



West Lancashire LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

PREFERRED OPTIONS



August 2018
www.westlancs.gov.uk/LPR

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Foreword



The Council is ambitious for West Lancashire - our economy, the environment and for the health and wellbeing of residents. These Local Plan Preferred Options propose a new Local Plan that reflects those ambitions, seeking to ensure that West Lancashire improves as an attractive place that people will want to live, work and visit, and does so in a sustainable, planned manner over the next 30 years in a way that provides a degree of certainty for all.

West Lancashire has a wonderful mix of vibrant towns and picturesque villages, and boasts some of the most beautiful and productive countryside in the UK. It is also placed strategically within the emerging City Regions, particularly Liverpool City region with Liverpool Superport being one of the largest International Ports in close proximity (less than 10 miles) which is now home to the North's only Deep

Sea terminal Liverpool 2. This new Northern Gateway has already proven to be a catalyst for multiple aligned investments across the region. It is therefore vital that we manage, guide and encourage development within the Borough to improve the economic and social prospects within our towns with a view to the wider picture, but do so while protecting and improving our environment for future generations and maintaining the communities we already have. This document proposes the way that the Council considers this is best achieved.

The Local Plan Preferred Options have been developed by considering all the information provided by the Council's evidence base thus far and the results of previous public consultation on the Scope, Issues and Options for a new Local Plan, and takes into account the latest guidance issued by the Government on preparing local planning policy, most notably the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework.

Ultimately, the Local Plan is extremely important for the future of the Borough and will directly or indirectly affect all residents and communities within the Borough and so I strongly encourage you to engage with the public consultation on this document. Let the Council know your views on the Local Plan, so that we can prepare the best possible Local Plan for West Lancashire.

Councillor John Hodson

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development

West Lancashire Borough Council

August 2018

How to Comment on the Preferred Options

If you would like to comment on any part of the preferred options, then you can do so through the Local Plan Review Preferred Options consultation.

The consultation is open for nine weeks from **12 October until 13 December 2018**.

How to submit your comments:

We strongly encourage people to make representations online as this is the easiest and quickest method of submitting your views. This can be done at:

www.westlancls.gov.uk/lpr

As well as the comments form, and an electronic copy of the preferred document paper, the website also has full details of our evidence base documents should you wish to learn more.

However, you can still email or write in with your comments using the details below. Paper copies of the preferred option paper can be found at all libraries in West Lancashire, at the Council Offices at 52 Derby St, Ormskirk and the Customer Service Point, Unit 142, first floor of the Concourse, Skelmersdale.

Web:	www.westlancls.gov.uk/lpr
Email:	localplan@westlancls.gov.uk
Post:	Strategic Planning West Lancashire Borough Council 52 Derby Street Ormskirk Lancashire L39 2DF

Any questions or queries?

If you have any queries about the Local Plan Review, you can contact the Local Plan Team by phoning 01695 585194 or by attending one of our events. Details of our events can be found online at www.westlancls.gov.uk/lpr

Chapter 1: Introduction

Local Plan Review: Preferred Options Consultation

- 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.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 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.
- 1.3 While the current Local Plan does support the principle of sustainable development that is championed by the NPPF, it is now five years old and 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.
- 1.4 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.

- 1.5 Therefore, while the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 is not out of date at this point in time, it is considered prudent to prepare a new Local Plan, and this Preferred Options document is a key step in doing that.

Preparation of a new Local Plan

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 In February and March 2017, the Council consulted publicly on the Scope of a Local Plan Review and a series of Issues & Options papers which set out the planning-related issues facing West Lancashire and proposed options for how those matters could be dealt with through a new Local Plan. This Preferred Options Paper takes on-board the helpful comments received during that consultation, as well as the wide range of evidence studies that have been prepared and commissioned by the Council, and proposes what is essentially a draft new Local Plan for West Lancashire which would supersede the adopted Local Plan if it were ultimately adopted. This Preferred Options paper also refers to the alternative policy options and site allocations that have been considered before settling on this set of preferred policies and site allocations.
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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).

- 1.10 Similarly, if you are objecting to the proposed allocation of a site in these Preferred Options, you should provide evidence and sound planning reasoning to support your view.
- 1.11 Also, please comment on the alternative policy options or site allocations that the Council have considered, either to support the Council's view not to include that option or to disagree with the Council's decision not to include it. Please also suggest your own alternative policy options and site allocations if the Council do not appear to have considered it.
- 1.12 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/lpr), explains how you can provide feedback to the Council on the preferred options.

The National and Sub-Regional Planning Context

- 1.13 The 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 consistent 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.

- 1.14 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.
- 1.15 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 – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground: and
 - Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.
- 1.16 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).
- 1.17 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.

Key Issues facing West Lancashire

1.18 Our emerging evidence, including the Thematic and Spatial Evidence Papers can be found on the Council's website, www.westlancs.gov.uk/lpr. It identifies the issues that the Borough is facing and assesses 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.

Chapter 2: A Vision for West Lancashire

2.1 Draft Vision

This Vision 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.

2.2 Objectives

The following Objectives 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.

Chapter 3: Strategic Policies

Policy SP1: Delivering Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the support for sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans and supplementary planning documents) will be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies referred to in footnote 7 of the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

New development will be promoted in accordance with the following Settlement Hierarchy, with those settlements higher up the hierarchy, in general, taking more development than those lower down and new development being of a type and use that is appropriate to the scale and character of settlements at each level of the hierarchy.

Hierarchy	Settlements
Regional Town	Skelmersdale and Up Holland
Key Service Centres	Ormskirk and Aughton; Burscough
Key Sustainable Villages	Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, Parbold; Banks
Rural Sustainable Villages	Southport/Birkdale/Ainsdale boundary; Halsall; Haskayne; Scarisbrick; Rufford; Newburgh; Appley Bridge; Tontine;

Hierarchy	Settlements
Small Rural Villages	Crawford; Hilldale; Mere Brow; Shirdley Hill; Stanley Gate; Holt Green; Westhead; Wrightington (Hunger Hill, Mossy Lea, Wrightington Bar)

The Regional Town and the two Key Service Centres of the Borough will take the vast majority of new development. Spatially and economically, Skelmersdale, and the area surrounding it, is the main location for new development throughout the Local Plan period due to the planned delivery in the town centre, the need for regeneration in the town, the new employment land provision and the proposed new Garden Villages around it. Ormskirk, Aughton and Burscough are also key locations for new development with a focus of new development to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton and the existing allocated Yew Tree Farm site in Burscough.

Development in rural areas will be restricted to sites within the defined settlement boundaries of each village, including specific allocations proposed in this Local Plan, unless development proposals meet one of the specific exceptions for development outside settlement boundaries set in this Local Plan or national policy.

Justification

- 3.1 Policy SP1 seeks to accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF by setting at the heart of this Local Plan the desire to create sustainable development and to be proactive in promoting appropriate new development.
- 3.2 The settlement hierarchy is based upon the evidence collated in the Sustainable Settlement Study (2017) which focuses on the level of service provision within each settlement. Where appropriate, for planning purposes, the hierarchy considers settlements as one contiguous built-up area even though it is recognised that there can be distinct towns and villages within those built-up areas with their own identity (e.g. Skelmersdale with Up Holland, Ormskirk with Aughton and Tarleton with Hesketh Bank).



- 3.3 Consistent with the need to deliver sustainable development, it is appropriate that those settlements at the top of the hierarchy, with the most services, should, in general, accommodate the most development. As such, Skelmersdale and Up Holland, Ormskirk and Aughton, and Burscough will take the vast majority of new development. In rural areas development is encouraged within settlement boundaries but restricted outside of them, unless a specific exception is met. In general, this policy continues the existing policy with regard settlement hierarchy and new development in the adopted Local Plan, with just minor changes to where settlements are placed in the hierarchy to reflect the updated evidence in the Sustainable Settlement Study (2017).

Alternatives Considered

- 3.4 Given the importance placed upon promoting sustainable development in the NPPF, there is no realistic alternative to the first part of the proposed policy SP1 which would be reasonable to consider and consistent with the NPPF. However, in relation to the settlement hierarchy, the alternatives considered were:

- 3.5 *To not have a settlement hierarchy / have the same policy for all settlements*

This policy approach would allow the same scale of development to take place in Skelmersdale as it would in a small village such as Shirdley Hill, and so would not be a viable and appropriate approach in West Lancashire.

- 3.6 *Variations on the settlement hierarchy proposed*

Variations on both the structure of hierarchy and on where each settlement fits into that structure would be a viable alternative, and the Council would like to receive any evidence which would query the conclusions reached in the proposed settlement hierarchy, but the proposed hierarchy is based upon the evidence currently available to the Council and which is summarised in the Sustainable Settlement Study (2017). In doing so, the Council also concluded that the structure of the hierarchy should continue that which is already in the current Local Plan.

- 3.7 *Variations on the policy proposed for each level of the hierarchy*

A policy approach could be adopted which varies the general policy and scale and type of development within each level of the hierarchy. However, the council currently considers it most appropriate to continue broadly the same policy currently adopted for each level of the hierarchy.

Policy SP2: Strategic Development Requirements

Over the period 2012 to 2050 there will be a need for **15,992 new dwellings** (net) as a minimum and a need for **190 ha** of land to be newly developed for employment uses. These Borough-wide requirements will be divided between the different spatial areas of the Borough as indicative targets as follows:

	Housing	Employment Land
Skelmersdale and South-Eastern Parishes	8,572 dwellings	150 ha
Ormskirk and Aughton	3,003 dwellings	10 ha
Burscough and Central Parishes	1,495 dwellings	25 ha
Northern Parishes	1,435 dwellings	5 ha
Western Parishes	923 dwellings	-
Eastern Parishes	564 dwellings	-

For the purposes of measuring the annual delivery of the above Borough-wide housing requirement, the Local Plan period will be divided into three phases:

	Total for that Phase	Annual Requirement
2012-2019	1,899 dwellings*	271 dwellings per annum*
2019-2027	3,168 dwellings	396 dwellings per annum
2027-2050	10,925 dwellings	475 dwellings per annum

**Reflects Actual Delivery 2012-2018 plus anticipated delivery 2018/19*

Justification

- 3.8 A full, detailed explanation of how the Council has arrived at the above Strategic Development Requirements is provided in the Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the new Local Plan for West Lancashire should cover the period 2012 to 2050. The base date of 2012 reflects the base date of the existing West Lancashire Local Plan and maintaining this base date points toward the fact that this new Local Plan is a continuation of the current Local Plan, with those allocations and development proposals proposed in the current Local Plan continuing on into the new Local Plan.
- 3.10 The proposal to prepare a longer-term Local Plan to 2050 enables the Council to plan

sustainably and holistically for the longer-term, providing a greater likelihood of delivering much-needed new infrastructure through the critical mass of development that this longer-term approach creates and providing competition in the land market (to help manage land values and viability). It also removes the need for safeguarded land and means that there should be no need to review the Green Belt boundary in West Lancashire again for the next 20-25 years.

- 3.11 The Employment Land Requirement reflects a need for 99 ha of employment land for B1, B2 and small-scale B8 uses over the period 2012-2050 (2.6 ha per year) based on the Completions Trend scenario in the LCR SHELMA study and the proposal that West Lancashire should deliver 91 ha of large-scale B8 uses over the period 2012-2050 (2.4 ha per year) as a contribution towards meeting the growing demand for large-scale B8 uses in the wider City Region.



- 3.12 Given that the large-scale B8 uses need very good connections to the motorway network and the Port of Liverpool (such as those found in the M58 Corridor), and given that the majority of existing employment uses in West Lancashire (84%) are located in Skelmersdale and Simonswood, policy SP2 proposes that the majority of new employment development should be located in Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes. A secondary focus at Burscough is proposed which also reflects the existing distribution of employment uses. The proposal to accommodate 10 ha of employment land in Ormskirk and Aughton and 5 ha in the Northern Parishes reflects the desire to see more employment opportunities created in the Borough's second largest town and to enable some new employment opportunities in more sustainable rural areas.
- 3.13 The 15,992 dwelling requirement reflects a combination of elements of housing need, which are summarised in the table below. Firstly, it reflects the current adopted Local Plan's housing requirement to 2027 (Row A of the table below), which it is considered should be continued within the new Local Plan given the commitment that the Council has given to see this level of delivery to 2027. Secondly, for the period from 2027-2050 it utilises the Local Housing Need calculation set by the Government as it pertains to West Lancashire at the time of preparing this document (Row B), then adds to this an anticipated growth of housing need in West Lancashire from 2027-2050 based upon the impact of the Skelmersdale Rail proposals and the proposals to accommodate a significant level of large-scale logistics development on the M58 Corridor (Row C). This growth in housing need will be redirected primarily from the Liverpool City Region by the change in commuting patterns and employment opportunities these proposals create

in West Lancashire. Finally, a further element of the Liverpool City Region’s housing need between 2027 and 2050 will not be able to be met within the City Region due to significant environmental constraints limiting capacity for development in some parts of the City Region, and so under the Duty to Co-operate West Lancashire is obliged to meet these future unmet housing needs if it can do so, and this is reflected in Row D of the table below.

		Housing Need (dwellings per year)	Housing Requirement (dwellings)
A	Current Local Plan Requirement 2012-2027	324	4,860
B	Local Housing Need Calculation Rolled Forward for 2027-2050	212	4,876
C	Growth from Skelmersdale Rail and Large-scale Logistics Employment 2027-2050	120	2,760
D	Remaining Unmet Housing Need from the Liverpool City Region for 2027-2050	152	3,496
E	Total		15,992

Table 1: Calculation of the Proposed Housing Requirement

- 3.14 The proposed distribution of these new dwellings across West Lancashire reflects a combination of existing housing distribution in the borough and the fact that Skelmersdale will take the majority of housing growth being attracted from the Liverpool City Region because it will be the focus of economic growth linked to the Skelmersdale Rail proposals and the large-scale B8 uses.
- 3.15 The proposed Annual Requirements for residential development take account of the delivery to-date in the first half of the current Local Plan and how all the major allocations have now commenced development, and so project an upturn in delivery that will be seen from 2019 onwards, but then a further upturn from 2027 when the proposed new allocations in the new Local Plan start to deliver significant numbers of completions. This allows a seven-year “grace period” from the adoption of the Local Plan to bring these major new developments through the planning process and initial construction works to start delivering housing completions.
- 3.16 It should also be noted that, through this proposed phasing of annual delivery for housing development, more than the current Local Plan requirement of 4,860 new dwellings will still be completed by 2027 (the current Local Plan end date). Indeed, more than 200

additional dwellings will have been completed based on the proposed annual delivery rates.

Alternatives Considered

3.17 A series of Strategic Development Options were considered at the Issues & Options stage of the Local Plan Review (Spring 2017), and the selected preferred option reflected in policy SP2 lies somewhere between options C and D in terms of the amount of development land required, option II in terms of Local Plan period and is most similar to Scenarios 2 and 4 in relation to the distribution of new development across the borough. As such, the alternatives are the other options considered in the Issues & Options: Strategic Development Options paper. Most notably, the alternatives include:

3.18 *A Plan period running to 2037 only*

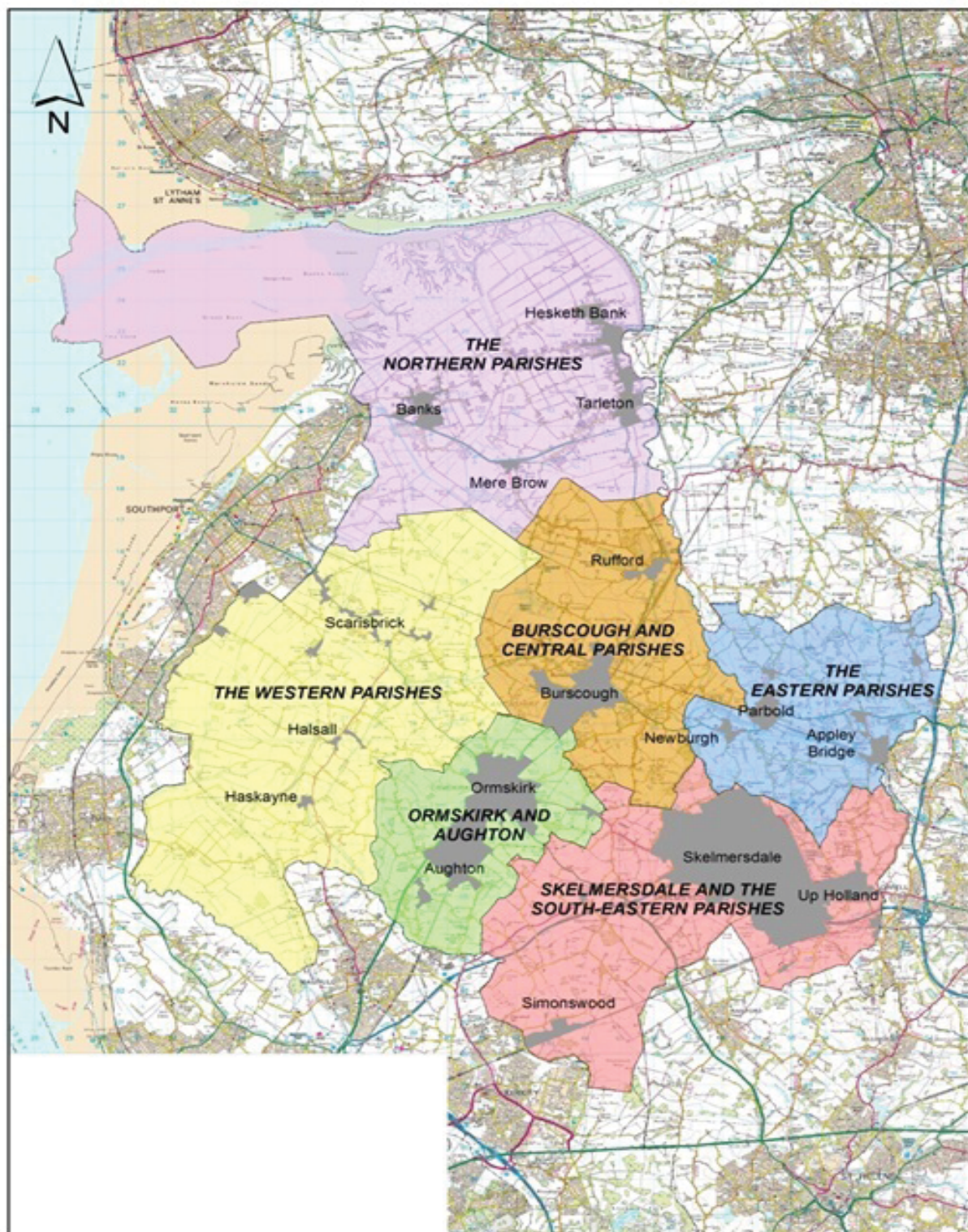
Under this approach, Safeguarded Land would be required for development needs beyond the Plan period and so a similar amount of land would still need to be released for allocation / safeguarding as the preferred option, but the flexibility of the Plan would be reduced.

3.19 *Planning for less development in general, e.g. by not meeting any of the wider housing and employment land needs from the Liverpool City Region*

While it is questionable whether the Council would actually have a choice to seek a reduced level of development given the revised NPPF's policy on meeting the unmet needs of adjacent authorities, if there is a choice, this alternative would limit the opportunities for economic growth and regeneration in the borough and would likely exacerbate the existing issues over the affordability of housing, employment opportunities and commuting in the borough.

3.20 *Distributing new development more evenly, according to the existing pattern of households and employment land across the borough*

This alternative has no regard to the capacity of each part of the borough to accommodate a level of growth commensurate with its existing share of households and employment land, or how sustainable perpetuating the existing patterns would be. As such, it would involve less housing in the Skelmersdale & South-Eastern Parishes, but more in most other parts of the borough, which are generally more constrained (environmentally and / or in terms of infrastructure) and less sustainable in terms of development opportunities.



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Figure 1: Spatial Areas in West Lancashire

Policy SP3: Settlement Boundaries

The boundaries of West Lancashire's settlements, and land outside those boundaries designated as Protected Land and Green Belt, are shown on the Policies Map.

I. Development within settlement boundaries

Within settlement boundaries, development on brownfield land will be encouraged, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies being satisfied.

Development proposals on greenfield sites within settlement boundaries will be assessed against all relevant Local Plan policies applying to the site, including, but not limited to, policies on infrastructure, open and recreational space and nature conservation, as well as any land designations or allocations.

II. Development outside settlement boundaries on Protected Land

Development on Protected Land will only be permitted where it retains or enhances the rural character of the area, for example small scale, low intensity tourism and leisure uses, and forestry and horticulture related uses. As an exception, residential development may be permitted in some circumstances in accordance with policy H1.

III. Development outside settlement boundaries within the Green Belt

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy on Green Belt, together with Policy SP4 of this Local Plan and any locally adopted SPD or Neighbourhood Plan covering development in the Green Belt. As an exception, residential development may be permitted in some circumstances in accordance with policy H1.

Justification

- 3.21 It is considered that the approach of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 towards defining settlement boundaries (which itself is a continuation of previous Local Plans' policy) remains sound, and that there is no reason for changing this approach. In most places, the Green Belt boundary (as proposed to be amended by this new Local Plan) matches the settlement boundary, with existing built-up areas being tightly defined by the Green Belt boundary.

3.22 However, especially in the Northern Parishes, there are areas of land that are not within the settlement boundary that are also not within the designated Green Belt, which the adopted Local Plan designated as “Protected Land”. This Protected Land forms a buffer between the built-up area and the Green Belt and is considered generally unsuitable for development, with the majority of it being open and undeveloped and in a horticultural / agricultural or other countryside use. Having said that, exceptions to this protection are proposed to be set out in Policy SP3 and H1 of a new Local Plan.



3.23 Changes to settlement and / or Green Belt boundaries (compared with the adopted Local Plan) have been made where new development allocations have been proposed that requires the release of land from the Green Belt, but many minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary have also been made across the borough to ensure that the Green Belt boundary on the Policies Maps aligns with the physical features on the ground.

3.24 Policy SP3 supports the development of brownfield land within settlements, subject to other relevant Local Plan policies being satisfied. Greenfield land within settlements that is not allocated for any specific use will be subject to all the applicable policies within this Local Plan document. In addition to relevant Local Plan policies, the following considerations may also be taken into account when assessing proposals for development on greenfield sites within settlements:

- The sustainability of the site, including how well it relates to the settlement, and how easy it is to access the settlement centre and other local services on foot or by sustainable modes of transport;
- The extent to which any parts of the site are already developed (for example, greenhouses or agricultural buildings), and the nature of the development (size, permanence, condition);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, the site's visual, amenity, leisure or recreational value (regardless of whether it is designated as open or recreational space);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, the site's biodiversity value (regardless of any environmental designation);
- The extent of, and the likely impact upon, tree cover on the site (regardless of

whether or not the trees are protected by TPOs);

- Whether the proposals impact upon the site's visual, recreational, amenity, or natural environmental value, and the scope for effective mitigation measures;
- Whether the site includes any Best or Most Versatile agricultural land, and if so, whether the proposed development can be configured in such a way as to minimise the loss or sterilisation of the agricultural land;
- The impact of the site's development upon the character and appearance of the settlement and the setting of heritage assets, and the contribution of the site to local character;
- The cumulative impact of successive development proposals in the same settlement, or in the same part of a settlement; and
- The scope for provision of community facilities, general improvements to the locality, or other community benefits.

3.25 In relation to inappropriate development in the Green Belt that is allowed by exception through the NPPF, policy SP4 (and the proposed housing policies of the Local Plan) will clarify how some of these exceptions are to be interpreted in relation to development proposals within West Lancashire.

Alternatives Considered

3.26 Policy SP3 is essentially a continuation of Policy GN1 of the adopted Local Plan that, with policy SP4, also expands and clarifies the interpretation of national policy on development in the Green Belt. The following alternatives have been considered:

To provide greater flexibility on development within settlement boundaries, even on greenfield sites

To remove any specific policy on that which is currently designated Protected Land or to make the policy more stringent so that it aligns with Green Belt

To simply rely on national policy for development in the Green Belt

Policy SP4: Development in the Green Belt

Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy on Green Belt, together with any locally adopted SPD or Neighbourhood Plan covering development in the Green Belt.

In particular, with reference to the categories of development set out in paragraphs 145 and 146 of the NPPF, the following development will be considered permissible in the Green Belt in West Lancashire, subject to compliance with other relevant policies:

- I. The extension or alteration of a building, provided that the resulting volume of the extension, together with any previous extensions, alterations and non-original outbuildings, would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. 'Disproportionate additions' are usually taken to be more than 40% above the volume of the original building. There may be occasions where an increase of more than 40% is acceptable; conversely, there may be occasions where less than 40% is unacceptable.
- II. The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use, and the volume of the replacement building is not materially larger than the one it replaces. 'Materially larger' is usually taken to be more than 20% above the volume of the original building. There may be occasions where an increase of more than 20% is acceptable; conversely, there may be occasions where less than 20% is unacceptable.
- III. Limited infilling in villages – all villages in West Lancashire are inset from the Green Belt, and as such, this category of exception development in the Green Belt is not relevant in West Lancashire, except potentially where the infill development is between the edge of an inset settlement (as demarcated on the Policies Map) and a property / properties outside, but close to the edge of, the settlement, and where on the ground the urban form of the settlement clearly extends beyond its Policies Map boundary.
- IV. Limited affordable housing for local community needs – this is covered by the rural exception sites policy (see policy H1).
- V. The redevelopment of brownfield sites. Where there is no net impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, market housing will be permissible. Where there is any net impact upon openness, the harm to the openness must be less than substantial, and the 'net impact' must be made up by affordable housing units.

VI. The re-use of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major change, demolition or extension.

In the case of residential development permitted under (iii), (v) and (vi) above that involves the creation of 10 or more dwellings, a percentage of the units will required to be affordable, consistent with policy H3.

Justification

- 3.27 Green Belt benefits from the strongest protection in policy terms. Paragraphs 133-147 of the NPPF set out national Green Belt policy, including what types of development are ‘appropriate’ or ‘inappropriate’ in the Green Belt.
- 3.28 This Local Plan does not seek to change or elaborate on national policy, except in cases where national policy leaves room for interpretation. The six types of development listed in policy SP4 provide local clarification on paragraphs 145 and 146 of national policy. These two paragraphs together list a total of 13 types of development that are defined as being ‘not inappropriate’. This Local Plan makes no comment on the other 7 types of development listed; these would be permissible in West Lancashire, subject to compliance with other relevant policies.
- 3.29 The full justification for the ‘local interpretation’ of the NPPF under policy SP4 is set out in the Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document. In brief, with reference to the six types of development listed above:
- 3.30 ***Extensions / replacement buildings ((i) and (ii))***
An increase of more than 40% above the volume of the original building for extensions is considered ‘disproportionate’ (NPPF 145(c)), and an increase of more than 20% over the volume of the original building for replacement dwellings is considered ‘materially larger’ (145(d)). There may be occasions where an increase of more than these percentages may be acceptable; conversely, there may be occasions where less is unacceptable. The existing building should be lawful and permanent in nature, and proposals should be in keeping with the character of the area, and appropriate in terms of design and materials.
- 3.31 ***Redevelopment of brownfield sites ((v))***
The NPPF (145(g)) allows for the redevelopment of brownfield sites for housing, provided there is no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The NPPF also allows for affordable housing to meet an identified local

need where there is less than substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. In the case of the redevelopment of a brownfield site, it is considered acceptable to allow for market housing to replace existing buildings (no net impact on openness) and for the remainder of the development to comprise affordable dwellings only, provided the net resultant harm to openness is not 'substantial'. Whether or not the harm is substantial is a judgment to be made on a case-by-case basis, and will limit the number of affordable houses permissible.

3.32 ***Re-use of buildings ((vi))***

In the case of the re-use of existing [permanent and substantial] buildings, these should be capable of conversion without major change, demolition or extension. Other relevant policies will apply, for example on design.

3.33 If any schemes permitted under (iii), (v) or (vi) above result in the development of 10 or more dwellings, or 1,000m² of floorspace, a percentage will be required to be affordable, in line with policy H3. This does not necessarily imply that all proposals for 10 or more units will be judged appropriate in the Green Belt, in particular in the case of limited infilling in villages.

3.34 A number of permitted development rights exist relating to residential development in the Green Belt. These are the subject of national policy and are not elaborated upon in this Local Plan.

3.35 As a general principle, the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas, and advises (paragraph 78) that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the viability of rural communities. NPPF paragraph 79 requires that planning policies avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside, unless one of five exceptions apply. The meaning of the word 'isolated' has been the subject of different interpretations, and the focus of debate at planning appeals and in the courts.



3.36 In judging whether a proposal for residential development in the Green Belt (permissible under NPPF paragraphs 145 and 146) is acceptable under NPPF paragraphs 78 and 79, the following considerations will apply:

- Does the proposed dwelling (or 'dwellings'; similarly below) meet any of the exceptions

of NPPF paragraph 79?

- Is the proposed dwelling within a rural 'settlement' (group of dwellings and other buildings that clearly has the appearance of a distinct 'hamlet' or 'village'; such 'settlements' need not be inset from the Green Belt on the Local Plan Policies Map), or is it outside any such 'settlement'?
- How easy is it to access services and facilities from the proposed development without the use of a private car or similar vehicle?

3.37 Additional and more detailed guidance on other forms of development (e.g. stables) is provided in the Development in the Green Belt SPD.

Alternatives Considered

3.38 Policy SP4 is essentially a clarification at West Lancashire level of national policy. Therefore, there is little scope for major variations in the policy. The following alternatives have been considered:

3.39 *A different approach to rural exception sites*

This is covered under the alternatives to policy H1.

3.40 *Different percentage limits for 'disproportionate' and 'materially larger'*

The 40% / 20% limits have been devised in the light of years of experience by Development Management officers with respect to specific cases (both granted and refused permission / at appeals) in West Lancashire. Lower limits are considered unduly restrictive; higher limits would lead to over-large dwellings in the Green Belt, causing more harm to its openness.

Policy SP5: Skelmersdale Town Centre

Proposals for the enhancement, regeneration and redevelopment of Skelmersdale Town Centre within the SP5 Strategic Development Site designation on the Policies Map will be supported. A revitalised Skelmersdale Town Centre is vital to the wider regeneration of the town.

- I. The following principles should be considered for development proposals within Skelmersdale Town Centre:
 - a. Make Skelmersdale an attractive leisure, recreational and retail centre;
 - b. In compliance with the Tawd Valley Park Masterplan, ensure that the parks and open spaces in and around the Town Centre are integral to the regeneration and are more accessible to Skelmersdale's communities and visitors;
 - c. Reconnect the Town Centre with surrounding communities through the building of new footpaths and cycleways;
 - d. Facilitate the delivery of a rail station as an integrated part of the Town Centre;
 - e. Increase the number of residents in the Town Centre and diversify the style and range of residential accommodation available;
 - f. Explore all opportunities to attract employment-generating uses to the town centre;
 - g. Maximise opportunities for low carbon design; and
 - h. Ensure all development is of the highest quality of design in terms of buildings and public realm, having full regard to the relationships between buildings and spaces.
- II. The following are the key development opportunities within the Town Centre proposals:
 - a. To enhance the Town Centre offer and to ensure the long-term vitality and viability of the Town Centre, including the Concourse Centre, new development is required to link the Concourse and Asda / West Lancashire College and should include a range and mix of uses including retailing (food and non-food) and leisure, and must include high quality public realm. Any scheme should not significantly harm the viability and

vitality of the Concourse Centre and must provide sufficient linkage to the Concourse.

- b. To ensure maximum practical integration, an improved western entrance into the Concourse Centre to link with the new Town Centre development and a relocated or renovated bus station, and re-use of the top floor of the Concourse Centre. Enhancements to the existing Concourse Centre to improve the retail offer and attractiveness of the Concourse Centre will also be encouraged.
- c. To make better use of the southern part of the Town Centre, by making the most of the presence of a new rail station on the former Westbank/Glenburn site to develop complementary uses in accordance with the Skelmersdale Town Centre (South) Development Framework.
- d. To create new housing, including at Findon and Delf Clough and on land to the south and west of the Tawd Valley, with a minimum of 750 units to be delivered over the Local Plan period. All housing areas should be of a high quality of design.
- e. Delf House and Whelmar House should continue to be used for office uses, but, should a viable redevelopment opportunity arise, replacement offices or non-food bulky goods retail would be appropriate.

Development which would prejudice the delivery of any aspect of the Town Centre regeneration scheme, either in terms of its location or the viability of other elements of the scheme, will not be permitted.

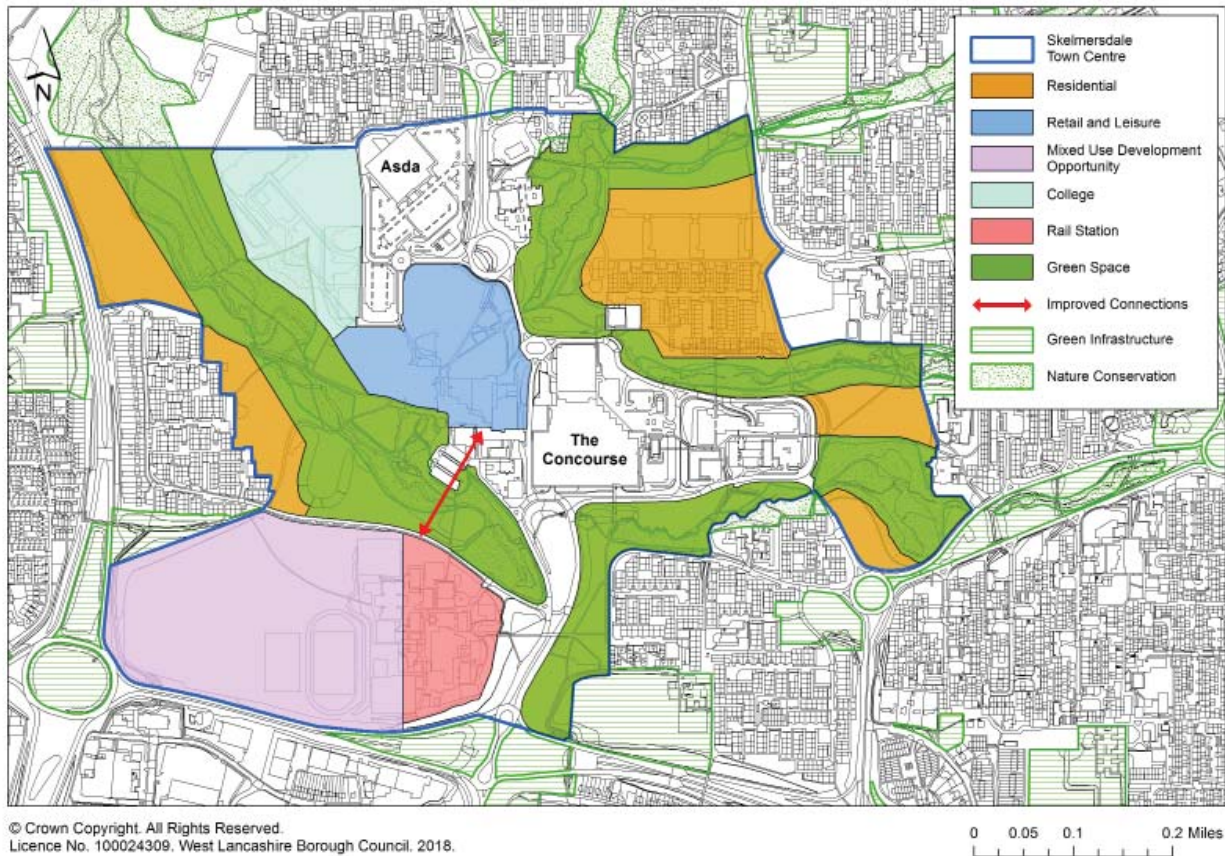


Figure 2: Skelmersdale Town Centre

Justification

- 3.41 Policy SP5 continues and updates the equivalent policy for Skelmersdale Town Centre in the current, adopted Local Plan. A revitalised town centre is vital to secure wider economic development opportunities in the town and to serve the proposed significant development growth of Skelmersdale and its hinterland proposed in this new Local Plan. In 2002 the Council started the process to secure this town centre development and has seen overwhelming public support for the plans that have been prepared to date. The new Local Plan must now take forward those plans in the light of the current economic conditions and forecasts, to ensure that a realistic and viable set of development schemes can be developed as early as possible in the new Local Plan period.

Alternatives Considered

- 3.42 Improving the town centre of Skelmersdale is a Key Priority for the Council and for this Local Plan. As such, there are no alternatives to be considered other than proposals which deliver the improvement and economic boost that is required. While there may be choices to be made as to precisely what new development happens where in the Town Centre, policy SP5 is considered flexible enough to accommodate those variations.

Policy SP6: Yew Tree Farm, Burscough

In accordance with the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD, which development on the site will be required to conform to, an area to the west of Burscough has been designated as a Strategic Development Site to deliver:

Residential development for at least 1,000 new dwellings and a 100-bed care home;

- At least 25 ha of new employment land as an extension to the existing employment areas, including land at Tollgate Crescent and land to the west of Tollgate Road;
- A new town park for Burscough, with a Management Trust to co-ordinate and fund the maintenance of the park, alongside other Green Infrastructure improvements;
- A linear park / cycle route across the site to link in with a wider Ormskirk to Burscough linear park / cycle route;
- A new Primary School and other local community facilities to meet the increased demand created by the proposed development if that demand cannot be appropriately accommodated elsewhere in the town;
- Appropriate highway access for the site on Liverpool Road South (one access only, in accordance with the Masterplan SPD) and Tollgate Road, together with a suitable internal road network providing a connection across the site between the two roads;
- Traffic mitigation measures to improve traffic flow on Liverpool Road South and protect other local roads;
- A robust and implementable Travel Plan for the entire site to address the provision of, and accessibility to, frequent public transport services and to improve pedestrian and cycling links with Burscough town centre, rail stations and Ormskirk; and
- Measures to address the surface water drainage on the Yew Tree Farm site to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Development of the Yew Tree Farm site must not result in surface water being discharged into the public sewerage system and will, wherever possible, redirect surface water that

currently flows into the public sewerage system (to at least the equivalent quantity of foul water being discharged from the site into the public sewerage system) to be attenuated within the SuDS on the Yew Tree Farm site. Surface water being attenuated by those SuDS should discharge to the local watercourse at greenfield run-off rates.

Development of the Yew Tree Farm site should be of a high quality of design and be of a high standard in relation to energy efficiency. The scale and massing of development should be appropriate, given the site's edge of built-up area location, in accordance with the Council's Design Guide SPD. Any development of the site should have consideration to its impact on nearby heritage assets and implement appropriate mitigation measures to minimise any negative impact on these assets.

Development should seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity and landscape value wherever possible, including delivering appropriate mitigation identified by a specific Habitat Regulations Assessment / Appropriate Assessment for the site, and consider how the design of development within the site can actively enhance biodiversity through habitat creation.

Development should also improve access to recreation opportunities and green spaces so as to integrate the development with the local and wider Green Infrastructure network, particularly through the inclusion of the Ormskirk to Burscough Linear Park within the site and the new, maintained town park for Burscough.

In relation to the employment land designated to the west of Tollgate Road (which does not form part of the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD), a Travelling Showpeople site would also be permissible within this employment allocation, as per policy H6.

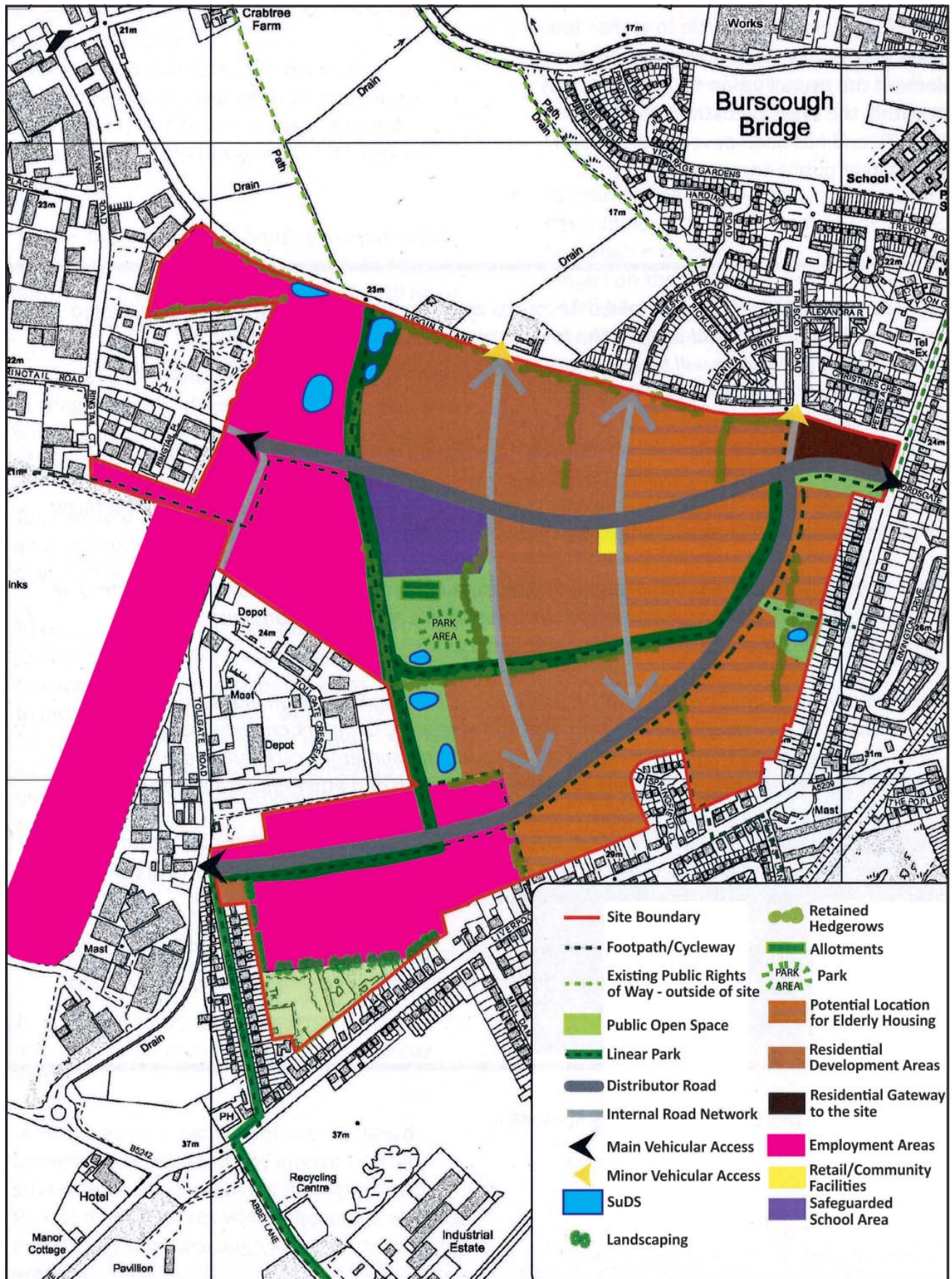


Figure 3: Yew Tree Farm Master Plan

Justification

- 3.43 Policy SP6 continues and updates the equivalent policy for the Yew Tree Farm site in the current, adopted Local Plan. The key change compared to the existing policy is to remove the requirement to safeguard part of the site for further residential and employment development in the future and so allocate the whole site for development in the new Local Plan period. This is simply because the new Local Plan will cover the period beyond 2027 and so the land which was safeguarded from development in the adopted Local Plan will be required for development needs in Burscough post-2027.
- 3.44 The development of the whole site, which includes parts that already benefit from a planning permission, will be required to adhere to the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD (adopted in February 2015) and was prepared expressly to ensure a co-ordinated and integrated development of the whole site over time. However, Policy SP6 also covers an additional area of land to the west of Tollgate Road which is proposed for allocation as employment land through this Local Plan. While this is not covered by the Yew Tree Farm Masterplan SPD, it is considered an extended part of this strategic location for new development and will be expected to deliver new employment development in accordance with Policy SP6. A Travelling showpeople site will also be considered appropriate on that additional land, as per Policy H6.

