



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

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Monday, 5 June 2017

**TO COUNCILLORS: MORAN, GAGEN, COOPER, J HODSON, PATTERSON, WILKIE, WRIGHT, WYNN**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CABINET/COMMITTEE ROOM - 52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK L39 2DF** on **TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2017** at **7.00 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** 1 - 2

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. MINUTES** 3 - 10

To receive as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of Cabinet held on 14 March 2017

**5. CONFIRMATION OF PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

1. To note the Leader has appointed Cabinet Committees and Working Groups for 2017/18 as circulated at the Annual Meeting on 17 May 2017 with the terms of reference now included in the Constitution.
2. To note the 'Proper Officer Provisions and Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers' insofar as they are executive functions and the Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members as set out in the Constitution.

**6. PUBLIC SPEAKING** 11 - 14

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 8 June 2017.

**7. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

- 7a Quarterly Performance Indicators Q4 2016-17 15 - 28  
(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran)
- 7b Granville Park Conservation Character Appraisal Update 29 - 90  
(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Hodson)
- 7c Housing Revenue Account - Income Recovery Policy 2017 91 - 112  
(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Patterson)
- 7d Local Plan Review Consultation - Feedback on Scoping and Issues & 113 -

## 8. 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 items of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 (Financial/Business Affairs) 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 items of business).

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

8a	192 - 198 Ennerdale, Skelmersdale (Former Tanhouse Neighbourhood Housing Office) (Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Patterson)	197 - 202
8b	Regeneration of Gorsey Place, Skelmersdale (Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor I Moran & Councillor C Wynn)	203 - 210

**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

	General		Notes
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.



# Agenda Item 4

**CABINET**

**HELD: Tuesday, 14 March 2017**

Start: 7.00pm

Finish: 7.20pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillor: Councillor I Moran (Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

Councillors:

	<u>Portfolio</u>
Councillor Y Gagen	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Human Resources
Councillor T Aldridge	Portfolio Holder for Older People
Councillor J Hodson	Portfolio Holder for Planning
Councillor J Patterson	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services
Councillor K Wilkie	Portfolio Holder for Street Scene
Councillor K Wright	Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Safety
Councillor C Wynn	Portfolio Holder for Finance

In attendance: Councillor D Evans  
Councillors

Officers:

- Chief Executive (Ms K Webber)
- Director of Leisure and Wellbeing (Mr D Tilleray)
- Director of Housing and Inclusion (Ms J Sinnott-Lacey)
- Director of Development and Regeneration (Mr J Harrison)
- Director of Street Scene (Mrs H McDougall)
- Borough Solicitor (Mr T Broderick)
- Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion (Mr S Walsh)
- Deputy Borough Treasurer (Mr M Kostrzewski)
- Principal Member Services Officer (Mrs S Griffiths)

93 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

94 **SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of special urgency.

**95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. Councillor Moran declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6(l) (Appointment to West Lancashire College Board) as his wife is employed by West Lancashire College.
2. Councillors Aldridge (tenant of a Council garage), Patterson (tenant of Council accommodation) and Wright (connected person tenant of Council accommodation) declared disclosable pecuniary/pecuniary interests in agenda items 6(d) (Capital Programme Monitoring) and 6(l) (HRA Revenue and Capital Monitoring) but considered they were entitled to speak and vote by virtue of an exemption as nothing in these reports relates particularly to the relevant tenancy or lease.
3. Councillor J Hodson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6(f) (Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 – Consultation Draft) in view of him being a landlord and the document contained references to private landlords.

**96 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no items under this heading.

**97 MINUTES**

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 10 January and 22 February 2017 be received as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**98 MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

Consideration was given to the report relating to the following matters requiring decisions as contained on pages 2015 – 2215 of the Book of Reports.

**99 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ( Q3 2016-17)**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Borough Transformation Manager & Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion which presented performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 December 2016.

Minute no. 63 of the Corporate & Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 March 2017 was circulated at the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the minute of the Corporate & Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED (A) That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 31 December 2016 be noted.

(B) That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report was submitted to the meeting of the Corporate & Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2017.

100 **COUNCIL PLAN 2017-18**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Chief Executive which sought approval of the "Council Plan 2017-18".

Additional information relating to the financial position contained within the Council Plan 2017-18 was circulated at the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the additional information and the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED (A) That the "Council Plan 2017-18" attached as Appendix A to this report be approved and referred to Council for adoption.

(B) That authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make any final amendments to the document, prior to publication.

(C) That call-in is not appropriate for this item, as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2017.

101 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT 2017-18**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Borough Transformation Manager & Deputy Director of Housing and Inclusion which sought approval for the Suite of Performance Indicators to be adopted as the Council's Corporate PI Suite 2017/18.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED (A) That the Suite of Performance Indicators 2017/18 (Appendix A) and targets identified be approved and adopted as the Council's Corporate PI Suite 2017/18.

- (B) That the Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing & Inclusion, in consultation with the Leader of the Council as Portfolio Holder, be authorised to finalise and amend the suite having regard to any agreed comments of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 30 March 2017, and to make necessary amendments to the suite in year in response to any issues that may arise, for example government policy or collection mechanisms.
- (C) That call-in is not appropriate for this item as it is being considered at the next meeting of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2017.

**102 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

Councillor Wynn introduced the report of the Borough Treasurer which updated Members on the current position in respect of the 2016/17 Capital Programme.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED (A)** That the current position in respect of the 2016/2017 Capital Programme be noted.

- (B) That call-in is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March 2017.

**103 DEVELOPING AN ORMSKIRK BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration which advised on the concept of developing a Business Improvement District (BID) for Ormskirk Town Centre.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED** That the appointment of Groundwork to undertake a feasibility study to investigate the implications of developing a BID for Ormskirk Town Centre at a cost of £7,600 be approved.

**104 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2017-2022 (CONSULTATION DRAFT)**

Councillor Wright introduced the report of the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing which sought approval of the draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 for public consultation.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED (A) That the draft Homelessness Strategy 2017-2022 attached as Appendix 1 be made available to the public and stakeholders for a period of consultation from 20 March 2017, for a period of 6 weeks.
- (B) That the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make any minor changes to the strategy prior to the consultation period.
- (C) That call-in is not appropriate as the report will be submitted to the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 30 March 2017.

105 **USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES IN BURSCOUGH**

Councillor Gagen introduced the joint report of the Director of Leisure and Wellbeing and Director of Development and Regeneration which considered a proposal for Section 106 monies received by the Council from housing developers to be used for the enhancement of public open space and recreation provision in Burscough.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED That the use of £21,292 of S106 monies to help fund the proposed project to create a new public picnic area and improve public access from the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at Burscough Cricket Club be approved.

106 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Councillor Wynn introduced the report of the Borough Treasurer which set out details on the Key Risks facing the Council and how they are managed and proposed changes to the Risk Management Policy.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED (A) That the progress made in relation to the management of the risks shown in the Key Risks Register (Appendix A) be noted and endorsed.

- (B) That the updated Risk Management Policy at Appendix B be approved.

**107 FIRSWOOD ROAD HOUSING ALLOCATION**

Councillor J Hodson introduced the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration which sought authority to consider and take all necessary measures to bring forward the development of the Firswood Road Local Plan housing allocation in Lathom South/Skelmersdale.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED** That the Director of Development and Regeneration be authorised to take all necessary measures to facilitate development of the Firswood Road housing allocation, which may include the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers to purchase the land.

**108 CIL FUNDING PROGRAMME - ASSESSMENT OF SCHEMES**

Councillor J Hodson introduced the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration which sought approval to slight changes to the assessment of potential schemes for CIL Funding Programmes in future years, in order to facilitate greater Member participation in the assessment process.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED** That the new approach to the assessment of schemes for CIL Funding Programmes as set out at section 4 of the report be approved.

**109 HRA REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING**

Councillor Patterson introduced the joint report of the Director of Housing and Inclusion and the Borough Treasurer which provided an update on the current position on the 2016/17 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Council Housing Capital Investment Programme.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED (A)** That the financial position in respect of the 2016/2017 HRA and Council Housing Capital Investment Programme be noted.

- (B) That the proposed £50,000 capital budget virement from the Disabled Adaptation scheme to the Lift scheme as set out in paragraph 6.3 of the report be approved.
- (C) That call-in is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 March. 2017.

110 **APPOINTMENT TO WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE BOARD**

Councillor Moran introduced the report of the Borough Solicitor which advised of an invitation from the National Training and Colleges Group (NCG) for the Chief Executive to join the West Lancashire College Board.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details as set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

**RESOLVED** That the invitation from NCG be noted and the Chief Executive be authorised to accept the appointment for the reasons set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

.....  
**Leader**





## **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

<p><b>YES/NO*</b></p> <p>*delete as applicable</p>
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Note: This page will not be published.

(P.T.O.)





CABINET: 13 JUNE 2017

CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE:  
13 JULY 2017

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**Report of: Borough Transformation Manager and Deputy Director of Housing & Inclusion**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor I Moran**

**Contact for further information: Ms A Grimes (Extn. 5409)**  
**(E-mail: [alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:alison.grimes@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Q4 2016/17)**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 March 2017.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 31 March 2017 be noted.

2.2 That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report will be submitted to the meeting of the Corporate & Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2017.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

3.1 That the Council's performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 31 March 2017 be noted.

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## **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Members are referred to Appendix A of this report detailing the quarterly performance data for key performance indicators. The performance information aims to help demonstrate performance against the corporate priorities as well as providing some service-specific information.
- 4.2 32 data items are reported quarterly, two of these are data only. Of the 30 PIs with targets reported:
- 23 indicators met or exceeded target
  - 3 indicators narrowly missed target; 2 were 5% or more off target
  - 2 indicators items have data unavailable at the time of the report (*NI 191 Residual household waste ; NI 192 Percentage of household waste*)

As a general comparison, Q4 performance in 2016/17 gave 15 (from 32) indicators on or above target (to enable a comparison these figures do not include outturn information for NI195c and NI195d as these indicators are no longer monitored quarterly for 16/17).

- 4.3 Performance plans prepared by service managers are already in place for those indicators where performance falls short of the target by 5% or more for this quarter, if such plans are able to influence outturn and will be relevant for future monitoring purposes.
- 4.4 These plans provide the narrative behind the outturn and are provided in Appendix B1. Where performance is below target for consecutive quarters, plans are revised only as required, as it is reasonable to assume that some remedial actions will take time to make an impact. Progress on actions from previous Performance Plans are provided in Appendix C.
- 4.5 For those PIs that have flagged up as 'amber' (indicated as a triangle), an assessment has been made at head of service level based on the reasons for the underperformance and balancing the benefits of implementing an performance plan versus resource implications. This is indicated in the table.
- 4.6 Although the purpose of this report is to comment on quarterly information, where available, a brief reference on draft annual performance is also given in Appendix A.
- 4.7 Performance against the full corporate suite of indicators 2016/17 will be reported within the Council Plan Annual Report. This suite of indicators was agreed by Cabinet in March 2016. Targets for 2017/18 were agreed through Cabinet in March 2017 and in consultation with the Leader following consideration of comments from the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These future targets will be reported alongside the 2016/17 annual performance data.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 The information set out in this report aims to help the Council improve service performance and is consistent with the Sustainable Community Strategy aim of providing good quality services that are easily accessible to all.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report. Monitoring and managing performance information data helps the authority to ensure it is achieving its corporate priorities and key objectives and reduces the risk of not doing so.

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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**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Quarterly Performance Indicators for Q4 January-March 2016/17

Appendix B1 – R1 % of Council Tax collected

Appendix C – Actions from Previous Performance Plans

Appendix D – Minute of Cabinet to follow (Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee)





# APPENDIX A: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS













Icon key		
PI Status		Performance against same quarter previous year
	OK (within 0.01%) or exceeded	23
	Warning (within 5%)	3
	Alert (by 5% or more)	2
	Data only	2
	Awaiting data	2
N/A	Data not collected for quarter	0
Total number of indicators/data items		32







	Improved	21
	Worse	6
	No change	3
/	Comparison not available	0
	Awaiting data	2

## Shared Services <sup>1</sup>


Page 10	Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
		Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
	ICT1 Severe Business Disruption (Priority 1) (ytd)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.0%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 99% was exceeded.		
	ICT2 Minor Business Disruption (P3) (ytd)	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	97.0%	98.0%	98.0%	97.0%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 97% was exceeded.		
	ICT3 Major Business Disruption (P2) (ytd)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	89.0%	92.0%	100.0%	92.0%	94.0%	96.0%	98.0%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 98% was narrowly missed.  As referred to in previous reports, the small number of incidents in this category meant that achieving the annual SLA would be extremely difficult, following the single incident in July that did not meet target. Within month performance has been 100% for 11 of the 12 months.  Head of Service's amber assessment: performance plan not required		
	ICT4 Minor Disruption (P4) (ytd)	99.0%	99.0%	99.0%	97.0%	98.0%	99.0%	99.0%	100.0%	99.0%	98.0%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 98% was exceeded.		

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
B1 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (ytd)	6.62	8.89	8.07	8.00	7.02	7.22	7.24	8.10	6.41	12.00	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 12 days was exceeded.		
B2 Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (payments received) ytd	£203,868	£67,408	£149,382	£207,159	£276,577	£79,368	£157,338	£225,685	£311,409	170,000	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of £170K was exceeded.		
R1 % of Council Tax collected (current year)	96.03%	29.64%	56.69%	84.37%	97.02%	29.38%	56.67%	84.38%	96.74%	97.10%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 97.10% was narrowly missed.  Head of Service's amber assessment: performance plan attached at Appendix B1		
R2 % council tax previous years arrears collected	33.56%	8.97%	25.31%	32.64%	37.31%	9.98%	17.3%	22.54%	26.82%	24.50%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 24.50% was exceeded.		
R3 % of Non-domestic Rates Collected	96.40%	28.09%	54.83%	80.41%	98.32%	29.27%	56.87%	82.98%	97.22%	97.20%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 97.20% was exceeded.		
R4 Sundry Debtors % of revenue collected against debt raised	90.73%	72%	83.67%	88.84%	95.00%	66.42%	72.43%	80.87%	95.06%	89.10%	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 89.10% was exceeded.		





### Development & Regeneration Services



PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 157a Processing of planning applications: Major applications	62.50%	100%	100%	100%	81.82%	100%	92.31%	71.43%	83.33%	65.00%	Annual performance of 87.1% exceeded annual target of 65%. Performance Plan update, see Appendix C.		
NI 157b Processing of planning applications: Minor applications	80.88%	72.22%	66.15%	67.14%	62.26%	70.97%	91.67%	96.49%	94.67%	75.00%	Annual performance of 88.85% exceeded annual target of 75%.		
NI 157c Processing of planning applications: Other applications	88.71%	85.03%	83.33%	81.82%	80.00%	85.95%	96.64%	92.68%	89.52%	85.00%	Annual performance of 90.56% exceeded annual target of 85%.		

## Finance and HR Services







PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
WL_121 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence <sup>2,3</sup>	8.74	9.63	10.43	10.47	9.64	8.89	7.61	7.40	7.44	8.08	Q4 outturn is year to date; Annual target of 8.08 exceeded. Previous Performance Plan in progress, see Appendix C.	↑	

## Housing & Inclusion Services







PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
HS1 % Housing repairs completed in timescale	97.36%	97.04%	96.11%	97.02%	95.38%	94.93%	97.42%	98.13%	98.40%	97.00%	Annual performance of 97.22% exceeded annual target of 97%.	↑	
Pages 13 % LA properties with Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) outstanding	0.1%	0.05%	0.01%	0.08%	0.13%	0.13%	0.22%	0.07%	0.19%	0.00%	Target based on legal requirement for all eligible properties to have certificate. Reported performance is an average from months in the period. Annual performance of 0.19% did not achieve target of 0%.  Performance Plan in progress. See Appendix C.	↓	
TS1 Rent Collected as a % of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f)	98.65	102.3	100.12	99.74	99.81	102.3	99.96	99.96	99.09	97.00	Q4 outturn is year to date; annual target of 97% was exceeded.  We now actively encourage tenants to make rent payments in advance at commencement of tenancy and continue to request advance payment from those paying by direct debit. The Money Advice Team have secured additional income and back dated awards for tenants throughout the year. These measures have assisted with the collection position.	↓	
TS24a GN Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days) - GENERAL NEEDS	29.42	26.63	25.93	26.97	32.75	19.80	20.69	27.63	27.47	28.00	Annual performance of 23.9 exceeded annual target of 28 days.	↑	









PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
TS24b SP Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (days) - SUPPORTED NEEDS	92.24	60.33	63.09	24.89	77.62	44.82	100.94	267.00	48.85	65.00	Quarter 4 performance is on target. Previous Performance Plan in progress. See Appendix C.  Annual performance of 115.41 did not achieve annual target of 65 days.		

### Leisure & Wellbeing Services









PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
WL08a Number of Crime Incidents	1,105	1,120	1,169	1,271	1,205	1,359	1,224	1,388	1,199		Annual outturn is 5,170		
WL_18 Use of leisure and cultural facilities (swims and visits)	322,129	314,915	303,157	215,442	331,443	307,707	311,904	245,996	348,199		Annual outturn is 1,213,806		

### Street Scene Services

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 191 Residual household waste per household (Kg) <sup>4</sup>	117.6	122.66	124.96	138.46	128.7 <sup>5</sup>	121	125.32	126.71 <sup>5</sup>		125	Data pending from external sources		
NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting <sup>4</sup>	41.08	51.08	51.37	41.81	42.05 <sup>6</sup>	54.16	51.41	43.42 <sup>6</sup>		50.00%	Data pending from external sources		
NI 195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Litter	0.33%	N/A	1.17%	1.17%	2.00%	N/A	1.33%	1.11%	0.65%	1.61%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1. Annual performance of 1.03% exceeded annual target of 1.61%.		

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
NI 195b Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting): Detritus	8.89%	N/A	3.41%	5.97%	5.47%	N/A	3.24%	2.96%	2.19%	5.00%	Survey carried out three times each year. No data for Q1. Annual performance of 2.21% exceeded annual target of 5.00%.		
WL01 No. residual bins missed per 100,000 collections	74.23	81.12	93.34	87.42	97.41	73.06	75.87	78.68	79.62	80.00	Annual performance of 76.81 exceeded annual target of 80.		
WL06 Average time taken to remove fly tips (days)	1.09	1.07	1.05	1.06	1.08	1.03	1.05 <sup>7</sup>	1.03 <sup>7</sup>	1.03	1.09	Annual performance of 1.03 exceeded annual target of 1.09 days		
WL122 % Vehicle Operator Licence Inspections Carried Out within 6 Weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Annual performance of 100% met annual target of 100%.		

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**Transformation & Support Services**

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
BV8 % invoices paid on time	99.27%	99.06%	98.65%	99.28%	98.36%	98.54%	98.33%	98.65%	98.37%	98.75%	March outturn was 99.19%. Head of Service's amber assessment: performance plan not required. Annual performance of 98.48% narrowly missed annual target of 98.75%. Relates to 39,851 invoices in year.		
WL19bii Direct dial calls answered within 10 seconds <sup>2</sup>	82.28%	81.34%	80.79%	82.35%	81.00%	80.15%	79.95%	82.41%	82.69%	82.21%	Annual performance of 81.23% narrowly missed annual target of 82.21%. Relates to 224,182 calls in year.		
WL90 % of Contact Centre calls answered	91.6%	90.6%	93.8%	92.4%	91.1%	92.2%	94.6%	93.7%	91.9%	91.0%	Annual performance of 93% exceeded annual target of 91%.		
WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre	31.00	43.00	23.00	37.00	60.00	64.00	47.00	58.00	69.00	50.00	Annual performance of 60s did not achieve target of 50s. Performance Plan in progress, see Appendix C.		

PI Code & Short Name	Q4 2014/15	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17	Current Target	Comments	Q4 16/17 vs Q4 15/16	Quarter Performance
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
(seconds)											During this period we have also had periods of sickness absence which were managed in line with the Absence Management Policy. Underperformance against the current target was also considered during the 2017/18 target setting process. Performance Plan in progress.		

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Managed through LCC/BTLS contract. Contractual targets are annual. Quarter targets are provided as a gauge for performance only. ICT data and RBS data reflect progress to year end.

<sup>2</sup> WL19bii / WL121: Data does not include BTLS seconded staff.

<sup>3</sup> WL\_121: From 2016/17, quarter data shows a rolling 12 month outturn against the annual target rather than 'within quarter' performance. Outturns of previous quarters re-stated to show this.

<sup>4</sup> NI191-192: Data is provided to WLBC with a time lag due to time involved to confirm final figures.

<sup>5</sup> NI191: Data restated from originally published Q4 2015/16 131.82; Q3 2016/17 121.6.

<sup>6</sup> NI192: Data restated from originally published Q4 2015/16 40.61; Q3 2016/17 44.43.

<sup>7</sup> WL106: Data restated from originally published Q1 1.07, Q2 1.01.

'NI' and 'BV' coding retained for consistency/comparison although national reporting no longer applies.

Following the annual review of PIs, the following changes to QPIs were approved by Cabinet in March 2016 for 2016/17:

- TS24a Average time taken to re-let local authority housing (Supported Needs) – target changed from 50 to 65 to take account of low demand for sheltered housing;
- WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers – target changed from 30 to 50s to reflect increased demand on operator time resulting from increased resolution at first point of contact;
- WL121 Working days lost to sickness absence – outturn period changed from 'within quarter' performance to match internal management reports showing rolling 12 month 'outturn' against the annual target, previous quarter outturns restated to reflect this;
- NI 191 Residual household waste per household – target changed from 495 to 500kg to reflect increase in street litter collected and increase in waste presented for collection;
- NI 195c Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti) – indicator deleted as assessment includes private property where there is no control;
- NI 195d Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of fly posting) – indicator deleted as assessment includes private property where there is no control;
- BV8 % invoices paid on time

<b>PERFORMANCE PLAN</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	R1 % of Council Tax collected
<b>Reason(s) for not meeting target:</b> Inability to escalate debt recovery over a prolonged period	
<p><b>Additional Commentary</b></p> <p>As previously reported, the closure of Ormskirk Magistrates Court in June 2016 and the subsequent impact on the service's ability to escalate debt recovery over several months has had a detrimental impact on performance. Resources have continually been prioritised during the year to try and mitigate the impact and to target recovery action.</p> <p>Although this work resulted in <i>R3 % of Non-domestic Rates Collected</i> outturn exceeding target for the second year, unfortunately despite the best efforts of staff within the team and across the service as a whole we were unable to re-coup the impact of the reduced activity for <i>R1 % of Council Tax collected</i>. It is frustrating to report that despite a really positive start to the year we have fallen slightly short of this annual target by 0.36%.</p> <p>In terms of context, this shortfall equates to approximately £200k against a total annual liability of £56m. The direct impact of this to WLBC is approximately 13%, equating to a shortfall to the Council of £26k.</p> <p>This shortfall has been more than offset for the Council by the Revenues &amp; Benefits Service through the over achievement of performance against other targets for which WLBC are the sole beneficiaries of, such as;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>B2 Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments</i> – over recovery of £141k</li> <li>• <i>R4 Sundry Debtors</i> – over recovery of £421k of % of revenue collected against debt raised</li> </ul> <p>This combined with the overachievement of performance against the <i>R3 % of Non-domestic Rates Collected</i> and <i>R2 % Council Tax - Previous Years arrears collected</i> targets, equating to a further £90k for the Council also adds to the overall net positive impact on performance to WLBC which in total is circa £626k.</p> <p><b>Proposed Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An updated Recovery Strategy for 2017/18</li> <li>• Relevant court dates scheduled with the Magistrates Court Service.</li> </ul> <p>These actions will have a positive impact from the start of the financial year.</p>	
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Resource issues have been considered during the updating of the Recovery Strategy and will be met within the existing service.	
<b>Priority</b>	
The collection of year Current Year Council Tax is a key priority for the service.	
<b>Future Targets</b>	
No proposed change to target.	
<b>Action Plan</b>	
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
• An updated Recovery Strategy for 2017/18	March 2017
• Relevant court dates scheduled with the Magistrates Court Service.	March 2017

**ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS PERFORMANCE PLANS**

**APPENDIX C**

Indicator	Task created following Q	Tasks to be undertaken	Completion Date	Progress	Comment/Impact
NI157 Processing of planning applications	Q1 16/17	Temporary maternity cover for 2 posts / return of maternity staff	April 2017	Complete	Performance has been on target for Q2, Q3, Q4 with no revision of performance plan.
WL121 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence	Q1 16/17	A high level review of the Council's approach to Absence management will be conducted in order to improve performance, including reviewing the policy along with a range of health and well being initiatives	March 2017	Complete	Performance has been on target for Q2, Q3, Q4 with no revision of performance plan.
	Q1 16/17	Develop an eLearning tool for managers on health and safety in the workplace, which will offer advice to prevent illness, accidents and resultant absence.	Feb 2017	Complete	
	Q1 16/17	An e-learning system is about to be implemented, which can be used to provide more effective training on sickness management.	Feb 2017	Complete	
HS13 % of LA properties with CP12 outstanding	Q316/17	Form a working group. Involving Legal, Property Services, Housing Operations and the councils heating contractor.	March 2017	Complete.	Performance for Q4 remains under target. Actions should impact on performance once recommendations are implemented.
		Review current processes with the group	May 2017	Tasks assigned for next meeting.	
		Review best practice from other organisations with the group.	June 2017		
		Make recommendations for changes to the process.	July 2017		
		Implement Changes.	Sept 2017		
WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre	Q316/17	Recruitment to vacant posts	Jan 2017	Complete	Performance for Q4 remains under target. Appointments were made in January, however due to delays with references, checks etc and the need to undertake full training this has delayed the positive impact on performance. Maintaining an efficient contact



					centre remains integral to our customer service. The resourcing of this needs to be balanced with the promotion of channel shift.
TS24b Average time taken to re-let local authority housing SUPPORTED NEEDS	Q316/17	Hall Green Redevelopment	Ongoing	In progress	Q4 performance was within target. The actions proposed aim to reduce the number of empty sheltered properties, this may not always equate to a lower average turnaround in the short or medium term. As a more meaningful measure, the re-let QPIs will be replaced for 2017/18 with a measure of void rent loss.
		Appraisal of sheltered bedsit accommodation	June 2017		
		Promotion of the scheme through local agencies, partners and directly to applicants	July 2017		
		Continue a programme of open days at low demand schemes	Sept 2017		
		Investigate options for reducing age limit from 60 to 55 years for selected Category 1 accommodation.	June 2017		

There were no performance plans relating to the Q2 report.

Performance plans often include actions which, by the time of publication, have already been completed and/or become part of the day to day operations of a service. The above table details those actions from previous Performance Plans that contained a future implementation date.





CABINET: 13 June 2017

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

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J. Hodson

**Contact for further information:** Ian Bond (Extn. 5167)  
(e-mail: [ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk))

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**SUBJECT: GRANVILLE PARK CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL UPDATE**

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Wards affected: Aughton and Downholland Ward

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report back to members the results of the public consultation on a revised boundary to Granville Park Conservation Area boundary and seek the approval of Cabinet for the update to the Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal and associated Design Guide, and the provision to make a new Article 4 Direction across the whole of the Conservation Area.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

- 2.1 That the Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal update for Granville Park Conservation Area and the Design Guide appended to this report (Appendix A and B) be approved.
- 2.2 That the Conservation Area boundary be extended to include the Cockbeck Tavern and its Car Park (identified as extension A on the Plan in Appendix C).
- 2.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Development and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to make and publicise an Article 4 Direction for the extended Granville Park Conservation Area (identified on the Plan in Appendix C and schedule in Appendix D).

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## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The review and update of the character appraisal for the Granville Park Conservation Area is part of a rolling programme of appraisals of all the Conservation Areas in West Lancashire. The Borough Council has an obligation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review, from time to time, its Conservation Area designations, and under Section 71 of this Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.
- 4.2 The draft update to Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal (attached to this Report as Appendix A) was originally subject to public consultation and a public exhibition was held in Aughton Village Hall on 27 October 2016.
- 4.3 On the 8 December 2016 Planning Committee resolved to support the updated appraisal but with a recommendation to revise the boundary by including the Cockbeck Tavern and bowling green together with an additional number of cottages at the top of Winifred Lane.
- 4.4 Cabinet previously considered the update to the Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal and the changes proposed by Planning Committee on the 10 January 2017. Cabinet had no objections regarding the appraisal document, the design guide or the proposals to make a new Article 4 Direction to cover the whole area but felt the Conservation Area boundary should be altered to include the Cockbeck Tavern, car park and the bowling green to the rear (indicated by extensions A and B on the attached plan in Appendix C).
- 4.5 Cabinet resolved that the Character Appraisal update should be deferred in order to undertake further consultation on a proposed revision to the Conservation Area boundary to include the Cockbeck Tavern, car park and the bowling green to the rear of Cockbeck Tavern and that any comments be considered at a future Cabinet meeting.

## **5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION – RESPONSES**

- 5.1 Consultation on the revision to include the Cockbeck Tavern, car park and the bowling green within the Conservation Area boundary took place between 30 January and 20 February 2017. A letter was sent to all residents within the Conservation Area as well as the owners of the Cockbeck Tavern and bowling green inviting any views relating to the proposed amendment to the conservation area boundary.
- 5.2 Three responses were received as a result of this consultation. These are summarised within Appendix E attached to the report. Two responses were from residents within the Conservation Area who support the proposed extension to include the bowling green to the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern. Their support is noted.

- 5.3 The third response was received from the owners of the Cockbeck Tavern site which includes bowling green who whilst provide support for the inclusion of the Cockbeck Tavern and its car park within the Conservation Area, object to the inclusion of the bowling green. They feel that the bowling green does not front onto Granville Park and sits uncomfortably between housing areas and the proposal to include it within the Conservation Area would serve no useful function either in terms of land use or to enhance the Conservation Area. They stated that when assessed against the merits of the area, its inclusion is not useful and could detract from the quality of the Conservation Area.
- 5.4 A summary of the comments received from the consultation can be found within Appendix E attached to this report.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Conservation area appraisals aim to identify and re-affirm the special architectural or historic interest of Conservation Areas, clarify any issues relating to boundaries and identify ways to strengthen their commitment to manage the historic environment.
- 6.2 When considering any amendment to the boundary of a Conservation Area, the Council has to take a cautious approach – to ensure the area meets the statutory test imposed under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 of being an area of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) states that: *“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest”* (paragraph. 127 - NPPF).
- 6.3 Historic England Advice Note 1 (Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, 2016), states that the outcome of a Conservation Area review might typically be an addendum to the existing appraisal, recording what has changed within the area. In doing so, a local authority can redefine the special interest that warrants designation, setting out recommendations to revise the area’s boundaries and management strategy. Paragraph 18 of the same Advice Note states that where an existing boundary may have been drawn too tightly, omitting areas of special interest, such later phases of development, parks, cemeteries and historic green spaces the existing area may need to be extended.
- 6.3 My views on the proposed extension to the Conservation Area involving the Cockbeck Tavern, car park and bowling green are documented in section 5 of my previous 10 January 2017 Cabinet report (see copy attached in Appendix G). I retain the view that the special architectural and historic interest of the

Conservation Area would be enhanced by extending the boundary to include the Cockbeck Tavern and its associated car park (identified as extension A on the Plan in Appendix C).

- 6.4 The Cockbeck Tavern was constructed earlier than its bowling green, with the land probably being set aside for the bowling green in and around the late 1940's or early 50's. The bowling green is discretely located to the north of the car park which serves the former Public House and adjoins a modern residential cul-de-sac (Capilano Park).
- 6.5 Members previously felt that because of the long established association between the Cockbeck Tavern and its bowling green that the combined site contributed to the overall character of the area and to separate the two sites and ignore this relationship would therefore diminish the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 6.6 It is important to acknowledge that defining a boundary to a Conservation Area is a subjective matter and that it is for the Council to agree what area is defined of "special architectural or historic interest" and warrants designation. In this respect I am mindful that Conservation Areas do not only relate to buildings and can also include areas of land and open space, which contribute to the overall character and appearance of an area. Should Members not wish to accept my recommendation to include just the Cockbeck Tavern and car park and also include the bowling green they need to be sure that the revised boundary to the Conservation Area justifies its status as being an area of special architectural or historic interest and therefore meets the test contained in paragraph 127 of the NPPF.
- 6.7 The draft Conservation Area Appraisal Update (attached at Appendix A) has been revised to reflect the amendment of the Conservation Area boundary.
- 6.8 Extending planning control over development through the imposition of a new Article 4 Direction will help to prevent erosion of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Article 4 Direction will be re-drawn to cover the revised boundary of the Granville Park Conservation Area. Subject to approval of the recommendations, the procedure for making an Article 4 Direction requires consultation with any residents/land owners affected by the changes and a press notice must be published. The draft Direction identified will come into force on undertaking the notification with residents and can remain in place for up to 6 months. Before the Article 4 Direction can be confirmed, any representations from property owners affected by the Directions must be considered and they will be included in a further report back to Cabinet for a decision on whether or not to confirm the Direction.
- 6.9 In all other respects the proposals, including the Design Guide and management proposals, remain unaltered from those originally reported to Cabinet on the 10 January 2017.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.
- 7.2 The need to continue with efforts to protect and improve the quality of the Borough's environment including the streetscene, natural and built heritage of our towns, villages and countryside has been identified as a key issue in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 7.3 The historic environment has an important role to play in contributing to sustainability in West Lancashire. The appraisals help value the distinctiveness of the local areas and provide a better understanding of the state of the physical and historical environment. The work seeks to improve the environment and cultural heritage of the wider community.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report, although a programme of small scheme enhancement works including a Traditional Features Grant Scheme is currently supported via the Capital Programme.
- 8.2 However there are circumstances in which local authorities may be liable to pay compensation having made an Article 4 Direction, although the potential liability is limited by time limits that apply. Compensation in all cases can only be claimed for abortive expenditure or other loss or damage caused by the removal of the permitted development rights.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 The work undertaken is an important part of the Council's duty to preserve its Conservation Areas. Under existing legislation Councils are required to formulate and publish proposals for the management of its designated Conservation Areas.
- 9.2 Article 4 Directions provide planning controls over the impacts of minor development on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Failure to apply the Article 4 Directions weakens our management of these historic areas and risks the Authority not fulfilling its duty to preserve the historic character and appearance of both Conservation Areas.

## **10.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 The review of the Borough's conservation areas remains important work, which is essential for the proper management of our important historic places. The review work has confirmed that Granville Park Conservation Area retains its special architectural or historic interest.

