

West Lancashire Local Plan Review Issues & Options Consultation



Strategic Development Options Paper February 2017



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1. Introduction

1.1 A Local Plan Review: Issues & Options Consultation

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

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

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

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 This means that local planning policy, such as Local Plans, can quickly become out of date if they are not reviewed and updated accordingly, which, aside from not delivering the sustainable development we aspire to, can have two main negative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

1.1.4 First, an out-of-date Local Plan can constrain growth, both economically and in terms of providing the right kind of development in the right place in a timely fashion. Secondly, if local planning policy is out of date it can be ineffective in managing and guiding where appropriate development should take place and can lead to a situation where the Council has less control or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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

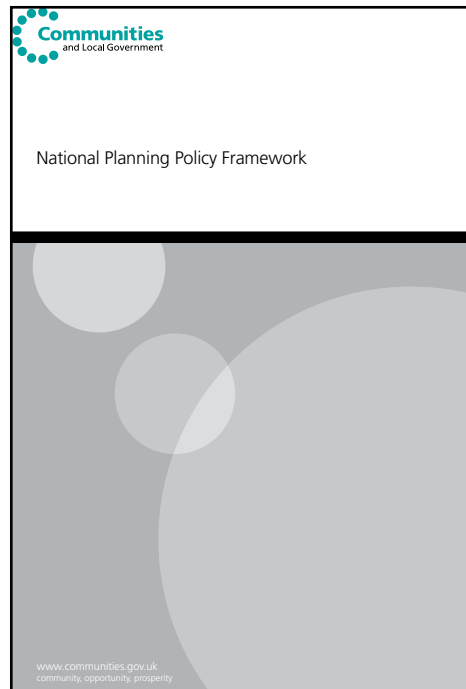


1.2 Preparation of a new Local Plan

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

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

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



1.3 The National and Sub-Regional Planning Context

- 1.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and its accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides the key context for all planning matters in the Local Plan, with one of the tests of soundness that the Local Plan will be examined on being consistency with the NPPF. The golden thread running through the NPPF is that of “sustainable development” and, in particular, the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This holistic emphasis on the economic, social and environmental impact of development has to come through a Local Plan and the Local Plan should fully meet an area’s objectively-assessed need for development unless there are over-riding adverse impacts of doing so which would outweigh the benefits of doing so.
- 1.3.2 This then sets the tone for any new Local Plan, in that it must be positively-prepared, seeking to promote any development that is sustainable and, wherever possible, meeting more than the basic development needs for an area; being creative in how those needs are met to make better places for people to live, work and spend their leisure time; and being viable and deliverable.
- 1.3.3 The NPPF still encourages a plan-led system, which keeps policies up-to-date and relevant to the local and national context, and encourages the preparation of Local Plans. It sets out the tests of soundness against which a Local Plan will be examined, namely:
- “Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;

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

1.3.4 Within the NPPF and the PPG, a wide range of planning matters are discussed and, where appropriate, the national policy on these matters is drawn out in this Paper as we discuss certain issues, but all must ultimately contribute to the aim of sustainable development that fully meets development needs (including necessary infrastructure).

1.3.5 Sub-regionally, there are no formal documents providing policy or guidance that cover West Lancashire, although the emerging Spatial Frameworks for the Liverpool City Region and for Greater Manchester will inevitably have an indirect effect, and should any such Framework be prepared for Lancashire in the future, a new Local Plan for West Lancashire will be able to directly inform it. As such, the key sub-regional matter for the Local Plan will be the Duty to Co-operate, required through the NPPF and other national legislation, which requires neighbouring authorities and certain key stakeholders to co-operate as they prepare Local Plans to ensure that cross-boundary issues are suitably addressed and

