



Kim Webber B.Sc. M.Sc.  
Chief Executive  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 2DF

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Tuesday, 14 February 2017

**TO: COUNCILLORS I MORAN, Y GAGEN, T ALDRIDGE, J HODSON, J PATTERSON,  
K WILKIE, K WRIGHT AND C WYNN**

Dear Councillor,

A Special meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CABINET & COMMITTEE ROOM, 52 DERBY STREET** on **WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017** at **6.30 PM** at which your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Kim Webber", written over a horizontal line.

Kim Webber  
Chief Executive

**AGENDA  
(Open to the Public)**

- 1. APOLOGIES**
- 2. SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS**

If, by virtue of the date by which a decision must be taken, it has not been possible to follow Rule 15 (i.e. a matter which is likely to be the subject of a key decision has not been included on the Forward Plan) then the decision may still be taken if:

- a) The Borough Solicitor, on behalf of the Leader, obtains the

agreement of the Chairman of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the making of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred,

- b) The Borough Solicitor, on behalf of the Leader, makes available on the Council's website and at the offices of the Council, a notice setting out the reasons that the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1571 -  
1572

If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest, he/she is advised to contact the Borough Solicitor in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of members a checklist for use in considering their position on any particular item is included at the end of this agenda sheet.)

### **4. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

1573 -  
1576

Residents of West Lancashire, on giving notice, may address the meeting to make representations on any item on the agenda except where the public and press are to be excluded during consideration of the item. The deadline for submissions is 5.00pm on Thursday 16 February 2017.

### **5. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

- 5a Local Plan Review - Scoping and issues & options consultation  
(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson)

1577 -  
1914

- 5b Provision of new cycle & pedestrian link through the Tawd Valley, Skelmersdale, linking to West Lancashire College  
(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson)

1915 -  
1924

### **6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It is recommended that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 (Financial/Business Affairs) & 5 (Legal Matters) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and as, in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(Note: No representations have been received about why the meeting should be open to the public during consideration of the following item of business).

**Part 2**  
**(Not open to the public)**

**7. MATTER REQUIRING DECISION**

7a	Planning Appeal Decision Regarding Land to the East of Prescott Road, Aughton (Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson)	1925 - 1986
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**We can provide this document, upon request, on audiotape, in large print, in Braille and in other languages.**

**FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE: Please see attached sheet.**

**MOBILE PHONES: These should be switched off or to 'silent' at all meetings.**

For further information, please contact:-

Sue Griffiths on 01695 585097

Or email [susan.griffiths@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:susan.griffiths@westlancs.gov.uk)

**FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR:  
COUNCIL MEETINGS WHERE OFFICERS ARE PRESENT  
(52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK)**

**PERSON IN CHARGE:** Most Senior Officer Present  
**ZONE WARDEN:** Member Services Officer / Lawyer  
**DOOR WARDEN(S)** Usher / Caretaker

**IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE**

1. Operate the nearest **FIRE CALL POINT** by breaking the glass.
2. Attack the fire with the extinguishers provided only if you have been trained and it is safe to do so. **Do not** take risks.

**ON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM**

1. Leave the building via the **NEAREST SAFE EXIT**. **Do not stop** to collect personal belongings.
2. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** on the car park and report your presence to the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.
3. **Do NOT** return to the premises until authorised to do so by the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.

**NOTES:**

Officers are required to direct all visitors regarding these procedures i.e. exit routes and place of assembly.

The only persons not required to report to the Assembly Point are the Door Wardens.

**CHECKLIST FOR PERSON IN CHARGE**

1. Advise other interested parties present that you are the person in charge in the event of an evacuation.
2. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire escape routes and inform any interested parties of the escape routes.
3. Make yourself familiar with the location of the assembly point and inform any interested parties of that location.
4. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire alarm and detection control panel.
5. Ensure that the zone warden and door wardens are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
6. Arrange for a register of attendance to be completed (if considered appropriate / practicable).

**IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, OR THE FIRE ALARM BEING SOUNDED**

1. Ensure that the room in which the meeting is being held is cleared of all persons.
2. Evacuate via the nearest safe Fire Exit and proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** in the car park.
3. Delegate a person at the **ASSEMBLY POINT** who will proceed to **HOME CARE LINK** in order to ensure that a back-up call is made to the **FIRE BRIGADE**.
4. Delegate another person to ensure that **DOOR WARDENS** have been posted outside the relevant Fire Exit Doors.

5. Ensure that the **ZONE WARDEN** has reported to you on the results of his checks, **i.e.** that the rooms in use have been cleared of all persons.
6. If an Attendance Register has been taken, take a **ROLL CALL**.
7. Report the results of these checks to the Fire and Rescue Service on arrival and inform them of the location of the **FIRE ALARM CONTROL PANEL**.
8. Authorise return to the building only when it is cleared to do so by the **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE OFFICER IN CHARGE**. Inform the **DOOR WARDENS** to allow re-entry to the building.

**NOTE:**

The Fire Alarm system will automatically call the Fire Brigade. The purpose of the 999 back-up call is to meet a requirement of the Fire Precautions Act to supplement the automatic call.

### **CHECKLIST FOR ZONE WARDEN**

1. Carry out a physical check of the rooms being used for the meeting, including adjacent toilets, kitchen.
2. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS**, both officers and members of the public are made aware of the **FIRE ALERT**.
3. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS** evacuate **IMMEDIATELY**, in accordance with the **FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**.
4. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** and report to the **PERSON IN CHARGE** that the rooms within your control have been cleared.
5. Assist the **PERSON IN CHARGE** to discharge their duties.

It is desirable that the **ZONE WARDEN** should be an **OFFICER** who is normally based in this building and is familiar with the layout of the rooms to be checked.

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOOR WARDENS**

1. Stand outside the **FIRE EXIT DOOR(S)**
2. Keep the **FIRE EXIT DOOR SHUT**.
3. Ensure that **NO PERSON**, whether staff or public enters the building until **YOU** are told by the **PERSON IN CHARGE** that it is safe to do so.
4. If anyone attempts to enter the premises, report this to the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.
5. Do not leave the door **UNATTENDED**.



# Agenda Item 3

## MEMBERS INTERESTS 2012

A Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter considered at a meeting must disclose the interest to the meeting at which they are present, except where it has been entered on the Register.

A Member with a non pecuniary or pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must disclose the existence and nature of that interest at commencement of consideration or when the interest becomes apparent.

Where sensitive information relating to an interest is not registered in the register, you must indicate that you have an interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information.

Please tick relevant boxes

Notes

	<b>General</b>		
1.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 below</i>
2.	I have a non-pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>
3.	I have a pecuniary interest <b>because</b> it affects my financial position or the financial position of a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest or it relates to the determining of any approval consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to me or a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>          <i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>
4.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest (Dispensation 20/09/16) or a pecuniary interest but it relates to the functions of my Council in respect of:  (i) Housing where I am a tenant of the Council, and those functions do not relate particularly to my tenancy or lease.  (ii) school meals, or school transport and travelling expenses where I am a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, and it does not relate particularly to the school which the child attends.  (iii) Statutory sick pay where I am in receipt or entitled to receipt of such pay.  (iv) An allowance, payment or indemnity given to Members  (v) Any ceremonial honour given to Members  (vi) Setting Council tax or a precept under the LGFA 1992	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>
5.	A Standards Committee dispensation applies (relevant lines in the budget – Dispensation 20/09/16 – 19/09/20)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>See the terms of the dispensation</i>
6.	I have a pecuniary interest in the business but I can attend to make representations, answer questions or give evidence as the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak but must leave the room once you have finished and cannot vote</i>

**'disclosable pecuniary interest'** (DPI) means an interest of a description specified below which is your interest, your spouse's or civil partner's or the interest of somebody who you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners and you are aware that that other person has the interest.

**Interest**

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Sponsorship

**Prescribed description**

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

	This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*"body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest" means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest; "director" includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;*

*"land" excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income; "M" means a member of a relevant authority;*

*"member" includes a co-opted member; "relevant authority" means the authority of which M is a member;*

*"relevant period" means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives notice to the Monitoring Officer of a DPI;*

*"relevant person" means M or M's spouse or civil partner, a person with whom M is living as husband or wife or a person with whom M is living as if they were civil partners;*

*"securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.*

**'non pecuniary interest'** means interests falling within the following descriptions:

- 10.1(1)(i) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) Any body (a) exercising functions of a public nature; (b) directed to charitable purposes; or (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) Any easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
- 10.2(2) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a connected person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision.

**'a connected person'** means

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association, or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph 10.1(1)(i) or (ii).

**'body exercising functions of a public nature'** means

Regional and local development agencies, other government agencies, other Councils, public health bodies, council-owned companies exercising public functions, arms length management organisations carrying out housing functions on behalf of your authority, school governing bodies.

A Member with a personal interest who has made an executive decision in relation to that matter must ensure any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

**NB** Section 21(13) of the LGA 2000 overrides any Code provisions to oblige an executive member to attend an overview and scrutiny meeting to answer questions.



## **PUBLIC SPEAKING – PROTOCOL**

**(For meetings of Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Audit & Governance Committee and Standards Committee)**

### **1.0 Public Speaking**

1.1 Residents of West Lancashire may, on giving notice, address any of the above meetings to make representations on any item on the agenda for those meetings, except where the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item.

1.2 The form attached as an Appendix to this Protocol should be used for submitting requests.

### **2.0 Deadline for submission**

2.1 The prescribed form should be received by Member Services by 5.00 pm on the Thursday of the week preceding the meeting. This can be submitted by e-mail to [member.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westlancs.gov.uk) or by sending to:

Member Services  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 2DF

2.2 Completed forms will be collated by Member Services and circulated via e-mail to relevant Members and officers and published on the Council website via the Council's Information System (CoInS). Only the name of the resident and details of the issue to be raised will be published.

2.3 Groups of persons with similar views should elect a spokesperson to speak on their behalf to avoid undue repetition of similar points. Spokespersons should identify in writing on whose behalf they are speaking.

### **3.0 Scope**

3.1 Any matters raised must be relevant to an item on the agenda for the meeting.

3.2 The Borough Solicitor may reject a submission if it:

- (i) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- (ii) is substantially the same as representations which have already been submitted at a previous meeting; or
- (iii) discloses or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

#### **4.0 Number of items**

- 4.1 A maximum of one form per resident will be accepted for each Agenda Item.
- 4.2 There will be a maximum of 10 speakers per meeting. Where there are more than 10 forms submitted by residents, the Borough Solicitor will prioritise the list of those allowed to speak. This will be dependent on:
  - a. The order in which forms were received.
  - b. If one resident has asked to speak on a number of items, priority will be given to other residents who also wish to speak
  - c. If a request has been submitted in relation to the same issue.
- 4.3 All submissions will be circulated to relevant Members and officers for information, although no amendments will be made to the list of speakers once it has been agreed (regardless of withdrawal of a request to speak).

#### **5.0 At the Meeting**

- 5.1 Speakers will be shown to their seats. An item 'Public Speaking' will be included on the agenda to enable local residents to make their representations within a period of up to 30 minutes at the start of the meeting. Residents will have up to 3 minutes to address the meeting when introduced by the Chairman for that meeting. The address must reflect the issue included on the prescribed form submitted in advance.
- 5.2 Members may discuss what the speaker has said along with all other information, when the item is being considered later on the agenda and will make a decision then. Speakers should not circulate any supporting documentation at the meeting and should not enter into a debate with Councillors.
- 5.4 If residents feel nervous or uncomfortable speaking in public, then they can ask someone else to do it for them. They can also bring an interpreter if they need one. They should be aware there may be others speaking as well.
- 5.5 Speakers may leave the meeting at any time, taking care not to disturb the meeting.



## REQUEST FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT MEETINGS

**MEETING & DATE** .....

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

.....

Post Code .....

**PHONE** .....

**Email** .....

Please indicate if you will be in attendance at the meeting

**YES/NO\***  
\*delete as applicable

Note: This page will not be published.

(P.T.O.)





CABINET: 22 February 2017

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**Report of: Director of Development and Regeneration**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson**

**Contact for further information: Mr Peter Richards (Extn. 5046)  
(E-mail: peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk)**

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**SUBJECT: LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – SCOPING AND ISSUES & OPTIONS  
CONSULTATION**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek authorisation to publicly consult on the Scope of a new Local Plan and on the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options Topic Papers.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That regard is had to the Minutes of the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group meetings of 18 October 2016, 7 December 2016 and 19 January 2017 (provided at Appendices A-C); to the Scoping Consultation Feedback Report and the responses received to the Scoping Consultation (provided at Appendix D); to the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Issues & Options Paper (provided at Appendices E and F); and to the Duty to Co-operate Statement (provided at Appendix G).

2.2 That the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options Topic Papers (provided at Appendix H-L) be approved for public consultation and that comments on the Scope of a new Local Plan also be sought from the public alongside this public consultation.

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### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Since Cabinet approved the Council's Local Development Scheme (which includes a timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan) in September, officers have consulted with key stakeholders on the Scope of a new Local Plan, prepared a number of documents and reports which form part of the evidence that will inform the preparation of a new Local Plan and have prepared a series of Issues & Options Topic Papers (Appendices H-L), and their accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (Appendix E) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) (Appendix F), for public consultation.
- 3.2 The consultation with key stakeholders on the Scope of a new Local Plan took place in October 2016 and a summary of the responses received, together with the Council's consideration of those responses, is provided at Appendix D in the Scoping Consultation Feedback Report. The responses to the Scoping consultation with key stakeholders, together with the evidence studies that have been collated and prepared thus far, have all informed the Issues & Options Topic Papers.
- 3.3 In relation to the preparation of evidence, officers have been preparing the following evidence documents, all of which will be available in draft alongside the Issues & Options Topic Papers for information and comment during the public consultation:
- Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) [it is anticipated a wider 4-week consultation on the draft report of this study will be held across the Liverpool City Region in April]
  - West Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
  - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
  - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1
  - Sustainable Settlement Study
  - Thematic and Spatial Evidence Papers

Other evidence, on further topics, will be prepared in due course, but the above provides a good starting point and has provided key information to inform the Issues & Options Topic Papers.

- 3.4 Draft versions of these Issues & Options Topic Papers were considered by the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group on 7 December 2016 and 19 January 2017, and their comments can be seen in the Minutes of that meeting provided in Appendices B and C. Minutes of a previous meeting of the Cabinet Working Group (on 18 October 2016) are also available at Appendix A.
- 3.5 Finally, it is vital that the Council demonstrates that it has co-operated with neighbouring local planning authorities and other key organisations in the

preparation of a new Local Plan, in order to fulfil the Duty to Co-operate. The Duty to Co-operate is a legal requirement of Local Plan preparation that, if the Council are found not to have complied with, can mean that the Local Plan is rejected by a Local Plan Inspector at the first step in a Local Plan Examination, and the Council has to start its Local Plan preparation again. As such, it is vital that the Council provides evidence to show how it has fulfilled the Duty to Co-operate and so the Council will prepare a Duty to Co-operate Statement at each stage of Local Plan preparation to aid with this. The Duty to Co-operate Statement for this Issues & Options Stage is provided at Appendix G.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Having undertaken the work outlined above, and taken on-board feedback from the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group, a series of Issues & Options Topic Papers have now been finalised with a view to publicly consulting on the Issues & Options for a new Local Plan. These Topic Papers mark the first public step in the preparation of a new Local Plan, as the Council asks all interested parties for their input at the very early stages of Local Plan preparation. In order to avoid consultation fatigue, it is proposed that there will be two simultaneous, and linked, consultations: one on the general scope of a Local Plan Review and one on the Issues & Options Paper.
- 4.2 While a Scoping consultation has already taken place, this was restricted to key stakeholders, but it helped identify all the key matters that should be covered in the Issues & Options Consultation. However, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement requires the Scoping consultation to be with the wider public as well. Officers were concerned about creating a sense of consultation fatigue very early on in the preparation of the Local Plan by having two very similar public consultations so close together. As such, it is recommended that a Scoping consultation is held alongside the Issues & Options consultation.
- 4.3 Both consultations will be very open in the way they invite interested parties to respond, but there will be a little more structure and direction with the Issues & Options Consultation due to a series of questions placed throughout the Topic Papers which invite a response to a particular matter. There will be an option to respond to the Issues & Options Consultation by essentially undertaking a survey answering these questions. However, both consultations will allow more general comments to be submitted as well.
- 4.4 There are five Issues & Options Topic Papers to be published for the consultation:
  - A Strategic Development Options Paper – Proposes a draft Vision and Objectives for the Local Plan and considers the options for:
    - How much new housing and employment land development will be required each year;
    - What period of time the Local Plan should cover;
    - Scenarios on how new development should be spread across the Borough;
    - Options for the types of locations that new development could be focused in; and

- Consideration of the infrastructure that would be required to support new development.
- An Economic Policy Options Paper – Proposes policy options for various planning considerations in relation to “Stimulating Economic Growth” (focusing on provision of employment land) and “Reinvigorating Town and Village Centres”.
- An Environmental Policy Options Paper – Considers policy options on planning matters relating to “Managing the Natural Environment”, “Addressing Climate Change” and “Designing the Built Environment”.
- A Social Policy Options Paper – Addresses a variety of policy options on subjects such as affordable housing, issues related to an ageing population, provision of student accommodation and more specialist provision for groups such as Travellers.
- A Spatial Portrait Paper – While not proposing any options itself, this Paper provides a key summary of the planning-related issues that West Lancashire faces and so presents the basis for the other Topic Papers and gives a greater understanding of the Borough, which will be crucial to addressing specific issues in each part of the Borough in the best way for that area.

4.5 By having a series of individual Topic Papers in this way, it is hoped that members of the public will be more likely to at least look at part of the Issues & options consultation and offer comments on the issues that interest them, and so each Topic Paper can be read in isolation (with a “What Happens Next?” section at the end to direct people on how to make comments on what they have read and various Question boxes throughout the Paper to stimulate comments on particular issues or options) or as one large document with the other Topic Papers. Likewise, the webpages for the consultation will be designed to enable interested parties to jump to their area of interest and only comment on that if they wish, but we hope respondents will comment on a range of issues and options by completing the full survey or making written representations.

4.6 It should also be noted that, while at this stage the Council is not discussing specific sites where development might be allocated, the Issues & Options Consultation, together with the publication of the draft Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), does start the ball rolling in respect of site allocations by asking interested parties to submit as much information as possible in relation to any sites that they wish to draw to the Council’s attention as having potential for allocation in the Local Plan. Given that the matter of deliverability is so important in planning now, under the NPPF and particularly in relation to the calculation of a five year housing land supply, the more information the Council has to help assess a site, the more likely that the sites we allocate will ultimately come forward for development in a timely fashion.



## 5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Should Cabinet approve the public consultation on the Scope of the Local Plan Review and the Issues & Options Consultation, the consultation will take place over six weeks from Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 (subject to any call-in of the Cabinet's decision on this item).
- 5.2 As ever with Local Plan consultations, the core of the consultation has to be submitted written representations, either as an email or a letter and either as a general comment (on the scope or on the issues & options) or by a response to a survey / questionnaire. Respondents have to provide their name and address (responses cannot be anonymous), although an individual's address and any other contact details will of course be kept private in line with data protection requirements.
- 5.3 To support this written consultation process, the Council will promote both consultation processes and particularly seek to disseminate information on the content of the Issues & Options Consultation in a variety of ways:
- A dedicated set of Local Plan webpages on the Council's website to make the information about the Issues & Options as accessible as possible, and to make it easy to respond to the consultation
  - A Wrap-around Advertisement on the Champion Newspaper as the consultation period starts
  - Letters / Emails to all contacts on the Local Plan consultation database
  - Briefing / Workshop for All Council Members and for Parish Councils
  - Up to 6 Forum events (depending on demand) in different venues across the Borough, where attendees will be able to engage in discussion with each other and Council officers on the Issues & Options
  - A House Builders Forum
  - A Business Forum
  - Engagement with school-age young people
  - Engagement with student population at Edge Hill University and West Lancs College
- 5.4 Following the consultation period, officers will collate the written responses received and consider the issues and suggestions they raise as a Preferred Options Local Plan document is prepared (essentially a draft Local Plan, complete with proposals for site allocations). A key part of the preparation of the Preferred Options will therefore be an assessment of the various site options submitted for the Council's consideration with a view to allocating sufficient sites to meet whichever strategic development option is ultimately selected by the Council.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 Although the decision being considered in this report only relates to a public consultation exercise, it is part of the wider preparation of a new Local Plan and the Local Plan will have very definite implications for sustainability and for the delivery of the objectives of the Community Strategy, hopefully (overall) positive implications. However, at this early stage in the preparation of the Local Plan, it is impossible to identify what the precise implications will be. The Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues & Options (see Appendix E) does provide an indication of the sustainability implications of the various options being considered.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The costs and resources associated with the public consultation exercise required for the Issues & Options consultation are covered by the Development and Regeneration Service's revenue budgets and no additional costs are expected to be incurred.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Given that the decision being considered only relates to whether the Council should publicly consult on the Scope of a Local Plan Review and the Issues & Options Topic Papers, there is minimal risk to the Council related to this decision, but the wider preparation of a Local Plan does carry some risks, be that related to the costs of abortive work if the Local Plan is ultimately found unsound or not legally compliant or related to the image of the Council should any proposals within the Local Plan prove unpopular.
- 8.2 However, the undertaking of public consultation such as the Scoping and the Issues & Options consultations minimises those risks due to the fact that carrying out such consultation ensures legal requirements are being met and that a robust Local Plan is being prepared and it ensures that all interested parties are being given an opportunity to make known their views to the Council for the Council to consider them in the preparation of the Local Plan. While the latter mitigation may not ultimately prevent those upset with particular proposals from expressing their dissatisfaction to the Council, the Council will be able to support the fact that they have given all interested parties a fair hearing.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

While the Issues & Options Topic Papers themselves do not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, it is part of a wider process to prepare a Local Plan which will have a direct impact. In addition, the actual decision being made by Cabinet is whether to undertake a public consultation and so, again, there is an impact on the public and stakeholders. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is required and is appended at Appendix M.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Minutes of Local Plan Cabinet Working Group on 18 October 2016

Appendix B – Minutes of Local Plan Cabinet Working Group on 7 December 2016

Appendix C – Minutes of Local Plan Cabinet Working Group on 19 January 2017

Appendix D – Scoping Consultation Feedback Report

Appendix E – Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues & Options

Appendix F – Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Issues & Options

Appendix G – Duty to Co-operate Statement

Appendix H – Strategic Development Options Paper

Appendix I – Economic Policy Options Paper

Appendix J – Environmental Policy Options Paper

Appendix K – Social Policy Options Paper

Appendix L – Spatial Portrait Paper

Appendix M – Equality Impact Assessment



**LOCAL PLAN CABINET WORKING GROUP**

**HELD: Tuesday, 18 October 2016**

Start: 6.30 pm

Finish: 8.25 pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillor: J Hodson (Chairman)  
G Dowling (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: J Davis N Furey  
E Pope D Westley  
A Yates

Officers in attendance: Director of Development & Regeneration (Mr. J. Harrison)  
Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager  
(Mr. P. Richards)  
Assistant Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager  
(Mr. S. Benge)  
Member Services/Civic Support Officer (Mrs. J.A. Ryan)

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Ashcroft.

**2 URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

**4 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference of the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group were submitted as below:-

1. To consider all policy documents arising from the adoption of the Local Plan and on any future updates.
2. To consider all matters, other than those already dealt with under the existing scheme of delegation, related to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and the identification of possible sites to meet proven need.
3. To report recommendations to Cabinet where appropriate.

AGREED: That the Terms of Reference be noted.

**5 PURPOSE OF THE GROUP**

Members received a presentation on the purpose of the Group by the Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager where the following points were raised:-

- The current Local Plan was 3 years old and that the process was starting over again for our next Local Plan.
- The timetable involved was a challenging timetable
- The importance of feeding back to other Members not on the Working Group
- Workshops and exhibitions would be held
- Getting accurate information out to the public was paramount

**RESOLVED:** That the presentation be noted.

**6 INTRODUCING THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager gave Members an introduction on the Local Plan Review during which the following comments were noted:-

- That there was not a problem with the current Local Plan, the current Local Plan was working well and bringing forward sites
- However, the Council needs to be proactive in looking ahead to a new Local Plan before the current Local Plan becomes out-of-date

**RESOLVED:** That the introduction into the Local Plan Review be noted.

**7 TIMESCALES**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager discussed with Members of the Working Group the timescales involved in the implementation of the new Local Plan and the following comments were noted:-

- Timescales involved in preparing a new Local Plan and the adoption date would be 2019-2022
- The fact that sub-regional governance structures are changing and the impact this would have
- Ageing population and the impact this would have on health

**RESOLVED:** That the timescales be noted.

**8 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager discussed with Members of the Working Group the involvement and role Members would have and the public consultation process and the following comments were noted:-

- Member involvement and the involvement of Cabinet at every stage
- Public consultation at every stage
- Regular meetings of the Working Group needed to be held, wide range of matters to be discussed
- The importance of engaging with key groups, local community groups and Parish Councils
- The importance of Regulation 18 of the Local Planning Regulations – obliged to take on everything submitted in next 2 years

**RESOLVED:** That the points raised be noted.

**9 EVIDENCE**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager discussed with Members of the Working group the evidence gathering process that would be carried out.

**RESOLVED:** This be noted.

**10 INITIAL THOUGHTS ON ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

Members received a presentation from the Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager and Members of the Working Group were asked for their initial thoughts on the issues and options, the following comments were noted:-

- What Members wanted West Lancashire to look like and we are striving to achieve and aim for
- To build on the Corporate and Objective Strategy
- Proposed Boundary Reviews and how these would affect West Lancashire
- The current Local Plan was a good starting point for us
- Size of sites, smaller sites often more acceptable than larger sites and the mix on sites
- Release of secured land, scale of developments and land auction sites
- Innovation and integration in the community was paramount
- Climate change issues
- The fact that population figures were growing, people were living longer and the structure of household formations
- Infrastructure of highways was a big concern and the importance of also implementing the railway structure
- Making sure sites allocated were not liable to flooding was a big issue
- Strategic options for quantum was an important issue

(Note: Councillor Pope left the meeting during consideration of this item and was not present for the remainder of the meeting).

**11      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

AGREED:      That the date of the next meeting will be the 7 December 2016 at  
18.30pm.

.....  
**- CHAIRMAN -**



**LOCAL PLAN CABINET WORKING GROUP**

**HELD: 7 December 2016**

Start: 6.30PM

Finish: 8.45PM

**PRESENT:**

Councillor: J Hodson (Chairman)  
G Dowling (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: I Ashcroft J Davis  
N Furey E Pope  
D Westley A Yates

Officers: Director of Development and Regeneration (Mr. J. Harrison)  
Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager (Mr. P. Richards)  
Assistant Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager  
(Mr. S. Benge)  
Member Services/Civic Support Officer (Mrs. J.A. Ryan)

12 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence received.

13 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

15 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 18 October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

16 **UPDATE ON EVIDENCE BASE STUDIES**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager gave Members an update on the Evidence Base Studies, during which the following comments were noted:-

- Members asked what the differences were in the evidence document as set out on page 10 of the report and those in the 2012 Local Plan.
- Members asked whether the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) and the Thematic and Spatial Evidence Papers were live documents and whether they were available on line.

**RESOLVED:** That the comments be noted.

17 DRAFT ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager discussed with members the draft Issues and Options Paper during which the following comments and questions were raised:-

- The duty to co-operate statement (Appendix B of the report) was noted as being to follow (paragraph 1.3.5)
- The spatial areas in the report, Members sought clarity that these were the current Local Plan areas (paragraph 2.1.1)
- To make sure that the proposed spatial areas were set out clearly from the outset
- Paragraph 1.1.5 misses out the social infrastructure/environmental issues and Members felt it was important to keep reiterating the 3 components of sustainability
- Members question why student accommodation was mentioned in paragraph 1.1.4 of the document, they would prefer this to be substituted with different wording, possibly unemployment of something else.
- Members stated it would be better to not refer to the student issue except at the student accommodation section
- Members felt that at paragraph 1.3.1 this was a good opportunity to mention the 3 tenets of sustainability
- At paragraph 1.2.3 Members felt the longer plan period would be a concern and the allocation of sites
- The wording in paragraph 1.3.2 Members didn't feel 'aspirational but realistic' was needed and the words should be deleted
- Flooding in Burscough was mentioned but Members raised the point that flooding occurred elsewhere also, it was felt that positive comments were included re issues in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale but there were no positive ones for Burscough
- It was felt that there should be something covering the environment/ economy /social for each area also
- On page 6 Members asked if the paragraph relating to Skelmersdale could be 'sparkled' up and the removal of the words socio-economic could be removed
- It was also felt that we should not put in 'deprived' when Skelmersdale mentioned at this section of the document
- At paragraph 2.1.3 in the document we refer to the need to retain graduates will this be a problem by concentrating on accommodation for the elderly
- On page 8 of the document with regard to the travelling community, Members stated where something is statutory/legally required this should be stated
- It was also felt that where anything was statutory possibly put this in bold type
- On pages 8-10 of the document Members noted that renewable energy and energy provisions is not included within the issues raised
- On page 9 – easing traffic congestion in Ormskirk, it was noted that the Ormskirk By-Pass had not been mentioned and Members asked where this was
- Members discussed whether there is any hierarchy in the objectives provided in section 3.2

- On page 12 of the document Members felt that the canal network should be mentioned
- Paragraph 4.2.1 Members raised whether numbers should be in here at this stage
- Members also raised whether we needed 5 housing options in here and whether there would be any mention of actual land mass (area) developed in West Lancashire
- At paragraph 4.3.4 concern was raised re the longer term assumptions and it was explained to Members that these had to be put in the document but that reference to the need to review these assumptions after 2025 would be appropriate
- On page 23 a map showing the spatial areas was discussed, Members felt the percentages would be better omitted
- Members raised the importance of engaging young people when consulting on the Local Plan Review (paragraph 5.4)
- At paragraph 5.5. Members suggested that this section needed trimming, it was raised that not all HMO's are students and we need to think about accommodation for graduates whom we wish to retain in the Borough.
- It was felt at this section that we may be better having an HMO heading and student issues separately
- Members also raised that at the beginning of this section it should be mentioned that Edge Hill University have no plans to expand further
- The issue of the loss of employment land as mentioned in paragraph 5.7.11 this needed to be spelt out why the loss of employment land to housing was a threat/issue
- Paragraph 5.8 – Members were not convinced that Burscough had a 'centre', it was felt that Burcough had upmarket eateries that served other towns e.g. Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, it was important to mention about a 'network' of the three centres and links between them
- Members felt it was important to focus not only on town centres but also outlying assets. Town Centres were 'hubs' or 'gateways'
- It was also mentioned that Burscough Industrial Estate also had retail outlets mixed in
- Members stressed that the opening line in paragraph 5.8.1 talked about towns and villages being the traditional destinations to buy goods and obtain services it was noted that retail wasn't the sole future for town centres – they needed to evolve/reinvent themselves
- Paragraph 5.9.6 – Members felt that the ethnic make-up of the Borough may change in the future e.g. asylum seekers and that this point needed to be mentioned
- At paragraph 5.9.26 Members felt that this needed to be expanded as there were significant number of people moving onto the water e.g. elderly downsizing
- Members felt that the comment stated at paragraph 5.10.1 about there being no issues relating to flooding should be removed or clarified as members of the public would react to this

- At paragraph 5.10.1 the bullet point relating to New Lane waste water treatment, Members asked if works were to be before or after new houses were built
- A Member raised a question as to why there was no mention of the Burscough rail improvements felt reference should be made in relation to this (page 70).

Members wished Officers to be thanked for their input and work into this document.

**RESOLVED:** That the comments and points raised be noted.

(Note: Councillor Dowling left during consideration of this item and was not present for the remainder of the meeting).

18 **PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

This item was not discussed.

19 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the date of the next meeting be confirmed.

.....  
**- CHAIRMAN -**

Start: 6.30PM

Finish: 7.40PM

**PRESENT:**

Councillor: J Hodson (Chairman)  
G Dowling (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: I Ashcroft J Davis  
N Furey E Pope  
D Westley

Officers: Assistant Director of Development and Regeneration (Mr I Gill)  
Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager (Mr P Richards)  
Assistant Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager (Mr S Bengel)  
Member Services/Civic Support Officer (Mrs J A Ryan)

20 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Yates.

21 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

23 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 7 December 2016 be approved as a correct record subject to the amendment of Minute No. 17 bullet point 8 to now read:-

- At paragraph 1.2.3 some Members felt the longer plan period would be a concern and the allocation of sites

24 **LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - REVISED DRAFT ISSUES AND OPTIONS TOPIC PAPERS**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager introduced the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration which sought members comments on the updated Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Papers, during which the following comments were noted:-

- Members were pleased with the amendments made to the document and that it made a good read, Officers were thanked for their work

**Appendix A – Strategic Development Options Paper**

- Paragraph 1.2.2 Members would like this worded slightly differently and that in the last phrase replace “consultation, and if we agree with your suggestion, additional

material will be added” with something along the lines of “consultation – consideration will be given to your suggestion and additional material may be added” or “consultation, and, taking into account your views, additional material will be added....”

- Paragraph 1.2.6 Members felt that this paragraph needed to be in bold type re site submissions and details of deliverability
- Members felt that Appendix A was a well worded document and raised the issues to be faced well.
- It was felt that the process to be followed needed to be stated more explicitly and spell out what the Council were trying to achieve, what we want people to do and explain where their comments went to
- Members expressed a wish for a glossary to be added to explain such terms like “sustainable development”
- On pages 203-207, a Member questioned the appropriateness of offering an unrealistically low option for housing and employment land requirements when the Council wanted growth
- In respect of the plan period going from 2012 a Member asked whether we were assuming that all current allocated Local Plan sites are to be developed and whether this could be stated more explicitly/simple in the document
- A Member asked that if there was a longer period of the Local Plan would this mean that more Green Belt sites would be released and would this be more problematic and cause great public concern
- It was suggested that if we allocated many sites for development there was a danger of the best sites being cherry picked and the least attractive sites left undeveloped
- It was stated that legislation is constantly changing and there are uncertain times ahead – should the Council seek to plan so far ahead at the present time
- There was a discussion about the merits of safeguarding land
- It was raised that the railway station at Skelmersdale when developed would change whatever is put in the Local Plan now
- It was recognised that more homes had to be built on Green Belt land and that the aim of the Council was growth
- It was felt that we needed to identify main sites for development and get on with them
- It was noted that on page 224 the timescales stated were incorrect and that the Student Accommodation Needs Paper would be Spring/Autumn 2017 and not 2016 as stated and that this would be done in liaison with Edge Hill University
- Members raised the point that Edge Hill University needed to share their plans for development and share data on student numbers
- A question was asked about newly built student accommodation would the University prefer this to be on or off site
- A Member asked about the strategic plan for Edge Hill University and enquired when this went up to

#### **Appendix B – Economic Policy Options Paper**

- Members raised no comments

#### **Appendix C – Environmental Policy Options Paper**

- In relation to paragraph 2.1 on page 250 a Member had noted that surveys of nature conservation sites were ‘infrequent’ and asked how did we move towards an ‘ecological network’ approach and what advantage would an ecological network give this Council
- In relation to paragraph 3.4 a Member commented that the figure for renewable energy was high and assumed that there was an up to date study backing this up

**Appendix D – Social Policy Options Paper**

- A Member asked if the second bullet point on page 243 could be amended to read – The ageing population will lead to a need for a range of suitable housing to meet older people's specific needs, and in appropriate locations
- Officers were asked to look carefully at the wording in paragraph 2.13 re affordable housing and CIL as Members felt this could be seen to be a little 'defeatist'
- A Member stated that he strongly supported the concept of adaptable housing and that housing suitable for the elderly not be restricted to bungalows
- Members stated the need for healthy sustainable communities that work in areas and that this was what they wanted to see – sustainable healthy communities with an appropriate mix of housing
- A Member said that they were very pleased with the wording in relation to adaptable housing

**Appendix E – Spatial Portrait Paper**

Members raised no comments on this paper

**RESOLVED:** That the comments and points raised be noted.

25

**CONSULTATION PROPOSALS FOR ISSUES AND OPTIONS**

The Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager gave Members an update on the consultation proposals for issues and options, during which the following comments were noted:-

- Members asked Officers how they intended to get the public interested and engage with the Council in the consultation exercise
- Ways of linking into Edge Hill University were discussed
- A Member commented that he had already spoken to local resident groups and that there was an important role for Members in the consultation process in engaging their communities
- It was noted that a workshop would be held with all Members of the Council and Parish Councils
- 6 forum events would be held scattered around the Borough including rural areas
- Officers stated they wished to engage with secondary school children, local youth groups and uniformed groups possibly meeting in local community centres as they didn't feel it worked going into a school environment
- It was noted that Officers did not intend to use Facebook as a way of getting information out to people this time round
- Officers informed Members that they would also be engaging with local house builders
- Officers intended to be out on market days and also at the Concourse in Skelmersdale carrying out consultation exercises
- It was noted that the consultation exercise would be commencing in March this year
- Officers outlined how Members would be involved in developing the Preferred Options paper in the future

**RESOLVED:** That the comments and points raised be noted.

**26      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED:    That the date of the next meeting be confirmed.

.....  
- CHAIRMAN -





Scoping  
Consultation  
Feedback Report

November 2016

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John Harrison DipEnvP, MRTPI  
Director of Development and  
Regeneration

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan Review, West Lancashire Borough Council will follow the engagement process as set out within the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI 2016) and the Regulations<sup>1</sup> governing the development plan process.

This consultation statement covers the feedback that the Council have received through the initial Scoping consultation with key stakeholders, which sought views on what the Local Plan Review, and the subsequent new Local Plan, should cover. The Council is keen to ensure that all statutory bodies with an interest in our Local Plan Review have the opportunity to let us know their views throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and right from the outset.

This consultation statement sets out:

- a) Who we consulted,
- b) How they were invited to make comments, and
- c) A summary of the main issues raised.

### Structure of the Statement

The statement is structured as follows:

**Section 2** gives details of who was consulted including the list of specific and general consultation bodies.

**Section 3** sets out how the consultation was undertaken.

**Section 4** includes who responded to the consultation.

**Section 5** includes a summary of the main issues raised and our responses.

**Section 6** is a conclusion to the consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## 2. Who was consulted?

West Lancashire Borough Council contacted 104 statutory stakeholders/bodies by either email or letter.

Lancashire County Council	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC)
Chorley Borough Council (BC)	St Helens MBC
South Ribble BC	Knowsley MBC
Preston City Council	Sefton MBC
Fylde BC	Liverpool City Council
Blackpool BC	Wirral MBC
Wyre BC	Halton MBC
Lancaster City Council	Ribble Valley BC
Blackburn with Darwen BC	Hyndburn BC
Burnley BC	Pendle BC
Rosendale BC	Parish Councils – All in West Lancs
Shadow Lancashire Combined Authority	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership	Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership
Liverpool Enterprise Partnership	Transport for Greater Manchester (GMPTE)
Merseytravel	Highways England
Merseyrail	Office of Rail Regulation
Northern Rail	Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
Civil Aviation Authority	Homes and Communities Agency
United Utilities	The Coal Authority
Electricity North West	National Grid

Scottish Power	Telecommunications companies (Mono)
Central Lancashire NHS	Lancashire Police
North West Ambulance Service	Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
Historic England	The National Trust
Environment Agency	Natural England
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Marine Management Organisation
Canal & River Trust	Forestry Commission
Lancashire Local Nature Partnership	Liverpool City Region Local Nature Partnership
Greater Manchester Local Nature Partnership	Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside
RSPB	Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
Friends of the Earth	Sport England
North and Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce	Home Builders Federation
National Federation of Property Professionals	National Housing Federation North West
Peel Ports Mersey	Gypsy Council, and other organisations representing Gypsies and Travellers
Age UK	Equality and Human Rights Commission
West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)	Well North and Well Skelmersdale
Church Commissioners	Ormskirk Community Partnership
Diocesan Board of Finance	

### 3. How was the consultation undertaken?

Consultation was undertaken with the specific and general consultation bodies recorded in the Local Plan database. All bodies were sent a letter either electronically or by post including details about the consultation event.

The consultation was undertaken in line with the recently adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)<sup>2</sup>.

### 4. Who responded?

From those notified about the consultation on the Local Plan Scoping Report a total of 18 people responded.

Of these responses the breakdown of respondents is as follows:

Parish Councils	5
Other LPAs	3
Statutory Bodies	6
Resident Groups	2
Other significant bodies	2

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/planning-policy-consultation/statement-of-community-involvement.aspx>

## 5. What was said and what is our response?

A summary of the main issues raised and our response is set out below, the full comments submitted to West Lancs Borough Council can be found in appendix 2.

Overall, it was pleasing to note that there were a number of comments which were in agreement with the Council's current approach in moving forward with a new Local Plan Review.

Organisations were asked to comment on matters and issues that a new Local Plan for West Lancashire should seek to address, and what the time period that the Plan should cover.

In order to inform thoughts on representations at this initial scoping stage, a list of policy areas reflects the initial thoughts of the Council on what the Local Plan should cover include:

- Strategic Policies – encompassing the key sustainable development framework for the Borough, requirements for residential and employment development, releasing land from the Green Belt (if required) and the allocation of strategic development sites.
- General Development Policies – encompassing development management policies that affect several types of development / land-use, including policies on settlement boundaries, safeguarded land, the design of development, and demonstrating viability in applications.
- Economic Policies – policies setting out the strategy for economic development in the Borough, including allocations for employment areas and protection of existing employment sites
- Residential Policies – policies setting out the strategy for residential development in the Borough, including housing allocations, provision of affordable, specialist and older persons' housing, accommodating travellers and caravans / house boats, and student accommodation.

- Infrastructure and Services Policies – policies guiding transport and highways matters, general utilities infrastructure, provision of community facilities and services and developer contributions towards new infrastructure.
- Environmental Policies – policies guiding protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, habitats for protected species, public open space and other green infrastructure and policies related to climate change.

In addition, the Council sought views on the length of time that the Local Plan should cover. Typically, Local Plans cover a 15-year period, but often have to safeguard land for beyond that timescale, particularly where Green Belt release is required in the Plan. This helps to protect the new Green Belt boundaries from encroachment and provides a greater degree of certainty and permanence about the Green Belt boundary beyond the Plan period.

Neighbouring Local Planning Authority responses agreed to cooperate with the production of the Local Plan Review and offered assistance in evidence sharing with the likely hood of addressing cross boundary issues.

A number of responses were received with regards to the scope of strategic and general development polices, primarily from Parish Council's and resident associations over the release of greenbelt. West Lancashire Borough Council undertakes rigorous evidence based studies regarding the amount of development needed and analysis of suitable land available. This forms part of the evidence base of the Local Plan Review and will be address through the development of the Local Plan.

English Heritage expressed their support for general development polices which encompass design polices, ensuring that the existing context of the Borough is maintained and enhanced.

With regards to infrastructure, a number of statutory bodies responded. Highways England are keen to work with West Lancashire Borough Council through the development of the Local Plan Review and offer assistance in highways matters and site allocations. This support is welcomed in ensuring that the impact on the wider transport network is managed.

Natural England and the Environment Agency reiterated their support for Environmental Polices to be addressed within the Local Plan review, indicating that the scope of the plan should extend to the creation and enhancement of the existing provision.

Sport England support the production of a Local Plan Review and the development of polices and evidence for the safeguarding of playing pitches.

Overall the responses to the Scoping of the Local Plan Review were supportive the statutory bodies and other bodies agree with the six main principles proposed in the scoping. West Lancashire Borough Council will ensure to work with statutory and other bodies in the production of the Local Plan Review.



## 6. Conclusion

This consultation focused on the scope of West Lancashire Borough Council's emerging Local Plan Review. There was not a significant response to the consultation but there was a number of statutory bodies who did express their support for a Local Plan Review.

Overall the quality and expertise within the responses was high with a number of important issues being raised, and relevant and supportive advice being given.

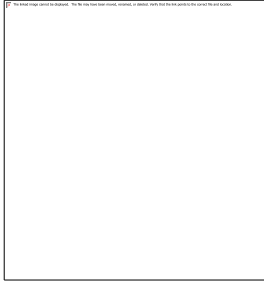
The following are ways in which responses to this consultation have been / will be taken account of:

- emails have been exchanged with various respondents in order to discuss issues and share information to improve the quality of the emerging Local Plan. Further meetings are being arranged
  
- work that had already been drafted has been reviewed and changes made where appropriate to address issues that have been raised
  
- all comments submitted are being considered in light of ongoing work and our ability to address the issues raised within the consultation document.

West Lancashire Borough Council will now spend some time ensuring that, where appropriate, the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Paper covers the points above before it is issued for public consultation.

**Appendix 1**

Consultation letter



**Directorate of Development and Regeneration  
Services**

**John R Harrison DipEnvP, MRTPI  
Director of Development and Regeneration**

PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk, West Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Telephone: 01695 577177  
Website: [www.westlancs.gov.uk](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk)  
Email: [peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk)

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Please ask for: Peter Richards  
Direct dial no: 01695 585046  
Extension: 5046

Dear Sir / Madam

**A Local Plan Review for West Lancashire**

As a key stakeholder in relation to planning and development in West Lancashire I am writing to you to inform you that the Council's Cabinet recently endorsed a proposal from officers to begin a review of the current West Lancs Local Plan 2012-2027 with a view to preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough.

As part of that resolution to endorse a Local Plan Review, the Cabinet also approved a consultation exercise with key stakeholders such as yourself on what the scope of the Local Plan Review, and subsequent new Local Plan, should be, in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

As such, I invite your organisation to comment on the matters and issues that a new Local Plan for West Lancashire should seek to address, and the time period that the Plan should cover.

It is the Council's intention to prepare an Issues & Options Paper for the Local Plan Review for public consultation in February / March 2017 and so your input at this initial stage will be crucial in guiding which issues that Paper should cover but we will of course invite further representations from you on the Issues & Options Paper in the New Year, as well as all subsequent consultations on the Local Plan.

In order to inform your thoughts on any representation at this initial scoping stage, at the present time the following list of policy areas reflects the initial thoughts of the Council on what the Local Plan should cover.

Possible Policy Areas for the Local Plan, and their scope, include:

- Strategic Policies – encompassing the key sustainable development framework for the Borough, requirements for residential and employment development, releasing land from the Green Belt (if required) and the allocation of strategic development sites
- General Development Policies – encompassing development management policies that affect several types of development / land-use, including policies on settlement boundaries, safeguarded land, the design of development, and demonstrating viability in applications
- Economic Policies – policies setting out the strategy for economic development in the Borough, including allocations for employment areas and protection of existing employment sites
- Residential Policies – policies setting out the strategy for residential development in the Borough, including housing allocations, provision of affordable, specialist and older persons' housing, accommodating travellers and caravans / house boats, and student accommodation
- Infrastructure and Services Policies – policies guiding transport and highways matters, general utilities infrastructure, provision of community facilities and services and developer contributions towards new infrastructure
- Environmental Policies – policies guiding protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, habitats for protected species, public open space and other green infrastructure and policies related to climate change

In addition, the Council are seeking your views on the length of time that the Local Plan should cover. Typically, Local Plans cover a 15-year period, but often have to safeguard land for beyond that timescale, particularly where Green Belt release is required in the Plan. This helps to protect the new Green Belt boundaries from encroachment and provides a greater degree of certainty and permanence about the Green Belt boundary beyond the Plan period.

However, recent planning appeal decisions across the country have made safeguarded land a more vulnerable designation than it once was, and instead safeguarded land is often used to provide flexibility where development is perhaps a little slower on allocated sites in the Plan (and even where it is not).

As such, one possible approach is to consider a longer Plan period that then does not require safeguarded land to be designated and gives the public more certainty over whether a site is allocated for development or not but also gives the development industry greater flexibility and choice. A longer Plan period also allows the Council and its partners to think longer-term in planning for infrastructure and growth and delivery of housing and employment land.

In this way, an argument could be made for a 20, 25 or even 30-year Plan period, and the Council would welcome your thoughts on this subject.

If you have any specific views on these proposed policy areas or believe that additional issues that have not been considered in the list above should be included, or you have views on the length of the Plan period, please make your representation to the Council by **5pm on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016**, making clear reference to the Local Plan, either by post or email at the following addresses:

Peter Richards  
Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
L39 2DF

Email: [localplan@westlancls.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancls.gov.uk)

If you have any queries regarding this letter or the Local Plan, please contact Peter Richards on 01695 585 046 or at the above email address.

For your information, the Council has also published a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) for the preparation of the Local Plan Review, and so if you wish to find out more about the process the Council will go through in reviewing the Local Plan and preparing a new one, you can download the LDS at:

<http://www.westlancls.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy.aspx>

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully



**Peter Richards**  
Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager

## **Appendix 2**

Table of comments

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
1.	Mark Evans	Fylde Borough Council	<p>Fylde Council is committed to working with West Lancashire Borough Council as a neighbouring authority under the Duty to Co-operate, in support of the plan-making process.</p> <p>Fylde Council has no comments to make in response to this consultation. We trust that we will be notified of further stages of plan preparation in due course.</p>	Comments Noted
2.	Warren Hilton	Highways England	<p>Highways England recognises that road infrastructure is an important component of delivering economic growth, particularly for the largest settlement within the West Lancashire Borough, Skelmersdale, which is served directly by the M58 motorway. We are therefore keen to support the Council in ensuring that its future growth aspirations can be accommodated by the strategic road network (SRN) in a sustainable way.</p> <p>From our perspective, the Council will need to ensure that the need for (and scope of) any improvements required to the SRN are identified during the development of the Local Plan Review and then incorporated into a revised Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP). The IDP will need to also details by what mechanisms such infrastructure is to be delivered at the appropriate time during the lifetime of the Plan period so that the impacts can be accommodated sustainably.</p> <p>At present, we are not aware of the locations and sizes of the new land allocations that the Council is looking to incorporate into the Local Plan as part of the review process. Without this information, it is difficult for us to advise precisely as to the extent of the SRN that the Council will need to assess within its evidence base for the review. In general terms, we would need to see that Junction 26 of the M6, together with Junctions 3, 4 and 5 of the M58 had been assessed as well as the Switch Island junction as the western end of the M58. Depending on the scale and location of additional sites, it</p>	<p>West Lancashire Borough Council welcomes Highways England comments and the sharing of data/existing traffic modelling available.</p> <p>As part of the evidence to support the Local Plan, the Council will undertake a Transport and Highways Assessment.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>may also be prudent to include M6 Junction 27 within the scope of this highway impact transport assessment.</p> <p>Highways England is happy to assist this work as much as possible through the provision of traffic count data and any existing traffic modelling that we have available. Once the detail of the proposed land allocations is known, we would then be able to help inform the Council's assessment of the potential traffic impacts on both the SRN and local highway network through the use of Highways England's GraHAM traffic modelling tool. This tool is a gravity-based traffic model that into which sites and road networks can be programmed. The tool is then able to generate trip generation and assignment data, which can then be used as the basis for further traffic modelling that the Council can gain an understanding of the wider impacts of all of the sites.</p> <p>As it is not a planning authority, Highways England is unable to comment upon the scope of the Local Plan Review. However, whilst we have no firm view as to the proposed lifetime of the new Plan, we note in this case that the aim of the review is to incorporate potentially much higher levels of housing growth; accommodating the authority's own Objectively Assessed Need together with an element of the needs of surrounding adjacent local authority areas. Consequently, this would favour taking a longer-term view of the Local Plan and of the approach to embedding the funding mechanisms needed to deliver any necessary infrastructure over such an extended period. The approach will therefore need to be mindful of the possibility of an increased need to travel between areas of new development and adjoining areas via the SRN for those new residents and businesses that are likely to have existing linkages for work, leisure or employment outside of the West Lancashire Borough.</p>	



	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
3.	Margaret Atherton	Downholland	<p>The Parish council is concerned about the preservation and protection of the Green Belt. This is important.</p> <p>Another consideration is that retention of commercial properties instead of giving up the sites for housing should be included.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>The need for the release of Green Belt land will depend on the scale and broad location of new development that the Local Plan ultimately identifies.</p> <p>Retention / Protection of employment land will be considered as a policy option.</p>
4.	Mark Harrison	Coal Authority	<p>The Coal Authority is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy &amp; Industrial Strategy. The Coal Authority was established by Parliament in 1994 to: undertake specific statutory responsibilities associated with the licensing of coal mining operations in Britain; handle subsidence claims which are not the responsibility of licensed coalmine operators; deal with property and historic liability issues; and provide information on coal mining.</p> <p>The main areas of planning interest to the Coal Authority in terms of policy making relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the safeguarding of coal in accordance with the advice contained in The National Planning Policy Framework &amp; Planning Practice Guidance in England, Scottish Planning Policy in Scotland, and Planning Policy Wales &amp; MTAN2 in Wales;</li> <li>the establishment of a suitable policy framework for energy minerals including hydrocarbons in accordance with</li> </ul>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>In preparing the Local Plan, the Council will have reference to LCC Minerals Safeguarding policy and consider policy on stability investigations and method statements.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>the advice contained in The National Planning Policy Framework &amp; Planning Practice Guidance in England, Scottish Planning Policy in Scotland, and Planning Policy Wales &amp; MTAN2 in Wales; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring that future development is undertaken safely and reduces the future liability on the tax payer for subsidence and other mining related hazards claims arising from the legacy of coal mining in accordance with the advice in The National Planning Policy Framework &amp; Planning Practice Guidance in England, Scottish Planning Policy in Scotland, and Planning Policy Wales &amp; MTAN2 in Wales.</li> </ul> <p>Consequently The Coal Authority would like to see the Local Plan Review set out a policy framework as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross refer to the minerals safeguarding policy of the Lancashire Minerals Local Plan</li> <li>Set out a policy to address land instability including investigation and treatment/remediation</li> <li>Incorporate consideration of mineral sterilisation and land instability in the site allocation assessment methodology</li> </ol> <p><b><u>Conclusion</u></b> The Coal Authority welcomes the opportunity to make these early comments. The Coal Authority also wishes to continue to be consulted both informally if required and formally on future stages.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
5.	Rachel Emmett	Lancashire Police	<p>The content of the West Lancashire current Local Plan relating to crime reduction is as follows;</p> <p><b><i>Policy GN3 Criteria for Sustainable Development</i></b>  <i>Development will be assessed against the following criteria, in addition to meeting other policy requirements in the Local Plan.</i></p> <p><b><i>1. Design/Setting</i></b>  <i>Proposals for development should:</i></p> <p><i>vii. Create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime and prepare a crime impact statement where required in accordance with the Council's validation checklist.</i></p> <p>Although this makes reference to safe and secure environments which reduce crime opportunities it fails to indicate how this can be done or what planners will be looking for in achieving this. Lancashire Constabulary invest highly in Early Action to reduce vulnerabilities across all communities in Lancashire. Early Action is crime prevention which is people focused. To compliment this in serving the communities of Lancashire, crime prevention is fundamental to reducing victims of crime and creating safer communities. Working in partnership with planning authorities is key to creating safer communities by ensuring new developments design out crime risks. This can be done in several ways including layout, physical security, lighting, encouraging natural surveillance and including appropriate boundary treatments.</p> <p>Applicants should be advised to obtain a Crime Impact Statement from Lancashire Constabulary's Designing Out Crime Officers. They are specially trained in reducing crime risks through design and security and also approach each application on a site specific basis relevant to crime figures and trends in the area around the site.</p>	<p>Comment Noted.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the following within a design policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Layout that promotes security,</li> <li>• External lighting,</li> <li>• Good levels natural surveillance,</li> <li>• Appropriate boundary treatments.</li> </ul>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>There is no charge for this service as Lancashire Constabulary is committed to creating safer communities.</p> <p>The Revised Local Plan should expand on the current Local Plan to ensure developments incorporate key measures to reduce crime risks.</p> <p>Suitable wording that would help to achieve this would be as follows;</p> <p>Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires all local authorities to exercise their functions with due regard to their likely effect on crime and disorder, and to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.</p> <p>A Crime Impact Statement should be obtained from Lancashire Constabulary's Designing Out Crime Officers in order to comply with the validation checklist. This will address crime risks relevant to the proposal and the area. Proposals will be expected to address the following minimum requirements, as appropriate to the nature and scale;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Layout that promotes security,</li> <li>· external lighting,</li> <li>· good levels natural surveillance,</li> <li>· appropriate boundary treatments.</li> </ul>	
6.	Karl Creaser	Historic England	<p>Thank you for consulting Historic England on the above proposal. This response details the expectations of the Local Plan for West Lancashire and the historic environment.</p>	Comments Noted.