Alternatives Considered

- 3.45 The new Local Plan is planning for development beyond the existing Plan period to 2027, and so additional land for development in Burscough is needed to meet requirements for that extended Plan period. As such, if the full Yew Tree Farm site were not released for development in the new Local Plan, the only alternative would be to release entirely new sites from the Green Belt elsewhere in Burscough to meet those additional development needs.
- 3.46 While other sites around Burscough have been put forward to the Council, all are in the Green Belt and so, when there is land for approximately 500 dwellings and 10 ha of employment land already removed from the Green Belt by the adopted Local Plan at Yew Tree Farm, and that land is enclosed by existing development, there is no realistic alternative to allocating this safeguarded land for development.

Policy SP7: The Creation of Garden Villages and Employment Areas to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale

Land to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale is to be allocated for the development of three Garden Villages totalling in the region of 6,000 dwellings and employment areas totalling over 100 ha of employment land, together with all necessary infrastructure and local services.

In delivering this new area of development, the following will be required as part of the proposals:

- The creation of three Garden Villages:
 - to the north of the A577 Dicket's Lane / Blaguegate Lane (circa 1,500 dwellings);
 - to the east of the B5240 Lyelake Lane (circa 2,500 dwellings); and
 - to the north-east of the A570 Rainford Bypass (circa 2,000 dwellings).
- Three 100-bed care homes / extra care facilities, each potentially as part of Elderly Care Villages incorporated within each Garden Village.
- A Logistics Park (approx. 70 ha in size) for large-scale B8 uses adjacent to Junction 3 of the M58 motorway.
- An extension of the existing employment area at White Moss Business Park for B1, C1 and D1 uses (approx. 15 ha to the south and east) and for general B1, B2 and B8 employment uses (approx. 20 ha to the west).
- The retention of a green buffer between the existing settlement of Skelmersdale and the new Garden Villages / J3 Logistics Park, which should be kept open and protected from the construction of new buildings except those related to agriculture and forestry and to facilities for outdoor sport and recreation.
- The provision of new highway links connecting the new Garden Villages and employment areas to the existing strategic highway network and improvements to existing local highways as required as a result of the proposed development.
- Measures to address surface water drainage to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority so that all surface water is

attenuated within the development to discharge to the local watercourse at greenfield run-off rate.

- The provision of new, or enhancement of existing, local centres accessible to each Garden Village to provide local services to the new settlements.
- Two new Primary Schools to meet the increased demand for school places created by the proposed Garden Village developments if that demand cannot be appropriately accommodated elsewhere in existing schools in Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes;
- Delivery of the Firwood Road - Plough Lane section of the Skelmersdale to Ormskirk Linear Park and provision of maintained Green Infrastructure and cycle links, areas of public open space, play areas and playing pitches in line with the requirements of the Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Developments SPD and other policies in this Local Plan.
- Protect, and where possible enhance, the Biological Heritage Sites at Dicket's Brook Wood, Stanley's Firs, Ferny Knoll Bog and Nipe Lane.

A Strategic Masterplan SPD for the area covered by the new Garden Villages and Employment Areas to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale will be prepared and all development within the area covered by the SPD will be required to adhere to it.

Development of the new Garden Villages and Employment Areas should be of a high quality of design and be of a high standard in relation to energy efficiency / low carbon development. Any development of the site should have consideration to its impact on nearby heritage assets and implement appropriate mitigation measures to minimise any negative impact on these assets.

Development should seek to conserve and enhance green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape value wherever possible, seeking to bring the countryside into the Garden Villages through their layout and design. All developments should consider how the design of development within the site can actively enhance biodiversity through habitat creation.

Development should also improve access to recreation opportunities and green spaces so as to integrate the development with the local and wider Green Infrastructure network, particularly through the inclusion of the Skelmersdale to Ormskirk Linear Park within the

most northerly Garden Village and by ensuring that Green Infrastructure and cycle links connect the three Garden Villages and the three employment areas with one another and with Skelmersdale.

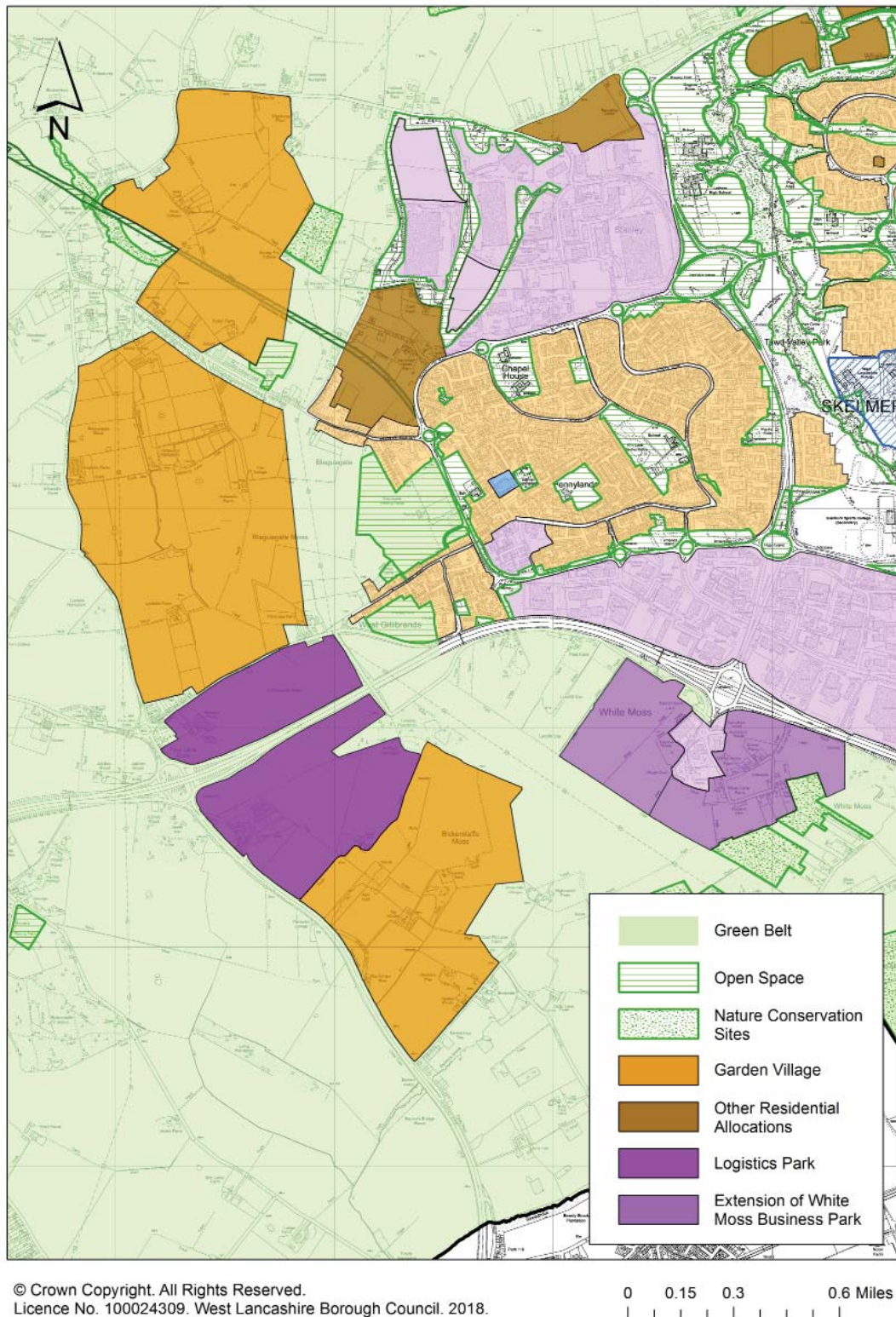


Figure 4: Proposed development in and around Skelmersdale

Justification

- 3.47 In order to deliver the level of development in Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes proposed in Policy SP2, additional land beyond that which is already allocated or available for development within the existing settlement boundaries of Skelmersdale and Up Holland is required. There is a need for land to accommodate at least 6,000 new dwellings and over 100 ha of employment land. In addition, in order to meet the need for C2 units in West Lancashire identified in the LCR SHELMA (see Policy H4), it is considered appropriate that provision of two C2 care homes / extra care facilities as part of the Garden Villages would be appropriate, potentially as part of wider Elderly Care developments incorporating a mix of C2 and C3 units.
- 3.48 Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations provides more detail on the assessment of site options for small and large sites in Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern Parishes. While a few site allocations with a capacity of less than 150 dwellings have been proposed on the edge of Skelmersdale following this sites assessment, the only realistic way to deliver the scale of development required in this spatial area is through the creation of new villages and employment areas to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale.
- 3.49 Focusing the vast majority of new development in this way also enables the delivery of new, shared infrastructure such as highways improvements, sustainable transport connections, Green Infrastructure, schools, local services and drainage infrastructure as part of the new development and integrated into the development in a sustainable way.
- 
- 3.50 While the development of the new housing and employment land will be ongoing until 2050, the planning and delivery of this development will be required to be co-ordinated and adhere to a strategic masterplan for the area to ensure all parts of the new development fit together seamlessly and all contribute towards the delivery of the new infrastructure required.

Alternatives Considered

- 3.51 Given the scale of the development requirements in the Skelmersdale and South-Eastern Parishes spatial area, there are no realistic alternatives to the whole of the development

proposed in Policy SP7, but two sites were assessed which could be considered as an option for allocation instead of parts of the proposed developments. However, fragmenting the developments in this way would not bring the same benefits through shared infrastructure delivery and sustainability and there were few, if any, alternatives for the employment requirements.

3.52 Furthermore, those alternative sites are all constrained by at least one additional factor (as well as the same factors of Green Belt and Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land) which those areas proposed for development in Policy SP6 are not. The two alternative sites (both for residential) are:

- Land to the south of St Joseph's College, Up Holland (indicative capacity of 900 dwellings)
- Land to the north of Vale Lane, Skelmersdale (indicative capacity of 1,200 dwellings)

Policy SP8: Land to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton

Land to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton is to be allocated for the development of at least 2,000 dwellings, a Knowledge Park, purpose-built student accommodation and a Sports Village, together with all necessary infrastructure and local services.

In delivering this new area of development, the following will be required as part of the proposals:

- Residential development of land:
 - To the east of Alty's Lane, Ormskirk (circa 400 dwellings);
 - To the west of Alty's Lane, Ormskirk (circa 700 dwellings);
 - To the north-west of Parr's Lane, Aughton (circa 400 dwellings); and
 - To the south of Parr's Lane, Aughton (circa 500 dwellings).
- An 80-bed care home / extra care facility as part of an Elderly Care Village.
- A 15 ha Knowledge Campus to the south of St Helens Road accommodating B1 uses and, if required post-2030, additional academic space (and limited associated car parking) for Edge Hill University.
- 1,000 bed spaces of purpose-built campus-style student accommodation.

- A Sports Village accommodating multiple sports in a hub made up of several sports clubs on land adjacent to the Cricket Club between St Helens Road and Alty's Lane.
- The provision of new and improved highway links connecting the B5197 Prescott Road to the A570 St Helens Road (at the junction with the University's Eastern entrance) to enable better access for the proposed residential developments to the strategic highway network.
- Measures to address surface water drainage to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Lead Local Flood Authority so that all surface water is attenuated within the development to discharge to the local watercourse at greenfield run-off rate.
- The provision of new, or enhancement of existing, local centres accessible to the residential developments to provide local services to new and existing residents.
- The provision of a new Primary School to meet the increased demand for school places created by the proposed developments if that demand cannot be appropriately accommodated elsewhere in existing schools in Ormskirk and Aughton;
- Provision of maintained Green Infrastructure and cycle links, areas of public open space, play areas and playing pitches in line with the requirements of the Provision of Public Open Space in New Residential Developments SPD and other policies in this Local Plan and to provide sustainable connections into Ormskirk town centre by means other than the car.

A Strategic Masterplan SPD for the area covered by policy SP8 to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton will be prepared and all development within the area covered by the SPD will be required to adhere to it.

Development should be of a high quality of design and be of a high standard in relation to energy efficiency. Development should seek to conserve and enhance green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape value wherever possible, seeking to bring the countryside into the developments through their layout and design. All developments should consider how the design of development within the site can actively enhance biodiversity through habitat creation.

Development should also improve access to recreation opportunities and green spaces

so as to integrate the development with the local and wider Green Infrastructure network, particularly by ensuring that Green Infrastructure and cycle links connect the residential areas with Ormskirk town centre.

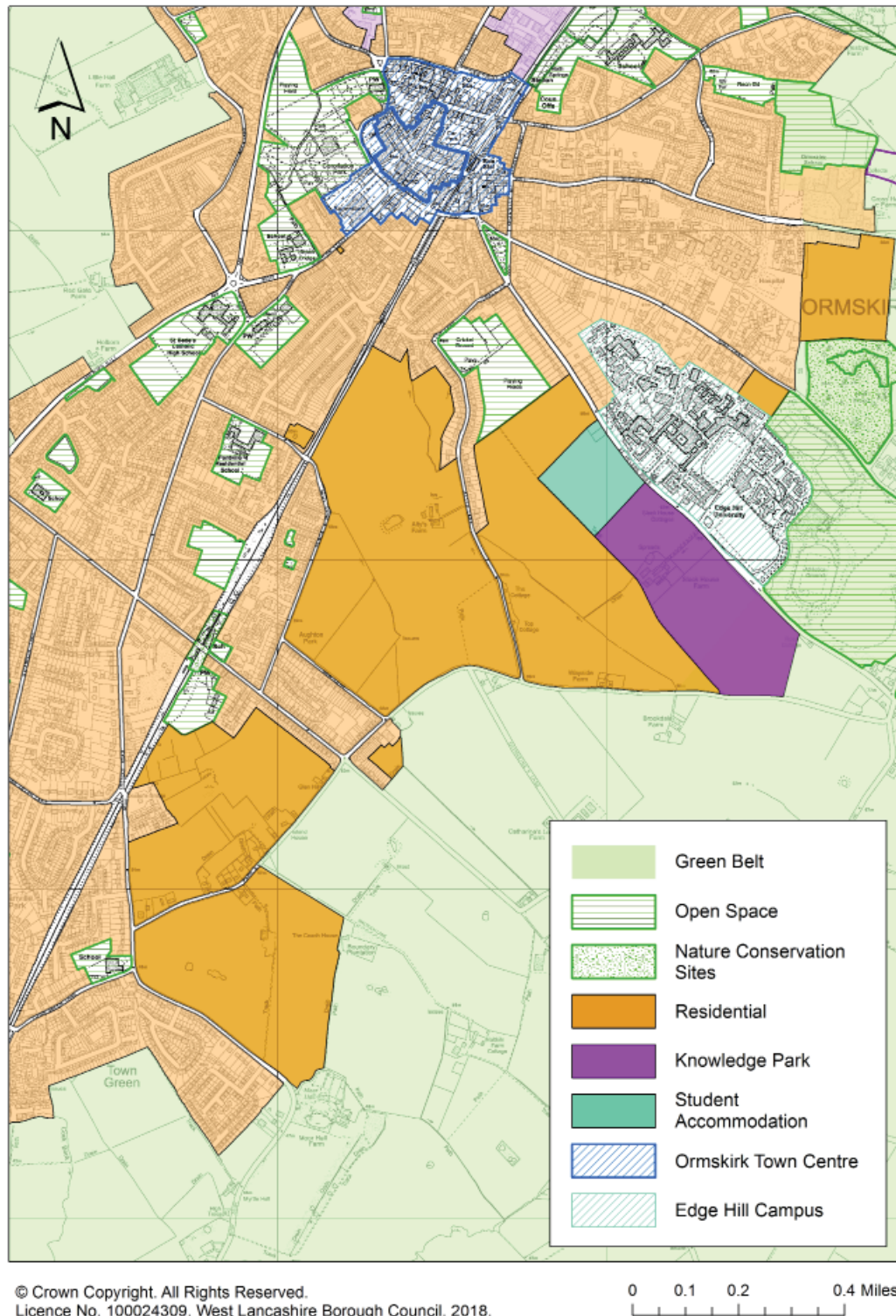


Figure 5: Proposed development sites in and around Ormskirk

Justification

- 3.53 In order to deliver the level of development in Ormskirk and Aughton proposed in Policy SP2, additional land beyond that which is already allocated or available for development within the existing settlement boundaries of Ormskirk and Aughton is required. There is a need for land to accommodate at least 2,200 new dwellings, 10 ha of employment land and purpose-built student accommodation to alleviate the demand for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- 3.54 Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations provides more detail on the assessment of site options for small and large sites in Ormskirk and Aughton. While a few site allocations with a capacity of less than 200 dwellings have been proposed on the edge of Ormskirk and Aughton following this sites assessment, the only realistic way to deliver the scale of development required in this spatial area is through a significant urban extension of the town.
- 3.55 While there are several options for allocating sites of 400 or more dwellings each around Ormskirk and Aughton, focusing the vast majority of new development to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton in the way proposed by policy SP8 also enables the delivery of new, shared infrastructure such as highways improvements, sustainable transport connections, Green Infrastructure, schools, local services and drainage infrastructure as part of the new development and integrate them into the development in a sustainable way.
- 3.56 In particular, development in this area would have less impact on traffic congestion in the town centre than options to the north and west of Ormskirk given the easier access to the M58 from the south-east side of Ormskirk. In addition, given this area is reasonably well enclosed by the existing built-up area to the north, west and south, a release of land in this location generally rounds of the settlement area of Ormskirk without significantly expanding the town into the open countryside or closing a strategic gap between settlements.
- 3.57 Within this strategic location, there is also the opportunity to create an Elderly Care Village, including a C2 care home to help meet some of the C2 need and general residential provision for an ageing population identified by Policy H4.
- 3.58 In relation to the creation of a new Knowledge Park as part of the strategic site, there is no realistic alternative to this site in Ormskirk and Aughton for such a development, and this location offers the benefits of close connections to the University for the mutual

benefit of the businesses who locate at the Knowledge Park and the University.

- 3.59 While the development of the new housing and employment land will be ongoing until 2050, the planning and delivery of this development will be required to be co-ordinated and adhere to a strategic masterplan for the area to ensure all parts of the new development fit together seamlessly and all contribute towards the delivery of the new infrastructure required.
- 3.60 While the provision of high quality purpose-built student accommodation on the strategic site is essential to help alleviate the demand for HMOs in Ormskirk and offer an increased level of on- or near-campus student accommodation, the site also provides the opportunity to develop additional land for Edge Hill University as part of the Knowledge Park should it be required in the longer-term (post-2030) to address changes in the Higher Education industry and manage the University Campus better to mitigate any negative impacts on the town arising from these changes.
- 3.61 The strategic site also provides opportunities to improve Green Infrastructure, sports and recreation provision and drainage infrastructure for the benefit of the whole town, and the Masterplan for the site will need to address the location and layout of any Sports Village, Public Open Space and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to maximise these opportunities.

Alternatives Considered

- 3.62 Given the scale of the development requirements in the Ormskirk and Aughton spatial area, there are no realistic alternatives to the whole of the development proposed in Policy SP8, but two sites were assessed which could be considered as an option for allocation instead of parts of the strategic site. However, fragmenting the developments in this way would not bring the same benefits through shared infrastructure delivery and sustainability and there were no realistic alternatives for the employment requirements.
- 3.63 Furthermore, those alternative sites are all constrained by at least one additional factor (as well as the same factors of Green Belt and Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land) which those areas proposed for development in Policy SP8 are not. The main alternative site of a significant size (for residential) in Ormskirk and Aughton is Land to the north of the Scott Estate, Ormskirk (indicative capacity of 400-500 dwellings).

Chapter 4: Economic Policies

Policy EC1: Delivering New Employment Developments

As established in policy SP2, the delivery of at least 190 ha of new employment development (B1, B2 and B8 uses) will be promoted in West Lancashire between 2012 and 2050. This requirement will be met as follows:

1. Approximately 70 ha of Large-scale B8 uses as part of a Logistics Park at Junction 3 of the M58 (see Policy SP7)
2. Approximately 15 ha of Large-scale B8 uses at XL Business Park
3. Approximately 15 ha of B1, C1 or D1 uses at and to the south and east of White Moss Business Park at Junction 4 of the M58 (see Policy SP7)
4. Approximately 20 ha of B1, B2 or B8 uses to the west of White Moss Business Park at Junction 4 of the M58 (see Policy SP7)
5. Approximately 20 ha of B1, B2 or B8 uses on the south-west and south-east edges of Pimbo Industrial Area
6. Approximately 20 ha of B1, B2 or B8 uses at Simonswood Industrial Area
7. Approximately 10 ha of B1 or D1 uses as part of a Knowledge Park at St Helens Road, Ormskirk (see Policy SP8)
8. Approximately 25 ha of B1, B2 or B8 uses at Tollgate Road, Burscough (see Policy SP6)*
9. Approximately 5 ha of B1, B2 or B8 uses at Southport New Road, Tarleton

Employment development in West Lancashire should continue to provide for the advanced manufacturing and distribution/logistics sectors but should also encourage higher quality business premises and offices for business and professional services, the health sector, the media industry and other sectors related to research and degree courses provided at Edge Hill University. The “green” construction and “green” technology sectors will also be encouraged to locate in West Lancashire and developers should work with such businesses

to ensure appropriate premises are provided.

The Council will take account of the following factors when assessing all development proposals for employment uses:

- a. The accommodation should be flexible and suitable to potentially meet changing future employment needs, and in particular to provide for the requirements of local businesses and small firms;
- b. The scale, bulk and appearance of the proposal should be compatible with the character of its surroundings or that proposed by a specific allocation;
- c. The development must not significantly harm the amenities of nearby occupiers nor cause unacceptable adverse environmental impact on the surrounding area;
- d. The development should provide sufficient car parking and sustainable transport options commensurate with the scale of development and, where required by relevant guidance, a Travel Plan;
- e. Proposals which will generate HGV movements to and from an employment development will be required to provide adequate lorry-parking (with appropriate facilities for drivers) within the development in order to accommodate the lorries of those drivers having to take statutory breaks following a delivery and to reduce the likelihood of “fly-parking” on roads around the employment development; and
- f. The Council will seek to ensure that employment opportunities are provided for local people and, where necessary, developers will be encouraged to implement relevant training programmes.

* A Travelling Showpeople site would also be permitted within this employment allocation off Tollgate Road in Burscough, as per policy H6.

Justification

- 4.1 The basis for the 190 ha requirement for employment land in West Lancashire to 2050, and its distribution across the Borough, is addressed in the Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations. The specific sites allocated to meet this new requirement are essentially the only and most logical options for such new allocations,

and incorporate all existing, undeveloped allocations from the current Local Plan. Furthermore, sufficient land has been proposed for allocation to exceed the 190 ha requirement slightly and so provide competition, choice and flexibility in the market.

- 4.2 Some of the proposed allocations seek to focus on specific types of employment developments, for example the Logistics Park at Junction 3 of the M58 and the Business or Technology Parks at White Moss in Skelmersdale (Junction 4 of the M58) and St Helens Road in Ormskirk, but others allow for any type of employment use (B1, B2 or B8), and this is necessary to ensure that the specific needs of some business sectors can be met in West Lancashire by ensuring that some land is reserved for B1 uses and some is reserved for large-scale B8 uses in order to meet the particular demands of the markets for the office and large-scale logistics sectors.



- 4.3 The factors that new employment developments should address proposed in policy EC1 are similar to those in the existing Local Plan and seek to ensure that new employment developments are designed and developed in a way to minimise impact on the environment around them and to provide flexible workspaces that can be adapted as demands change over time.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.4 The alternatives in relation to the quantum of new employment development required in Policy EC1 are addressed through Policy SP2, which sets that overall requirement and broad distribution of that requirement across West Lancashire. In relation to the specific sites identified in Policy EC1, there were few alternatives put forward by landowners / developers, but all alternatives are considered in the Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations.

Policy EC2: Managing Development on Existing Employment Land

Strategic Employment Sites

On the following existing employment sites, as detailed on the Policies Map, the Council will require a mix of industrial, business, storage and distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8), will allow A1 retail warehouses on a like-for-like basis of existing A1 premises and will allow small-scale ancillary uses to those uses:

- I. Pimbo Industrial Area
- II. Stanley Industrial Area / XL Business Park
- III. Gillibrands Industrial Area
- IV. Simonswood Industrial Area
- V. Burscough Employment Areas
- VI. Ormskirk Employment Area / Hattersley Court

On the following existing employment sites, as detailed on the Policies Map, the Council will only permit B1 use classes and, where specified, other employment-generating uses in use classes C1 and D1 as well as small-scale ancillary uses to those uses:

- VII. White Moss Business Park (B1, C1 and D1)
- VIII. Pilkington Technology Centre (B1 only)

Other Significant Employment Sites

On the following sites, as detailed on the Policies Map, the Council will permit industrial, business, storage and distribution uses (B1, B2 and B8) and will allow small-scale ancillary uses to those uses:

- IX. Westgate, Skelmersdale
- X. Chequer Lane, Up Holland
- XI. Southport Road / Green Lane, Ormskirk
- XII. Abbey Lane, Burscough
- XIII. Platts Lane, Burscough
- XIV. Orrell Lane, Burscough
- XV. Red Cat Lane, Burscough
- XVI. North Quarry, Appley Bridge
- XVII. Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge

On these significant employment sites and other, smaller sites in employment uses that are not allocated on the Policies Map, the Council will consider redevelopment for other uses only where a viability case can successfully be put forward in line with Policy EC7 and only where the employment premises are vacant and there is no foreseeable interest in the site for employment uses.

Justification

- 4.5 Protecting existing employment areas in West Lancashire is key to maintaining economic growth unless those areas are no longer fit for employment land purposes. As such, Policy EC2 seeks to ensure the designated existing employment areas are kept in employment uses in order to maintain a supply of sites and buildings for general employment uses across the Borough. This is particularly relevant for the strategic employment sites which together provide the vast majority of employment land in West Lancashire.
- 4.6 Within existing strategic employment sites there is a supply of generally smaller sites or vacant units potentially available. However, in terms of how this relates to the current employment land portfolio and whether these should be counted as available supply for new employment development that contributes to meeting the employment land requirement set in Policy EC1, various factors make any such quantitative analysis an inexact science.
- 4.7 Many of these sites are what could be termed private reserves (i.e. industrial land held with existing buildings for expansion). These are normally excluded from the analysis as they are not generally available for development. Other sites are simply those that are temporarily vacant or under-used and so form part of the overall churn of existing employment land. However, this latter category do provide a potentially useful source of land for smaller-scale employment developments.
- 4.8 A review of the existing employment areas have identified that the following areas of land (totalling up to 10 ha) are possibly available for expansion of existing businesses or smaller employment developments within existing employment areas, but have not been counted as part of the supply toward meeting the employment land



requirement identified in policy EC1:

- Up to 6 ha within Pimbo Industrial Area
- Up to 2 ha within Gillibrands Industrial Area
- Up to 2 ha south of Hattersley Way in Ormskirk Employment Area

- 4.9 However, in some cases, existing employment land that is not part of a strategic employment site may have lain vacant or under-used for some time and the existing premises are either not suitable for modern businesses and / or they cannot viably be redeveloped for a modern business. In those few cases, alternative uses to employment will be considered on these sites, subject to the requirements of policy EC7 being satisfied to evidence that the site is no longer fit for employment purposes.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.10 The alternatives to the proposed policy EC2 relate to the hierarchy of existing employment areas proposed, which employment areas sit within each level of the hierarchy and the level of protection given to those employment areas for employment use. As such there are two basic alternatives:

- 4.11 *Have a more relaxed / flexible structure, allowing conversion to / redevelopment for other uses in more circumstances.*

This alternative approach is not considered suitable for West Lancashire, especially in relation to the Strategic Employment Sites, as these employment sites perform a crucial function in the economy of the Borough and allowing other uses into them would undermine that function and start to create a conflict between uses that do not sit well together (such as residential and industrial uses). However, it is considered appropriate that, in the right circumstances, other employment sites might be converted to / redeveloped for other uses where they no longer meet the needs of modern employment sites.

- 4.12 *Have a stricter structure and approach, entirely protecting all existing employment sites for B1, B2 and B8 uses only.*

Likewise, while too much flexibility undermines the existing employment areas, too much restriction could lead to sites that become unfit for employment uses over the Plan period lying vacant and derelict when they could be put to better use. Therefore, a balanced approach as proposed in policy EC2 best reflects the new NPPF and planning policy guidance on allowing the re-use of redundant employment sites where appropriate.

Policy EC3: The Rural and Visitor Economy

Existing Uses

- I. Existing employment, agricultural, tourist and visitor uses will be protected in rural areas. Where an applicant can robustly demonstrate that a site currently or last in such use is no longer suitable and viable for these uses (in accordance with Policy EC7: Demonstrating Viability) the Council will consider alternative uses in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.

New and Expanded Uses

- II. Land is allocated for the purposes of employment at Southport New Road, Tarleton and any businesses that are related to the rural or visitor economy will be considered at this site.
- III. The development of new and expansion of existing rural employment, agricultural, tourist and visitor premises of an appropriate scale will be supported in rural areas subject to compliance with Policies SP3 and SP4.

In addition, the enhancement of existing location specific rural tourist and visitor infrastructure will be permitted where consistent with other Local Plan policies and where it would entail:

- a. the improvement and addition of walking and cycling routes including the canal network, public rights of way and green infrastructure; or
- b. additional tourist and visitor facilities at the following locations: Martin Mere, Mere Sands Wood, Farmer Ted's Adventure Farm (Downholland), Leisure Lakes (Mere Brow) and Windmill Animal Farm (Mere Side); or
- c. additional pitches and / or supporting services at holiday caravan, camping and chalet sites provided that they would be contained within existing site boundaries and would result in an overall environmental improvement to a site.

Other proposals for rural tourist and visitor uses will be considered on a case by case basis.

- IV. Proposals for new or significant extensions to agricultural produce packing and distribution facilities will be permitted in rural areas provided that an appropriate business case is

made, including demonstrating that:

- a. there is not a more suitable alternative site located within a nearby employment area;
- b. the proposed use remains linked, operationally, to the agricultural use of the land;
- c. the majority of the produce processed on the site is grown upon holdings located in the local area;
- d. the loss of agricultural land is kept to a minimum and, where there is a choice, that the lowest grade of agricultural land is used; and traffic generated can be satisfactorily accommodated on the local road network and will not be detrimental to residential amenity.

Diversification - Farm Shops

V. New or extensions to existing farm shops will be permitted where:

- a. the range of goods to be sold is restricted to those in connection with the farming of the associated land such as food, drink and plants;
- b. the proposal would not undermine the vitality and viability of designated centres identified by Policy EC4; and
- c. the scale, bulk and appearance of the proposal is compatible with the character of its surroundings, including Green Belt policy where appropriate, and in any event should not exceed 280 sq.m net sales floorspace.

VI. In relation criteria 2-5 above a proposal will need to demonstrate that:

- a. it is supported by adequate infrastructure or the development will provide new infrastructure to do so; and
- b. it would not have a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway network or road safety.

Additionally, the irreversible development of open agricultural land will not be permitted where it would result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, except where absolutely necessary to deliver development allocated in the Local Plan, strategic infrastructure or development associated with the agricultural use of land (including agricultural produce, packing and distribution).

Justification

4.13 Over 90% of West Lancashire is categorised as rural and the area contains the greatest proportion of the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3a) in the North West as well as an extensive Green Belt designation. It is a 'working landscape' supporting an important agricultural sector which employs 2,500 people directly with many more employed indirectly through various supply chains including local food, horticulture (with a major cluster in the Northern Parishes), food processing, produce packaging, haulage, machinery and agri-chemicals. The agricultural sector contributes £230m to the local economy and contains 39,400 ha of farming areas and 435 agricultural holdings¹. Increased national agricultural self-sufficiency is likely to become more important post Brexit.

4.14 In addition to agriculture, the Borough's rural areas support a growing tourist and visitor economy which, in total including urban areas, attracted 2.7m visitors in 2013 and generated an estimated £135m in revenue and supported approximately 1,900 jobs². Attractions include those based upon nature such as Martin Mere Nature Reserve and Mere Sands Wood, farming, camping / caravanning and the historic built environment such as Rufford Old Hall. There is potential to build upon these attractions and develop greater links with Southport and other areas to further promote West Lancashire as an attractive place to visit.



4.15 Rural West Lancashire is therefore an economically important but potentially sensitive environment and the latter also includes the rural roads that serve the area which can have limited physical capacity.

4.16 Employment opportunities whether urban or rural, are a finite resource and once lost for non-employment use, particularly residential, are unlikely to ever come back into an employment generating use. Therefore the continued employment use of existing employment sites in rural areas will be protected unless it can be demonstrated that a

¹ West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-25

² West Lancashire Economic Development Strategy 2015-25

site is unsuitable for an ongoing viable employment use and that the only realistic way to secure the sustainable future of the site is through an alternative use. In the case of the Borough's rural areas, it is appropriate for the definition of employment use to extend beyond B1, B2 and B8 land uses to also include agriculture and farming, tourist and visitor uses as the development and preservation of a sustainable rural economy is a high priority.

- 4.17 The NPPF indicates that local plans should promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Sustainable agricultural diversification is an important mechanism of maintaining the rural economy, with the re-use of buildings being encouraged for sustainable economic uses. Farm shops are one such means of diversification and will be supported where clearly linked to an existing agricultural operation provided they would be compatible with surrounding and be of an appropriate scale. An appropriate scale is considered to be less than 280 sq.m net sales floorspace which is equivalent to the size of a small convenience store (this is explained fully in the justification to Policy EC4). Other forms of farm diversification will be considered on a case by case basis.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.18 Given the importance of the rural economy in West Lancashire and the requirements of the NPPF, a policy is required. Alternatives include:

4.19 *Identification of additional rural employment sites*

Such an approach would broadly follow that of the adopted Local Plan which allocates sites on the Policies Map for both rural employment singularly and for a mix of residential and employment uses. Whilst a reasonable alternative, in this instance it is not considered necessary to allocate more than the site identified by the preferred policy above in order to meet economic needs. Other new sites and extension of existing businesses may be developed during the Plan period in rural areas, however these are more likely to be smaller in scale and either below a size threshold to show on the Policies Map (0.4ha) and / or unavailable to the open market.

4.20 *Identification of additional or fewer tourist and visitor sites where enhancement will be permitted*

This would be a reasonable alternative. However, the identification of fewer or no sites for such enhancement would not give rural businesses the same degree of assurance in relation to the acceptability of improving and potentially increasing their on-site activities

in the future.

4.21 *Additional and separate policies dealing with the rural economy*

Again this would be a reasonable alternative. It would allow for more detailed policies in relation to aspects considered in the preferred policy above such as farm diversification, the conversion and reuse of existing rural buildings or detailed matters against which to consider equestrian uses.

Policy EC4: Vibrant Centres

Centre Hierarchy

I. The hierarchy of centres within West Lancashire is designated as follows:

Hierarchy	Centre
Town Centres	Skelmersdale; Ormskirk and Burscough
District / Large Village Centres	Tarleton
Local / Village Centres	Hesketh Bank; Parbold; Up Holland; County Road (Ormskirk); Digmoor; Sandy Lane (both Skelmersdale)
Neighbourhood Centres	Banks; Moss Delph Lane; Town Green Lane (both Aughton); Wigan Road (Ormskirk); Ashurst (Skelmersdale)

Proposals for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses will be directed towards these centres, the boundaries of which are shown on the Policies Map, with a focus upon Skelmersdale in accordance with the Borough's Spatial Strategy identified by Policy SP1 (Delivering Sustainable Development). Planning permission will only be granted for development which is appropriate in scale and form to the role and function of each centre.

II. Where suitable sustainable connections cannot be made to access existing nearby centres, new local and / or neighbourhood centres will be developed to serve the following planned new residential developments, with their locations to be identified in masterplans:

- Garden villages on land to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale;
- Land to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton; and
- Yew Tree Farm, Burscough.

Sequential Approach

III. Proposals for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses which are not within an existing centre, do not form part of a site allocated for such uses in the Local Plan or are not identified in a masterplan in the cases of the new residential locations above must satisfy a sequential approach to site selection. In such circumstances, the Council will expect applicants to undertake a sequential assessment in accordance with the requirements in the justification to this policy.

The sequential approach requires applications for these uses to be located in accordance with the following sequence, subject to the availability of suitable sites:

- a. Within town, district, local and neighbourhood centres (in accordance with the centre hierarchy); followed by
- b. Edge of town centre locations, with priority given to those sites that are accessible and well connected to a town centre; then
- c. Accessible out of centre locations that are demonstrably well connected to a defined centre; then
- d. Within the existing Hattersley Way (Ormskirk) and Ringtail (Burscough) retail parks, as shown on the Policies Map; and finally
- e. Other sustainably located out of centre locations.

Impact

IV. Impact assessments will be required to accompany planning applications for retail and leisure use proposals outside of town centres in accordance with national policy. Retail proposals outside of town centres will be required to submit impact assessments under the following additional circumstances:

- a. comparison retail proposals, including extensions, change of use or variation of condition, that involve an increase in floorspace of over 500 sq.m gross; and
- b. supermarkets / superstores proposals, including extensions, change of use or variation of condition, that involve an increase in floorspace of over 1,000 sq.m gross.

Where more than one impact assessment threshold applies, the lower threshold will take precedence.

- V. Where impact assessment is required, proposals will only be granted planning permission where it is demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres, in accordance with those considerations identified by the NPPF.

Need for new Town Centre Uses and Site Allocations

- VI. Identified future Borough wide needs for town centre uses will primarily be met within the Skelmersdale Town Centre (Policy SP5) and by Development Opportunity Sites identified by Policy EC5 (Ormskirk Town Centre). The Skelmersdale Town Centre will contribute towards meeting Borough wide needs for comparison goods and food and drink floorspace to 2037 and for convenience goods floorspace to 2050. The Ormskirk Development Opportunity Sites will contribute towards meeting Borough wide needs for comparison goods and food and drink floorspace to 2037.

Windfall sites that may also contribute towards meeting identified needs will be considered on a case by case basis in relation to national planning advice.

Uses within Designated Centres

- VII. Policies EC5 (Ormskirk Town Centre) and SP5 (Skelmersdale Town Centre) identify development strategies, and where relevant, appropriate uses for those town centres. Future 'made' neighbourhood plans may also identify strategies and appropriate uses for centres in their neighbourhood areas.
- VIII. Within the Borough's district / large village, local / small village and neighbourhood centres uses will be permitted that contribute towards meeting local shopping and service needs. Change of use will be permitted where:
- a. the development would not cause undue detriment to the centre's range of facilities, thereby undermining the centre's vitality and viability; and
 - b. a break (i.e. a single unit) in the active frontage (i.e. shopfront in active use during the day) at ground level would not occur that would threaten the centre's vitality and viability.
- IX. Notwithstanding the criteria above, the loss of community facilities will be resisted in accordance with Policy IF2 (Community Facilities).

Local Convenience Stores

- X. Notwithstanding the requirements of the sequential approach above, single stand-alone local convenience stores of less than 280 sq.m net sales floorspace will be permitted at accessible locations within settlement boundaries of towns or villages identified by Policy SP1 but which are not in proximity to a centre within the above hierarchy, provided that it is demonstrated by an applicant that the proposal would:
- a. meet a local need;
 - b. not adversely affect the vitality and viability of designated centres or prejudice future investment in those centres; and
 - c. not adversely affect residential amenity or highway safety.

The retention of existing local convenience stores outside centres will be supported.

- XI. In all instances where a loss of retail, service and community facilities is proposed in existing centres (including vacant premises last in such use) or where there would be a loss of local convenience stores outside designated centres an applicant will be required to provide evidence that the property has been marketed for those uses in accordance with Policy EC7.

Justification

Centre Hierarchy

- 4.22 The centre hierarchy sets a framework for the management, planned growth and protection of West Lancashire's centres in the Local Plan. These centres are the traditional destinations to buy goods and obtain services and comprise the town centres of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Burscough as well as a number of smaller centres within villages and the suburban areas of Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. They face competition from larger shopping and leisure attractions situated beyond the Borough's boundary including at Southport, Wigan, Liverpool and Preston and as a result the Borough's residents spend significant proportions of their total non-food shopping expenditure outside West Lancashire and, to a lesser extent leisure and food shopping expenditure. Wider economic change, including the growth in online transactions, means that the retail, service and leisure sectors that underpin centres are experiencing further competition and dynamic change which may affect their future roles. As such the hierarchy will be kept under review as advocated by national advice.

- 4.23 Skelmersdale and to a lesser extent Ormskirk will be the primary focus of retail, service and leisure activities within West Lancashire. Policy SP5 indicates how Skelmersdale town centre will be regenerated. Ormskirk will increase its role as a visitor destination as explained by Policy EC5 (Ormskirk Town Centre) whilst Burscough will be the focus for convenience and niche retail and services. Other centres will be the focus for local retail and services and complementary community facilities. As indicated by policies SP1 and SP2, there will be significant future residential growth at locations in the Borough and additional planned local facilities will be required in connection with those developments. Whilst parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance would not meet the definition of centres according to national advice it is considered that such facilities in West Lancashire provide an important service role and function as centres for their communities which needs to be recognised and protected.

Sequential Approach

- 4.24 Sequential site searches considering potentially alternative suitable and available development sites are an important development management tool when considering proposals for main town centre uses. To achieve a satisfactory sequential test, the Council will expect the following approach from applicants:
- I. Area of search: The extent of the area of search will depend on the scale and nature of the proposed development and its catchment and may extend beyond the Borough boundary in certain instances. The area of search for any development proposal should be agreed with Council officers prior to the commencement of any sequential testing work.
 - II. Comprehensiveness of search: Evidence should be provided of a rigorous investigation of relevant sources of information as part of site assessments.
 - III. Availability / viability / deliverability of sites: Evidence should be provided to demonstrate that landowners / site occupiers and / or their agents have been contacted to discuss the possibility of developing the land, and, on any site rejected on viability grounds, financial information submitted to show on what basis that it would be unviable to proceed with the proposed development.
 - IV. Suitability: Evidence should take account of the suitability of sites to accommodate the proposed development including policy considerations or physical constraints, taking into account the need to be flexible in requirements.

Impact

- 4.25 When assessing proposed retail and leisure development outside town centres and which are not in accordance with the Local Plan an applicant will need to submit an impact assessment in certain circumstances. The West Lancashire Retail and Leisure Study advises that this will be required for planning applications (including extensions, change of use or variation of condition) for comparison retail of 500 sqm gross or more, or for supermarkets or superstores of 1,000 sqm gross or more. This is lower than the 'default' national figure of 2,500 sqm due the relatively small size of the Borough's town centres, both in terms of their total retail floorspace and the average size of individual units. Therefore, proposals for increases in retail floorspace greater than the above thresholds are large relative to existing provision and could potentially result in significant adverse impacts on the Borough's town centres. In the case of leisure developments the national threshold of 2,500 sqm applies.
- 4.26 Impact will need to be assessed in relation to public and private investment in centres and upon vitality and viability in accordance with national advice. In terms of the latter, this should include both qualitative and quantitative impact. The Council will require assessment of quantitative impact to also include an evaluation of the quantitative need for a proposal as a component of impact as it is considered that the availability of expenditure in a catchment area to support a proposal provides a useful benchmark against which to evaluate the quantitative impacts predicted upon centres.
- 4.27 The West Lancashire Retail and Leisure Study (2018) identifies a Borough wide need for approximately 1,800 sqm of additional convenience retail sales floorspace over the Plan period to 2050. It identifies a Borough wide need for 7,200 sqm of additional comparison retail sales floorspace by 2037 rising to 20,750 sqm by 2050, both excluding existing commitments. In terms of leisure uses, the Study identifies a need for an additional 7,300 sqm gross of food and beverage uses in the period to 2037 rising to 11,050 sqm gross by 2050 and for between 8 and 11 cinema screens, both figures including existing commitments. Due to the uncertainties in forecasting floorspace requirements for town centre uses over a long period of time the Local Plan makes provision for development sites to meet identified needs to 2037 but, with the exception of convenience floorspace, not to the longer period of 2050. The Retail and Leisure Study will be reviewed periodically in recognition of these challenges in predicting future floorspace requirements over a long



time period in order to maintain up to date evidence.

