

WEST LANCASHIRE



LOCAL PLAN

West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



**Sustainability Appraisal
February 2017**



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The Appendices to this Sustainability Appraisal Report are provided separately.

1. Introduction

1.1 Report Structure

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

1.1.2 The Local Plan Review will eventually supersede the current adopted West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 as the adopted development plan for the Borough. The two main purposes of this interim SA / SEA are to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review, and to enable people to participate in the consultation on the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options, by providing an assessment of the strategic development options and policy options against the SA Framework set out in this document. This allows the Council and the public to identify the potential social, economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan Review.

1.1.3 This Sustainability Appraisal Report is structured as follows:

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

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

1.2 Requirement for Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

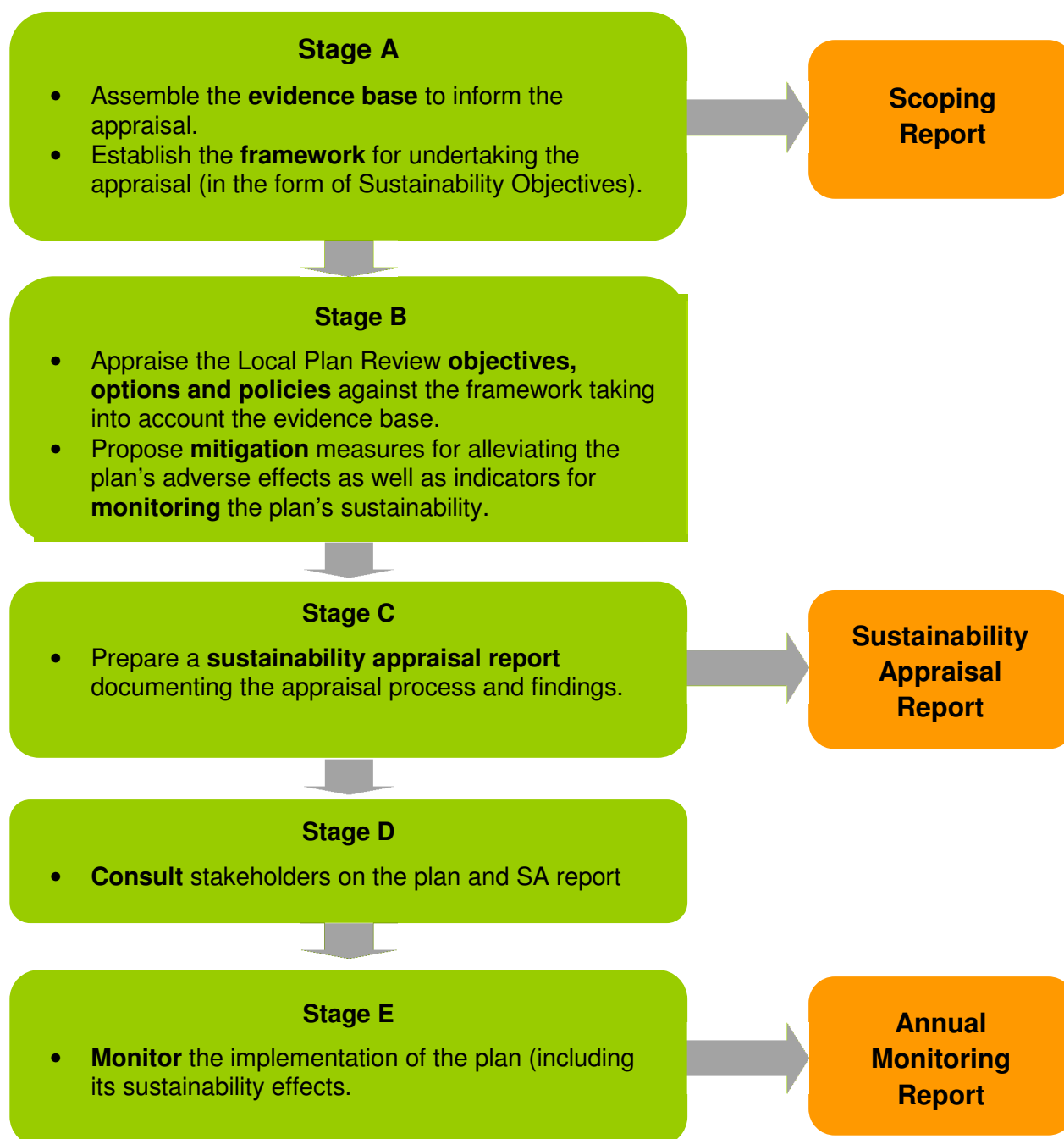
- 1.2.1 Under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for new or revised development plan documents.
- 1.2.2 Alongside this requirement, the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the 2004 Regulations') set a statutory requirement for local authorities to carry out an SEA of all planning and land use documents.
- 1.2.3 The 2004 Regulations transpose into UK law the requirements of the EU SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment).
- 1.2.4 The government's preferred approach is to combine the requirement to prepare an SEA and an SA into one unified assessment process that considers economic, social, and environmental effects. National Planning Practice Guidance, published by the government, set out how local planning authorities should undertake SA of local plans¹.