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.</p> <p>Historic England has produced a number of good practice advice notes on the historic environment, in particular the Good Practice Advice Note on the Historic Environment and Local Plans (<a href="http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa1-historic-environment-local-plans/">http://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa1-historic-environment-local-plans/</a>), which provides supporting information on good practice in plan-making, and the Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/</a>) may be useful in the production of your Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan for West Lancashire will be expected to include a proper description, identification and assessment of the historic environment and the supporting evidence base is expected to include heritage information. The Plan will need to demonstrate how it conserves and enhances the historic environment of the area and guide how the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied locally. This includes ensuring that the sites, which it is proposing to put forward for development, will assist in delivering such a strategy.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>A sound local plan should be based on an up-to-date evidence base which includes reference to the historic environment. The evidence base needs to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What contribution the historic environment makes to the character of the area, to its economic well-being and to the quality of life of its communities;</li> <li>• What issues and challenges is it facing and likely to be facing in the future;</li> <li>• What opportunities the historic environment offers for helping to deliver the other objectives in the Plan area.</li> </ul> <p>When undertaking this exercise, it is important to bear in mind that it is not simply an exercise in listing known sites but, rather understanding their value to society (i.e. their significance). There is a need to identify the subtle qualities of the Borough and its local distinctiveness and character which can easily be lost.</p> <p>There will need to be an assessment of the likelihood of currently unidentified heritage assets including sites of historic and archaeological interest being discovered in the future.</p> <p>It may also be necessary to identify heritage assets outside the Council's area where there are likely to be setting impacts caused by any development proposals put forward in the area. It is also important to bear in mind that some asset types are not currently well recorded.</p> <p>For example, the Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest in England, is thought to represent only around two thirds of sites potentially deserving inclusion.</p> <p>Evidence gathering can also help to identify parts of a locality that may be worthy of designation as a conservation area and identify assets that are worthy of inclusion in a locallist.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>Potential sources of evidence include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Heritage List for England</li> <li>• Historic Environment Record</li> <li>• Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans</li> <li>• Local Lists</li> <li>• National and Local Heritage At Risk Registers</li> <li>• Historic Characterisation Assessments</li> <li>• World Heritage Site Management Plans</li> <li>• In house and local knowledge expertise</li> </ul> <p>Where the evidence base is weak, the Council will need to commission additional work to ensure that the historic environment is adequately dealt with and can be used to inform the Plan.</p> <p><b>Spatial Portraits</b></p> <p>The Local Plan should include a proper description and assessment of the historic environment in the Borough and the contribution it makes to the area (NPPF, Paragraph 169). The Plan needs to describe the historical growth of the area and identify its historic environment. It should also clearly identify the different places their character and identity and the contribution it makes to all aspects of life in West Lancashire. In terms of Local Plans should include strategic policies to conserve and enhance the historic environment of the area and to guide how the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied locally. It is vital to include strategic policies for the historic environment in the local plan as the plan will be the starting point for decisions on planning applications and any Neighbourhood Plans that come forward are required to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>The strategic policies for the historic environment will derive from the overall strategy to deliver conservation and enjoyment of the area's heritage assets for generations to come. These may be policies that concern themselves specifically with the development of types of heritage asset. But delivery of the NPPF objective may also require strategic policies on use, design of new development, transport layout and so on. Indeed every aspect of planning, conceivably can make a contribution to conservation. Plan policies in all topics should be assessed for their impact on the strategic conservation objective.</p> <p>Conservation is not a standalone exercise satisfied by standalone policies that repeat the NPPF objectives. The Local Plan should also consider the role which the historic environment can play in delivering other planning objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a strong, competitive economy</li> <li>• Ensuring the vitality of town centres</li> <li>• Supporting a prosperous rural economy</li> <li>• Promoting sustainable transport</li> <li>• Supporting high quality communication infrastructure</li> <li>• Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes</li> <li>• Requiring good design</li> <li>• Protecting green belt land</li> <li>• Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change</li> <li>• Conserving and enhancing the natural environment</li> <li>• Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals</li> </ul>	



	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>In formulating the strategy it is advisable and often necessary to consider the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the historic environment can assist in the delivery of the vision and the economic, social and environmental objectives for the plan area;</li> <li>• How the Plan will address particular issues identified during the development of the evidence base including heritage at risk;</li> <li>• The interrelationship between the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and the other Plans policies and objectives;</li> <li>• The means by which new development in conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets might enhance or better reveal their significance;</li> <li>• How local lists might assist in identifying and managing the conservation on non-designated heritage assets;</li> <li>• How the archaeology of the Plan area might be managed;</li> <li>• How CIL funding might contribute towards ensuring a sustainable future for individual assets or specific historic places and whether or not certain heritage assets might need to be identified;</li> <li>• Whether masterplans or design briefs need to be prepared for significant sites where major change is proposed;</li> <li>• What implementation partners need to be identified in order to deliver the positive strategy;</li> <li>• What indicators should be used to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy.</li> </ul> <p><u>Development Management Policies</u></p> <p>In terms of development management policies, it is clear that the NPPF expects plans to include detailed policies, which will enable a decision maker to determine a planning application.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>The Local Plan for West Lancashire should include specific policies for the historic environment in order to help inform decisions that affect it and others should where possible cross-reference heritage related issues.</p> <p>Key issues to be considered are (not wholly comprehensive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undesignated heritage assets (including significance of, setting, extensions, demolition, alterations, change of use, etc).</li> <li>• Designated heritage assets (including significance of, setting, extensions, demolition, alterations, change of use, etc).</li> <li>• Archaeology including remains of less than national importance.</li> <li>• Conservation areas</li> <li>• Registered parks and gardens</li> <li>• Heritage at Risk</li> <li>• Important views and vistas</li> <li>• Landscape character</li> <li>• Local character and distinctiveness</li> <li>• Individual settlements</li> <li>• Historic shop-fronts and advertisements</li> <li>• Public realm</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Information to accompany an application.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategic Cross Boundary Issues</u></p> <p>Strategic cross boundary issues that affect the historic environment are issues that can only be effectively addressed at a larger than local scale and may cover the issues listed below, this is not an exclusive list and strategic issues will have to considered on an area by area basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extensive designated and non-designated heritage assets, e.g. World Heritage Sites, historic landscapes,</li> <li>• major heritage based tourism attractions, the management of</li> </ul>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>which may impact upon more than one Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• major quarries for building and roofing stone, e.g. Portland stone</li> <li>• major changes to green belt which affect the preservation of the setting and character of historic towns</li> <li>• major development proposals likely to affect important heritage assets in a neighbouring authority, e.g. major urban extensions, infrastructure proposals</li> </ul> <p>These strategic issues will not necessarily and always be the same as the strategic policies for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment included in a Local Plan but are likely to be a sub-set of them. Indeed local circumstances may indicate that strategic approaches may not always be needed. The sustainability appraisal scoping report should help to identify what is important for a particular plan area.</p> <p><b>Site Allocations</b></p> <p>The NPPF makes it clear that the significance of heritage assets can be harmed through development within their setting. There is a requirement in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that 'special regard' should be had to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. It is also the duty of the Council to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of its conservation areas and their setting. Where potential development sites appear to include non-designated assets including the possibility for archaeology, their potential should be investigated and retention/exploration should be promoted.</p> <p>Consequently, before allocating any site there would need to be some evaluation of the impact, which the development might have</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>upon those elements that contribute to the significance of a heritage asset including their setting, through undertaking a heritage impact assessment. The assessment of the sites needs to address the central issue of whether or not the <u>principle</u> of development and loss of any open space is acceptable. It needs to evaluate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What contribution the site in its current form makes to those elements which contribute to the significance of the heritage assets. For a number of these heritage assets, it might be the case that the site makes very little or no contribution.</li> <li>2. What impact the loss of the area and its subsequent development might have upon those elements which contribute to the significance of those heritage assets.</li> <li>3. If it is likely to result in harm, how might that harm be removed or reduced to an acceptable level.</li> <li>4. If the harm cannot be reduced or removed, what are the public benefits that outweigh the presumption in favour of the conservation of the heritage asset?</li> </ol> <p>The selection of sites for development needs to be informed by an up-to-date evidence base and the Plan should avoid allocating those sites which are likely to result in harm to the significance of the heritage assets of the Plan area. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, the Plan should consider how any harm might be mitigated. This could include measures such as a reduction of the quantum of development at a site, amending the types of development proposed or locating the development within another part of the site allocation. Such initiatives need to be fully justified and evidenced to ensure that such measures are successful in reducing identified harm.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>The allocation of sites for development may also present better opportunities for the historic environment. For example, new development may better reveal the significance of heritage assets or may provide an opportunity to tackle heritage at risk.</p> <p>Where relevant, policies for allocated sites may need to make reference to identified historic environment attributes in order to guide how development should be delivered. For example, this might require the policy to include detailed criteria or providing supplementary information with the supporting text.</p> <p>Historic England strongly advises that you engage conservation, archaeology and urban design colleagues at the Council to ensure that you are aware of all the relevant features of the historic environment and that the historic environment is effectively and efficiently considered in the development management policies, in the allocation of any site and in the preparation of the SEA.</p> <p>They are also best placed to advise on local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER. This will ensure that there is joined up and robust approach is undertaken to historic environment issues.</p>	
7.	Mark Cawood	Knowsley Council	<p>We welcome the opportunity to comment on the scope of the Local Plan Review as a neighbouring local planning authority.</p> <p>In general, we support the comprehensive range of policy themes that are proposed for inclusion in the Plan, noting that some of the potential housing and employment land supply may need to come from Green Belt sites. Assuming this turns out to be the case, a difficult balance will have to be struck between meeting growth needs and protecting the environment. This will likely be the</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities through the duty to cooperate requirements and are actively working on a joint SHELMA with the Liverpool City Region.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>greatest challenge, and indeed the most contentious issue, in moving the West Lancashire Local Plan towards the Examination stage and we are keen to ensure that any resultant impacts on Knowsley's communities are addressed, both in terms of cross-boundary issues and of shared housing market areas.</p> <p>Turning to the matter of the proposed residential polices, as you will recall, Knowsley Council was consulted in 2015 on the preparation of the West Lancashire Provision for Traveller Sites DPD. Whilst there are no longer any plans to progress this document, you will need to consider whether any of the work carried out here can be taken forward through the preparation of the new Local Plan. In any case, our response to previous consultations remain unaltered and, as such, there is still no evidence to suggest that any sites in Knowsley could appropriately help to meet West Lancashire's needs for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation at the current time.</p> <p>The length of the plan period as currently proposed is considered to be appropriate. We can however see the benefits of a longer term plan period, particularly where this aligns with the timescales of the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment. We have no substantive comments to make in respect of the revised Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>Finally, we shall look forward to receiving the Issues and Options Paper for the Local Plan Review early in the New Year and we are committed to working with you to resolve any cross boundary land use issues that may emerge at a later stage in the Local Plan process.</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
8.	Gemma Jackson	Environment Agency	<p>Environmental Policies – policies guiding protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment, habitats for protected species, public open space and other green infrastructure and policies related to climate change</p> <p>In terms of environmental policies for the future Local Plan we are in agreement with those listed. We would also recommend inclusion/incorporation of the following:</p> <p><b>Protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment</b>  <b><i>Remediation of contaminated land during redevelopment</i></b>  Redevelopment of brownfield sites should be remediated to create high quality land.</p> <p><b><i>Enhancement of available habitats/creation of new habitats</i></b>  In particular ensuring the ability of species to adapt to climate change by enabling the connectivity of habitats which then allows the migration of species and greater genetic diversity.</p> <p><b>Green infrastructure</b>  <b><i>Enabling the ability to reduce pollution and provide a better water environment.</i></b>  We are aware that the Council might be exploring the redevelopment of Skelmersdale, including around the River Tawd as one of its future priorities. This river has pollution issues upstream from potentially industrial sources. Due to the culverted nature it has not been possible to trace the source of this pollution and therefore an alternative solution would be to use natural wetland where the river is in an open channel to remove the pollutants, improving the condition of the water environment.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Flooding will be given due consideration in Local Plan Policies, informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
9.	Irene Roberts	Aughton Parish Council	<p>Your letter of 28 September 2016 was considered by the Parish Council at the October monthly meeting.</p> <p>Given the amount of time spent and the vast cost involved in the production of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, adopted just 3 years ago in October 2013, Aughton Parish Council would confirm its support of the rational of the current Development Plan Document and would not support any further release of Green Belt land in this area in the future.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The need for the release of Green Belt land will depend on the scale and broad location of new development that the Local Plan ultimately identifies.</p>
10.	Bryan Pready	Ormskirk Community Partnership	<p>Thank you for your letter of 28 September, giving Ormskirk Community Partnership the opportunity to make initial comments about the scope of your review of the local plan.</p> <p>Your letter has been considered by our Committee, which has asked that the following topics should be included:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Development of Ormskirk Town Centre as an attractive location for business, employment, leisure and as a service centre for the surrounding area.</li> <li>2) Ormskirk Town Centre environment, including the appearance of buildings and public areas, including car parks.</li> <li>3) Transport that meets the needs of all sections of the population both locally and linking to the major urban centres that surround West Lancashire, together with its impact on Ormskirk Town Centre.</li> <li>4) Edge Hill University; campus development and impact on Ormskirk in relation to demand for local services, traffic generation and student housing.</li> <li>5) Protection of the green belt around Ormskirk and Aughton.</li> <li>6) Housing that meets the needs of all sections of the local population.</li> <li>7) Meeting the needs of increasing numbers of people in the oldest age groups.</li> </ol>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>The Council will consider the comments carefully as the Local Plan is prepared.</p>



	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>8) Energy infrastructure and development, including the role of renewable energy and the response to potential fracking in West Lancashire. Measures to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.</p> <p>9) Consideration of the impact of new technologies on business, employment, transport, energy, leisure and life generally over the plan period.</p> <p>10) Public engagement in the formulation of the plan and its implementation.</p> <p>11) Can and should development control be improved?</p> <p>12) Appropriate response to climate change, such as measures to reduce flooding and improve flood resilience.</p> <p>Ormskirk Community Partnership supports the proposal for a longer Plan period, if it will deliver the suggested benefits and provided that it does not make the preparation of the plan longer and more cumbersome.</p> <p>We look forward to contributing to the next stage of your consultations in due course.</p>	
11.	Ian Davis	New Ormskirk Residents Group	<p>We understand that Local Groups were contacted in September with a view to making some initial comments regarding the scope of the review and we note from information on the council's website that consultation will include bodies and organisations with specific interest in Local plan topics.</p> <p>New Ormskirk Residents Group (NORG) is purely non-political (unlike some local groups, we do not have local serving councillors as members attending meetings on a regular basis) and our members are local residents from all across the three Ormskirk Town Wards.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>The Council will consider the comments carefully as the Local Plan is prepared.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ormskirk Town Centre – to be a thriving retail and service centre, attracting both local residents and from further afield. A concentration on the appearance of buildings and open areas.</li> <li>2. Transport – concentration on measures both to keep traffic moving in, around and through Ormskirk and also provision of parking.</li> <li>3. Housing – which meets the needs of all sections of the local population and to address demographic imbalance in certain areas. Also to give emphasis to the provision of ‘starter homes’ for local young people and young families.</li> <li>4. Energy provision, especially with regards to potential sites for fracking.</li> <li>5. Edge Hill University - the impact of a growing campus and student number on local services, local residents, car traffic/parking . local housing needs.</li> <li>6. Green Belt protection.</li> <li>7. Measures to address flood risk.</li> </ol> <p>We look forward to contributing in the New Year to the next and subsequent stages of consultation.</p>	
12.	Stuart Barnes	Sefton MBC	<p>Sefton Council and West Lancashire District Council have a history of enjoying a close working relationship and of positive cross-boundary working and we look forward to this relationship continuing over the foreseeable future as we both to continue to meet the Duty to Co-operate requirements in relation to addressing cross-boundary and sub-regional issues.</p> <p>In have the following comments to make on potential cross-boundary issues.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities through the duty to cooperate requirements and are actively working on a joint SHELMA with the Liverpool City Region.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>Employment land, Port and housing related needs West Lancs and Sefton are both involved in the sub-regional strategic housing and employment study (SHELMA). This will identify the employment, housing and Port-related needs for Merseyside. It is important that West Lancashire continue to work with the rest of the Liverpool City Region to identify how sub-regional port and general employment needs are met and that the WLLPR reflects this work and actively looks to identify sites within West Lancashire to do this.</p> <p>Likewise if there are sites proposed that are close to the Sefton boundary, consideration will need to be made in how much they can contribute towards meeting existing and future housing needs arising in Sefton. Consideration will also need to be given to minimising the impact of any development near the Sefton boundary upon Sefton residents.</p> <p>Sefton Council is happy to offer comments and/or assistance on any site selection methodology.</p> <p>Infrastructure If the WLLPR proposes new development near to its boundary with Sefton, consideration will need to be given to the impact that such development may have on the infrastructure and services within Sefton, and how that development can contribute (eg by way of a financial contribution) towards meeting the cost of any infrastructure requirements that may be in Sefton's infrastructure. This infrastructure might include transport, school, utilities, parks and open spaces and flood protection measures. This potentially could be done through</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>Community Infrastructure Levy or for off-site payments. Again Sefton Council is happy to discuss this further and work with West Lancashire on this issue.</p> <p>Transport It is hoped that the West Lancashire Local Plan review will continue to promote the provision of improved transport links linking Southport and Formby to the motorway network via Ormskirk and also to improve the rail links through Burscough, specifically the East-West line to Wigan and Manchester and the possible reinstatement of the "Burscough curves" as these issues are likely to benefit both Sefton and West Lancashire.</p> <p>We look forward to viewing the "issues and options" paper in 2017 with a view to making more detailed comments.</p>	
13.	Elizabeth-Anne Broad	Parbold Parish Council	<p>Strategic Policies: Parbold Parish Council objects strongly to the release of Green Belt land anywhere but especially within Parbold Parish, there are more than enough Brown field sites for housing and employment purposes in the borough. Especially here in Parbold as the Green Belt is above the flood plain and we really do not need any more flooding.</p> <p>Residential Policies: At the last review the recommendation was for up to ten houses. With the last four going up surely we have reached their target over the years? We think with the flooding we have done enough.</p> <p>We think the term of the plan should be 20 years.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The need for the release of Green Belt land will depend on the scale and broad location of new development that the Local Plan ultimately identifies.</p> <p>Flooding and the risk of flooding through the impact of new development will be assessed through a Strategic flood Risk Assessment.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
14.	C A Cross	Wrightington Parish Council	<p>The Parish Council has recently had the opportunity to look at the policy areas and their scope in the letter received and broadly agree with the proposed areas to be reviewed.</p> <p>The Parish Council are particularly keen to ensure that as much protection is given to the Green Belt in Rural Areas as possible and are therefore of the opinion that a Local Plan effective for a longer period of time could be more beneficial in safeguarding terms and would give West Lancashire residents more confidence in long term Planning Policy.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>The need for the release of Green Belt land will depend on the scale and broad location of new development that the Local Plan ultimately identifies.</p>
15.	Kate Wheeler	Natural England	<p>Planning policies should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of geodiversity, and promote opportunities for the incorporation of geodiversity interest as part of development.</p> <p>Local authorities should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to the geodiversity interest of designated sites as well as geodiversity interests within the wider environment, and maximise opportunities to include geodiversity in and around developments as part of the design process. Further information on geodiversity is available on Natural England's website.</p> <p>Natural England is in agreement that West Lancashire's natural assets need to be protected, conserved and enhanced and that this should be a key issue in the Local Plan. Natural England would expect biodiversity and geodiversity, soils, priority habitats, ecological networks, protected species to be covered under the heading of the natural environment. Please see the appendix below for further information on these topics.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>An overarching topic in the scoping of the Local Plan Review focuses on the natural environment and this will be pulled through in the development of the Local Plan.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
16.	Robert Deanwood	National Grid	<p>We have reviewed the above consultation document and can confirm that National Grid has no comments to make in response to this consultation.</p> <p><b>Further Advice</b> National Grid is happy to provide advice and guidance to the Council concerning our networks. If we can be of any assistance to you in providing informal comments in confidence during your policy development, please do not hesitate to contact us. To help ensure the continued safe operation of existing sites and equipment and to facilitate future infrastructure investment, National Grid wishes to be involved in the preparation, alteration and review of plans and strategies which may affect our assets. Please remember to consult National Grid on any Development Plan Document (DPD) or site-specific proposals that could affect our infrastructure.</p>	Comments Noted.
17.	Fiona Pudge	Sport England	<p>Sport England has no view on the timescale of the Local Plan because all of our areas of work operate within a 5 year time period. However, there are some key areas that we would like to see included within the Plan:</p> <p><u>Protection of Playing Fields and Pitches</u></p> <p>This is a key area for Sport England as we are a statutory consultee on all planning applications that affect or prejudice the use of playing fields. We would like to see a specific policy that affords protection and enhancement to existing playing fields in line with paragraph 74 of NPPF and Sport England's <a href="#">Playing Fields Policy</a>.</p> <p>We would not support a policy stance that recommends qualitative improvements to mitigate a loss because the current Playing Pitch</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>Playing Pitch Strategy/Open Space Review and Leisure Strategy will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>What CIL and S106 monies should be spent on is not part of the scope of a Local Plan, but a separate matter relating to the Regulation 123 list.</p>

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>Strategy shows there are deficiencies across most pitch types. This means the playing field land must be protected/replaced. Both NPPF and Sport England Policy require an equivalent or better quantity (playing field) and quality (pitch) replacement. Qualitative improvements to existing playing field in cases where a housing development demonstrates it will generate additional demand for sport. In that case a developer contribution can be secured to improve an existing playing field using the Playing Pitch Strategy Action Plan as a guide.</p> <p><u>Provision of New Playing Field/Pitches and Sports Facilities Associated with Population and Housing Growth</u></p> <p>Housing growth generates additional demand for sport and places pressure on existing facilities. Both the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Sport Built Facilities Strategy, if one has been undertaken contains assessments of future demand. Since the current PPS was adopted Sport England has developed a New Development Calculator which uses data from the PPS and either individual housing site figures or total housing growth figures to estimate the demand for individual types of pitch sport. Using Sport England's quarterly Facilities Costs an estimate of the cost of providing those works is also generated. This information can then be used as a starting point to negotiate an appropriate developer contribution for individual sites or a collection of sites. Please contact me if you would like to discuss how this works in practice as this is now being used instead of local standards.</p> <p>Please note Sport England would object to any policy that develops standards for pitch provision. This is because local standards do not reflect the demand characteristics for each pitch type and often results in isolated single pitch sites that do not contribute to the supply of pitches. These areas often become informal kick about</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>areas or informal open space. As an example other open space typologies unit of demand is one person. However, the unit of demand for a pitch is a team and those teams type and size varies from sport to sport e.g 5 a side football pitch would be ten people, whereas a senior rugby union pitch would be 30 people. The provision of new pitches must be clearly linked to the demand for pitches in that area. For example, the New Development Calculator and PPS will be able to inform whether the additional demand is likely to be for cricket rather than football.</p> <p>For built sports facilities the Council can use a combination of the Built Facilities Strategy and <a href="#">Sports Facility Calculator</a> with the same principles applying to calculating and delivering built facilities as pitches.</p> <p><u>Physical Activity and Design</u></p> <p>Sport England has a new strategy called <a href="#">Towards an Active Nation</a> which now has a focus on getting more people physically active irrespective of age and ability. To that end Sport England has produced a guide in partnership with Public Health England called <a href="#">Active Design</a> which sets out ten key principles to designing the environment to create more opportunities for physical activity. The Active Design Principles are aimed at contributing towards the Government's desire for the planning system to promote healthy communities through good urban design.</p> <p><u>Evidence Base</u></p> <p>The relevant sport related evidence base documents to help inform planning policy are the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sport Built Facilities Strategy (or similar). These two strategies contain the Needs Assessment required by paragraph 73 of NPPF.</p>	



	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Playing Pitch Strategy – this was a Strategy undertaken by the Council in partnership with Sport England and the pitch sport national governing bodies. The PPS was finalised by Consultants mid 2015 and Sport England highlighted two key outstanding pieces of work that needed to be finalised. The first was a monitoring and review procedure to be agreed by the Steering Group and included within the Strategy. The second was to ensure the PPS is adopted. I have not seen a Monitoring and Review procedure and I am not aware of it having been adopted by the Council. I’m aware a public consultation was carried out November 2015 but I have not been informed of progress. It should be noted that although the Council wish the PPS to have a 10 year lifespan that is only possible if the baseline data is kept regularly up to date. This is because the demand and supply of pitches fluctuates on a seasonal basis and any major changes within one season could affect the associated policies. I would be happy to discuss this aspect with the Council especially as Sport England has not formally signed off the PPS as being complete. It should be noted the PPS contained within the Evidence and Research section of the planning policy webpage is the out dated 2009 strategy. This should be amended to the current 2015 PPS.</li> <li>2. Leisure Strategy – I have not seen a copy of this so cannot ascertain whether it contains the appropriate needs assessment required to establish needs and opportunities to underpin planning policy. I am unable to locate a copy on the Councils website and I would appreciate a copy. This strategy will also need to be included within the Evidence and Research section of the planning policy page.</li> </ol>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>3. I note the out of date 2008 Open Space Study is contained on the Evidence and Research page of the planning policy section. This should be removed as the baseline data and assessment is too out of date to help inform planning policy. If a more up to date Open Space Study has been undertaken this should be used instead.</p> <p><u>CIL/S106</u></p> <p>Experience, training and legal advice suggests to Sport England that the following three guidelines should apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CIL should specifically exclude any mitigation measures required to make a development proposal satisfactory in planning terms, e.g. if housing is proposed on playing field the mitigation for that loss under NPPF Para 74 should be dealt with OUTSIDE of CIL.</li> <li>2. CIL 123 lists should only include defined projects and not use generic statements such as 'Indoor Sports Provision' and 'Outdoor Sports Provision'. Our understanding of the legal position is that where a generic statement is used for a facility type then all provision is caught within CIL and therefore none can be delivered via S106 (to avoid double dipping). Whilst there is some clarity re. what S106 will cover (providing clarity in those instances only) the fact that no projects have been listed under the CIL column for CIL funding will mean all outdoor sports projects not listed in the S106 column will by default be expected to be funded by CIL therefore the LA will be prevented from seeking S106 funding for anything other than clear mitigation on those sites listed. Sport England therefore</li> </ol>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
			<p>suggests the CIL column is revised in terms of both Indoor and Outdoor Sports Provision to include ONLY SPECIFIC PROJECTS THAT CAN REASONABLY BE FUNDED THROUGH CIL.</p> <p>3. CIL 123 lists should be kept to a list of major key priority projects and not seek to deliver all infrastructure. These projects should be the big ticket items where S106 pooling restrictions prevent S106 agreements being a practical tool and where CIL receipts are sufficient to deliver within a reasonable timescale. The project list should exclude smaller projects/improvement schemes that are simpler/quicker/more enforceable for developers/LAs to deliver on or off site via S106 agreements where delivery can become a planning requirement.</p> <p>Sport England therefore recommends:</p> <p>1. The CIL list includes specific projects for sport facilities (indoor and/or outdoor) and not generic statements.</p> <p>2. The statement clarifies that:</p> <p>a. Mitigation for loss under NPPF Para 74 falls OUTSIDE of CIL</p> <p>b. Clarification that S106 agreements will be used to secure new sports facilities needed to meet new demand arising from development for sports facilities (indoor and outdoor) where not already sought through the CIL (e.g. CIL may be used to fund a new leisure centre to meet growth in demand for swimming pool BUT S106's would be used to fund all outdoor sport).</p>	

	Name	Organisation	Comments	Response
18.	Tom Houghton	Scarisbrick Parish Council	<p>The Local Plan review was discussed at the November Parish Council meeting and a precise of the points raised are itemised below-</p> <p>1 Approximately 91% of the land in the Borough is Green belt. The present plan does not seem to make much mention of this and maybe that can be addressed in the review. There is a perception that developers 'park' land agreed for development leaving undue pressure on planners to consider allowing development on hitherto green belt.</p> <p>2 A revision of the housing allocation should be undertaken in any new plan. The pertinent question in Scarisbrick is what can be deemed as 'affordable' housing. Recent developments are priced way outside of the budget for local people to buy - and in particular younger Scarisbrick residents who may be first time buyers.</p> <p>3 The Rural economy - the last study dates back to 2006 and is felt to be out of date and as such needs re visiting.</p> <p>4 Flood Risk - Any review should have a formal policy - particularly relevant after the flooding of 2015 and the ongoing risk of the satellite pumping stations being closed.</p> <p>Hopefully these points can be considered as the new local plan is prepared.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p> <p>The need for the release of Green Belt land will depend on the scale and broad location of new development that the Local Plan ultimately identifies.</p> <p>The Matters of affordable housing, the rural economy and flood risk will all be carefully considered and the subject of appropriate planning policies through the preparation of the Local Plan.</p>



# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



## Sustainability Appraisal February 2017





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The Appendices to this Sustainability Appraisal Report are provided separately.

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Report Structure**

1.1.1 This report forms the interim Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Issues and Options version of the West Lancashire Local Plan Review.

1.1.2 The Local Plan Review will eventually supersede the current adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 as the adopted development plan for the Borough. The two main purposes of this interim SA / SEA are to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review, and to enable people to participate in the consultation on the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options, by providing an assessment of the strategic development options and policy options 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 Review.

1.1.3 This Sustainability Appraisal Report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 sets out the legal requirements for SA / SEA and summarises the SA process and how it relates to plan-making; it goes on to describe the Borough of West Lancashire from a sustainability point of view, outlines the reasons for, and nature of the Local Plan Review, and summarises work done to date on the SA Scoping Report and the establishment of an SA Framework for the Local Plan Review, including the 13 sustainability objectives and the 11 Topic Areas.
- Chapter 2 considers the 10 overarching objectives of the draft Local Plan Review, and how they relate to the 13 sustainability objectives against which the document is being appraised.
- Chapter 3 summarises the SA of the four strategic development policy options for the Local Plan Review.
- Chapter 4 summarises the SA of the six economic policy options.
- Chapter 5 summarises the SA of the four environmental policy options.
- Chapter 6 summarises the SA of the nine social policy options.
- Chapter 7 draws together the results and conclusions of the SA.

1.1.4 The full SA tables of the 23 different sets of policy options are provided separately in the Appendices to this document.



## **1.2 Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 1.2.1 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for new or revised development plan documents.
- 1.2.2 Alongside this requirement, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the 2004 Regulations') set a statutory requirement for local authorities to carry out an SEA of all planning and land use documents.
- 1.2.3 The 2004 Regulations transpose into UK law the requirements of the EU SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment).
- 1.2.4 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. National Planning Practice Guidance, published by the government, set out how local planning authorities should undertake SA of local plans<sup>1</sup>.

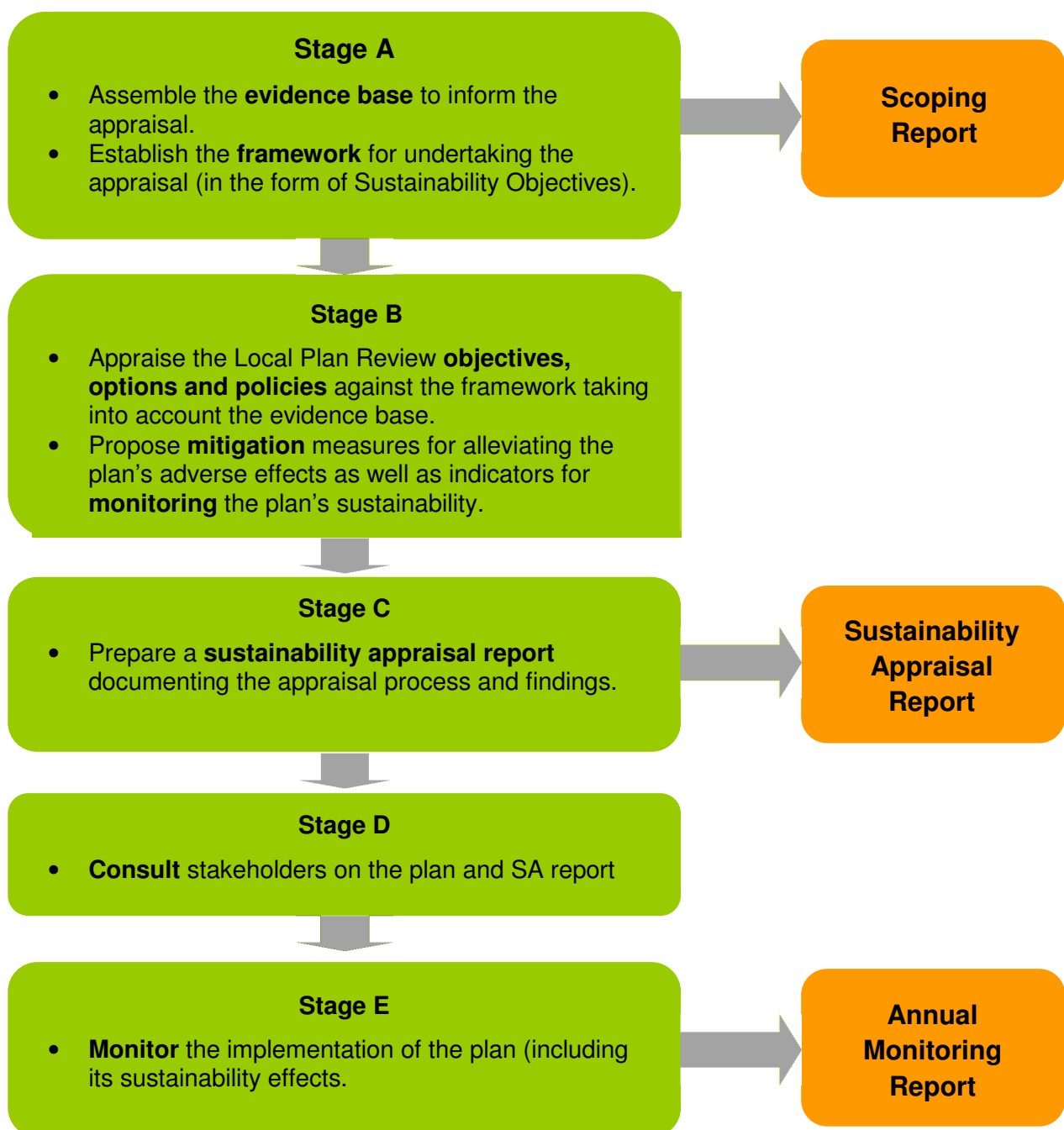
### **The SA Process**

- 1.2.5 The SA process essentially has five stages, as set out in Figure 1.1 overleaf

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<sup>1</sup> <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-local-plans/>

**Figure 1.1:** Five-stage approach to SA



1.2.6 At the initial **Stage A** in the SA process, the framework for undertaking the appraisal of the emerging Local Plan is developed. Generally this requires the collation of an evidence base to provide an initial, or 'baseline' set of statistics (including trends), identification of issues arising from the baseline information, and the generation of a set of sustainability objectives to *inter alia* address the issues. The SA framework and a summary of the evidence base are presented in a 'Scoping Report' for consultation with statutory consultees, namely Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

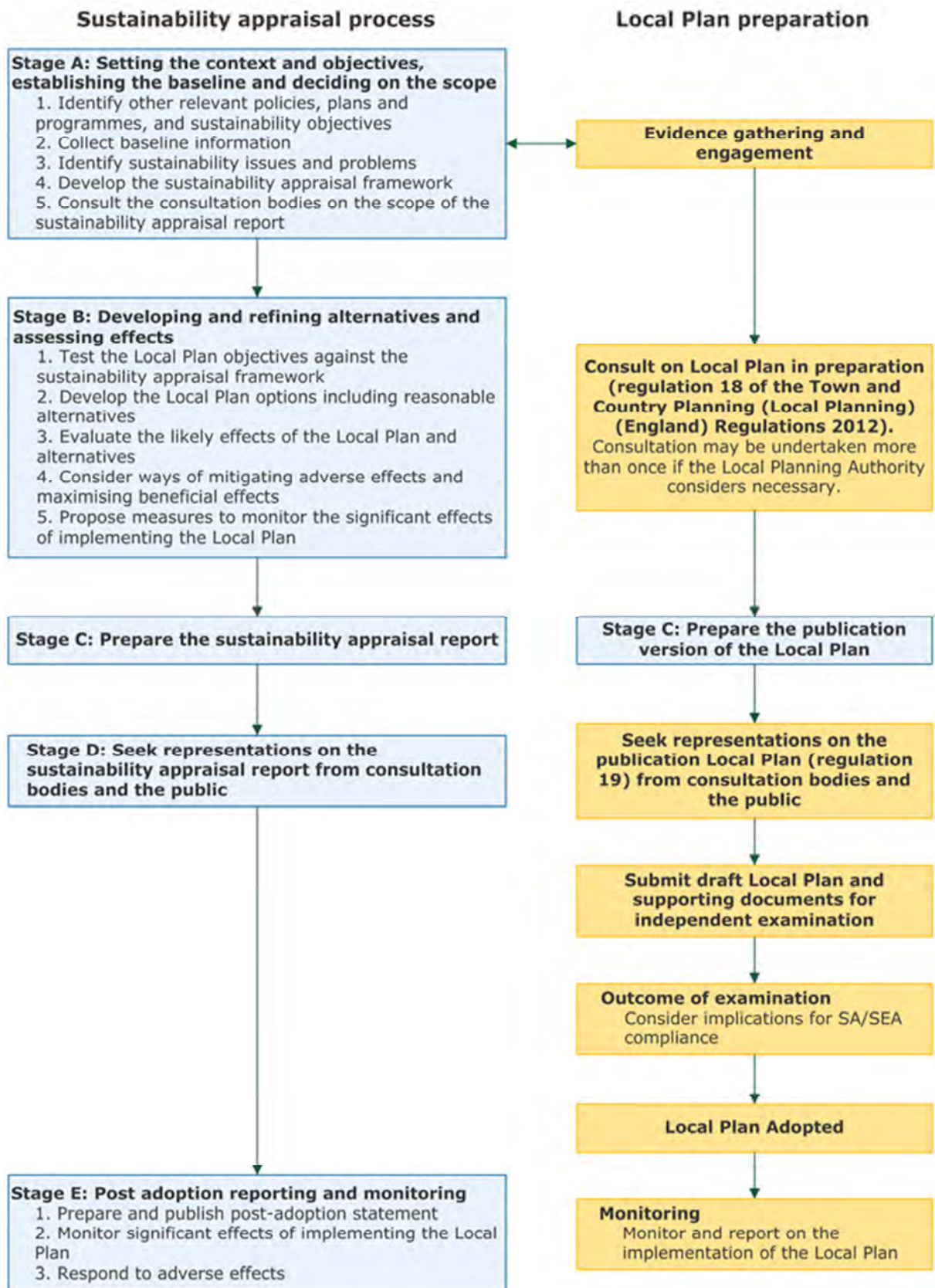
- 1.2.7 The SA Scoping Report for the West Lancashire Local Plan Review was prepared in autumn 2016 by Council officers. The baseline data is contained in a set of Thematic Spatial Evidence Papers ('TSEPs'), produced separately from, but summarised in, the SA Scoping Report. These TSEPs are available on the Council's website<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2.8 Following consultation with the statutory consultees, and in the light of comments received, parts of the SA Scoping Report were amended in December 2016. These amendments included minor changes to the proposed sustainability objectives and indicators.
- 1.2.9 **Stage B** in the SA process is the appraisal itself. This is an iterative process which requires the prediction and evaluation of the potential effects of the different strategic and policy-related options compared to the 'baseline' position. The possibility of mitigation measures and how they influence the likely effects of policies are also taken into account.
- 1.2.10 **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 public consultation (Stage D) the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made to the emerging Local Plan in response to representations. Stage E concerns ongoing monitoring of significant effects.
- 1.2.11 Under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, there is no specific requirement for the preparation of, or public consultation upon, either an "Issues and Options" or "Preferred Options" version of an emerging local plan document<sup>3</sup>. However, in order to give West Lancashire stakeholders the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in planning for their area, and to choose the best strategy for the future development of the Borough, it is proposed to undertake both "Issues and Options" and "Preferred Options" stages in preparing the Local Plan Review.
- 1.2.12 This SA report of the Issues and Options version of the Local Plan Review may be considered an "Interim SA Report" for the Local Plan Review. Just as the Issues and Options stage is not a statutory requirement, neither is the SA of the Issues and Options document a statutory requirement. However, to ensure that the eventual strategy to be set out in the Local Plan Review for the future development of the Borough will be a sustainable form of development, and to provide a robust consideration of alternatives to the eventual proposals or policies chosen, SA is being undertaken of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options documents.
- 1.2.13 Figure 1.2 below illustrates how the SA is an integral part of the local plan preparation process and should be undertaken in parallel with it.

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<sup>2</sup> To see the TSEPs, follow links from <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 18 requires that consultation be undertaken on the scope of a local plan document, and Regulation 19 requires that the document be published for consultation before being submitted to the Secretary of State, but there is no specific mention of an "Options" or "Preferred Options" stage.

**Figure 1.2** The SA process and Local Plan preparation



Source: National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014

## **Requirements of the SEA Directive**

- 1.2.14 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').
- 1.2.15 The SEA Directive requires that the following matters be considered in assessments:
- Biodiversity
  - Population
  - Human Health
  - Fauna
  - Flora
  - Soil
  - Water
  - Air
  - Climatic Factors
  - Material Assets
  - Cultural Heritage – including archaeological, architectural heritage
  - Landscape
- 1.2.16 There are two facets to the appraisal of a DPD: an appraisal of the DPD objectives (optional) and iterative appraisals of the DPD content – the options put forward during consultation, the preferred options and, any additional options in the submission DPD. Consideration should also be given to mitigation and enhancement measures for alleviating adverse effects and maximising positive effects, as well as potential indicators for monitoring the plan's sustainability.
- 1.2.17 The SEA Directive and the 2004 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 local plan and the accompanying environmental report. When consulting on the emerging Local Plan Review, the local planning authority must also invite comments on the accompanying SA report.
- 1.2.18 Whilst this 'interim' SA does not meet all the requirements of an 'environmental report' (SEA Regulations), it provides helpful background information and context for the preparation of the SA report which will be prepared alongside the Preferred Options, and ultimately the Publication version of the Local Plan Review. Should there be any significant changes to the Publication Version before it is submitted, a further SA report will be required to accompany the Submission version of the Local Plan Review.

## 1.3 Characteristics of West Lancashire

- 1.3.1 This section provides a brief description of West Lancashire, in particular its sustainability (environmental, social and economic) characteristics. A fuller 'spatial portrait' of the Borough is available as part of the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options suite of documents.
- 1.3.2 West Lancashire Borough lies at the northern extremity of the Liverpool City Region, and is adjacent to the Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire City Regions to the east and north respectively. The Borough has a population of approximately 110,000, and an area of 380km<sup>2</sup> (147 square miles).

### Economic characteristics

- 1.3.3 West Lancashire benefits from its location close to the northern edge of the Liverpool urban area with good road and rail links into the city. There are also close links with Southport, Wigan and Preston. Much of the Borough has easy access to the motorway network, and there are rail links to Preston and Manchester.
- 1.3.4 Employment in the Borough is varied, including services, professional occupations, agriculture and horticulture, and, as with other areas, a declining manufacturing base. The Borough has a number of industrial estates, particularly in Skelmersdale. Economic activity rates are healthy, and unemployment is generally lower than average. There is potential for the Borough to capitalise on logistics and related jobs resulting from the Liverpool Deep Water Terminal ('Superport') which opened late 2016.
- 1.3.5 Whilst Ormskirk functions as the administrative centre of the Borough, with its historic town centre and twice-weekly market, Skelmersdale (in planning terms) is the highest ranked town centre in the local settlement hierarchy. Skelmersdale town centre is currently performing less well than it should. The most recent proposals for the regeneration of the Town Centre have been delayed due to legal issues.
- 1.3.6 Edge Hill University, located on the edge of Ormskirk, has seen significant growth since 2000 and is a successful university and a significant contributor to the local economy. However, local graduate retention rates are lower than desired.

### Environmental characteristics

- 1.3.7 In general terms, the west, south and north west of the Borough comprises flat, fertile land, mainly in intensive agricultural or horticultural use. In the east and north east of the Borough lies more undulating wooded and / or pastoral land. The northern boundary of West Lancashire comprises the Ribble Estuary, an internationally important nature conservation site, forming part of a route for many migrating birds in autumn and winter. To the west of Burscough lies Martin Mere, another internationally important wetland site (and also a tourist attraction). The northern 'finger' of Sefton Borough lies to the west of West Lancashire and contains several miles of coastline with more internationally and / or nationally

important habitats, including sand dunes, dune heath, woodland, and the Alt Estuary.

- 1.3.8 A large part of West Lancashire contains safeguarded mineral deposits; in addition, there are extensive areas of deep peat, typically on the western edge and at the south east of the Borough. Over 90% of West Lancashire is designated as Green Belt, thereby constraining development. The Borough contains a very high proportion of the North West's Grade 1 agricultural land.

#### Social characteristics

- 1.3.9 West Lancashire is generally perceived as an attractive place to live, with several very affluent areas. As with other areas, house prices have risen significantly since 2000 and affordability of housing is a pressing issue. Crime rates for most types of crime are generally low and have decreased over recent years. The population is increasing slowly but steadily, and its composition is changing with the proportion of elderly people growing and projected to continue rising significantly, whilst the economically active population is projected to comprise an ever-decreasing proportion of the overall population.
- 1.3.10 Nationally, the Borough is ranked right in the middle in terms of the "Indices of Multiple Deprivation". However, this general ranking hides significant disparities between different parts of the Borough, with many parts of Skelmersdale experiencing below average educational attainment, employment prospects, health, income and housing quality. However, Skelmersdale has a number of advantages, including plenty of open space and greenery, a good community spirit, and a congestion-free road system.

## 1.4 West Lancashire Local Plan Review

- 1.4.1 The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 ('the WLLP'), adopted October 2013, is considered in need of reviewing and updating, not because there is anything 'deficient' with the WLLP, but in order that a new Local Plan can be in place by roughly halfway through the WLLP period (i.e. circa 2020), to ensure the Local Plan is up-to-date in the light of a number of economic opportunities and changes to national planning policy that have arisen since the adoption of the WLLP. The Council commenced work on a Local Plan Review in 2016. The Local Plan Review will cover all topics relevant for inclusion in a local plan for West Lancashire Borough, and will run from 2012, the base date of the existing WLLP.
- 1.4.2 The NPPF advises that a typical local plan period should be at least 15 years, and that when the release of Green Belt is involved, sufficient Green Belt land be released (and safeguarded) to meet development needs beyond the plan period, in order to avoid the need to further amend the Green Belt at the next iteration of the local plan.
- 1.4.3 Subject to the end date of the Local Plan Review period being decided (the end date – 2037 or 2050 – is one of the 'strategic options'), there will essentially be three periods which the Local Plan Review addresses:
- What is completed between 2012 and 2020;
  - What is needed, and deliverable site allocations to meet that need, 2020 – 2035; and
  - What is projected to be needed, and land allocations to meet that need, beyond 2035.

### Preparing the Local Plan Review

- 1.4.4 Consistent with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, there are a several stages involved in the preparation of the Local Plan Review:

- Development of the Evidence Base

The evidence base required for a local plan is extensive and splits into several topic areas. There are also over-arching themes which are often not specific to planning and cut across several topic areas, for example the themes of an ageing population, health, and climate change. The evidence base is being prepared and updated on an ongoing basis, some work being carried out by Council officers, some by external consultants or other bodies with specific expertise.

- Scoping, Issues & Options stage (Regulation 18)

The first external consultation on the Local Plan Review is with key stakeholders and any other interested parties to seek views on what the scope of the new Local Plan should be.

The second external consultation is on an Issues & Options Paper which sets out the full range of potential planning-related issues in West Lancashire, considers how those issues can be addressed through the Local Plan Review, and setting



out a draft vision and objectives for the Local Plan Review. It is the Issues and Options Paper that is the subject of this SA Report; the two documents are being consulted upon alongside each other.

- Preferred Options stage (Regulation 18)

Following the consultation on the Issues & Options Paper, the next stage will be the preparation of a Preferred Options Paper, which is essentially a draft Local Plan, with proposed site allocations and draft policies. This will also be subject to SA and extensive public consultation. This stage, together with the Scoping, and the Issues & Options stages, fulfils (in fact, goes beyond) the requirements of Regulation 18.

- Publication (Regulation 19) and Submission (Regulation 22)

Following consideration of representations received at the Preferred Options consultation, the 'final draft' version of the Local Plan is published to give stakeholders a final chance to make formal representations on its content. These representations are then submitted, alongside the Local Plan and necessary accompanying documentation, to the Secretary of State for examination.

- Examination (Regulation 24) and Adoption (Regulation 26)

Once the Local Plan is submitted, it is then in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate to appoint an Inspector to undertake an examination in public of the document. Following the examination hearing sessions, and consideration of all the evidence and representations submitted, the Inspector will write a report concluding whether or not the Local Plan is sound, and outlining any changes (modifications) that are necessary to make the plan sound. It may be necessary to carry out a public consultation exercise on proposed modifications to the Local Plan document, in particular if the modifications materially change policies of the document.

Once found sound, the Local Plan can be adopted by the Council.

- 1.4.5 The planned timetable for the preparation of the West Lancashire Local Plan Review is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme, available online by following links from <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>.

## **Structure of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Documents**

1.4.6 The Issues and Options document (actually a suite of documents in order to improve public accessibility) comprises the following elements:

- Spatial Portrait – a description of West Lancashire and its constituent settlements and areas;
- Strategic Policy Options – high-level options for the length of the plan period, overall housing and employment land requirements, the broad distribution of development across the Borough;
- Economic Policy Options – options for policies on distribution and types of employment land, approach towards existing employment sites, and town and village centres;
- Environmental Policy Options – options for policies on the natural environment, nature conservation sites, addressing climate change, and the built environment;
- Social Policy Options – options for policies on affordable housing, and accommodating those with specialist housing needs (e.g. the elderly, students, and caravan or houseboat dwellers).

## 1.5 The Local Plan Review SA Scoping Report

1.5.1 During autumn 2016, an SA Scoping Report was prepared and consulted upon with statutory consultees. This report covered 11 'thematic topic areas', addressing different aspects of 'sustainability'. For each topic area, the Scoping Report considered:

- Relevant plans and strategies (international / national / regional / sub-regional / local levels) – their main points of relevance, and how they relate to, or may influence, the Local Plan Review. Some plans and strategies (for example, the National Planning Policy Framework) cover more than one topic;
- The local context in terms of the topic in question – effectively a brief summary of the latest evidence on that particular topic. The evidence base is itself set out and / or summarised in two sets of topic papers, one set covering specific themes, for example transport, and one set covering the different geographical areas of West Lancashire. These topic papers are available on the Council's website;
- What the likely situation would be without the implementation of new Local Plan policies or proposals. This analysis, along with the local context, forms part of the 'baseline position' for the Borough;
- Sustainability-related issues in West Lancashire relating to the topic in question, in the light of what is set out in the evidence base. These issues have been used to determine a set of sustainability objectives (whose purpose is to address the issues), each including locally-distinctive sub-criteria.
- The sustainability objectives, their sub-criteria, and a series of corresponding proposed indicators, together form the proposed SA framework for the Local Plan Review.

1.5.2 This Scoping Report effectively fulfils Stage A of the SA process (Fig.1.2), as follows:

A1: Identifying other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives.	These are identified on a topic-by-topic basis through the Report.
A2: Collecting baseline information.	This baseline information is drawn primarily from a series of topic and place-based evidence papers prepared by the Council.
A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems.	The issues arise from consideration of the evidence papers, and are set out in detail, as well as summarised in the Scoping Report.

- A4: Developing the SA framework. The Scoping Report sets out objectives arising from, and seeking to address, the identified issues; it also suggests indicators for each objective – this is effectively the SA framework.
- A5: Consulting the consultation bodies on the scope of the SA. The views of statutory consultees were sought in a 5 week consultation in autumn 2016.

- 1.5.3 The Scoping Report was consulted upon in October / November 2016. Comments were received from Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency, as well as from the Lancashire County Council Public Health Team. This consultation resulted in a number of amendments to the Scoping Report. The Scoping Report and the Thematic Spatial Evidence Papers ('topic papers') are available on the Council's website at:  
<http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>

## **1.6 The Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Framework**

- 1.6.1 The table on the following pages sets out the proposed framework upon which the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Review will be based – the 13 broad objectives, locally-distinctive sub-criteria, and indicators. The sub-criteria provide more detail as to how the SA Objectives might be achieved, and how a particular policy may be assessed against the objectives.
- 1.6.2 The indicators are drawn from various sources, most notably the authority's Annual Monitoring Report. In choosing the indicators, consideration has been given to whether the data is readily available (at West Lancashire level, and updated sufficiently regularly), what the data demonstrates, and how well this relates to the objective in question.
- 1.6.3 Consultation on the SA Scoping Report led to minor tweaks to the wording of some objectives, to their sub-criteria, and to their proposed indicators. Full details of changes to the report are available on the Council's website:  
[www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx)

**Table 1 Sustainability Appraisal Framework for the Local Plan Review – Objectives, Sub-Criteria, and Indicators**

Objective	Locally distinctive sub-criteria	Indicators
<p><b>1. To cater for the needs of a generally ageing population.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy facilitate the provision of accommodation suitable for (designed or adaptable for) the elderly?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy facilitate the provision of infrastructure / services for the elderly?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy make it easier for the elderly to find appropriate employment or activities in which to participate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number / percentage of residential developments (&gt;15 units) requiring specialist accommodation for the elderly;</li> <li>• No. of specialist housing units for the elderly completed;</li> <li>• No. of Class C2 dwellings completed / granted permission.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. To reduce Borough-wide inequalities with regard to learning, skills, educational attainment, and employability.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy increase the levels of participation and attainment in education?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy address skills gaps and enable skills progression?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help develop the Borough's knowledge base?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve people's chances of success in applying for jobs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C;</li> <li>• % of the population educated to degree level or higher;</li> <li>• % of the population with no qualifications / Levels 1-4;</li> <li>• Job Seekers Allowance Claimants.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. To improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve economic, environmental and social conditions (quality of life) in deprived areas and for deprived groups?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce isolation in the community?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce levels of crime and / or the fear of crime?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy facilitate or encourage healthier lifestyles? Will the plan / policy improve the quantity and quality of, and access to, areas of open and recreational space, and to Green Infrastructure in general?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amounts of / loss of any publicly accessible green space;</li> <li>• Serious acquisitive crime rates;</li> <li>• Rate of emergency hospital admissions for violence;</li> <li>• Mortality rates (male and female)</li> <li>• Life expectancy at birth / at age 65;</li> <li>• % of the population whose health is considered 'good';</li> <li>• % of the population with limiting long term illness;</li> <li>• No. customers visiting 'health improvement facilities' (e.g. swimming pool, gym, leisure centre).</li> <li>• Percentage of physically inactive adults</li> <li>• Percentage of children classified as overweight or obese</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. To reduce economic inactivity and disparities in employment.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy provide job opportunities in all areas, including most needy areas?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy encourage business start-ups, especially from under-represented groups?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy provide a broad range of jobs and employment opportunities?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy provide higher skilled jobs?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve accessibility to jobs via the location of employment sites?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of people employed;</li> <li>• % of population living in workless households;</li> <li>• Employers by number of employees;</li> <li>• Average incomes and earnings;</li> <li>• % of the working age population economically active / inactive or employed / unemployed.</li> </ul>

Objective	Locally distinctive sub-criteria	Indicators
<b>5. To encourage sustainable economic growth.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy help attract workers, residents, businesses and / or investors to the Borough?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve the range of sustainable employment sites?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy promote growth in the key sectors of the Borough's economy?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy enable the Borough to take advantage of major investment nearby?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy deliver regeneration to / promote the economic growth of urban areas and the vitality / viability of town centres?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy increase the economic benefit derived from the Borough's natural environment?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GVA per capita;</li> <li>• Land / floorspace take-up for employment purposes;</li> <li>• Loss of employment land (designated or otherwise);</li> <li>• % of allocated employment land in locations readily accessible by public transport (400m bus, 800m rail);</li> <li>• Retail unit vacancy levels (no. / %) within Town Centres;</li> <li>• % of ground floor units within town centres in Class A1 use;</li> <li>• Amount (floorspace) of commercial, office, retail and leisure developed in town centres.</li> </ul>
<b>6. To facilitate diversification of the rural economy.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy support sustainable rural diversification?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy encourage and support the growth of sustainable rural businesses?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy retain or promote access to and provision of services in rural areas?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy promote the sustainable economic growth of villages and smaller settlements?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of business start-ups</li> <li>• Proportion of new development granted permission / completed in rural areas with access to five basic services;</li> <li>• Proportion of new development granted permission / completed in rural areas within 400m of a bus stop or 800m of a railway station.</li> </ul>
<b>7. To seek to meet the housing needs of all sections of society.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy provide for an appropriate mix of housing to meet all needs including affordable housing and / or housing for the elderly?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy support the creation of sustainable settlements with an appropriate balance of residents?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy support the provision of 'non-mainstream' housing e.g. gypsy and traveller sites, other caravan dwellers, houseboats, student accommodation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing completions against Local Plan targets;</li> <li>• Number / % of vacant dwellings;</li> <li>• Number of demolitions;</li> <li>• Number / % affordable housing permissions / completions;</li> <li>• Average house price (or ratio of lower quartile price : salary);</li> <li>• No. of authorised pitches / plots provided for Travellers;</li> <li>• Amount of student accommodation provided.</li> </ul>
<b>8. To contribute towards an efficient, equitable, safe, and environmentally 'sustainable' transport system / network.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve the efficiency of the transport network?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help reduce vehicular traffic and congestion?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy increase access to and opportunities for walking, cycling ('active travel') and use of public transport?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce or minimise emissions of greenhouse gases?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help improve air quality?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy promote the use of locally produced or sourced goods and materials?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of (suitable standard) cycleways and other 'greenways' (Linear Parks, etc.) provided;</li> <li>• Average distance travelled to work;</li> <li>• Mode of transport to work;</li> <li>• % of new development granted permission / completed within 400m of a bus stop or 800m of a railway station;</li> <li>• Proportion of new housing within 1km of 5 basic services.</li> <li>• Rate of people killed and seriously injured on the roads.</li> </ul>

Objective	Locally distinctive sub-criteria	Indicators
<b>9. To preserve and enhance the Borough's land resources.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce the amount of vacant, derelict, and contaminated land?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy encourage the use of brownfield land in preference to greenfield?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy minimise or reduce the loss of high quality agricultural land and / or soil in general?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy achieve the efficient use of land via appropriate density of development?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy reduce the amount of waste generated by development?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy promote the use of recycled, reclaimed and secondary materials?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of land stock classified as derelict land;</li> <li>• % of new dwellings granted permission / completed on previously developed land;</li> <li>• Density of new residential development;</li> <li>• Area of brownfield land developed for housing / employment / retail;</li> <li>• Area of prime agricultural land lost to development;</li> <li>• % of waste going to landfill / recycled.</li> </ul>
<b>10. To conserve, and, where possible, enhance, and to recognise the added value of, the built and cultural heritage of the Borough.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve the quality of the built and historic environment?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy support the preservation and / or enhancement of high quality built, natural and historic environments within the Borough (whether designated or not)?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy protect and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough's landscape, strengthening local distinctiveness and sense of place?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy improve access to / understanding of buildings and other assets of historic and cultural value?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of heritage assets lost / 'at risk';</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings on 'At Risk Register'.</li> <li>• Number of locally listed heritage assets.</li> </ul>
<b>11. To minimise contributions towards, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and protect against flood risk.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy minimise the need for energy generation / use?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy maximise the production / deployment of renewable energy?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy minimise the use of fossil fuels?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help reduce or manage flood risk?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help improve resilience to the likely effects of climate change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAP rating of local authority-owned (and other) dwellings;</li> <li>• Renewable energy developments granted permission (number / type / capacity);</li> <li>• Annual incidents of flooding within the Borough;</li> <li>• Number of planning applications allowed contrary to EA / LLFA advice on flood risk.</li> </ul>
<b>12. To protect 'water assets' and ensure an adequate supply of water and means of disposing of wastewater.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy help improve the quality of water resources in the area?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy maintain / enhance ground water (incl. aquifer) quality?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy help, or minimise effects upon, water supply?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy minimise / reduce the amount of wastewater generated by devt.?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of watercourse length within the Borough with good to fair water quality.</li> <li>• Development granted permission within or adjacent to a Principal Aquifer or Source Protection Zone 1 or 2?</li> </ul>
<b>13. To maintain and, where possible, enhance the biodiversity assets of the Borough.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the plan / policy protect and / or enhance the biodiversity or geodiversity of the Borough?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy protect and / or enhance habitats, species and damaged sites?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy provide opportunities for new habitat creation?</li> <li>• Will the plan / policy protect and / or extend habitat connectivity and landscape permeability, suitable for species migration?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Section 106 Agreements to mitigate harm to biodiversity;</li> <li>• Number of sites protected for their environmental / biodiversity / geodiversity value within the Borough.</li> <li>• % of SSSIs (by area) in favourable / recovering condition;</li> <li>• % of planning applications approved on an SSSI / BHS;</li> <li>• The number of protected sites that have been lost or damaged due to development.</li> </ul>



## 1.7 Sustainability Appraisal Topic Areas

- 1.7.1 In preparing the evidence base for the Local Plan Review, Thematic Spatial Evidence Papers ('TSEPs') were prepared on 11 different subjects. From these TSEPs, sustainability-related issues affecting West Lancashire were identified, and from the issues, 13 sustainability-related objectives were drawn up. These 13 objectives, along with their locally distinctive sub-criteria and proposed indicators, form the framework for the SA of the Local Plan Review (Section 1.6).
- 1.7.2 Table 1.2 below shows how the Local Plan Review evidence base topic areas cover the matters set out in the SEA Directive. The 11 TSEPs cover the SEA Directive topics and others besides.

**Table 1.2 Relationship between SEA Directive topics and WLBC topic papers**

<b>SEA Directive topic</b>	<b>Local Plan Review TSEP covering this topic</b>
a) Biodiversity	10. Biodiversity
b) Population	1. Population and social inclusion
c) Human Health	1. Population and social inclusion
d) Fauna	10. Biodiversity
e) Flora	10. Biodiversity
f) Soil	5. Land resources
g) Water	8. Water quality and resources
h) Air	9. Air quality
i) Climatic Factors	7. Climate change, energy and flooding
j) Material Assets	2. Housing; 3. Local economy and employment; 4. Transport; 11. Local services and community infrastructure
k) Cultural Heritage – including archaeological, architectural heritage	6. Cultural heritage and landscape
l) Landscape	6. Cultural heritage and landscape

- 1.7.3 Table 1.3 overleaf shows how the Sustainability Objectives in the SA Framework link to the TSEPs and also to the SEA Directive topics. Some links are indirect (and 'material assets' is taken to include housing, employment sites, and 'hard' infrastructure such as roads and schools).

**Table 1.3 Relationship between Sustainability Objectives and TSEP / SEA Directive topics**

<b>SA objective (Local Plan Review)</b>	<b>Link with LPR TSEP</b>	<b>Link with SEA Directive topic</b>
1. To cater for the needs of a generally ageing population.	TSEP1	b) Population c) Human health
2. To reduce Borough-wide inequalities with regard to learning, skills, educational attainment, and employability.	TSEP1	c) Human health (indirect link)
3. To improve, and reduce disparities in, health and well-being.	TSEP1	c) Human health
4. To reduce economic inactivity and disparities in employment.	TSEP1, 3	j) Material assets (indirect link)
5. To encourage sustainable economic growth.	TSEP3	j) Material assets (indirect link)
6. To facilitate diversification of the rural economy.	TSEP3 (and 1)	j) Material assets (indirect link)
7. To seek to meet the housing needs of all sections of society.	TSEP2	j) Material assets (indirect link)
8. To contribute towards an efficient, equitable, safe, and environmentally 'sustainable' transport system / network.	TSEP4, 9	h) Air quality j) Material assets (indirect link)
9. To preserve and enhance the Borough's land resources.	TSEP5	f) Soil l) Landscape
10. To preserve, and, where possible, enhance, and to recognise the added value of the built and cultural heritage of the Borough.	TSEP5	k) Cultural heritage
11. To minimise contributions towards, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and protect against flood risk.	TSEP7	i) Climatic factors
12. To protect 'water assets' and ensure an adequate supply of water and means of disposing of wastewater.	TSEP8	g) Water
13. To retain and, where possible, enhance the biodiversity assets of the Borough.	TSEP10	a) Biodiversity d) Fauna e) Flora

1.7.4 Table 1.4 below groups the 13 SA Objectives into 11 topic areas (which are actually the same as the TSEP topics). The sustainability of the policy options in the emerging Local Plan Review will be assessed using these topic areas in this order, rather than the SA Objectives in their order. A table of the 11 topic areas and their locally distinctive sub-criteria is provided in the appendices to this report.

**Table 1.4 SA Topic Areas and their relationship with SA Scoping Objectives**

<b>SA Topic Area</b>	<b>SA Scoping Objective</b>
1. Population and social inclusion	1. To cater for the needs of a generally ageing population. 2. To reduce Borough-wide inequalities with regard to learning, skills, educational attainment, and employability. 3. To improve, and reduce disparities in, health and well-being.
2. Housing	7. To seek to meet the housing needs of all sections of society.
3. Local economy and employment	4. To reduce economic inactivity and disparities in employment. 5. To encourage sustainable economic growth. 6. To facilitate diversification of the rural economy.
4. Transport	8. To contribute towards an efficient, equitable, and environmentally 'sustainable' transport system / network.
5. Land resources	9. To preserve and enhance the Borough's land resources.
6. Cultural heritage and landscape	10. To preserve, and, where possible, enhance, and to recognise the added value of the built and cultural heritage of the Borough (this objective includes landscape).
7. Climate change, energy and flooding	11. To minimise contributions towards, and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and protect against flood risk.
8. Water quality and resources	12. To protect 'water assets' and ensure an adequate supply of water and means of disposing of wastewater.
9. Air quality	8. To contribute towards an efficient, equitable, and environmentally 'sustainable' transport system / network. (This objective covers air quality)
10. Biodiversity	13. To retain and, where possible, enhance the biodiversity assets of the Borough.
11. Local services and community infrastructure	3. To improve, and reduce disparities in, health and well-being. 8. To contribute towards an efficient, equitable, and environmentally 'sustainable' transport system / network.

## 2. Assessment of Local Plan Review Objectives against SA Topics

2.1.1 This chapter sets out the proposed overarching (or 'strategic') objectives of the Local Plan Review and assesses their compatibility with the 13 SA Objectives.

2.1.2 The Local Plan Review Objectives are necessarily focused on matters that planning can directly influence but, where possible, they refer to the wider benefits good planning will have on other factors. The Objectives are as follows:

- **Objective 1: Sustainable Communities**

To ensure sustainability is a guiding principle within our communities providing a balanced mix of housing tenures and types, employment opportunities and access to services and the natural environment by adapting the principles set out within the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

- **Objective 2: A Healthy Population**

To encourage the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the population of West Lancashire by encouraging a healthier lifestyle through the way that new development is planned and designed, increasing and improving the network of green spaces and Linear Parks, waterways, Sport and Recreation spaces across the Borough and improving access to health and community facilities. To tackle health inequalities, especially within young people, focusing on areas of social deprivation.

- **Objective 3: A High Quality Built Environment**

To ensure that new development is designed to a high quality, recognising the imperatives of climate change, reduced natural resources and pollution and the requirement to drastically reduce carbon emissions and ensuring that the Borough's historic features and their settings are conserved and enhanced.

- **Objective 4: Addressing Climate Change**

To work proactively towards making a meaningful contribution to meeting the targets as agreed at the COP 21 Climate Change Summit 2015 by prioritizing Renewable Energy and low carbon development through greater emphasis on Solar, Onshore and Offshore Wind, Ground and Air source heat technologies, localised district energy schemes and all renewable technologies identified through Research and Development as progressive alternatives to all fossil fuel based sources with air quality as a priority.

- **Objective 5: Reduced Inequality**

To Plan for new development and improved infrastructure in ways which reduce inequality by addressing areas of identified and hidden deprivation across the Borough, seeking to address inequality to the most disadvantaged members of our communities and encourage strong community cohesion and diversity.

- **Objective 6: The Right Mix of Housing**

To provide a wide range of housing types and tenures in appropriate locations to meet the needs of West Lancashire's growing population, including affordable housing, accommodation for older people, student accommodation, houses of multiple occupation and residential caravans and house boats.

- **Objective 7: A Vitalized Economy**

To provide opportunities for appropriate new developments that will see the Borough play an increased role within the three City Regions by encouraging businesses to establish themselves in West Lancashire.

- **Objective 8: Vibrant Town and Village Centres**

To enable the Borough's Town and Village Centres to establish themselves and evolve to meet the aspirations of the Ambitious West Lancashire Vision and so build on the vitality and vibrancy so valued at the heart of each community.

- **Objective 9: Accessible Services**

To enable, encourage and plan for greater connectivity to a wide range of services to all parts of the Borough with an emphasis in providing ways of moving across the Borough as an alternative to car travel, making appropriate provision, or re-provision, of new facilities in the most accessible locations and locating development in accessible and sustainable locations.

- **Objective 10: A Natural Environment**

To improve and make the most of our "green" Borough by protecting and enhancing the natural environment, including biodiversity and a network of green spaces, waterways and connecting Linear Parks, facilitating the visitor economy, supporting the agricultural and horticultural industries and generally enabling rural communities to thrive.

2.1.3 Table 2.1 below compares the 10 Local Plan Review (LPR) Objectives with the 13 SA Objectives, putting a **Y** where the two objectives are consistent. It can be seen that each LPR Objective is consistent with at least one SA Objective, and that each SA Objective covers at least one LPR Objective. This implies that, as a whole, the overarching / 'strategic' LPR Objectives address the SA framework.

2.1.4 Table 2.1 also shows that a number of the LPR Objectives each address several SA objectives, for example those relating to a vitalised economy, reduced inequality, and a natural environment. This reflects the implicit consideration given to the economic, social and environmental tenets of sustainability in the Local Plan Review.