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

1.4 Key Issues facing West Lancashire

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

- Whilst the number of people in the Borough is increasing relatively slowly, the population is ageing, with older age cohorts projected to grow very significantly both number-wise and percentage-wise over coming years. Conversely, the working age population is projected to decrease. This change in the make-up of the population is likely to place increased demand on the provision (availability, accessibility and variety) of housing, services, health care, and appropriate training / jobs for the older population, whilst the number of persons able to contribute towards providing such services decreases proportionally. It is also likely to have implications for job growth requirements, commuting levels, and general housing provision.
- West Lancashire as a whole is very much 'middle of the road' nationally in terms of deprivation. However, there are some notable disparities and inequalities in health, life expectancy, educational attainment, and consequent job opportunities within the Borough. These disparities are most marked between Skelmersdale and more affluent areas such as Aughton, Parbold and Tarleton.
- The affordability of housing is an issue for West Lancashire (and elsewhere), the median house price being almost seven times the median earnings. The average age of household heads is projected to rise over time, both as a result of affordability issues, and the ageing of the population. The affordability issue is tied up with the contrasting housing market strengths that are seen in different parts of the Borough and offering viable alternatives to traditional housing built by large developers for the market, such as self- and custom-build, caravans and houseboats.
- In order to meet the Council's legal obligations, the needs of the Travelling community must be met in an appropriate way and as close as possible to where demand arises, taking into account physical and environmental constraints.
- The issue of student accommodation in Ormskirk needs to be adequately addressed to ensure that sufficient provision is made to accommodate student demand but in a way which minimises harm to, or conflict with, other parts of the residential community of Ormskirk.
- Economically, West Lancashire continues to gradually grow, with steady growth in jobs in particular, and this growth is anticipated to continue and possibly at a higher rate. However, the local workforce will decline in number as the population ages (and as working age people struggle to afford a house in West Lancashire). As such, the continued economic growth of

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

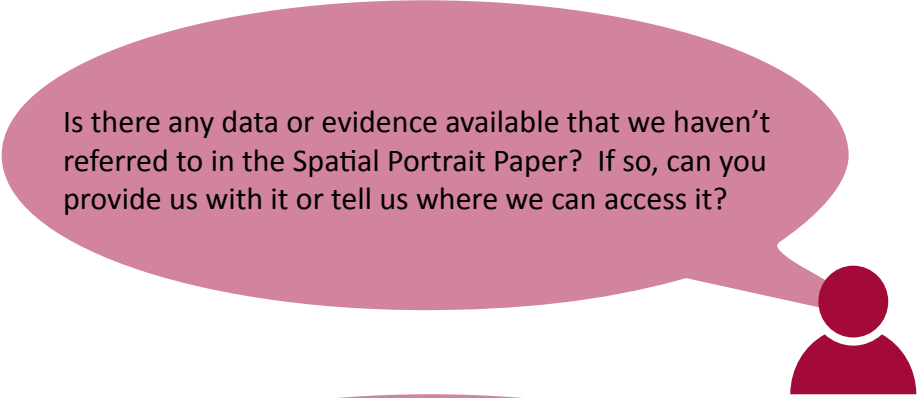


- There is significant leakage of expenditure from the Borough, especially in relation to comparison (non-food) retail and commercial leisure / entertainment and the night-time economy. The Borough's town centres in particular need to be managed and developed appropriately to help them reinvent themselves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

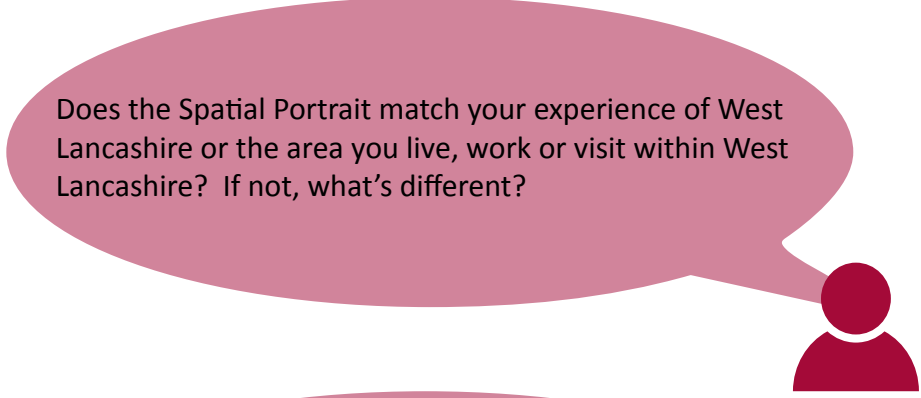
- The impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flooding and drainage, must be managed appropriately including considering how and where new development is built in West Lancashire to ensure that new development does not make existing issues worse.
- Opportunities for renewable energy provision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