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## **Background Documents**

2016	Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England)
1997	Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal
2017	Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update - Addendum Report (10 <sup>th</sup> January 2017 Cabinet Report)

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix F to this report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Granville Park Conservation Area Draft Character Appraisal
- Appendix B – Granville Park Conservation Area Design Guide
- Appendix C - Plan of Conservation Area extension and new Article 4 Direction boundary.
- Appendix D - Article 4 Direction schedule
- Appendix E – Granville Park Conservation Area revised boundary Consultation responses
- Appendix F - Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix G – Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update - Addendum Report (10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 Cabinet Report)





# Granville Park Conservation Area

## Draft Character Appraisal Update



May 2017

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This appraisal is part of a rolling programme of appraisals of all the Conservation Areas in West Lancashire. The Borough Council has an obligation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review, from time to time, its Conservation Area designations, and under Section 71 of this Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas.
- 1.2. The Granville Park Conservation Area was designated by West Lancashire District Council in 1975. The southern part of the Conservation Area incorporates Granville Park itself which consists of a serpentine road fronted by housing plots and four short cul-de-sacs. The northern part comprises a former quarry and a group of detached properties around Delph Lane, Moss Delph Lane and Quarry Drive.
- 1.3. The last appraisal of the Conservation Area was carried out in October 1997. This document aims to identify and re-affirm the special architectural or historic interest of the area which justifies its designation. In this instance this review is not intended to supersede the previous 1997 appraisal, but rather adds a further layer of understanding in recording changes and potential threats to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 1.4. The outcome of a review might typically result in an update to the existing appraisal, recording what has changed, confirming (or redefining) the special interest that warrants designation, setting out any new recommendations and revising the area's management strategy. Historic England's most recent advice on the topic<sup>1</sup> states the process of review plays a part in the management of the Conservation Area, and should result in the formation of a management plan.
- 1.5. As part of this review an objective study has been conducted, which has assessed the contribution (both architecturally and historically) that individual properties make within the Conservation Area. This appraisal work has extended beyond the boundary and is used to examine the potential for extending the boundary of the Conservation Area. The outcome of this study is illustrated in **Map 3**.

## 2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's Planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF recognises that a core role of the planning system is to conserve heritage so it can be enjoyed by future generations and sets out the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should ensure that Conservation Areas justify their status because of their architectural or historic interest.
- 2.2. The West Lancashire Borough Council Local Plan Development Plan Document 2012 – 2027 guides development within the Borough. The vision for the plan is for West Lancashire to be an attractive place where people want to live, work and visit. The distinctiveness of West Lancashire including the contribution made by its historic buildings and places should be valued, sustained and where possible, enhanced.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2016)

- 2.3. Policy EN4 of the Local Plan (Preserving and Enhancing West Lancashire's Cultural and Heritage Assets) identifies that the historic environment has an aesthetic value which helps create a unique sense of place. Protection is to be afforded the historic environment, and there is a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets (which includes Conservation Areas).
- 2.4. The West Lancashire 'Design Guide' Supplementary Planning Document (published in January 2008) provides specific direction in relation to design, including works to buildings in the historic environment. It states that development proposals should always be sensitive to the character of the historic environment, be of high quality in terms of design and the materials used and aim to enhance the character and appearance of the building and/or wider area.

### 3. Community Involvement

- 3.1 Consultation and early involvement of both local communities and owners is important in achieving support for Conservation Areas and a better understanding of what contributes towards its special character.
- 3.2 All residents within the Conservation Area were invited to a workshop which took place at 6:30pm on 12 April 2016 at the Council Offices in Ormskirk. Twelve local residents attended with a further three supplying comments after the event. The workshop presented an opportunity for residents to discuss conservation related issues and what contributes towards the special character of the Conservation Area. The comments made at the Workshop have fed into this Draft Appraisal.

### 4. History and Development

- 4.1 A brief history of the Granville Park Conservation Area and its surroundings was published in the 1997 Conservation Area Appraisal. This history, together with those of all the 28 Conservation Areas in the Borough, has been published in a document entitled *The Conservation Areas of West Lancashire: A Brief History (2007)* which is available to download from [www.westlancs.gov.uk/heritage](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/heritage)

## 5. Summary of Special Interest

### Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area

- 5.1 The key attributes of the Granville Park Conservation Area derive from a number of factors including:
- 5.1.1 The serpentine layout of the residential development, views along which are framed by mature trees.
- 5.1.2 The semi-rural setting of the residential park with views across the fields south of Winifred Lane.
- 5.1.3 A general feeling of informal openness within the residential area. This is created by a number of aspects including:
- Generous plot sizes. Despite many of the buildings being of substantial scale and mass, their setting surrounded by green space helps to reduce their visual impact and contributes to their sense of being set within a semi-rural landscape. Analysis of the plot sizes in Granville Park reveals that those properties built as part of the first phase of development (phasing of development is described in more detail in section 5) are generally set within the largest plots with the buildings on average covering less than 10% of the total plot area. The exception to this are instances where there has been subdivision of a plot. The second phase properties are still set within substantial plots, but the proportion of the plot covered by the building is slightly greater – on average this is up to 15%.
  - The ‘gaps’ between buildings. Many houses are separated from the neighbouring property by a significant amount of landscaping.
  - The set back of the property within the plot allowing for landscaping to the front. This means that the houses are glimpsed from the streetscene through landscaping, rather than dominating it.
  - Relatively small and discretely located areas of hardstanding within the residential curtilage – usually leading to a garage.
  - Understated boundary treatments which help to maintain a green frontage to the street scene. These fall into two categories:
    - Formal – traditionally created through the use of low walls or estate railings with a hedge behind
    - Informal - a simple hedge of a native species.
- 5.1.4 Extensive tree and shrub cover and roadside grass verges provide colour and a feeling of seclusion. The mature trees positioned along the roadside and others visible over rooftops and between buildings also provide an important green backdrop to the built development.
- 5.1.5 This green backdrop combined with the open spaces of the quarry and the private Tennis Club play a significant role in the creation of an Arcadian<sup>G 2</sup> character. The unmade road

<sup>2</sup> Words marked with <sup>G</sup> are explained within the Glossary at the end of this document.

surfaces on Quarry Drive and north of the tennis club also contribute to this informal, rustic character.

- 5.1.6 The variety of property types from different eras. No two properties in Granville Park are the same. There is considerable diversity even amongst properties of the same era that hints at bespoke architecture. Common features and materials are used, but in different combinations to produce this variety.

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5.1.7 The group value of the row of substantial, imposing late Victorian detached and semi-detached houses built at the northern end of the serpentine loop of Granville Park, Middlewood Road, Town Green Lane and near the quarry. Their form is generally two principle storeys, but with additional floors in the basement and roof space so that the main ground floor is approached via a short flight of stone steps. A number still retain their associated coach houses. The Victorian properties around the quarry (Quarry House, Fairholme, The Quarries and 15 Delph Lane) are physically separated from the others, smaller in scale and display a simpler architectural form with less detailing - perhaps due to their more functional relationship to the quarry. However most of the houses of this era share a common palette of materials and a number of similar architectural features which are listed below:



*Examples of Victorian properties in the Conservation Area*

**Materials:**

- Red bricks
- Stone heads and cills to windows often incorporating decorative mouldings
- Painted timber vertical sliding sash windows with horns<sup>G</sup>
- Painted panelled timber doors
- Cast iron rain water goods
- Painted timber fascia boards and barge boards<sup>G</sup>

**Architectural Features:**

- Italianate<sup>G</sup> and Gothic<sup>G</sup> styling
- Decorative barge boards<sup>G</sup> and fascias
- Finials<sup>G</sup>
- Console brackets<sup>G</sup>
- Canted and square bay windows<sup>G</sup>
- Coloured brick banding
- Roof forms of a mixture of gables<sup>G</sup> and hips<sup>G</sup>, occasionally broken by dormers<sup>G</sup>, towers and chimneys
- Large chimneys with numerous chimney pots
- Detailed entrances, some reached by a series of steps, some with canopies, others with internal



porches.

Low brick boundary walls with brick courses which follow the contours of the land, many with stone copings and gate piers.



*Brick walls with stone detailing to the front of the Victorian properties*

5.1.8 The group value of the Edwardian<sup>G</sup> houses located in the north of the Conservation Area – along Delph Lane, Moss Delph Lane and Quarry Drive. These properties are constructed of a common palette of materials and display architectural features typical of the era. These include:

**Materials:**

- Orange/red machine-made bricks
- Some use of render on feature walls
- Slate roofs
- Painted timber windows, fascia boards and barge boards

**Architectural Features:**

- Simple stone detailing to windows
- Square and canted bay windows<sup>G</sup>
- Timber vertical sliding sash windows with horns<sup>G</sup>
- Painted timber panelled doors
- Leaded door surrounds, some with stained glass decoration
- Half-timbered<sup>G</sup> detailing to gables
- Slated canopies over ground floor windows supported by elaborate timber brackets
- Chimneys with a number of chimney pots
- Low wall constructed of orange/red machine made bricks, capped with stone or shaped bricks. Decorative stone or brick gate piers, some of which incorporate the name of the property.



*Examples of Edwardian properties in the Conservation area.*



*An example of the decorative gateposts and walls with shaped bricks outside the Edwardian properties on Delph Lane.*

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5.1.9 The group value of the slightly later Arts and Crafts<sup>G</sup> era properties which also have a similar palette of materials and array of architectural features, listed below:

**Materials:**

Red Brick

Roughcast render often ending in heavy bell casts

'Rosemary red'<sup>G</sup> clay roof tiles

Painted timber casement windows<sup>G</sup>

**Architectural Features:**

Brick plinths<sup>G</sup>

Prominent front gables<sup>G</sup> and feature gabled bays

Projecting eaves<sup>G</sup> with projecting spar ends<sup>G</sup> (rather than boxed eaves<sup>G</sup>)

Leaded-light<sup>G</sup> and stained glass detailing to casement windows

Stylised entrance porches - some with simple canopies; others inset, constructed of brick and rounded in form

Feature chimneys topped with chimney pots

Boundary treatments which typically include clipped Privet and native species hedges, sometimes with wooden fences or original estate rails



*Examples of 'Arts and Crafts' properties in the Conservation Area.*

## 6. Assessment of Special Interest

### Location and Setting

- 6.1 The Conservation Area lies at the southern end of the contiguous settlements of Ormskirk and Aughton in the south of the Borough. (See **Map 1** which shows the Conservation Area boundary and its wider context). Apart from some isolated groups of older buildings, Aughton is predominantly a collection of twentieth century residential developments. It is a popular residential area because of its attractive environment and convenient transport links to Preston to the north and Liverpool to the south.
- 6.2 Although the Conservation Area is almost entirely surrounded by later residential developments; rolling open fields, dotted with farmsteads, extend to the south west and act as reminders of the area's agricultural heritage.
- 6.3 Part of the western boundary of the Conservation Area is formed by the Liverpool to Preston railway line. This is significant, as the presence of the railway facilitated the growth of Aughton.
- 6.4 The Conservation Area is on the southern slope of the low sandstone hill upon which Aughton is built. The land generally falls gently from north to south, although the depression of the former quarry between Delph Lane and Quarry Drive is a significant departure from that general topography.

### Views

- 6.5 Views out from a Conservation Area can often help connect it to its surroundings and enable the Conservation Area to be 'rooted' in the town or landscape. The dense vegetation and surrounding housing development severely restrict most long distance views into and out of the Conservation Area. However the junction of Winifred Lane with the entrance to Granville Park, near the War Memorial, provides an attractive view of the War Memorial surrounded by trees and a glimpse of the properties beyond.
- 6.6 Vistas are enclosed views, usually long and narrow due to being enclosed and shaped by features such as buildings, streets and trees. Several of these have been identified within Granville Park including:
- The constriction created by the narrowness of the southern part of Delph Lane which provides a dramatic contrast to the openness of the quarry.
  - The pedestrian footpaths which follow much older access routes. These footpaths (known locally as 'the pads' are extensively used and therefore form a significant way in which the Conservation Area is experienced by people passing through. These footpaths are divided into two sections:
    - The footpath which runs north – south through the park provides a vista enclosed by the rear garden fences and walls of houses in Granville Park. This sense of enclosure is particularly tangible in summer when the boundary trees add a further green dimension to this vista.
    - The footpath north of the Tennis Club which connects the end of the cul-de-sac section of Granville Park to the rest of the serpentine provides an almost rural vista entirely encircled by vegetation.

6.7 Vistas and views are illustrated in **Map 3**.

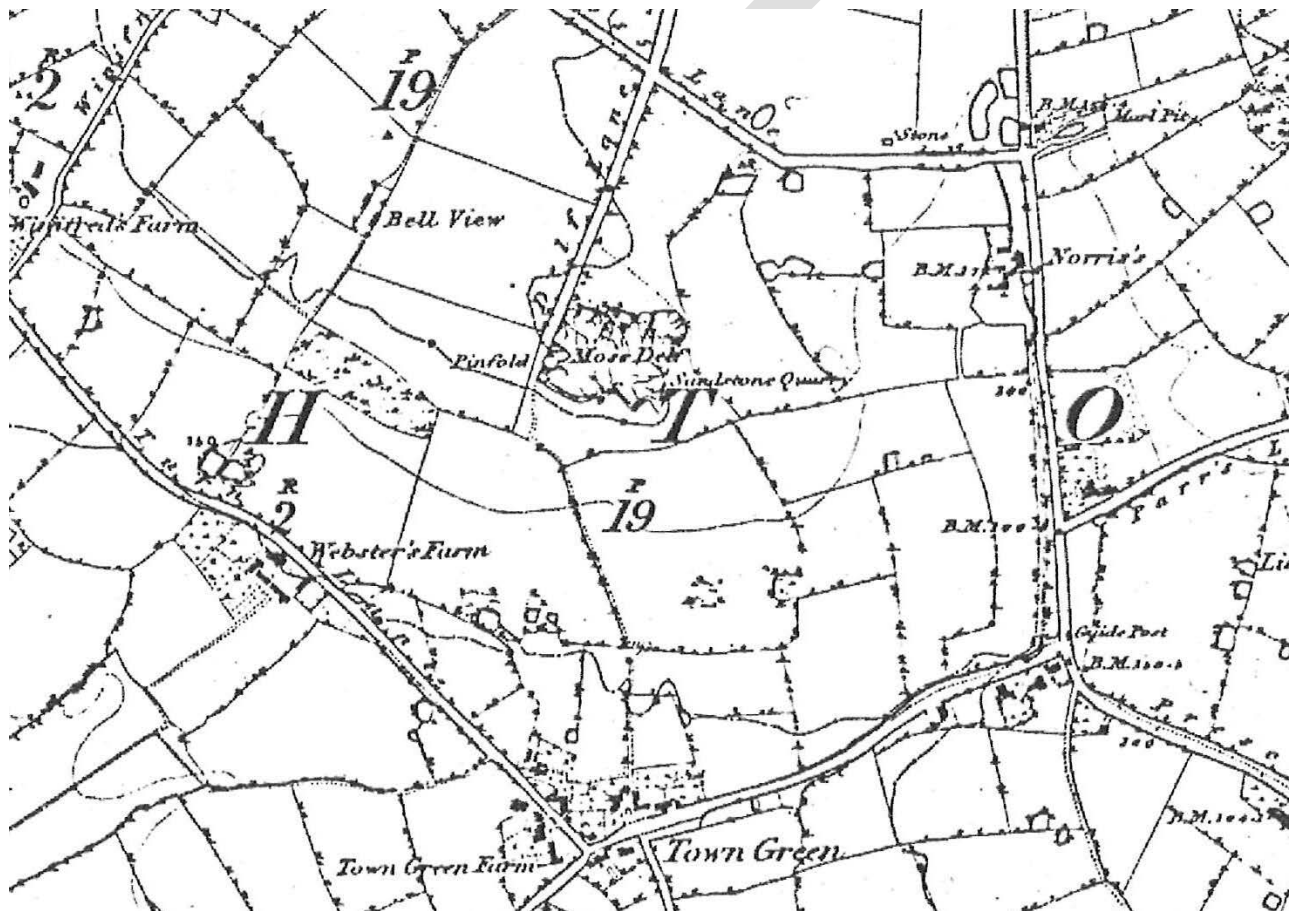


*Views down footpaths within Granville Park.*

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### Historic Development and Architectural Quality

- 6.8 Development within the Granville Park Conservation Area can be broken down into four phases. These phases are illustrated in **Map 2** and described in more detail below.
- 6.9 The 1848 map of Aughton shows that the hamlet of Town Green was already established around the junction of Winifred Lane and Bold Lane. However, with the exception of the quarry at the end of Delph Lane, (which was then not shown on mapping as a through highway) the area was entirely agricultural land, divided into irregular fields. There was a collection of buildings around what it now known as Limetree House and Farm (referred to on the 1848 map as Webster's Farm). Any remnants of these would therefore appear to be the oldest buildings in the Conservation Area. (See **Figure 1** below).



**Figure 1:** 1848 Map of Granville Park and its surroundings

- 6.10 The opening of the Liverpool to Ormskirk railway line in 1849 provided the opportunity for commuting from Aughton to Liverpool, and many houses were subsequently built to accommodate commuters. Landowners saw the opportunity for increased profit from residential developments and the loop road forming Granville Park was laid out, with the surrounding land divided into building plots.

#### Phase 1 (late Victorian period)

6.11 The map of 1893 (**Figure 2** below) shows that the north side of Granville Park, the area immediately around the quarry and around the junction with Town Green Lane / Middlewood Road was the first to be developed from approximately the 1880s with large detached and semi-detached dwellings. These Victorian villas are not identical – there is evident variety of form and architectural styles, including Italianate<sup>6</sup> and Gothic<sup>6</sup>, but a uniform palette of materials was used. Those still remaining from this era include no. 24 – 36 (evens), 40, Granville Park, Quarry Cottage (15 Delph Lane), The Quarries, Quarry House and Fairholme.

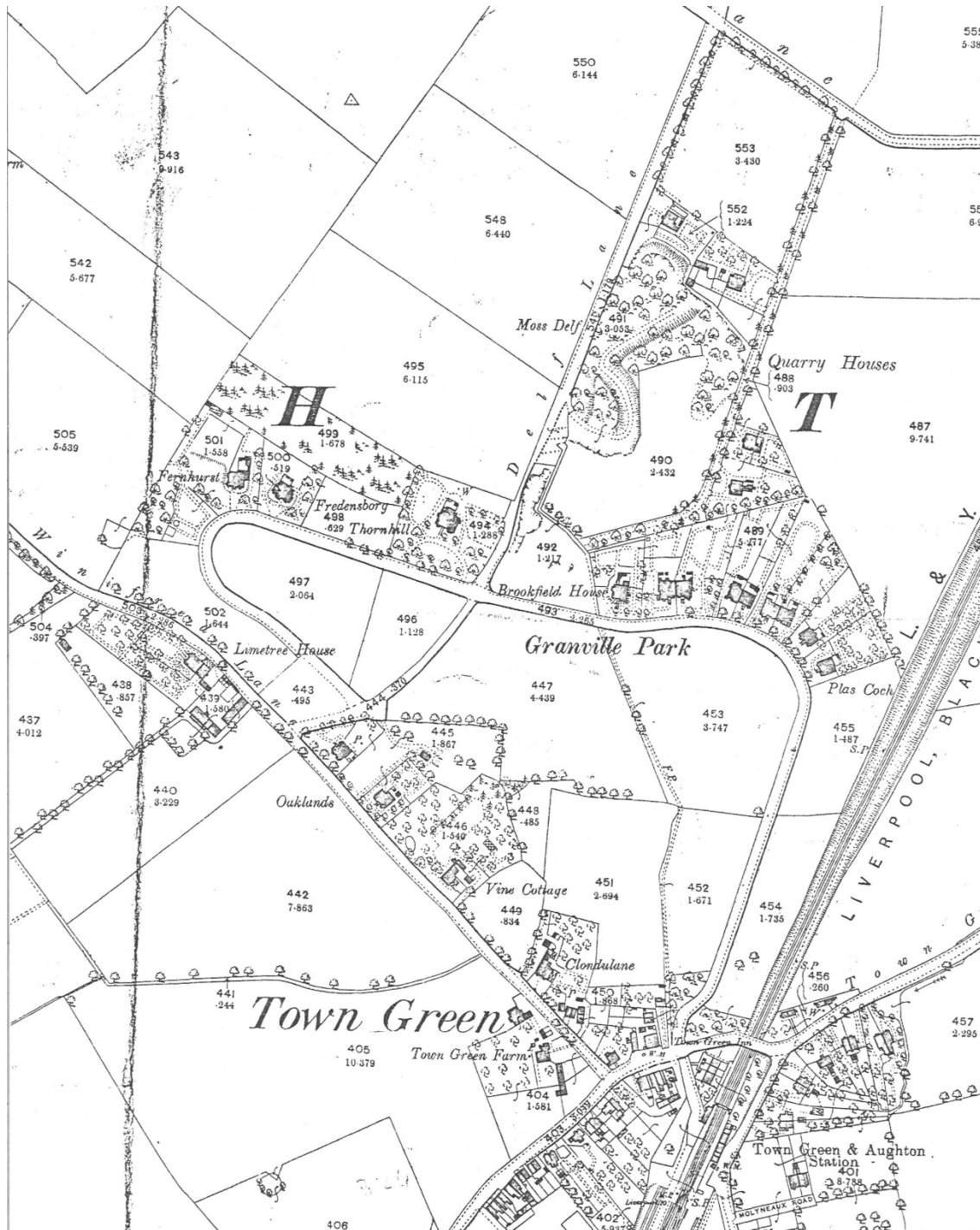


Figure 2: 1893 Map of Granville Park





Photograph showing first phase of development in Granville Park

Phase 2 (1901 - 1945)

6.12 The early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw residential development start to move further around the Granville Park serpentine and onto land north of the quarry. There is some distinction between those that reflect Edwardian features and those that display the Arts and Crafts architectural style popular at the time. This is described further below:

(A) Edwardian<sup>G</sup>

The Edwardian properties are two storey, detached and of a more moderate size in comparison to the earlier Victorian properties. Those belonging to this era include:

- Delph Lane: no.1 – 5 (odd) and no.11;
- Moss Delph Lane: no 212 and 214;
- Quarry Drive: Aughton House, Charlton and Eastwood

(B) 'Arts and Crafts' style<sup>G</sup> (constructed up until approximately the Second World War)

These are substantial two storey properties, some with attic accommodation, of a similar scale to the original Victorian villas. Those displaying these characteristics include:

- 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 18, 23, 42, 44, 49, 57, 57a, 60, 84, 86 Granville Park

The development of the second phase of properties in Granville Park can be seen in **Figure 3** below dating from 1927.

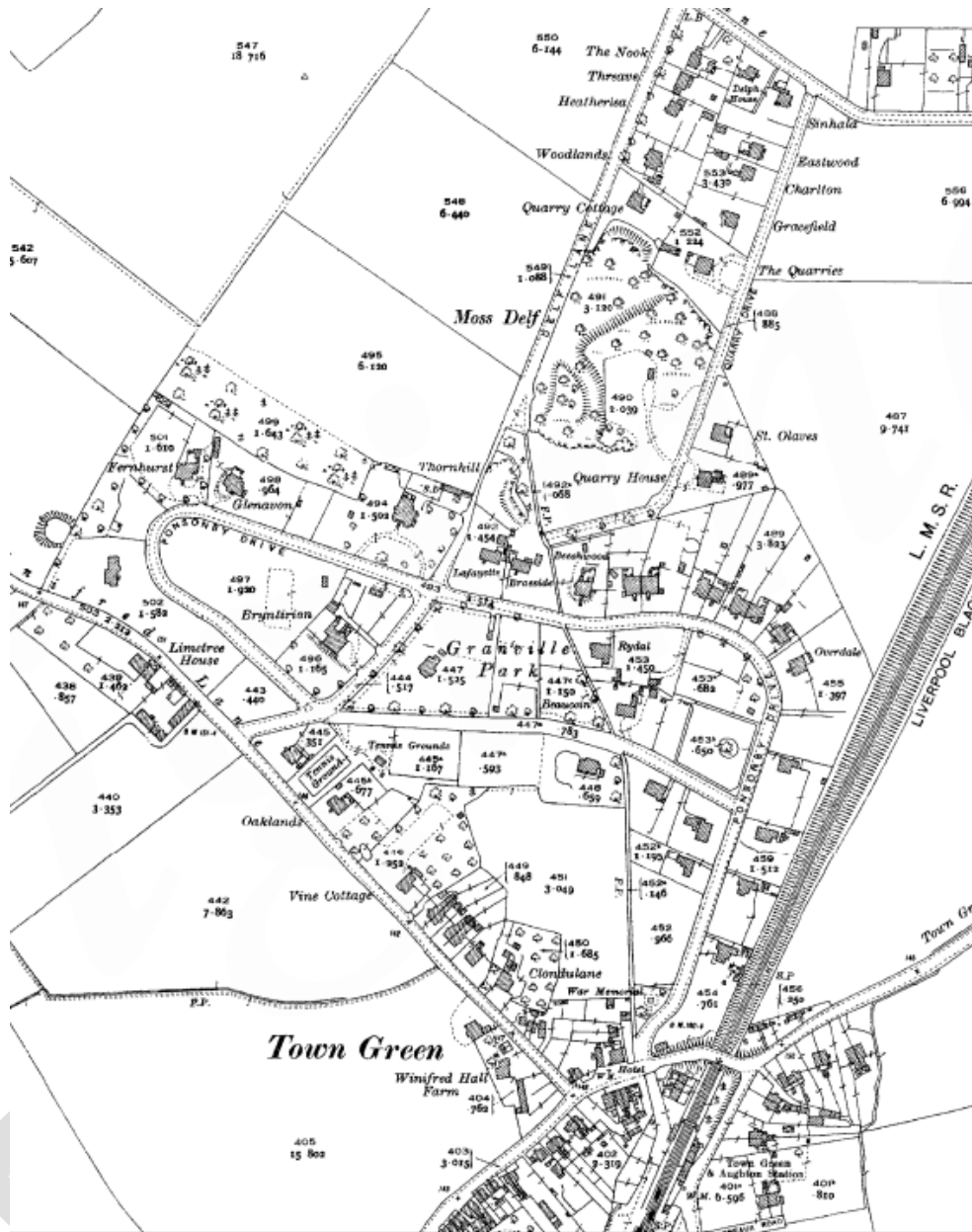


Figure 3: 1927 Map of Granville Park



*This early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph shows some of the newly constructed phase 2 properties alongside the late Victorian development visible at the head of Granville Park. 7 Granville Park lies on the left of the picture in the foreground, while no.6 is in the right foreground. The vacant plot to the south (later to be occupied by no.5) is also clearly visible.*

### Phase 3 (Post War – 1979)

- 6.13 As the Twentieth Century progressed, more substantial changes took place in the Conservation Area. Increased housing demand saw vacant plots developed and some larger plots sub-divided. The 1960s/70s also saw the demolition of two large original Victorian properties located on the western loop of the serpentine – Thornhill and Fernhurst which both had substantial grounds. These were replaced with several detached properties – those at Thornhill Close and Thornhill. Virtually no evidence of these former properties still exists – in the case of Fernhurst only the original gate piers remain.
- 6.14 Generally the development during this period is of no particular architectural style. House types followed those found in other suburban volume house builder estates. In terms of form, a mixture of bungalows and smaller two storey properties were built. The properties from this era include:
- Granville Park West: 35, 37, 43, 45, 48, 58, 66, 70
  - Granville Park: 2, 2a, 4, 8, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 20a, 22, 27, 38, 55
  - Quarry Drive: Delphside, Woodside and The Alcove
  - Moss Delph Lane: 210
  - Middlewood Road: 1a

### Recent development (1980 – present)

- 6.15 Following this third phase of development, the rate of development in Granville Park slowed as the number of available plots diminished. Granville Close was developed on the former site of Fernhurst

and a number of other properties were built on sub-divided plots – mainly of those properties built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. More recent years has seen the demolition and rebuild of houses and substantial extension of phase 2 and 3 properties.

6.16 This more recent phase of properties have tended (with some exceptions) to increase the proportion of built development within the plot – pushing the figure towards 20% and in some cases beyond this.



*Recent development in Granville Park.*

## Layout

6.17 The Portland stone War Memorial in the form of an obelisk set within a small landscaped garden area (*see below*) marks the main southern entrance to Granville Park. This is the start of the serpentine road which leads through the area.



6.18 Moss Delph Lane is a through traffic route and Delph Lane provides a vehicular link north out of Granville Park. The remainder of the roads in the Conservation Area principally only serve the properties within it, or are quiet cul-de-sacs – e.g. Quarry Drive.

6.19 The northern part of the Conservation Area incorporates a former quarry which is perhaps the oldest man made feature within the Conservation Area, having supplied the stone for many local buildings, not least Christ Church, Aughton. The quarry is now a wooded recreation area and Local Nature Conservation Site.

## Plot size

6.20 Plot sizes generally vary across the Conservation Area – a legacy of the phased development described above. As part of the update to the Appraisal, an assessment was made of the size of each of the plots, as well as a calculation of the proportion of the plot occupied by built development. Despite some exceptions, a general trend has emerged:

- Phase 1 properties typically possess the largest plots with properties occupying the smallest proportion of the plot – typically 10% or less. Exceptions exist where there has been plot subdivision, or substantial extension of the property (e.g. in the case of the former Nursing Home – no.26 Granville Park.)

- Phase 2 properties (both Edwardian and those constructed in Arts and Crafts style) have slightly smaller plots, with properties typically covering up to 15% of the plot, although many still have similar proportions of plot coverage (e.g. less than 10%) to the original Victorian properties.
- Phase 3 properties were generally constructed on smaller plots and therefore the proportion of the plot occupied by built development increased. Most occupy between 10-15% of the plot, although there are a significant number occupying a larger proportion than this – usually due to extensions.
- The trend towards larger properties on smaller sites has continued with properties developed in the last 30 years – many of these properties occupy over 15% of the plot, with some occupying over 20% of the plot.
- Maintaining the plot size and the ratio of the plot size to the buildings on particular sites is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area (see Section 5).

### Open Space, Trees, Gardens and boundaries

6.21 The Quarry is the only public recreation space in the Conservation Area. This small wooded area (*see below*), approximately 1.5 hectares in size, was a former quarry working site which is now within the ownership of Aughton Parish Council. It has a very natural appearance, dominated by self-seeded trees, mainly Beech with some Birch and other species. As the site has matured it has become an important area for biodiversity, supporting a mix of wildlife habitats. Also of interest is its evidence of the local geology with the steep sloping rock faces.



6.22 The majority of properties in Granville Park have retained their mature front gardens and the associated mature landscaping of trees, shrubs and hedging. Together with the roadside trees, this provides a picturesque setting for the houses in Granville Park which makes an important contribution towards the area's green character. This mature landscaping of both streets and

gardens in the area also creates a much quieter ambience of the thoroughfares of Granville Park when compared to other streets and roads outside the Conservation Area.

- 6.23 Trees are important to the Conservation Area for many reasons, not least because they can be attractive features in their own right. They add colour to the area, changing with the seasons, soften the hard edges of buildings and structures and can screen and frame views. They also provide shade and shelter for wildlife and absorb carbon dioxide. Virtually every garden has a least one mature specimen tree, and several houses have trees in the front, side and rear gardens. There are also valuable trees within the verges. There is a wide range of species including Scots Pine, Yew, Silver Birch, Ash and Sycamore as well as more exotic species such as Eucalyptus and Acers.
- 6.24 Boundaries such as walls, fences or hedges separate private spaces from the public realm of roads and pavements both physically and visually. Some of the older properties still have their original attractive brick boundary walls at the front with stone copings and impressive stone gate piers. In some areas the original metal estate railings remain. In other areas, original hedgerows are retained which preserve the area's semi-rural feel. These include species such as Privet, Holly and deciduous trees such as Hawthorn and Beech.



*Traditional boundary treatments still remaining in the Conservation Area*

- 6.25 The curved stone walls at the entrance to Quarry Drive, and stone wall at the constriction of Delph Lane also contribute to the almost rural feel and character.
- 6.26 Later 20<sup>th</sup> Century development has introduced more of a mixture of boundary treatments into the Conservation Area. (**Map 4** illustrates the different boundary treatments in existence in the area). There has been a tendency towards the installation of higher, more impermeable boundary treatments, including high walls and railings and electronic gates, constructed of either metal or wood, with the aim of increasing privacy and security of properties. This was highlighted within the previous appraisal as a detracting feature which has led to an increasing 'suburbanisation' of the streetscene and an erosion of the green, landscaped setting of these properties.

## 7.0 Further Action and Issues

### Possible changes to the Conservation Area boundary

- 7.1 National planning guidance states that when considering the designation of Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest. Although this section specifically refers to designation, this principle should also be used when considering boundary revisions to existing Conservation Areas.
- 7.2 The boundary of the Granville Park Conservation Area has been revised once since its designation. This took place in 1997, as part of the last Appraisal. This saw the area extended outside of the Granville Park serpentine - in two locations to the south to include properties on Middlewood Road, Winifred Lane and Town Green Lane.
- 7.3 As part of the re-appraisal of a Conservation Area, it is good practice to assess properties beyond the current boundary. The Granville Park Conservation Area is relatively self-contained with surrounding properties being from a different era, architectural style and serving a different function. However one building which is considered to be of a similar era and reflect a number of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area was the Cockbeck Tavern. This was assessed (using the same criteria as those within the Conservation Area) to determine the extent to which it reflects the Conservation Area's key characteristics (identified in Section 4). The potential extension to include this building and the plot associated with it is illustrated in **Map 5**.

### Proposed extension

- 7.4 The Cockbeck Tavern and its adjoining bowling green lie immediately to the south of the Conservation Area and are being considered for inclusion for the following reasons:
- The Cockbeck Tavern plays a significant role in the setting of the Conservation Area - framing the western entrance to the serpentine route of Granville Park
  - The building is located on a key corner site and is seen in close context to the War Memorial immediately to the north east
  - Old editions of maps for the area appear to show that the building is contemporary with the earliest development within Granville Park
  - It shares some architectural features with the Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the Conservation Area – for example sash windows and a slate roof
  - The bowling green to the rear of the building exhibits many of the 'Arcadian' characteristics of the rest of Granville Park, maintaining a leafy frontage and a glimpsed green vista from the footpath through the park.
- 7.5 Having considered the above, our recommendation is that the Cockbeck Tavern and the associated bowling green should be added into the Conservation Area.

