentially have a significant negative impact on biodiversity assets, which should be considered when development proposals come forward.</p>		<p>The impact of implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version in the short/medium term alongside other plans and programmes is considered to be positive. The NPPF sets out the need for planning to contribute towards conserving and enhancing the natural environment, which will contribute towards protecting areas of biodiversity value. Locally, both the Lancashire BAP and the Wildlife Action Plan for West Lancashire set out the need to protect certain habitats and species within the Borough.</p>	
Long term (beyond 2027)	<p>In the long term, the impact on biodiversity is likely to be negative. Land available for development is likely to be in short supply, which would place significant pressure on areas of biodiversity in the future.</p>		<p>Emerging plans, programmes and strategies recognise the value of proactive management of key features.</p>	
Areas likely to be significantly affected	<p>Areas that are most likely to be affected are the key biodiversity sites that are located close to the key service centres within West Lancashire where development is proposed. Those sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Mere (SSSI, RAMSAR, SPA) due to its proximity to Burscough • Ribble Estuary (SSSI, NNR, RAMSAR, SPA) due to its proximity to Banks • Ravenhead Brickworks (SSSI) due to its proximity to Up Holland and 			

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	Skelmersdale	
Permanent vs. Temporary	There may be instances of habitat loss due to new development that will inevitably result in permanent loss of habitat or species.	
Secondary or indirect	New development can have a number of secondary effects on biodiversity, through a reduction in air, water and soil quality, loss of habitat, increased disturbance and recreational pressure.	

7 Water and Land Resources

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 In the UK, access to clean water is generally taken for granted, yet large quantities are used for domestic purposes, for cooling, rinsing and cleaning in industry, and for irrigation in agriculture. Such activities place a heavy burden on water resources in terms of both quality and quantity. Water resources include precipitation, surface water (lakes, rivers, etc.), soil (near-surface) water and groundwater. Sustainable and effective planning and management of water resources is essential.

7.1.2 The use of land resources is a key component of sustainable development. As part of this chapter, the sustainability of the proposed policies in relation to a number of land resources will be explored, including the Green Belt, Green Infrastructure, Brownfield/Greenfield land, agricultural land and production of waste. This chapter will also consider geodiversity, which is the variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils, along with the natural processes that shape the landscape.

7.1.3 Green Infrastructure¹⁵ is a strategically planned and delivered network of high quality green spaces and other environmental features, which will be considered as part of this topic.

Identification of the applicable SA Objective

7.1.4 This section outlines the Sustainability Objectives that have been identified as being relevant to the Water and Land Resources topic area.

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub- Criteria
14	To restore and protect land and soil quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy reduce the amount of derelict, contaminated, degraded and vacant / underused land? • Will the plan / policy encourage the development of brownfield land in preference to Greenfield? • Will the plan / policy reduce the loss of high quality Agricultural land to development? • Will the plan / policy maintain and enhance soil quality? • Will the plan / policy achieve the efficient use of land via appropriate density of development?
16	To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy reduce or manage flood risk? • Will the plan / policy maintain and enhance ground water quality?

¹⁵ A detailed description of the concept of Green Infrastructure can be found on the Natural England website. Available at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/greeninfrastructure/default.aspx>. Accessed on 3rd June 2010

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub- Criteria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of coastal waters? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of rivers and inland waters?

7.2 What is the Policy Context?

7.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the water and land resources topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

7.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. One of the twelve core planning principles set out within the NPPF is the need to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. A key theme in the NPPF relates to protecting Green Belt land. It highlights the need for local planning authorities to plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt.

Water Resources

Water Act (2003)

7.2.3 The Water Act requires that all surface water bodies meet “good” ecological status and “good” chemical status by 2015. Water conservation is a priority within the Act and water abstraction/impoundment must not be undertaken in an unsustainable manner or one that contributes to the deterioration of water resources.

Future Water – The Government’s Water Strategy for England (2008)

7.2.4 The vision for water policy and management set out within the strategy is one where, by 2030, there is: improved quality of the water environment and the ecology which it supports; and continued high levels of drinking water quality from taps.

Land Resources

Waste Strategy for England (2007)

7.2.5 The Waste Strategy for England promotes the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO), the waste hierarchy and the proximity principle. Within the strategy, a number of key objectives are set. These include the need to: decouple waste growth from economic growth and put more emphasis upon waste prevention and re-use; secure the investment in infrastructure needed to divert waste from landfill and for the management of hazardous waste; and get the most environmental benefit from investment through increased recycling of resources and recovery of energy from residual waste.

Minerals Policy Statement 1: Planning and Minerals (2006)

- 7.2.6 The minerals policy statement seeks to ensure that the need for minerals generated by society and the economy is managed in an integrated way against its impact on the environment and communities. Some of the key objectives of the minerals policy statement include: to safeguard mineral resources as far as possible; to prevent or minimise production of mineral waste; and to protect internationally and nationally designated areas of landscape value and nature conservation importance from minerals development, other than in the exceptional circumstances.

Regional Policy**The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)**

- 7.2.7 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that water and land resources are protected throughout the region. The plan incorporates a number of measures that aim to:
- Protect the quality of inland waters;
 - Protect the quantity and quality of surface, ground and coastal waters; and
 - Maximise the re-use of vacant and under-used brownfield land and buildings for housing.

Sub Regional Policy***Water Resources*****The North West River Basin Borough – River basin management plan (2009)**

- 7.2.8 The river basin management plan aims to enhance water quality and sustainable water management is one of its key objectives. The plan focuses on achieving the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment including: surface freshwaters (including lakes, streams and rivers); groundwater and ecosystems such as some wetlands that depend on groundwater; and estuaries and coastal waters out to one nautical mile.

Land Resources**A Geodiversity Action Plan for Lancashire (2004)**

- 7.2.9 The Action Plan sets out a vision and a model by which geoconservation in Lancashire may be pursued collectively, by those bodies and individuals with an interest or obligation in respect of such matters. The overall aim of the plan is to protect the geological and landscape heritage of Lancashire for the foreseeable future, with a system similar to that which is already in place for the protection of biological heritage sites through biological action plans.

Minerals and Waste Management Core Strategy for Lancashire (February 2009)

- 7.2.10 The Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework sets out measures for managing mineral resources and waste within Lancashire. The plan highlights the need to safeguard Lancashire's mineral resources, minimise the need for mineral extraction, manage waste as a resource and achieve sustainable waste management.

Local Policy

Land Resources

West Lancashire Borough Council Revised Contaminated Land Strategy (April 2009)

- 7.2.11 The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the statutory duties of WLBC under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act, 1990 are carried out, and in particular that land within the Council's Borough identified as contaminated within the meaning of Part IIA is remediated to a standard that removes risk to human and other receptors.

7.3 What is the Situation Now?

- 7.3.1 This section of the chapter looks at the current baseline of Water and Land Resources within West Lancashire.

Water Resources

- 7.3.2 Within West Lancashire there are a number of water systems including the River Ribble, River Tawd, River Douglas, River Alt, the Ribble Estuary and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.
- 7.3.3 Statistics from 2006 show that rivers within West Lancashire have a significantly lower standard of quality in comparison to the rest of the North West¹⁶. 23.6% of river length in West Lancashire was judged to have good water quality, in comparison to the North West average of 63.2%. In addition, 14.2% of river length in West Lancashire was judged to have poor water quality in comparison to the North West average of 7%.
- 7.3.4 The Environment Agency website¹⁷ provides detailed information on the water quality of rivers within West Lancashire. The website identifies the biology and chemistry water quality of rivers within the UK, where A is the best quality and F is the worst. The following information is provided for rivers within West Lancashire:
- **River Douglas (Douglas Valley Stw to Fwl at Rufford):** Chemistry quality rating – E, Biology quality rating – C.
 - **River Douglas (Crooke to Douglas Valley Stw):** Chemistry quality rating – B, Biology quality rating – C.
- 7.3.5 Within West Lancashire, there are a number of areas where sources of groundwater are protected through 'Groundwater Source Protection Zones' (GSPZs)¹⁸. Inner and outer zones of GSPZs are found in Ormskirk and Burscough with the total catchment area extending to include the western part of Skelmersdale. West Lancashire also has a wide variety of water sources designated as aquifers¹⁹ that need to be protected from contamination or damage.

¹⁶ Information on the water quality of rivers in West Lancashire is provided within the West Lancashire Scoping Report for the LDF (February 2008)

¹⁷ Information on the water quality of specific rivers in West Lancashire is available on the Environment Agency website. Available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx>. Accessed on 17th September 2010.

¹⁸ GSPZs help to monitor the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area.

¹⁹ Groundwater is protected by identifying different types of aquifer, which are underground layers of water bearing permeable rock or drift deposits from which groundwater can be extracted.

Land Resources

- 7.3.6 West Lancashire is the Local Authority with the largest area of Green Belt within England. The Borough has 34,630 ha of Green Belt, which comprises 91% of its total land area. Figure 7.1 below shows the area that the Green Belt covers in West Lancashire.
- 7.3.7 Agricultural land classification is a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. Land is classified from grade 1 to grade 4 with grades 1, 2 and 3 being the best quality. West Lancashire also has the greatest proportion of grade 1, 2 and 3 agricultural land of all the Lancashire authorities, with 59% of its land classified as grade 1. West Lancashire has a greater proportion of grade 1, 2 and 3 agricultural land than the North West and England averages.
- 7.3.8 Vacant and derelict Brownfield sites within West Lancashire are predominantly located in the settlements of the Borough, with concentrations in Ormskirk, Burscough and Skelmersdale. In 2007, West Lancashire had a total of 101 hectares of Brownfield Land, of which 87% was vacant or derelict and 13% was previously developed land (PDL) with planning permission or a planning application. In addition, over the six year period of 2004-2010, on average 72% of new housing completions in West Lancashire have been on PDL. This exceeds the council and government targets for new development on PDL.
- 7.3.9 Over the past few years, West Lancashire has reduced the amount of household waste being sent to landfill by increasing the proportion of waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting. The percentage of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting in West Lancashire has risen from 27% in 2005/06 to 45% in 2008/09. West Lancashire's performance is currently above those rates of England and Lancashire.
- 7.3.10 There are a number of Local Geological Sites (previously known as Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)) located within West Lancashire. They are non-statutory areas of local importance for nature conservation that complement nationally and internationally designated geological and wildlife sites. The table below details the Local Geological Sites located in West Lancashire. All are less than 2 ha in size.

Figure 7.1 Green Belt in West Lancashire (Source: WLBC 2010)



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1:150,000

Table 7.1 Local Geological Sites in West Lancashire (Source: Geo Lancashire RIGS group 2010)

	RIGS	Type
WL/1/001	Aughton Park Station, Aughton	Railway cutting
WL/1/002	Crossens Pumping Station, nr Southport	Erratic boulder
WL/1/003	Pimbo Bush Quarry	Disused quarry
WL/1/004	Scarth Hill Quarry, Ormskirk	Disused quarry
WL/1/005	Skellow Clough, Bispham	Stream section
WL/1/006	The Ruff, Ormskirk	Disused quarry
WL/8/007	Sollom erratics	Two large Lake Borough erratics

7.3.11 There are a range of open spaces and green corridors within West Lancashire that contribute to the existing green infrastructure of the Borough. Figure 7.2 on page 84 highlights the existing green infrastructure of the Borough.

Effect of existing policies on current situation

7.3.12 The West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) contains policies protect water and land resources within the Borough. Policy DS2 (Protecting the Green Belt) restricts inappropriate development in the Green Belt and policy DS3 (Open Land on the Urban Fringe) protects open land on the edge of urban areas from inappropriate development. Policy GD3 (Development of Contaminated Land) sets out guidance on when development will be acceptable on contaminated land, policy EN2 (Protection of Agricultural Land) protects the most versatile agricultural land and policy EN11 (Protection of Water Resources) prevents development that is likely to damage groundwater or surface water resources.

7.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

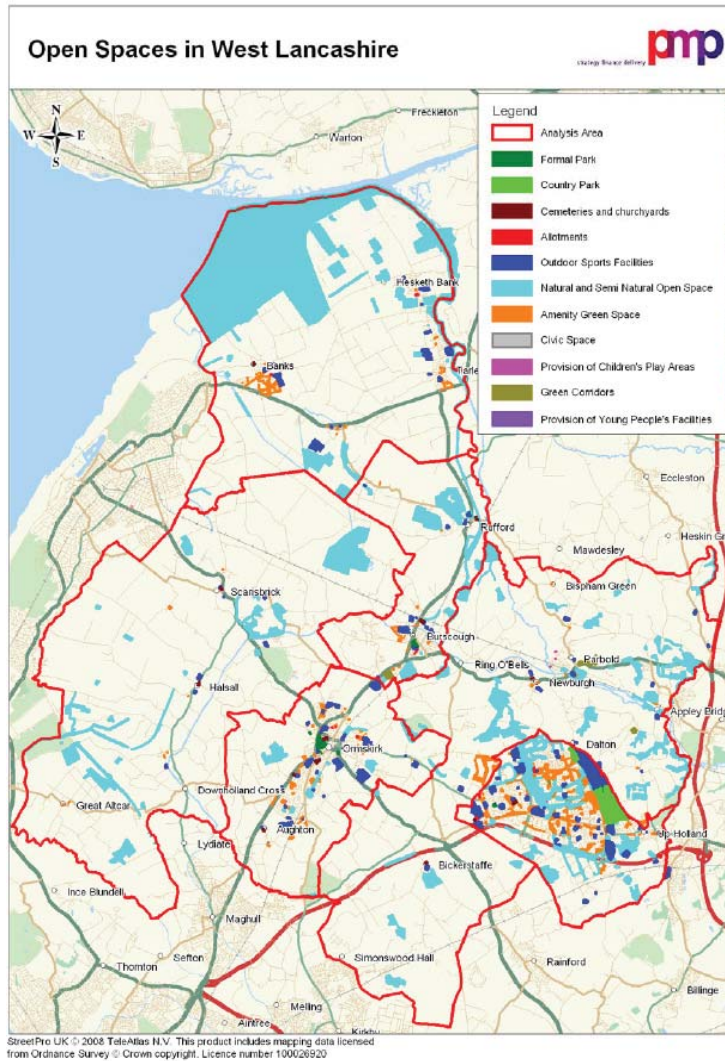
7.4.1 The following section sets out the likely future evolution of the water and land resources baseline if the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version were not adopted.

7.4.2 In the absence of the Local Plan, the saved policies of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2026) would be used to assess development proposals (until they can no longer be saved). As highlighted in the previous section, the Replacement Local Plan contains a number of policies to ensure that water and land resources are protected. However even under the transitional arrangements of the NPPF, such policies will carry little weight if they are inconsistent with the NPPF.

7.4.3 There is a requirement for the Borough to deliver 4,650 new dwellings and 75 ha of land for employment uses over the plan period. Without the plan, the pressure to develop on Greenfield sites and other vacant sites will increase over time, and this is likely to take place in an un-planned and possibly un-sustainable manner, which could include the loss of important land resources such as high grade agricultural land.

7.4.4 The growing population of West Lancashire is likely to lead to an increase in the volume of waste produced in the Borough, which will increase the need for suitable facilities to dispose of and recycle waste. The effects of climate change, especially flooding, are a further threat to land resources within the Borough. Without new policies to tackle the impacts of climate change the risk of loss of soils and geodiversity assets may increase.

Figure 7.2: Existing Green Infrastructure in West Lancashire (Source: Open Space Study, PMP (WLBC) 2010)



7.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

7.5.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on water and land resources in the Borough. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the policies.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	Red
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	Orange
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	Red
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	Red
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	Red
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	Orange
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	Light Blue
GN5 – Sequential Tests	Orange
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	Orange
EC2 – The Rural Economy	Orange
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	Orange
EC4 – Edge Hill University	Red
RS1 – Residential Development	Orange
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	Light Blue
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	Light Blue
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	Light Blue
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	Red
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	Light Blue
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	Orange
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	Orange
IF4 – Developer Contributions	Orange
EN1 – Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	Orange
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment	Red
EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	Red
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	Orange

General comments

- 7.5.2 The implementation of the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version would have a variety of impacts on water and land resources located within the Borough. The main issue in relation to the sustainability theme is that, although brownfield land is prioritised for new development, there will be a need to release Greenfield and Green Belt land over the plan period in order to meet housing and employment land targets, deliver potential renewable energy schemes and make improvements to the transport infrastructure. This could have a significant negative impact on water and land resources within the Borough. The delivery of new development on Greenfield and Green Belt land is necessary due to the shortage of brownfield land available. The broad approach taken towards the location of new development in West Lancashire is considered to be sustainable, as the Greenfield and Green Belt land identified is located within or adjoining key settlements within the Borough.

7.5.3 In other instances, the implementation of the proposed policies would have a positive impact on water and land resources. Policy EN2 incorporates measures that will ensure the most productive agricultural land is protected from inappropriate development. Policies IF3, IF4 and GN3 will help to ensure that the need to provide waste and recycling provision is considered as part of delivering new development. The Local Plan also aims to protect and where possible enhance existing green infrastructure and geodiversity within West Lancashire.

Location of new development in West Lancashire

7.5.4 Over the life of the Local Plan (2012 – 2027), Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) sets out that there will be a need to deliver a minimum of 4,650 new dwellings (net) and 75 ha of land for employment uses. The justification for Policy SP1 highlights that 48% of the total amount of employment development and 37% of housing development proposed in the Borough can be accommodated on Brownfield land. There is insufficient Brownfield land to accommodate the level of development required in West Lancashire so development on Greenfield and Green Belt land over the plan period is inevitable.

7.5.5 An overarching principle set out within a number of West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version policies is to prioritise new development where there is brownfield land available. This approach is set out within policies SP1, SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site), GN1 and EC3 (Rural Development Opportunities). This will have a significant positive impact on ensuring new development is directed towards the most appropriate locations to deliver effective use of land resources.

Land for Green Belt release in the Local Plan (2012-2027)

7.5.6 Development on Green Belt land over the plan period involves three specific sites within the Borough:

- Yew Tree Farm, Burscough (Policy SP3 – Yew Tree, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site);
- Grove Farm, Ormskirk (Policy RS1 – Residential Development); and
- Edge Hill University (Policy EC4 – Edge Hill University).

7.5.7 The West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) found that neither of the sites at Yew Tree Farm or Grove Farm fulfilled the purpose of Green Belt land. However, the study found that land at Edge Hill University fulfilled one purpose of Green Belt land, which would lead to a negative impact on the land resources topic. It is acknowledged that the release of Green Belt land in this location is necessary to support social and economic objectives for West Lancashire.

7.5.8 It is considered that the broad approach taken towards the location of new development in West Lancashire is sustainable. Greenfield and Green Belt land required for new development is located within the amended settlement boundaries and is within or adjoins key settlements (see Policy GN1 Settlement Boundaries). The location of new development in these areas represents the most sustainable location for development on Greenfield and Green Belt land.

“Plan B” sites and Safeguarded Land

7.5.9 Six out of seven “Plan B” sites are located in the Green Belt and the Grove Farm site is also located in the Green Belt. These sites have been subject to a site specific SA in this report.

The site specific assessments highlighted that land at Parr's Lane (east), Aughton, land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk, land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough and land at New Cut Lane, Halsall do not fulfill the purposes of the Green Belt. Therefore, development in these locations would not lead to the loss of significant Green Belt land.

- 7.5.10 However, the site specific appraisals highlighted that land at Mill Lane, Up Holland and land at Fine Jane's Farm, Halsall fulfills the purpose of restricting urban sprawl. It is acknowledged that the potential release of Green Belt in these locations is however necessary to support social and economic objectives for West Lancashire.
- 7.5.11 As part of Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land), land is safeguarded within the settlements boundaries for development needs beyond 2027 should it be required. Some of this land is located within the Green Belt. Approximately 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. It is considered that such land is required to meet the development needs of the Borough over the course of the plan period and beyond.

Further impacts on Land Resources

- 7.5.12 A number of other policies within the Local Plan Publication Version also have impacts on the land resources topic. These impacts are set out below.
- 7.5.13 Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests) requires the preparation of sequential tests for affordable housing in the Green Belt and gypsy sites in the Green Belt. Sequential tests are required for these types of developments to ensure developers demonstrate that the site they propose to develop is the most appropriate from a planning point of view (i.e. there are no sites in 'preferable' locations that could be developed instead). The requirement for sequential tests will ensure that: sufficient alternative locations for potential affordable housing and gypsy sites in the Green Belt have been considered; and that new development of this type is delivered in the most appropriate location. This will contribute towards a less significant impact on the land resources topic area.
- 7.5.14 Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) emphasises the need for applicants to find solutions that secure development that improves the environmental conditions in an area, which may indirectly help to protect high quality land in West Lancashire over the plan period. The NPPF has removed the national brownfield target for housing development, which could pose a threat to soil and land resources in the longer term. However, this is partly mitigated by the Core Strategy emphasis on the use of previously developed land to meet housing and employment needs.
- 7.5.15 Policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) sets out a series of criteria that will need to be satisfied before non permanent accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers is permitted. The policy states that the development of accommodation will need to comply with Green Belt policy. This will contribute towards protecting the Green Belt in West Lancashire from inappropriate development.
- 7.5.16 Density requirements for residential development within West Lancashire of a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare are set out within Policy RS1. The implementation of this policy will encourage efficient use of land resources within West Lancashire over the plan period. In

- particular, the efficient use of Brownfield land will help to minimise the need to develop Green Belt land and Greenfield land within settlements. This will contribute towards a less significant impact on the land resources topic area.
- 7.5.17 In terms of mitigating against the loss of high grade agricultural land, Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy) dictates that this will only be approved where “absolutely necessary to deliver development allocated within this Local Plan or strategic infrastructure.” The policy highlights the importance of protecting against the loss of the best and most versatile grade agricultural land elsewhere in the Borough.
- 7.5.18 Policy EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Efficiency) identifies the need to deliver 27.44 MW of wind energy within the Borough, which dependent upon location, could potentially have a significant negative impact on land resources within West Lancashire. However, the policy sets out a series of requirements that will need to be met as part of wind energy development. Proposals will be need to consider any potential impacts on land resources (including agricultural land and areas of deep peat). The policy also requires proposals for renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy schemes within the Green Belt to demonstrate that the harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by the wider benefits of the development.
- 7.5.19 The implementation of Policy EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment) will have a significant positive impact on the land resources topic area. It promotes the conservation and enhancement of the Borough’s deep peat resources. The policy also highlights how development on the most valued agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless it can demonstrate there are no other sites suitable to accommodate development. This approach will help to protect valuable land resources within West Lancashire.
- 7.5.20 Policy IF2 (Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice) sets out a number of measures to improve the transport infrastructure within the Borough (including promotion of public transport use, railway extensions and ultra low carbon/electric vehicles). The development of new transport schemes within the Borough (particularly the proposed development of the A570 Ormskirk bypass) could lead to a loss of Green Belt and Greenfield land.

Waste and Recycling

- 7.5.21 Minerals and waste planning issues are predominantly dealt with by the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework (prepared by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn and Darwen and Blackpool councils). The Local Plan Publication Version highlights the importance of delivering sufficient waste and recycling management infrastructure within the Borough. Policy IF3 (Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth) requires new development to demonstrate that it will support West Lancashire’s infrastructure requirements, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) for the Borough. Policy IF4 (Developer Contributions) identifies the potential to seek contributions towards waste infrastructure as part of the process of approving new development in West Lancashire.
- 7.5.22 In terms of the design of development, Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) highlights that new development in the Borough will be permitted provided that it incorporates sufficient recycling collection facilities. The implementation of policies IF3, IF4 and GN3 will contribute towards a less significant positive impact on the SA objectives within the land resources topic area.

Green Infrastructure and Geodiversity

- 7.5.23 A number of proposed policies in the Local Plan Publication Version would lead to the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure in West Lancashire. In particular, Policy EN3 (Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space) highlights the importance of providing a network of multi functional green space including open space, sports facilities, recreational and play opportunities, flood storage, habitat creation, footpaths and cycleways, food growing and climate change mitigation. Furthermore, Policy IF2 promotes the development of three linear parks within West Lancashire, which will help to enhance the green infrastructure network.
- 7.5.24 In terms of protecting and enhancing geodiversity assets located throughout the Borough, Policy EN2 highlights the need to protect Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological sites as part of delivering new development in West Lancashire. This will contribute towards a positive impact on this topic area.

Water Resources

- 7.5.25 New development and an increase in the population in the Borough will increase the pressure on current water resources within the area. The justification for Policy IF3 highlights how water supply will be considered within the IDP. Policy SP1 and IF3 highlight how waste water treatment capacity issues will need to be addressed as part of delivering new development in Ormskirk and Burscough.
- 7.5.26 Policies GN3 and EN2 aim to ensure water resources are managed within the Borough over the plan period. Policy GN3 identifies the need for new development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems and to be designed to prevent sewerage problems. Policy EN2 aims to prevent unnecessary development in the Borough's Coastal Zones. The implementation of these two policies will contribute towards protecting and improving the quality of both inland and coastal waters within West Lancashire over the plan period.

7.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 7.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:
- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to water and land resources than the alternative options.
 - The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: a **more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to the development of accommodation in inappropriate locations that could have a significant negative impact on water and land resources.

7.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

7.7.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced in relation to water and land resources.

Mitigation of Negative Effects

7.7.2 The potential negative effects on water and land resources can be summarised as follows:

- The implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version will lead to development on Green Belt and Greenfield land in order to meet housing and employment land targets, deliver potential renewable energy schemes and make improvements to the transport infrastructure. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, a number of proposals for new development on Green Belt land will be in locations where the Green Belt is no longer fulfilling the purpose of the Green Belt.

7.7.3 It should be noted that in order to meet specified targets, new development on Green Belt and Greenfield land is inevitable in West Lancashire over the plan period. However, it is considered that the broad approach taken towards the location of new development in West Lancashire is sustainable. Greenfield and Green Belt land required for new development is located within the amended settlement boundaries, which are set out in Policy GN1. The location of new development in these areas represents the most sustainable location for development on Greenfield and Green Belt land as it is located within or adjoining key settlements in the Borough.

7.7.4 Furthermore, an overarching principle set out within the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version policies is to prioritise new development where there is brownfield land available.

7.7.5 In terms of mitigating against the loss of high grade agricultural land, policy EN2 highlights how development on the most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless it can demonstrate there are no other sites suitable to accommodate the development.

Enhancement of Positive Effects

7.7.6 Potential positive impacts on water and land resources can be summarised as follows:

- The Local Plan identifies the need to ensure sufficient water supply and waste water infrastructure are delivered as part of new development. The implementation of Policies GN3 and EN2 will also contribute towards protecting and improving the quality of both inland and coastal waters within West Lancashire over the plan period.
- There are a number of proposed policies within the Local Plan (particularly Policy EN3) that will help to protect and where possible enhance the green infrastructure of the Borough and areas of geological value.
- Policies IF3, IF4 and GN3 require consideration and provision of waste and recycling facilities when delivering new development in West Lancashire.

7.8 Monitoring

7.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on this area of sustainability, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- % of river length assessed as (a) good biological quality; and (b) good chemical quality;
- Daily domestic water consumption (per capita consumption);
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the EA on water quality grounds;
- The volume of household waste collected and the proportion recycled;
- Amount of municipal waste arising and managed by management type;
- Capacity of new waste management facilities by type;
- No. of new developments incorporating recycling facilities;
- New homes build on previously developed land & % of converted dwellings on previously developed land;
- Amount of floorspace by employment type, which is on previously developed land;
- % of development on Greenfield sites & Brownfield sites; and
- % of contaminated land reclaimed in total.

7.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version Paper	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	The implementation of the policies within the Local Plan Publication Version would have a variety of different impacts on water and land resources within the Borough. The main issue is that, although brownfield land is prioritised for new development, there will be a need to release Greenfield and Green Belt land over the plan period to meet housing and employment land targets, deliver potential renewable energy schemes and make	<p>Water</p> <p>The Local Plan Publication Version builds upon the regional and local plans that address the need to protect water sources. Together these plans should deliver the improvements required by the Water Framework Directive and help to conserve water resources.</p> <p>Land Resources</p>

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version Paper	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>improvements to the transport infrastructure. This could potentially have a significant negative impact on water and land resources within the Borough.</p> <p>However, there are policies within the Local Plan Publication Version that will help to mitigate negative impacts to a certain extent.</p>	<p>Other plans and programmes that promote growth will have a negative effect on land resources. However, positive effects on the management of waste and minerals in the Borough are likely to be felt from the implementation of the Minerals and Waste Management Core Strategy for Lancashire.</p>
Long term (beyond 2027)	<p>Water</p> <p>In the longer term, population growth is expected in the Borough. There will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of water quality and resource issues.</p> <p>Land Resources</p> <p>In the longer term, the location of additional development in the settlement boundaries (as identified in Policy GN1) will ensure that Greenfield and Green Belt located outside of these areas are protected.</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>An emphasis on water quality and resource management will continue to be prevalent in policy. It is necessary for West Lancashire to maintain a long term commitment to promoting water efficiency in all new developments.</p> <p>Land Resources</p> <p>It is likely that the area will be left with a core of previously developed land in the long term that is not economically viable to remediate. At this point, Greenfield land will be the only option.</p>
Areas likely to be significantly affected	<p>The land resources that are likely to be significantly affected are the areas of Green Belt at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough, Grove Farm, Ormskirk and Edge Hill University, Ormskirk where development could potentially occur over the plan period.</p> <p>Water resources in and around these towns could also be significantly affected due to the level of development and increase in population and traffic in and around these areas.</p>	
Permanent vs. Temporary	<p>As the development of land is considered permanent, both positive and negative effects will be permanent.</p>	
Secondary or indirect	<p>Negative effects in relation to the use of land resources (e.g. increased hard standing areas or pollution of ground water through industrial development) and climate change and flood risk may have indirect effects on water quality and resources as increased velocity and volume of run off could lead to pollution of the Borough's waterways and groundwater system.</p> <p>A potentially significant secondary or indirect effect on land resources is the impact increased development (especially residential development) could have on land resources if the waste produced by those new developments is not minimised, re-used or recycled.</p>	

8 Climatic Factors and Flooding

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Climate change is recognised as one of the most serious and important challenges facing the UK. Climate change issues must be addressed at the national, regional and local level. In recent decades evidence has accumulated that demonstrates that an unprecedented rise in global temperatures has occurred over the last century or so. Scientific consensus attributes this change to emissions of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide from combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation or transport. The major contributing factor to increased greenhouse gases and climate change is human activity.