**Table 2.1 Assessment of Proposed Local Plan Review Objectives against the Sustainability Appraisal Objectives**

<b>LPR Objective</b>	<b>1: Sustainable communities</b>	<b>2: A healthy population</b>	<b>3: A high quality built environment</b>	<b>4: Addressing climate change</b>	<b>5: Reduced inequality</b>	<b>6: The right mix of housing</b>	<b>7: A vitalised economy</b>	<b>8: Vibrant town and village centres</b>	<b>9: Accessible services</b>	<b>10: A natural environment</b>
1 To cater for the needs of a generally ageing population	Y					Y				
2 To reduce Borough-wide inequalities with regard to learning, skills, educational attainment, and employability	Y				Y					
3 To improve and reduce inequalities in health and well-being	Y	Y			Y				Y	
4 To reduce economic inactivity and disparities in employment	Y				Y		Y		Y	
5 To encourage sustainable economic growth	Y						Y	Y	Y	
6 To facilitate diversification of the rural economy							Y	Y	Y	Y
7 To seek to meet the housing needs of all sections of society	Y				Y	Y				
8 To contribute towards an efficient, safe & environmentally sustainable transport system / network	Y								Y	
9 To preserve and enhance the Borough's land resources			Y							Y
10 To conserve & where possible enhance, and to recognise the added value of the built and cultural heritage of the Borough			Y							Y
11 To minimise contributions towards, and mitigate the impacts of climate change & protect against flood risk			Y	Y						Y
12 To protect 'water assets' & ensure an adequate supply of water and means of disposing of wastewater			Y							Y
13 To maintain and, where possible, enhance the biodiversity assets of the Borough.	Y									Y

### **3. Appraisal of Strategic Development Policy Options**

3.1.1 Chapters 3-6 of this SA Report set out the SA of the policy options for the West Lancashire Local Plan Review against the Framework outlined in Section 1.6 above. Chapter 3 sets out the sustainability appraisal of the 'strategic development policy options'; Chapter 4 appraises the economic policy options; Chapter 5 the environmental policy options and Chapter 6 the social policy options.

3.1.2 There are four sets of strategic policy options. These relate to:

- Annual requirements for development land (housing and employment land);
- The length of the Plan period;
- The location of new development; and
- The distribution of new development between the different spatial areas of the Borough.

3.1.3 The options are listed below, along with a summary of the conclusions from the appraisal of each option against the 11 SA topic areas. A fuller description of the different options and the reasons behind each one are provided in the Strategic Development Options Paper, one of the suite of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options papers. The full appraisals of each option are set out in detail in the appendices to this SA Report.

## Strategic Development Options 1 – The Amount of Development Land Required

3.1.4 In relation to the amount of development land required per year, there are 5 options:

- A. Approximately 8 ha of land (for 200 dwellings) per year and 2 ha of employment land per year.
- B. Approximately 12 ha of land (for 300 dwellings) per year and 3 ha of employment land per year.
- C. Approximately 16 ha of land (for 400 dwellings) per year and 4 ha of employment land per year.
- D. Approximately 20 ha of land (for 500 dwellings) per year and 5 ha of employment land per year.
- E. Approximately 24 ha of land (for 600 dwellings) per year and 6 ha of employment land per year.

### Summary of appraisal

- For each of the five options, a detailed appraisal of their overall sustainability is not possible without knowing more details of how each option would ‘pan out’, in particular the nature and locations of the housing and employment development associated with each option. As such, the appraisal is necessarily ‘high level’.
- In general terms, more development means the likelihood of more environmental damage or tension, but more investment, including in infrastructure, and more opportunities to address current social and economic issues. As development targets increase, so do risks to achieving delivery of the targets.
- Option A provides the minimum levels of growth for the Borough, thereby enabling conservation of land and habitats, etc. However, the low levels of development make it difficult to deliver the infrastructure or funding required to support growth, meaning that is a relatively unsustainable option.
- In contrast, Option E provides the maximum levels of growth for the Borough which will have the greatest effects on the Borough’s environmental sustainability (in particular landscape and, potentially, biodiversity), and carries the greatest risks to delivery on account of its somewhat ambitious targets. Neither Option A nor Option E can be considered particularly ‘sustainable’.
- Option D provides for significant levels of housing growth and an employment land target that is similar to the current requirement, but well above recent delivery rates. If achieved, it would deliver economic growth and probable social benefits, but there is a threat it could harm landscape and potentially biodiversity owing to the amounts of development land involved. As such, this is a relatively sustainable option, although less sustainable than options B and C.
- The most sustainable options are considered to be Option B, continuing the current Local Plan targets, or Option C, serving to meet both Borough and a proportion of sub-regional needs, as they would both plan for economic and residential growth, help secure the delivery of infrastructure to support that growth, but still offer some degree of environmental protection.



## **Strategic Development Options 2 – The Local Plan Period**

3.1.5 The two Local Plan periods under consideration are:

- I. 2012 to 2037.
- II. 2012 to 2050.

### Summary of appraisal

- These options cover only the period for the emerging Local Plan. Annual housing and employment land numbers are consistent for each option and the numbers of homes and area of employment land to be delivered in the plan periods are directly proportional to the numbers of years in each period. Both plan periods would enable the Council to address growth needs, but both hold their own advantages and disadvantages.
- A 38 year period (30 years from anticipated adoption) may enable the Council to plan more holistically and comprehensively for development and associated infrastructure, but may restrict the plan's ability to identify and respond to emerging and changing needs of the Borough.
- A 25 year period (17 years from anticipated adoption) is likely to provide less capacity to plan holistically and comprehensively for development and associated infrastructure, but may offer greater flexibility to respond to emerging and changing needs. 25 years (or even 17 years) is still a long time, and thus planning for infrastructure should still be possible. As such, the 25 year period may be the more sustainable option.
- However, insufficient details are available as to the location and types of development in any given area, and so it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the two options any further at this stage.

### **Strategic Development Options 3 – Distributing the Development Requirements Across West Lancashire**

3.1.6 In terms of the distribution of new development between the different spatial areas of West Lancashire, there are four potential scenarios:

- Scenario 1: the existing pattern of household and employment land distribution.
- Scenario 2: a focus on the key service centres.
- Scenario 3: a focus on rural communities.
- Scenario 4: a focus on growing Skelmersdale in particular.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 is likely to result in positive effects for Skelmersdale, which would receive the largest share of new investment and development, and which generally has the capacity to accommodate the development. However, this option will result in negative effects elsewhere, especially rural areas, compared to the baseline position, as there will be insufficient development to materially improve local services / job prospects, etc.
- Option 4 (Skelmersdale focus) has similar, but more pronounced, effects, directing an even greater proportion of development to Skelmersdale. Both the positive and negative effects relative to the baseline are more marked than for Option 1.
- Option 2, focussing on Key Service Centres, should result in positive effects in terms of economic and social sustainability in the largest settlements. Relative to the baseline (which also includes a strategy to focus development to the Key Service Centres), the effects are not highly significant. Option 2 is likely to result in negative effects for rural areas (as these will receive less development than under the baseline approach), as well as negative effects in terms of environmental sustainability (land resources, landscape, biodiversity) around the Key Service Centres.
- Option 3 (rural focus) should result in more social and economic benefits for rural settlements (and correspondingly less for the larger urban areas), but is more likely to result in negative effects in terms of environmental sustainability, for example loss of agricultural land and harm to the landscape.
- Overall, a 'blend' of the four options may be the most sustainable approach.

## **Strategic Development Options 4 – The Location of New Development**

3.1.7 In terms of the location of new development within the different spatial areas of the Borough, there are four options:

1. Prioritise infill or higher-rise buildings within settlements
2. Locate new development adjacent to existing settlements to reduce the need to travel.
3. Create new settlements with the necessary associated infrastructure.
4. Entirely restrict new development in areas at risk of flooding.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 has positive effects 'across the board', in particular with respect to land resources and local services / community infrastructure. The only negative effects are potential loss of urban green space and the possibility of increased congestion, especially in places like Ormskirk. As development levels increase, the negative effects associated with this option will become more marked; it is not considered that this approach could accommodate significant levels of new development.
- Option 2 (new development adjacent to settlements in order to reduce the need to travel) also would be expected to have positive effects covering economic, environmental and social sustainability whilst preserving urban greenspace and allowing for more employment land. However, this option will have negative effects in terms of loss of greenfield / agricultural land, and change to the landscape around settlements.
- In creating new settlements, Option 3 allows for significant economic and social benefits and opportunities for the residents of the new settlements. However, there would be significant negative effects in terms of loss of the land resource, including agricultural land, and harm to the landscape. Creation of new settlements is likely to lead to increased travel and corresponding greenhouse gas emissions, and may mean that other areas lose out in terms of infrastructure investment.
- Option 4 involves avoiding developing on land at any risk of flooding. The effects are generally likely to be neutral or smaller in magnitude compared to the baseline than for Options 1-3, except in the case of climate change, energy and flooding where there is a significant positive effect for obvious reasons. This option can be combined with any of Options 1-3.
- Overall, options 1 or 2 are considered the most sustainable.

## **4. Appraisal of Economic Policy Options**

4.1.1 There are six sets of economic policy options. These relate to:

- Providing the right scale, mix and distribution of employment land;
- Policy for existing employment areas;
- Spreading economic opportunities by supporting the rural economy;
- The network and hierarchy of settlement centres;
- Ensuring healthy town, village and local centres – appropriate uses; and
- Sites for town centre uses.

4.1.2 The options are listed below, along with a summary of the conclusions from the appraisal of each option against the 11 SA topic areas. A fuller description of the different options and the reasons behind each one are provided in the Economic Policy Options Paper, one of the suite of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options papers. The full appraisals of each option are set out in detail in the appendices to this SA Report.

### **Economic Policy Option 1 – Economic Strategy: Providing the right scale, mix and distribution of employment land**

4.1.3 In terms of providing the right scale, mix and distribution of employment land, there are four options, not all of them mutually exclusive:

1. Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing needs.
2. Allocate sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses.
3. Allocate all new sites for the range of B Class uses (business, general industry, and warehousing).
4. Increase town centre office sites.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 should provide some economic benefits compared to the baseline situation. Other effects are likely to be minor or neutral, depending on the sites chosen and any mitigation measures employed.
- Option 2 should provide more marked economic sustainability benefits compared to the baseline. As for Option 1, other effects are similarly minor or neutral.
- Option 3 – allowing B class uses on all new sites (i.e. a less restrictive approach than the baseline position) should also have positive effects in terms of economic sustainability. These effects are likely to be more positive than Option 1, but less positive than Option 2. Other effects are likely to be similar to those of Options 1 and 2.
- Option 4 (town centre office sites) should have positive effects in terms of the jobs, land resources and climate change topics. The only negative is linked to a likelihood of more traffic congestion. Option 4 is not incompatible with the other three options.
- Overall, Option 2 provides the most benefits, whilst Option 4 scores best against the sustainability topics. The most sustainable approach would be option 4 combined with one or more of Options 1-2.

## **Economic Policy Option 2 – Existing Employment Areas**

4.1.4 In terms of policy for existing employment areas, there are four options, not all of them mutually exclusive:

1. Continue with the existing Local Plan approach – three types of site designation; plus reassessment of all employment sites to confirm they are appropriately designated.
2. Protect all existing employment areas for business class (B1, B2, B8) employment uses, without exception.
3. Designate selected employment areas, either wholly or in part, for non-business class uses (e.g. fitness centres, gyms, children's soft play areas, etc.).
4. Do not protect employment areas for Class B1, B2, B8 uses.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 effectively represents the baseline position - a continuation of Local Plan policy, which has relatively recently been found to be sustainable and consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and its 'golden thread' of sustainable development. As such, this is a sustainable option.
- Option 2 has few predicted effects compared to the baseline – it represents a narrower range of uses on the same sites but no significant change.
- Option 3 (designation of some employment sites for other non-business class uses) would also be expected only to have minor changes in effects compared to the baseline – as with Option 2, it represents a slightly different range of uses on the same sites.
- The effects of Option 4 (abandoning protection of employment sites for B class uses) are more difficult to predict. The baseline position does allow for non-employment uses on employment sites in certain circumstances, not least change from offices to residential. This option is likely to have negative impacts in terms of the economy (e.g. job opportunities) and possibly accessibility.

### **Economic Policy Option 3 - Spreading Economic Opportunities by Supporting the Rural Economy**

4.1.5 In terms of policy for supporting the rural economy, there are three options:

1. Continue with existing Local Plan policy - protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and rural employment sites, allow business growth in certain circumstances, support rural diversification; promote appropriate-scale tourism.
2. Increased development in rural areas – a more permissive approach.
3. A tourism and visitor economy policy.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 represents the baseline position, a continuation of current Local Plan policy, so there would be no change in sustainability compared with current policy (which has been tested and found to be sustainable).
- Option 2 (a more permissive approach towards development in the rural areas) is likely to have positive effects relative to the baseline in terms of the population, health and social inclusion and housing topic areas, and a significant positive effect in terms of local economy and employment. There are likely to be negative effects in terms of land resources and landscape. For other topic areas, effects are more uncertain, and difficult to predict without knowing the nature and location of rural development.
- Option 3 (tourism and visitor economy) is likely only to have minor effects relative to the baseline, positive in terms of the local economy, and biodiversity (in the case of Martin Mere), negative in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and land resources (loss of greenfield land).

## **Economic Policy Option 4 – Network and hierarchy of centres**

4.1.6 In terms of the network and hierarchy of centres, there are three options:

1. Use the existing hierarchy of centres for the Borough – Town Centres, Large Village Centres, Small Village Centres.
2. Review, using evidence, the existing hierarchy – possibly moving some to another category, or adding or deleting others.
3. Use a different hierarchy of centres.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 would effectively be the baseline in terms of sustainability, having the effect of providing some protection to established local centres which serve the scattered settlements of West Lancashire. However, this may not reflect the retail changes that have occurred within the Borough in recent years. The growth of certain settlements may mean that further facilities may be required but this option would not address this issue.
- Option 2 offers the opportunity to review the retail situation, allowing in some cases amendment to the hierarchy where sufficient change is evidenced. Overall the impact upon sustainability is unknown without access to further details. There could be a positive effect for those living in settlements which move up the hierarchy (i.e. they could be prioritised for more facilities) but some areas may be moved down the hierarchy – resulting in less policy protection of existing retail centres. This may ultimately have an effect on the distance people need to travel to access retail facilities and could therefore increase carbon emissions should people decide to drive. For those without access to their own car, rural isolation could be an issue.
- The effects of Option 3 upon sustainability are largely uncertain at this stage given that there is no detail provided about the change in hierarchy of centres or how this will be decided upon. The implications may be positive for some areas – e.g. more policy protection for the provision of facilities; or negative for others – e.g. less policy protection and therefore in the long-term, an overall loss of facilities. For the reasons outlined above, the effects on the distance people will need to travel in order to access facilities is at present uncertain, therefore so are the potential impacts upon issues such as carbon emissions and rural isolation.



## **Economic Policy Option 5 – Ensuring healthy town, village and local centres – appropriate uses**

4.1.7 In terms of policy for ensuring healthy town, village and local centres, there are three options:

1. Review the town centre, village and local centre boundaries set out in the Adopted Local Plan.
2. Review primary shopping area boundaries set out in the Adopted Local Plan.
3. Review the policy approach to determining appropriate uses in town centres.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 offers the opportunity to review Town Centre / Village / Local Centre boundaries. The effects of this option upon sustainability at this stage are largely unknown. It may offer the opportunity for these centres to be rationalised, which may be appropriate given the significant changes in retail over recent years. This may allow the use of property within these centres to be used for other purposes – e.g. housing, relieving pressure elsewhere. However this may result in the contraction of some centres and the loss of some facilities in the long-term as town centre uses change. In some cases a review may result in a boundary being extended which could have the reverse effect.
- The effects of Option 2 may be similar to Option 1 as planning controls on town centre uses are either expanded or contracted; these effects are uncertain at this stage. Alteration in the concentration of shops and facilities within a Town Centre may influence the accessibility of shops and services. If these are no longer clustered together there may be a requirement for additional travel which would have a slight negative effect upon sustainability. In some cases the easing of planning restrictions within a certain centre may free up some properties for alternative uses – e.g. housing. In Skelmersdale, the establishment of a Primary Shopping Area could have a positive impact, focussing retail facilities within the main retail centre of the Concourse.
- Option 3 offers the Council more opportunity to influence the types and balance of uses within Town, Village and Local Centres and is likely to be the most sustainable option. This could include a restriction on the number of fast food outlets or bars within a certain area. This could have a significant positive effect upon the social aspects of sustainability in terms of encouraging healthy lifestyles for those living in these centres, and perhaps lessening the incidences of anti-social behaviour linked to the consumption of alcohol. However there may be a slight negative impact upon economic sustainability since there is a potential risk that this may result in empty units if there are no alternative competing uses to occupy them.

## **Economic Policy Option 6 – Sites for town centre uses**

4.1.8 In terms of policy for sites for town centre uses, there are four options:

1. Continue with the adopted Local Plan Approach – Skelmersdale concentration.
2. Allocate site(s) for town centre uses at Ormskirk.
3. Allocate a non-town centre site for a retail warehouse park.
4. Allocate a site to meet retail needs in the north of the Borough.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 is consistent with the current Local Plan approach and would represent the most sustainable option. The provision of increased and enhanced facilities in Skelmersdale Town Centre would have the effect of improving access to key facilities and employment for local people, in an area which suffers from multiple deprivation. Skelmersdale also has the advantages of being an established Town Centre with available retail space and sites which are already connected to the wider area through road and public transport infrastructure.
- Option 2 would also score well in terms of sustainability – but slightly less than Option 1 in relation to the social aspects of sustainability. Public transport links and infrastructure are already established, and further concentration of facilities could aid the reduction of carbon emissions. Such a policy approach could present the opportunity to bring vacant buildings back into use and the re-use of brownfield land in the urban area. The main benefit would be to Ormskirk residents but the positive impacts could also spread into the wider area.
- Option 3 would represent a departure from existing Local Plan policy and is considered the poorest option in terms of sustainability – particularly the social and environmental aspects. Whilst it may offer opportunities in terms of the creation of an attractive retail offer in the Borough, this would not be easily accessible by all residents – particularly those without access to a car. It also has the potential to conflict with other Local Plan policies and priorities including the reduction of emissions and the protection of town centres.
- The impacts and sustainability of the final option are somewhat uncertain given that no precise indication is given of where this site may be situated – just a general location of the north of the Borough. However, there may be advantages to this option for those living in more isolated, scattered communities in the north of the Borough. This could include a reduction in emissions and social isolation.

## 5. Appraisal of Environmental Policy Options

5.1.1 There are four sets of environmental policy options. These relate to:

- Local Nature Conservation Sites;
- Renewable energy;
- Sustainable design and construction; and
- Sustainable and healthy places.

5.1.2 The options are listed below, along with a summary of the conclusions from the appraisal of each option against the 11 SA topic areas. A fuller description of the different options and the reasons behind each one are provided in the Environmental Policy Options Paper, one of the suite of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options papers. The full appraisals of each option are set out in detail in the appendices to this SA Report.

### **Environmental Policy Options 1 – Local Nature Conservation Sites**

5.1.3 In terms of policy for Local Nature Conservation Sites, there are two options:

1. Continue with the current Local Nature Conservation Sites designation in the next Local Plan.
2. Remove the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation and replace with a policy to give appropriate protection to Ecological Networks.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 represents a continuation of current policy, i.e. the baseline position. As such, this is considered a sustainable option, given the 2012 Local Plan has been found to be sustainable. It should be borne in mind that this option involves reassessing the currently designated sites to ascertain whether they remain worthy of their designations.
- The policy approach of Option 2 is to incorporate the current Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) into the Ecological Network, and to write a local plan policy that affords appropriate protection to this Ecological Network. Provided this 'appropriate protection' were similar to the protection currently given to LNCS in the 2012 Local Plan, Option 2 could have a number of positive effects compared to the baseline, mostly linked to the opportunity to create or enhance new habitats or linkages between existing habitats. Delivery of these benefits is likely to depend on the development management process and the goodwill of landowners.

## **Environmental Policy Options 2 – Renewable energy**

5.1.4 In terms of policy for renewable energy, there are two options:

1. Designate specific areas in which the generation of wind energy, solar farms, and other renewable energy technology may be appropriate.
2. Do not designate any specific areas for renewable energy technologies, and therefore consider any applications for the development of such technologies on a case-by-case basis.

### Summary of appraisal

- The designation of specific areas in which the generation of wind energy, solar farms and other renewable energy technology may be appropriate should have significant positive effects compared to the baseline in terms of the generation (or 'delivery') of renewable energy and the reduction of greenhouse gases. Conversely, there could be negative effects in terms of loss of greenfield and / or agricultural land, and loss or fragmentation of habitats. However, it is expected that any renewable energy policy would have criteria requiring that renewable energy developments do not harm unduly the local environment. In conjunction with mitigation measures, this should mean that negative effects associated with this option should not be significant.
- Option 2 essentially represents the baseline position, so this approach would not be expected to result in any significant change from current trends. A small amount of renewable energy has been delivered in West Lancashire, but not as much as would be expected under Option 1.
- Option 2 is thus considered the more sustainable option.

### **Environmental Policy Options 3 – Sustainable design and construction**

5.1.5 In terms of policy for sustainable design and construction, there are three options:

1. Require specific sustainable design and construction features or measures to be incorporated into new developments.
2. Do not require any specific features or measures through policy.
3. Require new development to contribute financially to a Community Energy Fund.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1, by requiring specific sustainable design and construction features or measures, offers the greatest opportunity to protect and enhance biodiversity and the environment whilst mitigating climate change, although the strength will be dependent on the specific requirements of such a policy and their subsequent enforcement.
- Option 2 is the least sustainable, with no sustainable design requirements, and would be unlikely to deliver any improvements without a significant change in practice from the development industry resulting from market pressure.
- Option 3 supports the provision of renewable energy but does not have regard to other sustainability issues such as biodiversity.

## **Environmental Policy Options 4 – Sustainable and healthy places**

5.1.6 In terms of policy for sustainable and healthy places, there are three options:

1. Developments over a certain size to incorporate features that encourage an active lifestyle for residents and visitors.
2. Developments over a certain size to provide direct connections from the development to wider cycling and walking infrastructure.
3. Developments over a certain size to incorporate public open space and amenity green space.

### Summary of appraisal

- The options for this policy area are not mutually exclusive so that future Local Plan policy could comprise more than one of them. Option 3 reflects the approach taken by adopted Local Plan Policy EN3 and the Open Space SPD so this represents the baseline policy position. This option therefore has neutral consequences in terms of sustainability.
- Option 1 (incorporate features that encourage an active lifestyle) performs best with positive effects in relation to the population, health and social inclusion and local services and community infrastructure topics. It also has smaller positive effects in relation to transport and biodiversity.
- Option 2 (provide direct connections from a development to wider cycling and walking infrastructure) has advantages but does not perform as well as Option 1. It would have a small positive effect in relation to transport and a positive but uncertain effect in relation local services and community infrastructure. There would be an uncertain effect in relation to cultural heritage and landscape compared to the baseline as the approach would not seek to provide public open space and amenity green space.

## 6. Appraisal of Social Policy Options

6.1.1 There are nine sets of social policy options. These relate to:

- Affordable housing
- Demand for self- and custom-build housing
- Demand for alternative residential accommodation
- The Skelmersdale housing market
- The social requirements of older people
- Residential accommodation for older people
- Provision of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Ormskirk
- Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk
- Delivering suitable accommodation for Travellers.

6.1.2 The options are listed below, along with a summary of the conclusions from the appraisal of each option against the 11 SA topic areas. A fuller description of the different options and the reasons behind each one are provided in the Social Policy Options Paper, one of the suite of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options papers. The full appraisals of each option are set out in detail in the appendices to this SA Report.

### **Social Policy Option 1 – Affordable Housing**

6.1.3 In terms of affordable housing policy, there are eight options, not all of them mutually exclusive:

1. Do nothing – have no policy on affordable housing.
2. The 'usual' affordable housing approach – require a percentage of units in market housing developments above a certain threshold to be affordable.
3. The Local Plan policy RS2 approach: i) geographical variation in percentage requirements due to market strength and viability ii) numerical variation to increase the percentage requirement a development size increases.
4. Detailed affordable housing policy (such as tenure, size, accessibility standards, on / off site provision, viability) either included in the Local Plan or in an SPD.
5. Specific site allocations for 100% affordable housing.
6. Permissive policies for affordable housing in areas where market housing would not normally be permitted.
7. A more flexible approach to delivering affordable housing with market housing developments.
8. Allow for greater flexibility in what the Council defines as affordable housing.

### Summary of appraisal

- There are several potential policy approaches to affordable housing that have been assessed and it is important to recognise that these are not mutually exclusive in that a future Local Plan policy could comprise more than one of the above options, or could have a criteria-based policy supported by a site-specific policy in order to deliver affordable housing in the Borough.
- Option 3 reflects adopted Local Plan Policy RS2 which represents the baseline policy position; this option therefore has neutral consequences in terms of sustainability as it would continue the baseline.
- Options 2 (percentage of units in market housing developments above a certain threshold) and 6 (permissive policies for affordable housing in areas where market housing would not normally be permitted) are not considered to be of any significant difference to adopted Policy RS2 in policy approach and they are therefore also considered to have neutral consequences in relation to the baseline position.
- Option 1 (do nothing) performs poorly in relation to the baseline given the presence of the existing Local Plan policy. Policy Option 7 (a flexible approach to delivering affordable housing with market housing developments) may enable easier delivery of market housing but create more challenges in the delivery of affordable housing so performs modestly and with some degree of uncertainty in terms of sustainability.
- Options 4 (detailed affordable housing policy), 5 (specific site allocations for 100% affordable housing) and 8 (have greater flexibility in what the Council defines as affordable housing) perform well relative to the baseline position with options 4 and 8 performing best. By virtue of Option 5 promoting specific site allocations for 100% housing, there is presently a degree of uncertainty in relation to effects which would require further assessment once allocations were clarified.



## **Social Policy Option 2 – Demand for self- and custom-build housing**

6.1.4 In terms of policy to address demand for self- and custom-build housing ('SCB housing'), there are three options:

1. Do not allocate any sites for SCB housing as such, but allow SCB housing to be commissioned on allocated housing sites via volume house builders.
2. Set aside a part of larger allocated housing sites for SCB plots.
3. Identify and allocate small sites for SCB dwellings in line with demand.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 would see a much more market-led response to demand for Custom and Self Build housing. It would also typically be accommodated within larger housing sites and developer led. The impact upon sustainability would be little beyond the current baseline. This option would offer some choice to the SCB client within certain parameters, but the result would be largely indistinguishable from a mass market home. This form of provision will however experience the benefits of being part of a larger development – e.g. connection to infrastructure and facilities.
- Option 2 may be a slightly more sustainable option as it would appear to offer more flexibility in terms of the type of property that could be built. This may allow more scope to construct a home which includes features which would make the property more suitable or adaptable – e.g. for older people . However precautions would need to be taken to ensure SCB plots are not located on the worst part of the site. There could be the potential to apply a design code or guidelines of some description in order to control some aspects of the development of the sites but design quality and environmental performance of properties (beyond Building Regulations) would largely be driven by the client. SCB in these locations, as with option 1, would benefit from being part of a larger development in terms of access to infrastructure and facilities.
- Option 3 would require the greatest involvement from the Council. More so than with option 2, matters such as design quality and environmental performance will largely be driven by the person commissioning the SCB unless guidelines or design codes are issued. Therefore the sustainability of this option remains somewhat uncertain. Also, given Option 3 is seeking to allocate sites in line with demand, this approach could lead to unsustainable (isolated) sites being proposed for allocation, reliant on the private car for access to services. There would be pressure on the Council to find sites in popular locations such as Aughton or Parbold, whilst most vacant Council-owned sites are found in and around Skelmersdale.

### **Social Policy Option 3 – Demand for alternative residential accommodation**

6.1.5 In terms of policy to address demand for alternative residential accommodation (caravans and houseboats), there are three options:

1. Do Nothing – allow the market to provide accommodation through management and expansion of existing sites.
2. Allocate new sites or land on the edge of existing sites for additional caravan-based accommodation and mooring berths.
3. Vary Green Belt policy on a site-by-site basis to allow for expansion / intensification of existing sites or berths to meet identified need for such accommodation in West Lancashire.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 (do nothing) is the least sustainable. An unplanned approach is likely to result in a deterioration compared to the baseline position in relation to transport, land resources, cultural heritage and landscape, climate change, energy and flooding and local services and community infrastructure.
- Option 2 (allocate new sites or land for additional accommodation on the edge of existing sites) is the most sustainable, having positive effects in relation to the housing topic and minor positive effects in relation to population, health and social inclusion. There would be positive but uncertain effects in relation to climate change, energy and flooding and local services and community infrastructure. Negative effects arise in terms of cultural heritage, with further negative but uncertain effects in relation to the transport and land resource topics. These negative effects are mainly a consequence of the location of existing sites in the Green Belt and the uncertainty is a result of further investigation being required upon the identification of site allocations.
- Option 3 (vary Green Belt policy permissively to allow expansion or intensification) has positive effects in relation to housing but negative effects in relation to transport, land resources, and cultural heritage and landscape. It does not perform as well as Option 2 in terms of sustainability due to less certainty in relation to where new development may take place.

#### **Social Policy Option 4 – The Skelmersdale housing market**

6.1.6 In terms of policy to address the Skelmersdale housing market, there are two options:

1. Continue to relax / further relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale e.g. lower affordable housing requirement, exemption from CIL, reduced open space requirements.
2. Base the Local Plan Review strategy on the regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale, or at least give this objective significant weight.

#### Summary of appraisal

- Policy Option 2 (regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale) is the more sustainable and performs positively in relation to the population, health and social inclusion; housing; local economy and employment; climate change energy and flooding; and local services and community infrastructure topic areas. There are positive but uncertain effects in relation to transport, land resources and air quality. Option 2 is not considered to have any negative effects compared to the baseline.
- Whilst Option 1 (relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale) does not perform as well against the baseline as Option 2, it would still have positive effects in relation to the population, health and social inclusion; transport; climate change energy and flooding; and local services and community infrastructure topic areas. Effects on housing could be negative relative to the baseline – whilst more housing would potentially be delivered, the relaxation of policy requirements could mean that the ‘usual’ benefits associated with housing are not delivered. There could potentially be negative effects in relation to biodiversity insofar as this option would be unlikely to enhance, create or extend habitats, compared to the baseline position.

### **Social Policy Option 5 – The social requirements of older people**

6.1.7 In terms of policy to address the social requirements of older people, there are three options:

1. A general 'sustainable development' policy.
2. Allocate specific sites in appropriate locations for services and facilities.
3. Prepare an Area Action Plan / Development Brief / Masterplan to develop or redevelop a large site.

#### Summary of appraisal

- The options for this policy do not specify which services are required for older people, nor the locations for them, but instead outline a generic approach to the provision of services for the elderly.
- Option 1 presents the most sustainable option and consolidates the general approach of the current Local Plan.
- The allocation of specific sites in Option 2 may better support a minimum provision of services for the elderly in existing local areas.
- Option 3 may work best where large-scale development is proposed, and the scale of the development would generate the need for supportive services. However, it will be likely to generate the greatest issues regarding accessibility, particularly for the elderly.
- It is difficult to assess the sustainability effects of these options without further detail on required service provision or locations, and transportation support. Any one of the options can positively facilitate the provision of local services and community infrastructure, but it is important to understand that policy cannot guarantee their actual provision by other bodies, or dictate the patterns and choices of lifestyle of residents.

## **Social Policy Option 6 – Residential accommodation for older people**

6.1.8 In terms of a policy approach towards residential accommodation for older people, there are seven options:

1. No specific policy: let the market deliver appropriate accommodation in line with local demand.
2. Continue with a percentage approach, as per the current Local Plan.
3. Provide a tighter definition of what constitutes 'elderly accommodation'.
4. Adopt one or both Technical Standards for new houses.
5. Require adherence to, or at least have regard to, the HAPPI Design Principles.
6. Allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation.
7. Promote 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods'.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 contains the greatest risks to the delivery of specialised, elderly accommodation whilst Option 2 continues the approach of the current Local Plan to require a percentage of developments to be older person housing. Option 2 is considered a sustainable option.
- Options 3, 4 and 5 are relatively minor 'tweaks' to the current policy approach, increasing the technical and design requirements, and with it costs, meaning that developers may find it harder to deliver the housing. Therefore, these options may work better in conjunction with some of the other options, rather than operating in isolation.
- Option 6 would give greater control to allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation, most likely near required services and infrastructure, but would need to be based on a high level assessment of local needs which may be quite restrictive and inflexible to the general market.
- Option 7 is a good, sustainable approach in theory, but may not be an enforceable or deliverable policy framework.

## **Social Policy Option 7 – Provision of HMOs in Ormskirk**

6.1.9 In terms of a policy approach towards the provision of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Ormskirk, there are four options:

1. Expand the 'Article 4 area' and the area to which the HMO percentage policy applies, to include neighbouring settlements, e.g. Burscough or Skelmersdale, or the whole of West Lancashire.
2. Revoke the Article 4 Direction and policy RS3, effectively allowing a 'free for all'.
3. Change the HMO limit from 5% to a different (lower) number, even down to 0%.
4. Increase the HMO limit from current levels to a higher percentage.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 (expansion of the Article 4 Direction area) would be similar to the baseline position but could potentially have a small positive effect in helping to 'safeguard' properties in other settlements for mainstream housing rather than HMOs. There is no evidence at present, however, that loss of properties to HMOs is a particular issue outside the current Article 4 area.
- Option 3 (reduction of the permissible HMO percentages) would help protect the Ormskirk area from further losses of family homes, but would not assist in providing accommodation for students and addressing this particular housing need. Other than that, it has no effects compared with the baseline situation, so overall is similar in sustainability terms to Option 1.
- Option 2 would have significant negative effects in terms of the Social Inclusion and Housing topics, its only positive effect relative to the baseline being the facilitation of extra (HMO) accommodation for students. As such, this is not considered a sustainable option.
- The effects of Option 4 would be similar to those of Option 2, but less in magnitude.
- Overall, the most sustainable approach would appear to be to continue with the 'baseline policy', unless evidence demonstrates the same policy approach is needed in other settlements. Option 2 (removal of any restrictions) is the least sustainable option.

## **Social Policy Option 8 – Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk**

6.1.10 In terms of policy for provision of off-campus student accommodation, there are three options:

1. Continue with the current policy approach of restricting off-campus accommodation unless strict criteria are met.
2. Relax the current policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University Campus.
3. Allocate specific sites for off-campus student accommodation, whilst restricting 'unplanned' developments elsewhere.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 would continue to restrict off-campus purpose-built student accommodation; this is effectively the baseline position, so no change in 'sustainability' compared with the current Local Plan.
- The effects of Option 2 (allowing for purpose-built student accommodation away from the University campus) are generally unknown, as the locations of any sites that may come forward are not known. It would be expected that accommodation would only be permitted where it complies with "usual" plan policies, and should thus not have any significant negative effects compared to the baseline. Its positives are likely to be provision of specialist accommodation (i.e. for students), the potential freeing-up of HMOs for other accommodation, and the consequent removal of problems, perceived or otherwise, associated with a high concentration of HMOs.
- The effects of Option 3 are likely to be similar to those of Option 2, except that by allocating sites, there will be a greater measure of control over where any off-campus purpose-built student accommodation would be located. This should enable the Council to minimise unacceptable effects on the local community and ensure that sites are located within the best areas for students and the existing community. As such, the positive effects of Option 3 should be greater and / or the negative effects less, in comparison to the baseline (and Option 2).
- In conclusion, if there were a need for off-campus accommodation, Option 3 would be the most sustainable option to deliver it; if there is no, or little, need, Option 1 (continuation of current policy) would presumably be the most sustainable option.

## **Social Policy Option 9 – Delivering suitable accommodation for Travellers**

6.1.11 In terms of policy for delivering suitable accommodation for travellers (gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople), there are three options:

1. Allow travellers to stay on presently unauthorised sites.
2. Set aside part of new [residential or other] site allocations for travellers.
3. Compulsory purchase of suitable sites in order to allocate them.

### Summary of appraisal

- Option 1 effectively represents the baseline position, except that some sites would become authorised – a positive effect relative to the baseline.
- Option 2 (setting aside part of new allocations for travellers) is considered the most sustainable and performs strongly in relation to the housing topic, and positively in terms of population, health and social inclusion and climate change, energy and flooding. There would also be positive but uncertain effects in relation to local services and community infrastructure. This policy approach would not have any negative effects upon topics compared to the baseline.
- Option 3 (compulsory purchase of suitable sites) also performs positively in terms of sustainability compared to the baseline, with positive effects in terms of population, health and social inclusion, housing and climate change, energy and flooding. Both Options 2 and 3 have uncertain outcomes in relation to a number of topic areas which is partly a reflection of the uncertainty as to where sites would be located (Option 2) and where compulsory purchase might take place (Option 3) and would require further investigation once those matters were clarified.



## 7. What Happens Next?

7.1.1 Having read this SA report, the Council is inviting you to comment on its content (and also the content of the Appendices, if necessary). The easiest way to do this is online at [www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan), where you will find instructions on how to comment.

7.1.2 You can also email or write to the Council with your comments to:

Email: [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)  
Postal Address: Local Plan Consultation  
Planning  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
L39 2DF

7.1.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers (including this SA report), as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at all libraries in West Lancashire, at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF and at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of The Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.

7.1.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.

### Next Steps

7.1.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing the Local Plan Review, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. The Preferred Options Paper will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal, and a new SA Report will be prepared for consultation alongside the Preferred Options Paper.



**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**



# WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

## Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for Issues and Options

FEBRUARY 2017

## CONTACTS

**JO WEAVER**  
Senior Ecologist

dd +44 (0)1453 423 1224

m +44 (0)7809 594 186

e [jo.weaver@arcadis.com](mailto:jo.weaver@arcadis.com)

Arcadis.

The Mill

Brimscombe Port

Stroud

GL5 2QG

United Kingdom

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# WEST LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

## Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for Issues and Options

Author Jo Weaver

Checker Liz Turley

Approver Stewart Lowther

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Date FEBRUARY 2017

### VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Changes
V1	01 02 2017	Jo Weaver	First draft for review
V2	06 02 2017	Jo Weaver	Final draft for issue

This report dated 01 February 2017 has been prepared for West Lancashire Borough Council (the “Client”) in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment dated 27 October 2016 (the “Appointment”) between the Client and **Arcadis (UK) Limited** (“Arcadis”) for the purposes specified in the Appointment. For avoidance of doubt, no other person(s) may use or rely upon this report or its contents, and Arcadis accepts no responsibility for any such use or reliance thereon by any other third party.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Purpose of this Report

### Local Plan Review

- 1.1.1 The current West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, hereafter referred to as ‘the West Lancashire Local Plan’ or ‘the Plan’, was adopted in October 2013. West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) has undertaken a review of the Plan to ensure it remains up to date in light of the constantly changing context surrounding planning and development, and the evolution of National Planning Policy (NPP).
- 1.1.2 A Strategic Development Options Paper and supporting Topic Papers covering environment, economic and social policy as well as a spatial portrait, has been produced for consultation. These documents set out the key planning-related issues facing West Lancashire and consider options for how new local planning policy might be able to address those issues.

### Purpose of this Report

- 1.1.3 Arcadis Consulting (UK) Ltd has been commissioned to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the Local Plan Review. HRA is a legal requirement and concerns the assessment of the plan’s effects on designated sites of European Nature Conservation Importance, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). It also considers effects on Ramsar sites, potential SPAs and candidate SACs (hereafter collectively referred to as ‘European sites’).
- 1.1.4 A HRA Screening Report was prepared for the current Local Plan. This will need to be revised and updated to consider the issues and options arising from the Local Plan Review. This report considers high level potential risks associated with the strategic development options and the associated economic, environmental and social policies identified within the West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues and Options Consultation papers with regard to European Sites. It forms an important first step in the development of the HRA process which will seek to consider the Local Plan preferred options in more detail later in the year. This process will be undertaken in consultation with Natural England (NE).

## 1.2 Background to Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.2.1 Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon any Natura 2000 sites (also known as ‘European sites’). Within West Lancashire there are two European sites ; however, within a 20km radius of the borough boundary there are a further six sites which form part of the Natura 2000 network that could potentially be affected by the Local Plan.
- 1.2.2 Natura 2000 is a network of areas designated to conserve natural habitats and species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable or endemic within the European Community. This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), designated under the Habitats Directive for their habitats and/or species of European importance, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), classified under Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the codified version of Directive 79/409/EEC as amended) for rare, vulnerable and regularly occurring migratory bird species and internationally important wetlands.
- 1.2.3 In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process; furthermore, it is Government Policy that sites designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention for their internationally important wetlands (Ramsar sites) and potential SPAs (pSPAs) are also considered.
- 1.2.4 The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into English and Welsh law by means of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2010<sup>1</sup>, as amended.

Paragraph 3, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

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<sup>1</sup> SI 2010/490: Explanatory memorandum to the conservation of habitats and species regulations 2010.

*'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to paragraph 4 (see below), the competent national authority shall agree to the plan or project only having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.'*

Paragraph 4, Article 6 of the Habitats Directive states that:

*'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.'*

1.2.5 The overarching aim of HRA is to determine, in view of a site's conservation objectives and qualifying interests, whether a plan, either in isolation and/or in combination with other plans, would have a significant adverse effect on the European site. If the Screening (the first stage of the process, see Section 3 for details) concludes that significant effects are likely, then Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken to determine whether there will be adverse effects on a site's integrity.

### **1.3 Legislation and Guidance**

1.3.1 The HRA is being made in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended. In doing so, this screening report has drawn upon the following guidance:

- European Commission, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission, Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Department for Communities and Local Government (2006) Planning for the Protection of European Sites: Appropriate Assessment. Guidance for Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents.
- DTA Publications Limited, The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook.

## 2 Introduction to the Local Plan Review Issues and Options

### 2.1 Draft Vision

- 2.1.1 The Local Plan Vision is a statement of how West Lancashire intends to be at the end of the Local Plan Period. A draft vision has been developed as part of the Strategic Development Options Paper to be put forward for public consultation (see Box 1). The final Vision will be dependent upon which of the strategic options is ultimately selected and therefore the current vision represents what the council would like to achieve based on the evidence currently available.

*Box 1: Draft Vision for West Lancashire*

*West Lancashire will be an attractive place where people want to live, work and visit. The Borough will retain its local character and will also make the most of its highly accessible location within the North West and its links with the three City Regions of Liverpool, Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire and to this end will be an outward looking proactive partner within this setting.*

*West Lancashire will grow economically; creating jobs, attracting new businesses and making sure that existing employers have every opportunity to expand and succeed in the Borough, set within the three City Regions context.*

*West Lancashire will play its part in providing a fantastic range of housing, at the right quality, as a fundamental factor in delivering economic growth and leaving a lasting, vital legacy for the next generations. This will include provision of affordable housing to ensure positive impacts on the health, wellbeing, social mobility and general quality of life for West Lancashire residents.*

*The Borough's three main settlements of Skelmersdale with Up Holland, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough will be the focus for new development, with each town building on its individual strengths but all three working together to reduce inequality across the Borough by providing a well-rounded employment base, opportunities for business and the right residential mix. The regeneration of Skelmersdale in particular will be vital to this and all three town centres will be more robust and vibrant, offering what people need in a 21st Century town centre.*

*West Lancashire's fantastic potential will have been developed through investment in young people through education and training and in particular working with Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College to ensure that a greater number of post graduate jobs are created in order to retain skills and talents within the Borough.*

*In rural areas, Village and Hamlet settlements will retain their rural character whilst seeking to provide local focal points for services and employment, where appropriate, and the provision of good quality affordable homes. The agricultural and horticultural industry will continue to be a focus in rural areas.*

*The identity and unique landscape of West Lancashire will be valued, enhanced and sustained in accordance with best practice, enabling people to access and enjoy all that it offers. This will incorporate the Borough's historic buildings and character, its valuable and important wildlife, habitats and biodiversity, its vital agricultural role and its network of green spaces and waterways.*

*Infrastructure in West Lancashire will be improved and focused on the places that need it, be that improved sustainable transport options within and between the larger settlements and to key locations outside of the Borough (such as the proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link), improved utilities and communications, improved education offer or improved health, community and leisure infrastructure – all of which will provide a better, and healthier, quality of life for those who live, work and visit in West Lancashire.*

## 2.2 Objectives

2.2.1 Ten draft objectives have also been developed and set out how the Vision will be delivered, these are outlined in Box 2 (below).

*Box 2: Draft Objectives*

**Objective 1: Sustainable Communities**

*To ensure sustainability is a guiding principle within our communities providing a balanced mix of housing tenures and types, employment opportunities and access to services and the natural environment by adapting the principles set out within the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.*

**Objective 2: A Healthy Population**

*To encourage the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the population of West Lancashire by encouraging a healthier lifestyle through the way that new development is planned and designed, increasing and improving the network of green spaces and Linear Parks, waterways, Sport and Recreation spaces across the Borough and improving access to health and community facilities. To tackle health inequalities, especially within young people, focusing on areas of social deprivation.*

**Objective 3: A High Quality Built Environment**

*To ensure that new development is designed to a high quality, recognising the imperatives of climate change, reduced natural resources and pollution and the requirement to drastically reduce carbon emissions and ensuring that the Borough's historic features and their settings are conserved and enhanced.*

**Objective 4: Addressing Climate Change**

*To work proactively towards making a meaningful contribution to meeting the targets as agreed at the COP 21 Climate Change Summit 2015 by prioritizing Renewable Energy and low carbon development through greater emphasis on Solar, Onshore and Offshore Wind, Ground and Air source heat technologies, localised district energy schemes and all renewable technologies identified through Research and Development as progressive alternatives to all fossil fuel based sources with air quality as a priority.*

**Objective 5: Reduced Inequality**

*To Plan for new development and improved infrastructure in ways which reduce inequality by addressing areas of identified and hidden deprivation across the Borough, seeking to address inequality to the most disadvantaged members of our communities and encourage strong community cohesion and diversity.*

**Objective 6: The Right Mix of Housing**

*To provide a wide range of housing types and tenures in appropriate locations to meet the needs of West Lancashire's growing population, including affordable housing, accommodation for older people, student accommodation, houses of multiple occupation and residential caravans and house boats.*

**Objective 7: A Vitalized Economy**

*To provide opportunities for appropriate new developments that will see the Borough play an increased role within the three City Regions by encouraging businesses to establish themselves in West Lancashire.*

**Objective 8: Vibrant Town and Village Centres**

*To enable the Borough's Town and Village Centres to establish themselves and evolve to meet the aspirations of the Ambitious West Lancashire Vision and so build on the vitality and vibrancy so valued at the heart of each community.*

**Objective 9: Accessible Services**

*To enable, encourage and plan for greater connectivity to a wide range of services to all parts of the Borough with an emphasis in providing ways of moving across the Borough as an alternative to car travel, making appropriate provision, or re-provision, of new facilities in the most accessible locations and locating development in accessible and sustainable locations.*

**Objective 10: A Natural Environment**

*To improve and make the most of our “green” Borough by protecting and enhancing the natural environment, including biodiversity and a network of green spaces, waterways and connecting Linear Parks, facilitating the visitor economy, supporting the agricultural and horticultural industries and generally enabling rural communities to thrive.*

## 2.3 Strategic Development Options

2.3.1 The Strategic Development Options outline the potential options for delivering new housing and employment land within the Borough. They cover the following three variables:

- The amount of development land required for housing and employment uses per year;
- How far into the future the Local Plan is to look (the Plan Period); and
- The way the total amount of development land required throughout the Local Plan Period is spread across the Borough.

2.3.2 This Report will assess the risks associated with the strategic development options and the associated topic policies with regard to European Sites.

## 3 The Habitat Regulations Assessment Process

### 3.1 Stages in HRA

3.1.1 This section provides an outline of the stages involved in HRA and the specific methods that have been used in preparing this report.

3.1.2 The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

1. **Screening** is the process which initially identifies whether there are likely significant effects upon a European site arising from a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may have a significant effect on the site's qualifying habitats and/or species. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no likely significant effect; if the effect is likely to be significant, or if there is uncertainty, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, and adopting the precautionary principle, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.
2. **Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.
3. **Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out such adverse effects.
4. **Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4, an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI). If this is demonstrated to be the case, consent for the plan or project can be given, but only the necessary compensatory measures needed to protect and maintain the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network have been secured.

### 3.2 Approach to Screening

3.2.1 This Screening Report takes into account the requirements of the Habitats Directive and relevant guidance produced by David Tyldesley Associates<sup>2</sup>.

3.2.2 The following stages have been completed:

- Identification of all European sites that could potentially be affected (including those outside of the West Lancashire Local Plan area);
- A review of each European site, including the features for which the site is designated, the Conservation Objectives, and an understanding of the current conservation status and the vulnerability of the individual features to threats; and
- A high-level review of the Local Plan Review issues and options to identify which options have the potential to affect the European sites in order to inform the formulation of the preferred options with the aim of minimising the potential for affecting European sites.

### 3.3 Consultation

3.3.1 NE will be consulted on the findings of the Screening Report at the 'preferred options' stage. Responses from NE will be fed into any further iterations of the HRA Report and Appropriate Assessment (if required) for the Local Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> DTA Publications Limited. The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, accessed online July 2016.

## 4 Initial Screening of European Sites

### 4.1 Approach to Identifying Sites

- 4.1.1 There are European sites located within, and on, the Borough boundary which need to be taken into consideration in this assessment. In addition, European sites outside of the Borough may be affected by activities undertaken in West Lancashire if they are connected through an impact pathway, for example, hydrological links, or, if mobile species (i.e. birds) use land which is functionally linked to a European site, for example for foraging.
- 4.1.2 Therefore, in addition to all sites within the Borough, European sites which may be affected by the Local Plan activities through an identifiable impact pathway have been considered, within a 20km distance from the Borough.

### 4.2 European Sites

4.2.1 Two European sites have been identified within the Borough boundary. A further six sites are located within 20km of the Borough. Only those sites within 20km which have identifiable impact pathways have been included in the list i.e. although Manchester Moss SAC lies within 20km, this site has not been included as there are no identifiable impact pathways between the site and the Local Plan policies.

4.2.2 The sites are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: European sites within 20km

European site	Reason for inclusion
<b>Martin Mere SPA and Ramsar site</b> Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering, passage and breeding birds.	Located within the West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area.
<b>Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/ Ramsar site</b> Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering, passage and breeding birds.	Located partly within the West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area.
<b>Sefton Coast SAC</b> Designated for supporting important coastal habitats, petalwort ( <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> ) and great crested newts ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> ).	Located within 50m of the Borough Local Plan Area, occupying the same geographical area as parts of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar.
<b>Mersey Narrows &amp; North Wirral Foreshore SPA and Ramsar site</b> Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering birds.	Located within Merseyside, with closest point approximately 9km from West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area, with hydraulic connections to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (within West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area) and currently subject to recreational pressures.
<b>Liverpool Bay SPA</b> Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering and breeding birds. There is currently ongoing consultation in relation to the extension of the SPA.	Located immediately adjacent to Mersey Estuary with hydraulic connections to Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (within West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area).
<b>Dee Estuary SAC, SPA &amp; Ramsar site</b> Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering, passage and breeding birds.	The SAC is located 9km south of West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area; the SPA/Ramsar is located 20km south of West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area. There are hydraulic connections to the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar (within West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area).

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European site	Reason for inclusion
<p><b>Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar site</b>                      Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering and passage birds.</p>	<p>Located approximately 15km south of West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area.</p>
<p><b>Morecambe Bay SPA and Ramsar site</b>                      Designated for supporting Internationally important numbers of wintering, passage and breeding birds.</p>	<p>Located approximately 13km north of the West Lancashire Borough Local Plan Area (Morecambe Bay SAC is located approximately 22km north of the Local Plan Area, so is not included).</p>



## 5 Initial Screening Of The West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues and Options

### 5.1 Overview

- 5.1.1 The initial screening of the West Lancashire Local Plan Issues and Options in relation to the European Sites is presented below. At this early stage of the plan, the spatial options are insufficiently developed to accurately predict whether they are likely to have effects upon European sites or otherwise. A precautionary high-level approach has therefore been adopted which identifies possible impact pathways and promotes a more detailed consideration of the potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE) upon European sites as the options develop.
- 5.1.2 The assessment of the Strategic Development Options is detailed in Section 5.3, Table 2 and is designed to help steer the further development of the choice of options. In addition to the Strategic Development Options, the policies and options identified in the supporting topic papers for the economy, environment and social aspects have also been assessed for the potential to effect European sites. Further details are provided in Section 5.4 to 5.6 and Tables 3 to 5 (below).
- 5.1.3 Once the Plan Review has developed beyond the Issues and Options stage, and draft land allocation options have been identified (i.e. the preferred options stage and beyond), a further HRA Screening exercise will be undertaken and consulted upon with NE.

### 5.2 Potential Impacts

- 5.2.1 There are a number of ways in which development can have an effect upon a European site. At this stage of the Local Plan, it is not possible to determine precisely whether effects are likely; however, as a minimum, the following potential impacts will be considered throughout the review process:
- Direct habitat and species loss associated with European sites
  - Habitat degradation as a result of increased air pollution
  - Loss of habitat functionally linked to a European site (i.e. used by overwintering birds for foraging)
  - Disturbance to habitats and species through increased recreational activity, during operational stage
  - Changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites
  - Disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/operational stage

### 5.3 Assessment of Strategic Development Options

- 5.3.1 As described in Section 2.3, the Strategic Development Options Paper includes the provision of five options for the amount of development that would be required for housing and employment per year. The options range from 8 ha (200 dwellings) for housing and 2 ha of employment land per year to 24 ha (600 dwellings) and 6 ha of employment land per year. All development has the potential to impact upon European sites depending upon a number of factors. Without greater detail on the scale and location of individual development proposals it is not possible to determine specific impacts although the greater the amount of land earmarked for development, the greater the potential for impacts upon European sites is likely to be. That said, a smaller amount of development sited poorly could have greater impacts than larger amounts of development sited away from sensitive areas.
- 5.3.2 The second variable identified in the options paper is the length of the Plan Period. The length of the Plan Period would not be expected to result in significantly different amounts of development occurring over the same timeframe and therefore potential effects upon European sites are likely to be similar in terms of the effects of land take and recreational pressures. However, a shorter Plan period would necessitate more frequent review of the HRA and therefore safeguard against unforeseen changes giving rise to new likely significant effects. For example: if the population of pink-footed geese showed a significant decline for some reason, then sites supporting numbers that are not currently significant may become relatively more important. If the Plan was only reviewed every 38-40 years, this would, in

theory not affect whether those areas were allocated for development; whereas if it happened every 20 - 25, then a new HRA might influence the next plan.

- 5.3.3 The final variable outlined in the Strategic Development Options Paper relates to the spatial distribution of the proposed development land across the Borough. These options could lead to differences in potential effects upon European sites given that the proximity to European sites or land considered to be functionally linked to European sites will be a major factor in determining the extent of potential effects. The four spatial options identified are outlined in Table 2 (below) with an assessment as to their potential implications for the European sites in and adjacent to the Borough.

Table 2: Strategic Development Options Screening

Issue/Option	Additional Issues	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Scenario 1: New development spread around West Lancashire according to the current distribution of existing households and employment land</p>	<p>Requirements for improvement to waste water treatment and consideration of highways impacts of new development, particularly for Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough.</p>	<p>This scenario would see the bulk of new development focussed in and around Skelmersdale, with Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough the next largest settlements. Employment is heavily skewed towards Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes, therefore new employment land would be largely focused in this area.</p> <p>Whilst new development has the potential to impact upon the European sites identified in Table 1, focussing development in and around the existing heavily developed areas is likely to represent a lower risk in terms of the potential for significant effects compared to development in more rural areas.</p> <p>Skelmersdale lies further from the European sites than both Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough and is also much closer to the M58 corridor, and other large towns along the M6 corridor. As such, focussing development in this area is likely to minimise the potential for impacts upon European sites.</p> <p>It is considered unlikely that there would be any land-take within a European site as a result of this option.</p>
<p>Scenario 2: Focuses new development in and around the Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough, with these towns taking a larger proportion of the housing development while rural areas take less. A larger share of employment land would be in Ormskirk with Aughton compared to Scenario 1 and a lower share in rural areas.</p>	<p>Requirements for improvement to waste water treatment and consideration of highways impacts of new development, particularly for Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough.</p>	<p>This scenario would see the bulk of new development focussed in and around Skelmersdale, with Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough the next largest settlements. Under this scenario, new employment land would be more evenly split between Skelmersdale and Ormskirk with Aughton.</p> <p>Whilst new development has the potential to impact upon the European sites identified in Table 1, focussing development in and around the existing heavily developed areas is likely to represent a lower risk in terms of the potential for likely significant effects compared to development in more rural areas.</p> <p>Of the three Key Service Centres, Burscough is located closest to Martin Mere SPA/Ramsar site and, therefore, increasing the amount of housing development in and around this town compared with Scenario 1 could increase the potential for impacts upon this site and the land that is functionally linked to it.</p> <p>It is considered unlikely that any land-take within a European site would occur as a result of this option.</p>

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Issue/Option	Additional Issues	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Scenario 3: Allocates more new development to rural areas and less to the Key Service Centres. Greater levels of development would therefore be seen in the Northern, Eastern and Western parishes.</p>	<p>Potential for greater extent of new infrastructure in rural areas to facilitate expansion or creation of rural settlements.</p>	<p>This scenario sees a higher proportion of development within rural areas compared to the other three scenarios proposed. It is considered likely that this scenario would require the development of a greater degree of 'greenfield' sites which could represent land that is functionally linked to the Ribble and Alt SPA/Ramsar site (or other European sites designated for bird interest features). Development in the Northern and Western Parishes would be in closer proximity to the European sites and therefore the risk of indirect effects would be greater than for the other scenarios.</p> <p>It is considered unlikely that any land-take within a European site would occur as a result of this option.</p>
<p>Scenario 4: A variation on Scenario 2 but with an increased focus on Skelmersdale over the other two Key Service Centres (although employment land under this Scenario remains below that which would occur through Scenario 1).</p>	<p>Would support the need for a proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link and new railway station.</p>	<p>This scenario would see the bulk of new development focussed in and around Skelmersdale. New employment land would be largely focused at Skelmersdale.</p> <p>Whilst new development has the potential to impact upon the European sites identified in Table 1, focussing development in and around the existing developed areas is likely to represent a lower risk in terms of the potential for significant effects compared to development in more rural areas.</p> <p>It is considered unlikely that any land-take within a European site would occur as a result of this option.</p>

## 5.4 Assessment of Economic Policy Options

5.4.1 The Local Plan Review includes a topic paper covering a range of options for economic policies to be addressed. Table 3 provides details of the proposed economic policies with the associated options and identifies whether the policy as a whole or individual options within a policy have the potential for effects upon European sites to occur.

Table 3: Economic Policy Options Screening

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Policy 1: Providing the right scale, mix and distribution of employment land</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing needs.</li> <li>2) Allocate new sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses.</li> <li>3) Allocate all new sites for the range of B classes uses (business, general industry and warehousing).</li> <li>4) Increase town centre office sites.</li> </ol>	<p>Of the four proposed options related to this policy, option 2 has the highest potential for effects upon European sites as a result of the potential for a storage, processing and distribution site within a rural location. Further information on the proposed location of such a site would be required before the LSE could be assessed.</p> <p>Options 1 and 4 focus the provision of employment land on existing sites or within / on the edge of existing developed areas so the potential for affecting European sites is considered to be minimal.</p> <p>Option 3 relates to increasing the flexibility of the type of use rather than directing the location of development, therefore effects upon European sites are unlikely.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to all of the proposed options in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 2: Existing employment areas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue with the existing Local Plan policy approach.</li> <li>2) Protect all existing employment areas for business class employment uses.</li> <li>3) Designate selected employment areas either wholly or in part for non-business class uses.</li> <li>4) Do not protect employment areas for B1, B2 and B8 uses.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy and options relate to the type of use within existing employment areas. For Options 1 to 3 there are unlikely to be any impact pathways from the implementation of this policy to the European sites which will be considered in the screening assessment.</p> <p><b>Options 1 to 3 (if taken forward) associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore if this option is taken forward, it is likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p> <p>Option 4 would allow for some employment sites to be given over to more profitable housing development. There is the possibility that should such sites be located close to Martin Mere or the Ribble and Alt SPA / Ramsar sites an increase in recreational pressure upon the site could occur.</p> <p><b>Further information would be required in relation to Option 4 (if it was taken forward) in order to assess the significance of</b></p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
		<b>potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b>
Policy 3: Spreading economic opportunities by supporting the rural economy	1) Continue with existing Local Plan policy. 2) Increased development in rural areas. 3) A tourism and visitor economy policy.	Options 1 to 3 of this policy all have the potential for LSE on the European sites which will be considered in the screening assessment, as a result of providing for development within rural areas.  <b>Further information would be required in relation to Options 1, 2 and 3 (if any of these options are taken forward) in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b>
Policy 4: Network and Hierarchy of Centres	1) Review the Local Plan centre hierarchy.	This Policy provides details on the centre hierarchy and provides for a review of the hierarchy to consider whether any centres should be moved, deleted or added to the hierarchy. The policy itself does not provide for change and would not lead directly to any impacts on European sites.  <b>The option associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore it is likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b>
Policy 5: Ensuring Healthy Town, Village and Local Centres – Appropriate Uses	1) Review town centre, village and local centre boundaries in the Adopted Local Plan. 2) Review primary shopping area boundaries in the Adopted Local Plan. 3) Review policy approach to determining appropriate uses in town centres.	This policy and options relate to aspirations for community planning of existing town and village centres. The implementation of these policies is not expected to have any implications for European sites.  <b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b>
Policy 6: Sites for Town Centres Uses	1) Adopted Local Plan Approach – Skelmersdale concentration. 2) Allocate site(s) for town centre uses at Ormskirk. 3) Allocate a non-town centre site for a retail warehouse park. 4) Allocate a site to meet retail needs in the north of the Borough.	Options 1 and 2 relate to site allocations for development for existing town centres. Given that these options focus allocation sites within town centres, no LSE upon the European sites are anticipated as a results of the implementation of either of these options.  <b>Options 1 and 2 associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites and therefore if either of these options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b>  Options 3 and 4 allow for the potential

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
		<p>allocation of a site outside of the existing town/village centres and therefore in a more rural location. It is not clear whether such a site would be converting existing development or would be new development, therefore potential effects upon European sites cannot be ruled out and further information on scale and location of such developments would be required.</p> <p><b>Further information would be required in relation to Options 3 and 4 (if they are taken forward) in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>

## 5.5 Assessment of Environmental Policy Options

5.5.1 The Local Plan Review includes a topic paper covering a range of options for environmental policies to be addressed. Table 4 provides details of the proposed environmental policies with the associated options and identifies whether each policy as a whole or individual options within a policy have the potential for effects upon European sites to occur.