**Recommendation:** *To extend the boundary of the Conservation Area to include the Cockbeck Tavern and its associated bowling green – as illustrated in Map 5.*



- 7.6 In line with Historic England guidance<sup>3</sup> we propose that the possible extension should be subject to public scrutiny and consultation with local residents before a decision is taken to amend the Conservation Area boundary.
- 7.7 A Local Authority's power to cancel or vary a designation is given by Section 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In terms of procedure, the local authority must follow the same publicity procedures to vary or cancel a designation as they do to designate an area. In addition, notice will be given to the Secretary of State and Historic England with details of the area affected.

## 8.0 Article 4 Direction

- 8.1 Under the current Permitted Development Order<sup>4</sup> insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes, the installation of satellite antenna on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway, and the application of cladding are not permitted development in Conservation Areas (i.e. the works will require planning permission). However, even with these restrictions, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas can be negatively impacted by insensitive alterations to individual buildings which are allowed under permitted development – e.g. replacement of doors or windows. An Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent development or change taking place, but enables the Local Authority to retain control over the design and detailing of the works, and possibly grant permission subject to appropriate conditions.
- 8.2 Following the previous full appraisal of the Conservation Area in 1997, the Council felt that there was justification for placing an Article 4(2) Direction on a number of properties within the Conservation Area to remove a number of their permitted development rights. This covered all of the Phase 1 Victorian properties and some of the Phase 2 Edwardian properties and is illustrated in **Map 6**.
- 8.3 Part of the Appraisal process requires consideration of changes that have occurred over the years since the previous Appraisal which may compel the revision of this additional control. There has been a growing pressure for modernisation of properties in Granville Park in recent years. There are several properties (particularly Phase 2 properties) not currently protected by the Article 4 Direction that retain a number of original features which could potentially be removed without the need for planning permission. This would have a negative impact upon the character of the individual property and its contribution to the character of the wider Conservation Area.
- 8.4 Given the changes that have occurred over the last 20 years, the Council feels the extension of the Article 4 Direction across the whole of the Granville Park Conservation Area would be appropriate in order to prevent further insensitive alterations to properties which make a positive contribution to the area's character and prevent further threats to the key characteristics highlighted in section 5. This proposal is illustrated in **Map 6**.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 14, 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' Historic England Advice Note 1. (Historic England) February 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

***Recommendation:*** To extend the Article 4 Direction to cover the entire Conservation Area (including any approved extension), as illustrated in **Map 6**.

8.5 This would have an impact on all the types of development outlined in the table below:

<b>Element of Article 4 Direction proposed for Granville Park</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on a dwelling or a building within the curtilage	Chimneys are important features on many of the properties within the Conservation Area.
Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling *	To protect original windows, doors and other important original features.
Alteration of a dwelling roof *	Alteration of roofing materials would negatively impact upon the character of the Conservation Area given the predominance of natural materials – e.g. slate and clay tiles.
Erection/construction of a porch outside any external door *	A porch is a prominent feature on the front elevation of a property and therefore can have a significant impact upon its appearance.
Provision within the curtilage of a building, enclosure, swimming or other pool incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling or required for the maintenance, improvement or alteration of any building or enclosure *	The introduction of such a feature has the potential to impact upon the setting of the property and therefore the character of the Conservation Area.
Hard surfaces within the curtilage of a house incidental to its enjoyment *	The increase of areas of hardstanding, particularly to the front of properties within Granville Park has the potential to erode its landscaped setting, which is an important characteristic of the Conservation Area.
Installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antenna on house or curtilage *	Satellite antennae should be controlled to ensure they are correctly sited.
Erection or demolition of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure within the curtilage *	Boundary walls are important features within the Conservation Area.
Painting of the dwelling or buildings or enclosure within the curtilage *	Painting of buildings – particularly brickwork may have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

In respect of the developments marked with \*, a direction only relates to those developments fronting a highway, a waterway or an open space (defined as any land laid out as a public garden, or

used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground). In the case of an extension, if any part, such as the side, fronts the highway etc, then this will be covered.

- 8.6 Since the previous Appraisal, the General Permitted Development Order<sup>5</sup> has been changed, allowing for the installation of solar photo voltaic (PV) or solar thermal equipment in certain locations on buildings without the need for Planning Permission. At present there is no planning control over this type of work within the Conservation Area, although this could be achieved by including such works within a new Article 4 Direction.
- 8.7 Some solar PV/thermal panels have been installed within the Conservation Area in recent years. Their installation on the roofs of properties can obscure, to some extent, the original roof covering and can cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

***Recommendation:*** *To extend the development covered in the Schedule of the Article 4 Direction to include Part 14, Class A (the installation, alteration or replacement of microgeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment on domestic properties) so that this form of development will require Planning Permission.*

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<sup>5</sup> Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

## 9.0 Further Development in the Conservation Area

- 9.1 One of the threats identified within the previous Conservation Area Appraisal was the possibility of future pressure for further development.
- 9.2 The sense of spaciousness to the residential plots created by a number of different aspects related to layout and building footprint have been identified (see Section 5 on key characteristics) as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Although plot sizes in the Conservation Area are not uniform, their substantial size and the ratio between the plot size and the extent of buildings on the site contribute to the area's spacious character and parkland feel. Maintaining this is therefore important and cases of plot subdivision harm the special character of the Conservation Area.
- 9.3 Applications for the partial or total demolition of properties (commonly phase 3 properties) followed by rebuild have increased since the last Appraisal. As part of this update, each building has been assessed against a list of criteria related to character. The score each achieves forms the basis of its contribution (i.e. whether it makes a positive, neutral or no contribution to Granville Park's character). Proposals for the demolition of buildings assessed as making a positive contribution will be resisted. In the case of other buildings, the loss of the building and the impact of its replacement will be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 9.4 In order to help applicants consider the impacts of their proposals on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the Council have produced a Design Guide which covers the issues applicants need to consider when extending or replacing existing properties including layout within the plot, landscaping and boundary treatments.

## 10.0 Positive Contributors to the Conservation Area

- 10.1 The key characteristics of the Conservation Area, as identified in section 5.1, form the basis of the positive contributors to the area. This includes the value of the original development, in terms of the buildings and landscape and the intrinsic link between the two. **Map 3** also illustrates the outcome of an assessment of the houses within the Conservation Area – including those that make a positive contribution to the special character of the area.

### 11.0 Management issues

- 11.1 The Management Plan for a Conservation Area is an essential tool in ensuring the special character of the area is preserved and enhanced. The table below outlines the issues identified during the previous (1997) Appraisal, progress made in relation to these issues as well as any new concerns identified since. Development pressures are addressed separately in Section 9 above.
- 11.2 This document and the Appraisal document highlight the important features and the areas where action will be desirable in the future. How the works are financed largely depends on the ownership situation and on the availability of public sector finance to support those works that are not viable for landowners. It is expected that the checklist above will be used as a starting point for determining the areas for priority action and for where funds should be targeted in the future should they become available.

Issue	Progress	Comments	Implementation
Unsightly lighting columns and lanterns	Completed - lighting columns were replaced with new lantern-style columns following the last Appraisal.	N/A	N/A
Inappropriate boundary treatments to properties and public spaces (including the quarry)	On-going	There are some examples of more 'suburban', solid boundary treatments to properties. The Design Guide accompanying this Appraisal provides advice to homeowners on the kind of boundary treatments which preserve the character of Granville Park. The recommended extension of the Article 4 area would help prevent the loss of further original walls and control the style of replacement.	<p>In the long term to seek the replacement of any walls/fences with more appropriate boundary treatments.</p> <p>Residents to be made aware of the Hedging Grant Scheme available for the repair or reinstatement of hedging.</p> <p>An Article 4 Direction would prevent the erection of further inappropriate</p>

Issue	Progress	Comments	Implementation
<p>Insensitively designed new buildings, including extensions to existing properties</p>	<p>The previous Appraisal defined some of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area which contribute to its special character.</p>	<p>This has provided useful evidence and guidance for developers and Planning Officers making decisions on applications for development in the area or for defending decisions in the case of planning appeals.</p> <p>Current planning policy – including the existing Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Design aim to raise awareness of the value of good design and provide advice on how this might be best achieved.</p>	<p>walls/ fences/gates.</p> <p>Through guidance provided by the Design Guide SPD as well as the specific design advice produced as a result of this Appraisal.</p>
<p>Poorly maintained buildings and sites</p>	<p>Since the previous Appraisal, there has been increased investment in many of the properties within Granville Park. A significant number have been subject to applications for alteration and/or extension.</p>	<p>There remain two examples of poorly maintained buildings within the Conservation Area:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The garage at the entrance to Granville Park when approached from Town Green Lane remains in a poor state of repair; however the screening provided by trees and shrubs reduces its impact.</li> <li>2. No.49 Granville Park is a phase 2 building which displays a number of the key characteristics of the Conservation Area and has been</li> </ol>	<p>These properties are within private ownership therefore the Council is unable to intervene at this stage.</p> <p>The Council offers a planning pre-application advice service should the owner of either site wish to propose future changes.</p>

Issue	Progress	Comments	Implementation
		<p>assessed as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. However it is currently unoccupied with overgrown grounds and has been subject to vandalism over recent years. Whilst the building currently remains intact, its vacant state leaves it vulnerable to further vandalism and damage.</p>	
<p>Loss of original features on buildings of architectural or historic interest, such as the loss of traditional windows and roof materials and the rendering of brick buildings.</p>	<p>This has been reduced since the last Appraisal when the majority of the Phase 1 properties and some of the Phase 2 properties were protected by an Article 4 Direction. However this did not cover all Phase 2 properties, so there has been a loss of original detailing and features within this era of properties.</p>	<p>This issue is discussed further in Section 8 and is the reason for the recommendation to extend the Article 4 Direction to cover the whole Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Through the recommended extension of the Article 4 Direction area to include the whole of the Granville Park Conservation Area.</p>
<p>Large areas of hard standing or paving to the front of dwellings.</p>	<p>This has been an issue which has emerged since the previous Appraisal.</p>	<p>There have been an increasing number of applications for alterations to driveways and increasing the amount of hard standing to the front of properties in order to accommodate additional car parking.</p>	<p>Encourage the reduction of areas of hard surface and replacement with smaller parking areas and natural vegetation (gardens).</p> <p>Through negotiation with landowners and the extension of the Article 4 Direction across the whole Conservation Area to prevent further such development.</p>

Issue	Progress	Comments	Implementation
Loss of trees which require felling	This has been an issue which has emerged since the previous Appraisal	<p>Many of the trees in Granville Park were planted at the same time, as part of the original Victorian residential development. This means that a number may come to the end of their natural lifespan at a similar time, potentially creating gaps in tree cover which will have a significant visual impact and influence on the overall character of the area.</p>	<p>In the case of a privately-owned tree covered by a Tree Preservation Order, then the Council will require a replacement tree to be planted in a suitable location.</p> <p>Where a tree is lost as part of a development proposal, or through disease or damage, then the Council will seek a replacement tree to be planted in a suitable location.</p> <p>Roadside trees are the responsibility of Lancashire County Council with whom we will seek to negotiate a replacement.</p>
Improvements to the Quarry		<p>The Quarry is the responsibility of the Parish Council.</p> <p>A tree survey has recently been carried out to determine the condition and safety of trees within the quarry.</p>	<p>Support proposals which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage more diverse use of the Quarry</li> <li>• protect and enhance its biodiversity value.</li> </ul>



# Granville Park Conservation Area



## Design Guide

This design guide has been produced by West Lancashire Borough Council and provides advice for residents in relation to alterations and extensions to properties as well as works which may take place within the wider site.

This guidance must be considered in the light of the wider planning policy context including the National Planning Policy Framework, the West Lancashire Local Plan (2012 – 2027) and the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2008). It should also be read in conjunction with the Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals to provide a comprehensive summary of the Council's approach to development in the area.

### What makes Granville Park special?

Granville Park is a good example of a residential park initially laid out and developed in the late Victorian era but developed incrementally well

into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Changing architectural taste and fashion is evident in Granville Park as the older Gothic architectural style can be seen side by side with classic Edwardian features and Arts and Crafts 'Arcadian'<sup>1</sup> layouts and architecture of the second and third decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and more modern infill development.

The arrangement of the roads and layout of the individual plots and the size and form of its buildings contribute towards the feeling of spaciousness and openness and maintains a connection to Granville Park's wider setting and semi-rural surroundings. This is supplemented by the presence of many mature trees, as well as landscape features such as the Quarry. Together these aspects combine to make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Overall, the historic context, quality of the buildings, relationship between the layout of the roads and the positioning of the houses sets the Conservation Area apart from the surrounding residential suburbs of Aughton.

### Managing change in the Conservation Area

The Character Appraisal for the area recognises that Granville Park in its current form has been developed in a number of phases; therefore change of some degree has been taking place in the area almost continuously over the past 100 years. The broad phases of development and their key features are described in more detail in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Change within historic areas is inevitable and this is also true within Conservation Areas which cannot be left to stagnate or be frozen in time. There are many reasons why people want to make changes to their home - repairs and alterations may be necessary due to natural decay and weathering, or families may feel they need more space. Living in a Conservation Area does not mean that alterations cannot be made,

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<sup>1</sup> A rural, rustic, or pastoral feel, with the appearance of parkland.

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but it does mean extra care must be taken when considering what changes can be made.

The Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to assess proposals for change and whether these would meet the requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The guidance below provides further detail on how new development in Granville Park can be designed to make a positive contribution and complement the area's character.

### 1. *New development*

#### *Layout of buildings within the plot*

Overall, new buildings should respect the existing pattern and grain<sup>2</sup> of surrounding development. There are some specific aspects in this regard which will be important. These include:

- **Building line** – this is how far the building or property is 'set back' from the site frontage or roadside. In Granville Park, many of the original properties have a building line typically over 10 metres from the front boundary. This provides a substantial front garden area, allowing a landscaped setting for the properties which contributes positively to the area's character.
- **Orientation** – buildings should ideally be orientated so their main elevation(s) face onto the street. Buildings on corner plots should pay particular attention to 'turning the corner' through providing focal points or architectural interest and the careful design of these elevations.
- **Plot ratio / Building footprint** - (measured by the proportion of the plot which is occupied by the building). This varies - generally with the properties from the earliest phases occupying a smaller footprint in relation to the size of the plot than those developed later. In order to

<sup>2</sup> The way that buildings are sited is called the 'grain'. In effect it is the pattern or the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in an area and to what extent it is densely developed or more open in character.

retain the open and spacious character of Granville Park, new and extended buildings should not occupy a substantially larger proportion of the plot than that of the existing property. Plot subdivision is unlikely to respect existing plot ratios or the area's character and appearance and will therefore be resisted.

- **Preserving gaps between buildings** – these are essential to the maintenance of a sense of openness and informal character. The establishment or preservation of sections of landscaping and trees between properties will help in achieving this. New development should retain the spaces between common boundaries and between adjoining properties.

#### **Form**

The scale or height of buildings is vitally important to the area's character and appearance. Particularly tall buildings can have a visual impact over an extensive area and can overly dominate the space around them. Whilst this was the intention of the architects of the original Victorian houses in the north of Granville Park and is effective in creating the sense of a grand and exclusive residential area, many of the later phase properties are built on sub-divided plots and are smaller in scale – including some bungalows. Clearly it would be inappropriate if all new properties were built to replicate the scale of the original Victorian houses as this would have a negative impact upon the sense of space and openness. Therefore when considering the appropriate scale of a new or replacement property it will be important to consider:

- The height, scale and mass of the existing building
- The proportion and design of the different building elements such as walls, roof and windows
- Its proximity to neighbouring buildings and their comparative scale
- The size and context of the site and whether it has been previously sub-divided.

#### **Design**

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High quality and carefully considered design of new development in Conservation Areas is crucial. This does not mean that it should simply copy surrounding properties, but it should always be sensitive to its context. Some principles are that:

- On the whole new development should be 'of its time' rather than resorting to simply mimicking the design of the original houses in the Conservation Area. This can involve re-interpreting architectural styles and detailing in a contemporary manner. It is important that scope be given to the inclusion of architectural invention and innovation as this can provide distinctive buildings that enrich the area.
- New buildings should always utilise high quality and robust materials and workmanship throughout. There should be a strong logic in the choice of materials made, especially where changes in material are proposed.

More detailed guidance on design principles are provided in the Council's Design Guide SPD.

### 2. House extensions

An extension will permanently alter the character and appearance of a property. There will be cases where carefully designed minor extensions can be added without harm to the individual house or its setting, however in some cases it may not be possible to extend at all.

In all cases, proposals for new additions must demonstrate an understanding of the site and its context. This means it is important to consider:

- The original building itself - extensions should be subordinate to and be inspired by the original form and character of the house, rather than dominating or obscuring it and its original design. In most cases roof forms, building materials and architectural details such as windows should reflect those of the original building, but it is also important that a new extension can be clearly read as a new addition. Achieving this is a careful balance.

- Neighbouring buildings – as raised in the Appraisal, maintaining the space between houses is important in Granville Park. Side extensions (even single-storey ones) which close up the gaps between properties or between common boundaries, or result in a loss or reduction of mature landscaping, that would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene, should be avoided.
- The impact of the extension on the wider plot and landscaping. The landscaped areas (particularly at the front and side) of individual plots on the whole make a recognised contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any development in these areas must be carefully designed and be of an appropriate size in order to preserve the setting of the building and its relationship with others.

### 3. Roof alterations and windows

Many of the larger Phase 1 and 2 houses in Granville Park were built with some degree of attic accommodation, often incorporating small dormer windows as a method of providing light into these spaces. Proposals to extend or alter roof spaces should consider the following general principles:

- Dormer windows should not be over-sized but in proportion to the size of the roof and be of a design which harmonises with the architectural style and appearance of the property.
- Rooflights should be placed in discreet locations (preferably on rear roof slopes, away from the road side), be modest in size and of a slim-framed, traditional design (i.e. conservation type), fitting flush with the slope of the roof.
- Solar panels should similarly be placed in discrete locations – again preferably on the rear roof slope of the property and should sit as flush as possible with the roof slope.

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### 4. *Garages and other outbuildings*

When considering either a new garage or other outbuilding within the plot of an original property, or a more recent development, there are a number of issues which should be considered in relation to location and detail:

- It should be positioned to minimise its visual impact and set well back from the front of the house.
- Materials and design of details such as the doors to the garage or outbuilding should be carefully considered and appropriate to the context.
- Care is needed to ensure that garage locations do not reduce the gaps between buildings.

### 5. *Basements*

Some of the larger Victorian properties along Middlewood Road and Granville Park were constructed with basements. When considering the installation of a basement in properties elsewhere, residents should be aware that skylights, light wells and other visible manifestations of basements can be harmful to the setting and character of a house and garden and is also potentially damaging to trees and hedges.

### 6. *Windows*

With regards to any original windows - which make a significant contribution to the character of a building - the following principles should be followed:

- Windows should be repaired rather than replaced where possible.
- If the original frames, casements and glass are beyond repair then any replacements should be of the same material, replicate the original subdivision, profile and style of the window. On the whole this will involve the use of appropriate timber replacements.
- Care is needed if considering the use of double glazing as this can greatly alter the appearance of windows.

- Any important historical or architectural detailing to windows (e.g. leaded lights) should be retained. The encapsulation of leading within double glazing can never replicate the authenticity of the original and should be avoided.

### 7. *Building materials and details*

Retaining original decorative features and using traditional materials preserves a building's character. Removal of building detail can spoil the appearance of individual buildings as it is often the quality and combination of the decorative features of the individual houses that contribute to their character. To ensure that this is preserved, the following principles should be followed:

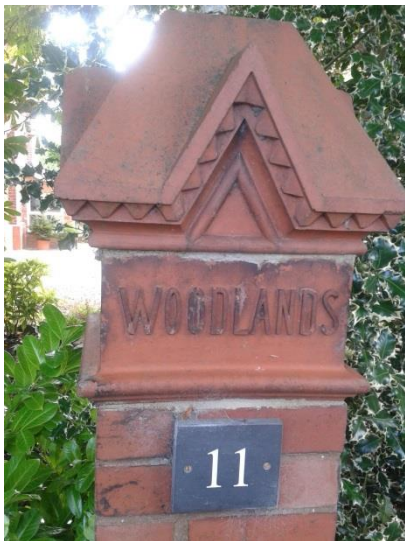
- Good quality, matching materials should be used, with close attention paid to detailing.
- Any new walls or repairs should be built in matching brick or rendering.
- With regards to roofs - often it is the fixings rather than the tiles themselves that need replacing. However, if replacement is necessary, care must be taken to match the colour, texture, size and materials of the original slates or clay tiles as they can come in a variety of shapes and sizes.
- Original chimney stacks and pots are considered important architectural features and should be retained.
- Any replacement rainwater goods should replicate historical profiles, materials and designs.

### 8. *Boundary treatments*

The Victorian properties in the northern section of Granville Park and the Edwardian properties around the Quarry generally are fronted by a low brick wall, some with original gate piers and stone or half round brick copings. Additional privacy is provided by a hedge (usually privet or holly) located behind this low wall. The effect of

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this is a formal boundary, but one which is softened through the inclusion of greenery and through which glimpses of the property behind can still be seen. Other properties are bounded by a simple hedge.



*Decorative gate pier in Delph Lane*

In the case of the original properties which retain boundary walls or hedges, their removal would have a detrimental effect upon the character of the historic building and they should be retained where possible.

When providing new boundary treatments high, solid boundary treatments should be avoided since they obscure the glimpsed views of the properties which contribute to the streetscene. Effective security should be provided through more subtle means which respect the area's semi-rural and 'open' character. For example, simple 'estate' style railings can be softened by hedge planting.



*Example of 'Estate' railings*

Species such as Privet should be considered as they are traditional favourites in Granville Park. As well as being a hardy species, it is suitable for most garden soils and lends itself well to pruning. Other species such as Beech or Holly are also typical in Granville Park. Further advice can be sought from the Council's Tree Officers.

Gates should follow the same principles, allowing glimpses through from the street frontage to the property beyond. Taller gates of a solid construction which obscure these glimpsed views should be avoided. Decorative wrought iron style gates would have been typically found at the front of many of the Victorian houses in Granville Park, and can offer security and still provide views through to the properties beyond.

## 9. Trees

The contribution of mature trees and established planting both along the roadside and in the gardens of many properties to the character of Granville Park is identified within the Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area and should be retained.

Anyone wishing to remove or prune a tree within a Conservation Area must notify the Local Authority which has 6 weeks to consider the proposal and respond. Work cannot proceed until the Council has responded or the 6 week period has expired. The purpose of this requirement is also to give the Local Planning Authority an opportunity to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order should be made in respect of the tree.

It is important that where major tree works are to be undertaken these are carried out by a qualified tree surgeon. West Lancashire Borough Council has a list of Approved Arboricultural Contractors that have been assessed for their standard of work and checked for the correct insurance documents. Further advice can be obtained from the Council's Tree Officers.

## 10. Landscaping

## **Appendix B**

The majority of front gardens feature hedges and other planting which soften the impact of the houses in their setting.

The depth and extent of landscaping needs to be preserved when considering changes such as:

- extending a property (especially in the case of corner plots)
- providing or extending a parking area or area of hard standing

### **Further advice and guidance**

We strongly recommend that homeowners or developers take advantage of the Council's Planning Pre-application advice service at an early stage when considering alterations to their properties or new development in Granville Park Conservation Area.

The advantages of going through the Pre-application process are clear. If development is acceptable in principle, it enables changes to be made and potential problems to be overcome before an application is submitted, saving time during the application process and minimising the risk of planning permission being refused. The response will also inform the applicant of any information they would be required to submit with an application for Full Planning Permission.

Forms to apply for Pre-application advice are available through the Planning pages of the Council's website:

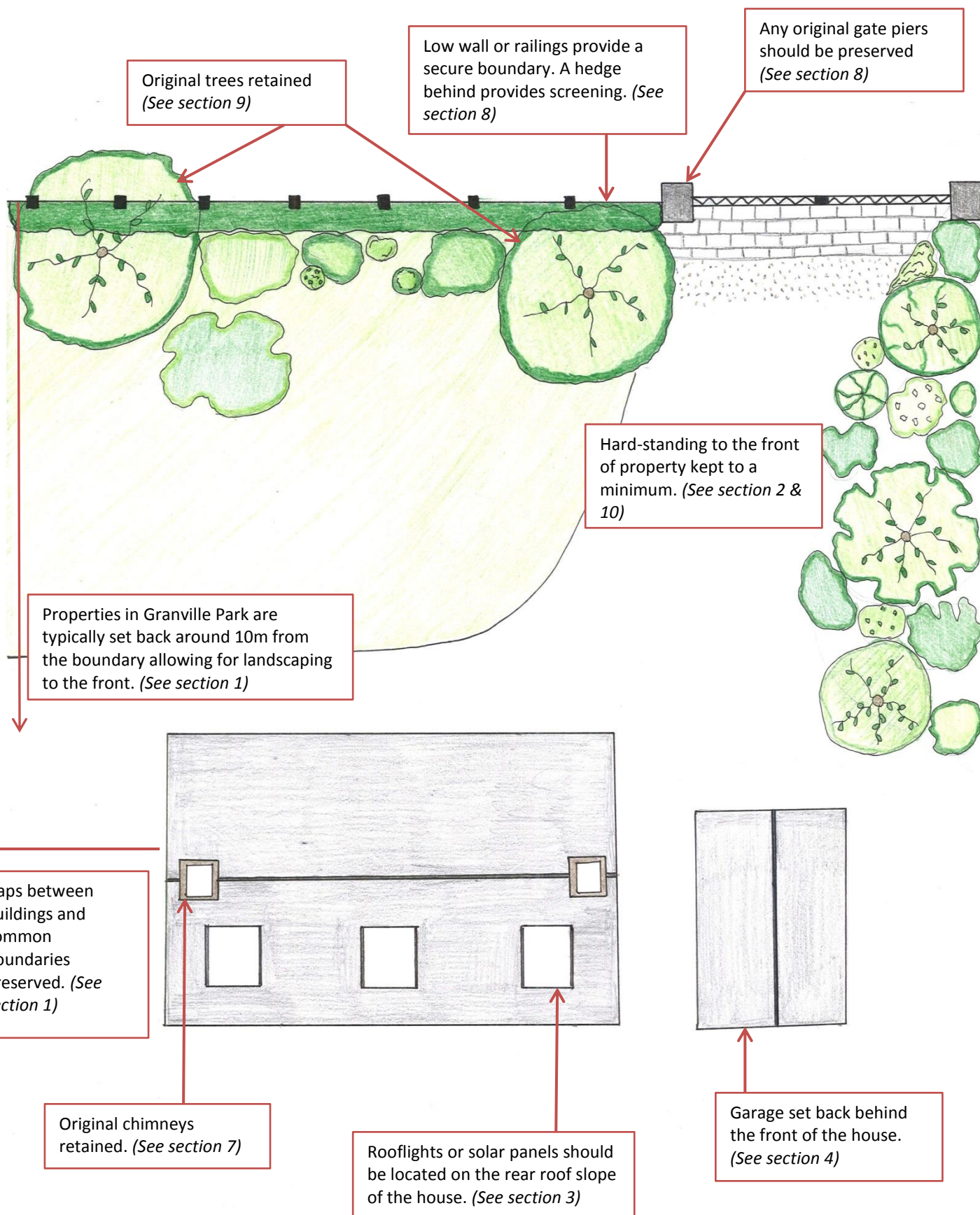
[www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning)

Further guidance about applying for this advice is available from Planning Support on 01695 585239. General Conservation advice can be sought from the Council's Conservation Officers on 01695 5855167 or 01695 585068.

Advice concerning trees, hedging or landscaping can be obtained from the Council's Tree Officers – Dave Thornber on 01695 585114 or Roland Jones on 01695 585168.

## Appendix B

The sketch below provides an example of a typical Granville Park frontage and illustrates some of the aspects discussed throughout the Design Guide. Labels refer to the relevant sections of the Design Guide where further information can be found.









**APPENDIX C**



<b>Element of Article 4 Direction proposed for Granville Park</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Erection, alteration or removal of a chimney on a dwelling or a building within the curtilage	Chimneys are important features on many of the properties within the Conservation Area.
Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling *	To protect original windows, doors and other important original features.
Alteration of a dwelling roof *	Alteration of roofing materials would negatively impact upon the character of the Conservation Area given the predominance of natural materials – e.g. slate and clay tiles.
Erection/construction of a porch outside any external door *	A porch is a prominent feature on the front elevation of a property and therefore can have a significant impact upon its appearance.
Provision within the curtilage of a building, enclosure, swimming or other pool incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling or required for the maintenance, improvement or alteration of any building or enclosure *	The introduction of such a feature has the potential to impact upon the setting of the property and therefore the character of the Conservation Area.
Hard surfaces within the curtilage of a house incidental to its enjoyment *	The increase of areas of hardstanding, particularly to the front of properties within Granville Park has the potential to erode its landscaped setting, which is an important characteristic of the Conservation Area.
Installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antenna on house or curtilage *	Satellite antennae should be controlled to ensure they are correctly sited.
Erection or demolition of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure within the curtilage *	Boundary walls are important features within the Conservation Area.
Painting of the dwelling or buildings or enclosure within the curtilage *	Painting of buildings – particularly brickwork may have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area.
The installation, alteration or replacement of microgeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment on a dwellinghouse or a block of flats; or a building situated within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse or a block of flats*	The installation of these panels on the roofs of properties, particularly on those elevations facing on to the road, can obscure, to some extent, the original roof covering and result in harm being caused to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

\* In respect of these developments a direction only relates to those developments fronting a highway, a waterway or an open space (defined as any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground). In the case of an extension, if any part such as the side fronts the highway etc. then this will be covered.

## Appendix E Summary of Consultation responses

Name & Address	Comment	Officer observations
<i>Resident, Granville Park</i>	<p>Welcome the inclusion of the Cockbeck Tavern and its entire curtilage, including the Bowling Green which is so much in the spirit and character of the early 20th Century development of the area.</p> <p>By proposing the addition of the Cockbeck and its bowling green the Conservation Area character changes from being only residential and recreational in character and rightly recognises an element that services the area, both historically and currently.</p>	Support for the inclusion of the bowling green to the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern is noted.
<i>Resident, Granville Park</i>	I agree that the Cockbeck pub, car park and bowling green should be included in the Conservation Area.	Support for the inclusion of the bowling green to the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern is noted.
<i>JWPC Chartered Town Planners (on behalf of Unique Pub Properties Ltd)</i>	Support the inclusion of the Cockbeck Tavern within the Conservation Area extension.	Support for inclusion of the Cockbeck Tavern within the Conservation Area noted.
	<p>The nature of the Conservation Area, characterised by large dwellings in larger plots, does not provide justification for the site of the bowling green to also be included in this minor extension. Land immediately to the west of the bowling green is built up with a cul-de-sac development of new houses unfamiliar to the Conservation Area - the bowling green sits somewhat uncomfortably between the two areas, defined by neither. Therefore it would be inappropriate to include it within the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The bowling green does not front onto Granville Park although it is accessible by a lane. Object to the inclusion of the site of the bowling green within the Granville Park Conservation Area on the basis that this was not originally considered by the Appraisal and it will form no useful function in terms of land use or to enhance the Conservation Area. When evaluated against the merits and purpose of the Conservation Area the inclusion of the bowling green land does not form a necessary or useful inclusion and could detract from the quality of the</p>	Comments noted.

**Appendix E****Summary of Consultation responses**

Name & Address	Comment	Officer observations
	Conservation Area itself as the public house becomes separated from the bowling green use through conversion to a supermarket.	

# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Development and Regeneration</b>		<b>Service:</b>
<b>Completed by: Ian Bond</b>		<b>Date: 03/05/17</b>
<b>Subject Title: Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update</b>		
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>		
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes	<i>*delete as appropriate</i>
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Granville Park</li> <li>• Report to members on the results of public consultation on the updated document, revised boundary and the representations received</li> <li>• The proposals identified in the Character Appraisal to extend the conservation area and make a new Article 4 Direction</li> </ul>	
<p><i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i></p> <p><i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</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 Section 3</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)?	Residents of Granville Park Conservation Area in particular, but also wider residents of the	

	local area to a lesser degree.
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)?	No
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	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?	N/A
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	The Character Appraisal update identifies management proposals within the conservation area and proposes a new Article 4 Direction, which restricts permitted development rights, an extension to the conservation area and new design guidance. The appraisal will be used by the LPA in determining planning applications.
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 were sought during a consultation workshop with local residents held the evening of 12 April 2016. This allowed residents to discuss aspects of the built and natural environment which contribute towards the special character of the Conservation Area.  The consultation responses received as a result of the consultation on proposed boundary changes forms part of the Cabinet report.
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?	The views of residents (via a workshop, direct consultation and from an exhibition) have been incorporated into the draft document.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	Under the procedures residents affected by the creation of the Article 4 Direction and the extension of the boundary will be consulted and a notice will be placed in a Local newspaper.
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with	The provision of a new Article 4 Direction to



particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	cover the whole of the conservation area removes the rights of homeowners to undertake certain types of work and therefore can have a negative impact on those residents. In some circumstances compensation can be applicable. However the review has been justified by the Council's duty to preserve the character and appearance of conservation areas. This work helps the Council fulfil that statutory duty.
<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.).	Homeowners affected by the changes have the opportunity to apply for planning permission.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions.
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	We have a general duty to review all the Borough's Conservation Areas from time to time. We currently have a program to review and monitor conservation areas.





**AGENDA ITEM:**

**CABINET: 10 January 2017**

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

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J. Hodson

**Contact for further information:** Ian Bond (Extn. 5167)  
(e-mail: [ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bond@westlancs.gov.uk))

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**SUBJECT: GRANVILLE PARK CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL UPDATE – ADDENDUM REPORT**

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Wards affected: Aughton and Downholland Ward

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This Addendum Report has been produced to assist Cabinet in considering the comments made by Planning Committee on 8 December 2016 in relation to the report of the Director of Development and Regeneration on the Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update and present updated recommendations.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the comments of the Planning Committee be noted.
- 2.2 That extension B to the Granville Park Conservation Area (identified in Appendix 1) as proposed by Planning Committee is not supported for the reasons stated in Section 5 of this Report.
- 2.3 That the Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update (included in Appendix 4 of this report) including the provision to extend the Conservation Area boundary and to make a new Article 4 Direction be approved.
- 2.4 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Development and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to make

the necessary arrangements to inform residents and to publish the Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update (as identified in Appendix 4 of this report).