8.1.2 Floods can occur anywhere and at any time. They are caused by rising ground water levels, burst or overloaded waste or stormwater infrastructure, hillside run-off as well as flooding from rivers and the sea. The main areas at risk of flooding are located towards the north and the east of the Borough.

8.1.3 The impact of the Local Plan Publication Version on the need to minimise energy use and promote its efficient use is considered as part of this chapter also.

8.1.4 In considering this area of sustainability, it is important to recognise that climate change and flooding is closely related to two other topics. The impact of air pollutants on climate change means that there is overlap with the Air Quality topic and the impact of climate change on flooding and flood risk means that there is overlap with the Water Quality and Land Resources topic.

Identification of the applicable SA Objective

8.1.5 This section outlines the Sustainability Objectives that have been identified as being relevant to Climatic Factors and Flooding.

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub- Criteria
16.	To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy reduce or manage flood risk? • Will the plan / policy maintain and enhance ground water quality? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of coastal waters? • Will the plan / policy improve the quality of rivers and inland waters?
18.	To ensure the prudent use of natural resources, including the use of renewable energies and the sustainable management of existing resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the plan / policy minimise the need for energy? • Will the plan / policy maximise the production / proportion of renewable energy? • Will the plan / policy increase energy efficiency (e.g. energy efficiency in buildings, transport

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub- Criteria
		modes, etc) • Will the plan / policy minimise the use of fossil fuels?

8.2 What is the Policy Context?

8.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the climatic factors and flooding topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

8.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. One of the twelve core planning principles set out within the NPPF is to “*support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change...*” The NPPF highlights the key role that planning plays in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change. It also highlights that inappropriate development should be avoided in areas at risk of flooding.

Planning and Energy Act (2008)

8.2.3 The Planning and Energy Act allows local councils in England and Wales to set reasonable requirements in their development plan documents for: a proportion of energy used in development to be energy derived from renewable sources in the locality of the development; similarly, a proportion of energy used to be low-carbon energy; and for development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of the current Building Regulations.

Climate Change Act (2008)

8.2.4 The Climate Change Act makes the UK the first country in the world to adopt legally-binding carbon emission targets. Under the Climate Change Act, the government will have to adhere to five year carbon budgets and will be required to provide annual reports on its progress towards these.

Regional Policy

North West Sustainable Energy Strategy (2006)

8.2.5 The North West Sustainable Energy Strategy sets out how the region can contribute towards the development of renewable energy and greater take up of energy efficiency. The key relevant objective is to set the region on a course to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60% by 2050.

North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 (2011)

8.2.6 The Shoreline Management Plan 2 (SMP2) provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding along the coast. The area of shoreline within the

SMP2 incorporates an area to the north of West Lancashire. The SMP2 identifies a number of objectives, including the need to:

- set out the risk from flooding and erosion to people and the developed, historic and natural environment within the SMP2 area;
- identify policies for managing and improving the environment by managing the risks from flooding and coastal erosion; and
- discourage inappropriate development in areas where flooding and erosion risks are high.

Regional Policy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

8.2.7 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that: flood risk from inland and coastal waters is avoided; and the region is protected from the impacts of climatic change. The plan incorporates a number of measures that aim to:

- Manage flood risk from waterways in the region and the North West coastline; and
- Reduce emissions in the region and adapt to climate change.

Sub-Regional Policy

Lancashire Climate Change Strategy 2009-2020

8.2.8 The Lancashire Climate Change Strategy sets out the partnerships long term vision that Lancashire is a low carbon and well adapted sub region by 2020. The strategy identifies the key objectives for adapting to climate change and the key tools that will help to deliver strategic planning, raising awareness and education.

Local Policy

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment West Lancashire (2010)

8.2.9 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for West Lancashire identifies areas at risk of flooding, so that risk can be managed and future development located in those areas at lowest risk of flooding. The SFRA shows that the majority of land that is susceptible to flooding within West Lancashire is located within the Green Belt and is used for agricultural purposes. It identifies Banks as the settlement most at risk of flooding.

Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study 2010

8.2.10 The purpose of the Renewable Energy Capacity Study is to provide evidence for the LDF relating to renewable energy, including the identification of suitable energy sources and priority zones for the delivery of low and zero carbon technologies. The study will inform future land allocations.

8.3 What is the Situation Now?

8.3.1 This section of the chapter looks at the current baseline in terms of Climatic Factors and Flooding present within West Lancashire.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

8.3.2 Table 8.1 shows that West Lancashire has higher per capita CO² emissions than all of the other Lancashire local authorities, apart from the Ribble Valley, and higher than the North West and the England average. The table also shows that within Lancashire, the share of emissions attributable to industry and commerce is greatest in those boroughs where energy-intensive industrial activities have a disproportionate representation. This includes West Lancashire.

Table 8.1: Local and Regional Estimates of Carbon Dioxide Emissions (Source: Lancashire Profile 2010 (DECC 2007))

	CO ² emissions (thousands of tonnes)					Per capita CO ² emission (Tonnes)
	Industry & commerce	Domestic	Road transport	Land use change	Total	
Burnley	214	210	154	1	549	6.6
Chorley	199	258	395	10	861	8.7
Fylde	269	205	199	26	700	9.2
Hyndburn	201	190	187	2	580	7.1
Lancaster	312	314	346	21	992	6.9
Pendle	257	212	136	3	608	6.8
Preston	370	299	356	7	1032	7.8
Ribble Valley	893	155	122	10	1180	20.2
Rossendale	242	181	130	3	557	8.3
South Ribble	287	257	311	7	862	8.1
West Lancashire	438	275	274	98	1085	9.9
Wyre	312	270	238	47	867	7.8
<i>Lancashire</i>	<i>3994</i>	<i>2826</i>	<i>2848</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>9903</i>	<i>8.5</i>
<i>North West</i>	<i>25354</i>	<i>16406</i>	<i>14933</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>57336</i>	<i>8.4</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>232945</i>	<i>145725</i>	<i>136361</i>	<i>-1815</i>	<i>513216</i>	<i>8.4</i>

Fuel Consumption

8.3.3 Gas is the largest consumed fuel within West Lancashire, followed by electricity. Gas is a non-renewable fuel and will run out eventually. Use of both gas and electricity has been reducing slowly since 2005, with a visible increase in the proportion of energy generated from renewable and waste sources.

Flood Risk

8.3.4 Figure 8.1 demonstrates that significant areas of land are potentially under threat from coastal and fluvial flooding. The highest areas of risk are to the north and west of the Borough, where coastal flooding is the greatest threat. The only significant sizeable settlement within such a high flood risk zone is Banks, which consists of approximately 1,364 properties and a population of 3,359. Sea embankments that are built to withstand a 1 in 75 year event protect the settlement of Banks and the land to the south. Other settlements in the north of the

- Borough including Hesketh Bank and Tarleton are not considered to be in a direct flood risk area.
- 8.3.5 The geographical landscape of West Lancashire is a low-lying fluvial plain which historically makes large areas of land prone to flooding. However, much of this land is used for agricultural purposes and is sparsely populated. Therefore the risk to people and properties is low.
- 8.3.6 Further threats of flooding affect the south west of the Borough 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 River Douglas passes close to a number of settlements including Hesketh Bank, Tarleton, Rufford, Parbold and Appley Bridge. Works are currently underway to improve flood defences on the upper reaches of the River Douglas in Wigan and on one of the tributaries, the River Yarrow in Croston. However, no improvements are planned for the river's course within West Lancashire in the near future.
- 8.3.7 The main settlements of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough do not lie directly in areas of significant flood risk although properties located adjacent to the River Tawd in Skelmersdale and Sandy Brook in Ormskirk may be at some localised risk.

Renewable Energy Capacity

- 8.3.8 The Renewable Energy Capacity Study for the Liverpool City Region Authorities and Merseyside identified a high wind resource within West Lancashire with average wind speeds of between 6.6 – 7.1 m/s. The assessment also suggested that a target of 27.44MW of electricity from wind energy development by 2020 would be achievable within West Lancashire. 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.
- 8.3.9 The study also identified that Ormskirk Town Centre could be a potential energy priority zone for district heating. This is primarily due to the key anchor loads such as the swimming pool, hospital and other public buildings that would be required to ensure a network would be feasible. The capacities for biomass and wind energies for each local authority area within the Liverpool City Region are shown in Table 8.2.

Figure 8.1 Flood risk levels in West Lancashire (Source: WLBC SFRA (Environment Agency) 2010)



Table 8.2 Capacities for biomass and wind energy (Source: Renewables Study, 2010)

Approximate Priority Zone Capacities	Biomass CHP		Onshore wind (MWh)
	Electrical (Mwe est.)	Thermal (MW)	
Halt	0.7-1.0	0.8-1.3	-
Knowsley	9.0	9.9 est	-
Liverpool	5.4	6.5	-
Sefton	1.3	1.5	Up to 1,100
St Helens	0.4	0.5	-
Warrington	3.8	4.5	-
West Lancashire	0.8	1.0	Up to 2,200
Wirral	2.9	3.5	Up to 1,400
Total	24.3-24.6	18.3-18.8	Up to 5,500

Effect of existing policies on current situation

- 8.3.10 The West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) contains a number of policies that guard against flooding and ensure that renewable energy schemes are supported over the plan period (for as long as these policies are saved). Policy EN3 (Coastal Zone) sets out the need to protect the coastal zone by ensuring that only appropriate development types are allowed in this area. Policy EN10 (Flood Risk) aims to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding throughout the Borough. Policy SC12 (Renewable Energy) supports renewable energy proposals where they would not have a significant detrimental impact on the character or landscape value of an area.

8.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 8.4.1 The following section sets out the likely future evolution of the climatic factors and flooding baseline if the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version Policies are not adopted. If greenhouse gases, for instance CO², are emitted worldwide at current levels then global temperatures are predicted to rise by up to 6°C by the end of the century. This is enough to make extreme weather events like floods and droughts more frequent in the future. Without adoption of the new plan, this trend is likely to be exacerbated, as new development will not necessarily take place in sustainable locations, leading to an increase in CO² emissions in the Borough.
- 8.4.2 As a result of climate change, there will be a greater risk of flooding due to heavier rainfall and increased sea levels. Within urban areas, the frequency and severity of flooding is expected to increase, due to the limited capacity of existing surface water drainage systems.
- 8.4.3 In the absence of the Local Plan policies, the saved policies of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) would be used to determine development proposals (for as long as these policies are saved). However even under the transitional arrangements of the NPPF, such policies will carry little weight if they are inconsistent with the NPPF. The potential increase in flood risk as a result of future climate change may lead to new areas becoming susceptible to flood risk.

8.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

8.5.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on climatic factors and flooding in the Borough. The following table describes the degree of impact of each of the proposed policies on climatic factors and flooding.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	
EC4 – Edge Hill University	
RS1 – Residential Development	
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	
IF4 – Developer Contributions	
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	
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	

General comments

- 8.5.2 Overall, the implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version should have a significant positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding sustainability topic. Although the growth over the plan period is likely to lead to an increase in the volume of traffic travelling to and around the Borough (which would in turn increase CO₂ emissions), there are policies within the plan to counteract this negative impact to some extent, including to ensure that community facilities and services are in appropriate locations to reduce the need to travel; and through the promotion of sustainable transport methods.
- 8.5.3 The majority of new development proposed within the plan is targeted towards areas that do not suffer from significant flood risk and a sequential approach is adopted to permission of development in flood zones 2 and 3.
- 8.5.4 The Local Plan Publication Version promotes the development of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy schemes over the plan period and highlights the importance of delivering low carbon development. Both these policy measures will help to reduce CO₂ emissions over the plan period.

Increase in Population

- 8.5.5 Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) sets out the level of development that is proposed in the West Lancashire Borough across the plan period (2012-2027). The policy states that there will be a need for 4,650 new dwellings (net) and 75ha of land for employment uses over the period of the Local Plan. This level of development and increase in population will subsequently increase the amount of traffic travelling to and around the Borough. In turn, the increase in traffic will lead to an increase in CO₂ emissions over the plan period.
- 8.5.6 There are a number of policies within the Local Plan Publication Version that aim to locate development in appropriate locations to accommodate growth but reduce the need to travel. The implementation of these policies will have a significant positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding topic area. Policy SP1 sets out that the majority of new development will be directed towards the three existing key service centres (Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale). These three settlements are the primary sustainable communities in the Borough that include all essential services and facilities and many desirable services and facilities (particularly Skelmersdale). Focusing new development in these settlements will reduce the need to travel to a certain extent, as these areas have existing services and facilities.
- 8.5.7 The settlement boundaries proposed in the Local Plan Publication Version are set out in Policy GN1 (Settlement Boundaries). The settlement boundaries incorporate Greenfield and Green Belt land required to accommodate new development over and beyond the plan period. The aim of Policy GN1 is to ensure that new development is delivered within the settlement boundaries. The implementation of this policy will have a less significant positive impact on the climatic factors topic through reducing the need to travel, which should assist to reduce the carbon emissions generated by new development.
- 8.5.8 Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land) sets out land has been safeguarded within the settlement boundaries in West Lancashire and which will be protected from development. Planning permission will be refused for development proposals which would prejudice the development of this land in the future. Land is safeguarded within the settlements boundaries for either:

development needs beyond 2027; or for the “Plan B” approach should it be required. The safeguarding of this land will ensure that in the long term (beyond 2027); development is located within existing settlement boundaries, which will reduce the need to travel. This will help to reduce CO₂ emissions from new development in the Borough.

- 8.5.9 Policy SP3 (Yew Tree, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) proposes significant growth towards the south of the town. The policy highlights how a new primary school, local convenience shops and a new youth and community centre will be developed as part of the strategic development site. The inclusion of these services will reduce the need for people moving to the area to travel in order to access key services. This will have a less significant impact on reducing CO₂ emissions from new development within Burscough.
- 8.5.10 Policy IF3 (Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth) identifies the need to make the most of existing infrastructure, by focussing new development in sustainable locations with the best infrastructure capacity. The policy also highlights the need to co-locate new public facilities and services, creating “community hubs” and providing a range of services in one sustainable and accessible location. The implementation of this policy is likely to have a positive impact of little or no effect on the SA objectives within the climatic factors topic area.

Sustainable Travel

- 8.5.11 Measures to deliver sustainable transport solutions alongside new development are identified within a number of policies in the Local Plan Publication Version. Through encouraging people in West Lancashire to utilise sustainable transport solutions (as opposed to the private car), the amount of CO₂ emissions produced will be reduced, which would have a less significant positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.
- 8.5.12 In particular, Policy IF2 (Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice) highlights that over the Local Plan period the council will seek to provide additional footpaths and cycleways where appropriate, encourage greater use of public transport facilities, improve public transport to rural areas of the Borough and promote low carbon travel choices. The policy also promotes the creation of new transport infrastructure including a new rail station, a new bus station, improved cycle linkages between Ormskirk and Burscough and the provision of a new rail link between Ormskirk & Preston and Southport & Wigan. The implementation of this policy will have a less significant positive impact on the climatic factors topic area.
- 8.5.13 Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) highlights the need for new development in West Lancashire to integrate well with the surrounding area and provide safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle access; and prioritise the convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. Both measures will help to promote the use of sustainable travel as part of delivering new development in the Borough, which may assist to reduce CO₂ emissions.
- 8.5.14 Policies SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre), SP3 and EC4 (Edge Hill University) aim to ensure that provisions for ensuring sustainable transport methods are provided as part of delivering growth in the key service centres in West Lancashire. This will help to ensure that CO₂ emissions from travel are kept to a minimum in these areas when delivering new development.

Flood Risk

- 8.5.15 A large proportion of new development will be directed towards the three existing key service centres (Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale), which do not lie directly in areas of

- significant flood risk. Subsequently, this will ensure that the majority of new development is not located in areas that are at significant risk of flooding.
- 8.5.16 Policy GN3 emphasises the need to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable flood risk or drainage problems through requiring new development to: be located away from flood zones 2 and 3 where possible; satisfy the sequential and, if necessary, the exceptions tests set out in National Guidance; and incorporate sustainable drainage systems where there is a risk of surface water flooding within or beyond a site. The implementation of this policy will have a significant positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.
- 8.5.17 Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests) highlights that proposals at risk from flooding will be required to undergo a sequential test to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites in preferable locations. This will contribute towards ensuring that inappropriate development is avoided in areas at risk of flooding over the plan period.
- 8.5.18 As part of delivering development that adapts to climate change, Policy EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure) requires all development to be located away from areas at risk of flooding. The implementation of this policy will further contribute towards a significant positive impact on the SA objectives within the climatic factors and flooding topic area.
- 8.5.19 Policy IF4 (Developer Contributions) sets out the type of developer contributions that will be sought through development proposals in West Lancashire. Contributions may be sought for flood prevention works. This contributes towards a likely positive impact of little or no significance on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

Energy Efficiency

- 8.5.20 The Local Plan Publication Version encourages the development of renewable energy schemes throughout West Lancashire over the plan period. The overarching policy in terms of renewable energy development is Policy EN1 (Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure). The policy sets out a series of standards that all redevelopment will be required to adhere to, including: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 as a minimum standard for new residential development and conversions, rising to Level 4 in 2013 and to Level 6 in 2016; and BREEAM 'very good' standard as a minimum for new commercial buildings of more than 1000m², rising to excellent by 2013. The policy also sets out the need to deliver low and zero carbon energy infrastructure throughout West Lancashire. This involves requiring all major development to explore the potential for a district heating or decentralised energy network. The implementation of this policy will ensure renewable energy and low carbon infrastructure is delivered in West Lancashire, which will help to reduce CO₂ emissions released over and beyond the plan period.
- 8.5.21 Policies SP3, EN4, and GN3 also incorporate measures that will help to ensure that low carbon and renewable energy schemes are delivered over and beyond the plan period. Policy IF4 sets out the type of developer contributions that will be sought through development proposals in West Lancashire. Contributions may be sought for climate change and energy initiatives. Policy IF2 sets out that developments may be required to provide an electric vehicle recharging point, which will facilitate the use of electric vehicles during and beyond the plan period. These will contribute towards a less significant positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

8.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 8.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). An assessment of the alternative options for policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version is not required in this chapter as this policy was judged to have a minimal effect on the climatic factors and flooding topic area.

8.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

- 8.7.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced to improve sustainability of the plan in relation to climatic factors and flooding.

Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 8.7.2 The potential negative effects on climatic factors and flooding can be summarised as follows:
- The level of development proposed over the plan period within the Local Plan Publication Version would lead to a growth in the population of the Borough. In turn, this would lead to an increase in the amount of traffic travelling to and around the Borough. This is likely to lead to an increase in CO₂ emissions emitted over the plan period, which would have a significant negative impact.
- 8.7.3 There are measures included within the plan to mitigate this negative impact to some extent. The overall direction of development towards the key service centres and within settlement boundaries will help reduce the need for people to travel by private vehicle in order to access key services. Policy IF3 encourages the co-location of new public facilities and services in sustainable locations, which will further contribute towards reducing the need to travel over the plan period. Policies SP2, SP3, EC4 and IF2 promote the use of sustainable transport methods. This will help to reduce the volume of CO₂ emissions released through private travel.

Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 8.7.4 Potential positive impacts on the topic area of climatic factors and flooding can be summarised as follows:
- Policy IF3 encourages the co-location of new public facilities and services in sustainable locations, which will help to reduce the need to travel over the plan period. In turn, this will help to reduce the amount of CO₂ emissions released.
 - Policies SP2, SP3, EC4 and IF2 incorporate measures to promote the use of sustainable transport methods over the plan period. These measures will help to reduce the volume of CO₂ emissions released through private travel.
 - A number of policies within the plan (including Policies EN1, SP3, EN4 and GN3) emphasise the importance of delivering low carbon development over the plan period. The delivery of low carbon development will have a positive impact on ensuring CO₂ emissions are reduced over the plan period.

- Policies GN3 and IF4 identify the importance of delivering new development within the Borough in the context of preventing flood risk.

8.8 Monitoring

8.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on climatic factors and flooding, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- CO₂ emissions by sector and per capita emissions;
- Average annual domestic consumption of gas and electricity (kwh);
- Renewable energy capacity installed by type;
- % reduction of the per capita CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area;
- Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds;
- Number of approvals incorporating EA advice on flood mitigation guidelines;
- Properties at risk of flooding;
- Renewable energy capacity installed by type;
- % reduction of the per capita CO₂ emissions in the Local Authority area;
- Energy use (gas and electricity);
- % of commercial buildings meeting BREEAM Very Good standard;
- Amount of energy produced by renewable energy sources; and
- Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings (1-highly inefficient, 100-highly efficient).

8.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	Overall, the implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version will have a positive impact on climatic factors and flooding. Although the growth in population over the plan period will lead to an increase in the	A number of plans and programmes at all spatial levels in the UK, including the Climate Change Act (2008), and the NPPF will strengthen the impact of the Local Plan and emphasise the

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>amount of traffic travelling to and around the Borough (which will in turn increase CO₂ emissions), there are policy measures within the plan to counteract this negative impact to some extent.</p> <p>The majority of new development proposed within the plan is targeted towards areas that do not suffer from significant flood risk. There are policies to ensure that development will only be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 if it can be shown that there is no alternative site for development outside these flood zones.</p> <p>The Local Plan Publication Version promotes the development of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy schemes over the plan period and highlights the importance of delivering low carbon development. This will help to reduce CO₂ emissions over the plan period, and contribute positively.</p>	<p>importance of this topic area.</p>
Long term (beyond 2027)	<p>In the long term the Local Plan policies relating to climatic factors and flooding may have less of an impact as new guidance and legislation is introduced.</p> <p>However, by ensuring that new development in West Lancashire is directed towards the key service centres (which are regarded as the most sustainable locations in terms of access to public transport and key services), there is likely to be a significant positive impact on the Borough.</p>	<p>Over the long term, national and regional legislation and guidance may emerge which will strengthen the targets for carbon emissions reduction and will ensure that environments are adaptable. This may outdate the Local Plan policies.</p>
Areas likely to be significantly affected	<p>The main towns located within West Lancashire (Skelmersdale, Burscough and Ormskirk) are most likely to be impacted by climatic factors due to the high level of development proposed in these areas. This will increase the carbon emissions in these areas through an increase in population, which will contribute to a negative impact on the wider climate.</p> <p>Areas towards the east and north of the Borough are most susceptible to flooding. These are likely to be positively affected by the proposed policies due to the measures to protect areas at risk of flooding.</p>	
Permanent vs. Temporary	<p>The majority of impacts relating to climatic factors and flooding will be permanent, especially in terms of reducing carbon emissions; ensuring developments are adaptable to climatic shifts and locating new development away from flood risk.</p>	
Secondary or indirect	<p>That the effects that new development can have on climatic factors and flooding are essentially secondary or indirect effects, as they operate on the wider climatic system.</p>	

9 Transportation and Air Quality

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Transportation networks play a critically important role in the sustainable development of a Borough, enabling people and goods to move around. West Lancashire's transportation networks are vital for those living, working and visiting the Borough, providing local accessibility to key locations as well as connectivity to wider, sub-regional networks.
- 9.1.2 Ensuring that residents and visitors have a choice of sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, walking and cycling, helps to increase accessibility to key employment, education, training and leisure opportunities as well as improving health and well-being through more active lifestyles.
- 9.1.3 Similarly, many businesses require an efficient local transport network, so ensuring that new development is located centrally or is accessible by a variety of transport modes helps to increase accessibility to goods, services and amenities and to secure the viability of their operations.
- 9.1.4 Therefore, it is important to ensure that transport infrastructure is able to safely and efficiently accommodate demand and provide choice of transportation, thereby reducing the impact of congestion on the Borough's roads.
- 9.1.5 The effects on health of transport-related air pollution are among the leading concerns about transport. The increased intensity of private motorised transport has led to greater emissions of air pollutants and greater exposure of people to hazardous pollution that causes serious health problems.
- 9.1.6 When air pollution is present in high concentrations it can cause various health effects ranging from irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, to the worsening of lung and heart diseases. In addition to impacts on human health, annual levels of nitrogen dioxide (mainly from traffic) and sulphur dioxide (mainly from industry) can impact on vegetation and ecosystems. Air pollutants can also lead to the soiling and corrosion of buildings.
- 9.1.7 In recent years there has been a growing body of evidence to suggest that poor air quality may have a cumulative effect, which may be chronic for sensitive individuals.
- 9.1.8 Actions to reduce air pollution are also often actions to tackle climate change, for example through reducing local emissions from transportation, tackling outputs of local pollutants as well as those of greenhouse gases. Therefore, there is some overlap between this topic and climatic factors and flooding.

Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives

- 9.1.9 The following Sustainability Objectives have previously been identified as the most relevant to Transportation and Air Quality:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
11	To reduce the need to travel, improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes	<p>To reduce the need to travel, and improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes.</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce vehicular traffic and congestion?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy increase access to and opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce freight movement?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve access to and encourage the use of ICT?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the efficiency of the transport network?</p>
17	To protect and improve noise air quality	<p>Will the plan / policy maintain or, where possible, improve local air quality?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce noise and light pollution?</p>

9.2 What is the Policy Context?

9.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the transportation and air quality topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

9.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. One of the twelve core planning principles set out within the NPPF is to “*actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable*”. The NPPF emphasises the need for Local Authorities to work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development. It also highlights that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

The Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010)

9.2.3 The Regulations transpose into UK law set standards (binding limit values) and assessment criteria for air quality, as required by the EU Air Quality Directive and Daughter Directives.

Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (2010)

9.2.4 The Government’s revised strategy - required under the Environment Act 1995 - sets out plans to improve and protect air quality in the UK. It considers ambient air quality only, leaving occupational exposure, in-vehicle exposure and indoor air quality to be addressed separately.

9.2.5 The strategy sets health-based objectives for nine main air pollutants. The pollutants covered are: Benzene; 1,3-butadiene; carbon monoxide (CO); lead; nitrogen dioxide (NO₂); ozone;

particles (PM10); sulphur dioxide (SO₂); and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Performance against these objectives is monitored where people are regularly present and might be exposed to air pollution.

Air Quality and Climate change – A UK Perspective (2007)

- 9.2.6 The links between climate change and air quality mitigation / improvements should be explored in policy development and measures that result in benefits for both air quality and climate should be concentrated on.

Regional Policy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

- 9.2.7 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that air quality is improved within the region and sufficient transport schemes are delivered. The plan incorporates a number of measures that aim to:

- Mitigate the impacts of road traffic on air quality;
- Reduce traffic growth, promote walking, cycling and public transport;
- Provide good public transport links to surrounding towns and villages;
- Ensure safe, reliable and effective operation of the region's transport networks; and
- Manage travel demand and deliver an integrated transport network.

Sub-Regional Policy

Transportation

Lancashire Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) 2011-2021 (November 2010)

- 9.2.8 LTP 3 sets out Lancashire County Council's transport priorities for the next ten years (2011-2021). The top three priorities for Lancashire that are set out in the LTP are to: deliver economic growth, through the creation of jobs and access to employment; invest in the safety of our children and young people in the early years; and ensure that the current transport infrastructure is maintained. A number of aims are also set out within LTP3. These include:

- Reduce congestion and delay;
- Improve highway links and junctions;
- Reduce journey times;
- Improve connections and links;
- Promote the case for major infrastructure investment;
- Develop bus stations and interchanges;
- Promote sustainable travel options to important visitor destinations; and
- Ensure adequate parking is delivered throughout the Borough.

Lancashire and Cumbria Route Utilisation Strategy August 2008 and Merseyside Route Utilisation Strategy March 2009

- 9.2.9 The Lancashire and Cumbria RUS considers the future of the rail system in Lancashire and Cumbria over primarily a 10 year time period, but also takes into account the Government's 2007 White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Railway" to give a 30-year context. The RUS examines the current and future freight and passenger markets and assesses the predicted growth in each and seeks to accommodate this growth. A number of small investments are proposed at Preston, Carlisle, Ormskirk, Blackburn and Burscough Junction to improve interchanges and a standard hourly service between Southport, Preston and Ormskirk. The Northern Line of the Merseyside RUS, which serves Ormskirk via Liverpool Central, is covered by the Merseyside Route Utilisation Strategy. The Merseyside RUS recommended further work be undertaken to investigate the business case for a new rail station for Skelmersdale.