The SA Process

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

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

Figure 1.1: Five-stage approach to SA



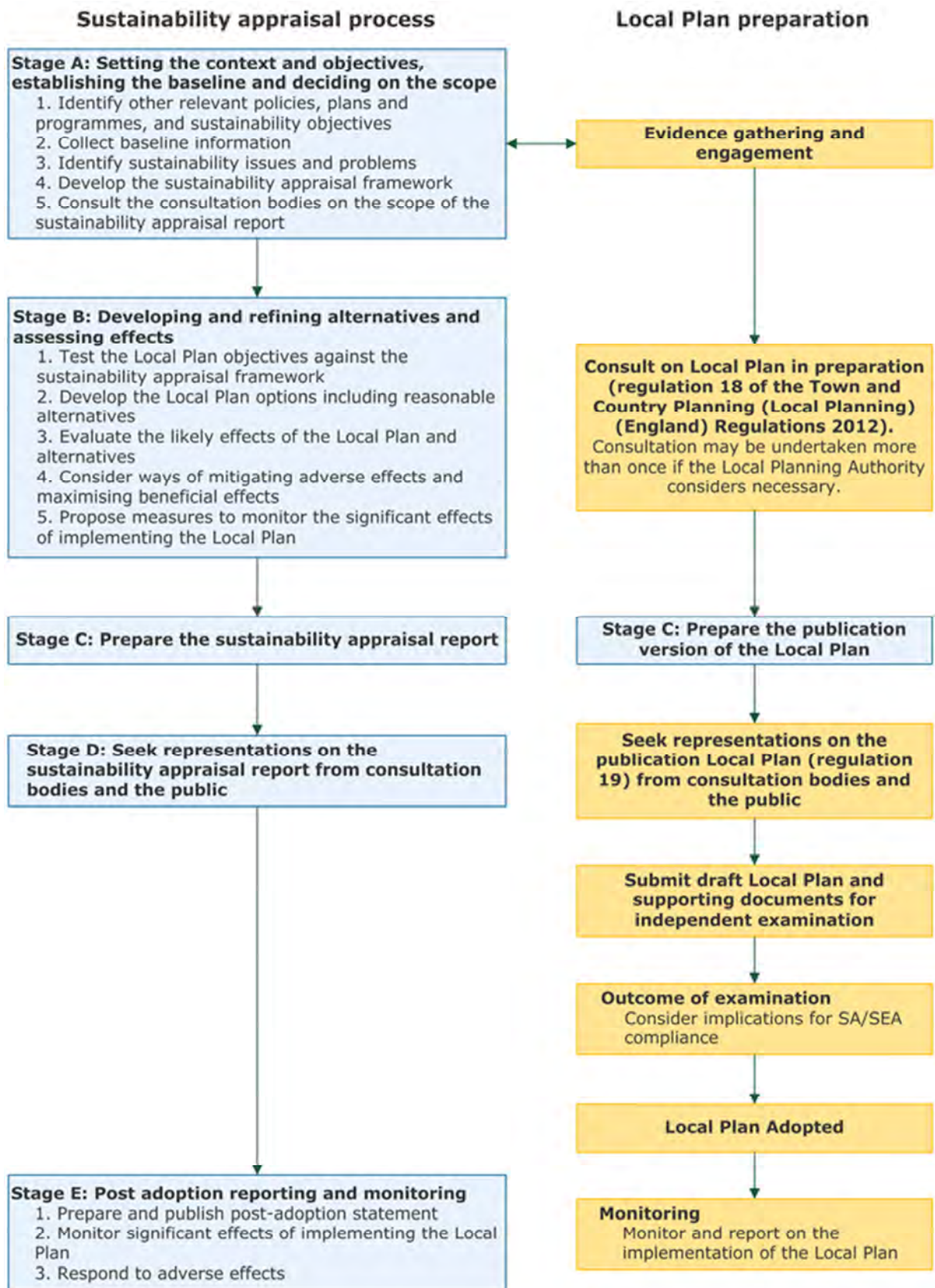
1.2.6 At the initial **Stage A** in the SA process, the framework for undertaking the appraisal of the emerging Local Plan is developed. Generally this requires the collation of an evidence base to provide an initial, or 'baseline' set of statistics (including trends), identification of issues arising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