Table 4: Environmental Policy Options Screening

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
Policy 1: Local Nature Conservation Sites	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue with the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation in the next Local Plan.</li> <li>2) Remove the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation from the Local Plan.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy is designed to account for changes to the procedure for designating local sites of Nature Conservation Importance. There is a move towards designating Ecological Networks to further protect, and enhance (where possible) the natural environment.</p> <p>The implementation of either option associated with this policy is considered to have no adverse impacts. Potentially some beneficial effects on the European sites could occur, through ensuring a coherent network of ecological sites across the borough which would provide a resource for birds associated with SPA and Ramsar sites.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to negative effects upon European sites, and there is potential for beneficial effects to occur. Therefore, whichever option is taken forward it is likely to be Screened Out at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
Policy 2: Renewable Energy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Designate specific areas where the generation of wind energy, solar farms and any other renewable energy</li> </ol>	<p>Either option associated with this policy could lead to the development of renewable energy schemes.</p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
	<p>technology may be appropriate.</p> <p>2) Do not designate any specific areas for renewable energy technologies, and therefore consider any applications for the development of such technologies on a case-by-case basis.</p>	<p>There is an uncertainty as to whether renewable energy development would lead to any likely significant effects on European sites as locations of such development are not known.</p> <p>New renewable energy projects have the potential to impact designated sites through loss of habitat that is functionally linked to a European site, changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites, and disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.</p> <p>Option 1 could enable the Council to steer development away from sensitive sites through the designation of specific areas within the Local Plan; however, even where areas are designated there will be a requirement for individual project HRAs to be undertaken to fully assess the potential impacts from such development.</p> <p>Option 2 would require careful policy wording to ensure that inappropriate developments would not be considered if there was a potential for there to be a significant effect on a European site.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to both of the proposed options in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 3: Sustainable Design and Construction</p>	<p>1) Require specific sustainable design and construction features or measures to be incorporated into new developments.</p> <p>2) Do not require any specific features or measures through policy.</p> <p>3) To require new development to contribute financially to a Community Energy Fund.</p>	<p>These policies are all associated with the design of new developments. These are statements of intent and aspirations. The implementation of these policies is not expected to have any implications on European sites and potentially some beneficial effects through for example, requiring developments to incorporate features to reduce the production of greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 4: Sustainable and healthy</p>	<p>1) Requirements for developments over</p>	<p>This policy and options set out</p>



Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
places	<p>a certain size to incorporate features that encourage an active lifestyle for local residents and visitors.</p> <p>2) Requirements for developments over a certain size to provide direct connections from the development to the wider cycling and walking infrastructure.</p> <p>3) Requirements for residential developments over a certain size to incorporate public open space and amenity green space.</p>	<p>aspirations for sustainable and healthy living. Option 2 could lead to development in order to provide connections to the wider cycling and walking infrastructure. Such development is likely to be relatively small scale and considered unlikely to lead to an effect upon the European sites. However, this is not certain at this stage and it cannot be ruled out that implementation of this policy may have effects on European sites.</p> <p><b>Options 1 and 3 associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage. Option 2 would require further screening.</b></p>

## 5.6 Assessment of Social Policy Options

5.6.1 The Local Plan Review includes a topic paper covering a range of options for social policies to be addressed. Table 5 provides details of the proposed social policies with the associated options and identifies whether the policy as a whole or individual options within a policy have the potential for effects upon European sites to occur.

Table 5: Social Policy Options Screening

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
Policy 1: Affordable Housing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do nothing, i.e. have no policy on affordable housing.</li> <li>2) Continue with the 'usual' approach to affordable housing policy.</li> <li>3) If the 'percentage approach' is followed, carry on with a broadly similar policy to policy RS2 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027.</li> <li>4) An affordable housing policy that contains more detail.</li> <li>5) Allocate specific sites for 100% affordable housing schemes</li> <li>6) Include 'permissive' policies for affordable housing.</li> <li>7) Provide a more flexible approach to how affordable housing is delivered with market housing developments.</li> <li>8) Have greater flexibility in what the Council defines as affordable housing.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy and options relates to how affordable housing can be incorporated into the housing allocations set out in Strategic Development Options. The implications for European sites will therefore be assessed under the Strategic Development Options and do not need to be repeated here.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Policy 2: Demand for self- and custom-build housing</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do not allocate any sites for SCB housing (allow for such housing to be commissioned on allocated housing sites).</li> <li>2) Set aside a part of larger allocated housing sites for SCB plots.</li> <li>3) Identify and allocate small sites for SCB dwellings in line with demand.</li> </ol>	<p>Options 1 and 2 relate to how self- and custom-build housing can be incorporated into the housing allocations, they would not lead to additional development and therefore no effects upon European sites would occur as a result of these options without implementation of the Strategic Development Options.</p> <p><b>Options 1 and 2 (if taken forward) associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites and therefore whichever options are taken forward are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p> <p>Option 3 has the potential for new sites to be allocated for development. Although likely to only comprise small numbers of houses, they could be located close to a Designated site, or on/adjacent to areas which could constitute functionally-linked land to a Designated site.</p> <p>Construction of new self-build homes has the potential to impact designated sites through loss of habitat functionally-linked to a Designated site, changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to Designated sites, and disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.</p> <p><b>Further information would be required in relation to Option 3 (if it was taken forward) in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Policy 3: Demand for alternative residential accommodation</p>	<p>1) Do nothing – allow market to provide accommodation through management of existing caravan sites and planning applications for expansion or intensification of sites (likely to be located within Green Belt).</p> <p>2) Allocate new sites, or land on the edge of existing sites, for additional caravan-based accommodation and mooring berths.</p> <p>3) As above, vary local Green Belt policy on a site-specific basis, to allow for expansion or intensification of residential caravan sites or mooring berths to meet identified need for such accommodation in West Lancashire.</p>	<p>This policy will lead to development in rural areas that may be in close proximity to Designated sites, or land which is functionally-linked to such sites.</p> <p>Construction of new alternative residential accommodation within the Green Belt has the potential to impact European sites through increased recreational pressure, loss of habitat functionally-linked to a Designated site, changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites, and disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to all of the proposed options in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 4: The Skelmersdale housing market</p>	<p>1) Continue to relax, or further relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale.</p> <p>2) Base the Local Plan Review strategy on the regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale.</p>	<p>This policy and options relates to encouraging regeneration and expansion within Skelmersdale.</p> <p>Option 1 relates to policy requirements in relation to sites and those site allocations that would be considered within the Strategic Development Options. The implications for European sites will therefore be assessed under the Strategic Development Options and do not need to be repeated here.</p> <p><b>Option 1 associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, therefore if this option is taken forward, it is likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p> <p>Option 2 could allow for the allocation of many / large sites in and around Skelmersdale for significant amounts of residential and employment development. Whilst development within and around Skelmersdale is considered likely to represent a lower risk to the European sites than expanding development in more rural areas of the Borough, the potential for</p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
		<p>LSE cannot be ruled out at this stage.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to Option 2 in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 5: The social requirements of older people</p>	<p>1) A general 'sustainable development' policy.</p> <p>2) Allocate specific sites in appropriate locations for services and facilities.</p> <p>3) Prepare an Area Action Plan / Development Brief / Masterplan</p>	<p>Good access to shops, public transport, and medical facilities etc. is a social requirement older people.</p> <p>Option 1 relates to development or redevelopment within settlements, there is no impact pathway from the implementation of this option to the Designated sites.</p> <p><b>Option 1 associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore if this option is taken forward, it is likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p> <p>Options 2 and 3 could allow for the allocation of new development sites, potentially outside existing urban areas and therefore the potential for LSE upon European sites cannot be ruled out at this stage.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to Options 2 and 3 in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
<p>Policy 6: Residential accommodation for older people</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Have no specific policy, but let the market deliver appropriate accommodation in line with local demand.</li> <li>2) Continue with the 'percentage approach' of the current Local Plan.</li> <li>3) In conjunction with the above, provide a tighter definition of what constitutes 'housing designed specifically to accommodate the elderly'.</li> <li>4) Adopt one or both of the optional Technical Standards for new houses.</li> <li>5) Require adherence to, or at least that regard be had to, the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) Design Principles.</li> <li>6) Allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation.</li> <li>7) Adopt the more general policy approach of promoting 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods'.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy and options relates to how residential accommodation for older people can be incorporated into the housing allocations set out in Strategic Development Options. The implications for European sites will therefore be assessed under the Strategic Development Options and do not need to be repeated here.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 7: Provision of Houses in Multiple Occupation in Ormskirk</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Expand the 'Article 4 area' and the area to which the HMO percentage policy applies, to include neighbouring settlements.</li> <li>2) Revoke the Article 4 Direction and existing Local Plan policy RS3.</li> <li>3) Decrease the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a lower percentage, potentially even down to 0%.</li> <li>4) Increase the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a higher percentage.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy and options relates to controlling the conversion of dwellings into multi-occupancy housing. All of these options relate to development or redevelopment within a settlement, there is no impact pathway from the implementation of this policy to the European sites.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 8: Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue with the current policy approach of restricting off-campus purpose-built student accommodation unless strict criteria are met.</li> <li>2) Relax the current policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University Campus.</li> <li>3) Allocate specific sites for off-campus student accommodation, whilst restricting 'unplanned' developments elsewhere.</li> <li>4) Tighten the current policy to severely, or entirely, restrict off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation.</li> </ol>	<p>This policy could lead to development and it is not clear whether this would be focussed in urban or rural areas. Therefore, development may be in close proximity to European sites, or land which is functionally-linked to such sites.</p> <p>Construction of new student accommodation has the potential to impact European sites through increased recreational pressure, loss of habitat functionally-linked to a European site, changes in water quality where sites are hydrologically linked to European sites, and</p>

Policy	Policy Options	Potential for Effect upon European Sites
		<p>disturbance to species as a result of construction activities/ operational stage.</p> <p>Option 3 would allow the Council to direct off-campus development away from sensitive areas through allocating specific sites within the plan. This minimises the likelihood that sites which could lead to significant effects upon European sites would be chosen for development.</p> <p><b>Additional information would be required in relation to all of the proposed options in order to assess the significance of potential effects on the European sites. This would be considered further at the preferred options stage.</b></p>
<p>Policy 9: Delivering suitable accommodation for travellers</p>	<p>1) Allow the travellers based at present in West Lancashire to stay on their (currently unauthorised) sites.</p> <p>2) When allocating new sites for other developments in the Borough set aside part of those sites for travellers.</p> <p>3) Compulsory Purchase of suitable sites in order to allocate them.</p>	<p>Evidence identified a need for 22 permanent traveller pitches in West Lancashire by 2033. The small scale of such a requirement and the likelihood that such sites would be located within reasonably close proximity to existing sites, or other urban areas would suggest that such sites are unlikely to have an impact upon European sites.</p> <p><b>The options associated with this Policy would not lead to effects upon European sites, and therefore whichever options are taken forward, they are likely to be Screened Out of the assessment at the preferred options stage.</b></p>

## 6 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 Sections 5.3 to 5.6 detail the various policies and options set out for consultation to feed into the review of the Local Plan. Whilst none of the Policies or options promote development within a European site, at this early stage of the process it is not always possible to fully determine the significance of potential effects.
- 6.1.2 The following paragraphs summarise the conclusions of the initial HRA Screening of the Policies and Options. Once the Options have been refined and preferred options identified along with proposed site allocations, a more detailed HRA Screening will be undertaken.

### Strategic Development Options

- 6.1.3 The options set out within the Strategic Development Options paper include varying amounts of development per year and options for the length of time covered by the updated Local Plan.
- 6.1.4 The greater the amount of development proposed for each year of the Plan, the higher the likelihood that green field sites would be required to fulfil the requirements, and as such, the potential for likely significant effects could be greater.
- 6.1.5 In terms of the four spatial development scenarios, Scenario 3 provides for increased potential for development within rural areas, which are likely to be closer to the European sites within the borough, and leading to the loss of greater amounts of green field sites. Consequently, Scenario 3 is considered to have the highest risk of allocations proposed under it to have effects upon European sites, although further information pertaining to proposed allocations would be required before the likely significance of such effects could be fully established.
- 6.1.6 Scenarios 1, 2 and 4 all provide for focussing development within and adjacent to existing developed settlements, and as such, overall risks that new site allocations would lead to effects upon European sites are considered likely to be lower. However, until further details of proposed allocation sites under any of the scenarios are provided, the potential for significant effects upon European sites cannot be ruled out for any of the proposed scenarios.
- 6.1.7 The different length of time over which the Plan could be made is not considered likely to lead to significantly different conclusions being drawn upon the potential for development to affect European sites; however, a shorter Plan period would necessitate more frequent review of the HRA and therefore safeguard against unforeseen changes giving rise to new likely significant effects.

### Economic Policy Options

- 6.1.8 The Economic Policy Options paper outlines six policies with associated options. Of these, implementation of any of the options associated with Policies 4 and 5 are considered unlikely to lead to effects upon European sites and it is likely that these would be screened out of the assessment at the preferred options stage, once the policy wording has been finalised. Whilst some of the options associated with the remaining four policies could also be screened out, others would require further details, such as scale and location, of proposed developments to enable a conclusion as to the potential for likely significant effects upon the European sites.

### Environment Policy Options

- 6.1.9 The Environmental Policy Options paper outlines four policies with associated options. Of these, implementation of any of the options associated with Policies 1, 3 and 4 are considered unlikely to lead to effects upon European sites and it is likely that these would be screened out of the assessment at the preferred options stage, once the policy wording has been finalised. Further details, such as scale and location, of proposed renewable energy developments that could occur as a result of implementation of Policy 2 would be required to enable a conclusion as to the potential for likely significant effects upon the European sites. Careful policy wording should be considered if Option 2 is taken forward to ensure renewable energy developments are sited appropriately.

### **Social Policy Options**

6.1.10 Finally, the Social Policy Options paper outlines nine policies with associated options. Of these, implementation of any of the options associated with Policies 1, 6, 7 and 9 are considered unlikely to lead to effects upon European sites and it is likely that these would be screened out of the assessment at the preferred options stage, once the policy wording has been finalised. Whilst some of the options associated with the remaining five policies could also be screened out, others would require further details, such as scale and location, of proposed developments to enable a conclusion as to the potential for likely significant effects upon the European sites.



Arcadis (UK) Limited

The Mill  
Brimscombe Port  
Stroud  
GL5 2QG  
United Kingdom  
T: +44 (0)1453 423 100

[arcadis.com](https://www.arcadis.com)





# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



## Duty to Co-operate Statement February 2017





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### **Appendix: LCR Statement of Co-operation**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) created a duty on local planning authorities, county councils and other “prescribed” bodies to cooperate with each other to address strategic matters relevant to their areas in the preparation of a development plan document, such as a Local Plan. The duty requires on-going constructive and active engagement on the preparation of development plan documents and other activities relating to the sustainable development and use of land, in particular in connection with strategic infrastructure or matters that would fall under the remit of a county council.
- 1.2 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF, which was published in March 2012, states that *“Local planning authorities will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their Local Plans are submitted for examination”*. This Duty to Co-operate Statement accompanies the Issues & Options consultation of the West Lancashire Local Plan Review and sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council has co-operated with neighbouring authorities and the “prescribed” bodies in relation to issues with potential cross-boundary impacts since the adoption of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 in October 2013 and, in particular, as the Council as started its Local Plan Review.
- 1.3 Paragraph 181 of the NPPF also provides examples of how evidence of co-operation may be demonstrated, such as jointly prepared strategies or planning policies, joint committees with neighbouring authorities to make decisions or memorandums of understanding to agree how authorities and bodies will co-operate with each other as they prepare planning policy or strategy. This Statement will address such examples to show how the Council has co-operated so far in preparing the Local Plan Review, how it has considered options such as a jointly-prepared Local Plan and how it intends to fulfil the Duty going forward in the preparation of a new Local Plan.
- 1.4 The NPPF also provides further guidance on the Duty, focusing on *“planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those which relate to the strategic priorities set out in paragraph 156”* (paragraph 178, NPPF). The NPPF is clear that local planning authorities (LPAs) and other public bodies should work collaboratively on these strategic priorities and reflect this in Local Plans. It is these strategic priorities that provide the framework for this Statement. These strategic priorities are:
- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
  - the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
  - the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

1.5 The Duty to Co-operate applies to all local planning authorities, county councils in England and to a number of other “prescribed” bodies. Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out who those “prescribed” bodies are. The following are those local planning authorities, county councils and “prescribed” bodies that are relevant in the context of the Duty for West Lancashire:

- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Chorley Borough Council
- South Ribble Borough Council
- Fylde Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council (as County Council, minerals and waste local planning authority, transport authority, highway authority and education authority)
- Merseytravel (as a neighbouring Integrated Transport Authority)
- Transport for Greater Manchester (as a neighbouring Integrated Transport Authority)
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Civil Aviation Authority

1.6 West Lancashire Borough Council also co-operates with several other bodies and organisations on strategic issues relevant to the Local Plan, and these are set out below:

- Lancashire Shadow Combined Authority
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership

- Lancashire Local Nature Partnership
- Highways England
- Network Rail
- Utility Providers (United Utilities, National Grid, Electricity North West, Scottish Power Manweb, Mono Consultants)
- Coal Authority
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Canal & River Trust
- Sport England
- West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)
- Emergency Services
- West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Southport & Ormskirk Hospital Trust
- West Lancashire GP Consortia

## **2. Co-operation in the Local Plan Review**

2.1. WLBC's co-operation can be broadly split into three types of co-operation:

- Joint Evidence Base Studies and Projects
- Regular officer-level meetings between authorities and with key stakeholders
- Formal consultation with neighbouring authorities and key stakeholders throughout the preparation of the Local Plan

2.2. In relation to Joint Evidence Base Studies and Projects, WLBC has engaged, or is engaging, with neighbouring authorities and Lancashire County Council (LCC) on a number of joint studies / projects that will inform not only the West Lancashire Local Plan Review, but the equivalent documents of neighbouring authorities as well. These Joint Studies include:

- The Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (LCR SHELMA) – currently in draft for consultation.
- The West Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) – currently in draft for consultation – while this is not a joint study, the methodology employed has been subject to consultation with the LCR authorities who are part of the same Housing Market Area and/or Functional Economic Market Area.
- Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2015)



- The West Lancashire Green Belt Study (2011) – utilising a shared methodology with Sefton and Knowsley, and independently validated by Lancashire County Council
  - Various transport-related studies, strategies and masterplans with LCC and Merseytravel, including proposals for a Skelmersdale Rail Link and a West Lancashire Route Management Plan
- 2.3. In addition, the Council will be commissioning further evidence base studies as the Local Plan Review progresses, some potentially joint studies (e.g. on Renewable Energy Capacity) and some involving close working with partners (e.g. a Traffic Impact Assessment Tool for the Preferred Options with Highways England and LCC).
- 2.4. In relation to regular officer-level meetings, West Lancashire officers are part of both the Liverpool City Region and Lancashire Planning Officer Groups, where colleagues from across the city-region / county regularly meet (every 6 weeks and every quarter respectively) to discuss matters that affect the whole city-region / county and that are cross-boundary and strategic in nature.
- 2.5. In addition, West Lancashire officers regularly meet with colleagues from neighbouring authorities separately to discuss strategic matters specific to the relationship between WLBC and their neighbours. In particular, due to the greater cross-boundary influences, officers regularly meet with colleagues from Sefton and have frequently met with colleagues from Wigan, St Helens, Knowsley and LCC. These meetings may not always directly lead to the formulation of policy but they provide a crucial understanding of cross-boundary issues and an awareness of the needs of neighbours that has undoubtedly influenced the formulation of policy in the Local Plan.
- 2.6. In relation to key stakeholders, the key relationships are referred to in section 1.0 above, but it is worth mentioning the on-going engagement with United Utilities, who have willingly met with WLBC on many occasions to discuss the preparation of the last Local Plan, specific planning applications and now the Local Plan Review. This is an important relationship given the vital role that United Utilities play in the Borough with regard waste water treatment and the sewer network. UU and WLBC will continue to co-operate fully and openly in order to achieve the best Local Plan to balance resolving infrastructure constraints but still meeting development needs.
- 2.7. In relation to formal consultation, all neighbouring authorities and “prescribed” bodies have been, and will continue to be, consulted on the preparation of the Local Plan Review.
- 2.8. Table A below provides a summary of the collaborative work West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) has undertaken thus far in preparing the Local Plan Review, and who it has co-operated with on each aspect of that work. The Table is based upon the five strategic priorities set out in paragraph 156 of the NPPF and identifies strategic issues specific to West Lancashire under each of these priorities. The nature of each of these strategic issues is then briefly set out, along with who is affected / obliged to co-operate on that issue, who

is co-operating with whom, and how this is being done, and finally the anticipated outcome of that co-operation for that strategic issue.

- 2.9. As well as the co-operation undertaken on the strategic issues set out in Table A, West Lancashire Borough Council has collaborated with several of the “prescribed” bodies as a matter of course on various general aspects of the preparation of the Local Plan.

#### Liverpool City Region Authorities

- 2.10. From a strategic planning perspective, the Council co-operates most closely with the authorities in the Liverpool City Region, given that West Lancashire is most closely aligned economically and in terms of housing markets with the City Region. In September 2016 the Council’s Cabinet endorsed a LCR Statement of Co-operation, a statement which sets out how the LCR authorities, including West Lancashire, have, and are, working together in the preparation of Local Plans and on strategic planning matters. The Statement was also endorsed by the other LCR authorities over the course of Autumn 2016. This Statement, which will be updated from time-to-time as appropriate, therefore provides a key element of evidence of co-operation by the Council with its neighbours to the south and it is appended to this Duty to Co-operate Statement.

#### The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England

- 2.11. These three organisations are statutory consultees in the preparation of a Local Plan as well as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and (for Natural England) the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). As such, even at this early stage of Plan preparation, all three have been engaged through the initial Scoping consultation in October 2016 and on the preparation of the SA Scoping Report. At the current Issues & Options Stage, all three have been specifically invited to comment on the Issues & Options Topic Papers, the SA of the Issues & Options and Natural England have been invited to engage with the Council and our HRA consultants (Arcadis) on the HRA Screening Report for the Issues & Options.
- 2.12. In addition, the Environment Agency have provided input to the Council on the draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1, continuing the positive working relationship that the Council had with the Environment Agency in preparing the last Local Plan.

#### The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

- 2.13. The Council and the HCA have co-operated for many years, mainly on matters relating to Skelmersdale town centre and the wider regeneration of Skelmersdale, involving HCA-owned sites in and around Skelmersdale, and in recent times this has been a very fruitful relationship as the two organisations have together enabled the delivery of key housing allocations in the last Local Plan. This co-operation is continuing with the preparation of the Local Plan Review and the HCA have been specifically invited to comment on the Issues & Options Topic Papers.

#### West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

- 2.14. The Council and the West Lancs CCG have been liaising closely over recent times, with the Council being able to have a better understanding of the health infrastructure serving the Borough and where improvement is needed and development opportunities may arise, while the CCG have been able to reflect advice from the Council on strategic planning in their management of their landholdings to ensure sufficient land and buildings are made available for health services. This has included on-going input from the CCG on the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and attendance of Council officers at CCG / NHS estates meetings. This relationship will continue as the Local Plan Review progresses and particularly as the preferred Strategic Development Options are selected, so that the CCG and Council can plan for development and health infrastructure in co-operation.

#### Transport and Highway Authorities

- 2.15. Lancashire County Council (LCC), as transport authority and highway authority covering West Lancashire, together with Merseytravel as integrated transport authority covering the rest of the Liverpool City Region, are key to the Local Plan Review delivering a Plan that deals with the cross-boundary movement of people and goods sustainably. In addition, Highways England are also key to understanding the impact any development proposals in West Lancashire (together with proposals in neighbouring areas) may have on the Strategic Road Network serving West Lancashire (primarily the M58 and M6) and the Council will be working with them and LCC to undertake a Traffic Impact Assessment of the Preferred Options once they have been selected.
- 2.16. The Council are working closely with LCC, Merseytravel and Network Rail to bring forward the Skelmersdale Rail Link, as well as looking at opportunities to improve other rail services in the Borough, such as the Ormskirk to Preston line. The Council are also supporting LCC in the delivery of the West Lancs Highways & Transport Masterplan, with the focus currently on a Route Management Strategy for West Lancashire to identify how the Primary Route Network serving West Lancashire could be improved.

**Table A: Duty to Co-operate – Strategic Issues for West Lancashire and Evidence of Co-operation in preparing the West Lancashire Local Plan DPD**

**Terminology in Table A**

WLBC – West Lancashire Borough Council

LCC – Lancashire County Council

Neighbouring Authorities – Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wigan, Chorley, South Ribble, Fylde

LCR Authorities – Liverpool City Region (Liverpool, Wirral, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens, Halton)

Lancashire Authorities – Lancaster, Ribble Valley, Wyre, Blackpool (Unitary), Fylde, Preston, South Ribble, Chorley, Blackburn with Darwen (Unitary), Rossendale, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle and West Lancashire

HCA – Homes and Communities Agency

TfGM – Transport for Greater Manchester

CCG / NHS – Clinical Commissioning Group and National Health Service

CVS – Council for Voluntary Service

NPPF Strategic Priority (para 156)	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
Homes and Jobs	Housing Delivery	<p>Delivery of housing to meet identified needs in wider sub-regional housing market context and the need to demonstrate flexibility in meeting housing needs.</p> <p>Green Belt release may be required in West Lancs to meet housing need and ensure flexibility in delivery.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities and LCR authorities	<p>WLBC have co-operated with the LCR authorities in preparing the LCR Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) which, although currently only in draft, identifies the Housing Market Areas present within the study area and the Objectively-Assessed Need (OAN) for housing across the LCR and West Lancs and for each individual authority within the study area.</p> <p>Further to the SHELMA, on-going dialogue with the LCR authorities and formal consultation with neighbouring authorities through the Local Plan Review will identify whether any LCR or neighbouring authorities have any unmet housing need which West Lancs may be asked to accommodate through a redistribution of housing need or whether West Lancs may have an unmet housing need which other authorities may be asked to meet.</p> <p>WLBC have prepared a draft Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which supersedes the SHLAA prepared to support the last Local Plan. While this has been prepared only for West Lancs, all other authorities within the same Housing Market Area as West Lancs were consulted on the methodology for the SHELAA and support WLBC's approach.</p> <p>In relation to the potential for Green Belt release, WLBC prepared a Green Belt Study in 2011/12 during the preparation of the last Local Plan. This was prepared alongside separate studies undertaken by Sefton and Knowsley, based on a shared methodology. The studies explored whether any parts of the Green Belt in these three authorities no longer fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt. Given how recent this study was, and the limited change to land in the Green Belt seen in West Lancs, it is still relevant for the Local Plan Review.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that WLBC will continue to work with the LCR Authorities in particular to identify any necessary redistribution of housing need as is appropriate and that this will directly influence the housing requirement that is set as part of the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>As such, the housing requirement to be set will have the support of the LCR and neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>A part of the above process will be to ensure that the comparative merits of land in the Green Belt in all authorities involved is considered and assessed so that each authority meets as much as possible of their own OAN within their boundaries unless there are over-riding constraints to development that would prevent this from happening.</p>	TBD

NPPF Strategic Priority (para 156)	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
	Employment Land Delivery	<p>Delivery of employment land to stimulate economic growth and provide new jobs.</p> <p>Green Belt release may be required in West Lancs to meet employment land need and ensure flexibility in delivery.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities and LCR authorities	<p>WLBC have co-operated with the LCR authorities in preparing the LCR Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) which, although currently only in draft, identifies the Functional Economic Market Area that West Lancs sits within and an OAN range for employment land need across the LCR and West Lancs and for each individual authority within the study area.</p> <p>Further to the SHELMA, on-going dialogue with the LCR authorities and formal consultation with neighbouring authorities through the Local Plan Review will identify whether any LCR or neighbouring authorities have any unmet employment land need which West Lancs may be asked to accommodate through a redistribution of employment land need or whether West Lancs may have an unmet employment land need which other authorities may be asked to meet. In particular, the SHELMA identifies an LCR-wide need for large-scale B8 development which the LCR authorities and West Lancs will need to consider how best to meet across the study area.</p> <p>WLBC have prepared a draft Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which seeks to identify any previously unidentified sites which may be suitable for employment land development. While this has been prepared only for West Lancs, all other authorities within the same Functional Economic Market Area as West Lancs were consulted on the methodology for the SHELAA and support WLBC's approach.</p> <p>In relation to the potential for Green Belt release, WLBC prepared a Green Belt Study in 2011/12 during the preparation of the last Local Plan. This was prepared alongside separate studies undertaken by Sefton and Knowsley, based on a shared methodology. The studies explored whether any parts of the Green Belt in these three authorities no longer fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt. Given how recent this study was, and the limited change to land in the Green Belt seen in West Lancs, it is still relevant for the Local Plan Review.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that WLBC will continue to work with the LCR Authorities to identify any necessary redistribution of employment land need, particularly for large-scale B8, as is appropriate and that this will directly influence the employment land requirement that is set as part of the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>As such, the employment land requirement to be set will have the support of the LCR and neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>A part of the above process will be to ensure that the comparative merits of land in the Green Belt in all authorities involved is considered and assessed so that each authority meets as much as possible of their own OAN within their boundaries unless there are over-riding constraints to development that would prevent this from happening.</p>	TBD
	Significant levels of commuting in and out of West Lancs	West Lancashire sees a high proportion of employment-related commuting across its boundaries, both out of West Lancs (to places like Liverpool, Sefton and Wigan) and into West Lancs (from Sefton and Wigan in particular).	<p>WLBC, LCR authorities and Lancashire authorities</p> <p>LCC, Merseytravel and TfGM</p>	<p>WLBC will continue to consult with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding economic and employment land policies in the Local Plan Review through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan preparation and more general engagement throughout the process.</p> <p>Study work conducted with LCC, Merseytravel and / or TfGM has explored, and continues to explore, the potential transport infrastructure improvements that may be beneficial to address any increased commuting from West Lancashire to surrounding areas. This includes:</p>	<p>It is accepted that West Lancashire has close economic and employment links with neighbouring authorities and nearby major cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Preston and that this relationship will continue.</p> <p>Proposals for new or improved transport infrastructure have not been fully defined at this stage, but there is a clear working relationship between WLBC and the various</p>	TBD.

NPPF Strategic Priority (para 156)	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Lancashire Highways &amp; Transport Masterplan</li> <li>West Lancashire Route Management Plan</li> <li>Ormskirk Movement Strategy</li> <li>Rail Study relating to Skelmersdale</li> <li>Rail Studies relating to electrification of Ormskirk to Preston line and the re-opening of the Burscough Curves</li> </ul>	transport authorities seeking to deliver solutions to any transport infrastructure concerns.	
	Provision for Travellers	<p>Delivery of sites for Travellers to meet identified needs.</p> <p>Green Belt may have to be used in West Lancashire to meet this need.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities	WLBC and the LCR authorities (except Halton) co-operated to prepare a Merseyside and West Lancashire GTAA in 2015. This identifies the need for Traveller Sites in each authority to 2033.	While it is anticipated that each authority will meet its own needs for Traveller Sites, by nature the movement of Travellers can be a cross-boundary issue, and so WLBC will continue to liaise with all neighbouring authorities on this issue to identify the most appropriate policy for Traveller Site provision.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
Retail, leisure and other commercial development	Retail Provision and Sub-regional hierarchy of Centres	<p>West Lancashire is reliant on Centres in other authorities (Southport, Wigan, Liverpool and Preston) for access to Comparison retail and, to a lesser degree, Convenience retail.</p> <p>West Lancashire provides three Key Service Centres, one of which (Skelmersdale) is a Regional Town Centre.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities LCC, Merseytravel and TfGM	WLBC will consult with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding retail policy and the hierarchy of centres in its Local Plan through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan Review and more general engagement throughout the process.	The Local Plan will, as far as is possible, seek to deliver new retail provision within West Lancs to serve any increase to West Lancs' needs. However, it is accepted that West Lancs has close links with neighbouring authorities and nearby major cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Preston regarding comparison retail and that this relationship will continue and so transport infrastructure must be improved in places to accommodate this demand.	TBD
	Skelmersdale Town Centre	<p>WLBC is focused on improving the town centre physically and in terms of provision of retail, leisure and other commercial developments to cement its role as a Regional Town Centre.</p> <p>While such developments will hopefully make the town centre more attractive to a wider part of the Borough, it is not anticipated that it will draw significant footfall from other centres outside the Borough.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities, LCC and the HCA	<p>WLBC has been working with partners (including LCC and the HCA) for several years to see the delivery of new development and new infrastructure in Skelmersdale Town Centre in order to revitalise the centre as a retail and leisure destination within West Lancs.</p> <p>Proposals for the Town Centre have evolved over time, and will continue to evolve and so WLBC will continue to engage with all partners and neighbouring authorities as a suitable policy for the Town Centre is prepared for the Local Plan Review.</p>	By consulting closely with neighbouring authorities on this issue, it is anticipated that there will be no objections to the continued proposals for Skelmersdale Town Centre in the Local Plan Review.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.

NPPF Strategic Priority (para 156)	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
Infrastructure	Transport	While the majority of impacts on the transport network from development in West Lancashire will be within the Borough, the Borough's transport network is utilised by individuals travelling through the Borough to and from neighbouring authorities, and some limited impacts may be felt on more strategic transport networks, such as Motorways.	WLBC and neighbouring authorities LCC, Merseytravel, TfGM, Highways England and Network Rail	<p>WLBC will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding potential policies in the Local Plan Review on transport infrastructure through both formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan Review and more general engagement throughout the process.</p> <p>Study work conducted with LCC, Merseytravel and / or TfGM has explored, and continues to explore, the potential transport infrastructure improvements that may be beneficial to address any increased commuting from West Lancashire to surrounding areas. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Lancashire Highways &amp; Transport Masterplan</li> <li>• West Lancashire Route Management Plan</li> <li>• Ormskirk Movement Strategy</li> <li>• Rail Study relating to Skelmersdale</li> <li>• Rail Studies relating to electrification of Ormskirk to Preston line and the re-opening of the Burscough Curves</li> </ul>	It is hoped that WLBC and LCC can arrive at agreed positions with neighbouring planning and transport authorities on how the impact of new development on cross-boundary transport infrastructure will be managed. However, it is recognised that some infrastructure constraints will not have easy solutions and so co-operation on this key issue will be vital and some potential locations for development may need to be reconsidered if no solutions are forthcoming.	TBD
	Water-related infrastructure	Different parts of the Borough are affected by a Waste Water Treatment constraint, water supply issues, surface water issues, drainage and / or flood risk – however, none of these constraints have an effect on areas outside the Borough	WLBC, Environment Agency and United Utilities	<p>While these issues are not strategic in that they do not directly affect neighbouring authorities, they have a crucial effect on the Local Plan proposals and could therefore create indirect effects on neighbouring authorities if they limit delivery of housing or employment land targets in certain parts of the Borough. Therefore, WLBC will continue to consult with neighbouring authorities regarding policies in its Local Plan affected by these matters through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan Review and more general engagement throughout the process.</p> <p>WLBC will also continue to engage closely with United Utilities, the Environment Agency and LCC (as Lead Local Flood Authority) on these issues throughout the preparation of the Local Plan Review, meeting regularly with all three organisations in an attempt to arrive at a solution, where appropriate.</p>	<p>With the support of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and LCC, the Local Plan Review will identify policies to enable development within the most appropriate locations, in an appropriate timescale and without negatively affecting issues of flood risk, surface water drainage or water supply.</p> <p>As such, co-operation on this issue should result in support from relevant prescribed bodies on the Local Plan policies.</p>	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
	Minerals & Waste	Minerals and Waste planning policy matters affecting West Lancashire are considered by Lancashire County Council	WLBC, LCC, LCR authorities and the Coal Authority	WLBC will continue to engage with LCC as they prepare a new Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and with the LCR authorities should they need to review the Merseyside Waste DPD.	As necessary, a new Local Plan for West Lancs will reflect the Minerals and Waste policies to be prepared by LCC and their implications for new development.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.

NPPF Strategic Priority (para 156)	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure	Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	New development as proposed by the Local Plan will have implications for a range of “social” and “cultural” infrastructure providers.	WLBC, LCC, CCG / NHS, Emergency Services, Canal & River Trust, Sport England and CVS.	A wide range of “social” and “cultural” infrastructure providers, including those listed, have been, and will continue to be, engaged on the Local Plan Review through the formal consultation at each stage of preparation, through the preparation of the IDP and through more general engagement on health-related matters.	WLBC and its partners will identify suitable policies and proposals to ensure that appropriate social and cultural infrastructure is provided in West Lancs to support new development and to promote healthier lifestyles.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
Climate change and natural and historic environment	Managing impacts in relation to International Habitat Sites	New development, cumulatively across sub-regions, can have significant impacts on International Habitat Sites and such impacts should be reduced or mitigated for if at all possible.	WLBC, neighbouring authorities, LCR authorities and Natural England	WLBC has had a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report carried out by consultants (Arcadis) for the Issues & Options stage of the Local Plan Review, and this is being consulted upon alongside the Local Plan, with particular input from Natural England. The same consultants will prepare the HRA for later stages of the Local Plan Review and, if necessary, an Appropriate Assessment of identified impacts.	<p>The HRA / AA will inform each iteration of the Local Plan and so result in a Local Plan that has been prepared with an understanding of the wider, cross-boundary implications of development for International Habitat Sites both within the Borough and elsewhere in surrounding areas.</p> <p>The HRA will identify where specific mitigation measures will be required in relation to developments in West Lancashire affecting international sites in other authorities and the Local Plan will reflect the commitment of West Lancashire to work with neighbouring authorities to this end.</p>	TBD



### 3. Impact on Neighbouring Authorities

- 3.1. As the Local Plan Review progresses and the Preferred Options for development and planning policy are finalised, the final column of Table A above will be populated and will set out where the new Local Plan may, potentially, have an impact on neighbouring authorities. This will raise a number of key strategic, cross-boundary issues which warrant more detailed discussion not only to demonstrate the legal compliance aspect of the Duty to Co-operate, but the soundness aspects of the Duty as well. Clearly, at this time the Council cannot predetermine what these impacts and issues will be, but the following are likely to be the areas where most co-operation is needed to fulfil the Duty.
- 3.2. Probably the most significant of cross-boundary strategic issue will be that of meeting housing and employment land need, as, although the Council intends to ensure that West Lancashire's own objectively-assessed housing and employment land needs will be met within West Lancashire, this cannot be certain until the LCR SHELMA study is finalised. Likewise, there can be no certainty of whether neighbouring authorities in the LCR may have unmet housing and/or employment land needs until the SHELMA is finalised and consideration is given to the potential supply of land in those authorities available to meet their OAN. As such, the conversations to be had with the LCR authorities once the SHELMA is finalised will be central to this issue, and whether it is an issue at all.
- 3.3. This issue is not just restricted to West Lancs' relationship with the LCR authorities, but could also be relevant to the relationship with Greater Manchester (especially Wigan) and Central Lancashire, although there is nothing to suggest at the current time that those areas will not be able to meet their OAN.
- 3.4. In addition, should any such unmet need arise and West Lancashire is considered the most suitable place to meet that need, the issue of where within West Lancashire such need is met will become a strategic, cross boundary issue because of the potential implications on neighbouring Boroughs of locating (or not locating) new development in certain parts of West Lancashire. Such implications may be transport-related or have other infrastructure implications in neighbouring authorities, or they may have impacts on commuting patterns. At this early stage in the Local Plan Review we cannot be more specific but, as the Local Plan Review progresses, this will be an issue that needs more engagement and co-operation.
- 3.5. Such an issue would also raise the question identified by paragraph 179 of the NPPF, which considers local planning authorities to "*consider producing joint planning policies on strategic matters and informal strategies*". West Lancashire sits in a position between three city-regions and has links to all three, but in the new political environment of Combined Authorities, West Lancashire is outside the established Combined Authorities of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region, but working towards being part of a new Lancashire Combined Authority. As such, West Lancashire cannot be a part of the City Region Combined Authorities' Joint Spatial Frameworks, but can work under the Duty to

Co-operate to ensure that there is correlation between those Spatial Frameworks and the West Lancs Local Plan. At the current time, the Lancashire Combined Authority is not proposing to prepare a Spatial Framework as part of its remit.

- 3.6. Below this strategic level of planning, the Council could consider a joint Local Plan with an individual authority(ies) within those Combined Authorities, especially if West Lancashire is being asked to meet any of that authority's OAN, but there has been no issue raised at the current time that would justify this and, given the stage of Local Plan preparation which West Lancashire's neighbours are currently at, it would be unlikely that a joint Local Plan would be appropriate.

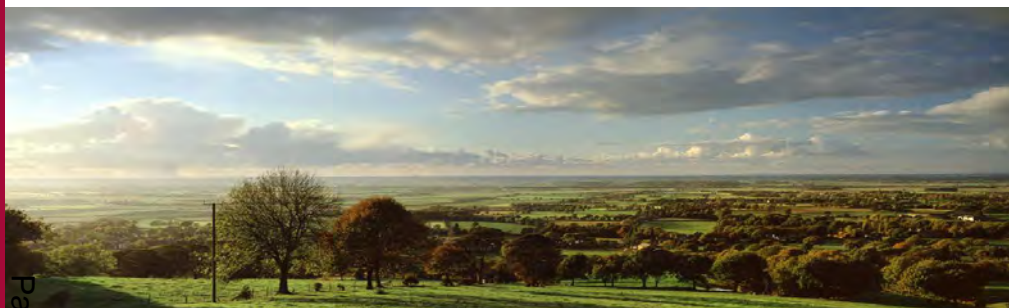
## **4. Summary**

- 4.1. In summary, West Lancashire Borough Council demonstrated a high level of co-operation with other authorities and public bodies in the preparation of the last West Lancs Local Plan and is committed to continuing this in the preparation of the Local Plan review, as can be seen by what co-operation has already taken place at this early stage of Plan preparation. In particular, the Council has participated in a number of joint projects with other authorities on key evidence base documents and is working closely with key infrastructure providers to ensure that the Local Plan Review will deliver what infrastructure is needed to address constraints and facilitate new development.
- 4.2. This Paper will be updated at each stage of the Local Plan Review to show how the Council is fulfilling the Duty to Co-operate as it prepares a new Local Plan.



**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**

# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



## Strategic Development Options Paper February 2017





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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 A Local Plan Review: Issues & Options Consultation

1.1.1 West Lancashire Borough Council is committed to ensuring sustainable development is delivered in West Lancashire and so has undertaken to review the current West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, which was adopted in October 2013.

1.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework talks about the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

1.1.3 While the current Local Plan does support the principle of sustainable development that is championed by the National Planning Policy Framework and is only a little over three years old, the context surrounding planning and development is constantly changing and national planning policy is evolving with it. This means that local planning policy, such as Local Plans, can quickly become out of date if they are not reviewed and updated accordingly, which, aside from not delivering the sustainable development we aspire to, can have two main negative consequences.

1.1.4 First, an out-of-date Local Plan can constrain growth, both economically and in terms of providing the right kind of development in the right place in a timely fashion. Secondly, if local planning policy is out of date it can be ineffective in managing and guiding where appropriate development should take place and can lead to a situation where the Council has less control or choice in its decisions.

1.1.5 Therefore, while the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 is not out of date at this point in time, it is considered prudent to begin work on a Local Plan Review with the aim of preparing a new Local Plan, especially given that the gathering and review of all evidence, the preparation of a Local Plan and the Examination of the final document by a Planning Inspector can, all together, take several years.

1.1.6 This Strategic Development Options Paper, and its supporting Topic Papers, marks the first public consultation on the preparation of a new Local Plan. It is designed to set out the key planning-related



issues that West Lancashire faces and consider options for how new local planning policy might be able to help address those issues. Such issues and options cover all aspects of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) and can range from area-specific issues to Borough-wide or even national and international issues (that affect West Lancashire).

1.1.7 In particular, this Paper identifies a series of “Strategic Development Options” for the amount and broad location of new housing and employment development. Those options will have varying positive and negative effects depending on the amount of development involved and where it is proposed, but it is important that whichever options are ultimately selected, the Borough is enabled to grow economically, has good social infrastructure and its environment is protected and enhanced wherever possible. However, at this stage, the Council is not earmarking any specific sites for potential development, but is inviting detailed suggestions for specific sites that fit within one or more of the Strategic Options to be put forward through this consultation.

1.1.8 As well as these “strategic” issues, and the options for addressing them, the Local Plan must consider the issues that affect the Borough as a “place” and that affect the people who live, work and spend leisure time in West Lancashire. As such, there are a series of Topic Papers sitting underneath this Paper that we invite you to consider, especially if you have an interest in a particular topic area.

1.1.9 The first topic paper is the Spatial Portrait Paper, which looks at the information and data we have on each part of the Borough and

identifies the key issues that each faces and that the Borough as a whole faces. This is important in ensuring that we are identifying the right issues in the right places so that we can seek to address them through the Local Plan, where appropriate.

1.1.10 Alongside this, there are three topic papers which explore the policy options the Council has to deal with particular aspects of the Key Issues identified in the Spatial Portrait Paper. These three topic papers reflect the three pillars of sustainability and look at the Economic Policy Options, the Environmental Policy Options and the Social Policy Options.

1.1.11 Finally, there is a topic paper which covers the legal Duty to Co-operate that the Council are required to demonstrate compliance with as they prepare a new Local Plan. This involves co-operating with neighbouring authorities and a series of key stakeholders to prepare the Local Plan.

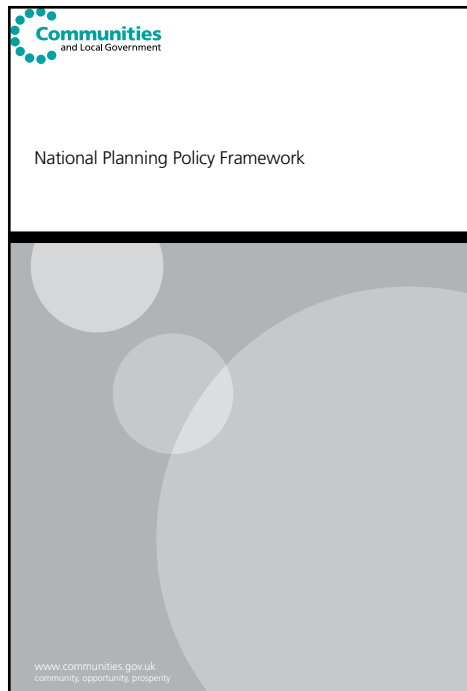


## 1.2 Preparation of a new Local Plan

- Page 1750
- 1.2.1 The Local Plan Review (and therefore the preparation of a new Local Plan) began in earnest in September 2016, when Council’s Cabinet approved a new Local Development Scheme (a project plan and timetable for the preparation of a new Local Plan) and authorised an initial “scoping” consultation with key stakeholder organisations. This scoping consultation took place in October 2016 and several organisations provided feedback on what topics the new Local Plan should cover and how long a period it should cover.
- 1.2.2 Based upon this feedback, this Issues & Options Consultation covers all the topics suggested by those stakeholders as well as others that the Council consider appropriate and it is likely that, as a new Local Plan is prepared, it will include policies addressing these topics. If you have any views on what topics the Local Plan should cover (the scope of the document), please let us know through this Issues & Options Consultation and consideration will be given to your views and, where appropriate, additional material will be added to the Local Plan to cover those topics.
- 1.2.3 The NPPF recommends that a Local Plan should cover a Plan period that lasts at least 15 years from the anticipated adoption date. The Local Development Scheme identifies that the anticipated adoption date of a new Local Plan would be towards the end of 2019 or start of 2020, and so the new Local Plan should cover a period to at least 2035. However, it might be appropriate to cover a longer period, perhaps as long as 30 years (to 2050), in order to be able to make more strategic decisions about where development will go and release land in a co-ordinated way to achieve a sustainable growth of the Borough, so we would appreciate your views on this.
- 1.2.4 Alongside this, and continuing throughout the Issues & Options consultation and beyond, the Council is preparing and commissioning a range of studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the decisions on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations should go into the new Local Plan. The full range of evidence base documents that have been, or will be, prepared is provided in Appendix A to this Paper.
- 1.2.5 To this end, you are invited to submit any robust evidence you consider appropriate as part of your consultation feedback on this Paper. The more detail provided in this evidence, the more useful it is to the Council, and the more likely it is to influence the Council’s decision-making.
- 1.2.6 In particular, if you are promoting a particular site for allocation for development in the Local Plan, you are encouraged to provide evidence of how suitable the site is for development and how deliverable it is, taking into account all policy considerations that affect the viability of development. This would include:
- all information pertaining to the constraints that might limit development of the site (either physically or infrastructure-related or from a planning policy perspective) and how they could be appropriately overcome with minimal impact on the surrounding environment and neighbours;
  - information on the sustainability merits of the site; and
  - information on the availability and deliverability of the site for development, ideally including a viability assessment to show

- how the development is deliverable in financial terms while taking account of all the current policy requirements (e.g. affordable housing, CIL, provision of Public Open Space, highways improvements).

1.2.7 More generally, the “How to Comment” section at the start of this Paper, along with information on the Council’s website ([www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplanreview](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplanreview)), explains how you can provide feedback to the Council on the issues and options in this Paper and its accompanying topic papers.



### 1.3 The National and Sub-Regional Planning Context

1.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and its accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides the key context for all planning matters in the Local Plan, with one of the tests of soundness that the Local Plan will be examined on being consistency with the NPPF. The golden thread running through the NPPF is that of “sustainable development” and, in particular, the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This holistic emphasis on the economic, social and environmental impact of development has to come through a Local Plan and the Local Plan should fully meet an area’s objectively-assessed need for development unless there are over-riding adverse impacts of doing so which would outweigh the benefits of doing so.

1.3.2 This then sets the tone for any new Local Plan, in that it must be positively-prepared, seeking to promote any development that is sustainable and, wherever possible, meeting more than the basic development needs for an area; being creative in how those needs are met to make better places for people to live, work and spend their leisure time; and being viable and deliverable.

1.3.3 The NPPF still encourages a plan-led system, which keeps policies up-to-date and relevant to the local and national context, and encourages the preparation of Local Plans. It sets out the tests of soundness against which a Local Plan will be examined, namely:

- “Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

- Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.” (NPPF paragraph 182)

- 1.3.4 Within the NPPF and the PPG, a wide range of planning matters are discussed and, where appropriate, the national policy on these matters is drawn out in this Paper as we discuss certain issues, but all must ultimately contribute to the aim of sustainable development that fully meets development needs (including necessary infrastructure).
- 1.3.5 Sub-regionally, there are no formal documents providing policy or guidance that cover West Lancashire, although the emerging Spatial Frameworks for the Liverpool City Region and for Greater Manchester will inevitably have an indirect effect, and should any such Framework be prepared for Lancashire in the future, a new Local Plan for West Lancashire will be able to directly inform it. As such, the key sub-regional matter for the Local Plan will be the Duty to Co-operate, required through the NPPF and other national legislation, which requires neighbouring authorities and certain key stakeholders to co-operate as they prepare Local Plans to ensure that cross-boundary issues are suitably addressed and

collective development needs are met in full. To this end, a Duty to Co-operate Statement is provided at Appendix B to evidence how the Duty to Co-operate has been, and is being, fulfilled at this Issue & Options stage of Local Plan preparation.

## 1.4 Key Issues facing West Lancashire

1.4.1 The accompanying Spatial Portrait Paper considers how the Borough is currently functioning in economic, social and environmental terms, looking at key indicators and data to identify issues that the Borough is facing and assessing the physical nature of the Borough, be that in terms of the natural environment, built environment or infrastructure provision. It identifies a series of issues for each part of the Borough that the Local Plan should seek to address but also pinpoints several key issues which affect the whole, or most of, the Borough:

- Whilst the number of people in the Borough is increasing relatively slowly, the population is ageing, with older age cohorts projected to grow very significantly both number-wise and percentage-wise over coming years. Conversely, the working age population is projected to decrease. This change in the make-up of the population is likely to place increased demand on the provision (availability, accessibility and variety) of housing, services, health care, and appropriate training / jobs for the older population, whilst the number of persons able to contribute towards providing such services decreases proportionally. It is also likely to have implications for job growth requirements, commuting levels, and general housing provision.
- West Lancashire as a whole is very much 'middle of the road' nationally in terms of deprivation. However, there are some notable disparities and inequalities in health, life expectancy, educational attainment, and consequent job opportunities within the Borough. These disparities are most marked between Skelmersdale and more affluent areas such as Aughton, Parbold and Tarleton.

- The affordability of housing is an issue for West Lancashire (and elsewhere), the median house price being almost seven times the median earnings. The average age of household heads is projected to rise over time, both as a result of affordability issues, and the ageing of the population. The affordability issue is tied up with the contrasting housing market strengths that are seen in different parts of the Borough and offering viable alternatives to traditional housing built by large developers for the market, such as self- and custom-build, caravans and houseboats.
- In order to meet the Council's legal obligations, the needs of the Travelling community must be met in an appropriate way and as close as possible to where demand arises, taking into account physical and environmental constraints.
- The issue of student accommodation in Ormskirk needs to be adequately addressed to ensure that sufficient provision is made to accommodate student demand but in a way which minimises harm to, or conflict with, other parts of the residential community of Ormskirk.
- Economically, West Lancashire continues to gradually grow, with steady growth in jobs in particular, and this growth is anticipated to continue and possibly at a higher rate. However, the local workforce will decline in number as the population ages (and as working age people struggle to afford a house in West Lancashire). As such, the continued economic growth of

- West Lancashire needs to be fuelled not just by providing land in the right location for new employment premises to attract businesses (both large and small, established and new), but by providing the right supporting context to attract those businesses which includes providing a skilled local workforce, appropriate housing provision to accommodate employees and an attractive environment and offer to retain and draw working age people to the area, especially graduates.
- There is a significant opportunity to boost the local economy, especially in the M58 corridor, as a result of the Liverpool2 deep water terminal and expected surge in demand for logistics facilities and 'spin-off' industries. Skelmersdale is likely to be the most appropriate location for such opportunities given its excellent road access from the Port of Liverpool.
- There is pressure in some parts of the Borough for housing on existing employment sites, leading to loss of employment land, because some existing employment sites and premises are no longer fit for purpose. Consideration will need to be given to how to distinguish between a site that is no longer appropriate and one that simply needs to be redeveloped for more modern premises.

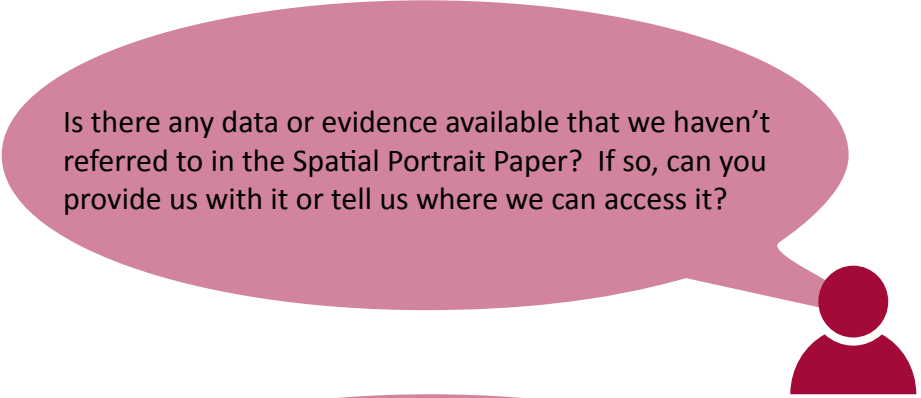


- There is significant leakage of expenditure from the Borough, especially in relation to comparison (non-food) retail and commercial leisure / entertainment and the night-time economy. The Borough's town centres in particular need to be managed and developed appropriately to help them reinvent themselves to meet 21st Century preferences for retailing, leisure and entertainment.
- The amount of best and most versatile agricultural land in the Borough is a regionally important resource and is vital to the high performing agricultural industry in West Lancashire.
- Parts of West Lancashire are internationally important designated nature reserves, accommodating significant proportions of the world population of certain species. These are both an asset to the Borough, requiring continued protection, and also a potential constraint to development in some areas.

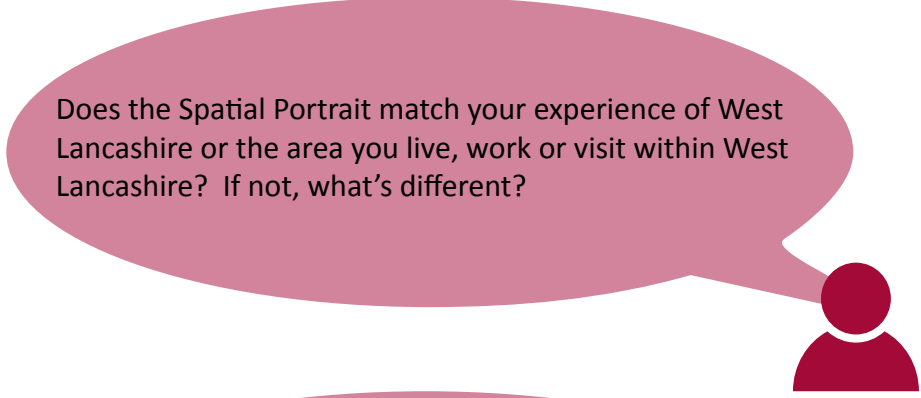
- The impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding and drainage, must be managed appropriately including considering how and where new development is built in West Lancashire to ensure that new development does not make existing issues worse.
- Opportunities for renewable energy provision need to be explored and measures considered to improve energy efficiency of new developments, to help reduce the impact of climate change.
- There are varying levels of accessibility to services / facilities / jobs / public transport around the Borough. General accessibility to key services has decreased over recent years as services have been rationalised and consolidated. Consistent with many other areas, car use is high and cycling and public transport use is lower than it could be. As such the issue of rural isolation in particular is a concern.
- Public transport and highways traffic management needs improving in key areas, such as a rail link into Skelmersdale, easing traffic congestion in Ormskirk and generally facilitating better access via a range of transport modes across the Borough.

### Summary

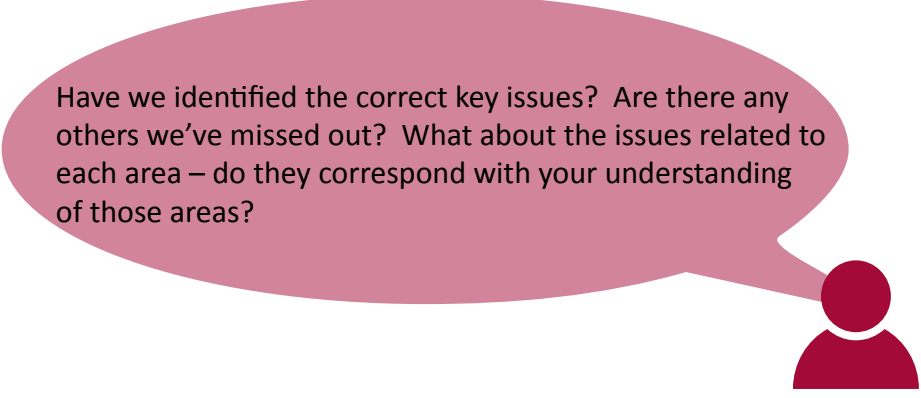
Have we captured all of the issues affecting West Lancashire in the Spatial Portrait? Please discuss by answering the following questions in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



Is there any data or evidence available that we haven't referred to in the Spatial Portrait Paper? If so, can you provide us with it or tell us where we can access it?



Does the Spatial Portrait match your experience of West Lancashire or the area you live, work or visit within West Lancashire? If not, what's different?



Have we identified the correct key issues? Are there any others we've missed out? What about the issues related to each area – do they correspond with your understanding of those areas?

## 2. A Vision for an Ambitious West Lancashire

### 2.1 A Draft Vision

- 2.1.1 The following Vision is a draft that the Council would like your feedback on. Depending on which Strategic Option is ultimately selected for the amount and location of new housing and employment development and the particular policy options which are chosen to address different issues in the various topic areas, the Vision may ultimately have to change, as these options will influence what West Lancashire looks like by the end of the Plan period, but this draft reflects what the Council would like to achieve based on the evidence currently available.



***West Lancashire will be an attractive place where people want to live, work and visit. The Borough will retain its local character and will also make the most of its highly accessible location within the North West and its links with the three City Regions of Liverpool, Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire and to this end will be an outward looking proactive partner within this setting.***

***West Lancashire will grow economically; creating jobs, attracting new businesses and making sure that existing employers have every opportunity to expand and succeed in the Borough, set within the three City Regions context.***

***West Lancashire will play its part in providing a fantastic range of housing, at the right quality, as a fundamental factor in delivering economic growth and leaving a lasting, vital legacy for the next generations. This will include provision of affordable housing to ensure positive impacts on the health, wellbeing, social mobility and general quality of life for West Lancashire residents.***

***The Borough's three main settlements of Skelmersdale with Up Holland, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough will be the focus for new development, with each town building on its individual strengths but all three working together to reduce inequality across the Borough by providing a well-rounded employment base, opportunities for business and the right residential mix. The regeneration of Skelmersdale in particular will be vital to this and all three town centres will be more robust and vibrant, offering what people need in a 21st Century town centre.***



***West Lancashire's fantastic potential will have been developed through investment in young people through education and training and in particular working with Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College to ensure that a greater number of post graduate jobs are created in order to retain skills and talents within the Borough.***

***In rural areas, Village and Hamlet settlements will retain their rural character whilst seeking to provide local focal points for services and employment, where appropriate, and the provision of good quality affordable homes. The agricultural and horticultural industry will continue to be a focus in rural areas.***

***The identity and unique landscape of West Lancashire will be valued, enhanced and sustained in accordance with best practice, enabling people to access and enjoy all that it offers. This will incorporate the Borough's historic buildings and character, its valuable and important wildlife, habitats and biodiversity, its vital agricultural role and its network of green spaces and waterways.***

***Infrastructure in West Lancashire will be improved and focused on the places that need it, be that improved sustainable transport options within and between the larger settlements and to key locations outside of the Borough (such as the proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link), improved utilities and communications, improved education offer or improved health, community and leisure infrastructure – all of which will provide a better, and healthier, quality of life for those who live, work and visit in West Lancashire.***

### Summary

Does the Spatial Vision represent your experience of West Lancashire? Tell us your thoughts by answering the question below in the **Issues & Options Survey**.

What do you think of the draft Vision for the Local Plan? Does it cover all it needs to? Is it aiming for the right improvements?



## 2.2 Objectives

- 2.2.1 The following Objectives (which are also in draft and subject to change depending on your feedback and on the final options selected) set out how the above Vision will be delivered. They are vital in guiding how the planning policies are written (what they aim to achieve) and in monitoring whether the policies are working, after the Local Plan is adopted. The Objectives are necessarily focused on matters that Planning can directly influence but, where possible, they refer to the wider benefits good Planning will have on other factors.

### Objective 1: Sustainable Communities

To ensure sustainability is a guiding principle within our communities providing a balanced mix of housing tenures and types, employment opportunities and access to services and the natural environment by adapting the principles set out within the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

### Objective 2: A Healthy Population

To encourage the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the population of West Lancashire by encouraging a healthier lifestyle through the way that new development is planned and designed, increasing and improving the network of green spaces and Linear Parks, waterways, Sport and Recreation spaces across the Borough and improving access to health and community facilities. To tackle health inequalities, especially within young people, focusing on areas of social deprivation.

### Objective 3: A High Quality Built Environment

To ensure that new development is designed to a high quality, recognising the imperatives of climate change, reduced natural resources and pollution and the requirement to drastically reduce carbon emissions and ensuring that the Borough's historic features and their settings are conserved and enhanced.