- 2.5 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Development and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to make the arrangements to amend the Conservation Area boundary and make an Article 4 Direction to cover the amended Conservation Area boundary, to inform residents of the changes, carry out the relevant consultations and report back to a future Cabinet to consider confirmation of the Article 4 Direction.

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## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 When considering any amendment to the boundary of a Conservation Area, the Council has to take a cautious approach – to ensure the area meets the statutory test imposed under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 of being an area of “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The National Planning Policy Guidance states that: “When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest” (paragraph. 127 - NPPF).
- 4.2 Background survey work of the Conservation Area for the character appraisal and the results of a public consultation workshop identified the Cockbeck Tavern as a possible extension to the Conservation Area. The building, which lies just beyond the southern boundary of the Conservation Area at its junction with Town Green Lane, is a prominent focus for the southern entrance into the residential ‘Park’. The former Public House was highlighted as playing a significant role in the setting of the Conservation Area, displaying some of the same key characteristics (set out in Section 5 of the draft appraisal document included in Appendix 4 of this report) as other properties within the Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The building dates from the mid to late C19 and is contemporary with the earliest phase of development in Granville Park. Visually it shares a number of common architectural features and materials typically found elsewhere in Granville Park.
- 4.4 Planning Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> December considered the Character Appraisal update and resolved : *That the properties as indicated on the plan at the meeting be included in the Granville Park Conservation Area these being the Bowling Green at the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern and the cottages at the top of Winifred Lane.* This is identified in Appendix A – Map of Conservation Area – identifying the proposed extension to the Conservation Area to include both

areas A and B.

- 4.5 To assist Cabinet, Appendix 2 attached to this report provides an assessment of the properties highlighted by Planning Committee for inclusion in the Conservation Area. The property assessments have been made against the key characteristics of the conservation area identified in the Draft Character Appraisal Update.

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EXTENSION PROPOSED BY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 The views expressed by Planning Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> December meeting involves the inclusion of a further seven residential properties (No's 4 to 12 Winifred Lane and 62 and 64 Town Green Lane) together with the Bowling Green which is located immediately to the north of the car park to the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern. The area adjoins the southern portion of the Conservation Area and would form a new contiguous area at the junction of Granville Park with Town Green Lane and its junction with Winifred Lane.
- 5.2 In light of the comments to extend the boundary of Conservation Area, further building assessments have been undertaken, to consider the merits of the buildings and the Bowling Green, when measured against the key characteristics of the existing Conservation Area. A summary table in Appendix 2 evaluates each building (seven residential properties) against the key characteristics identified in the draft Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 5.3 The assessments show that the seven properties have a diverse architectural style which on the whole would make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of the existing Conservation Area. This is for a number of reasons:
- The properties all lie outside the clearly defined 'residential' Park.
  - They are generally of a different scale and relate more to the settlement on the south side of Town Green Lane. No's 8-12 Winifred Lane are a group of small single bay cottages built on small (infill) residential plots and are at odds with the character of the typical properties within Granville Park, which are typically larger in scale. Even the most prominent of the group No.64 Town Green Lane has a plot size substantially below those typically found in Granville Park.
  - Four of the properties share a simple, (C19) cottage form, which have very little architectural detailing, which is a typical within Granville Park. The other three within the group are modern (mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century) detached properties of various styles/designs. No 62 Town Green Lane for example is a mid C20 bungalow. None of the properties illustrate late C19 or early C20 architecture found within Granville Park.

- All seven properties have been subject to some change and lack detailing i.e. timber windows, lighted lights commonly found elsewhere in the Conservation Area.
- The properties, because they fall outside the residential park, lack the presence of any mature landscape setting enjoyed by the houses in Granville Park. Their focus and orientation is towards the village centre of Town Green rather than the residential park.

5.4 The overall contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area of the seven properties is, on our assessment very limited and would not meet the test contained in national planning guidance.

5.5 The Bowling Green is an enclosed open space located to the rear of the Cockbeck Tavern, bounded by the existing car park. The Bowling Green does not share the same historical context (associations) as the Cockbeck Tavern and dates from a later period (post 1927). Whilst this period marks a period of expansion within the Park because of its enclosed location it is largely obscured from view and is screened by the former Cockbeck Tavern and the residential properties to the north and east. It is separated from the existing Conservation Area by an existing pathway which runs northwards which is a clear and well defined boundary to the existing Conservation Area. There is currently no connection/access from the Bowling Green into the Conservation Area. The modern residential development of Capilano Park, which lies immediately to the north of the Bowling Green and is outside the Conservation Area is also bounded by the same pathway.

5.6 In conclusion, the Bowling Green is discretely located behind the frontage and is physically separated from Granville Park. It does not play a significant role in the appearance of the Conservation Area and there is no overwhelming historical value to warrant the boundary being amended to include it within the Conservation Area.

5.7 For the reasons highlighted above I do not feel the inclusion of the seven residential properties or the Bowling Green (identified as extension B in Appendix 1) as put forward by Planning Committee would meet the requirements of the statutory test of being of “special architectural or historic interest” imposed under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In relation to the above I retain the view, as outlined in my original report, that the Conservation Area should be amended to include the Cockbeck Tavern (identified as extension A in Appendix 1).

## **6.0 REQUIREMENTS - CONSULTATION**

6.1 Members need to be aware that if they wish to take forward Planning Committees recommendation to extend the Conservation Area to include the Bowling Green and the seven residential properties identified in Area B in Appendix 1, there will need to be further consultation with the owners and/or

occupiers of the properties affected. Any comments made as a result of the consultation, to include their properties in the Conservation Area and to introduce an Article 4 Direction, will need to be brought forward and considered at a future Cabinet meeting.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.
- 7.2 The need to continue with efforts to protect and improve the quality of the Borough's environment including the streetscene, natural and built heritage of our towns, villages and countryside has been identified as a key issue in the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 7.3 The historic environment has an important role to play in contributing to sustainability in West Lancashire. The appraisals help value the distinctiveness of the local areas and provide a better understanding of the state of the physical and historical environment. The work seeks aims to improve the environment and cultural heritage of the wider community.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report although a programme of small scheme enhancement works including a Traditional Features Grant Scheme is currently supported via the Capital Programme for properties in designated Conservation Areas.
- 8.2 However there are circumstances in which local authorities may be liable to pay compensation having made an Article 4 Direction, although the potential liability is limited by time limits that apply. Compensation in all cases can only be claimed for abortive expenditure or other loss or damage caused by the removal of the permitted development rights in the event that the Council refuses consent for proposed works.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 The work undertaken is an important part of the Council's duty to preserve its Conservation Areas. Under existing legislation Councils are required to formulate and publish proposals for the management of its designated Conservation Areas.
- 9.2 Article 4 Directions provide planning controls over the impacts of minor development on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Failure to apply the Article 4 Directions weakens our management of these historic

areas and risks the Authority not fulfilling its duty to preserve the historic character and appearance of both Conservation Areas.

## **10.0 CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 That no further changes to the Conservation Area boundary, other than that proposed to include the Cockbeck Tavern identified in my original report, can be properly justified. That the revised boundary identified as Area A in Appendix 1 be taken forward as an extension to Granville Park Conservation Area.

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### **Background Documents**

2016            Advice Note 1: Conservation Area  
Designation, Appraisal and Management  
(Historic England)

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix 3 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account when undertaking the actions detailed within this article.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Map of Granville Park Conservation Area – illustrating proposed boundary extensions

Appendix 2 – Summary Assessment of buildings within proposed extension against the Key Characteristics of the Granville Park Conservation Area

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Granville Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal Update  
(Planning Committee and Cabinet Report)



Agenda item 7(b)

**GRANVILLE PARK CONSERVATION CHARACTER APPRAISAL UPDATE**

**MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR J HODSON**

- A. That the Granville Park Conservation Area Appraisal update for Granville Park Conservation Area and the Design Guide appended to this report (Appendix A and B) be approved.
- B. That the Conservation Area boundary be extended to include the Cockbeck Tavern its Car Park and Bowling Green (identified as extensions A & B on the Plan in Appendix C).
- C. That authority be delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to make and publicise an Article 4 Direction for the extended Granville Park Conservation Area (identified in Appendix C (including the extensions identified A & B on the Plan in Appendix C) and schedule in Appendix D).





**CABINET:**  
**13 June 2017**

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**Report of: Director of Housing and Inclusion**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Patterson**

**Contact for further information: Mrs J. Maguire (Extn. 5003)**  
**(E-mail: [jane.maguire@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:jane.maguire@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - INCOME RECOVERY POLICY 2017**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider and agree the Housing Revenue Account Income Recovery Policy.
- 1.2 To note the main amendments included in the updated policy at Appendix 1.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Housing Revenue Account Income Recovery Policy 2017 attached to Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- 2.2 That the Director of Housing and Inclusion, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make any minor changes to the policy where appropriate following tenant consultation, and to implement and deliver the policy.

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## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Housing Revenue Income Recovery Policy has remained current and has not required any significant changes. However the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act has provided an opportunity to carry out a review and refresh of the policy.

3.2 The most recent review, led by Officers, has taken place to take account of the introduction of Universal Credit, changes brought about by the Government Welfare Reforms and the update of the pre-court protocol for Landlords. This has provided an opportunity to ensure that the policy complies with current legislation and guidance, takes account of changes in best practise and terminology, Welfare Reforms and the introduction of Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a real risk to the Councils rental stream and so it is important that we have the right policies in place to recover income and at the same time provide advice and support.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 The current policy outlines the Council's approach to the recovery of rent arrears and other debts owing, the key principles of keeping debt to a minimum and to sustaining tenancies through arrears prevention work and early intervention.

4.2 The revised policy maintains these key principles, includes a refresh of terminology, and references the increasing options for tenants to pay their rent and access services in a digital format. By making it quicker and easier for tenants to make payments and access rent information this will assist with income recovery and minimising debt and ensure the Council provide increased options to maximise income.

4.3 In addition, the revised policy includes the following key changes for consideration:

- The option to review the 48 week rent charging period subject to business needs and formal consultation. During the 4 rent non-collection weeks, tenants can still make payments to reduce arrears and also use these weeks to pay in advance. A number of housing providers have considered, and implemented, charging over a 52 week period as this can mean a lower weekly rent to pay for those tenants on a low income and this also assists with budgeting. Including this as an option for consideration in the policy will provide the Council with some flexibility to consult and consider this approach should rent charges exceed the weekly Local Housing Allowance levels.
- The option for the Council to reserve the right to exclude a property from capital and planned investment programmes where Court proceedings are in place due to the high level of rent arrears, is something that would be considered on a case by case basis. This approach reinforces the importance of paying rent and taking responsibility to do this and that rental income funds tenant services and improvements to Council homes. This is something other providers have implemented and has resulted in residents paying debts in order to benefit from the works.

- The requirement for all new tenants to pay their rent in advance to comply with the terms of the tenancy agreement. Since January 2017 this has been operational and all prospective tenants notified that this is a prerequisite of accepting a tenancy. To date there has been only one enquiry regarding this approach and customers have satisfied this requirement. This approach promotes a rent payment culture and ensures all new tenants understand the importance of paying their rent and monies due.
- The Council's approach to Bankruptcy and Debt Relief Orders. The previous policy did not make specific reference to Bankruptcy and Debt Relief Orders. In instances of Bankruptcy, the Council will register a formal claim for debt owed; this may be paid when the Official Receiver takes control of the debtor's assets. In most instances there will be no funds and so the Council will write off the debt. Debt Relief Orders are a new form of insolvency and are a simpler, quicker and cheaper alternative to Bankruptcy. The use of this type of insolvency solution has increased over the last few years and so it is appropriate that the policy highlights the Council's approach in dealing with a Debt Relief Order.

## **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Your Voice group are a tenant consultation group that provide feedback on Housing services and policies. They will be asked for their views and feedback on the main changes proposed. These are shown at Appendix 2.
- 5.2 All feedback will be considered and where appropriate, minor amendments will be made to the policy document.
- 5.3 The Policy will be considered at the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

## **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 8.1 The revised policy proactively seeks to sustain tenancies, ensuring enforcement action and possession proceedings are a last resort. This approach satisfies the pre-court protocol and ensures that the Council has actively attempted other alternatives and approaches before seeking possession. This approach ensures that we minimise the costs associated with re letting a home, the Court costs associated with eviction, and the impact of an empty property on the sustainability of an area.

## **9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Housing Revenue Account is reliant on its rental income to be able to provide services to its tenants. Having effective collection arrangements in

place, including an up to date Policy, will help to maximise this income stream and so enable the Council to deliver better quality services.

## **10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 Universal credit is a risk to the Council's rental stream and so it is important that we have the right policies in place to recover income and at the same time, provide advice and support. Keeping the Income Recovery Policy up to date will help to minimise and manage this risk.
- 10.2 This item does not require a formal risk assessment as this is an operational document and no changes have been made to risk registers. However Housing and Inclusion have recorded the wider issue of the Welfare Reforms as a recognised risk item.
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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**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the recommendations contained within this report

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Housing Revenue Account Income Recovery Policy 2017

Appendix 2 - Consultation questionnaire

Appendix 3 - Equality Impact assessment

Appendix 4 - Minute of Landlord Services Committee held 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (Cabinet only) – *to follow*



**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

**Income Recovery Policy 2017**

## **Introduction**

This policy outlines West Lancashire Borough Council's approach to collecting rent, service charges, court costs, recharges and payments due from its tenants and former tenants. It defines the approach we adopt to recovering rent arrears and other tenant debts.

It is a key priority for the Council to collect income as it provides the funds to maintain homes and provide services; and supports the Council's business plan. The Council take debts of rent or any monies owed seriously, and will balance the need to maximise rental income with a range of strategies to recover rent, service charges and any other payments due from its tenants and former tenants.

The Council will adopt a proactive, prevention and early intervention approach. However, in cases of persistent non-payment of rent, the Council will take a firm enforcement approach, which may include taking legal action, resulting in repossession of a tenant's home. Eviction will only be carried out as a last resort when all other appropriate recovery actions have been exhausted.

The Council recognise that tenant's financial circumstances differ and at times, they may have money difficulties which can affect the ability to pay rent and service charges on time. The Council has a range of ways to make it as easy as possible for customers to make payments, access information about their accounts, and make contact.

The Council will offer support to tenants in debt using trained staff to provide a Financial Inclusion and Money Advice Service. We will also maintain links with other agencies and partners who can help tenants to increase their income and manage money.

This policy links to the Corporate debt recovery policy, the Tenant Financial Inclusion Strategy (2016)) and the key objectives of tenancy sustainability.

The Council will adopt a professional and confidential approach, providing excellent customer service in all its interactions. We will listen to our customers so they can help us to improve the services we deliver and we will offer value for money in how we achieve this.

## **Policy Statement**

West Lancashire Borough Council aims to collect income promptly from tenants and former tenants, to sustain tenancies and neighbourhoods, and to protect the provision of tenant services.



## **Key Policy Aims**

- To optimise the collection of income due and keep debt to a minimum.
- To promote a rent payment culture by taking payments in advance and publicising the importance of paying rent and monies due. To sustain tenancies through early intervention, prevention and support services
- To understand the financial circumstances of each tenant, and former tenant, their ability to pay, and to agree how debts can be cleared in a realistic, affordable and timely manner
- To inform tenants of any changes to rent and other charges and in accordance with any legislative and government guidelines
- To provide a range of accessible payment methods and keep tenants informed of the ways they can pay, encouraging use of a bank account and/or credit union account
- To maximise income and benefit entitlement by raising awareness and providing advice and support linked to welfare benefits, Universal Credit, and back into work programmes
- To promote financial wellbeing, provide high quality money advice, and sign-post tenants to other agencies who can help maximise income
- To work closely with the DWP and Housing Benefit service to ensure the Council maximises Welfare Benefit claims and direct payments
- To ensure, through its Tenant Financial Inclusion Strategy, that the Council targets those who are most financially vulnerable
- To ensure that all communication is clear and encourages contact
- To communicate and keep tenants informed during the recovery process of what action will be taken, and the consequences of failing to pay rent, service charges and debt
- To have a recovery process that is clear and easy to follow and ensure all debt cases are managed in a consistent and fair way, taking account of the relevant legislation, good practice and court protocols.
- To take appropriate and timely legal action against tenants who fail to pay their rent, service charges or debt, or keep to payment arrangements.

This Policy and the associated recovery process will be reviewed and updated annually to incorporate areas of best practice, with the aim of providing innovative ways to recover money due and maximise the income for the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

This Policy takes account of the Court pre-action protocol guidance and the need to make every attempt to contact the tenant, and promote a preventative approach.

## **Rent Statements and Keeping in Touch**

The Council will provide access to a rent balance and rent statement on demand and will encourage tenants to access information using digital methods. The Council will promote payments, rent statements, and account balances online, and through the tenant mobile phone app.

All tenants who are in rent arrears will receive a rent statement and personal contact before any legal action is taken.  
Officers will make contact using /text/email/letter/phone.

Home visits, appointments and interviews will be carried out in a professional manner, maintaining confidentiality at all times. All interviews/visits will be noted and repayment arrangements confirmed by text/email/letter.

## **New Tenants**

Prospective tenants will have a financial wellbeing assessment and be advised of the cost of renting and running a home. They will be informed of the property rent and service charges when making a bid for accommodation, when an offer is made and also at the property viewing.

On accepting the keys for a home and taking the tenancy, new tenants will be advised of their responsibility to pay rent and service charges, the ways in which to pay and the consequences of not paying.

New tenants must pay their rent in advance of their tenancy start date. The amount will depend on the agreed payment frequency. (See separate guidance under pay in advance).

## **When to Pay**

### **Collection dates**

Rent will be collected over 48 weeks. There will be 4 non- collection weeks, 2 at the end of March/early April and 2 over the Christmas/New Year period. This will be subject to review on an annual basis and may change depending on business needs.

Those in rent arrears must continue to pay on the non-collection weeks. Those paying by direct debit will have payments calculated to take account of the non-collection weeks.

Rent is due in advance. A rent account will be considered to be in arrears if a payment has not been received within the period it is due.

## **Ways to Pay**

### **We will offer a range of ways to pay:**

Direct Debit (the most convenient way to pay)

Tenant Mobile App- 24/7

Online- 24/7

Automated telephone line -24/7

At the Post office or at Paypoint or Payzone (at retail outlets)

Standing Order

Over the phone

By cheque through via Royal Mail.

## **Recovery – Our Approach - Rent/Service Charge Arrears**

The Council will intervene as soon as payments are missed on any account.

In all debt cases the Council will follow current and applicable legislation and guidance, in particular, the Court Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by

Social Landlords (the 'Protocol'). The Council will take a preventative approach to keep debts to a minimum.

Accounts will be monitored weekly and those in arrears will be contacted as soon as is practicable. The Council will ensure early contact and that this contact is maintained throughout the period of arrears.

Suitable affordable repayment arrangements will be agreed taking account of individual financial circumstances. Action will be taken to ensure that Housing Benefit/Universal Credit is claimed and paid where there is an entitlement.

If there are arrears on a rent account, the Council will request direct payment of housing costs from the DWP for those in receipt of Universal Credit and Alternative Payment Arrangements to reduce the outstanding arrears. For those on Housing Benefit we will request direct payments and deductions from the DWP to reduce outstanding arrears.

Where a tenant is vulnerable or is at risk of losing their home, the Council will ensure that direct payments of rent onto the account are sought through direct payments or DWP managed payments.

If there are debt and money issues, debt and welfare advice and assistance will be offered or a referral made to a Money Advisor.

### **Legal Proceedings – Rent/Service Charge Arrears**

Before starting any legal action, the Council will

- Contact the tenant as soon as they owe arrears to discuss:
  - The cause of the arrears;
  - The tenant's financial circumstances;
  - The tenant's entitlement to welfare benefits; and
  - Proposals for repayment of the arrears, and agreement of an affordable amount for the tenant to pay towards reducing the arrears.
  
- Serve a statutory notice, and continue to make attempts to contact the tenant to discuss:
  - The amount of the arrears;
  - The cause of the arrears;
  - Repayment of the arrears; and
  - The Housing Benefit or Universal Credit position.
  
- The Council will provide a copy of the Pre court Protocol to the tenant before issuing any court proceedings.

If the tenant maintains their agreement to pay the current rent and a reasonable amount to reduce the arrears, the Council will postpone issuing court proceedings.

If the tenant stops making payments as agreed, the Council will advise the tenant of the intention to bring legal proceedings, give clear time limits to comply, and make a referral for Money Advice if they are not already involved.

At Court, the Council will seek a possession order, suitable to the level of arrears outstanding and the tenant's payment history and personal circumstances.

The Council will request a money judgment for the debt and an order for any Court costs in all cases, unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so. A money judgement order may be used to enforce collection of arrears when a tenancy is terminated and the Council collect the former tenant debt.

Any court costs will be recovered as part of the rent recovery process.

If proceeding with court action, the Council reserves the right to exclude the property from any capital and planned investment programmes.

### **Repossession of a Property – Rent/Service Charge Arrears**

This will be a last resort, however if a warrant for possession has been made, it will not be withdrawn unless:

1. The arrears are cleared in full; or
2. The Court order is brought up to date and the warrant costs paid.

A decision to proceed or withdraw an eviction application will be made by the Income Management Officer with approval from the Senior Income Recovery Officer or Income Management and Financial Inclusion Manager.

For all tenants, and in particular those who are vulnerable, the Council will liaise with the Homelessness Team when the warrant for possession is lodged.

If there are any safeguarding concerns, the Council will inform Lancashire County Council Social Services department when an eviction is taking place.

### **Confidential Money Advice**

Throughout the recovery process, free confidential money advice will be made available. All contact will promote use of this free service and that tenants should also seek independent legal and debt advice from Welfare Rights, the Citizens Advice Bureau, a Law Centre or Solicitors.

The Council will promote financial inclusion through their Money Advisors, including advice and assistance on budgeting, managing debt, claiming benefits and discretionary housing payments. Money Advisors will work with those tenants who are vulnerable and excluded financially to seek affordable loans and banking services, provide advice on fuel poverty, back into work programs, and any initiatives which will maximise income.

A range of links and partnerships will also be maintained with other agencies where tenants can be sign-posted for help.

## **Joint Tenancies**

All joint tenants are jointly and severally liable for rent arrears that may accrue. The Council will contact separately all tenants named in the tenancy agreement when advising of arrears and legal proceedings.

With authority from the tenant, the Council will make contact with any named advocate who is acting on behalf of all parties in the tenancy agreement.

## **Sole Tenancy**

In households with a sole tenant on the tenancy agreement, the Council will encourage the tenant to keep all other household members informed of any legal action in connection with rent arrears; interested parties do not include lodgers.

## **Garage Tenancy**

The Council will encourage tenants of garages to pay their rent monthly in advance by Direct Debit.

The Council will monitor garage rent payments and commence quick recovery action using the relevant legislation at an early stage of non-payment. Persistent non-payment will not be accepted and the Council will seek to recover possession of garages at the earliest opportunity.

## **Former Tenant Arrears – ‘FTAs’**

FTAs occur when a tenancy with arrears is terminated by the tenant, where a property is abandoned, when a tenant moves out without providing formal notice, or where a tenancy is ended by the Council and there are arrears on the account at the time of termination.

To minimise arrears, the Council will ensure that tenants are made aware of their obligations upon ending a tenancy. On notice of termination, the tenant will be made aware of any rent and service charge monies owed and a forwarding address will be taken.

Where the outgoing tenant cannot clear any debt owed prior to leaving, an affordable repayment plan will be agreed. This agreement will be confirmed and the tenant made aware of the methods of payment available.

The Council will pursue all former tenant debts. Where no forwarding address is given, every effort will be made to trace former tenants. The Council will use the Income Management Team, specialist tracing systems, and outside tracing/collection agencies, if appropriate. The Council will use a variety of methods to make contact with the former tenant.

Failure to agree to, or to maintain, an acceptable repayment arrangement may result in further legal action to pursue the debt. The suitability of such action will be determined on a case by case basis.

The Council will not accept applications for the Councils Housing Register where there is a debt owing to the Council, unless a payment plan has been made and kept to in accordance with the Councils Allocations policy. (see Allocations Policy)

### **FTA Write Offs**

On occasions an FTA debt may not be deemed recoverable if there have been numerous failed attempts to trace the former tenant. Some examples may be:

- The tenant has died and we cannot claim on the estate
- The tenant moved permanently to residential care and a request is made on compassionate grounds.

In some instances an existing tenant may have a former tenant debt or recharge debt and we will continue to pursue the debt.

If a former tenant makes an application for the Councils Housing Register and has a previous FTA we will actively seek to recover any previous debts or refuse to accept the application.

### **Bankruptcy/Debt Relief Orders (DRO)**

#### **Bankruptcy**

If a bankruptcy order is made by the Official Receiver they take control of the debtor's assets and these are shared out amongst the creditors. If a tenant is declared bankrupt then the Council will be a creditor and will have to register a formal claim for any debt owed. This may be paid if sufficient funds are available after the primary debt is paid off. If we are unable to recover the debt then the debt will be written off from the account.

The Council can still continue to seek possession of property therefore tenants will be advised to take legal advice before considering bankruptcy.

#### **DRO**

A DRO is an alternative to bankruptcy. It lasts for 12 months and during this time the rent arrears listed within the DRO will not be pursued. If financial circumstances change the order may be withdrawn. If this happens the debt can then be recovered. At the end of the DRO period the rent arrears covered by the DRO can be written off.

If arrears accrue again after the DRO has been issued the Council will continue to pursue the debt.

The Council can still seek possession of the property for rent arrears, so the tenant will be advised to take legal advice before considering a DRO.

### **Rechargeable Debts**

A separate policy and process is available for rechargeable debt. (See separate documents)

## **Vulnerability**

The Council understands that it has tenants who are elderly or vulnerable through mental or physical disability. Also, tenants who have young dependent children or who may be carers.

The Council will always take action that is appropriate to the individual needs of the tenant and, where necessary, refer to other agencies to provide support services if vulnerable tenants are unable to pay their debts.

## **Working with Others**

The Council will ensure that it develops and maintains excellent working relationships with agencies who can support the work it does and for the benefit of its tenants.

This will include having links and good relationships with:

- Providers of affordable credit e.g. Credit Unions
- Local Banks
- Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Advice Services including United Utilities
- Furnished Tenancies/Furniture Recycling Schemes
- Advice and support services associated with combating and preventing illegal lending
- Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)
- BTLs Revenues and Benefits Service
- Welfare Rights and CABs

## **Equality & Diversity**

This policy will comply with the Council's Equality and Diversity Statement, recognising that people who use Council services come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences and needs.

In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any tenants who have mobility problems due to disability, who need information in other formats and languages, who may need interpreters or signers, or have difficulty with reading are provided with the assistance that they require.

We will ensure digital access and training services are available across the Borough for tenants who require assisted support to enable them to interact with our services in the easiest and most flexible way for them, including support for those making Universal Credit claims on line.

## **Performance Monitoring**

The Council will compare its income collection activity and performance against a range of other similar landlords and set challenging performance targets to meet the needs of the business.

Performance information will be used to support officers. Regular audits of individual rent accounts will be carried out to check progress against the Council's policy and associated recovery procedures.

### **Further Information**

Details of this Policy are available on the Council's website.

The recovery procedures operated by officers are available on request.

In order to ensure the Council is delivering customer focused services, officers and tenants may be asked to become involved in reviewing the service, complete feedback surveys and make suggestions for improvements and change.

### **Legal & Regulatory Framework**

The Council will, at all times, meet current and relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, following any good practice guidance.

### **Monitoring and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Income Management and Financial Inclusion Manager, to monitor the implementation of this policy and the associated procedures.

The Director of Housing and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring delivery of this policy.

All staff dealing with income collection, arrears, debt recovery and money advice must be familiar with this policy.

### **Associated Documents**

- Income Recovery Procedures
- Allocations Policy & Procedures
- Pre-Action Court Protocol
- Equality & Diversity Policy

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually to take account of any significant changes in legislation, guidance or good practice.

Tenants will be consulted and involved in any significant changes.

<b>Approved by:</b>	
<b>Effective date:</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	
<b>Policy developed by:</b>	



<b>Associated Procedure:</b>	
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JM 18/04/17



**Your Voice – Consultation on Housing Revenue Account - Income Recovery Policy 2017**

We are making some changes to our Income Recovery Policy which details how we collect rent and arrears and would like to hear your views.

The survey has three questions and by completing it you will be entered into a prize draw to win shopping vouchers.

**Q1.** To help prevent tenants getting into rent arrears and to comply with our tenancy agreement, new tenants will have to pay their rent in advance before they start their tenancy.

Do you agree or disagree with this?

Agree

Disagree

Any comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q2.** Rent payments are currently charged over 48 weeks per year. We would like to be able to review this on an annual basis to check this is meeting the business needs.

Do you agree or disagree that we should review this?

Agree

Disagree

Any comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q3.** If a tenant is being taken to court over rent arrears, we would like to be able to refuse planned investment and improvements to their homes?

Do you agree or disagree with this?

Agree

Disagree

Any comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any comments about the overall arrangements for income recovery?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Equality Impact Assessment Form



<b>Directorate: Housing and Inclusion</b>	<b>Service: Income Management and Financial Inclusion</b>
<b>Completed by: Jane Maguire</b>	<b>Date: 24/04/17</b>
<b>Subject Title: Income Recovery Policy</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes
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:	The updating of the current Income Management and Arrears Recovery Policy
<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):	*delete as appropriate
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>	Yes/No*
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Tenants and Former tenants of West Lancashire. Potential new tenants. Council officers in Housing and Inclusion. Partners delivering money advice.
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)?	The policy is universal to all current and former tenants, however takes full account of the individual needs of each tenant and any vulnerabilities due to age, health, mental health, and disabilities, and those responsible for providing care or have young dependent children.

Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?	
Age	Yes
Gender	Yes
Disability	Yes
Race and Culture	Yes
Sexual Orientation	No
Religion or Belief	No
Gender Reassignment	No
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes
<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 policy is relevant to all tenants former current and potential as they would be affected by the policy should they go into debt.
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	<p>The policy has a positive impact as it ensures a fair consistent approach for recovering debt. It provides a support mechanism for those who owe rent arrears, including a variety of payment methods, agreements and early intervention.</p> <p>The policy recognises different needs of the protected characteristics and ensures that recovery action takes account of needs and that there are support partnerships and networks in place to refer tenants to.</p>
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?	A consultation exercise will be carried out to collect views on the revised policy
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?	Experian Segmentation data and data extracted for the Financial Inclusion strategy has been used for age, gender, disability, race and pregnancy and maternity as these groups have been identified as financially vulnerable.
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	Further consultation will take place across a range of service users and feedback will inform the final policy.
<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 update of the policy will have a positive impact by providing alternative ways of contacting and accessing services. The policy allows the Council to assist more vulnerable tenants by claiming direct payments and the provision of money and budgeting support.
<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.).	No negative impact has been found. If any negative impact is identified, the policy will be revised to mitigate where possible.

What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions planned
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	This EIA will be reviewed annually with the policy





**MINUTE OF LANDLORD SERVICES COMMITTEE (CABINET WORKING GROUP)  
– 7 JUNE 2017**

**CONSULTATION ON RELEVANT DRAFT CABINET REPORTS**

**7 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT INCOME RECOVERY POLICY**

Consideration was given to the draft report of the Director of Housing and Inclusion that provided details in relation to the updated Housing Revenue Account Income Recovery Policy as set down at Appendix 1.

The Income and Financial Inclusion Manager attended the meeting and provided an overview of the report, clarification on issues raised referring to details as set down in the report and responded to questions.

In discussion comments and questions were raised in relation to:

- 52 week rent charging period – review.
- Rent payment – increasing options / access to services.
- Widening debt recovery options – alternative approaches.
- Promotion of a rent payment culture.
- Home improvements undertaken by former tenants – restitution /impact on void housing stock.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.





CABINET: 13 June 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 – CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON SCOPING AND ISSUES & OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the feedback received through the Local Plan Review Scoping and Issues & Options consultations and seek authority to publish the Consultation Feedback Report so that all interested parties are able to review what comments have been submitted to the Council.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the Consultation Feedback Report on the Local Plan Review Scoping and Issues & Options consultation (provided at Appendix A) be noted and endorsed.

2.2 That the next steps in the Local Plan Review process set out at Section 4.0 of this report be endorsed.

---

## **3.0 CURRENT POSITION**

3.1 The Local Plan Review: Scoping and Issues & Options public consultation ran for six weeks from Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and involved several strands of public and stakeholder engagement:

- A dedicated set of Local Plan webpages on the Council's website

- A Wrap-around Advertisement on the Champion Newspaper as the consultation period starts
- Letters / Emails to all contacts on the Local Plan consultation database
- Online Survey to help respondents engage with, and respond to, the consultation material
- Workshop for All Council Members and for Parish Councils
- Six Public Forum events in six different venues across the Borough
- A Developers Forum
- A Neighbouring Authorities (Duty to Co-operate) Workshop
- Engagement with student population at Edge Hill University and West Lancs College
- On-street surveys at Skelmersdale Concourse and Ormskirk Market

3.2 All aspects of the consultation went well, with positive engagement from the public and stakeholders in the process both face-to-face and in writing. 128 responses to the online issues & options and scoping surveys were received and approximately the same number of people attended the six public forums. The public forums, in particular, generated a good level of discussion and helped raise planning matters of concern to local communities in West Lancashire to the Council officers in attendance. In general, the written responses reflected the concerns raised at the public forums and the responses to the on-street surveys also highlighted similar key issues.

3.3 The Consultation Feedback Report provided at Appendix A sets out a summary of the feedback received from all aspects of the consultation exercise and the full responses to the consultation that were received in writing will be published online alongside this Consultation Feedback Report, should Cabinet endorse it. The Feedback Report does not include any Council response to the comments received.

3.4 At the current time, the urgency is to simply publish the comments and feedback received through the recent consultation exercise so that all interested parties can see the nature of the feedback that the Council has received. This, in turn, may generate more informal feedback as interested parties digest what has been submitted. This is important because, while the formal consultation on the Local Plan Review Scope and Issues & Options is now closed, Regulation 18 of the Local Planning regulations covers the whole preparation of the Local Plan until Publication stage and so Councils preparing a Local Plan are meant to be open to receiving and considering any comments submitted throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, even those received informally outside of formal consultation periods. As such, the publication of the Consultation Feedback Report is important to maintaining the transparency of the process and stimulating further dialogue with stakeholders.

