



# Local Development Scheme

West Lancashire Borough Council

September 2018

WEST LANCASHIRE



LOCAL PLAN

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a project plan for the Local Plan for West Lancashire. The production of an LDS is a requirement on Local Planning Authorities arising from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by Section 111 of the Localism Act 2011. Furthermore, the Council's adherence to the timescale it has set itself within the LDS will be used as a performance measure.

1.2 This Local Development Scheme provides a guide for the preparation of a Local Plan Review which will culminate in a new Local Plan for West Lancashire as well as selected Supplementary Planning Documents that will also need to be prepared. This version of the LDS replaces that previously produced in September 2017. It includes the following Chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides an introduction and offers a background to why we have prepared an LDS and what the purpose of it is, as well providing a list of the current set of local planning policy documents;
- Chapter 2 identifies the topics that we envisage will make up a new Local Plan for West Lancashire and the likely timescale for preparing the Local Plan;
- Chapter 3 looks at the evidence base that will underpin the production of the Local Plan;
- Chapter 4 identifies the resources available to the Development and Regeneration Service of the Council to support the preparation of a new Local Plan; and
- Chapter 5 considers the risks that exist which could slow progress on the Local Plan and some of the mitigation measures which can be put in place.

### Background

1.3 The current West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 was adopted in October 2013 and while it is only five years old, the context surrounding planning and development is constantly changing and national planning policy is evolving with it. This means that local planning policy, such as Local Plans, can quickly become out of date if they are not reviewed and updated accordingly, which can have two main negative consequences.

- 1.4 First, an out-of-date Local Plan can stymie necessary growth, both economically and in terms of providing the right kind of development in the right place in a timely fashion. Secondly, if local planning policy is out of date it can be ineffective in managing and guiding where appropriate development should take place and can lead to a situation where the Council has less control or choice in its decisions.
- 1.5 Therefore, while the current adopted Local Plan for West Lancashire is not out of date at this point in time, the Council considered it prudent to begin work on a Local Plan Review in September 2016 with the aim of preparing a new Local Plan, especially given that the gathering and review of all evidence, the preparation of a Local Plan and the Examination of the final document by a Planning Inspector can, all together, take several years. However, all policies in the current, adopted Local Plan will remain effective and a part of the Development Plan for the Borough until they are replaced by new policies in a newly adopted Local Plan.
- 1.6 Producing any Local Plan is a major project that requires significant resources in order to prepare it and a project management approach is vitally important to enable production within a given timescale. The Council views the LDS as a key project management tool in the production of its Local Plan.
- 1.7 The LDS has three main purposes:
- To inform people of how the Local Plan will be prepared and the likely timescale involved;
  - To establish work priorities and enable work programmes to be formed; and
  - To set a timescale for the monitoring and review of the preparation of such documents.
- 1.8 This LDS contains all those Development Plan Documents (such as a Local Plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents for which a timetable is known as at September 2018 that the Council is responsible for. Minerals and Waste matters are the responsibility of Lancashire County Council, although the relevant Development Plan Documents (DPDs) related to those matters do form part of the Development Plan for West Lancs.

1.9 It is possible that in the future further documents will be added. These will only be added into this document, however, when a detailed timetable for the work can be established.

### **Current Local Planning Policy documents**

1.10 The current adopted Development Plan for West Lancashire is made up of three documents:

- The West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 DPD (October 2013); and
- The Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy DPD (February 2009)
- The Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Site Allocation and Development Management Policies (September 2013)

1.11 In addition, one policy from the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan 2001-2016 was saved at the time of the adoption of the current Local Plan. Policy DE4 – Caravan Sites for Gypsies and Travelling Show People – is therefore currently still part of the Development Plan.

1.12 The Council has a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that are current and several Supplementary Planning Guidance documents (SPGs) that have been retained and are still relevant:

- Development in the Green Belt SPD (October 2015)
- Yew Tree Farm, Burscough Masterplan SPD (February 2015)
- Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Developments SPD (September 2014)
- Skelmersdale Town Centre Masterplan SPD (September 2008)
- Design Guide SPD (January 2008)
- Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural Workers SPG
- Affordable Housing SPG
- Design Guide for Shop Fronts SPG
- Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance SPG