### Objective 4: Addressing Climate Change

To work proactively towards making a meaningful contribution to meeting the targets as agreed at the COP 21 Climate Change Summit 2015 by prioritizing Renewable Energy and low carbon development through greater emphasis on Solar, Onshore and Offshore Wind, Ground and Air source heat technologies, localised district energy schemes and all renewable technologies identified through Research and Development as progressive alternatives to all fossil fuel based sources with air quality as a priority.

### Objective 5: Reduced Inequality

To Plan for new development and improved infrastructure in ways which reduce inequality by addressing areas of identified and hidden deprivation across the Borough, seeking to address inequality to the most disadvantaged members of our communities and encourage strong community cohesion and diversity.

### Objective 6: The Right Mix of Housing

To provide a wide range of housing types and tenures in appropriate locations to meet the needs of West Lancashire's growing population, including affordable housing, accommodation for older people, student accommodation, houses of multiple occupation and residential caravans and house boats.

### Objective 7: A Vitalized Economy

To provide opportunities for appropriate new developments that will see the Borough play an increased role within the three City Regions by encouraging businesses to establish themselves in West Lancashire.

### Objective 8: Vibrant Town and Village Centres

To enable the Borough's Town and Village Centres to establish themselves and evolve to meet the aspirations of the Ambitious West Lancashire Vision and so build on the vitality and vibrancy so valued at the heart of each community.

### Objective 9: Accessible Services

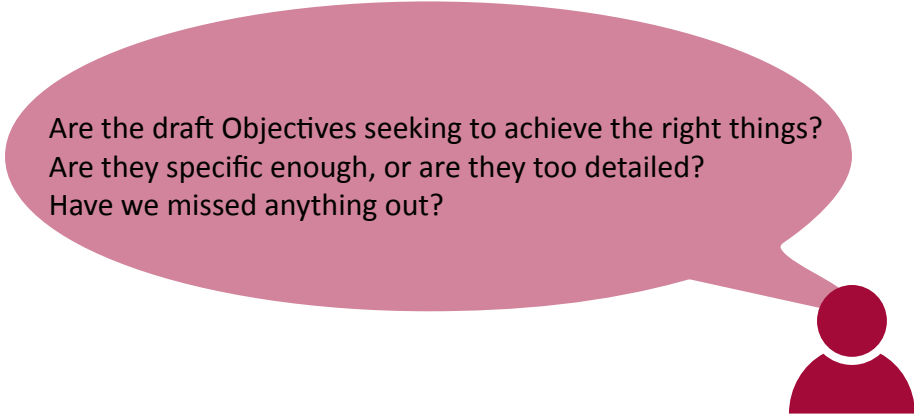
To enable, encourage and plan for greater connectivity to a wide range of services to all parts of the Borough with an emphasis in providing ways of moving across the Borough as an alternative to car travel, making appropriate provision, or re-provision, of new facilities in the most accessible locations and locating development in accessible and sustainable locations.

### Objective 10: A Natural Environment

To improve and make the most of our "green" Borough by protecting and enhancing the natural environment, including biodiversity and a network of green spaces, waterways and connecting Linear Parks, facilitating the visitor economy, supporting the agricultural and horticultural industries and generally enabling rural communities to thrive.

### Summary

The Strategic Objectives set out how the Vision for West Lancashire will be delivered. If you have any views on these please answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



Are the draft Objectives seeking to achieve the right things?  
Are they specific enough, or are they too detailed?  
Have we missed anything out?

## 3. Strategic Development Options

### 3.1 The Three Variables

3.1.1 The Strategic Development Options focus on potential options for delivering new housing and employment land, and the options cover three variables:

- The amount of development land required for housing and employment uses per year
- How far into the future the Local Plan is to look (the Local Plan period)
- The way the total amount of development land required throughout the Local Plan period is spread across the Borough



### 3.2 The Amount of Development Land Required

3.2.1 In relation to the amount of development land required per year, we are considering five options:

- A. Approximately 8 ha of land (for 200 dwellings) per year and 2 ha of employment land per year
- B. Approximately 12 ha of land (for 300 dwellings) per year and 3 ha of employment land per year
- C. Approximately 16 ha of land (for 400 dwellings) per year and 4 ha of employment land per year
- D. Approximately 20 ha of land (for 500 dwellings) per year and 5 ha of employment land per year
- E. Approximately 24 ha of land (for 600 dwellings) per year and 6 ha of employment land per year

3.2.2 The Options reflect the emerging analysis of development needs for West Lancashire in the draft report of the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA), which is available to view alongside this consultation. The SHELMA seeks to identify the Objectively-Assessed Need (OAN) for West Lancashire and for the Liverpool City Region as a whole and, in doing so, identifies several scenarios for the calculation of OAN for housing and employment land needs. The OAN is the minimum amount of development that a local planning authority should be seeking to provide, unless there are particular physical or planning-related constraints which make it especially difficult or unpalatable to do so.

3.2.3 Option A is roughly based on (for housing) meeting the 2014-based Sub-National Population Projections, with appropriate adjustments for the more recent Mid-Year Population Estimates, household formation rates and market signals, and (for employment land) meeting the need for general employment land needs based on the Labour-Demand Scenario in the SHELMA but not seeking to meet any of the sub-regional need for land for large-scale logistics. **As such, Option A is the very minimum level of new development that West Lancashire could be argued to need.**

3.2.4 Option B is roughly based on the SHELMA's Economic Growth scenario for housing based on the anticipated job growth in West Lancashire and on a mid-point scenario for employment land between the Labour-Demand Scenario and the Completions Trend scenario with a 20% margin for flexibility, but again not seeking to meet any of the sub-regional need for land for large-scale logistics. **As such, Option B sees an uplift for development needs compared to the very minimum in Option A, reflecting a housing scenario that incorporates forecast job growth and an employment land figure that takes account of past trends for development of employment land as well as job growth.**

3.2.5 Option C is approximately based on the SHELMA's Economic Growth scenario for housing plus an assumption that West Lancashire would have to meet an unmet housing need from the Liverpool City Region (LCR) or other surrounding authorities of 100 extra dwellings a year if those areas are unable to meet all of their own housing needs. The employment land requirement in Option C is based on the Completions Trend scenario in the SHELMA with a 20% margin for flexibility and meeting a small proportion of the LCR demand for

large-scale logistics as well. **As such, Option C is a clear above-OAN option that seeks to deliver more housing and employment land than is strictly necessary in West Lancashire in order to help meet a wider sub-regional need.**

3.2.6 Option D reflects a scenario where West Lancashire meets a larger unmet need for housing from the LCR or surrounding authorities of 200 extra dwellings a year on top of the Economic Growth scenario for West Lancashire. The employment land requirement is based on the Completions Trend scenario in the SHELMA with a 20% margin for flexibility, like Option C, but meeting a larger proportion of the LCR demand for large-scale logistics as well. **As such, Option D reflects a level of development needs significantly above the OAN to seek growth of West Lancashire economically whilst meeting a wider sub-regional need.**

3.2.7 Option E reflects a scenario where the Local Plan seeks to meet close to the full affordable housing need for West Lancashire and so allows more housing generally to ensure the delivery of the proportion of housing that is to be affordable. Correspondingly, the employment land requirement must increase to ensure that there are sufficient jobs to support the additional households, and so the employment land scenario assumes that West Lancashire would accommodate a larger proportion of the LCR demand for large-scale logistics on top of the general West Lancashire employment land needs based on a mid-point scenario. **As such, Option E provides an absolute maximum option in terms of what is potentially deliverable, although meeting the increased needs associated with this Option would be extremely challenging to deliver, especially for housing.**

3.2.8 In considering the five options set out above there are a number of factors to consider including the environmental impact of developing the land required, the economic and social benefits of the development, the infrastructure that might be needed to support the levels of development and, particularly for the larger-scale options how they could be achieved and delivered given that they are significantly higher than the levels of development usually seen in West Lancashire.

3.2.9 For example, Options A and B would clearly have the least environmental impact and, depending on how the housing and employment land requirements were divided up between the different parts of the Borough and depending on the length of the Local Plan period, may not require additional Green Belt release (although they would require development of greenfield land that is in the current Local Plan either as an existing allocation or as safeguarded land). However, while these options are based on potential scenarios for development needs, the requirements are lower than those in the current Local Plan and what would typically be expected in West Lancashire and so could stymie economic development in West Lancashire and have a detrimental social impact as a result.

3.2.10 Options C to E all involve higher requirements for housing and employment land development than the Local Plan or that which has regularly been achieved in West Lancashire in recent times and so Options D and E in particular would require innovative methods to ensure delivery of such a large amount of development over a sustained period. These options would also require Green Belt to be released, given how constrained the Borough's settlements

are by the Green Belt boundary, thereby having a greater environmental impact (albeit one that can be off-set to some extent). However, such additional development will bring economic and social benefits to West Lancashire and facilitate the improvement and renewal of towns such as Skelmersdale, with the growth potentially attracting funding to improve infrastructure in the Borough, all of which, if planned properly, can narrow the inequality gaps that exist between different parts of the Borough.

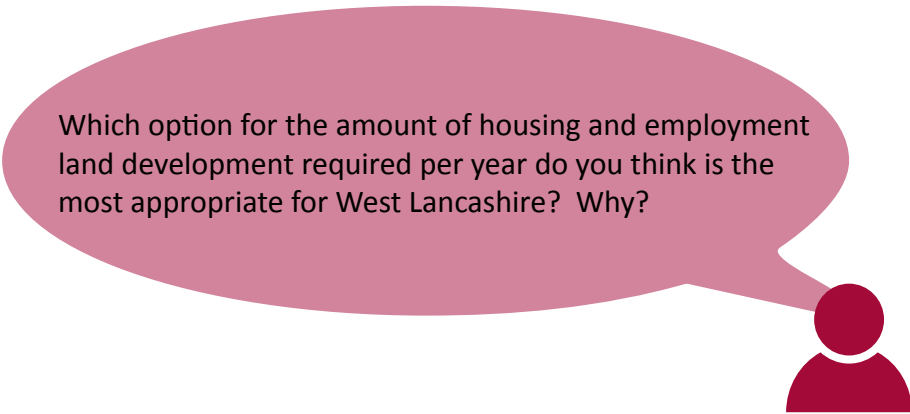


3.2.11 With Options C and D, regarding both housing and employment land requirements, they involve West Lancashire meeting an unmet housing need from authorities in the Liverpool City Region and a wider sub-regional demand for large-scale logistics development. If such a need or demand is realised from the Liverpool City Region or other surrounding local authorities as the Local Plan Review progresses, under the Duty to Co-operate, the Council are required to work with our neighbours to find the best solution for meeting those unmet needs and demands. Depending on those discussions, West Lancashire may be identified as the best location to meet those unmet needs and demands.

3.2.12 Therefore, the Council faces a difficult choice as to the scale of development needs that a new Local Plan should meet and would like to seek the views of the public, businesses and stakeholders of West Lancashire on these options, taking account of all the issues that influence the options.

**Summary**

The Strategic options discussed the amount of development land required for the Borough. If you have views on this please answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



Which option for the amount of housing and employment land development required per year do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?

### 3.3 The Local Plan Period

3.3.1 The above options for annual requirements for housing and employment land must then be translated into requirements for the whole Local Plan period. We are considering two time periods for the Local Plan, both of which have a base date of 2012 to match the base date of the SHELMA and the current Local Plan:

- I. 2012 to 2037
- II. 2012 to 2050

3.3.2 The first option would ensure that the Local Plan would exceed the minimum period required for a Local Plan (15 years) from the anticipated date of adoption in 2020 and aligns with the forecast period in the SHELMA. The second option would look longer-term and ensure that the Council is planning the future growth of the Borough in a co-ordinated way and is particularly relevant where Green Belt release is required, as the NPPF requires a local planning authority to release sufficient land from the Green Belt to meet longer-term development needs when they are altering the Green Belt boundary.

3.3.3 Table 4a shows how, for West Lancashire as a whole, the five above Options (A to E) and the two potential Local Plan periods (Options I and II) would result in different total requirements for housing and employment land.

	Per Annum		2012-2037 (Option I)		2012-2050 (Option II)	
	Housing (dwellings)	Employment Land (ha)	Housing (dwellings)	Employment Land (ha)	Housing (dwellings)	Employment Land (ha)
<b>Option A</b>	200	2	5,000	50	7,600	76
<b>Option B</b>	300	3	7,500	75	11,400	144
<b>Option C</b>	400	4	10,000	100	15,200	152
<b>Option D</b>	500	5	12,500	125	19,000	190
<b>Option E</b>	600	6	15,000	150	22,800	228

*Table 4a: Housing and Employment Land Requirement Options by Plan period*



- 3.3.4 Given that the base date for both options is 2012, a portion of the housing and employment land requirements ultimately identified in the new Local Plan will have already been met by development that has already been delivered, is being delivered, has planning permission or that is allocated under the existing Local Plan. Therefore, when considering the different total requirements in Table 4a, it should be remembered that in the region of 5,000 houses and 75 ha of employment land can be delivered under the existing Local Plan.
- 3.3.5 While the SHELMA only forecasts to 2037, if the Plan period selected was to run to 2050, the Local Plan would need to review whether the requirements to 2037 should continue to 2050, including meeting any unmet need or demand, potentially building in a review mechanism into the Plan for this purpose.

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**Summary**

The Strategic Options Paper proposes two alternative options for the plan period of the Local Plan. If you have a view on this please answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Should the Council go for a standard Plan period (Option I) or plan longer-term (Option II)? Why?



**3.4 Distributing the Development Requirements across West Lancashire**

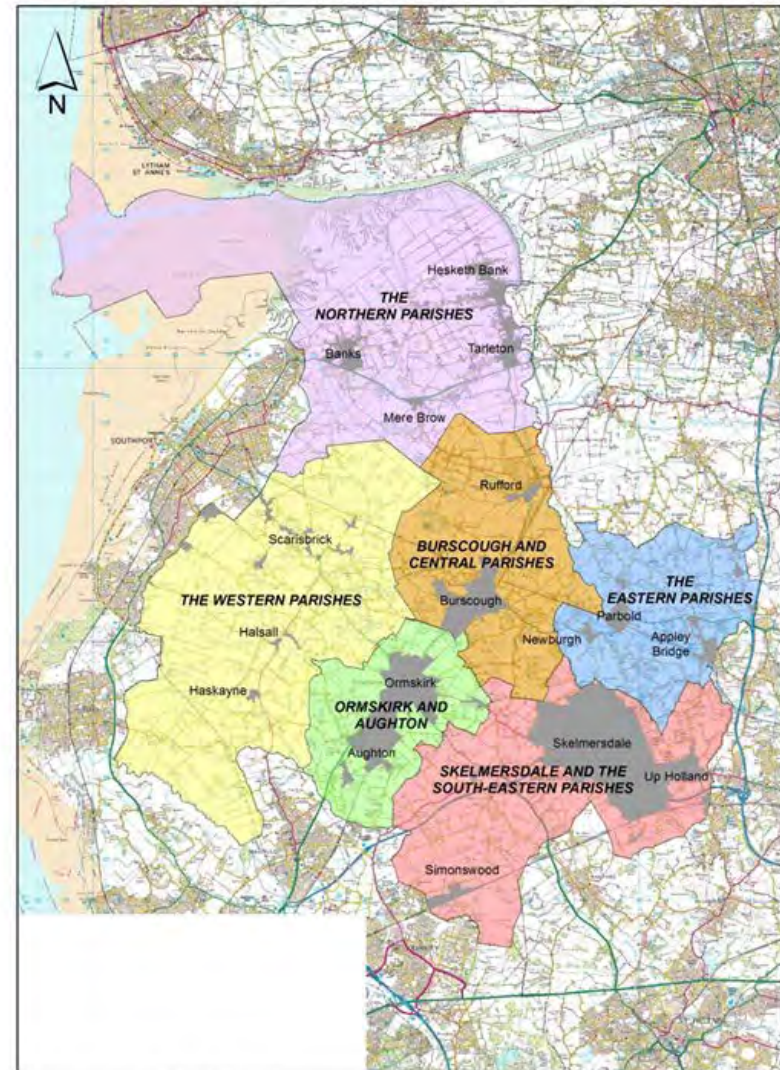
- 3.4.1 A further consideration for the Strategic Development Options is the way the total amount of development land required is spread across the Borough, i.e. whichever of Options A to E is ultimately selected and whichever Plan period is applied to that requirement, then considering how that total requirement for new development is distributed across the Borough.
- 3.4.2 The initial evidence collated and analysed to inform this Issues and Options Paper (through the Thematic and Spatial Evidence Papers and the Spatial Portrait Paper which accompanies this Issues & Options Paper) considered the Borough in terms of six spatial areas set out in the current Local Plan, but as this Paper has been prepared, and as the Spatial Portrait Paper concludes, it has been considered appropriate to look again at the Spatial Areas to better reflect the way the different parts of the Borough function. Whichever way the Borough is sub-divided, there will always be imperfect fits, as administrative boundaries never fully reflect the way the real world works, but we think the following Spatial Areas are more appropriate and have sought to consider the Strategic Development Options in light of these revised Spatial Areas (see also the map over the page):
- Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes (incorporates all of the unparished area of Skelmersdale, together with the Parishes of Bickerstaffe, Lathom South, Simonswood and Up Holland)
  - Ormskirk with Aughton (includes the three wards in the unparished area of Ormskirk and the Parish of Aughton)
  - Burscough and the Central Parishes (encompasses the Parishes of Burscough, Lathom and Rufford)

- The Northern Parishes (includes the Parishes of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols and Tarleton)
- The Western Parishes (encompasses the Parishes of Downholland, Great Altcar, Halsall and Scarisbrick)
- The Eastern Parishes (incorporates the Parishes of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale, Newburgh, Parbold and Wrightington)

**Summary**

West Lancs Borough has been divided into Spatial areas, do you have any views on the way the spatial areas have been allocated? If so, answer the question below in the **Issues & Options Survey**.

Are the above spatial areas appropriate? If not, how should the Borough be divided up to help identify where development should go?



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3.4.3 In terms of the distribution of new development between these new spatial areas, we have identified four realistic potential scenarios that we might wish to take forward:

- Scenario 1: the existing pattern of household and employment land distribution
- Scenario 2: a focus on the key service centres
- Scenario 3: a focus on rural communities
- Scenario 4: a focus on growing Skelmersdale in particular

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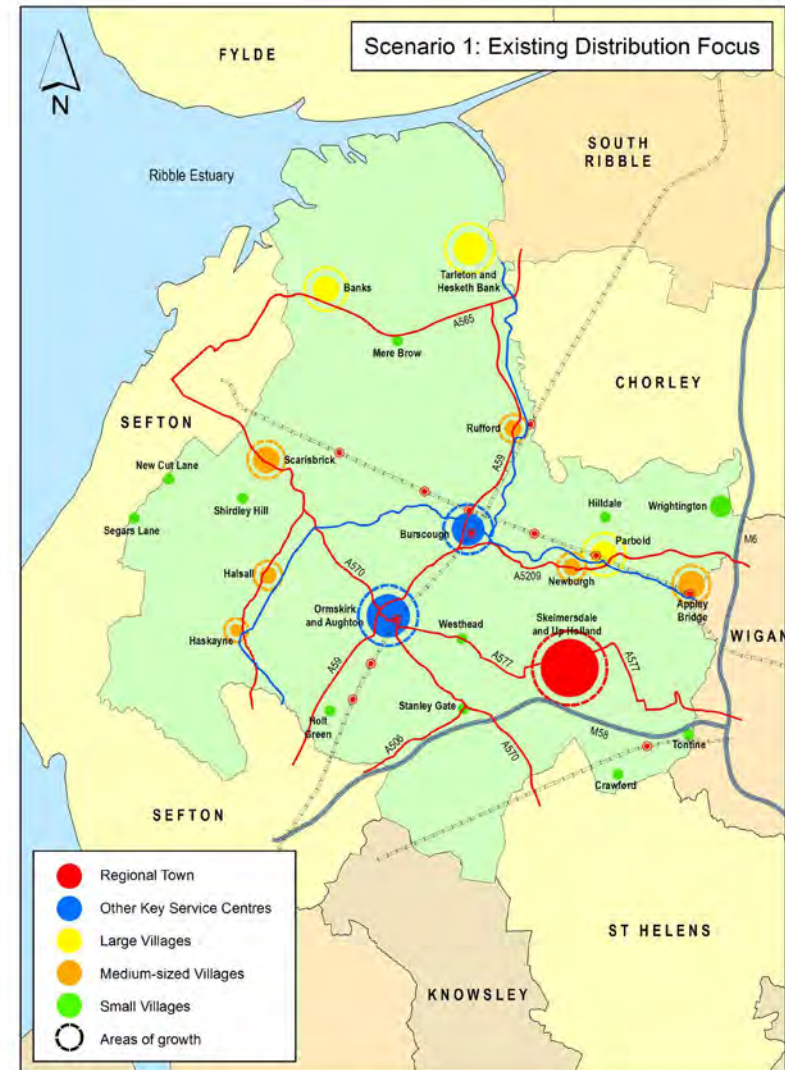


3.4.4 **Scenario 1** seeks to spread new development around West Lancashire according to the current distribution of existing households and employment land, i.e. if the Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes area has 40% of the existing households in the Borough, then 40% of the new housing should be accommodated there. This option effectively continues the current situation in terms of the proportionate size of settlements in West Lancashire and the availability of local employment opportunities based in offices, industrial premises and warehouse premises (and so the patterns of commuting to workplaces) within the Borough.

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3.4.5 When Scenario 1 is first considered, it seems like a fair approach to distributing future development needs around the Borough and, to a degree, it is. However, when the distribution of employment land, in particular, is considered, the current spread of employment opportunities from offices, industrial units and warehousing is extremely skewed towards Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes, with the Borough's second largest settlement (Ormskirk with Aughton) making a negligible contribution (although there are of course many other types of employment opportunity in Ormskirk).

3.4.6 Likewise, in relation to housing distribution, simply maintaining the same proportionate distribution going forward does not necessarily reflect the most sustainable approach as it could mean that some settlements have to take more development than their existing infrastructure, services and environment can practically cope with and / or that other settlements take less development than they could otherwise cope with. However, this existing



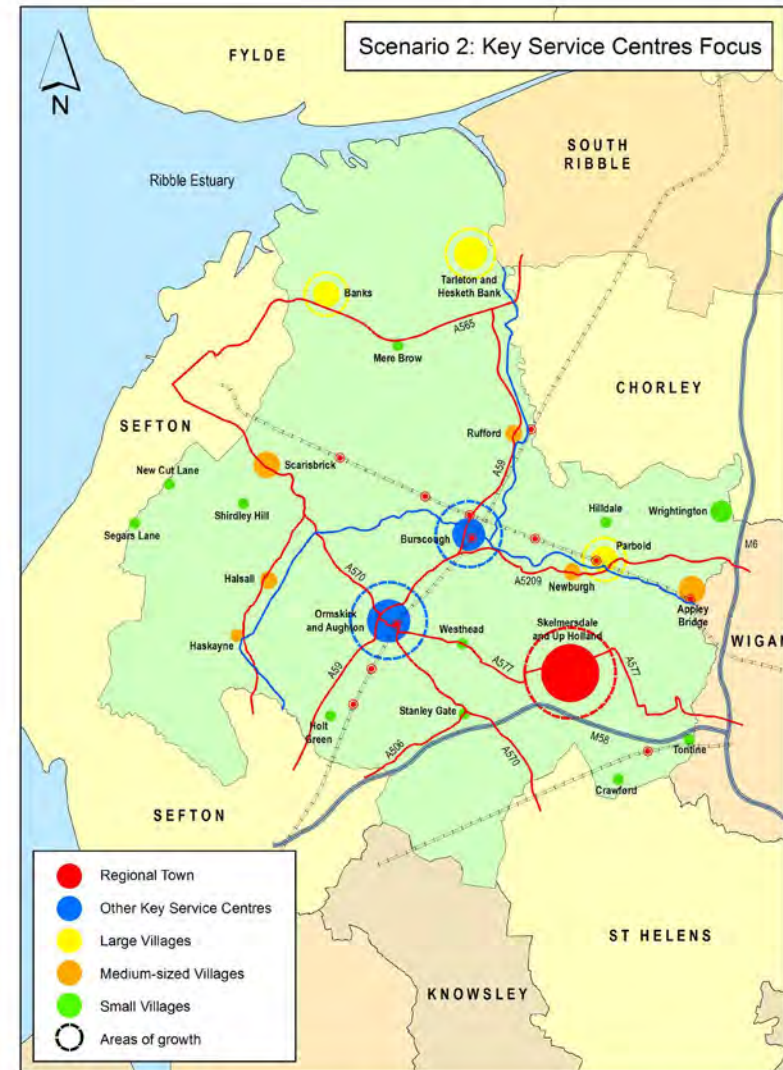
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distribution option does give a useful starting point for discussion and highlights existing patterns which may well influence the distribution of housing and employment land requirements moving forward.

3.4.7 **Scenario 2** seeks to focus new development in and around the Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough so, for housing, the areas encompassing these towns take a larger proportion of new housing development (perhaps as much as 90% in total) while the rural areas take less. For employment land, the key change (compared to Scenario 1) would be that Ormskirk with Aughton takes a much larger share of new employment land in line with its status as a Key Service Centre and the rural areas move from a very small contribution towards new employment land (in the Eastern Parishes) to a zero contribution.

3.4.8 This scenario essentially adjusts the historic pattern of development in Scenario 1 to make it more sustainable by locating more new development around the Key Service Centres (which have more key infrastructure) in a broadly proportionate way, though not entirely removing the historic patterns. This is especially the case for employment land where Skelmersdale and Burscough still have a larger share than their populations might ordinarily justify. As such, Scenario 2 is somewhat more sustainable than Scenario 1 and would have slightly less impact on environmental factors by focusing new development around the towns rather than the villages and rural areas.

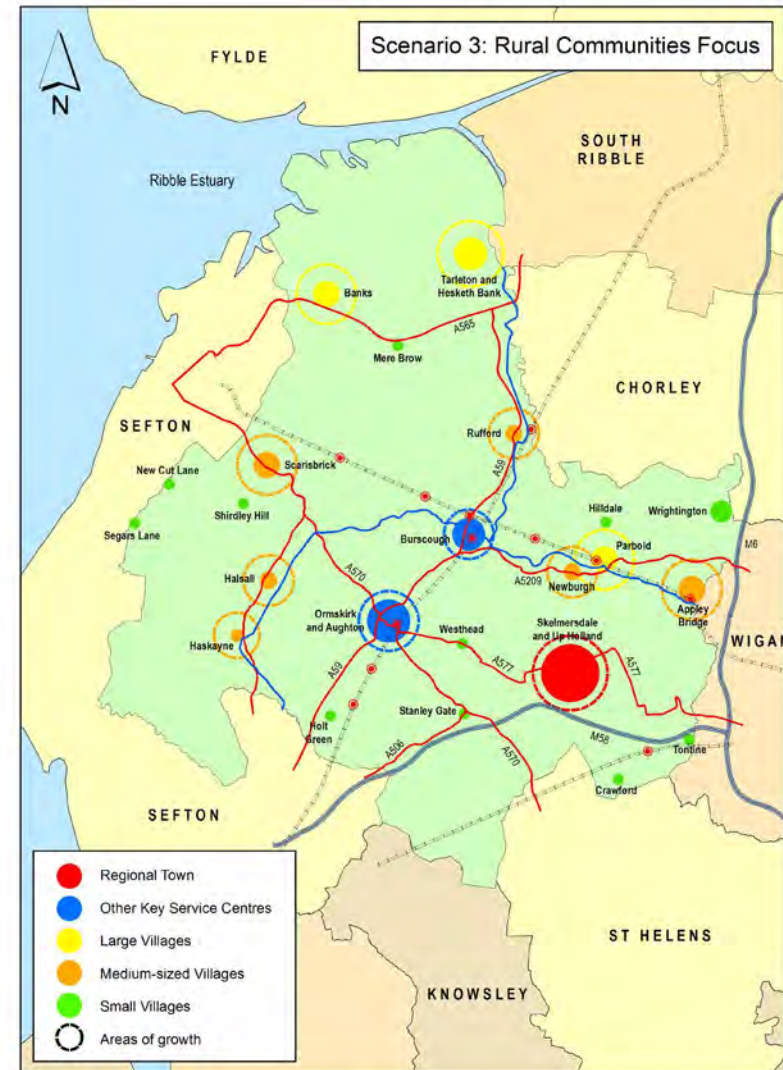


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3.4.9 **Scenario 3** is the opposite of Scenario 2, seeking to allocate more new development to the rural areas, and so less to the Key Service Centres. The Northern Parishes in particular therefore would see a greater level of development under this scenario, as would the Eastern and Western Parishes. From an employment land perspective, the historic pattern of the majority of employment land development being based in Skelmersdale continues, but much reduced, while the rural areas see much more employment land developments.

3.4.10 This scenario would be appropriate if it was considered that the rural areas need to be grown in order to make them more sustainable and to reduce the burden of new development on the Borough's towns if it was felt that the towns are constrained in a significant way. This would mean significant investment in infrastructure and services would likely be needed in the rural areas to support this scenario. Potentially, this scenario could partially be met by creating a new village(s) in the rural areas or significantly expanding a smaller village to meet this need for new development, thereby creating new rural communities (with the associated new infrastructure).



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3.4.11 **Scenario 4** is effectively a variation on Scenario 2 whereby the focus is on Skelmersdale in particular of the three Key Service Centres. This scenario would be appropriate where there is a particular need or justification to grow Skelmersdale more than the other Key Service Centres and / or the other Key Service Centres are more constrained (either physically and environmentally or in terms of infrastructure and services).

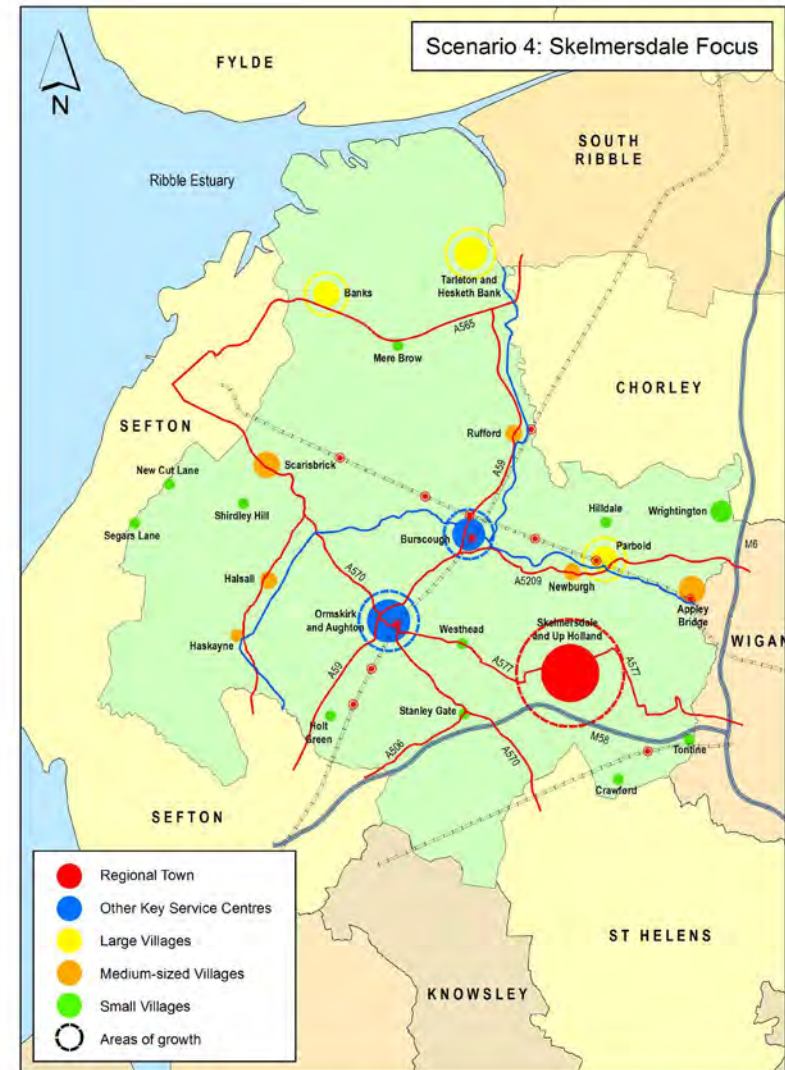
3.4.12 However, even under this scenario, the employment land requirement for Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes would not be as high as under Scenario 1, given how skewed the historic pattern of employment land development is towards Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes, but it would still be very high.

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### Summary

The Strategic Options Paper discusses four possible scenarios for the distribution of housing and employment land. What are your views on this? Tell us by answering the question below in the **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which scenario for the distribution of housing and employment land requirements around the Borough is most appropriate? Why?  
 Would you prefer a completely different option or distribute development differently in any way?



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### 3.5 The Location of New Development

3.5.1 The above strategic development options are clearly crucial in setting the framework upon which new development proposals will be based but of equal importance is the precise location of new development within a spatial area, especially in relation to minimising the impact of new development on the natural environment and planning for the impacts of climate change. As such, there are a series of (not necessarily mutually exclusive) options which need to be considered on this subject, and these will ultimately help identify the most appropriate site allocations:

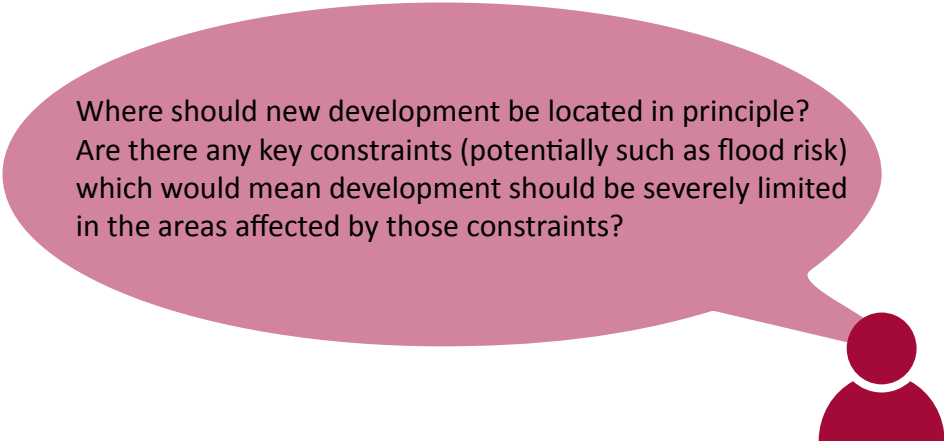
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- 1) Maximise the capacity of existing settlements by prioritising infill developments within the built-up area or by building higher – this option would minimise the loss of open, undeveloped land in the Green Belt but would potentially risk the loss of valuable urban green space or cause over-development in existing built-up areas, potentially markedly changing the character of our existing towns and villages.
  - 2) Locate new development adjacent to existing settlements to reduce the need to travel and reduce emissions – this option would inevitably involve the loss of Green Belt and open countryside (because the Green Belt boundary is so tight around the built-up areas of most settlements in West Lancashire) but would locate new development as close to existing services and employment as possible without unduly overdeveloping the existing settlements.

- 3) Create brand new settlements with the necessary associated infrastructure – this option would have the least direct impact on existing settlements but would likely require the greatest loss of Green Belt in order to accommodate all the housing, employment development, infrastructure and services necessary to create a sustainable new settlement.





- 4) Entirely restrict new development in areas at risk of flooding (i.e. in Flood Zones 2 or 3 or in a Critical Drainage Area) – this option broadly reflects the starting point in national planning policy whereby development should be limited in areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and in Critical Drainage Areas and Authorities should only consider allocating land for development in those areas if there are no suitable alternatives in other areas. However, this national policy does allow the possibility of allocating land for development in those areas in the right circumstances. This option would remove that flexibility and simply rule out any allocation of land in those areas, even though that might mean no new development at all in some areas (such as Banks) or a limited choice of sites in other areas. This potentially runs the risk of causing some settlements to stagnate and cause distortions to the housing market in those settlements as insufficient new housing would be developed to meet local need or demand. However, it would help to ensure that no new properties are constructed in areas that are likely to flood during a severe weather event.



Where should new development be located in principle?  
Are there any key constraints (potentially such as flood risk) which would mean development should be severely limited in the areas affected by those constraints?

#### Summary

If you have any views on where new development should be located, answer the question in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

### 3.6 Site Allocations

3.6.1 While the Council are not, at this stage of the Local Plan preparation, proposing sites which would be allocated for development through the Local Plan, we are requesting input from landowners, developers, stakeholders in general and the public on suggestions for what sites might be suitable for development that the Council can consider as it draws up the Preferred Options for the Local Plan. To this end, we would ask that any such site suggestions are submitted to the Council as part of the consultation on the Draft Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which is running alongside this Issues & Options consultation, together with as much information and evidence as possible to support the suggestion. If you have already submitted a site to the recent Call for Sites exercises that have informed the Draft SHELAA, we would ask you to consider if there is any further information you could submit to the SHELAA consultation to aid our assessment of your site.

3.6.2 Such supporting information should include:

- What kind of development you consider would be suitable on the site;
- Confirmation that the landowner is willing to make the site available for development at a reasonable land value that enables a viable development taking into account all known abnormalities that would add a cost to the development (such as flood risk, land contamination and ground conditions) and all current policy-requirements that would add a cost to the development (such as CIL, affordable housing provision, drainage requirements, public open space provision, ecological mitigation

and transport / highways improvements);

- Evidence supporting the suitability of the site for development, considering the physical and environmental context of the site, the provision of infrastructure and services in the local area of the site and the current planning policy (national and local) that would currently be relevant for the site; and
- An explanation of how the development would be realistically achieved, taking into account the abnormalities and policy-requirements referred to above, and over what timescales it could be achieved.



- 3.6.3 The more of the above information that is supplied in relation to a site suggestion, the more comprehensive an assessment of the site that the Council will be able to undertake and so, conversely, if the information supplied is limited and there are gaps in the evidence as to its availability, suitability and achievability, the Council's assessment will also be limited and the site will be less likely to be assessed as deliverable and appropriate for allocation.

#### Summary

If you know of any suitable sites for development within the Borough, please submit these as part of your response to the **Draft SHELAA**.

Do you have any suggestions for sites that might be considered for allocation in the Local Plan? Is the site available for development, is it suitable for development and can development on it be realistically achieved?



## 3.7 Providing Infrastructure and Services

- 3.7.1 Identifying what infrastructure and services will be required to support a new Local Plan will depend upon which strategic development options are ultimately selected and which sites are allocated to meet the Local Plan requirements, but it is still a key issue that we must consider at this early stage of plan preparation.
- 3.7.2 The 2012 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) set out to ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support the amounts and locations of development in the current West Lancashire Local Plan would be delivered. The Spatial Portrait Paper summarises the current infrastructure provision situation<sup>1</sup> but the following provides a summary of the key issues:
- In relation to flood risk, minerals and waste management, gas or electricity provision, broadband improvements and health provision, no new issues have been identified which cannot otherwise be addressed jointly by the Council and service providers.
  - The Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 and the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (2014) refer to a route management plan for West Lancs and a movement strategy for Ormskirk, the delivery of a new rail link and rail station in Skelmersdale and improvements to strategic cycle routes. However, funding constraints at Lancashire County Council (LCC) have resulted in the withdrawal of a number of rural bus services throughout West Lancashire.

<sup>1</sup> The infrastructure provision situation as at December 2016 is set out more fully in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update (Part 1), available on the Council's website.

- LCC funding constraints have also resulted in the closure or amalgamation of a number of community facilities including libraries and children centres.
- There are expected to be sufficient numbers of school places up to 2027 (taking into account the planned development of the 2012 Local Plan) except in Burscough, where additional places required as a result of new residential development will be paid for through planning obligations.
- Capacity issues at New Lane waste water treatment works have been taken into account in the planning of the Burscough area, and United Utilities plan to address these issues by 2020 or shortly after.
- The Borough Council's ambition is to replace the existing built leisure facilities in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk and improve the sports centre in Burscough, and there are plans to create a series of linked linear parks and cycle routes to form a recreational and green transport network around the Borough.

3.7.3 The new Local Plan will cover the period to at least 2037, and will inevitably involve further housing and employment land development, over and above that set out in the 2012-2027 Local Plan (i.e. 4,860 net new dwellings and 75ha employment land), even under Option A and Option I.

3.7.4 Options A – E and Options I and II are essentially numerical variations of housing and employment land targets. To discuss the infrastructure implications of each combination of options in

turn will achieve little at this stage. However, it is clear that additional development, in particular housing, will require more supporting infrastructure than is currently planned for in the 2012 IDP, for example utilities, transport connections or improvements, education, community, health and leisure facilities, and the higher the level of new development the more infrastructure is likely to be required to support it. Ultimately though, the exact nature of shortfalls in infrastructure provision will depend on the level and distribution of development chosen.

3.7.5 A more worthwhile discussion in this section is of the implications of Scenarios 1-4 for the spatial distribution of development around the Borough:

- **Scenario 1** seeks to spread new development around West Lancashire according to the proportionate size of existing settlements. As pointed out above, simply maintaining the same proportionate distribution could mean that some settlements have to take more development than their existing infrastructure, services and environment can practically cope with and / or that other settlements take less development than they could otherwise cope with. For the higher development requirements (e.g. Options D and E) and the longer plan period (Option II), it is probable that just about all spare existing infrastructure capacity would be 'used up' in all settlements. However, even for the lower development requirements it is highly likely that this scenario would require the significant improvements to infrastructure such as waste water treatment serving Ormskirk and Burscough that are identified in the 2012 IDP and the highways implications for the same towns would

need to be carefully assessed.

- **Scenario 2** seeks to focus new development in and around the Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough. This scenario locates more new development around the Key Service Centres which have more key infrastructure. As with Scenario 1, there would be a requirement for significant improvements to waste water treatment for Ormskirk and Burscough and careful consideration of highways impacts of new development in Ormskirk and Burscough.
- **Scenario 3** seeks to allocate less development to the Key Service Centres and more to the rural areas such as the Northern Parishes, where there is currently less key infrastructure. As such, this scenario would necessitate significant investment in infrastructure in the rural areas. As highlighted above, this could involve the significant expansion of a small village or even the creation of a new settlement. As such, there will be a need to introduce new infrastructure in locations where it does not currently exist. In some cases, enhancing existing provision (e.g. broadband) is easier than creating it 'from scratch'; in other cases (perhaps road capacity), new provision may be easier, although there is no hard and fast rule.
- **Scenario 4** focuses development on Skelmersdale, and could reflect a need, or policy objective to grow Skelmersdale significantly more than the other Key Service Centres. This may tie in with current infrastructure capacity that exists in Skelmersdale (for example, highways capacity), and mean that infrastructure constraints in other Key Service Centres (for

example waste water treatment capacity) are not exacerbated to any great extent. High levels of development in Skelmersdale could aid the business case for major infrastructure improvements such as a rail station at Skelmersdale.

- 3.7.6 Turning to transport in particular, the transport network enables people to move within the Borough and beyond to undertake activities such as going to work and school, participating in leisure and moving goods. Situating new development where it is well located or can be made to be well located in relation to the transport network, and particularly public transport, is integral to delivering sustainable development.



- 3.7.7 The Spatial Portrait identifies several key transport issues for West Lancashire, including a need to improve:
- Accessibility to services, facilities, jobs and public transport, which varies around the Borough – poorer accessibility can contribute towards inequalities in both rural and urban areas and can contribute towards isolation in remote locations;

- Access to a range of transport modes to reduce traffic congestion (for example in Ormskirk and along the A59 in Burscough) and provide a greater range of opportunities in deprived areas with lower car ownership;
- The quality of interchange facilities between different modes of transport such as bus or car to rail;
- Rail services, both in terms of north-south and east-west links and providing new facilities where there is currently a gap in provision, such as in Skelmersdale;
- Rural public transport provision in light of declining services due to reductions in public sector funding; and
- Safe green travel such as cycling and walking to provide alternative modes of transport and improve health.

3.7.8 Whilst some transport matters, such as the provision of bus services or traffic calming measures, are beyond the scope of the Local Plan there are several key transport proposals already planned for West Lancashire. In particular, we need to consider how the four different development scenarios outlined above could relate to the delivery of these proposals and whether other new proposals and / or policy approaches will be required over the extended Local Plan period to at least 2037.

The importance of existing schemes could vary depending upon which of the four scenarios is taken forward. Some of the high level transport opportunities and challenges arising from these four

scenarios are therefore highlighted below. More detailed transport proposals may be required when a preferred amount and distribution of development is decided and we will work with Highways England, Lancashire County Council and other transport service providers to consider this further at the next stage of the Local Plan preparation.

3.7.9 By distributing development around the Borough in accordance with the existing scale of settlements, scenario 1 would require a broad range of transport improvements as outlined in existing documentation as a minimum. This would include, but would not be exclusive to, the provision of a new railway station at Skelmersdale, easing traffic congestion around Ormskirk and along the A59 in Burscough, improvements to strategic cycle and walking routes including new linear parks between settlements and enhancements to existing rail infrastructure such as providing a regular, reliable service on the Ormskirk-Preston line, possibly even including electrifying the line.

3.7.10 Focusing development in the key service centres of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Burscough under scenario 2 would accelerate the importance of transport improvements at these locations, particularly the need to review the road network to ease traffic congestion around Ormskirk and provide a new railway station at Skelmersdale. As a focus for public transport to serve surrounding areas these settlements would also benefit from improved interchanges between different modes of transport, for example from car to bus and / or to rail. This may include the provision / improvement of park and ride facilities in key locations (such as rail stations).



- 3.7.11 Scenario 3 would involve more development in rural areas and would require greater emphasis upon improvements to rail and bus services in these areas whilst managing increased usage of rural roads. The challenge would be to improve transport over a wide area, especially public transport.
- 3.7.12 Focusing development at Skelmersdale under scenario 4 would give increased support to the proposed Skelmersdale Rail Link and new railway station and could potentially minimise the increased demand on congested routes in other parts of the Borough.
- 3.7.13 In addition to transport proposals, the adopted Local Plan also contains car parking and cycle storage standards for a range of different types of development and it is necessary to consider if they should be reviewed and whether any other standards in relation to transport may be introduced.

- 3.7.14 The Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers to ensure that the necessary infrastructure will be delivered to support the levels and distribution of development proposed in the final Local Plan Review. As such, an update to the Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared alongside the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan Review.

#### Summary

The Providing Infrastructure and Services section discusses what infrastructure might be required in the future. If you think this is an important issue answer the question below in the **Issues & Options Survey**.

In your experience, what are the infrastructure and transport constraints in the areas of West Lancashire that you live, work and spend leisure time in? Where is infrastructure and transport well-provided for in West Lancashire, and in what way?



## 4. What Happens Next?

### Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

4.1 Having read this Paper, the Council would like you to respond by commenting on what you've read through the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options consultation. The easiest way to do this is online at **[www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan)**, where you will find instructions on how to respond.

4.2 The best way to respond is by completing a short survey online available at the above web link. The survey is related to the questions you'll have seen scattered throughout this Paper and the other Issues & Options consultation papers. You can also email or write in with your comments to:

**Email: [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)**

**Postal Address: Local Plan Consultation**

**Planning**

**West Lancashire Borough Council**

**52 Derby Street**

**Ormskirk**

**L39 2DF**

4.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers, as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at:

- **all Libraries in West Lancashire,**
- **at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF; and**
- **at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.**

4.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.





## Next Steps

- 4.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing a new Local Plan, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down on, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. At that point, site allocations are proposed to meet the development needs identified.
- 4.6 The Preferred Options Paper will be publicly consulted upon and the feedback from that consultation will be considered and the Council will make the necessary refinements and amendments to the proposed policies and site allocations to prepare what is essentially a "final draft" Local Plan, known as the Publication version, which represents the Local Plan that the Council want to take forward and adopt.
- 4.7 Once again, the Publication version will be made available for public scrutiny and formal representations (comments) on the document will be invited. However, this time, the comments will not be considered by the Council, but submitted with the Local Plan to a Planning Inspector to consider as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. This Examination will involve public hearings where those invited to speak by the Planning Inspector can put forward their views to help the Inspector to arrive at a decision on whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and whether it is a "sound" document.
- 4.8 More detail will be provided by the Council on how to engage with the Preferred Options Paper, the Publication version and the Examination in Public as we reach each stage, but the above gives a brief overview of the process.
- 4.9 Alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Council will continue to prepare and commission new studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the Council's decision-making on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations are most appropriate for inclusion in the new Local Plan.

## Appendix A - the Local Plan Review Evidence Base

Evidence Document	What it Covers	Timescales
Thematic & Spatial Evidence Papers	These Papers look at all the range of issues that affect planning, and the data behind them, as well as looking at each spatial area within West Lancashire to consider what issues specifically affect different areas and the Borough as a whole. The Papers have directly informed this Issues & Options Paper.	Version 1 was prepared in Autumn 2016.
Sustainable Settlement Study	This study assesses the availability of, and access to, services for each settlement in the Borough in order to identify a settlement hierarchy as to which are the most sustainable.	Version 1 was prepared in Autumn 2016.
Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing & Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA)	The SHELMA is a joint study between the Liverpool City Region authorities and West Lancashire to identify the Objectively-Assessed Need for housing and employment land for each authority and for the City Region (including West Lancs) collectively.	Draft SHELMA Report to be consulted on Spring 2017.
West Lancashire Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)	The SHELAA identifies all the sites that have been put forward through recent "Call for Sites" exercises for housing and employment land (and other uses) and assesses their suitability in order to identify a supply of available land for each use.	Draft SHELAA published alongside this Issues & Options Paper; 2017 SHELAA Update to be finalised in due course.
West Lancashire Housing Needs Assessment	Building on the findings of the SHELMA, the Housing Needs Assessment will seek to identify the affordable housing need for West Lancashire as well as look at specialist types of housing provision such as provision for the elderly and demand for caravans and houseboats	Study recently commissioned, final report due Summer 2017.
Student Accommodation Needs Assessment	Considers the need and demand for student accommodation in the Ormskirk area based on current and anticipated student numbers at Edge Hill University and the availability of different types of student accommodation in the area.	Data and information being collated to undertake this assessment, final report due Summer 2017.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	The Level 1 SFRA assesses the extent of different types of flood risk across West Lancashire in order to inform where development should be allocated.	Draft Level 1 SFRA published alongside this Issues & Options Paper; Final Level 1 SFRA to be complete Summer 2016.



Evidence Document	What it Covers	Timescales
Review of Local Nature Conservation Sites and the Ecological Framework	To consider the current value of the Borough's designation of Local Nature Conservation Sites and the implications of the Lancashire Ecological Framework for development in West Lancashire.	Initial findings of the Review identified in this Issues & Options Paper and informed policy options.
Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study	To consider what capacity each Authority has for different types of renewable energy and whether any specific areas should be designated as being suitable for particular types of renewable energy.	To be commissioned shortly and finalised Autumn 2017.
Open Space Study and Review of Playing Pitch Assessment and Play Areas Assessment	To assess the current provision of, and projected future need for, all types of open space.	To be commissioned shortly and finalised Autumn 2017.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	The draft IDP identifies the current provision of all types of infrastructure based on information supplied by Infrastructure Providers and identifies areas of shortfall. The final IDP will project forward anticipated demand for infrastructure based on Local Plan Preferred Options and identify further areas of future shortfall.	Draft IDP published alongside this Issues & Options Paper; Final IDP to be complete Autumn 2017.
Traffic / Transport Assessment	To assess the impact of the Preferred Options on highways and transport infrastructure in and around West Lancashire and identify possible mitigation.	To be commissioned shortly and finalised Autumn 2017.
Review of Economy Study	If required, a review of the West Lancashire Economy Study to be undertaken to update the findings of the current study.	To be commissioned in Summer 2017 (if required).
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	Incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the SA will consider the sustainability of the policies in the Local Plan at each stage of preparation.	SA Scoping Report complete Autumn 2016 and SA of Issues & Options Paper complete February 2017.
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	Including Appropriate Assessment where necessary, the HRA assesses the impact of Local Plan policies on ecological sites of international importance, such as Martin Mere, and identifies potential impacts and necessary mitigation if the policies cannot be avoided.	HRA of the Issues & Options Paper complete February 2017.

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**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**



# West Lancashire Local Plan Review

## Issues & Options Consultation



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### Economic Policy Options Paper February 2017







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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Future policies within the Local Plan need to address the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability. This topic paper is primarily concerned with economic matters and is one of a series of documents that together comprise the West Lancashire Local Plan Issues and Options consultation. As such, it is linked to, but sits under a Strategic Development Options Paper which identifies a series of options for the amount and broad location of future new housing and employment development. It sits alongside Social Policy Options and Environmental Policy Options Papers and seeks to address important current and future issues for economic policy in West Lancashire that have been identified by the final document in the series, the Spatial Portrait Paper. In considering these key issues the Economy Policy Options Paper proposes alternative ways for dealing with them (called policy options).

1.2 The paper is divided into two sections which are Stimulating Economic Growth and Reinvigorating Town and Village Centres. The former primarily considers the future role of and appropriate uses at existing business and industrial areas and the provision of new sites for employment development whilst the latter looks to support the network of town and village centres in the Borough, support their future health through permitting suitable uses and planning for appropriate future development opportunities to meet needs.



## 2. Stimulating Economic Growth

2.1 Key issues arising from the Spatial Portrait Paper can be summarised as:

- The West Lancashire economy continues to grow which requires land to be allocated in the right location to meet a range of business needs (both large and small, established and new).
- Complementary policy support needs to be provided to attract businesses which includes ensuring the presence of a skilled local workforce and suitable housing to attract and retain employees.
- There are development pressures upon existing employment areas for alternative uses including housing and other commercial uses such as retail leading to the loss of employment land.
- Rural businesses are an important part of the Borough's economic base and need to be supported.

2.2 In addition, in seeking to deliver sustainable development the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) contains three headings of direct relevance to policies to support economic growth which are: building a strong, competitive economy; supporting a prosperous rural economy; and ensuring the vitality of town centres. The latter will be dealt with under the following section "Reinvigorating Town and Village Centres". In terms of stimulating economic growth the NPPF requires local authorities to:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area.
- Meet future anticipated economic needs by allocating enough land for development and, if necessary, identifying strategic sites.
- Identify and planning for new or emerging business sectors.
- Identify priority areas for economic regeneration.

2.3 Three broad policy issues have subsequently been identified below along with alternative approaches for dealing with them.



## Economic Policy Issue 1: Providing the right scale, mix and distribution of employment land

- 2.4 We need to contribute towards sustainable national economic growth. The West Lancashire Economic Strategy 2015-25 includes 8 strategic themes including providing the right scale and mix of employment sites, a better connected West Lancashire, supporting the rural and visitor economy and advantage through knowledge and skills. It focuses particularly upon Skelmersdale. This economic strategy needs to be built upon for the Local Plan by considering how much future development should take place and where, what type of development, which specific areas need to be regenerated, how businesses can be supported and how local communities can benefit.
- West Lancashire has experienced a prolonged and steady increase in jobs and this is forecast to continue into the future through the expansion of existing businesses and development of new ones. Land will be required to meet these business development needs. The principal existing locations of economic activity are Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough. Skelmersdale possesses several purpose built industrial estates, is well connected to the highway network and is a focus for manufacturing and distribution. Ormskirk has a smaller but more diverse jobs base which includes Edge Hill University, West Lancashire Borough Council, Ormskirk and District General Hospital and town centre shops and services. Burscough town centre has a moderate commercial core, however there are several employment areas in the town including the sizable Burscough Industrial Estate.
- 2.6 Land allocated for the purposes of business (use class B1), general industry (B2) and warehousing (B8) uses is known as employment land. The current Local Plan sets a 75 ha requirement for development of employment land for the 15 year period 2012–2027. The majority is located in Skelmersdale (52ha), followed by Burscough (13ha) and the remainder in northern and eastern rural parishes. It comprises new greenfield allocations and the regeneration of some vacant and / or under used premises in existing industrial areas but needs to be reviewed because:
- Employment land uptake has slowed in recent years. This raises issues in terms of its suitability to meet business needs in terms of size, quality and location.
  - The Local Plan time period will be extended from 2027 to either 2037 or 2050.
  - More recent evidence has been produced in relation to employment land needs.
  - Anticipated regeneration sites proved impractical as vacant premises were re-occupied as the UK came out of recession.
- 2.7 The strategic development options in the Strategic Development Options Paper consider the issues of how much employment land is required and, broadly, where it should be allocated, but there is more to employment land than simple amount and broad location. We also need to consider what type of employment land is required (what type of end-user will occupy the land) and whether the provision of certain employment uses is appropriate in certain

locations. The following options (which are not mutually exclusive) consider these issues.

- 1) **Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing needs.** Larger sites would be allocated specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing uses, most likely in the M58 corridor at Skelmersdale. It would boost the local economy and benefit from the likely increased demand for logistics as a result of the opening of the Liverpool2 deep water terminal. It would locate jobs in the area of greatest need and would be most compatible with development scenarios 2 (Key Service Centres focus) and 4 (Skelmersdale focus).
- 2) **Allocate sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses.** New sites would be provided for specific employment uses where similar activities could concentrate. For example, a site or sites could be provided for forecast growth in emerging business sectors such as professional and scientific services or for start-up businesses which may be compatible with development scenario 2 (Key Service Centres focus) given the presence of Edge Hill University. Alternatively, a dedicated storage, processing and distribution site could be provided in a rural location to service the agricultural sector which may be compatible with scenario 3 (Rural areas focus). Such an approach may require a more flexible range of uses being permitted than just business class use. It could also require a site specific policy rather than a single policy that deals with the employment land portfolio collectively.
- 3) **Allocate all new sites for the range of B classes uses (business, general industry and warehousing).** This option would allocate all employment sites for the range of business use without identifying

*any sites for specialist employment uses as above. It would be compatible with any development scenario 1-4.*

- 4) **Option 4: Increase town centre office sites.** Land would be allocated in and around existing town centres specifically for additional office uses. It would contribute towards the regeneration and re-use of brownfield sites. However, the Borough is not a significant office location, evidence predicts that the demand for new office floorspace in West Lancashire is likely to be limited and other than Skelmersdale there are few town centre development opportunities. A risk would therefore be that allocated town centre sites would remain undeveloped.

#### Summary

Economic Policy Issue 1 considers where future employment should be located, if you think this is an important issue, please answer the question below in our [Issues & Options Survey](#).

Which policy option or options above for how we should allocate land for employment sites do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why? Is there an alternative option that you think is appropriate that has not been considered? If so, what is it?



## Economy Policy Issue 2: Existing Employment Areas

- 2.8 Alongside potential land allocations there are at least 30 existing employment areas in West Lancashire which provide a range of existing commercial premises; 19 of these are designated (and protected) in the adopted Local Plan. Existing policy identifies three types of employment areas with some variation of uses permitted within them (see policy option 1 below). There is a need to ensure that existing employment areas and premises continue to meet a diverse range of business needs and consider if it would be appropriate for them to allow alternative commercial needs beyond the traditional employment uses of business, general industry and warehousing. Meanwhile the loss of employment areas to residential uses is a threat due to the national drive to deliver more housing and the generally greater financial returns from residential development. In addition, since the current Local Plan was adopted in 2013, changes in permitted development rights have relaxed planning rules for change of use from offices and warehousing to residential use under certain circumstances as a result of reform of the General Permitted Development Order. The following options consider alternative policy approaches for addressing the issues facing existing employment areas.

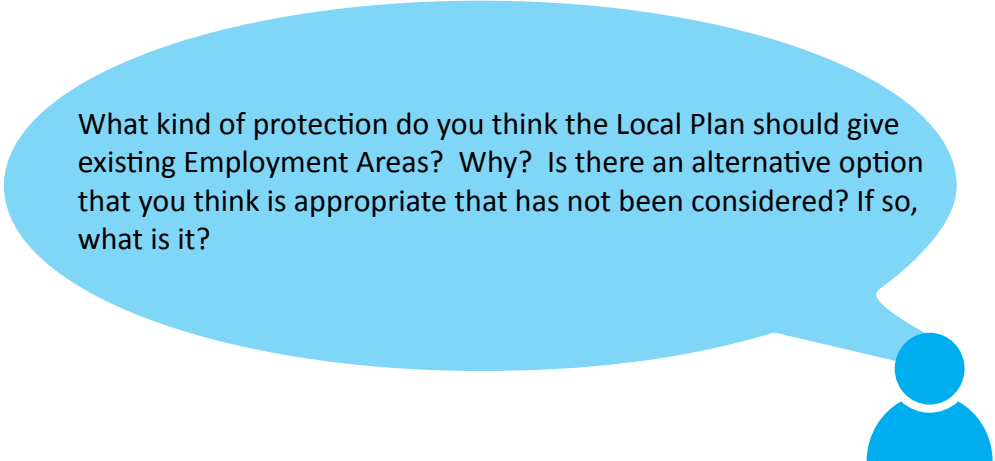


- 1) **Continue with the existing Local Plan policy approach.** This includes three types of existing sites comprising: Strategic Employment Sites, Other Significant Employment Sites and Other Existing Employment Sites. B1, B2 and B8 uses as well as A1 retail warehouses on a like for like basis are allowed at Strategic Employment sites with more specialist uses (offices, hotels, D1) supported at selected sites. B1, B2 and B8 uses are permitted at Other Significant Employment Sites. B1, B2 and B8 uses are permitted at Other Existing Employment Sites whilst allowing their redevelopment under certain circumstances. All existing employment areas would be re-assessed to confirm whether they would still meet criteria for their designation. The approach would assume that that the previously described relaxation in planning rules will not adversely affect the purpose and function of existing employment areas.
- 2) **Protect all existing employment areas for business class employment uses.** The adopted Local Plan's flexibility of use on existing employment areas would be removed so that only business, general industry, distribution and warehousing uses are permitted, without exception. This would likely require the introduction of Article 4 directions to remove nationally permitted change of use rights from offices and warehousing to residential, which would be very difficult to justify.

- 3) **Designate selected employment areas either wholly or in part for non-business class uses.** A more flexible approach than the adopted Local Plan would be introduced by allowing additional commercial uses other than business, general industry and warehousing within selected existing employment areas, requiring either part of or an entire existing employment area to be designated to do so. It would recognise that a demand exists for uses such as (but not limited to) fitness centres, gyms or indoor children's activity centres and that such uses may not be able to viably locate in town centres.
- 4) **Do not protect employment areas for B1, B2 and B8 uses.** This would allow market forces to dictate the appropriate mix of uses within existing employment areas. The advantage would be that it would increase the range of sites available for these other commercial uses but the disadvantage would be that it would be likely to accelerate the loss of existing employment areas to more financially attractive non-employment generating residential uses and make conflicts of use more likely between housing and industry. In reality this approach is only likely to be appropriate in particular circumstances where an existing employment area is no longer considered fit for purpose.

### Summary

Economic Policy Issue 2 discusses the future of the Borough's existing employment areas. If you think this is important answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



What kind of protection do you think the Local Plan should give existing Employment Areas? Why? Is there an alternative option that you think is appropriate that has not been considered? If so, what is it?

### Economic Policy Issue 3: Spreading economic opportunities by supporting the rural economy

2.9 Given that over 90% of West Lancashire is rural there is a significant rural employment base comprising over half of the Borough's companies and 40% of jobs. This includes an important food production sector based upon horticulture with associated distribution but also a growing visitor destination with attractions including Martin Mere Wildlife Reserve and Rufford Old Hall.