Local Policy

Transportation

West Lancashire Integrated Transport Review (May 2008)

- 9.2.10 The report is a strategic review of passenger transport within West Lancashire. The study analyses key issues, relevant information and explores opportunities for improvements to passenger transport in West Lancashire to inform strategic and operational planning by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The review of passenger transport identified a broad range of service provision throughout West Lancashire including scheduled bus services, rail provision (including in relation to the Kirkby-Wigan line), community, school and health transport. The accessibility assessment conducted as part of the review concluded that Bickerstaffe, Crawford, Great Altcar and Holmeswood suffer from the lowest level of accessibility in West Lancashire.

9.3 What is the Situation Now?

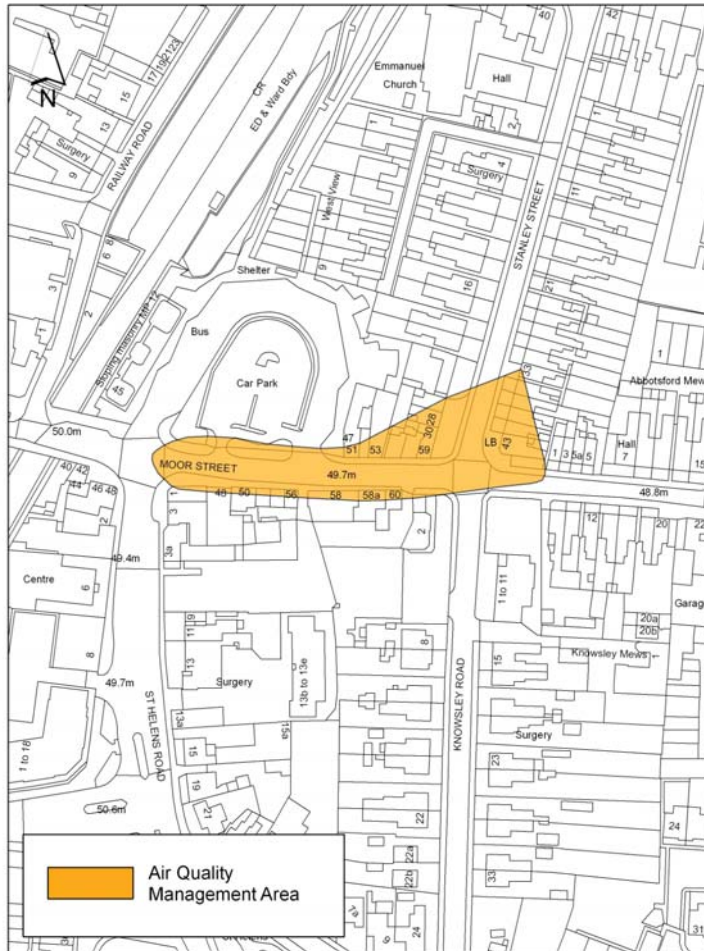
Air Quality

- 9.3.1 Since December 1997 each local authority in the UK has been carrying out a review and assessment of air quality in their area. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the next few years. The aim of the review is to make sure that the national air quality objectives will be achieved throughout the UK by the relevant deadlines. If a local authority finds any areas where the objectives are not likely to be achieved, it must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) there. The rural nature of West Lancashire means that it has relatively good air quality compared to urban Boroughs, where there are higher levels of traffic and industry emissions. West Lancashire has only one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which is located in Moor St, Ormskirk (see figure 9.1). This area suffers from congestion and bottle necks from traffic travelling through Ormskirk town centre.

Combined Air Quality

- 9.3.2 The urban area of Up Holland, close to the intersection of the M6 and M58 motorways, is the only part of the authority that is classified in the worst air quality category in Lancashire (see figure 9.2). A Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) within North Meols is rated as one of the best areas of air quality in the whole of Lancashire (Source: Lancashire Profile 2010).

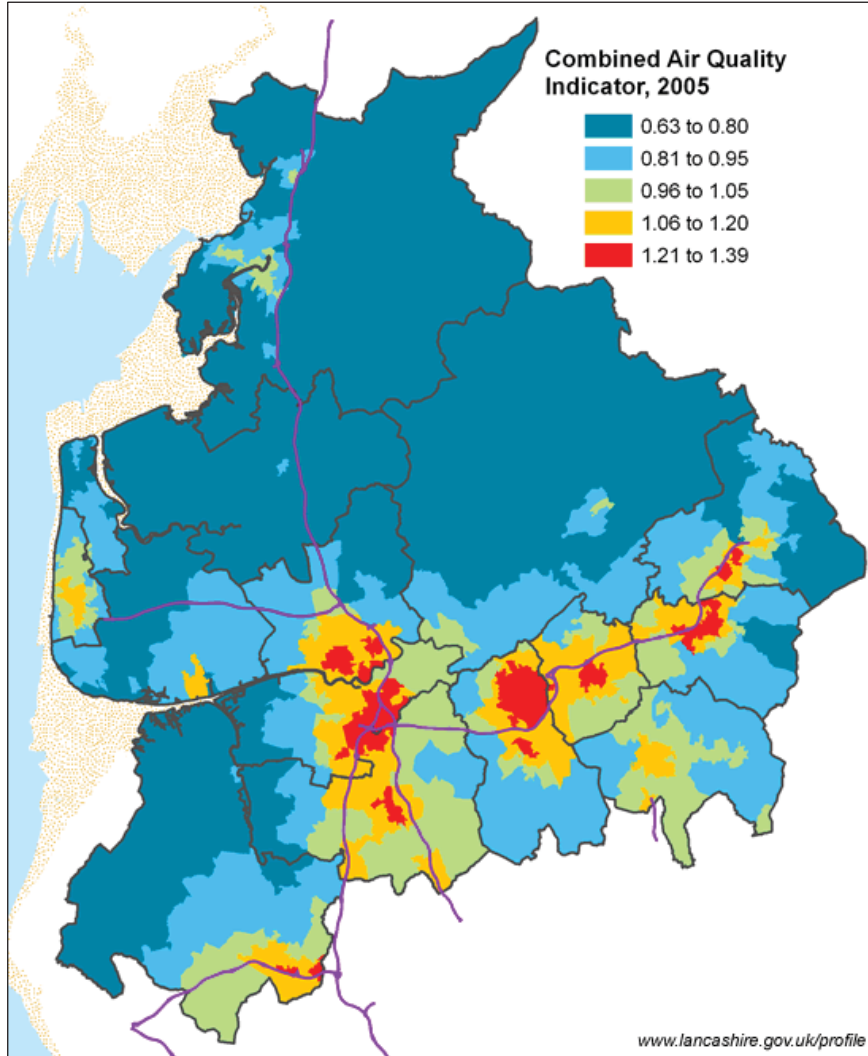
Figure 9.1 AQMA, Moor Street, Ormskirk (Source: WLBC 2010)



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1:1,250

Figure 9.2: Combined Air Quality Indicator Scores, 2005 (Source: Lancashire Profile 2010)



Carbon Dioxide Emissions

9.3.3 The total carbon dioxide emissions in West Lancashire are high in comparison to most other Lancashire authorities, and the rate for tonnes per person is noticeably above the national level. Emissions from the industry and commerce sector are relatively high, and those from land-use change are also quite significant in comparative terms, reflecting the agricultural activity in the area.

Table 9.1: Local and Regional Estimates of Carbon Dioxide Emissions, 2007 (Source Lancashire Profile 2010)

	CO ² emissions (thousands of tonnes)					Per capita CO ² emission (Tonnes)
	Industry & commerce	Domestic	Road transport	Land use change	Total	
Burnley	214	210	154	1	549	6.6
Chorley	199	258	395	10	861	8.7
Fylde	269	205	199	26	700	9.2
Hyndburn	201	190	187	2	580	7.1
Lancaster	312	314	346	21	992	6.9
Pendle	257	212	136	3	608	6.8
Preston	370	299	356	7	1032	7.8
Ribble Valley	893	155	122	10	1180	20.2
Rosendale	242	181	130	3	557	8.3
South Ribble	287	257	311	7	862	8.1
West Lancashire	438	275	274	98	1085	9.9
Wyre	312	270	238	47	867	7.8
<i>Lancashire</i>	<i>3994</i>	<i>2826</i>	<i>2848</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>9903</i>	<i>8.5</i>
<i>North West</i>	<i>25354</i>	<i>16406</i>	<i>14933</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>57336</i>	<i>8.4</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>232945</i>	<i>145725</i>	<i>136361</i>	<i>-1815</i>	<i>513216</i>	<i>8.4</i>

Transportation

9.3.4 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.

9.3.5 Three rail lines run through the Borough, providing links to Liverpool, Preston, Southport, Wigan and Manchester, although interchanging between these lines within the Borough can be difficult. There are regular bus services between Southport and Wigan but public transport in the remainder of the Borough is generally poor, particularly in the rural areas.

Effect of existing policies on current situation

- 9.3.6 The West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan (2001-2016) contains a number of policies to ensure that air quality throughout the Borough is protected and sustainable transport promoted. Policy DS1 (Location of Development) highlights the importance of locating new development to ensure that sensitive uses are not located close to potentially polluting development. The implementation of this policy contributes towards protecting air quality when considering the location of sensitive uses within West Lancashire. Policies SC6 (Roads), SC7 (Public Transport) and SC9 (Cycling and Walking Facilities) aim to encourage the use of sustainable transport methods throughout the Borough.

9.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 9.4.1 The following section sets out the likely future evolution of the Transportation and Air Quality baseline if the West Lancashire Local Plan Public Version are not adopted. Without new policies that promote sustainable transport, improved accessibility and a greater choice in modes of transport, the numbers of cars on the roads in West Lancashire will increase. This will have an inevitable knock-on effect on congestion (and therefore air quality) and on road safety.
- 9.4.2 Ultimately, the most significant drawback going forward without any new planning policy on sustainable transport is that the saved Local Replacement Plan will soon be out of date (the transitional arrangements of the NPPF allow just twelve months for local authorities to get their plans up to date). This will make it difficult to deliver sustainable transport initiatives through the planning system and could be inconsistent with local, sub-regional and national transport policy. As such, it would not only be unsustainable to attempt to move forward without new policy, it would make the Borough unattractive for new development and limit progress on addressing social inequality and promoting economic development.
- 9.4.3 Without the plan, there could be a decrease in air quality in the Borough; and this could have adverse effects on health in the Borough.
- 9.4.4 Much of the census data does not show past trends, reporting only the position at the 2001 census, and so it is difficult to predict future trends. However, it is likely that car ownership and use will increase, and given the anticipated growth of population in the Borough, are likely to rise even further. An increase in the number of cars on the road will have implications for congestion and traffic levels, noise, pollution, the environment and sustainability.
- 9.4.5 Without intervention, public transport use will remain relatively low whilst the level of public transport services in many places, particularly rural areas, will remain low and infrequent. This has implications on the accessibility of services and employment.
- 9.4.6 The car will remain the most popular method of transport, with levels of variation across the Borough.
- 9.4.7 West Lancashire residents will continue to commute to other areas, namely Sefton, to seek employment as the diversity and availability of employment in West Lancashire is unlikely to improve.

9.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

9.5.1 The Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact in a variety of ways. The following table identifies the significance of impact of each of the policies on transportation and air quality.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	
EC4 – Edge Hill University	
RS1 – Residential Development	
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	
IF4 – Developer Contributions	
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	
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	

9.5.2 The following discussion is an assessment of the likely impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on transportation and air quality.

General Comments

- 9.5.3 Generally, the Local Plan Publication Version has a positive impact on air quality, mainly via indirect impacts. Some of the policies set out the need to locate new development sustainably and promote public transport provision within West Lancashire, which will have a positive impact on air quality. The Local Plan Publication Version also promotes renewable energy schemes as part of a low carbon economy, which is likely to have a positive impact on air quality.
- 9.5.4 A number of the policies within the Local Plan Publication Version significantly and directly affect transportation in the Borough. All new development has to be accessible and this creates changes in transport and movement patterns; therefore any policy proposing new development will have at least a “less significant” effect. Other policies concerning transportation, movement and access proposals will clearly have a “significant” effect.
- 9.5.5 The overall effect of the Local Plan Publication Version on transportation sustainability is positive.

Location of New Development

- 9.5.6 Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) sets the overall context as to where the main areas of new development in West Lancashire will be directed. It highlights Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough as the three key locations for new development. This is sustainable in that they are the largest centres, with reasonable existing access to services and public transport.
- 9.5.7 The settlement boundaries proposed in the Local Plan Publication Version are set out in Policy GN1 (Settlement Boundaries). The aim of Policy GN1 is to ensure that new development is delivered within the settlement boundaries over and beyond the plan period. The implementation of this policy will have a significant positive impact on this topic area through reducing the need to travel, which will subsequently lead to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- 9.5.8 Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land) highlights land that has been safeguarded within the settlement boundaries in West Lancashire. This land 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. Land is safeguarded within the settlement boundaries for either development needs beyond 2027; or for the “Plan B” approach should it be required. The safeguarding of this land will ensure that in the long term (beyond 2027); development is located within existing settlement boundaries, which will reduce the need to travel. This will help to reduce CO₂ emissions in the Borough.
- 9.5.9 The overarching policy for delivering sustainable transport provision over the plan period is Policy IF2 (Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice). The policy sets out measures that will have a significant positive impact on ensuring that sustainable transport choice is provided. These include the provision of alternative means of transport such as walking and cycling and improvements to public transport to rural parts of the Borough.
- 9.5.10 The general ethos of the Policy IF2 promotes improved accessibility and encourages the use of more sustainable forms of transport. The policy seeks to reduce the need to travel by car and promotes the use of travel plans for all appropriate development. The policy promotes the provision of additional footpaths and cycleways where appropriate. The implementation of this policy is likely to have a significant positive impact on reducing the need to travel, improving

choice and use of sustainable transport modes and improving air quality in the Borough. A reduction in congestion in Ormskirk and Burscough will also have an indirect positive impact on the local economy by improving the attractiveness of the two towns to new economic development.

- 9.5.11 The policies within the Local Plan Publication Version that identify proposals for the strategic development sites all incorporate measures that will ensure a significant positive impact on the transportation sustainability topic. Policy SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site) highlights the need to improve pedestrian and cycle linkages into the town centre from surrounding residential areas, which will help to promote cycling and walking in and around the town centre. Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) identifies the need to ensure an appropriate road network is delivered as part of the development site. As part of developing Edge Hill University in Ormskirk, Policy EC4 identifies the need to prepare travel plans and parking strategies to encourage sustainable travel and improve access to the campus. This will help to promote the use of public transport when travelling to and from the university.
- 9.5.12 The type of developer contributions that may be sought as part of delivering new development are set out in Policy IF4 (Developer Contributions) and include transport provisions (highway, rail, bus and cycle network). Delivery of these provisions would support the development of sustainable transport choice over the plan period. Furthermore, the implementation of policies IF3 (Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth) and EC1 (The Economy and Employment Land) will also have a less significant positive impact on this topic area through encouraging new development that is accessible by public transport.
- 9.5.13 Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) also incorporates measures that will have a significant positive impact on transportation and air quality objectives. It highlights the need for new development to: provide safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle access; prioritise the convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users over car users; and create an environment that is accessible to all sectors of the community including children, elderly people and people with disabilities.

Parking Standards

- 9.5.14 Policy IF2 and Appendix F of the Local Plan Publication Version set out the Council's car parking standards. Allowing for a variation in car parking standards for residential development by the number of bedrooms could mean that there is a lower potential demand for on-street parking in locations with larger units. Consequently there could be less risk to road safety and the quality of the urban environment. Policy IF2 is considered flexible as it allows for developers to provide more or less parking at new developments if it is needed, if there is evidence to do so.
- 9.5.15 Outlining standards for cycle parking provision through Policy IF2 will ensure that new development provides appropriate provision for cyclists, this will help to encourage cycling and will have a less significant positive impact on reducing congestion in the Borough and will also have an in-direct positive impact on health in the Borough.
- 9.5.16 The requirement for set standards for disabled parking provision will ensure that new development is accessible to all parts of the community and will therefore help increase social inclusion.

Transportation Proposals and Initiatives

- 9.5.17 Policy IF2 outlines the key transport proposals for the Borough, including:
- The proposed A570 Ormskirk bypass;
 - A new rail station in Skelmersdale including a new track and electrification of existing track;
 - An appropriate rail link made between the Ormskirk-Preston line and Southport-Wigan line;
 - Electrification of the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough;
 - The remodelling of the bus station at Ormskirk, providing improved linkages with Ormskirk Railway Station;
 - A new Bus Station at Skelmersdale;
 - Improved cycle linkages between Ormskirk and Burscough;
 - Improved car park management within Ormskirk;
 - The provision of three linear parks; and
 - Any potential park and ride schemes associated with public transport connections.
 - Any potential green travel improvements associated with access to the Edge Hill University Campus on St. Helens Road, Ormskirk.
- 9.5.18 The implementation of these schemes would have a significant positive impact on transportation sustainability by improving sustainable transport choice within West Lancashire over the plan period. Although development within Ormskirk over the plan period is likely to contribute towards existing congestion, the development of the Ormskirk Bypass would help to relieve this situation.
- 9.5.19 The development of three linear parks, along with the provision of green infrastructure improvements within the Borough over the plan period (set out in Policy EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space) would help to promote walking and cycling.
- 9.5.20 Transport and access to services is one of the biggest concerns for many people living in rural areas in the Borough. It impacts on local people's access to employment, education and key services including health care and leisure and recreational facilities. The improvement of public transport to rural parts of the Borough and the implementation and support of “innovative rural transport initiatives” through Policy IF2 will have a positive social impact.
- 9.5.21 Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) sets out how a linear park / cycle route across the site to link in with a wider Ormskirk to Burscough linear park / cycle route will be delivered as part of new development on the site. This will encourage walking and cycling between Ormskirk and Burscough and will contribute towards a positive impact on the air quality and transportation topic area.

Delivering Development and its affect on Transportation and Air Quality

- 9.5.22 It should be noted that growth within the Borough proposed in the Local Plan Publication Version could potentially have a negative effect on air quality due to the increase in development and thus vehicle movements. However, a number of other policies within the Local Plan seek to strengthen sustainable transport links within the Borough and support a modal shift which should help mitigate negative impacts on air quality.
- 9.5.23 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development within Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire), and not with the other policies in the LDF, the impact on the air quality and transportation topic area of implementing this policy should a less significant positive effect. A number of policies in the NPPF (in particular section 4 – Promoting sustainable transport) would positively address the local sub-criteria for SA objectives 11 and 17.
- 9.5.24 Requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points through Policy IF2 is expected to have a range of sustainability benefits. The provision of electric vehicle charging points should help to increase the proportion of vehicles that are electrically powered, which in turn should assist in reducing harmful emissions from road transport within the Borough, such as nitrogen oxides. A reduction in air emissions from road traffic is likely to have a significant positive impact on air quality in the Borough.
- 9.5.25 The Local Plan Publication Version (particularly Policy EN1 – Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure) promotes the development of renewable energy provisions over the plan period. This should help to reduce CO₂ emissions over the plan period, which would have a less significant positive impact on air quality.
- 9.5.26 Policy GN3 identifies the importance of delivering new development that is designed to minimise any reduction (i.e. improve) in air quality in West Lancashire.
- 9.5.27 The development of the Ormskirk Bypass (as set out in policy IF2) should have a positive impact on air quality within Ormskirk Town Centre (which is currently allocated as an AQMA) by reducing congestion within this area.

9.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 9.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). An assessment of the alternative options for policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version is not required in this chapter as this policy was judged to have a minimal impact on the transportation and air quality topic area.

9.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

- 9.7.1 This section identifies ways in which negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts can be enhanced to improve the sustainability in relation to climatic factors and flooding.

Mitigation of Negative Effects

- 9.7.2 The potential negative effects on air quality and transportation are as follows:
- The increase in development and population growth could potentially have a significant negative effect on air quality.
- 9.7.3 There are measures included within the plan to mitigate this negative impact. Policy IF4 encourages the co-location of new public facilities and services in sustainable locations, which will help to reduce the need to travel over the plan period. Policies SP2, SP3, EC4 and IF2 promote the use of sustainable transport methods over the plan period. This will help to minimise the volume of CO₂ emissions released through private vehicle movements.
- The increase in development in Ormskirk could contribute towards congestion within the town centre, contributing to a negative impact on air quality in this area.
- 9.7.4 The development of the Ormskirk bypass (as set out in Policy IF2) should help to mitigate this negative impact by reducing the volume of traffic that needs to pass through the town centre.

Enhancement of Positive Effects

- 9.7.5 Potential positive impacts on the topic area of air quality and transportation can be summarised as follows:
- Policies SP2, SP3, EC4 and IF2 promote the use of sustainable transport methods over the plan period. This will help to deliver sustainable transport choice in West Lancashire.
 - New development is targeted towards key settlements within West Lancashire (including Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough). This is sustainable in that they are the largest centres, with reasonable existing access to services and public transport.
 - Policy IF4 identifies transport measures (including the development of the highway, rail, bus and cycle network) as potential contributions that may be sought when delivering new development.
 - A number of transport schemes are proposed in IF2 that will contribute towards providing sustainable transport choice throughout the Borough.
 - The development of the Ormskirk bypass will help to relieve congestion in Ormskirk Town Centre. This will have a positive impact in terms of improving access in and around the town and improving air quality through a reduction in traffic.
 - The development of three linear parks and the improvements to the green infrastructure network proposed within the Local Plan will help to encourage people to walk and cycle.

9.8 Monitoring

- 9.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on transportation and air quality, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:
- Estimated traffic flows for all vehicle types (million vehicle km);

- % of the resident population who travel to work a) by private motor vehicle; b) by public transport; c) on foot or cycle;
- Out-commuting – % of residents working outside the Borough;
- Distance travelled to work;
- The percentage of the resident population travelling over 20 km to work;
- Heavy goods mileage intensity;
- Amount of completed non-residential development complying with local car parking standards;
- Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of a GP, a hospital, a primary school, a secondary school, areas of employment and a major retail centre;
- Vehicle ownership in the Borough;
- % of new development located in Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres;
- % of development outside key service centres and local service centres;
- Number of days per year when air pollution is moderate or high for PM10;
- Number and total extent of Air Quality Management Areas;
- Annual average nitrogen dioxide concentration; and
- Public and private investment in public transport, walking and cycling.

9.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version		Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.	
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	Generally, the Local Plan Publication Version has a positive impact on transportation and air quality. Policy SP1 (alongside other policies) details the need to locate new development sustainably and promotes public transport choice within West Lancashire, which is likely to have a significant positive impact on air quality. Policy IF2 is the overarching policy in		The Lancashire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3 is the key transport plan for West Lancashire. Improvements to the transport network set out within the Local Plan Publication Version are consistent with proposals set out within the LTP. Overall, the plans and activities dealing with air quality issues, along with the	

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>terms of setting out the transport schemes that are going to be delivered over the plan period. The delivery of these will help to improve sustainable transport choice over the plan period. The Local Plan Publication Version also emphasises the need for new development to be accessible, which will contribute towards a significant positive impact on this topic area.</p>	<p>Local Plan, should ensure that sustainability in terms of air quality is not negatively affected.</p>
<p>Long term (beyond 2027)</p>	<p>In the long term, the effects of the Local Plan Publication Version on the sustainability of transportation and air quality will still be positive, but to a lesser extent. This is because the specific improvements proposed will have been delivered and there will be new demands from development (possibly in different locations) emerging.</p> <p>In the longer term, should expected growth have been achieved, there will be a need for continual monitoring and mitigation of air quality issues.</p>	<p>The Lancashire LTP should continue to be updated and provide a decision making context for development decisions in the Borough, as well as identifying further specific transport improvements in the future. Therefore, the positive long term effect of the Local Plan will be consolidated.</p>
<p>Areas likely to be significantly affected</p>	<p>In terms of transportation, the areas likely to be significantly affected by the Local Plan proposals are Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, due to the level of development and transport schemes proposed in these areas. The main urban areas in the Borough and settlements close to the main transport routes are most likely to be significantly affected by air quality issues. In particular, congestion issues currently present in Ormskirk town centre could be worsened by the level of development proposed in this area. However, the development of the Ormskirk bypass should help to mitigate any negative impact.</p>	
<p>Permanent vs. Temporary</p>	<p>In terms of transportation, most of the impacts will inevitably be permanent, as will many physical improvements to the transport network. However, there will be a temporary variation in effects as the Plan is implemented in either a positive or negative way, depending on whether new development or transport proposals are implemented first.</p> <p>The implementation of the plan should result in an improvement in the state of air quality within the Borough, which should represent a permanent trend. However, there is scope for air quality to worsen suddenly, perhaps due to a new development affecting a local area negatively. Road transport is likely to remain a significant contributor to air pollution in the future. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that there is a continual focus on ensuring high air quality (through delivering development in sustainable locations), particularly in and near to residential areas and town centres.</p>	
<p>Secondary or indirect</p>	<p>There is potential for the adverse effects of climate change to affect transportation</p>	

Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
	<p>indirectly in the long-term, through disruption caused by extreme weather events.</p> <p>The main secondary/indirect effect on air quality arises where proposals/policies could lead to increased traffic levels, especially congestion. This, in turn, will lead to reduced air quality. The Plan seeks to limit the impact on air quality from increased traffic, predominantly by reducing traffic levels and congestion.</p>	

10 Social Equality and Community Services

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 Health and equality, safe communities, access to open space, leisure and education are all fundamental contributors to the quality of life and well being of people living in West Lancashire. A priority of the Council and its partners is to ensure that people living in West Lancashire enjoy a good quality of life.
- 10.1.2 Planning can make a positive difference to people’s lives and can help to deliver homes, jobs, and better opportunities for all. The Local Plan has a significant role to play in delivering social inclusion and preventing exclusion, through setting the pattern of urban growth; developing new facilities (or improving existing ones); ensuring that a choice of affordable transport is available to maximise accessibility; and dealing with crime and safety issues through good design.
- 10.1.3 Concepts of Sustainable Communities have developed markedly over the last two decades from an emphasis on physical redevelopment to a holistic understanding which has emphasised the organic nature of communities and the strong inter-relationships between the key elements of the built environment, the social and cultural fabric of communities, their governance, equity, services, economy and connectivity.
- 10.1.4 Communities across the UK are increasingly diverse in make-up in terms of the variety in racial, cultural and religious identities. There is also an emphasis on recognising other forms of diversity within communities, including age, gender, sexuality and disability. Where a particular group or section of community suffers disadvantage, this can give rise to social inequalities.
- 10.1.5 A key challenge in creating a sustainable community is therefore to ensure that all groups and individuals have equal access to opportunities and services, and that the benefits of development are distributed equally among various groups that make up a community.

Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives

- 10.1.6 The following Sustainability Objectives have previously been identified as the most relevant to the Social Equality and Community Services topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub-Criteria
2	To secure economic inclusion	<p>Will the plan / policy meet the employment needs of all local people?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy encourage business start-up, especially from under represented groups?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve physical accessibility to jobs through the location of employment sites and / or public transport links being close to areas of high unemployment?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce poverty in those areas and communities most affected?</p>
5	To deliver urban renaissance	<p>Will the plan / policy improve economic, environmental and social conditions in deprived urban areas and for deprived groups?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the quality of the</p>

		<p>built and historic environment?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the quantity and quality of open space?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the vitality and viability of Town Centres?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy deliver Sustainable Communities?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy deliver regeneration to urban areas and Market Towns?</p>
6	To deliver rural renaissance	<p>Will the plan / policy support sustainable rural diversification?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy to encourage and support the growth of sustainable rural businesses?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy promote the economic growth of market towns?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy retain or promote access to and provision of services?</p>
8	To improve access to basic goods and services	<p>Will the plan / policy improve the access, range and quality of cultural, recreational and leisure facilities including natural green spaces?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the access, range and quality of essential services and amenities?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy improve the access to basic goods, promoting the use of those which are locally sourced?</p>
10	To reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime	<p>Will the plan / policy reduce levels of crime?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce the fear of crime?</p>
12	To improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	<p>Will the plan / policy improve physical and mental health?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce deaths in key vulnerable groups?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy promote healthier lifestyles?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce health inequalities among different groups in the community?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce isolation for vulnerable groups in the community?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy promote a better quality of life?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce poverty in those areas and communities most affected?</p>

10.2 What is the Policy Context?

10.2.1 There is a range of policy which is relevant to the social equality and community services topic at the national, sub-regional and local level. The key policy documents are set out below.

National Policy

- 10.2.2 National planning policy recognises that in planning for sustainable development, policies should aim to create socially inclusive communities with access to health facilities and healthy environments.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 10.2.3 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. A core planning principle set out within the NPPF is the need to “take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs”. A key theme of the NPPF is promoting healthy communities. It highlights the need for planning policies and decisions to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities that communities need.

Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005)

- 10.2.4 Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity (2005) promotes prosperity for all, through promotion of good governance, empowering communities and tackling disadvantage.

Regional Policy

- 10.2.5 Building sustainable communities is a regional priority. Communities should meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, promote community cohesion and equality and diversity, be sensitive to the environment and contribute to a high quality of life.

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

- 10.2.6 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008) seeks to ensure that there is provision for all members of the community for:
- The full spectrum of education, training and skills provision, ranging from childcare and preschool facilities, through schools, to further and higher education and to continuing facilities and work-related training; and
 - Health facilities ranging from hospitals down to locally based community health facilities; and sport, recreation and cultural facilities.