Summary

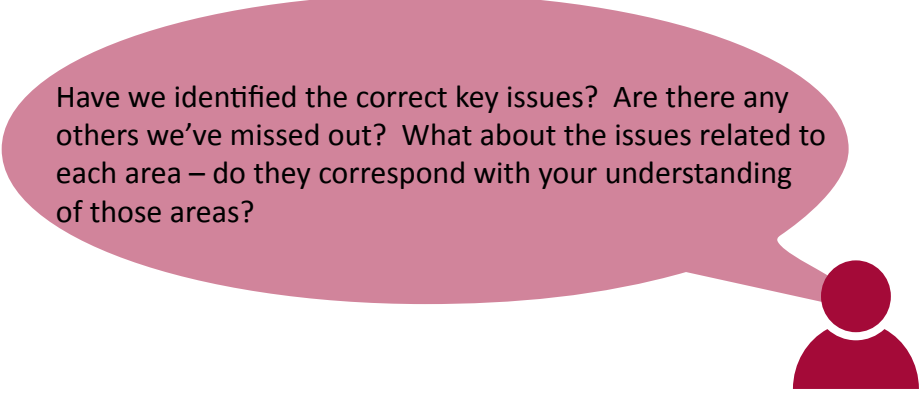
Have we captured all of the issues affecting West Lancashire in the Spatial Portrait? Please discuss by answering the following questions in our **Issues & Options Survey**.



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



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



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

2. A Vision for an Ambitious West Lancashire

2.1 A Draft Vision

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary

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

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



2.2 Objectives

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

Objective 1: Sustainable Communities

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

Objective 2: A Healthy Population

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

Objective 3: A High Quality Built Environment

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

Objective 4: Addressing Climate Change

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

Objective 5: Reduced Inequality

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

Objective 6: The Right Mix of Housing

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

Objective 7: A Vitalized Economy

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

Objective 8: Vibrant Town and Village Centres

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

Objective 9: Accessible Services

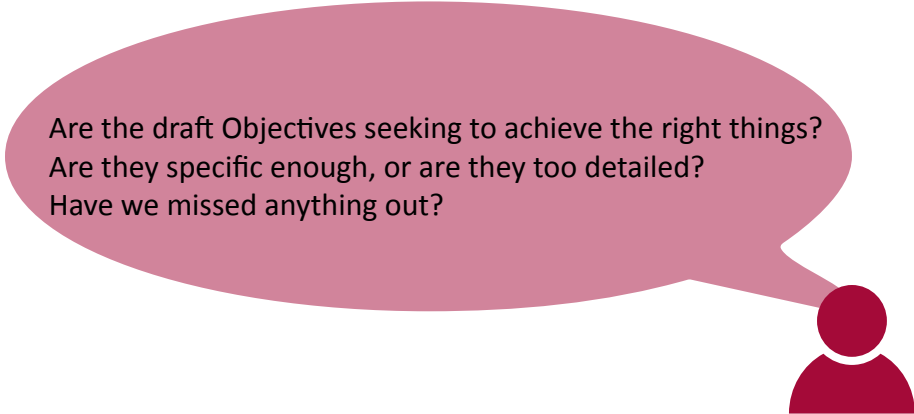
To enable, encourage and plan for greater connectivity to a wide range of services to all parts of the Borough with an emphasis in providing ways of moving across the Borough as an alternative to car travel, making appropriate provision, or re-provision, of new facilities in the most accessible locations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