- [Trees and Development](#) SPG
- [Site Planning - Layout and Design](#) SPG
- [Dalton Village Design Statement](#) SPG
- [Whalleys Housing and Mixed Use Sites](#) SPG
- [Whitemoss Business Park](#) SPG
- [Land West of Stanley Industrial Estate](#) SPG

1.13 The Council also adopted a new **Statement of Community Involvement** (SCI) in June 2016. The SCI sets out who we will consult on various aspects of planning, and what methods we will use.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

1.14 CIL is not technically local planning policy, or a matter that is required to be reported on in the LDS, but it is inextricably linked to local planning, being a levy that is placed on new development at the time permission is granted. As a new Local Plan is prepared, it is inevitable that a new CIL Charging Schedule will need to be prepared in order to ensure that CIL is charged at the correct level based on viability evidence that incorporates the new local planning policy context. The Council will determine in due course the most appropriate time to review the CIL Charging Schedule.

## Chapter 2 A Local Plan Review – a timetable

2.1 The timetable for the Local Plan Review and preparation of a new Local Plan is set out in the following chart, and this chapter seeks to explain a little more about a number of key stages in the process of the Local Plan Review.

Document / Stage	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020	
<b>Local Plan Review</b>																			
Preparation of Evidence	Green	Yellow	Yellow																
Regulation 18 "Scoping" Consultation		Green																	
Preparation of Issues & Options Paper		Green	Green																
Issues & Options Consultation			Green	Green															
Preparation of Preferred Options				Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow										
Preferred Options Consultation										Yellow									
Preparation of Publication version											Yellow	Yellow							
Publication / Pre-Submission Consultation													Yellow						
Submission to Planning Inspectorate														Yellow					
Examination in Public (inc. Hearings and any Modifications consultation)														Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Receipt of Inspector's Report																			Yellow
Adoption of Local Plan																			Yellow

### Regulation 18 “Scoping” consultation and Preparation of Evidence

2.2 In order to begin to satisfy the first part of Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (and alongside the publication of this LDS) the Council wrote to a wide range of key stakeholders in September 2016 to consult on the scope of the Local Plan Review, i.e. what topics a new Local Plan for West Lancashire should cover and what time period it should cover. Feedback received from this consultation is available on the Council's website at [www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan).

2.3 A further stage of Scoping consultation was carried out with the general public and any other interested parties alongside the Issues & Options consultation discussed below.

The feedback received from this additional Scoping consultation is also available at [www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/localplan).

- 2.4 Preparation of evidence to better understand key planning issues is an essential part of the Local Plan Review and directly informs the preparation of new local planning policy and so the Council have already begun to collate the evidence needed to formulate policies for a Local Plan, and will consider collating further evidence as necessary based upon the feedback in the above scoping consultation with key stakeholders. Preparation of evidence is covered in greater detail in the next chapter but it will include undertaking some studies in-house and, in other cases, commissioning consultants to prepare studies where the Council does not have the relevant expertise in-house.

### **Issues & Options stage**

- 2.5 Following the scoping consultation, the Council prepared a series of Issues & Options Papers for the Local Plan Review, and consulted on them in March / April 2017. This Issues & Options stage was a key step in the early preparation of the new Local Plan, as it set out the full range of potential planning-related issues in West Lancashire and so began to consider how those issues can be addressed through a Local Plan (i.e. policy options).
- 2.6 Overlying the consideration of the issues, the Issues & Options Papers also proposed a draft Vision & Objectives for a new Local Plan and considered a series of Strategic Options for the amount of development (housing and employment land) together with the spatial distribution of that development.
- 2.7 The responses and feedback generated through the Issues & Options consultation is available to view at [www.westlancs.gov.uk/LPR](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/LPR).

### **Preferred Options stage**

- 2.8 Following the consultation on the Issues & Options Paper, the Council have prepared a Preferred Options Paper, which narrows down to a single, preferred option for the amount of new development to be included in the Local Plan and the spatial distribution of that new development, considering what site allocations will be necessary for different uses in order to deliver that amount of development and drafting new planning policies to guide new development proposals in the new Local Plan.

- 2.9 The culmination of this stage of the Local Plan Review will be a public consultation on the Preferred Options Paper, which is essentially a draft Local Plan, with proposed policies included in draft and proposed site allocations. This Paper will be publicly consulted on in October / November 2018. This stage, together with the previous Issues & Options stage, forms the bulk of the requirements of Regulation 18.