2.10 Nevertheless, West Lancashire's rural areas face several recent challenges and opportunities and therefore potential change as a result of global and more localised influences. These include, but are not confined to, the future competitiveness of agriculture and food production, the continued development of an energy sector including renewable and non-renewable sources, rural isolation, enhancements in communications technology improving remote working capabilities and the future UK move out of the European Union and therefore loss of EU agriculture grant funding. Planning challenges also exist including the need to reconcile business needs to develop and expand with environmental sensitivities, including an extensive Green Belt designation, best quality agricultural land and lower traffic capacities on rural roads.

2.11 In order to support the rural economy, the NPPF requires local authorities to:

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of business in rural areas.
- Promote development and diversification of agriculture.
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments.

- Facilitate flexible working practices including the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

2.12 Providing rural economic opportunities therefore raises multiple and potentially complex issues and therefore there are a variety of policy options below which may either form a single future policy or a number of future policies.

- 1) ***Continue with existing Local Plan policy.*** This seeks to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land, protect existing rural employment sites and re-use existing buildings where they would be left vacant. It also allows rural business growth in certain circumstances, promotes tourism of an appropriate scale, supports high speed broadband and encourages renewable energy projects. Two adopted Local Plan policies (EC2 and EC3) combine to allocate sites for rural employment and more mixed use rural development opportunities.
- 2) ***Increased development in rural areas.*** This more permissive approach would support development scenario 3 (Rural areas focus). It would entail the allocation of a greater quantity of land in rural areas for employment purposes. This may provide new opportunities for agricultural produce packing and distribution facilities and/ or for rural technology hubs. It would also support visitor attractions and the potential for larger scale commercial uses, for example larger farm shops. As with existing Local Plan policy, a broader range of uses than business, general industry and warehousing would be allowed as may mixed uses in order to facilitate viable employment development.



- 3) **A tourism and visitor economy policy.** This could consider site specific criteria for the expansion of larger scale tourism sites such as Martin Mere or new facilities. In order to grow the rural economy this approach could also identify circumstances whereby the development and / or expansion of caravan parks or holiday lodges may be suitable. Careful consideration would need to be given to compatibility with Green Belt policy.

#### Summary

Economic Policy Issue 3 discusses options for supporting the rural economy. What do you think about this? Answer the question below in our **Issues and Options Survey**.

What do you think about the policy options above for Supporting the Rural Economy? Is there an alternative option that you think is appropriate that has not been considered? If so, what is it?



## 3. Reinvigorating Town and Village Centres

3.1 Our town and village centres are the traditional destinations to buy goods and obtain services. The Borough's network of town centres comprise Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Burscough. Ormskirk is a traditional town centre, being primarily focussed upon pedestrianised east-west (Moor Street and Church Street) and north-south (Burscough Street and Aughton Street) axes, also extending to Derby Street to the north and Morrisons to the south. There is a range of independent and national multiple shops, a twice weekly market and an established evening economy which benefits from the presence of Edge Hill University. Skelmersdale town centre contains the purpose built Concourse Shopping Centre, extending northwards to include Asda and to the east to office buildings (Delf House and Whelmer House). It has a narrow range of retailers, a limited night time economy and a higher proportion of vacant units. Burscough is the smallest of the town centres, being focussed on Liverpool Road North. There are also a number of smaller local centres within suburban areas of Skelmersdale and Ormskirk as well as within rural villages. Out of centre retail facilities include Ringtail Retail Park in Burscough and the Hattersley Retail and Trade Centre in Ormskirk.



3.2 The collective retail and service offer of West Lancashire's town and village centres is relatively modest and competition exists in the form of much larger shopping and leisure attractions situated beyond the Borough's boundary including Southport, Wigan, Liverpool and Preston town and city centres as well as large retail warehouse parks at Southport, Aintree and Wigan. As a result the Borough's residents spend significant proportions of their total non-food shopping expenditure outside West Lancashire and, to a lesser extent food shopping and leisure expenditure. As well as

challenges in terms of competition from other town centres and out of centre attractions there is also competition resulting from the growth in online sales and wider economic change. Increasingly, customers expect a leisure experience when visiting town centres, for example having a meal or visiting an entertainment destination to complement a shopping trip. Therefore centres need to evolve and reinvent themselves with those that provide a range of attractions, better physical environments and increase visitor dwell times. Centres that do so will be more resilient and it is notable that whilst Ormskirk has broadly maintained its position in the national ranking of centres over recent years Skelmersdale's position has declined.

3.3 National planning policy promotes competitive town centres that provide customer choice, a diverse retail offer and reflect individuality. In seeking to ensure the vitality of town centres, the NPPF requires local authorities to:

- Define a network and hierarchy of centres;

## Economic Policy Issue 4: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a definition of primary and secondary frontages and set out what uses will be permitted in these locations.
- Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.
- Where town centre sites are not available, allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for town centre uses and set policies for the consideration of proposals outside town centres.
- Plan positively for town centres in decline; and
- Set local floorspace thresholds to allow the consideration of proposals for retail, leisure and office developments that are outside town centres and not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan.

3.4 These matters form prospective components of Local Plan policy to address local issues and are considered below including alternative options for dealing with them. The adopted Local Plan acknowledged a general reliance upon national policy in relation to the promotion and protection of town centres so it is important to consider whether such an overall approach remains best.

3.5 The centre hierarchy sets a framework for the management, planned growth at an appropriate scale and protection of centres during the timescale of the Local Plan. Policy IF1 of the adopted Local Plan contains a centre hierarchy so it is appropriate to consider if there have been any changes since the Plan's adoption that would justify altering it. Such changes may include the recent growth or decline of centres, future planned growth or the need for any new centres to provide facilities in connection with recent or planned new development.

3.6 The adopted Local Plan establishes the following hierarchy of centres for the Borough:

Town centres - Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough

Large village centres – Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Up Holland, Banks and Parbold

Local Centres - Ashurst; Digmoor; Sandy Lane, Old Skelmersdale; County Road, Ormskirk; Moss Delph Lane, Aughton; Town Green Lane, Aughton.

*Maps can be found in Appendix 1-14*

## Economic Policy Issue 5: Ensuring Healthy Town, Village and Local Centres - Appropriate Uses

- 1) **Review the Local Plan centre hierarchy.** *The policy option would use evidence to review the above hierarchy to consider if any centres should be moved within the hierarchy or whether any should be deleted or added, including any new centres linked with planned new development. There would also be an opportunity to consider whether a three level hierarchy is the most suitable approach in West Lancashire. One potential outcome from the review may be that there should be no change to the existing hierarchy.*

*There are no other reasonable policy options in relation to this issue.*

### Summary

Economic Policy Issue 4 considers the hierarchy of centres within West Lancashire. If you don't agree with the hierarchy then answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Do you have any comments in relation to the Network and Hierarchy of Centres in the Local Plan?



- 3.7 National planning policy promotes competitive town centre environments. It encourages local authorities to recognise them as the heart of their communities and set out policies to support their health. As indicated in the introduction to this section, national planning policy needs us to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and set out what uses will be permitted in these locations. This helps to concentrate main town centre uses in town centres in order to reinforce their roles as drivers of the local economy, assist in locating attractions in accessible locations and gives opportunities for linked trips. Main town centre uses include retail, leisure, entertainment facilities, offices, arts, culture and tourism. Village and local centres have an important role in meeting the day to day needs of the local community, particularly in rural areas. They provide retail and service uses close to home, particularly for the less mobile, reduce the need to travel and contribute towards providing mixed and inclusive neighbourhoods.
- 3.8 The adopted Local Plan Policies Map defines the extent of town centre boundaries for Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, and Burscough as well as identifying primary shopping areas for the latter two, where retail uses are concentrated. The location and extent of village and local centres are also identified. Adopted Local Plan Policy IF1: Maintaining Vibrant Town and Local Centres seeks to retain at least 70% of shop uses (use class A1) at ground floor level in primary shopping areas of Ormskirk and Burscough town centres and within Skelmersdale town centre, village and local centres as a whole. However, since the adoption of the Local Plan there have been relaxations to the General Permitted Development Order which permits change of use without requiring planning permission,

including from shops (use class A1) to other uses including restaurants and cafes, leisure and residential uses below certain floorspaces (either 150 or 200sq.m). There has also been a drive to promote healthier lifestyles, including healthier eating and drinking. It is therefore necessary to consider if existing town and primary shopping areas are still appropriate and what uses should be allowed within them through the following options.

- 1) **Review town centre, village and local centre boundaries in the Adopted Local Plan.** Readily available national and local evidence would be used (such as existing uses, changes in uses, pedestrian flows and potential development sites, as well as nationally recognised dataset for the retail and commercial property industry, such as Goad plans) to review the town centre boundaries for Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough as shown in the adopted Local Plan in order to consider if they are still suitable. Village and local centre boundaries would also be reviewed.
- 2) **Review primary shopping area boundaries in the Adopted Local Plan.** Again, local evidence would be used to review primary shopping area boundaries for Ormskirk and Burscough, consider if they are still necessary or require amendment and decide if it is appropriate to also define a primary shopping area for Skelmersdale.
- 3) **Review policy approach to determining appropriate uses in town centres.** This would explore the removal or retention of a minimum percentage requirement for shop (use class A1) uses at ground floor level within the primary shopping areas of Ormskirk and Burscough or the wider Skelmersdale town centre. Alongside this, criteria could be used to determine the suitability of uses. These could include, but

would not be confined to the retention of active frontages in terms of the retention of a pedestrian level shop front and traditional day time operating hours.

Alternatively, policy could set limits upon the percentage of uses allowed in town centres where planning controls for change of use still remain, including drinking establishments (use class A4) and hot food take aways (use class A5) to encourage healthier lifestyles. This could also be applied to local and village centres where appropriate. Either the policy criteria or percentage of uses approach could be expanded to an individual policy for a town centre seeking to concentrate the same or similar uses in particular locations (for example, cafes, restaurants and drinking establishments) and identify re-development opportunities.

#### Summary

Economic Policy Issue 5 considers how the Local Plan might ensure healthy towns and villages are maintained. Do you think this is an important issue, please answer the question below in the **Issues & options Survey**.

Do any of the above options for Ensuring Healthy Town, Village and Local Centres get your support? If so, why? Is there an alternative option that you think is appropriate that has not been considered? If so, what is it?



## Economic Policy Issue 6: Sites for Town Centre Uses

- 3.9 We need to ensure that there are enough sites available in our town and village centres to be able to accommodate any identified needs for main town centre uses. This will allow centres to improve and grow in a sustainable way, meet residents' needs and retain spending within the Borough. The West Lancashire Retail and Leisure Study (2011) identified future retail and other town centre development needs. This Study covers the time period between 2012 and 2027 so will require updating during the Local Plan Review to correspond with the proposed extension of the plan period to at least 2037. Nevertheless, the 2011 Study provides useful information to context broad policy options. It identifies future additional convenience (essentially food) and comparison (essentially non-food) retail floorspace requirements of 3,300 sq.m net and 11,000sq.m net respectively at 2027. The additional convenience floorspace would be equivalent to a new food superstore and as a benchmark the largest superstore in the Borough is currently Asda, Skelmersdale which is 2,866 sq.m net convenience floorspace. The additional comparison floorspace assumes increased retention of residents' expenditure to claw back some of that spent outside the Borough.



- 3.10 The Retail Study also identifies the Borough wide need for leisure facilities comprising scope for an additional 9-13 food and drink outlets, an independent cinema or 4 screen multiplex (as West Lancashire does not presently contain a cinema), one neighbourhood bingo hall and a family entertainment facility (such as an ice skating rink or bowling alley). The Retail Study concluded that new floorspace should be directed to town centre locations and that any substantial improvement in the retail and leisure offer of the Borough should prioritise Skelmersdale. Planning permissions exist to expand the offer of Skelmersdale town centre but have not presently been implemented. Alternative options are as follows.
- 1) **Adopted Local Plan Approach – Skelmersdale concentration.** *The adopted Local Plan identifies Skelmersdale town centre as a strategic development site, establishing a mix of suitable uses and principles for regeneration and enhancement. This approach plans positively for a town centre in decline and would assume that focussing the development of new town centre uses would continue to be the most suitable approach, contributing towards the wider regeneration of Skelmersdale and prioritising an area of most need. It would be appropriate to review the adopted Local Plan policy's principles and proposed uses in light of any changes since its adoption in 2013. It would be most compatible with development scenario 4 (Skelmersdale focus) in the Strategic Development Options paper.*
  - 2) **Allocate site(s) for town centre uses at Ormskirk.** *This approach would be in addition to site allocation at Skelmersdale town centre and would vary from recommendations in the West Lancashire Retail Study. Ormskirk town centre is currently performing relatively well but physical constraints exist to finding development sites as a result*

of the historic core and one way system; however, it needs to evolve and reinforce the commercial offer in order to remain competitive with other shopping and leisure destinations. The redevelopment potential of existing or likely future underused areas within the town centre would be investigated. It could also justify the development of an area based policy / strategy specific to the town centre.

- 3) **Allocate a non-town centre site for a retail warehouse park.** This would be a radical approach, again varying from recommendations in the West Lancashire Retail Study and would seek to address the lack of a quality retail warehouse park in the Borough. It would look to reduce the loss of residents' non-food spending from the Borough by allocating an accessible site for a non-food retail warehouse park outside existing town centres, therefore acknowledging that town centre sites were unavailable and / or unsuitable. The most likely location would be either Ormskirk or Skelmersdale. However, this approach would not be without risk in terms of developing a potentially competing attraction with existing town centres.
- 4) **Allocate a site to meet retail needs in the north of the Borough.** The village centres contain some relatively small scale convenience retail provision, with the largest being the Booths store at Hesketh Bank. This approach would acknowledge that large amounts of retail expenditure are therefore lost from the northern parishes of the Borough and that significantly improved retention of food expenditure would be realistic by developing a new larger store. This would be most compatible with development scenario 3 (Rural areas focus) in the Strategic Development Options Paper.

### Summary

Economic Policy Option 6 discusses allocating sites for retail uses within the Borough. Is this important to consider? Answer the question below in the **Issues & Options Survey**.

Do we need to allocate Sites for Town Centre Uses within West Lancashire in the Local Plan? If so, which option do you think is most appropriate and why? Is there an alternative option that you think is appropriate that has not been considered? If so, what is it?

Are there any other economic policy issues that should also be considered? If so, what are they?

## 4. What Happens Next?

### Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

4.1 Having read this Paper, the Council would like you to respond by commenting on what you've read through the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options consultation. The easiest way to do this is online at **[www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan)**, where you will find instructions on how to respond.

4.2 The best way to respond is by completing a short survey online available at the above web link. The survey is related to the questions you'll have seen scattered throughout this Paper and the other Issues & Options consultation papers. You can also email or write in with your comments to:

**Email:** **[localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)**  
**Postal Address:** **Local Plan Consultation  
Planning  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
L39 2DF**

4.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers, as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at:

- **all Libraries in West Lancashire,**
- **at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF; and**
- **at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.**

4.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.

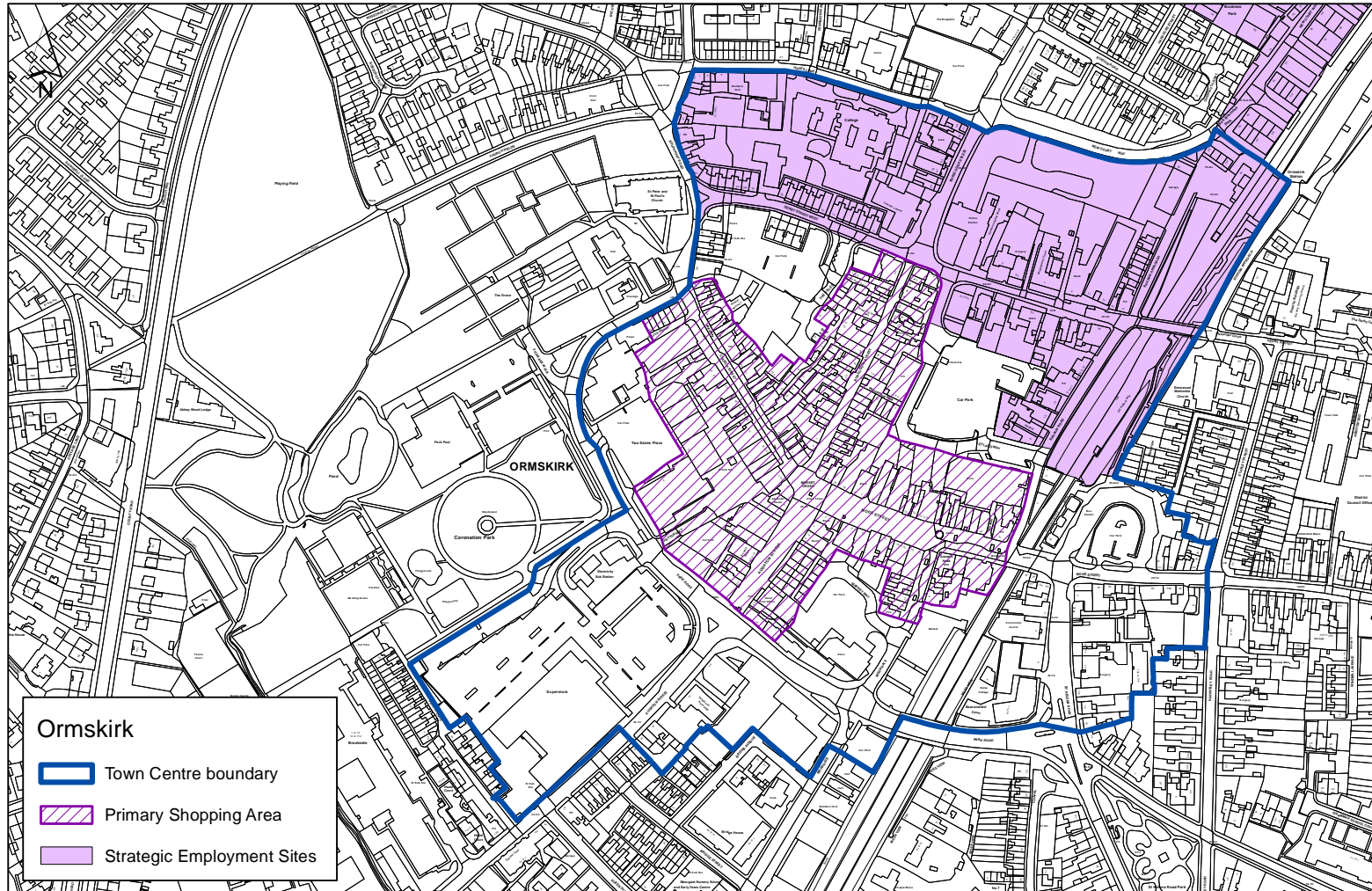




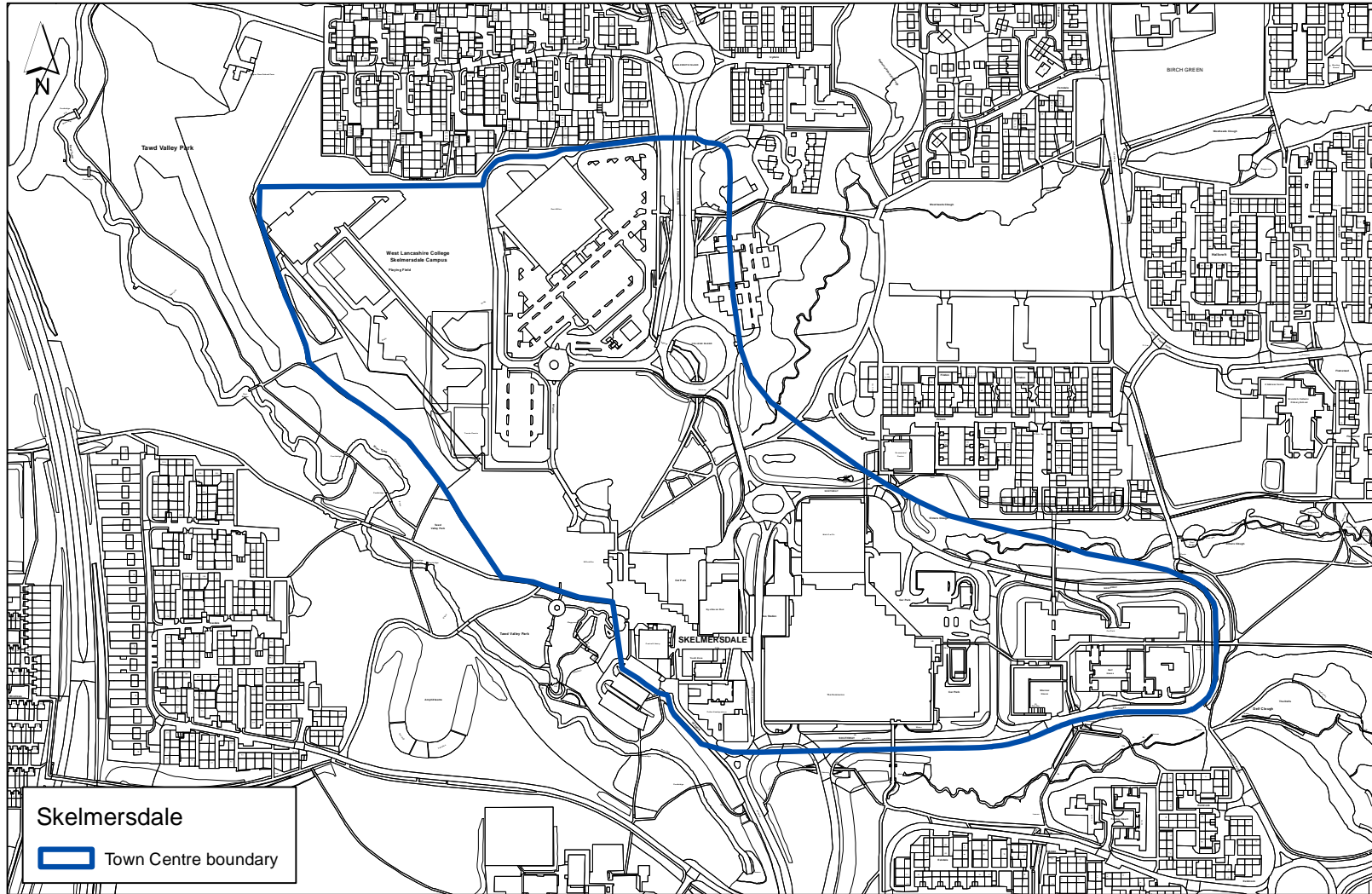
## Next Steps

- 4.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing a new Local Plan, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down on, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. At that point, site allocations are proposed to meet the development needs identified.
- 4.6 The Preferred Options Paper will be publicly consulted upon and the feedback from that consultation will be considered and the Council will make the necessary refinements and amendments to the proposed policies and site allocations to prepare what is essentially a "final draft" Local Plan, known as the Publication version, which represents the Local Plan that the Council want to take forward and adopt.
- 4.7 Once again, the Publication version will be made available for public scrutiny and formal representations (comments) on the document will be invited. However, this time, the comments will not be considered by the Council, but submitted with the Local Plan to a Planning Inspector to consider as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. This Examination will involve public hearings where those invited to speak by the Planning Inspector can put forward their views to help the Inspector to arrive at a decision on whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and whether it is a "sound" document.
- 4.8 More detail will be provided by the Council on how to engage with the Preferred Options Paper, the Publication version and the Examination in Public as we reach each stage, but the above gives a brief overview of the process.
- 4.9 Alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Council will continue to prepare and commission new studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the Council's decision-making on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations are most appropriate for inclusion in the new Local Plan.

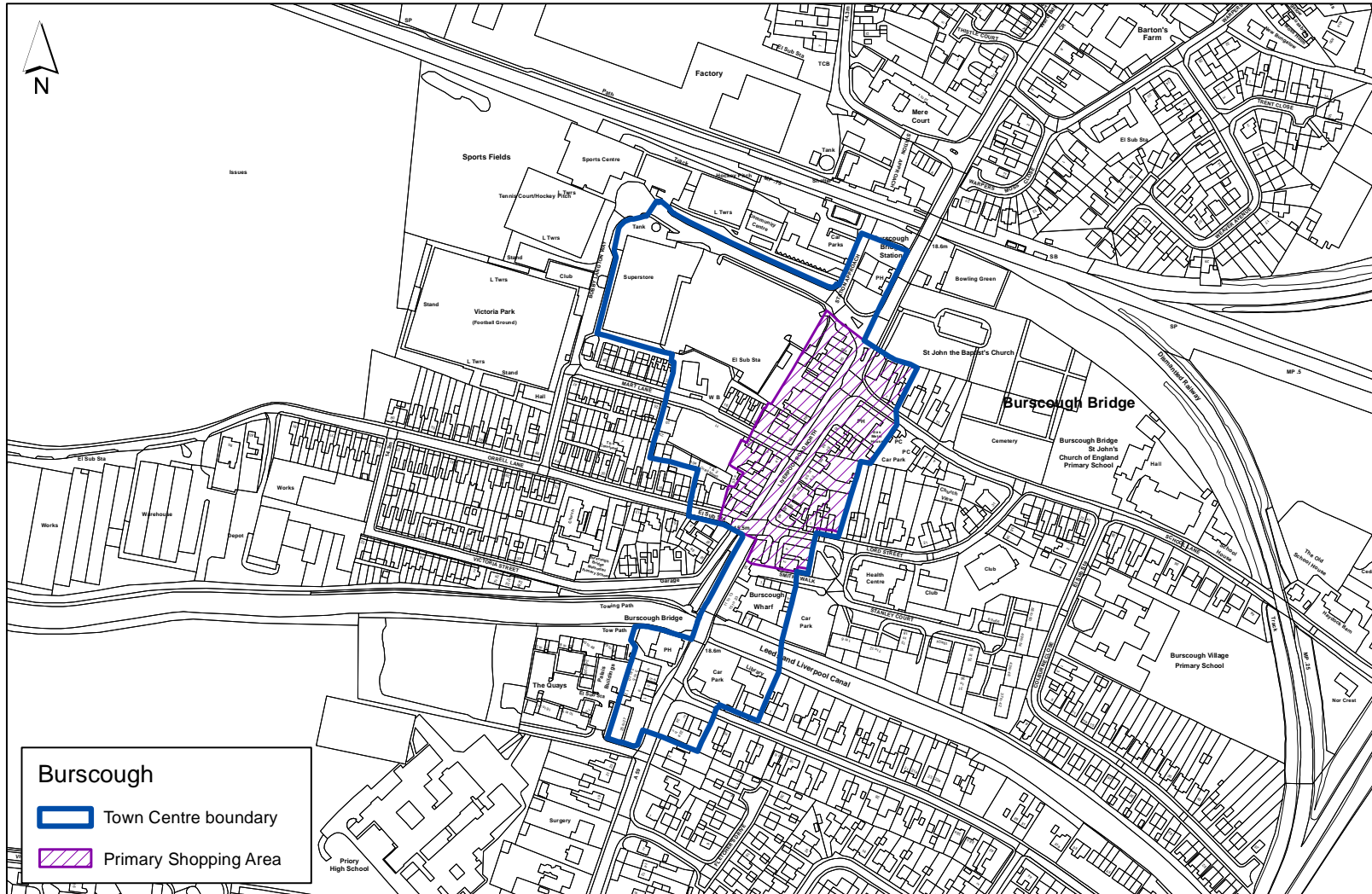
# Appendix 1 - Ormskirk



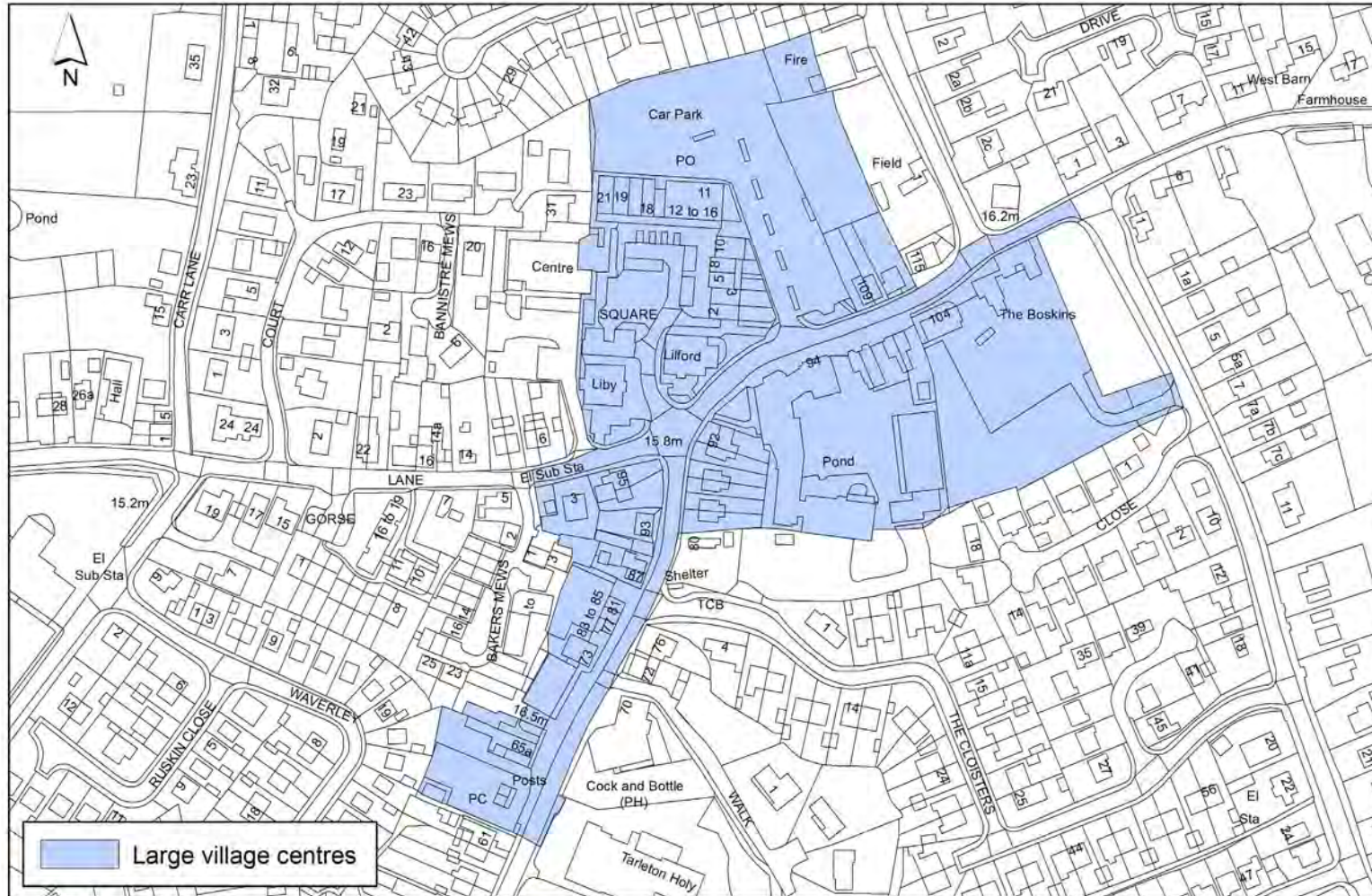
# Appendix 2 - Skelmersdale



# Appendix 3 - Burscough

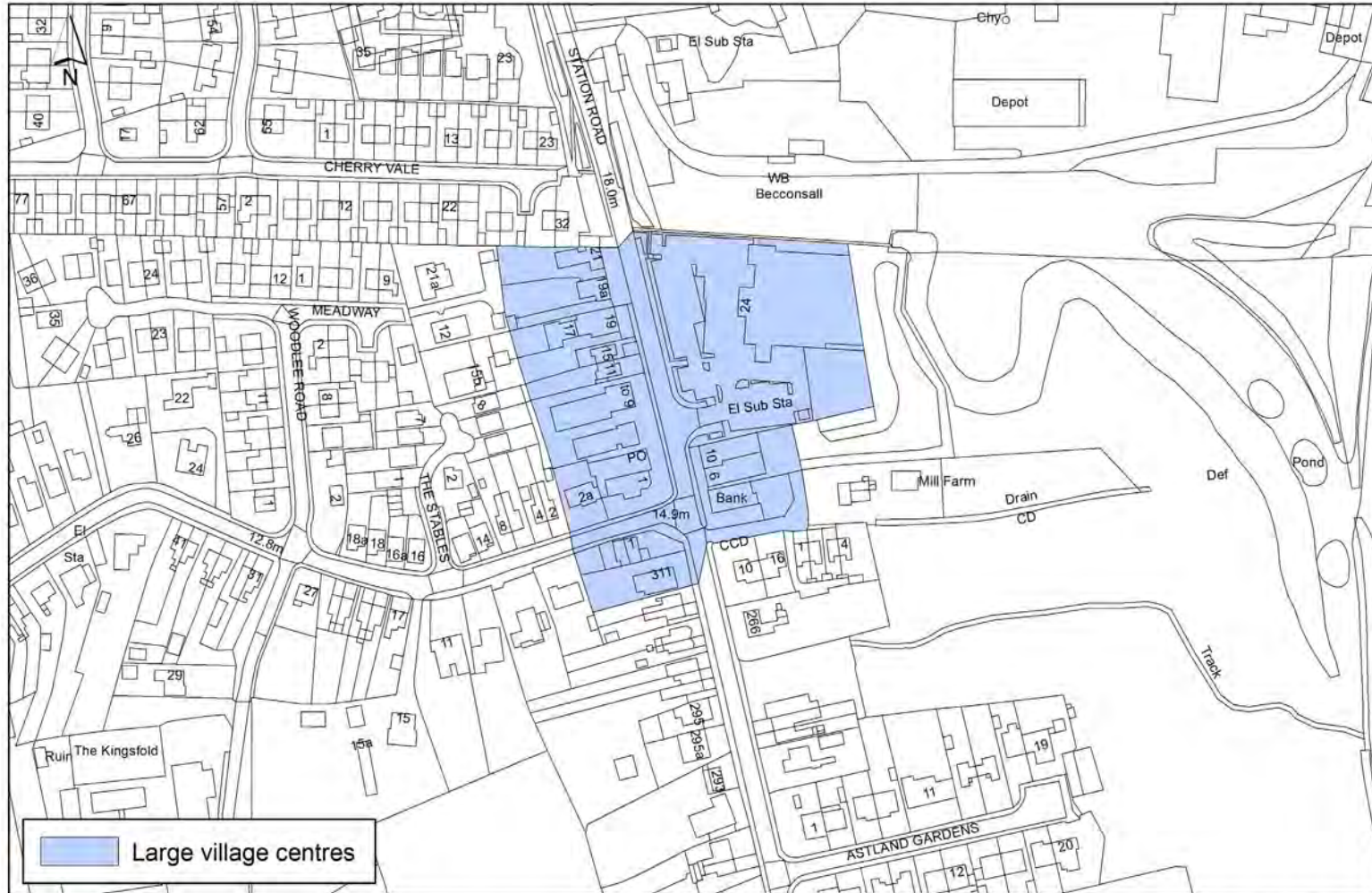


# Appendix 4 - Tarleton

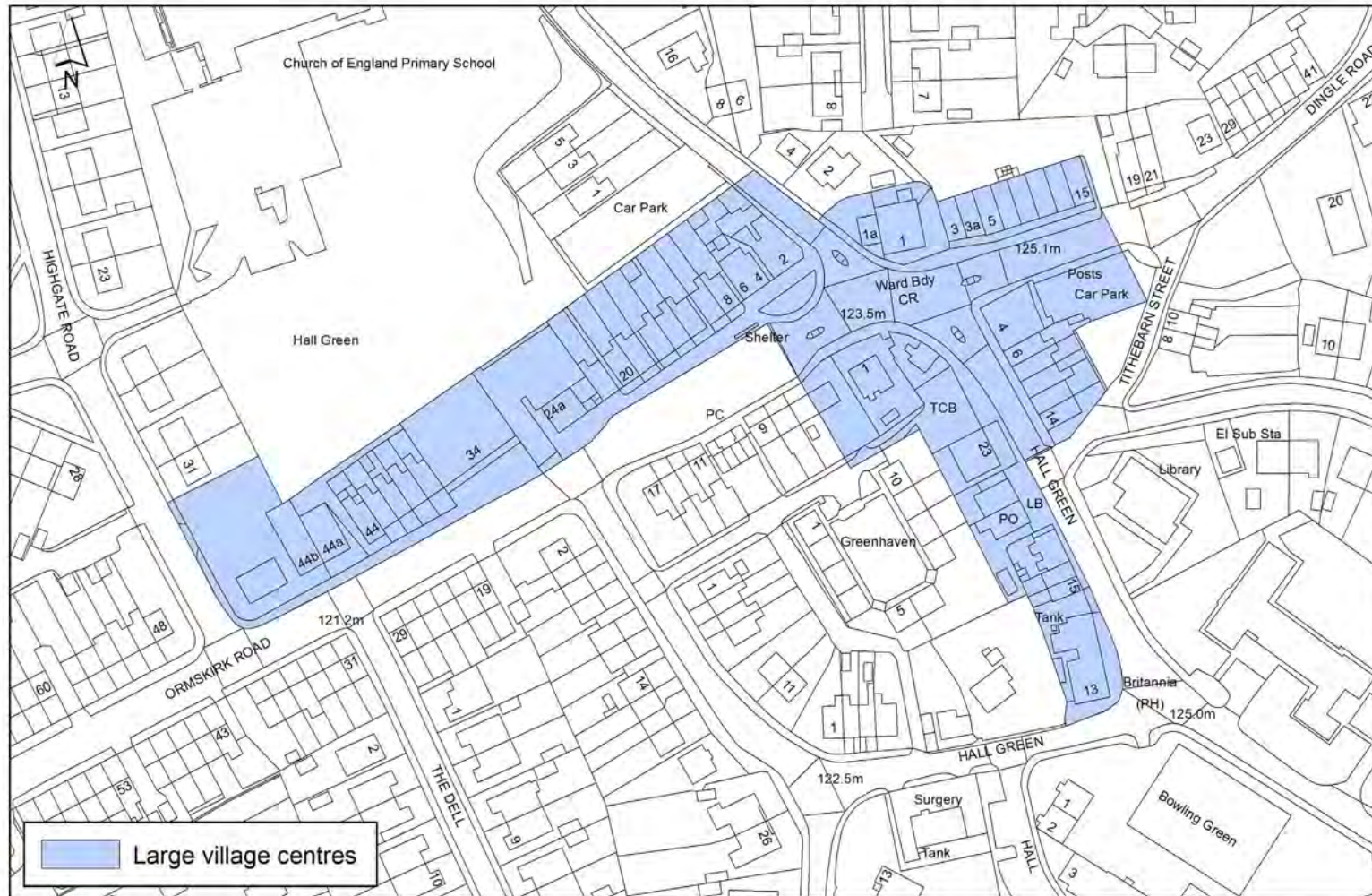


# Appendix 5 - Hesketh Bank

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# Appendix 6 - Up Holland



# Appendix 7 - Banks

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# Appendix 8 - Parbold



# Appendix 9 - Ashurst

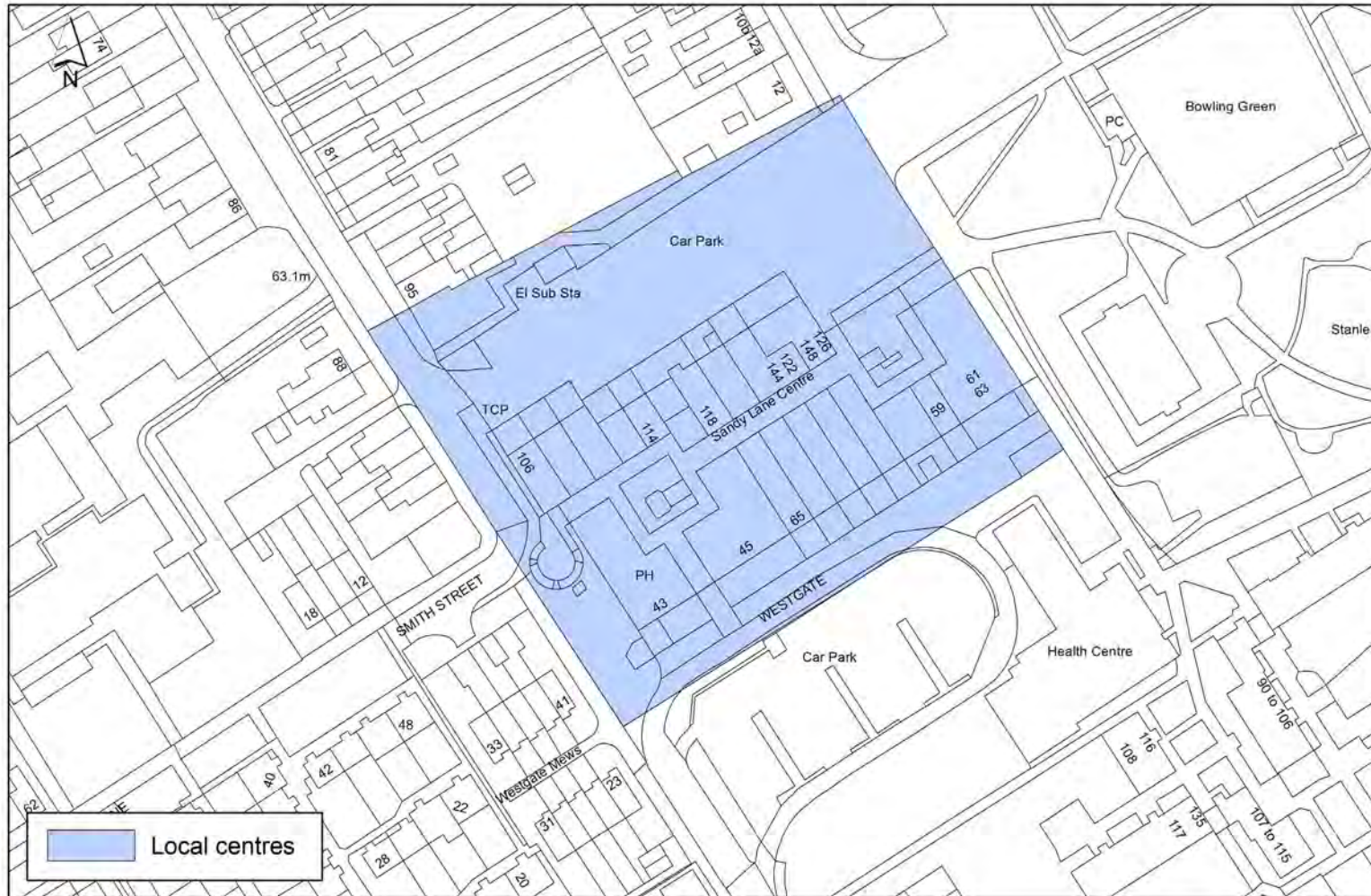
Page 1814



# Appendix 10 - Digmaor



# Appendix 11 - Sandy Lane



# Appendix 12 - County Road

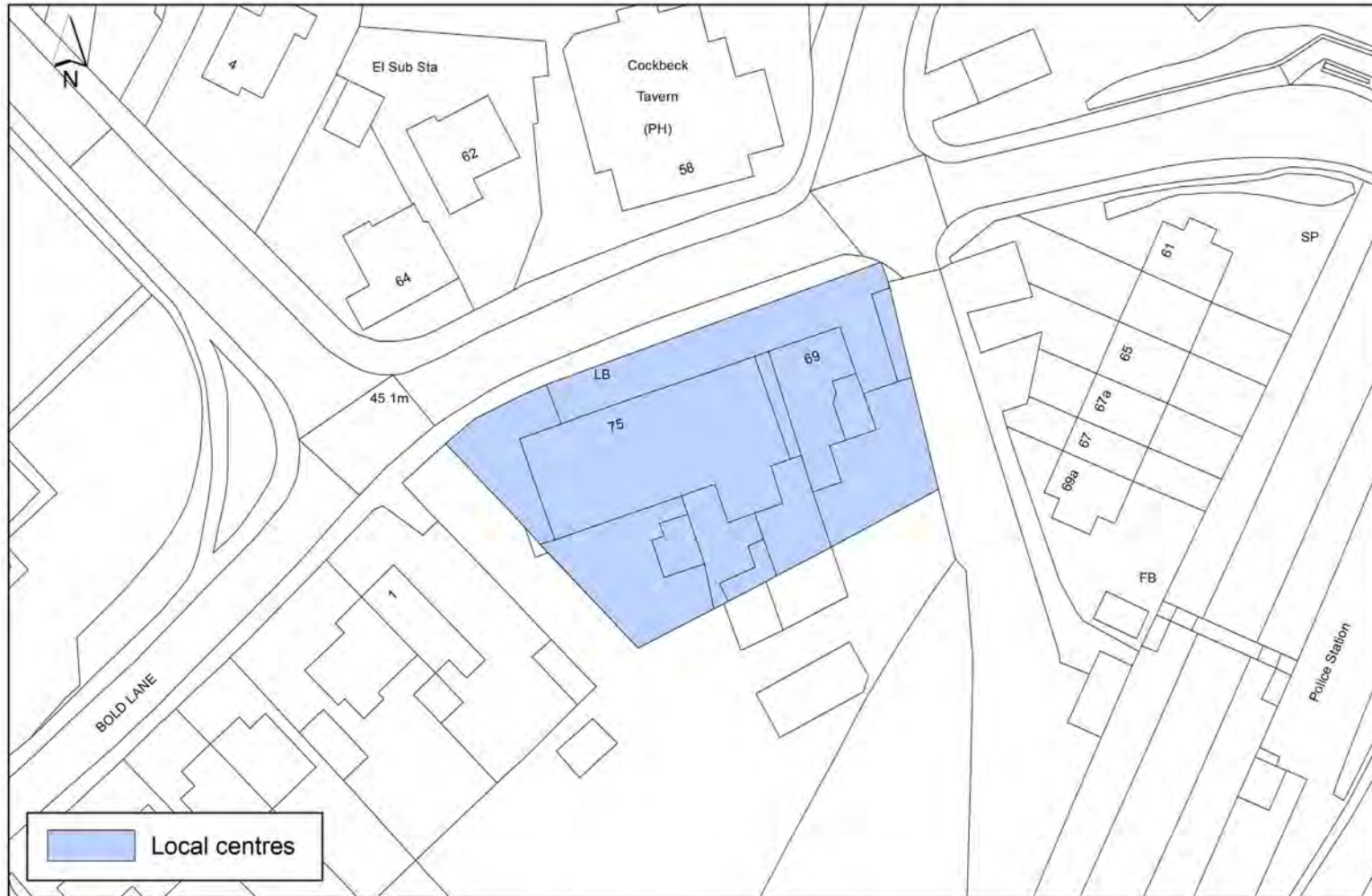


# Appendix 13 - Moss Delph Lane



# Appendix 14 - Town Green Lane

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**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**



# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



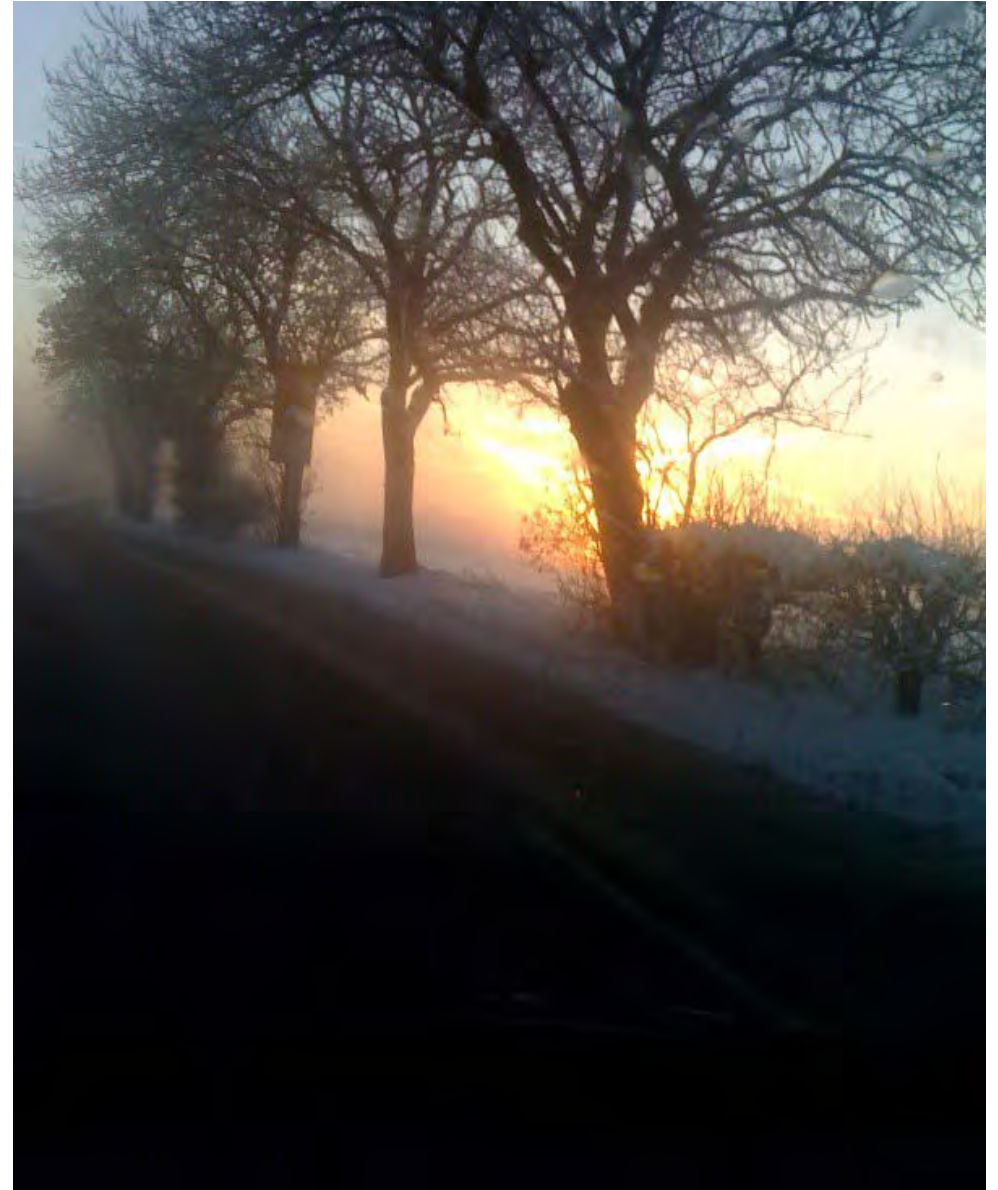
Environmental  
Policy Options Paper  
February 2017





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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Current trends in population growth and the inevitable increase in demand for natural resources will require careful management as a new Local Plan is prepared, particularly if we are to support West Lancashire's needs in a sustainable way, and in particular in a manner which does not have a detrimental impact upon the environment. Added to this is the challenge of managing the impacts of climate change, caused by rising temperatures, and resulting in increased coastal flood risk and erosion, increased occurrences of extreme weather events such as heat waves and heavy rain, and long-term changes in seasonal weather patterns.

1.2 One key aspect of resilience to climate change of particular relevance in West Lancashire is dealing with the risk of flooding. This has the potential to impact on the area's economy in terms of the agricultural and horticultural industries of West Lancashire but also impact on built-up areas.

1.3 Planning has an important role to play in minimising vulnerability to such impacts, for instance controlling where new development is located. Particular issues exist within the Northern Parishes and some localised areas elsewhere which are located within Flood Zone 3, where the probability of river and sea flooding is greatest, or there are exceptional instances of surface water flooding. This issue is covered in the Strategic Development Options Paper as the location of new development goes to the heart of the Plan-making process and so the relevance of areas at risk of flooding to where new development should be located is considered with the Strategic Development Options.

1.4 Design of the built environment is also relevant to climate change (and visa versa) and so must not just be concerned about how a place looks but also considers how a place, or a building, functions. For example, carefully thought through layouts can encourage walking and cycling rather than car use for short journeys in particular, securing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable energy generation, flood mitigation and energy saving measures can be built into new developments in a way which will not compromise design.

1.5 Taking all the above into account, there will be a number of issues related to the natural environment, built environment and climate change that the Local Plan will need to address.

## 2. Managing the Natural Environment

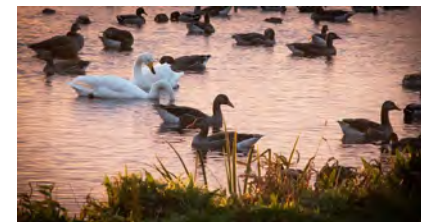
2.1 The combination of new development, intensive farming practices on agricultural land and climate change is predicted to result in an overall loss of habitat for a number of species as well as issues such as habitat squeeze and fragmentation. However, there are challenges related to obtaining up to date information on biodiversity to accurately measure this impact. Surveys of some sites (particularly at the more local level) are carried out infrequently and therefore the evidence necessary to make an accurate assessment of the impact of development upon nature sites may be lacking. It is also difficult to predict and measure the effects of climate change on biodiversity, but it is necessary to gain an understanding of the short, medium and long term impacts and how resilience can be built up to it within the natural environment.

The preparation of the Lancashire Ecological Network by Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust is an important part of the work needed to inform policy-making on this issue and the Council will continue to work with the County Council and Wildlife Trust to gain a better understanding of the issue in order to ensure that the policies included in the Local Plan offer the best opportunities for biodiversity enhancement available through new development.

2.3 There are a number and variety of internationally and nationally designated nature sites located within West Lancashire, including Martin Mere and the Ribble Estuary. These are largely protected and managed through European and national legislation and so the Council's approach with regards to these sites is essentially to protect them in line with their conservation objectives and enhance linkages to other habitats.

2.4 However there is growing recognition that biodiversity is not restricted to these areas. Biological Heritage Sites are Lancashire's locally important wildlife sites, hosting a wide and rich variety of species. These are monitored and managed at a County-level and are identified within the Local Plan. Amendments to the list of sites are made by the Biological Heritage Sites Review Panel which comprises ecologists from the County Council, Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside and Natural England.

2.5 Even smaller scale 'natural infrastructure' such as street trees and domestic gardens act as wildlife corridors, play a significant role in connecting and supporting habitats, allowing species to move. Recognition of this concept has led to the development of 'Ecological Networks' in recent years. These were established as a response to Government concern, expressed in the NPPF, about the challenge of halting biodiversity loss, resulting from the effects of increased development and climate change. At a Lancashire-wide level, Ecological Network maps have been created for two of the three major habitat groups (woodland and scrub as well as grassland) and maps for the third group (wetland and heathland) are still being finalised. Each map identifies and classifies the Core Areas, Corridors and Stepping Stones identified for that habitat group, so providing a more complete picture of where habitats are and where they should be protected and enhanced if possible.



## Environmental Policy Issue 1: Local Nature Conservation Sites

2.6 West Lancashire has a lower tier of district-level nature sites – termed ‘Local Nature Conservation Sites’ – which have been designations for the last two Local Plans. However, there has been some concern that this site selection no longer accurately reflects areas that are important to biodiversity. There is a sense that the production of the Ecological Network of sites somewhat supersedes this designation and that the Ecological Network approach is a more effective way of preserving biodiversity for the long term. There are also the implications and responsibilities set out in DEFRA guidance on how such local site systems should be selected, managed and reviewed. This additional burden would need to be picked up by the Local Authority in partnership with landowners.

However, should the current district tier of Local Nature Sites be removed, the sites would need to go through an assessment procedure to consider whether they should be upgraded to a Biological Heritage Site or if not, to ensure any aspects of ecological value is reflected in the Ecological Network.

2.8 The Council will need to consider the precise policy wording that will be required to ensure the preservation and enhancement of Ecological Networks, Biological Heritage Sites and internationally and nationally designated nature conservation sites in West Lancashire but the Council has two options of how to address the current designation of Local Nature Conservation Sites:

1) **Continue with the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation in the next Local Plan.** This would require assessment of whether the sites currently designated are still worthy and whether there are any other candidate sites. The Council will also need to consider

*how the sites can be managed to meet their obligations. This is particularly difficult given that most sites are not in public ownership and the Council has no powers to require a landowner to maintain their land in a particular way.*

2) **Remove the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation from the Local Plan.** The sites instead would be incorporated into the Ecological Network. A Local Plan policy would need to be included which affords appropriate protection to this Ecological Network.

### Summary

Environmental Policy Issue 1 looks at the importance of how we protect our natural environment and the ecology that lives within it. If you have views on that issue, please answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Should West Lancashire retain the Local Nature Conservation Site designation in the future? Which policy option for the management of local nature sites do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?





## 3. Addressing Climate Change

- 3.1 As outlined previously, planning is central in shaping places to secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and it is also important in supporting the deliverability of renewable energy.
- 3.2 The provision of renewable energy is important in seeking to reduce reliance on carbon-based energy and reduce the effects of climate change. As such, it is important that the Council consider how the Local Plan should facilitate the provision of Renewable Energy in West Lancashire. Renewable Energy can be a divisive issue, generally due to the perception of harm to the local environment that certain types of renewable energy can generate (e.g. wind energy and solar farms). However, this does not remove the Council's responsibility to consider all options and assess them objectively.



### Environmental Policy Issue 2: Renewable Energy

- 3.3 National planning policy broadly supports the provision of renewable energy but ministerial statements over recent years have placed clear provisos on that support, in particular relating to onshore wind energy. It is good practice for the Local Planning Authority to assess the types of renewable energy that are appropriate in different parts of a district and then designate areas which are suitable for specific types of renewable energy generation.
- 3.4 A recent study (the Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study) concluded that West Lancashire has the potential to create 1630Mw of renewable energy mostly from wind, followed by micro-generation, with much smaller amounts from available resources in the form of waste and biomass.
- 3.5 As such, the Council will need to review the studies conducted for the preparation of the last Local Plan on potential for renewable energy generation in West Lancashire and identify any areas that the Council might designate for specific renewable technologies. There would appear to be two general policy options available to the Council in relation to the provision of Renewable Energy:
- 1) **Designate specific areas where the generation of wind energy, solar farms and any other renewable energy technology may be appropriate.** This will need to rely on the assessment of various criteria for each technology to identify defined areas which are, in principle, appropriate for that technology in terms of it being a viable location to generate energy and would not be unduly harmful to the surrounding environment or uses.

- 2) **Do not designate any specific areas for renewable energy technologies, and therefore consider any applications for the development of such technologies on a case-by-case basis.** This is effectively the current approach in the Local Plan. This provides more flexibility and enables the industry to propose sites they see as suitable for consideration under the planning process, however it has its disadvantages given that it does not provide clear planning guidance to an applicant as to where the Council might find development of renewable technologies appropriate and so may result in applications for such development in inappropriate locations.

### Summary

Environmental Policy Issue 2 considers how the Local Plan might plan for developments that use Renewable Energy technologies. If that's something you think is an important issue, please answer the questions below in our **Issue & options Survey**.

Should West Lancashire Borough Council designate sites for the provision of Renewable Energy? Which policy option for provision of Renewable Energy do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?



## 4. Designing the Built Environment

- 4.1 Good design encompasses both buildings and spaces and creates places which are unique, attractive and lively where people want to live, work and visit. West Lancashire has its own distinct character and development should reflect and draw upon this local distinctiveness. Design is not just concerned about how a place looks but also considers how it functions.
- 4.2 Good design is inherently sustainable. Carefully thought through layouts will encourage walking and cycling rather than car use for short journeys in particular and well-designed buildings using quality materials will have a longer life. However, designing the built environment must be considered at many different levels – neighbourhood, site layout, scale, mass and form of the building or buildings down to individual design elements.
- 4.3 All development, regardless of scale requires a proper understanding of the site, its surroundings and the distinctive nature of the place. Development proposals should understand local context and the constraints and opportunities of the site.
- 4.4 The Council's Design SPD establishes a set of design principles and sets out the Council's expectations in relation to design. The Local Plan Review will need to explore options for amending our design policies, where appropriate.

### Environmental Policy Issue 3: Sustainable Design and Construction

- 4.5 The way that buildings are designed and constructed can help to reduce the effects of climate change by reducing the demand for energy (for heating or lighting a building) and so ultimately reduce the production of greenhouse gases in the creation of that energy from carbon-based fuel. It can also help promote biodiversity by including specific features. Approaches to rating the sustainability of a building or construction have been downplayed or removed altogether by changes to national policy and advice in recent years, and so it has become quite difficult for planning to require that a certain standard of sustainable construction is met in new developments. However where it is justified and does not make development unviable, the Local Plan can include policies which place a requirement for a particular sustainable feature or measure on certain new developments to help improve the environmental performance of buildings.



4.6 A good example of this would be the provision of electric vehicle recharging points in new developments. The Local Plan could include a policy which requires all new houses to have a suitable external power connection that an electric vehicle can be recharged from. Other examples might include incorporating renewable energy technologies into/onto new buildings or developments or promoting features on buildings or developments that support the movement of, or habitats for, local wildlife (bird boxes, bat bricks, hedgehog-friendly fencing). As such, there are three general policy options available to the Council to address this issue:

- 1) **Require specific sustainable design and construction features or measures to be incorporated into new developments.** *This option would require clear evidence of the need or justification for any particular feature and the viability of including it in new development in an affordable way but would provide certainty on what is expected.*
- 2) **Do not require any specific features or measures through policy.** *This option would rely upon the market demand for such features to change current construction and design practices in the development industry and so provides little certainty that any such features would ultimately be incorporated into new development but provides flexibility to developers.*
- 3) **Require new development to contribute financially to a Community Energy Fund.** *This option would enable those developments where it is practically difficult to include specific features in the development to instead make a financial contribution in lieu of these features to a Community Energy Fund*

*which the Council would manage. This might particularly be relevant when carbon compliance cannot be achieved on site in line with the final Part L building regulation increase. The Council could then utilise this fund to make other, existing properties more sustainable or to deliver renewable energy developments, thereby ensuring the same overall net improvement in sustainable construction.*

#### Summary

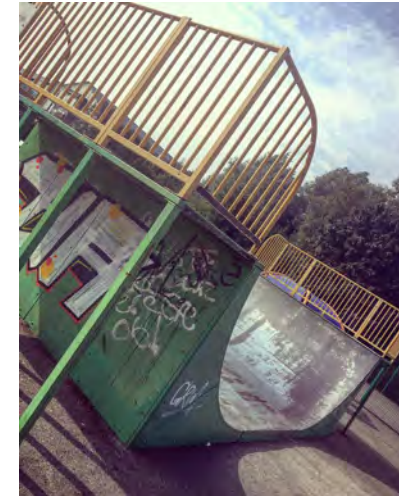
Environmental Policy Issue 3 weighs up the pros and cons of how the Local Plan might encourage or require sustainable design and construction in new developments in West Lancashire. What do you think about this? Answer the questions below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which policy option for Sustainable Design and Construction do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why? Would a combination of options help to assist sustainable development? What kind of measures could we require of new development?



## Environmental Policy Issue 4: Sustainable and Healthy Places

- 4.7 It is recognised that creating places that are beneficial for human health only comes about through collaborative and joined-up working, since improving health is a complex, multi-faceted challenge. However, the design of new development layouts can encourage increased activity levels and reduced car-usage in order to combat long-term excess weight and obesity related health problems, improve local air quality and to generally help residents and users to exercise more. This prioritises providing an attractive and easy to use walking and cycling environment which connects places with each other, provision of open spaces within easy reach for recreation and play as well as good quality neighbourhood spaces where community and social infrastructure and local facilities are also provided and protected. All of this also has mental health benefits.