Objective 10: A Natural Environment

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

Summary

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



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

3. Strategic Development Options

3.1 The Three Variables

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

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



3.2 The Amount of Development Land Required

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

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

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

- 3.2.3 Option A is roughly based on (for housing) meeting the 2014-based Sub-National Population Projections, with appropriate adjustments for the more recent Mid-Year Population Estimates, household formation rates and market signals, and (for employment land) meeting the need for general employment land needs based on the Labour-Demand Scenario in the SHELMA but not seeking to meet any of the sub-regional need for land for large-scale logistics. **As such, Option A is the very minimum level of new development that West Lancashire could be argued to need.**
- 3.2.4 Option B is roughly based on the SHELMA's Economic Growth scenario for housing based on the anticipated job growth in West Lancashire and on a mid-point scenario for employment land between the Labour-Demand Scenario and the Completions Trend scenario with a 20% margin for flexibility, but again not seeking to meet any of the sub-regional need for land for large-scale logistics. **As such, Option B sees an uplift for development needs compared to the very minimum in Option A, reflecting a housing scenario that incorporates forecast job growth and an employment land figure that takes account of past trends for development of employment land as well as job growth.**
- 3.2.5 Option C is approximately based on the SHELMA's Economic Growth scenario for housing plus an assumption that West Lancashire would have to meet an unmet housing need from the Liverpool City Region (LCR) or other surrounding authorities of 100 extra dwellings a year if those areas are unable to meet all of their own housing needs. The employment land requirement in Option C is based on the Completions Trend scenario in the SHELMA with a 20% margin for flexibility and meeting a small proportion of the LCR demand for large-scale logistics as well. **As such, Option C is a clear above-OAN option that seeks to deliver more housing and employment land than is strictly necessary in West Lancashire in order to help meet a wider sub-regional need.**
- 3.2.6 Option D reflects a scenario where West Lancashire meets a larger unmet need for housing from the LCR or surrounding authorities of 200 extra dwellings a year on top of the Economic Growth scenario for West Lancashire. The employment land requirement is based on the Completions Trend scenario in the SHELMA with a 20% margin for flexibility, like Option C, but meeting a larger proportion of the LCR demand for large-scale logistics as well. **As such, Option D reflects a level of development needs significantly above the OAN to seek growth of West Lancashire economically whilst meeting a wider sub-regional need.**
- 3.2.7 Option E reflects a scenario where the Local Plan seeks to meet close to the full affordable housing need for West Lancashire and so allows more housing generally to ensure the delivery of the proportion of housing that is to be affordable. Correspondingly, the employment land requirement must increase to ensure that there are sufficient jobs to support the additional households, and so the employment land scenario assumes that West Lancashire would accommodate a larger proportion of the LCR demand for large-scale logistics on top of the general West Lancashire employment land needs based on a mid-point scenario. **As such, Option E provides an absolute maximum option in terms of what is potentially deliverable, although meeting the increased needs associated with this Option would be extremely challenging to deliver, especially for housing.**

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

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

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

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



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

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

Summary

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

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



3.3 The Local Plan Period

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Summary

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

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



3.4 Distributing the Development Requirements across West Lancashire

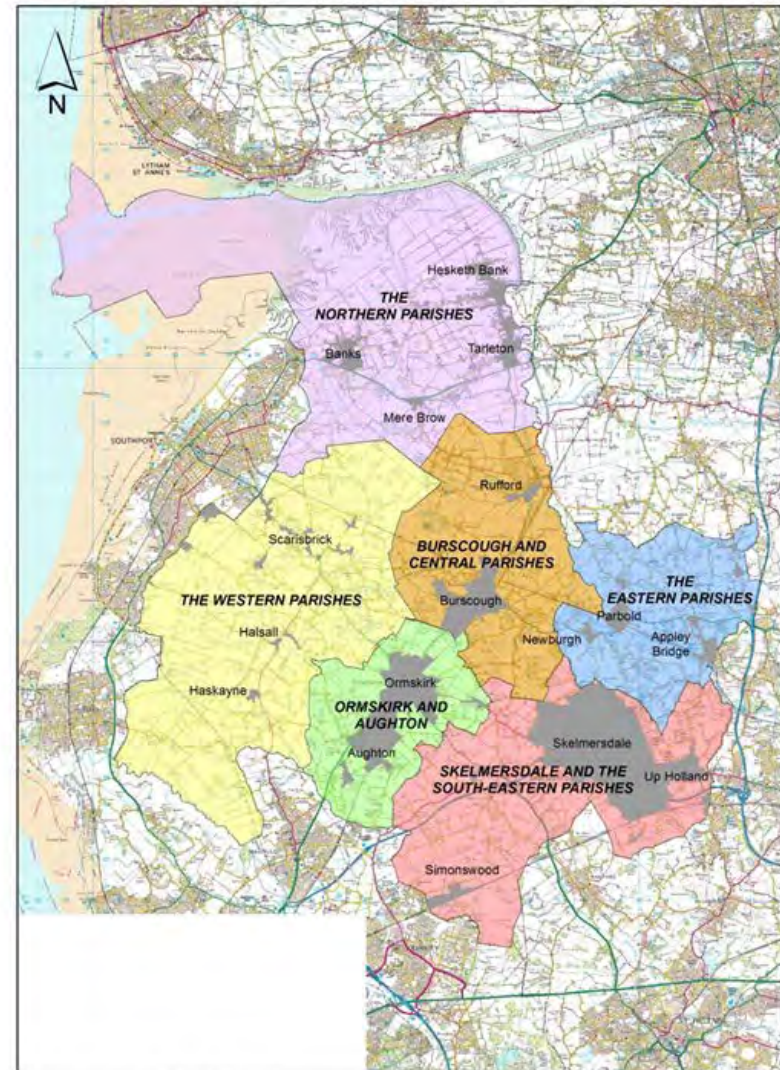
- 3.4.1 A further consideration for the Strategic Development Options is the way the total amount of development land required is spread across the Borough, i.e. whichever of Options A to E is ultimately selected and whichever Plan period is applied to that requirement, then considering how that total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