### **Publication of Pre-Submission Local Plan, Submission and Examination and Adoption**

- 2.10 The final few stages of the Local Plan Review reflect the more formal stages of the Local Plan preparation, starting with the publication of the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan. This is essentially the “final draft” version of the Local Plan which the Council wishes to submit for Examination. It is published to give members of the public and other stakeholders the opportunity to make formal representations on the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan. These representations are then submitted, with the Local Plan, to the Secretary of State for the Examination of the Local Plan.
- 2.11 As such, this “publication” stage is not consultation, but simply seeking representations, and so the only events the Council would have at this stage would be “Drop-In” events for information only, to help individuals to make their representations.
- 2.12 Following this publication period, the Council would then decide on whether to submit the Local Plan for Examination. Once the Local Plan is submitted, it is then in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate to appoint an Inspector to undertake the Examination and write a report concluding whether or not the Local Plan is sound, and outlining any changes that are necessary to make it sound. Once the Local Plan has been found sound, the Council can adopt it. If there are significant changes proposed by the Inspector (known as main modifications) there may need to be a further stage of consultation during the Examination, with all responses ultimately being considered by the Inspector.

### **Other local planning policy documents**

- 2.13 As well as the Local Plan, the Council may choose to prepare new SPDs as the Local Plan progresses and specific matters arise which are best addressed in detail through an SPD, but at this time the Council are not proposing to begin preparation of any SPDs until there is a firmer idea of what Local Plan policies will cover (and in what detail) and so what further detail may be needed in an SPD.

## Summary of Planning Policy documents to be produced

<b>West Lancashire Local Plan</b>															
Document Details	<p>Role &amp; Content: Sets out the main planning context of the Borough, the development strategy for the Borough and priority locations for development, development management policies and site allocations;</p> <p>Status: Development Plan Document (DPD);</p> <p>Chain of Conformity: The Local Plan should conform with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Any additional DPDs or SPDs, and any Neighbourhood Plans, should conform with the Local Plan;</p> <p>Geographic Coverage: Whole Borough.</p>														
Timetable	<table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Initial Regulation 18 Scoping Consultation</td> <td>October 2016</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Issues &amp; Options Consultation</td> <td>March / April 2017</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Preferred Options Consultation</td> <td>October / November 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publication / Pre-Submission Consultation</td> <td>June - August 2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Submission to Planning Inspectorate</td> <td>October 2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Examination Period (inc. Hearings)</td> <td>October 2019 – October 2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adoption</td> <td>December 2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Initial Regulation 18 Scoping Consultation	October 2016	Issues & Options Consultation	March / April 2017	Preferred Options Consultation	October / November 2018	Publication / Pre-Submission Consultation	June - August 2019	Submission to Planning Inspectorate	October 2019	Examination Period (inc. Hearings)	October 2019 – October 2020	Adoption	December 2020
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Adoption	December 2020														
Arrangements for Production	<p>Prepared by Strategic Planning &amp; Implementation Team;</p> <p>Input from other Council services;</p> <p>Input and approval from Members via Cabinet, Local Plan Cabinet Working Group, Planning Committee, Executive Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and, for submission and adoption, Council;</p> <p>Adequate staffing resource is available within Department for production.</p>														
Commentary on Progress	<p>In broad terms, the preparation of a new Local Plan has progressed as planned in the LDS published in September 2017. There was a slight delay in the publication of the Preferred Options Papers for public consultation and this has caused a knock-on delay in the remainder of the timetable, but the current timetable still anticipates submission of the Local Plan for examination by October 2019 (compared to April 2019 in the previous LDS) and adoption by December 2020 (compared to April 2020 in the previous LDS). This would still represent a typical preparation time for a new Local Plan of around 4 years.</p>														

## Chapter 3 The Evidence Base

3.1 A Local Plan Review requires an extensive evidence base covering a wide range of topics and the following provides a summary of what evidence the Council are collecting, and when, to inform the Local Plan Review. This list could well change, especially if feedback from consultation with stakeholders identifies a gap in the proposed evidence base. All published versions of the various evidence base studies (whether in draft or as a final version) are available on the Council's website at:

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

- **Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)**

The Council have been working with the Liverpool City Region Authorities on the preparation of a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) since the start of 2016. The SHELMA identifies the objectively-assessed need (OAN) for housing and employment land across the City Region and by individual Authority to 2037. While a final version of the SHELMA has been prepared by the appointed consultants (GL Hearn), the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) has not yet been able to sign it off for publication.