- 3.5 In due course, as the feedback received is digested by Council officers and Members involved in the preparation of the Local Plan, and as the Preferred Options version of a new Local Plan is prepared ready for the next stage of formal consultation, the Council will be able to publish a response to the issues raised in the Consultation Feedback Report, but this will clearly not be possible until the Council has considered the feedback fully. It should also be noted that the Council do not respond individually to each of the written comments received and do not write back to each individual that has submitted comments, as this would not be an effective use of the Council's resources. Instead, the Council will respond collectively to each issue that has been raised and publish that response for any interested party to view.

#### **4.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 Council officers will now begin the process of preparing a Preferred Options version of a new Local Plan. This will involve close working, and regular meetings, with the Local Plan Cabinet Working Group as well as updating and briefing Cabinet and Members in general at appropriate times on the progress of, and proposals for, the Preferred Options.
- 4.2 The preparation of the Preferred Options will, firstly, involve establishing the preferred Strategic Development Option for the housing and employment land requirement, what period the Local Plan should cover and how the housing and employment land requirement should be distributed across the Borough. This can then lead to an assessment of potential site allocations to identify what land should be allocated for development to deliver the preferred Strategic Development Option. Alongside this, specific policies will be drafted to address relevant topics and issues, drawing on the specific feedback received in the recent consultation on each topic/issue and on the latest evidence available to the Council on that topic/issue.
- 4.3 As such, there is a great deal of work involved in preparing the Local Plan Preferred Options and so it is not anticipated that the final draft Preferred Options document will be brought to Cabinet for their consideration until June 2018. In turn, this means that the next stage of formal public consultation (which will be on the Preferred Options document) would not take place until at least June/July 2018.

#### **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 5.1 Although the decision being considered in this report only relates to the publishing of a Consultation Feedback Report, 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 Local Plan will be an important consideration in the preparation of the new Local Plan.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial and resource implications related to the publishing of the Consultation Feedback Report.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 There are no risks associated with the publishing of consultation feedback received through the Local Plan Review consultation.

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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**

The decision Cabinet are being asked to make is simply related to the publication of a Consultation Feedback Report and so there is no direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Local Plan Review: Scoping and Issues & Options Consultation Feedback Report



## **West Lancashire Local Plan Review**

### **Issues and Options**

### **Consultation Feedback Report**

June 2017

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John Harrison DipEnvP, MRTPI  
Director of Development and  
Regeneration

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge Hill University</li> <li>• Skelmersdale College</li> <li>• Skelmersdale Concourse</li> <li>• Ormskirk Market</li> </ul>	
11.	Representations on other matters	62
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1)</li> <li>• Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment</li> <li>• Sustainability Appraisal</li> <li>• General comments</li> </ul>	
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the responses West Lancashire Borough Council received to its consultation on the West Lancashire Local Plan Review: Issues and Options from Thursday 16 March to Friday 28 April 2017. The full set of representations can be viewed on the Council's website:

<http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>

### The West Lancashire Local Plan Review

- 1.2 The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 was adopted in October 2013. Work commenced on a review of the Local Plan in 2016, with the aim of adopting a new Plan by 2020. The review was commenced, not because there was any problem with the West Lancashire Local Plan per se, but in order to reflect changes in national policy, to explore opportunities that may arise from projects in the wider area (for example, the Liverpool2 Deep Water Terminal that is likely to lead to a significant increase in container traffic, and that could stimulate jobs in logistics and distribution across the Region), and in order that a new plan be in place roughly halfway through the current Local Plan period, as is standard good practice.
- 1.3 Various topic-based and place-based evidence papers were prepared from summer 2016 onwards. From these, the principal planning-related issues affecting West Lancashire were identified. Consultation with Statutory Consultees took place on the scope of the Local Plan Review in autumn 2016. Five issues and options papers were prepared late 2016 / early 2017, along with a set of supporting documents including a Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1), Habitats Regulations Assessment, Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment.
- 1.4 The Local Plan Review Issues and Options papers comprised the following documents, reflecting the three tenets of sustainability (economic, environmental, social):
- Strategic Development Options Paper – covering the vision and objectives of the Plan, length of Plan period, and amount and distribution of development
  - Economic Policy Options Paper – covering land for industrial / business / commercial uses, the rural economy, and town centres
  - Environmental Policy Options Paper – covering nature conservation, renewable energy, climate change and design of development
  - Social Policy Options Paper – covering accommodation for students, older people, caravan and boat dwellers, travellers, and affordable housing
  - Spatial Portrait – a description of West Lancashire, and the planning-related issues
- 1.5 Each of the above papers contained a series of questions about the various planning-related issues covered, and policy options for addressing them. These questions were the basis for consultation on the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options. In addition, people were invited to comment on the scope of the Local Plan Review, and on the supporting documents referred to above.

### Compliance with the West Lancashire Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.6 The West Lancashire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in June 2016 (replacing the 2007 SCI). This specifies what level and means of consultation should be undertaken when preparing a local plan. The following extracts from the 2016 SCI set out the consultation and feedback requirements for the Issues and Options stage:

**Table 2.1 Consultation during the preparation of a Development Plan Document** (extract)

Stage	DPD Preparation Stage	Regulation number <sup>1</sup>	Purpose	Consultation required?	Publicity required?
1	Evidence gathering	-	To gather evidence in order to identify the issues and opportunities for development in the Borough	As necessary for each element of evidence	As necessary for each element of evidence
2	Scoping	Reg. 18	To notify persons/groups of the subject of the DPD and invite them to make representations about what the DPD should contain  Comments received will inform the preparation of the next stage	Y	Y
3	Issues and Options	-	To gather evidence on the issues and options for suggested policy directions and to undertake initial work on the Sustainability Appraisal.  To notify persons/groups of the issues for the DPD and invite them to make representations on the issues and options  If consulted upon, comments received will inform the preparation of the next stage	Optional (i.e. not required by 2012 Regulations, but the Council may choose to consult at this stage)	Optional (i.e. not required by 2012 Regulations, but the Council may choose to publicise at this stage)

**Table 2.2 Consultation on emerging DPDs** (extract)

Method	Stage of preparation of DPD	
	Pre-Draft Consultation (Scoping) (Reg.18)	Draft Consultation (Options / Preferred Options) (Optional)
Website	✓	(✓)
Email out (database)	✓	(✓)
Mail out (database)	✓	(✓)
On deposit	✓	(✓)
Press release	Optional	Optional

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

Method	Stage of preparation of DPD	
	Pre-Draft Consultation (Scoping) (Reg.18)	Draft Consultation (Options / Preferred Options) (Optional)
Press notice	Optional	Optional
Press advertisement	Optional	Optional
Leaflets	Optional	Optional
Neighbour letters	N	N
Staffed exhibitions	Optional	Optional
Unstaffed exhibitions	Optional	Optional
Forums	Optional	Optional
Drop-in sessions	Optional	Optional
Social media	Optional	Optional
Schools	Optional	Optional
Groups consulted / notified	Statutory, general and public.	Statutory, general and public. Representors from previous stage.
Duration	Minimum 4 weeks	Minimum 6 weeks
Feedback Report produced	Y	Y

#### 2.1.4 How will we feed back the results?

Following each round of consultation, the Council will prepare a **Feedback Report** (or Consultation Statement), which will summarise the issues raised through the representations, how the Council has responded to them and what has been changed in the DPD as a result of the comments. This will be shared with Members to inform their decisions on the next stage of the DPD's preparation, and will be published on the Council's website. The Council is not bound to respond to each individual submission / representation to the consultation.

- 
- 1.7 The six week consultation undertaken on the scope of the Local Plan Review (i.e. the 'Pre-Draft Consultation' referred to in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 above) and on Issues and Options (part of Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) met all of the 'essential' and many of the 'optional' requirements of the SCI.
- 1.8 With reference to paragraph 2.1.4 of the SCI quoted above, it is important to point out that this Consultation Feedback Report does not contain the Borough Council's responses to representations received (this will be done, where necessary, at a later date), but simply summarises the comments made by respondents.

### Consultation Methods Used

- 1.9 Consultation methods used included a mailout to all people or organisations on the Council’s planning policy consultation database, the website, placing material on deposit in libraries and Council offices, a press release, press notice, a four page ‘newspaper wrap’, leaflets (posted to all those who do not receive the free weekly newspaper), and on-street questionnaires (in Ormskirk town centre, Skelmersdale Concourse, Edge Hill University, and Skelmersdale College).
- 1.10 Six public workshops were held across the Borough, at which people were invited to give their views on a series of selected questions, and / or on any other relevant topics of particular importance to them. The workshops were as follows:
- |               |                                       |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 27 March 2017 | The Grove Community Centre, Burscough |
| 29 March      | The Ecumenical Centre, Skelmersdale   |
| 3 April       | Parbold Women’s Institute             |
| 6 April       | Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk              |
| 10 April      | Halsall Memorial Hall                 |
| 12 April      | Tarleton Academy                      |
- 1.11 In addition, a forum was held with Council Members on 8 March 2017, with Parish Councillors on 21 March, with (housing and commercial) developers and their agents on 20 March, and a meeting was held with neighbouring local authorities under the ‘Duty to Co-operate’ on 27 March.

### Structure of this Report

- 1.12 This Consultation Feedback Report is structured as follows:
- Representations on Scope of the Local Plan (Chapter 2)
  - Representations on Strategic Development Options (Chapter 3) – this summarises the comments received from the online questionnaire, from Borough Council Members (at the Members’ Forum), from Parish Councils, and at the public workshops; similarly with Chapters 4-6 below
  - Representations on Economic Policy Options (Chapter 4)
  - Representations on Environmental Policy Options (Chapter 5)
  - Representations on Social Policy Options (Chapter 6)
  - Representations on the Spatial Portrait (Chapter 7)
  - Comments made under the Duty to Co-operate (Chapter 8)
  - Comments made at Developers’ Forum (Chapter 9)
  - Responses to questionnaire work (Chapter 10)
  - Representations on other matters, e.g. Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (Chapter 11)
  - Conclusions (Chapter 12)

## 2. Scope of the Local Plan

- 2.1 The Borough Council consulted with Statutory Consultees in autumn 2016 with regard to the content to the new Local Plan Review. A copy of the feedback report for this consultation is available to download at <http://www.westlancls.gov.uk/localplan>. As part of the consultation on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options, the invitation to comment on the scope of the Plan was extended to the wider public and other stakeholders, in line with the 2016 Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.2 The purpose of this consultation was to ascertain views on what subjects and policies the Local Plan should contain. 15 stakeholders responded in total. There was some cross-over between the comments submitted through the specific Scoping consultation and those made through the Issues and Options consultation. Therefore much of the summary below is repeated in later stages of this report.
- 2.3 Respondents to the Scope of the Local Plan consultation considered that economic, environmental and social policies should be granted equal merit and importance. Nevertheless, key issues appeared to relate to infrastructure, the delivery of affordable housing, the availability of elderly housing, the sustainability of the environment, the protection of Green Belt and agricultural land, and minimising flood risk.
- 2.4 Many respondents considered that infrastructure delivery should be of primary importance, including transport services, community services, health care and broadband provision. Respondents, particularly those in rural areas, were concerned about the loss of rural services and employment opportunities as local businesses were commonly lost to residential developments. Policies for the protection and/or provision of small scale business units / development in local villages was supported. Respondents considered that improvements to transport infrastructure would also bring improvements to air quality and health.
- 2.5 Large amounts of support were received for the delivery of affordable housing, particularly in rural areas, although some considered that the definitions of affordable housing (set by national, rather than local, policy) should be redefined as they currently cannot provide 'truly affordable' housing (i.e. housing at a cost marginally lower than market still does not make it affordable to many people). Respondents also stressed the need for elderly housing, and/or the provision of support for the elderly to enable them to remain in their existing homes. The provision of support for the elderly links closely back to infrastructure and accessibility to social care and transport facilities.
- 2.6 Sustainability and the environment were considered very important. Respondents want new buildings to be designed with energy conservation and the environment in mind and felt policies should require developers to provide renewable energy design features and respond to climate change. In residential developments a mix of housing types and tenures is supported to provide choice. Buildings should be of good design, location and quality. Planners should continue to consider how developments impact on school places and respond accordingly. On residential developments, respondents wanted

- adequate parking to be provided by developers, including adequate garage sizes so that cars can be parked off-road. Traveller sites should be located away from flood risk zones.
- 2.7 Respondents considered it important that the arable farmland in the Borough, as prime grade agricultural land, should be protected from development in order to provide food for the nation.
- 2.8 Some respondents saw a need to encourage a more youthful and diverse population to live in the Borough, seizing on opportunities to engage with Edge Hill University and local employers. Conversely, others thought greater control should be placed on Edge Hill to prevent it expanding any further into the green belt and to reduce problems relating to HMOs and the loss of market housing in Ormskirk.
- 2.9 There was support for policies which can serve to enhance cultural and community facilities. Respondents suggested policies should be designed to address the erosion of town centres, considered to be created by a loss of retail mix, too many low cost retailers and high rents for shop units.
- 2.10 Some respondents wanted the issue of gridlocked traffic in Ormskirk to be addressed. There was support for the provision of off-road pedestrian and cycle routes to provide an alternative to car use, ensuring they link to new housing developments, which can also serve to improve physical activity and exercise.
- 2.11 Some respondents identified the growth agenda of the wider Liverpool City Region, and the role of West Lancashire within it, as an important issue. It was stressed that within the City Region there are growth opportunities for the Borough which, in turn, could help to tackle many of the issues that have been identified for the Borough. It was considered important to have a balanced and sustainable development approach that can integrate land use and transport, regeneration and economic development, social inclusion and tackle climate change.



### 3. Representations on Strategic Development Policy Options

- 3.1 This chapter summarises the representations made on the questions relating to the Strategic Development Policy Options. For this chapter, and for chapters 4-6 following, comments received on the online questionnaire are summarised first, followed by comments made by Members at the Members’ Forum (see 1.11 above), comments made by Parish Councils, and comments made at the public workshops (see 1.10). For clarity, any Parish Council comments submitted via the online survey are recorded in the ‘Feedback from Parish Councils’ section, rather than the ‘Feedback from Online Surveys / Written Representations’ section. Comments from neighbouring authorities are summarised in Chapter 8: Duty to Co-Operate, rather than in Chapters 3-6.
- 3.2 The Strategic Development Policy Options questions<sup>2</sup> covered the following matters:
- The draft Vision
  - The draft Objectives
  - Required annual amounts of development
  - The plan period
  - The sub-division of West Lancashire into ‘spatial areas’
  - Distribution of development around the Borough
  - Location of new development in relation to existing development
  - Infrastructure

#### Feedback from Online Surveys / Written Representations

##### **7. A draft Vision for West Lancashire**

*The Vision<sup>3</sup> is what the Council would like to see achieved for West Lancashire, based on the current evidence available. 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?*

- 3.3 31 out of a total 45 respondents<sup>4</sup> supported or broadly supported the Vision. One described it as ‘idealistic’; another said it should be more aspirational. A number of additions were recommended to the Vision, including (greater) reference to farming and food production / the food processing sector, renewable energy, living within one’s environmental means, sustainable travel, carbon-neutral development, the historic environment (in addition to historic buildings), accommodation for the elderly, meeting housing needs in full, helping meet neighbouring authorities’ needs, quality family accommodation, retaining a skilled workforce, economic development and growth

<sup>2</sup> Three questions relating to the Spatial Portrait (questions 4-6) were included in the ‘Strategic Development Options’ document; responses to these questions these have been summarised in Chapter 7 (Spatial Portrait) of this Feedback Report.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 for the Vision.

<sup>4</sup> The 45 respondents exclude Parish Councils and neighbouring authorities: their representations are considered elsewhere (Parish Councils in a separate section in this chapter, neighbouring authorities in Chapter 8).

being a key priority, growing the smaller settlements, the Northern Parishes as a location for growth, and Green Belt release.

- 3.4 One respondent recommended that the Vision contain specific ambitions for each of the key spatial areas; another recommended that the word ‘fantastic’ be removed.

### **8. Objectives**

*Are the draft Objectives<sup>5</sup> seeking to achieve the right things? Are they specific enough, or are they too detailed? Have we missed anything out?*

- 3.5 19 of the 39 respondents who commented on this question expressed general support for the Objectives as a whole. Others highlighted support for individual Objectives, in particular Objective 6 (housing). One respondent described the objectives as ‘complex’, whilst four others considered they were lacking in detail, too vague to inform how the Vision would be delivered. One described them as ‘anodyne’, applicable to anywhere, and recommended that they be made more West Lancashire-specific. One stated the Plan could not solve many issues of health and inequality; another stated the Objectives were admirable, but would fail. Two advised that the Objectives should be more aspirational and pro-growth. Only one disagreed with the Objectives as a whole.
- 3.6 A number of changes were proposed to individual Objectives, as follows:
- Add ‘sustainable’ to Objectives 3,6,7 and 10;
  - [Conversely...] refer to the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development rather than ‘sustainability’ (Objective 1);
  - Refer specifically to flood risk, either in Objective 3 or 10;
  - Add ‘family housing’ to Objective 6;
  - Objective 7 should include the retention of existing businesses, and should be worded more positively in terms of the Borough’s wider economic role;
  - Objective 10 should refer to ‘ecological networks’ (alternative wording suggested);
  - Add an Objective 11 supporting the agricultural and food processing industry;
  - A ‘stand-alone’ Objective should be provided on the historic environment.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix 1 for the Objectives.

**9. Strategic Development Options**

*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?*

*A: Approximately 8 ha of land (for 200 dwellings) and 2 ha of employment land*

*B: Approximately 12 ha of land (for 300 dwellings) and 3 ha of employment land*

*C: Approximately 16 ha of land (for 400 dwellings) and 4 ha of employment land*

*D: Approximately 20 ha of land (for 500 dwellings) and 5 ha of employment land*

*E: Approximately 24 ha of land (for 600 dwellings) and 6 ha of employment land*

- 3.7 The 48 responses to this question spanned the whole range of options. 13 individuals expressed a preference for Options A and / or B, citing the need to protect Green Belt and the Borough's prime agricultural land, to meet only this Borough's needs, and to maximise use of brownfield land. Agents responding on behalf of landowner or developer clients favoured the higher options – 11 expressed a preference for Option C or above, 4 (plus 2 individuals) for Option D or above, and 7 for Option E. The reasons given for the support for the higher figures were to follow national policy to 'boost significantly' the supply of housing, to be ambitious and promote economic growth, to aim to meet affordable housing needs, and to help meet the needs of constrained neighbours in the Liverpool City Region. Many respondents referred to the SHELMA and reserved the right to make further comments once this study, and with it a clearer picture on the need for inter-Borough development distributions, becomes available.

**10. The Local Plan Period**

*We are considering two time periods for the Local Plan:*

- *Option I - 2012 to 2037*
- *Option II - 2012 to 2050*

*Should the Council go for a standard Plan Period or plan longer term? Why?*

- 3.8 With regard to the plan period, 48 responses were received. 20 supported a 'standard' plan period going to 2037; 19 supported a longer plan period. The remainder advised a 'hybrid approach' whereby land was allocated to meet development needs to 2037, and further land was safeguarded to meet needs to 2050, thereby removing the need to alter Green Belt boundaries at the end of the Plan period (which would be the case for both a 2037 and 2050 end date for the Plan). Advocates of this approach cited national policy (NPPF paragraph 85) and the 2016 findings of the Local Plans Expert Group to support their choice of option.
- 3.9 Reasons for favouring the standard, or shorter, plan period included the need to be flexible, the fact that 2050 was well beyond the end of the available evidence base, and that matters are very difficult to predict in the long term given things change quickly. Reasons for advocating the longer plan period included the need for certainty and the long timescales needed to achieve regeneration and to influence climate change.

3.10 One response expressed concern at the 2012 base date, recommending 2017 instead.

**11. Distributing the development requirements across West Lancashire**

*(A map was provided showing the proposed subdivision of the Borough into spatial areas.) Are the proposed spatial areas appropriate<sup>6</sup>? If not, how should the Borough be divided up to help identify where development should go?*

3.11 Of the 26 stakeholders who commented on Question 11, 18 supported the proposed key spatial areas. The requested changes to, or additional comments on, the subdivision of the Borough were:

- Up Holland should be considered separately from Skelmersdale;
- Aughton should be considered separately from Ormskirk (although another respondent expressed the opposite view);
- Appley Bridge should be considered with Wigan rather than the Eastern Parishes;
- Newburgh and Parbold should be considered as part of Skelmersdale and the South Eastern Parishes;
- It is important to recognise the ‘synergy’ between the different spatial areas, and that they do not operate independently.

**12. Distribution of new development**

*We have identified four realistic potential scenarios that we might wish to take forward:*

- *Scenario 1: Spread new development around West Lancashire according to the proportionate size of existing towns and villages.*
- *Scenario 2: Focus new development in and around the key service centres of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough*
- *Scenario 3: Allocate less development to the key service centres and more to the rural areas such as the Northern Parishes.*
- *Scenario 4: Focus development on Skelmersdale; grow Skelmersdale significantly more than the other key service centres.*

*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?*

3.12 In terms of the general distribution of development around the Borough, opinions varied widely amongst the 51 stakeholders who commented. 4 supported Option 1 (reflect the current distribution), one representation referring specifically to Ormskirk’s size; 15 chose Option 2 (Key Service Centres) citing the existence of infrastructure in those locations as a reason to direct development there; 3 chose Option 3 (rural focus) – although (see below) others supported more development in rural communities; 13 preferred Option 4 (Skelmersdale focus), citing the existence of infrastructure there,

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1 for the map of proposed spatial areas.

and the need for regeneration. In addition, 9 respondents advocated a ‘hybrid’ approach, most notably a combination of Options 2 and 3.

3.13 Other points made in response to Question 12 included:

- There should be flexibility in allowing development to come forward in different areas, once the spatial distribution is finalised;
- Delivering high levels of growth in Skelmersdale will be challenging;
- Priority should be given to brownfield sites and minimising Green Belt release;
- In terms of minimising settlements merging, any Green Belt release should be between Ormskirk and Southport, reflecting links between these two settlements.

### **13. The location of new development**

*Where should new development be located in principle?*

- *Option 1: Maximise the capacity of existing settlements by prioritising infill developments within built-up areas or by building higher*
- *Option 2: Locate new development adjacent to existing settlements to reduce the need to travel and reduce emission.*
- *Option 3: Create brand new settlements with the necessary associated infrastructure*
- *Option 4: Entirely restrict new development in areas at risk of flooding*

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

3.14 Question 13 received 51 responses. 14 expressed a preference for Option 1 (restricting new development to existing settlements), 19 for Option 2 (building on the edge of existing settlements), and 4 for Option 3 (new settlement). 16 agreed with Option 4 (avoid development on land at risk of flooding), bearing in mind this option was not mutually exclusive with any of Options 1-3. In addition, 10 respondents advocated a hybrid of Options 1 and 2, i.e. developing suitable sites within existing settlements as the starting point, then meeting the remainder of the development requirements on land adjacent to settlements.

3.15 Other pertinent points made in relation to Question 13 were as follows:

- Option 1 is predicated on the need to ensure suitable sites exist within settlements;
- Amend Option 1 to include prioritising infill / high rise on underutilised land;
- Whatever approach is chosen, this should not preclude the development of other suitable sites where these are available;
- Option 2 should consider non-Green Belt land (Protected Land) before Green Belt land;
- One respondent referred to a study that concluded that for new settlements, it typically takes 5.5 years for development to commence;

- In terms of flood risk, the Environment Agency advised *inter alia* that development on land free from flood risk could adversely affect other land at risk of flooding. Two respondents expressed the view that a blanket approach (Option 4) could be unsuitable in that it may preclude consideration of certain suitable sites where the flood risk could readily be mitigated satisfactorily.

#### **14. Providing infrastructure and services**

*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?*

- 3.16 Infrastructure provision was raised as a crucial issue by several respondents. The main areas of deficiency mentioned were transport-related: public transport, in particular bus and rail services, with the lack of a rail station at Skelmersdale cited several times. The road network was mentioned, both in general terms, as well as more specific areas, including Hesketh Lane (Tarleton), and Burscough. It was recommended that road safety be taken into consideration in the Plan. Other areas of deficiency included secondary education in Skelmersdale, water supply (Tarleton), drainage and sewerage (Burscough in particular), and the lack of a strategic approach to Green Infrastructure.
- 3.17 In terms of good infrastructure provision, examples given were the road network in and adjacent to Skelmersdale, and the Borough's links to the motorway network. Other points made in relation to infrastructure included:
- New development can help provide infrastructure (developer contributions);
  - One can take into account infrastructure provision in neighbouring authority areas, for example Sefton;
  - Spreading development on small sites should lessen the need for infrastructure provision;
  - Land use planning and transport should be integrated.

#### **Feedback from West Lancashire Borough Council Members**

- 3.18 As stated in Chapter 1, a Members' Forum was held on 8 March, asking West Lancashire Borough Councillors a number of the Issues and Options consultation questions in discussion groups. Under the Strategic Development Options, Members were asked Questions 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14.
- 3.19 In terms of annual development targets (Question 9), some Members favoured the highest option (Option E: 600 houses, 6ha of employment land) per year, aiming for ambitious growth in the Borough. Others chose Option B, citing constraints such as land at risk of flooding, and infrastructure capacity.
- 3.20 Some Members expressed a preference for the longer plan period (2012-2050), seeking to plan ahead to encourage investment, regeneration and infrastructure provision.

- Others preferred the standard plan period (to 2037), one reason being to reduce the amount of Green Belt land that could potentially be released.
- 3.21 For Question 12 (distribution of development across the Borough), the vast majority of Members preferred Option 4: Skelmersdale focus, in order to deliver regeneration and a rail station for Skelmersdale. Some Members also favoured a strategic site at Ormskirk, and others favoured rural employment.
- 3.22 In terms of the location of new development in relation to existing development, most Members chose Option 2: Building on the edge of existing settlements. The view was expressed that a small amount of Green Belt could be sacrificed to protect green space and parks within settlements, with the proviso that the sites released should be small, and the locations of Green Belt release determined in accordance with local infrastructure capacity. ‘Garden City’ principles were supported by a number of Members.
- 3.23 As far as infrastructure deficiencies were concerned, Members highlighted public transport issues including the need for improved rail facilities (Skelmersdale, and the Burscough Curves), the road system – in particular in Ormskirk and Burscough Centres and on the A5209 (Burscough - M6), Skelmersdale Town Centre shops and its evening economy, the physical environment of estates in Skelmersdale, and wastewater treatment capacity.

### **Feedback from Parish Councils**

- 3.24 As stated in paragraph 1.11 above, Parish Councils were invited to a consultation forum / workshop on 21 March 2017, at which a number of issues and options were discussed. Representatives from 8 Parish Councils attended (Aughton, Bickerstaffe, Burscough, Downholland, Halsall, Lathom, Newburgh and Up Holland). Online representations were made by 7 Parish Councils (Aughton, Burscough, Dalton, Halsall, Lathom, Scarisbrick, Up Holland), meaning that a total of 10 Parish Councils engaged with the Issues and Options consultation.
- 3.25 For the Vision (consultation question 7), only two comments were made. Halsall Parish Council (HPC) advised that the Vision should emphasise rural employment, affordable accommodation for the elderly, and 1-2 bed ‘first time’ homes. Up Holland Parish Council (UPC) considered there was too much emphasis on housing, and not enough on rural land uses and the environment.
- 3.26 In terms of the Objectives (question 8), two comments were made: HPC considered the Objectives needed more detail as to how they would be achieved and address specific issues. UPC stated the titles were reasonable, but definitions were open to interpretation, in particular ‘sustainable development’, in which the economic aspect often appeared to outweigh the social and environmental aspects in decision-making.

- 3.27 For question 9 (amounts of development), four Parish Councils (PCs) responded. UPC and Burscough PC chose Option A: 200 houses / 2ha employment land. BPC's view was that the Borough should take the minimum amount of development it is allowed to, referring to 2015 Government Select Committee material on the interpretation of the term 'sustainable development' (see also 3.26 above). Lathom PC's choice was similar to Option B: 300 houses / 3-4ha employment land. HPC chose Option C: 400 houses / 4ha employment land, in order to respond to housing and employment land needs.
- 3.28 For the plan period (question 10), five PCs responded, four choosing 2037 and one choosing 2050. The reasons for a shorter plan period were that this would lessen the threat of Green Belt release, would be more realistic and provide more flexibility in an ever-changing environment, and that 2050 was too far in the future to plan for. The reason for choosing the longer period was to give stability.
- 3.29 Two PCs commented on the subdivision of West Lancashire into spatial areas (question 11). HPC agreed with the proposed subdivision. UPC considered that it did not reflect the current and historical pattern of Up Holland in relation to Skelmersdale, and that it was not understood why the two settlements should be considered as one.
- 3.30 There were three comments on the scenarios for the distribution of development (question 12). HPC and UPC preferred Scenario 1: Reflecting existing development patterns. UPC added that there should be minimal new development in Up Holland. Burscough PC's choice was Scenario 4: Skelmersdale focus, along with development on the south side of Ormskirk, with links to Merseyside and the motorway network.
- 3.31 For question 13 (location of new development in relation to existing), HPC and UPC chose Option 1: accommodating new development within existing settlements. Dalton PC did not choose an option, but advised that safeguarded land should remain safeguarded in the next Local Plan. At the PC Forum, the general consensus was that new places require entirely new infrastructure so it is better to keep existing settlements vibrant and sustainable by allowing some new development. However, development should be small scale and an incremental approach would be better.
- 3.32 In terms of infrastructure deficiencies and strengths, the comments from the PC Forum meeting were as follows:
- Rural public transportation – bus services have been withdrawn, and the future is looking bleak. There is a need for a sustainable rural transportation system that works for different age groups. As the population ages, dependency upon public transport increases;
  - The road network is under stress; the condition of roads is very poor in places, not being designed for the size of vehicles using them;
  - Rail does not serve all areas; the Up Holland line is single track and hourly. A rail link to Skelmersdale will improve matters;
  - Bickerstaffe is one of the 3% of areas that does not have broadband access.
- 3.33 Individual Parish Council comments made online are summarised as follows:



- BPC: Concerns about surface water and sewer flooding;
- HPC: Concerns about rural (moss) roads; bus services (e.g. Shirdley Hill now has none); drainage provision, leading to localised sewage flooding;
- UPC: rail services for Up Holland are poor; investment is needed in environmental corridors, walkways and cycleways.

## Feedback from Public Workshops

### Infrastructure

- 3.34 The following infrastructure-related issues were raised consistently Borough-wide:
- The condition, capacity, and use of the road network – people referred to pot-holes, crumbling or sinking roads, traffic congestion at certain points or times of day, and large vehicles on unsuitable rural lanes or passing through settlements;
  - Public transport - a lack of, or cuts to, bus services, especially in rural areas; lack of, or limited availability of, evening bus services; limited availability of rail services, some areas having no rail access, others having infrequent services;
  - Parking – in town or village centres, or at stations;
  - Retail provision – people needed to, or tended to, visit neighbouring authorities for certain types of retail.
- 3.35 Area-specific infrastructure issues may be summarised as follows:
- Burscough – drainage and sewerage capacity; traffic issues (A59 / A5209 through Burscough, and on moss roads);
  - Eastern Parishes – traffic on rural roads, including A5209; limited parking at Parbold and Appley Bridge stations;
  - Northern Parishes – traffic congestion through Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, unsuitable vehicles (HGVs) on rural roads; water pressure;
  - Ormskirk – parking issues, relating to local and University traffic; traffic congestion in and around the Town Centre;
  - Skelmersdale – lack of sports and leisure facilities; poor evening / night-time economy; quality of education provision, e.g. no A-levels offered at college, quality of secondary schools.

### Location of new development

- 3.36 The matter of where, in general, new development should be located in relation to what already exists, and the related matter of Green Belt release, were discussed at each workshop. The following points were made:
- On the whole, people were not supportive of significant amounts of new development on large sites, but would accept small-scale sites on the edges of settlements, provided it was meeting a local need, e.g. affordable / old persons / 'downsizer' / first-time buyer properties, and not a wider need;
  - Prime agricultural land should be protected from development;

- Green Belt land should only be used as a last resort;
- Infrastructure must be provided in advance of new development.

## 4. Representations on Economic Policy Options

4.1 This chapter summarises the representations made relating to the seven questions on Economic Policy Options, which covered the following:

- Providing new employment land
- Policy for existing employment areas
- The rural economy
- The network and hierarchy of town, village and local centres
- Ensuring healthy town, village and local centres
- Sites for town centre uses
- Any other economic policy issues

4.2 In addition, relevant responses were received in relation to the 'catch-all' question 37: *Do you have any general comments to make on the Issues and Options consultation?*

### Feedback from Online Surveys / Written Representations

4.3 A total of 56 responses were received to one or more of the Economic Policy Options questions (including 4 responses under the general question 37) from members of the public and other stakeholders via the online surveys and paper representation forms.

#### **15. Land for employment uses**

*Which policy option or options for how we should allocate land for employment sites do you think is the most appropriate for West Lancashire?*

1. *Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing.*
2. *Allocate sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses.*
3. *Allocate all new sites for the range of business class uses.*
4. *Increase town centre office sites.*

*Why? Is there an alternative option?*

4.4 34 responses were received in relation to question 15; these included 4 comments from Parish Councils, dealt with separately under the Feedback from Parish Councils section below<sup>7</sup>.

4.5 These options are not mutually exclusive and more than one approach could be taken forward in combination in the emerging Local Plan. 11 respondents considered that a combination of options would be required in the emerging Local Plan to enable the allocation of an appropriate employment land portfolio. Option 1 (5 responses) was the most popular of the responses to any single option, followed by Option 2 (4 responses) with Options 3 and 4 registering just one favourable response each. One respondent

<sup>7</sup> This is the case for all questions in this section, and also in Chapters 3 and 5 of this Feedback Report.

expressed the view that none of the options were suitable and put forward an individual site for employment uses instead.

4.6 Other comments made in relation to question 15 can be summarised as follows:

- Local businesses should be supported;
- Light industries should be retained in villages;
- More skilled employment is needed in the Borough;
- In connection with Edge Hill University, Ormskirk would be a good location for specialist employment uses;
- There are already a number of vacant warehouses in Skelmersdale and poor transport for the local workforce;
- Strategic warehousing should be located more widely than the M58 corridor / Skelmersdale;
- The view of traditional 'employment' jobs has changed and there is a growing job market around sport that needs to be considered.