Community Facilities

- 4.28 Community and cultural facilities add to the diversity of uses in town centres, and can make an important contribution to centres' 'vitality and viability'. The value of land in town centres means that community and cultural facilities may come under pressure from uses which attract higher land values and, without protection against this, it can be very difficult to find alternative sites. Demand for different types of community facilities will change over time, but it is important to retain such premises and encourage their reuse when they become available in order to meet the future needs of residents and visitors.
- 4.29 It is recognised that a small convenience store can provide a community asset so will be encouraged at an appropriate scale in villages which do not possess an established retail and service centre in the Borough hierarchy. Convenience stores (i.e. below supermarket size) are considered to represent an appropriate scale, which the Competition Commission's Supply of Groceries in the UK Market Investigation Report (2008) defines as being of less than 280 sqm net floorspace.

Alternatives Considered

Given the importance placed upon ensuring the vitality of town centres in the NPPF, a policy which contains a centre hierarchy, an indication of which uses will be permitted in centres and reference to the sequential and impact tests is required. Alternatives therefore consider how the components of the preferred policy above may otherwise be addressed. They are:

4.30 A different centre hierarchy

The hierarchy could be varied, for example to simply refer to two tiers of centre with those being town centres and local centres. Such an approach would require consideration of whether the neighbourhood centres should be reassigned as local centres or should not be designated as centres. It would also be possible to leave the principle of new centre identification in areas of significant future planned residential growth to a later date, for example when masterplans for those areas gave clarity on this matter.

4.31 Sequential and impact tests

An alternative would include simply defaulting reference to the sequential and impact tests to the NPPF, in which case there would be no reference to existing retail parks in

the preferred policy search sequence in the instance of the former. In the case of impact there would be no explanation that quantitative need is considered to be a component of assessing impact.

- 4.32 A further alternative would be to retain a stand-alone sequential test policy as is the case in the West Lancashire Local Plan DPD 2012-27.

4.33 *Town centres and appropriate uses*

An alternative would be for each of the three town centres to have their own separate policies in the Local Plan which detail suitable uses within them rather than Ormskirk alone. However, in the case of Burscough this would entail duplication as the emerging Burscough Parish Neighbourhood Plan already deals with this matter. Given current fluidity in the regeneration proposals for Skelmersdale town centre it is considered that it is not currently possible to produce a policy for the centre which provides more detail than the strategic framework of Policy SP5.

- 4.34 A further alternative would therefore be to include consideration of appropriate uses for Ormskirk town centre in the preferred policy approach above.

4.35 *Local centres and stand-alone convenience stores outside centres*

An alternative approach would be a separate policy dealing with lower order centres (district, local and neighbourhood as currently contained in the preferred policy) providing more stringent criteria in relation to the loss of A1 class uses.

- 4.36 A further alternative would be to concentrate upon supporting the provision of services at designated centres only by not seeking to protect existing or supporting the provision of new local convenience facilities outside of these centres.



Policy EC5: Ormskirk Town Centre

Ormskirk Town Centre and Primary Shopping Area is defined on the policies map. Within the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) the Council will focus on allowing developments that contribute towards the viability, vibrancy and character of the town centre.

The Council will seek to protect the retail function of the town centre by retaining A1 uses and encouraging appropriate, alternative town centre uses that support the town centre's vitality and viability. The Council will encourage a range of complementary services, commercial activities, leisure and cultural facilities to support the retail function of the PSA. In this context, the Council will have regard to the following in decision-making within Ormskirk Town Centre:

- I. The Council will not permit the change of use from Use Class A1 (retail) within the PSA if the loss of that unit from Use Class A1 would result in less than 50% of pedestrian-level units in the PSA being in Use Class A1.
- II. Subject to meeting criterion (I), within the PSA proposals for a change of use from Use Class A1 to other main town centre uses will be permitted providing they also meet the following criteria:
 - a. The Council will allow a maximum of 20% of ground floor units to be Class A5 (Hot food/takeaway) within the whole PSA;
 - b. All proposals must maintain a pedestrian level shop front with windows and display;
 - c. Any proposed non A1 retail unit should operate for a minimum of 4 hours of the traditional operating hours (i.e. 9am-5pm) for at least 4 days a week;
 - d. Proposals for non-A1 uses should be other 'Main town centre uses' as defined in the NPPF and including financial and professional services, which are likely to complement the vitality and viability of the primary shopping area; and
 - e. The applicant needs to provide suitable evidence to ensure that the unit has been marketed as a retail unit in accordance with the requirements of Policy EC7.
- III. Within the PSA and above ground floor level, in order to support the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, proposals for an appropriate range of town centre uses will be encouraged, including cultural facilities, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments/nightclubs, financial and professional services, purpose built residential accommodation, student accommodation, uses relating to non-residential institutions, office accommodation, hotels, leisure and recreational uses, providing there is no unacceptable impact upon amenity of existing town centre uses and the proposals will not affect the operational

capacity of existing or future retailers on the ground floor (for example proposals that involve the loss of required storage space).

IV. Outside of the PSA but within the town centre boundary, as defined on the policies map, a diverse range of uses will be encouraged to support sustainable economic growth and the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole. Such uses will include those listed in Part 3 of this policy. However, the Council will resist the change of use of any existing ground floor units which currently serve as Class A1 retail or Class A2 Professional and Financial Services

V. The following Development Opportunity Sites are marked on the Policies Map:

5.1 The Indoor Market

5.2 The Bus Station

5.3 Land located behind Styles car park

5.4 The former West Lancashire College Site

5.5 Land behind and including the former Ormskirk Magistrate's Court

On these Development Opportunity Sites (as defined on the policies map) appropriate development that supports the sustainable growth and regeneration of the town centres will be supported providing that:

- a. The development provides sustainable economic growth and will have a positive impact in terms of supporting the wider town centre (this may include proposals that provide retail, cultural or leisure facilities, or support tourism);
- b. Proposals maintain or create an active ground floor frontage;
- c. The development connects and integrates with the wider town centre, particularly the PSA;
- d. Proposals within or adjacent to the PSA must contain appropriate uses to support the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- e. The development does not cause an unacceptable impact in terms of highway safety;
- f. Proposals support sustainable means of transport wherever possible; and
- g. Proposals are of a high quality of design and, where appropriate, make a positive contribution to the historic character and distinctiveness of the town centre, particularly within the Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area.

Within Development Opportunity Sites, residential accommodation, including student accommodation, may be permitted above ground floor units providing there is an appropriate, active street frontage.

VI. The Council will support the redevelopment of existing units and sites within the PSA that provide a range of unit sizes that could help attract multinational and other larger A1 retailers, providing that the redevelopment incorporates an active street frontage on the ground floor.

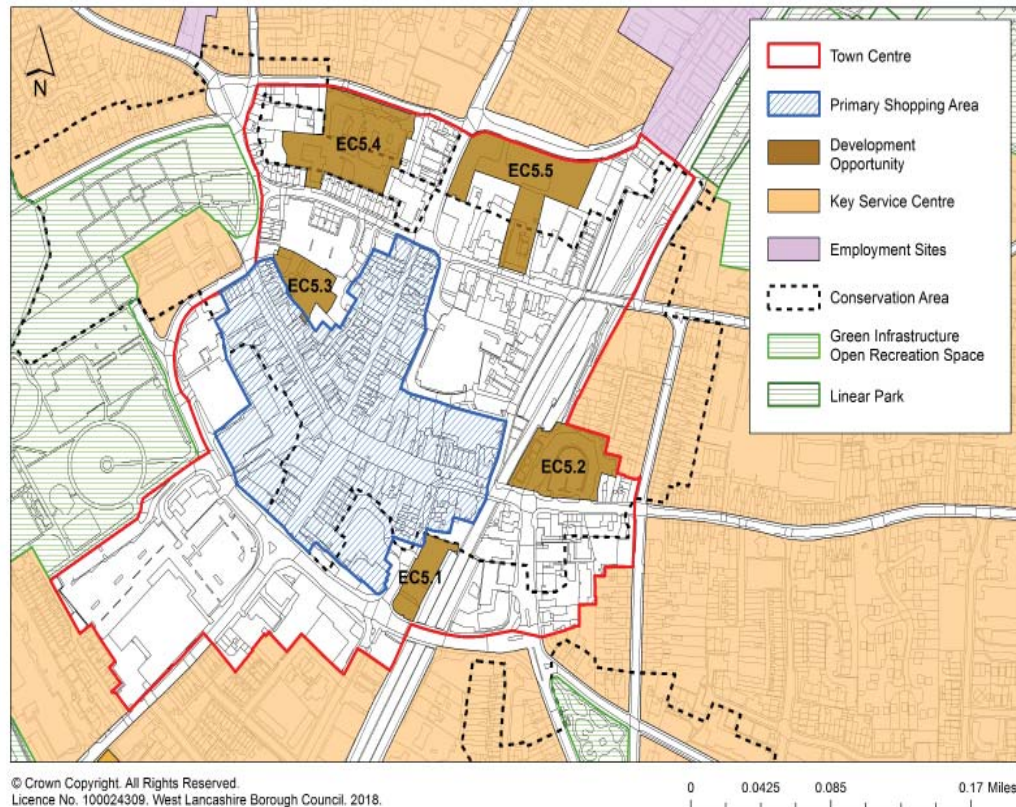


Figure 6: Ormskirk Town Centre

Justification

- 4.37 Ormskirk is an attractive, traditional market town with a successful street market taking place every Thursday and Saturday. The town also benefits from its proximity to Edge Hill University.
- 4.38 The town centre is mainly pedestrianised and has received significant investment in recent years with new public realm works taking place in Moor Street. The town centre has an above average amount of independent units (currently 60%, April 2018) with a good mix of butchers, grocers, craft shops, as well as a number of cafes, restaurants and bars. The West Lancashire Retail & Leisure Study 2018 has identified that Ormskirk remains a vital and viable town centre with reasonable representation from national retailers and a number of good quality independents. The town centre is performing well with a good convenience retail offer.

- 4.39 Although Ormskirk is currently performing well there has been a slight increase in vacancy rates since 2011, although they are still below the regional and national average. In addition, there has been a move away from A1 retail with a number of units which have recently converted to restaurants, food and drink A3, drinking establishments A4, drinking establishments with expanded food and drink AA and hot food takeaways A5 uses. However, as identified in the retail and leisure study there is a need to encourage key comparison sub retailers which are currently lacking in the town.
- 4.40 The town centre is well served by all forms of transport including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links and is accessible for cars with a number of car parks surrounding the town centre.
- 4.41 The Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015-2020 was established to help ensure that the town centre continues to thrive addressing key issues helping to make the town as attractive as possible to businesses, residents and visitors. Following the adoption of the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy 2015-2020, a Town Centre Management Group was established made up of stakeholders to help deliver the actions contained within the strategy. As part of these actions independent research was undertaken by Place Making specialists which recommended that Ormskirk be positioned to continue to serve as a retail destination but should also grow as a visitor destination linking in with the wider attractions found in the area. We believe that Ormskirk is well served to provide a good retail and visitor experience whilst also providing visitors with choice and a diverse offer.



Uses within the Primary Shopping Area

- 4.42 Whilst the Council aims to maintain a core retail presence within the PSA it is acknowledged that other appropriate town centre uses such as leisure uses, restaurants and cafes are appropriate within the primary shopping area and can assist with the creation of the town centre experience. Whilst the percentage of A1 retail units has fallen over recent years these units have been taken up with non-retail uses which have allowed the town centre to remain vibrant. The aim of this policy is to allow Ormskirk to perform its key retail function whilst allowing for appropriate town centre uses to complement and support this retail function. The Council believes that this approach is both deliverable and in line with changing demand.
- 4.43 In terms of assessing applications for change of use away from Class A1 retail, the criteria listed in Part 2 of Policy EC5 has been drawn up taking account of the NPPF and

the Council's experiences in relation to the town centre. The Council wants to encourage a range of complementary and diverse town centre uses that support the vibrancy of the PSA.

- 4.44 In order to ensure the town centre maintains its attractiveness and vibrancy encouraging people to visit it is important that all non-retail units maintain shop fronts and displays and are open during traditional opening hours. By maintaining shop fronts the town centre looks inviting and vibrant and the units can also easily be converted back to A1 retail use at a later date. By requiring an overlap with traditional shop opening hours (9am-5pm) it is hoped that footfall will be increased during these hours helping to support the vitality and vibrancy, as well as supporting other business in the town centre.



- 4.45 In line with the NPPF and the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Council believes that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating healthy communities. The Council working with partners is undertaking a range of programmes aimed at reducing obesity and encouraging more active lifestyles in the borough. While the causes of obesity are complex there is evidence to support that fast food is one of a number of contributing factors to obesity. The Council will therefore consider the health impacts of the development of new hot food takeaway's in Ormskirk and the wider borough. The Council also wishes to prevent an over concentration of uses such as takeaways which predominantly operate of an evening that could harm the attractiveness of the town centre as a retail destination.
- 4.46 To support the viability of the primary shopping area the Council wishes to support the use of premises above ground floor level in the primary shopping area providing it does not affect the operations of existing or future retailers. Appropriate town centre uses can help add vibrancy and increase footfall during the day as well as outside traditional retail opening hours.

Growth of commercial sectors/cultural facilities

- 4.47 The Council's retail and leisure strategy identifies that the Council should encourage the emerging food and drink sector and ensure that this complements the retail functions of the town centre. Any opportunities to provide complementary cultural and arts facilities should be supported.

- 4.48 Current trends show that commercial leisure, such as cafes, bars, restaurants and cinemas are growing and will continue to grow their share of town centre floor space. This partly comprises replacement activity generated as a consequence of the reduced demand for traditional retail space, and is partly driven by the increase in leisure expenditure as discretionary household expenditure rises. With the growth of the quality food and drinks sector in Ormskirk, as well as the attractive town centre environment the Council believe that Ormskirk is well positioned to capitalise on this change. The Council wants to encourage more cultural facilities helping to make Ormskirk a destination in its own right. This should help support the town centre by increasing footfall.

Development Opportunity Sites

- 4.49 The retail and leisure strategy also says that new development should seek to provide a range of unit sizes for commercial operators, to redevelop smaller sites that currently detract from the street scene and wider town centre environment. This could include the creation of larger retail units that might be attractive to national retail operators. This could be achieved through new development or redevelopment of existing units.
- 4.50 Given the nature of Ormskirk town centre, potential development opportunities are limited; however there are a number of sites identified on the policies map which do have the potential to help provide additional retail and leisure facilities:
- 5.1 the current indoor market which has the potential to provide retail, leisure and residential accommodation,
 - 5.2 the existing bus station site and car park which has potential to be developed for a range of users including a new bus station to make better use of the site.
 - 5.3 Land located behind Styles car park which has the potential to deliver a mixed use development including modern new retail units
 - 5.4 The former West Lancashire college site which is currently vacant and has potential for a mix of appropriate town centre uses and residential use which could help support the town centre.
 - 5.5 Land behind and including Ormskirk magistrate's court which has potential for a mixed use scheme including possible provision of a hotel.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.51 *Having a minimum percentage of A1 retail units*

Options were considered to have a minimum requirement of A1 retail units. However this option was not taken forward as it was considered to be an inflexible approach

which could increase the amount of vacant units within the town centre. Whilst the Council does want to protect the retail function of the primary shopping area there is an acknowledgement that retail trends are changing. This policy is intended to be sufficiently flexible to allow Ormskirk to adapt to meet these changes.

4.52 *Reducing the size of the PSA*

Having a compact primary shopping area and requiring high percentage of A1 retail units within this area whilst allowing alternative uses appropriate to the town centre other than A1 retail to dominate.

Although this option was considered as it had merits in allowing for a smaller, more concentrated retail core given the mix of both A1 retail and non-A1 retail units across the town centre there did not appear to be a natural location. The town centre currently has an even mix of both retail and non-retail units which does help ensure that no one particular use dominates the town centre helping to ensure the town centre remains vibrant.

4.53 *Removing the percentage of retail units*

Options were considered to remove the requirement to maintain a minimum percentage of A1 retail units entirely; however, this was not taken forward because the Council wanted to maintain a cumulative number of retail units so that Ormskirk can sustain its retail function. Although the policy does encourage alternative town centre uses to help make visiting Ormskirk an experience with a range of facilities and services, the Council believes that Ormskirk needs to maintain its core retail function and other uses should help sustain this opposed to replacing it.

Policy EC6: Edge Hill University

Through the Local Plan the Council will seek to maximise the role and benefit of Edge Hill University as a key asset to the Borough, in terms of the employment opportunities and community benefits it provides, investment in the local area and the up-skilling of the population, whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impacts on Ormskirk and the wider environment.

When considering development proposals on the existing campus (delineated on the policies map), the following key principles will be adhered to:

When considering development proposals on the existing campus (delineated on the policies map), the following key principles will be adhered to:

- I. Support for the continued development and improvement (including high quality design and landscaping) of Edge Hill University and its facilities on the existing campus;
- II. That the University should continue to develop travel plans and parking strategies to encourage sustainable travel, improve access to the campus and alleviate any existing or new traffic and parking impacts arising from the University, including making suitable provision to replace the existing temporary car parking;
- III. That the University will continue to improve its residential accommodation offer within the existing campus;
- IV. The use of sustainable drainage systems for surface water;
- V. Where possible, new development should create links between the University, local businesses and the community sector, in terms of both information sharing and learning programmes, to ensure that the University continues to contribute to the local economy and social inclusion in the Borough; and
- VI. Where possible, new development should ensure that the benefits of the University and its future growth and development are also directed to those communities where educational attainment is lower through specific programmes, and where possible and appropriate, led by private sector employers.

Any growth of the University beyond the existing campus should be accommodated to the south of St Helens Road (see policy SP8) or within Ormskirk town centre, with purpose-built student accommodation forming a key part of any growth.

Justification

- 4.54 Edge Hill University is considered a major asset to the Borough of West Lancashire and the town of Ormskirk. The University has grown considerably over recent years and continues to be a significant employer in the area and contributor to the local economy. The presence of a large number of students, particularly in Ormskirk, has led to better provision of services and leisure facilities creating direct benefits for the wider community as well as students. As such, the University's continued role in providing a valuable

educational service as well as an economic benefit to the local area is essential for the future prosperity of West Lancashire. For this reason, careful consideration is required in relation to the future plans of the University.

- 4.55 However, along with the positive aspects of the University being located in the Borough, there are also some issues which have arisen from the continued expansion of this once relatively small educational establishment. The main issues for consideration within the Local Plan relate to traffic, parking and housing. Traffic continues to be problematic at key times of the academic year with impacts notable across Ormskirk and along the A570 through Bickerstaffe and managing the demand for car parking on-campus can be challenging, especially in the Autumn term. Housing is also a key concern within



Ormskirk with increasing student demand for rented accommodation leading to less lower cost housing for local people. The location of student accommodation has a direct link to resulting transport needs and a holistic approach needs to be adopted when addressing these issues.

- 4.56 Therefore, while further growth of the University is generally supported, there are issues which need to be addressed and a balance should be found between expansion and the impact on the surrounding environment and local residents. Policy EC6 seeks to address this in relation to managing the development and redevelopment of the existing University campus.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.57 *To not have any policy for the campus*

While not having a policy would be unlikely to cause harm to the University (as the campus is wholly in the University's ownership and the University would be highly unlikely to seek permission for development not related to the use of the land as a University campus), any development on the campus should be managed to ensure it does not cause harm

off-campus, and so a policy of some description to guide development on-campus is considered to be required.

4.58 *To have a more detailed or prescriptive policy or masterplan for the University campus*

The Council could seek a policy which controls more tightly what is developed where on-campus, but this could have the result of unnecessarily fettering the University, especially given the flexibility needed for the University to respond to ever-changing demands within the higher education sector. As such, it is considered preferable to give the University the flexibility to decide how best to manage development of their campus, provided that it does not cause harm off-campus.

4.59 *Should growth of the campus be necessary in the future, to consider a different location for the expansion of the campus*

The proposed policy EC6 refers to any growth of the campus being accommodated across the road from the existing campus, to the south of St Helens Road, as part of the strategic development location covered by policy SP8. The creation of a satellite campus elsewhere in Ormskirk or West Lancashire have been considered, but such an approach would not necessarily be the most sustainable (in terms of creating additional movements between campuses) and would not be the most efficient or attractive model for the University. Furthermore, a central reason for considering campus growth to the south of St Helens Road is to provide more purpose-built campus-style student accommodation to help alleviate pressure for student housing in Ormskirk. Locating this at a satellite campus would not provide the same alleviation on student housing pressures in Ormskirk.

Policy EC7: Demonstrating Viability

The Council will seek to retain existing commercial /industrial (B1,B2 or B8) and retail (A1) land/premises, together with agricultural/horticultural workers' dwellings and tourism/visitor uses, unless the requirements of part 1 and 2 of this policy have been met.

- I. In order to demonstrate that the existing use is no longer viable it must be demonstrated that that either Part 1a or 1b has been met, in addition to meeting the requirements of Part c.

- a. The continued use of the site/premises for its existing use is no longer viable in terms of its operation of the existing use, building age and format and that it is not commercially viable to redevelop the land or refurbish the premises for its existing use.
- b. The land/premises is no longer suitable for the existing use when taking into account access/highways issues (including public transport), site location and infrastructure, physical constraints, environmental considerations and amenity issues. The compatibility of the existing use with adjacent uses may also be a consideration.
- c. Marketing of the land/property indicates that there is no demand for the land/property in its existing use and evidence is provided in accordance with the Marketing section of this policy.

II. Where the existing use is no longer considered viable in the existing location as demonstrated in Part 1 the Council will preferentially seek the following alternative uses to have been considered and evidence provided to demonstrate that they are not viable prior to consideration of a market housing led scheme:

- a. That options to relocate the existing business within an alternative location in West Lancashire have been fully explored and evidence to demonstrate this provided.
- b. A mixed-use scheme for the same, existing use along with a compatible use.
- c. For existing retail uses, an alternative use that helps create or maintain the vitality of a town, village or local centre; and
- d. For existing agricultural/horticultural workers' dwellings, an alternative use for affordable housing, tourism uses such as hotels/hostels or a community use which shall include either a community centre, meeting hall, library or a health and community care facility.
- e. For existing commercial/industrial (B1,B2 or B8) other permanent employment generating uses

Marketing

III. Where an application relies upon a marketing exercise to demonstrate that there is no demand for the land/premises in its current use, the applicant will be expected to submit evidence to demonstrate that the marketing was adequate and that no reasonable offers were refused.

This will include evidence demonstrating that:

- a. The marketing has been undertaken by an appropriate agent or surveyor at a price which reflects the current market or has been refused.
- b. The land/premises has been marketed for an appropriate period of time, which will usually be 12 months, or 6 months for retail premises.
- c. The land/premises has been regularly advertised and targeted at the appropriate audience. Consideration will be given to the nature and frequency of advertisements in the local press, regional press, property press or specialist trade papers etc.; whether the land/premises has been continuously included on the agents website and agents own papers/ lists of premises; has the land premises been advertised online using sites such as Rightmove, the location of advertisement boards; whether there have been any mail shots or contact with local property agents, specialist commercial agents and local businesses; and with regards to commercial/industrial property, whether it has been recorded on the Council's sites and premises search facility.
- d. Evidence sites have been marketed in a flexible and realistic manner taking account the size of land premises. For example has consideration been given to subdividing larger sites/premises and that for above ground floor retail units consideration has been given to alternative town centre uses as specified in Policy EC5 (for Ormskirk)
- e. Where a departure from policy is proposed, the council may seek to independently verify the submitted evidence, and the applicant will be required to bear the costs of independent verification.

Justification

- 4.60 The Local Plan seeks to protect particular uses of land for example employment use on employment sites, retail use in town centres, agricultural workers dwellings or tourism uses in order to help achieve sustainable development. However, this preferred options policy allows for changes of use in some circumstances providing it has been robustly demonstrated that the former use is no longer viable. It is important for the Local Plan to be viable and to be able to adapt to changes. The purpose of this preferred options policy is to set out a range of parameters that will enable the Council to make fair and robust assessment of whether there is a justifiable case for whatever change of use is proposed.
- 4.61 The Council considers it is important to have a robust policy in place to ensure that important commercial/employment sites, retail units and agricultural/horticultural workers dwellings and tourism/visitor uses are protected. Whilst we acknowledge that there may

be occasions these uses may no longer be viable in their current location it is important to have a robust policy in place to ensure that alternative uses are only considered when it can be clearly demonstrated that their existing use is no longer viable.

- 4.62 The Council intends to protect larger employment generating uses and where sites are still viable and suitable employment in rural areas. The borough has a number of smaller employment generating sites in rural areas which provide important sustainable locations to provide services and local employment. However, the Council does acknowledge that where these uses are no longer viable or indeed where these sites are vacant it is preferable to allow for other uses (preferably employment generating) to be considered.
- 4.63 The Council also wants to protect viable A1 retail units from conversion to other uses that might harm the vitality of town/village/local centres, whilst at the same time allowing for the conversion of units that are clearly no longer viable and would otherwise remain vacant in the long term.
- 4.64 Given the rural nature of the borough, agriculture/horticulture is an important part of the rural economy and given the limited availability of affordable homes within the rural parts of the borough and a lack of public transport in these areas it is particularly important that these dwellings remain available for agricultural/horticultural workers. Similarly the Council considers tourism to be important to the West Lancashire economy, particularly in rural areas and it is important that tourism uses are protected to protect jobs and support the local economy.
- 4.65 When it can be demonstrated that existing uses are no longer viable in their existing locations and that the same employment use cannot be relocated to another part of West Lancashire regard should be given to whether, firstly, a mixed use scheme involving the existing use is viable and then, secondly whether or not for retail premises or agricultural/horticultural workers dwellings an alternative use to meet a similar need or purpose to the existing use is viable. If it can be demonstrated that these alternative uses are no longer viable, market housing may be considered as an alternative use. The affordable housing requirements of Policy H3 will apply to market housing developments that ultimately emerge from this process, regardless of the previous use of the land/building.

Alternatives Considered

- 4.66 *To remove the requirement for agricultural/horticultural workers dwellings to comply with this policy*

Whilst removing the requirement for agricultural/horticultural workers to comply with this

policy could allow for the delivery of additional homes it is considered important to keep agricultural/horticultural workers dwellings within this policy to protect the rural economy within West Lancashire. Given the high cost and limited availability of properties in rural areas within West Lancashire it is considered important to protect these homes for essential workers. Without these affordable properties for workers some rural businesses may struggle to survive.

4.67 Removing this policy entirely

This policy is an updated version of Policy GN4 from the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027. This policy has worked well in protecting commercial/industrial premises, retail premises and agricultural workers dwellings, unless there is clear evidence that these sites are no longer viable in their current use. As this policy is working well and provides clear guidance to demonstrate when a site is no longer viable for its existing use the policy has been updated and continued.

4.68 Allowing the redevelopment of existing smaller employment sites

Although there is growing pressure for housing development in rural locations and there is a trend of local employers to want to relocate to more modern, better connected locations it is considered important that employment sites which are currently operating to be supported, unless it can clearly be demonstrated that these sites are no longer fit for purpose and are unviable. The Council wants to support a range of employment sites from larger sites to smaller localised sites that provide an employment function and can help support smaller growing businesses.

Chapter 5: Housing Policies

Policy H1: General Housing Policy

I. Within settlement boundaries

Residential development will be permitted within West Lancashire Borough's settlement boundaries provided it complies with other relevant planning policies.

II. Outside settlement boundaries

On **Protected Land**, the following residential development will be permitted:

- Conversion of existing buildings, provided they are of permanent and substantial construction;
- Redevelopment of existing buildings on previously developed land, provided there is no substantial net reduction in openness;
- Entry level affordable housing development on Rural Exception Sites, subject to the criteria below being satisfied.

Within the Green Belt, residential development will be permitted where it is compliant with Local Plan policy SP4 and with national policy, e.g. as set out in the NPPF or any future replacement policy.

Small scale development to meet identified local affordable housing needs will also be permitted on Rural Exception Sites on the edge of Key Sustainable Villages and Rural Sustainable Villages, with the exception of Tarleton, Hesketh Bank and Banks, subject to the criteria below being satisfied:

III. Rural Exception Sites

Entry level affordable housing developments will be permitted on Rural Exception Sites, subject to the following criteria being satisfied:

- a. The site is located immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary;
- b. The housing comprises affordable dwellings, in particular homes for discounted sale, for shared ownership, or for affordable rent. Where 100% affordable housing is not viable, up to 40% of the units may be market housing to help ensure the viability of the overall scheme;

- c. The housing is to meet identified local affordable housing needs;
- d. Homes are to be affordable in perpetuity;
- e. The site is proportionate in size to the adjacent settlement, and in any case does not exceed 10 units, unless there are compelling reasons to exceed this figure;
- f. The proposed development complies with other relevant policies;

IV. Density

A density of at least 30 dwellings per hectare will be expected on housing sites, unless there is good reason to go below this figure. Where sites are well served by public transport and have good access to services and facilities, a higher density will be expected, subject to design and other considerations.

V. Development of Garden Land

When considering proposals for residential development on garden land, careful attention will need to be paid to relevant matters including the avoidance of undue harm to the character of the local area and / or to nearby residents, as well as to policies relating inter alia to design, vehicle access and nature conservation.

VI. Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure

All residential developments should aim to provide a mix of housing sizes as follows:

Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure

	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4 bedrooms
Market	5%	30%	45%	20%
Low-cost home ownership	15%	35%	40%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	35%	35%	25%	5%

VII. Self and Custom Build Housing

Self- and custom-build housing will be supported, subject to compliance with other relevant planning policies.

Justification

- 5.1 Provision of sufficient, appropriate, and good quality residential development is key to the delivery of this Local Plan, as well as contributing to the health and wellbeing of the general population. As such, housing is supported in appropriate locations throughout

the Borough, in compliance with other Local Plan policies, and with national policy. Such policies include, but are not limited to, policies on design, open space, developer contributions, and the natural environment.

- 5.2 In line with policy SP1, the residential development of brownfield land is supported in principle, in preference to the development of greenfield land, provided it complies with other relevant policies. The Borough Council has published its Brownfield Register, a schedule of brownfield sites that are considered suitable for residential development; this will be updated annually and is available on the Council's website.
- 5.3 Whilst the general approach towards the countryside is to protect it and retain its open, rural nature, the need for affordable housing in West Lancashire is considered sufficiently great to justify allowing a limited amount of affordable housing on rural exception sites, to meet local affordable housing needs.
- 5.4 Housing provided in West Lancashire should comprise a mix of sizes, types and tenures in order to contribute towards meeting the needs of different groups in the community (for example those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, Travellers, people who rent their homes, and people wishing to commission or build their own homes). Other housing policies in this Local Plan cover a number of the aforementioned groups.

Land outside settlement boundaries

Protected Land

- 5.5 The justification for the Protected Land designation is set out under Local Plan policy SP3. There is a shared aim with Green Belt policy to retain the open rural nature of the land, although the level of protection given to Protected Land is not as great as for the Green Belt.
- 5.6 Market housing is permissible on Protected Land in the following cases only:
- Conversion of existing buildings, provided they are of permanent and substantial construction;
 - Redevelopment of existing buildings on previously developed land, provided there is no substantial net reduction in openness.
- 5.7 If the affordable housing threshold is reached or exceeded in either of the above scenarios, a percentage of the units should be affordable, in line with policy H3. For

clarity, horticultural glasshouses do not count as previously developed land, neither do they count as buildings of permanent and substantial construction.

- 5.8 Affordable housing will be permitted on Rural Exception Sites on Protected Land, subject to the Rural Exception Site criteria (below) being met.

Green Belt

- 5.9 Green Belt policy is set out in the NPPF. West Lancashire-specific Green Belt policy is set out in policy SP4 of this Local Plan.
- 5.10 Green Belt benefits from the strongest protection in policy terms. Certain types of development that result in additional housing units are set out in the NPPF as being 'not inappropriate'³; these categories, and the 'local take' (a summary of policy SP4) on them, are listed below:
- Limited infilling in villages;
 - Limited affordable housing for local community needs (on Rural Exception Sites)
 - Redevelopment of brownfield sites
 - The re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction.
- 5.11 In addition, a number of permitted development rights exist relating to housing in the Green Belt. These are the subject of national policy, are liable to change, and are not elaborated upon in this Local Plan.

Rural Exception Sites

- 5.12 A number of the Borough's settlements have an unmet need for affordable housing, few available development sites, and tightly drawn Green Belt boundaries. During consultation on issues and options, people generally expressed a willingness to accept small rural housing developments to meet local needs only, in order to allow people from the village to continue living there as their housing needs change. Rather than making a series of small Green Belt boundary alterations across the Borough to help meet these needs, a Rural Exception Sites (RES) policy is considered preferable, in line with national policy¹, allowing individual villages to grow organically to meet their local affordable housing needs, on the site(s) of their choice, subject to a number of criteria being satisfied.

3 National policy (NPPF paragraph 71) allows for 'entry level exception sites' (i.e. sites providing homes for first time buyers) on land outside existing settlements.

5.13 The RES policy applies to:

- Protected Land, and
- Green Belt land around Key Sustainable Villages and Rural Sustainable Villages, with the exception of Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, and Banks - these are excluded on account of their being surrounded by Protected Land. In addition Tarleton has land allocated for residential development, Hesketh Bank has infrastructure constraints, and Banks lies mostly within Flood Zone 3 and has had significant numbers of affordable units delivered since 2005. In addition, Key Service Centres and Regional Towns are excluded on account of their size, and the fact that they have land allocated for residential development. Small Rural Villages are excluded on account of their having few services.

5.14 With regard to the criteria set out in the policy for RESs:

- I. Rural Exception Sites (RESs) should lie immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary, in order to minimise the impact on the wider countryside and to maintain as far as possible the 'form' of the settlement. Planning applications for development on RESs should be accompanied by a statement demonstrating that careful consideration has been given to the development of suitable sites within, or closer to the centre of, the settlement area, including contact having been made wherever possible with landowners or site agents, prior to proposing the development of land outside the settlement.

- II. Housing units on RESs should be affordable. However, if a scheme would be clearly undeliverable without market units, the Council may in exceptional circumstances allow a small proportion of the units on the site to be market units. 40% is



considered the absolute limit; otherwise the scheme becomes predominantly market housing. The definition of affordable housing encompasses homes for discounted market sale (at least a 30% discount will be required) or rent, starter homes, and homes for affordable rent, all of which are considered good in terms of viability and are unlikely to require significant cross-subsidisation from market units.

- III. Affordable housing on RESs must meet a local need for which there is clear evidence and which is agreed by the Borough Council. Undeveloped sites with extant permission for affordable housing will be taken into account when assessing outstanding needs for affordable housing outside settlement boundaries. For the purposes of this policy, 'local' is defined as being within the same settlement, ward, or parish.

Over-provision of affordable housing is not supported in the case of RESs as these sites are in tension with the purposes of Protected / Green Belt land, and any non-local affordable housing need to be met on 'superfluous' RESs could most likely be met on non-Green Belt sites elsewhere in the Borough. In order to minimise loss of openness of rural land around individual settlements, there is a need to limit the number of RESs. The extent of the local AH need is considered to be the most appropriate limit.

- IV. Exception site housing must be offered to households in the locality (the same settlement, ward or parish). Given the above criteria, there should be sufficient local need to account for the units delivered on RESs, but in any cases of insufficient local need, the units should subsequently be offered to people on the housing waiting list elsewhere. When dwellings on RES are subsequently sold on, they must remain affordable in perpetuity, or else any subsidy or discount must be recycled or passed on.
- V. Exception sites should not exceed 10 units in size, unless there are compelling reasons associated with the site in question that mean it would be appropriate to allow more units. Similarly, incremental developments which would result in the development of more than 10 units at one location will not be allowed, unless there are compelling reasons to do so.

Density

- 5.15 In order to ensure the efficient use of land, it is important that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. The NPPF advises that plans should include the use of minimum density standards, considering a range of densities that reflect the accessibility and potential of different areas, and that in town centres and other locations well served by public transport, the average density of residential development should be significantly higher, except where this would be inappropriate. Densities lower than 30 dwellings per hectare may be appropriate where these reflect the surrounding area, or in parts of 'garden villages'.

Garden land development

- 5.16 'Garden grabbing' is not considered to be a pressing issue in West Lancashire, but it is acknowledged that for neighbours of proposed garden developments, the issue can be particularly acute. National policy does not allow for residential development of gardens where it would cause harm to the local area. Policy H1 only allows for garden land development subject to stringent caveat relating to design, character, access, amenity and other matters.

Housing Mix

- 5.17 There is a range of factors that influences demand for different sizes of homes. These include population change, earnings and incomes / ability to save, the economy, and housing affordability. The Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study sets out a suggested mix of housing by size and tenure, based on analysis of long-term (20 year) demographic change.
- 5.18 Residential schemes should aim to adhere to the specified mix of house sizes; if any significant deviation is proposed, the applicant should provide robust justification for the alternative mix, having regard to the nature of the development site and character of the area, up-to-date evidence of local needs, and the existing mix and turnover of properties in the local area.

Self and Custom Build Housing

- 5.19 Self and Custom Build housing is supported in principle. Feedback from consultation indicated that to require that parts of allocated housing sites be set aside for self-builders would not be advisable. The Council is currently obliged to provide a number of serviced self-build plots, equivalent to the number of people on the statutory Self and Custom Build Register; this work is being undertaken by the Council's Estates Team. Numbers on the Register are not high enough to justify the allocation of any sites specifically for Self or Custom Build Housing.

Other considerations

- 5.20 A number of sites are allocated specifically for housing development; these are listed in policy H2. There are other 'accommodation allocations' in other housing policies, for example sites for Travellers.

- 5.21 With relation to residential caravans and houseboats, the Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study concludes that, whilst there exists a demand in West Lancashire for this type of accommodation, there is no need to allocate land specifically for this purpose, but that planning applications for such uses should be considered on their own merits.
- 5.22 Neighbourhood Plans may be prepared in areas of the Borough subsequent to the adoption of this Local Plan; such plans may allocate sites for housing. National legislation and policy sets out the relationship between local plans and neighbourhood plans.

Alternatives Considered

- 5.23 *Different amounts of development allowed in the different tiers of the settlement hierarchy, e.g. limit to 4 market units / affordable-led developments (as at present) in lowest tier.*

Whilst this would avoid the potential of over-large developments in small hamlets, there are few, if any, large development sites in the smallest settlements, so there is considered to be no need for this policy. Also, this approach would make policy H1 more complex.

- 5.24 *Different approach towards development in the countryside, for example no exception sites, allow for limited affordable housing on Protected Land and / or very limited affordable housing in the Green Belt, subject to sequential tests (as per current policy).*

This continuation of current policy would potentially provide more control over where development takes place in the countryside, whilst also allowing for housing anywhere in the countryside, not just adjacent to settlements, so that affordable housing needs can be met wherever they arise. However, allowing for housing anywhere in the countryside, not just adjacent to settlements could result in more unsustainable patterns of development. Under current policy, sequential tests have proved cumbersome and of limited value. It appears that affordable housing permissions are often granted in rural areas primarily to increase land value, rather than to meet a local need. National policy encourages Rural Exception Sites (RESs) in non-Green Belt countryside.

- 5.25 *Allocate RESs rather than rely on 'windfall applications'*

The proposed criteria-based policy could result in less control over where sites come forward and raises the question of how we 'stop' too many sites coming forward in one area. If allocated, small RESs can contribute towards the NPPF stipulation that 10% of the local plan's housing requirement be allocated on small sites. Also, it may be easier to predict future completions on RESs if they have been allocated. However, under a

criteria-based policy, local communities are able to choose the most appropriate sites for themselves; the work of choosing / assessing / justifying / allocating does not fall to the Council; there is more flexibility, especially for a longer plan period; and the criteria-based approach appears to be the only approach used elsewhere. In terms of a 'surfeit' of sites, this does not appear to be an issue elsewhere, given the extent of local needs.

Policy H2: Housing Site Allocations

I. Strategic Development Sites

The following sites are allocated under Strategic Policies SP5-SP8 for residential development, or for mixed use development including residential:

Ref	Spatial Area	Site name / address	Site allocated for	No. of dwellings
SP5	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Skelmersdale Town Centre	Mixed use including residential	750
SP6	Burscough / Central Parishes	Yew Tree Farm, Burscough	Mixed use including residential	1,000
SP7	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land to the north of A577 Dicket's Lane / Blaguegate Lane	Mixed use including residential	1,500
SP7	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land east of B5240 Lyelake Lane	Mixed use including residential	2,500
SP7	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land north east of A570 Rainford Bypass	Mixed use including residential	2,000
SP8	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land south east of Ormskirk (Alty's Lane, Parrs Lane, Prescott Road)	Mixed use including residential	2,000

II. Major Residential Development Sites

The following sites are allocated for residential development:

Ref	Spatial Area	Site name / address	No. of dwellings
HS1	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Whalleys, Skelmersdale	630
HS2	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Whalleys North, Skelmersdale	50

Ref	Spatial Area	Site name / address	No. of dwellings
HS3	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land south of Vale Lane, Skelmersdale	150
HS4	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Firwood Road, Lathom South	400
HS5	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Mill Lane, Up Holland	100
HO1	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at Ruff Lane, Ormskirk	18
HO2	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at Crosshall Brow, Ormskirk	170
HO3	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land west of Southport Road, Ormskirk	120
HB1	Burscough / Central Parishes	Land at Red Cat Lane, Burscough	50
HN1	Northern Parishes	Alty's Brickworks, Hesketh Bank*	210*
HN2	Northern Parishes	Land north of A565 / west of Church Road, Tarleton*	360*
HN3	Northern Parishes	Former Greaves Hall Hospital, Banks*	133*
HN4	Northern Parishes	Land west of Guinea Hall Lane, Banks	200
HW1	Western Parishes	New Cut Lane, Birkdale (Halsall)	150
HW2	Western Parishes	Fine Jane's Farm, Moss Road, Birkdale (Halsall)	60
HW3	Western Parishes	Land at Moss Road / Bentham's Way, Birkdale (Halsall)	300
HW4	Western Parishes	Land between 101-159 Southport Road, Scarisbrick	60
HW5	Western Parishes	Land at Carr Moss Lane, Halsall	50
HW6	Western Parishes	Blundells Farm, Haskayne	50
HE1	Eastern Parishes	Lawrenson's Farm, Newburgh	80
HE2	Eastern Parishes	Land north west of The Common, Parbold	100
HE3	Eastern Parishes	Land east of Appley Lane North, Appley Bridge	250
HE4	Eastern Parishes	Land west of Sprodley Drive, Appley Bridge	30

* Sites HN1, HN2 and HN3 also include an allocation for employment uses.