- 4.8 Whilst the Borough does appear to have an abundance of open green space as a result of its rural setting, one of the main issues relates to deficiencies in certain types of open space and sports facilities (either quantitatively or qualitatively), and poor access to these spaces for local communities. In addition, problems relating to an oversupply of poor quality green spaces in some areas can lead to difficulties maintaining the green spaces which makes them less attractive and results in under-utilisation.
- 4.9 As such, there are several (not mutually exclusive) options that the Council might consider including in the Local Plan:
- 1) **Requirements for developments over a certain size to incorporate features that encourage an active lifestyle for local residents and visitors.** Such features effectively encourage residents and users to enjoy what is provided within the development in a way

*which leads to more exercise. This can be traditional provision of open space and play / exercise equipment and pleasant routes to walk / run around but can also include more creative use of space and layout design to garner interest in activities that facilitate physical exercise. This can often link to the next option, in terms of encouraging residents / users to move beyond the development site into the wider local area and enjoy physical activity and exercise.*

- 2) **Requirements for developments over a certain size to provide direct connections from the development to the wider cycling and walking infrastructure.** *This option seeks to enable easy, sustainable access to local services and facilities and so encourage residents / users of the development to move to / from the development site by walking and cycling rather than the car when using local facilities such as corner shops.*
- 3) **Requirements for residential developments over a certain size to incorporate public open space and amenity green space. Public open space and green features are crucial to creating a pleasant environment to live in.** *Not only do they facilitate healthy activity and exercise, but they provide a calming and peaceful environment that benefits mental health and wellbeing. As such, this option would seek to maximise the health benefits of incorporating public open space within new developments.*

### Summary

Environmental Policy Issue 4 reflects on the role that the Local Plan might have in promoting healthier lifestyles for the people who live, work and spend leisure time in West Lancashire. Do you think it is important for planning to consider this? If so, answer the questions below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which policy option for creating Sustainable and Healthy Places do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Would it be appropriate to include more than one of the options in order to create healthy and accessible environments for all? Which ones, and why?

Are there any other environmental policy issues that should also be considered? If so, what are they?

## 4. What Happens Next?

### Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

4.1 Having read this Paper, the Council would like you to respond by commenting on what you've read through the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options consultation. The easiest way to do this is online at **[www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan)**, where you will find instructions on how to respond.

4.2 The best way to respond is by completing a short survey online available at the above web link. The survey is related to the questions you'll have seen scattered throughout this Paper and the other Issues & Options consultation papers. You can also email or write in with your comments to:

**Email: [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)**  
**Postal Address: Local Plan Consultation**  
**Planning**  
**West Lancashire Borough Council**  
**52 Derby Street**  
**Ormskirk**  
**L39 2DF**

4.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers, as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at:

- **all Libraries in West Lancashire,**
- **at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF; and**
- **at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.**

4.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.



## Next Steps

- 5.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing a new Local Plan, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down on, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. At that point, site allocations are proposed to meet the development needs identified.
- The Preferred Options Paper will be publicly consulted upon and the feedback from that consultation will be considered and the Council will make the necessary refinements and amendments to the proposed policies and site allocations to prepare what is essentially a "final draft" Local Plan, known as the Publication version, which represents the Local Plan that the Council want to take forward and adopt.
- 5.7 Once again, the Publication version will be made available for public scrutiny and formal representations (comments) on the document will be invited. However, this time, the comments will not be considered by the Council, but submitted with the Local Plan to a Planning Inspector to consider as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. This Examination will involve public hearings where those invited to speak by the Planning Inspector can put forward their views to help the Inspector to arrive at a decision on whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and whether it is a "sound" document.
- 5.8 More detail will be provided by the Council on how to engage with the Preferred Options Paper, the Publication version and the Examination in Public as we reach each stage, but the above gives a brief overview of the process.
- 5.9 Alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Council will continue to prepare and commission new studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the Council's decision-making on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations are most appropriate for inclusion in the new Local Plan.





**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**

# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



## Social Policy Options Paper February 2017





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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Within a Local Plan, many of the policies that are ultimately included affect the social aspect of sustainability. Such policies often also have environmental and / or economic impacts, but the thrust of them is about protecting or providing for different sections of society. As such, this topic paper, which sits under the Strategic Development Options Paper, looks at different groups of people that live, work and spend leisure time in West Lancashire and considers the kind of planning issues that might affect them and policy options for addressing those issues. Using such general groupings of people never gives the full picture, and never truly reflects an individual within the group, because all people are different, but looking at these groups helps identify those issues which are common to a group, or groups, of people and so should be addressed, if possible, by the Local Plan.

1.2 A key issue for all parts of society is the provision of somewhere safe and secure to live and this therefore is often a key component of a Local Plan, generating the most interest from residents, landowners and developers alike, and usually involving the greatest amount of land take. Options for housing in relation to overall numbers and broad locations are set out and discussed in the Strategic Development Options Paper and so this topic paper will not comment further on housing numbers or the spatial distribution of the numbers but the following key issues have been identified in the Spatial Portrait Paper in relation to housing, and planning policy can help to address some of these:

- Affordability of housing is an issue for West Lancashire (and elsewhere), the median house price being almost 7 times the median earnings;
- The ageing population will lead to a need for a range of suitable housing to meet older people's specific needs, and in appropriate locations;
- There are differences in housing market strength within the Borough, with parts performing less well than other areas;
- There is a lack of authorised / suitable accommodation in the Borough for the travelling community, with current sites predominately unauthorised;
- There is a demand for student accommodation in Ormskirk; and
- There is a demand, albeit small, for Self- and Custom-Build Housing and for residential caravans or houseboats.

1.3 The issues of accommodation for the ageing population, for students and for travellers are covered below in the topic-specific sections but the remaining three issues are addressed under the Working Age Population section.

## 2. The Working age Population

2.1 The population in West Lancashire is expected to increase from 111,900 in 2014 to 116,200 by 2037 representing an increase of 3.8% or additional 4,300 residents on 2014 levels. This will include a significant increase in the aged population but both a proportionate and numerical decrease in the working age population. Economic dependency upon the working age population will therefore increase. There are likely to be proportionately more older workers given the increase in retirement age and the national trend towards people working into their senior years in order to supplement income and / or maintain lifestyles. This may require opportunities for retraining during the course of a career to enable individuals to develop new skills.

West Lancashire currently has economic activity rates below both the regional and national averages which is partly explained by the presence of a significant student population. Conversely, historically unemployment rates have been below regional and national levels on a consistent basis. Whilst female economic activity is comparable to the national average, male rates are below with geographical concentrations of economic inactivity in Skelmersdale. However, significantly higher proportions of the Borough's economically inactive indicate that they would like to work compared to the regional and national rates and this represents an underused resource. The Borough possesses higher proportions of lower skilled occupations than either nationally or regionally, greater proportions of middle skill occupations and comparatively lower proportions of workers employed in higher skilled managerial, professional, associate professional and technical occupations compared to national rates. In order to meet business needs and attract inward investment there must be an available, qualified and skilled

workforce otherwise jobs may be less easily filled, workers will need to commute in from outside the area or as a worst case existing businesses may leave the Borough.

2.3 The Borough's population is also less well qualified than the national average with proportionately less people educated to NVQ levels 2, 3, 4 and above (equivalent to GCSE grades A-C and education beyond that level) yet conversely the Borough contains Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College. It is important that there are employment opportunities available locally to retain the educated population as they enter the workforce.

2.4 West Lancashire has strong economic links with surrounding areas which is reflected by sizable inward and outward commuter flows. A higher proportion of residents commute to work by car than the regional and national averages which reflects the lower availability of public transport options compared to more urban areas. The Spatial Portrait Paper also identified a lack of opportunity for rail commuting from Skelmersdale as there are no railway stations and this limits mobility and the accessibility of economic opportunities to residents and reinforces an inequality gap.

2.5 All of the above issues are discussed in other topic papers (particularly the Economic Policy Options Paper). However, a further important factor in attracting and retaining people of working age in the Borough is the provision of suitable residential accommodation in terms of quantity, quality and type, not least because an established resident working age population also has wider benefits for the local economy in terms of supporting local businesses such as shops, restaurants and services by spending

income locally. The remainder of this section will therefore consider the issue of residential accommodation.

- 2.6 There will be a range of types of housing needed during a person's working life including starter homes, family accommodation and potentially smaller housing to enable downsizing. It is therefore important that there are suitable opportunities to get on the housing ladder but also to remain within the area as an individual's housing need changes. As such, the issues of provision of affordable housing, providing other, alternative forms of residential accommodation and providing a greater choice of housing in the Skelmersdale housing market in particular are important for the Local Plan Review to address.





## Social Policy Issue 1: Affordable Housing

2.7 Housing affordability is a longstanding issue, not just in West Lancashire but nationwide. Not only are house prices high and rising but (owing to changes in national policy, the weight given to viability matters, and macro-economic issues such as austerity, recession and Brexit) the Council's ability to procure affordable housing, either from 100% affordable schemes, or in conjunction with market housing developments, has been significantly curtailed. Thus the Council are operating in a difficult environment as far as facilitating or delivering affordable housing is concerned and, as a consequence, in recent years the delivery of affordable housing in West Lancashire has been below the annual need.

Further changes are also afoot, most notably with the introduction of 'starter homes' which, although priced at below market value, are not affordable in perpetuity. If, as expected, priority is given in national policy to starter homes over other types of affordable housing, the Council's capacity to deliver genuine affordable housing is further reduced, as the starter homes will account for much of the 'budget' available for affordable housing from market housing schemes.



2.9 The usual policy stance in West Lancashire and elsewhere with regard to affordable housing has been to require that a percentage of properties in market housing developments above a certain threshold (the government imposed a national threshold of 11 units in 2014) be 'affordable', the definition of affordable being set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The percentage can be varied if agreed viability figures demonstrate that the policy requirement would make a scheme unviable. 100% affordable housing developments can also be encouraged, either through permissive planning policies (including allowing affordable housing on land where market housing would not be permitted), or through site-specific allocations.

2.10 In order that the benefits of affordable housing be available not just to the first occupiers of a particular affordable property, but also to subsequent occupiers, West Lancashire Borough Council's stance has been to require via legal agreements that affordable units be affordable 'in perpetuity'.

2.11 As set out above, the Council's ability to procure and therefore deliver affordable housing has been undermined through national policy changes, and any affordable housing policy will be constrained by the findings of the Council's forthcoming affordable housing needs study, and by government policy on Starter Homes (not yet published at the time of writing this Issues and Options document).

2.12 Since the adoption of the current affordable housing policy, the 'affordable rent' tenure has become more prevalent, and local planning authorities' powers to insist on 'social rent' tenure have diminished, as has the willingness of Registered Providers to provide

it given nationally set rent reductions on social rented properties and the introduction of the Right To Buy on Registered Provider-owned properties.

2.13 One other factor to consider is the Council's introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule in September 2014. CIL is chargeable on new dwellings in all parts of the Borough except Skelmersdale. Whilst the charge was calculated to take into account the costs associated with affordable housing and other policy requirements, the Council will need to review whether the current CIL charges are still appropriate in light of any new or updated policy requirements in the new Local Plan and the general viability of development in West Lancashire at that time.

2.14 Taking account of the above constraints, the options for policy in respect of affordable housing are set out below. Apart from the 'do nothing' option, the different approaches are not mutually exclusive.

- 1) *Do nothing, i.e. have no policy on affordable housing. Given the affordable housing needs in the Borough, and the minimal likelihood that developers will come forward 'unprompted' with affordable housing schemes, this is not considered a realistic option.*
- 2) *Continue with the 'usual' approach to affordable housing policy, i.e. to require that a percentage of units in market housing developments over a certain threshold be affordable. Whilst this approach has not historically delivered enough affordable housing to meet annual needs, it is considered that it is the most appropriate way to procure affordable housing outside of site-*

*specific allocations (see 5 below), or the Council itself building the housing (see following section), and is a well-established and nationwide approach.*

3) *If the 'percentage approach' is followed, carry on with a broadly similar policy to policy RS2 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, i.e.*

*i. Geographical variation: one set of affordable housing percentage requirements for Skelmersdale, another for the rest of the Borough, on account of the differences in market strength between the two areas, the desirability of investment in the Borough's largest town, and the fact that there are already a good number of cheaper and social rented properties in Skelmersdale. The alternative, a 'blanket' requirement, is likely to result in a lower likelihood of market housing developments in Skelmersdale on account of viability and market factors.*

*ii. Numerical variation: the percentage requirements increase as the development size increases, in line with viability assessments, and on account of factors such as economies of scale. The alternative, a 'blanket' percentage requirement would either impact disproportionately upon smaller or medium housebuilders (high requirement for lower numbers), or would result in a 'missed chance' with large developments (a requirement lower than it could justifiably be set).*

4) *An affordable housing policy that contains more detail (covering such matters as tenure, size, accessibility standards, on/off-site provision, viability considerations, etc.). Being part of the*

*Local Plan Review DPD, these detailed policies would have greater weight, but it would be difficult to change them were circumstances to change over the 15+ year plan period. The alternative is to leave the details to a supplementary planning document (SPD); as such, the detailed policies may have lesser weight, but could more easily be adapted to changing circumstances.*

- 5) *Allocate specific sites for 100% affordable housing schemes<sup>1</sup>. This would provide more certainty over numbers and locations, but there is no guarantee such sites would be delivered.*
- 6) *Include 'permissive' policies for affordable housing, i.e. allowing affordable housing in areas where market housing would not usually be permitted, for example 'very limited' affordable housing in the Green Belt, or 'small scale' affordable housing on non-Green Belt land outside settlement boundaries, and affordable housing developments in the smallest rural settlements. Such an approach recognises the pressing need for affordable housing in many rural areas, balancing this need against the general undesirability of housing in less sustainable locations.*
- 7) *Provide a more flexible approach to how affordable housing is delivered with market housing developments. Except in exceptional circumstances, the current policy RS2 requires the set percentage of affordable housing in a market development to be provided on-site. However, the policy could be made more flexible (and so viable in some circumstances) by allowing the delivery of affordable off-site, or allowing a financial payment to be made to the Council in lieu of the provision of affordable, which the Council would then use to*

*provide affordable housing. This can make the delivery of affordable housing more challenging in some circumstances, and places the onus on the Council to facilitate or make the provision (which has resource costs for the Council), but it can make the delivery of the market housing development easier.*

- 8) *Have greater flexibility in what the Council defines as affordable housing. Some developers offer a housing product as standard which is significantly more affordable than market housing but which cannot be classified as "affordable housing" under the national definition in the NPPF. In such instances, greater flexibility in the Local Plan policy may facilitate the delivery of good developments which provide an affordable housing product.*

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 1 discusses affordable housing, do you have comments on this issue? If so, answer the question below in our **Issue & Options Survey**.

**Which option(s) for the approach towards affordable housing policy do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?**

<sup>1</sup> In terms of the local planning authority's need / ability to allocate sites for 100% 'starter homes', government policy is currently awaited.

## Social Policy Issue 2: Demand for self- and custom-build housing

2.15 The profile of self- and custom-build housing ('SCB housing') continues to rise, with recently enacted legislation requiring local authorities to register demand for plots for such housing, and to make adequate provision of sites and / or serviced plots to meet the identified local demand. The Council at present has only a small number (fewer than 20) registered as wanting a self- or custom-build plot in the Borough.



2.16 SCB housing can take various forms, from individual houses designed and built in their entirety by their occupant, through 'grand design' type properties (often replacement dwellings) effectively 'project managed' by their occupant, and built by tradespeople, to 'mainstream' properties built by volume housebuilders with certain internal details chosen by the occupant.

2.17 The policy options for meeting demand for SCB housing are as follows:

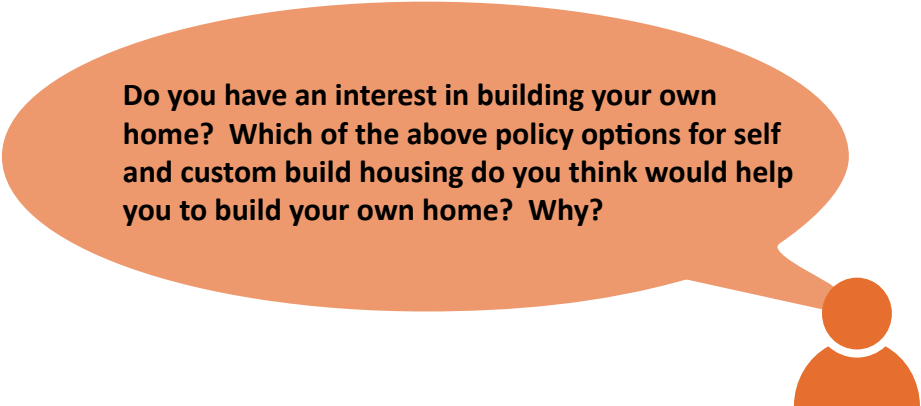
- 1) *Do not allocate any sites for SCB housing as such, but allow such housing to be commissioned on allocated housing sites (as per the third form of SCB described in the paragraph above) via volume housebuilders. This could be achieved by means of a policy requirement, or on a more informal basis. Any policy requirement may be difficult to justify given current low indications of demand from the Council's SCB Register (unless these figures were demonstrated to be significant underestimates). A more informal 'laissez faire' approach would depend on the whims of individual housebuilders for SCB housing to be provided. Such an approach would be likely only to deliver custom-build housing of a limited variety, rather than the wider range of SCB housing. However, other types of SCB housing may still come forward under this option via individual 'windfall' planning applications.*
- 2) *Set aside a part of larger allocated housing sites for SCB plots. This would be achieved through an appropriate policy requirement (e.g. 3% or 5% of the overall site capacity) and could involve a requirement that the site developer provide serviced plots*

*for the SCB dwellings. As with Option 1, this approach would require robust demand data to justify the policy requirement. It is the Council's understanding that a 'percentage of large sites' approach is unpopular with developers, who perceive it as affecting marketability of the rest of the site.*

- 3) *Identify and allocate small sites for SCB dwellings in line with demand. Such sites could be identified via a Call for Sites exercise(s), or via the Council's own evidence base work (including liaison with the WLBC Estates Department and the potential sale of small Council-owned sites for self / custom builders). The allocation of small sites specifically for SCB would provide certainty of demand being met in numerical terms, and need not rule out other sites coming forward via 'windfall' planning applications.*

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 2 discusses how opportunities for self and custom build housing could be facilitated. If you have views on this answer the following question in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



**Do you have an interest in building your own home? Which of the above policy options for self and custom build housing do you think would help you to build your own home? Why?**

### Social Policy Issue 3: Demand for alternative residential accommodation

2.18 In addition to bricks and mortar dwellings, residential accommodation can comprise caravans (sometimes referred to as “Park Homes”) or houseboats. According to the 2011 Census, there were 1,056 dwellings in West Lancashire (2.2% of all dwellings in the Borough) that comprised “caravans or other mobile or temporary structures.” The Census does not differentiate between the different types of such accommodation, i.e. between caravans and houseboats. There are a number of residential caravan sites in the Borough, the largest of which are at Banks and Scarisbrick. There are also three canal marinas, two at Rufford and one at Scarisbrick, and several mooring points and while these cannot be used for the permanent mooring of residential boats, the majority of the moorings will be used by people who spend the majority of the year at those marinas, and so there is a residential need being accommodated at these marinas.



2.19 Draft government guidance issued in March 2016 recommends that local authorities measure need for caravan and houseboat-based accommodation (including accommodation for the travelling community; this is covered above), and that once such needs are known, consider how to meet the identified needs. The needs can be met through the socially or commercially rented sectors, or through private ownership of sites and / or accommodation.

2.20 Data is not currently available on demand for houseboat or [non-traveller] caravan accommodation in West Lancashire, although it is intended to do a needs assessment over coming months. Need / demand are not expected to be significant in West Lancashire. In terms of meeting identified needs, the policy options are:

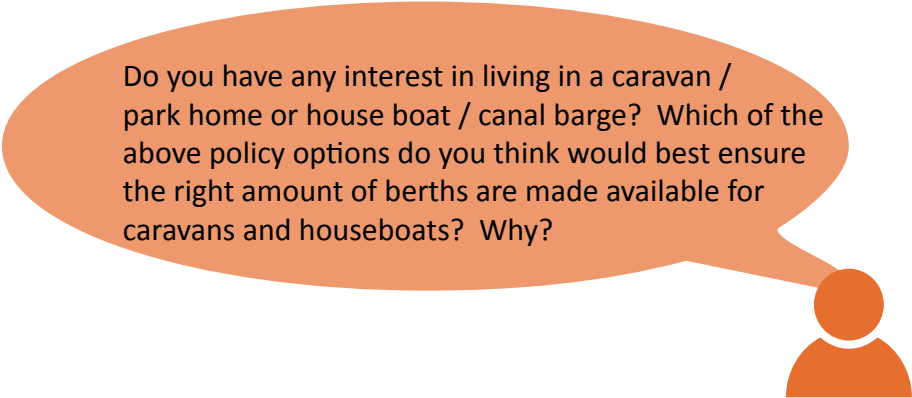
- 1) *Do nothing – allow the market to provide the accommodation through management of existing caravan sites and planning applications for expansion or intensification of sites. Given caravan sites are most likely to be situated in the Green Belt, there is no guarantee that such planning applications will be successful. This approach would not enable the ‘planning’ of locations, and development may occur in more unsustainable areas than under a ‘site allocations’ option.*
- 2) *Allocate new sites, or land on the edge of existing sites, for additional caravan-based accommodation and mooring berths. Such an option would enable the Council to select more sustainable locations than under Option 1. As with Option 1, given the likelihood of sites being in Green Belt locations, this approach may involve the re-designation*

*of Green Belt land (which would require exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated), or a permissive 'non-conforming use in the Green Belt' type policy (Option 3).*

- 3) *As above, vary local Green Belt policy on a site-specific basis, to allow for expansion or intensification of residential caravan sites or mooring berths to meet identified need for such accommodation in West Lancashire. Given Green Belt policy is set out at national level in the NPPF, such a policy would require robust evidence and justification to be found sound.*

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 3 focuses on West Lancashire's demand for alternative forms of accommodation such as caravans and houseboats. Is this something of interest to you? If so, answer the question in the our **Issues & Options Survey**.



Do you have any interest in living in a caravan / park home or house boat / canal barge? Which of the above policy options do you think would best ensure the right amount of berths are made available for caravans and houseboats? Why?

## Social Policy Issue 4: the Skelmersdale housing market

2.21 The housing market in most parts of West Lancashire is considered good; the Borough is an attractive place to live, and properties tend to sell easily. However, the market in much of Skelmersdale is considered weaker by some developers. The regeneration of Skelmersdale, in particular the town centre, has been a longstanding priority in the planning for West Lancashire, featuring in strategic policies in the three Borough-wide plans prepared to date, and, given the issues that continue to face the Borough's largest town, looks set to remain a high priority in the Local Plan Review.

2.22 In recognition of the issues concerning the relative weakness of the housing market in parts of Skelmersdale compared to other parts of the Borough, a number of policies or initiatives are already in place. For example, affordable housing requirements are lower in the town and the Community Infrastructure Levy has a zero charge in the built-up area of Skelmersdale. In 2016, the Council adopted three Local Development Orders on sites in Skelmersdale, effectively granting planning permission for residential development, thereby reducing an element of risk associated with bringing forward development proposals on the site and increasing its attractiveness to developers. One policy option is to further relax the policy requirements associated with residential development in the town to give development there a significant 'advantage' over other parts of the Borough. The disadvantage of such an approach is the potential for development that impacts upon the local area / infrastructure whilst doing little to contribute towards necessary improvements to mitigate the impacts.

2.23 In preparing the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027, it was originally intended to direct a higher proportion (over half) of the

overall housing requirement to Skelmersdale but the eventual allocation was a little less than half the housing requirement of the Borough primarily as a result of concerns over the delivery of some sites around the Town Centre. However, greenfield sites on or adjacent to the edge of the settlement are considered more deliverable in general and such sites are now coming forward for development.

2.24 A number of the Strategic Development Options would require the allocation of significant amounts of development land in or beside Skelmersdale. One way to aid the deliverability of such options is for West Lancashire Borough Council to build the houses themselves (via a 'Development Company'). This option is currently being explored.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the formation of a development company is not a policy option per se, its existence will help to demonstrate the deliverability (and therefore 'soundness') of any policy option that involves significant development in or adjacent to Skelmersdale. In addition, the Council will continue to work with developers, landowners and the HCA to de-risk development sites and facilitate the delivery of infrastructure to support new development.



<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/news/september-news-2016/council-considers-development-company-proposal.aspx>



- 2.25 The more general policy options in relation to the issue of relative market weakness in Skelmersdale are therefore:
- 1) *Continue to relax, or further relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale. This option could include such measures as a lower (or zero) affordable housing requirement, exemption from the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the reduction or waiving of developer contributions towards open space. The result of these relaxations should be to make sites more viable to develop. However, relaxation of the 'usual' policy requirements would result in fewer wider 'community benefits' arising from housing developments in the town.*
  - 2) *Base the Local Plan Review strategy on the regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale, or at least give this policy objective significant weight, having regard to the Council's formation of a development company to ensure delivery of the required development. So, for example, this approach could see the allocation of many / large sites in and around Skelmersdale for significant amounts of residential and employment development, as well as for associated infrastructure (roads, schools, open space, etc.). As such, this policy option would tie in most closely with 'Scenario 4' (focus on Skelmersdale) of the Strategic Development Options for the Borough.*

### Summary

Social Policy Issue 4 discusses the housing market within Skelmersdale. What do you think about this? Answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which policy option for addressing the issue of relative market weakness in Skelmersdale do you think is the most appropriate? Why?



## 3. An Ageing Population

- 3.1 A key issue identified in the Spatial Portrait Paper is the ageing of the West Lancashire population, in particular the very significant increases in the proportion of people aged 75 and over, coupled with a decrease in the working age population. This change in the demographic make-up of West Lancashire is likely to result in increased demand for housing (as people live longer and in smaller households), health care, other services, and appropriate training / employment for the older population. The corresponding proportional decrease in working age persons able to contribute towards providing such services will have implications for job growth requirements, commuting levels, and general housing provision.

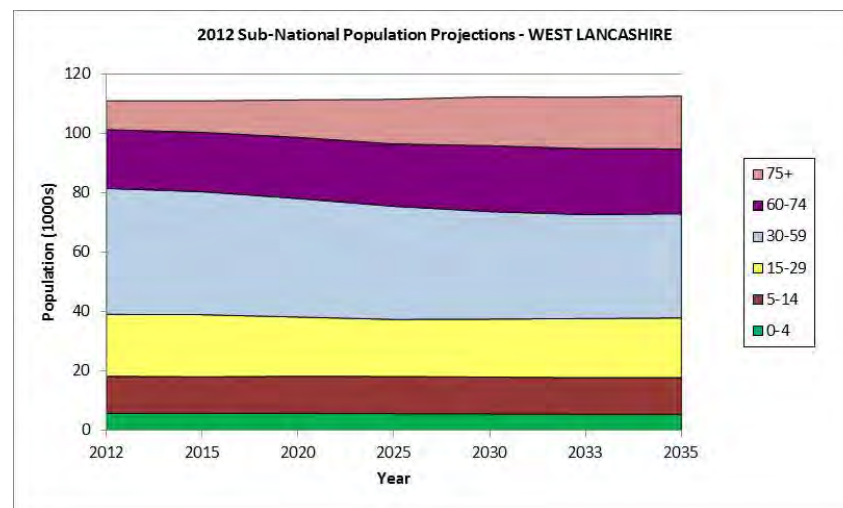
The current evidence available to the Council on the ageing population of the Borough is summarised in the Council's document, 'An Ageing Population in West Lancashire', available on the Council's website.<sup>3</sup> This draws from a variety of sources, including national statistics (2011 Census) and publications, through to more local studies.

- 3.3 The local evidence on the ageing population of West Lancashire can be summarised as follows:

- Whilst the West Lancashire population is projected to increase by 3.6% between 2014 and 2037, the 60-74 age group is projected to grow by 5.5%, the 75+ age group by 77%, and the 85-89 and 90+ age group by even higher percentages. The percentage increases for the older population in West Lancashire are higher than for Lancashire, the North West, and England, meaning

that the Borough could see more marked effects of an ageing population than elsewhere.

- As the population lives longer, the number of people with health / disability issues is expected to increase.<sup>4</sup> For example, in West Lancashire in 2030, 7.0% of men and 9.7% of women aged over 65 are expected to be living with dementia.
- In 2014, 17.6% of people aged 65 or over in West Lancashire were estimated to be unable to manage at least one mobility activity<sup>5</sup> on their own. By 2030 this is projected to increase to 20.2%. Lack of mobility can lead to social isolation, depression and a poor quality of life.



<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> 'Healthy life expectancy' (number of years during which an individual's health is generally good) is approximately 15-20 years shorter than 'general life expectancy', implying that many people will spend their later years in poorer health.

<sup>5</sup> Mobility activities include going out of doors, walking down the road, getting up/down stairs, moving around the house and getting in and out of bed.

- In 2014, 22% of West Lancashire's population over 75 were estimated to be living alone; by 2030, it is predicted that the percentage will have risen to 26%.<sup>3.4</sup>

3.4 In addition to the West Lancashire-specific statistics referred to above, there is a plethora of studies and reports on the elderly and their requirements. Specific local evidence that could be useful to inform policies and strategies to address issues associated with the ageing population in West Lancashire would include:

- How is the housing market reacting to the ageing population – how many dwellings for the elderly are being delivered?
- Is there any evidence of a changing housing market, i.e. a tangible increasing demand for properties for older people?
- Are developers starting to build properties for older people 'as a matter of course' or do they still need a 'policy prompt'?
- Is there a market for appropriate smaller properties for 'downsizers'?
- What are the most successful forms of development for older people (retirement villages / care homes / sheltered housing / individual adaptable dwellings)?
- What works better for older people's accommodation – segregation or integration? How well does 'society' look after the older people in their midst?

3.5 The remainder of this section looks at issues stemming from the ageing of the population, and explores policy options for addressing the issues.<sup>6</sup> The topics come under two broad headings: social (health, services, accessibility) requirements of older people, and residential accommodation for older people.



<sup>6</sup> The exception is the macro-economic issue of ensuring there are enough workers to the Borough to support the needs of the older population, either directly – for example through provision of services, or indirectly – for example through the taxes and national insurance contributions they pay. This matter is addressed elsewhere in this Issues and Options Paper.

## Social Policy Issue 5: The social requirements of older people

3.6 It needs to be borne in mind that the term 'older people' may be defined in different ways – over-55s, over 75s, over 80s... As such, the needs of this potentially very broad group may vary markedly. Some 'older people' may still be working, others retired but fit and active, others frail or with severely limiting health problems. Speaking generically, 'older people' have a number of self-evident requirements – they should be able to access facilities (not least health care), services, and social networks; they should be able to engage with their local or closest communities; they should have access to public and / or private transport; they should have appropriate employment and training opportunities; they should feel safe and supported.

Matters such as the precise nature of health care are beyond the remit of this document. However, planning policy can affect older people's ease of access to health and other facilities, services, and social opportunities, by influencing where residential accommodation is located (covered below), and, to a lesser extent, where and how community, health, social and other facilities are located.

3.8 For non-housebound older people, facilities should be easily accessible, either close to their accommodation, or easy to access by (in decreasing order of preference) foot / bicycle / mobility scooter, public transport, taxi, or private motor vehicle. Retail facilities, town centres and public transport can be made more accessible to a wider range of people (e.g. via safe and attractive car parking, "shopmobility" schemes, convenient and easily accessible buses, etc.).

3.9 Options for policies relating to the social requirements of older people are as follows:

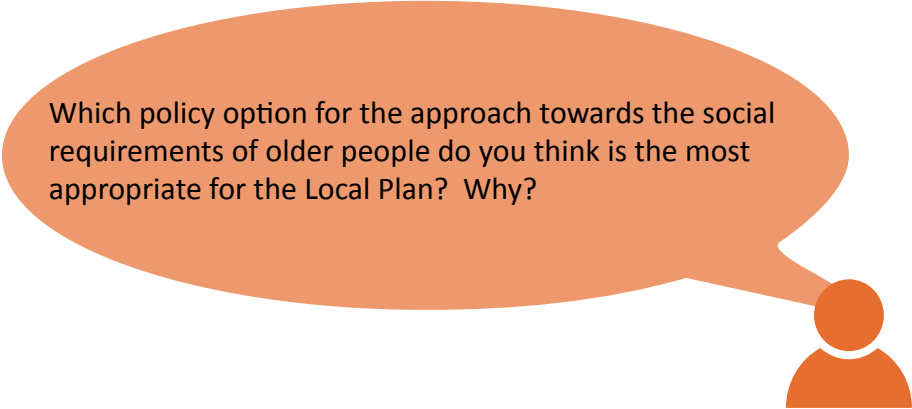
- 1) *A general 'sustainable development' policy. Such a policy would direct facilities and services to areas where other facilities and services already exist (town, village and local centres), and / or to locations with good public transport connections, whilst restricting such development elsewhere. A policy of this nature would not guarantee delivery of services – that would depend on appropriate proposals coming forward via planning applications. Neither is it clear whether it would be beyond reasonable planning powers to 'forbid' certain facilities and services outside the designated areas.*
- 2) *Allocate specific sites in appropriate locations for services and facilities. This approach would be similar to Option 1 in directing facilities and services to specified locations. It would not guarantee delivery of such services but should provide more certainty as to what would be expected where.*
- 3) *Prepare an Area Action Plan / Development Brief / Masterplan to develop or redevelop a large site (current urban site, or part of an urban extension or new settlement), grouping necessary facilities close to public transport hubs. Once again, this is a similar approach to Options 1 and 2, but should provide a little more certainty as to what would go where, and could result in a higher probability of development being delivered, depending on how the Action Plan / Masterplan is prepared (partners involved, etc.).*

3.10 The above approaches are considered acceptable in principle. However, it is usually the case that most necessary facilities and services already exist, and these may often be more 'scattered' in nature, and / or not accessible by public transport (for example out-of-centre retail). Furthermore, whilst planning policies can permit appropriate facilities and services, it is up to other bodies to provide them. Sometimes, it is possible for the local planning authority to liaise with such bodies (e.g. health and social care providers) to help ensure policy objectives are met; at other times, this is not possible.

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3.11 Demographic evidence shows that there are many older people living in rural areas, away from services and public transport routes. Most, if not all, of these people will be independent and mobile, or cared for by younger family members, and may only move to more appropriate (urban) accommodation once rural living becomes impractical. The extent to which the Local Plan Review seeks to influence such patterns of lifestyle is a matter for debate - rural properties exist, and planning policy cannot dictate who may or may not live in them.

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 5 discusses the social requirements for older people, do you think it is important planning should consider this? If so, answer the question in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



Which policy option for the approach towards the social requirements of older people do you think is the most appropriate for the Local Plan? Why?

## Social Policy Issue 6: Residential accommodation for older people

- 3.12 As the number of older people increases, the need to address their specific accommodation requirements becomes greater. These requirements may include easy access to health and social care within specific residential developments, as is the case in care homes or 'retirement villages'. They may also include various features within the property that suit frailer, less dextrous, or less mobile people (for example wheelchair access, entry level bathroom, appropriate fittings and fixtures) or features within the development and its surrounding area to aid people with conditions such as dementia – for example, more 'legible' layouts of buildings or neighbourhoods.
- 3.13 It is expected that the housing market will, to an extent, deliver the kind of accommodation that older people desire, increasingly so as the population ages.<sup>7</sup> However, the limited (largely anecdotal) West Lancashire-specific evidence to date indicates that the provision of suitable accommodation for the elderly, the frail elderly and the elderly with special needs is not yet receiving the priority it requires<sup>8</sup>, and that there is thus a need for a 'policy prompt' to facilitate the provision of sufficient suitable accommodation for the elderly.
- 3.14 Conversely, there is also anecdotal evidence that many older people are not necessarily looking for a purpose-built 'retirement property', but rather for an easily adaptable mainstream property that can meet their changing needs as they age. The Building for Life and Lifetime Homes standards (LHS) aimed to achieve this goal in new residential development.
- 3.15 The current West Lancashire Local Plan has sought to secure accommodation for the elderly via two policy mechanisms. Firstly, there is a requirement that all new dwellings meet the LHS, and secondly, that 20% of dwellings be designed specifically to accommodate the elderly in all schemes of 15 or more homes. This requirement gives considerable leeway to developers in interpreting the terms 'older people' and 'designed for the elderly'.
- 3.16 The LHS requirement was scrapped by the government in 2015 and replaced by new 'Technical Standards' which are part of the Building Regulations: M4(1), M4(2), and M4(3). M4(2) is broadly equivalent to the LHS; M4(3)<sup>9</sup> is more stringent, relating to wheelchair accessibility. All new homes must comply with the basic M4(1); the local authority can also, if desired, and subject to adoption criteria, require adherence to M4(2) and also M4(3). If such a course of action is pursued, every new dwelling would have to comply with the standards. In deciding whether or not to adopt M4(2) or M4(3), the local authority must weigh up the expected extra cost to developers (and consequent likelihood of a reduction in housing delivery) against the benefits of having accessible and adaptable new houses.

<sup>7</sup> When this subject is raised, parties typically refer to 'bungalows'. However, the types of suitable accommodation is far wider ranging than just bungalows and care homes.

<sup>8</sup> This may be the case more generally. For example, the report 'Designing with downsizers' (University of Sheffield / Dwell, 2016), highlights an unmet demand for smaller properties suitable for old people to move into and 'downsize'.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/housing-optional-technical-standards/>

3.17 The policy options, as far as residential accommodation for older people is concerned, are set out below. The options are not all mutually exclusive:

- 1) *Have no specific policy, but let the market deliver appropriate accommodation in line with local demand. Considering patterns of development in West Lancashire over the past decade, such an approach may result in care homes, age-specific retirement homes<sup>10</sup>, and possibly extra care facilities, but is unlikely to deliver significant numbers of highly adaptable or accessible dwellings.*
- 2) *Continue with the 'percentage approach' of the current Local Plan, either with a 20% requirement, or a higher or lower percentage. For larger site allocations, this is likely to deliver stand-alone care home type facilities; for medium size developments, it may result in a small number of adaptable dwellings 'pepper-potted' through schemes.*
- 3) *In conjunction with the above, provide a tighter definition of what constitutes 'housing designed specifically to accommodate the elderly' (what types of housing, what age of occupant). This would give developers more certainty, e.g. in terms of costs, but could remove flexibility, both for the developer and the Council, and lead to missed opportunities for certain sites, where a more innovative product may be more appropriate.*
- 4) *Adopt one or both of the optional Technical Standards for new houses. The justification for, and viability implications of, such an approach would need to be tested at examination. The presumed extra costs of meeting these standards may limit development*

*in West Lancashire, or may result in other policy objectives (e.g. provision of affordable housing) being undermined. A variation of this option could be a requirement that a percentage of new dwellings meet one or both of the optional Technical Standards, i.e. that compliance with M4(2) and / or M4(3) is one of the Council's interpretations of what constitutes 'accommodation for the elderly'.*

- 5) *Require adherence to, or at least that regard be had to, the HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) Design Principles.<sup>11</sup> These principles are based on 10 key criteria; many reflect general good design (for example good light, ventilation, storage, room to move around), but are of particular relevance to older people's housing.*
- 6) *Allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation, whether that be age-restricted bungalows, sheltered accommodation, care homes, an extra care facility, or a full-blown 'retirement village'. Policy could specify the exact type of accommodation, or it could be left open.*
- 7) *Adopt the more general policy approach of promoting 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods', i.e. generating a variety of housing provision and range of support relevant to a spectrum of ages and stages in a family cycle. Such an approach may be difficult to enforce.*

<sup>10</sup> E.g. 'McCarthy Stone' type developments

<sup>11</sup> See [http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design\\_building/HAPPI/](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design_building/HAPPI/) for the principles.

### Summary

Social Policy Issue 6 addresses residential accommodation for older people. What are your thoughts on this? Answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

As you get older, what kind of accommodation do you think you might want to live in? Which policy option(s) for providing accommodation for older people would you therefore prefer?





## 4. Young People & Children

4.1 Children and young people can reasonably be considered to be those of 19 years old and below. They form a significant portion of the population of West Lancashire with projected numbers anticipated to remain approximately static at between 25,500 and 26,000 between 2014 and 2037. This is an age group of transition where issues will change or vary in importance as younger children grow up to become teenagers and then adults. Even the youngest children at present will reach adulthood during the time period that the Local Plan will cover to 2037 or 2050 (either 20 years or 33 years from present). As such, issues that are currently relevant to a wider population such as employment (in terms of entering the workforce) and requiring somewhere to live (in terms of getting on to and moving along the housing ladder) will apply. Those matters are addressed by other sections of this or other topic papers.

4.2 The Lancashire Children's and Young People's Trust have identified priorities for West Lancashire as being:

- Reducing School Exclusions;
- Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment;
- Increasing the proportion of young people who are in employment, education and training;
- Increasing the proportion of children and young people with a healthy weight;
- Reducing risk taking behaviour; and

- Things to do and places to go.

4.3 Along with other service providers, the Local Plan can assist in educational provision and opportunities, facilitating healthy and active lifestyles and ensuring that facilities are provided for a range of activities. In this context, the repetition of inequality from one generation to the next needs to be broken to ensure more equitable life chances. Whilst 21.2% of children in West Lancashire are in poverty, which is less than the county, regional and national (28%) averages, there are significantly higher rates in Skelmersdale. This corresponds with geographical concentrations of other indicators of social and economic deprivation.

4.4 Primary schools in the Borough are generally of good quality with 20% being rated as outstanding, 3 as needing improvement and the remainder rated as good. In addition, all but one secondary school was rated as good. This is reflected by the performance of West Lancashire's pupils in achieving GCSEs better than regional and national averages. In addition, there are higher levels of those aged 16-18 years in education, employment and training in the Borough than county, regional and national averages. However, there are geographical inequalities in educational attainment with lower levels in Skelmersdale, which reduces employment prospects. It is important that the Local Plan assists in the provision of accessible, modern learning environments by being supportive of any needs for new or extended schools and colleges such as the new state of the art campus for West Lancashire College at Skelmersdale. Training in preparation for employment is dealt with in the following section Stimulating Economic Growth.

4.5 The provision of inadequate facilities or the wrong kind of services can contribute towards unhealthy life choices. The Local Plan can encourage healthy and active lifestyles at an early age by providing opportunities for play, other physical exercise and informal learning. It can also consider if potentially unhealthy eating choices should be restricted in certain locations, for example takeaways in proximity to schools.

These matters are important because obesity amongst children in West Lancashire in reception year and year 6 remains above the national and regional averages. Participation in physical activity can contribute towards improved self-esteem and confidence and in this regard levels of the latter are much lower amongst West Lancashire school children than across Lancashire as a whole.

4.6 The Council's Leisure Strategy includes an assessment of play areas and, separately, of playing pitches. It is important that the quantity and quality (including perceptions of safety) of these as well as other open spaces are protected by the Local Plan and that they are accessible at the local level as children and young people have lower personal mobility than the general population, relying upon walking, cycling, public transport or parents for travel. The difference in play requirements between the younger and older age groups needs to be acknowledged. The supply of local facilities in rural areas is of increased importance as this is where lower levels of personal mobility for younger people exist. Green corridors providing for safe cycling and walking between locations would encourage active travel.

4.7 The Local Plan also needs to ensure that built community facilities meet the needs of younger age groups and their service providers in order to provide a choice of activities. Most obviously this includes children's centres, of which there are 5 in the Borough, and leisure centres with similar issues in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility being relevant.

4.8 However, while all of the above is extremely important for the development of the children and young people in West Lancashire, at this stage it would not be appropriate to specific policy options on these issues as the provision of, for example, education facilities and open space and leisure facilities will be dependent on where new development is to be located. Therefore, the Council will continue to work with the providers of those services to ensure the Local Plan plans for the land requirements of those providers in light of the increased populations in each part of the Borough.



## 5. The Student & Graduate Population

- 5.1 Edge Hill University is a major employer in the Borough having grown significantly over the past two decades, and enjoys a good reputation nationally. Overall, it is considered that the University has a beneficial impact upon West Lancashire, making a significant contribution to the local economy through direct employment, the 'supply chain', and patronage of local businesses.<sup>12</sup>
- 5.2 However, Edge Hill's expansion in previous years has raised a number of issues, including the proliferation of student houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Ormskirk and seasonal traffic congestion in Ormskirk. The latter is an issue covered more in the Strategic Development Options Paper as part of a general discussion of highways and transport infrastructure and so this topic paper focuses more on the accommodation issue.
- 5.3 The Edge Hill University Estates Strategy (2009) contains an action plan for the development of the campus to 2020. This includes the creation of new built facilities, and the relocation of sports pitch facilities. The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 acknowledged there were 'exceptional circumstances' relating to the University's needs, and released 10ha of Green Belt land to accommodate the University's medium term development plans, consistent with the Estates Strategy. Planning permission was granted in 2012 for several hundred additional student bed spaces on the campus; these are now predominantly complete.
- 5.4 Work is underway to assess the need for future accommodation, looking at the current and consented amount of accommodation available for students, and projected student numbers over coming

years. The effect of changes in tuition funding and the existence of alternative opportunities to study at university on student numbers at Edge Hill will also be monitored.

- 5.5 The proliferation of HMOs in Ormskirk, in particular between 2000 and 2010, has had a number of effects on the area. The properties that have been converted to HMOs tend to be at the cheaper end of the housing market (for example terraced and smaller semi-detached houses).

This has resulted not only in a shortage of cheaper, more affordable properties for sale. In streets where the percentage of HMOs is high (15 streets have more than 20% HMOs), the character of the street can be changed by the number of students. Even at low percentages, the property(-ies) immediately adjacent to an HMO can be disproportionately affected.



<sup>12</sup> Edge Hill University – Economic Impact Report (Regeneris Consulting, April 2011). This study investigated the extent of the impact of EHU on West Lancashire, Merseyside, and the wider North West economies.

## Social Policy Issue 7: Provision of HMOs in Ormskirk

5.6 The proliferation of HMOs has been a pressing local (Ormskirk area) issue for a number of years. Prior to 2012, the Council was unable to influence the spread of HMOs as planning permission was not required to convert a dwelling house to a (3-6 person) HMO. Recognising the problem, the Council implemented an Article 4 Direction covering Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead in December 2011, the effect of which was to make it necessary to obtain planning permission to convert a house to a HMO. In conjunction with the Article 4 Direction, a Local Plan policy was introduced (as part of the current Local Plan adopted in October 2013) that limited the percentage of HMOs permissible on residential streets (policy RS3 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027). The policy has largely been upheld at appeal.

Whilst this policy cannot influence the conversion of HMOs back to dwelling houses, it is considered it has successfully slowed the further spread of HMOs, not allowing any more HMOs on streets already over the specified percentage limit, and limiting the percentage of HMOs on most other streets to 5% or below.

5.8 However, it must always be remembered that HMOs are not just occupied by students, but are occupied by post-graduates, recent graduates and young professionals, among others. As such, the need for HMOs in Ormskirk is not just driven by students and, in fact, if West Lancashire is to retain graduates from Edge Hill in the area, there must be suitable and affordable provision of accommodation for them.

5.9 Therefore, in relation to HMOs, it is assumed that policy RS3 should continue in one form or another through the Local Plan Review, but in the three years that policy RS3 has been in existence, stakeholders

have suggested a variety of adjustments to the HMO aspect of policy RS3.

The following represent the key options open to consideration for this policy:

- 1) *Expand the 'Article 4 area' and the area to which the HMO percentage policy applies, to include neighbouring settlements, e.g. Burscough or Skelmersdale, or the whole of West Lancashire. This would mean that the spread of HMOs would be controlled not just in Ormskirk but further afield. Imposition of an Article 4 Direction is usually restricted to areas where there is a particular problem with a permitted development right (in this case, changing from a house to an HMO). Whilst one effect of policy RS3 has been to widen the area of search in which potential HMO landlords look to buy property, the Council has no evidence at present that there are pressing issues associated with HMOs in settlements outside the current Article 4 area.*
- 2) *Revoke the Article 4 Direction and policy RS3. This would allow a 'free-for-all' in terms of conversion of houses to HMOs. Such an option would be likely to ensure student accommodation needs are met in full, but would also be likely to greatly exacerbate the issues highlighted above, and have a significant detrimental effect upon the town.*
- 3) *Decrease the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a lower percentage, potentially even down to 0%. This change to policy would further restrict future HMOs. In preparing policy RS3, it was considered that a 5% limit (one HMO out of*

20 residential properties) was an acceptable balance between protecting residential amenity and meeting student and graduate accommodation needs and so there would need to be a very clear justification for further restriction.

- 4) Increase the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a higher percentage. This change would allow a more controlled relaxation compared to Option 2 and potentially allow for certain streets to take a higher proportion of HMOs.

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 7 discusses the issues associated with the provision of HMOs in Ormskirk. What do you think about this? Answer the question below in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which key policy option with regard to the issue of control over HMOs in Ormskirk do you think is the most appropriate? Why? Are there any other policy options or minor changes that should also be considered?



## Social Policy Issue 8: Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk

5.10 In addition to HMOs, students can be housed in purpose-built accommodation, either on-campus or off-campus. The provision of such accommodation on-campus is referred to above. For off-campus accommodation, the Council's policy stance in the current Local Plan is to restrict such accommodation except where an overriding need for such accommodation is demonstrated, demand for the conversion of existing dwellings to HMOs will be demonstrably reduced, and the accommodation will not negatively impact the amenity of surrounding areas, especially residential areas. Since the adoption of this policy in 2013, only limited, new-build off-campus student accommodation has been granted planning permission in Ormskirk.

5.11 With regard to the provision of off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation, the policy options are as follows:

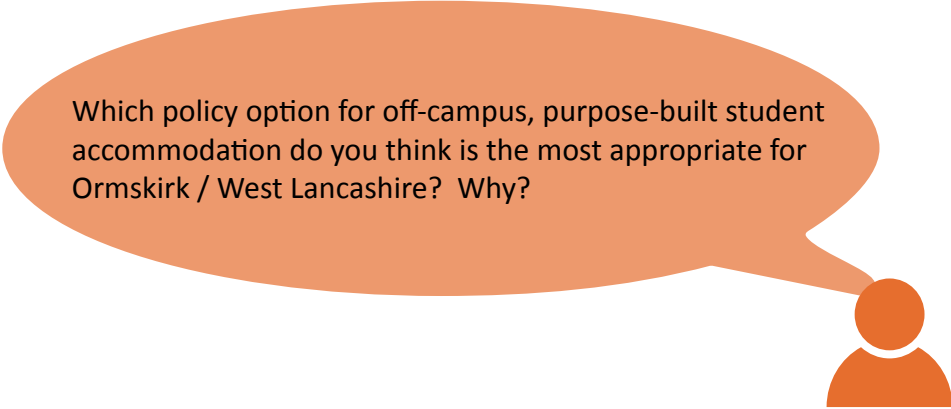
- 1) *Continue with the current policy approach of restricting off-campus purpose-built student accommodation unless strict criteria are met. There is no evidence to suggest this approach has been inappropriate over the past 3-4 years, although provision of purpose-built student accommodation off-campus (other than HMOs) has been minimal.*
- 2) *Relax the current policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University Campus. Such a change in policy would require strong justification, not least robust evidence of continuing unmet need for student accommodation. However, a more relaxed policy could in theory be beneficial if it were to reduce demand for HMOs, either to lessen the current (slow) spread of HMOs, or to result in some HMOs converting back to dwelling houses. Suitable criteria would be necessary to ensure off-campus student accommodation has no unacceptable impacts on the local community.*
- 3) *Allocate specific sites for off-campus student accommodation, whilst restricting 'unplanned' developments elsewhere. This would enable the Council to have an element of control over numbers and locations of bedspaces to be provided. Once again, such an approach should be on the basis of robust evidence that there remains an unmet accommodation need. Sites chosen should be such that there is no unacceptable impact on the local community.*



- 4) *Tighten the current policy to severely, or entirely, restrict off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation. The Council would need extremely strong evidence of harm to justify such an approach and would need to be sure that no new accommodation is required to accommodate student numbers. Such a policy is likely to lead to an increase in applications for HMOs and could potentially make the University less attractive to students if there is insufficient accommodation of good quality.*

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 8 discusses the provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk. If you have views on this issue, please answer the question in our **Issues and Options Survey**.



Which policy option for off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation do you think is the most appropriate for Ormskirk / West Lancashire? Why?

## 6. Minority Groups / People with a Disability

- 6.1 Planning policy matters are unlikely to have an impact on many diversity groups, including those of gender, religion and sexuality. However, some policy areas will have varying levels of impact on diversity groups and it will be important for policy to consider the requirements of those different groups. This may include:
- Age: To ensure that the young can access affordable homes, employment opportunities and play and leisure facilities; whilst the old have access to specialised / elderly accommodation, care, health and transport services.
  - Racial or ethnic groups: To respond to the requirements of gypsy and traveller groups who have particular accommodation needs. It is unlikely that other ethnic groups would be affected by planning policy.
- 6.2 Consideration should also be given to those with disabilities, including disability arising through age. This is particularly relevant to the design of new developments, to ensure that accessibility is promoted through both the physical environment and building design. As the population ages, there will need to be a greater focus on homes that can adapt to accommodate changing physical abilities and needs. It is anticipated that the numbers of people affected by dementia will increase with an ageing population and good design can help sufferers better identify their environment and serve to reduce their confusion. However, the provision of suitable accommodation for the elderly section above (Social Policy Issue 6) addresses this issue insofar as people of all ages who are disabled are similarly affected.





## Social Policy Issue 9: Delivering suitable accommodation for travellers

- 6.3 There is, and has been for several years, a lack of authorised / suitable accommodation in the Borough for the travelling community. The 2014 Merseyside and West Lancashire GTAA identified a need for 22 permanent traveller pitches in West Lancashire by 2033, as well as a transit site and travelling showpeople yard. The current West Lancashire Local Plan (and its predecessors) did not allocate any specific sites to meet traveller accommodation needs, and work was suspended in June 2016 on the emerging Provision for Traveller Sites Development Plan Document, due to a shortage of deliverable sites being identified, mainly on account of landowners being unwilling for their land to be considered as a potential location for a traveller site. Consequently, all but one currently occupied gypsy pitches in West Lancashire are unauthorised, and a number of the pitches are in Flood Zone 3, where national policy does not allow residential caravans. The need remains to allocate specific deliverable sites to meet the accommodation needs of travellers (as defined in the government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015), and is therefore a matter for the Local Plan Review to address.
- 6.4 Provision of accommodation for travellers has proved a very difficult task, with the 'available' sites – i.e. the sites in the ownership of travellers, or of people willing to have the land as a traveller site – often in unsuitable locations, for example Flood Zone 3, and the 'suitable' sites not available for travellers to purchase. In preparing the Provision for Traveller Sites DPD, the Council undertook as extensive and rigorous a site search as was reasonably possible, carrying out two calls for sites, writing to owners of potential and allocated housing sites, contacting major landowners, looking at Council-owned land, and asking neighbouring local

authorities under the Duty to Cooperate whether they would be willing to meet any of West Lancashire's traveller accommodation needs. The result was just one site considered to be available, suitable and viable, its capacity falling far short of the objectively assessed traveller accommodation needs for the Borough.

- 6.5 The National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites requires that specific deliverable sites be allocated to meet traveller accommodation needs in the short term – i.e. for the next five years, and that developable sites (or, failing that, broad locations) be identified to meet medium to long term needs. Needs must be objectively assessed, although the government's recent redefinition of 'travellers' may result in a change to needs figures. (As stated above, work will be commissioned to reassess traveller accommodation needs in West Lancashire.) Therefore, choosing whether or not to allocate sites, and choosing how many pitches to allocate are not policy options. The policy options – size, nature and distribution of sites – are discussed below.
- 6.6 It was recommended in good practice guidance<sup>13</sup> (now withdrawn, but still considered relevant) that traveller sites contain between 5 and 15 pitches, although they can be larger. In theory, the whole Borough's traveller needs could be met on one large site, but in reality, this is not considered a viable option as travellers and their advocacy bodies all advise that co-locating different groups (and backgrounds) of travellers could lead to tension and unacceptable living conditions on the site. There are options, however, for a permanent site to be sited next to a transit site, owned by the occupants of the permanent site. It is also possible

13 Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide, DCLG, 2008.

to co-locate more than one group of travellers from the same ethnic background. At this stage, it is not possible to set out specific options for site numbers at present as up-to-date need figures are unknown.

6.7 The policy options with regard to provision of traveller sites are set out below. Once again, not all of the options are mutually exclusive.

- 1) *Allow the travellers based at present in West Lancashire to stay on their (currently unauthorised) sites. The existing travellers based in the Borough have been in situ for a number of years (in some cases, more than 20 years), and several have formed ties to their nearest community (for example through attendance at school). The Council has no evidence of the current travellers causing unacceptable harm to their nearby communities. It is usually cited as good practice to meet the needs of travellers where they arise; allowing them to stay in their present locations would achieve this. The main disadvantage with this policy option is the fact that three of the current sites are located on land that is classified as Flood Zone 3, on which national policy does not permit 'highly vulnerable development' (which includes static caravans), and thus this option could not meet all of West Lancashire's traveller accommodation needs. The extent of Flood Zone 3 land means that it will be unlikely that the needs of travellers currently based in Banks could be met where they arise.*
- 2) *When allocating new sites for other developments in the Borough set aside part of those sites for travellers. This approach has worked in a number of locations elsewhere. In searching for sites*

*as part of the abortive work on the Provision for Traveller Sites DPD, the Council found it extremely difficult to find landowners who were willing for their land (or part of their land) to be considered as a traveller site. However, if the setting aside of part of the land was used as a 'bargaining tool' when negotiating the allocation of sites, this may result in greater success in finding willing landowners. Of course, any such sites would need to be suitably located, and there would need to be a guarantee that the travellers and other occupants of the site in question could live together without any issues.*

- 3) *Compulsory Purchase of suitable sites in order to allocate them.*

*If the Council enjoys no success in finding available sites, the remaining option is, as a very last resort, compulsory purchase of land by the Council in order to make them available to the travelling community and be able to allocate deliverable sites.*

#### Summary

Social Policy Issue 9 discusses how sustainable accommodation for travellers can be delivered. What do you think about this? Answer the questions in our **Issues & Options Survey**.

Which policy option(s) for addressing the issues of meeting traveller accommodation needs do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?



Are there any other social policy issues that should also be considered? If so, that are they?



## 7. What Happens Next?

### Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

7.1 Having read this Paper, the Council would like you to respond by commenting on what you've read through the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options consultation. The easiest way to do this is online at [www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan), where you will find instructions on how to respond.

7.2 The best way to respond is by completing a short survey online available at the above web link. The survey is related to the questions you'll have seen scattered throughout this Paper and the other Issues & Options consultation papers. You can also email or write in with your comments to:

**Email:** [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)  
**Postal Address:** **Local Plan Consultation**  
**Planning**  
**West Lancashire Borough Council**  
**52 Derby Street**  
**Ormskirk**  
**L39 2DF**

7.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers, as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at:

- all Libraries in West Lancashire,
- at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF; and
- at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.

7.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.



## Next Steps

- 7.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing a new Local Plan, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down on, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. At that point, site allocations are proposed to meet the development needs identified.
- The Preferred Options Paper will be publicly consulted upon and the feedback from that consultation will be considered and the Council will make the necessary refinements and amendments to the proposed policies and site allocations to prepare what is essentially a "final draft" Local Plan, known as the Publication version, which represents the Local Plan that the Council want to take forward and adopt.
- 7.7 Once again, the Publication version will be made available for public scrutiny and formal representations (comments) on the document will be invited. However, this time, the comments will not be considered by the Council, but submitted with the Local Plan to a Planning Inspector to consider as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. This Examination will involve public hearings where those invited to speak by the Planning Inspector can put forward their views to help the Inspector to arrive at a decision on whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and whether it is a "sound" document.
- 7.8 More detail will be provided by the Council on how to engage with the Preferred Options Paper, the Publication version and the Examination in Public as we reach each stage, but the above gives a brief overview of the process.
- 7.9 Alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Council will continue to prepare and commission new studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the Council's decision-making on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations are most appropriate for inclusion in the new Local Plan.



**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**





# West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation

WEST LANCASHIRE



LOCAL PLAN



## Spatial Portrait Paper February 2017





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# 1. Introduction

1.1 The current West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 included a Spatial Portrait of the Borough which considered how, at the time of writing the Local Plan, the Borough was functioning in economic, social and environmental terms, looking at key indicators and data to identify issues that the Borough was facing and assessing the physical nature of the Borough, be that in terms of the natural environment, built environment or infrastructure provision.

1.2 As the Council begins preparation of a new Local Plan, this Spatial Portrait needs reviewing to see what has changed in recent years in the Borough and in how it functions, and what these changes mean for the key issues that the Borough faces and that the Local Plan can help address.

1.3 The Spatial Portrait in the current Local Plan split the Borough into six spatial areas, which were used to identify how development should be distributed across the Borough and so, as a start, this review of the Spatial Portrait will use those spatial areas to look at the Borough. Those six areas were:

- Skelmersdale with Up Holland
- Ormskirk with Aughton
- Burscough
- Northern Parishes
- Eastern Parishes

- Western Parishes



## 2. Skelmersdale with Up Holland

2.1 Skelmersdale with Up Holland is designated in the current Local Plan as a Regional Town, the highest tier of West Lancashire's settlement hierarchy. 38% of the Borough's population live there (circa 35,000 in the unparished area of Skelmersdale and over 7,000 in the Parish of Up Holland). It contains a large number of services and facilities, a large stock of housing, employment opportunities, retail and leisure uses and is reasonably well-served by public transport (buses).

2.2 Although historically there was some industry in the Skelmersdale with Up Holland area, the area was predominantly rural until the early 1960s with Up Holland being the larger settlement and Skelmersdale just a small mining community. However, this changed with the establishment of Skelmersdale New Town in 1961 which was planned to accommodate people displaced from the conurbation of Liverpool. Skelmersdale has subsequently grown to become the largest and most densely populated settlement in the Borough, but has not reached its originally planned size of 80,000 residents.



2.3 Skelmersdale has a young, more varied population structure than other areas of the Borough. However, life expectancy in the Skelmersdale wards of Digmoor, Birch Green and Tanhouse is the lowest in the Borough with men in the most deprived areas having life expectancies almost 10 years less than those in the least deprived areas<sup>1</sup>. Skelmersdale is the most deprived area in West Lancashire with 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (60%) featuring in the top 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally (compared with a figure of 29% for West Lancashire as a whole). There is therefore a clear polarisation within the Borough between those areas with the highest and lowest levels of deprivation.

2.4 Rates of unemployment are above average in Skelmersdale (10% unemployment rates in the town compared to 2% across the rest of the Borough). Skelmersdale has the highest proportion of people in the Borough with no qualifications and there is limited knowledge-based employment available. Skelmersdale has a significant proportion of its residents employed in the town, particularly in manual work in the manufacturing and industrial industries suggesting that the skills base in the town is low.