Investment for Health: A Plan for the North West of England (2003)

- 10.2.7 Investment for Health: A Plan for the North West of England (2003) seeks to achieve significant reductions in health inequalities between groups and areas in the North West, within a framework of sustainable development that supports economic, social and environmental regeneration.
- 10.2.8 The strategy as a whole is underpinned by four key principles:
- The primacy of prevention, on the basis that interventions which prevent the causes, and reduce the consequences of health inequalities, will have the greatest long term impact;
 - Ensuring that mainstream services are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged populations;
 - Using targeted interventions to test innovative approaches, or to tackle specific problems and to reach particular priority groups; and

- Using mainstream planning, performance management and monitoring of services to support local and national action.

The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity 2004-2008 (2004)

10.2.9 The North West Plan for Sport and Physical Activity 2004-2008 (2004) outlines a number of key objectives and targets:

- Increased participation;
- Widening access (by demographics) especially to the countryside;
- Increased success at all performance levels;
- Two hours of quality PE for 75% of children in every school by 2006 (government target);and
- Increasing life expectancy (regular physical activity reduces the risk of dying prematurely).

Local Policy

West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy for 2007-2017

10.2.10 The key objectives of the West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 include:

- To improve safety and ensure that people feel safe;
- To improve health outcomes, promote social wellbeing for communities and reduce health inequalities for everyone;
- To build on the solid foundations of a strong voluntary and community sector and to develop community participation and pride in our neighbourhoods;
- To provide good quality services that are easily accessible to all; and
- To provide opportunities for young and older people to thrive.

West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008-2011 (2010 Update)

10.2.11 The West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership Plan 2010 will work towards achieving the key aims and priorities of the national reducing re-offending action plan and regional delivery plan by working to:

- Reduce re-offending, and through this reduce harm to victims, communities and vulnerable groups;
- Contribute to an overall reduction in the level of crime committed; and
- Deliver a co-ordinated and integrated response to the resettlement of offenders.

10.3 What is the Situation Now?

10.3.1 There are a range of deprivation indicators that have been developed to assist in assessing and comparing 'deprivation' or poverty, at the local, regional or national level. The most up to date Index of Deprivation²⁰ is the English Indices of Deprivation 2007 (IMD 2007).

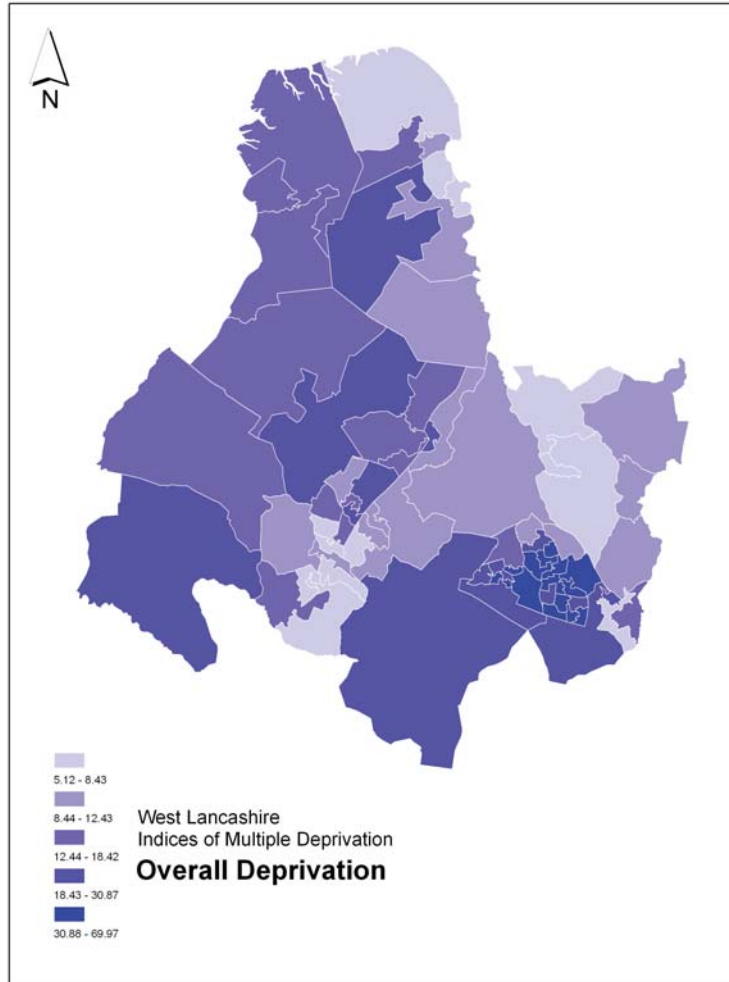
10.3.2 West Lancashire's 2010 IMD average score gave it a national rank order of 136th most-deprived Borough out of 326 in England. However, as illustrated in Figure 9.1 varying levels of deprivation can be found within the Borough. In 2007 all six LSOAs ranked amongst the 10% most deprived nationally in terms of multiple deprivation are in Skelmersdale wards - one in Birch Green, two in Digmaor, one in Moorside and two in Tanhouse. One of these LSOAs in Digmaor ward is ranked 244th i.e. amongst the 1% most deprived nationally. Hesketh Bank, Aughton and Parbold are amongst the least deprived areas.

10.3.3 Other key issues drawn from the baseline are as follows:

- Life expectancy in the Borough is equal or lower than the national average. The Skelmersdale wards of Digmaor, Birch Green and Tanhouse suffer from the most severe health deprivation in the Borough;
- The percentage of smoking in pregnancy and road injuries and deaths are significantly worse in the Borough than the national average. The proportion of physically active children is also significantly worse than the England average;
- Variation in educational attainment within the Borough; and
- An ageing population.

²⁰ The Index of Multiple Deprivation is the Government's official measure of multiple deprivation at small area level. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (IMD 2007) which forms part of the ID 2007 is based on the small area geography known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). LSOAs have between 1000 and 3000 people living in them with an average population of 1500 people. In most cases, these are smaller than wards, thus allowing the identification of small pockets of deprivation. There are 32,482 LSOAs in England. The LSOA ranked 1 by the IMD 2007 is the most deprived and that ranked 32,482 is the least deprived.

Figure 10.1: Overall Deprivation in West Lancashire (Source: West Lancashire Population and Social Inclusion Topic Paper 2010)



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1:150,000

10.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 10.4.1 Without the implementation of the Local Plan, the Saved Policies of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2001-2016 (reviewed in 2006) would continue to provide the planning framework for social equality and community services until they can no longer be saved.
- 10.4.2 In the short term existing trends would be likely to continue, including low life expectancy and poor health, low skills and educational attainment in certain areas of the Borough. New development could put pressure on existing open space in some settlements.
- 10.4.3 The saved Local Plan polices will soon out of date and inconsistent with the NPPF. The needs of the Borough are likely to change in the future, beyond the scope of those planned for in the 2001 Local Plan. The new Local Plan is expected to deliver the needs of the Borough up to

- 2027 and is informed by a detailed evidence base, which considers long term population forecasts.
- 10.4.4 In the absence of the Local Plan, the existing policies of both the Council and its partners would continue to deliver improvements to quality of life and health in West Lancashire. The delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan requires the Council to work with partners to make the necessary quality of life improvements. However, existing trends of worsening health problems may continue unless more significant interventions are made. Potential impacts of a worsening situation for health in West Lancashire include reduced life expectancies and the experience of serious health problems by a wider proportion of the population over a longer period of time. Worsening health will also have a negative impact on the productivity of people living within the Borough.
- 10.4.5 Population projections for West Lancashire reveal that by the year 2031 the proportion of people aged over 75 will have increased by 110% from 2006 levels. This ageing population will create new needs in terms of physical and social infrastructure and service provision.
- 10.4.6 Without the implementation of the Local Plan the Council may struggle to align land use planning with infrastructure planning, which could have a negative impact on community health and equality, leisure and education.
- 10.4.7 Although the extent to which the Local Plan has direct control of facilitating healthy communities and lifestyles is limited, policies can help influence lifestyle behaviour through the provision of open space and social infrastructure such as health and educational provision through planning contributions. The Local Plan is likely to address some aspects of this, for example, by directing community facility development to locations easily accessible by public transport, foot and cycle.
- 10.4.8 Without the Local Plan it is likely that community infrastructure may not be located sustainably and it may be more difficult to obtain appropriate contributions to required community infrastructure from other developments. The implementation of the Local Plan Publication Versions would ensure that access to community facilities and services is taken into account when considering the scope for development in different locations. There is also a need to ensure that existing open space is protected and enhanced, and adequate and readily accessible open space is provided to meet the needs of new development.
- 10.4.9 Without the Local Plan there may also be less emphasis in addressing spatial disparities in the Borough. For instance, the Local Plan Publication Version targets areas in Skelmersdale in particular, that suffer from a concentration of deprivation. Without the implementation of the Local Plan, there may be a reduced emphasis on linking West Lancashire's deprived communities to employment, training or education opportunities in the Borough, through interventions such as local labour agreements or through encouraging life-long learning.
- 10.4.10 Ultimately, while there are other Council and partner policies in place that directly influence the implementation of services associated with social equality and community services, without the implementation of the Local Plan, there would be no up-to-date planning policy to guide such policies in the future as to where services will be needed as development patterns change. The absence of an up-to-date planning policy framework would limit the positive impact on sustainability of other Council and partner's policies due to the lack of spatial guidance for developing such services.

10.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

10.5.1 The Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on social equality and community services in a variety of ways. The following table outlines the degree of impact of each of the policies on social equality and community services.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	
EC4 – Edge Hill University	
RS1 – Residential Development	
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	
IF4 – Developer Contributions	
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	
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	

- 10.5.2 The following discussion is an assessment of how the Local Plan Publication Version policies identified are likely to have an impact on the sustainability of social equality and community services.

General Comments

- 10.5.3 There are a number of policies in the Local Plan Publication Version that are expected to have a positive cumulative impact on social equality and community services.
- 10.5.4 A number of Publication Version policies focus on improving accessibility to services and facilities and as such will have an overall positive impact on improving social inclusion for the Borough's communities. The implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version will help achieve social inclusion by ensuring individuals and communities can access schools, quality health care and other community services and facilities in addition to allowing people to participate in community life.
- 10.5.5 Providing social infrastructure such as basic health and community facilities, sports and open space facilities will help to improve the health of the population and also increase community integration. Likewise, those policies that encourage walking, cycling, a reduction in private car use and the enhancement and protection of green infrastructure are likely to have positive influences on health.

Accessibility

- 10.5.6 Several policies in the Local Plan Publication Version collectively improve the accessibility of services and amenities by providing for them within or adjacent to new development, or by locating development close to existing facilities or access routes.
- 10.5.7 Policy RS1 (Residential Development) and Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire), identify Skelmersdale and Burscough as key locations for new housing development, supported by Ormskirk / Aughton and the northern parishes. These areas are the most sustainable locations in which to accommodate growth and currently have the best level of services and facilities, which will help reduce the need to travel. The level of existing service provision in Skelmersdale will be significantly boosted through the delivery of the Town Centre Masterplan.
- 10.5.8 Policy SP1 seeks to ensure that 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. The implementation of this policy will clearly have a significant positive impact on access to services and facilities within the Borough.
- 10.5.9 Policy EC3 (Rural Development Opportunities) promotes the development of mixed uses sites on brownfield land in the Borough. The implementation of this policy will help stimulate the local economy and provide necessary housing land within the rural parts of the Borough; as part of this mixed used development leisure and recreational uses and essential services and infrastructure will be permitted, this will have a positive but less significant impact on social equality and community services in the Borough.
- 10.5.10 Policy GN1 allows for small scale affordable housing, small scale rural employment and community facilities to meet an identified local need on Protected Land if a sequential site search has been undertaken. This will help increase accessibility to community services in

- rural areas and will also improve social inclusion through the provision of employment opportunities.
- 10.5.11 Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land), will ensure that Borough is able to provide for community needs during and beyond the plan period particularly in unforeseen circumstances, in terms of housing, employment and services and infrastructure provision.
- 10.5.12 Policy IF2 (Enabling Sustainable Transport Choice) aims to promote sustainable travel options which are likely to bring health benefits through improving local air quality and the promotion of walking and cycling. By supporting alternative modes to the private car, the implementation of Policy IF2 will increase the availability of alternatives for those without access to a private car, increasing equality and reducing social exclusion.
- 10.5.13 The co-location of new public facilities and services and the creation of 'community hubs' through the implementation of Policy IF3 will have a significant positive impact on accessibility to services and in the long term will contribute towards reducing social exclusion in the Borough.
- 10.5.14 Policy GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) indicates that new development will only be allowed if it "creates an environment that is accessible to all sectors of the community including children, elderly people, and people with disabilities"; this will have a positive but less significant impact on social inclusion objectives for the Borough.

Retail

- 10.5.15 The focus of IF1 (Maintaining Vibrant Town and Village Centres) is the promotion and enhancement of existing centres, with centres fulfilling different roles depending on their position in a defined retail hierarchy. The implementation of this policy will help to protect and enhance the diversity of uses and services available in the existing town centres and local centres and contribute to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.
- 10.5.16 Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests) requires the preparation of sequential tests for retail and other town centre uses outside the town centre. The requirement for sequential tests will help to protect and support the viability of town centres across the Borough.
- 10.5.17 Enhancing the vitality and viability of the Borough's town and village centres should assist to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime in the town centres. Increased vitality should mean town and village centres are likely to have increased footfall and surveillance, reducing opportunities for opportunistic crime, and fear of crime.
- 10.5.18 Policy SP2 identifies Skelmersdale town centre as a Strategic Development Site and seeks to promote Skelmersdale as a 'leisure, recreational and retail centre of excellence within the North West', this will have a significant positive impact on increasing accessibility to services and facilities in the Borough.
- 10.5.19 The flexible approach taken in Policy SP2 to the location of a new supermarket at the Concourse Centre or on the new high street will allow for the delivery of convenience retail provision in the Borough.

Health and Well-being

- 10.5.20 Policy SP2 seeks to deliver improved accessibility to parks and open space in and around Skelmersdale town centre; this will have a positive impact of less significance on the health and

- lifestyle of residents. In addition, by promoting high quality design Policy SP2 will help to improve overall quality of life for people that live and work within the Borough.
- 10.5.21 Crime and fear of crime has been recognised as having a direct link to levels of social exclusion and can impact negatively on living environments. Policy EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment), seeks to create “safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime”. Similarly, Policy GN3 indicates that new development will only be allowed if it creates safe and secure environments which, “through design, reduce the opportunities for crime.” This is likely to have a significant positive impact on the quality of life for local residents through helping to reduce the fear of crime and reducing opportunities for crime.
- 10.5.22 Local Plan Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough - A Strategic Development Site), supports the construction of local convenience shops and a new youth and community centre, this will help to promote social inclusion.
- 10.5.23 Infrastructure planning and provision is an essential factor in ensuring that sustainable growth is delivered in a way that enhances an area and provides access to a wide range of services. Policies SP3, IF3 and IF4 aim to maximise community benefits from development and ensure that sufficient services and infrastructure will be in place to meet the needs of employment and housing growth. Securing financial contributions from developers through a Section 106 agreement and through the Community Infrastructure Levy where appropriate will allow for investment in existing and new education facilities; this will have a positive impact on the local economy and community by helping to raise the level of educational attainment in the Borough. Delivering physical improvements such as the enhancement of open space and play areas will also have a positive impact (of less significance) on the health of the Borough, as it is likely to help promote active lifestyles.
- 10.5.24 Seeking financial contributions from developers 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” via Policy SP3 will also help improve accessibility to key services and reduce social exclusion in the Borough.
- 10.5.25 Policy EN1 requires developers to contribute to the Council’s Community Energy Fund where carbon compliance “in line with the most up to date national standards” cannot be achieved on site. This will help tackle fuel poverty and have a positive impact (of less significance) on health and well-being in the Borough.
- 10.5.26 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development within Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire), and not with the other policies in the Local Plan, the impact on the Social Equality and Community Services topic area of implementing this policy should be one of a less significant positive effect. A number of policies in the NPPF (in particular section 8 – Promoting healthy communities) would positively address this topic area.

Green Infrastructure

- 10.5.27 The creation of a formal park for Skelmersdale town centre adjacent to Tawd Valley through the implementation of Policy SP2 will have a positive impact of less significance on increasing accessibility to the green infrastructure network. Likewise the implementation of Policy SP3 will provide for the delivery of a new town park for Burscough, which will help increase accessibility to green infrastructure in the Borough.

- 10.5.28 The implementation of policies EN2 and EN3 will ensure that the Borough's natural environment is protected and that access to green space, sports facilities and recreational opportunities within the Borough is protected and enhanced, this should have a positive impact on the health and well-being of local people.

Housing

- 10.5.29 Policy RS4 (Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople), will assist to address social exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers by providing pitches in appropriate locations. The delivery of Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople sites will help to ensure such communities can remain together, therefore retaining community identity.
- 10.5.30 The delivery of specific housing for particular groups in the Borough through policies RS1 and RS2 (including affordable housing) is likely to have a significant positive impact on quality of life, health and general well-being in the Borough and is also likely to increase social inclusion. The emphasis on providing an appropriate proportion of new homes for the elderly within the Local Plan is reflective of the Borough's ageing population.
- 10.5.31 Policy RS1 also states that development proposals for accommodation designed specifically for the elderly will be encouraged within settlements, provided that they are accessible by public transport or close to community facilities. Policy RS5 (Accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers) aims to ensure that sufficient accommodation is provided for temporary workers within West Lancashire. The implementation of both these policies will contribute towards ensuring suitable housing choice is available to all members of the community.
- 10.5.32 Restricting the development of purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk and Aughton (outside of the University) will ensure that any adverse impacts associated with student accommodation in residential areas particularly in relation to student HMOs are reduced, this is likely to have a positive impact (of less significance) on quality of life for residents within Ormskirk and Aughton.

Education and Skills

- 10.5.33 Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) supports improvements to education provision in Burscough through the creation of a new primary school, which will benefit children through offering a better quality learning environment, although it is recognised that a new primary school will only be required because of the increased demand that development of the strategic site would generate.
- 10.5.34 Policy EC1: The Economy and Employment Land, seeks to encourage and support training opportunities in specific sectors such as the media industry and 'green industries'. Policy EC4 (Edge Hill University) seeks to create links between the University, local businesses and the community sector in terms of information sharing and learning programmes, the implementation of these policies is likely to have a significant positive impact on social inclusion in the Borough. An increase in levels of achievement, self confidence and community involvement could lead to a reduction in equity gaps across different areas within the Borough.

10.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

10.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:

- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to social equality and community services than the alternative options.
- The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: a **more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to a deficit in accommodation for temporary workers within West Lancashire.

10.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

10.7.1 The implementation of the Local Plan is not expected to have any negative impacts on social equality and community services. The potential for negative impacts will be if there is a failure in implementing the Local Plan in full.

10.7.2 It will be essential to ensure that new development is designed and built with all equality groups in mind, including disabled and elderly residents, women and ethnic minorities and the very young.

10.8 Monitoring

10.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on social equality and community services, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- Household size;
- Index of deprivation (including health and crime domain);
- % of a) children and; b) population over 60 that live in households that are income deprived;
- % of working age population claiming unemployment benefit;
- % of working age that is economically active;
- Life expectancy at birth (male and female);
- Death rates by cause – Standardised Mortality Ratio for all causes;
- Age standardised mortality rates for a) all cancers; b) circulatory diseases; and c) respiratory diseases;
- Infant mortality;

-
- % of households with one or more person with a limiting long-term illness;
 - Number of affordable housing completions;
 - The area of land designated as a local nature reserve per 1,000 population;
 - Access to a GP;
 - Doctor / Patient ratio;
 - No. of road accidents per year (to measure community safety);
 - Access to local green space;
 - Length of cycleways created;
 - % of adults taking part in sport;
 - % of half days missed due to total absence in a) primary and; b) secondary schools maintained by the local education authority;
 - The proportion of young people (16-24 year olds) in full-time education or employment;
 - The proportion of working-age population qualified to a) NVQ2 or equivalent and; b) NVQ4 or equivalent;
 - % of Year 11 pupils educated to NVQ levels 2, 3 or 4;
 - % of Year 11 pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs grade A-C;
 - % of the population whose highest qualification is a first degree (or equivalent);
 - Number of S106 agreements requiring skills training;
 - % of the population with no or low qualifications;
 - Crime rates: a) overall recorded crime (BCS comparator offences); b) Notifiable offences;
 - Crime – violence against the person (rate per 1000 population);
 - Crime – burglary from a dwelling (rate per 1000 population);
 - Crime – theft from a motor vehicle (rate per 1000 population);
 - Crime – sexual offences (rate per 1,000 population);
 - Fear of crime (Panel surveys);
 - Design Out Crime layouts included in applications;
 - No. of developments which meet police crime design awards standard;
 - Residents perception of community spirit in West Lancashire (Panel surveys);

- Amount of new residential development within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP; a hospital; a primary school; a secondary school; areas of employment; and a major retail centre(s);
- % of properties within set distances of GP (1000m), primary school (600m), secondary school (1500m), adult education centre (2000m), lower level SOAs with 500 or more jobs (5000m), post office (1000m), local shopping centre (800m), recreation facilities (2000m), identified greenspaces and local nature reserves (2000m), frequent bus/metro stop (400m), major fixed public transport node(1500m);
- No. of major & minor planning apps approved which demonstrate suitable access for disabled people; and
- % of development located in Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres.

10.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework relating to social equality and community services. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on social equality and community services in the Borough.	<p>The Primary Care Trust (up until they are disbanded in 2013), local GPs, the National Health Service and other agencies, will be particularly important in ensuring that the Local Plan has the desired effect of addressing local health issues.</p> <p>Furthermore other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to improving equality, education, service provision and leisure in the Borough will strengthen the positive impacts of the Local Plan on this topic area.</p>
Long term (beyond 2027)	<p>The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of increased levels of access to services and facilities.</p> <p>There may be a need for planning policy to change its emphasis in the future due to these successes, or there may be new problems arising which will need addressing more explicitly, such as the impacts of an increasing ageing population. The Local Plan should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such changes.</p>	<p>National Health Service activities will continue to be important in supporting health improvements.</p> <p>In the long term the Local Plan will need to ensure that it is in accordance and continues to support other policy, guidance and plans especially in terms of national and sub-regional guidance which may strengthen the link between social inclusion and spatial planning.</p>

<p>Areas likely to be significantly affected</p>	<p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from improved access to a range of services and facilities and from the safeguarding and enhancement of services, community and infrastructure provision including healthcare, but particularly wherever new development takes place.</p>	
<p>Permanent vs. Temporary</p>	<p>Facilities to improve health may be permanent but improving health is dependent on lifestyle choices in some cases and hence subject to change. New health and lifestyle problems may emerge, and the Local Plan should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such changes. Ensuring West Lancashire’s communities can sustainably access community services and facilities including health, green infrastructure and education, should have a permanent positive impact on social inclusiveness in West Lancashire. There will be other spatial planning issues in relation to social equality and community services that will evolve over the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond, which will mean that some effects become temporary. This includes changing economic and social conditions and circumstances.</p>	
<p>Secondary or indirect</p>	<p>Other areas of sustainability are explicitly linked to social equality and community services, including those relating to the physical environment (air quality, housing provision, open space,) and to the economic environment (employment and local economy) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on social equality and community services. For example, the provision of affordable and supported housing can increase social integration through mixed communities and can have secondary positive impacts on quality of life. Likewise, the provision of sustainable travel options can have secondary impacts on community health and equality, leisure and education, through the improvement of local air quality and the promotion of walking and cycling, which can bring health benefits alongside increasing equality through improved accessibility to service and facilities. In addition, the design and layout of development can have secondary impacts on community health and well-being. Adopting principles to protect the amenity of existing areas and to create attractive places that are accessible and safe, can have positive secondary impacts on the quality of life for residents through reducing the fear of crime and reducing opportunities for crime in the local environment and by ensuring development can be used by all sections of the community.</p>	

11 Local Economy and Employment

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The performance of the economy has a fundamental bearing on the achievement of sustainable development. Economic growth can help tackle deprivation and support regeneration. The economy provides employment and generates wealth, but can as a result generate adverse effects, such as waste or pollution from industry or traffic.

11.1.2 A healthy economy can be characterised by:

- A range of employment opportunities;
- Access to skills training and education;
- Economic growth;
- Inward investment;
- New business start-ups;
- A diverse range of business sectors;
- Low unemployment;
- Job satisfaction; and
- Resource use efficiency.

11.1.3 Planning policy can support inward investment and new business formation through the supply of land allocated for employment uses. The Local Plan will provide a framework to protect and enhance existing employment areas and support appropriate new employment land.

11.1.4 The Local Plan will need to take a spatial approach to the location of new employment. New economic development will need to be located in sustainable locations that are accessible to employees and well served by public transport.

Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives

11.1.5 The following Sustainability Objectives have previously been identified as the most relevant to the Local Economy and Employment topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
1.	To reduce the disparities in economic performance within the Borough	<p>Will the plan / policy provide job opportunities in areas with residents most at need?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce economic disparities within the Borough and at the Regional level?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy maximise local benefit from investment?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy meet local needs for</p>

		<p>employment? Will the plan / policy improve the quality of employment opportunities within the Borough?</p>
3.	To develop and maintain a healthy labour market	<p>Will the plan / policy address the skills gap and enable skills progression? Will the plan / policy provide higher skilled jobs? Will the plan / policy increase the levels of participation and attainment in education? Will the plan / policy provide a broad range of jobs and employment opportunities?</p>
4.	To encourage sustainable economic growth	<p>Will the plan / policy improve the range of sustainable employment sites? Will the plan / policy help develop the Borough's knowledge base? Will the plan / policy attract new businesses to the Borough? Will the plan / policy promote growth in the key sectors of the Borough's economy? Will the plan / policy help to diversify the Borough's economy?</p>
5.	To deliver urban renaissance	<p>Will the plan / policy improve economic, environmental and social conditions in deprived urban areas and for deprived groups? Will the plan / policy improve the quality of the built and historic environment? Will the plan / policy improve the quantity and quality of open space? Will the plan / policy improve the vitality and viability of Town Centres? Will the plan / policy deliver Sustainable Communities? Will the plan / policy deliver regeneration to urban areas and Market Towns?</p>

6.	To deliver rural renaissance	<p>Will the plan / policy support sustainable rural diversification?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy to encourage and support the growth of sustainable rural businesses?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy promote the economic growth of market towns?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy retain or promote access to and provision of services?</p>
7.	To develop and market West Lancashire's image	<p>Will the plan / policy to encourage and support the growth of sustainable rural businesses?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy promote the economic growth of market towns?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy retain or promote access to and provision of services?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy increase the economic benefit derived from the Borough's natural environment?</p>

11.2 What is the Policy Context?

11.2.1 There are a number of planning documents relating to the local economy and employment, ranging from Government White Papers to local strategies. Key messages from these documents are identified below.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

11.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. A core planning principle set out within the NPPF is to “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs”. Two key themes set out in the NPPF are to ensure the vitality of town centres and to support a prosperous rural economy. In order to achieve economic growth, the NPPF highlights that Local Planning Authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century.

Regional Policy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (2008)

11.2.3 Regional policy relating to the outer part of the Liverpool City Region (which includes Skelmersdale) states that plans and strategies should:

- focus economic development in the town/cities as set out in RDF1 and at other locations which accord with the spatial principles policies of the RSS, which include promoting sustainable communities and making the best use of existing resources and infrastructure. Particular attention should be given to addressing worklessness;

- support significant intervention in areas where housing market restructuring is required in line with the approach set out in the RSS;
- expand the quality and choice of housing in line with the approach set out in the RSS; maintain and enhance the roles of the regional towns, key service centres and local centres in accordance with the policies within the RSS; and
- identify, define and maintain the role of suburban centres in accordance with the spatial principles set out in the RSS.

11.2.4 Regional policy relating to the remaining rural parts of Liverpool City Region (which includes West Lancashire Borough- excluding Skelmersdale) states that plans and strategies should:

- support and diversify the rural economy and improve access to services in the rural areas focusing development in locations which accord with RSS;
- be consistent with other regeneration programmes and policies; and
- ensure the provision of housing to address barriers to affordability and to meet identified local needs.

North West Regional Economic Strategy (2006)

11.2.5 West Lancashire is identified in the Regional Economic Strategy as forming part of both the Liverpool City and Central Lancashire economies. Key relevant challenges for the Liverpool City Region include:

- Need to continue to accelerate economic recovery and urban renaissance given a continuing gap in underlying economic performance;
- High concentrations of economically inactive people; and
- High concentrations of those with low levels of qualifications.

11.2.6 Key relevant challenges for Central Lancashire include:

- Improve productivity of service sector businesses;
- Improving intra- and inter- city region connectivity;
- Developing regionally significant, high quality locations for business; and
- Expanding the role of higher education in the city region.

Local Policy

11.2.7 Local policy aims to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress. Local planning policy includes the Saved Policies of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2001-2016 (reviewed in 2006) and the documents outlined below.

The Lancashire Economic Strategy and Sub-regional Action Plan 2006

11.2.8 The Strategy aims to:

- Grow the market and increase the share of businesses participating in higher value activity across Lancashire;
- Through public sector intervention, increase private investment in improving the knowledge intensity of businesses across Lancashire;
- Increase the amount of the labour force in knowledge intensive employment across Lancashire;
- Increase the levels of entrepreneurship;
- Grow the size of the workforce in employment across Lancashire; and
- Through public sector enabling, attract private investment that will enhance the economic investment appeal of the cities, towns and market towns, and of the urban, coastal and rural settings.