III. Small Housing Sites

The following small sites (one hectare or less) are allocated for residential development:

Ref	Spatial Area	Site name / address	No. of dwellings
HSB1	Burscough / Central Parishes	Barton's Farm (former Martland's Yard), Burscough	8
HSB2	Burscough / Central Parishes	Land to the rear of the Bull and Dog Inn, Burscough	6
HSO3	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at Scarth Hill Lane, Ormskirk	17
HSO4	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at 'Roslyn', Black Moss Lane, Ormskirk	10
HSO5	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at Church Lane, Holt Green	4
HSO6	Ormskirk / Aughton	Land at 111 Aughton Street, Ormskirk	3
HSS7	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land at Carlton Avenue / Ormskirk Road, Up Holland	10
HSS8	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land adjacent to The Highwayman, Blythewood, Digmoor	4
HSS9	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land at Marlborough, Ashurst	10
HSS10	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land adjacent to Community Centre, Hartland, Birch Green	10
HSS11	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land off Northfield (Adjacent to St James' School)	16
HSS12	Skelmersdale / SE Parishes	Land at Elswick, Tanhouse	10
HSN13	Northern Parishes	Land north of Church Road, Tarleton	16
HSE14	Eastern Parishes	Land south of 41 Cobbs Brow Lane, Newburgh	20
HSE15	Eastern Parishes	Land north west of Glenside, Appley Bridge	20

IV. The following is required for all allocated sites that comprise or include housing:

- a. Compliance with other relevant Local Plan policy requirements including, but not limited to, policies H3 (affordable housing), H4 (housing for older people), SD1 (sustainable layout), SD2 (sustainable design), and GI1 and GI2 (Green Infrastructure and open space).

It will be expected that development of the site in adherence to the above and other relevant policies will be viable, as per the promotion of the sites through the Local Plan preparation process. If this is not the case because of a substantial change in circumstances for the site, the Applicant / Developer will be required to submit a clear, transparent viability assessment in accordance with Local Plan policy H8.

- b. A layout that adheres to the design principles set out in policy SD1 (sustainable layout), and that follows general 'good practice' as set out in national guidance and other relevant publications.
- c. A housing mix that reflects the local housing mix, and / or particular local housing needs, for example for older people, families, first time buyers, and those in need of affordable housing.
- d. Timely commencement on site and delivery of homes once planning permission is granted. Where necessary and appropriate, a planning condition may be imposed providing that development must begin within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period.

Justification

- 5.26 The sites allocated for residential development, or for mixed use development including residential, have been selected following a comprehensive site assessment process, drawing almost exclusively on sites in the West Lancashire Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and sites submitted as potential development land during the Local Plan Review Issues and Options consultation (spring 2017). Further explanation of the site selection process for the large and strategic housing sites is given in the Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations Technical Paper.

In terms of criteria (i) to (iv):

- i. The policies of this Local Plan have been subject to a robust Viability Assessment undertaken on the Council's behalf by experts in this field. The draft Local Plan Viability Assessment has been published alongside the Preferred Options for comment and its findings will be reflected in any changes needed to the various policy requirements associated with allocated residential sites as the Council draws up the Publication version of the new Local Plan to ensure that all can be delivered

without rendering the overall development of allocated sites unviable. It is the expectation that this will remain the case when sites come to be developed, and that further viability assessments should not be necessary at that time, unless there is clear evidence that circumstances have changed materially since the adoption of this Local Plan. Reductions in these contributions will not be supported unless there are exceptional circumstances and robust and transparent information on viability is provided in accordance with policy H8.



- ii. Houses are essentially permanent additions to the local environment. A good quality layout that provides or allows for: safe and convenient routes for walking and cycling to the closest facilities, 'legibility' (including for people with conditions such as dementia), greenery and natural features, wildlife, and incorporation of energy-saving design features (e.g. south-facing windows, solar panels), can deliver significant health and well-being and natural environmental benefits, thereby making an important contribution to social and environmental sustainability, and, as a consequence, economic sustainability. Conversely, to fail to achieve the above through an unsympathetic and unimaginative layout, results not only in a missed opportunity, but also harm to sustainability.

In addition to the requirements of national and Local Plan policy (e.g. policies SD1 and SD2), there are a number of good practice guides and publications that advocate sustainable design and layouts, and the integration of health and wellbeing with development. Some links are provided below.

- iii. Adherence to policies H3 and H4 requires that a number of the homes provided be of different tenures and / or sizes, to reflect local needs for affordable housing, and for housing for the elderly. These policies reflect the findings of the 2018 Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study. Also, the NPPF (paragraph 61) requires that policies identify the size, type and tenure of homes for different groups in the community, including older people, families with children, first time buyers, people who rent their homes, and those in need of affordable housing. For clarity, other types of housing are dealt with through other policies of this Local Plan (for example for caravan or boat dwellers, self-builders, students, and Travellers).

- iv. Allocated housing sites have been selected taking into account their deliverability, which will have been demonstrated and agreed at the Local Plan Examination. Bearing in mind the Housing Delivery Test, the local authority will expect that once an allocated site is granted permission for residential development, it will be developed timeously. In certain circumstances (for example, where there is a significant percentage of sites with unimplemented permissions, and where completions are falling short of requirements), the Council may impose planning conditions requiring development to commence on site within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period.

- 5.27 Of the 38 sites allocated in this policy for housing, 15 sites (indicative capacity 164 units in total) are small (i.e. no more than one hectare). This falls short of the NPPF requirement (paragraph 68(a)) that 10% of the Local Plan housing requirement be made up of sites of no more than one hectare, but there are strong reasons as to why this target cannot be achieved, namely the long plan period, significant housing requirement, and lack of deliverable and / or developable small housing sites in West Lancashire.
- 5.28 In line with policy SP3, the residential development of brownfield land is supported in principle, in preference to the development of greenfield land, provided it complies with other relevant policies. The Borough Council has published its Brownfield Register, a schedule of brownfield sites that are considered suitable for residential development; this will be updated annually and is available on the Council's website.

Phasing

- 5.29 There are no specific phasing restrictions for the above allocated sites, but regard must be had to the Council's most up-to-date Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 5.30 In locations where there are material shortcomings in infrastructure provision, i.e. if the additional housing associated with a particular site is built, the place will no longer be able to function in an acceptable manner, and where there is no prospect of these shortcomings being addressed by the time that over half of the new housing is completed, then construction of the new dwellings may have to be delayed until such time as the necessary infrastructure is delivered, or there is a clear, agreed prospect that it will be delivered within a short time. In such situations, planning permissions may be granted subject to 'Grampian conditions' delaying housing delivery. Regard will also be had towards the Housing Delivery Test and the implication of Grampian conditions on delivery rates.

- 5.31 In relation to the Strategic Development Sites, and the larger allocations, the matter of infrastructure delivery and its relation to housing delivery will be addressed through Masterplans and / or Development Briefs.

Alternatives Considered

5.32 Allocation of different sites to those proposed above

All sites have been assessed through the SHELAA process, and through more comprehensive Local Plan Review Site Assessments. Technical Paper 1: Strategic Development Options and Site Allocations sets out the reasons for the proposed allocation of the sites in policy H2. The following “alternative” site allocations have been included on the Plans at Appendix 1. reflecting those sites which performed reasonably well in the Site Assessments and could genuinely be considered as possible alternatives to those sites (or parts of) which are currently “Preferred” allocations:

- Land to the south of St Joseph’s College, Up Holland
- Tower Hill Playing Fields, Up Holland
- Southern part of Chequer Lane Playing Fields, Up Holland
- Holland Moor Open Space, Up Holland
- Hillside Playing Fields, Elmers Green, Skelmersdale
- Land at Beacon Lane / Elmers Green Lane, Ashurst, Skelmersdale
- Land to the north of Spa Lane / Vale Lane, Skelmersdale / Lathom South
- Land at Mawdsley’s Farm, Westhead
- Land to the south-west of Ledson Grove, Aughton
- Land to the west of Nursery Farm, Holt Green
- Land north of Holborn Hill, Ormskirk
- Land to the north of the Scott Estate, Ormskirk
- Land to the south of Plox Brow and east of Coe Lane, Tarleton
- Land to the west of Hoole Lane, Banks
- Land to east and west of Fine Jane’s Farm, Moss Road, Birkdale boundary
- Land west of Hall Road and east of Bescar Brow Lane, Scarisbrick
- Land at 528 Southport Road, Scarisbrick
- Land east of St Cuthbert’s Primary School and north of 89 New Street, Halsall
- Land at Hollin Farm, Haskayne
- Land west of Sandy Lane, Newburgh
- Land north of Finch Lane, Appley Bridge
- Land at Dawber Delf, south of Skull House Lane, Appley Bridge

5.33 *A more relaxed or more stringent approach towards meeting other policy requirements (e.g. affordable housing, design, sustainable layouts)*

A more relaxed approach may enable delivery of a greater number of housing units, but it will secure fewer benefits, and is more likely to lead to unsustainable patterns of development, and less good quality neighbourhoods across the Borough. Such an approach also undermines the other policies that are not adhered to. Conversely, a more stringent approach may lead to fewer dwellings being delivered, a possible lack of 5 year housing land supply, and the possibility of grants of permission on appeal on less suitable sites.

5.34 *Greater phasing and / or locational control*

This approach may be linked to ensuring infrastructure provision. However, it could lead to a decrease in overall housing delivery, with its associated risk (as per the previous alternative).

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

The provision of affordable housing is supported within the settlement boundaries of West Lancashire, either as 100% affordable housing developments, or as a proportion of the units in market housing-led schemes.

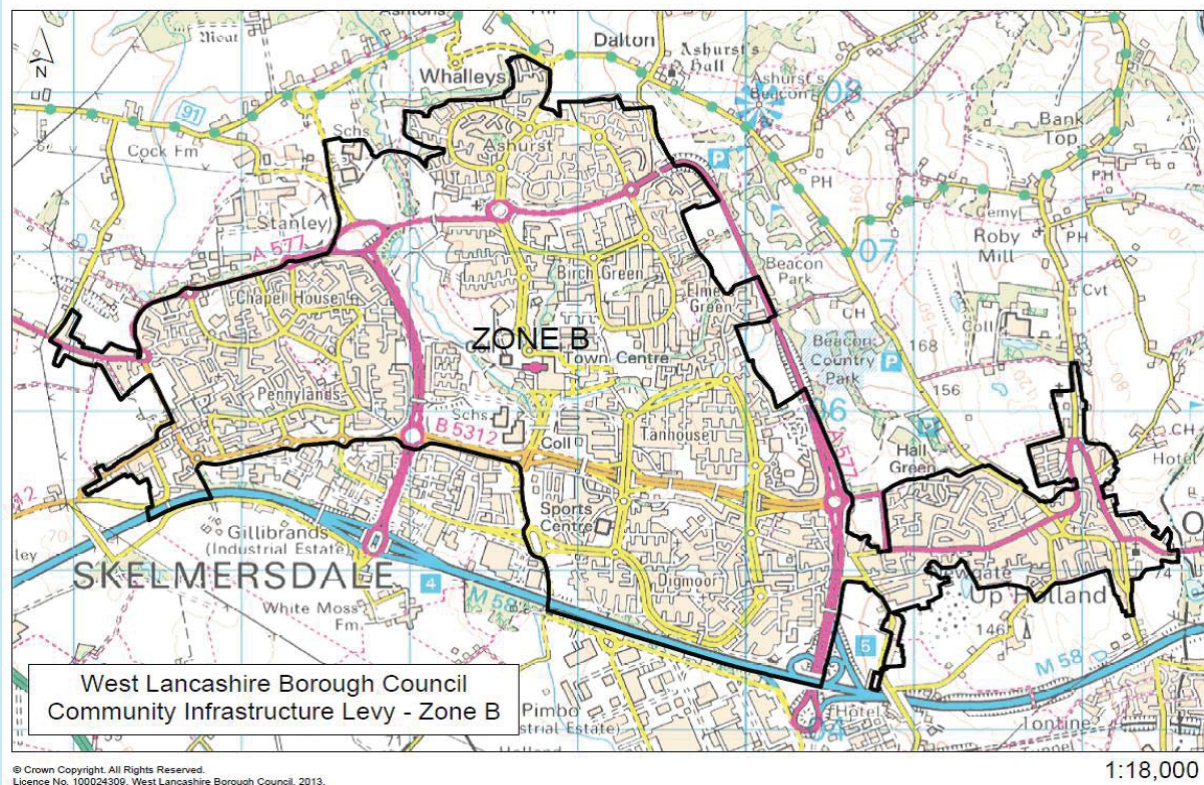
Outside settlement boundaries, the following types of affordable housing are supported:

- Affordable housing to meet local needs on Rural Exception Sites (in accordance with Local Plan policy H1);
- Affordable housing as a proportion of market housing-led developments (over the affordable housing threshold) that are compliant with other Local Plan and / or national policies, for example the redevelopment of rural brownfield sites.

Requirements for Affordable Housing

Affordable housing will be required as a percentage of new market housing-led residential developments in West Lancashire as follows:

Location	Size of development	
	1-9 units	10 units or more
'Zone B' of Skelmersdale / Up Holland	0%	10%
'Zone A' i.e. remainder of West Lancashire	0%	30%



The location of Zone B (and, by implication, Zone A) is shown on the plan above.

* **Note** – dependent on the findings of the Local Plan Viability Assessment, these figures could be varied.

Similarly, the Zone A / Zone B boundary could be amended if evidence indicates it should be changed.

Other Considerations

The Council will take viability into account when assessing individual housing schemes. If a level of affordable housing lower than the levels set out above is proposed for a specific scheme, the Council will require robust and transparent information on viability to be provided by the applicant, in accordance with Local Plan policy H8.

In the case of redevelopment of previously developed sites, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, the affordable housing contribution will be reduced proportionately. The Council will normally expect affordable housing to be provided on-site. If off-site affordable housing is proposed, the applicant must provide robust justification as to why affordable housing cannot be provided on-site, and must identify and secure a suitable site in the locality for the off-site provision.

As per the advice in the Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study (ASHNS):

- The bulk of the affordable home ownership should be shared ownership – this is the most affordable of the home ownership options. In Skelmersdale, other forms of affordable home ownership could be considered where this will improve the housing mix;
- The Council could also consider other forms of affordable home ownership (such as Starter Homes) where this improves viability, and could potentially also seek for some proportion of market housing to be discounted;
- Subject to viability, in addition to the affordable home ownership, the Council should be looking to secure additional rented housing. A broadly equal split between social and affordable rented could be considered.

The ASHNS advises that affordable units comprise the following mix of sizes:

	Mix of Housing by Size and Tenure			
	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms
Low-cost home ownership	15%	35%	40%	10%
Affordable housing (rented)	35%	35%	25%	5%

Should new evidence emerge that would indicate that any of the above be changed, this will be addressed through a review of the Local Plan, or through a Supplementary Planning Document.

Justification

- 5.35 Housing affordability has been recognised as a key issue across West Lancashire, not just for this Local Plan, but also in previous local plans. As is the case nationally, house prices have tended to rise faster than earnings, and affordable housing delivery rates have fallen below annual levels of need. There is thus general support for affordable housing across the Borough, except in undeveloped rural areas remote from settlements.
- 5.36 The 2018 Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study sets out the annual affordable housing need in West Lancashire, as well as the types, tenures and sizes of affordable housing needed. As and when this evidence is updated, a decision will be made as to whether this policy needs amending or updating.
- 5.37 In accordance with national policy, 10% of the homes provided in market housing-led schemes of 10 units or more must be for affordable home ownership, unless this would

exceed the level of affordable housing in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups. In West Lancashire, the most suitable form of affordable home ownership is shared ownership.

- 5.38 The percentage requirements of policy H3 reflect the need for affordable housing, and the viability of development in the area (as set out in the Local Plan Viability Assessment). There are clear differences in the viability of development between much of Skelmersdale / Up Holland and the rest of the Borough; these are reflected in the differing percentage requirements for these areas.
- 5.39 The requirement to provide affordable housing will apply to incremental developments on sites which would result in the development of 10 units or more on a larger site. An example would be where a large site was divided into smaller sites and proposals were submitted for up to 9 units on each site on a piecemeal basis.
- 5.40 For proposals involving the redevelopment of previously developed sites, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, the affordable housing contribution will be reduced by a proportionate amount equivalent to the gross floorspace of the existing buildings, divided by the residential floorspace of the new scheme⁴. This 'vacant building credit' does not apply where buildings have been abandoned.
- 5.41 As required by case law, the Council will take viability into account when assessing individual housing schemes. If a level of affordable housing lower than the levels set out in this policy is proposed for a specific scheme, Local Plan policy H8 requires that robust and transparent information on viability be submitted to the Council by the applicant. The Council may, if necessary, have this information independently checked at the expense of the applicant.
- 5.42 Affordable housing is defined in the glossary of the NPPF. The definition is broad, encompassing a range of different types and tenures of 'affordable housing', ranging from such products as starter homes and Build to Rent schemes (which are likely to have less of a financial cost on the provider, but which may be less affordable to those in housing need), through to social rented units (which have a bigger financial cost, but which are far more likely to be genuinely affordable to those in need). As such, it should usually be possible to find an appropriate balance of tenures / types of affordable housing that can meet the policy H3 percentage requirements, and also maintain a viable scheme for the developer. It is recommended that early engagement be undertaken with the Council to negotiate the right affordable housing mix for an individual scheme. There may need

⁴ For example, if 4,000m² floorspace is to be demolished / reused, and the new development has 10,000m² residential floorspace, the affordable housing requirement will be reduced by 4,000 / 10,000, or 40%.

to be a trade-off between securing a larger number of 'affordable' units, or a smaller number of 'genuinely affordable' units.

- 5.43 National guidance advocates the creation of sustainable mixed communities. As a general principle, affordable housing should be 'pepper-potted' through a site rather than in 'enclaves'.
- 5.44 Exceptionally, and where robustly justified, off-site provision of affordable housing will be considered as an alternative to on-site provision, where a site(s) has been identified and secured for the delivery of the required affordable housing to the satisfaction of the Council. Delivery of such a site(s) would be programmed alongside, and linked to, the delivery of the main site through a Section 106 agreement. The number of units of affordable housing required would be calculated taking into account the total number of units on the combined sites⁵. In such circumstances, off-site provision should be provided in the locality, i.e. within the same (or, exceptionally, an adjacent) parish as the development site, or within the same settlement in non-parished areas. In cases of off-site provision, it must be demonstrated that the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 5.45 The Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study (ASHNS) provides advice on the type, tenure and mix of affordable housing that should be provided in West Lancashire. Should new evidence emerge that would indicate that any of the advice be changed, this will be addressed through a review of the Local Plan, or through a Supplementary Planning Document, depending on the nature of the change(s).

Alternatives Considered

- 5.46 *A variation in the percentage requirements (higher / lower)*

National policy requires at least 10% of units in schemes of 10 units or more (i.e. major schemes) to be affordable; as such there is no scope to lessen the lower requirements. The 30% requirement for major schemes has been achieved for a number of schemes under the current WLLP and is considered reasonable. This will be subject to testing under the Local Plan Viability Assessment, and could well change if the LPVA indicates it is too high, or too low.

- 5.47 *No variation in distribution across West Lancashire, i.e. Skelmersdale rates are similar to elsewhere*

⁵ For example, a development of 50 units requires 15 affordable units (30%). If, instead, all 50 units on site were market units, then 21 affordable units would be required offsite (making 71 in total; 30% of 71 is 21.)

Viability evidence to date indicates that there are material differences in the deliverability of affordable housing between Skelmersdale / Up Holland and the rest of the Borough, as well as a greater supply of less expensive residential units in Skelmersdale. To impose the same requirements in Skelmersdale as elsewhere could further discourage development in that area, undermining the primary focus of planning strategy in this emerging plan (and previous plans).

5.48 *Different approach towards size / tenure / type*

Policy on house sizes, tenures and types has been drawn up in the light of up-to-date and robust evidence as set out in the Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study. To vary this approach would be to go against evidence, and would most likely be to the detriment of housing provision in the Borough. It should be noted, however, that the policy allows for some variation in the light of local circumstances and backed up by robust locally-specific evidence.

Policy H4: Housing for Older People

The provision of suitable residential accommodation for older people ('older people's housing' or OPH) across West Lancashire is supported. Development proposals for OPH will be encouraged within settlements, in locations easily accessible by public transport and / or within a reasonable walking distance of shops, medical services, public open space and other relevant community facilities.

OPH provided over the Plan period should comprise a range of types, including individual market housing units, retirement accommodation, sheltered accommodation, extra care housing schemes, and care homes. The main focus should be independent living models, which enable residents to live independently, as opposed to schemes involving on-site care (although these will be required too). Innovative products will be encouraged.

All new 1, 2 and 3-bedroom market and affordable dwellings will be required to meet Building Regulation M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated as to why it would be inappropriate to meet this Standard.

I. Care Homes / Extra Care Accommodation

Care Homes (Use Class C2) will be supported in locations within settlements accessible by public transport, and subject to compliance with other relevant policies.

Extra Care developments (which can be a mixture of C2 and C3 units) will be permitted on suitable sites within settlements provided the following criteria are met:

- a. The site has satisfactory highways access
- b. A proportion of the C3 units are affordable, in line with policy H3

To meet objectively assessed needs for C2 accommodation for the elderly, it will be necessary to provide at least 1,482 registered care bedspaces in West Lancashire over the Local Plan period (39 per year). This need will partially be met through those C2 developments already completed / granted permission since 2012 and through the allocation of the following sites:

- c. A 100-bed care home / extra care facility at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough (policy SP6)
- d. Three 100-bed care homes / extra care facilities within the proposed garden villages south west of Skelmersdale (policy SP7)
- e. A 80-bed care home / extra care facility as part of an Elderly Care Village south east of Ormskirk (policy SP8)
- f. A 50-bed care home / extra care facility as part of the proposed development on land at Cross Hall Brow, Ormskirk (policy H2, site HO2).
- g. A 50-bed care home / extra care facility as part of the proposed development on land north of the A565 in Tarleton (policy H2, site HN2)

The remainder of the need will be met through 'windfall' care home developments.

II. Design

Schemes involving OPH should be designed in such a way as to achieve as many of the following objectives as possible:

- a. The occupants are able to live independently;
- b. The OPH is integrated with the wider community (as opposed to 'elderly-only enclaves'), unless there are clear reasons to keep it separate;
- c. Layouts of estates and neighbourhoods are 'elderly-friendly' with regard to 'legibility', ease of movement, and safety.

- d. There is good, convenient access to facilities and services, or at least to guaranteed satisfactory public transport services.

Justification

- 5.49 The ageing population of West Lancashire presents a number of challenges relating to health and the economy, and the need to cater for older people's accommodation requirements. Ensuring that suitable housing options are available for older people will help people live longer, independent, active and healthy lifestyles, consistent with the aims of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Providing accommodation is not just about design, but is also about ensuring that older people remain an active part of society within sustainable communities, and that they are able to live as independently as they wish to.
- 5.50 The term 'older people' has no universal definition. It could be considered in terms of age (over 55 / 65 / 75, etc.) or in terms of general health, mobility, and independence. People vary widely, and a wide range of housing types will be required for their accommodation. The market can, to an extent, provide OPH, but given the ageing population, some planning intervention is considered necessary to facilitate provision of a sufficient range and number of units suitable for the elderly.

- 5.51 As people age 'significantly', they are less likely to be using the private car. It is important that people be able to access facilities to meet their day-to-day physical needs (e.g. food, health care), as well as their social needs (company, integration within communities). Proposals for OPH not located close to existing or proposed services will be resisted, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to justify why access is not required by residents, for example a care home, or an extra care development with all necessary facilities on site.



- 5.52 The typical perception of elderly persons' accommodation is bungalows or sheltered

housing. However, this need not be the case, and such types of development are not always appropriate, e.g. from a density point of view. Whilst policy H4 sets out 'standard' types of housing units or schemes to accommodate older people, innovative housing designed for the elderly is encouraged, whether that be higher density bungalows, or more radical approaches to design. The Council will encourage proposals that foster the development of effective links and partnerships between housing, planning and social care authorities.

Market housing for older people

- 5.53 The Affordable and Specialist Housing Needs Study (ASHNS) concludes that there is a clear need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable dwellings (as well as wheelchair user dwellings) and recommends that the Council consider a policy requiring all new-build homes to meet Building Regulation part M4(2). The Study notes, however, that there will be cases where this may not be possible, and so any policy should be applied flexibly.
- 5.54 Therefore, 1, 2 and 3-bedroom properties will be required to meet Building Regulation M4(2) 'Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings' unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated as to why it would be inappropriate to meet this Standard. The requirement does not apply to larger properties (4+ bedrooms); this is to discourage 'house-sitting' of under-occupied larger properties by elderly people. However, adherence to M4(2) on larger properties, or to M4(3) on any suitable properties, will not be resisted. In seeking M4(2) compliant homes, the Council recognises that such homes could be considered as 'homes for life' and would be suitable for any occupant, regardless of whether or not they are elderly or have an age-related disability at the time of initial occupation.
- 5.55 It is not expected that the provision of OPH should have significant negative impact upon viability, given there should be high demand for accommodation suitable for older people, and the price of such accommodation should compare favourably with 'typical' market housing. If the decision is made to meet M4(2) from the outset on a new-build dwelling, the cost is not considered to be prohibitive. Estimates of this cost range from around £500 to around £1500. For conversions of buildings (i.e. where the fabric of the building is already in place), the cost may be significantly higher. As such, policy H4 has flexibility in that the requirement to meet M4(2) in 1-3 bedroom houses applies,



except where it is clearly inappropriate to apply the standard.

- 5.56 Provision of OPH has been considered through the Local Plan Viability Assessment, taking into account the extra cost associated with meeting Building Regulation M4(2). Therefore the Council expect this requirement to be met, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Care Home Provision

- 5.57 The Liverpool City Region SHELMA sets out the need and justification for Care Home spaces across the City Region. Taking account of existing and projected residential institution population, the SHELMA concludes (Table 53, p143) that there is a requirement of 39 registered care bedspaces per annum in West Lancashire. Over the proposed 38 year Local Plan period, this equates to 1,482 bedspaces. Since 2012, 279 C2 bedspaces have been completed / are under construction and there is an outline permission for a 100-bed C2 care home at Yew Tree Farm. As such, land for at least a further 1,103 C2 bedspaces is needed.
- 5.58 These bedspaces can be provided partly by the market through 'windfall' schemes, but it is not considered that such 'windfall' development alone will meet the overall need (although the above figures for completions / permissions since 2012 show that windfall delivery can be quite significant and will have delivered an average of virtually 40 bedspaces per year by 1 April 2019, not even including the care home with outline permission at Yew Tree Farm). Policy H4 (in conjunction with other housing policies) thus allocates specific sites for care homes / extra care facilities, and requires care homes to be provided as part of the residential mix on the larger Local Plan site allocations, with approximately 580 bedspaces potentially allocated (including the care home with outline permission at Yew Tree Farm). Full details of that provision will be addressed, where appropriate, through Masterplans and / or Development Briefs for the individual sites.

Affordable Housing

- 5.59 A percentage of C3 OPH units provided may be required to be affordable, in conjunction with Policy H3. In addition, as the majority of dwellings provided in traditional housing developments are to be M4(2) compliant, a high percentage of affordable units provided in large market-led schemes should also be suitable for elderly people.

Design

- 5.60 Major housing developments should be designed to take account of older persons'

housing needs, including accessibility and a 'dementia-friendly' layout. Highways, parking and servicing arrangements should be satisfactorily addressed, to enable access by ambulances, taxis etc. The form, scale and design of older persons' housing units should be appropriate for their occupants.



- 5.61 Older people should have a living environment that promotes personal safety, social engagement and activity, maximises wellbeing, and reduces the social isolation and the adverse impacts of some long term conditions. Pick up and drop off facilities should be located close to principal entrances wherever possible.
- 5.62 Developments featuring older persons housing, or adaptable housing, should be encouraged to adhere to the HAPPI⁶ principles: generous internal space standards, design to allow in natural light; dual aspect to maximise natural ventilation and light making it 'care' ready and adaptable for new technologies; shared spaces to encourage interaction and remove institutional feel; multi-purposes space and facilities; design that engages positively with the street and local community; energy efficient and well insulated; adequate storage space; and shared external areas giving priority to pedestrians.

Alternatives Considered

- 5.63 *No requirement for OPH, let the market deliver.*

This policy approach has not worked well in that few OPH units have been delivered so far under the Local Plan 2012-2027. This approach contains the greatest risks to the delivery of OPH and is unlikely to deliver significant numbers of OPH until the housing market changes. Greater policy intervention to secure the delivery of PH is more realistic

- 5.64 *Continue with the WLLP percentage approach.*

This policy approach is the most likely to deliver stand-alone care home type facilities on large sites, and / or adaptable dwellings on medium sites, but there have been difficulties in enforcing such requirements historically, largely due to viability arguments. It may be

⁶ Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) Design Principles

most appropriate to combine this approach with that of market delivery, and to more stringently enforce the percentage requirement. Nonetheless, this is considered a sustainable option.

5.65 *Provide a tighter definition of OPH.*

This approach would give developers more certainty, but would remove flexibility in delivery and could lead to missed opportunities and lack of innovation.

Policy H5: Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Student Accommodation

I. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (Use Class C4 and Sui Generis)⁷

While not all HMOs are occupied by students within the designated Article 4 area in Ormskirk and Aughton, the vast majority are student households.

When assessing proposals for conversion of a dwelling house or other building into a HMO within the Article 4 area in Ormskirk and Aughton, the Council will have regard to the proportion of existing residential properties in use as, or with permission to become, an HMO, either in the street as a whole, or within the nearest 60 residential properties.

Where proposals for conversion to an HMO would result in the percentages specified in the table below being exceeded, these proposals will not be permitted unless there are compelling reasons specific to an individual application why it would be appropriate to allow the limit to be exceeded, or further exceeded. When assessing proposals for conversion to HMOs, the Council will also have regard to any purpose built student accommodation on the same street or section of the street, and to any potential clustering of student accommodation, and the effects of this on nearby properties.

⁷ * A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is defined as a house or flat occupied by three or more people who rent a property, are not related and share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. Where between three and six unrelated people, who satisfy the criteria of an HMO, live in a property and share one or more basic amenities, the property falls within Class C4 of the Use Classes Order. However, for the purposes of Policy H5, the definition of HMO may also include any house or flat occupied by seven or more unrelated people who rent the property and share one or more basic amenities (use class Sui Generis). Where the conversion of a dwelling house to rented accommodation for seven or more people requires planning permission, then Policy H5 will apply, just as it applies to HMOs with between three and six people.

The below shows the streets in categories A and B.

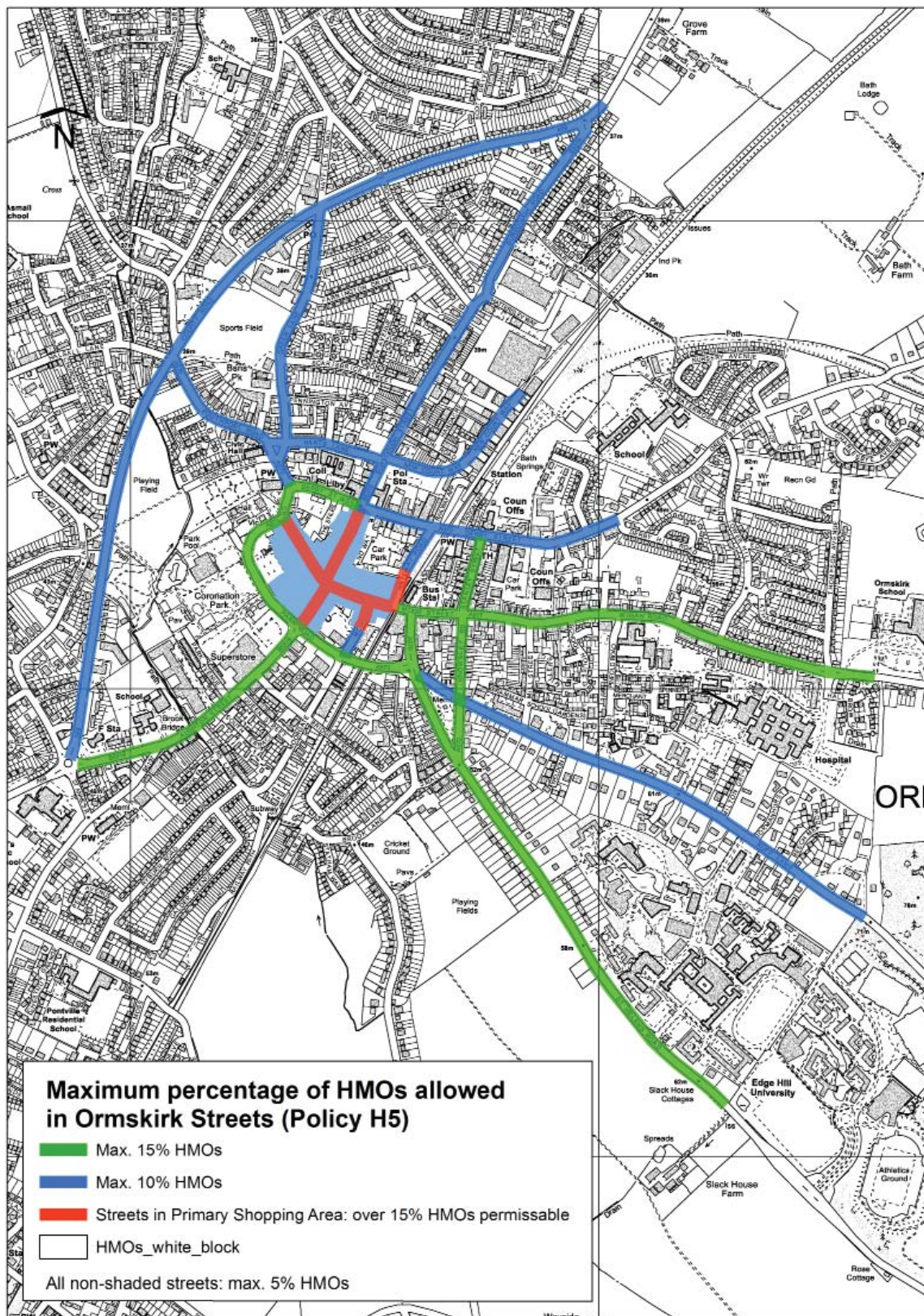
Category	Max %	Description of Street	Streets
Category A	15%	Typically A- and B- classified roads and other important routes in Ormskirk which tend to have the highest levels of traffic and are within easy walking distance from the University.	Aughton Street (section outside Primary Shopping Area (PSA)), Moor Street (section outside PSA), Park Road, Derby Street West, Knowsley Road, Stanley Street, St Helens Road, Wigan Road.
Category B	10%	Typically unclassified roads that have high levels of through traffic, and / or roads with a significant amount of non-residential uses present, within reasonable distance of the University, but usually further away than Category A roads.	Burscough Road, Burscough Street (section outside PSA), Southport Road (section east of County Road only), County Road, Derby Street, Green Lane, Hants Lane, Moorgate (section outside PSA), New Court Way, Railway Road (section outside PSA), Ruff Lane.
Category C	0%	All other streets in the Ormskirk area covered by the Article 4 Direction on HMOs.	

The figure opposite shows the streets in categories A and B.

Within the primary shopping area of Ormskirk, as defined on the Policies Map, a greater proportion than 15% of residential properties above ground floor level will be permitted to function as HMOs, subject to there being no unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of the primary shopping area, on the viability of any retail or business units on the lower floor(s) of the property in question, and on the supply of accommodation for other town centre uses (for example, first floor offices, or storage for ground floor retail units).

The Council will not permit the conversion to HMOs of any new housing built in the Ormskirk / Aughton spatial area following the adoption of this Local Plan, regardless of its location and notwithstanding the limits in the above table.

This policy is applicable in conjunction with an Article 4 Direction relating to HMOs and covering Ormskirk and Aughton. If in future years, there is evidence that HMOs are becoming an issue in settlements outside of Ormskirk and Aughton, Article 4 Directions will be implemented to cover such areas, the principles of Policy H5 will apply to such areas.



II. Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Use Class C2)

Proposals for the construction of purpose built student accommodation will be supported within the University Campus and to the south of St Helens Road, Ormskirk, in accordance with Policy SP8. Purpose built student accommodation will also be considered an acceptable use above ground floor on the Development Opportunity Sites identified in Ormskirk Town Centre, subject to compliance with policy EC5:

- a. Ormskirk Indoor Market, Moorgate;
- b. Ormskirk Bus Station;
- c. Land behind the Stiles car park;
- d. The former West Lancashire College site;
- e. Land at, and to the rear of, Ormskirk Magistrates Court.

Purpose built student accommodation will be permitted on other suitable sites within Ormskirk, subject to the following criteria being satisfied:

1. There is an accepted need for such accommodation;
2. Demand for the conversion of existing dwelling houses to HMOs will be demonstrably reduced; and
3. The proposed development and use will not have any unacceptable negative effects upon the amenity of surrounding uses, in particular residential uses.

When assessing the potential impact of purpose built student accommodation on the amenity of the surrounding areas, the Council will also have regard to the presence of any HMOs in the vicinity.

Justification

- 5.67 Edge Hill University delivers economic and social benefits to the Borough as a whole. The Council supports in principle the development of the University and the provision of sufficient and good quality bed spaces for Edge Hill students, whether on or off-campus. However, development of the University should not have an unacceptable impact, and increased student numbers should only be facilitated in future if the students can be satisfactorily accommodated without causing any unacceptable harm to the local or wider area, whether in terms of the impact of students living locally or students living

further afield who commute to and from the University.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 5.68 Within Ormskirk, residents' groups have contacted the Council over recent years to express their concerns over issues relating to uncontrolled proliferation of HMOs within certain areas of Ormskirk. Under the previous Local Plan, the most appropriate approach towards HMOs was considered to be to limit the proportion of HMOs within specific streets to a certain percentage, whilst recognising that in some cases the ideal maximum percentage has already been exceeded during the period (pre-2011) where it was not possible to control the conversion of dwelling houses to HMOs. This policy has generally worked well, and the approach is being continued in this new Local Plan, subject to some minor 'technical alterations', and the reducing of the lowest limit from 5% to 0%.
- 5.69 The change to a 0% limit results from a lessening in demand for HMO accommodation from 2017 onwards, evidenced by the increasing number of unlet rooms in HMOs. Whilst it has been considered that a 5% HMO limit in any given street would not unacceptably harm amenity for the street as a whole, even a single HMO can have a disproportionate impact on its immediate neighbours. As such, balancing supply of / demand for accommodation against its localised impact, a 0% limit for streets currently without HMOs is now considered appropriate.
- 5.70 Policy H5 does not set out specifically what constitutes 'compelling reasons' for allowing additional HMOs. Examples may be where a terraced property is sandwiched between two or more HMOs, or where there is such a high proportion of HMOs on a particular street (say, over 90%), that it would be unreasonable to expect non-students to live there anymore. However, every case is treated on its merits, and 'compelling reasons' in one case may not be 'compelling' in another.
- 5.71 The following detailed considerations apply:

When calculating percentages of HMOs:

- Only properties lying within the area covered by the Article 4 Direction are to be counted, even if the street extends outside the Article 4 area.
- Residential properties used specifically for the accommodation of older people or in a Class C2 use are excluded from calculations.
- When considering the nearest 60 properties, count properties on the continuation of the street in question, even if its name changes (e.g. Cottage Lane / Asmall Lane)
- If a house is subdivided into apartments which are rented out to pairs of students,

consider the subdivided property as an HMO in percentage calculations.

- The HMO limit must not be exceeded for the street overall, nor for the nearest 60 properties on the street.

Clustering and consideration of effect / impact of a proposed HMO:

- Where appropriate, one may take account of HMOs on other streets (e.g. backing on to a property) when considering the effect of a new HMO. Whilst the majority of the impact of an HMO will stem from the front or side of the property – people and vehicles arriving and leaving, storage of refuse bins, and noise, HMOs can impact properties behind (e.g. via noise in the rear garden, or through open rear windows).

Other Considerations

- 5.72 Within the primary shopping area of Ormskirk Town Centre, the environment is predominantly commercial rather than residential. In this area, it should be possible to accommodate a higher proportion of HMOs than 15% (taken as a proportion of residential units) without there being unacceptable effects on the amenity of town centre residents. It is important, however, to ensure that conversion of accommodation to HMOs does not result in any significant loss of space for other appropriate town centre uses, for example first floor offices, or storage for ground floor shop units, that would undermine town centre viability and vitality.
- 5.73 New housing is being proposed in and around Ormskirk and Aughton in this Local Plan and this will involve the release of currently safeguarded or Green Belt land. Some of these new sites are close to Edge Hill University. It is considered appropriate to specify that none of this new housing should subsequently be converted to HMOs, otherwise further Green Belt release may be required to meet needs.
- 5.74 This policy is applicable in conjunction with an Article 4 Direction relating to HMOs and covering Ormskirk, Aughton and Westhead. If in future years, there is evidence that HMOs are becoming an issue outside the current Article 4 area, and if the Article 4 area is revised (or if new Article 4 Directions are implemented), the principles of this policy will apply to such areas.

Purpose Built Student Accommodation

- 5.75 The provision of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) to meet identified needs is supported in general terms, but it is important that such accommodation should be sited only in suitable areas. As set out in policy EC6, the best locations for additional

PBSA are considered to be the existing University campus, newly-allocated land to the south of St Helens Road (see policy SP8), and suitable sites within Ormskirk town centre. Given the extent of the future accommodation needs of the University, and the amount of land allocated for student accommodation, it is considered that these allocations should largely or fully meet needs for the foreseeable future, so policy H5 restricts development of PBSA elsewhere, unless strict criteria are met.



Alternatives Considered

With regard to HMOs:

- 5.76 *No restraint – Allow conversion of properties to HMOs regardless of location or the proportion of properties already in use as HMOs in the surrounding area.*

The unrestrained conversion of the (often) cheapest available market housing to HMOs has knock-on effects in terms of affordable housing provision. An uncontrolled number of student properties in an area can in certain cases lead to blight, loss of property value for existing residents, and problems with parking and occasional antisocial behaviour. The Council is aware from discussions with certain residents groups of acute problems in areas where there is already a significant proportion of HMOs.

- 5.77 *Setting aside of areas for up to 100% student accommodation – this approach would restrain the conversion of properties to HMOs in most areas, whilst allowing complete streets or neighbourhoods to become HMOs, thus creating “student zones” within Ormskirk.*

Whilst this approach has been shown to work in certain University cities, it is not considered appropriate for Ormskirk, which is a smaller town, and does not appear to have residential areas that could be set aside as student areas without detriment to, or significant effect upon, the whole town. There is a danger that a “student area” approach can also lead to “ghettos” which are largely empty during summer holiday time.

With regard to the provision of purpose built student accommodation:

- 5.78 *Relax policy to allow purpose-built student accommodation away from the University*

Campus.

The effects of PBSA in residential areas could be unacceptably adverse; the need for such accommodation is limited, especially in the light of proposed new allocations, so there is no justification for this approach.

5.79 *Tighten the current policy to severely, or entirely, restrict off-campus, purpose-built student accommodation.*

Whilst local residential amenity should be preserved (or enhanced), it is also necessary not to restrict the reasonable functioning of the University, a major contributor to the local economy.

Policy H6: Gypsy and Traveller Sites

I. Traveller Site Allocations

The following sites are to be inset from the Green Belt and allocated to meet current / short term local Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs only:

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------------|
| A. | Pool Hey Caravan Park, Pool Hey Lane, Scarisbrick | 5 pitches |
| B. | Land at Sugar Stubbs Lane, Banks | 2 pitches (touring caravans only) |
| C. | Land at Aveling Drive (West), Banks | 4 pitches (touring caravans only) |
| D. | Land at Aveling Drive (East), Banks | 1 pitch (touring caravans only) |
| E. | Land at Blackacre Lane, Ormskirk | 6 pitches |

The following site is allocated for employment uses, but Travelling Showpeople accommodation for local needs will be considered acceptable on part(s) of the site, subject to compliance with other relevant policies:

- F. Land west of Tollgate Road, Burscough

Expansion or intensification in the use of sites (A) to (E) beyond the stated number of pitches or plots will not be permitted unless very special circumstances are demonstrated. The use of the sites shall be restricted to permanent (i.e. non-transit) Gypsy and Traveller

accommodation. If such a use of the site were to cease in the future, the land shall only be used for purposes deemed appropriate for a Green Belt location.