The Council also asked GL Hearn to undertake a further piece of HEDNA-related evidence work to consider what are known as "policy-on" scenarios to understand what the implications of certain policy decisions would be for economic growth and the accompanying growth in housing demand in West Lancashire.

Further to the SHELMA, the LCRCA (with West Lancashire) have commenced a two-stage study looking at the supply of sites for large-scale B8 uses given the need identified in the SHELMA for large-scale B8 across the LCR and West Lancashire.

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

The SHELAA has two functions: 1) to enable all sites that are potentially available for development to be brought to the attention of the Council and ultimately be assessed as to their suitability for development, and 2) to identify

the 5, 10 and 15-year supply of sites in the SHELAA that are currently, in principle, policy-compliant with the current adopted Local Plan.

More information on existing and several new sites have been submitted by landowners and developers in the past year, and the Council have taken this information into consideration and will publish an updated SHELAA in September 2018. The SHELAA will be updated each year, usually following a call for any new information on existing or new sites.

- **Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study (ASHNS)**

Whilst the SHELMA (above) looks at overall housing needs, the ASHNS looks specifically at the local need for affordable housing in its various forms (social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, etc.), as well as the need for housing for the elderly, and for people living in houseboats in caravans (non-travellers). The study is now complete and has been published on the Council's website.

- **Traveller Needs Assessment**

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was undertaken by consultants in 2013/14 for Merseyside and West Lancashire. Since then, the government have changed the definition of "traveller". The 2017 Traveller Needs Assessment provides an updated figure for accommodation needs for the travelling community in West Lancashire, taking into account the government's revised definition of a traveller. The study is now complete and has been published on the Council's website.

- **Traffic / Transport Impact Assessment**

The Council have appointed WYG to prepare this Assessment which will identify the additional traffic flows that are likely to be created by new sites proposed in the Local Plan Preferred Options and how that traffic will affect the existing Key Route Network and Strategic Route Network. This will allow the Council, in close consultation with Highways England and Lancashire County Council, to consider where improvements may be required on particular routes / junctions to mitigate for the additional flows. A draft of this Assessment will be made available on the Council's website alongside the Preferred Options consultation.

- **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**

The Council published a draft IDP alongside the Issues & Options consultation. This could only consider existing infrastructure capacity compared to existing demand. However, as the Preferred Options have been developed, the IDP has been expanded to consider how the existing infrastructure in the Borough will be able to cope with the additional demands placed upon it by new development and identify any improvements that will need to be made to infrastructure to meet the increased demand.

- **Sustainable Settlement Study**

The Council have prepared a Sustainable Settlement Study to consider how sustainable each town and village in West Lancashire is, when considering access to key services. This then allowed an appropriate settlement hierarchy to be identified and inform deliberations in the Local Plan Review of which settlements should be the focus for new development.

- **Retail and Commercial Leisure Study**

The Council have appointed consultants Peter Brett Associates to produce a Borough wide Retail and Leisure Study in order to meet requirements set out by paragraph 85 of the revised NPPF. The Study identifies future retail and leisure floorspace requirements for the Borough with a view to informing the allocation of sites for future town centre uses in the Local Plan, undertaking health checks of Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale town centres and identifying future strategies for each of these centres. The study is now complete and has been published on the Council's website.

- **Playing Pitch Strategy Review**

A West Lancashire Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) was adopted as Council policy in February 2016. The PPS considers a range of sports including football, rugby union, cricket, hockey and bowls and identifies future needs for pitches. It recommends a number of priority projects which should be implemented between 2015 and 2025 for pitches and associated facilities such as changing rooms and will be used to identify which pitches and facilities should be protected and where any new provision should be made. In order to identify progress with recommendations and identify any important changes that have

taken place, the PPS is currently being refreshed in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance for keeping a strategy robust and up to date. A draft of this PPS Review, prepared by consultants KKP, is available on the Council's website.

- **Open Space Study**

The Council have appointed consultants KKP to update a Borough wide Open Space Study to identify local open space needs, audit local site provision, set local open space standards and apply those standards to identify surpluses and deficiencies in different types of open space across the Borough. The Study will develop a strategy identifying where and how open space should be protected, enhanced and where future new provision should be created. This will then be used to determine open space designations and planning policies in the new Local Plan. Robust and up to date assessments of the needs for both open space and sports provision are required by paragraph 96 of the revised NPPF. A draft of this open Space Study is available on the Council's website.

- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

Paragraph 156 of the revised NPPF indicates that Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The Council consulted on a draft Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) between March and April 2017. The primary purpose of the SFRA is to provide information on flood risk from all sources in the Borough and inform decision making in the emerging Local Plan in terms of the allocation of land and drafting of policies to manage flood risk. The Level 1 SFRA has been revised in light of comments received during consultation and a more detailed Level 2 SFRA has been prepared to assess those proposed allocations which may impact on flood risk. The SFRA will be made available on the Council's website alongside the Preferred Options consultation.

- **Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy**

The Council have prepared a Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy which is due to be finalised and approved in September 2017. The Strategy sets out the Council's aspirations for new Green Infrastructure and cycling infrastructure across West Lancashire, in particular the proposed Linear Parks and the West

Lancs Wheel. As such, the Local Plan will be prepared with regard to how parts of the Strategy might be delivered alongside (or by) new development.

- **Renewables / Low Carbon Development Study**

The Council will appoint consultants to prepare a study that assesses the potential capacity of West Lancashire to provide Renewable Energy or Low Carbon Developments, taking into account constraints that would impact on the suitability of such developments in a given location. The study may identify areas which are most suitable for particular types of Renewable Energy developments, and this will inform any policy on Renewable Energy developments in the new Local Plan. It was hoped this study would have been prepared in time for the Preferred Options consultation, but unfortunately a suitable consultant could not be secured initially to deliver the work, and so the delivery of this evidence study has been delayed.

- **Local Plan Viability Assessment**

Keppie Massie have been appointed to prepare a Viability Assessment for the Local Plan, and are currently assessing the Local Plan Preferred Options document as to whether it will enable viable developments to come forward in West Lancashire. This study will inform any tweaks to proposed policy which may be required to make the Local Plan viable and inform any review of a the CIL Charging Schedule. A draft of the Viability Assessment of the Preferred Options will be made available on the Council's website alongside the Preferred Options consultation.

- **Technical Papers**

The Council will prepare a series of Technical Papers as required to bring together the evidence on several key topics and explain how this has been used to identify the proposed Policies in the Local Plan. Technical Paper 1 covers the Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations and will be published alongside the Preferred Options consultation. Other Technical Papers, including for topics such as Student Accommodation and Health and Wellbeing will be prepared as required in the future.

- **Thematic and Spatial Evidence Papers**

The Council have prepared a range of thematic papers to summarise the available data and information on particular topics that form the baseline evidence for the Local Plan Review. This information has also been summarised in spatial papers to identify the key issues affecting each spatial area.

- **Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment**

A Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) is a legal requirement as part of a Local Plan preparation to assess the sustainability merits and environmental impacts of the preferred options selected in the Local Plan and the alternative options that have been considered. As such, it is an integral part of the evidence and decision-making process on the Local Plan.

- **Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

A HRA is another legal requirement to consider the impacts that the Local Plan may have on internationally-designated nature sites, such as Martin Mere and the Ribble Estuary. The HRA must first scope out whether impacts are potentially likely and then carry out an Appropriate Assessment of those impacts to identify any issues which the Local Plan must address or mitigation required to minimise the impacts of new development.