West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy for 2007-2017

- 11.2.9 A key objective of the West Lancashire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 is “to create more and better quality training and job opportunities to get more people into work.” The Strategy proposes to create a modern town centre for Skelmersdale and seeks to ensure improvements are made to Ormskirk and Burscough market towns.
- 11.2.10 Successful implementation of the Inspire Project is also a key priority of the Strategy. The Project is delivering a 3-year programme of activity in the form of six mini-projects to help bring about physical regeneration in West Lancashire.

11.3 What is the Situation Now?

11.3.1 Key issues drawn from the baseline are as follows:

- The decline in manufacturing and agricultural employment;
- Rising levels of worklessness;
- Low job density;
- High unemployment and employment deprivation in Skelmersdale particularly in the wards of Digmaor, Birch Green and Tanhouse;
- Varying levels of vitality and viability within the Borough’s centres – there is an identified need to improve the evening economy offer;
- New business start-up rates below that of national and regional figures;
- Growth in transport and communications, the service sector, employment and retail;
- Low growth since 1998 in commercial office floorspace, especially by comparison to neighbouring authorities;
- Below average economic performance compared to the North West and UK figures;

- A lack of available employment land outside of Skelmersdale;
- Median gross weekly pay higher than Lancashire and the North West but lower than the Great Britain rate;
- High JSA benefit claiming rate in Skelmersdale and Up Holland;
- A lower proportion of residents employed in professional and managerial occupations and skilled trade than the North West and Great Britain figures;
- An identified need for leisure facilities in the Borough;
- Considerable 'leakage' in expenditure being lost to competing facilities outside the Borough (particularly comparison goods); and
- High levels of out-commuting particularly to Sefton.

11.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

- 11.4.1 Without the implementation of the Local Plan, the Saved Policies of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2001-2016 (reviewed in 2006) and the Lancashire Economic Strategy and Sub-regional Action Plan 2006 would continue to provide the planning framework for the local economy and employment (although the saved policies of the Local Plan have a very limited life, in light of the transitional arrangements of the NPPF).
- 11.4.2 In the short term existing unfavourable economic trends would be likely to continue, including employment deprivation and low job density.
- 11.4.3 The economic needs of the Borough are likely to change both now and in the future, beyond the scope of those planned for in the Local Plan and the Economic Strategy and Sub-regional Action Plan. The new Local Plan is expected to deliver the needs of the Borough up to 2027 and is informed by a detailed evidence base, which considers long term economic forecasts.
- 11.4.4 The Local Plan has a key role to play in ensuring that economic development is located in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport and well connected to the local labour force. Unless changes are made to the local planning framework, opportunities to help forge a more sustainable Borough will be lost.
- 11.4.5 Without the implementation of the Plan the Council may struggle to align land use planning with infrastructure planning. Without the new Local Plan, a market-led approach to economic development and local employment may develop; this would not be sustainable as it would fail to provide an integrated approach to creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 11.4.6 Unemployment and workless households are evident in some parts of the Borough. The gap between the highest deprived areas and the rest is widening, concentrating the problem in the worst affected areas. Without the strategic direction of the Local Plan piecemeal development may result in regeneration opportunities being missed. Allowing market-led development will result in the highest profit margins for the developer and it may result in the loss of economically active communities, thus not passing the benefits of development onto the people of West Lancashire.

11.4.7 In terms of retail and town centres, without the implementation of the new Local Plan, an opportunity will be lost to help reduce the considerable 'leakage' in expenditure being lost to competing facilities outside the Borough, addressed in the Local Plan through the growth of Skelmersdale town centre supported by Ormskirk and Burscough town centres.

11.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

11.5.1 The Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact on the local economy and employment in a variety of ways. The following table outlines the degree of impact of each of the policies on the local economy and employment.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	
EC2 – The Rural Economy	
EC3 –Rural Development Opportunities	
EC4 – Edge Hill University	
RS1 – Residential Development	
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	
IF4 – Developer Contributions	
EN1 – Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural	

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
Environment	
EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	

11.5.2 The following discussion is an assessment of how the Local Plan Publication Version policies identified are likely to have an impact on the sustainability of the local economy and employment.

General Comments

11.5.3 Planning for a sustainable local economy and providing local employment opportunities is an important issue to address in the Local Plan. The Local Plan strongly focuses development needs upon the existing key service centres. This will help to achieve regeneration in the Borough, resulting in growth of the local economy over time.

11.5.4 Whilst there is a recognised need to develop Green Belt land in order to meet housing and employment land targets in the Borough, the focus of the Local Plan policies is to maximise the vast majority of suitable land within urban areas (with Skelmersdale providing the majority of this development - 2400 new houses and 52ha of employment land) before new housing and employment development is delivered in the Green Belt.

11.5.5 The overall effect of the Local Plan on the local economy and employment is positive. The implementation of the Local Plan will assist in the delivery of new employment opportunities within the Borough. By improving local job prospects for new and existing residents, the Local Plan will also help to counteract the level of out-commuting. The provision of a wide range of employment opportunities should also have positive indirect effects on the vitality of communities and the sense of well-being amongst residents of the Borough.

11.5.6 The Local Plan will have a significant positive impact on the local economy and employment by revitalising existing industrial and business areas as a priority and developing infrastructure that is supportive of economic growth; and a planning framework that supports business development.

11.5.7 It is considered that there is a sustainable balance struck in the Local Plan between delivering an appropriate level of employment land and infrastructure to meet social and economic needs in the Borough with significant environmental constraints and Green Belt policy protection. It is recognised that the release of Green Belt land through the Local Plan has the potential to generate negative impacts on the local environment, including potential adverse visual impacts on local landscapes. However economic and social needs must also be addressed to achieve sustainable communities, and release of additional employment land in the Green Belt is needed to achieve this.

Sustainable Local Economy

Economic Development

11.5.8 Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) sets out the directions of growth for housing, employment and retail development. Policy SP1 seeks to

support the role of Skelmersdale as a regional town, Ormskirk/Aughton as a Borough town and Burscough as a market town respectively. The economic impacts of this policy are positive and potentially very high in the long-term as improved town centres will boost the economy in a number of ways. It is considered sustainable for the vast majority of new economic development to be located in these three key service centres. Policy SP1 supports the release of Green Belt land through the amendment of Green Belt boundaries on the Proposals Map (as defined in Policy GN1). In terms of impacts on the local economy and employment, this small amount of Green Belt release at Yew Tree Farm (for 10 ha of new employment land) and Edge Hill University (10ha for new university buildings, car parking and new access road) is necessary in order to provide the conditions for employment growth in the Borough. In West Lancashire there are unavoidable trade-offs to be made between delivering the infrastructure necessary to accommodate economic growth and the potential negative environmental impacts associated with this such as Green Belt release.

- 11.5.9 Policy SP1 allows for the enactment of all 'Plan B' sites if new evidence or monitoring of employment and residential completions indicates the need to increase development targets or if targets are not being met. This flexibility within Policy SP1 will have a positive economic impact on the Borough as it supports a change in market conditions and allows for economic growth in the Borough even during unforeseen circumstances.
- 11.5.10 Policy SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site), outlines the proposals for the redevelopment of the town centre. One of the priorities of the policy is to “ensure that high quality design will be the key to creating a vibrant town centre”, high design quality and the redevelopment of brownfield sites is likely to increase the attractiveness of the town and the Borough as a whole and help stimulate inward investment.
- 11.5.11 It is anticipated that the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre through the implementation of Policy SP2 and an updated Masterplan / SPD will facilitate wider economic growth in the town and Borough through a diversification of the employment base and increased training and 'up-skilling' opportunities. Business investment in the town will help to improve the image and attractiveness of the town.
- 11.5.12 The implementation of Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm Burscough – A Strategic Development Site) would deliver an extended employment area (10ha during the Plan period and 10ha post 2027) which would provide opportunities for new businesses and existing businesses from neighbouring areas to relocate. Improving the rail service facilities between Ormskirk and Burscough will facilitate access to wider employment opportunities for the people of West Lancashire. The development of the Yew Tree Farm site fills the spatial gap between the town and the existing employment area
- 11.5.13 Policy GN1 (Settlement Boundaries) permits small scale rural employment (up to 1000 sqm²) to meet an identified local need provided a Sequential Test has been carried out in accordance with Policy GN5. This flexible policy will have a positive impact on diversifying rural economies in the Borough and meeting local needs through allowing appropriate employment development.
- 11.5.14 Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land) protects a number of sites for development beyond the plan period (2027), this will have a significant positive impact on economic growth as it allows for the delivery of land for employment development if required to meet employment needs beyond the plan period.

- 11.5.15 It is considered that the safeguarding of land for economic development through Policy GN2 and the amendment of settlement boundaries through Policy GN1 to allow for appropriate economic development in the Borough will have a significant positive impact on local economic growth. It will help settlement boundaries and Green Belt boundaries endure as the identification of sufficient land for future development should help reduce the pressure to amend settlement boundaries and Green Belt boundaries in the future, thus providing certainty re future development boundaries now.
- 11.5.16 Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability) is likely to have a significant positive impact on local employment opportunities in the Borough through the protection of employment sites. The policy requires change-of-use applications to demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect for retaining or re-using the site in its current use. For employment sites, Policy GN4 requires consideration of other employment uses such as those relating to tourism, retail and residential institutions and market changes adversely affecting the viability of development. In addition, Policy GN4 is considered flexible enough to deal with changing market circumstances.
- 11.5.17 Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests) requires the preparation of sequential tests for retail and other town centre uses outside the town centre and for office developments outside settlement centres. The flexible nature of Policy GN5 will have a positive impact on local economic growth. It allows for new development in the Borough in locations where policy usually presumes against; if the sequential test can demonstrate that the development is appropriate and that there are no alternative sites in preferable locations that could be expected to accommodate the development.
- 11.5.18 The requirement for sequential tests to be prepared for retail and other town centre uses outside the town centre and for office developments outside settlement centres will help support and promote the growth and viability of town centres and existing employment areas within settlement centres in the Borough. It is considered that this approach will help ensure that employment opportunities are generated in reasonable proximity to economically deprived areas in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.
- 11.5.19 Providing the right type of jobs in the right location is essential to creating sustainable communities and reducing the level of out-commuting in the Borough. In order to do this it is essential that a positive planning framework is in place to support economic development throughout West Lancashire. Policy EC1: The Economy and Employment Land, provides a planning framework for delivery of employment and economic development in the Borough. The policy seeks to protect existing employment sites and secure 75ha of new employment development in the Borough over the plan period. The prioritisation of redevelopment and regeneration opportunities in existing employment areas related to vacant or under-used employment land, and the remodelling and extension of the Burscough industrial estates and the remodelling of Simonswood industrial estate is considered to be a very sustainable approach. Redeveloping vacant sites in existing employment areas will help to tackle physical and environmental decay and will help stimulate wider investment in the Borough, and existing sites should have much of the supporting infrastructure already in place.
- 11.5.20 It is considered that through Policies SP1, GN1, GN1-5 and EC1-2 the Local Plan delivers a portfolio of employment land which is balanced enough to ensure provision for different sectors of the economy across the Borough, in both urban and rural areas during and beyond the plan period. The portfolio of employment land is considered flexible enough to respond to dynamic market conditions and changing business needs and working practices.

- 11.5.21 The promotion of 'green' construction and technology sectors in the Borough through Policy EC1 should help the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 11.5.22 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development within Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire), and not with the other policies in the Local Plan, the impact on the local economy and employment topic area of implementing this policy should be one of significant positive effect. The NPPF places very strong emphasis on securing economic growth (in particular section 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy, section 2 – ensuring the vitality of town centres and section 3 – supporting a prosperous rural economy) and the positive implementation of these policies would have a major beneficial impact on SA objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Local Skills and Education

- 11.5.23 There is a direct relationship between education and skills and the local economy and employment topic. Policy EC1 will help encourage and support training opportunities in specific sectors such as the media industry and 'green industries'. Policy EC4: Edge Hill University seeks to create links between the University, local businesses and the community sector in terms of information sharing and learning programmes. The implementation of these policies is likely to have a direct positive impact on the local economy and the up-skilling of the local population.
- 11.5.24 The implementation of appropriate training programmes via Policy EC1, particularly in Skelmersdale, will help to reduce worklessness in the Borough by raising the level of skills and is also likely to help remove some of the barriers which prevent some people from being employed to their full potential. Raising skill levels may influence the number of new business start-ups in the Borough and improve income levels by encouraging higher income jobs to be created.

Infrastructure Planning

- 11.5.25 Infrastructure planning and provision is an essential factor in ensuring that sustainable growth is delivered in a way that enhances the area and allows safe, sustainable access to a wide range of services and facilities. Policy IF4 (Developer Contributions), is likely to strengthen the economy and aid the regeneration of West Lancashire. In particular, the policy ensures that sufficient services and infrastructure will be in place to meet the needs of employment and housing growth. Financial contributions from developers may be needed towards educational provision in the Borough. The provision of educational opportunities will help students move into employment and improve the skills base for enterprise in the Borough.
- 11.5.26 Policy IF3: Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for growth seeks to support the delivery of broadband and communications technology to all parts of the Borough. This will help support economic growth particularly in rural areas.

Rural Diversification

- 11.5.27 Given that the Borough is predominately rural in nature, the rural economy is an important consideration for the Local Plan.
- 11.5.28 There are two fundamental issues likely to affect the agricultural sector in the coming years; climate change and the reform of agricultural funding mechanisms. The reform of the Common

- Agricultural Policy (CAP) means that subsidies will no longer be so closely linked to farm production and the expansion of the second 'pillar' of the CAP, the Rural Development Regulation, is likely to encourage greater diversification away from agricultural activity. Nationally, the growing season for plants is extending, largely due to the early onset of the spring season, providing opportunities to extend crops.
- 11.5.29 Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy) supports rural enterprise and diversification and the vitality of rural settlements and is in accordance with the wider planning framework. The landscape of the Borough is important to the quality of place for those living and working in West Lancashire, therefore any change needs to be managed sensitively. Policy EC2 also highlights that the Council will support the roll out of high speed broadband in order to support economic recovery and growth within West Lancashire. This will encourage the development of rural enterprise and diversification within the Borough.
- 11.5.30 The allocation of rural economic development through Policy EC2 at Greaves Hall, Banks will have a significant positive impact on rural economic growth in the Borough. The promotion and enhancement of tourism and the natural economy through agricultural diversification as outlined in Policy EC2 will help stimulate rural economic growth and employment opportunities.
- 11.5.31 Policy EC2 indicates that the Council will protect the continued employment use of employment sites in rural areas. This approach is considered sustainable as the contribution of rural employment sites towards the overall stock of business and employment premises is important. Rural employment sites provide an alternative to rural / urban travel to work patterns, reducing congestion and releasing capacity on public transport. The availability of rural employment sites also broadens the range of stock available, attracting occupiers that might not otherwise have located within West Lancashire, particularly amongst knowledge-based businesses.
- 11.5.32 The promotion of tourism through Policy EN4 is also likely to help diversify the rural economy.
- 11.5.33 The supporting text of Policy EC2 promotes home working and small 'cottage' industries in rural areas. The implementation of this flexible policy is likely to have a moderate beneficial impact upon boosting the rate of small business start-ups and increasing employment opportunities within the Borough, thus helping to achieve sustainable economic growth in the medium-long term. Encouraging home-based working will also help to reduce the need to travel which would also have positive environmental impacts.
- 11.5.34 As mentioned previously, the amendment of settlement boundaries through Policy GN1 allows for the development of small scale rural employment. This policy will help stimulate local rural economy growth and diversification.
- 11.5.35 Policy EC3 (Rural Development Opportunities) allocates four 'key rural development sites' and allows for a mix of uses on these sites, with an employment generating use required to 'make up a reasonable proportion of the overall site in the interest of the rural economy' and that this will be 'determined on a site by site basis'. This approach is considered sustainable as it offers the flexibility required to enable viable mixed use schemes to come forward, where employment only uses have struggled to come forward. The implementation of this policy also allows for sites/buildings to be redeveloped for other uses which may be desirable for all parties, for example, because they are bad neighbour developments, inappropriately located, or cause adverse environmental, visual or other impacts.
- 11.5.36 Likewise Policy EC3 allows for a situation where some sites/buildings have reached the end of their economic life, are unfit for modern occupation and yet uneconomic to redevelop for

employment use. The classification of the types of development uses considered appropriate on the four sites provides clarity and the allowance for 'wider employment generating uses, where a case can be made to demonstrate that new jobs will be created'; is considered flexible and allows for closely related sui generis uses. In line with the NPPF Policy EC3 is considered reasonably flexible and sustainable and should help support rural and wider economic growth in the Borough.

Housing

- 11.5.37 Policies SP1 and RS1 seek to deliver 4,650 new homes over the plan period. New housing of a good quality will support efforts to attract new businesses by providing a good choice of homes for employees and may increase employment in the construction industry.
- 11.5.38 It is essential that new housing growth areas are linked with employment opportunities. Policies SP1 and RS1 focus the majority of new housing development in Skelmersdale and Up Holland, supported by Ormskirk and Aughton and Burscough and the northern parishes. Policy SP1 focuses the majority of new employment development in Skelmersdale and Up Holland and Burscough. These policies are therefore likely to ensure that communities have access to a wide range of employment opportunities and that the majority of growth is provided without having a detrimental impact on environmental, economic or social capacity.
- 11.5.39 The delivery of affordable and specialist housing via Policy RS2 will allow for a good social structure / mix of ages, this will help local businesses to survive and prosper.
- 11.5.40 The implementation of Policy RS5 (Accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers) will help to ensure that sufficient accommodation is provided for temporary workers within the area. This will support the businesses located within West Lancashire that rely on temporary workers and help to develop the rural economy within the Borough.

Transport

- 11.5.41 Policies SP1 and IF2 encourage sustainable transport and require new developments to contribute to providing an integrated sustainable transport network and to be located where possible on sites with high levels of accessibility. Providing better transport links to the Borough's employment areas will improve physical access to employment opportunities for the Borough's residents.
- 11.5.42 The more accessible employment sites are, the more attractive they are to businesses, investors and the market. Any focus for employment growth in the Borough must have regard to bus and rail accessibility and motorway connections. Policy IF2 supports the delivery of a number of transport improvements and new schemes including: the A570 Ormskirk Bypass, a new rail station in Skelmersdale, an appropriate rail link between the Ormskirk-Preston line and the Southport-Wigan line and a new bus station in Skelmersdale. The delivery of high quality transport infrastructure in the Borough will increase accessibility to employment opportunities throughout the Borough and will provide increased access to the key service centres; this will support the growth of the local economy and may also promote inward investment.

Environment

- 11.5.43 Policy SP1 focuses the majority of new economic development in the key service centres, with over 69% of new development focused in Skelmersdale, the Borough's only regional town. This focus on Skelmersdale is considered sustainable as there is a significant amount of

- brownfield land available for development and a large amount of Greenfield land that serves a limited purpose; and is likely to be suitable for development.
- 11.5.44 In order to meet employment development targets in West Lancashire some development will have to take place on Green Belt land. Clearly there is an inherent trade-off and tension between developing land in the Green Belt (of which some is of high agricultural or environmental value) and delivering the residential and economic development required for West Lancashire to meet its locally-determined growth targets over the plan period.
- 11.5.45 Current spatial planning policy is very protective of the Green Belt. Building on Green Belt land in the Borough has the potential to generate negative impacts on the local environment including potential adverse impacts on local landscapes (visual) and local biodiversity and the potential loss of green infrastructure.
- 11.5.46 The implementation of Policy SP3 (Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site), would involve the release of 74ha Green Belt land for residential and employment development, although 30ha of this would be safeguarded from development until at least 2027. Likewise the expansion of Edge Hill University through Policy EC4 will involve the release of 10ha of Green Belt land. Also, Policy EC1 indicates that a further 10ha of land will be extended into the Green Belt at the Burscough industrial estates. Importantly the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (May 2011) found that Yew Tree Farm which is the subject of Policy SP3 does not hold any high biodiversity or landscape value, therefore adverse impacts on biodiversity and landscape are unlikely at this site.
- 11.5.47 Given that opportunities for development within the Borough contained by the Green Belt have been thoroughly investigated and are either unsuitable due to development constraints and are / or will be maximised during the plan period, the release of no more than 60ha of Green Belt land between 2012-2027 (which represents only 0.17% of the total Green Belt land in the Borough) is considered to be realistic and robust on the basis of meeting locally-determined targets and the wider economic, environmental (in some cases) and social needs of the Borough over the plan period.
- 11.5.48 Approximately 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. It is considered that such land is required to meet the economic and social development needs of the Borough over the course of the plan period and beyond.
- 11.5.49 Policy SP1 seeks to ensure that new development protects or enhances biodiversity of the local environment; this is likely to have a positive impact on the quality of the local environment and could indirectly stimulate inward investment. The enhancement of local biodiversity will have a wider positive impact on local employment and economy through the ecosystem services that biodiversity assets provide. For example businesses are reliant on the water cycle for fresh water.
- 11.5.50 Preparing West Lancashire for climate change is essential to ensure the health of the economy in the future. The promotion of renewable energy development through Policies SP1, SP3, EC1, EC2 and EN1 has the potential to create employment opportunities across a wide range of markets in environmental goods and services. The pursuit of a low and eventually a zero

carbon economy will help realise economic opportunities through improved productivity and innovation in key market areas such as 'green' energy.

- 11.5.51 However, the pursuit of a low and zero carbon economy and the need for new development to meet higher carbon reductions and energy infrastructure targets will add to development costs and may threaten the viability of some developments particularly in the earlier years of the plan period when the market continues to slowly recover from the global financial crisis in 2008. It is acknowledged however that the low carbon design standards set out in Policy EN1 are in line with national building regulations, Ultimately, the implementation of Policy EN1 will result in the additional costs of construction falling primarily upon developers, which are likely to be passed through to lower land prices, whilst the benefits are likely to be gained by occupants through lower energy bills and ultimately by society as a whole in the form of carbon savings.
- 11.5.52 To be economically viable, industries need to be sited where they are accessible to main transport routes and to sources of labour. This inevitably means that a balance has to be struck between the needs of industry, the needs of the community and the interests of safety. Policy SP1 should have secondary positive impacts on the local economy and employment through the protection of people and infrastructure from the consequences of flooding.
- 11.5.53 Policy ENV4: Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment requires all new development to be designed to a high standard. Development will only be permitted if it complies to a number of criteria related to quality design, renewable energy and waste facilities, crime, accessibility and transport, drainage and sewage, landscaping and the natural environment and other environmental considerations, The implementation of this policy is likely to have multiple benefits for residents and town centre users, helping to attract new businesses and people by improving the overall image of the Borough.
- 11.5.54 Potential negative cumulative effects from economic growth could result from increased material usage and waste generation that will result from new employment development that is proposed for the Borough. The absolute impacts on the consumption of energy, water and other resources and on waste generation need to be addressed with effective local targets.

Tourism

- 11.5.55 Positive effects in relation to the growth of the tourism industry have been identified in relation to policies, EC2, EN2, EN3 and EN4.
- 11.5.56 Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy), encourages the creation of new tourism opportunities through agricultural diversification. The growth of tourism in the rural areas of the Borough would have a significant positive impact on local economy and employment and would help to attract inward investment and could potentially lead to subsequent spin-off multiplier effects.
- 11.5.57 Policy EN2 and EN3 aim to preserve and enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity in West Lancashire. The implementation of these policies is likely to have a positive impact on helping to protect key tourist assets such as Martin Mere.
- 11.5.58 Policy EN4 seeks to enhance and protect West Lancashire's distinctive cultural and heritage assets. The implementation of this policy is likely to have a positive impact on helping to protect key tourist assets such as Rufford Old Hall and will help to strengthen the Borough's image and identity.

- 11.5.59 Improving the Borough's tourism offer will ultimately increase the number of visitors to the Borough. Depending upon the mode of transport, this could generate an increased level of emissions and it could place additional pressure upon the existing highway network. However Policy IF2 seeks to ensure development and transport planning are co-ordinated to improve accessibility, this should have a positive impact on the local economy by improving accessibility to tourist facilities from both within and outside the Borough.

Town and village centres in the Borough

- 11.5.60 The overall impact of the Local Plan on centres in the Borough is significantly positive. Policy SP2 (Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site), outlines the proposals for the redevelopment of the town centre. One of the priorities of the policy is to make Skelmersdale a “leisure, recreational and retail centre of excellence within the North West”. An improved and more accessible regional town centre for West Lancashire would boost the economy and is likely to stimulate employment opportunities in the Borough.
- 11.5.61 Policy GN5 (Sequential Tests) requires the preparation of sequential tests for retail and other town centre uses outside the town centre. The requirement for sequential tests will help support and promote the growth and viability of town centres across the Borough.
- 11.5.62 Policy IF1 seeks to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town, village and local centres, through a number of measures including the requirement for at least 70% of ground floor units within each local centre and primary shopping area to remain in Class A1 retail use. This approach is considered flexible as it allows for some appropriate change of use in the town, village and local centres but provides a sustainable planning framework which seeks to prevent significant numbers of retail units being lost in the Borough.
- 11.5.63 Retail growth in the Borough's town centres through the implementation of policies SP1, SP2, SP3 and IF1 will improve the Borough's vitality and viability by making it a more attractive place to visit, attracting more people and reducing leakage of spend to nearby larger towns and cities.

11.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 11.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:
- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to the local economy and employment than the alternative options.
 - The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: **a more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to a deficit in accommodation for temporary workers within West Lancashire. This could potentially have a detrimental impact on the development of the rural economy within the Borough.

11.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

11.7.1 Overall, the Publication Version policies of the Local Plan are envisaged to have a positive impact on the local economy and employment. This is particularly so in the medium to long-term when the policy measures have had time to take effect and provide conditions for the economic growth required to generate the level and range of employment opportunities which will meet the needs of the Borough.

11.7.2 Increasing skill levels of the local workforce and encouraging investment in the Borough, should enable economic growth and investment.

11.8 Monitoring

11.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on the local economy and employment, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- % of the working-age population that is in employment;
- The number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants as a) a percentage of the resident working age population and; b) % of these who have been out of work for more than a year;
- Worklessness: a) % of the working age population who are economically inactive; b) % of the economically inactive working age population who want a job; c) working age unemployment rate;
- Jobs density (number of jobs filled to working age population);
- Average earnings of employees in the area;
- Amount of floor space developed for employment by type;
- Amount of floor space developed for employment by type in employment or regeneration areas;
- Employment land available by type;
- Losses of employment land in (i) employment / regeneration areas and (ii) local authority area;
- Amount of employment land lost to residential development;
- Economic activity rate;
- GVA per head claimant count;
- Amount of completed retail and office development;
- ONS Annual Population Survey;
- Unemployment rate % (male and female);
- GVA £ per capita;
- Amount of floorspace by employment type which is on previously developed land;
- Amount of completed retail, office and leisure development in town centres;
- The total number of VAT registered businesses in the area at the end of the year;

- The percentage change in the number of VAT registered businesses;
- Town centre vacancy rates;
- Pedestrian flows/yield/rent;
- VAT based rural local units by industry;
- Agricultural holdings (number and total size);
- Research and development and employment in high and medium-high technology industries;
- Business start-ups and closures;
- Percentage of jobs in the tourism sector;
- Number of tourist visitors;
- Number of visitors staying overnight and overnight spend; and
- Unemployment Annual Population Survey and Claimant Count Rates.

11.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework for the local economy and employment. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on the local economy and employment in the Borough.	The implementation of the Lancashire Economic Strategy and Sub-regional Action Plan 2006 will also be important in ensuring economic growth and employment opportunities. Furthermore other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to the local economy and employment in the Borough will strengthen the positive impacts of the Local Plan on this topic area.
Long term (beyond 2027)	The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of access to employment opportunities and increased economic activity in the Borough. Like all economic growth, the impacts are likely to be temporary. However, the conditions needed to stimulate economic	The long term outlook is positive with all strategies aligned towards similar outcomes.