For longer term needs, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation should be sought within the following broad locations for growth:

- Banks area (Northern Parishes)
- Scarisbrick (Western Parishes)

Travelling Showpeople accommodation should be sought within the following broad locations:

- Burscough
- M58 Corridor (Skelmersdale and South Eastern Parishes)

II. Criteria for Assessment of Proposals for Traveller Accommodation

In the case of planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople accommodation on non-allocated sites, the following criteria will be used to assess such proposals:

(i) Broad Locations

Proposals for permanent or transit sites or pitches should be located in areas where need exists, as demonstrated by robust evidence.

(ii) Site-Specific Criteria

Permanent Sites

(a) Flood risk:

Proposed permanent sites for Travellers must not be located within Flood Zone 3, unless:

- I. The sites are restricted to touring caravans only; and
- II. There is a local authority-approved site evacuation plan; and
- III. It has been robustly demonstrated there are no other deliverable sites outside of Flood Zone 3 that could meet the same accommodation need.

Permanent sites for Travellers should not be located in Flood Zone 2, unless it has been robustly demonstrated that there are no other deliverable sites outside of Flood Zone 2 that could meet the same accommodation need.

(b) Other considerations:

In order to ensure that sites are fit for purpose and will provide adequate residential amenity, both to members of the travelling community and to members of the settled community, proposed permanent sites for Travellers should meet the following criteria:

- I. The site does not lie within the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated;
- II. The site, on account of its scale and / or location, would not dominate the nearest settled community in such a way that the prospect of peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local settled community would be undermined;
- III. The site is sufficiently far from any refuse site, industrial process, high voltage electricity infrastructure, other hazardous place, or any other process, land use or environmental issue (e.g. flyover, motorway), for there to be no unacceptable impact on the health, safety or general well-being of the residents of the site;
- IV. The site is not subject to any physical constraints or other environmental issues that
- V. cannot be mitigated to an acceptable level, and that would impact on the health, safety or general well-being of the residents of the site, or on non-residents;
- VI. The site is accessible by a public highway that can accommodate typical Traveller-related vehicles without compromising highway safety;
- VII. The site is not within, adjacent to, or close to (such that it would adversely affect) any area of land subject to a nature conservation designation;
- VIII. The site is not within, adjacent to, or close to (such that it would adversely affect) any area of land subject to an historic environment or historic landscape designation;
- IX. The site has mains water, drainage and electricity, or else these services could readily be provided and satisfactory drainage achieved; and services;
- X. The use of this site as a Traveller site would not place undue pressure on local infrastructure and services;
- XI. The site is within 1.5 kilometres (or 20 minutes' walk) of a bus route or other public transport facility, and / or it is possible to access from the site by means other than private motor vehicle the following facilities / services:
 - an appropriate health facility;
 - education facilities, in particular a primary school;

- employment opportunities;
- shops;
- other necessary services;

XII. It is possible to achieve visual and acoustic privacy on the site without any unacceptable visual impact on the site's surroundings;

XIII. The site can accommodate between 3 and 15 pitches.

Transit Sites

In the case of transit sites, these should meet the above criteria and, in addition, should be readily accessible to the M58, or to the strategic highway network.

Justification

5.82 The full detailed justification for this policy is set out in the Traveller Sites Technical Paper, which forms part of the evidence base for this Local Plan.

The local planning authority is required by national policy:

- To identify needs for Traveller accommodation;
- To identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of sites against their locally set targets, and
- To identify a supply of specific, developable sites, or broad locations for growth, for years 6 to 10 of the Local Plan and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the Plan.

Traveller Accommodation Needs

5.83 The latest evidence on Traveller accommodation needs is set out in the West Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), December 2017. The main drivers of need are newly forming families, and families residing on unauthorised sites. The needs for 2017-2037, over and above any sites with extant planning consent, are as set out in Table H6.1:

Table H6.1 West Lancashire Traveller Accommodation Needs 2017-2037

Period	Gypsy and Traveller Pitches	Travelling Showpeople Plots
2017-2022	15 (10)	4
2022-2027	2 (2)	0
2027-2032	2 (2)	1
2032-2037	2 (2)	0
Total 2017-2037	21 (16)	5

Source: West Lancashire GTAA, December 2017

(Figures in brackets are needs excluding households who do not travel for work.)

- 5.84 In relation to transit provision, the GTAA recommends that negotiated stopping places be explored for small scale transit encampments.
- 5.85 The above needs could change in future. If there is evidence that the above needs have changed to any material extent, this will be dealt with through a review of the Local Plan. It is clear from the table above, and from the size of the proposed site allocations, that not enough deliverable sites (/pitches) have been allocated in this Local Plan to provide 5 years' worth of deliverable sites against locally set targets. Sites (A) to (D) above provide a total of 18 pitches, or 12 pitches over and above the 6 current authorised pitches in West Lancashire. The reasons for the shortfall in deliverable sites are primarily on account of land availability, and are set out in full in the Traveller Sites Technical Paper.

Site allocations for Gypsies and Travellers

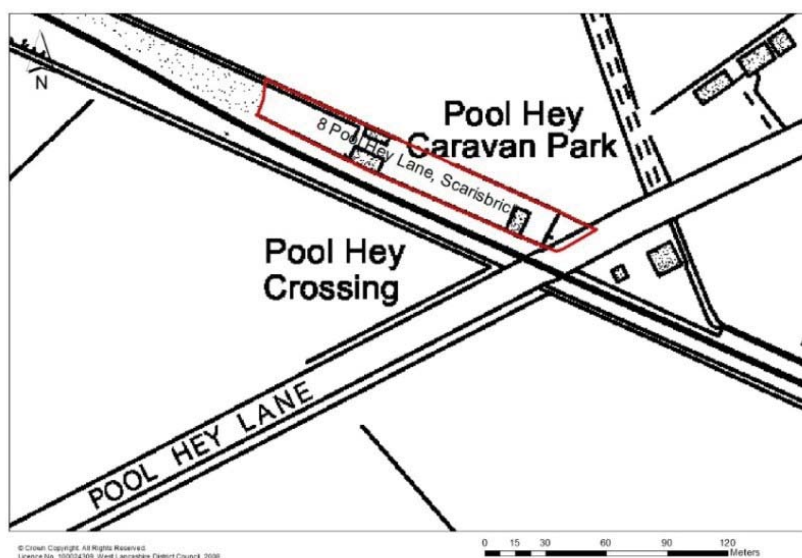
- 5.86 PPTS (Policy E, paragraph 17) allows, in exceptional circumstances, for limited alterations to be made to Green Belt boundaries (for example to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a Traveller site. Such alterations should be made through the plan-making process and should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a Traveller site only.
- 5.87 It is considered, in the case of the six sites below, that exceptional circumstances do indeed exist that justify the release of the land from the Green Belt for the following reasons:
- There is an unmet local need for Traveller accommodation;
 - There are no deliverable sites for Traveller accommodation in non-Green Belt areas, and no other deliverable sites in the Green Belt for Traveller accommodation;
 - Four of the sites are owned by, and have been occupied by, Travellers for between

8 and 25 years;

- The Council has no record of issues arising as a result of the sites' occupation by Travellers⁸.

5.88 The detailed justification for the selection of the sites below as the preferred options for meeting West Lancashire's Traveller accommodation needs is set out in the Traveller Sites Technical Paper. Brief comments on each of the sites are provided below.

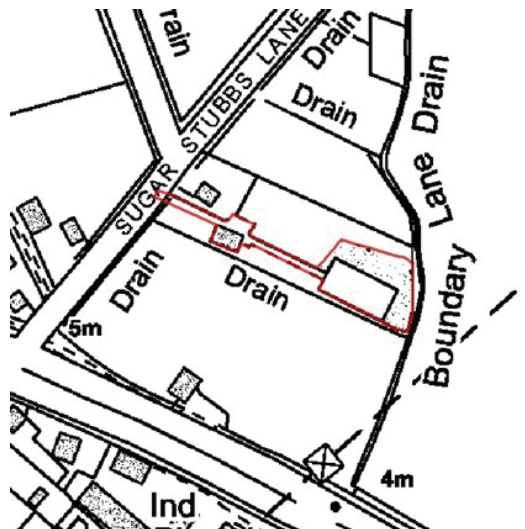
A. Pool Hey Caravan Park, Pool Hey Lane, Scarisbrick



5.89 This is a longstanding (25 years) site that received partial consent for a park home on appeal in 2006, and consent for 5 Traveller pitches in 2017, tied to a particular family. Given the accommodation needs set out in Table H6.1 above are over and above sites with consent, Site A does not contribute towards meeting the needs in Table H6.1. The site is allocated for 5 pitches.

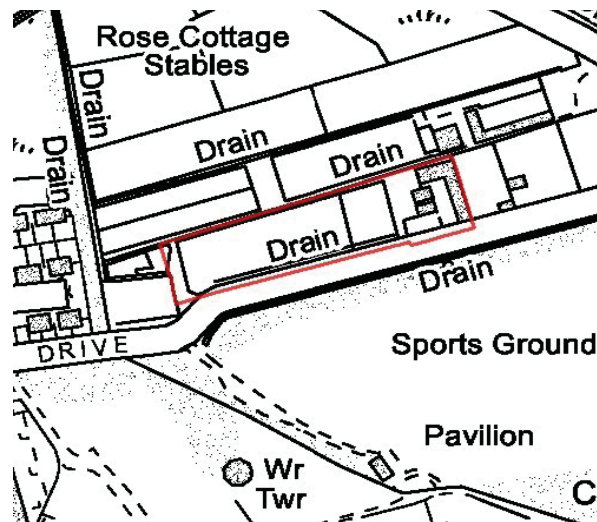
⁸ For example, Network Rail do not object to the allocation of Site A, provided there is no expansion and / or intensification of the site; the police have not expressed any concern about the occupants of sites A-D.

B. Land at Sugar Stubbs Lane, Banks



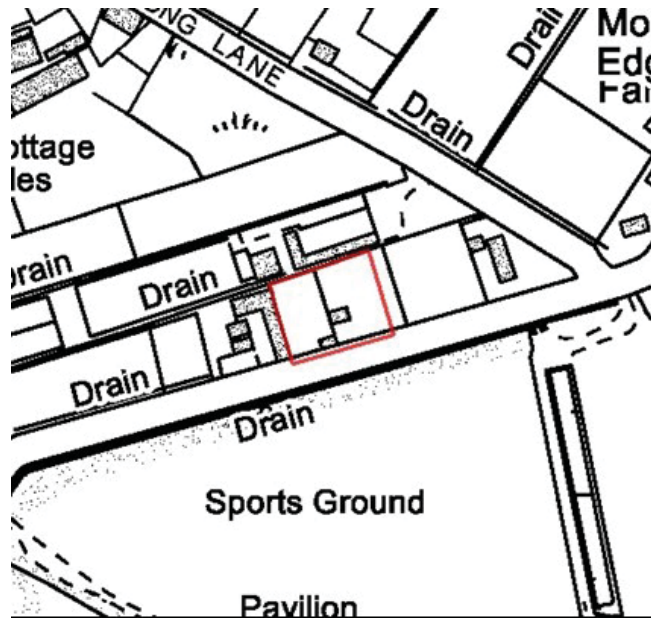
- 5.90 This is a longstanding site that received consent for one static caravan in 1993, but has since accommodated more caravans on site. The land was redesignated as Flood Zone 3 in 2015/16. The 1993 permission remains extant. The remainder of the site is allocated for 2 pitches, for touring caravans only, and must be subject to a site evacuation plan, approved by the local authority and any other relevant body.

C. Land at Aveling Drive (West), Banks



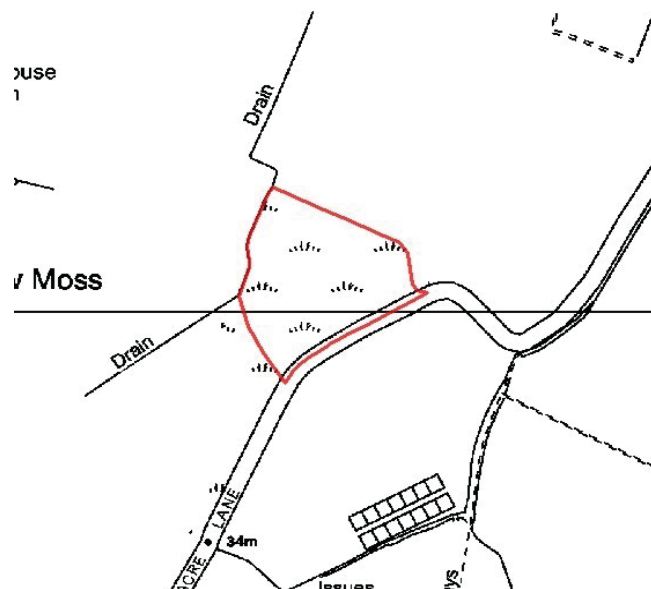
- 5.91 This site lies within Flood Zone 3, and is allocated for 4 pitches, for touring caravans only. The site requires an approved site evacuation plan.

D. Land at Aveling Drive (East), Banks



5.92 This site lies within Flood Zone 3, and is allocated for 1 pitch, for touring caravans only. The site requires an approved site evacuation plan.

E. Land at Blackacre Lane, Ormskirk



5.93 This site is owned by Travellers is currently used for grazing horses. The site could accommodate 6 pitches.

Sites in Flood Zone 3

- 5.94 Sites B – D lie in Flood Zone 3, upon which national policy does not permit ‘highly vulnerable development’ such as static residential caravans. ‘More vulnerable development’ such as holiday or short-let caravans is permissible, subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan. Whilst occupation by Travellers is not strictly ‘holiday’ or ‘short let’ use, it is arguable that occupation by Travellers who regularly move from the site is not dissimilar to a holiday-type use, and that Traveller caravans may be physically present on sites for fewer days per year than caravans in nearby ‘holiday sites’ (south of Banks) also situated in Flood Zone 3. Moreover, as the Traveller Sites Technical Paper demonstrates, there are no other deliverable sites in the area to meet the accommodation needs of the Banks Traveller families, so the proposed site allocations are considered the best option.

Travelling Showpeople accommodation

- 5.95 The 9 hectare site shown below is allocated for employment uses under policy EC2. However, Travelling Showpeople accommodation for local needs will be considered acceptable on part(s) of the site, subject to compliance with other relevant policies. Storage and maintenance of fairground equipment is not entirely dissimilar to certain business / industrial uses, and whilst such sites are not normally ideal for residential uses, Travelling Showpeople have indicated they would prefer to reside in such a location, close to their equipment. (The alternative, to store and maintain equipment in primarily residential areas, or in open countryside, is not considered preferable.) Furthermore, a business park location means that road access to the site will be suitable for the large vehicles associated with Travelling Showpeople.

- F. Land west of Ringtail Road, Burscough



Justification for the criteriaBroad Locations

- 5.96 Policy H6 is intended to direct Traveller development to areas where there is a need for such accommodation, as demonstrated by robust evidence. As a first recourse, the Council will rely on the findings of the most up-to-date Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) covering West Lancashire. Any planning application that departs from the findings of the most up-to-date GTAA will require to be backed up by robust evidence justifying this departure, either an unequivocal demonstration of need in a different area, or a clear demonstration that no sites are realistically available within the GTAA-identified areas of Traveller need.
- 5.97 In the light of the findings of the 2017 West Lancashire GTAA:
- Permanent sites should be located in, or as close as reasonably possible to, the settlements of Skelmersdale, Scarisbrick or Banks;
 - Land for Travelling Showpeople should be located within the Burscough area, or on the M58 corridor (Skelmersdale and South Eastern Parishes).

Criteria

- 5.98 The criteria in Policy H6 above are based on national policy, as set out in the NPPF, and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS; August 2015)⁹ documents. Regard has been had to the advice contained in the document Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites Good Practice Guide (DCLG, May 2008), but, as this document has been revoked, less weight is attributed to criteria based solely on the Good Practice Guide.
- 5.99 Policy H6 is intended to facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of Travellers whilst respecting the interests of the settled community. The policy aims to ensure that if a site is granted permission for Traveller development, its development maintains a suitable quality of life, both for residents of the site in question, and, equally, for those living or working in the vicinity of the site. Sites should have reasonable access to facilities and services, and should not cause an adverse impact on neighbouring residents or land uses.
- 5.100 The criteria set out in Policy H6 are similar to the criteria that have been used in the assessment of potential Traveller sites, as set out in the Traveller Sites Technical Paper. The Technical Paper provides more specific detail as to the source of each site

⁹ PPTS requires inter alia that a criteria based policy should be set out within Local Plans.

assessment criterion.

- 5.101 With regard to the requirement in Policy H6 that sites lie outside Flood Zone 3, caravans intended for permanent residential use are defined as ‘highly vulnerable’ development in Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification (paragraph 66 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change section) of PPG. Table 3: Flood Risk Vulnerability and Flood Zone ‘Compatibility’ (paragraph 67) states that ‘highly vulnerable’ development should not be permitted on sites within Flood Zone 3. With regard to criterion (vi), if a site lies within Flood Zone 2, the site must be demonstrated to meet the Exception Test. The allocation of caravans intended for non-permanent residential use, which are defined as ‘more vulnerable’ in the PPG (Table 2, Para 66), in Flood Zone 2 are subject a specific warning and evacuation plan. (Whilst sites B-D above are in Flood Zone 3, there are exceptional circumstances justifying this proposed allocation, as set out in the Traveller Sites Technical Paper.)
- 5.102 In relation to criterion (i), Traveller site development is by definition inappropriate in the Green Belt, and PPTS 2015 (paragraph 16) requires that very special circumstances be demonstrated in order for Traveller sites in the Green Belt to be judged acceptable. It also advises that, subject to the best interests of the child, personal circumstances and unmet need for Traveller accommodation are unlikely to establish very special circumstances.
- 5.103 Criteria (ii), (vi), (vii), (ix) and (xi) seek to ensure that Traveller sites integrate as far as is reasonably possible with the local settled community, and with the surrounding natural and built environment. National policy, as set out in the NPPF, is also applicable. For example, with regard to heritage assets, NPPF paragraphs 195 and 196 are relevant, the primary consideration being whether or not there would be ‘substantial harm’ as a result of the proposed development. With regard to nature conservation designations, the level of protection afforded to different sites is influenced by the sites’ particular designations.
- 5.104 Criteria (ii), (iii), (iv) and (ix) are intended to protect the occupants of sites from unacceptable adverse living conditions, and to protect those living near to sites from possible adverse impacts of Traveller site development. These criteria do not necessarily rule out development if a site is subject to the particular issues specified in the criteria. For example, if existing residential development or existing authorised Traveller development is located equally close to the uses listed in criterion (iii), this will be taken into account when assessing proposals for new Traveller sites in the locality. It is necessary also to take into account the scope for mitigation measures, and whether the adverse impact from any uses set out in the criteria can be minimised to an acceptable level.

- 5.105 Ensuring adequate highways access to Traveller sites is important (criterion (v)). Whilst on a day-to-day basis, the sites are likely to be used by cars, vans and small lorries, there are also likely to be regular movements of touring caravans, and occasional movements of larger static caravans. Travelling Showpeople sites are likely to be regularly accessed by articulated lorries and / or heavy goods vehicles carrying fairground rides. The 2008 Good Practice Guide advised that access onto Traveller sites should be readily achievable by regular or potential visitors to the site, including the emergency services. Similarly, easy movement through, or manoeuvres within, the site should be possible for typical Traveller vehicles, and the safety of [pedestrian] site occupants, including children, is an important consideration. Whilst the Guide has been cancelled, its advice with regard to highways access is considered to remain relevant. Access to Traveller sites should be achievable in such a way that highway safety and the free flow of traffic are not compromised. In the event of any planning application, the highway authority would be consulted as a matter of course.
- 5.106 In terms of criterion (x), whilst it is recognised that Travellers, by definition, are most likely to have ready access to motor vehicles, it is preferable, in terms of sustainable development, that Travellers also have the opportunity to access local services by sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling, and public transport. It is generally recognised, however, that most established (and legal) Traveller sites tend to be situated a short distance outside the nearest settlement, allowing for appropriate separation between the settled and travelling community. As such, the accessibility distances set out in policy H6 (1.5km) are greater than those usually applied for 'bricks and mortar' residential development. When considering accessibility by walking (i.e. 20 minutes walking distance), the route taken on foot can differ from the highway-based route, for example using more direct public footpaths.
- 5.107 With regard to the screening of sites (criterion (xi)), careful attention should be paid to the nature of screening and how it relates to the character of the surrounding area. Close board and other fencing, or evergreen landscape planting may be appropriate in some areas, but not in others. Sites on elevated or sloping ground are likely to be more difficult to screen appropriately. For sites adjacent to developed areas, an acceptable balance needs to be struck taking into account the privacy of occupants and neighbours, the visual impact of screening (if it needs to be greater in height than on a more isolated site), and the general urban design principle of natural surveillance.
- 5.108 The Good Practice Guide stated that sites should consist of a maximum of 15 pitches unless there is clear evidence that a larger site is preferred by the Gypsy and Traveller Community. At the lower end of the scale, having a minimum site threshold of 3 pitches

(criterion (xii)) should result in fewer sites around the Borough, lessening the overall impact of providing for Traveller accommodation needs. Having a maximum site size of 15 pitches should reduce the possibility of individual sites dominating the nearest settled community.

- 5.109 Traveller sites in one local authority area can potentially impact neighbouring local authority areas (for example through use of services). Any possible cross-boundary effects should be taken into account when assessing proposals for Traveller accommodation, in particular on sites close to the West Lancashire boundary. not been possible to find suitable alternative sites, and in the overall balance, the sites proposed for allocation above are considered the most suitable.

Alternatives Considered

5.110 Different sites (e.g. avoiding Flood Zone 3)

As set out in the Technical Paper, and in the policy justification above, it has simply not been possible to find suitable alternative sites, and in the overall balance, the sites proposed for allocation above are considered the most suitable.

5.111 Do not allocate specific sites, but rely solely on a criteria-based policy

This approach was judged unsound at the 2013 West Lancashire Local Plan Examination. The local authority is required to allocate specific deliverable sites. Criteria can be used to assess speculative, or 'windfall' planning applications, but these must be in addition to site allocations.

5.112 Different criteria

The justification for the proposed criteria of policy H6 is set out in detail above. The chosen criteria are considered the best in the circumstances, and there is not considered to be any reason to change them.

Policy H7: Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural / Horticultural Workers

The reuse of existing buildings within village settlements and the Green Belt for accommodation for temporary agricultural and / or horticultural workers will be permitted provided that it complies with other policy in this Local Plan and national Green Belt policy. The provision of non-permanent accommodation, appropriate to both the identified need and the location, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- I. there is a requirement to provide accommodation to satisfy a clearly identified need for temporary agricultural / horticultural workers;
- II. there are no existing buildings in the locality which are suitable, or capable of being made suitable, for accommodating temporary workers;
- III. the site chosen is the most suitable in the locality, taking into account other policies in this Local Plan;
- IV. any impact on visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety, landscape, wildlife and countryside character is minimised to an acceptable level; and
- V. proposals include measures to protect the character of the local area, including retention of existing trees and hedges, implementation of landscape planting, improvement of any damaged or derelict land involved and improvement of boundary treatments.

In all cases of non-permanent accommodation, the permission will be subject to a time-limiting condition of five years from the date of the accommodation being sited on the site or the date of the planning permission, whichever is the earlier, unless the evidence of need demonstrates that a shorter time-limited condition is warranted.

Justification

- 5.113 For many years, seasonal agricultural workers, including workers from overseas, have been employed on farms in West Lancashire. Whilst the influx of migrant agricultural / horticultural workers has declined in recent years, there remains a requirement for a policy to address accommodation for these workers, should a need emerge over the course of the Plan period.
- 5.114 Whereas in the past, the caravans housing these workers may have been placed within and / or between the farm buildings, new sites can often be highly visible and some are near to residential properties. Permanent buildings or caravans kept on site for a number of months can reduce the open character of the Green Belt and / or Protected Land, and

can have an adverse impact on the landscape and the amenity of local residents. Policy H7 is thus required, both to assist in supporting a healthy rural economy, and to protect the natural environment and rural character of the Borough from inappropriate agricultural / horticultural workers' accommodation developments.



5.115 National policy requires that local plan policies address the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The policy context for, and the needs of, temporary agricultural / horticultural workers has barely changed over the past 20 years. Consequently, policy H7 is essentially the same as Policy RS5 in the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (and its predecessor, policy DE8 of the West Lancashire Replacement Local Plan) and the same justification remains.

5.116 In past years agricultural and horticultural employers have found it increasingly difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of temporary workers, especially at periods of peak activity, owing to a lack of suitable and affordable accommodation in the rural areas. The farmers have advised that this constrains their ability to meet domestic demand and some export markets, so opening up the UK to imports.

5.117 The majority of seasonal and casual workers have come from one or more of the following:

- Workers recruited direct by the farmers;
- Workers supplied by gang-masters;
- Students seeking part-time or vacation work;
- The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (now terminated); and the working holiday arrangements.

5.118 Although some temporary accommodation will not require planning permission, in most cases permission will be required. Operators should always check with the Council's planning department, but planning permission is usually required in the following cases:

- If the workers will be housed for longer than a normal planting, growing, or picking season;
- If caravans and other related buildings (e.g. canteens and toilets) are to be kept on site permanently;
- If a change of use to an existing building is involved; or
- If hardstandings and permanent services (e.g. water supply or septic tank) need to be constructed.

5.119 The Council has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance on Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural Workers. Whilst this SPG refers to an older policy, its fundamental principles remain relevant to the implementation of this policy, and may be a useful guide in relation to preparing or evaluating specific proposals for temporary accommodation.

Alternatives Considered

5.120 Have no policy on temporary workers

As stated above, it is considered important to have a policy to guide proposals for accommodation, should the need arise over the plan period, in order to facilitate the rural economy but at the same time to protect the natural environment and rural character of the Borough from inappropriate developments.

5.121 Have a more relaxed policy

It is considered the policy is sufficiently flexible as it stands. To relax it further would be to change the balance between supporting the rural economy and protecting the environment and character of the rural areas.

Policy H8: Viability Appraisals on Residential Developments

On sites allocated under Policy H2, development proposals will be expected to meet all policy requirements and developer contributions set out in the Local Plan and associated SPDs, and viability appraisals will, as a general rule, not be accepted at application stage. By exception, if viability circumstances in relation to a given allocation have changed substantially since the adoption of the Local Plan a viability appraisal will be considered as part of the application process if that significant change in circumstances can be evidenced. However, land value will not be accepted as a justification for deviation from policy requirements.

For other, windfall residential developments, a viability appraisal will be considered as part of the application process where it can be evidenced that meeting the policy requirements in this Local Plan and other development contributions would make development unviable. Such evidence must include a land value which takes account of the policy requirements of this Local Plan, any abnormal constraints to development on the site and recent land transactions of comparable sites in West Lancashire.

In the above circumstances only a viability assessment may be submitted to accompany a planning application so that the Council can have regard to evidence submitted by the applicant and consider whether any flexibility in planning policy requirements / obligations is justified. This evidence should include the option agreement or conditional contract between the applicant and the landowner.

This evidence must also refer back to the Local Plan Viability Assessment prepared by the Council that informed the Local Plan Review and clearly demonstrate what has changed since this assessment was undertaken to now make a policy compliant development unviable on that site.

In most circumstances the Council will seek advice from specialist consultants to review the viability assessment and the full cost of that will be borne by the applicant.

All viability assessments must be prepared in line with PPG for Viability or any subsequent related guidance, including the standardised inputs to viability assessments required in that guidance and the residual land valuation methodology. In this approach local plan requirements are included alongside other development costs, which are deducted from the gross development value to determine the residual value that is available to pay for land. The assessment should include the following information:

- I. Benchmark land value. The preferred methodology is 'existing use value plus a premium.' The value should reflect all planning compliant planning obligations and any site specific costs including any abnormal costs and site specific fees. (Where recent market transactions are used to inform the assessment of benchmark land value, there should be evidence that these transactions were based on a policy compliant development in line with this Local Plan)
- II. Estimated development / build costs supported by either up to date Building Construction Information Service (BCIS) costs, tender costs or full QS schedule to include a specified contingency, any preliminary costs, and contract related fees.
- III. Abnormal costs including those associated with treatment for contaminated sites, or listed buildings, or costs associated with brownfield, phased or complex sites. These abnormal costs must be taken into account when defining benchmark land value.
- IV. Purchase process (e.g. private treaty, open market bid, auction, etc.) and purchase costs including legal and agents fees.
- V. Professional fees presented under respective headings.
- VI. Community Infrastructure Levy/S106 costs.
- VII. Estimated residential sales or rental values with supporting evidence including schedule of unit floor areas, room types, number of bedrooms / bedspaces and principal features (i.e. balcony, views, facilities, car parking etc.) and / or estimated commercial yields with supporting evidence including gross / net internal floors area and any principal features.
- VIII. Estimated profit/developers target returns.
- IX. Value/cost of any affordable/specialist housing provision and where relevant calculations of any commuted sum.
- X. Executive summary – a clear statement that summarises the key findings of the assessment.

Gross development value may be total sales and/or capitalised net rental income from developments. Details of any grants or other external sources of funding should be factored in.

The gross development value should be calculated based on market evidence from either the actual site (if available) or using comparable's from existing developments in similar locations or discussions with future occupiers, including rents and lease arrangements. An adjustment can be made to ensure an appropriate comparison to take into account variations in use, form, scale, location rents and yields, having regard to outliers but this must be clearly explained. Transactions or market data should be up to date (from at least within the last six months as far as possible), within an appropriate distance from the site, and relate to new build properties (or conversions where relevant).

Valuations using up to date standard viability models such as: the Homes England (HE) Development Appraisal tool and the development software ARGUS Developer, will be acceptable provided that all required information is set out and is supported by an appropriate cash flow analysis. A live version of the appraisal should be provided. This information should be provided to the Local Authority in its entirety.

Applicants should be aware that the Viability Assessment will be made publically available in the same manner as all other documents that form part of the planning application submission.

All viability evidence must be robustly justified and appraisal assumptions should be benchmarked against publicly available data sources.

Justification

- 5.122 The NPPF says that viability assessments at the decision making stage should not be necessary. Paragraph 57 of the NPPF states *"Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage."*
- 5.123 In line with PPG a comprehensive Local Plan Viability Assessment (LPVA) is being undertaken to assess whether proposed site allocations and policies within the Local Plan Review are viable. This assessment will be sensitive to geographical differences in land and property values. It is anticipated that the results of this assessment will demonstrate that the cumulative impact of the Local Plan policies does not make the Local Plan unviable.

5.124 As such Viability Assessments in relation to allocated sites at application stage will only be considered where circumstances have fundamentally and substantially changed since the LPVA was undertaken or, alternatively, if the site in question is a “windfall” site and therefore was not included within the original LPVA and does not match one of the generic development assessments used in the study.



5.125 In those instances where the Council agrees that a site-specific viability appraisal should be submitted with an application, in order to assess whether a case for not meeting the policy requirements is justified and reasonable and in line with the national planning requirements, the Council will require applicants to submit a full, un-redacted viability assessment at the time of submission of the planning application. This will be made public.

5.126 PPG, insofar as it relates to viability, advises that any viability assessment should follow the government’s recommended approach to defining key inputs and assessing key factors as set out in PPG and be proportionate, simple, transparent and publicly available. It also advises that where a viability assessment accompanies a planning application the price paid for land is not relevant justification for failing to accord with relevant policies in the plan.

5.127 The government advocates the Existing Use Value Plus (EUV+) approach to determining benchmark land value. This means that land value equates to the existing use value plus a premium for the landowners to incentivise the release of the land for development. To determine the premium, PPG encourages comparable analysis of similar recently transacted sites that have been granted planning permission in accordance with the relevant policies. The emphasis here should be on the ‘similar’ sites, i.e. sites where all aspects of the development, including policy requirements, are similar.

5.128 PPG also states that “*The cost of complying with policy requirements should be accounted for in the benchmark land value*”.

5.129 The PPG is clear that “in all cases, benchmark land value should:

- *Fully reflect the total cost of all relevant policy requirements including planning obligations and, where applicable, any CIL charge;*
- *Fully reflect the total cost; site-specific infrastructure costs; and professional site fees;*
- *Allow for a premium to landowners (including equity resulting from those building their own homes; and*
- *Be informed by comparable market evidence of current uses, costs and values wherever possible. Where recent market transactions are used to inform assessment of benchmark land value there should be evidence that these transactions were based on policy compliant development. This is so that previous prices based on non-policy compliant developments are not used to inflate values over time.”*

Alternatives Considered

- 5.130 *Making all applications accord with policy requirements and relying entirely on the Local Plan Viability Assessment to assess the viability of applications.*

Although the Local Plan Viability Assessment is a robust assessment of the Local Plan it is important that the Council remains sufficiently flexible to prevent development coming forward when circumstances change from when the LPVA was undertaken.

- 5.131 *Having a less prescriptive policy and instead relying upon advice within the NPPF and PPG for Viability.*

National guidance in relation to the requirements for viability assessments is quite prescriptive, however, this guidance would not clearly demonstrate when a viability assessment is required or refer to the specific policy areas where we will accept a viability assessment to be submitted alongside a planning application.

Chapter 6: Infrastructure and Services Policies

Policy IF1: Strategic Transport Infrastructure

I. Location, Design and Management of New Development

Development will be permitted where it has been demonstrated that:

- a. it would provide safe and adequate pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to, from and within the development and would not materially add to highway safety concerns or reduce efficiency of the network;
- b. it would not sever or remove existing transport infrastructure, particularly that relating to walking, cycling and public transport unless an alternative link of at least equal function and quality would be provided;
- c. where it would have an adverse impact on the existing highway network, appropriate mitigation would be provided including contributing towards on or off site infrastructure; and
- d. relevant criteria of Policy SD1 (Designing Sustainable Layouts) are met.

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required for all development proposals that will generate a significant level of movements.

II. Transport Infrastructure

The Council will support the delivery of, and not allow development which could prejudice the delivery of, the following schemes:

- a. a new rail station serving Skelmersdale, including new track and electrification of existing track as appropriate;
- b. a new relocated or renovated bus station for Skelmersdale town centre;
- c. electrification of the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough;
- d. an appropriate rail link made between the Ormskirk-Preston line and Southport-Wigan line;
- e. implementation of measures in Ormskirk to improve the highway network, particularly in and around the town centre;

- f. the redevelopment of Ormskirk bus station, including providing improved linkages with Ormskirk railway station;
- g. any sustainable travel improvements associated with access to the Edge Hill University campus on St Helens Road, Ormskirk;
- h. any potential park and ride schemes associated with public transport connections;
- i. any proposals for improved cycle and footpath routes in the Council's Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy, including the West Lancashire Wheel and the provision of 4 linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, Tarleton and Hesketh Bank and along the former railway line at Banks;
- j. on and off site highway infrastructure required in connection with planned new garden village developments to the west and south-west of Skelmersdale and new development to the south-east of Ormskirk and Aughton;
- k. the proposed Simonswood bypass;
- l. the proposed Green Lane Link Road in Tarleton; and

Major transport schemes listed above, including new rail infrastructure, will have regard to biodiversity and must provide appropriate mitigation measures as recommended in Policy GI3.

Decisions relating to developments adjacent to, or affecting, rail lines (including those resulting in a material increase or change of character of the traffic using a rail crossing) will have regard to the views of Network Rail.

III. Parking Standards

Proposals for residential development will be required to meet the following standards for car parking provision and communal cycling and disabled parking provision for visitors:

Type of Development	Number of Parking Spaces (per dwelling)	Cycle Parking Provision	Disabled Parking Provision
Dwellings with 1 bedroom	1	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings

Dwellings with 2-3 bedrooms	2	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings
Dwellings with 4+ bedrooms	3	1 communal space per 5 dwellings	1 space per 10 dwellings

**in developments with communal parking only*

For apartment developments a minimum of 1 cycle parking space per 2 dwellings should be provided in a secure, covered location for use by residents.

Parking standards for non-residential developments are set out within Appendix B.

Proposals for provision above or below the recommended parking standards should be supported by evidence detailing the local circumstances that justify a deviation from the policy. These local circumstances will include:

- a. the location of the development – urban / rural, within walking or easy cycling distance of a range of services and facilities;
- b. the proposed use;
- c. levels of local parking provision, and any local parking congestion issues;
- d. the distance to public transport facilities, and the quality (frequency / reliability / connection to main routes or interchanges) of the public transport provision in question;
- e. the quality of provision for cyclists: cycle parking, dedicated cycling facilities, access points to site, quality of design and provision;
- f. the quality of provision for pedestrians; and
- g. evidence of local parking congestion.

Consideration will be given to allowing proposed developments to share car parking spaces where these joint developments have communal car parks and where it can be demonstrated that the different uses have peaks of usage that do not coincide.

4) Electric Vehicle Recharging Points and Reducing Transport Emissions

Electric Vehicle Recharging (EVR) points will be required for all types of new developments that require parking provision. Where a Transport Assessment, a Transport Statement or a Travel Plan is required (as advised in the NPPF), a Low Emission Strategy statement should be integrated within this work, explaining actions for carbon reductions and reductions in toxic air pollutant emissions.

The minimum provision of parking bays and charging points for electric vehicles in new developments will be as follows:

All dwelling houses with at least one off-street parking space or garage space integral to the curtilage of the property:	One charging point per house.
All residential properties served by communal parking areas for the use of those properties only:	At least one or 10% (whichever is greater) of parking spaces must be marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with an adequate charging infrastructure and cabling for each marked bay
All other development:	At least one or 10% (whichever is greater) of parking spaces must be marked out for use by electric vehicles only, together with an adequate charging infrastructure and cabling for each marked bay

Justification

- 6.1 Policy IF1 supports the preferred development strategy identified by Policies SP1 and SP2 by seeking to ensure that new developments are well located in relation to existing transport infrastructure whilst delivering new infrastructure where and when required, ensuring safety, improving sustainable forms of transport to reduce carbon emissions and providing mitigation as appropriate. Principle transport objectives include to:
- manage the environmental impact of transport through suitable mitigation and design, including the use of Manual for Streets principles;
 - reduce transport emissions by encouraging greater usage of sustainable modes of transport;
 - reduce congestion in the Borough's key service centres, particularly Burscough and Ormskirk;
 - improve community health and well-being by providing for alternative means of transport such as walking and cycling and associated infrastructure.
 - prepare and actively promote travel plans for all new developments in accordance

with DfT guidance;

- improve public transport and support and implement innovative rural transport initiatives where appropriate; and
- support the shift towards new technologies and fuels by promoting low carbon travel choices and encouraging the development of ultra-low carbon / electric vehicles and associated infrastructure.

- 6.2 The Council will work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to achieve these objectives.

Transport Infrastructure

- 6.3 There are a wide range of transport schemes to be delivered during the Plan period which have been derived from evidence that includes the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Master Plan, the Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2011-21, West Lancashire Route Management Strategy, West Lancashire Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy and the Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy.

- 6.4 Skelmersdale and surrounds is identified as the main location for new development and is a regeneration priority area. The town is the second largest in the North West after Leigh to have no direct access to a railway station. The Council is continuing to work with Lancashire County Council and Merseytravel to investigate the delivery of a new rail station and rail link to Skelmersdale off the Kirkby-Wigan line, with the current preferred station location adjoining the town centre at the location of the former Glenburn and West Bank High Schools. This would give direct access to Liverpool, Wigan and Manchester, allow interchange with buses and provide access to jobs, education and training as well as higher order retail and cultural facilities.

- 6.5 Although Burscough has two rail stations, one on each of the Southport to Wigan and Ormskirk to Preston lines, connectivity between these two routes is poor. There is an aspiration to reinstate the Burscough Curves and to electrify the line from Ormskirk to



allow connectivity between lines and improve accessibility of Burscough to Liverpool and Ormskirk to Southport and Wigan, hence the safeguarding of land on the Policies Map. Burscough currently experiences congestion along the A59 through the town centre which is planned to be addressed by traffic calming.

- 6.6 The road network in Ormskirk suffers from major problems of congestion along the A59 and A570, particularly around the town centre with adverse impacts upon air quality and safety. Moor Street is identified as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) which indicates that it is currently identified as being at risk of exceeding an air quality objective. The Council has been working with Lancashire County Council to identify improvements to circulation which could reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability. The town's bus station will be redeveloped and the link with Ormskirk rail station improved to encourage greater usage and help reduced congestion.
- 6.7 North-south highway links in the Borough are generally better developed than east-west ones which rely upon the A5209 towards junction 27 of the M6 and the A565/ A59 towards Preston. East-west network resilience therefore requires further investigation.

- 6.8 The West Lancashire Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy seeks to facilitate delivery of a comprehensive cycle network across the Borough including new and improved links. This will involve the Borough and County Councils and accessing a number of funding sources including developer contributions. A key element of the Strategy involves the



delivery of a 'West Lancashire Wheel' which would be a connected on and off road route between Ormskirk, Burscough, Parbold and Skelmersdale. This includes the delivery of linear parks along the disused railway line linking Ormskirk and Skelmersdale and between Ormskirk and Burscough. Two further linear parks are planned along the banks of the River Douglas between Hesketh Bank and Tarleton and along the former railway line in Banks.

- 6.9 Government policy requires transport assessments to be prepared in relation to proposals that could have a significant transport impact. For major developments the assessment

must look at the accessibility of the site by all modes of transport and include the likely modal split of journeys. It should also give details of the proposed alternative means of transport, for example measures to improve accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling and to reduce the need for parking. For smaller schemes the plan should simply outline the transport impacts of the development.

Car Parking Standards

- 6.10 The provision of parking facilities can have major impacts upon an area with benefits including helping to promote the vitality and viability of town centres, attracting businesses to an area, and reducing congestion. On-street parking can add to congestion by hindering traffic movement, and can present a potential danger for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users; therefore the provision of off-street parking is usually desirable. A balance is required between providing adequate levels of parking, and helping encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- 6.11 Locally-specific parking standards were set by the West Lancashire Local Plan DPD 2012-27 in order to deal with the Borough's specific parking-related issues. They are based upon those proposed by the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, with some additions and modifications, and were largely agreed across authorities (including those in Lancashire). The standards include provision of parking for disabled drivers, as well as cyclists. Levels of accessibility can vary significantly between the Borough's Key Service Centres to rural villages and other areas and the parking standards reflect this by containing two accessibility categories (A and B):

Accessibility Area A – Non-metropolitan Key Service Centres (Skelmersdale with Up Holland, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough).

Accessibility Area B – All other areas, including key sustainable villages, rural sustainable villages and small rural villages.

Electric Vehicle Recharging Points and Reducing Transport Emissions

- 6.12 West Lancashire is committed to reducing carbon emissions and, in particular, to reducing emissions caused through transport. As well as seeking to encourage walking and cycling the Council remains committed to introducing electric vehicle recharging points to facilitate low carbon travel.
- 6.13 The introduction of Electric Vehicle Recharging (EVR) points is an important way of reducing road transport emissions, which are the third biggest source of carbon

emissions nationally. Although there are different types of low emissions vehicles on the road electric vehicles have several advantages which include:

- They produce no vehicle exhaust or carbon emissions at the point of use as they run off batteries and electric motors.
- They use energy in a far more efficient way than standard engines.
- They have the potential to be zero-emission vehicles if powered by renewable electricity, and create almost no noise.

6.14 EVR points are being rolled out across the North West region and the Country as a whole and in most cases a domestic 13a socket fixed to an internal/external wall should cost less than £100 (based on 2011 prices).



6.15 A Low Emissions Strategy statement can provide a package of measures to help mitigate the transport impacts of development by encouraging the accelerated uptake of cleaner fuels and technologies in and around a development. They can complement other design and mitigation options, such as travel planning.