#### **16. Existing Employment Areas**

*What kind of protection do you think the Local Plan should give existing Employment Areas? Why? Is there an alternative option?*

1. *Continue with the existing Local Plan policy approach.*
2. *Protect all existing employment areas for business class uses.*
3. *Designate selected employment areas for non-business class uses.*
4. *Do not protect employment areas for business class uses.*

4.7 21 responses were received to this question. 15 responses could be directly related to the 4 options, with other comments also being of relevance.

4.8 Option 1 (9 responses) was by far the most popular with a smaller amount of support in relation to Options 2 (3 responses), 3 (2 responses) and 4 (1 response) respectively. The support for Option 4 was under circumstances where there would be no demand for an employment site. Other comments made in relation to question 16 are as follows:

- There should be a more vigorous consideration of viability than at present before alternative, non-employment uses should be allowed on employment sites;
- Sites that no longer meet business needs should be considered for alternative development;
- Jobs are being created in sports. Some protection of employment sites is required but it should depend upon employment and training opportunities created;
- Other (non-business class) uses need to be accommodated in employment areas, potentially in combination with extending those areas;
- Some employment uses are “bad neighbours” due to noise, pollution or traffic and are not suitable to be in close proximity to housing.

**17. The Rural Economy**

*What do you think about the policy options for supporting the rural economy? Is there an alternative option?*

1. *Continue with the existing Local Plan policy.*
2. *Increased development in rural areas.*
3. *A tourism and visitor economy policy.*

4.9 27 responses were received in relation to question 17. Options 1 and 2 are mutually exclusive, but Option 3 could be combined with either of those approaches. There was a relatively even distribution of preferences: Option 3 was the most popular (7 responses) with Options 1 and 2 both receiving support from 5 respondents. A further two responses advocated a combined approach of Options 1 and 3.

4.10 Other relevant comments in relation to question 17 are as follows:

- There is a need to support small work units and farm enterprises;
- Increased rural development would be more likely to result in people being able to live where they were brought up;
- Rural areas require increased packing and distribution businesses; however, good highway access would be required;
- An approach based upon tourism and the visitor economy would be more sustainable over the medium to long term compared the currently unsustainable practices of agricultural drainage and ploughing;
- In connection with tourism, the Borough has unique potential in terms of wildlife sites, waterways, the Tawd Valley and the Cloughs of Skelmersdale;
- Concern over the failure to deliver business development in rural areas as part of mixed use schemes including housing.

**18. Network and Hierarchy of Centres**

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

4.11 There being only one 'Option' under this question, only 10 responses were received. There was most support for the review of the hierarchy. Specific comments in relation to the network and hierarchy of centres were:

- The hierarchy should be flexible enough to take into account that some areas, e.g. Skelmersdale, need significant increases of activities associated with town centres;
- Support for the continued growth of centres within the hierarchy;
- Review the hierarchy as small village centres are failing;
- Some respondents confused centre hierarchies with settlement hierarchies.

**19. Ensuring Healthy Town, Village and Local Centres**

*Do you support any of the options for Ensuring Healthy Town, Village and Local Centres:*

- 1. Review town centre, village and local centre boundaries.*
- 2. Review Primary Shopping Area boundaries.*
- 3. Review the policy approach to determining appropriate uses in town centres.*

*If so, why? Is there an alternative option?*

4.12 22 responses were received in relation to question 19. The three Options are not mutually exclusive and could be combined. There was greatest support for Option 3 (6 positive responses) followed by Option 1 (5 responses). Whilst Option 2 received just one response, 5 respondents advocated support for a mix of options which included option 2. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was broad support for the review of centre boundaries, Primary Shopping Area boundaries and the policy approach for uses in town centres.

4.13 Other comments received can be summarised as follows:

- A Primary Shopping Area should be identified for Skelmersdale and the site recently granted planning permission for town centre uses should be included within it.
- Conversely, the Concourse Shopping Centre is vulnerable and in need of protection and the site granted planning permission for town centre uses outside the Concourse should be excluded from being within the town centre boundary.
- Centres are changing due to changing shopping and leisure habits and therefore policy needs to be flexible. There has been a loss of retail and growth of cafes, bars and charity shops, particularly in Ormskirk town centre.
- The existing policy to retain a minimum percentage of A1 (retail) uses is not supported.
- There is support for mixed and diverse town centres beyond Primary Shopping Areas; retail should be allowed to change to cafes, bars etc. Housing should be allowed in large village centres.
- The policy option to consider appropriate uses in town centres could be used to contribute towards healthy town centres and tackle health indicators associated with obesity and alcohol consumption.

**20. Sites for Town Centre Uses**

*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? The Options are:*

1. *Adopted Local Plan approach – Skelmersdale concentration.*
2. *Allocate sites 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.*

4.14 Of the 21 responses received on question 20, 18 (86%) could be directly related to the 4 Options. The Options are not mutually exclusive; however the degree of concentration under Option 1 would affect emphasis upon Options 2 and 4. There was clear support for Option 1 (11 positive responses), with the only other support for a single Option being Option 4 (1 response). However, 6 responses advocated a mix of options including the selection of Option 2 (Ormskirk) and Option 4 (north of the Borough). There was virtually no support for option 3.

4.15 Other comments received can be summarised as follows:

- There has been substantial leakage of comparison goods expenditure from the Borough. The case for retail development and other town centre uses in Skelmersdale remains clear.
- Make Skelmersdale town centre the priority for investment.
- Develop Ormskirk as a market town with a distinctive mix of smaller shops and offices.
- Out of centre retail parks are not a sustainable solution and the Borough does not need more of them.

**21. Other Economic Policy Issues**

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

4.16 31 responses were received to this question, of which several were reallocated, being more pertinent to questions 15-20. The remainder can be summarised as follows:

- The balance between jobs and new homes is critical;
- Invest in small and medium sized enterprises to prevent settlements becoming dormitories;
- Existing light industrial zones such as Pimbo should be given priority in attracting new and varied businesses including hi-tech;
- Site requirements to meet expansion needs of a particular business were outlined;

- There is a need to attract and create a more highly skilled workforce and attract better quality jobs. There should be partnership working with educational establishments creating more work placements;
  - Consider deprivation statistics when preparing Preferred Options. Economic growth is a means of addressing persistent unemployment and income deprivation. Access to employment, education and training should be a key consideration;
  - A comprehensive masterplan is needed for Skelmersdale town centre. This should include the Concourse shopping centre;
  - The economic value of the Borough's natural capital needs to be addressed;
  - Waterways create a sense of place. A linear park along the River Tawd should positively impact on the visitor economy;
  - There was no mention of the potential impact of flooding on the area's agricultural and horticultural economy in the Economy Paper. This should tie with the Environment Paper where it is considered;
  - The threat of flooding to the rural economy has not been identified. It is important to understand how agriculture integrates into the wider economies of the Borough and Lancashire.
- 4.17 10 relevant responses were received in relation to the 'catch-all' question 37, of which six were reallocated and considered under questions 15-20. Other comments were:
- Shale gas should be encouraged;
  - A vital opportunity to reconfigure and improve out of date industrial estates was missed by the Adopted Local Plan;
  - Existing employment sites could be reconfigured to provide housing and boost the local economy.
- 4.18 In addition, a small number of potential economic development sites were put forward.

### **Feedback from West Lancashire Borough Council Members**

- 4.19 The Members' workshop considered 5 questions from the Economy Policy Options Paper (nos. 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20). In relation to question 15, the allocation of land for employment purposes, views expressed can be summarised as follows:
- The M58 corridor and Skelmersdale was seen as a good development opportunity given access to wider road networks. However, there were concerns that warehousing would provide lower quality jobs at lower job densities.
  - Estates at Burscough were also viewed as suitable employment locations but accessibility needed to be improved.
  - Links with Edge Hill University and other business and educational providers needed to be improved to develop skills and employment opportunities. Students needed to be retained through the creation of jobs locally.
  - Business start-ups / incubator units would be desirable for Ormskirk and rural areas.



- There were conflicting views about whether a logistics opportunity to transfer agricultural produce from smaller to larger vehicle would be feasible.
- 4.20 In relation to question 16, existing employment areas, views expressed were that there could be scope for the expansion of, or creation of, another Skelmersdale Investment Centre type development but other services would be required to go alongside this type of out of centre development. The need to address the poor design of some estates in Skelmersdale e.g. Gillibrands East and West was also raised.
- 4.21 Under Question 17 (rural economy), discussions were that low cost offices could be developed and some farm buildings had been successfully converted to business use.
- 4.22 Question 19, ensuring healthy town, village and local centres, discussions were that the current policy restricting uses along town centre frontages should be relaxed but that in so doing inactive frontages should be avoided.
- 4.23 In relation to question 20, sites for town centre uses, views were that the night time economy needed to be developed, particularly at Skelmersdale. Additional discussions were that Burscough and the Northern Parishes do not have the infrastructure to accommodate additional retail development and that it would be desirable to get retail back into Ormskirk centre.

#### **Feedback from Parish Councils**

- 4.24 The Parish Council Workshop considered 3 questions from the Economy Policy Options Paper (questions 15, 16 and 19).
- 4.25 Feedback in relation to question 15 (the allocation of land for employment purposes), indicated that Skelmersdale was a suitable location for logistics uses and that there was no purpose in locating such uses in areas with poor links to the strategic road network. In relation to other specialist uses, incubator units were considered to be desirable.
- 4.26 Views in relation to question 16 (existing employment areas), were that allowing residential development on business sites (especially in villages) was not good practice as it was important to retain local business and jobs. Skelmersdale Investment Centre was viewed as a good facility with potential for expansion.
- 4.27 Question 19 feedback, particularly in relation to the uses allowed in town centres, was that allowing change of ‘town centre’ uses to residential would result in a loss for the wider community. However, changes of use from residential to commercial should be supported in principle. It is questionable whether vacant units in Ormskirk town centre will be able to attract new retail businesses. Given the growth in internet shopping there may be less need of ‘bricks and mortar’ retail.
- 4.28 Written responses were also received from four Parish Councils in relation to the Local Plan Issues and Options public consultation. Comments in relation to question 15, the allocation of land for employment purposes, can be summarised as follows.

- Preferences were expressed for Options 1 (strategic distribution and warehousing), 2 (geographical clusters of specialist uses) and 3 (allocate for the range of B class uses). The distribution of sites by the adopted Local Plan was also considered suitable, provided account could also be taken of rural and tourism opportunities;
  - A flexible policy approach is needed given uncertainty in relation to future business requirements but change of use from business to housing should not be allowed.
  - Due to the design and size of town centres future expansion is an issue;
- 4.29 Written responses from Parish Councils in relation to question 16 (existing employment areas) expressed a single preference for the continuation of the existing Local Plan approach (Option 1). In addition, the need for out of town non-industry is recognised provided adequate provision can be made for pedestrians.
- 4.30 Question 17 (the rural economy) generated support for continuing existing Local Plan policy (Option 1). The need to also support the tourist and visitor economy was also recognised. Additionally, one Parish advocated a mixed approach which would include increasing development in rural areas.
- 4.31 Parish responses in relation to the hierarchy of centres (question 18) indicated that Up Holland should remain a village centre and separate from Skelmersdale, and that additional village centres should be considered for inclusion.
- 4.32 In relation to healthy centres (question 19) the view expressed was that the policy approach to determining appropriate uses in town centres should be reviewed as should the Primary Shopping Area in Burscough (Options 3 and 2 respectively).
- 4.33 Question 20 (sites for town centre uses) generated most support for a concentration upon Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. A non-food retail warehouse park was viewed as beneficial by one parish as this would increase non-food expenditure retention for the Borough. Conversely, an opposing view was that no further sites were required.
- 4.34 Question 21 (general comments) generated a few responses from Parish Councils. It was noted:
- The Local Plan does not mention fracking which needed to be robustly resisted;
  - An acceptable funding regime was needed for the retention of threatened pumping stations which have a direct impact on drainage of agricultural land;
  - Negative impacts from surface water flooding upon the economy and transport infrastructure need to be addressed.

### **Feedback from Public Workshops**

- 4.35 At the six public workshops, several bespoke questions were used to generate discussion in relation to the Economy Policy Options; these relate to questions 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20. The open nature of discussions at these workshops also meant that additional general observations were made which are summarised below.

- 4.36 The following comments were made in relation to question 15, the allocation of land for employment development:
- There is a need to link housing to employment land so that people can work locally;
  - Skelmersdale and the M58 corridor have good transport links and are appropriate locations for large warehousing. More land needs to be allocated for these uses. The proposed rail link and station at Skelmersdale should include a freight terminal;
  - However, a converse view was that there was enough warehousing in the area, with a number of empty premises that should be adapted / sub-divided and that new warehouses in connection with Liverpool 2 were likely to be required further afield;
  - Warehousing would not be suitable in the rural Western Parishes;
  - Warehousing does not employ many people, and has little job progression;
  - There was a need for more business start-up units and smaller commercial units;
  - More interaction between Edge Hill University and businesses was needed;
  - There needed to be a range of businesses and more high tech jobs, with higher skills, particularly at Skelmersdale. There are few new premises;
  - The Council should consider forming a Development Company and developing a site for specialist business uses;
  - Sites for employment uses in the Northern Parishes need to be well-located in relation to the road network. There are current sites that are not well-located.
- 4.37 In terms of existing employment areas (question 16) the view was expressed that industrial estates need upgrading and modernising.
- 4.38 Question 17, the rural economy, generated the following comments:
- There needs to be more units provided in rural areas and more for rent;
  - There were concerns that mixed use residential / housing sites in rural areas had not come forward for business development (due to perceptions of viability);
  - Existing rural businesses, particularly SMEs, should be retained and encouraged.
- 4.39 In addition, other comments were made in relation to the Stimulating Economic Growth section of the Economy Issues and Options Paper as follows:
- More training opportunities were required to develop skills and education that can then retain local people;
  - Training and apprenticeships were required for the older workforce.
- 4.40 Ensuring healthy town, village and local centres (question 19) generated the following comments:
- The market should be allowed to dictate town centre uses;
  - The existing policy approach for Burscough town centre is appropriate;

- The general view was that village centres provided a useful function and should have commercial uses protected. Some had issues in terms of function and appearance e.g. Town Green Lane and Moss Green Lane. Local Centres in the Northern Parishes were considered to be losing services and Banks was in need of improvement;
- It was evident that each of the Borough's town centres had different issues, strengths and weaknesses e.g. it was suggested that Ormskirk needed a brand based upon being a tourist town with visitor attractions.

4.41 The following views were expressed in relation to question 20 (sites for town centre uses):

- Leakage of expenditure from the Borough to other centres must be accepted. Town centres have also been impacted by online shopping, parking restrictions, etc;
- New development should be focussed on Skelmersdale and greater diversity of uses are required, extending use into the evening;
- Conversely, town centre development should be spread around the Borough;
- However, it was noted that no redevelopment sites existed in Ormskirk and earlier developments had not improved pedestrian linkages;
- There was no need for more out of centre retail parks;
- The elderly have issues in terms of access to shops and services e.g. supermarkets;
- Main food shopping in the northern Parishes is undertaken outside the Borough but there are no sites for further retail development in Tarleton.

## 5. Representations on Environmental Policy Options

5.1 This chapter summarises the representations made on the questions relating to the Environmental Policy Options. The Environment Policy Options questions covered the following matters:

- The Local Nature Conservation Site designation
- Provision of renewable energy
- Sustainable design and construction in new development
- Creation of sustainable and healthy places for all
- Other environmental policy issues

### Feedback from Online Surveys / Written Representations

#### **22. Local Nature Conservation Sites**

*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?*

- *Option 1: Continue the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation into the next Local Plan*
- *Option 2: Remove the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation from the Local Plan and incorporate these sites within the Lancashire Ecological Network*

5.2 A total of 22 responses were received to this question from members of the public and other stakeholders. 9 of those who commented supported Option 1, whilst 7 expressed a preference for the alternative, Option 2.

5.3 Most of those who preferred Option 1 expressed concern that removal of this layer of sites would result in less protection for areas of nature conservation value in West Lancashire. One respondent expressed a wish for more Local Nature Conservation sites to be designated across the Borough.

5.4 Those who preferred Option 2 made the following points:

- Option 2 is a more realistic and sustainable way of protecting sites of local nature importance given the diminished resources of local authorities, natural environment charities and Natural England.
- This Option would allow concentration of effort on the development and maintenance of a robust and evidence-based Ecological Network based on regularly updated knowledge.
- This approach would also be more future-focussed and may offer a more flexible approach to the climatic, social and economic pressures and changes that will occur in the future.

- This Option offers an opportunity to promote a more holistic, joined-up way of protecting the environment which treats such sites as ‘links’ and would provide better connectivity for wildlife across the Borough.
  - Any successive policy related to the Ecological Network should be framed so as to give an effective and robust level of environmental protection across the Borough.
  - Further development could increase the chances of negative impacts on the Borough's Ecological Network and its functionality. In order to minimise such risks, Development Management policies should be provided which provide adequate protection for Ecological Networks, as well as for the whole hierarchy of designated wildlife sites and habitats and species of principal importance.
- 5.5 One respondent highlighted that the public accessibility and enjoyment value of Borough level sites could more appropriately be considered as part of West Lancashire’s Green Infrastructure Strategy and potentially be addressed within the Local Plan through a Green Infrastructure policy.

### **23. Provision of Renewable Energy**

*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?*

- *Option 1: Designation of specific areas where the generation of wind energy, solar farms and other renewable energy technologies may be appropriate.*
- *Option 2: Consideration of applications for renewable energy infrastructure on a case-by-case basis.*

- 5.6 Of the 33 respondents who commented on this section, 9 supported Option 1, 5 supported Option 2, and one supported a hybrid of the two whereby areas are designated for renewable energy, but outside these areas renewable energy installations are considered on a case by case basis.
- 5.7 Those who supported Option 1 made the following points:
- Four expressed a preference for designating sites for solar farms based on the opinion that these have less of a visual and noise impact than wind turbines and that the land can still be used for grazing and/or other purposes;
  - Another supported shale gas extraction;
  - Option 1 was seen as the only option which would be certain to deliver renewable energy infrastructure through the planning process;
  - Another suggested that Option 1 would have the added advantage of providing clarity about the optimum siting for renewable energy sources.
  - Two saw Option 1 as potentially the most appropriate way of assessing the impact of providing renewable energy infrastructure upon wildlife and wildlife sites.

- There was a desire to see local communities involved in some way in such schemes and also to see an increased emphasis on increasing energy efficiency and eliminating wastefulness overall.
- 5.8 Those supporting Option 2 did so for a variety of reasons:
- Considering applications on a case-by-case basis would be the most effective in allowing local residents to have their say and assessing the individual impact of each technology.
  - New technologies may appear in the future which may not be appropriate for previously designated sites.
  - Two other respondents who felt strongly that much more should be done to encourage solar panels and wind turbines in existing industrial areas – particularly on large warehouses where large expanses of solar panels could be installed.
- 5.9 One respondent drew attention to a recent research report produced by Natural England entitled ‘Evidence review of the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology’ (NEER012). This early attempt to assess the impact of solar farms upon sensitive habitats and species highlights the need for further research into the potential interactions between wildlife and solar arrays.
- 5.10 More generally, two respondents raised the potential of harnessing tidal energy, highlighting the reliability of such a source. Another recommended consideration of the Lancashire Climate Change Strategy 2009-2027 which sets out the long-term vision for the whole county in relation to climate change adaptation.

#### **24. Sustainable Design and Construction in new development**

*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?*

- *Option 1: Require specific sustainable design and construction features or measures to be incorporated into new developments.*
- *Option 2: Do not require any specific sustainable design and construction features or measures to be required through planning policy.*
- *Option 3: Require applicants wishing to develop to contribute financially to a Community Energy Fund, managed by the Council which could be used to make other, existing properties more sustainable or to deliver renewable energy developments elsewhere.*

- 5.11 In all, 24 comments were received in relation to this question.
- 5.12 5 respondents favoured a mixture of Options 1 and 3, as this offered the opportunity to both influence new development and potentially improve existing stock through the suggested Community Energy Fund. One individual considered that Option 3 alone

- would not be acceptable since a financial contribution “should not be the 'easy option' for the developer to avoid energy saving being incorporated in the design”.
- 5.13 6 favoured Option 1, supporting the principle that developers should be encouraged to build more sustainably and incorporate more renewable energy features and energy saving measures as standard. One respondent advocated the use of district energy schemes and renewable energy infrastructure (e.g. ground source heat pumps and air source heat pumps) particularly on larger development sites. One comment highlights the opportunities this option may present for significant restoration of biodiversity and climate change mitigation. Several expressed preferences for different forms of renewable energy, including solar roof tiles and solar panels.
- 5.14 5 supported Option 2, expressing concern that Option 1 could place unacceptable burdens on developers which may ultimately make the development unviable. One described such a policy as a “development tax”; another stated that such issues were sufficiently covered under Buildings Regulations changes. Concerns were also raised that it may not be appropriate to install sustainable design and construction features or measures on every site.
- 5.15 Two comments expressed concern about Option 3. One questioned the equity of a policy where those who contributed to such a fund did not benefit. The other suggested that the fund should recognise the fundamental variances in terms of housing market conditions and viability across the Borough. It was also felt that a financial obligation such as this should only be progressed in tandem with a review of the CIL Charging Schedule and that there should be a discretionary policy so that the planning benefits of any such obligations could be balanced against other planning benefits, e.g. the preservation or enhancement of heritage assets.

### **25. Creation of sustainable and healthy places**

*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 to create healthy and accessible environments for all? Which ones; why?*

- *Option 1: Require developments over a certain size to incorporate features that would encourage an active lifestyle for local residents and visitors.*
- *Option 2: Require developments over a certain size to include provision for direct connections from development into the wider cycling and walking infrastructure.*
- *Option 3: Require residential developments over a certain size to incorporate public open space and amenity green space.*

- 5.16 16 responses were received to this question:
- One respondent favoured Option 1;
  - 3 favoured Option 2, one stating the importance of creating connectivity between settlements in order to encourage greater use of means of transport other than the



car, which would produce multiple benefits for health and the environment. This individual also felt that the concept of the creation of Linear Parks across the Borough should be core to the Local Plan.

- One respondent supported Option 3, specifically mentioning the provision of safe and secure children’s play areas.
- 9 supported all three options, with one highlighting the fact that West Lancashire faces a number of challenges in relation to health and wellbeing and experiences significant inequalities.
- One respondent preferred a combination of Options 1 and 2;
- One preferred a combination of Options 2 and 3.
- One individual observed that each option has its pros and cons while another stated the importance of considering options available in relation to sustainable and ‘healthy’ design and layout on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the capacity of the site to accommodate features.

5.17 A number of issues surrounding the third option were raised, including the importance of ensuring any open / green space is designed and maintained in a way that also protects, maintains, enhances, expands and links the district's identified Ecological Networks. A call was made for ecological assessments of all significant developments, requiring designers to have regard to, and preferably retain, existing habitat features where practicable, and demonstrate how the proposal would enhance biodiversity and ensure links to the Ecological Network. Open space features should be an integral part of any development scheme and not “tucked away in a forgotten corner to be underutilised or vandalised”. A mix of careful planting would help to soften built environment and green space. One respondent suggested that this option should make provision to consider off-site provision in lieu of on-site provision.

5.18 Additional observations included:

- The flat nature of the West Lancashire landscape makes it ideal for cycling.
- Support of efforts to encourage increased activity levels due to the high levels of obesity in the North West region.
- A suggestion that more could be done to facilitate walking in the Borough – raising specifically the lack of pavements in some areas which discourages pedestrians.
- Support for housing near to employment sites which would provide people with the opportunity to walk or cycle to work, as well as for more safe routes which will encourage more children to walk to school. A further response recommended that community and road safety be considered, as the perception and fear of crime can discourage active travel and the use of green facilities for physical activity.

**26. Are there any other environmental policy issues that should also be considered? If so, what are they?**

*This question requested further comments on any other environmental policy issues that should also be considered. This prompted a range of responses which also typically varied in scope and scale.*

5.19 Most comments received under this question related to more macro-scale issues which extend beyond the scope of a Local Plan, to sub-national or national level, but nonetheless can be influenced by actions at local level:

- Air quality and its impact upon human health which has recently risen up the political agenda.
- One individual suggested that all developments should be encouraged to minimise emissions produced in their construction and use and also by associated transport movements.
- Another expressed concern about the widespread use of pesticides and herbicides; in particular neonicotinoids which research suggests can have a particularly negative impact upon pollinating insects, for example bees.

5.20 One respondent provided detailed comments and submitted evidence in relation to flooding, specifically the impact of proposed closure of pumping stations in the Alt-Crossens catchment areas. The written evidence highlighted the impact of flooding upon infrastructure (such as road and rail) and also upon the wider environment (including on the behaviour and survival of certain species). The conclusion of the evidence submitted, in the view of the respondent, was that both flood resistance and resilience measures should be promoted as part of the planning process.

5.21 Although it is beyond the scope of the Local Plan, one response raised concern about the environmental impact of ‘fracking’ on local wildlife, water supply and general amenity in the Borough.

5.22 As outlined above, some comments in this section related to more local level issues which could be addressed through smaller scale actions. These included encouraging residents to cultivate gardens in such a way as to create wildlife habitats and to use rainwater for domestic purposes wherever possible, to create incentives for developers to include landscaping that encourages pollinating insects, or for agricultural businesses in the Northern Parishes to look into how green waste products may generate energy through an anaerobic digester.

**Feedback from West Lancashire Borough Council Members**

- 5.23 The value of biodiversity was discussed and recognised by Members. Beyond its intrinsic value, it was highlighted how important biodiversity is to tourism, particularly for popular sites such as Martin Mere.
- 5.24 However, some Members highlighted that some rural areas were like ‘barren landscapes’ in terms of nature and biodiversity, as in a number of cases intensive agriculture is harming wildlife.
- 5.25 Some Members specifically supported the Ecological Network approach to nature conservation as the way forward in terms of future provision for wildlife. All Members supported the suggestion that development could present an opportunity to increase biodiversity across the Borough. Some Members suggested that Green Infrastructure should be built around housing, improving connectivity between places; all Members specifically agreed that new development should link into the proposed and developing linear parks.
- 5.26 All Members recognised hedges and trees as important features and habitats within West Lancashire, and it was suggested these should take the place of walls in terms of boundary treatments where possible. Some Members supported the expansion of tree planting, suggesting the designation of sites for tree planting in the future. The value of tree planting for the absorption of surface water run-off and prevention of flooding in general was highlighted by some Members, as was the avoidance of excessive hardstanding within the garden areas and frontages of houses. In terms of sustainable design and construction, the re-use of grey water was raised as an issue which should be provided in new development.
- 5.27 Many Members articulated strongly that the Borough has a responsibility to deliver on its commitment with regards to renewable energy, with one even suggesting that the Borough should aim towards becoming self-sustaining. These same Members supported the idea that new housing should be warm and cheap to heat and suggested that renewable energy infrastructure should be located in the best / most appropriate places and also smaller scale infrastructure (e.g. solar panels) should be provided as part of new development. This aspect was also raised by other Members who supported the installation of solar panels on the roofs of factories as an ideal way of boosting renewable energy supply. Some Members indicated that they felt wind turbines were inappropriate in West Lancashire due to their visual impact upon the Green Belt.
- 5.28 All Members expressed the opinion that flood resilience is important within West Lancashire and that homes in particular need to be safe. Some Members suggested that it may be possible to build within Flood Zones, provided precautions were taken in terms of construction methods – for example potentially the use of ‘raft’ foundations. However, it was recognised that the engineering costs of designing out flooding could be significant.

- 5.29 Some Members stated that the Council should avoid homogenous development and encourage variety. It was suggested that perhaps some ‘quirky’ features which distinguish places and create a sense of distinct place could be embraced. This has been the case across the Borough in the past.

### **Feedback from Parish Councils**

- 5.30 Comments from the Parish Council Forum on environmental issues were based around flood risk, including the conflict and tension that exists in relation to development in Flood Zones. Concern was expressed that development should not take place in areas subject to a higher risk of flooding, but it was also recognised that without any development in Flood Zones 2 or 3, villages in the Borough may well suffer without any new build. A lack of new families in the area could result in villages ‘dying’, schools closing, etc.
- 5.31 Parish Councillors were keen to emphasise that flooding incidences cannot only be attributed to coastal and fluvial flooding, but are also due to drainage issues, surface water and problems with United Utilities’ (UU) infrastructure. Concern was expressed at the lack of existing procedure to rectify this. There was particular concern about the threat posed by pumps being turned off by the Environment Agency in the Alt-Crossens river catchment area and the impact this may have on future business investment decisions in the affected area.
- 5.32 Written comments on the Environmental Policy Options Paper were received from three Parish Councils.
- 5.33 In relation to local nature sites, two supported the continuation of the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation (Option 1) while the remaining one supported the removal of this designation and the incorporation of these sites within the Environmental Network (Option 2).
- 5.34 In relation to renewable energy generation, two Parish Councils supported the designation of specific areas for renewable energy infrastructure (Option 1) while one supported a combination of the two proposed options.
- 5.35 With regards to sustainable design and construction features or measures, two Parish Council responses favoured a combination of Option 1 and 3 which would see both the incorporation of sustainable design and construction features or measures on some sites with an additional policy requiring a contribution towards a central fund for sustainable construction and design. The other response favoured solely Option 3. An additional comment came from one Parish Council who felt that smaller developments should also be required to make some contribution towards features which would encourage an active lifestyle.

### Feedback from Public Workshops

- 5.36 The value of local nature sites was made clear at most of the public consultation workshops. The importance of large, designated sites of the Ribble Estuary and Martin Mere to nature and tourism was recognised by many, however local people also keenly highlighted a variety of smaller sites which they valued for a number of reasons. Some examples were Mere Sands Wood in Burscough and Beacon Park near Skelmersdale. These sites were valued for their own sake – for nature value – but also for their associated recreational value. For this reason, a number of people supported improved access to these and other sites. In the Northern Parishes the new path across Ribble Marshes was praised for opening up this area to visitors and local people alike. People in Skelmersdale in particular called for improved access for all to areas of the Tawd Valley.
- 5.37 Associated with this desire for improved access to green areas was a wish to see better use of underused or waste land for the benefit of local people – e.g. as allotments.
- 5.38 In relation to improving nature value in West Lancashire, concern was raised across a number of workshops about the negative impact of farming on biodiversity. Specific issues included the removal of hedgerows which provide valuable wildlife habitats. Most agreed that hedgerows should be given more protection.
- 5.39 A number of people appreciated the importance of wildlife corridors to species movement and survival. Some saw the potential of linking this concept to that of the proposed and developing linear parks across the Borough. The concept was recognised by many of those attending the workshops and viewed as having future potential. Some saw the provision of linear parks and as a means by which the impact of future development could be mitigated.
- 5.40 A clear message through many workshops was that consideration of the environment when providing new development is vitally important. There was a call for improvement of the environment when surrounding sites are developed, rather than it being forgotten or pushed to the bottom of a list of priorities. There was a consensus across most events that measures supporting biodiversity and improved habitats for wildlife should be built into new developments. These could include features such as bat bricks and bird nesting boxes or simply the retention of existing habitats or natural features such as groups of trees, ponds and hedges.
- 5.41 There was a general consensus that renewable energy was a positive means of supplying our energy needs. However there was a divide over which forms of renewable energy generation would be most effective and acceptable and the scale of the provision and concentration of such infrastructure. Some gave their support to any form of renewable energy, believing more should be done to encourage this ‘clean’ form of energy generation. This belief was often based upon the attitude that renewable energy infrastructure is at least reversible (even turbines), unlike other forms of generation such as nuclear. There was wider support for the inclusion of

- turbines in more industrial areas. Several people who attended the Skelmersdale workshop claimed that they had become accustomed to the 'Walker's' turbine since it had been installed. Others were more cautious about the impact of wind energy – especially the visual impacts of larger solar farms and wind turbines. In relation to solar farms, some saw little impact on the local environment since land can still be used for grazing and their installation is reversible. Those against were more fearful of losing valuable agricultural land.
- 5.42 There was more general support for the inclusion of renewable energy generation as part of new development – particularly solar panels on new housing or warehousing and retail developments. The latter was seen as having particular potential and least impact on people. There were suggestions at all of the events concerning new and emerging renewable energy technologies – e.g. solar roof tiles and Ground Source Heat Pumps as well as suggestions for more innovative solutions – e.g. harnessing tidal power and using former mine shafts for geothermal energy. Several people at two events felt that energy generated locally should benefit these local communities specifically. There was general consensus that new development should be as energy efficient as possible. Rising fuel costs were a particular concern in Skelmersdale. A number of people at this workshop expressed the view that new homes should be as cheap to heat as possible.
- 5.43 At the workshop events there was alarm almost universally expressed at the suggestion that the Council should consider permitting development on Flood Zones 2 or 3. Some individuals suggested that there could be some measures employed which may allow some development within these areas (e.g. raised floor levels) but there was some scepticism that this would provide an acceptable solution. Flooding from some source or another was raised as an issue of concern in all of the areas, but was particularly acutely felt in Burscough. There was an understanding in most cases that flooding was a complex and multifaceted issue but many of those attending felt strongly that it needed to be dealt with effectively as part of any future development. Suggestions for methods of doing this included the use of SUDS and more greenery in general in order to help in the natural absorption of water. A number of people recognised that there was a need to deal with water effectively within households through efforts such as water recycling.
- 5.44 In relation to the layout of new development there was some concern that there was not sufficient space within recent housing developments for the creation of a sufficiently green and pleasant environment. A number of people across several workshops claimed that many new housing estates included too much obvious hardstanding (generally tarmac). Along the same lines, out of a number of discussions emerged a preference for hedges rather than harder boundaries such as fences or walls. Wider 'green' boundaries, wildflower areas and open spaces were also seen as a means of accommodating more wildlife in and around these developments.

- 5.45 There was general support for improved links within and out of/in to new developments by foot or bike. A lack of suitable pavements in new estates was raised a number of times as this was felt to discourage pedestrians on safety grounds. An absence of signage and legible routes was highlighted as a particular issue in Skelmersdale which discourages walkers and cyclists. In terms of the provision of local green spaces, the importance of small local play spaces for children within residential areas was raised and suggested as an important way of providing children with an opportunity for exercise, so promoting healthier lifestyles.
- 5.46 There were a number of discussions around the design of new housing and many felt that in most cases the design of new homes was too ‘standard’, not distinctive enough and did not reflect the style of their individual locality.

#### **Other Feedback**

- 5.47 Although beyond the scope of the Local Plan, one Parish Council response raised concern about the environmental impact of ‘fracking’ on local wildlife, water supply and general amenity in the Borough.
- 5.48 A separate Parish Council comment raised the issue of air quality and queried the impact of tree and woodland schemes on improvements to air quality.