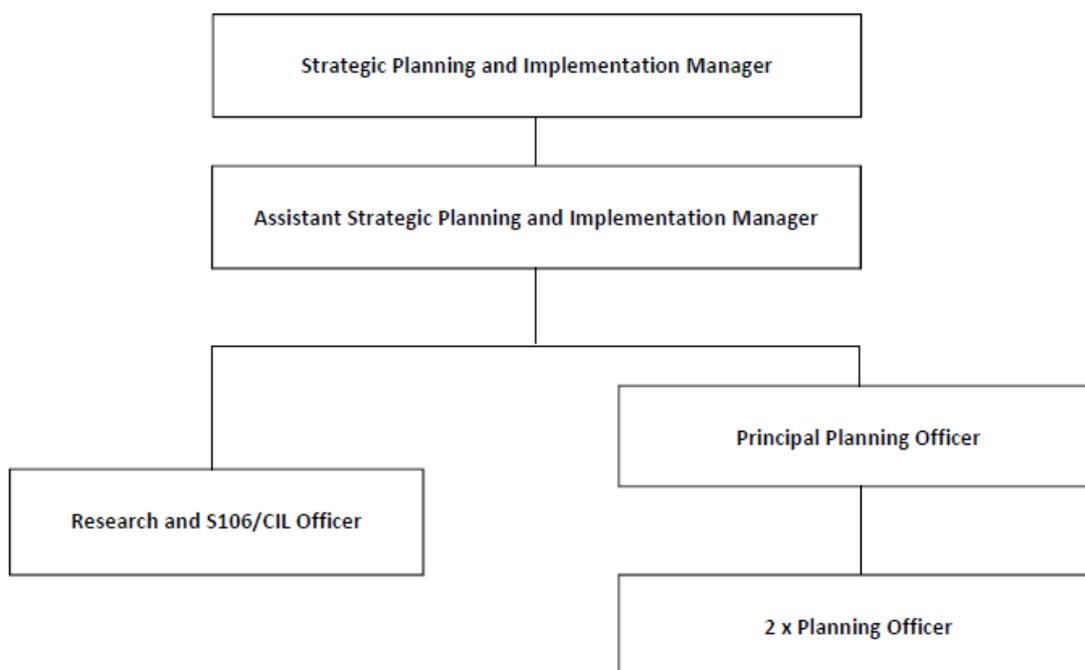
- **Health and Equality Impact Assessment**

Many aspects of new development and the way a place functions can have impacts on the health of the population and can have different effects on different groups of the population. As such, the Council will prepare a Health and Equality Impact Assessment of the Local Plan in order to identify ways in which the Local Plan can be improved to support a healthier population and to ensure that no particular group in society is prejudiced by the proposals.

## Chapter 4 Resources

- 4.1 The Local Plan Review and subsequent new Local Plan will be produced by the Council's Strategic Planning & Implementation Team but a document as wide ranging as a Local Plan will inevitably involve input from various parts of the Council as well as from external partners.
- 4.2 The Strategic Planning & Implementation Manager will take the lead role in developing the Local Plan Review, project managing the process and the preparation of a new Local Plan and all other local planning policy documents and CIL documents.
- 4.3 The Strategic Planning & Implementation Team will liaise closely with a number of other Council sections in developing the Plan, including:
- The Development Management Team (who will use the Local Plan to make decisions on planning applications)
  - The Heritage & Environment Team (on design, heritage, trees and landscaping)
  - The Economic Regeneration Team (on economic development and regeneration matters, town centre proposals and employment land)
  - The Housing Strategy and Development Programme Manager (on affordable and specialist housing)
  - The Technical Services Team (on flooding, drainage and other engineering matters)
  - The Leisure and Wellbeing Service (on leisure / public open space and health matters)
  - The Environmental Protection and Community Safety Team (on environmental protection, public health and community safety matters)
- 4.4 The staffing resource of the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team is as per the team structure chart below. It is considered that this level of staff, supplemented by a small budget to cover the costs of external specialist consultancy advice, is sufficient to adequately resource the preparation of a new Local Plan, and its evidence, up to the point of submission as well as the following:
- Preparation of all other local planning policy documents;
  - Responding to new Government planning policies, and other Government strategies and plans related to Planning;
  - Engaging with adjacent authorities and other agencies on planning matters;

- All monitoring required to prepare the Annual Monitoring Report and Housing Land Supply;
- The on-going maintenance of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Schedule;
- Administration of the Community Infrastructure Levy and how it is spent;
- Implementation of key projects to help deliver the proposals within the Local Plan and other documents, particularly transport and infrastructure related;
- Involvement in the preparation of key Council strategies; and
- Advising the Council's Development Management Team on the interpretation of planning policies and, where necessary, attending planning appeals.



**Figure 1: Strategic Planning & Implementation Team Structure**

4.5 Given that West Lancashire Borough Council is a two-tier Authority with Lancashire County Council, the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team will also continue to liaise closely with the County, especially on issues of highways and transportation, as well as having reference to the County's planning policy work on Minerals and Waste and their role as Education Authority. On the issue of transport, the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team also liaise closely with Merseytravel as the public transport

executive for Merseyside, extending into parts of West Lancashire, and Transport for Greater Manchester.

- 4.6 Resources have also been, and will continue to be, saved through effective partnership working with neighbouring Local Authorities. The Strategic Planning & Implementation Team are working closely with their peers in Merseyside, Lancashire and Greater Manchester in order to deliver "joined-up" cross-border planning on many issues that are not restricted by Local Authority boundaries. This also helps to fulfil the Duty to Co-operate introduced by the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.7 The Strategic Planning & Implementation Team will also continue to liaise closely with a wide range of infrastructure providers to ensure that development is located where infrastructure is already provided or to consider how infrastructure can be provided over the Local Plan period to meet the needs created by development in the Local Plan.

## Chapter 5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 The planning system requires effective project management techniques to ensure, as far as possible, that stated timetables for Local Plan, and other local planning policy document, preparation are adhered to. Through the use of such techniques, the Strategic Planning & Implementation Team will endeavour to ensure that progress is kept 'on track', in accordance with the dates set out within this LDS. However, there are a variety of circumstances which alone, or in combination, can conspire to delay the preparation process.
- 5.2 It is important that the Council, the local community and all other stakeholders in the planning process, are aware of the possible risks to preparation. This is so that the risks can be minimised or mitigation measures put in place in the case of delays being occasioned. The following table identifies some of the more likely risks that could prejudice Local Plan preparation and the mitigation measures that could be employed.

Risk	Mitigation
<p><b>Legislation / Government Guidance</b></p> <p>Publication of national planning policy statements can generate new issues that the Local Plan, or its preparation, must address, sometimes causing delays.</p>	<p>Maintain close liaison with latest national guidance and its preparation.</p> <p>Revise Local Plan timetable if necessary.</p> <p>Adequate budgetary provision for consultancy support if required.</p>
<p><b>Planning Inspectorate</b></p> <p>Delays could be caused if the Local Plan or other documents takes longer than expected in the Examination process.</p>	<p>Keep in touch with Inspectorate and advise them of requests for Examinations at the earliest possible time.</p> <p>The Council will monitor Inspector's decisions elsewhere to seek to ensure the Council is following best practice.</p>
<p><b>Legal / Soundness</b></p> <p>Local Plan fails tests of soundness which would significantly delay process.</p> <p>Legal challenge to document could see Local Plan, or part of it, quashed.</p>	<p>Ensure robust evidence base and use soundness self-assessment toolkit.</p> <p>Draw on external expertise where necessary to ensure evidence and approach to policy is robust.</p> <p>Ensure procedures, Acts and Regulations are complied with.</p>

Risk	Mitigation
<p><b>Other External Bodies</b></p> <p>The planning system involves complex arrangements for co-operation, consultation, engagement and evidence gathering. Failure on the part of other bodies to respond on time or to provide adequate responses (which require subsequent clarification) could cause significant delay to work programmes.</p>	<p>Contact external bodies at the earliest opportunity and communicate clearly and regularly with them to minimise risk of no / poor responses and therefore delays.</p>
<p><b>Joint Working</b></p> <p>There can be challenges in achieving joint working with other local authorities on evidence base and ensuring that the Duty to Co-operate is fulfilled as each authority is working to their own programme and has their own particular concerns with regard an area of evidence. As such, projects / evidence studies can take longer when joint working is involved.</p>	<p>Establish clear working arrangements with other local authorities and ensure strong programme / project management.</p>
<p><b>Staffing</b></p> <p>Individual absences due to leave, personnel changes or sickness can cause delays in document production.</p> <p>Staff could leave the authority and could be difficult to replace, therefore causing delays to document production while the team is under-strength.</p>	<p>Local Plan timetable should be set on a realistic basis taking into account the staff resources available.</p> <p>Ensure quick replacement of staff wherever possible.</p> <p>Flexibility of staff within the Development and Regeneration Service enables secondment opportunities from other planning-related teams in the Service to help with workload.</p> <p>Some elements of work can be undertaken by consultants where there is financial resource available.</p>
<p><b>Political Direction / Management</b></p> <p>Members requiring late amendment to proposed documents or not willing to approve a document for consultation / submission / adoption.</p>	<p>Early consultation and information sharing with Members will reduce the likelihood of late amendments being required or documents being rejected.</p>
<p><b>Reduced Council Resources</b></p> <p>In the current climate of austerity, and reducing Council budgets, it is possible the resource available to the Development and Regeneration Service would be reduced affecting the speed at which a Local Plan can be prepared.</p>	<p>Explore all opportunities for joint working and service sharing.</p> <p>Maximise flexibility across the service.</p> <p>Revise Local Plan timetable if necessary.</p>