6.16 In order to support the development of the LES statement, information on the types of mitigation measures and low emission technologies technical guidelines are available for applicants online at www.lowemissionsstrategies.org and toolkits at www.lowemissionhub.org/. These will help assess the amount of transport emissions resulting from the proposed development and the costs, effects and benefits from adopting low emission fuels, technologies and infrastructure.

6.17 This policy is in line with the NPPF which states that developments should be located and designed where practical to incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emissions vehicles.

Alternatives Considered

- 6.18 A transport policy is required as there are a number of infrastructure projects that will be needed to enable future development, including land that needs to be identified and safeguarded. Alternatives are:

- 6.19 *A policy without location, design and management of new development principles*

Such an approach would follow that of the adopted Local Plan. However, given the scale of development proposed by strategic policies in the new Local Plan it is considered that establishing development principles in relation to transportation is desirable in order to set a development management framework for dealing with future planning applications.

A reasonable alternative would be to provide a separate and expanded policy dealing with development principles in relation to transport along with a further policy which identifies future required transport infrastructure.

- 6.20 *A separate policy prioritising walking, cycling and public transport*

Whilst the current preferred policy includes a criteria to optimise the use of sustainable modes of transport in the locality including walking, cycling and public transport it would be possible to include a stand-alone policy given the need to promote modes of transport other than private vehicles. This could include prioritising use of, protecting and enhancing walking and cycling routes, public rights of way, bridleways and public transport including reference to a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. However, the preferred policy approach is pragmatic, recognising that the rural nature of the Borough means that private transport is sometimes the only reasonable means of travel.

- 6.21 *A policy with no requirement for electric vehicle recharging points*

Such an approach would be unambitious given the presence of a requirement for EVR points in the adopted Local Plan and the policy shift from the NPPF of taking into account an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles to the draft NPPF's requirement to take account of the need to ensure adequate provision of spaces for charging plug in and ultra-low emission vehicles if setting local parking standards.

Policy IF2: Community Facilities

Provision of new facilities

Development proposals for new community facilities will be encouraged to create flexible and adaptable buildings which can accommodate multi-purpose uses and integrated service provision (such as community hubs). Facilities should be convenient and well-located in areas which have good access by pedestrian, cycle or public transport links, or which are able to provide significant improvements to sustainable transportation links through the proposal.

Priority will be given to the location of community facilities within, or adjoining, existing service centres. Proposals for any out-of-centre locations should be able to demonstrate overriding community, amenity and environmental benefits arising from locating that facility there in comparison with existing service centres in the surrounding area.

Proposals for strategic development should ensure all necessary community facilities, required to respond to any increase in need arising directly from that development, can be appropriately delivered. This should be delivered on-site or should make the necessary financial contributions through planning obligations (CIL/S106). The funding of such community facilities through S106/CIL may include, but not be limited to, health, education, leisure facilities and libraries.

Existing facilities

The loss of community facilities will be resisted unless it can be sufficiently demonstrated, through appropriate evidence, that they no longer provide a value for the community, are not financially viable or can be relocated locally elsewhere in a suitable and accessible location. Such evidence may include market data or local community consultation.

Where it is demonstrated an existing community use is not viable, preference will be given to change of use or redevelopment to alternative community uses before other uses are considered. Support will be given to the diversification and consolidation of existing community facilities (for example a public house accommodating a post office).

Evidence should demonstrate all reasonable efforts have been made to preserve the facility and explain why it would not be viable, feasible or practical to retain the facility and show that the property/site has been robustly and transparently marketed with no interest.

Justification

- 6.22 Community facilities are essential to support strong, vibrant and healthy local communities, with accessible services that reflect local people's needs.

- 6.23 Community infrastructure includes health (GPs, health centres, clinics), education (schools, training), social (religious, childcare, youth clubs, advice centres, community centres, public houses), cultural (libraries, museums), retail and leisure. Such facilities serve a variety of important economic and social purposes, including promoting health and wellbeing and community cohesion; reducing social disparities and inequalities; reducing social isolation; providing education, training and skills; reducing the need for travel and supporting the local economy. Therefore it is important to plan positively to protect the sustainability of community resources.

- 6.24 New development can place pressure and demand on existing facilities and services and therefore should be encouraged to contribute to the provision of new or improved community infrastructure in order to actively promote sustainable communities. Equally, it is necessary to protect against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, especially where this would reduce a community's ability to meet its day to day needs by removing those functions that they rely upon. Both these aspects need to be balanced against the ever-changing needs and demands of modern society, together with evolving technologies, which change how we interact and access services. It is therefore important to have adaptable policies that can respond flexibly to challenges and opportunities relating to the provision of community facilities.

- 6.25 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identifies the existing infrastructure in West Lancashire, what gaps exist and what will be required to support development. Along with other evidence sources, a number of disparities and inequalities are shown to exist across the Borough – including health, schools and access to leisure facilities. The Local Plan plays an important role in working to 'narrow the gap' of these inequalities by trying to ensure the right services are provided in the right locations to address specific needs.

- 6.26 Cumulative or large-scale development can create additional demand for facilities and increase pressure on existing facilities. Community facilities are typically non-profit making and are vulnerable to cost-cutting, particularly those funded by the public-sector, which means they are susceptible to loss. In addition, the development of new technologies will encourage more services to become digital (for example, an increase in online service provision) and modernisation offers new methods of service delivery. Policy therefore needs to be adaptable and flexible to changing needs and challenges. To minimise costs

and maximise the efficiency of land/buildings, policy should encourage the development of shared spaces, with buildings providing more than one community use. The provision and protection of community facilities should enable the various needs of different age groups and socially and culturally diverse communities to be met. Digital connectivity should be adopted.

6.27 As the Settlement Study illustrates, the majority of community services are concentrated in the main towns and key sustainable areas of the Borough, with more limited provision in the rural areas. Rural areas are particularly vulnerable because, by their very nature, they tend to be more isolated with poor transport connections. Rural areas also tend to have smaller



numbers of residents with which to support community services. The protection of viable community services from development, particularly in rural areas, is therefore important for those local communities that rely upon them and that may find accessing services elsewhere difficult.

6.28 Subsequently, the policy aims to promote the provision of community facilities, where they are easily accessible by public transport and located within the community they are intended to serve. The loss of community facilities will be resisted unless the loss is unavoidable and equivalent facilities can be found elsewhere in the local area, or it can be demonstrated that the facilities are no longer required. Evidence, which may include the results of public consultation in those areas with the potential to be impacted by the loss of facilities, should be provided to demonstrate that community facilities are no longer required or supported.

6.29 Planning for the provision of community facilities is an ongoing process and the Council will continue to work with infrastructure providers and developers. Developers should identify and respond to community needs and pro-actively engage with the Local Planning Authority and infrastructure providers through the development management process.

6.30 Proposals for significant development should ensure that all necessary community facilities, required to respond to any increase in need arising directly from that development,

can be appropriately delivered. This should be delivered on-site or make necessary financial contributions through planning obligations (site-specific needs). Community facility needs arising from general development may be deliverable using funds raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Alternatives Considered

- 6.31 *A policy that provides general guidance but detail in relation to specific development sites or infrastructure types.*

This would be a prescriptive approach which would tighten control on community facilities for certain sites and infrastructure types whilst retaining flexibility for the rest of the Borough. It could, in theory, do more to tackle disparities across the Borough. However, for those reasons set out above, community facilities must serve local need, and the nature and demand for those needs varies, as does financial viability. It would therefore be more appropriate to let the market and community need dictate when and where community facilities should be delivered, with a flexible policy to then guide that delivery.

- 6.32 *A detailed policy by each settlement area, or infrastructure type, including what should be provided and protected.*

As with the policy option considered, this would be a prescriptive approach to tighten control on delivery but would be inflexible to changing needs and costs.

Policy IF3: Communications Development

The Council will support the provision and improvement of telecommunication and broadband infrastructure providing that the proposals accord with paragraph 112 and 113 of the NPPF and the following criteria are achieved:

- Providers should explore any possibility of sharing existing facilities within the locality to minimise disruption, reduce installation costs and increase the viability of service provision. Where appropriate, providers should demonstrate there is no possibility of sharing existing facilities within the locality when making planning applications. New and upgraded telecommunications capability should be encouraged to be located on existing existing masts, buildings and structures.

- Proposals for new infrastructure should identify how any adverse impacts on the environment and communities have been minimised and make provision for appropriate mitigation where adverse impacts cannot be avoided.

Justification

- 6.33 Telecommunications and broadband (internet) are now essential parts of modern life. Those areas which have poor telecommunication connections will find themselves at an economic and social disadvantage compared to those areas with good connections. In particular, rural communities often suffer the most from poor access and/or slow broadband speeds. Communications technology is rapidly evolving and the Council must ensure there is sufficient flexibility to accommodate and future-proof communications development for the benefit of businesses, residents and visitors. To reduce disparity, and encourage growth and improvement to telecommunications infrastructure, the Council will support, in principle, proposals which seek to facilitate such growth and improvement providing that such proposals are appropriately sited and designed to minimise the impact on the locality, including landscape, character and setting.
- 6.34 Digital technology is essential not only for economic growth but also for social inclusion. It is well recognised that businesses and service providers are increasingly moving to provide online services as digital by default and, as a result, those without internet access or strong broadband and mobile connections are at risk of being disenfranchised, particularly in areas like health care. By supporting the provision of high speed internet connections, it allows residents and businesses to access important services online.
- 6.35 Furthermore, access to broadband and mobile communication can help to improve accessibility to services by reducing the need to travel to access those services, for example online banking. There are also indications that the internet can be beneficial, particularly for the elderly, in alleviating loneliness and social isolation, although the cost of provision can also be prohibitive/ and those who suffer social disadvantages can then be least likely to benefit from the technology that can help them tackle their disadvantage¹⁰. Ensuring that broadband access is equitable across the Borough is at least one step towards reducing such disparities.
- 6.36 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communication networks, and the Building (Amendment) Regulations 2016 require, from

¹⁰ Age UK Digital Inclusion Evidence Review 2013

1 January 2017, all new buildings to have the necessary physical infrastructure inside the house to enable superfast broadband. There is no obligation on local authorities to include broadband in the planning process. However, we recognise the importance of digital communication infrastructure and will encourage fast broadband provision.

- 6.37 The NPPF encourages full fibre broadband and next generation mobile technology to support economic growth and social wellbeing. The Council will require all new major developments to provide fast fibre broadband. With regard to electronic communications, evidence must be submitted with planning applications and prior notifications to justify the proposed development, including relevant consultation, exposure levels and locational considerations.
- 6.38 The Councils Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) recognises that there are, at the time of writing, low broadband speeds and a poor reliability of supply in rural areas, particular in Banks, Mere Brow, Downholland and Westhead. Speeds in Ashurst and Pimbo are not as fast as elsewhere in the Borough. Next Generation, Ultra Fast Broadband, is available in some parts of West Lancashire, including areas on the periphery (Wigan, Southport), but is not available in the three main towns where most of the Borough's homes and businesses are located. Nine exchanges in West Lancashire are ADSL enabled but only two are SDSL enabled (enabling faster upload and download speeds). SDSL is gradually being rolled out across Lancashire and the North West and the Council will continue to support the delivery of such improvements.
- 6.39 Planning policy needs to be adaptable and flexible to respond to ever-evolving communication technologies, and the provision of new homes and buildings will be required, through EU legislation, to ensure they are high speed ready. However, the EU Directives (2014) allow exemptions for historic buildings, holiday homes or where disproportionate costs will be incurred, meaning that smaller and rural developments may be excluded. Recognising the importance of internet connection and speeds, the Council will encourage all developments to provide suitable internet access. In Europe, high speed ready connections are taken to refer to mean 30Mbps for all by 2020 in accordance with the Digital Agenda target.
- 6.40 The Council will seek to work positively with stakeholder groups to improve telecommunication networks throughout the Borough.

Alternatives Considered

- 6.41 Much of the guidance for communications development is provided through the NPPF and the preferred policy serves only to add greater detail at a local level in order to

provide control whilst enabling flexibility. The Council considered an alternative approach, which would be not to have any policy at all, as per the current Local Plan 2012-2027, but this would allow the Council less control over siting and delivery for development management purposes.

Policy IF4: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Development

The Council will support the development of low carbon and renewable energy schemes where they are appropriately located and designed. All proposals for low carbon and renewable energy developments will be required to evidence that the scheme:

- i. Considers the effects on landscape, biodiversity, including protected species, heritage assets, visual amenity, highway safety, land resources;
- ii. Mitigates any impacts of the development so there are no unacceptable significant effects on the amenities of neighbouring uses (excessive noise, odour, traffic);
- iii. Demonstrates that any significant adverse effects are outweighed by wider social, economic and environmental benefits, which may include those associated with the increased production of renewable energy; and
- iv. Where appropriate, has consulted with the local community at a pre-application stage in developing proposals for renewable energy.

Low carbon and renewable energy developments should, where practicable, minimise the effect on the amenity of the area. Very special circumstances will need to be demonstrated in order to justify renewable and low carbon energy proposals where they constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

All new major applications will be required to provide an Energy Statement with the planning application to show how the inclusion of low carbon and renewable technologies has been considered in the design in order to seek to minimise energy use and carbon emissions. The Energy Statement can be included within the Design and Access Statement or as a separate report.

Support will be given to low carbon and renewable developments on brownfield land or existing buildings, for example the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on commercial properties. Preference will also be given to Solar PV farms on brownfield land or lower grade agricultural land, rather than on the best and most versatile agricultural land, subject to meeting criteria (i)-(iv) above.

All developments, wherever possible, should connect, or be able to connect in future, into a district heating or decentralised energy network, unless it can be demonstrated that the connection is not feasible or viable.

An 'Opportunities Map' will be prepared to show those locations that are likely to have the greatest potential for such low carbon and renewable energy schemes and is designed to provide guidance. The opportunities map will exclude wind, which should be covered separately through a land designation.

Community led initiatives for the development of renewable energy will be supported. Such proposals should, as with commercial schemes, identify and address any adverse impacts in line with the criteria (i)-(iv).

By 2050, the Council will expect that all developments coming forward for development at that time should be carbon neutral, although developments will be encouraged to work towards achieving carbon neutrality in significant advance of this date.

Wind Energy Infrastructure

Wind energy developments will be given positive consideration providing:

- i. The proposed development is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development and designated as a 'Wind Energy Opportunity Site' on the Policies Map
- ii. Planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been appropriately addressed and have their backing.

Developers are required to provide evidence to support their proposals considering:

- singular or cumulative impacts on landscape character and value;
- impact on local residents (including noise and shadow flicker);
- ecological impact, including migration routes of protected bird species;
- impacts on land resources, including agricultural land and areas of deep peat;
- impacts on the historic environment and assets;
- community benefits of the proposal; impacts on telecommunication, audio and visual signals;
- impacts on aviation navigation systems and communications; or
- any other factor that may be affected by wind energy developments

The evidence will be required to demonstrate that any impacts can be satisfactorily addressed but need only be proportional to the scale and nature of development.

Evidence should include Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Statement (ES), Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) in accordance with the relevant guidance for each.

Justification

- 6.42 In the UK, the planning system has a key role to play in reducing emissions through the delivery of low and zero carbon development, and the support and promotion of renewable energy developments. The results of which will help the UK move towards energy security, whilst strengthening the economy, and assist in mitigating the causes of climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- 6.43 Subsequently, it is important that West Lancashire takes a clear, bold and robust approach to encouraging the delivery of renewable energy in the Borough, to assist in reducing carbon emissions and addressing, not just a local need, but a national and global obligation.
- 6.44 However, whilst the Borough has the potential to take on a key role within Lancashire for renewable energy production, this must be balanced with the need to protect its valuable assets – including landscape, heritage, agricultural land and important bird species, migration routes and habitats.
- 6.45 It is the intention of this policy to guide the strategic development of all commercial renewable energy schemes under 50MW (as anything above 50MW is dealt with by the Secretary of State). The 'Sustainable Design' policy guides the inclusion of low carbon design and renewable energies in new developments, including residential and



commercial developments. Both policies should be read in conjunction with the other.

- 6.46 Renewable energy is a key infrastructure item, essential to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and is expected to form a large and increasingly important part of the national economy, reducing dependence on carbon-based fuels and imported energy, thereby strengthening the UK's energy security. Contributing to the UK output can therefore be expected to strengthen the Borough's position economically as well as environmentally, but renewable energy developments need to be balanced with a range of potential adverse impacts.
- 6.47 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) must identify and address such adverse impacts, including those affecting landscape character, heritage assets, biodiversity (particularly protected species, migration routes and habitats), drainage and hydrology, peat and mineral resource, agricultural land and public rights of way (PROW), to ensure that renewable energy developments do not unduly harm local areas.
- 6.48 Whilst the NPPF recognises that many renewable energy projects will constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it allows for such developments where very special circumstances can be demonstrated. These very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources. Therefore, whilst Green Belt is a consideration, it does not entirely rule out renewable energy developments. However, each such case will need to be determined on its individual merits.
- 6.49 The NPPG states that policies should promote low carbon and renewable energy technologies, informed by evidence that considers the opportunities for different technologies, the opportunities for district heat networks and a consideration of the impacts that such developments may have on the landscape.
- 6.50 It is the Council's intention to commission new studies to update information relating to low carbon and renewable energy capacity and to help identify specific 'opportunity areas'. It is intended that these will be available for, and reflected in, the Local Plan Review Publication document.
- 6.51 In the interim, previous studies, including the Liverpool City Region Renewable Energy Capacity Study (2010) and the Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study (2011) have examined the potential for renewable energy generation West Lancashire and the wider sub-region. Each study identified a significant capacity for wind energy generation within the Borough, and identified specific areas with the potential for commercial scale wind energy were identified within West Lancashire: - Adjacent to the River Alt, Great Altcar

and Adjacent to the A5209 between Burscough and Newburgh. The studies stated that there would need to be additional analysis as the study did not account for impacts on landscape, biodiversity, flood risk or heritage assets. The studies concluded that commercial on-shore wind is critical to the overall growth in renewable energy and it is unlikely that Lancashire could make significant progress towards meeting the target for 2030 without increasing deployment of this resource. West Lancashire therefore has a key role to play in working to reduce carbon emissions for Lancashire.

- 6.52 The Studies also found that West Lancashire has the potential to generate energy through small scale (domestic) schemes, energy crops (biomass), straw and poultry litter, in reflection of its strong agricultural base. This policy accommodates for such alternative energy sources on a case by case assessment.
- 6.53 The Studies further identified that Ormskirk Town Centre has the potential to be an energy priority zone for district heating, primarily due to the major energy users (swimming pool, hospital, public buildings) that would be required to ensure such a network would be feasible. Consequently, this policy requires all major development to explore the potential to provide district heat and decentralised energy networks, particularly in relation to strategic sites.
- 6.54 The low carbon and renewable energy policy needs to be future-proof, adaptable to emerging and progressive technologies. The policy does not prescribe the types of energy sources that will be supported and therefore the policy enables appropriate flexibility.
- 6.55 As the Council procure new evidence, any areas identified as being suitable for renewable energy development will be shown in an 'Opportunities Map'. The map should not be viewed as definitive or restrictive, and the suitability, viability and feasibility of any energy development in any area is subject to further assessment on a case by case basis as to their potential for both development and significant adverse effects. Inevitably, technologies and regulation will change and there is no doubt potential to generate energy outside of those opportunity areas. The map does not preclude any areas from renewable energy developments but simply acts as a starting point for investigations.
- 6.56 Subject to evidence, any areas identified and designated for commercial wind energy



developments will be shown on the Local Plan policies map. The designations will be subject to public consultation to try and address, where appropriate, the concerns of local communities. This should enable the identification of the most suitable areas and the provision of guidance for the most appropriate development.

- 6.57 The Council relies upon the landscape character information set out within the Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance SPG in order to assess the possible landscape impacts of any proposals.
- 6.58 Where renewable energy schemes become non-operational for over a year, the facility must be removed and the site restored within two years of the end of that operation. Temporary energy generation facilities must provide full details of the arrangements for the dismantling of existing infrastructure and the reinstatement/restoration of the site along with indicative timescales. This requirement will be secured through planning condition.

Alternatives Considered

- 6.59 *A flexible policy for all aspects of low carbon and renewable energy*

A flexible policy would be adaptable to ever changing renewable energy needs and demands and would allow a broad approach to encourage renewable energy whilst considering each scheme on its own merits and any potential for impacts. It would not try and identify specific areas for each type of technology, allowing developers flexibility over location. However, this approach would potentially fail to do enough to pro-actively encourage and support the delivery of strategic renewable energy schemes and, in turn, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It would lead to reactive planning and the assessment of individual planning applications on an ad hoc basis, rather than trying to deliver strategic energy infrastructure and identifying those areas most suitable for different energy technologies.

- 6.60 *A policy for the specific allocation of sites for low carbon and renewable energy*

A policy could be used to allocate a range of sites for renewable developments. This would provide a strategic direction to the siting of renewable energy schemes and ensure sites with the greatest potential are identified. However, it could lead to the sterilisation of potential sites and securing the necessary evidence, and the agreement of the landowner, could be resource intensive. It would also remove the flexibility to respond to changing energy or land requirements. For example, as technologies and regulation change there could be further areas of opportunity created that would be difficult to deliver if they did

not form part of any existing site allocations.

6.61 *An energy opportunities map*

This would provide a spatial summary of the key opportunity areas for various forms of renewable energy to inform and guide development towards the most suitable and appropriate areas, for example guiding it away from sensitive landscapes. This approach would set a positive policy context encouraging the development of renewables and helping to identify which areas may be more suitable for certain types of renewable energy. However, it would not be possible to identify locations for all types of renewable energy technologies and may identify potential areas which are unpopular. It does not provide a definitive statement on the suitability of a certain location for a particular development, meaning each application must provide the necessary evidence and be assessed on its own merits.

6.62 *Local Development Orders*

Local Development Orders (LDOs) grant planning permission to specific types of development within a defined area. LDOs can streamline and simplify the planning process for specific development, creating certainty and saving time and money for all those involved, and can be flexible tools which can be revised and updated as required. However, LDOs can be costly to produce, particularly where extensive evidence relating to EIA and LVIAs are required, and an LDO would need revising and updating periodically to reflect changes. With the speed at which the climate change agenda is progressing, LDOs are not currently considered to be the best mechanism for the delivery of low carbon and renewable energy.

- 6.63 It is considered that the current policy takes a balanced approach by seeking to allocate sites for strategic wind energy infrastructure whilst supporting the delivery of all other renewable energy schemes on a flexible, individual basis with guidance on suitable locations provided via an opportunities map.

Chapter 7: Green Infrastructure Policies

Policy GI1: Provision of Green Infrastructure

In order to support the Council's Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy (formally adopted in 2017) all development, where appropriate, should:

- i) Protect and enhance the existing network of green links, open spaces and sports facilities, securing additional facilities to serve the new development where deficiencies are identified in the Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy;
- ii) Support the link between Green Infrastructure and well-being by ensuring new open spaces are easily accessible by residents, particularly those within new development proposals;
- iii) Wherever possible, promote, deliver and enhance new recreational opportunities, including the linear parks between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale, between Ormskirk and Burscough, along the River Douglas at Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, and all other Green Infrastructure connections proposed in the Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy;
- iv) Where appropriate, the opportunity should be taken to extend Green Infrastructure by linking green spaces or by filling in gaps in Green Infrastructure corridors including (where relevant) extending these into settlements, or providing Green Infrastructure into new developments themselves;
- v) Promote the creation of new, and the enhancement of existing Ecological Networks;
- vi) Support the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park and associated infrastructure.

Justification

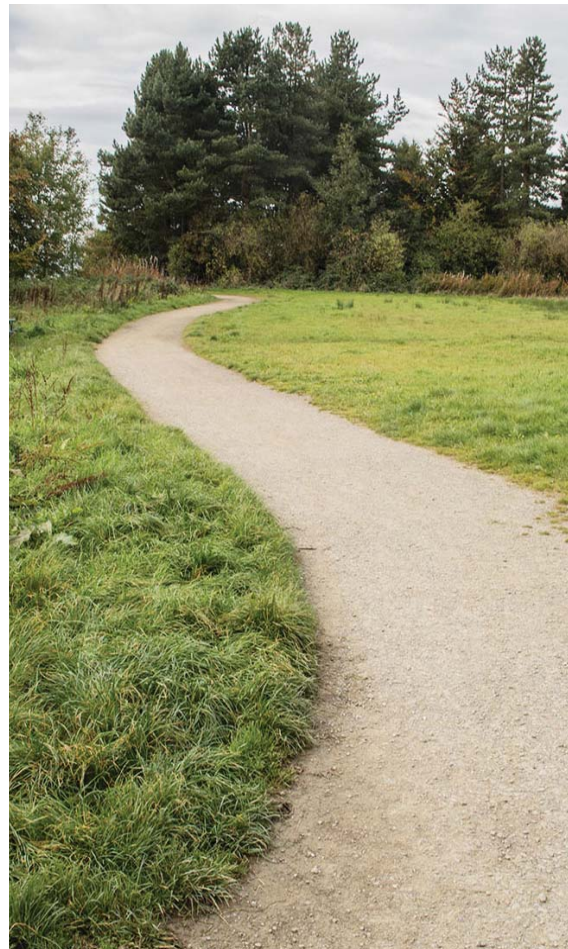
- 7.1 This policy sets out the requirements for the provision of both new and enhanced Green Infrastructure within West Lancashire.
- 7.2 The term Green Infrastructure is used to summarise the variety of functions of open spaces including parks, sports facilities, play areas, natural and semi natural open spaces, footpaths or green corridors and allotments and their functions. Inland waterbodies,

waterways and the canal network are often referred to as Blue Infrastructure; these actively contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure within the Borough. Green Infrastructure acts as an interconnected network of features and the natural systems that these support.

7.3 Green Infrastructure contributes to the health and wellbeing of the population and enhances the natural environment, improving the places where people live and work. Green Infrastructure assets can also encourage visitors into the Borough, therefore improving the visitor economy.

7.4 West Lancashire benefits from good overall provision of Green Infrastructure. However, all types of Green Infrastructure are not distributed evenly across the Borough and areas of deficiencies exist. As such, The Council will protect existing green spaces where required and appropriate, and enhance their quality and accessibility. Opportunities to create new Green Infrastructure and improve the quality of existing Green Infrastructure will be utilised where supported by evidence, and where such improvement will have wider planning benefits. Figure 7 shows the areas of Green Infrastructure across West Lancashire. As can be seen, the majority of formally identified Green Infrastructure is grouped around the larger settlements of Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.

7.5 The areas around West Lancashire's settlements are important for wildlife, local distinctiveness and character, whilst also providing areas for communities to access green space for sport, recreation and exercise close to where they live, including providing easy access to the countryside. Parks, open spaces and smaller nature assets all contribute to the diverse Green Infrastructure within West Lancashire. The policy approach above aims to ensure that new development does not have a detrimental impact on the provision of Green Infrastructure in the Borough, and to manage existing provision in the most effective way.



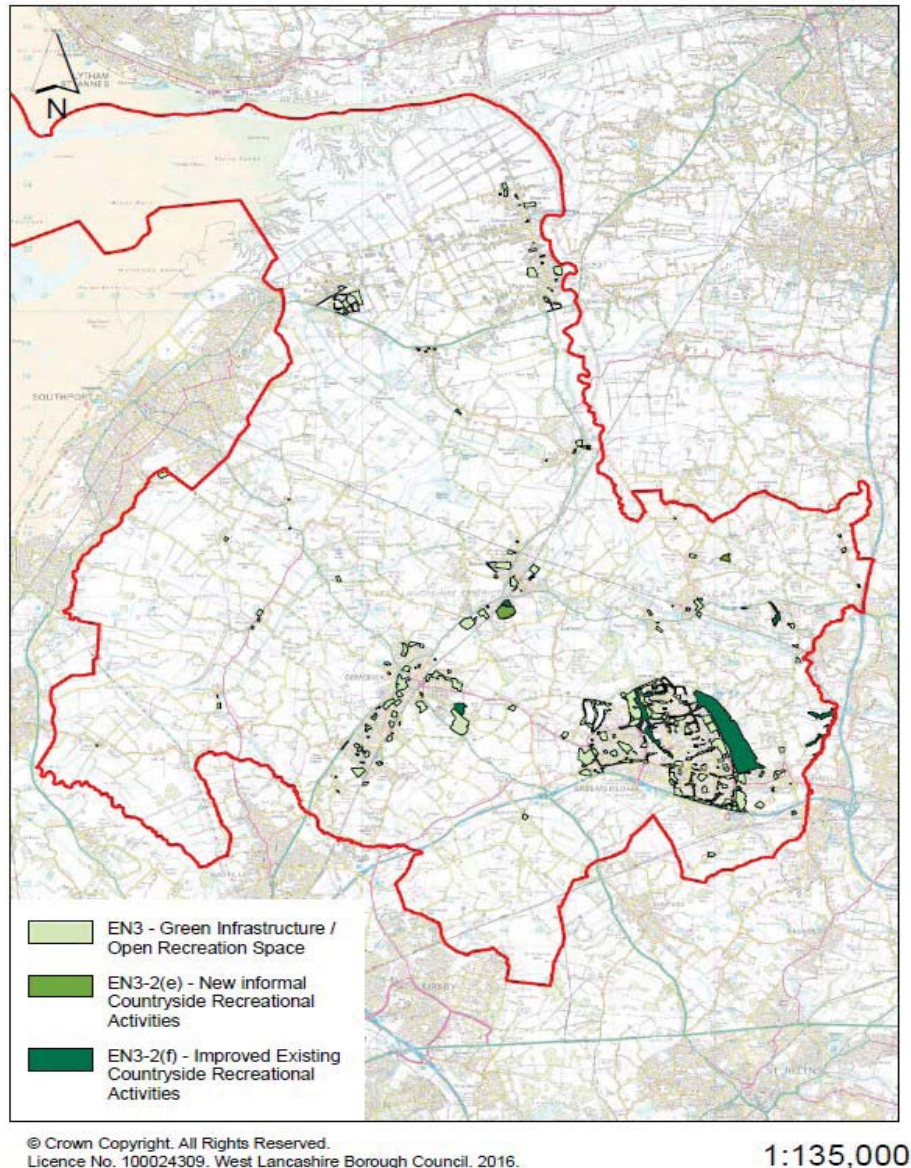


Figure 7: Green infrastructure in West Lancashire

Source: West Lancashire Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy, 2017.

- 7.6 The West Lancashire Green Infrastructure and Cycling Strategy, adopted in 2017, highlights that Green Infrastructure requires planning and needs to be managed in a strategic way at different spatial scales. This therefore requires proposed development to consider its impact on the Borough's Green Infrastructure at all levels. The GI and Cycling Strategy also identifies a clear link between Green Infrastructure and economic, social and environmental well-being of individual residents and wider society. Therefore, the Council recognises the importance of accessible spaces which encourage both residents and visitors to make the most of the Borough's open spaces and parks, and to utilise the spaces to improve health. Access to Green Infrastructure will be supported and encouraged within new developments in order for the Borough's Green Infrastructure to be maintained and where possible enhanced. The Council also recognises the importance

of linking areas of Green Infrastructure to encourage the diversity of species within the Borough and also to ensure that the rural character of the majority of West Lancashire is not diminished by new development. The creation of new, and strengthening of existing, ecological networks will also have a positive impact on the biodiversity of the Borough.

Alternatives Considered

7.7 *Separate Town Centre GI policies (e.g. Stockport)*

Town centres do not require a specific policy as West Lancashire is not a large conurbation. Additional detail may be provided through an SPD, but at the current time there is no requirement for this document.

7.8 *More detailed small scale GI specific policy to include reference to Green Roofs, Tree Planting, Green streets etc.*

This would be better included within an SPD.

7.9 *Site specific GI policies, which refer to site specific regeneration*

This would be better included within an SPD.

7.10 *Reduce the range of measures and controls / do not refer to Ecological Networks within policy*

Reducing the range of measures and controls would be likely to undermine efforts to protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity and green infrastructure networks.

Policy GI2: Open Space and Outdoor Sports / Recreation Facilities

- I. New development that results in the loss of any existing open space or sports and recreation facilities (including school playing fields) will only be permitted if:
 - a. The open space has been agreed by the Council as being unsuitable for retention because it is under-used, poor quality or poorly located;
 - b. The proposed development would be ancillary to the use of the site as open space and the benefits to recreation would outweigh any loss of the open area;
 - c. Successful mitigation takes place to create an alternative, improved provision in the same locality; or

- d. The site is classed as incidental open space and it is agreed by the Council that the impact on the character of the area would not be harmed if lost to development.

II. New major developments will be required to:

- c. Meet the standards set out in the 'Provision of Public Open Space in new Residential Developments' Supplementary Planning Document, having regard to local provision and viability;
- d. Secure long term management and investment plans for new and existing open spaces and facilities within their site;
- e. Support the development of new allotments and protect the existing provision of allotments from development; and
- f. Ensure open space and sports facilities are provided in line with an appraisal of local context and community need, with particular regard to the impact the development of the site will have on biodiversity.

III. Development which would prejudice the protection and improvement of facilities at the following countryside recreation sites will not be permitted:

- a. Hunters Hill, Wrightington
- b. Parbold Hill, Parbold
- c. Platts and Mill Dam Lane, Burscough
- d. Beacon Country Park, Skelmersdale
- e. Fairy Glen, Appley Bridge
- f. Dean Wood, Up Holland
- g. Abbey Lanes, Up Holland
- h. Ruff Wood, Ormskirk
- i. Platts Lane, Burscough
- j. Chequer Lane, Up Holland
- k. Station Approach, Ormskirk

Justification

- 7.11 West Lancashire benefits from overall good levels of open space provision. However, in some areas it is not distributed evenly across the Borough; as a result some areas are in deficit of certain types of open space. The Council will protect existing green spaces and, where required and appropriate, will seek to enhance their quality and accessibility. Where supported by evidence and in the delivery of wider planning benefits, opportunities to improve existing green space quality may be delivered through redevelopment of

green spaces.

- 7.12 In considering the future growth of West Lancashire, there is a need to ensure that there is adequate provision of quality and accessible green space, including publicly accessible natural green space, and space for formal recreation and allotments. The green space needs of the Borough have been identified in the West Lancashire Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.
- 7.13 The application of open space standards will be through the Council's Open Space SPD. In developing the open space standards for the Borough, the Council adhere to Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt). The Council aspires to maximise recreation near to where people live, which can help to minimise adverse impact and avoid the more sustainable use of sensitive nature conservation sites for recreational purposes.
- 7.14 Some developments may not be capable of accommodating the required green space within the site boundary. The majority of these sites fall within town centre locations or on small scale sites. In these instances, and taking into account the characteristics of the site, it may be acceptable to deliver the green space off-site, within the same locality, or potentially a combination of off-site and on site.
- 7.15 Where supported by evidence and in the delivery of wider planning benefits, opportunities to improve existing green space quality may be delivered through redevelopment of green space, improved quality of green spaces in the same locality and support of the local community.

Alternatives Considered

- 7.16 *Less protection for open and recreational space; less obligation to provide it*

This would most likely lead to the loss of valued areas of open space, potentially significant amounts, to the detriment of local areas and the general health and wellbeing of the population as a whole. It would also mean that opportunities to procure more, or improved, open and recreational space are missed.

- 7.17 *Much greater, or absolute, protection of open and recreational space; more to be provided through planning obligations.*

Whilst in theory, this approach seems laudable and would result in no losses to open / recreational space, it may be appropriate sometimes to develop parts of some open

spaces, especially if this leads to enhancement of the rest. More onerous planning obligations could make some schemes unviable, meaning that needed development is not delivered.

Policy GI3: Nature Conservation and Ecological Networks

I. The hierarchy of nature conservation sites

The Council is committed to ensuring the protection and enhancement of West Lancashire's biodiversity and geological assets and interests. The Council will have regard to the following hierarchy of nature conservation sites when making planning decisions. According to their designation:

a. International

1. Ramsar Sites
2. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
3. Special Protection Areas (SPA)
4. Candidate SACs or SPAs.

The strongest possible protection will be given to sites of international importance. The preservation of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park will also be encouraged by the Council, this area encompasses part of the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar Site.

b. National

1. National Nature Reserves (NNR)
2. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Developments that would directly or indirectly affect any sites of national importance will only be permitted where exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. The public benefit of the development must also clearly outweigh the impacts on the site and the wider ecological network. Where development is proposed within a SSSI, consideration will be given to the likely impact of the development on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest.

c. Local

1. Regionally Important Geological Sites
2. County Biological Heritage Sites
3. Local Nature Reserves

Development that would directly or indirectly affect any sites of local importance will be permitted only where it is necessary to meet an overriding local public need or where it is in relation to the purposes of the nature conservation site.

II. Development within or affecting nature conservation sites and ecological networks

Whilst certain aspects of nature conservation are covered by National and European law, it is essential that development complies with national planning policy. Therefore, proposals for development within or affecting the above nature conservation sites must adhere to the following principles:

- a. Proposals which seek to enhance or conserve biodiversity will be supported in principle, subject to the consideration of other Local Plan policies;
- b. Consideration should be given to the impact of development proposals on the Major Wildlife Corridors defined on the Policies Map and on any additional Ecological Networks identified within any Supplementary Planning Document in the future and, where possible, opportunities to support the network by incorporating biodiversity in and around the development should be encouraged;
- c. Where development is considered necessary, adequate mitigation measures and compensatory habitat creation will be required through planning conditions, and / or obligations, with the aim of providing an overall improvement in the site's biodiversity value. Where compensatory habitat is provided it should be of at least equal area and diversity, if not larger and more diverse, than what is being replaced; and
- d. The development of recreation will be targeted in areas which are not sensitive to visitor pressures – the protection of biodiversity will be given higher priority than the development of recreation in sensitive areas of internationally important nature conservation sites (as identified in paragraph (a) (i) above), and on all nature conservation sites and ecological networks in situations where there is conflict between the two objectives.

III. Damage to nature conservation sites and ecological networks

The following definition of what constitutes damage to nature conservation sites and other ecological assets will be used in assessing developments likely to impact upon them:


- a. Loss of the undeveloped open character of a part, parts or the entire nature conservation site or ecological network;

- b. Reducing the width of part of an ecological network or causing direct or indirect severance of any part of the ecological network or of any part of a nature conservation site;
- c. To restrict the lateral movement of wildlife within or through an ecological network or nature conservation site;
- d. To cause the degradation of the ecological functions of any part of the ecological network or nature conservation site;
- e. Directly or indirectly damaging or severing links between nature conservation sites, green spaces, wildlife corridors and the open countryside; and
- f. To impede links to the wider ecological network and nature conservation sites that are recognised by neighbouring planning authorities.

IV. Priority Species and Habitats

- a. The biodiversity and geological resources of the Plan Area and its surroundings will be conserved and where possible enhanced by ensuring that development proposals will not result in significant harm to biodiversity interests.
- b. Where there is reason to suspect that there may be priority species, or their habitat, on or close to a proposed development site, planning applications should be accompanied by a survey assessing the presence of such species and, where appropriate, making provision for their needs.
- c. Where development is considered necessary, adequate mitigation measures and compensatory habitat creation will be required through planning conditions and / or obligations, with the aim of providing an overall improvement in the site's biodiversity value. Where compensatory habitat is provided it should be of at least equal area and diversity, if not larger and more diverse than what is being replaced.
- d. For those sites where there is the potential for the site to support important habitat for birds associated with Martin Mere SPA (and any others which may support suitable habitat), the applicant should submit an Ornithology Report containing sufficient information to demonstrate that consideration has been given to the potential for effects on SPA birds, and if necessary, that suitable mitigation measures will be implemented to address this to the satisfaction of the Council and to ensure no adverse effect on site integrity.

Justification

- 7.18 West Lancashire is home to a number of valuable habitats, for example the Ribble Estuary and Martin Mere, and some of these take the form of wildlife corridors, such as the Leeds Liverpool Canal and the River Douglas. There are also a number of important international sites, such as the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA / Ramsar and the Sefton Coast SAC which the Borough shares with neighbouring authorities, in which the Council will have to adopt a collaborative approach to management. The Borough lies within the National Character Area: profile 32 (Lancashire and Amounderness Plain)¹¹ which due to extensive agricultural use throughout history has seen the majority of habitats considerably reduced in size and quality. Policy GI3 therefore seeks to halt further loss, and encourage the creation of new sites of ecological diversity.
- 7.19 The NPPF identifies biodiversity as being a vital part of the natural environment. Planning policy should, where possible, minimise the impact of development on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. This will contribute to the government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. The Natural Environment White Paper published in June 2011 considers that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being.
- 7.20 The NPPF places great emphasis on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. This process includes minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. This will contribute to the government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, whilst also including establishing of coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressure.
- 
- 7.21 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Whilst the most important wildlife habitats are protected by law or by national planning policy, there are a number of locally-designated environmental sites in West Lancashire that have been inherited from the previous Local Plan. Although not benefitting from national level protection, these

¹¹ National Character Area Profile, 32: Lancashire and Amounderness Plain. Natural England 2014.

sites still have significant environmental or geological value, and can make a significant contribution to the biodiversity of the Borough.

- 7.22 Where in previous Local Plan Policy Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS) have been protected specifically, these sites are no longer afforded individual protection. LNCS often form part of Ecological Networks as pathways or stepping stones. Therefore as they are covered within the Ecological Network protection, they no longer require additional provision for their protection.
- 7.23 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning policies should protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. Policies should also aim to protect and enhance valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils whilst recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services. Creating coherent Ecological Networks will result in more networks and links which will be more resilient to both current and future pressures.
- 7.24 Components of the Ecological Networks across the Borough should be identified and mapped and biodiversity should be planned for at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries. In line with the Liverpool City Region Ecological Networks¹² which used nature conservation sites in West Lancashire to inform cross boundary links and opportunities for ecological intervention, this policy aims to identify opportunities to enable better protection and management of the natural assets within West Lancashire and at the same time, identify opportunities to create new natural assets to improve the biodiversity of the Borough. The natural environment is one of the West Lancashire's greatest assets and is highly valued by both visitors and residents. Protecting and enhancing the environment that makes West Lancashire special is a key objective of the Local Plan.
- 7.25 West Lancashire provides vital habitat for a number of protected species including many varieties of birds, water voles and red squirrels whose habitats are carefully managed and protected. The Council plays an important strategic role in supporting biodiversity in West Lancashire and will ensure the protection, and safeguarding of all sites of international, national and local level importance. The Council will also support the development of the Ribble Coast (which is also designated as a National Nature Reserve) and the Wetlands Regional Park to support the understanding that by 2020 the area will become an internationally recognised area. Strategic green links between rural areas, river corridors and green spaces will be supported in order to provide an ecological network of good quality which will provide habitats to support the Borough's biodiversity, and to prevent the fragmentation of the natural environment.

¹² Liverpool City Region Ecological Network. MEAS.org.uk

7.26 Lancashire County Council have produced documents based on the Ecological Networks within the Borough, and have currently identified the Lancashire Grassland Ecological Network and the Woodland and Scrub Ecological Network. Work is to be undertaken by Lancashire County Council on the Wetland and Heath data with a view to further refine its analysis. These works have taken into consideration how different environments and



habitats are linked and how species utilise the networks on a functional basis. Land types and allocations which may have an implication on the strengthening or improving the network are also taken into account. The findings of the work should provide the necessary information and outputs to enable the Council to meet the requirements of the NPPF in this respect. Should the findings of the documents be considered appropriate, they will be incorporated into a future Supplementary Planning Document to help inform planning decisions.

7.27 The priority species section of the policy is designed to contribute to the aims of the NPPF by minimising the potential impacts of development on biodiversity and geodiversity and to provide net gains in biodiversity where possible. The Plan Area has a rich biodiversity, primarily due to its rural nature. With the large expanse of green belt which surrounds the Borough's towns and villages it is essential that no undue harm comes to the species rich habitats within West Lancashire.