	<p>growth have much more permanent effects, such as good infrastructure.</p> <p>There may be a need for planning policy to change its emphasis in the future due to these successes, or economic conditions could change and these may need addressing more explicitly. The Local Plan should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such change.</p>	
<p>Areas likely to be significantly affected</p>	<p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from economic growth, regeneration and the provision of a wide range of employment opportunities, but particularly wherever new development takes place in the key services centres within the Borough.</p>	
<p>Permanent vs. Temporary</p>	<p>The implementation of the Local Plan policies in relation to the local economy and employment will have a long term impact, for example the development of a town centre or the development of employment land is considered more or less permanent.</p> <p>Likewise, the development of employment and other commercial development on previously developed land will help to encourage urban renaissance and is likely to have a long term impact.</p> <p>The success of the Borough's economy is tied to that of the UK economy as a whole, and as such, there will be other spatial planning issues in relation to the local economy and employment that will evolve over the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond, which will mean that some effects become temporary. This includes changing economic, environmental and social conditions and circumstances.</p>	
<p>Secondary or indirect</p>	<p>The local economy and employment topic is interrelated to all the other sustainability topic areas identified within this report. Other areas of sustainability explicitly linked to economic growth and employment, include those relating to the physical environment (ecosystem services, air quality, housing provision, open space, transport) and to the social environment (community health and equality, education and skills, leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on the local economy and employment.</p> <p>For example, the availability of land resources can have significant secondary impacts on the local economy and employment as the reuse and redevelopment of derelict, vacant and underused land in preference to Greenfield sites can help to tackle physical and environmental decay, which in the long term can help stimulate economic activity.</p> <p>Similarly, the quality of the built and physical environment can have secondary impacts on the local economy and employment; a high quality environment can attract and help stimulate investment. Likewise the natural environment provides ecosystem services such as fresh water to businesses through the water cycle, such services are vital to the life and growth of the local economy.</p> <p>The provision of both social and physical infrastructure can also have secondary impacts on the local economy and employment. If suitable physical infrastructure is in place, such as employment sites and transport connections, this can stimulate and meet the needs of employment growth. Likewise, in terms of social infrastructure, education and skill levels can have significant secondary impacts on the local economy, as level of skills can influence the number of new business start ups in an area and a high skill base can encourage higher value industries to be established.</p>	

12 Housing

12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1 Access to shelter and the need for a home are fundamental human requirements and as such provision of sufficient good quality housing is also a crucial component of a sustainable community. The housing needs of a community vary greatly and different people have different housing demands, which also change over their lifetime. The need to provide a variety of dwelling types and sizes is therefore crucial.
- 12.1.2 In many areas, less affluent members of society are not always able to access the housing market due to high house prices. Affordable housing provision whereby housing is subsidised is therefore a key component of housing provision for a sustainable community. Many public sector workers such as teachers and health-care workers cannot access the housing market. Gypsies and travellers have different accommodation needs. Provision of a range of affordable housing/accommodation options is therefore important.
- 12.1.3 Ensuring that the housing stock is of an adequate standard is important. The UK Government has set a 'decent homes' standard, defining a 'decent home' as a home that is warm, weatherproof and has reasonably modern facilities. New housing must conform to this standard. In many areas however, the housing stock is old and in a poor state of repair. Improving the conditions of these buildings is crucial.
- 12.1.4 In order to ensure the development of sustainable communities in West Lancashire, the LDF must ensure the availability of sufficient housing to meet identified needs, in terms of housing quantity, location, quality, affordability and choice. It is important that the Local Plan provides sufficient flexibility and a continuous supply of housing land.
- 12.1.5 There is a need to have regard to national and sub-regional pressures, demographic changes in West Lancashire and climate change, with an increasing need to ensure that development is located, designed and constructed sustainably.

Identification of the Applicable SA Objectives

- 12.1.6 The following Sustainability Objective has previously been identified as the most relevant to the Housing topic area:

Number	Objective	Locally Distinctive Sub Criteria
9	To improve access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing	<p>Will the plan / policy provide for an appropriate mix of housing to meet all needs including affordable?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy reduce the number of unfit empty homes?</p> <p>Will the plan / policy support the development and operation of resource efficient housing?</p>

12.2 What is the Policy Context?

12.2.1 There are a number of planning documents relating to housing, ranging from Government white papers to local strategies. Key messages from these documents are discussed below.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

12.2.2 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and takes immediate effect. A key theme set out within the NPPF is the need to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes. It highlights the need for Local Planning Authorities to widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Green Paper “Homes for the Future: More Affordable and More Sustainable” (2007)

12.2.3 Green Paper “Homes for the Future: More Affordable and More Sustainable” sets out a number of targets for affordable homes and social housing delivery. 70,000 affordable homes a year are to be provided by 2010-11.

Regional Policy

The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) (2008)

12.2.4 The North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) provides a framework for development in the region over its plan period (15-20 years). The plan aims to provide 416,000 new dwellings in the North West between 2003 and 2021 and sets out quantified housing requirements for the different areas within the region.

12.2.5 The total housing provision for West Lancashire for 2003-2021 is set at 5,400 dwellings, providing an annualised provision figure of 300 dwellings, of which at least 65% should be built on previously developed land. This brownfield target is set jointly with Sefton Borough. As Sefton have a higher housing requirement, and are currently achieving almost 100% of their new dwellings on brownfield land, West Lancashire could have considerably less than 65% of its new dwellings on brownfield land and still jointly meet the RSS target with Sefton.

12.2.6 Despite the proposed abolition of the RSS through secondary legislation of the Localism Act in early during 2012, the evidence base that informed the preparation of the RSS remains the most up-date and relevant evidence in many social, economic and environmental areas. At this point in time (November 2011), the targets set within the RSS are still material considerations for planning decisions.

The North West Regional Housing Strategy (2005)

12.2.7 The North West Regional Housing Strategy (2005) seeks to deliver urban renaissance through Pathfinders and other schemes, provide affordable homes to maintain balanced communities, meet the region's needs for specialist and supported housing and deliver decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods.

Local Policy

West Lancashire Homelessness Strategy 2007-2012

12.2.8 At the local level, the West Lancashire Homelessness Strategy sets out a number of key aims, these are:

- Identify people 'at risk' of homelessness;
- Identify the causes of homelessness in the Borough;
- Assess the current level of homelessness in the Borough;
- Map the provision of homelessness services in the Borough and identify potential gaps in service provision; and
- Provide a platform for partnership working with agencies and providers in the Borough.

West Lancashire Housing Strategy Update 2004-2009

12.2.9 The strategic aims of the West Lancashire Housing Strategy 2004-2009 are:

- Balancing West Lancashire's Housing Market, particularly the remodelling of Skelmersdale;
- Improving the supply and access to affordable housing across the Borough;
- Achieving Decent Home Standard by 2010;
- Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people; and
- Improving the standard of the private sector housing.

West Lancashire Affordable Housing Strategy 2008-2013

12.2.10 The key aims of the Strategy are to:

- Balance West Lancashire Housing Market to create sustainable communities;
- Achieve the Council's Corporate Priority of ensuring that there is affordable housing available for local people;
- Outline the general context and strategic direction that sets out the priorities for the delivery of affordable housing within the Borough;
- Provide a range of activities that will help us define housing need at a more local level and then plan for the delivery of the identified affordable housing needs in West Lancashire;
- Demonstrate the Council's clear commitment to the provision of affordable housing; and
- Provide a source of reference for Members, Council Officers, Registered Social Landlords, private developers and the local community.

A Strategy for Private Sector Housing in West Lancashire 2006 – 2009

12.2.11 The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Work with partners to ensure all vulnerable residents have the necessary support systems to live independent lifestyles in safe, secure and warm homes;

- Prepare action programmes in conjunction with any corporate regeneration initiatives to identify areas of the Borough requiring intervention to prevent decline and promote thriving communities living in affordable decent private homes;
- Work towards providing an excellent Private Sector Housing Service for all service users making best use of available resources;
- Identify and promote initiatives which help to maintain a good supply of decent affordable homes supporting a balanced housing market in West Lancashire; and
- Have in place adequate policies and procedures to promote good quality, well managed private rented accommodation in the Borough.

12.3 What is the Situation Now?

12.3.1 Key issues drawn from the baseline are as follows:

- To respond to an increasing and ageing population which will place demand on the number and types of homes available. Demand for sheltered housing is likely to increase;
- To improve the availability of affordable housing, particularly in the rural parishes. The 2010 Housing Needs Survey states that 214 affordable dwellings need to be provided annually to meet demand and that a target of 35% affordable dwellings is achievable;
- To provide a better variety of housing and 'even out' tenure and stock type distribution between settlements, particularly by diversifying the mix of housing in Skelmersdale by increasing market supply;
- To provide a supply of housing to meet targets and demand. The SHLAA Update (August 2011) has identified through applying a cautious approach that there is potential to deliver 73.5% of the housing development required over the 20 year period 2008-2028. Achieving the required levels of development will require planning policy intervention with land allocations and changes to restrictive residential policies in smaller villages being evaluated. Such policy decisions will need to be balanced with the potential for Green Belt land releases;
- To revitalise the housing markets in Skelmersdale and regenerate the town and improve its desirability as a place to live;
- To narrow the gaps between areas in relation to housing deprivation; and
- To ensure equal access to housing, employment and services for all the community through an integrated public transport network.

12.4 What will the Situation be without the Plan?

12.4.1 The prevailing economic and housing market conditions are impacting on housing growth and regeneration in the short and medium term in the Borough. As well as the downturn in the housing market and severe reduction in speculative commercial and residential building, investment in business assets and development has also been affected.

- 12.4.2 However, the need to increase the supply and quality of housing has not diminished. The Borough's long-term strategic goals need to remain the same. In the longer term the aim should be to provide a balanced housing offer that supports economic growth, strengthens economic inclusion and ensures new supply is appropriate to the local markets, by ensuring that the location, type, design, size and tenure are appropriate and that existing stock is used effectively. A stable, balanced housing market and a strong, viable economy go hand in hand and both are needed to create communities where people want to live.
- 12.4.3 Without the implementation of the new Local Plan, the Saved Policies of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2001-2016 (adopted 2006), the West Lancashire Housing Strategy and the West Lancashire Homelessness Strategy would continue to provide the planning framework for housing.
- 12.4.4 In the short term existing unfavourable housing trends would be likely to continue, including a limited choice of housing options and a growing affordability issue. The poor condition of some of the housing stock and the high vacancy rates would also be likely to persist.
- 12.4.5 For example, a projected ageing population in West Lancashire will have implications for future supported housing needs and supply of relevant accommodation. Demand for supported housing and services for older people are likely to grow dramatically. Demand for sheltered housing options is also expected to grow over the next few years. There is therefore a need to consider specific measures to address these needs.
- 12.4.6 Furthermore, there is an identified affordable housing need in the Borough. There is a growing need for intermediate housing, as access to mortgages is likely to become as important as price in restricting housing options in the Borough. The implementation of the Local Plan is expected to address housing need and affordability.
- 12.4.7 The population of the Borough in 2010 was estimated at 110,300 ONS Mid Year Estimates 2009. This has risen by just under 2% since 2001 when the population was 108,378 Census 2001. 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. There is therefore a need to allocate sufficient sites to accommodate this future population growth.
- 12.4.8 The existing planning policy framework for housing would not deliver the required mix, type and size of housing needed. Without the Local Plan there would be uncertainty about adequate housing provision for all and a greater land-take for larger houses could affect the availability of future land supply. The strategic gap between urban and rural areas could also be lost.
- 12.4.9 The Local Plan is informed by a detailed evidence base, which considers long term population and health forecasts and is thus expected to deliver the needs of the Borough up to 2027 and beyond. There are significant pockets of deprivation in the Borough, characterised by poor housing. The gap between the most deprived areas and the rest is widening, concentrating the problem in the worst affected areas in the Borough.
- 12.4.10 Without the Local Plan a 'business as usual approach' is likely to result in piecemeal development and would result in regeneration opportunities for the Borough being missed. Market-led housing provision would be dictated by the most profitable sites and house types. The Local Plan adopts a regeneration focused strategy and seeks change in targeted areas, i.e. deprived wards, brownfield sites and according to identified housing needs. The implementation of the Local Plan is likely to lead to a more joined-up approach to tackling deprivation than the existing planning policy framework.

- 12.4.11 The Local Plan has a key role to play in ensuring that residential development is located in sustainable locations that are well served by public transport and well connected to local employment opportunities and community facilities/services. Unless changes are made to the local planning framework, opportunities to help forge a more sustainable Borough will be lost.
- 12.4.12 The Local Plan will identify what physical, social and green infrastructure is required to facilitate new development. Without the implementation of the Plan the Council may struggle to align land use planning with infrastructure planning. Such an approach would not be sustainable as it would fail to establish an integrated approach to creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 12.4.13 Ultimately, without new housing policies the current planning policy framework is ill-equipped to deal with the future housing needs of the Borough. The Local Plan sets a more sustainable course of action than the existing planning policy framework. Whilst measures are taken through the wider planning framework such as the Council's Housing Strategy there is a clear need for the delivery of a new mix, type and size of homes through the planning system.
- 12.4.14 Importantly the implementation of the Local Plan is required to ensure delivery of housing sites in the Borough; this will involve consideration of site allocations and Green Belt release in order to meet housing targets. This is due to the shortage of available and suitable land for development within the existing towns and villages across the Borough.

12.5 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Publication Version?

- 12.5.1 The Local Plan Publication Version will have an impact in a variety of ways. The following table outlines the degree of impact of each of the policies on housing.

KEY	
	Significant Effect
	Less Significant Effect
	Little or no Effect

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
SP1 – A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire	
SP2 – Skelmersdale Town Centre – A Strategic Development Site	
SP3 – Yew Tree Farm, Burscough – A Strategic Development Site	
GN1 – Settlement Boundaries	
GN2 – Safeguarded Land	
GN3 – Criteria for Sustainable Development	
GN4 – Demonstrating Viability	
GN5 – Sequential Tests	

Local Plan Policy Title	Degree of Impact Rating
EC1 – The Economy and Employment Land	Orange
EC2 – The Rural Economy	Orange
EC3 – Rural Development Opportunities	Red
EC4 – Edge Hill University	Red
RS1 – Residential Development	Red
RS2 – Affordable and Specialist Housing	Red
RS3- Provision of Student Accommodation	Red
RS4 – Provision for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People	Red
RS5 – Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers	Red
IF1 – Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres	Orange
IF2 – Enhancing Sustainable Transport Choice	Orange
IF3 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure for Growth	Orange
IF4 – Developer Contributions	Red
EN1 – Low Carbon Development and Energy Infrastructure	Orange
EN2 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment	Orange
EN3 – Provision of Green Infrastructure and Open Recreation Space	Orange
EN4 – Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment	Orange

12.5.2 The following discussion is an assessment of how the Local Plan Publication Version policies identified are likely to have an impact on housing.

General Comments

12.5.3 The supply and type of housing provided across West Lancashire is a key issue in terms of promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability throughout the Borough.

12.5.4 The housing market itself has a crucial role to play in encouraging and supporting economic growth. Without the right types of homes in the right places, West Lancashire will not be able to retain or attract residents and investors. The Local Plan housing policies focus upon ensuring that the Borough delivers an overall balanced housing stock that meets the needs of new and existing residents.

12.5.5 Two of the key challenges facing the Borough relate to meeting the needs of an increasingly ageing population and increasing the supply of housing land including the need to build on Greenfield and Green Belt land. The implementation of the Local Plan will help to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent and affordable home and that specific housing needs are met. This in turn will help to reduce social inequalities within the Borough.

12.5.6 The development of new homes is likely to have a significant positive effect on meeting local housing needs and a less significant positive effect on the local economy through providing employment in the construction industry. However, the development of new homes could

potentially have a negative environmental impact (potentially on sites of biodiversity importance, key land resources, water quality and air quality) and significant impact on landscapes in the Borough. Therefore, all new development needs to take account of the local character of areas.

- 12.5.7 By focusing new development within Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Aughton and Burscough, the implementation of the Local Plan will help to reduce the reliance upon the car, as employment and services will be provided in close proximity. In turn, it is likely that over time this will help to reduce the level of carbon emissions from transport, which will help to improve air quality.
- 12.5.8 Increasing the provision of new housing will be important as it will help to broaden the housing offer within the Borough, which will be critical to help retain the Borough's younger generation, as well as increasing the attractiveness of the Borough to potential new residents.
- 12.5.9 The provision of new housing may result in opportunities to improve cultural, social, leisure and recreational provision. However, it could lead to increased pressure on these same services, thus reducing the quality of provision. This issue is addressed in Policy IF4 (Developer Contributions).
- 12.5.10 To the extent that new development is determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development within Policy SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire), and not with the other policies in the Local Plan, the impact on the housing topic area of implementing this policy should be one of a significant positive effect. The NPPF places very strong emphasis on delivering a wide choice of high quality homes (in particular section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes) and the positive implementation of these policies would have a significant positive impact on SA objective 9.
- 12.5.11 Overall, the pattern of distribution of housing development set out within Policy SP1 is considered to represent the most sustainable approach for the Borough to deliver key housing and employment targets, in light of the range of development issues and constraints in the Borough, including existing patterns of development, the physical geography of the Borough, land availability and infrastructure constraints.

Housing Distribution

- 12.5.12 The location of new housing development affects the landscape, the future of settlements, population, the services and facilities that are required by residents and the viability of these.
- 12.5.13 Policy RS1 (Residential Development) and Policy SP1, identify Skelmersdale and Burscough as the key locations for new housing development, supported by Ormskirk and Aughton and the northern parishes. It is considered that the delivery of 4,650 new dwellings over the plan period would have a significant positive impact on SA Objective 9, helping to provide for an appropriate mix of housing in the Borough.
- 12.5.14 In order to meet the Borough's overall housing target of 4,650 new dwellings between 2012-2027 Policy SP1 proposes the strategic release of Green Belt land at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough for 500 dwellings and at Grove Farm for at least 250 dwellings. This approach is considered to be sustainable given the shortage of available land within the built-up areas in the Borough.
- 12.5.15 Policy RS1 supports the development of brownfield and Greenfield sites not protected by other policies within the urban areas. This will ensure that housing is located close to key public

transport corridors, creating the critical mass in these locations needed to support improvements to existing facilities such as healthcare and education.

- 12.5.16 Local Plan Policy SP2 seeks to deliver 2400 new dwellings in Skelmersdale over the plan period. This is likely to have a significant positive impact on housing choice in the Borough and an increased number of people living in the regional town will generate greater demand and therefore associated improvements in local leisure, recreation, employment and retail provision. The implementation of this policy would maximise the use of vacant and under-used previously developed land, provided that this land is suitable for housing.
- 12.5.17 Policy SP1 allows for the release of all or part of the “Plan B” sites set out in Policy GN2 should monitoring of residential completions show that development targets for the Local Plan are not being delivered or if new evidence emerges that indicates the need to increase development targets. This flexible policy will ensure that housing need in the Borough is delivered if circumstances change in the Borough over the plan period.
- 12.5.18 In addition, Policy GN4 is considered flexible enough to deal with changing housing market conditions and will help deliver new housing development particularly in the short-medium term whilst the market recovers from the global recession.

Environment

- 12.5.19 Prioritising development on previously developed land and on Greenfield sites not protected by other policies through Policy RS1 will help to maintain and protect the quality of rural areas in the Borough. On the other hand, delivering new housing will result in increased land-take which can generate adverse impacts on the environment, including areas of landscape and biodiversity value through increased disturbance and recreation pressure.
- 12.5.20 Policy SP1 does seek to restrict new residential development to within the settlement boundaries as outlined in Policy GN1, except where Green Belt release is specifically needed to meet development requirements during and beyond the plan period. Restricting development in the Green Belt beyond the 135ha required for new employment and residential development (which represents only 0.39% of the existing Green Belt) should have a positive effect on biodiversity and landscape character. .
- 12.5.21 Local Plan Policy RS4 (Provision for Gypsies & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople), provides for these communities to be specifically catered for (in compliance with Government requirements). The implementation of this policy is important, as failing to allocate sites may lead to unauthorised encampment, which leads to an increased possibility of environmental damage and could also have a negative impact on the image of the Borough.

Student Accommodation

- 12.5.22 Policies EC4 and RS3 (Provision of Student Accommodation) seek to support the development of purpose-built student accommodation in appropriate locations within the University campus and sustainably manage student accommodation in the Borough. The implementation of these policies will have a significant positive impact on SA Objective 9. The development of new student accommodation at the University may free-up other residential properties in the Borough. Likewise it is likely that student accommodation within the campus will be provided at a higher density than ordinary residential accommodation, thus making more efficient use of West Lancashire’s limited supply of development land.

- 12.5.23 The location of new student accommodation within the University campus may have a less significant positive impact on congestion and air pollution within the Borough by shortening or eliminating car journeys, particularly in Ormskirk.
- 12.5.24 It is considered that the implementation of Policy RS3 will help to ensure that student accommodation is sited in the most appropriate location in the Borough and will help protect residential amenity.

Affordable and Specialist Housing

- 12.5.25 Policy RS2 sets individual affordable housing targets for sites incorporating 8 or more dwellings outside of Skelmersdale. The impact of this policy is positive as it recognises the need to generate sufficient affordable dwellings across the Borough.
- 12.5.26 Policy RS2 alongside policies RS1 and SP1 should help to provide key workers with access to affordable homes. Delivery of affordable housing will meet the needs of people who are unable to compete in the general housing market. Mixed developments will help in social integration and the provision of affordable accommodation will ensure that people are able to live and work in the Borough. Allowing for small scale affordable housing schemes in Green Belt settlements subject to a sequential test being completed as per Policy GN5 should also help deliver affordable housing in the Borough.
- 12.5.27 Policy RS1 highlights that within small rural villages, housing developments of more than four dwellings will be allowed as long as they are at least 50% affordable. The preferred options policy stated that only 100% affordable housing schemes would be permitted; the publication version policy represents a more viable solution for the development of housing within small rural villages over the plan period.
- 12.5.28 Policy RS1 also states that development proposals for accommodation designed specifically for the elderly will be encouraged within settlements, provided that they are accessible by public transport or close to community facilities. Policy RS5 (Accommodation for temporary agricultural/horticultural workers) aims to ensure that sufficient accommodation is provided for temporary workers within West Lancashire. The implementation of both these policies will contribute towards ensuring adequate housing choice is available to all members of the community.
- 12.5.29 Policy IF4 addresses the Borough's shortfall of affordable homes through developer contributions. The implementation of the Local Plan will ensure that well-designed housing at a lower cost is provided for those in need of affordable housing.
- 12.5.30 In adopting the principles of Policy IF2 which include maximising access by public transport, the Local Plan will ensure that housing can be accessed by a sustainable transport network. This will be particularly important in the context of special needs housing, affordable housing and older person's accommodation, as these groups often have mobility difficulties. Ensuring development is encouraged in the right location will help to prevent social exclusion.
- 12.5.31 Policy RS2 aims to ensure that specific housing needs of particular groups including specialist housing for the elderly are delivered, in order to address deficiencies in the existing housing stock. In all instances, it will be important that all new development is well designed, and integrates with and enhances local character. Policy RS2 will help to meet affordable and specialist housing need in those areas where sites come forward. The flexible approach to viability in Policy RS2 should ensure that developers are not deterred from delivering new

residential development in the Borough on the grounds of viability particularly in the early years of the plan period.

High Quality Housing

- 12.5.32 The provision of 4650 new homes over the plan period will have a significant positive impact on SA Objective 9 by increasing the number of houses available across the Borough.
- 12.5.33 Policies EN1 and EN4 require the design of new housing to display high standards of design, environmental sustainability and layout. As new housing will be developed to a higher design standard, this policy will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of the community. The implementation of Policy EN1 will encourage new housing development to be delivered in accordance with higher energy efficiency standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 12.5.34 Policy EN4 aims to encourage new development which provides a safe and secure living environment. Improving the overall environmental quality of residential areas will be important as it will have a positive impact upon quality of life, as residents will feel safe and secure.
- 12.5.35 Overall the Local Plan aims to support an appropriate level of housing growth and promotes a balanced housing offer through ensuring a mix of tenure and type in sustainable locations to meet the needs of new and existing residents. This includes improving the existing housing stock, as well as new housing, specialist housing, affordable housing and sites to meet the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Waste Management

- 12.5.36 Increased housing densities will result in an increase in waste production and disposal; this could have less significant but negative effects. The implementation of Policy IF4 should help to reduce the negative effects of increased housing densities on sustainable waste management, through the requirement for contributions towards waste recycling facilities.

12.6 What will the Situation be under the Local Plan Alternative Options?

- 12.6.1 A detailed assessment of the alternative options for each of the policies was set out within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper SA/SEA Report (2011). Following the introduction of policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) within the Publication Version, an account of the situation under the alternative options for this policy is set out in detail in Appendix 4, and is summarised below:
- In summary, the preferred approach for policy RS5 is more sustainable in relation to the local economy and employment than the alternative options.
 - The implementation of either of the alternative options (1: Don't have a policy, 2: **a more relaxed policy than proposed**) could potentially lead to a deficit in suitable accommodation for temporary workers within West Lancashire.

12.7 Recommendations for Mitigation and/or Enhancement

12.7.1 Overall, the Local Plan Publication Version is envisaged to have a positive impact on housing. There are no recommendations for mitigation or enhancement.

12.8 Monitoring

12.8.1 To monitor the impacts of the Local Plan Publication Version on housing, appropriate indicators could be selected from the following list:

- Affordable dwellings completed as a percentage of all new housing completions;
- % of all housing that is unfit²¹;
- House price to income ratio;
- Affordability ratio;
- % of housing stock that is vacant;
- House price level – for house types and overall average;
- Housing trajectory;
- House type and tenure;
- Net additional pitches for Gypsy and Travellers;
- Housing Quality – Building for Life Assessments;
- Homelessness;
- % of new dwellings completed at less than 30 dph, between 30-50 dph and above 50 dph;
- Average rentals;
- No. unfit dwellings demolished; and
- No. of people on housing waiting list.

²¹ Unfit housing is housing that fails to meet a national minimum standard defined initially in the Housing Act 1985.

12.9 Summary of Impacts

KEY

Very Positive	Positive	No Effect	Negative	Very Negative
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Type of Impact	Local Plan Publication Version	Local Plan plus other plans, programmes, etc.
Short / medium term (to about 2027)	<p>The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework for housing. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on housing in the Borough.</p> <p>The Local Plan should result in an increase in the supply of housing (including affordable housing) within the Borough, whilst also creating mixed and balanced communities.</p>	<p>Other plans, programmes and strategies which relate to housing in the Borough, especially the NPPF, will strengthen the positive impacts of the Local Plan on this topic area.</p>
Long term (beyond 2027)	<p>The positive effects seen in the short / medium term should continue in the long term, especially in terms of meeting existing and proposed housing needs in the Borough.</p> <p>The Local Plan policies are based on a robust evidence base and have been developed to respond to local needs in the Borough. However, there may be a need for housing policies to change emphasis in the future due to changes in the socio-economic makeup of the Borough. The Local Plan should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such changes.</p>	<p>The policies allow for sufficient growth in, and design aspects of the housing stock to accommodate future changes in the population.</p>
Areas likely to be significantly affected	<p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from increased housing quantity, quality, affordability and choice, but particularly wherever new development takes place. The most positive effects are likely to be in Skelmersdale and Up Holland and to a lesser extent Ormskirk, and Aughton, Burscough and the northern parishes. There could also potentially be negative impacts on areas of landscape value within the Borough, depending upon where new housing is located.</p>	
Permanent vs. Temporary	<p>The Local Plan sets the long term vision and strategic objectives for spatial planning in the Borough. The implementation of the Local Plan policies in relation to housing will have a permanent impact.</p>	
Secondary or indirect	<p>The housing topic is interrelated to many other sustainability topic areas identified within this report.</p> <p>Other areas of sustainability explicitly linked to housing, include those relating to the physical environment (employment provision, open space, transport) and to the social</p>	

	<p>environment (community health and equality, local economy, education and skills, and leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on housing. There could also potentially be secondary impacts on some ecosystem services including water quality, quality of biodiversity sites and air quality.</p> <p>For example, a diverse local economy can have positive secondary impacts on housing choice and can support housing growth through the attraction of potential residents and investors.</p>
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13 Site Appraisals and Consideration of Alternative Sites

13.1 Background

13.1.1 Given the need to amend Green Belt boundaries in the Borough to ensure the delivery of the necessary residential and employment development and to demonstrate flexibility in delivery of 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 the plan period (2027) or, if it is assigned as a “Plan B” site, to meet development needs in the plan period if allocated sites fail to deliver the required amount of development.

13.1.2 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 and in such a way as to not prejudice the possible future development of this land if the “Plan B” is triggered.

13.1.3 In accordance with the above and in order to reach a series of options and alternatives for the location and focus of housing and employment growth in the Borough, a comprehensive review and appraisal exercise has been undertaken of a wide range of sites / areas. These sites / areas were identified using a series of land databases, evidence base studies and existing land allocations in the Replacement Local Plan (2006).

13.1.4 The selection of sites / areas process has been undertaken in two stages:

- Initial Sieving – to reduce the ‘list’ of sites / areas to a shortlist of potentially appropriate sites / areas, by assessing the ‘list’ against sustainability criteria and general planning and development considerations. Consultation on the Interim SA Report in 2010 and the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper during spring 2011 has informed this sieving process, as has the Green Belt Study undertaken in May 2011. This study of the Green Belt reviewed land around the edge of the existing built-up areas included within the West Lancashire Green Belt and identified whether or not this land still meets the purposes of the Green Belt.
- Site / Area Appraisals – in this SA Report, a detailed appraisal has been taken of each site / area on the shortlist where sites have not previously been allocated in the Local Plan or are the subject of a strategic policy which has already been through a comprehensive SA (such as Skelmersdale Town Centre and Yew Tree Farm). The appraisal incorporates an assessment of the sustainability and suitability of locating specific development types on each site.

13.1.5 More detailed information about the site selection process is documented within the separate West Lancashire Local Plan Strategic Options and Greenbelt Release Technical Paper, particularly in relation to the alternatives that have not been subject to appraisal in this report. These include:

- 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 Yew Tree Farm (south), Burscough
- Land at Warper's Moss Lane, Burscough

13.1.6 The preferred and the alternative "Plan B" 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 greatest potential for delivery and the greatest 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.

13.1.7 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).