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

Summary

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

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



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

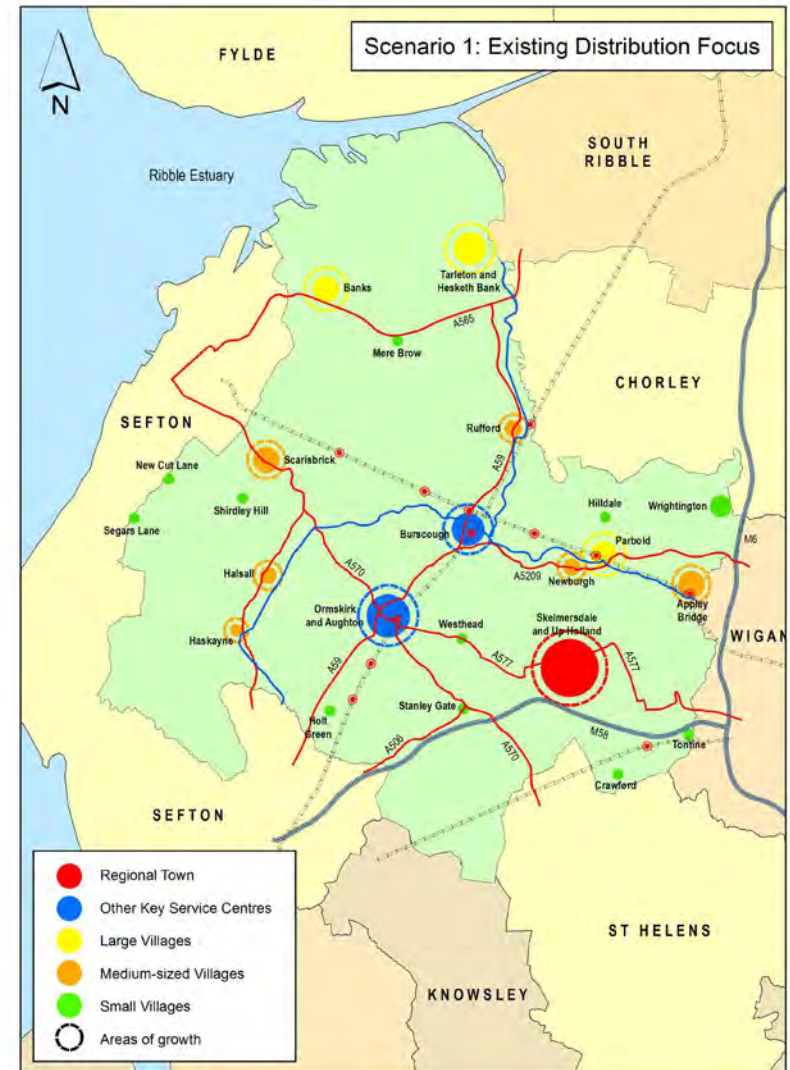
- Scenario 1: the existing pattern of household and employment land distribution
- Scenario 2: a focus on the key service centres
- Scenario 3: a focus on rural communities
- Scenario 4: a focus on growing Skelmersdale in particular