7.28 Opportunities for biodiversity to extend into the urban areas will be sought. In particular via parks and gardens where there is space for vegetation and wildlife to thrive, and via river corridors and trails that link habitats together. The continued development of the Ecological Networks will provide opportunities for links between the urban areas and the surrounding countryside to be developed. The impact of climate change on biodiversity will also be addressed by improving connectivity between habitats.

7.29 This policy seeks to ensure that the biodiversity of the Borough will be protected, and where possible, enhanced in line with guidance within the NPPF which states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'

7.30 The Natural Environment White Paper sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy. The mission for the next decade, is 'to halt overall biodiversity loss, support

healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.’

- 7.31 As well as the need to protect, conserve and enhance designated sites it is also important to protect, conserve and enhance nationally and locally important species that use a variety of sites/habitats as part of a nature conservation network.

Alternatives Considered

7.32 *Biodiversity Accounting & Habitat Evaluation Procedure*

A number of more sophisticated approaches to calculating habitat impact are possible which would use a government-approved metric and index. These methods would enable the Council to assess any habitats which may be lost, retained or enhanced as a result of new development.

- 7.33 Whilst it is understood that Biodiversity Accounting and the Habitat Evaluation Procedure are superior approaches to biodiversity protection, the Local Authority advises that this approach involves significant cost, and requires specific expertise which the Council does not have. Therefore the current policy approach is considered to be adequate to conserve the Borough’s nature biodiversity.

Policy GI4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

- I. Planning permission will not be permitted where the proposal adversely affects trees, woodlands and hedgerows which are:
 - a. Protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO);
 - b. Ancient Woodlands including individual ancient and veteran trees and those defined in Natural England’s inventory of ancient woodlands;
 - c. In a Conservation Area; or
 - d. Within a recognised Nature Conservation Site.
- II. There will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing tree, woodland and hedgerow cover on all other development sites, unless it can be demonstrated that any loss is unavoidable in order to develop the site;

- a. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, replacement trees will be required to be planted on site – where appropriate at a rate of two new trees for each tree lost – or, where a group of trees is to be lost, an equivalent area of replacement trees are to be planted;
- b. Tree survey information should be submitted with all planning applications where trees are present on and adjacent to the site. The tree survey information should include protection, mitigation and management measures and be in line with national guidance BS.5837:2012 and any subsequent document;
- c. Appropriate management measures will be required to be implemented to protect newly planted and existing trees, woodlands and/or hedgerows.
- d. Provided there are no implications on existing habitats, additional tree cover is encouraged.

III. Landscaping

- a. Developers will be required to submit, where appropriate, tree planting and soft landscaping, including the replacement of any trees lost on site.
- b. Developers will be required to demonstrate that public and private spaces are well designed, safe, attractive, complement the built form and provide for the retention of significant landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.
- c. Development plans will be required to demonstrate the sustainable management of trees, woodland and hedgerows including the provision of new planting within the new development proposals to provide local distinctiveness within the landscape, enable climate adaptation resilience and support biodiversity.
- d. For large scale developments a structured landscape scheme must be produced which demonstrates the planting and sustainable growth of large trees within new development. This is required to demonstrate the retention or improvement of tree canopy cover, which will benefit the character of the Borough as a whole.

Justification

- 7.34 Trees, woodlands and forests have a very special place in English culture and have provided us with many of the essentials of life through history. Their health is essential for our wellbeing and prosperity. They shape our landscapes and street scenes. Our choices today will shape our future landscapes, prosperity and wellbeing¹³.
- 7.35 The NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists¹⁴.
- 7.36 Development will be required to provide new trees, woodlands and/or hedgerows to provide a wide range of benefits, including aiding health and wellbeing, helping mitigate the effects of climate change, landscaping, noise proofing, benefits for wildlife, and amenity value. Developers will be required to provide trees, woodlands and/or hedgerows of an appropriate type and maturity for the site, to be decided in liaison with the Council.
- 7.37 Where existing trees are considered to be of significant amenity benefit to the local area, a Tree Preservation Order may be considered in order to restrict the potential damage/pruning of the specimen. The TPO would be assigned in line with the Town and Country Planning (Tree preservation) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 7.38 The Borough's trees and hedgerows are protected through separate government legislation as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Tree Regulations 1999, and Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The Council understands the significant contribution made to the landscape by trees, either as woodland or as individual specimens, and by hedgerows. Therefore there will be a presumption in favour of retaining and enhancing all existing tree, woodland and hedgerow cover. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees, woodlands and/ or hedgerows the Council will encourage a replacement, ideally



¹³ The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' (2011)

¹⁴ Paragraph 174 NPPF.

to be located on site or in the vicinity of the site or local area. Where this is not possible it will be sought for off-site provision to be located where the Council sees fit.

- 7.39 Ancient Woodlands (woodlands which have been continuously wooded since 1600AD) are particularly important for their flora, fauna and their undisturbed soil and drainage patterns. The Council acknowledges the high biodiversity value of ancient woodland and the fact that it is an irreplaceable habitat; as such it is essential that ancient woodland be protected from the adverse effects of development.
- 7.40 Trees in Conservation Areas make a special contribution to, and enhance the environmental quality of, these areas. Such trees are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Six weeks prior written notice must be given to the local planning authority of any intended works to the trees. This will enable the Council to make a Tree Preservation Order if it considers the proposed works unacceptable and detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The Council wishes to encourage the planting of native tree species, where trees are characteristic of the landscape and are beneficial to wildlife.
- 7.41 The development of sites within the Borough will need to take into consideration potential impact on trees and hedgerows in the area. Trees are considered to be an important feature in creating a high quality local environment. Detailed landscape plans will be required for large scale developments, and soft landscaping plans may be required for smaller development where considered appropriate. This will ensure that the verdant nature of the Borough is retained during the development process.
- 7.42 May not be viable due to ongoing work with ecological networks across the Borough. The NIAs would require additional resources, and may cover the same topics and issues.

Alternatives Considered

7.42 *Assign Nature Improvement Areas*

May not be viable due to ongoing work with ecological networks across the Borough. The NIAs would require additional resources, and may cover the same topics and issues.

Policy GI5: Landscape Character and Land Resources

Where new development is proposed it will be required to take advantage of the surrounding landscape setting and historic landscapes by having regard to the different landscape character types across the borough. Where development is likely to affect landscapes or their key features, approval will only be granted where the development is considered to make a positive contribution, or where the public benefit outweighs the harm to the landscape.

The level of protection afforded to the specific landscape setting will depend on the quality, importance and uniqueness of the land, as defined in the Natural Areas and Areas of Landscape History Importance SPG and any subsequent documents. The active use of the Borough's landscapes through leisure and tourism will be promoted where this is compatible with objectives relating to their protection. Proactive management of the Borough's landscape, for the benefit of carbon retention, biodiversity and flood prevention, will also be supported.

In addition, development will be permitted where it meets the following criteria:

- i. The proposed development is to maintain or enhance the distinctive character, and visual quality of the Landscape Character Area, as shown on the Policies Map, in which it is located;
- ii. The development is to respect the historic character of the local landscape and townscape, as defined by the Areas of Landscape History Importance shown on the Policies Map; and
- iii. The development is to complement or enhance any existing attractive attributes of its surroundings through sensitive design which includes appropriate siting, orientation, scale, materials, landscaping, boundary treatment, detailing and use of art features where appropriate.

Land Resources

- a. Development on the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 & 3a) will not be permitted except where absolutely necessary to deliver development allocated within the local plan or strategic infrastructure, or development associated with the agricultural use of the land;
- b. Development will have regard to the conservation of the Borough's deep peat resources;

- c. In coal mining development referral areas, take account of issues such as land instability and where appropriate, a coal mining risk assessment report will be required;
- d. Ensure the protection of water quality and ground water resources and, where possible, seek improvement; and
- e. In mineral safeguarding areas, developers are to refer to the Lancashire Minerals & Waste Local Plan to ensure sufficient consideration of the potential impact of the area on new and existing development.

Justification

- 7.43 The land resources of West Lancashire include some of the best agricultural land in the country. There are vast areas of deep peat, wetlands and mosslands, and also a number of opportunities for recreational access for residents. These natural assets, combined with the historic buildings and settings, mean that West Lancashire has some of the most important landscape character areas in the region. Development must be directed so it respects and enhances the special historical and environmental significance of areas of landscape importance.
- 
- 7.44 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes landscape protection, management and planning, and European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns, villages and open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.
- 7.45 West Lancashire has a number of historic and important landscapes which are recognised for their special cultural, horticultural, and historic and landscape qualities. Scarisbrick Hall Park is a site included on the national register of gardens and parks of special historic interest and adds to the character of the Borough. With an increased pressure from developers it is important to protect these areas to ensure that their character is not

inherently affected.

- 7.46 West Lancashire's land resources include deep peat deposits and some of the country's best and most versatile agricultural land. The extraction or degradation of peat should be actively discouraged as it plays a significant role in providing a unique habitat and is also an important carbon store.
- 7.47 The landscape of the plan area has a wide variety of physical differences and constraints which has been developed over years of agriculture, and economic and population growth. This has therefore produced a landscape of particularly high quality, which is more than 90% Green Belt. This policy has been designed to both protect and enhance the existing landscape character and deep peat deposits without stifling development to an unacceptable level. The control exercised by the policy will ensure that the quality of life for local residents is maintained, and economic investment and tourists are still attracted to the area.

Alternatives Considered

7.48 *Limiting development in the Countryside*

West Lancashire has a significant level of Green Belt where development is restricted in line with National Policy. However to further restrict development to justify the retention and protection of the Borough's Landscape Character in order to only allow development considered integral to the rural economy, would be significantly more inflexible approach than currently presented, and this may therefore restrict the Councils ability to help meet housing and local need.

Policy GI6: Coastal Zone

Development within the Borough's Coastal Zones, as defined on the Policies Map, will be limited to that which is essential in meeting the needs of coastal navigation, amenity and informal recreation, tourism and leisure, flood protection, fisheries, nature conservation and /or agriculture. Development will not be allowed which would allow the loss of secondary sea embankments, which would impair the capacity of the coastal zone to form a natural flood defence.

Development in Marine Areas as defined by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) must be in line with the Marine Policy Statement and, when produced, Marine Plans. In the

absence of a Marine Plan, the Marine Policy Statement should be consulted.

Development which may have an adverse effect on internationally important nature sites will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- i. There are no alternatives;
- ii. There are imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and
- iii. Compensatory provision is being made.

Justification

- 7.49 Whilst, strictly speaking, West Lancashire is not located on the west coast of England, an area approximately 16km in width at the north of the Borough is considered to be within a Coastal Zone, due to it being positioned on the south side of the River Ribble Estuary. West Lancashire is therefore considered to have a coastline. The Coastal Zone, as defined on the Policies Map, covers an area of land which is predominantly a National Nature Reserve and agricultural land. The probability of flood risk renders the vast majority of this land unsuitable for most types of development.
- 7.50 The natural processes affecting the Ribble Estuary mean that parts of the Coastal Zone are subject to change. Climate change and rising sea levels are likely to increase rates of coastal change in future, hence the importance of natural sea defences. This policy focuses on protecting and enhancing coastal processes, landforms and habitats, and managing tidal flood risk and development in relation to coastal change.
- 7.51 Much of the Ribble Estuary within the West Lancashire Local Plan area is designated as a Coastal Zone. Other parts of the Ribble Estuary benefit from protection by virtue of being located within a Special Protection Area or within a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The area identified as the Coastal Zone on the Policies Map, however, does not all benefit from this protection.
- 7.52 Owing to the flat, open nature of this land, it is considered that development can be particularly visually intrusive as well as being harmful to the environmental sensitivity of the locality. As such, this policy seeks to restrict development other than that meeting the specific criteria within the policy. Where appropriate, planning conditions may be used on planning permissions to limit the lifetime of development within a coastal location

to a temporary period, or to limit its use or occupancy, and to set out the approach for managing the development at the end of its planned life.

Alternatives Considered

7.53 *Specify the types of development acceptable in a prescriptive manner (Fylde)*

As West Lancashire does not have an area of coastline as such, the severe restriction of development would not be necessary as beaches and dunes would not be affected. The Ribble Estuary is subject to physical constraints due to the nature of the land, therefore a development is already restricted to a certain extent.

Chapter 8: Sustainable Development and Design Policies

Policy SD1: Designing Sustainable Layouts

Development proposals will be assessed against the criteria below, and will be required to adhere to the policies and principles of the Design Guide SPD (or any successor document) when planning for new development.

Proposals for new development should:

- I. Integrate with the surrounding area by providing safe, convenient and attractive pedestrian and cycle access through the new development and to nearby facilities and services;
- II. Incorporate suitable and safe access and road layout design, prioritising the convenience of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users over car users, wherever possible;
- III. Ensure that parking provision standards within Appendix B are met when planning for new development, unless it is clearly inappropriate to meet these standards;
- IV. Where development is over a certain size, provide Transport Assessments and Travel Plans in line with the latest Department for Transport guidance.
- V. Create an environment that is accessible to all sectors of the community including children, elderly people, and people with disabilities;
- VI. Provide, where appropriate, suitable infrastructure for public transport, including bus stops and shelters;
- VII. Maximise opportunities for retention and / or enhancement of biodiversity and / or habitats on site through preservation of existing features of biodiversity value, and / or creation of areas within the site where species can flourish, or can move between other areas of biodiversity value (ecological networks);
- VIII. Create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime and prepare a crime impact assessment where required in accordance with the Council's validation checklist;
- IX. Consider the guidance as laid out within Building for Life 12 and any subsequent document, in order to ensure development is sustainable and appropriate to the location; and
- X. Use sustainable drainage systems and permeable/porous hard surfacing materials to help reduce or maintain rates of surface water runoff to existing drainage systems.

Where the design of the development accords with the above criteria, and the guidelines within the Design Guide SPD (and any subsequent updated document) and Building for Life 12, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to the development. Where innovative design is proposed to promote sustainable development, great weight will be attributed to the benefits of the design when determining planning applications.

Justification

- 8.1 PPG sets out that the pursuit of sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built and natural environment. Development should encourage change and innovation, whilst safeguarding and enhancing existing development. Therefore Local Plan policy should seek to ensure that all development in the Borough is of a high quality which contributes positively to its distinctive character. This can help to attract people, businesses and investment.
- 8.2 Design quality is significant in both urban and rural areas, with good development requiring an understanding of the context in which it takes place. This requires consideration of the prevailing layout, urban grain, legibility, landscape, biodiversity, density and mix of uses, important views and historic routes.
- 8.3 Sustainable layout is intrinsic to the success of a new development integrating well with the character of an area. The Council has published a Design Guide SPD which highlights ways in which to design appropriate and sustainable layouts for the Borough, and identifies and details the character of the Borough's areas.
- 8.4 NPPF (paragraph 129) states that Local Planning Authorities should ensure that they have appropriate tools and processes in place for assessing and improving the design of development. Design advice and design review arrangements should be readily available for developers to utilise at the earliest stages within the planning process.
- 8.5 Other tools, including assessment frameworks such as Building for Life 12, are also to be used by developers when considering design options. When assessing planning applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome of these processes, including any recommendations by Design Review Panels.
- 8.6 As well as influencing how a place looks, layout can also have an impact on issues such as crime, nature conservation, flooding and reducing the proportion of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. In the case of the latter, providing connections to walking and

cycling links between new and existing developments can encourage people to travel locally and further afield without relying on the private car.

- 8.7 The orientation of housing can help to maximise the use of sunlight and daylight and allow air movement for ventilation.

Alternatives Considered

- 8.8 *Do not have a specific design policy*

This approach is similar to the existing Local Plan, where the design guidance forms part of a larger more general Sustainable Development policy. This approach contains less detailed guidance.

- 8.9 *Have a more prescriptive design policy*

This approach would potentially stifle good design, and would eventually result in new developments appearing to have a pastiche character to the existing development of the borough. A more restricted design approach may also result in development not being considered appropriately sustainable later in the Local Plan period.

Policy SD2: Sustainable Design

I. Design and Character

In order to ensure improvements to the quality of the built and natural environment and to make a positive contribution to its surroundings, new development should:

- a. Be of high quality design and adhere to the West Lancashire Design Guide SPD;
- b. Respect the historic character of the area, local landscape and / or townscape, and respond to the local surrounding through its design;
- c. Retain or create reasonable levels of privacy, amenity and sufficient garden / outdoor space for occupiers of the proposed and neighbouring properties;
- d. Have regard to visual amenity and promote local distinctiveness within its surroundings through sensitive design, including; appropriate siting, orientation, mass, height, density, materials, landscaping and landscape context, boundary treatment, scale and architectural design;
- e. Adhere to low carbon sustainable building principles;

- f. Relate to existing buildings, in terms of height and mass, design and materials, and the relationship with surrounding development; and
- g. Aim to create safe and secure environments that reduce the opportunities for crime and a crime impact statement should be prepared where required in accordance with the Council's validation checklist.

II. Sustainable Design

Unless it is clearly inappropriate to do so, new development should make provision for:

- a. Space for secure cycle storage and residential amenity space;
- b. Space for waste and recycling storage;
- c. Low carbon and renewable energy technologies, and water saving features, although regard should be had to the character of the development and the surrounding area when considering the scale and location of renewable energy technologies;
- d. Charging facilities for electrical vehicles or other 'green transport' technologies that may emerge; and
- e. Wildlife-friendly design features (such as bat roosts and bird boxes), and in the case of major schemes, wildlife permeable boundaries between gardens and open space, trees and hedgerows, green corridors, and street lighting which is sympathetic to wildlife.

III. Advertisements & Shop Fronts

- a. When determining applications for new and replacement advertisements, the impact on the area's amenity and public safety must be taken into account.
- b. When determining applications for new shop fronts, the character of the existing street scene and buildings must be carefully considered. New development should seek to assimilate with existing development.
- c. Developers should refer to the West Lancashire Design Guide for Shop Fronts, Advertisements & Shop Security.

Justification

- 8.10 West Lancashire is an attractive place to live, work and visit and development should reflect and draw on the local distinctiveness of the area. Consideration should always be given to the local landscape, its history, the built form and character of the settlement, the typical building type, its architecture and the materials used in its construction.

8.11 Policies which are to be used to guide the design of new development should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes upon the development. Whilst it is important for new development to reinforce local distinctiveness, the above policy should not seek to stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. Where appropriate, supplementary documents and plans have been made available in order to provide maximum clarity about regarding design expectations for the Borough.



8.12 Design features can also address wider sustainability issues such as crime, carbon reduction, reducing flood risk, and other environmental concerns such as air quality and lighting, creation of wildlife-friendly habitats, and making buildings accessible to all user groups. Therefore a policy is required to guide development proposals to ensure that they are sustainable.

8.13 The Council has produced a Design Guide SPD (2008) and a Design Guide for Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD (2005); these are to be used alongside Building for Life 12 and any successor Standards, in order to ensure that the design of new development is acceptable in terms of respecting the character of the Borough. Prior to submission of a large scale planning application, developers should seek to utilise a Design Review Panel made available by the Council in order for the design of the development to be agreed in principle prior to the submission of the application.

8.14 When considering applications for advertisements, whilst these are controlled by separate legislation, care must be taken to ensure that they do not harm the amenity or public safety of the vicinity. Where new shop fronts are proposed, developers and applicants should refer to the West Lancashire Design Guide for Shop Fronts SPD.

Alternatives Considered

8.15 *Do not have a specific design policy in the Local Plan (other than a general 'hook'), but instead rely on national and SPD policy on sustainable design.*

This approach would rely on less detailed / less prescriptive national policy, and detailed, but less 'weighty' SPD policy, and would represent a weaker approach than the preferred

Local Plan policy above.

8.16 *Have a more prescriptive design policy*

This approach would potentially stifle good design, and could result in new developments appearing to have a pastiche character to the existing development of the Borough. A less flexible design approach may also result in development not being considered appropriately sustainable later in the Local Plan period.

Policy SD3: Preservation of Heritage Assets

The Local Plan will seek to conserve the Borough's unique and valuable historic environment through the identification and appropriate preservation of its heritage assets.

Development should preserve or enhance both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including, where appropriate, their setting. The degree of protection afforded to heritage assets will relate to their historic significance. There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation of all designated heritage assets. When considering the impact of proposals on the historic environment, the Council will have regard to:

- I. The need to sustain and enhance the significance of any heritage asset including its setting;
- II. The preservation or enhancement of original or historic form, its fabric, features of note, function or the character of the asset and the value of its setting;
- III. The relationship with adjoining development and its wider setting, and neighbouring uses, particularly where these are heritage assets of significance in their own right;
- IV. The desirability of securing a viable or sustainable use for a heritage asset which is consistent with its conservation;
- V. An understanding of and respect for the significance of heritage assets as parts of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In each case the public benefit of mitigating the effects of climate change should be weighed against any harm to the significance of the heritage asset;
- VI. Any public benefits of the proposed development.
- VII. The contribution that the sensitive use of heritage assets can make to the wider sustainable regeneration of an area; and,
- VIII. Any Conservation Area Character Appraisals and management plans or other relevant conservation or heritage reports.

There will be a presumption in favour of the conservation of non-designated heritage assets

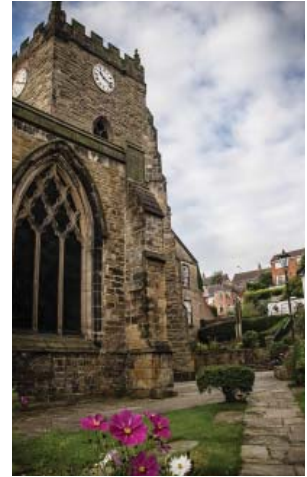
including those of archaeological interest, which have a recognised local importance or historic character which it is desirable to retain. Development proposals should respond proportionately to these assets minimising any loss or damage to their identified significance. Such heritage assets will generally be identified through the List of Locally Important Buildings adopted by the Council.

Heritage Statements and / or Archaeological Evaluations will be required for development relating to, or having an impact upon, the setting of heritage assets and / or known or possible archaeological sites. The level of information provided will be proportionate to the asset's significance and must be sufficient to enable a proper understanding of the potential impact of the proposal on the asset's significance.

Justification

- 8.17 West Lancashire has a rich and varied history which is documented through the Borough's wide range of heritage assets. Individually and collectively these assets contribute to the enjoyment of life in the Borough and play a key role in shaping local character and identity.
- 8.18 Heritage assets are defined as a building, monument, site, place, structure, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets identified in the Historic Environment Record, including local assets.
- 8.19 West Lancashire's historic environment includes:
- 28 Conservation Areas
 - 510 Statutory Listed Buildings (6 Grade 1, 21 Grade 2* and 483 Grade 2)
 - 169 Locally Listed Buildings
 - 11 Scheduled Monuments
 - 1 (Grade 2) Statutory Registered Park and Garden of Special Historic Interest;
- 8.20 The Council is committed to securing the conservation and enhancement of all historic assets including those of archaeological interest. Archaeological remains are the principal surviving evidence of the Borough's past.
- 8.21 Designated heritage assets are preserved through national legislation. The Planning

(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific guidance for the preservation of designated heritage assets and areas of special architectural or historic interest. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 provides specific protection for scheduled monuments.



- 8.22 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which must be conserved, managed and enhanced. This principle is also an important component of the NPPF's drive to achieve sustainable development. (para. 7-11).
- 8.23 We have a shared duty to ensure that heritage assets are preserved and wherever possible enhanced in order for them to be sustained for the enjoyment of current and future generations. The historic environment is a valuable part of our cultural heritage, it provides local distinctiveness, and contributes to a sense of place for our communities. The Local Plan aims to facilitate appropriate new development and, through this process, make the most of opportunities to preserve and enhance the historic environment.
- 8.24 There are many levels in which development proposals can respond to heritage, for example, through the reinstatement of important architectural features in domestic alterations, to more complex projects involving the sympathetic adaptive re-use of heritage buildings for wider public benefit and to support the visitor economy. The Council takes a positive view of development and change where this is consistent with an asset's conservation and other sustainability objectives. This approach is also in line with Historic England's 'Constructive Conservation' principles¹⁵.
- 8.25 To secure the future of such assets, the Council will encourage the retention of their existing uses, considering favourably appropriate new uses that do not harm their significance.
- 8.26 For all heritage assets, high quality design should be achieved. The design should aim to avoid poorly executed pastiche solutions and should foster innovation and creativity that is sensitive and enhances the significance of heritage assets in terms of architectural design, detailing, scale, massing and use of materials.
- 8.27 The Council will seek to positively manage the historic built environment through engagement with landowners / asset owners and other organisations and by working with communities to ensure that heritage assets are preserved, have appropriate viable

¹⁵ Constructive Conservation: Sustainable Growth for Historic Places'. English Heritage, March 2013.

uses, are maintained to a high standard and are secured and have a sustainable future for the benefit of future generations. Proposals that conserve and enhance assets on the Heritage at Risk register will be encouraged. Advice and assistance should be made available from public sources and the Council in order to ensure owners of heritage assets are able to sustain the asset whilst it is in their stewardship.

Alternatives Considered

8.28 *Do not have a specific heritage policy*

This approach would rely solely on the NPPF and heritage-related legislation. It would be less specifically tailored to the unique characteristics of West Lancashire, and may result in less benefits than the preferred policy.

Policy SD4: Managing Flood Risk

New development must not result in unacceptable flood risk or drainage problems or exacerbate existing flood risk or drainage issues. To achieve this, development must:

- I. Be located outside of Flood Zones 2 or 3, with the exception of water compatible uses and infrastructure, unless supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which demonstrates that the proposals satisfy both the sequential and exception tests;
- II. Take account of local and national evidence and guidance on flood risk and drainage, including the West Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA);
- III. Demonstrate that sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) have been considered to manage surface water generated on-site and where possible remove surface water from existing sewers;
- IV. If SuDS are not feasible, provide robust justification why the development can only connect surface water to the sewer network. Any surface water connection must be at an agreed attenuated rate; and
- V. Demonstrate that development on previously developed land will be able to achieve a reduction in surface water run-off of at least 30%, rising to a minimum of 50% in Critical Drainage Areas, unless this is demonstrated to be unfeasible or unviable, and that on greenfield sites surface water runoff will remain at no more than the existing greenfield runoff rate.

Proposals within areas of infrastructure capacity and / or water supply constraint should demonstrate that there is adequate wastewater infrastructure and water supply capacity to serve the development, or that adequate provision will be made available.

a. Sequential Test

The aim of the Sequential Test is to direct new development to areas with the lowest probability of flood risk. These areas should have an existing identified need for new development. A Sequential Test shall be used by applicants when their development proposals are located in Flood Zone 2 and 3, to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites in locations of lower flood risk that could reasonably be expected to accommodate the proposed development within the expected project timeframe.

In order to achieve a satisfactory sequential test, applicants are required to incorporate the following:

1. Area of Search – Conduct a search of the area, relative to the scale and nature of the proposed development. The area of search normally includes the settlement, ward or parish in which the development proposal lies, but could extend to neighbouring settlements, wards, parishes or districts where appropriate;
2. Comprehensiveness of search – Provide evidence of a rigorous investigation of relevant sources of information to find sequentially preferable sites;
3. Availability / viability / deliverability – Provide evidence that landowners / occupiers of the sequentially preferable sites or their agents have been contacted to discuss the possibility of selling or developing the land for the proposed development, and, on any site rejected on viability grounds, provide financial information to show on what basis that it would be unviable to proceed with the proposed development on that site;
4. Suitability – Take account of the suitability of sequentially preferable sites to accommodate the proposed development.

It is advised that an applicant verify their proposed approach to a Sequential Test with the Council before commencing work on the Test.

If, following a Sequential Test, the development is not consistent with wider sustainability objectives which would allow the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding, the Exception Test is to be applied in line with the guidance as set out within the NPPF.

Justification

- 8.29 The Council is proactive in delivering sustainable communities, including protecting new homes, employment and public spaces from unacceptable levels of flood risk. Policy SD4 aims to support the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive¹⁶ and seeks to protect, enhance and manage the water environment.
- 8.30 NPPF (paragraph 149) states that local plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. Inappropriate development in areas of flood risk should be avoided by directing development away from areas at higher risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flooding elsewhere.
- 8.31 The Environment Agency identifies areas that are technically at risk of flooding and these are shown as Zones 2 & 3 on their flood risk maps. Flood zones are defined as:
- Zone 1- little or no risk with an annual probability of flooding from rivers and the sea of less than 0.1 %.
 - Zone 2 - low to medium risk with an annual probability of 0.1-1.0% from rivers and 0.1- 0.5 % from the sea.
 - Zone 3 - high risk with an annual probability of flooding of 1.0 % or greater from rivers, and 0.5 % or greater from the sea.
 - Zone 3b – the functional flood plain - land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood.
- 8.32 These areas may change during the Plan period and the Council recommends that the Environment Agency be contacted directly to ascertain whether a particular parcel of land or a building falls within an area at risk of flooding.
- 8.33 Critical Drainage Areas are areas which are located within Flood Zone 1 and suffer from critical drainage problems. These areas are established and mapped in consultation with the Environment Agency and the Local Lead Flood Authority. West Lancashire does not



¹⁶ Council Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

currently have any designated Critical Drainage Areas. If any are designated, these will be identified within the Council's most up to date Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and will be kept under review.

- 8.34 New developments will be required to integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, to avoid adverse impact on water quality and quantity, including groundwater resources, and to provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation.

Sequential Test

- 8.35 A satisfactory sequential test should demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that it is appropriate to allow a development proposal in an area where policy usually presumes against such development. Development should be located away from areas within Flood Zone 2 or 3 and Critical Drainage Areas within Flood Zone 1, as these areas are at risk from flooding. If it is not possible to locate development away from these areas, applicants will be required to undertake a Sequential Test. Sequential Tests are not required on sites that have already been subject to this approach and which are allocated within the Local Plan, nor are they required for change of use, other than uses where Sequential Tests are required by national planning policy. However, if any site-specific flood risk assessments are required on exempt sites, these should be undertaken, and should consider the implications of climate change on flood risk probability.
- 8.36 Applicants are required to search alternative sites in preferable locations that could reasonably be expected to accommodate the proposed development within the expected project timeframe. The area of search for alternative sites may differ depending on the size of the proposed development. It is recommended that developers / owners contact the Local Planning Authority to discuss the extent of the area of search for the proposed development.
- 8.37 Evidence is required to be submitted by the applicant demonstrating the comprehensiveness of the search as part of the planning application process. This can include (but is not limited to); the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, Housing Land Supply Reports, the Council's Commercial Property Register, aerial photographs, and mapping.
- 8.38 The Sequential Test should include justification / explanation as to why the development could only be accommodated on a single site. Additional information may also be included, for example on flexibility, availability, viability, deliverability, written evidence that landowners / occupiers / agents have been contacted, and financial information

showing that alternative sites are unviable for the proposed development. The Test should also consider the implications of climate change on the probability of flood risk.

- 8.39 The suitability of sequentially preferable sites to accommodate the proposal should be taken into account. Suitability considerations could include policy designations or physical constraints. Development proposals should not prevent the development of larger areas of land or render parts of it unusable, for example by restricting access.
- 8.40 Where the Sequential Test is not sufficient in identifying whether development is appropriate the Exception Test is to be applied in line with the NPPF guidance.

Alternatives Considered

- 8.41 *Do not have a specific policy on flood risk, but rely on national policy*

National policy on flood risk is less detailed than the preferred Local Plan policy, and is arguably a little weaker. This approach is thus likely to be less beneficial for the Borough in terms of protecting the local area from developments that could exacerbate flooding and / or flood risk issues.

- 8.42 *Have a stricter policy, not allowing any development in Flood Zones 2 or 3, or in Critical Drainage Areas.*

This approach would go beyond (and thus be contrary to) national policy by imposing a blanket ban on development in certain areas. This could lead to local development needs in areas such as Banks, and the accommodation needs of the majority of West Lancashire's Travellers, not being met.

Policy SD5: Managing Contamination and Pollution

Development proposals must demonstrate that they have considered the potential impact of the proposed development on the amenity, health, and well-being of residents, on property, and on the natural environment.

I. Air Quality

Development should seek to ensure it does not contribute further to existing Air Quality issues within the Borough. Where an Air Quality Management Area is in place, development

should, where possible, seek to remediate and mitigate against additional air pollution in the area.

II. Contaminated Land

New development is required to remediate and / or mitigate against despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land within or affecting proposed development sites.

III. Noise and Light Pollution

When considering planning proposals for change of use and new development, the impact on the amenity of surrounding residents and businesses by virtue of light and noise pollution must not be such that it leads to unacceptable harm, and any impacts must be adequately mitigated.

Where a residential development is proposed in proximity to a commercial or community use, the responsibility lies with the residential developer to design their development such that the occupiers of the development will not be affected by the adjoining uses.

Justification

8.43 The NPPF lays great importance on protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment and puts forward the minimisation of pollution as a suitable mitigation measure. Local Plan policies are required to prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, light or noise pollution, or by land instability.

8.44 The Council considers the protection of its residents' quality of life to be a central theme of the Local Plan. The NPPF highlights that in preparing plans to meet development needs, the aim of the Local Planning Authority should be to minimise pollution. Plans should prevent both new and existing development from contributing to, or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely



affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution. Development is required to remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, and unstable land where appropriate. Also, development is required, wherever possible, to help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality.

- 8.45 Local Plan Policies should aim to prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability. Policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate to its location. The effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment, or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or the landowner.
- 8.46 Planning policies should also consider the suitability of the site for development with regard to ground conditions and potential pollution arising from previous uses. After remediation of the site, as a minimum land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Alternatives Considered

- 8.47 *Do not have a specific policy on managing contamination and pollution*

National policy on contamination and pollution is less detailed than the preferred Local Plan policy. This approach may be less beneficial the Borough in terms of protecting the local area from developments that could exacerbate issues relating to contamination and pollution. Furthermore, national policy requires that local plan policies address these matters.

Chapter 9: Next steps

- 9.1 It is important that the Council gain feedback to this document, both positive and negative, from the West Lancashire public and from stakeholders in order to help us prepare the best possible Local Plan for West Lancashire.
- 9.2 The How To Comment section at the start of this document explains how you can submit your comments to us.
- 9.3 Following the close of the consultation on 13th December, the Council will consider all the feedback received from the public consultation and use it in preparing what is effectively a draft Local Plan, known as the Publication document. That process must take into account the views of everyone who comments – including the public, landowners and their agents, and stakeholders and the Local Plan will be refined and amended as appropriate. The Publication Local Plan is the Council's preferred final document – essentially a Final Draft version of the Local Plan.
- 9.4 The Publication document will be made available for formal representations, through a public consultation exercise, at a later date. The Publication document, together with all representations received through the consultation, are then submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for an Examination in Public (EiP). This will be conducted by a Planning Inspector who independently verifies whether the Local Plan has been prepared correctly, according to legal procedures, and whether the document can be considered 'sound'. If the Inspector approves the Plan, then Council can adopt it as the Development Plan Document for West Lancashire.
- 9.5 The ultimate decision for adopting the Local Plan will lie with full Council.

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Low-cost and subsidised housing, irrespective of tenure, ownership or financial arrangements, available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the open market.

Article 4 Direction: Provide the opportunity to control minor development by removing certain 'permitted development' rights. Planning permission then needs to be sought for that development.

Anaerobic Digestion: A biological process that produces a gas principally composed of methane and carbon dioxide otherwise known as biogas. These gases are produced from organic wastes such as livestock manure, food processing waste, etc.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): An annual publication that assesses the Council's progress in preparing LDF documents and the success of its planning policies in achieving their aims.

Biodiversity: The whole variety of life, including genetic, species and ecosystem variations.

Biomass: Also known as biofuels or bioenergy, is obtained from organic matter either directly from plants or indirectly from industrial, commercial, domestic or agricultural products. The use of biomass is classed as a 'carbon neutral' process because the carbon dioxide released during the generation of energy from biomass is balanced by that absorbed by plants during their growth.

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM): BREEAM is a nationally and internationally recognised environmental assessment method and rating system for non-domestic buildings. It was first launched in 1990 and sets the standard for best practise in sustainable building design, construction and operation and is a recognised measure of a building's environmental performance.

Brownfield Land: See 'Previously Developed land'.

Carbon footprint: The carbon footprint is a measure of the impact our individual activities have on the environment, and in particular climate change. It relates to the amount of greenhouse gasses produced in our day-to-day lives through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating and transportation etc.

Climate Change: This is a change in the average weather experienced over a long period, including temperature, wind and rainfall patterns. There is strong scientific consensus that human activity is changing the world's climate and that man-made emissions are its main cause. In the UK, we are likely to see more extreme weather events, including hotter and drier summers, flooding and rising sea-levels increasing the risk of coastal erosion.

The Climate Change Act 2008: This Bill became law in 2008 and aims to create a new approach to manage and respond to climate change.

Community Hub: A Community Hub can mean something different depending on the community. In West Lancashire, the broad definition is a multi-use building which may be community-run and is proactive in enabling a range of services to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): CIL was introduced by the Planning Act 2008 and came into force on 6 April 2010 through the CIL Regulations 2010. It is a planning charge that local authorities in England and Wales can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods need/want - for example new or safer road schemes, park improvements or a new health centre. CIL applies to most new buildings and charges are based on the size, use and location of the new development.

Community Involvement: When preparing the LDF, the local authority needs to involve the local community, businesses, landowners, and anyone else with an interest in the area. Ideally these "key stakeholders" should be involved from the start, and right through the LDF preparation process.

Decentralised Energy Network / District Heat Network: Primarily the generation of energy close to the user and where appropriate, the recovery of the surplus heat (combined heat and power – CHP), for purposes such as building space heating and domestic hot water production. CHP is often used in District Heat Networks, with the heat generated as a by-product of electricity generation being pumped into homes, either as hot water or as steam, through networks of reinforced pipes.

Department for Transport: The Department for Transport are the government department responsible for transport across the United Kingdom.

Derelict Land and Buildings: Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that is incapable of beneficial use without treatment. This includes abandoned and unoccupied buildings (including former single residential dwellings) in an advanced state of

disrepair, and land damaged by development, but which has been, or is being, restored.

Development Plan Document (DPD): This is a local planning policy document that is given statutory weight by the Local Planning Regulations. All DPDs must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement and independent examination by the Secretary of State. Once adopted, development management decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Electric Vehicle Recharging Points EVRs: Electric Vehicle Recharging Points are a network of charging points that provide power for electric vehicles.

ELPS: Employment Land and Premises Study. This examines the availability of land in the Borough for employment use and forms part of the Local Plan Evidence Base.

Environment Agency (EA): Government agency set up with the aim of protecting or enhancing the environment, in order to play its part in achieving the objective of sustainable development.

Evidence Base: Qualitative and quantitative information gathered by the planning authority, or other organisations, to support preparation of Local Plan documents.

Green Belt: Areas of land where development is tightly controlled for the purposes of: restricting sprawl of large built-up areas; preventing neighbouring towns from merging; safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and preserving character and aiding urban regeneration by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Greenfield Land: Land which has not been previously developed, or which has now returned to its natural state.

Green Infrastructure: Network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces, including (but not limited to): hedges, outdoor sports facilities, coastal habitat, grassland and heathland, cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds, agricultural land, allotments, community gardens and urban farms, moorland, village greens, open spaces, degraded land, private gardens, wildlife habitats, parks, fields, open countryside, woodlands, street trees, ponds, lakes, waterways.

Gypsy: Members of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. In this document it is used to describe English (Romany) Gypsies, Scottish Travellers, Welsh Travellers and Eastern European Roma. English Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1988.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA): Assessments carried out to quantify the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and travellers (including Travelling Showpeople) in terms of residential and transit sites, and bricks and mortar accommodation.

Gypsies and Travellers: As defined for the purposes of the Housing Act 2004, in this document it includes all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Travelling Showpeople, Eastern European Roma and other Travellers who adopt a nomadic or semi-nomadic life.

Habitats: Are ecological or environmental areas that are inhabited by a particular species of animal, plant or other type of organism. It is the natural environment in which an organism lives, or the physical environment that surrounds a species population.

Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA): Aims to identify any aspects of the Local Plan that would have the potential to cause a likely significant effect on Natura 2000 or European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites), and to identify appropriate avoidance and mitigation strategies where such effects are identified. This is a legal requirement set within Article 6 of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Health and Wellbeing: A definition of the general condition of a person in terms of mind, body and spirit

House of Multiple Occupation (HMO): Is a property rented out by at least 3 people who are not from 1 'household' (e.g. a family) but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. It's sometimes called a house share. Typically, privately rented student accommodation falls under a HMO.

Housing Needs Assessment: A survey that estimates the number of households within an area that are in need of affordable housing and/or housing that meets their specific requirements.

Infrastructure: Roads, water supply, sewage disposal, schools and other community facilities needed to support housing, industrial and commercial uses.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP): The IDP is a supporting document to the Local Plan. Its purpose is to provide background evidence regarding the physical and social infrastructure likely to be needed to support identified development in the Borough over the plan period. It sets out a baseline assessment of existing infrastructure provision and provides an

indication of the existing capacity and shortfalls of all types of infrastructure. The document will be updated and monitored regularly and will assist in future delivery of infrastructure requirements. The IDP relies on the input of infrastructure partners and stakeholders and is therefore only as accurate as the plans of our partners.

Infrastructure Delivery Schedule (IDS): A list of projects identified as being required to support new development in the Borough. It is a 'live document' and is updated regularly as existing projects are delivered or new projects emerge.

Infrastructure Providers: Any organisation responsible for delivering infrastructure – including highways and utilities.

Key Service Centre: Towns or villages which act as service centres for surrounding areas, providing a range of services including: retail, leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services. They should have good public transport links to surrounding areas, or the potential for their development and enhancement

Linear Parks: Are linear parcels of land used as public parks providing recreational uses including walking and cycling.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): A project plan detailing the timetable for the production of DPDs and SPDs.

Local Planning Authority (LPA): Normally the Borough Council, Metropolitan district or Unitary Authority, but occasionally the County Council with the responsibility of planning for that area.

Local Service Centre: Towns or villages which provide a more limited range of services to the local community.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): A group of public, private, voluntary and community organisations and individuals that are responsible for preparing the Sustainable Community Strategy. Such partners include: the Borough Council, the County Council, the Police, the Fire Service and the NHS.

Local Transport Plan (LTP): Local Transport Plans are strategic documents which set out the local transport priorities in the long term. The current Local Transport Plan for Lancashire, Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) runs from 2011 to 2021. This LTP consists of a 10 year overarching strategy, supported by 3 year rolling implementation plans. Lancashire County Council is the transport authority representing West Lancashire and has prepared a joint

document with Blackpool Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council.

Low Carbon Development: Low-carbon developments consist of buildings which are specifically engineered with the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in mind. So by definition, a low carbon building is a building which emits significantly less carbon dioxide than regular buildings.

Main town centre uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres), leisure, entertainment facilities, the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs ,night clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

MHCLG (formerly DCLG): The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government sets national policy for planning, as well as local government, housing, urban regeneration and fire and rescue. They have responsibility for all race and equality and community cohesion related issues in England and for building regulations, fire safety and some housing issues in England and Wales.

Multiple Deprivation: The Government collects information to pinpoint pockets of deprivation, or to highlight variations within a wider geographical area. Information is collected on a range of topics to illustrate how deprived an area is, including: income; employment; health and disability; education, skills and training; barriers to housing and services; crime; and living environment.

National Nature Reserve: These are areas that are protected for their importance for their importance to wildlife and natural features. These sites are managed by Natural England. These sites often contain rare species or nationally important species of plant, insects, butterflies, birds, mammals etc.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): National government planning policy

Permitted development: Some minor types of development can be done through 'permitted development' meaning that planning permission does not need to be applied for. However, the LPA may have removed the permitted development rights through a planning condition, or an Article 4, so you should always check first.

Photovoltaics (PV): The direct conversion of solar radiation into electricity by the interaction of light with the electrons in a semiconductor device or cell.