13.1.8 In light of the above, a number of potential "Plan B" sites were appraised alongside a number of housing allocations and rural development sites allocated in the Local Plan as part of the SA/SEA of the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper (2011). These sites are:

Nine Potential 'Plan B' Sites:

- Land at Parr's Lane (east), Aughton
- Land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk
- Land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough
- Land at Mill Lane, Up Holland
- Land at Moss Road (west), Halsall
- Land at Fine Jane's Farm, Halsall
- Land at New Cut Lane, Halsall
- Land at Holborn Hill
- Land at Alty's Farm

One Rural Employment Site

- Safeguarded land at Greaves Hall, Banks

Four Rural Development Opportunities

- Greaves Hall Hospital, Banks
- Appley Bridge East Quarry
- Alty's Brickwork's, Hesketh Bank
- Tarleton Mill, Tarleton

Four Housing Allocations

- Grove Farm, Ormskirk
- Land at Firwood Road, Lathom / Skelmersdale
- Whalleys / Cobbs Clough Road, Skelmersdale
- Chequer Lane, Up Holland

- 13.1.9 The SA of these sites is included in Appendix 7. A pro forma was prepared to enable the full range of planning and development issues to be tested in relation to each of the sites and for those issues to then be taken into consideration in assessing the overall sustainability of the sites (against criteria based on the topic areas in this SA report and the SA Framework). The guidance for undertaking the appraisals is also provided in Appendix 6.
- 13.1.10 An amendment to the site boundary for Grove Farm, Ormskirk has been made since the Preferred Options paper was published, which has led to an increase in the site area. The extension to the site area will enable a linear park / cycle route to be created between Ormskirk and Burscough. The pro forma for this site has been updated in Appendix 7 to take account of these changes.

13.2 Site Appraisal SA Findings Summary

Limited Availability of Non-Green Belt Alternatives

- 13.2.1 The limited availability of non-Green Belt land within the Borough leaves few opportunities for identifying new land for development purposes. Overall, a limited number of alternatives were considered for allocation within the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper due to the extent of Green Belt land in the Borough (90.86% of the total land) and the tightness of settlement boundaries.
- 13.2.2 Infrastructure issues in rural areas of the Borough also impact on the number of areas that could realistically deliver any new development. Essentially, in the preparation of the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper, all realistic alternatives that were located in the Green Belt were considered for allocation in the Local Plan. Ultimately, locally determined housing and employment growth targets cannot be accommodated in the Borough without the need to encroach into the Green Belt and sensitively amend settlement boundaries.
- 13.2.3 A number of safeguarded sites were considered as alternatives to allocated sites in the Local Plan Preferred Options Paper but ultimately these were rejected due to the unsustainable / constrained location of these sites. For example, non-Green Belt land is to be safeguarded for development beyond 2027 at Greaves Hall Avenue / Guinea Hall Lane, Banks through Policy GN2 rather than being allocated for development in the plan period, as it currently serves an important function as an area of open land within the southern part of the village and is not currently required to meet the development needs of the Northern Parishes. Likewise, non-Green Belt land at Moss Road (west), Halsall has been safeguarded as a “Plan B” housing site and land at Moss Road (east), Halsall has been safeguarded for use beyond the plan period, as it is considered that development in this area would not be as beneficial to West Lancashire at present as those sites allocated for development during the plan period in the Local Plan, given Moss Road’s location on the Sefton boundary.

“Plan B” Sites

- 13.2.4 The SA found the following sites suitable for allocation as “Plan B” residential sites, as it was felt that the implementation of various Local Plan policies alongside appropriate mitigation in relation to any potential negative environmental impacts, would allow for a sustainable pattern of development in the Borough:
- Land at Parr’s Lane (east), Aughton
 - Land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk

- Land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough
- Land at Mill Lane, Up Holland
- Land at Moss Road (west), Halsall
- Land at Fine Jane's Farm, Halsall
- Land at New Cut Lane, Halsall

- 13.2.5 The Parr's Lane site was considered to be located in a sustainable location close to the urban areas of Ormskirk and Aughton and the size of this site means that it has good potential for residential development.
- 13.2.6 The site appraisal found that the key sustainability concern related to the development of the Parr's Lane site is the potential loss of graded agricultural land (Grades 2 and 3). However, the appraisal has indicated that the social and economic benefits resulting from the development of this site for residential use would outweigh the negative environmental impacts, particularly in the context of current development constraints in the Borough; and therefore the loss of graded agricultural land in this instance, would represent exceptional circumstances. The site is considered appropriate as a "Plan B" residential site.
- 13.2.7 For the Parr's Lane and Ruff Lane sites which are located on a principal sandstone aquifer in the western area of the Borough, it was considered that potential negative impacts on water resources could be mitigated through appropriate water management on the site; as per previous development in the western area of the Borough. Appropriate mitigation will help ensure that the aquifer is protected from contamination and damage.
- 13.2.8 Four of the "Plan B" sites were identified in the Green Belt Study (May 2011) as no longer fulfilling their Green Belt purpose and as such the safeguarding of these sites as "Plan B" sites for residential use was found not to generate significant adverse impacts on the strength of the Borough's settlement boundary.
- 13.2.9 For sites which are located close to areas of biodiversity value at Ruff Lane (Ruff Wood), Red Cat Lane (Martin Mere) and New Cut Lane (Halsall and Plex Mosses) it is considered that Local Plan policies GN3 and EN2 will help to ensure that new development is sensitive to the biodiversity value of nearby sites and to ensure that new habitats are created on site. It is recommended that potential negative impacts on biodiversity are assessed at the planning application stage and mitigated via appropriate planning conditions if required.
- 13.2.10 For sites which are located close to areas of landscape value at Parr's Lane (Moor Hall), Ruff Lane (Ruff Lane County Landscape History Area), Red Cat Lane (Martin Mere) and Mill Lane (County Landscape History Area) it is recommended that any future development of the sites for residential development employs sensitive design principles to ensure that development does not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character of the nearby local and county areas of landscape history. It is considered that the implementation of Policy EN2 which seeks to preserve and enhance West Lancashire's Natural Environment including landscape character, will also help ensure that any negative impacts on local landscape character generated by the development are mitigated at the planning application stage.

Unsuitable Alternative "Plan B" Sites

- 13.2.11 The SA found two sites at Holborn Hill and Alty's Farm as unsuitable for allocation as "Plan B" sites. The recent West Lancashire Green Belt Study (May 2011) found that the Holborn Hill site is still fulfilling purpose 3 of the Green Belt "To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment" as the site is free from development and in agricultural use. The study

indicates that the site is also not well contained and would result in sprawl of the urban area away from Ormskirk. In light of this, it is considered that the redevelopment of the site would have a negative impact on land resources in the Borough through the creation of a weaker Green Belt boundary.

- 13.2.12 It is recommended that other suitable sites in the Borough are allocated as “Plan B” sites before Holborn Hill site, given the harm to the Green Belt likely to be generated by development of this site through the extension of the urban area of Aughton north-westwards into the countryside and the creation of a weaker Green Belt boundary.
- 13.2.13 The Green Belt Study found that the Alty’s Farm site as still fulfilling purpose three of the Green Belt “To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” as the site is free from development and in agricultural use. The study indicates that views of the site from the east are also very open and considered to be important to the setting of Ormskirk. In light of this, it is considered that the redevelopment of the site would have a negative impact on land resources in the Borough through the creation of a weaker Green Belt boundary.
- 13.2.14 The Alty’s Farm site also had a number of development constraints which would have to be overcome to allow for residential development on the site including flood risk and local highways capacity.

Rural Employment and Development Opportunities

- 13.2.15 The SA found that land at Greaves Hall, Banks would be suitable for a rural employment site if appropriate flood risk mitigation and management can be implemented.
- 13.2.16 The SA found the following four sites as suitable for rural development opportunity sites:
- Greaves Hall Hospital, Banks
 - Appley Bridge East Quarry
 - Alty’s Brickwork’s, Hesketh Bank
 - Tarleton Mill, Tarleton
- 13.2.17 Flood risk issues at Greave Hall Hospital would have to be overcome to allow for development. The Alty’s Brickwork’s site at Hesketh Bank is located in close proximity to the Ribble Estuary SSSI and areas of woodland/tree preservation value. Therefore it will be important that new development addresses the need to protect these designations. An area of the site towards the eastern boundary is at risk of flooding, so development should be directed away from this part of the site. Flood Risk issues at Tarleton Mill will also need to be addressed to enable sustainable development of the site.
- 13.2.18 The Appley Bridge East Quarry site is located within the Appley Bridge settlement boundary. The development of the site for a mix of uses will ensure that additional employment opportunities are provided for the local community, which will have a positive impact on the local economy. The impact of new development on an area of woodland/tree preservation value within close proximity to the site will need to be considered in the delivery of new development.

Housing Allocations

- 13.2.19 The SA found the following four sites as suitable for housing allocation:

- Grove Farm, Ormskirk
- Land at Firswood Road, Lathom / Skelmersdale
- Whalleys / Cobbs Clough Road, Skelmersdale
- Chequer Lane, Up Holland

- 13.2.20 In relation to Grove Farm, the appraisal indicates that a number of issues would need to be addressed before development of the site, given that the site is located in close proximity to Martin Mere; a local nature conservation site; and a listed building. The site is also located within the groundwater source protection zone 2 and on a principal aquifer. Mitigation would therefore be required to ensure that water resources are protected from contamination and damage.
- 13.2.21 Development of the Chequer Lane site would lead to a loss of a small area of Grade 2 agricultural land. However, the SA has indicated that the social and economic benefits resulting from the development of this site for residential use would outweigh the negative environmental impacts, particularly in the context of current development constraints in the Borough; and therefore the loss of a small amount of Grade 2 agricultural land in this instance, would represent exceptional circumstances. The site is within close proximity to Skelmersdale town centre, which would provide accessible job opportunities for new residents.
- 13.2.22 Development of the Firswood Road site in Lathom will have a significant positive impact on improving the provision of housing available in the Borough. The location of new development would also ensure that key community facilities and services would be accessible to people inhabiting the new site. However, issues relating to the capacity of local highways would need to be addressed in order to support the delivery of new housing on the site.
- 13.2.23 The Whalleys / Cobbs Cough Road site is located within the Skelmersdale settlement boundary. The location of new development would ensure that key community facilities and services would be accessible to new residents. Furthermore, the site is within close proximity to Skelmersdale town centre, which would ensure job opportunities are accessible to new residents.
- 13.2.24 **Please refer to the individual site pro formas in Appendix 7 for more detailed information in relation to the SA of each of the sites.**

14 Conclusion

14.1 Introduction

14.1.1 This section sets out a series of conclusions for the SA of the Local Plan Publication Version. Conclusions are tabled for each topic area, followed by a final summary section, which draws out the key conclusions, or findings, of the appraisal.

14.2 Topic Area Conclusions

14.2.1 The tables below provide overall conclusions for the different SA topics. For each SA topic, the tables look at the current status or baseline situation; the likely situation in the future if the Local Plan was not adopted; the likely situation in the future under the Local Plan Publication Versions; if it were to be adopted - the secondary/indirect effects, short, medium, long term, permanent and temporary effects, spatial effects and cumulative effects anticipated.

SA Topic	Heritage and Landscape	
SA Objectives	13. To protect places, landscapes and building of historical, cultural and archaeological value	
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version
There are around 600 buildings on the statutory lists of buildings of architectural or historic interest located within West Lancashire. There are 28 Conservation Areas in West Lancashire. There are a range of landscape types located throughout West Lancashire, including: upland fringes and ridges; settled sandlands; coalfield farmlands; urban; Valley meadowlands, settled mosslands; marine levels; saltmarshes; and estuaries/Firths.	It is likely that areas of heritage and landscape value located within West Lancashire will face pressure from new development that is likely to occur throughout the Borough in the future. However, restrictive covenants that exist for some of the built heritage within the Borough (i.e. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) should ensure that the most valued heritage assets are protected. Without the Local Plan, the policies within the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan contain measures to ensure that existing areas of heritage and landscape value are protected. However, potential new sites that could be identified as having value over the plan period may require additional protection that is not available in the existing local plan.	Ten Local Plan Publication Version policies were judged to have a significant effect on the heritage and landscape topic area. The sustainable location of new development through the allocation of housing and employment sites and the implementation of a number of Local Plan policies will help ensure that new development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version paper is unlikely to pose a threat to the heritage assets and key landscape areas located within West Lancashire. A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt and greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land during the plan period is unlikely to have a

		<p>significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.</p> <p>There are policies within the Local Plan Publication Version which are likely to assist to negate the any potential negative impacts of new development on heritage and landscape. In particular, policies EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Natural Environment), EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire’s Built Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) act as overarching policies in relation to this topic area. They specify that key heritage assets should be sustained and where possible enhanced and that new development should protect/enhance the landscape character of West Lancashire.</p>
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Heritage and Landscape:</p> <p>Development in the vicinity of areas of heritage and landscape value could have negative secondary effects through the indirect effects caused by additional traffic / congestion and reduction in air quality (pollutants can cause damage to building structures). Furthermore, any negative effect in climatic factors and flooding may pose an increased risk to heritage and landscape assets within West Lancashire.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Heritage and Landscape:</p> <p>Effects on heritage and landscape features can be immediate upon the development of new uses nearby and are usually permanent, as the landscapes/townscapes and especially the heritage assets, cannot always recover from the negative effects, at least not without great cost or a lengthy recuperation period once the development is removed.</p>		
<p>Spatial Effects on Heritage and Landscape:</p> <p>The areas that are most likely to be affected are the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, which are located throughout the Borough. The Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and key landscape areas located in and close to Ormskirk and Skelmersdale are most likely to be affected due to the level of development that is proposed in these two areas.</p>		
<p>Cumulative Effects on Heritage and Landscape:</p> <p>Cumulative effects will reflect spatial effects, as the areas of highest concentration of new development will likely be the areas of greatest cumulative effect, and should be monitored and managed accordingly.</p>		
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Heritage and Landscape:</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 		
SA Topic	Biodiversity	
SA Objectives	15. To protect and enhance biodiversity	
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version
<p>There are four SSSIs located within West Lancashire: Martin Mere, Mere Sands Wood, Ravenhead Brickworks and the Ribble Estuary.</p> <p>Within West Lancashire, LNRs include Haskyane Cutting and Mere Sands Wood.</p> <p>Martin Mere, the Ribble Estuary and the Alt Estuary are all designated as Special Protection Areas (SPA), which are sites that contribute to the 'Natura 2000' network of habitats of European importance.</p>	<p>The condition of the SSSIs in West Lancashire is likely to be at risk in the future without the plan. The effects of climate change, especially flooding, are a particular threat to sites of biodiversity value within the Borough. Without new policies to tackle climate change the risk to vulnerable habitats may increase further.</p> <p>Without the plan, the pressure on biodiversity (including habitats and species) is likely to increase.</p>	<p>Thirteen of the policies within the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version are anticipated to have an impact on biodiversity. The level of new development proposed within West Lancashire, the potential development of Greenfield Land and the potential release of Green Belt pose a risk to biodiversity assets within the Borough. A potential risk to local biodiversity is new development on Green Belt and greenfield land. However, information within the West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) and the site specific SA in this report highlights that on the whole, new development on Green Belt land both during and beyond the plan period is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the landscape character of the Borough.</p> <p>Policies SP1 (A Sustainable Development Framework for West Lancashire) and, in particular, EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment) and GN3 (Criteria for Sustainable Development) should help to mitigate such risks. Construction and operation of new transport infrastructure could potentially have a significant negative impact on biodiversity assets, which should be considered when development proposals come</p>

	forward.
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Biodiversity:</p> <p>New development can have a number of secondary effects on biodiversity, through a reduction in air, water and soil quality, loss of habitat, increased disturbance and recreational pressure.</p>	
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Biodiversity:</p> <p>Effects on biodiversity are usually permanent, although some minor effects can reduce populations for a short time but then allow the populations to build back-up over time. Similarly, any negative effects on biodiversity will usually become more negative over the long-term, as populations of species are affected and this, in turn, affects the populations of other species further up or down the food chain, but some effects are so significant that they can have immediate negative effects. This is usually the case where new development directly affects a habitat or important biodiversity site on or in close proximity to the development site.</p>	
<p>Spatial Effects on Biodiversity:</p> <p>Areas that are most likely to be affected are the key biodiversity sites that are located close to the key service centres within West Lancashire where development is proposed. Those sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin Mere (SSSI, Ramsar, SPA) due to its close proximity to Burscough • Ribble Estuary (SSSI, NNR, Ramsar, SPA) due to its close proximity to Banks • Ravenhead Brickworks (SSSI) due to its close proximity to Up Holland and Skelmersdale 	
<p>Cumulative Effects on Biodiversity:</p> <p>The greatest risk of cumulative effects on biodiversity will arise where most development is planned and where policy is not strong enough in preventing negative impacts on the environment and on specific habitats. As such, the main towns of Skelmersdale, Burscough and Ormskirk where development will be focused may see a cumulative negative effect on biodiversity in and around the towns.</p>	
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Biodiversity:</p> <p>None</p>	

SA Topic	Water and Land Resources	
SA Objectives	<p>14. To restore and protect land and soil quality</p> <p>16. To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk</p>	
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version Paper
Within West Lancashire there are several water systems including the River Ribble, River Tawd, River	There is a requirement for the borough to deliver 4,500 new dwellings and 87 ha of land for	The implementation of the policies within the Local Plan Publication Version would have

<p>Douglas, River Alt, the Ribble Estuary and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.</p> <p>Statistics from 2006 show that rivers within West Lancashire have a significantly lower standard of quality in comparison to the rest of the North West²². 23.6% of river length in West Lancashire was judged to have good water quality, in comparison to the North West average of 63.2%. In addition, 14.2% of river length in West Lancashire was judged to have poor water quality in comparison to the North West average of 7%.</p> <p>West Lancashire is the Local Authority with the largest area of Green Belt within England. The Borough has 34,630 ha of Green Belt, which comprises 91% of its total land area.</p> <p>West Lancashire also has the greatest proportion of grade 1, 2 and 3 agricultural land out of all the Lancashire authorities, with 59% of its land classified as grade 1.</p>	<p>employment uses over the plan period. Without the plan, the pressure to develop on Greenfield sites and other vacant sites would be increased. This could potentially increase the pressure placed upon valued land resources within West Lancashire.</p> <p>The requirement for additional development within the Borough and increase in the population of West Lancashire is likely to lead to an increase in the volume of waste produced in the Borough, which will increase the need to provide suitable facilities to dispose of and recycle waste.</p> <p>The effects of climate change, especially flooding, are a particular threat to land resources within the Borough. Without new policies to tackle climate change the risk to soils and geodiversity assets may increase further.</p>	<p>a variety of different impacts on water and land resources within the Borough. The main issue is that, although brownfield land is prioritised for new development, there will be a need to release Greenfield and Green Belt land over the plan period to meet housing and employment land targets, deliver potential renewable energy schemes and make improvements to the transport infrastructure. This could potentially have a significant negative impact on water and land resources within the Borough.</p> <p>However, there are policies within the Local Plan Publication Version that will help to mitigate negative impacts to a certain extent.</p>
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Water and Land Resources:</p> <p>Negative effects in relation to the use of land resources (e.g. increased hard standing areas or pollution of ground water through industrial development) and climate change and flood risk may have indirect effects on water quality and resources as increased volumes and velocity of runoff could lead to pollution of the Borough's waterways and groundwater system.</p> <p>A potentially significant secondary or indirect effect on land resources is the impact of increased development (especially residential development) on land resources if the waste produced by those new developments is not minimised, re-used or recycled.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Water and Land Resources:</p> <p>If water consumption increases unchecked then there are likely to be permanent negative</p>		

²² Information on the water quality of rivers in West Lancashire is provided within the West Lancashire Scoping Report for the LDF (February 2008)

<p>outcomes for water resources in and downstream from the Borough.</p> <p>As the development of land is considered a permanent arrangement, both positive and negative effects will be permanent.</p>
<p>Spatial Effects on Water and Land Resources:</p> <p>The land resources that are likely to be significantly affected are the areas of Green Belt surrounding Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale; where development could potentially occur over the plan period.</p> <p>Water resources in and around these towns could also be significantly affected due to the level of development and in turn the increase in population and traffic in and around these areas.</p>
<p>Cumulative Effects on Water and Land Resources:</p> <p><i>Water</i> – Cumulative effects will be in-line with the spatial effects and so will take place where the combined effect of new development comes together in specific catchments or specific aquifers, most likely around the main towns and downstream of these.</p> <p><i>Land Resources</i> – Cumulative effects on land resources will be similar to the spatial effects, as where new development is focused, effects will inevitably be cumulative as well. The cumulative effect of large amounts of development across the Borough will also have a cumulative effect on waste management and potentially on sites of geological/geomorphological value as well, if significant levels of development are located near to them, and such development brings significant land disturbance with it.</p>
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Water and Land Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

SA Topic	Climatic Factors and Flooding	
SA Objectives	<p>16. To protect and improve the quality of both inland and coastal waters and protect against flood risk.</p> <p>18. To ensure the prudent use of natural resources, including the use of renewable energies and the sustainable management of existing resources.</p>	
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version
Significant areas of land in the Borough are potentially under threat from coastal and fluvial flooding. The highest areas of risk are to the north and west of the Borough where coastal flooding is the greatest threat. The only significant sizeable settlement within a high flood risk zone is Banks.	If greenhouse gases, for instance CO ₂ , are emitted worldwide at current levels then global temperatures are predicted to rise by up to 6°C by the end of the century. This is enough to make extreme weather events like floods and droughts more frequent in the future. Without the plan, this trend is likely to continue, as new development will not necessarily occur in the most sustainable locations, which	Overall, the implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version will have a significant positive impact on climatic factors and flooding. Although the growth in population over the plan period will lead to an increase in the amount of traffic travelling to and around the Borough (which will in turn increase CO ₂ emissions), there are policy measures within the

<p>Within West Lancashire there is great potential for wind energy and some capacity for biomass energy.</p>	<p>would potentially lead to increases in CO² emissions throughout the Borough.</p> <p>The potential increase in flood risk as a result of climate change in the future may lead to new areas throughout West Lancashire (that are not currently identified within the replacement local plan) becoming susceptible to flood risk. In this instance, the saved policies would be insufficient.</p>	<p>plan to counteract this negative impact.</p> <p>The majority of new development proposed within the plan is targeted towards areas that do not suffer from significant flood risk. However, there are policies to ensure that development will only be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 if it can be shown that there is no alternative site for development outside these flood zones.</p> <p>The Local Plan Publication Version promotes the development of development of renewable, low carbon and decentralised energy schemes over the plan period and highlights the importance of delivering low carbon development. This will help to reduce CO₂ emissions over the plan period, and contribute positively.</p>
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Climatic Factors and Flooding:</p> <p>Aside from the direct effects that new development can have on climatic factors and flooding, any negative effects in relation to air quality and transportation may have long term indirect effects of a similar negative nature.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Climatic Factors and Flooding:</p> <p>The majority of impacts relating to climatic factors and flooding will be permanent, for example, ensuring developments are adaptable to climatic shifts and locating new development away from flood risk.</p>		
<p>Spatial Effects on Climatic Factors and Flooding:</p> <p>The main towns located within West Lancashire (Skelmersdale, Burscough and Ormskirk) are most likely to be impacted by climatic factors due to the high level of development proposed in these areas by the Local Plan.</p> <p>Areas towards the east and north of the Borough are most susceptible to flooding. These are likely to be positively affected by the policies within the Local Plan due to the measures incorporated that aim to protect areas at risk of flooding.</p>		
<p>Cumulative Effects on Climatic Factors and Flooding:</p> <p>The very issue of climate change is a cumulative effect itself and the effects within West Lancashire will be based on a combination of global effects and localised effects, caused by existing and new development.</p>		

Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Climatic Factors and Flooding:

- None

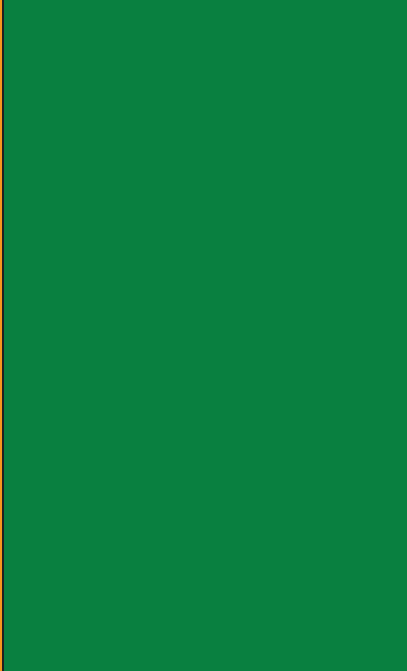
SA Topic	Transportation and Air Quality		
SA Objectives	16. To reduce the need to travel, improve the choice and use of sustainable transport modes 17. To protect and improve noise air quality		
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version	
<p>The rural nature of West Lancashire means that it has relatively good air quality compared to urban Boroughs, where there are higher levels of traffic and industry emissions. West Lancashire has only one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which is located in Moor St, Ormskirk. This area suffers from congestion and bottle necks from traffic travelling through Ormskirk town centre.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>In West Lancashire, without intervention, public transport use will remain relatively low whilst the capacity of public transport services in many places, particularly rural areas, will remain low and infrequent. This has implications for the accessibility of services and employment.</p> <p>The car will remain the most popular method of transport, with levels of variation across the Borough.</p> <p>West Lancashire residents will continue to commute to other areas, namely Sefton, to seek employment, if the diversity and availability of employment in West Lancashire does not improve.</p> <p>Without the plan, there could be a decrease in air quality in the Borough; and this could have adverse effects on health.</p>	<p>Generally, the Local Plan Publication Version has a positive impact on transportation and air quality. Policy SP1 (alongside other policies) details the need to locate new development sustainably and promotes public transport choice within West Lancashire, which is likely to have a significant positive impact on air quality. Policy EN1 promotes the development of renewable energy schemes, which may assist to reduce carbon emissions over the plan period.</p> <p>Policy IF2 is the overarching policy in terms of setting out the transport schemes that are going to be delivered over the plan period. The delivery of these will help to improve sustainable transport choice over the plan period. The Local Plan Publication Version also emphasises the need for new development to be accessible, which will contribute towards a significant positive impact on this topic area.</p>	

<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Transportation and Air Quality:</p> <p>Effects on other sustainability factors and issues do not generally have indirect, secondary effects on transportation, although there is the potential for the adverse effects of climate change to affect transportation indirectly in the long-term, through disruption caused by extreme weather events.</p> <p>The main secondary/indirect effect on air quality is where proposals/policies could lead to increased traffic levels, especially congestion. This, in turn, will lead to reduced air quality. The Plan seeks to limit the impact on air quality from increased traffic, predominantly by reducing traffic levels and congestion.</p> <p>The development of renewable energy technology could have a secondary positive effect on air quality, as it provides a sustainable form of energy production. Over time, the reduction in emissions generated by other forms of energy production would improve air quality in West Lancashire.</p>	
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Transportation and Air Quality:</p> <p>In terms of transportation, most of the impacts will inevitably be permanent, as will many physical improvements to the transport network. However, there will be a temporary variation in effects as the Plan is implemented in either a positive or negative way, depending on whether new development or transport proposals are implemented first.</p> <p>The implementation of the plan should result in an improvement in the state of air quality within the Borough, which should represent a permanent trend. However, there is scope for air quality to worsen suddenly, perhaps due to a new development affecting a local area negatively.</p> <p>Furthermore, road transport is likely to remain a significant contributor to air pollution in the future. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that there is a continual focus on ensuring high air quality (through delivering development in sustainable locations), particularly in and near to residential areas, community facilities and town centres.</p>	
<p>Spatial Effects on Transportation and Air Quality:</p> <p>In terms of transportation, the areas likely to be significantly affected by the Local Plan are Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough due to the level of development and transport schemes proposed in these areas. The main urban areas in the Borough and settlements close to the main transport routes are most likely to be significantly affected by air quality issues. In particular, congestion issues currently present in Ormskirk town centre could be worsened with the level of development proposed in this area. However, the development of the Ormskirk bypass should help to mitigate negative impacts.</p> <p>In addition, areas that incorporate sensitive ecosystems and habitats could also be adversely affected by air quality issues.</p>	
<p>Cumulative Effects on Transportation and Air Quality:</p> <p>Cumulative effects reflect the spatial effects in that the positive cumulative effect of public transport improvements and the promotion of sustainable transport choices throughout the Borough including rural areas, will create a positive effect and complement the amount of new development being focused in the Borough's main centres.</p> <p>In terms of air quality, cumulative effects will again reflect the spatial effects, at Skelmersdale town centre and to a lesser extent the main towns of Burscough, Ormskirk and Aughton, where most new development will be directed.</p>	

Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Transportation and Air Quality:

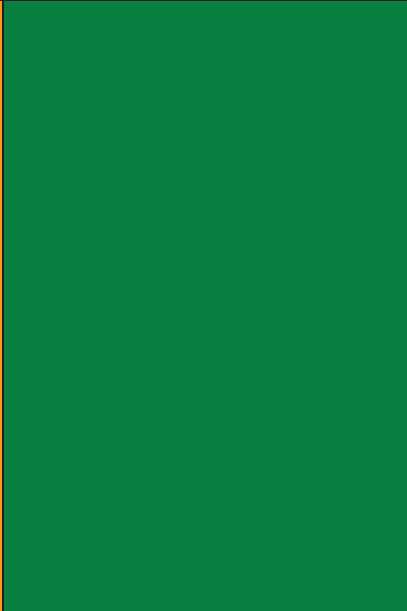
- None

SA Topic	Social Equality and Community Services	
SA Objectives	2.To secure economic inclusion 5.To deliver urban renaissance 6. To deliver rural renaissance 8. To improve access to basic goods and services 10. To reduce crime and disorder and the fear of crime 12. To improve physical and mental health and reduce health inequalities	
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version Paper
<p>There are varying levels of deprivation across the Borough. All 6 LSOAs ranked amongst the 10% most deprived nationally in terms of multiple deprivation are in Skelmersdale wards; and Digmaor ward is ranked 244th i.e. amongst the 1% most deprived nationally. Hesketh Bank, Aughton and Parbold are amongst the least deprived areas.</p> <p>Life expectancy in the Borough is equal or lower than the national average. The Skelmersdale wards of Digmaor, Birch Green and Tanhouse suffer from the most severe health deprivation in the Borough.</p> <p>The percentage of smoking in pregnancy and road injuries and deaths are significantly worse in the Borough than the national average. The proportion of physically active children also performs significantly worse than the England average.</p>	<p>In the short term existing trends would be likely to continue, including low life expectancy and poor health, low skills and educational attainment in certain areas of the Borough.</p> <p>Over time, as the national planning framework changes, the saved Local Plan polices would begin to become out of date, and in some instances, irrelevant, as the needs of the local population are likely to change both now and in the future, beyond the scope of those planned for in the 2001 Local Plan. The Local Plan is expected to deliver the needs of the local population up to 2027 and is informed by a detailed evidence base, which considers long term population forecasts.</p> <p>Furthermore new development could put pressure on existing open space in some settlements. In the absence of the Local Plan, the existing policies of both the Council and its partners would continue to deliver improvements to quality of life and health in West Lancashire.</p>	<p>The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework relating to social equality and community services. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on social equality and community services in the Borough.</p>

<p>There is a variation in educational attainment within the Borough.</p> <p>There is an ageing population in the Borough.</p>	<p>The delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Corporate Plan requires the Council to work with partners to make the necessary quality of life improvements. However, existing trends of worsening health problems may continue unless more significant interventions are made. Potential impacts of a worsening situation for health in West Lancashire include reduced life expectancies and the experience of serious health problems by a wider proportion of the population over a longer period of time. Worsening health will also have a negative impact on the productivity of people living within the Borough.</p>	
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Social Equality and Community Services:</p> <p>Other areas of sustainability are explicitly linked to social equality and community services, including those relating to the physical environment (air quality, housing provision, open space,) and to the economic environment (employment and local economy) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on social equality and community services.</p> <p>Likewise, the provision of sustainable travel options can have secondary impacts on community health and equality, leisure and education, through the improvement of local air quality and the promotion of walking and cycling, which can bring health benefits alongside increasing equality through increased accessibility to service and facilities.</p> <p>In addition, the design and layout of development can have secondary impacts on community health and well-being. Adopting principles to protect the amenity of existing areas and to create attractive places that are accessible and safe, can have positive secondary impacts on the quality of life for residents through reducing the fear of crime and reducing opportunities for crime in the local environment and by ensuring development can be used by all sections of the community.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Social Equality and Community Services:</p> <p>Facilities to improve health may be permanent but improving health is dependent on lifestyle choices in some cases and hence subject to change.</p> <p>New health problems may emerge, and the Local Plan should seek to be as adaptable and as flexible as possible to deal with such changes.</p> <p>Ensuring West Lancashire's communities can sustainably access community services and facilities including health, green infrastructure, and education should have a permanent positive impact for social inclusiveness in West Lancashire.</p> <p>There will be other spatial planning issues in relation to social equality and community services that will evolve over the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond which will mean that some effects become temporary. This includes changing economic and social conditions and circumstances.</p>		

<p>Spatial Effects on Social Equality and Community Services:</p> <p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from improved access to a range of services and facilities and from the safeguarding and enhancement of services, community and infrastructure provision including healthcare, but particularly wherever new development of this nature takes place.</p>
<p>Cumulative Effects on Social Equality and Community Services:</p> <p>Cumulative effects will reflect the spatial effects, as where there is most new development, there is most chance of a cumulative effect on community equality and services. Cumulatively, measures proposed that will contribute towards sustainable communities in all policies should have a significant positive effect on community health as a receptor and equality, leisure and education.</p>
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Social Equality and Community Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the Local Plan is not expected to have any negative impacts on social equality and community services. The potential for negative impacts will be if there is a failure in implementing the Local Plan in full.