## 6. Representations on Social Policy Options

6.1 This chapter summarises the representations made on the questions relating to the Social Policy Options, which covered the following matters:

- Affordable housing
- Self and custom build housing
- Caravan and houseboat accommodation
- The Skelmersdale housing market
- Social requirements of older people
- Accommodation for older people
- Houses in multiple occupation
- Off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation
- Accommodation for Travellers

### Feedback from Online Surveys / Written Representations

#### **27. Affordable Housing**

*There are various policy options to deliver affordable housing ('AH'); several of these can be used together. The options are:*

- *Option 1: Do nothing, i.e. have no policy on AH*
- *Option 2: Continue with the usual 'percentage' approach to AH policy*
- *Option 3: Carry on with a broadly similar policy to policy RS2 of the current Local Plan with geographical and percentage variation between schemes*
- *Option 4: Add more detail to the Local Plan policy e.g. on house sizes and tenures*
- *Option 5: Allocate specific sites for 100% AH schemes*
- *Option 6: Allow AH in locations where general market housing would not be permitted*
- *Option 7: Allow for more flexibility when delivering AH as part of larger market housing developments*
- *Option 8: Have greater flexibility in what the Council defines as AH*

*Which option(s) for the approach towards AH policy do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?*

6.2 A total of 26 responses were received to this question from members of the public and other stakeholders via the online surveys and paper representation forms. The eight options were not necessarily mutually exclusive, and responses favoured a variety of options, either single options or hybrids of several options, for example options 2-4, and / or 5-8. Option 1 received the least support (2 respondents); Options 2, 8 and 3 were the most popular (10, 8 and 7 'votes' respectively); Options 4, 5 and 7 had support from 6 respondents, and Option 6 had 5 respondents' support.



6.3 The comments made by representors included the following:

- 100% AH allocations need to have a high probability of being delivered;
- Steer away from creating 'sink estates' (i.e. mix AH with market housing);
- Greater weight should be given to schemes which meet the full AH requirements;
- It is important to have a robust evidence base to back up AH policies;
- Option 3: Any policy needs flexibility to apply during a long plan period;
- Option 8: There are many AH needs, the definition of AH should be broad;
- Off-site contributions via commuted sums should be considered;
- The Community Infrastructure Levy is undermining viability, thus also AH provision;
- Look not just at affordability but also quality, choice, type, tenure and size;
- There is a need for one policy for rented AH and another policy for AH for purchase.

**28 Demand for self- and custom-build housing**

*The options for self- and custom-build housing ('SCB housing') are as follow:*

- *Option 1: Do not allocate any sites for SCB housing*
- *Option 2: Set aside parts of larger allocated housing sites for SCB plots*
- *Option 3: Identify and allocate small sites for SCB dwellings in line with demand*

*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?*

6.4 18 responses were received to question 28, with 4 favouring Option 1, one favouring Option 2, and 6 favouring Option 3. One respondent was of the opinion that none of the options should be pursued, but that there should be flexibility in policy to allow for SCB housing if needed. The House Builders Federation advised that setting aside part of a large site for SCB housing could impact on the whole site's viability and delivery. Another respondent advised that SCB properties should be environmentally sustainable.

**29 : Demand for alternative residential accommodation**

*In terms of meeting the needs of caravan / houseboat dwellers, the options are:*

- *Option 1: Allow for caravan or houseboat accommodation to come forward as the market demands*
- *Option 2: Allocate new sites, or land on the edge of existing sites, for additional caravan-based accommodation or mooring berths.*
- *Option 3: Vary Green Belt policy on a site-specific basis, to allow for expansion or intensification of residential caravan sites or mooring berths to meet identified needs*

*Which of the above policy options do you think would best ensure the right amount of pitches or berths are made available for caravans and houseboats? Why?*

- 6.5 18 comments were made on question 29, with five respondents favouring Option 1, four favouring Option 2, three favouring Option 3, and one favouring a mix of all three options. Several people were of the view that allowing these forms of accommodation would provide people with the opportunity to downsize, thereby freeing up market housing. There were varying opinions about whether or not to relax Green Belt policy to meet these needs. It was advised that, as canal boat occupiers require the facilities found at marinas, that their needs should be met on the edge of existing marinas.

**30 The Skelmersdale housing market**

*The options to address the issues relating to the Skelmersdale housing market are:*

- *Option 1: Continue to relax, or further relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale*
- *Option 2: Base the Local Plan Review strategy on the regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale*

*Which policy option for addressing the issue of relative market weakness in Skelmersdale do you think is the most appropriate? Why?*

- 6.6 With respect to addressing the relative underperformance in the Skelmersdale housing market, 31 responses were received. 10 expressed a preference for Option 2; 2 for Option 1, and at least 3 for a blend of the options. Various comments were made on the Skelmersdale market and associated issues, which can be summarised as follows:
- If Option 1 is pursued, environmental protection policies should not be relaxed, nor should open space policies, nor CIL where applicable (as infrastructure is needed), but affordable housing requirements can be further relaxed. Option 1 should include wider community benefits;
  - One needs to look not just at housing, but how infrastructure will be provided to create sustainable communities; policy in relation to infrastructure provision should

not be relaxed. One should also investigate providing incentives to develop, for example fast-track planning arrangements;

- Housing and employment investment around Skelmersdale can act as a ‘catalyst’ for regeneration within the town. Develop the ‘easier’ sites first, then once the town centre is delivered, develop housing within the town. The town centre needs to be more than a retail park. A range of housing is required for the town, including for second and third time buyers, to be integrated with jobs provided;
- Conversely, some expressed the view that recent policy has not worked and it is ‘time to move on to other areas’ or to ‘start from scratch’, that expanding a deprived area will make it worse, and that a strategy to focus development on the town will not deliver any significant or necessary levels of development.

### **31 The social requirements of older people**

*With respect to the ‘social needs’ of older people, the options are:*

- *Option 1: A general ‘sustainable development’ policy which directs new development to places where services and facilities are available*
- *Option 2: Allocate specific sites in appropriate locations for services and facilities.*
- *Option 3: Prepare an Area Action Plan or similar document to ensure facilities are provided as part of any very large new developments*

*Which policy options for the approach towards the social requirements of older people do you think is the most appropriate for the Local Plan? Why?*

6.7 29 stakeholders responded to this question, 10 expressing a preference for Option 1, two for Option 2, and two for Option 3, as well as one person opting for a combination of Options 1 and 2, and one opting for Option 1, backed up by 2 and 3.

6.8 Specific comments made on this topic are summarised thus:

- Accommodation needs to be integrated with the community and / or with new development; older people should not be ‘shipped off’, away from their homes and families; special developments only for older people carry a risk of ‘ghettoization’;
- Conversely, support was expressed by one respondent for a retirement village;
- It is important that health, transport and consumer facilities are readily available;
- There is no need for an elderly-specific sustainable development policy (Option 1), as sustainable development should run through the whole Local Plan;
- Option 3: a new approach is needed as there is an insufficient range of suitable types of development; specialist schemes tend to be exclusive;
- Whilst the objectives are supported, the Local Plan should not be prescriptive as to how these should be achieved;
- Liaison with the Lancashire County Council Public Health Team is recommended.

**32 Residential accommodation for older people**

*With respect to the accommodation requirements for older people, the options are:*

- *Option 1: Have no specific policy, but let the market deliver appropriate accommodation in line with local demand*
- *Option 2: Continue the current approach, i.e. require that a percentage of new dwellings be designed specifically to accommodate the elderly*
- *Option 3: In conjunction with the above, provide a tighter definition of what constitutes ‘housing designed specifically to accommodate the elderly’*
- *Option 4: Adopt one or both of the optional Technical Standards for new houses*
- *Option 5: Require adherence to, or at least that regard be had to, the HAPPi (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) Design Principles*
- *Option 6: Allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation*
- *Option 7: Adopt the more general policy approach of promoting ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’*

*Which policy option(s) for providing accommodation for older people would you therefore prefer?*

- 6.9 The options set out in question 32 are not mutually exclusive, so several of the overall 33 responses involved the choice of two or more options. Options 2, 5 and 7 received 7 ‘ticks’ each, followed by Options 6, 4, 1 and 3 with 6, 5, 4 and 3 ‘ticks’ respectively. Four other respondents expressed a preference for bungalows.
- 6.10 Several representors advised that older people’s needs vary between individuals and over time, and therefore the ways of meeting needs also vary considerably, requiring a ‘mix and match’ approach, rather than ‘one size fits all’. As a general principle, people want the right to choose whether to stay at home (independently, or with support) and when (or if) to move into specialist accommodation. The types of accommodation included sheltered or retirement housing, Extra Care, adaptable dwellings (satisfying Building Regulations M4(2) or M4(3)), and extra care villages. One developer suggested ‘downsizer units, made available to older people in the first instance.
- 6.11 Other comments included recommendations to liaise with LCC Public Health, and to follow the advice in the ‘Housing for Later Life: Planning Ahead for Specialist Housing for Older People’ toolkit and suggested policy wording. Two respondents opposed the application of Technical Standards, as well as the HAPPi principles, citing the Housing Standards Review which recommended minimising the application of standards, instead favouring a permissive policy which facilitates provision of suitable accommodation.

**33 Provision of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in Ormskirk**

*In terms of future policy to address the issues relating to HMOs, the key options are:*

- *Option 1: Expand the 'Article 4 area' and the area to which the HMO percentage policy applies, to include neighbouring settlements*
- *Option 2: Revoke the Article 4 Direction and policy RS3, and have no policy*
- *Option 3: Decrease the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a lower percentage, potentially even down to 0%*
- *Option 4: Increase the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a higher percentage.*

*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?*

6.12 15 responses were received to question 33. 7 favoured Option 1, followed by 3 in favour of Option 2, and 2 in favour of Option 4. Specific points made were as follows:

- In preparing a new policy, it is necessary to know student accommodation supply and demand, and to have flexibility for the future if a long plan period is chosen;
- If HMO provision is restricted, the Council should ensure student accommodation needs are met some other way, taking account of the University's aspirations;
- Consider a student quarter in Skelmersdale, with good public transport links to the University.

**34 Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk**

*With regard to the provision of purpose built student accommodation, the options are:*

- *Option 1: Continue with the current policy approach of restricting off-campus purpose-built student accommodation unless strict criteria are met.*
- *Option 2: Relax policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University Campus.*
- *Option 3: Allocate specific sites for off-campus student accommodation, whilst restricting 'unplanned' developments elsewhere.*
- *Option 4: Tighten the current policy to severely, or entirely, restrict off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation.*

*Which policy option for off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation do you think is the most appropriate for Ormskirk / West Lancashire? Why?*

6.13 Of the 20 responses to this question, six favoured Option 1; six favoured Option 3; two favoured Option 2; and one favoured Option 4. Three respondents expressed the view that accommodation should be provided on campus as far as is possible. Edge Hill University's (EHU) agent advised that EHU remains committed to providing on-campus

accommodation, but would also like to explore building some units in Ormskirk centre. Two respondents expressed concern about the impact on town centre shops; another stated that students / graduate can have a positive effect on town centres. Other locations suggested for sites included ‘scrubland out of town’, Skelmersdale, land in low- or non-residential areas, and land released from the Green Belt. It was advised that regard be had to transport and access to basic services when choosing sites.

### **35 Delivering suitable accommodation for travellers**

*The options for providing traveller accommodation are:*

- *Option 1: Allow the travellers based at present in West Lancashire to stay on their (currently unauthorised) sites.*
- *Option 2: When allocating new sites for other development in the Borough, set aside part of those sites for travellers*
- *Option 3: Compulsory Purchase suitable sites in order to allocate them for Travellers*

*Which policy option(s) for addressing the issue of meeting traveller accommodation needs do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?*

6.14 17 responses were provided to question 35. Option 1 was the most popular, with 7 ‘votes’; Option 3 had 4 ‘votes’ and Option 2 just a single vote.

- In terms of Option 1, one respondent suggested flood risk was not an issue, as caravans could be moved if floods were imminent. The Environment Agency, conversely, advised that allocating sites in Flood Zone 3 is contrary to the NPPF;
- For Option 2, the view was expressed that locating Travellers adjacent to housing would not work;
- For Option 3, CPO should only be used as a last resort if negotiation did not work;
- Any allocated sites should have a ‘contract’ that they be well maintained.

### **Feedback from West Lancashire Borough Council Members**

6.15 At their forum, Council Members discussed affordable housing, accommodation for the elderly, and provision for Travellers.

6.16 There were differing views between Members concerning affordable housing. Some held the view that the current policy should be continued, that there should be more social rented and / or Council housing, that sites should be allocated for 100% affordable housing schemes, including on Council-owned land, and that the use of commuted sums for off-site provision was not supported. Others considered that affordable housing distorts the market, which should be allowed to ‘run its course’, that there were plenty of cheap (i.e. affordable) properties in Skelmersdale, that there

should be no sites for 100% affordable housing schemes, but that affordable units should be ‘pepper-potted’ through developments.

- 6.17 All Members were of the view that the emphasis on viability was undermining the policy, and that there was no ‘one size fits all’ approach.
- 6.18 In terms of accommodation for the elderly, Members agreed there was a need for a policy, although it could be amended, for example by providing a tighter definition of ‘accommodation for the elderly’. There was consensus that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach, that people generally would prefer to live in their own homes, rather than move to a care home (etc.), and that bungalows were desirable, but in short supply. There is also a short supply of suitable properties to enable older people to downsize, both privately and Council-owned. In terms of ‘institutions’, the view was expressed that large developments such as Brookside in Ormskirk are the way forward. It was recommended that good practice elsewhere be observed and emulated.
- 6.19 In relation to accommodation for Travellers, it was pointed out that there are different types of Travellers, and that seeking to accommodate them all on one site would not work. The question was asked whether there would be any harm in allowing existing Travellers to stay on the sites they currently occupy. Members considered that setting aside part of a site allocation for Travellers would be unlikely to be successful, and that compulsory purchase looked to most realistic option, with brownfield sites favoured over greenfield.

### **Feedback from Parish Councils**

- 6.20 Online representations on (a selection of) the Social Policy Options were made by 5 Parish Councils (Aughton, Burscough, Halsall, Lathom, Scarisbrick, Up Holland). As stated earlier, 8 Parish Councils (PCs) were represented at the forum, and in total, 10 different Parish Councils made comments on the Social Policy Options as part of the Issues and Options consultation.
- 6.21 Five PCs responded online to question 27 on affordable housing (AH); the matter was also discussed at the PC forum. The following comments were made:
- Small clusters of AH in rural settlements to meet local needs enable communities to remain intact (Options 5 and 6);
  - The current definition of AH is not fit for purpose (Option 8);
  - In the light of the local need for AH, housing schemes that include AH should be prioritised;
  - AH should be encouraged without being prescriptive as to the amount / type, to reflect the differing needs of different areas;
  - It is extremely important to create and retain housing within the reach of first time buyers, as well as those with special needs;

- There is a need for affordable housing to enable children who have grown up in a village to stay in the area, and that a good mix of types / tenures is important.
- 6.22 In terms of self and custom build (SCB) housing (question 28), four PCs responded. Two chose Option 3: Allocate sites for SCB housing; one chose a combination of Option 2: Have SCB plots on larger allocated sites, and Option 3. Burscough Parish Council (BPC) supported SCB housing as an opportunity to create something out of the ordinary.
- 6.23 For question 29: caravan and houseboat accommodation, three PCs gave views; one supported Option 1: Leave to the market; one supported Option 3: Vary Green Belt policy. BPC pointed out that these types of accommodation could provide low cost homes, but could lead to a loss of holiday homes, a growth area in the visitor economy. BPC expressed the view that there may be a need for a marina at Burscough.
- 6.24 Three PCs commented on the Skelmersdale housing market (question 30). Up Holland PC did not support Option 1: Relaxation of (developer contribution) policies in Skelmersdale, adding that market weakness provides housing for people on low incomes. BPC supported Option 2; Halsall PC supported both Options 1 and 2.
- 6.25 At the Parish Council forum, Parish Councillors made the following points about the ageing population:
- People want suitable accommodation in their local areas to enable them to downsize (and also accommodation for young people / families to ‘get onto the housing ladder’), rather than more large executive homes. The current trend of replacing bungalows with larger houses should be resisted;
  - We should provide for older people to stay in the settlement where they live;
  - There is a desire for bungalows, and for multi-occupancy facilities (spread around the Borough); a mix of ages helps community cohesion.
- 6.26 Three PCs commented online regarding policies for older people (questions 31 and 32). Halsall PC supported the allocation of specific sites for services and facilities; Burscough PC advised that old people generally have no wish to be segregated. In terms of accommodation, there was support for Option 2: Continue the current policy; Option 3: Provide a tighter definition of ‘accommodation for the elderly’; Option 4: Application of Technical Standards on accessibility; Option 6: Allocate sites for elderly (and affordable) accommodation; and Option 7: Promote ‘Lifetime Neighbourhoods’.
- 6.27 With regard to student accommodation (question 33), Burscough PC supported the expansion of the ‘Article 4 area’ (Option 1) for HMOs to Burscough; Halsall and Up Holland PCs also supported Option 1, although they did not specify any additional areas to which the Article 4 Direction would apply. For off-campus purpose-built accommodation, Halsall PC chose Option 2: Relax current policy, whereas Up Holland PC chose Option 1: Continue with the current policy.



- 6.28 The same three PCs responded to question 34 (Traveller accommodation). Halsall PC considered Option 1: Allow Travellers to remain on current sites to be the most optimal; Burscough and Up Holland PCs chose Option 3: Use of compulsory purchase powers.

### **Feedback from Public Workshops**

- 6.29 At the public workshops, social policy option questions were asked in relation to affordable housing, self and custom build housing, student accommodation, and housing and facilities for the elderly.
- 6.30 Eight recurring points were made with regard to affordable housing (AH):
- AH needs to be provided where there is infrastructure, facilities, and employment;
  - AH is needed in order to allow people to stay in the area where they grew up;
  - AH needs to be genuinely affordable; some AH products are expensive;
  - Factors such as Right to Buy have worsened the affordability situation;
  - It was asked whether the Council could build affordable properties for rent or sale;
  - There is a need for a mix of different types, sizes and tenures of affordable housing;
  - Cheaper accommodation exists in Skelmersdale. Some recommended that people should move there; others considered this was an unreasonable expectation;
  - There was a desire that the Council enforce AH percentages; the viability argument appears to undermine AH provision.
- 6.31 Self and custom build (SCB) housing was only discussed briefly, and only at two workshops. People were generally supportive of the concept, and considered that small sites should be allocated for SCB housing, maybe with land being provided at a discount or free of charge to encourage this type of housing.
- 6.32 Student accommodation was discussed only at the Ormskirk workshop. The main points raised were:
- Policy RS3 has made some impact, but 2-student properties ‘fall under its radar’ and can have a significant cumulative impact;
  - Some considered the HMO limit should be 0%; others considered 5% was reasonable;
  - Policy RS3 only takes into consideration HMOs on the same street. There can be impact from HMOs to the rear or side of a property on different streets; this should be taken into account when assessing HMO proposals;
  - There was a discussion as to the benefits or otherwise of students and the University in general. Negative effects included parking issues and students’ exemption from Council Tax; positive effects included expenditure in the town;
  - On-campus accommodation was generally preferred to off-campus; first years should all be accommodated on campus; this may ‘free up’ HMOs for general use.

6.33 The topic of accommodation for the elderly raised much interest at each workshop, the main points made being:

- People are active until old age; they want to retain their independence and stay in their houses, therefore adaptable properties are necessary;
- There is a need for suitable properties for people to downsize into, both affordable accommodation (which is considered to be lacking), and 'quality' units;
- Older people's housing needs to be located within easy reach of services and facilities and / or good public transport;
- Old people generally do not want to live within an 'enclave', but to be integrated with the wider community: on the whole, mixed communities were considered better, although there was some desire for quiet cul-de-sac type developments;
- There needs to be a mix of types of old people's housing, from adaptable 'standard' market houses, through bungalows (which received widespread support, and preference to multi-storey developments) to schemes with on-site care;
- There was also support for a mix of ages, combining old people's housing with affordable housing, and properties for first time buyers;
- As with affordable housing, there was a call for the Council to build accommodation for the elderly.

## 7. Representations on Spatial Portrait

- 7.1 This chapter provides an overview of the representations made on the questions relating to the Spatial Portrait (questions 4-6 of the online survey). The Spatial Portrait summarises the key data for the Borough and, from that evidence, purports to describe each of the different areas of the Borough and identify the key planning-related issues across West Lancashire.

### **4. Spatial Portrait**

*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?*

- 7.2 Representors agreed with most of the conclusions presented through the spatial portrait, particularly in relation to issues like the ageing population. Nonetheless, there were suggestions of data or evidence that could be included through future iterations.
- 7.3 It was considered that the Local Plan was correct in identifying the regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre as an important objective and suggested evidence should be collated to evidence the leakage of expenditure from Skelmersdale to other areas, the loss of high street retailers, and lost ground in the national retail rankings. This was to show that the Concourse needs protecting as per the current Policy SP.2.
- 7.4 Some felt that the data presented through the Spatial Portrait is inconsistent, particularly regarding Up Holland and Bickerstaffe where data on those areas is provided separately to Skelmersdale and at other times combined with Skelmersdale. It is considered that Up Holland and Bickerstaffe are different in character to Skelmersdale and should be treated separately. Summary statements cannot therefore accurately reflect the area as a whole.
- 7.5 There were complaints that there was no mention of fracking and the negative impacts it would have on tourism, agriculture and the environment. Halsall Parish Council provided links to evidence from USA research on the damage caused by fracking. Separate links were also provided to data on soil health, peat loss, and water level management in the Alt-Crossens catchment by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust.
- 7.6 There were demands for the results of the HEDNA and Liverpool City Region SHELMA to feature in later iterations of the Spatial Portrait. Some also wanted the Spatial Framework proposals of Greater Manchester and Liverpool, when adopted, to feature in the Portrait and CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) provided links to evidence rebutting the need for extensive Green Belt release in those areas. Some respondents considered that cross-boundary issues should be emphasised more strongly – felt to be particularly important given West Lancashire's geographical proximity to larger urban areas and the Liverpool City Region.

- 7.7 One representor requested data be sought that identifies the percentages of pupils at primary and secondary levels travelling out of Skelmersdale to reach education, as they considered parents are choosing to send their children to schools outside the town.
- 7.8 Some representors felt that more emphasis should be given to the importance of agricultural and food production and its value to the local economy and provided links to BRES and ONS data sources.
- 7.9 There were requests for more local infrastructure studies – including road traffic assessments in the northern parishes. Burscough Parish Council offered evidence of flooding which they considered is not adequately covered in the evidence base.
- 7.10 Some representors stated that the Spatial Portrait made insufficient reference to the importance of buildings as heritage assets and buildings at risk. It was considered important to explain the contribution of the historic environment to the character of an area, its economic well-being and the quality of life of its communities.
- 7.11 Finally, others suggested that the evidence should include reference to playing pitch strategy and other health related strategies. The Council’s Economic Development Strategy (2015) should be included within the Spatial Portrait.

#### **5. Spatial Portrait (ii)**

*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?*

- 7.12 Most people concurred with the Spatial Portrait. However, a small number of comments made suggestions for improvement and minor corrections.
- 7.13 Some representors felt that the Portrait does not reflect all areas accurately – for example, analysis using ward boundaries merges deprived areas with affluent areas to blur evidence whilst Ormskirk and Aughton have been merged for administrative and political purposes which has resulted in the erosion of Aughton’s identity as a village in its own right. Similarly, some respondents considered that Up Holland should not be considered as part of Skelmersdale’s whole but be a separate entity geographically and culturally. It was felt that the inclusion of Bickerstaffe and Up Holland with Skelmersdale as a single coherent area does not facilitate easy analysis of data and statements do not apply across all areas; the data is too generalised.
- 7.14 There were calls that the Portrait should provide greater commentary on the linkages between West Lancashire and other local authority areas and communities. It was also considered that more should be made of green infrastructure and more said about the importance of agriculture and food production. Representors wished to emphasise the poor infrastructure in the northern parishes – including roads, low water pressure and often reduced bus services and health services. They also emphasised the need for development to support economic growth, sustain local services and facilities.

- 7.15 Representors said the Portrait alluded to the need for the regeneration of Skelmersdale town centre but did not adequately express the urgent requirement to deliver a credible evening economy and improve the town centre environment. Others felt that the Portrait should provide a description and assessment of the historic environment in the Borough and the contribution it makes in each area.
- 7.16 There were some minor corrections requested, including:
- Ravenhead brickworks is a SSSI for its geology rather than wildlife;
  - Correction within last sentence relating to Wrightington Bar Pasture SSSI and its biological importance;
  - Statement relating to the Borough having “the highest total areas of Wildlife Trust reserves in the county” should be corrected as it is incorrect.

### **6. Key Issues**

*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?*

- 7.17 Again, most respondents agreed that the Spatial Portrait identified the correct key issues for the Borough, including the need for affordable housing, sustainable development and the issues relating to an increasing, ageing population. Although it was proposed that the Portrait should explicitly acknowledge how issues interlink; for example, the link between the growth in ageing population and the decline in the working age population and how this impacts on the need to boost economic development.
- 7.18 Some respondents suggested that the enhancement of waterways and the prevention of fracking should be listed as issues. Some felt that the current Portrait only addresses international biodiversity issues, but should instead look spatially at ecology in strategic/wider landscape terms across the whole of the borough and into adjoining authorities and better integrate networks and green infrastructure. Other respondents suggested that the Council should consider the possibility of creating new garden/green villages which are currently being promoted by DCLG.
- 7.19 Some respondents suggested that a new issue should be ensuring that new development in Skelmersdale town centre does not result in the decline of the remainder of the town centre (Concourse). The completion of Skelmersdale Town Centre should be linked with the creation of an attractive, accessible Tawd Valley Park.
- 7.20 Respondents considered that the issue of safety, crime, community safety and reducing hospital admissions for violent crime should be addressed through the design of safe and accessible environments.

- 7.21 There was re-emphasis that education provision needs to be reviewed once housing sites have been determined and should therefore be an issue for consideration. Provision of employment opportunities and the provision of a support context to attract businesses (housing, training, attractive environment) should also be an important issue. Development opportunities should be maximised along the M58 corridor.
- 7.22 Some respondents considered greater consideration should be given to the public transport provision issues (including bus services, connectivity, Skelmersdale rail station proposals) and its interrelation with new development so as not to compound existing problems. It was also suggested that air quality management should be an issue to address.
- 7.23 Respondents suggested that the disparity between Skelmersdale and the remainder of the Borough needs to be stressed and addressed more effectively.
- 7.24 Respondents thought that cross-boundary issues and the role of West Lancashire in the Liverpool City Region should be given greater emphasis.
- 7.25 Respondents considered that the emerging Local Plan should ensure it encourages sustainable development, and reduces any impact on the environment locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, so that we can all live sustainably. As with the previous questions, respondents suggested that protecting agricultural land should be a key issue as it is of national, not just regional, importance. Others reminded that there is no mention of key heritage assets or the historic environment.

## 8. Duty to Co-operate

8.1 Ten organisations that are covered by the Duty to Co-operate, as well as a further three that are key stakeholders related to strategic and / or cross boundary issues, responded to the Local Plan Review: Issues & Options Consultation. Where these organisations made specific comments on individual issues, these have been covered in the relevant sections above. However, it is important to specifically identify the key Duty to Co-operate issues that have been raised by these organisations at this early stage of the Local Plan Review against the Strategic Priorities set out in NPPF paragraph 156. This section of the Consultation Feedback Report therefore identifies the key Duty to Co-operate Issues raised.

### Homes and Jobs

8.2 In general, the key issues that tend to be relevant to this NPPF Strategic Priority are those of the delivery of housing and employment opportunities, and issues that derive from the relationship between these two factors (such as commuting ratios). As such, the Council is seeking to address these key issues together through the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) but, given this assessment is still being prepared by the City Region Authorities (including West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC)), some of the Council's neighbouring authorities have made comments on this issue.

8.3 Sefton Council have raised the potential issue that they may not be able to meet all of their long-term housing and employment land needs within Sefton and so WLBC may need to consider whether it can accommodate any of this long-term need. However, Sefton cannot quantify what this long-term need may be at the current time. Sefton also consider that, should WLBC seek to meet any of Sefton's longer-term needs, they should be accommodated as close as possible to Southport (the area within Sefton most constrained and unable to meet development needs). In addition, Sefton agrees that some of the City Region's need for large-scale B8 logistics development identified in the SHELMA could be met in WLBC, along the M58.

8.4 Knowsley Council have confirmed that they do not require WLBC to meet any of their development needs. St Helens Council have stated support for the identified Objectively-Assessed Need for WLBC and have stated their willingness to continue to work with WLBC as both the St Helens and the West Lancashire Local Plans are prepared to consider how each authority may help each other meet their objectively assessed development needs.

8.5 Another factor in the delivery of homes and jobs is the length of the Local Plan period, with the Council proposing two options – to 2037 or to 2050. Sefton and Knowsley have both expressed some concern about planning beyond 2037, but Lancashire County

Council (LCC) welcome the suggestion, as it could contribute to achieving wider strategic economic and regeneration objectives.

#### Retail, Leisure and other Commercial Development

- 8.6 LCC provided comments on the retail options discussed in the Economic Policy Options Paper, primarily in relation to seeking more sustainable and healthy living by reducing the need for car-based journeys.

#### Infrastructure

- 8.7 Sefton and St Helens Councils both made comments on the need for any development near to their boundaries to be planned with regard to cross-boundary impacts on infrastructure, particularly in relation to highways, public transport and education. LCC's School Planning Team also provided detailed comments on planning for education as part of the Local Plan Review in relation to how any increased demand for school places will be identified and accommodated, in particular the difficulties of calculating accurate pupil projections if the Local Plan were to cover a longer Plan period. LCC and Highways England both commented on the need to continue to work with the Council as the Local Plan Review progresses, to identify any impacts on the highways networks in and around WLBC.

#### Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure

- 8.8 Several organisations made general comments on the need to ensure appropriate provision of community and cultural infrastructure and to promote healthier lifestyles through the way places are planned, including LCC and Sport England. However, these issues, while important, are not necessarily relevant to the Duty to Co-operate as they are not cross-boundary issues for WLBC, but they have been considered against the relevant issues in the earlier sections of this report.

#### Climate change and natural and historic environment

- 8.9 As statutory consultees with responsibility for particular aspects of the natural and historic environment, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England have all provided detailed comments on their respective areas of expertise, as have the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, and these have been considered against the relevant issues in the earlier sections of this report. However, with the exception of some localised drainage / flooding issues and some ecological issues (mainly covered by the Habitats Regulations Assessment), these issues are not cross-boundary issues and so are not wholly relevant to the Duty to Co-operate.



## Summary

- 8.10 Those organisations who are affected by the Duty to Co-operate and have responded to the Local Plan Review consultation have raised several relevant issues that will require further consideration and discussion. Most crucially, the on-going co-operation with neighbouring authorities on the provision of homes and jobs will shape the Local Plan Review and will, in turn, have impacts on infrastructure provision within WLBC and its neighbours, as well as having impacts on the environment which must be managed. As the preferred strategic development option is selected and specific sites identified for allocation to meet that preferred option, these issues will need to be considered further with the relevant Duty to Co-operate bodies and infrastructure providers.

## 9. Developers Forum

9.1 A total of 45 developers and / or agents attended the forum, held at WLBC offices on 20 March 2017. At the forum, a number of set questions were asked, relating to key issues, in order to generate discussion. The key issues, and the points made in response by the attendees, are set out below.

### 9.2 Key Issue 1: Why West Lancashire?

- West Lancashire is a missed opportunity – it enjoys a good position in the region, so can sustain a good level of housing and economic development;
- Market potential – the Borough has not fulfilled that potential because it is restricted by the Green Belt, despite being reasonable location-wise;
- Advantage of a University in Ormskirk;
- M58 Corridor – this has good opportunities for logistics operations with the Superport;
- The Borough enjoys good infrastructure, albeit with some shortfalls, e.g. no station at Skelmersdale;
- Eastern Parishes doesn't have enough population because the Green Belt is constraining it; the area is deteriorating;
- Opportunities exist for a new settlement option;
- House builders need some commitment from the Council to invest; investment is needed in Skelmersdale rail, Skelmersdale Town Centre, the West Lancashire Route Management Strategy, and in water-related infrastructure.

### 9.3 Key Issue 2: How much new development?

The Plan should go for higher numbers to:

- deliver economic growth and affordable housing need;
- take advantage of the Superport;
- satisfy NPPF which seeks positive opportunities for growth, as Cheshire East have done;
- let market decide – provide an over-supply to help deliver affordables and to provide range and choice – market will move to West Lancs if there is a boost to supply;
- plan for longer-term in order to plan properly and release GB in one go (so don't have to have GB debate each Local Plan);
- provide labour force to industrial areas (Knowsley Industrial Park works because residential areas on doorstep, Castleford another good example).

However, there is a limit to the market, a ceiling (though its value is unknown; this is a national issue) because of the limited number of housebuilders – this is even more so in Skelmersdale, so a broader selection of market locations is needed. Skelmersdale Rail is a game changer though and provides opportunities to make good new places in outlying areas of Skelmersdale to raise this ceiling.

#### 9.4 Key Issue 3: Where should we put new development?

(The question posed was the same as Issues and Options consultation question 11.)

- All 4 scenarios (reflect existing distribution, Key Service Centres, rural focus, Skelmersdale focus); don't concentrate on one area – all need to grow.
- Make use of previously developed sites on brownfield land in the Green Belt; have a more flexible policy for these.

#### 9.5 Key Issue 4: What kind of employment development is needed and where?

- The M58 Corridor is the best option, but this corridor needs to be defined.

#### 9.6 Key Issue 5: Do we need sites for retail and town centre uses?

- Skelmersdale needs more retail, so policy needs more flexibility to stop leakage of food spend elsewhere.
- Could also do with a non-food retail park.