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

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

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



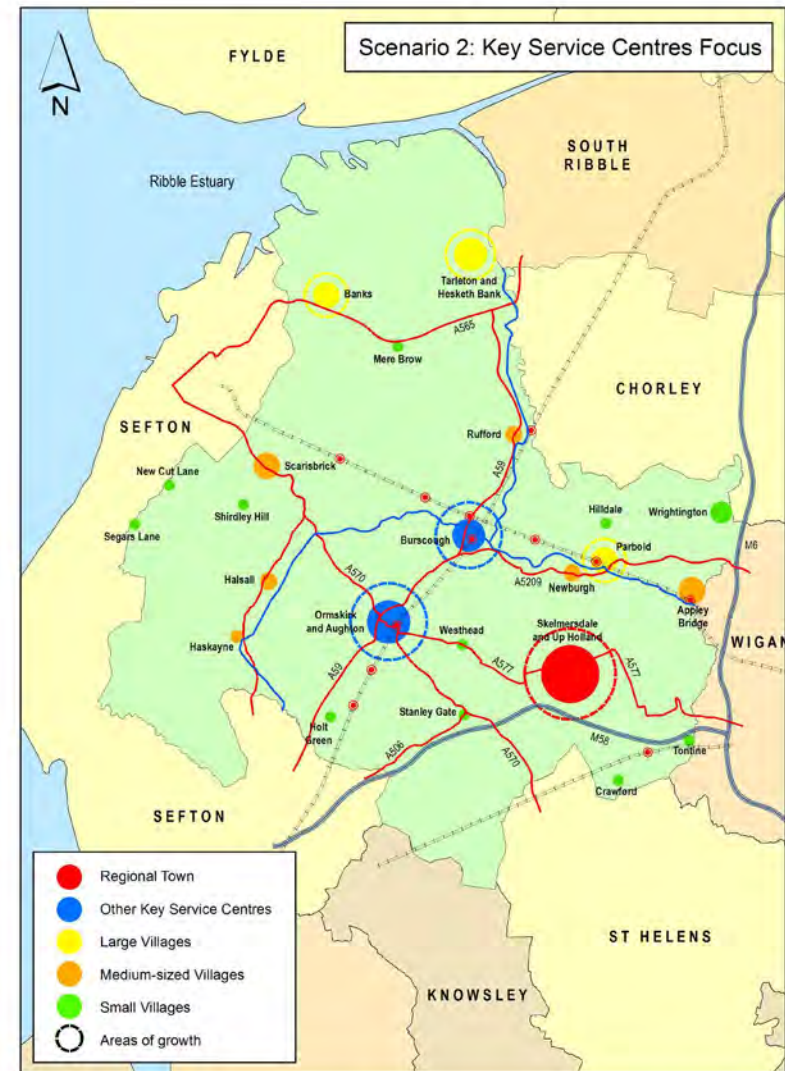
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distribution option does give a useful starting point for discussion and highlights existing patterns which may well influence the distribution of housing and employment land requirements moving forward.