SA Topic	Local Economy and Employment		
SA Objectives	1. To reduce the disparities in economic performance within the Borough 3. To develop and maintain a healthy labour market 4. To encourage sustainable economic growth 5. To deliver urban renaissance 6. To deliver rural renaissance 7. To develop and market West Lancashire's image		
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Versions Paper	
<p>Key sustainability issues within the Borough include the decline in manufacturing and agricultural employment.</p> <p>Another key issue is high unemployment and employment deprivation in Skelmersdale, particularly in the wards of Dignum, Birch Green and Tanhouse.</p> <p>There are varying levels of vitality and viability within the Borough's centres and there is an identified need to</p>	<p>In the short term existing unfavourable economic trends would be likely to continue, including employment deprivation and low job density.</p> <p>Over time, as the national planning framework changes, the saved Local Plan would begin to become out of date, and in some instances, irrelevant.</p> <p>Without the Local Plan a 'business as usual approach' is likely to result in piecemeal development and may result in regeneration opportunities for the Borough being missed. Allowing</p>	<p>The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework for the local economy and employment. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on the local economy and employment in the Borough.</p>	

<p>improve the evening economy offer.</p> <p>There is a lack of available employment land in the Borough outside of Skelmersdale.</p> <p>There is considerable 'leakage' in expenditure to competing facilities outside the Borough (particularly comparison goods) and there are high levels of out-commuting particularly to Sefton.</p>	<p>market-led development will result in the highest profit margins for the developer and it may result in the loss of economically active communities, thus not passing the benefits of development onto the people of West Lancashire.</p> <p>In terms of retail and town centres, without the implementation of the Local Plan, an opportunity will be lost to help reduce the considerable 'leakage' in expenditure to competing facilities outside the Borough -through the growth of Skelmersdale town centre supported by Ormskirk and Burscough town centres.</p>	
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Local Economy and Employment:</p> <p>The local economy and employment topic is interrelated to all the other sustainability topic areas identified within this report. For example there are linkages to the physical environment (ecosystem services, air quality, housing provision, open space, transport) and to the social environment (community health and equality, education and skills, leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on the local economy and employment.</p> <p>Similarly, the quality of the built and physical environment can have secondary impacts on the local economy and employment; a high quality environment can attract and help stimulate investment. Likewise the natural environment provides ecosystem services such as fresh water to businesses through the water cycle, such services are vital to the life and growth of the local economy.</p> <p>The provision of both social and physical infrastructure can also have secondary impacts on the local economy and employment. If suitable physical infrastructure is in place, such as employment sites and transport connections, this can stimulate and meet the needs of employment growth. Likewise, in terms of social infrastructure, education and skill levels can have significant secondary impacts on the local economy, as level of skills can influence the number of new business start ups in an area and a high skill base can encourage higher value industries to be established.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Local Economy and Employment:</p> <p>The implementation of the Local Plan policies in relation to local economy and employment will have a permanent impact, for example the development of a town centre or the development of employment land is considered permanent.</p> <p>Likewise, the development of employment and other commercial development on previously developed land will help to encourage urban renaissance and is likely to have a permanent impact.</p>		
<p>Spatial Effects on Local Economy and Employment:</p> <p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from economic growth, regeneration and the provision of a wide range of employment opportunities, but particularly wherever new development takes place in the</p>		

key services centres within the Borough.
<p>Cumulative Effects on Local Economy and Employment:</p> <p>Cumulative effects will reflect the spatial effects, as where most new development is located, there is most chance of a cumulative effect on local economy and employment. Cumulatively, measures proposed that will contribute towards a sustainable transport system, increased education opportunities, greater housing choice, enhanced community facilities and a sustainable environment in all policies should have a significant positive effect on the local economy and employment.</p>
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Local Economy and Employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the preferred policy options of the Local Plan are envisaged to have a positive impact on local economy and employment, particularly in the medium to long-term when the policy measures have had time to take effect and provide conditions for the economic growth required to generate the level and range of employment opportunities which will meet the needs of the Borough.

SA Topic	Housing		
SA Objectives	9. To improve access to good quality, affordable and resource efficient housing		
Current Status	Likely situation without the plan	Situation under the Local Plan Publication Version	
<p>A key sustainability issue is the need to respond to an increasing and ageing population which will place particular demands on the number and types of homes available.</p> <p>There is a need to improve the availability of affordable housing, particularly in the rural parishes, to provide a better variety of housing and 'even out' tenure and stock type distribution between settlements, particularly by diversifying the mix of housing in Skelmersdale by increasing market supply.</p> <p>There is a need to provide a supply of housing to meet targets and demand. Achieving the required levels of development will require planning policy intervention</p>	<p>In the short term existing unfavourable housing trends would be likely to continue, including a limited choice of housing options and a growing affordability issue. The poor condition of some of the housing stock and the high vacancy rates would also be likely to persist.</p> <p>Over time, as the national planning framework changes, the existing planning policy framework would become out of date, and in some instances, irrelevant. The housing needs of the Borough are likely to change both now and in the future, beyond the scope of those planned for in the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Ultimately, without new housing</p>	<p>The Local Plan Publication Version strives to meet the sustainability objectives identified in the SA framework for housing. Overall the policies proposed should have a significant positive impact on housing in the Borough.</p> <p>The Local Plan should result in an increase in the supply of housing (including affordable housing) within the Borough, whilst also creating mixed and balanced communities.</p>	

<p>with land allocations and changes to restrictive residential policies in smaller villages being evaluated. Such policy decisions will need to be balanced with the potential for Green Belt land releases.</p> <p>There is also a need to revitalise the housing markets in Skelmersdale and regenerate the town and improve its desirability as a place to live.</p>	<p>policies the current planning policy framework will be ill-equipped to deal with the future housing needs of the Borough. The Local Plan sets a more sustainable course of action than the existing planning policy framework. Whilst measures are taken through the wider planning framework such as the Council's Housing Strategy there is a clear need for the delivery of a new mix, type and size of homes through the planning system.</p>	
<p>Secondary / Indirect Effects on Housing:</p> <p>Other areas of sustainability explicitly linked to housing, include those relating to the physical environment (employment provision, open space, transport) and to the social environment (community health and equality, local economy, education and skills, and leisure) and as such, these can have a number of secondary impacts on housing. There could also potentially be secondary impacts on some ecosystem services including water quality, quality of biodiversity sites and air quality.</p>		
<p>Short, Medium and Long-term effects and Temporary / Permanent effects on Housing:</p> <p>The Local Plan sets the long term vision and strategic objectives for spatial planning in the Borough. The implementation of the Local Plan policies in relation to housing will have a permanent impact.</p>		
<p>Spatial Effects on Housing:</p> <p>All parts of the Borough will benefit from increased housing quantity, quality, affordability and choice, but particularly wherever new development takes place. The most positive effects are likely to be in Skelmersdale and Up Holland and to a lesser extent Ormskirk, and Aughton, Burscough and the northern parishes. There could also potentially be negative impacts on areas of landscape value within the Borough, depending upon where new housing is located.</p>		
<p>Cumulative Effects on Housing:</p> <p>Cumulative effects will reflect the spatial effects, as where most new development is located, there is most chance of a cumulative effect on housing. Cumulatively, measures proposed that will contribute towards a sustainable transport system, increased community facilities and services and increased economic activity should have a significant positive effect on housing.</p>		
<p>Summary of Recommended Mitigation / Enhancement for Housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the preferred policy options of the Local Plan are envisaged to have a positive impact on the provision of housing to meet local need. 		

14.3 Cumulative and Synergistic Effects

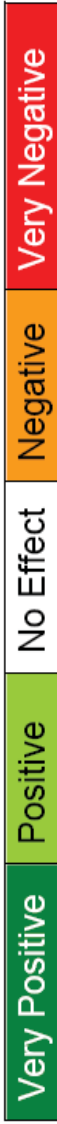
- 14.3.1 This section looks at the performance of the plan on two levels. Table 13.1 on page 181 looks at the performance of the policies together. Appendix 5 looks at the performance of the plan in combination with other initiatives in the Borough. Some of the key cumulative and synergistic effects are set out in this section.
- 14.3.2 Table 13.1 on page 181 sets out the performance of the policies in the Local Plan Publication Version together, in relation to each of the SA topics. The policies have varying impacts on the different SA topics explored within this SA.
- 14.3.3 The table shows that in relation to the climatic factors & flooding, transportation & air quality, social equality & community services, housing and local economy & employment topic areas, the policies generally have a positive impact.
- 14.3.4 The policies have a varying cumulative impact on the heritage & landscape, biodiversity and water & land resources. The policies that set out the need to develop on Green Belt and Greenfield land would lead to pressure on environmental resources in West Lancashire. However, policies GN3, EN2, EN3 and EN4 help to mitigate these negative impacts to a certain extent as they incorporate measures that will help to protect areas of environmental value.
- 14.3.5 The table in Appendix 5 shows that other initiatives in Lancashire and neighbouring local authorities will contribute to the positive effects on the various SA topics caused by the Local Plan Publication Version Paper.
- 14.3.6 Neighbouring local authorities to West Lancashire include Chorley, South Ribble, Fylde, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens and Wigan. The authorities are at various stages of preparing their local plans. The development of various transport schemes in surrounding areas (including the Thornton to Switch Island link road in Sefton) will contribute towards improving the transport network surrounding the Borough. The local plans for each of the neighbouring Boroughs also highlight the importance of protecting and enhancing areas of environmental value and identify the need to deliver economic development and new housing. This will contribute towards the positive impact of the West Lancashire Local Plan Publication Version.
- 14.3.7 The Lancashire Local Transport Plan proposes a series of new transport schemes throughout Lancashire. Many of the schemes within West Lancashire will lead to improvements in public transport, which will have positive impacts on a number of the SA topics including air quality and climatic factors.
- 14.3.8 The Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan sets out a number of policies in relation to minerals and waste development. The policies set out within the Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan has a positive impact on ensuring that minerals and waste development is located in the most sustainable locations.
- 14.3.9 The situation in combination with the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy sets out a series of measures that will ensure that the impacts of climate change are mitigated in Lancashire. These measures contribute to the positive impacts that the Local Plan Publication Version have on the SA topics. In particular, the Climate Change Strategy has a very positive impact on the climatic factors and flooding SA topic.
- 14.3.10 The North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan 2 contributes towards a positive impact on a number of topic themes. The plan incorporates measures that will ensure

that natural resources and built development towards the north of the Borough will be protected from the risk of flooding.

- 14.3.11 The situation in combination with the Lancashire Economic Strategy ensures a positive impact on some of the SA topics, but does not have any significant impact on others. The strategy addresses the need to ensure environmental resources and biodiversity are protected as part of new development and the need to tackle climate change. In particular, when combined with the Publication Version, the economic strategy has a positive impact on improving the local economy.

Table 14.1 – Cumulative Effects of the Policies Together

KEY



		Policies																								
		SP1	SP2	SP3	GN1	GN3	GN4	GN5	EC1	EC2	EC3	EC4	RS1	RS2	RS3	RS4	RS5	IF1	IF2	IF3	IF4	EN1	EN2	EN3	EN4	
SA Topics	Heritage and Landscape																									
	Biodiversity																									
	Water and Land Resources																									
	Climatic Factors and Flooding																									
	Transportation and Air Quality																									
	Social Equality and Community Services																									
	Local Economy and Employment																									
	Housing																									

14.4 Monitoring

- 14.4.1 Sections 8 in Chapters 4-11 suggest a range of appropriate indicators for monitoring the significant environmental effects of policies within the Local Plan Publication Version. In the case of monitoring recommendations, it is important to note that these are initial recommendations. It will be up to the Council to consider the practicalities of monitoring and what might be achievable.
- 14.4.2 Monitoring significant effects is a key requirement of the SEA Directive: The SEA Directive states that “*member states shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programme in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action*” (Article 10.1). The Environmental Report shall include “a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring” (Annex I (i)).
- 14.4.3 The Council must currently prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) setting out, amongst other things, the extent to which the policies set out in the DPDs and SPDs are being achieved. The significant effect indicators (for monitoring important effects identified by the SA) identified through the SA process can be monitored as part of the AMR process, which monitors the performance of the plan.
- 14.4.4 The Localism Act removes the statutory requirement for LPAs to submit AMRs to the Secretary of State, now LPAs have the discretion to include whatever information they feel necessary and there is now more flexibility on the timescales for publication.

14.5 General Conclusions

- 14.5.1 In conclusion, it is considered that the Local Plan achieves a sustainable balance between making provision for development to meet local needs, taking into account infrastructure requirements and the physical and environmental constraints of the area, in particular the amount of Green Belt land in the Borough and the waste water treatment constraints, and displaying flexibility to respond to changing circumstances across the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond.
- 14.5.2 The major planning and sustainability concern in the preparation of the Local Plan is the need to amend Green Belt boundaries in the Borough to ensure delivery of residential and employment development needs and the need to demonstrate flexibility in that delivery of development needs if circumstances change.
- 14.5.3 Approximately 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. It is considered that the safeguarding of such land represents a sustainable approach as will help ensure that land is available in the Borough in order to meet the economic and social development needs of the Borough over the course of the plan period and beyond.

- 14.5.4 The flexibility within the Local Plan will have a positive economic impact on the Borough as it supports a change in market conditions and allows for economic growth in the Borough even during unforeseen circumstances.

Location of New Development

- 14.5.5 The Local Plan Publication Version indicates the Council's commitment to accommodating growth in a sustainable way which generally prioritises sustainable brownfield land. Whilst there is a recognised need to release Green Belt land in the Local Plan at Edge Hill University, Yew Tree Farm and Grove Farm and potentially on "Plan B" sites in order to meet housing and employment land targets in the Borough, the focus of the Local Plan policies is to maximise the vast majority of suitable land within urban areas before new housing and employment development is delivered in the Green Belt particularly in relation to "Plan B" sites.
- 14.5.6 Policies SP1 and IF2 encourage sustainable transport and require new development to contribute to providing an integrated sustainable transport network and to be located where possible on sites with high levels of accessibility; this should help to reduce the need to travel. The importance of conserving and enhancing settlement character is recognised in the town centre hierarchy (Policy IF1) which indicates the scale of development acceptable in centres and is based on the services they provide.

Natural and Historic Environments

- 14.5.7 A potential risk to key areas of biodiversity value within the Borough is the level of development proposed within the Local Plan Publication Version, particularly development proposed on Green Belt land. However it is recognised that a number of policies provide measures for ensuring that new development can be delivered alongside biodiversity protection objectives. Six out of seven "Plan B" sites are located in the Green Belt and the Grove Farm site is also located in the Green Belt. These sites have been subject to a site specific SA in this report. It is considered on the whole that the development of these sites is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on biodiversity, as the majority of sites are located away from areas of biodiversity value and where they are located close to sites of biodiversity value, appropriate mitigation will allow for any potential adverse impacts to be minimised. However, it is recognised that impacts on biodiversity and the wider environment will still need to be assessed at the planning application stage.
- 14.5.8 The Council's commitment to improving the environment of the Borough is emphasised throughout the Local Plan, but is particularly evident in policies EN2 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Natural Environment) and EN4 (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Built Environment). The successful implementation of these policies will ensure that the environmental quality of the Borough is maintained and enhanced. Likewise, the importance of protecting, enhancing and managing places, landscapes and buildings of historic, cultural and archaeological value is well recognised throughout the Local Plan and providing these policies are implemented these features will be enhanced and sustainably managed into the longer term.
- 14.5.9 A potential risk to local landscape character is new development on Green Belt land. However as indicated above, the key sites have been subject to a site specific SA in this report. It is considered on the whole that the development of these sites is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on landscape character in the Borough, as the majority of sites are well screened or enclosed and appropriate mitigation will allow for any potential adverse impacts to

be minimised. However, it is recognised that impacts on landscape character and the wider environmental will still need to be assessed at the planning application stage.

Land and Water Resources

- 14.5.10 Over the plan period, the implementation of the Local Plan will result in potential negative impacts on land resources due to the development of key housing and employment development and associated infrastructure on Greenfield sites and Green Belt land. However, these negative effects are partly mitigated by other policies within the Local Plan which aim to reduce the impact of new development on or close to Green Belt and Greenfield land where possible over the plan period, and/or seek to deliver a high quality green infrastructure network across the Borough, to mitigate the loss of Green Belt and Greenfield land.
- 14.5.11 New development through the implementation of the Local Plan will bring an increase in water consumption and waste generation in absolute terms, hence in most cases there is a negative assessment of those policies which direct growth against these objectives. However the implementation of policies GN3 and IF4 and the wider Lancashire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will help manage waste generation in the Borough, but will also require other awareness raising programmes to encourage recycling, carried out by the Council and its partners.
- 14.5.12 In addition, it is also recognised that, through the implementation of Policy EN1 there is a requirement for new housing to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 and eventually Level 4 and Level 6 in 2016, which will assist in delivering water and energy efficiency in new homes.

Economic Growth, Social Inclusiveness and Key Infrastructure

- 14.5.13 The Local Plan strongly focuses development needs upon the existing key service centres. This will help to achieve regeneration in the Borough, resulting in growth of the local economy over time.
- 14.5.14 One of the main thrusts of the Local Plan Publication Version is to support the growth of the Borough's economy and expand and diversify employment opportunities within the Borough. The regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre, the expansion of Edge Hill University and the focus on the media industry and green industries through Policy EC1 represent significant growth and investment opportunities for the Borough, and are likely to significantly increase job opportunities and business development opportunities in West Lancashire and the wider sub-region in the long term.
- 14.5.15 The implementation of the Local Plan is likely to have a significantly positive impact on transportation in the Borough. The delivery of a number of transport improvements would support the growth of the local economy and may also promote inward investment. The degree of positive impact would of course depend on whether aspirational schemes such as the A570 Ormskirk Bypass, new rail station in Skelmersdale and rail link between the Ormskirk-Preston lines are taken forward.
- 14.5.16 Positive impacts on increasing social inclusiveness in West Lancashire have been identified in relation to the housing and employment policies. There are also policies which will help to ensure that sufficient community services and facilities are developed alongside new development delivered over the plan period.

- 14.5.17 Through the allocation of Key Rural Development Sites the Local Plan will help stimulate the local economy and provide necessary housing land within the rural parts of the Borough.
- 14.5.18 Flexible Policy GN2 (Safeguarded Land), will ensure that Borough is able to provide for community needs during and beyond the plan period particularly in unforeseen circumstances, in terms of housing, employment and services and infrastructure provision.
- 14.5.19 By meeting existing and proposed housing needs while maximising the efficient use of land, respecting the identity of settlements and reducing the need to travel, the Local Plan Publication Version is envisaged to have a positive impact on housing within the Borough.
- 14.5.20 Through Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability) it is considered that the Local Plan is flexible enough to deal with changing housing market conditions and will help deliver new housing development particularly in the short-medium term whilst the market recovers from the global recession.
- 14.5.21 The Local Plan Publication Version contains a wide variety of policy content focused on addressing the Borough's health problems. Approaches notable for their consideration and impact upon health priorities include those within policies SP2 and EN2-3 but there are also efforts to address health problems through the maintenance of well-designed places and spaces, through the support of accessible sustainable travel options and through the provision of a healthy and green local environment.
- 14.5.22 In essence, the Local Plan seeks to create healthy and liveable urban neighbourhoods, provide social infrastructure (such as health, community and sports facilities, and open space) and raise levels of educational attainment.

Climate Change

- 14.5.23 The implementation of the Local Plan will have a positive impact on tackling the impacts of climate change. As new development is broadly directed towards existing centres, it will be located close to existing services. This should reduce the need to travel, which will in turn have a positive impact on reducing the volume of carbon emissions produced through private vehicle movements. The Local Plan also promotes the development of low carbon and renewable energy, which will increase the potential for delivering sustainable energy throughout the Borough.
- 14.5.24 Requiring the provision of electric vehicle charging points through Policy IF2 is expected to have a range of sustainability benefits including the reduction of harmful emissions from road transport within the Borough, such as nitrogen oxides. A reduction in air emissions from road traffic is likely to have a positive (although less significant) impact on air quality and climate change mitigation in the Borough.
- 14.5.25 The geographical landscape of West Lancashire is a low-lying fluvial plain which historically makes large areas of land prone to flooding. Much of this land is used for agricultural purposes and is sparsely populated and therefore the risk to people and properties is low. However, areas to the north and west of the Borough are at risk of costal flooding. The only significant sizable settlement with a high risk of flooding is Banks.
- 14.5.26 The risk of flooding is likely to increase over the lifetime of the Local Plan due to climate change. However the Local Plan addresses the need to take account of flood risk in development proposals in Policy SP1 and also directs a large proportion of new development

towards the three existing key service centres (Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale), which do not lie directly in areas of significant flood risk.

- 14.5.27 Overall, it is considered that the implementation of the Local Plan Publication Version policies will achieve sustainable and sensitive growth in West Lancashire.

15 Next Steps

- 15.1.1 This SA Report will be published alongside the Local Plan Publication Version to seek feedback on the way forward for the Local Plan (which is required to comply with Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008). The Local Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for an Examination in Public.
- 15.1.2 The Council are keen to promote the submission of comments electronically and would encourage anyone with appropriate facilities to make their responses via the consultation website. This can be found at: www.westlancs.gov.uk/ldf.
- 15.1.3 Alternatively, comments can be returned by post to the following address:
- Local Development Framework Team
West Lancashire Borough Council
52 Derby Street
Ormskirk
L39 2DF
- Or by email to: ldf@westlancs.gov.uk
- 15.1.4 **The consultation period will start in August 2012 and run for 8 weeks**

16 Glossary

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

One of a number of documents required to be included in the Local Development Framework Development Plan Documents. It is submitted to Government via the Regional Government office by a local planning authority at the end of December each year to assess the progress and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

The Localism Bill removes the statutory requirement for LPAs to submit AMRs to the Secretary of State, now LPAs have the discretion to include whatever information they feel necessary and there is now more flexibility on the timescales for publication.

Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)

Non-permanent designation created if monitoring reveals that statutory air quality thresholds are being exceeded or will be exceeded in the near future.

Built Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)

A voluntary measurement rating for green buildings that was established in the UK by the BRE. Since its inception it has since grown in scope and geographically, being exported in various guises across the globe.

Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)

A heavy odourless colourless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances; absorbed from the air by plants in photosynthesis.

Conservation Area

A conservation area is a tract of land that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features, cultural heritage or biota are safeguarded. A conservation area may be a nature reserve, a park, a land reclamation project, or other area.

Development Plan Document (DPD)

A Local Development Document which forms part of the statutory development plan, including the Local Plan DPD.

Geodiversity

Geodiversity is the variety of earth materials, forms and processes that constitute and shape the Earth, either the whole or a specific part of it.

Green Belt

Green Belt is undeveloped land, which has been specifically designated for long-term protection. It is a nationally important designation.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is a concept originating in the United States in the mid-1990s that highlights the importance of the natural environment in decisions about land use planning. In particular there is an emphasis on the "life support" functions provided by a network of natural ecosystems, with an emphasis on interconnectivity to support long term sustainability.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG)

Greenhouse gases are gases in an atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

An indicator of economic prosperity. It measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector. It is based on the difference between the value of goods and services produced and the cost of raw materials and other inputs that are used in production.

Local Development Document (LDD)

The individual documents that set out planning policies and guidance for the Borough for specific topics or for the geographical areas.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

The Local Development Framework is the portfolio or folder of Local Development Documents, which set out the planning policy framework for the Borough.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

A Local Nature Reserve or LNR is a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the powers of Borough councils to establish LNRs are contained in Article 22 of the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

Local Planning Authority (LPA)

A Local Planning Authority is the local authority or council that is empowered by law to exercise planning functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Local strategic partnerships exist in nearly all local authority areas in England. They bring together representatives from the local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to address local problems, allocate funding, discuss strategies and initiatives.

Local Geological Sites (LGS)

Local Geological Sites (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological Sites - or RIGS) are non-statutory sites that have been identified by local geo-conservation groups as being of importance. A potential Local Geological Site is put through an assessment panel and, if a site is dually recommended, is notified to the relevant local authority. By designating a Local Geological Site, the features identified then become a material consideration in any future development.

Per capita consumption

The amount of a commodity used by each person.

Previously Developed Land (PDL)

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings.

Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

This is the blue print for economic development in England's North West. It sets out a clear vision for the region's economy and identifies specific priority actions to meet the economic challenges and opportunities of the next ten years and close the economic gap with the rest of England.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

Overarching strategy document produced by the Regional Planning Body. The RSS provides a spatial framework to inform the preparation of the LDF and will form part of the Statutory Development Plan. The North West RSS was adopted in September 2008.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Site of Special Scientific Interest is a special area to protect wildlife, habitats and geographic features based on scientific interest.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

A Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is defined in the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), also known as the Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

A Special Protection Area or SPA is a designation under the European Union directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a system of incorporating environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes. It is sometimes referred to as Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

In England and Wales, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) are a required part of the local planning process.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

A document that's primary objective is to identify sites with potential for housing, assess their housing potential and when they are likely to be developed.

Sustainable

When making decisions in relation to land uses, local authorities have a duty to ensure that a development is sustainable. This means that a development or activity must meet the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

In United Kingdom Planning Law a Sustainability Appraisal is an appraisal of the economic, environmental and social effects of a plan from the outset of the preparation process to allow decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development. Since 2001, Sustainability Appraisals have had to be in conformity with the Strategic Environmental Assessment EU directive.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

These are Local Development Documents that have not been subject to independent testing and do not have the weight of development plan status. Replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance.