



West Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2040

Scope, Issues & Options Consultation

Duty to Co-operate Statement

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) created a duty on local planning authorities, county councils and other 'prescribed bodies' to cooperate with each other to address strategic matters relevant to their areas when preparing a development plan document, such as a Local Plan. The duty requires on-going constructive and active engagement on the preparation of development plan documents and other activities relating to the sustainable development and use of land, in particular in connection with strategic infrastructure or matters that would fall under the remit of a county council.

1.2 Paragraph 26 of the NPPF, which was revised in July 2021, states:

'Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.'

1.3 This Duty to Co-operate Statement accompanies the Issues & Options consultation of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2040 and sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council has co-operated / is co-operating with neighbouring authorities and the 'prescribed' bodies (and certain other stakeholders) in relation to issues with potential cross-boundary impacts since the adoption of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 in October 2013 and, in particular, as the Council has started this new Local Plan.

1.4 Paragraph 27 of the NPPF also advises:

'In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more 'statements of common ground', documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning practice guidance, and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.'

1.5 A Liverpool City Region Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground was endorsed by West Lancashire Borough Council and the 6 Liverpool City Region local authorities in late 2019 and will be regularly reviewed and updated. It is too early in the plan-making stage at present to have produced any other statements of

common ground with other neighbouring authorities, but these will be prepared as this new Local Plan progresses.

1.6 The NPPF also provides further guidance on the Duty, referring to '*strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries*' (paragraph 24, NPPF). These strategic matters were identified as:

- the homes and jobs needed in the area;
- the provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
- climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.

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

- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council (as neighbouring authority and neighbouring highway authority)
- Chorley Borough Council (as a neighbouring authority)
- South Ribble Borough Council (as a neighbouring authority)
- Fylde Borough Council (as a neighbouring authority)
- Lancashire County Council (as County Council, minerals and waste local planning authority, transport authority, highway authority, education authority and Lead Local Flood Authority)

- Merseytravel (as a neighbouring Integrated Transport Authority)
- Transport for Greater Manchester (as a neighbouring Integrated Transport Authority)
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Homes England
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Civil Aviation Authority

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

- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership
- Lancashire Local Nature Partnership
- Highways England
- Network Rail
- Utilities Providers (United Utilities, National Grid, Electricity North West, Scottish Power Manweb)
- Coal Authority
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Canal & River Trust
- Sport England
- West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)
- Emergency Services
- West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Southport & Ormskirk Hospital Trust

2. Co-operation in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2023 – 2040

2.1. West Lancashire Borough Council's (WLBC's) co-operation can be broadly split into three types:

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

2.2. In relation to Joint Evidence Base Studies and Projects, WLBC has engaged, or is engaging, with neighbouring authorities and Lancashire County Council (LCC) since 2013 on a number of joint studies / projects, including:

- The Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (LCR SHELMA), published in 2018.
- The West Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), produced annually. Whilst this is not a joint study, the methodology employed was subject to consultation with the LCR authorities who are part of the same Housing Market Area and/or Functional Economic Market Area as West Lancashire.
- Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (2014)
- Various transport-related studies, strategies and masterplans with LCC and Merseytravel, including proposals for a Skelmersdale Rail Link, a West Lancashire Route Management Strategy and an Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy.

2.3. In addition, the Council will be commissioning further evidence base studies as the new Local Plan progresses, some potentially joint studies (e.g. on Renewable Energy Capacity, and a Recreation Mitigation Strategy) and some involving close working with partners (e.g. Local Plan Transport Assessment in co-operation with Highways England and LCC).

2.4. In relation to regular officer-level meetings, West Lancashire officers are part of both the Liverpool City Region and Lancashire Planning Officer Groups, where colleagues from across the City Region / County regularly meet (every 6 weeks and every quarter respectively) to discuss matters that affect the whole City Region / County and that are cross-boundary and strategic in nature.

- 2.5. In addition, West Lancashire officers regularly meet with colleagues from neighbouring authorities separately to discuss strategic matters specific to the relationship between WLBC and their neighbours. In particular, due to the greater cross-boundary influences, officers meet with colleagues from Sefton and have frequently met with colleagues from Wigan, St Helens, Knowsley and LCC. These meetings may not always directly lead to the formulation of policy but they provide a crucial understanding of cross-boundary issues and an awareness of the needs of neighbours that has undoubtedly influenced the formulation of policy in the Local Plan.
- 2.6. In relation to key stakeholders, the main relationships are referred to in Section 1 above, but it is worth mentioning the ongoing engagement with United Utilities ('UU'), who have met with WLBC on many occasions to discuss the preparation of the last Local Plan, specific planning applications, the 'ceased' Local Plan Review (2016-2018), and now this new Local Plan 2023 - 2040. This is an important relationship given the vital role that United Utilities play in the Borough with regard to waste water treatment and the sewer network. UU and WLBC will continue to co-operate fully and openly in order to achieve the best Local Plan to balance resolving infrastructure constraints but still meeting development needs.
- 2.7. In relation to formal consultation, all neighbouring authorities and 'prescribed bodies' have been, and will continue to be, consulted on the preparation of the Local Plan 2023 - 2040.
- 2.8. Table A below provides a summary of the collaborative work WLBC has undertaken thus far in preparing the new Local Plan, and who it has co-operated with on each aspect of that work. As a starting point, the table is based upon the five strategic priorities previously set out by the NPPF and identifies strategic issues specific to West Lancashire under each of these priorities. As the Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation, these strategic priorities and issues may be updated in due course as the Local Plan progresses and in response to more up-to-date evidence, further collaborative working and public consultation. The nature of each of these strategic issues is briefly set out in the table, along with who is affected / obliged to co-operate on that issue, who is co-operating with whom, and how this is being done, and finally the anticipated outcome of that co-operation for that strategic issue.
- 2.9. As well as the co-operation undertaken on the strategic issues set out in Table A, WLBC has collaborated with several of the "prescribed" bodies as a matter of course on various general aspects of the preparation of the Local Plan.

Liverpool City Region Authorities

- 2.10. From a strategic planning perspective, WLBC co-operates most closely with the authorities in the Liverpool City Region, given that West Lancashire is most closely aligned economically and in terms of housing markets with the City Region, and is an associate member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. In response to revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018, which introduced the requirement for strategic policy making authorities to prepare and maintain statements of common ground, a LCR Spatial Planning Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) was prepared. The SoCG was endorsed by all LCR authorities between July and October 2019, including by WLBC's Cabinet in September 2019. The SoCG covers a number of strategic, cross-boundary, planning-related issues. It sets out the current position in the City Region (including West Lancashire) regarding those issues, and identifies future approaches to working together on those issues, where relevant. It is intended that the Statement will be updated regularly, as and when an authority reaches a key milestone in its Local Plan preparation (e.g. Publication or Submission stage) and therefore provides a key element of evidence of co-operation by WLBC with its neighbours to the south.

The Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England

- 2.11. These three organisations are statutory consultees in the preparation of a Local Plan as well as the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and (for Natural England) the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). As such, even at this early stage of Plan preparation, all three have been engaged on the preparation of the SA Scoping Report in May / June 2021. At the current Regulation 18 Stage, all three bodies are being specifically invited to comment on the Scope and Issues & Options material and the SA of the Issues & Options. Natural England are also being invited to engage with the Council and our HRA consultants (AECOM) on the HRA Screening Report for the Issues & Options.
- 2.12. In addition, the Environment Agency (as well as the Lead Local Flood Authority) have provided input to the Council on the West Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 (completed in 2019) and SFRA Level 2 (completed in 2020) and will be consulted in relation to any updates required to these documents. This continues the positive working relationship that the Council had with the Environment Agency in preparing the 2012 Local Plan.

Homes England (HoE)

- 2.13. WLBC and HoE have co-operated for many years, mainly on matters relating to Skelmersdale town centre and the wider regeneration of Skelmersdale, involving

HoE-owned sites in and around Skelmersdale. In recent times, this has been a very fruitful relationship as the two organisations have together enabled the delivery of key housing allocations in the last Local Plan. This co-operation is continuing with the preparation of the new Local Plan.

West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

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

Transport and Highway Authorities

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

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

Terminology in Table A

WLBC – West Lancashire Borough Council

LCC – Lancashire County Council

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

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

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

HoE – Homes England

TfGM – Transport for Greater Manchester

CCG / NHS – Clinical Commissioning Group and National Health Service

CVS – Council for Voluntary Service

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
Homes and Jobs	Housing Delivery	<p>Delivery of housing to meet identified needs in wider sub-regional housing market context and the need to demonstrate flexibility in meeting housing needs.</p> <p>Green Belt release may be required in West Lancs to meet housing needs and to ensure flexibility in delivery.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities and LCR authorities	<p>WLBC has co-operated with the LCR authorities in preparing the LCR Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) which, identifies the Housing Market Areas present within the study area and the Objectively-Assessed Need (OAN) for housing across the LCR and West Lancs and for each individual authority within the study area.</p> <p>Further to the SHELMA, on-going dialogue with the LCR authorities and formal consultation with neighbouring authorities in Lancashire and Greater Manchester through the new Local Plan will identify whether any LCR or neighbouring authorities have any unmet housing need which West Lancs may be asked to accommodate through a redistribution of housing need or whether West Lancs may have an unmet housing need which other authorities may be asked to meet. The LCR Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) indicates that presently there is no unmet housing need arising either at local authority level or from the city region as a whole which needs to be redistributed. It says this issue will be kept under review as individual councils prepare updated development plans. Where local authorities' local plan evidence indicates that they will not be able to accommodate their entire OAN, a process for agreeing the distribution of this unmet need will be set out.</p> <p>WLBC has prepared a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which supersedes the SHLAA prepared to support the adopted Local Plan. While this has been prepared only for West Lancs, all other authorities within the same Housing Market Area as West Lancs were consulted on the methodology for the SHELAA and support WLBC's approach.</p> <p>In relation to the potential for Green Belt release, WLBC prepared a Green Belt Study in 2011/12 during the preparation of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2021-27 DPD. This was prepared alongside separate studies undertaken by Sefton and Knowsley, based on a shared methodology. The studies explored whether any parts of the Green Belt in these three authorities no longer fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt. Subsequent evidence for the ceased Local Plan Review assessed every potential</p>	<p>WLBC will continue to work with the LCR Authorities within the context of the SoCG, and neighbouring authorities in Lancashire and Greater Manchester, to identify any necessary redistribution of housing need as is appropriate. This will directly influence the housing requirement that is set as part of the new Local Plan.</p> <p>As such, the housing requirement to be set should have the support of the LCR and neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>A part of the above process will be to ensure that the comparative merits of land in the Green Belt in all authorities involved is considered so that each authority meets as much as possible of their own OAN within their boundaries unless there are over-riding constraints to development that would prevent this from happening.</p>	To be determined (TBD)

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
				development site against the purposes of the Green Belt and this exercise will be updated as part of evidence for the new Local Plan. The LCR SoCG indicates that the LCR authorities will continue involving each other closely when considering the case for localised changes to the Green Belt and will keep the need for a joint strategic review of it under consideration.		
	Employment Land Delivery	<p>Delivery of employment land to stimulate economic growth and provide new jobs.</p> <p>Green Belt release may be required in West Lancs to meet employment land need and ensure flexibility in delivery.</p>	WLBC and neighbouring authorities and LCR authorities	<p>WLBC has co-operated with the LCR authorities in preparing the LCR Strategic Housing and Employment Land Market Assessment (SHELMA) which identifies the Functional Economic Market Area that West Lancs sits within and an OAN range for employment land need across the LCR and West Lancs and for each individual authority within the study area.</p> <p>Further to the SHELMA, ongoing dialogue with the LCR authorities and formal consultation with neighbouring authorities through the new Local Plan will identify whether any LCR or neighbouring authorities have any unmet employment land need which West Lancs may be asked to accommodate through a redistribution of employment land need, or whether West Lancs may have an unmet employment land need which other authorities may be asked to meet. The SHELMA identifies an LCR-wide need for large-scale B8 (storage or distribution) development of at least 397 hectares before 2037 which the LCR authorities and West Lancs will need to consider how best to meet across the study area. The SoCG indicates that the LCR authorities agree that they will work collaboratively to identify the minimum proportions of the need for strategic B8 uses which should be accommodated within each local authority.</p> <p>WLBC has prepared a Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) which seeks to identify any previously unidentified sites which may be suitable for employment land development. While this has been prepared only for West Lancs, all other authorities within the same Functional Economic Market Area as West Lancs were consulted on the methodology for the SHELAA and support WLBC's approach.</p> <p>In relation to the potential for Green Belt release, WLBC prepared a Green Belt Study in 2011/12 during the preparation of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2021-27 DPD. This was prepared alongside separate studies undertaken by Sefton and Knowsley, based on a shared methodology. The studies explored whether any parts of the Green Belt in these three authorities no longer fulfil the purposes of the Green Belt. Evidence for the ceased Local Plan Review assessed every potential development site against the purposes of the Green Belt and this will be updated as part of evidence for the new Local Plan. The LCR SoCG indicates that the LCR authorities will continue involving each other closely when considering the case for localised changes to the Green Belt and will keep the need for a joint strategic review of the Green Belt under consideration.</p>	<p>WLBC will continue to work with the LCR Authorities within the context of the SoCG to identify any necessary / agreed redistribution of employment land need, particularly for large-scale B8, as is appropriate. WLBC will also continue to work with neighbouring authorities in Lancashire and Greater Manchester.</p> <p>As such, the employment land requirement to be set should have the support of the LCR and neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>A part of the above process will be to ensure that the comparative merits of land in the Green Belt in all authorities involved is considered so that each authority meets as much as possible of their own OAN within their boundaries unless there are over-riding constraints to development that would prevent this from happening.</p>	TBD

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
	Significant levels of commuting in and out of West Lancashire	West Lancashire sees a high proportion of employment-related commuting across its boundaries, both out of West Lancs (to places like Liverpool, Sefton and Wigan) and into West Lancs (from Sefton and Wigan in particular).	WLBC, LCR authorities and Lancashire authorities Highways England, LCC, Merseytravel, Network Rail and TfGM	WLBC will continue to consult with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding economic and employment land policies in the new Local Plan through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan preparation and more general engagement throughout the process. Study work conducted with LCC, Merseytravel and / or TfGM has explored, and continues to explore, the potential transport infrastructure improvements that may be beneficial to address any increased commuting from West Lancashire to surrounding areas. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan • West Lancashire Route Management Strategy • Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy • Rail Study and business case relating to Skelmersdale • Rail Studies relating to electrification of Ormskirk to Preston line and the re-opening of the Burscough Curves 	It is accepted that West Lancashire has close economic and employment links with neighbouring authorities and nearby major cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Preston and that this relationship will continue. Proposals for new or improved transport infrastructure have not been fully defined at this stage, but there is a clear working relationship between WLBC and the various transport authorities seeking to deliver solutions to any transport infrastructure concerns.	TBD.
	Provision for Travellers	Delivery of sites for Travellers to meet identified needs. Green Belt may have to be used in West Lancashire to meet this need.	WLBC and neighbouring authorities	WLBC and the LCR authorities (except Halton) co-operated to prepare a Merseyside and West Lancashire GTAA in 2013/14. This identified the need for Traveller Sites in each authority to 2033. WLBC prepared a GTAA for the Borough in 2017 which extended needs to 2037 and which reflected the Government's 2016 redefinition of the term 'Traveller'. (Other LCR authorities were invited to participate jointly in this Study.) The 2017 Study will be updated in due course.	While it is anticipated that each authority will meet its own needs for Traveller sites, by nature the movement of Travellers can be a cross-boundary issue, and so WLBC will continue to liaise with all neighbouring authorities on this issue to identify the most appropriate policy for Traveller site provision.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
Retail, leisure and other commercial development	Retail provision and sub-regional hierarchy of centres	West Lancashire is reliant on Centres in other authorities (Southport, Wigan, Liverpool and Preston) for access to comparison retail and leisure and, to a lesser degree, convenience retail. West Lancashire has three Key Service Centres, one of which (Skelmersdale) is a Regional Town Centre.	WLBC and neighbouring authorities LCC, Merseytravel and TfGM	WLBC will consult with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding town centre and retail policy and the hierarchy of centres in its Local Plan. This will be through formal consultation at each stage of the new Local Plan and more general engagement throughout the process. The work will be informed by a Town Centre, Retail and Leisure Study produced / updated as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.	The new Local Plan will, as far as is possible, seek to deliver new retail and leisure provision within West Lancashire to serve any increase to West Lancs' needs. However, it is accepted that this Borough has close links with neighbouring authorities and nearby major cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Preston regarding comparison retail and leisure, and that this relationship will continue. Therefore transport infrastructure must be improved in places to accommodate this demand.	TBD
	Skelmersdale Town Centre	WLBC is focused on improving the Town Centre physically and, in terms of provision of retail, leisure and other commercial developments, to cement Skelmersdale Town	WLBC and neighbouring authorities, LCC and HoE	WLBC has been working with partners (including LCC and HoE) for several years to see the delivery of new development and new infrastructure in Skelmersdale Town Centre in order to revitalise the Centre as a retail and leisure destination within West Lancashire. A new Town Centre development is currently under construction.	By consulting closely with neighbouring authorities on this issue, it is anticipated that there will be no objections to the continued proposals for Skelmersdale Town Centre in the new Local Plan.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
		Centre's role as a Regional Town Centre. While such developments will hopefully make the Town Centre more attractive to a wider part of the Borough, it is not anticipated that it will draw significant footfall from other centres outside the Borough.		Proposals for the Town Centre have evolved over time, and will continue to evolve and so WLBC will continue to engage with all partners and neighbouring authorities as a suitable policy for the Town Centre is prepared for the new Local Plan.		
Infrastructure	Transport	While the majority of impacts on the transport network from development in West Lancashire will be within the Borough, the Borough's transport network is used by individuals and businesses travelling through the Borough to and from neighbouring authorities, and some impacts may be felt on more strategic transport networks, such as motorways.	WLBC and neighbouring authorities LCC, Merseytravel, TfGM, Highways England and Network Rail	WLBC will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities and with transport authorities regarding potential policies in the new Local Plan on transport infrastructure through both formal consultation at each stage of the new Local Plan and more general engagement throughout the process. Study work conducted with Highways England, LCC, Merseytravel and / or TfGM has explored, and continues to explore, the potential transport infrastructure improvements that may be beneficial to address any increased recreational travel and commuting, as well as business travel in connection with the movement of goods and services from West Lancashire to surrounding areas. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lancashire Highways & Transport Masterplan • West Lancashire Route Management Strategy • Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy • Rail Study and business case relating to Skelmersdale • Rail Studies relating to electrification of Ormskirk to Preston line and the re-opening of the Burscough Curves • Port of Liverpool improved road access, which includes considering either a new route through the Rimrose Valley or improvements to the A5036 Dunning's Bridge Road corridor (both outside West Lancashire) • West Lancashire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) • Leeds – Liverpool Canal improvements. 	WLBC will work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and transport authorities in the planning and delivery of cross-boundary strategic projects. It is hoped that WLBC and LCC can arrive at agreed positions with neighbouring planning and transport authorities on how the impact of new development on cross-boundary transport infrastructure will be managed. However, it is recognised that some infrastructure constraints will not have easy solutions and so co-operation on this key issue will be vital and some potential locations for development may need to be reconsidered if no solutions are forthcoming.	TBD
	Water-related infrastructure	Different parts of the Borough are affected by a Waste Water Treatment constraint / water supply issues / surface water issues / drainage and / or flood risk. However, these constraints are likely to have a limited effect on areas outside the Borough	WLBC, Environment Agency, LCC (Lead Local Flood Authority) and United Utilities	With the exception of the strategic management of flood risk across river catchments these issues are not likely to be strategic in that they may not directly affect neighbouring authorities. However, they have a crucial effect on the new Local Plan proposals and could therefore create indirect effects on neighbouring authorities if they limit delivery of housing or employment land in certain parts of the Borough. Therefore, WLBC will continue to consult with neighbouring authorities regarding policies in its new Local Plan affected by these matters through formal consultation at each stage of the Local Plan and more general engagement throughout the process.	With the support of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and LCC, the new Local Plan will identify policies to enable development within the most appropriate locations, in an appropriate timescale and without negatively affecting issues of flood risk, surface water drainage, water supply or waste water disposal. As such, co-operation on this issue should result in support from	TBD – minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
				<p>WLBC will also continue to engage closely with United Utilities, the Environment Agency and LCC (as Lead Local Flood Authority) on these issues throughout the preparation of the new Local Plan, meeting regularly with all three organisations in an attempt to arrive at a solution, where appropriate.</p> <p>A specific issue in West Lancashire, which requires liaison with the EA as the responsible body, is the future of 5 satellite pumping stations in the Alt Crossens catchment. Turning off these pumping stations, as planned, would result in a significant area of high quality agricultural land in West Lancashire becoming permanently wet.</p>	relevant prescribed bodies on the Local Plan policies.	
	Digital infrastructure	To create an interlinking full fibre network, improving local areas of deficiency, to deliver ultrafast connectivity for homes and businesses and unlock major investment. To ensure mobile phone connectivity.	WLBC, neighbouring authorities, LCC, Openreach (BT), mobile network operators (MNOs)	The Lancashire Local Broadband Plan (2012) acknowledges the importance of superfast broadband to the economy. Lancashire County Council, supported by commercial providers BT, used public money in a joint venture to roll out superfast broadband across the county, including in West Lancashire. The LCR SoCG indicates investment plans should be produced to accelerate investment and deployment in shared digital infrastructure.	Ultrafast broadband is less well developed in Skelmersdale & Up Holland, Burscough or Ormskirk, where most of West Lancashire's homes and businesses are located. Continued improvement in digital connectivity in West Lancashire will provide improved access for businesses and homes with benefits for investment.	TBD
	Minerals & Waste	Minerals and Waste planning policy matters affecting West Lancashire are considered by Lancashire County Council	WLBC, LCC, LCR authorities and the Coal Authority	WLBC will continue to engage with LCC as they prepare a new Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and with the LCR authorities should they need to review the Merseyside Waste DPD.	As necessary, a new Local Plan for West Lancs will reflect the Minerals and Waste policies to be prepared by LCC and their implications for new development.	TBD – but no, or minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
Health, security, community and cultural infrastructure	Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)	New development as proposed by the Local Plan will have implications for a range of "social" and "cultural" infrastructure providers.	WLBC, LCC, CCG / NHS, Emergency Services, Canal & River Trust, Sport England and CVS.	A wide range of "social" and "cultural" infrastructure providers, including those listed, have been, and will continue to be, engaged upon in the new Local Plan through the formal consultation at each stage of preparation, through the preparation of the IDP and through more general engagement on health-related matters.	WLBC and its partners will identify suitable policies and proposals to ensure that appropriate social and cultural infrastructure is provided in West Lancashire to support new development and to promote healthier lifestyles.	TBD – minimal, impacts are anticipated on areas outside West Lancs.
Climate change and natural and historic environment	Managing impacts in relation to International Habitat Sites	New development, cumulatively across sub-regions, can have significant impacts on International Habitat Sites and such impacts should be reduced or mitigated.	WLBC, neighbouring authorities, LCR authorities and Natural England	<p>WLBC has had a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report carried out by consultants (AECOM) for the Issues & Options stage of the new Local Plan, and this is being consulted upon alongside the Local Plan, with particular input from Natural England. The same consultants will prepare the HRA for later stages of the Local Plan and, if necessary, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of identified impacts.</p> <p>Consultation with Natural England has indicated a need to consider the recreation effects of residents in West Lancashire visiting International Habitat Sites, including the Sefton Coast outside the Borough. Consequently, WLBC has joined the LCR in undertaking a Joint Recreation Mitigation Strategy dealing with this issue.</p>	<p>The HRA / AA will inform each iteration of the new Local Plan and so result in a Local Plan that has been prepared with an understanding of the wider, cross-boundary implications of development for International Habitat Sites both within the Borough and elsewhere in surrounding areas.</p> <p>The HRA will identify where specific mitigation measures will be required in relation to developments in West Lancashire affecting international sites and the new Local Plan will reflect the commitment of West</p>	TBD