2.5 The area has good access to the strategic road network with connections to the M58 and M6 beyond, as well as A-roads to Wigan, Ormskirk and St Helens. However, Skelmersdale has the highest proportions of people owning no vehicle, meaning that access to employment and services is increasingly dependent on public transport, and the location of facilities near to housing. The only railway station (Up Holland) is located to the south east of Skelmersdale, relatively distant and disconnected from residential populations and only providing a limited service between Kirkby

<sup>1</sup> The seven wards: a focus on Skelmersdale, S Collins, Lancashire County Council, March 2015

and Manchester Victoria via Wigan. As such, Skelmersdale is one of the largest towns in the country without a railway station. This has led the Council and its partners (Lancashire County Council and Merseytravel) to investigate the feasibility of providing a new rail link, joining the Kirkby-Wigan line with a new rail station in Skelmersdale that would provide direct services to both Liverpool and Manchester.

2.6 Skelmersdale New Town consists of clear residential, industrial and retail zones. The presence of sizable employment areas on its outskirts means that the town is West Lancashire's key location for employment, containing 43% of all the Borough's employee jobs and over 70% of land allocated for employment uses in the Borough. The town centre comprises the purpose-built but dated Concourse Shopping Centre and bus station, some associated services, offices, the new West Lancashire College campus and an Asda superstore at the north-eastern fringe. Connections between these separate buildings are in need of improvement, and this is planned through a consented regeneration scheme comprising a new cinema, food and drink outlets and a mix of other retail uses. This would assist in enhancing the town centre's limited entertainment and night time economy and reduce the leakage of such spending from the Borough.

2.7 The new town legacy means that just under half of all homes in Skelmersdale are rented and while there is a large stock of housing, its quality is not always high and the choice of larger dwellings can be limited. Residential areas are of varying quality. The 'Radburn' style road layout is such that the town is essentially congestion-free and pedestrians are largely segregated from the road system

through a network of footpaths, underpasses and footbridges. Use of some of these facilities is limited because of a perceived risk of crime. There are three local centres at Ashurst, Sandy Lane and Digmoor which offer a range of smaller shops and services.

2.8 The new town has extensive green spaces, with 56% of the area being classed as such. It includes Tawd Valley Park and the Green Flag awarded Beacon Country Park along with a variety of playing fields, wooded cloughs and other open spaces, giving much of the town an open, 'green' feel. The town is surrounded by Green Belt, much of which is the best and most versatile agricultural

land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) with the highest quality grades 1 and 2 concentrated to the south and west of Skelmersdale. Additionally, there are several locally important biological heritage sites within and surrounding the town, in particular the Tawd Valley running from the north of the town right into the town centre. The area identified as being at risk from flooding is limited and is primarily confined to a narrow band following the River Tawd.

2.9 Aside from the lack of a rail link serving Skelmersdale and the need to provide an improved town centre, Skelmersdale with Up Holland is generally well served by local services and infrastructure, especially given that the town was originally intended to accommodate more than double its current population. In terms of education provision, primary provision is more than adequate and, while attainment levels at secondary level could be improved, there is sufficient secondary provision, even after the recent closure of the Glenburn High School.

- 2.10 Up Holland adjoins Skelmersdale to the east and includes a conservation area and a scheduled ancient monument (Up Holland Benedictine Priory) as well as a nationally important wildlife site at the former Ravenhead Brick Works. It contains a local centre with a range of services, although residents arguably look more towards Wigan than to West Lancashire to meet their needs.



#### Key issues for Skelmersdale with Up Holland:

- Skelmersdale contains deprived areas, having on average poorer health, lower educational attainment, higher unemployment and lower incomes than other parts of West Lancashire. Parts of the town are poorly designed and / or in need of regeneration.
- Skelmersdale town centre would benefit from enhancement of its retail, leisure and evening economy offer to cement its role as the highest level centre in the Borough.
- Skelmersdale with Up Holland has excellent connections to the national road network and reasonable bus services to neighbouring towns. The area is well suited to take advantage of the logistics-based opportunities associated with the Liverpool 2 deep water terminal.
- Whilst Skelmersdale with Up Holland has reasonable bus services to nearby towns, Skelmersdale at present lacks a rail station.

## 3. Ormskirk with Aughton

3.1 Ormskirk is an attractive, relatively compact, historic market town situated centrally within West Lancashire. It is the second largest settlement in West Lancashire (population 18,000) and functions as the Borough's administrative centre. Ormskirk contains a full range of facilities and services – retail, a twice-weekly market (first granted a charter in 1286), leisure, sports, civic functions, primary and secondary schools, a university, hospital, rail and bus stations, and a small retail park, business park and industrial estate, although the amount of employment land for a settlement the size of Ormskirk is relatively low. The town centre is pedestrianised, much of it lying within a conservation area, containing historic and landmark buildings such as the clock tower and parish church with its distinctive joint spire and tower. There is one local centre in the northern part of Ormskirk, on County Road, providing local retail and services. Parts of Ormskirk can suffer from flooding associated with the Hurlston Brook which runs across the town, although the actual designated Flood Zones 2 and 3 only cover a very small area.

3.2 Aughton (population of Aughton Parish 8,000) is a mainly residential area lying directly south of Ormskirk on the rising ground of Holborn Hill, with Christ Church tower a local landmark and “gateway” into Aughton from Ormskirk. While historically its own entity, Aughton effectively now functions as a ‘suburb’ of Ormskirk. The pattern of development in Aughton tends to be less dense than in Ormskirk, and the average age of properties is generally less than in Ormskirk. Apart from two small local centres, Aughton tends to rely on Ormskirk for its facilities and services.

3.3 Ormskirk with Aughton has reasonably good transport links to surrounding areas, with a fifteen minute frequency electric rail service to Liverpool, and a less frequent diesel service to Preston. However, there are no direct east or west rail links (e.g. to Manchester or Southport). A number of bus routes converge at Ormskirk bus station, connecting to Liverpool, Southport, Preston and Wigan. The M58 motorway can be accessed three kilometres south east of the settlement, and the A59 provides good north-south road links, whilst the A570 provides north west – south east links. However, there are issues with congestion on the one-way road system around Ormskirk town centre, leading to problems with air quality (with the Borough's only designated Air Quality Management Area being located on Moor Street, adjacent to the bus station). Proposals for a bypass were in existence for several decades, but have been shelved, and the future planning for the area is being undertaken on the basis of there being no bypass.





3.4 In recent times, parts of Ormskirk have experienced instances of flooding during periods of heavy rainfall on already saturated ground and the town is served by the New Lane WWTW which is currently close to capacity (see below in Burscough section) but generally, infrastructure provision (other than in relation to traffic congestion) is good in Ormskirk.

3.5 Recent development of Ormskirk with Aughton has generally been 'infill' in nature (for example on former industrial, hospital or school sites); however, Grove Farm, a greenfield site on the northern edge of Ormskirk, was allocated for development in the current Local Plan and its construction is expected to start in 2017.

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Apart from small pockets of relative deprivation in Scott Ward, Ormskirk is generally of average affluence. Aughton is one of the most affluent areas of the Borough, with many large and expensive properties, and its affluence being borne out by national statistics on multiple deprivation, average earnings, car ownership, qualifications, etc.

3.7 Like other centres, Ormskirk town centre has suffered as a result of general retail trends (out-of-town and internet shopping) and the economic downturn from 2008 onwards, and continues to face these pressures. However, the town centre has fared better than average, and still has a low vacancy rate and a good number of independent, specialist shops. The night-time economy is developing, with bars and restaurants increasing in number, boosted by the patronage of the local student population.



3.8 Edge Hill University has seen significant expansion since 2000, and is currently a thriving and popular university with an attractive campus. However, the increase in student numbers has raised issues, most notably a proliferation of houses in multiple occupation in Ormskirk (there are now well over 400), leading to a marked change in character in some residential streets, and a much-diminished supply of affordable or cheaper homes for sale or rent by non-students. Conversely, the University provides a significant boost to the local economy, jobs- and trade-wise (1,580 full time equivalent jobs and Gross Value Added £75m per annum)<sup>2</sup>. One of the goals of the future planning of the area is the retention of Edge Hill graduates in suitable quality jobs in the Borough.



### Key Issues for Ormskirk with Aughton:

- Ormskirk is a highly sustainable settlement, so in theory an appropriate location for more development (subject to infrastructure capacity). However, there is a lack of suitable developable 'infill' sites in the urban area. Undeveloped land surrounding Ormskirk with Aughton tends to be highly visible and open and / or subject to constraints.
- Ormskirk town centre is subject to various pressures; these need to be addressed and the town centre allowed to 'evolve', making the most of its assets, in order to maintain its vitality and viability.
- There are problems with traffic congestion in and around the town centre.
- Edge Hill University, whilst providing significant economic benefits to the town, has impacted upon Ormskirk, in particular with regard to student accommodation (houses in multiple occupation) and, seasonally, traffic congestion.

## 4. Burscough

- 4.1 Burscough is the third largest settlement in West Lancashire (population of Burscough Parish 9,500), and functions as a 'Key Service Centre', providing a good range of services to surrounding rural areas and a significant area of employment land (13% of the Borough's allocated employment land) for a town its size. The settlement and its attractive surrounding rural area is flat, and mostly in agricultural use, although Martin Mere (internationally important wetlands and designated Special Protection Area, and an established tourist attraction) lies 1.5 kilometres (1 mile) north west of Burscough. There is some historical interest in and around Burscough, with the remains of an Augustinian priory, a number of listed buildings and Conservation Areas, and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, which runs east-west through the settlement, with a branch towards Rufford, Tarleton and the River Ribble at the Burscough 'Top Locks' conservation area. Burscough was recently voted by a national newspaper as one of the top ten places in the country to raise a family.
- 4.2 Burscough town centre is reasonably vibrant and contains a range of shops including a large supermarket, a sports centre, other businesses, a thriving church, GP Practices and a library (although it has been identified for closure recently) and it is home to Burscough Wharf, a unique collection of shops, businesses and other facilities in converted historic buildings adjacent to the Canal. A small retail park, which includes a Booths supermarket, has recently opened on the southern edge of the settlement; its impact on Burscough (and Ormskirk) town centre will become apparent over coming years. Education-wise, Burscough has a secondary school and several primary schools.

- 4.3 Over the past four decades, Burscough has expanded significantly, following a number of sizeable housing developments. The Yew Tree Farm site (75 hectares, south west of Burscough) has been allocated in the current Local Plan for housing and employment uses, as well as some safeguarded land for potential longer-term development.



- 4.4 Burscough is reasonably well-connected transport-wise. Two railway routes run through Burscough: from Southport to Wigan / Manchester with a half-hourly service, and from Ormskirk to Preston with a less regular service. There is no direct connection between the two lines, although the reopening of "the Burscough Curves" has been mooted for a number of years to make this connection. A

small number of bus routes serve Burscough, but most are infrequent and do not run in the evenings, meaning that connection by public transport even to nearby Ormskirk can be difficult. The A59 dissects the settlement north-south, and carries heavy traffic at times. The A5209 runs from Burscough towards the M6 and is heavily used, including by HGVs travelling to and from Burscough's employment areas, even though it is not an ideal route due to the nature of the road as it runs through Burscough and the Eastern Parishes.

Local residents' main infrastructure concerns relate to drainage and flooding. Even though no part of the town of Burscough is within Flood Zone 2 or 3, it can suffer from problems with surface water drainage and sewer flooding at times of extremely heavy rainfall and New Lane WWTW (which serves Burscough, Ormskirk and parts of Scarisbrick and Rufford) and some of the sewers in Burscough are close to capacity. However, United Utilities are working to address the capacity issue at New Lane WWTW and work closely with the Council to ensure that new developments do not make surface water flooding issues worse.

4.6 Burscough as a whole is 'average' in terms of affluence / deprivation, its 'percentage figures' for various indicators being similar to those for West Lancashire as a whole, although there are localised areas within Burscough with higher than average unemployment rates and related deprivation.

#### Key Issues for Burscough:

- Burscough has seen significant development over recent years / decades, and contains the current Local Plan's largest greenfield site allocation. It is important to ensure that that recent, and new development integrates well with the existing settlement.
- Burscough's sewerage system is close to capacity and there are concerns amongst residents about surface water drainage and flooding.
- The road system through Burscough can become congested at times, in particular on the A59.
- The settlement is well served by rail, although the two lines would benefit from better integration and connecting bus services to other settlements.

## 5. The Northern Parishes

- 5.1 The Northern Parishes in the current Local Plan contain four main villages (Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Banks and Rufford) within the four parishes of Tarleton, Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols and Rufford respectively.
- 5.2 Tarleton is the largest of the villages (population of Tarleton Parish circa 5,600). Located within the village centre are a variety of services, including shops, a library and medical facilities and there is a secondary school serving the whole of the Northern Parishes located in the north of the village. The village benefits from being located on the A59/A565 corridor, with good road access to Ormskirk, Burscough, Rufford, Southport and Preston, although there can be congestion on the 'spine road' through the settlement at peak times as traffic from both Tarleton and Hesketh Bank queues towards the A565 / A59 junction.

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- 5.3 Hesketh Bank, the second largest village (population of Hesketh-with-Becconsall Parish circa 4,000), is located directly to the north of Tarleton and effectively forms one linear built-up area with Tarleton on either side of Hesketh Lane / Station Road. The River Douglas / Rufford Branch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal forms the eastern boundary of the two villages. Hesketh Bank village centre offers some basic services such as a supermarket but looks to the nearby settlement of Tarleton for support regarding services such as secondary education provision and GP Practices. Hesketh Bank in particular has suffered from water supply issues, primarily due to low water pressure if pumps fail or, more commonly, due to the demand from the horticultural businesses in the area. However, United Utilities have been working closely with the horticultural businesses to rectify this situation.
- 5.4 The settlement of Banks is located along the A565 corridor in the north west of the Borough adjacent to Crossens (Sefton). A significant proportion of Banks lies within Flood Zone 3 and is thus treated as being at high risk of flooding. The population of Banks is circa 4,000. The number of services within Banks is limited, meaning residents often rely on facilities in neighbouring Sefton (Southport).
- 5.5 Rufford is located along the A59 and has a population of circa 2,000. The village lacks basic facilities with only one small shop, with residents often relying on Burscough for services and facilities. Rufford has a railway station on the Ormskirk to Preston line, but services are sporadic and do not operate on Sundays. Rufford Old Hall is a very valuable heritage asset located within the settlement and adjacent to the Rufford Branch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, with a leisure and tourism offer. Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve

lies to the west of Rufford.

- 5.6 Other smaller settlements within the Northern Parishes include Holmeswood and Mere Brow. The area also contains two large caravan parks, as well as 'Leisure Lakes', a sizeable rural tourist attraction.
- 5.7 The Northern Parishes primarily have an employment sector based around agriculture, horticulture and produce packing industries. Hesketh Lane and Station Road (the only road in and out of the north of Tarleton and Hesketh Bank) can become heavily congested with a combination of HGVs accessing packing facilities and local traffic, causing significant issues at peak times. Traditional employment uses have mainly moved out of the Northern Parishes, with two former large industrial sites and a former hospital site having been allocated for housing-led mixed-use redevelopment in the current Local Plan.
- 5.8 From a nature conservation and landscape perspective, the Northern Parishes have several areas of ecological and landscape value, including the River Douglas corridor, and all but Rufford parish sit on the edge of the Ribble Estuary, which is an internationally protected site for its ecology (primarily migratory birds) and takes up a large part of the north of the Borough. The landscape in and around Rufford Old Hall is designated as an Area of Landscape History of Regional Importance.

#### Key issues for the Northern Parishes:

- Flooding – virtually the whole of Banks (indeed the North Meols Parish) is within Flood Zone 2 or 3 and so is severely restricted in terms of potential for new development, although the village is very well protected by the coastal flood defences.
- The combined impact of the horticultural business (including HGVs) and local residential traffic on Hesketh Lane / Station Road causes congestion at times in Tarleton.
- Lack of public transport generally, and access to services in Banks and Rufford particularly, leads to rural isolation for some residents, especially those on lower incomes or of an older age.

## 6. The Eastern Parishes

6.1 The Eastern Parishes in the current Local Plan are formed from ten parishes (Bickerstaffe, Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale, Lathom, Lathom South, Newburgh, Parbold, Simonswood and Wrightington) and the rural parts of Up Holland parish. This area surrounds Skelmersdale to the north, west and south-west. The Eastern Parishes area can be roughly split into a 'northern area' including a series of attractive and historic villages along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and A5209 in the north of the area amongst the hills rising towards the east of the Borough, and a flatter, lowland 'southern area' between Skelmersdale and Ormskirk and southwards towards Kirkby. Both are intensively farmed and offer attractive views across open countryside. Together, the Eastern Parishes have a combined population of over 10,000, with the village of Parbold (population circa 2,500) by far the largest of the settlements.



6.2 The 'northern area' contains a number of countryside and recreation assets including the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, the River Douglas Valley and Fairy Glen and relates more to Wigan than to Ormskirk, particularly in terms of public transport, being located along the Southport to Wigan railway line. Notwithstanding the railway, there is a high level of car dependency and some dissatisfaction with access to, and quality of, public transport. During the preparation of the current Local Plan, residents expressed concerns about the closure of local facilities and services – an issue which is likely to be compounded by the recently announced closure of Parbold Library.

6.3 The 'southern area' of the Eastern Parishes contains no real settlements of any note, with just small hamlets and scattered collections of dwellings and farmsteads across the whole area. As such, there are very few services in this part of the Borough and few transport services. Simonswood, in the very south-west corner of the area adjoining Kirkby, has a relatively large and established industrial area (and planning permission was recently granted for a further 14 ha of employment land adjacent to it) but there is little connection between it and the rest of West Lancashire.

6.4 Access to affordable housing and specific provision for elderly people are issues of concern for local people across the Eastern Parishes. A lack of accessibility to transport, as well as living alone, can contribute to social isolation. Inevitably, this is of particular concern for rural areas such as the Eastern Parishes which are less well served by public transport services and where key services, including health services, are more difficult to reach.

- 6.5 The Eastern Parishes are comparatively affluent - all fall within the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Parbold ward is amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The highest proportion in the Borough of people with Level 4 qualifications (degree level) or higher is found in Parbold, Newburgh and Wrightington. 46% of residents of Parbold have a degree level qualification compared to an overall figure of 26% of West Lancashire's workforce and 24% of the regional workforce. This is also reflected in the professions of residents: 40% of those living in Newburgh ward are employed at managerial level or in professional occupations; figures for other Eastern Parishes wards are similar. Many of these residents commute out of the area for work. Around 79% of workers in Newburgh and Parbold travel to work by car.
- 6.6 Employment-related issues raised during consultation for the previous Local Plan included a desire for a diversified rural economy to help provide more local job opportunities. The shortage of a variety of business premises was one issue that was felt to be holding back the provision of local employment. However, land that has been made available for local employment uses in Appley Bridge has seen limited development or take-up.
- 6.7 In terms of environmental concerns, the residents of the northern part of the Eastern Parishes share a common concern with a large proportion of the rest of the Borough regarding flooding. This is particularly true of the settlements of Appley Bridge and Parbold. There is a wide variety of heritage assets in the Eastern Parishes area, as well as various areas of ecological value, although none have a national designation.

#### Key Issues for the Eastern Parishes:

- Lack of services and access to public transport can lead to rural isolation.
- Localised flooding in the northern part of the area.
- Access to housing – particularly for older people and for affordable housing.



## 7. The Western Parishes

7.1 The Western Parishes, as defined in the current Local Plan, contain a number of small villages and hamlets within the parishes of Downholland, Great Altcar Halsall and Scarisbrick and the rural areas around the built-up areas of Aughton, Ormskirk and Burscough. Their combined population is less than 7,000. The Western Parishes are located within the flat or gently undulating farmland of the coastal plain where large arable fields are lined with hedges and / or ditches and punctuated by small deciduous woodlands and shelterbelts which are important to local wildlife.

7.2 The area does not have a great deal of service provision and accessing such services (especially by public transport) can be challenging. The area tends to rely upon services within neighbouring Sefton (Southport) or Ormskirk, but the A570 can get congested, particularly at the entrance to Southport at Kew. This lack of access to services can lead to rural isolation for older residents and those on low incomes. There is also a lack of affordable housing in the area to meet local needs.



7.3 The Grade 1 Listed Gothic Revival Scarisbrick Hall is a landmark building set within attractive, protected parkland (listed on Historic England's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). As well as being a nationally important example of this style of architecture, it is also an important local heritage asset and the extensive parkland plays a significant role in the cultural landscape, nature value and history of the local area. The complex is also a private school, including primary, secondary and sixth form.

7.4 The Western Parishes countryside plays host to a number of tourist and leisure related facilities such as Farmer Ted's, Scarisbrick Marina, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, Haskayne Cutting Nature Reserve and the Cheshire Lines path, with others such as Leisure Lakes, Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve, Windmill Farm and Martin Mere just across Parish boundaries in Tarleton, Rufford and Burscough. The proximity of Martin Mere in particular means that, depending on the agricultural practices in any given field, the Western Parishes provide valuable feeding habitat to many thousands of migrant wild ducks, geese, waders and swans which over-winter at Martin Mere.

7.5 The Western Parishes contain a very high proportion of prime agricultural land and are an important centre of food production. This can cause conflict with the area's nature status since the intensification of farming practice can pose a threat to the biodiversity value of the land. Significant areas of Grade 1 agricultural land have been used for turf growing, rather than food production. The western part of the Western Parishes (adjoining the boundary with Southport) is mainly in Flood Zone 2 or 3 and is an area of deep peat deposits which can create difficult ground conditions, limiting the viability or achievability of development, as

well as releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere when the peat is disturbed.

7.6 Around 30% of residents in the Western Parishes are classed as economically inactive – this category includes retired people, students, non-working parents, sick or disabled people and job-seekers. Of this proportion around two thirds are retired while 10% are classed as sick or disabled. The retired sector of the population is set to increase over the coming decades which may present challenges to service provision in the future. If these groups are to maintain good links to the rest of the community and to vital services, avoiding isolation, then this needs to be positively planned for.

#### Key issues for the Western Parishes:

- Housing affordability.
- Rural isolation and access to services.
- Flood risk and peat deposits close to the boundary with Southport.

## 8. West Lancashire in General

### Social & Demographic Matters

- 8.1 The population of West Lancashire has been increasing slowly but steadily since 1999. At the 2011 Census the Borough had a population of 110,685, a 2.1% increase from 2001. The latest mid-year estimates of population, for 2015, give the Borough's population as 112,740.
- 8.2 The Borough's population is projected to rise to 116,200 by 2037 – a 3.8% increase on its 2014 level, equating to an additional 4,300 residents. The main changes forecast to the age structure are an increase in the proportion of residents aged over 60 and a decrease of those of working age (aged 15-59). The greatest increase predicted is to the age category 75+ with a growth of 76.5% on its 2014 rate.
- The highest numbers of residents are found in the urban areas of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough. There is some variation in age structure between settlement areas. The rural areas of the Borough are more attractive to people of middle or retirement age whilst Skelmersdale has a younger, more varied population structure. Ormskirk has a "spike" in the 15-24 age group on account of the presence of Edge Hill University.
- 8.4 At the 2011 Census, 96% of West Lancashire residents described themselves as White British. The remaining 4% describing themselves as Mixed, Asian, Black, Chinese or another ethnicity.
- 8.5 In the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (CLG), West Lancashire was ranked 164th out of 326 local authorities in England. This places the Borough in the middle rankings nationally. However, varying levels of deprivation are found within the different settlements / areas of the Borough. Skelmersdale has markedly higher levels of deprivation than the rest of the Borough, with 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAS) (61%) falling within the worst 20% deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Conversely, some areas of the Borough have some of the lowest levels of deprivation nationally, including Aughton, Ormskirk, Parbold and Tarleton. There is therefore a clear polarisation and inequalities between different areas of the Borough, and this is borne out by the differences in issues identified in the above spatial areas.
- 8.6 In the 2011 Census, 88% of West Lancashire residents described their health as 'very good' or 'good' indicating that the majority of residents consider themselves to be in good health. However, at a ward level, results vary with residents from Skelmersdale wards rating their health less well than residents of Aughton, Hesketh-with-Beconsall and Parbold. Health statistics also indicate significant differences across West Lancashire, including in premature mortality rates in the least compared to the most deprived areas of the Borough; these differences may be attributed to lifestyle factors such as diet and smoking, as well as to the local environment. Life expectancies of men in the most deprived areas of the Borough are almost ten years shorter than those of men in the least deprived areas of the Borough.
- 8.7 The Borough's ageing population is likely to create impacts on health, as more people are expected to live longer and spend more years in poorer health. For example, the proportion and numbers of people expected to have dementia are expected to increase and 20% of the population aged over 65 are expected to have problems with their mobility. The lack of access to key services and public

transport provision in rural areas, as identified in the Northern, Eastern and Western Parishes sections above, leads to rural isolation and this will only be magnified as the population in those areas get older, adding to the health concerns of an ageing population.

- 8.8 26% of West Lancashire's workforce have a degree (or equivalent) or higher, placing West Lancashire on par with the North West and England. However, there are disparities between different parts of the Borough in relation to education and skills and economic activity, with Skelmersdale performing significantly less well than other areas in the Borough.

West Lancashire has low levels of recorded crime. Over a 5 year period, reports of offences in West Lancashire have fallen considerably for most common crimes. However, the most recent figures for hospital admissions as a result of violence (presuming violence must relate to a crime, although not all may be reported) show that West Lancashire rates significantly above the national average in this measure but below the North West average.

- 8.10 In relation to housing, 85% of the dwelling stock in West Lancashire is privately owned and 13% owned by the local authority. Almost a quarter of all homes (24%) are rented whilst 73% are owner occupied. The rural areas tend to have the most homes owned outright whilst in Skelmersdale almost half of all homes are rented, mainly from the Council. There is limited housing available for rental from registered social landlords (2%) when compared to the North West (11%) and England (8%).

- 8.11 Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of households who rent privately has increased by 69% whilst the proportion in social rented tenure has decreased by 8%. The increase in privately rented homes is largely due to the increase in house prices over the past decade. The gap between wages and house prices makes it hard for first time buyers to get on the housing ladder and people, particularly young people, are being priced out of home ownership altogether and forced into private renting.
- 8.12 As with most other areas of the country, housing affordability is an issue for West Lancashire. The average house price in West Lancashire in 2012 stood at £180,985. The median house price is now almost 7 times (6.96) the median earnings in West Lancashire and this is significantly higher than the county average (5.22) and above the national average (6.72).



8.13 Household projections indicate that by 2039, West Lancashire will have 50,000 households, an increase of 9% from its 2014 level. In keeping with the population trends, it is expected that the number of households headed by someone aged over 85 will increase by 194% between 2014 and 2039, and those households headed by someone aged 75-84 are expected to increase by 54% over the same period. Conversely, decreases are expected in the groups of working age households.

8.14 The strength of the housing market varies across the Borough, in broadly the same pattern as is seen with deprivation. There is significant demand to live in most parts of the Borough, although the cost of housing is prohibitive to many. Other aspects of the housing market are artificially inflated by specific demands, such as that for the cheaper housing in the Ormskirk area, where the value of such housing is increased by the demand from landlords for properties to convert to HMOs for students.

8.15 Housing is not just about bricks and mortar dwellings, and there is demand in West Lancashire for provision for accommodation in caravans and houseboats, so the need, and market, for these accommodation types must be considered. In particular, the specific need for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in West Lancashire must be met.



8.16 The popularity of self- and custom-build housing has risen in profile in the UK in recent years with numerous TV programmes on the subject boosting interest in, and appetite for, people to build or adapt their own homes. The government has recognised this and the value of developing the self- and custom-build market in the UK to be more in line with Europe and the United States. As such, it is now a policy requirement to make adequate provision of sites to meet the local demand for self- and custom-build.

## Economic Indicators

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- 8.17 There were 51,900 economic active people in West Lancashire in March 2016 representing an economic activity rate of 73.8%. This was lower than both the North West (75.5%) and Great Britain (77.8%). Economic inactivity in West Lancashire (26.2%) was therefore above the North West (24.5%) and Great Britain (22.2%), however, this is partly explained by the Borough's student population being somewhat above regional and national levels. Of those economically inactive in the Borough, 40.3% want to work which is significantly higher than both regionally and nationally. The increasing ageing of West Lancashire's population in the future means that there will be a reduction in the local workforce unless economic inactivity decreases, people choose to work beyond retirement and / or there is additional in migration or in-commuting of those of working age.
- 8.18 The unemployment rate for the Borough in March 2016 (4.5%) was lower than for the North West (5.3%) and Great Britain (5.1%) which has been a consistent trend with the exception of the period from mid-2009 to mid-2010 when it was higher. Unemployment in the Borough has steadily decreased since September 2012; nevertheless, significant geographical variations remain between the different settlements and wards of the Borough in terms of with the highest unemployment rates being seen in Skelmersdale.
- 8.19 Gross average weekly pay income for full-time employees in the Borough stood at £503.50 in 2015 which is above the North West average (£492.00) but below Great Britain (£529.60). This has been a consistent relative position over the past 14 years and represents an increase of 27.5% upon 2002 income levels.
- 8.20 The occupations of the Borough's residents are broadly similar to England and Wales. However, the 2011 Population Census indicated that there are proportionately less residents employed in the higher skilled occupations (managers, professionals, associate and technical) in West Lancashire (38.7%) than the national average and proportionately greater (20.5%) in the less skilled and unskilled occupations (plant and machine operatives and elementary), a difference of approximately 2% in both instances. The greatest amount of Borough residents work in professional occupations, followed by associate professionals and technical occupations whilst the least residents work in sales and customer services and as process, plant and machine operatives. In the rural areas of the Borough, agricultural and horticultural employers (including packaging industries) play an important role, although these often rely upon migrant and seasonal workers.
- 8.21 West Lancashire has experienced prolonged and steady growth in the total number of indigenous employees from less than 10,000 in 1929 to 45,500 in 2014. The Business Register Employment Survey (BRES) indicates that the largest number of employees in the Borough in 2014 were within the wholesale, retail and repairs (7,800), manufacturing (6,800), health (6,400), education (4,600 – partly due to the presence of Edge Hill University) and accommodation and food services (4,100) sectors. There was an increase of 3,300 jobs between 2009 and 2014 with greatest increases being in accommodation and food services, professional, science and technology and health. Whilst manufacturing employment remained static during this time, there was a decline of 2,800 employees in the earlier period 1998 to 2008 which is consistent

with national changes in this sector. Economic forecasts indicate that job growth will rise in the period 2012-37 with sectoral change continuing the above historic trends alongside additional forecast growth in construction and wholesale and retailing.

- 8.22 The Borough is home to a number of international and nationally recognised companies including Pilkington UK, Co-operative Bank, PepsiCo, Asda, Walkers Snack Foods and Trelleborg Offshore UK. In addition, there are also important local employers such as Edge Hill University, West Lancashire Council and Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust. Whilst the Borough contains a number of major employers, in 2015 the vast majority of the 4,240 active enterprises were 'micro' businesses (defined as 0-9 employees) at 86.6% followed by 'small' (10-49 employees) at 11.6%. Most traditional employment uses (B1, B2 and B8) are located in Skelmersdale, with Burscough and Simonswood also key locations.
- 8.23 A particular economic opportunity at the current time is the anticipated growth in the logistics sector and, to a lesser degree, advanced manufacturing and its supporting sectors as a result of the opening of the Liverpool2 deep water terminal at the Port of Liverpool. West Lancashire, and particularly Skelmersdale, is in very easy reach of the Port of Liverpool by road (along Dunning's Bridge Road in Sefton and then the M58) and so it is very likely that West Lancashire will fall within the area of search for businesses and developers looking to develop large-scale warehousing and other B2 / B8 uses. This important opportunity must be explored by the Council as it considers what type of provision of employment land should be made, and where, in the Local Plan Review.

- 8.24 West Lancashire has strong economic links with areas outside the Borough which is reflected by commuter flows. There is a total outflow of 22,000 commuters with Sefton (5,476) being the most popular destination, followed by Liverpool (3,042) and Wigan (2,483). Inward commuting flows were 2,200 less, amounting to approximately 19,800, comprising large numbers from Sefton (5,220) and Wigan (4,793). Skelmersdale remains a significant employment destination.
- 8.25 Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and to a lesser extent Burscough are the Borough's main shopping and commercial centres. The collective retail, commercial leisure and night time economy offer in West Lancashire remains relatively modest which means that there are significant outflows of expenditure to surrounding areas including Southport, Wigan and Liverpool. There is a substantial 74% leakage of Borough residents' total comparison goods (essentially non-food) expenditure whilst it is a much lower 32% for convenience goods (essentially food) expenditure reflecting the more localised nature of food shopping trips and presence of major foodstores in the Borough (Asda, Morrisons, Tesco and Booths).



## Transport & Infrastructure

- 8.26 West Lancashire's geographical location provides 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, within the Borough itself there are issues regarding traffic congestion around Ormskirk Town Centre as a result of the one-way system on the A570.
- 8.27 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, which travel via Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. However, public transport services within the remainder of the Borough are generally poor, particularly in the rural areas.
- 8.28 No infrastructure constraints to development have been identified at these initial stages of plan preparation that would entirely rule out development in an area. This includes water supply and waste water infrastructure, gas and electricity infrastructure and broadband and telecommunications infrastructure. The Council recognise the importance of strong working relationships with infrastructure providers to share information throughout the plan preparation process and facilitate an iterative decision making process.
- 8.29 Water supply does not currently present an issue for most parts of West Lancashire with the exception of the Northern Parishes where, due to the local topography and demand from the horticultural businesses in the area, the water pressure (and therefore supply) can be affected. Additional development in the Northern Parishes may exacerbate this if appropriate improvements or management plans are not put in place. United Utilities also have plans to upgrade the Bickerstaffe Water Treatment Works and the local borehole source to reduce the reliance on the River Dee supply. Overall, from a water supply perspective, no fundamental issues have been identified to meet proposed growth but localised up-sizing to the water supply infrastructure will be required to be delivered through developments. Climate change may create supply issues in the future.
- 8.30 In terms of waste water treatment, United Utilities are considering solutions to increasing the capacity of New Lane WWTW, which serves Burscough, Ormskirk, Rufford and parts of Scarisbrick, as it is currently close to capacity.
- 8.31 Within West Lancashire, transport planning is the responsibility of Lancashire County Council which sets out the vision and objectives for future transport in the Borough within The Lancashire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011-2021 and the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (2014). These documents set out plans to transform the transport network in the Borough, including opportunities to deliver a new rail station in Skelmersdale, a Route Management Plan for West Lancs (including a Movement Strategy for Ormskirk) and improvements to strategic cycle routes, thereby providing opportunities to support road, rail, bus and cycle and pedestrian transport modes. However, further solutions to connect



residents with service and employment areas need to be explored, especially in rural areas, given the reduction in bus services across the Borough.

- 8.32 The increasing ageing population will inevitably place greater demand on health services and any significant increase in population will require additional GP provision to be borne in mind as plan preparation progresses. The recent announcements regarding closure of community facilities including libraries and children centres is also a concern.

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- 8.33 In relation to education provision, the Education Authority expect there to be sufficient numbers of primary places, and a surplus of secondary schools places, up to 2027, which means there are no immediate issues with education provision. The only highlighted exception is that of Burscough, which may warrant additional primary school places as a result of the existing planned growth in the area.

- 8.34 The Council have a desire to replace the existing leisure facilities in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk and to improve Burscough Sports Centre, and recognise the importance of outdoor sports and recreation facilities, including parks and green space. Green infrastructure, and biodiversity sites, need to be protected, whilst maximising the opportunities for sustainable access.

## The Natural and Built Environment

- 8.35 The landscape of West Lancashire is characterised by the largely flat extensive mosslands and wetlands of the Coastal Plain. The flat and fertile plains provide ideal farmland and the Borough contains the largest proportion of best and most versatile agricultural land in the North West. Contrast is presented by the Up Holland ridge, Ashurst Beacon and Parbold Hill in the east of the Borough, offering views over the surrounding countryside, extending as far as North Wales.



- 8.36 The history of the area as an arable landscape is reflected in the built development. Clustered red brick farm buildings, hamlets, rural villages and historic towns are all present, some of which have been heavily influenced by 20th century modernisation and development. There are also a number of designed landscapes associated with large historic estates, such as Rufford Old and New Hall, Scarisbrick Hall, Lathom Hall, Blythe Hall and Moor Hall.

- 8.37 There are around 600 listed buildings and more than 160 locally listed buildings and structures across the Borough. Reflecting the area's agricultural heritage, over 120 of the statutorily listed buildings are farmhouses, with a substantial proportion of the remainder in some way related to agriculture (e.g. barns or agricultural worker's dwellings). There are also 28 Conservation Areas protecting a varied range of places including agricultural villages, residential parks and parkland estates of large manor houses, for their historic and/or architectural interest.
- 8.38 The Borough has the highest total area of wildlife trust reserves in the country, with Martin Mere and the Ribble Estuary being the larger two assets. These are recognised as internationally important wetland habitats, particularly important as a winter feeding ground for wetland birds.
- 8.39 Two key water ways in the Borough are the River Douglas located in the east, and the Leeds-Liverpool Canal which bisects the Borough and also branches off to the north at Rufford. Due to the flat topography of the land, large areas within the Northern Parishes (and to a lesser degree the Western Parishes) are located within Flood Zone 3; this puts them at the greatest risk from potential flooding.
- 8.40 The Government's climate change risk assessment identifies flood risk, and particularly flooding from heavy downpours, as one of the key climate threats for the UK, alongside stresses on water resources, threats to biodiversity and natural habitats. Given the nature of the West Lancashire landscape described above, flooding is likely to be a considerable issue in the Borough in the future.

- 8.41 Climate policy at international and national level aims to cut global greenhouse gas emissions in order to avoid the most extreme impacts and provide more time to prepare and adapt to those that are unavoidable. As well as changes at national level, measures to cut carbon emissions should also be put into place at a local level and can include:
- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport;
  - Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies;
  - Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating; and
  - Promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design.



## 9. Key Issues for West Lancashire

9.1 Having considered all of the above analysis of the Borough, in relation to both specific areas and the Borough as a whole, there are several key spatial issues which present themselves and that the Local Plan should seek to address where it can:

- Whilst the number of people in the Borough is increasing relatively slowly, the population is ageing, with older age cohorts projected to grow very significantly both number-wise and percentage-wise over coming years. Conversely, the working age population is projected to decrease. This change in the make-up of the population is likely to place increased demand on the provision (availability, accessibility and variety) of housing, services, health care, and appropriate training / jobs for the older population, whilst the number of persons able to contribute towards providing such services decreases proportionally. It is also likely to have implications for job growth requirements, commuting levels, and general housing provision.
- West Lancashire as a whole is very much ‘middle of the road’ nationally in terms of deprivation. However, there are some notable disparities and inequalities in health, life expectancy, educational attainment, and consequent job opportunities within the Borough. These disparities are most marked between Skelmersdale and more affluent areas such as Aughton, Parbold and Tarleton.
- The affordability of housing is an issue for West Lancashire (and elsewhere), the median house price being almost seven times the median earnings. The average age of household heads is projected to rise over time, both as a result of affordability issues, and the ageing of the population. The affordability issue is tied up with the contrasting housing market strengths that are seen in different parts of the Borough and offering viable alternatives to traditional housing built by large developers for the market, such as self- and custom-build, caravans and houseboats.
- The needs of the travelling community need to be met in an appropriate way and as close as possible to where demand arises, taking into account physical and environmental constraints.
- The issue of student accommodation in Ormskirk needs to be adequately addressed to ensure that sufficient provision is made to accommodate student demand but in a way which minimises harm to, or conflict with, other parts of the residential community of Ormskirk.
- Economically, West Lancashire continues to gradually grow, with steady growth in jobs in particular, and this growth is anticipated to continue and possibly at a higher rate. However, the local workforce will decline in number as the population ages (and as working age people struggle to afford a house in West Lancashire). As such, the continued economic growth of West Lancashire needs to be fuelled not just by providing land in the right location for new employment premises to attract businesses (both large and small, established and new), but by providing the right supporting context to attract those businesses which includes providing a skilled local workforce, appropriate housing provision to accommodate employees and an attractive

environment and offer to retain and draw working age people to the area, especially graduates.

- There is a significant opportunity to boost the local economy, especially in the M58 corridor, as a result of the Liverpool2 deep water terminal and expected surge in demand for logistics facilities and 'spin-off' industries. Skelmersdale is likely to be the most appropriate location for such opportunities given its excellent road access from the Port of Liverpool.
- There is pressure in some parts of the Borough for housing on existing employment sites, leading to loss of employment land.
- There is significant leakage of expenditure from the Borough, especially in relation to comparison (non-food) retail and commercial leisure / entertainment and the night-time economy. The Borough's town centres in particular need to be managed and developed appropriately to help them reinvent themselves to meet 21st Century preferences for retailing, leisure and entertainment.



- The amount of best and most versatile agricultural land in the Borough is a regionally important resource and is vital to the high performing agricultural industry in West Lancashire.
- Parts of West Lancashire are internationally important designated nature reserves, accommodating significant proportions of the world population of certain species. These are both an asset to the Borough, requiring continued protection, and also a potential constraint to development in some areas.
- The impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding and drainage, must be managed appropriately by how and where new development is built in West Lancashire to ensure that new development does not make existing issues worse.
- There are varying levels of accessibility to services / facilities / jobs / public transport around the Borough. General accessibility, in terms of distance to key services, has decreased over recent years. Consistent with many other areas, car use is high and cycling and public transport use are lower than they could be. As such the issue of rural isolation in particular is a concern.
- Public transport and highways traffic management needs improving in key areas, such as a rail link into Skelmersdale, easing traffic congestion in Ormskirk and generally facilitating better access via a range of transport modes across the Borough.

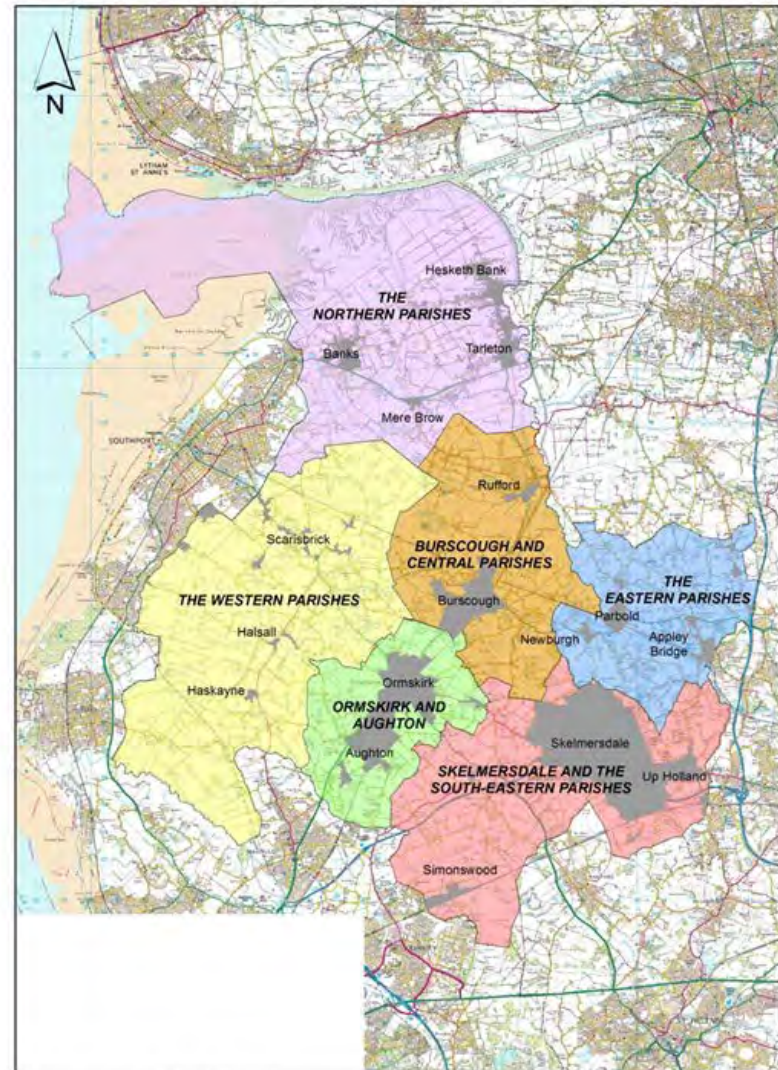
## A New Definition of Spatial Areas

- 9.2 Having reviewed the Spatial Portrait above, aside from updating the key issues that West Lancashire in general and specific areas face, it has raised questions over whether the Spatial Areas used in the current Local Plan are still the best way to sub-divide the Borough from a functional point of view.
- 9.3 The current Spatial Areas hark back to the original set of Local Plans for the Borough when there were three Local Plans covering much of the District (the Western Parishes of Scarisbrick, Halsall, Downholland and Great Altcar were not covered by a Local Plan until the first District-wide Local Plan in 1999):
- The Ormskirk, Burscough and Aughton Local Plan (May 1987)
  - The Skelmersdale and Eastern Parishes Local Plan (January 1992)
  - The Northern Parishes Local Plan (July 1992)
- 9.4 The main difference between this sub-division of the Borough and the current Spatial Areas is that the latter sought to separate out the three main urban areas and Key Service Centres of Skelmersdale (with Up Holland), Ormskirk (with Aughton) and Burscough.
- 9.5 Looking afresh at the Borough, while there is never a sub-division along administrative boundaries that is ever ideal, the current Spatial Areas perhaps do not fully reflect the way the Borough functions on the ground, so to speak. The main urban areas are not linked with their natural rural hinterlands, some parishes are grouped with others where the functional relationship is not really as strong (or perhaps is less strong than their relationship with other

parishes), some spatial areas cover very diverse areas that might be better being sub-divided.

- 9.6 As such, on reflection, it is proposed that in preparing the new Local Plan, a different set of Spatial Areas should be used, as follows:
- Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes (incorporates all of the unparished area of Skelmersdale, together with the Parishes of Bickerstaffe, Lathom South, Simonswood and Up Holland)
  - Ormskirk with Aughton (includes the three wards in the unparished area of Ormskirk and the Parish of Aughton)
  - Burscough and the Central Parishes (encompasses the Parishes of Burscough, Lathom and Rufford)
  - The Northern Parishes (includes the Parishes of Hesketh-with-Becconsall, North Meols and Tarleton)
  - The Western Parishes (encompasses the Parishes of Downholland, Great Altcar, Halsall and Scarisbrick)
  - The Eastern Parishes (incorporates the Parishes of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale, Newburgh, Parbold and Wrightington)
- 9.7 This sub-division places Rufford and Lathom more appropriately with Burscough, as the functional relationships are stronger with Burscough than with the Northern Parishes and the Eastern Parishes respectively; it ensures that the urban area of Ormskirk and Aughton are surrounded by their natural rural hinterlands (the non-built-up

areas of the unparished area of Ormskirk and the parish of Aughton); and it splits the northern Eastern Parishes off from Skelmersdale and the southern Eastern Parishes, given the quite distinct differences in nature of what is now termed 'the South-Eastern Parishes' in comparison to the remainder of the Eastern Parishes.



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## 4. What Happens Next?

### Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

4.1 Having read this Paper, the Council would like you to respond by commenting on what you've read through the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options consultation. The easiest way to do this is online at **[www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan)**, where you will find instructions on how to respond.

4.2 The best way to respond is by completing a short survey online available at the above web link. The survey is related to the questions you'll have seen scattered throughout this Paper and the other Issues & Options consultation papers. You can also email or write in with your comments to:

**Email:** **[localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)**  
**Postal Address:** **Local Plan Consultation  
Planning  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
L39 2DF**

4.3 All the Issues & Options consultation papers, as well as survey forms and details of how to engage with the consultation, are also available at:

- **all Libraries in West Lancashire,**
- **at the Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF; and**
- **at the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale, WN8 6LN.**

4.4 You can also phone the Council if you have any queries about the Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation to speak to a Council Officer on **01695 585194**.



## Next Steps

- 4.5 With regard to the wider process for preparing a new Local Plan, following this Issues & Options Consultation, the Council will consider the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper narrows down on, and selects, the Council's preferred policy option for each topic (i.e. how policy will address each key issue) as well as the preferred strategic option for how much new housing and employment development should take place and where. At that point, site allocations are proposed to meet the development needs identified.
- 4.6 The Preferred Options Paper will be publicly consulted upon and the feedback from that consultation will be considered and the Council will make the necessary refinements and amendments to the proposed policies and site allocations to prepare what is essentially a "final draft" Local Plan, known as the Publication version, which represents the Local Plan that the Council want to take forward and adopt.
- 4.7 Once again, the Publication version will be made available for public scrutiny and formal representations (comments) on the document will be invited. However, this time, the comments will not be considered by the Council, but submitted with the Local Plan to a Planning Inspector to consider as part of the Examination of the Local Plan. This Examination will involve public hearings where those invited to speak by the Planning Inspector can put forward their views to help the Inspector to arrive at a decision on whether the Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation and whether it is a "sound" document.
- 4.8 More detail will be provided by the Council on how to engage with the Preferred Options Paper, the Publication version and the Examination in Public as we reach each stage, but the above gives a brief overview of the process.
- 4.9 Alongside the preparation of the Preferred Options Paper, the Council will continue to prepare and commission new studies to provide the evidence needed to guide the Council's decision-making on which policy options, strategic option and site allocations are most appropriate for inclusion in the new Local Plan.





**John Harrison Dip. Env.P., M.R.T.P.I.  
Director of Development and Regeneration  
PO Box 16, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk  
Lancashire, L39 2DF  
Tel: 01695 577177**

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Development &amp; Regeneration</b>		<b>Service: Planning</b>	
<b>Completed by: P Richards</b>		<b>Date: 24/01/17</b>	
<b>Subject Title: Local Plan Review – Scoping and Issues &amp; Options Consultation</b>			
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes	This consultation proposed marks the first step in producing a new Local Plan for West Lancs.	
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No		
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No		
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No		
Is a programme or project being planned:	No		
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes		
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes		
Details of the matter under consideration:	Proposals for public consultation on the Scope and Issues & Options for the Local Plan Review		
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above <b>go straight to Section 3</b></i>  <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above <b>please complete Section 2</b></i></p>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No*	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>	
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i>			
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>			
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	A new Local Plan will ultimately, directly or indirectly, affect all stakeholders in West Lancashire, be they residents, businesses or other organisations.		
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any	n/a.		

particular group affected more than others)?	
Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?  Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>  No No No No No No No No No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	The Local Plan provides policy that is used to determine planning applications and provides strategy that guides the delivery of new infrastructure and new development across West Lancs. All are able to participate in the public consultation being proposed.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The impact of a new Local Plan cannot currently be assessed as it is too early in the preparation of the document. The proposed consultation will have no impact on stakeholders other than inviting them to engage in the preparation of a new Local Plan.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	People's views on the Local Plan in general will depend upon how directly they are affected by allocation of new development or specific policies where they wish to deliver new development. These views may well be affected by proposals in a new Local Plan but it is too early in the process to assess this.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	Guidance provided through the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Census data and a range of other data have been included in the evidence base that informs the preparation of the Local Plan.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	Cabinet decision is whether to consult or not on the Scope and Issues & Options for the Local Plan Review.
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	The decision on whether to consult at this point or not will not have an impact on people with protected characteristics, although all will be able to engage with the consultation. The Local Plan itself may, in due course, identify impacts on specific groups with particular protected

	characteristics, for example Travellers and Older Persons.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	There is no impact at this stage.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions.  <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	At each key stage of Local Plan preparation.





CABINET: 22 February 2017

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**Report of: Director of Development and Regeneration**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson**

**Contact for further information: Mr Peter Richards (Extn. 5046)**  
**(E-mail: peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk)**

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**SUBJECT: PROVISION OF NEW CYCLE & PEDESTRIAN LINK THROUGH THE TAWD VALLEY, SKELMERSDALE, LINKING TO WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE**

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Wards affected: Birch Green and Skelmersdale North

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek approval for proposed amendments to the plans for the Tawd Valley cycle and pedestrian link in Skelmersdale, which is being part-funded by Section 106 monies held by the Council.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the proposed amendments to the route of, and proposals for, the Tawd Valley cycle and pedestrian link be approved
- 

## **3.0 THE SCHEME AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

- 3.1 In January 2014, Cabinet delegated authority to the (then) Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to:
- i) Negotiate and enter into agreement with Lancashire County Council to provide a grant using S106 funding to assist them with the construction of the proposed cycle and pedestrian link through the Tawd Valley and to also to give Lancashire County Council access to land owned by West Lancashire Borough Council to conduct work to construct the proposed route.

- ii) Release section 106 funds of up to £200,000 secured through planning permissions related to West Lancashire College, to contribute towards the implementation of a new cycle and pedestrian path through the Tawd Valley linking the college campus with surrounding residential areas.

3.2 Subsequently, a scheme was agreed and Lancashire County Council (LCC) submitted a planning application for the route, which runs from Skelmersdale Library to the western end of the road named Irwell through the Tawd Valley, with a route coming off this main route into the rear of the West Lancashire College Campus. The planning application proposed lighting the route with specialist, low level street lights designed to minimise disruption to the Bats that roost and feed in the Tawd Valley.

3.3 The application (2015/1140/FUL) was granted permission on 1 August 2016 but the Council were informed later in 2016 by LCC officers that the cost of the scheme had increased given the need to replace two bridges on the permitted route and potentially improve the existing footbridge over Houghton's Road to the north of the permitted route to enable bicycles to use the bridge safely, and so allowing LCC to designate a cycle route to link the permitted Tawd Valley route up to the existing cycle routes in the Manfield / Summer Street area of Ashurst. As such, officers from both Councils met to consider how costs could be reduced on the scheme whilst still delivering this key connection.

3.4 As a result of these discussions the following amendments have been proposed to the route:

- An alternative route for a section of the link through the Tawd Valley to utilise more of an existing footpath and to involve a route which only requires improvements to one bridge.
- A more appropriate link into Inglewhite.
- This phase of the link will terminate at Irwell, meaning that any connection across Houghton's Road into Ashurst will form a second phase to be funded separately at a later date.
- No lighting will be provided as part of these proposals, although there will be the option of adding lighting in at a later date should it prove necessary and cost-effective.

It is anticipated that the above amendments would allow the scheme to be delivered within the available budget.

3.5 The plan at Appendix 1 shows the section through the Tawd Valley which will no longer be implemented, together with the new proposed route to replace it. That section of the new route which follows an existing adopted footpath can be more easily upgraded and benefits from permitted development rights for such engineering works. However, the section marked with a hatched box will require a fresh planning permission, just for that section, in order to progress.

3.6 The other new section, providing a more appropriate link into Inglewhite, behind the College Campus, will also require a fresh planning permission. Both of these sections are only a small section (approximately 150m in length) of the overall route of the proposed Tawd Valley cycle and pedestrian link and therefore it is



possible for work to commence on the remainder of the route that already has permission while planning permission is sought for the two new sections.

- 3.7 The bridge that will require improvement as part of the new section is currently unadopted and is owned and maintained by WLBC. The bridge is capable of being upgraded to safely accommodate bicycles, but it will not be upgraded to an adoptable standard as this would significantly increase the cost of the scheme and thereby prejudice its delivery. As the upgraded bridge will not be adopted, the Borough Council will retain ownership and responsibility for its future maintenance.
- 3.8 Should Cabinet accept the recommendation at 2.1 above and LCC also formally approve the amendments, then it is anticipated that work will start on site later this year.

#### **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 4.1 The proposed scheme will have positive sustainability implications and help support the community strategy. The proposed scheme will help provide safer communities by providing a new route through the Tawd Valley, develop stronger communities by linking residential areas with educational, employment and social opportunities and provide improved health for all by encouraging cycling and walking.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All financial / resource implications arising from this report in respect of the delivery of the proposed scheme will be met using funding from Section 106 commuted sums secured through planning permissions related to West Lancashire College and funding allocated through the Lancashire County Council LTP3. Any costs for WLBC related to maintenance responsibilities for the scheme once delivered (such as for the improved bridge) will be met within existing budgets.

#### **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The proposals for a new cycle way between the Tawd Valley and West Lancashire College provide an opportunity to spend that Section 106 funding secured through the recent planning permissions at West Lancashire College to provide a safe and sustainable alternative mode of transport between the College and residential areas via the Tawd Valley. Given that LCC will be delivering and maintaining the cycle way (except for the existing WLBC bridge to be improved), there is limited risk for WLBC in this project.
- 6.2 If a suitable scheme is not agreed that enables the S106 monies to be spent within 10 years, the monies would have to be returned to West Lancashire College.

## **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

The Tawd Valley cycle and pedestrian link may have a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is required and is appended at Appendix 3.

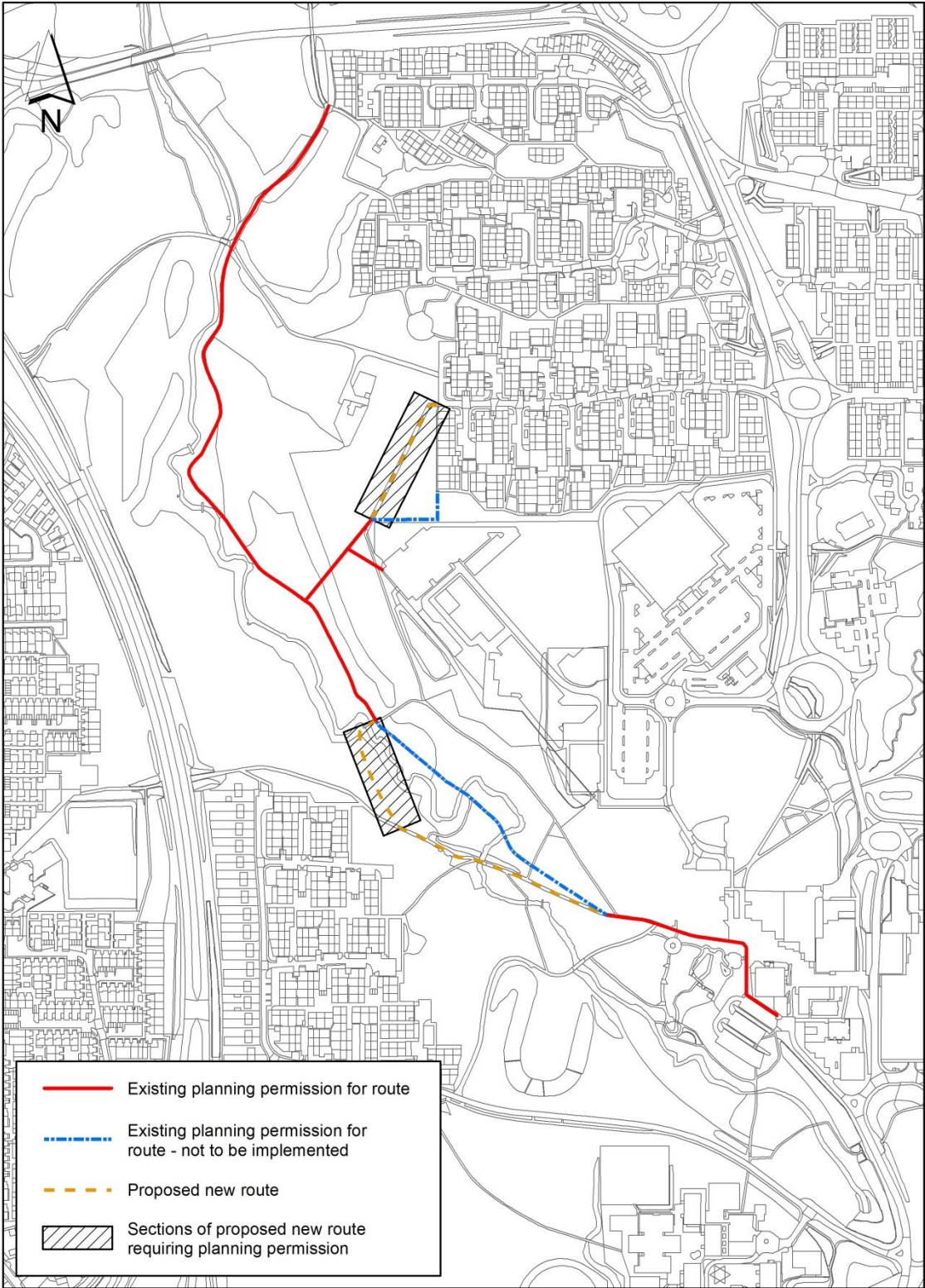
## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Plan of route for Tawd Valley cycle and pedestrian link

Appendix 2 – Minute of Cabinet, 14 January 2014, Item 78.

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 1



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**78. PROVISION OF A NEW CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN LINK FOOTWAY THROUGH THE TAWD VALLEY IN SKELMERSDALE LINKING TO WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE**

Councillor Forshaw introduced the report of the Assistant Director Planning which advised on the proposal to create a new cycle/pedestrian link way through Tawd Valley linking to the West Lancashire College campus and sought approval to release Section 106 funding to finance the scheme.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED
- A. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to:
- i) negotiate and enter into agreement with Lancashire County Council to provide a grant using S106 funding to assist them with the construction of the proposed cycle and pedestrian link through the Tawd Valley and to also to give Lancashire County Council access to land owned by West Lancashire Borough Council to conduct work to construct the proposed route.
  - ii) release section 106 funds of up to £200,000 secured through planning permissions related to West Lancashire College, to contribute towards the implementation of a new cycle and pedestrian path through the Tawd Valley linking the college campus with surrounding residential areas.
- B. That subject to an acceptable scheme being designed, the Council arrange to dedicate the route to Lancashire County Council so that the County Council adopt the route, taking over future maintenance liabilities.
- C. That the Assistant Director Planning be authorised to enter into all necessary agreements and licences and to obtain necessary consents, approvals and permissions to facilitate the scheme.

**79. DRAFT WEST LANCASHIRE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT MASTERPLAN**

Councillor Forshaw introduced the report of the Assistant Director Planning which presented the draft West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan document and sought authorisation for the submission of the Council's formal response to Lancashire County Council.

A copy of a revised Appendix A was circulated at the meeting.



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Development &amp; Regeneration</b>		<b>Service: Planning</b>	
<b>Completed by: P Richards</b>		<b>Date: 25/01/17</b>	
<b>Subject Title: PROVISION OF NEW CYCLE &amp; PEDESTRIAN LINK THROUGH THE TAWD VALLEY, SKELMERSDALE, LINKING TO WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE</b>			
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>			
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	No		
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No		
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No		
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No		
Is a programme or project being planned:	Yes		
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes		
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes		
Details of the matter under consideration:	Amendments to a proposal for a shared cycle and pedestrian link through the Tawd Valley in Skelmersdale.		
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above <b>go straight to Section 3</b></i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above <b>please complete Section 2</b></i>			
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>			
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <span style="float: right;"><i>*delete as appropriate</i></span>		
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to <b>Section 3</b></i>			
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>			
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>			
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Members of the general public who use the Tawd Valley or who wish to access West Lancs College and the town centre in general by bicycle or on foot.		
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	n/a.		

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
Age	No
Gender	No
Disability	No
Race and Culture	No
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	No
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	The Tawd Valley is primarily used for recreational purposes and by people moving through it to access the town centre.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	Aside from some temporary disruption while work is being carried out, the proposed scheme will improve the accessibility to and through the Tawd Valley and to West Lancs College and the town centre.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	It is generally acknowledged that the Tawd Valley could be improved by making it more accessible.
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	N/A
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	N/A
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	Increased accessibility to, and through, the Tawd Valley and to West Lancs College and the town centre will benefit all groups of society, including those of protected characteristics.
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	There is no impact at this stage.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions. <i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	N/A



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