- 1.2.7 The SA Scoping Report for the West Lancashire Local Plan Review was prepared in autumn 2016 by Council officers. The baseline data is contained in a set of Thematic Spatial Evidence Papers ('TSEPs'), produced separately from, but summarised in, the SA Scoping Report. These TSEPs are available on the Council's website².
- 1.2.8 Following consultation with the statutory consultees, and in the light of comments received, parts of the SA Scoping Report were amended in December 2016. These amendments included minor changes to the proposed sustainability objectives and indicators.
- 1.2.9 **Stage B** in the SA process is the appraisal itself. This is an iterative process which requires the prediction and evaluation of the potential effects of the different strategic and policy-related options compared to the 'baseline' position. The possibility of mitigation measures and how they influence the likely effects of policies are also taken into account.
- 1.2.10 **Stage C** in the SA process involves documenting the appraisal and preparing the SA Report (this incorporates the material required for inclusion in the Environmental Report under the SEA Directive). Following public consultation (Stage D) the SA Report may require updating to reflect changes made to the emerging Local Plan in response to representations. Stage E concerns ongoing monitoring of significant effects.
- 1.2.11 Under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, there is no specific requirement for the preparation of, or public consultation upon, either an "Issues and Options" or "Preferred Options" version of an emerging local plan document³. However, in order to give West Lancashire stakeholders the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in planning for their area, and to choose the best strategy for the future development of the Borough, it is proposed to undertake both "Issues and Options" and "Preferred Options" stages in preparing the Local Plan Review.
- 1.2.12 This SA report of the Issues and Options version of the Local Plan Review may be considered an "Interim SA Report" for the Local Plan Review. Just as the Issues and Options stage is not a statutory requirement, neither is the SA of the Issues and Options document a statutory requirement. However, to ensure that the eventual strategy to be set out in the Local Plan Review for the future development of the Borough will be a sustainable form of development, and to provide a robust consideration of alternatives to the eventual proposals or policies chosen, SA is being undertaken of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options documents.
- 1.2.13 Figure 1.2 below illustrates how the SA is an integral part of the local plan preparation process and should be undertaken in parallel with it.

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

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

Figure 1.2 The SA process and Local Plan preparation



Source: National Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014

Requirements of the SEA Directive

- 1.2.14 In preparing a new or revised Development Plan Document (DPD), West Lancashire Council must conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the European Directive 2001 /42 /EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment ('the SEA Directive').
- 1.2.15 The SEA Directive requires that the following matters be considered in assessments:
- Biodiversity
 - Population
 - Human Health
 - Fauna
 - Flora
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Air
 - Climatic Factors
 - Material Assets
 - Cultural Heritage – including archaeological, architectural heritage
 - Landscape
- 1.2.16 There are two facets to the appraisal of a DPD: an appraisal of the DPD objectives (optional) and iterative appraisals of the DPD content – the options put forward during consultation, the preferred options and, any additional options in the submission DPD. Consideration should also be given to mitigation and enhancement measures for alleviating adverse effects and maximising positive effects, as well as potential indicators for monitoring the plan's sustainability.
- 1.2.17 The SEA Directive and the 2004 Environmental Assessment Regulations require the public and the SEA Consultation Bodies to be given "an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames" to express their opinions on the draft local plan and the accompanying environmental report. When consulting on the emerging Local Plan Review, the local planning authority must also invite comments on the accompanying SA report.
- 1.2.18 Whilst this 'interim' SA does not meet all the requirements of an 'environmental report' (SEA Regulations), it provides helpful background information and context for the preparation of the SA report which will be prepared alongside the Preferred Options, and ultimately the Publication version of the Local Plan Review. Should there be any significant changes to the Publication Version before it is submitted, a further SA report will be required to accompany the Submission version of the Local Plan Review.

1.3 Characteristics of West Lancashire

- 1.3.1 This section provides a brief description of West Lancashire, in particular its sustainability (environmental, social and economic) characteristics. A fuller 'spatial portrait' of the Borough is available as part of the Local Plan Review: Issues and Options suite of documents.
- 1.3.2 West Lancashire Borough lies at the northern extremity of the Liverpool City Region, and is adjacent to the Greater Manchester and Central Lancashire City Regions to the east and north respectively. The Borough has a population of approximately 110,000, and an area of 380km² (147 square miles).

Economic characteristics

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

Environmental characteristics

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

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

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

Social characteristics

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

1.4 West Lancashire Local Plan Review

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

Preparing the Local Plan Review

- 1.4.4 Consistent with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, there are a several stages involved in the preparation of the Local Plan Review:
- Development of the Evidence Base
The evidence base required for a local plan is extensive and splits into several topic areas. There are also over-arching themes which are often not specific to planning and cut across several topic areas, for example the themes of an ageing population, health, and climate change. The evidence base is being prepared and updated on an ongoing basis, some work being carried out by Council officers, some by external consultants or other bodies with specific expertise.
 - Scoping, Issues & Options stage (Regulation 18)
The first external consultation on the Local Plan Review is with key stakeholders and any other interested parties to seek views on what the scope of the new Local Plan should be.

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

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

- Preferred Options stage (Regulation 18)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure of the Local Plan Review Issues and Options Documents

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

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

1.5 The Local Plan Review SA Scoping Report

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

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

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

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

A4: Developing the SA framework.

The Scoping Report sets out objectives arising from, and seeking to address, the identified issues; it also suggests indicators for each objective – this is effectively the SA framework.

A5: Consulting the consultation bodies on the scope of the SA.

The views of statutory consultees were sought in a 5 week consultation in autumn 2016.

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

1.6 The Local Plan Review Sustainability Appraisal Framework

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

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

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

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

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

1.7 Sustainability Appraisal Topic Areas

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

Table 1.2 Relationship between SEA Directive topics and WLBC topic papers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Assessment of Local Plan Review Objectives against SA Topics

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

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

- **Objective 1: Sustainable Communities**

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

- **Objective 2: A Healthy Population**

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

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

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

- **Objective 4: Addressing Climate Change**

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

- **Objective 5: Reduced Inequality**

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

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

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

- **Objective 7: A Vitalized Economy**

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

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

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

- **Objective 9: Accessible Services**

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

- **Objective 10: A Natural Environment**

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

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

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

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

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

3. Appraisal of Strategic Development Policy Options

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

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

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

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

Strategic Development Options 1 – The Amount of Development Land Required

- 3.1.4 In relation to the amount of development land required per year, there are 5 options:
- A. Approximately 8 ha of land (for 200 dwellings) per year and 2 ha of employment land per year.
 - B. Approximately 12 ha of land (for 300 dwellings) per year and 3 ha of employment land per year.
 - C. Approximately 16 ha of land (for 400 dwellings) per year and 4 ha of employment land per year.
 - D. Approximately 20 ha of land (for 500 dwellings) per year and 5 ha of employment land per year.
 - E. Approximately 24 ha of land (for 600 dwellings) per year and 6 ha of employment land per year.

Summary of appraisal

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

Strategic Development Options 2 – The Local Plan Period

3.1.5 The two Local Plan periods under consideration are:

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

Summary of appraisal

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Strategic Development Options 4 – The Location of New Development

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

4. Appraisal of Economic Policy Options

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Economic Policy Option 2 – Existing Employment Areas

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Economic Policy Option 4 – Network and hierarchy of centres

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Economic Policy Option 6 – Sites for town centre uses

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

5. Appraisal of Environmental Policy Options

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

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

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

Environmental Policy Options 1 – Local Nature Conservation Sites

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Environmental Policy Options 2 – Renewable energy

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Environmental Policy Options 3 – Sustainable design and construction

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Environmental Policy Options 4 – Sustainable and healthy places

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

6. Appraisal of Social Policy Options

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

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

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

Social Policy Option 1 – Affordable Housing

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 3 – Demand for alternative residential accommodation

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 4 – The Skelmersdale housing market

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 5 – The social requirements of older people

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 6 – Residential accommodation for older people

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 7 – Provision of HMOs in Ormskirk

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

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

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

Social Policy Option 9 – Delivering suitable accommodation for Travellers

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

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

Summary of appraisal

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

7. What Happens Next?

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

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

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

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

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

Next Steps

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

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