Strategic Priority	West Lancashire Strategic Issue	What is the nature of the strategic issue?	Who is affected / obliged to co-operate?	Who is co-operating with whom and How is this being done?	Anticipated Outcome	Impact on neighbouring authorities
					Lancashire to work with neighbouring authorities, as appropriate, to this end. The joint Recreation Mitigation Strategy will enable the delivery of a co-ordinated approach by the LCR and WLBC for mitigating impacts on International Habitat Sites from recreational pressures as a result of new residential developments.	
	Climate change, renewable energy and coastal change / management	Managing the effects of climate change upon West Lancashire (and beyond) and contributing towards a reduction in greenhouse gases locally by supporting renewable energy production as appropriate.	WLBC, neighbouring authorities, LCR authorities, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation and Natural England	The LCR local authorities, WLBC and Warrington Borough Council jointly prepared the Renewable Energy Capacity Study in 2011 which focused on wind energy. WLBC subsequently prepared a Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Study (May 2019) which considered wind, solar and other renewable energy such as heat pumps, anaerobic digestion etc. The LCR SoCG indicates that authorities will work together to generate a new evidence base regarding renewable energy. West Lancashire has a coastline along the Ribble Estuary which will be affected by climate change in the form of sea level rise. The Environment Agency is responsible for coastal defences in this area and is also nationally responsible for producing Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), indicating how sections of coastline will be managed into the future. Climate change is a wide-ranging matter which also influences other strategic issues in West Lancashire e.g. flood risk from other sources.	A Renewable Energy Study will inform the new Local Plan in deciding what forms of renewable energy may be appropriate in West Lancashire and where. It is possible that schemes may cross or be close to the boundaries of other local authorities. Management of the coastline crosses local authority boundaries and requires multi-agency co-operation. The SMP covering the West Lancashire and Sefton coastline is likely to be updated. Coastal management will influence future flood risk and therefore where it may be appropriate for future development to be located.	TBD
	Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	New development as proposed in the Local Plan may affect biodiversity and Green Infrastructure (GI) but may also offer opportunities to improve biodiversity and GI.	WLBC, neighbouring authorities, LCR authorities, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, LCC and Sport England	It is expected that the Environment Bill will mandate a requirement for a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain as a result of new development from 2023. WLBC is liaising with Merseyside and Lancashire local authorities in establishing how this may be best achieved in Local Plans. Green Infrastructure is a strategic network of multi-functional green and blue (water) spaces and other green features, urban and rural, and so crosses local authority boundaries. The LCR SoCG states that the seven local authorities recognise the need for a strategic approach to natural assets and Green Infrastructure so will work with a range of partners to protect, enhance and where possible extend the network.	An approach to inform a new Local Plan policy which deals with Biodiversity Net Gain. A co-ordinated approach to the strategic Green Infrastructure network which will inform Local Plan policy and the designation of sites.	TBD