#### 9.7 Key Issue 6: Specialist Housing

- Need a cross section of accommodation types across the sites collectively
- Industry is nervous about compartmentalising people
- Could elderly housing be exempt from the Community Infrastructure Levy?
- Provision of affordable housing is driven by Registered Providers
- The house building industry is embracing Starter Homes and is ready to deliver them
- Developers would welcome off-site delivery of affordable and specialist housing

## 10. Questionnaire work

10.1 This chapter provides a summary of the comments made during informal on-street questionnaires which were carried out over the course of 2-3 hours each in several locations. These locations comprised Skelmersdale Concourse Shopping Centre (Wednesday 19 April), Ormskirk Town Centre (Thursday 20 April), West Lancashire College, Skelmersdale Campus (Wednesday 19 April) and Edge Hill University (Wednesday 5 April). This form of consultation, and in these locations, was carried out in order to gain the opinions of those who would not generally participate in Local Plan consultations. The questionnaire was designed to be short, taking no more than five minutes to answer, and the questions were tailored to the specific location. The questions asked are set out below, and this is followed by a summary of each consultation event.

### **Edge Hill University**

- *What's the best thing about living in / studying in Ormskirk?*
- *What's the worst thing and what can we do about it?*
- *Would you consider living in Ormskirk or the surrounding area after you graduate?*
- *What would prevent you from doing this?*

### **West Lancashire College (Skelmersdale Campus)**

- *What's the best thing about (living in) Skelmersdale? [OR, if not from Skelmersdale] Why did you choose to come to West Lancs College?*
- *What is good about Skelmersdale?*
- *What would you do to improve Skelmersdale?*
- *Would you consider living in the area after you finish college? Why?*
- *What would stop you from choosing to live in the area?*

### **Ormskirk Town Centre/Skelmersdale Concourse Shopping Centre**

- *What's the best thing about living in / visiting [Ormskirk/Skelmersdale]?*
- *What is the worst thing about living in / visiting [Ormskirk/Skelmersdale] and what would you want the Council to do about it?*
- *Where should the Council try to focus new development in the future? (3 options: build as much as possible within the towns and villages; on the edge of towns and villages; or by creating new towns and villages).*
- *What sort of new housing do you think is needed in [Ormskirk / Skelmersdale] or wider West Lancs?*
- *What sort of business and job opportunities do you think that we need to attract to [Ormskirk / Skelmersdale] or wider West Lancs?*
- *What infrastructure improvements are needed in Ormskirk/ West Lancs?*

**Edge Hill University**

- 10.2 25 responses were collected in total from students at Edge Hill University. The majority of students spoken to had a positive view of Ormskirk as a town. Many of these cited the smaller, market town feel as something they valued. Some used the word ‘friendly’ to describe the town and many valued its good transport links, particularly to Liverpool City Centre. 16 of those asked thought that Ormskirk offered a reasonable range of shops which provided them with what they needed day-to-day.
- 10.3 Of those who responded to the question concerning negative aspects of the town, several expressed concern about the number of recent shop closures which had taken place in the main shopping area. Some cited the lack of things to do, particularly leisure facilities, as something they would like to see improved. A couple of responses specifically highlighted the lack of a cinema in the town, necessitating a journey to Southport. A similar number stated that it can be a confusing place to navigate by car due to the one-way system. Lack of parking was also raised by two students who travelled primarily by car to the University. A number of students living in the town itself, rather than on the University campus, expressed concern about the cost of student rental accommodation and the standard of these properties given the cost, for example there can be issues of noise in some locations.
- 10.4 The majority of students surveyed did not anticipate staying in Ormskirk / West Lancashire following graduation. Generally this was due to the ‘pull’ of their home town and family ties, rather than any local issues ‘pushing’ them away. However there was a general perception that the labour market in their home town / city offered more job opportunities. Three students felt that moving to a larger city such as Liverpool or Manchester would provide better job opportunities; a similar number had a specific employment sector in mind, or a location that would take them away from the area. One student expressed a desire to live and work abroad following graduation. However ten students (most of whom already lived relatively locally) wished to remain in the local area, if future employment offers allow. One trainee teacher stated that West Lancashire has a number of good local schools and would thus be an attractive location.

**West Lancashire College (Skelmersdale campus)**

- 10.5 Thirty six responses were gathered during the consultation of students in Skelmersdale. Twenty five of those interviewed were from the town itself with the remaining 11 travelling from elsewhere (mostly from within West Lancashire). Around eight Skelmersdale residents interviewed did not like living in the area and did not highlight any positive aspects of living there. However the remaining students mentioned some positive features of the town which included the College, the availability of shops and a green environment in which to live. Two students stated that they lived in a quiet area which is something that they valued.
- 10.6 A number of suggestions were made by students concerning improvements that could be made to the town. The overwhelming complaint was that there was not enough to

do in the Town Centre of an evening. Students cited a lack of restaurants, cinemas, pubs and other leisure activities. Several supported the idea of a train station opening in Skelmersdale. 13 made comments in relation to infrastructure including roads, parks and signage, complaining that these were poor and deteriorating. Three also would like to see better sporting facilities provided in the town, whilst others are keen to see a better range of shops provided within Skelmersdale.

- 10.7 Despite this, most of the students interviewed expressed a desire to continue living in Skelmersdale after finishing at College. This was generally due to family connections or ties within the town, although some cited the availability of housing as a reason for staying. Amongst the reasons for wanting to leave was the presence of gangs in the area and the feeling that it was not safe or desirable to go out of an evening and there was no real destination to visit in the Town Centre.

### ***Ormskirk Town Centre***

- 10.8 A total of 30 people were interviewed in Ormskirk Town Centre on market day. Those commenting commonly valued its character as a small ‘friendly’ market town with a reasonable range of shops and good public transport connections to other areas of Lancashire and Merseyside.
- 10.9 Negative issues raised by respondents typically concerned the number of town centre shops that had recently closed. Some considered the area was declining, particularly the range of shops. Four people felt that there were too many student properties in what is a small town, impacting negatively on the local environment and mix of people living there. One resident identified a lack of facilities for those with young children – i.e. shops for baby clothes, a Children’s Centre or adequate play and nursery facilities.
- 10.10 When consulted on the location of future development in Ormskirk, five people felt that the town centre was already too crowded in terms of development, and that there were insufficient brownfield sites left to develop upon. These people also expressed concern that any green sites should be considered for housing as they valued local parks and green areas within the town.
- 10.11 In relation to the types of new housing that should be provided, over half of those who commented highlighted a lack of first time buyer and/or affordable homes. Many felt this section of the market had been ‘taken over’ and used as student homes.
- 10.12 When asked about employment and business and job opportunities, some felt that there was a lack of support and accommodation for small, independent shops and businesses in the town. Two people suggested that more employment space could be established on the outskirts of the town or near the motorway, but others considered that large scale employment was probably inappropriate for a town of Ormskirk’s size.
- 10.13 Responses in relation to infrastructure improvements focussed around traffic congestion and parking with thirteen people raising this issue.

***Skelmersdale Concourse Shopping Centre***

- 10.14 Sixteen responses were received during an on-street questionnaire session in the Concourse Shopping Centre. Three people interviewed picked out the sense of community and the people in their neighbourhoods as what they valued about Skelmersdale. A similar number liked the green surroundings of the housing estates and the fact that the town was surrounded by countryside. However in contrast, three people stated that they didn't enjoy living in the area and were looking to move out. A small number of people interviewed were not Skelmersdale residents but had travelled to the Concourse to use the shops and appreciated these facilities and the availability of free parking.
- 10.15 Seven people when asked what improvements should be made to the area responded that there was little to do of an evening in the town, specifically mentioning a lack of bars and restaurants. This linked into the observation by several people that there was a poor range and choice of shops in the Concourse and a number perceived this as getting worse.
- 10.16 There was a mix of responses when people were asked where new development should be located. Only one person supported the development of underused green spaces, one suggested density of development could be increased while two felt that building on the edge of the town was preferable.
- 10.17 Again, a mix of responses was received in response to the question about the sort of housing that people felt would be required in the future. Most people suggested this needed to be 'affordable' and three stated that more family homes were required. A similar number claimed that there was a need for more bungalows and housing specifically for older people. Three people expressed a wish to see more energy efficient homes that were cheap to heat and run, highlighting the incidence of fuel poverty in the area.
- 10.18 In relation to employment provision, people gave many different responses. Many felt that a flexible approach was necessary to attract any business willing to invest in the area. There was some concern expressed by three people that skills should match the jobs available in the local area. One person suggested that providing a better evening offer in terms of entertainment could improve job opportunities – for example in the restaurant sector.
- 10.19 By far the most common response to the question concerning infrastructure requirements in Skelmersdale was that the town needs a railway station. Almost everyone questioned raised this topic. One person suggested that there was a need for better sports facilities which can be used by all, but particularly young people.

## 11. Representations on other matters

11.1 In addition to the 37 consultation questions relating to the content of the four Options Papers and the Spatial Portrait, comments were invited or permitted on other supporting and / or evidence base documents, including the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1, the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the Sustainability Appraisal. The comments received, as well as general comments not included elsewhere in this report, are summarised below.

### Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1)

11.2 There were 8 responses to the Issues and Options public consultation that are of relevance to the draft Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (February 2017) which provides evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan. Five responses were from members of the public, two from Parish Councils and one from the Environment Agency. Those responses can be summarised as follows:

- Rufford, Halsall and Burscough were considered to be areas at risk of local flooding. Drainage was considered as being inadequate in Burscough and concerns were expressed in relation to the impact of new development on surface water flooding and flooding from sewers;
- The potential closure of pumping stations in the Alt-Crossens catchment area would adversely affect agriculture, the wider economy, infrastructure and housing.
- Evidence of flooding is available that has not been adequately covered by the evidence base. (NB Paragraph 7.1 of the draft SFRA indicates what official sources of flooding are taken into account in the document);
- Whilst the SFRA is a very thorough review it takes no account of increased future risk from flooding due to climate change. Extreme caution should be applied to increasing development in high flood risk zones and the Local Plan should consider the lifetime of housing development. Improved data may come to light during the lifetime of the Plan;
- There will be a significant reduction in EA maintenance in the Alt-Crossens catchment, withdrawing land drainage operations, and creating uncertainty. This requires specific attention in the Local Plan and for the Council to fully engage with partners. The increase in ground saturation and rising groundwater levels will be a major issue with off-site flooding likely to become increasingly relevant.

11.3 In addition, a comment was received at the Rural East Public Workshop that the draft SFRA also needed to take topography into account.



- 11.4 Finally, the representation from the Environment Agency made several detailed comments for amendment of the SFRA, including:
- Ormskirk is a high flood risk area. Add a comment about the interaction between the older drainage systems and Sandy Brook;
  - Parbold should be added as an area at risk from flooding. There are no flood defences in the vicinity of Parbold;
  - The SFRA should define Flood Zone 3b (functional floodplain);
  - Commentary relating to flood risk management systems (part of section 8) should be removed. The diversion of Calico Brook into East Quarry at Appley Bridge has ceased.

### **Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)**

- 11.5 A ‘Call for Sites’ exercise was carried out seeking suggestions for suitable sites for housing, employment, and other land uses, as part of the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation. People were also given the opportunity to comment on the methodology and findings of the Draft Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (‘SHELAA’).
- 11.6 This ‘Call for Sites’ and consultation was extended to those on the Council’s Local Plan Consultation Database, and also to people who owned, or who had submitted sites for the SHELAA in previous ‘Calls for Sites’. Information requested included:
- Site specification – size, current uses, planning history
  - Proposed uses – indication of capacity and potential timeframe for delivery
  - Other information, e.g. on known constraints, viability.
- 11.7 The 2017 Call for Sites yielded a total of 15 new sites – 7 for housing only, 1 for employment only, and 7 for mixed uses including employment.
- 11.8 The consultation on the Draft SHELAA also generated 42 responses in relation to existing sites. These responses tended to involve the submission of additional details on sites, including timescales for anticipated delivery, and supporting information e.g. topographical surveys. However, much of the material received simply reiterated information already contained within the existing site submission forms.
- 11.9 The above submissions will be incorporated into the 2017 SHELAA, and will be reflected in the final 2017 SHELAA report which will be published later in the year, and will inform the next stage of the West Lancashire Local Plan Review.

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 11.10 No specific representations were received on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) *per se*, although it was mentioned in two representations: one representor simply repeated national policy and Regulations in stating that SA needs to be undertaken and that it

should inform the Local Plan strategy; Lancashire County Council referred to the SA in their comments on several Options questions:

- Key Issues (question 6) – acknowledges that hospital admissions for violent crime is listed as an indicator in the SA; this should influence urban design considerations;
- Location of development (question 13): LCC agrees with the SA's conclusion that Options 1 and 2 are the most sustainable;
- Infrastructure (question 14): the SA includes an indicator on numbers killed or seriously injured on roads; this should be reflected in the Plan, with highway safety being a key area for consideration in the Preferred Options paper;
- Healthy town centres (question 19): the SA concludes that Option 3 is likely to be the most sustainable; consideration should be given to policies that contribute to healthy town centres to address specific health inequalities;
- Affordable housing (question 27): it is noted that in the SA, Option 4 (detailed AH policy) and Option 8 (flexibility in the definition of AH) perform well relative to the baseline.

### **Habitats Regulations Assessment**

- 11.11 A representation was received from Natural England which agreed that the spatial options were insufficiently developed to accurately predict potential effects upon European designated sites. They expressed a desire to discuss evidence that will be needed on which to base an effective Habitats Regulations Assessment as the Local Plan progresses.

### **Other (General) Comments**

- 11.12 Various other comments were made during the consultation, not directly relating to any specific Issue and Options question, or supporting document, but of relevance to the plan-making process, including:
- Consideration should be given to policy options to facilitate healthy lifestyles;
  - Concern was raised about the possibility of hydraulic fracturing ('fracking') in West Lancashire. *(Note: this matter is beyond the remit of the West Lancashire Local Plan Review, but comes under the authority of Lancashire County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority.)*
  - Burscough Parish Council requested that comments made by individuals be given equal weight to comments made by agents on behalf of landowners or developers. *(Note: West Lancashire Borough Council has always attached equal weight to comments received from all respondents and will continue to do so.)*
  - One member of the public expressed the view that the Equality Impact Assessment for the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Cabinet Report was inadequate, and that more attention needs to be paid to those with protected characteristics, for example people with a disability.

## 12. Conclusions

- 12.1 A total of 113 representations were received on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation, from a range of different stakeholders (statutory consultees, Parish Councils, residents' groups, individuals, organisations, developers, landowners and agents) covering a very wide variety of topics. 15 further representations were received on the Scope of the Local Plan Review.
- 12.2 A total of 138 people (excluding Council officers) attended the six consultation workshops around the Borough. 24 West Lancashire Borough Councillors and 12 Parish Councillors attended their respective forums. 45 developers and / or agents attended the Developers' Forum, and 8 neighbouring authorities attended the Duty to Co-Operate meeting hosted by the Council.
- 12.3 It is not surprising, given the nature of the questions asked, and the range of respondents, that the answers received to the different questions varied significantly between different stakeholders, and often between different areas of the Borough. Given the number of questions asked (over 35) and the range of views, this concluding chapter of the Consultation Feedback Report will not attempt to provide an overall summary of the representations received and reported in earlier chapters.
- 12.4 In due course, the Council will respond where appropriate, in a separate report, to points made in the representations on the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation, in line with the requirements of the West Lancashire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). As stated in the SCI, the Council is not bound to respond to each individual submission / representation to the consultation.
- 12.5 The full set of representations can be viewed on the Council's website:  
<http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/the-local-plan/local-plan-review.aspx>
- 12.6 The next stage of preparation of the Local Plan Review will be the Preferred Options stage, in which the preferred strategy for the future development of West Lancashire will be set out. It is envisaged that consultation on the Local Plan Review Preferred Options document will take place in summer 2018.

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## Appendix 1 Consultation Questions

The 37 consultation questions on the Local Plan Review – Issues and Options documents are as follows:

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1-3. (Personal details – name, address, etc. Do you wish to be added to our consultation database?)

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### 4. Spatial Portrait

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.

**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?**

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**5. 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?**

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**6. 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?**

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### 7. A draft Vision for West Lancashire

The **Vision** is what the Council would like to see achieved for West Lancashire, based on the current evidence 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.

**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?**

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## **8. Objectives**

**Objectives** set out how the **Vision** will be delivered. They are important in guiding what the planning policies should aim to achieve, and in monitoring whether the policies are working successfully after the Local Plan is adopted.

**The draft Objectives are:**

- Objective 1: Sustainable Communities
- Objective 2: A Healthy Population
- Objective 3: A high quality built environment
- Objective 4: Addressing climate change
- Objective 5: Reduced inequality
- Objective 6: The right mix of housing
- Objective 7: A vitalized economy
- Objective 8: Vibrant town and village centres
- Objective 9: Accessible services
- Objective 10: A natural environment

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

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## **9. Strategic Development Options**

### **The 3 variables**

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

- How much new housing and employment land we should provide each year
- How far into the future the Local Plan is to look (the Local Plan period)
- How we spread new development land around the Borough

### **The amount of development land required**

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

***The options are, for each year of the plan period,:***

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

\*One hectare (ha) is about the size of one and a half football pitches.

**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?**

## 10. The 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 data of the SHELMA\* and the current Local Plan.

\*The SHELMA (Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment) is an important study we are undertaking with neighbouring Merseyside councils to work out our future housing and employment land needs.

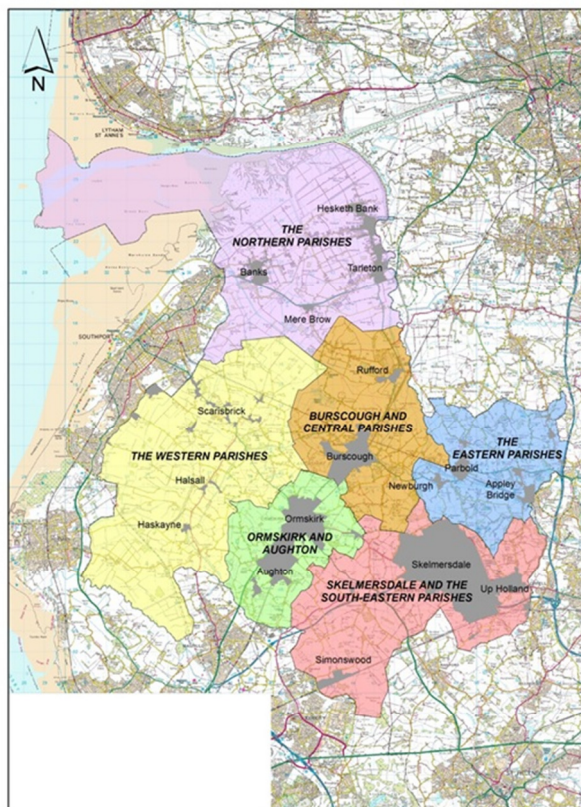
**The options are:**

- Option I - 2012 to 2037
- Option II - 2012 to 2050

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

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## 11. Distributing the development requirements across West Lancashire



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A further consideration for the Strategic Development Options is the way the total amount of development land required is spread across the Borough. 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.

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

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

**The options are:**

- Scenario 1: Spread new development around West Lancashire according to the proportionate size of existing towns and villages.
- Scenario 2: Focus new development in and around the key service centres\* of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough
- Scenario 3: Allocate less development to the key service centres and more to the rural areas such as the Northern Parishes.
- Scenario 4: Focus development on Skelmersdale; grow Skelmersdale significantly more than the other key service centres.

\*Key service centres (such as Ormskirk and Burscough) are those centres that have a good range of retail and service provision that can meet day to day needs, particularly for convenience (food) shopping. They will also have a primary school, secondary school, local employment, GP surgery, playing fields/areas and regular public transport services. A full explanation of the different types of centres can be found in the '[Sustainable Settlement Study](#)'.

**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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### **13. The location of new development**

The previous question asks how we should spread development across West Lancashire. But we also need to think about where new development should go in relation to what exists at present. For example, should we try and fit new development within existing settlements, or put it in the countryside?

**The options are:**

- Option 1: Maximise the capacity of existing settlements by prioritising infill developments within built-up areas or by building higher.
- Option 2: Locate new development adjacent to existing settlements to reduce the need to travel and reduce emissions.
- Option 3: Create brand new settlements with the necessary associated infrastructure.
- Option 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).

\* Flood zones are mapped by the Environment Agency and refer to the likelihood of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of any defences. Flood zone 2 is a medium chance of flooding (or the chance of flooding once in every 100 or 200 years). Flood zone 3 is a high chance of flooding (or the chance of flooding more than once in every 100 years). There are no critical drainage areas in West Lancashire at present.

**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?**

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### **14. Providing infrastructure and services**

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. However, infrastructure is still a key issue that we must consider at this early stage of plan preparation. The different options for the amount of new development, and the whereabouts in the Borough it should go, all have their own implications for infrastructure and services provision.

**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?**

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

We need to contribute towards sustainable national economic growth. This includes providing the right size and mix of employment sites, better connecting Lancashire, supporting the rural and visitor economy and improving knowledge and skills. It places particular focus upon Skelmersdale. We need to consider how much future development should take place, where it should be, what type of development, which specific areas need to be regenerated, how business can be supported and how local communities can benefit.

**The options are:**

- Option 1: Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing needs
- Option 2: Allocate sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses
- Option 3: Allocate all new sites for a range of 'B class' uses\*
- Option 4: Increase town centre office sites

\*Class B of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order (1987). This includes uses such as business and light industry (Class B1), general industry (B2), and warehousing (B8).

**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?**

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## 16. Economic Policy Issue 2: Existing Employment Areas

The following options consider how we should treat existing employment areas.

### ***The options are:***

- Option 1: Continue with the existing Local Plan policy approach - i.e. protect employment uses on the most important sites; allow for other uses in certain situations on other sites
- Option 2: Protect all existing employment areas for business class employment uses
- Option 3: Designate selected employment areas either wholly or in part for non-business class uses
- Option 4: Do not protect employment areas for Class B1, B2 and B8 uses\*

\*Class B of the **Town** and Country Planning Use Classes Order (1987). This includes uses such as business and light industry (Class B1), general industry (B2), and warehousing (B8).

**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?**

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

National policy requires local authorities to support the growth of business in rural areas, promote development and diversification of agriculture, and support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments. Providing these rural economic opportunities raises multiple and potentially complex issues. The policy options below may either form a single future policy or a number of future policies.

### ***The options are:***

- Option 1: Continue with existing Local Plan Policy approach
- Option 2: Increased development in rural areas
- Option 3: A tourism and visitor economy policy

**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?**

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## 18. Economic Policy Issue 4: Network and hierarchy of centres

The Local Plan establishes a hierarchy of centres within the Borough:- town centres, large village centres and small village centres and local centres. This hierarchy is designed to provide a framework for the type and levels of development that will be appropriate for each of those centres.

### ***The options are:***

- Review the Local Plan centre hierarchy

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

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

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## 19. Economic Policy Issue 5: Ensuring healthy town, village and local centres - appropriate uses

Town centres are often the heart of a community and we want to support them. We need to consider whether the existing town centres and primary shopping areas\* are still appropriate and what uses should be allowed within them.

\*Primary shopping areas are the areas of town or village centres where shops are concentrated. Other parts of the town centre may have leisure (restaurants, cafes, bars) or business (offices etc) uses so we use the term 'primary shopping area' to identify the main retail area.

### ***The options are:***

- Option 1: Review current town, village and local centre boundaries
- Option 2: Review current primary shopping area boundaries
- Option 3: Review what we consider to be appropriate uses in town centres

**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?**

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## 20. Economic Policy Issue 6: Sites for town centre uses

**Town centre uses are those that you'd typically expect to see in your town centre - things like shops, cafes, bars, restaurants and offices.**

We need to make sure that there are enough sites in our town and village centres to be able to accommodate any identified needs for town centre uses. This will allow centres to grow sustainably, meet residents' needs and retain spending within the Borough.

### ***The options are:***

- Option 1: Continue our current approach - make Skelmersdale town centre the priority for investment
- Option 2: Allocate site(s) for town centre uses at Ormskirk
- Option 3: Allocate a non-town centre site somewhere in the Borough for a retail warehouse park.
- Option 4: Allocate a site to meet retail needs in the north of the Borough

**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?**

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

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## 22. Environmental Policy Issue 1: Local Nature Conservation Sites

There are many levels of protection given to different nature conservation sites. One of the lower levels is called 'Local Nature Conservation Sites'. However, there is some concern that these sites no longer accurately reflect areas that are important to biodiversity and new and alternative assessments could be used to categorise and identify sites. National planning policy refers to the establishment of 'ecological networks' - looking at links between different sites and how improvements can be made to support nature conservation. We need to consider whether to keep the 'Local Nature Conservation Sites' designation, or to base our future policy approach on ecological networks.

### ***The options are:***

- Option 1: Continue with the Local Nature Conservation Sites\* designation in the next Local Plan
- Option 2: Remove the Local Nature Conservation Sites designation from the Local Plan. The sites would instead be incorporated into the Ecological Network\*\* and given appropriate protection.

\* Local Nature Conservation Sites are designated by local authorities as areas of locally important nature and landscape

\*\* Ecological Networks are the basic, joined up infrastructure of existing and future habitat needed to allow population of species and habitats to survive in changing conditions.

**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?**

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## 23. Environmental Policy Issue 2: Renewable Energy

Planning can play an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, providing resilience to climate change, and delivering renewable energy\*. It is important to consider how the Local Plan should encourage the provision of renewable energy in West Lancashire.

\*Renewable energy is energy collected from renewable sources - i.e. that which can be generated and replaced in short timescales. It includes solar panels and wind turbines.

### ***The options are:***

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

**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?**

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#### 24. Environmental Policy Issue 3: Sustainable Design and Construction

The way that buildings are designed and constructed can help to reduce the effects of climate change by reducing demands on energy - for example through insulation, electric vehicle charging points and use of sustainable materials. Design can also help protect and promote biodiversity - for example by providing habitats for wildlife (bird boxes, bat bricks, hedgehog friendly fencing).

**The options are:**

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

\*The **Community** Energy Fund would require certain new developments to pay the Council money, and that money would then be used to make existing properties more sustainable or to deliver renewable energy developments. This would help reduce the impact of development.

**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?**

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#### 25. Environmental Policy Issue 4: Sustainable and Healthy Places

There are obviously lots of factors that influence health, although planning plays a significant role. The layout of new developments can contribute to encouraging exercise, improving connectivity, and reducing car usage, improving air quality, and improving the attractiveness of the area to enhance mental health and help people with dementia-related issues navigate their way around the area. Whilst the Borough has many areas of green spaces, there are shortages in certain types of open space and sports facilities and access to them.

**The options are:**

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

**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?**

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#### 26. Are there any other environmental policy issues that should also be considered? If so, what are they?

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#### 27. Social Policy Issue 1: Affordable Housing

Housing affordability is a long standing issue, in West Lancashire and elsewhere. House prices are high and rising, and the Council's ability to deliver affordable housing has been reduced over recent years. The usual policy approach has been to require a percentage of houses on schemes above a certain size to be affordable. Moving forward, there are various policy options to deliver affordable housing; several of these can be used together.

**The options are:**

- Option 1: Do nothing, i.e. have no policy on affordable housing
- Option 2: Continue with the 'usual' approach to affordable housing policy
- Option 3: Carry on with a broadly similar policy to policy RS2 of the current Local Plan
- Option 4: Add more detail to the Local Plan policy e.g. on house sizes and tenures
- Option 5: Allocate specific sites for 100% affordable housing schemes
- Option 6: Allow affordable housing in locations where general market housing would not be permitted
- Option 7: Allow for more flexibility when delivering affordable housing as part of larger market housing developments
- Option 8: Have greater flexibility in what the Council defines as affordable housing

**Which option(s) for the approach towards affordable housing policy do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?**

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**28. Social Policy Issue 2: Demand for self- and custom-build housing**

Self- and custom-build housing ('SCB housing') can take various forms, from individual houses designed and built by the person who will live in them, to 'grand design' type properties that are commissioned by the occupant but built by tradespeople, to more general housing built by volume housebuilders but with certain internal features chosen by the occupant. Interest in self-build and custom-build housing continues to rise, and national policy means that Councils must register demand for plots for such housing, and make adequate provision of sites, or plots, to meet that demand.

***The options are:***

Option 1: Do not allocate any sites for SCB housing

Option 2: Set aside parts of larger allocated housing sites for SCB plots

Option 3: Identify and allocate small sites for SCB dwellings in line with demand

**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?**

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**29. Social Policy Issue 3: Demand for alternative residential accommodation**

People may choose to live in caravans (or park homes) and houseboats, rather than 'bricks and mortar housing'. Draft government guidance recommends local authorities measure the need for caravan and houseboat accommodation and then consider how to meet those needs. We expect to do a needs assessment over coming months, but can consider the policy options now.

***The options are:***

Option 1: Allow for caravan or houseboat accommodation to come forward as the market demands

Option 2: Allocate new sites, or land on the edge of existing sites, for additional caravan-based accommodation or mooring berths.

Option 3: Vary Green Belt policy on a site-specific basis, to allow for expansion or intensification of residential caravan sites or mooring berths to meet identified needs

**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 pitches or berths are made available for caravans and houseboats? Why?**

---

**30. Social Policy Issue 4: the Skelmersdale housing market**

The housing market in Skelmersdale is considered weaker than in other areas of the Borough. The regeneration of Skelmersdale, in particular the town centre, has been a long standing priority for the Council. There are policies and initiatives already in place to strengthen the Skelmersdale housing market, but, moving forward, there are other general policy options that could help achieve this goal.

***The options are:***

1) Continue to relax, or further relax policy requirements for housing sites in Skelmersdale

2) Base the Local Plan Review strategy on the regeneration and expansion of Skelmersdale

**Which policy option for addressing the issue of relative market weakness in Skelmersdale do you think is the most appropriate? Why?**

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### 31. Social Policy Issue 5: The social requirements of older people

'Older people' covers a very broad group, but generally speaking 'older people' have a number of requirements - they should be able to access facilities (including 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 employment and training opportunities; and they should feel safe and supported. Planning can affect ease of access to facilities, social opportunities and transport.

#### **The options are:**

- Option 1: A general 'sustainable development' policy which directs new development to places where services and facilities are available
- Option 2: Allocate specific sites in appropriate locations for services and facilities.
- Option 3: Prepare an Area Action Plan or similar document to ensure facilities are provided as part of any very large new developments

**Which policy options for the approach towards the social requirements of older people do you think is the most appropriate for the Local Plan? Why?**

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### 32. Social Policy Issue 6: Residential accommodation for older people

Older people have specific accommodation requirements - for example design features that can respond to people's changing health and mobility difficulties. It is expected that the housing market will, to an extent, deliver accommodation for older people. However, there are some concerns that provision for elderly needs is not receiving the priority it requires, and therefore there is a need for policy to prompt such delivery.

#### **The options are:**

- Option 1: Have no specific policy, but let the market deliver appropriate accommodation in line with local demand
- Option 2: Continue the current approach, i.e. require that a percentage of new dwellings be designed specifically to accommodate the elderly
- Option 3: In conjunction with the above, provide a tighter definition of what constitutes 'housing designed specifically to accommodate the elderly'
- Option 4: Adopt one or both of the optional Technical Standards\* for new houses
- Option 5: Require adherence to, or at least that regard be had to, the HAPPi (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) Design Principles\*\*
- Option 6: Allocate specific sites for elderly accommodation
- Option 7: Adopt the more general policy approach of promoting 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods'

\*The 'Technical Standards' are part of national Building Regulations, and require dwellings to be accessible for elderly or wheelchair-bound occupants, e.g. wide doorways, ground floor bathrooms etc

\*\* The HAPPi principles are a set of 10 design criteria relating to things such as good natural light, and room to move around. They are particularly relevant to older people's accommodation needs.

**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?**

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### 33. Social Policy Issue 7: Provision of HMOs in Ormskirk

HMO's refer to Houses in Multiple Occupation. The increase in the number of HMOs has been an issue in Ormskirk for a number of years and has had effects on the area. The properties converted to HMOs typically tend to be at the cheaper end of the market, reducing the availability of first-time or affordable properties. In streets where the proportion of HMOs is high, the character of the street can be changed.

\*An Article 4 Direction, a legal tool that gives the Council extra control over development, was introduced in 2011 to control changes of use from dwellings to HMOs in Ormskirk, most of Aughton, and Westhead. Consequently, planning permission is needed to convert a house to a HMO in these areas. It works alongside policy RS3 of the current Local Plan, which limits the proportion of HMOs in a street, typically to 5%. We want to know how future policy should address HMOs.

**The options are:**

Option 1: Expand the 'Article 4 area'\* and the area to which the HMO percentage policy applies, to include neighbouring settlements

Option 2: Revoke the Article 4 Direction and policy RS3, and have no policy

Option 3: Decrease the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a lower percentage, potentially even down to 0%

Option 4: Increase the HMO limit from current levels on all or specific streets to a higher percentage.

**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?**

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**34. Social Policy Issue 8: Provision of off-campus purpose-built student accommodation in Ormskirk**

In addition to HMOs, students can be housed in purpose built accommodation either on-campus or off-campus. The provision of on-campus accommodation is dealt with above in question 33. With regard to the provision of off-campus, purpose built student accommodation, there are a number of options.

**The options are:**

- Option 1: Continue with the current policy approach of restricting off-campus purpose-built student accommodation unless strict criteria are met.
- Option 2: Relax policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University Campus.
- Option 3: Allocate specific sites for off-campus student accommodation, whilst restricting 'unplanned' developments elsewhere.
- Option 4: Tighten the current policy to severely, or entirely, restrict off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation.

**Which policy option for off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation do you think is the most appropriate for Ormskirk / West Lancashire? Why?**

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**35. Social Policy Issue 9: Delivering suitable accommodation for travellers**

For several years there has been, and is, a lack of authorised or suitable accommodation in the Borough for the travelling community. Providing accommodation for travellers has proved difficult, with the 'available' sites often found in unsuitable locations (for example in flood risk areas) and the 'suitable' sites not available for travellers to purchase. National policy requires the Council to allocate specific sites to meet local accommodation needs.

**The options are:**

Option 1: Allow the travellers based at present in West Lancashire to stay on their (currently unauthorised) sites.

Option 2: When allocating new sites for other development in the Borough, set aside part of those sites for travellers

Option 3: Compulsory Purchase\* of suitable sites in order to allocate them for travellers

\*A Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) is a legal function that would allow the Council to obtain land or property without the consent of the owner. To issue a CPO, the authority must demonstrate the land is necessary and there is a public interest. Compensation is usually provided.

**Which policy option(s) for addressing the issue of meeting traveller accommodation needs do you think is (are) the most appropriate for West Lancashire? Why?**

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**36. Are there any other social policy issues that should also be considered? If so, what are they?**

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**37. Do you have any general comments to make on the Issues and Options consultation?**

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