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

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

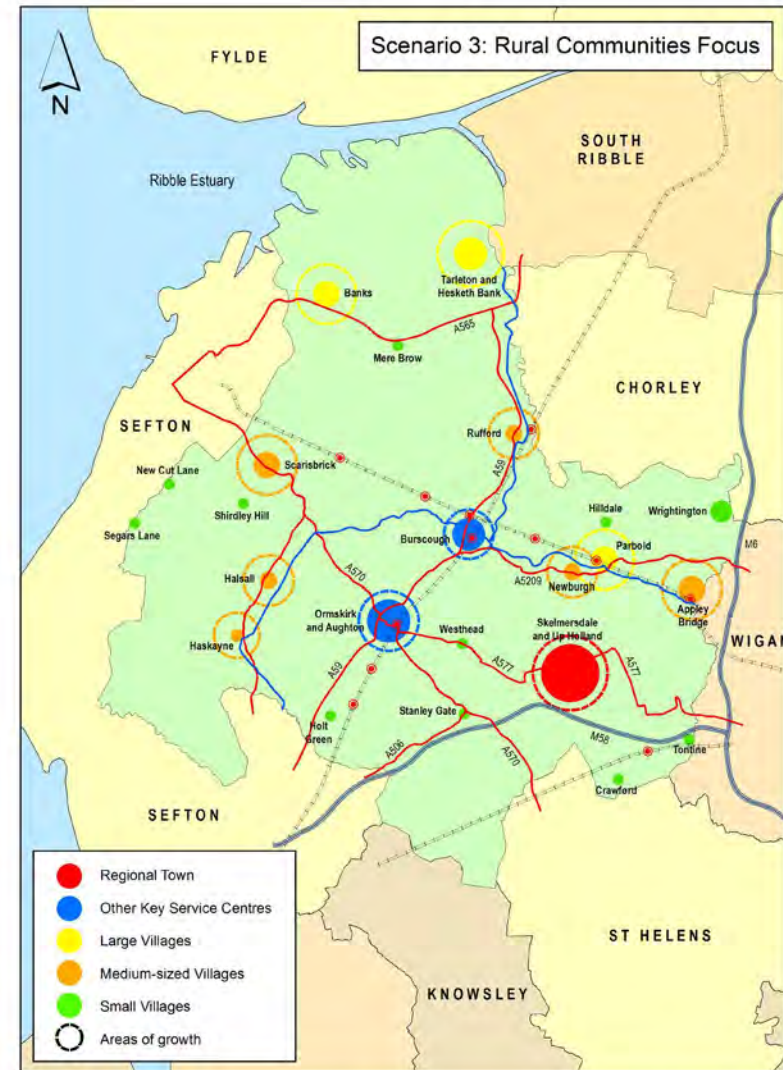


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3.4.9 **Scenario 3** is the opposite of Scenario 2, seeking to allocate more new development to the rural areas, and so less to the Key Service Centres. The Northern Parishes in particular therefore would see a greater level of development under this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

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



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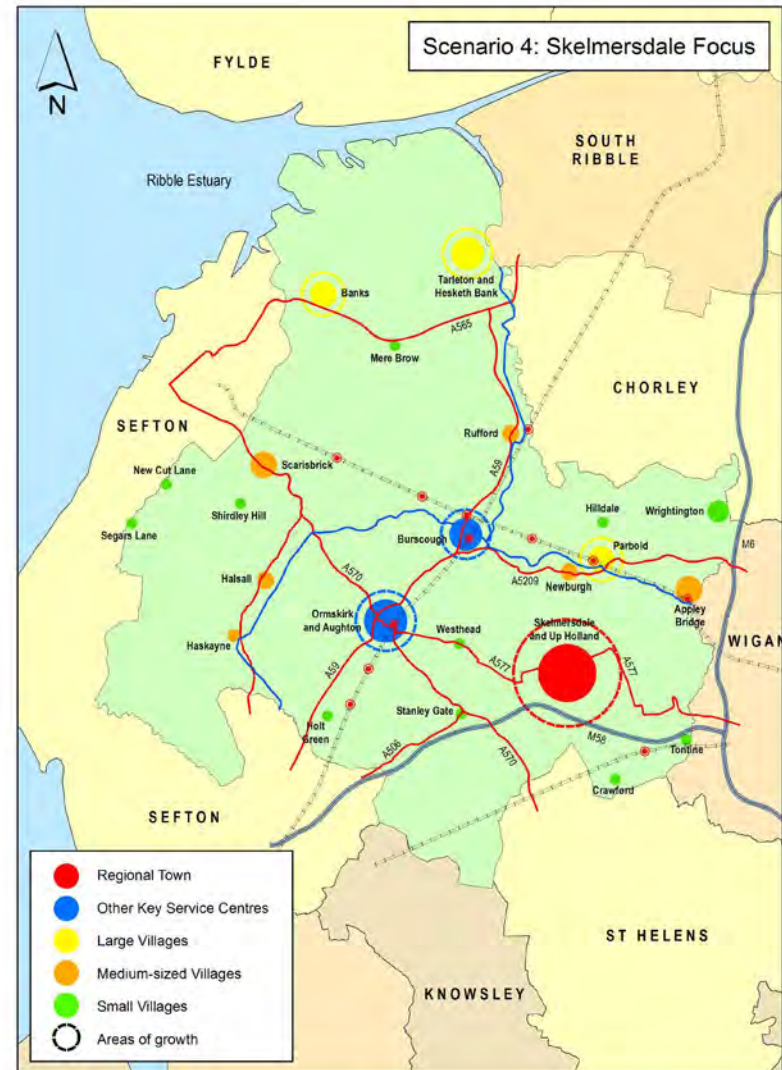
3.4.11 **Scenario 4** is effectively a variation on Scenario 2 whereby the focus is on Skelmersdale in particular of the three Key Service Centres. This scenario would be appropriate where there is a particular need or justification to grow Skelmersdale more than the other Key Service Centres and / or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

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

Summary

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

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



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3.5 The Location of New Development

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

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

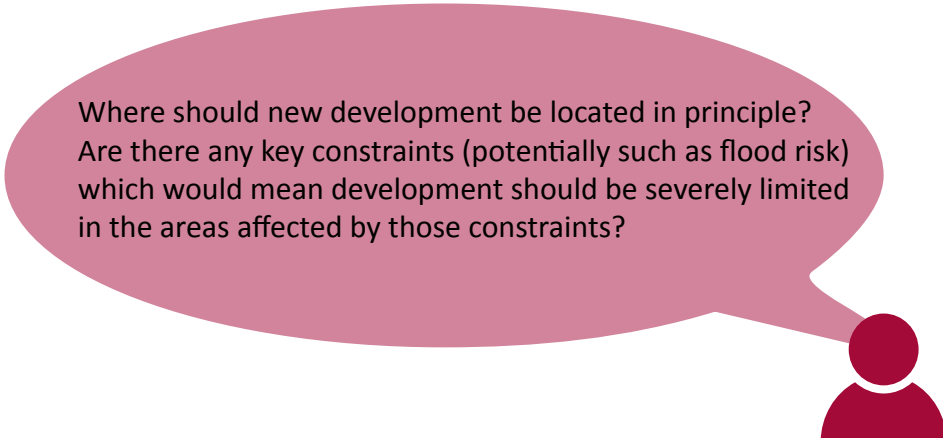
- 3) Create brand new settlements with the necessary associated infrastructure – this option would have the least direct impact on existing settlements but would likely require the greatest loss of Green Belt in order to accommodate all the housing, employment development, infrastructure and services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



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

Summary

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



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

3.6 Site Allocations

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

3.6.2 Such supporting information should include:

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

and transport / highways improvements);

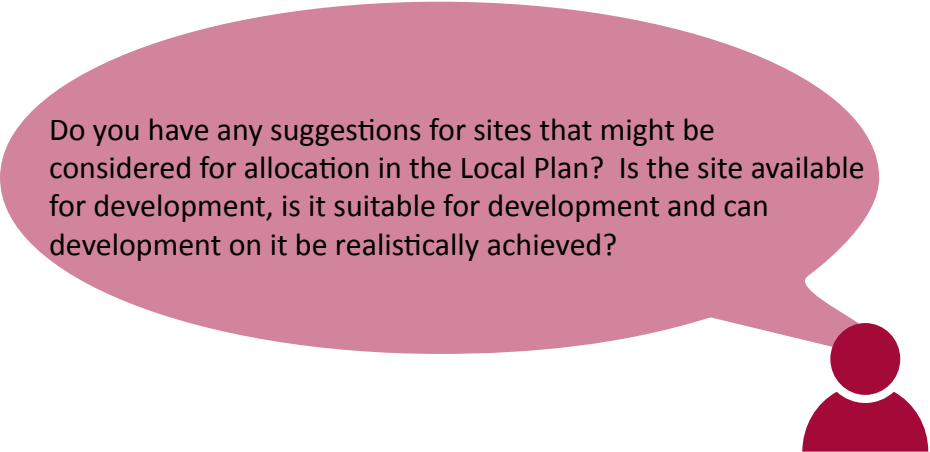
- Evidence supporting the suitability of the site for development, considering the physical and environmental context of the site, the provision of infrastructure and services in the local area of the site and the current planning policy (national and local) that would currently be relevant for the site;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



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

Summary

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



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

3.7 Providing Infrastructure and Services

3.7.1 Identifying what infrastructure and services will be required to support a new Local Plan will depend upon which strategic development options are ultimately selected and which sites are allocated to meet the Local Plan requirements, but it is still a key issue that we must consider at this early stage of plan preparation.

3.7.2 The 2012 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) set out to ensure that the infrastructure necessary to support the amounts and locations of development in the current West Lancashire Local Plan would be delivered. The Spatial Portrait Paper summarises the current infrastructure provision situation¹ but the following provides a summary of the key issues:

- In relation to flood risk, minerals and waste management, gas or electricity provision, broadband improvements and health provision, no new issues have been identified which cannot otherwise be addressed jointly by the Council and service providers.
- The Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 and the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan (2014) refer to a route management plan for West Lancs and a movement strategy for Ormskirk, the delivery of a new rail link and rail station in Skelmersdale and improvements to strategic cycle routes. However, funding constraints at Lancashire County Council (LCC) have resulted in the withdrawal of a number of rural bus services throughout West Lancashire.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

need to be carefully assessed.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Summary

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

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



4. What Happens Next?

Responding to the Issues & Options Consultation

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

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

Email: localplan@westlancs.gov.uk

Postal Address: Local Plan Consultation

Planning

West Lancashire Borough Council

52 Derby Street

Ormskirk

L39 2DF

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

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

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



Next Steps

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

Appendix A - the Local Plan Review Evidence Base

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

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

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