3. Impact on Neighbouring Authorities

- 3.1. As the new Local Plan progresses and the proposed sites for development and proposed planning policies are finalised, the final column of Table A above will be populated and will set out where the new Local Plan may, potentially, have an impact on neighbouring authorities. This could raise a number of key strategic, cross-boundary issues which warrant more detailed discussion not only to demonstrate the legal compliance aspect of the Duty to Co-operate, but the soundness aspects of the Duty as well. Clearly, at early stage in preparing the new Local Plan, the Council cannot predetermine what these impacts and issues will be.
- 3.2. In general terms, probably the most significant cross-boundary strategic issue is that of meeting housing and employment land needs. Whilst the current adopted local plans for neighbouring authorities have no unmet needs that are proposed or requested to be met in West Lancashire, there can be no certainty of whether or not neighbouring authorities may have unmet housing and/or employment land needs in the medium and longer-term until respective local evidence is finalised and consideration is given to the matter in their next round of local plans. As such, the conversations to be had with neighbouring authorities once local evidence is finalised, or new plans are prepared, will be central to this issue (and will highlight whether it is an issue at all).
- 3.3. Should any unmet needs arise in neighbouring authority areas, consideration would need to be given as to whether West Lancashire would be a suitable place to meet that need and, if that were agreed, the issue of where within West Lancashire such need could be met would become a strategic, cross boundary issue. The issue may have transport-related, or infrastructure-related implications, or impacts on commuting patterns. At this early stage in the new Local Plan we cannot be more specific but, as the Local Plan progresses, this may become an issue that needs more engagement and co-operation.
- 3.4. West Lancashire sits in a position between three city-regions and has links to all three, but is outside the established Combined Authorities of Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region (although it is an associate member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority). The possibility of a new Lancashire Combined Authority or combined Lancashire authority working group has been under consideration. As such, work under the Duty to Co-operate can help ensure that there is correlation and consistency between neighbouring Spatial Frameworks and the West Lancashire Local Plan.
- 3.5. Below this strategic level of planning, the Council could consider a joint Local Plan with an individual authority(ies) within the neighbouring Combined Authorities or Lancashire. However, there has been no issue raised at the current time that would justify this and, given the different stages of Local Plan preparation which West Lancashire's neighbours are currently at, it would be unlikely that a joint Local Plan would be appropriate.

4. Summary

- 4.1. In summary, West Lancashire Borough Council demonstrated a high level of co-operation with other authorities and public bodies in the preparation of the last (2012) West Lancashire Local Plan and is committed to continuing this in the preparation of the new Local Plan, as can be seen by what co-operation has already taken place at this early stage of the new Plan's preparation. In particular, the Council has participated in a number of joint projects with other authorities on key evidence base documents and is working closely with key infrastructure providers to ensure that the new Local Plan will deliver what infrastructure is needed to address constraints and facilitate new development.
- 4.2. This Duty to Co-operate Statement will be updated after the Local Plan Scope, Issues & Options Consultation and at subsequent stages of the Plan to show how the Council is fulfilling the Duty to Co-operate as it prepares a new Local Plan. Future updates should also be read in conjunction with respective Statements of Common Ground with neighbouring authorities, such as the LCR.