Pitches: An area on a Travellers' site developed for a family unit to live. On socially rented sites, the area let to a licensee or a tenant for stationing caravans and other vehicles.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004: Built upon the principles of: sustainable development, addressing climate change, spatial planning, high quality design, good accessibility and community involvement.

Planning Policy Statements/Guidance (PPS/PPG): Documents produced by CLG that set out national policies relating to different areas of planning.

Plots: Areas on yard for Travelling Showpeople to live. As well as dwelling units, Travelling Showpeople often keep their commercial equipment on a plot.

Previously Developed Land (PDL) and Buildings: Is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings) and associated fixed surface infrastructure.

Unauthorised site: Land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers without the appropriate planning or other permissions. The term includes both unauthorised development and encampment

Ramsar sites: These are wetlands of international importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Registered Provider :A provider of social housing, registered with Tenant Services Authority under powers in the 2008 Housing and Regeneration Act. This term replaced 'Registered Social Landlord' (RSL) and encompasses housing associations, trusts, cooperatives and companies.

Renewable Energy: Energy which comes from natural resources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, and geothermal heat, which are renewable (naturally replenished).

Safeguarded Land: Land on the edge of certain settlements in West Lancashire formerly allocated to meet longer-term development needs if necessary.

Section 106 Agreement: Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement and is a way of delivering or addressing

matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.

Sequential Testing: Is designed to ensure that new development is steered to the most appropriate areas – for example land at a lower risk of flooding

Settled Community: Term used to describe non-Gypsies and Travellers who live in traditional housing

Shadow flicker: This occurs when the sun passes behind the hub of a wind turbine and casts a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, shadows pass over the same point causing an effect called ‘shadow flicker’.

SMART Objectives: The Government requires that objectives must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Spatial Planning: Under the former planning system, we were almost exclusively concerned with land use. Spatial planning is a wider concept that does not just take into account land use, but also considers other matters that could indirectly affect land use, or be affected by it, e.g. health and education, deprivation, crime and social inequality, climate change, flooding and the natural environment, transport and infrastructure, the rural economy and agriculture, cultural heritage and urban design. Put another way, spatial planning looks at places and how they function.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitat Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010

Special Protection Areas (SPA): These are sites which are strictly protected in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive. These sites are classified for rare and vulnerable birds, and for regularly occurring mitigation species.

Specialist Needs Housing: Providing suitable accommodation for specific sections of the community, including: seasonal agricultural workers; the elderly or retired; and students.

SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest): Sites with statutory protection of national and international importance.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): An assessment required by EU legislation

that is incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): Carried out in consultation with the Environment Agency (EA) to examine the risk of flooding in the Borough from sea and rivers. It includes information on flood risk areas, flood infrastructure, history of flooding in the Borough and expected future development pressures and their potential impact.

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA): This examines the availability of land in the Borough for residential and employment use and forms part of the Local Plan Evidence Base.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A document that sets out how the Council will involve the community and other stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of planning policy documents and on planning applications.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): These cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, and provide further detail on policies in the Local Plan or other Development Plan Documents.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): Development Plan Documents are subject to a “Sustainability Appraisal”, examining how the policies and proposals in the DPD would be likely to impact upon the economy, the environment, transport, and the community. This will ensure that decisions are made that accord with sustainable development.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS): Document prepared by the West Lancashire Local Strategic Partnership, the principles of which outline the needs and priorities of the community, and which also shapes the activities of the organisations within the partnership to fulfil those needs and priorities. The Local Plan must accord with the SCS.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Transit site / pitch: A site pitch intended for short term use, with a maximum period of stay

Transport Assessments: A Transport Assessment is a comprehensive and systematic process which sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. They identify what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Travel Plan: These are a package of measures produced by employers to encourage staff to use alternative means of transport than single occupancy car-use. Such plans include, for example, car sharing schemes, improving cycling facilities, dedicated bus services or restricting car parking allocations.

Travelling Showpeople: People who organise circuses and fairgrounds and who live on yards when not travelling between locations. Most travelling showpeople are members of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain

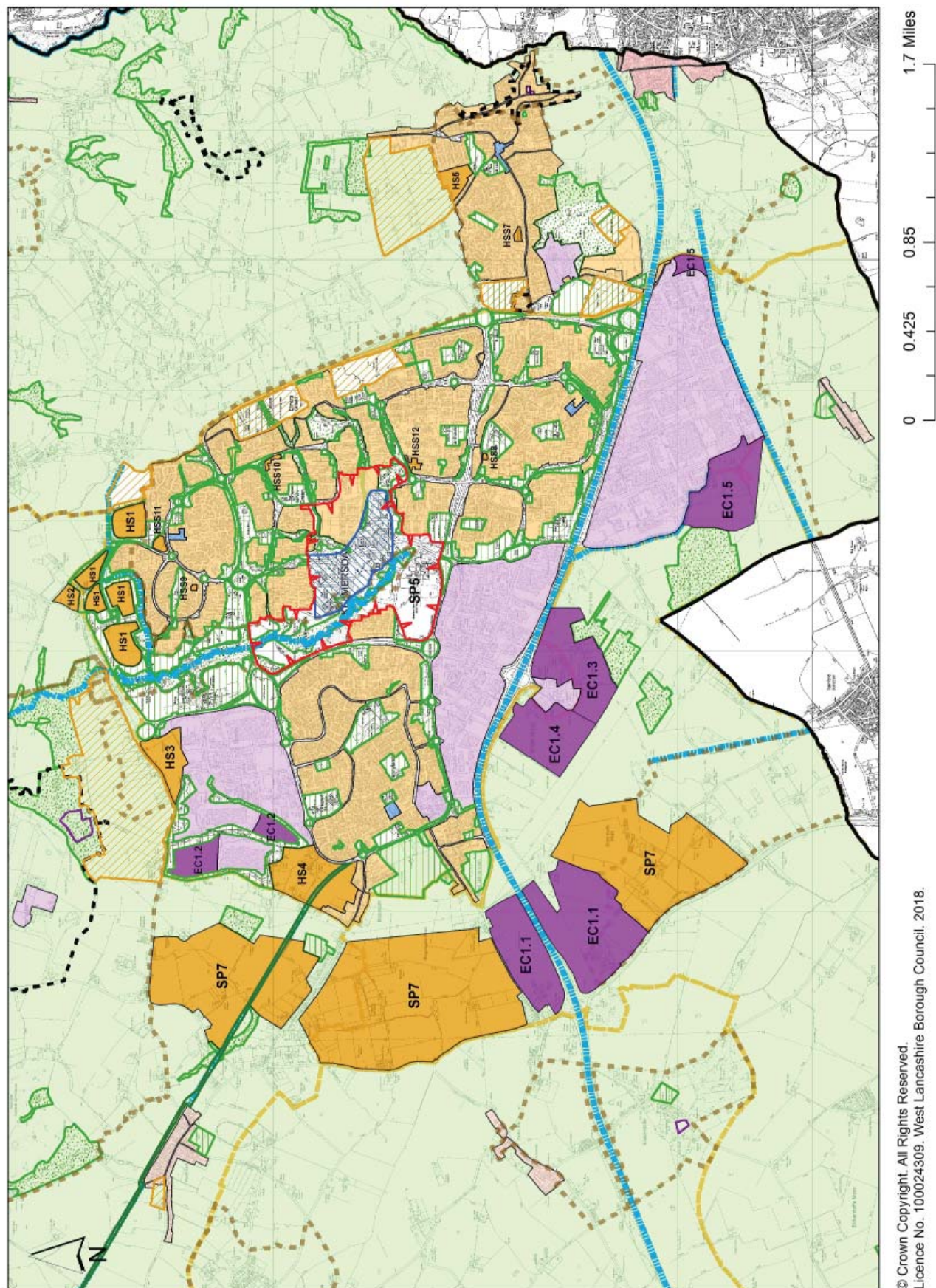
Unauthorised site: Land occupied by Gypsies and Travellers without the appropriate planning or other permissions. The term includes both unauthorised development and encampment.

West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027: The current Local Plan.

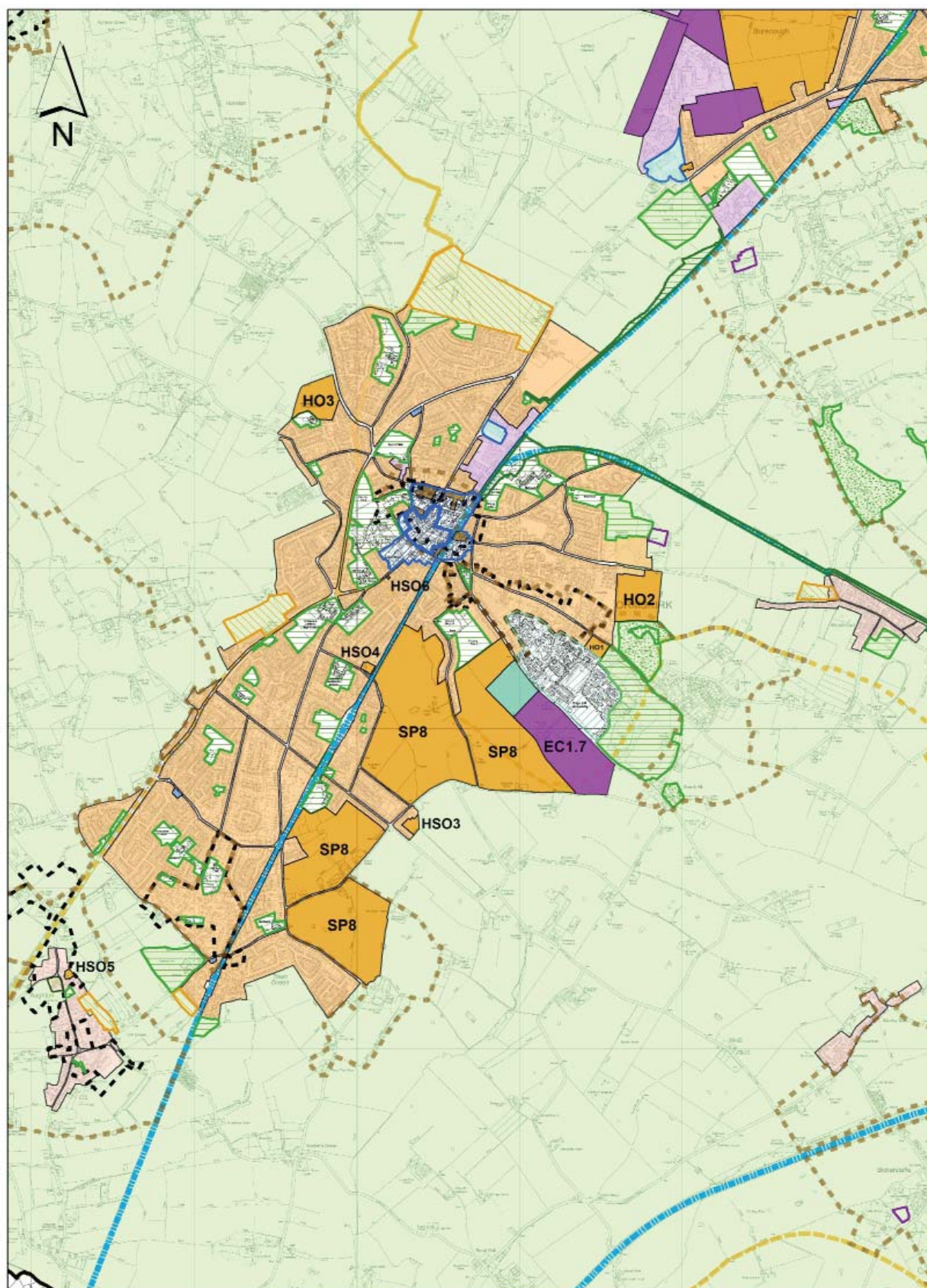
Appendix A: Area Maps

	Regional Town		Village and Local Centres
	Key Service Centre		Retail Park
	Key Sustainable Village		University
	Rural Sustainable Village		Green Infrastructure/ Open recreation Space
	Small Rural Village		Nature Conservation Sites
	Proposed Housing Allocation		Major Wildlife Corridors
	Proposed Employment Allocation		Linear Park
	Alternative Housing Options		Coastal Zone
	Proposed Purpose-Built Student Accommodation		Landscape Character
	Ormskirk Town Centre Development Opportunity		Landscape History
	Strategic Development Site		Conservation Areas
	Employment Sites		Scheduled Monuments
	Protected Land		Historic Parks and Gardens
	Town Centre		Green Belt
	Ormskirk Primary Shopping Area		Borough Boundary

Skelmersdale and Up Holland



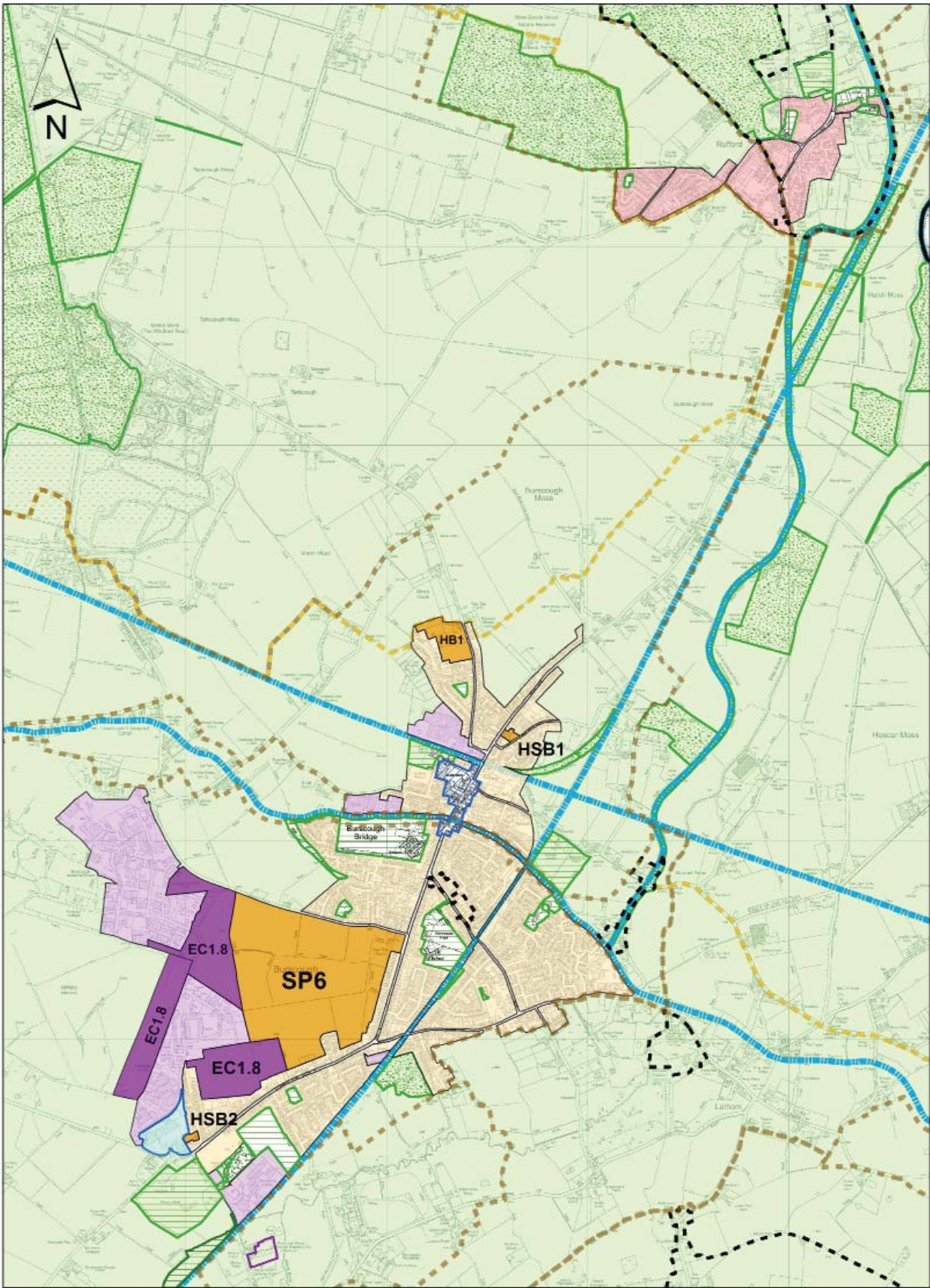
Ormskirk and Aughton



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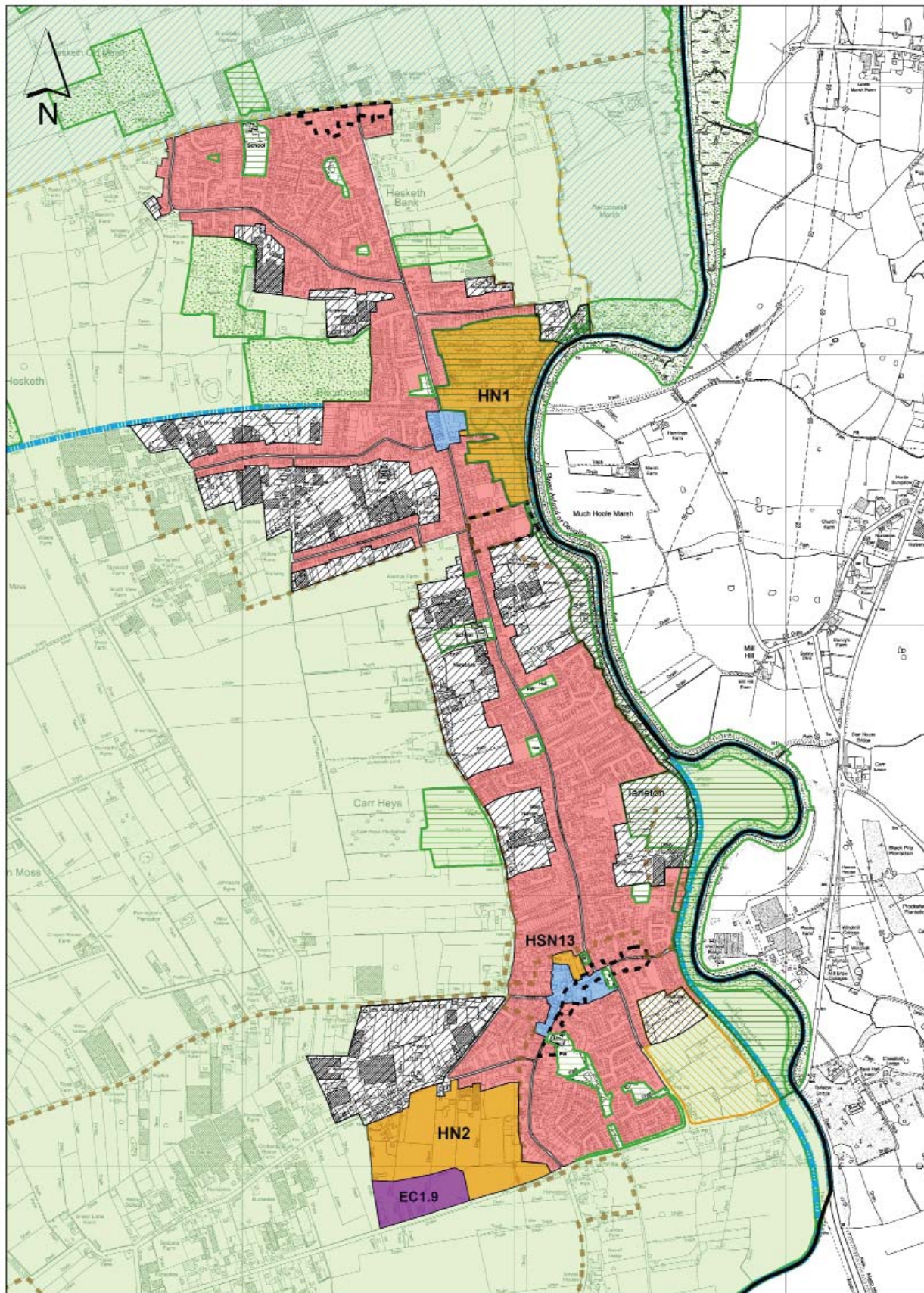
Burscough and Rufford



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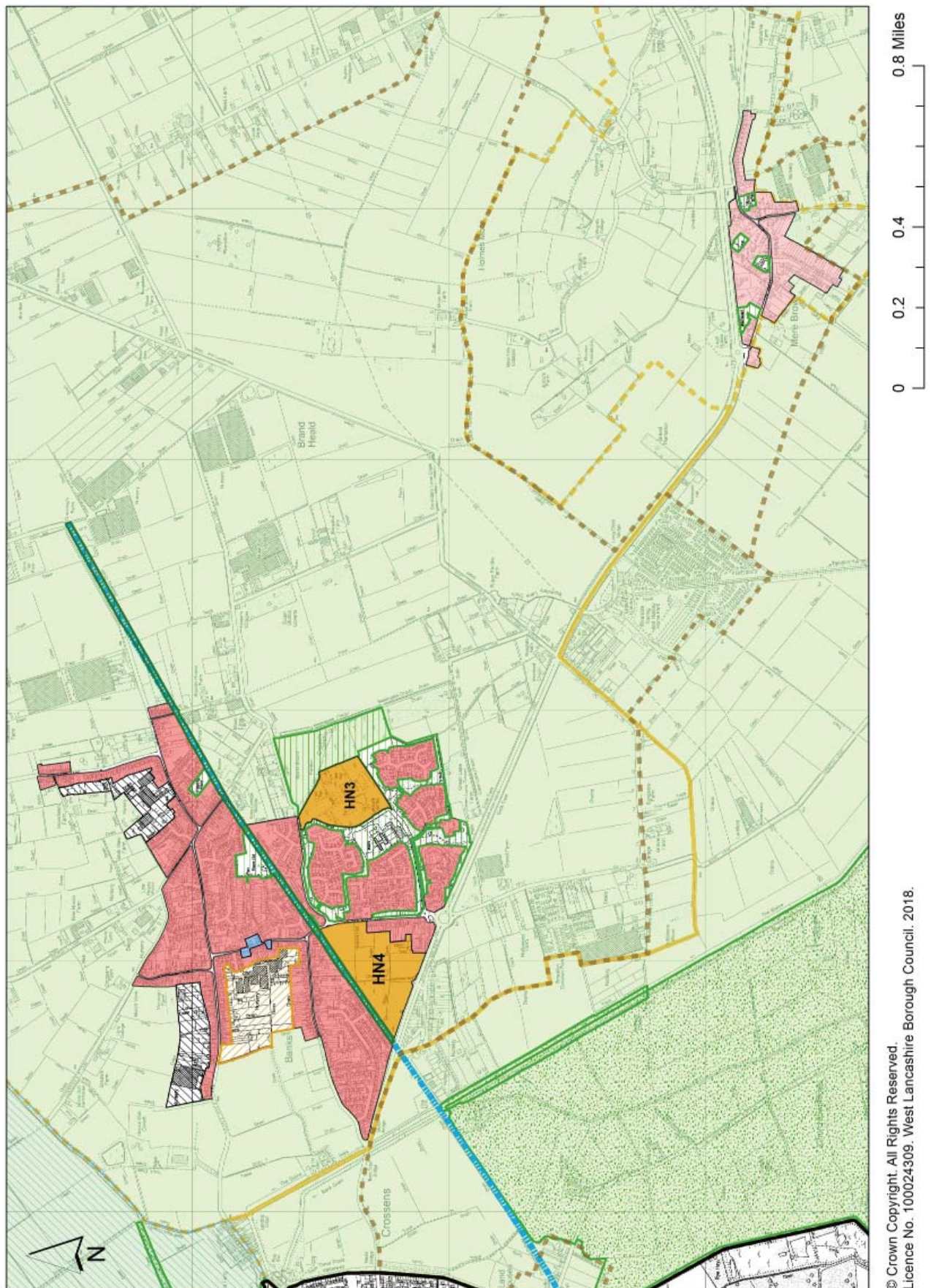
Tarleton and Hesketh Bank



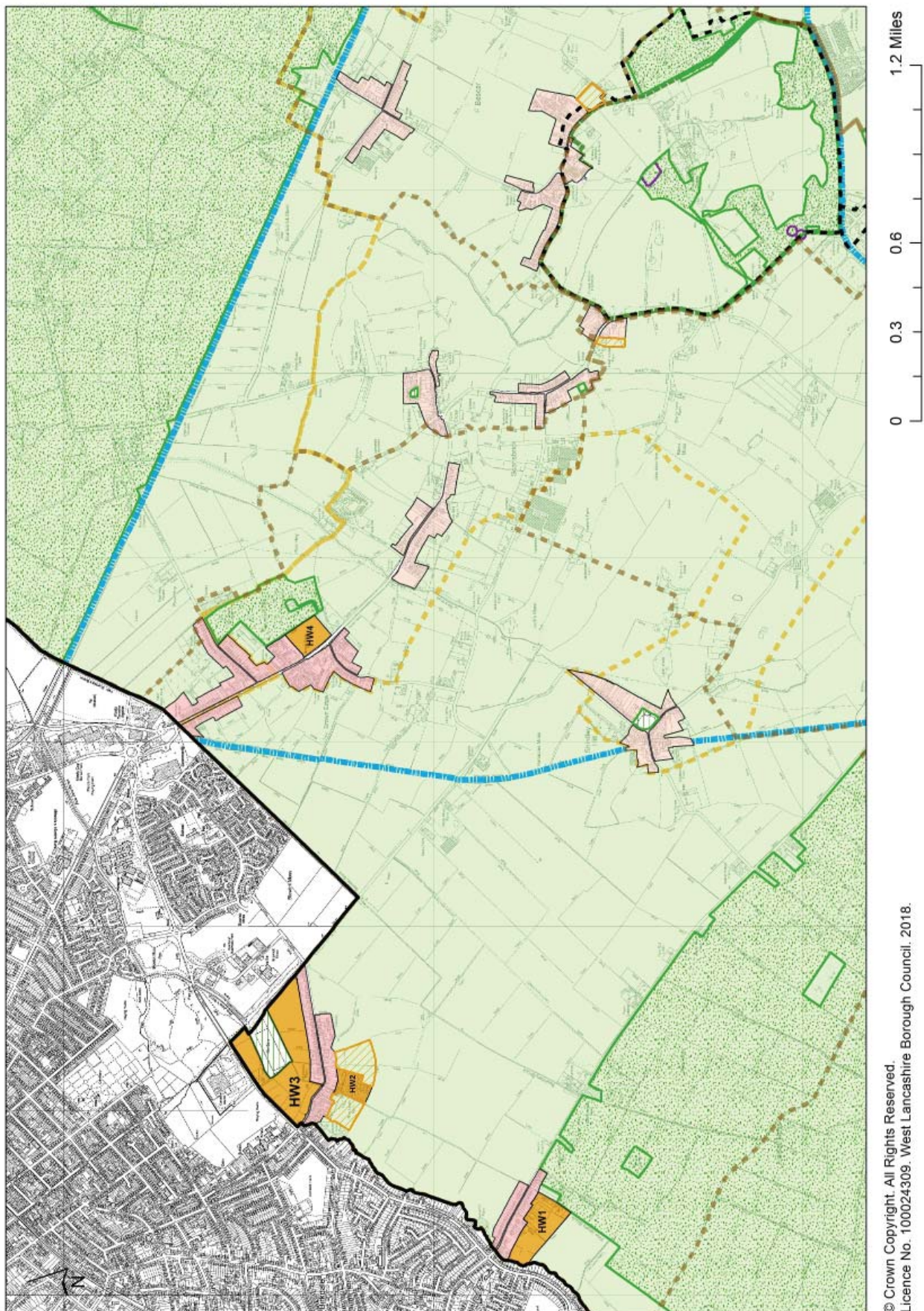
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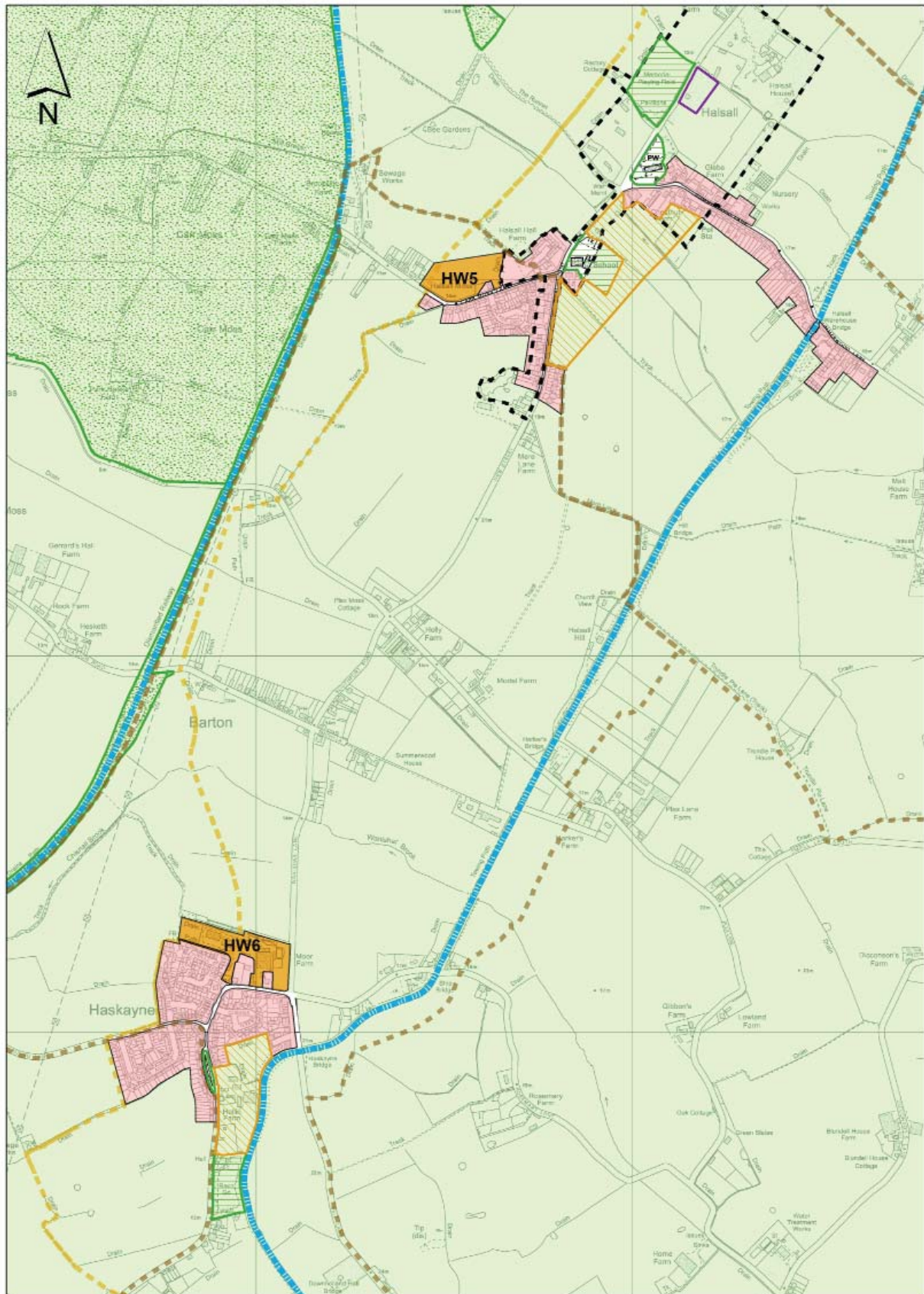
Banks and Mere Brow



Southport boundary and Scarisbrick



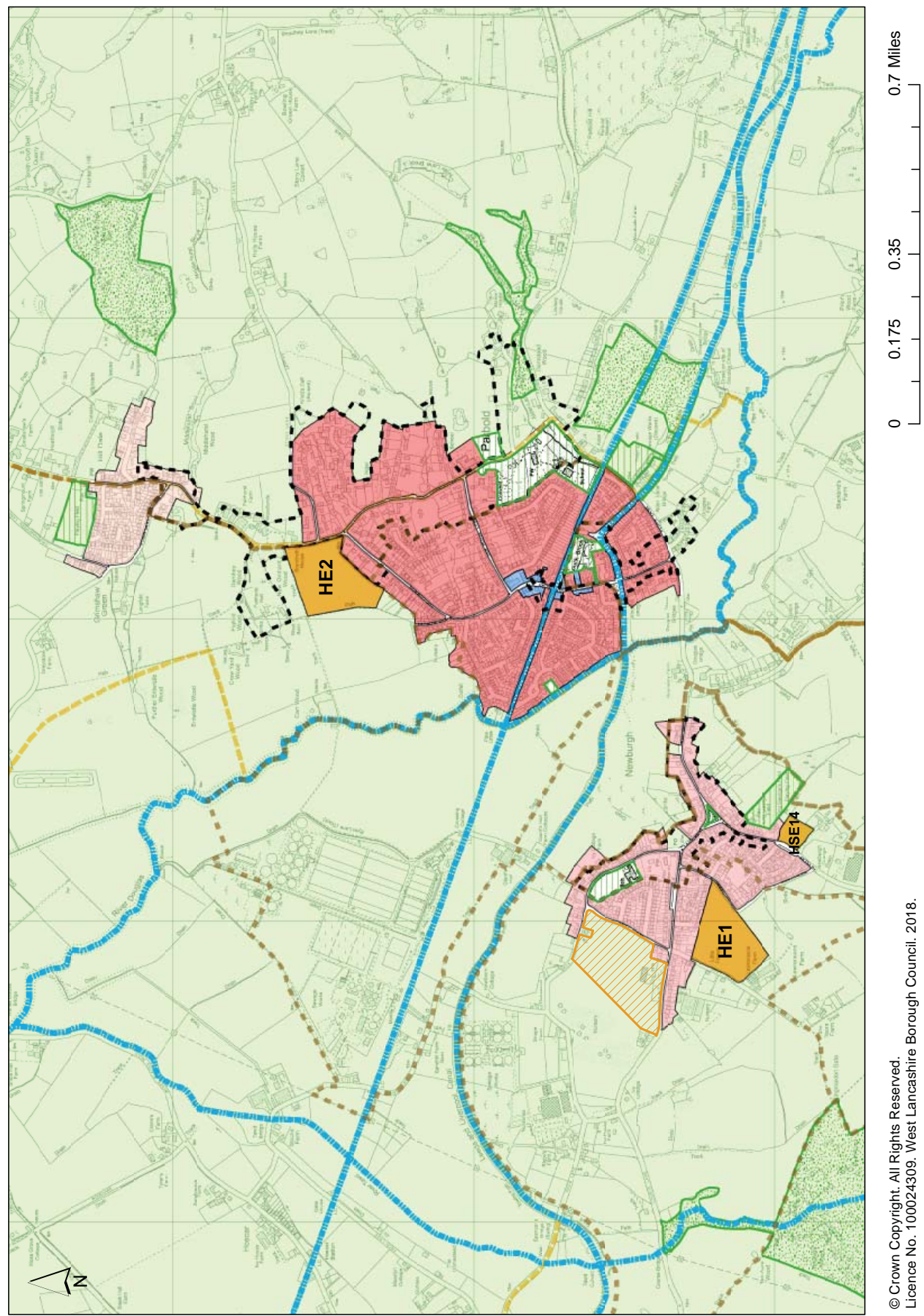
Halsall and Haskayne



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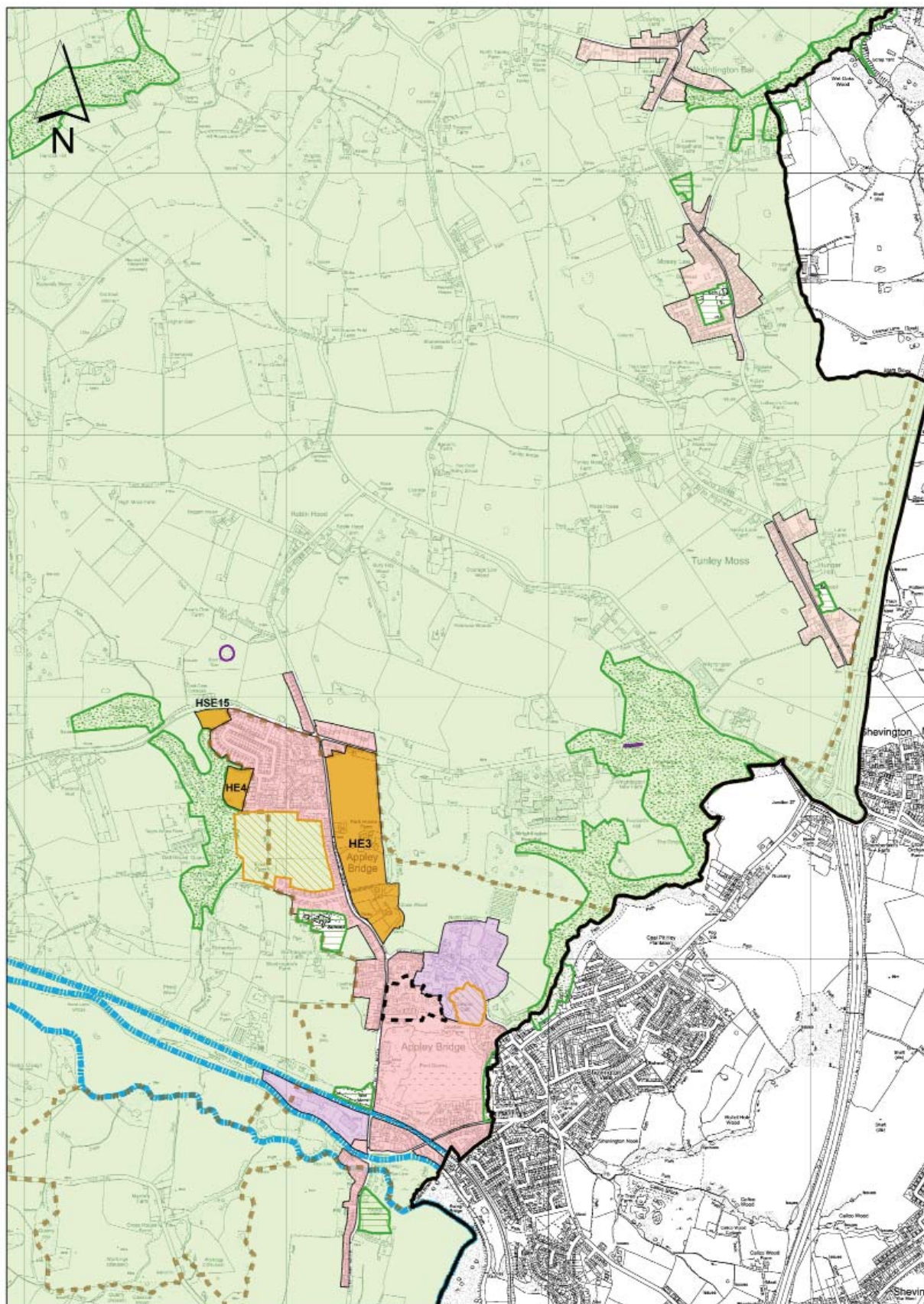
0 0.075 0.15 0.3 Miles

Parbold and Newburgh



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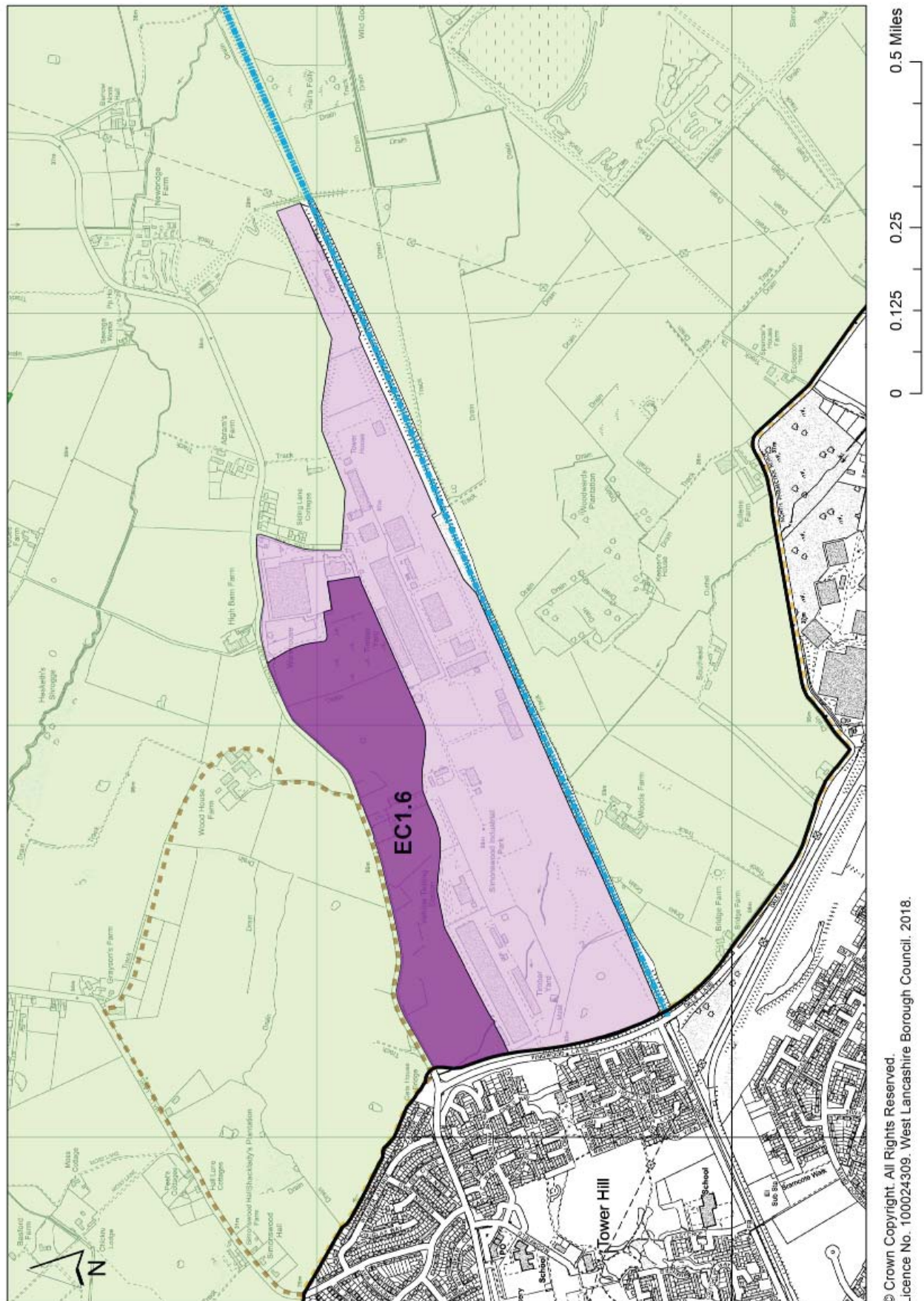
Appley Bridge and Wrightington



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0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

Simonswood



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Appendix B: Parking Standards

Class	Broad land use	Specific land use	Spaces per gross floors area (unless indicated)		Disabled parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
A1	Shops	Food retail	1 per 15 sqm	1 per 14 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 140 sqm (min 2 spaces)	1 per 350 sqm (min 2 spaces)	-	-	-
		Non-food retail	1 per 21 sqm	1 per 20 sqm			1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	-	-	-
		Retail warehouse	1 per 45 sqm	1 per 40 sqm			1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	-	-	-
A2	Financial and professional services	Banks, building societies, betting offices, estate and employment agencies, professional and financial services	1 per 32 sqm	1 per 30 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	-	-	
A3	Restaurants and cafés	Restaurants, cafés, snack bars, fast food and drive through	1 per 6 sqm of public floorspace	1 per 5 sqm of public floorspace	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 50 sqm (min 2)	1 space per 125 sqm	Negotiated on a case by case basis	Negotiated on a case by case basis	-
A4	Drinking establishments	Public houses / wine bars other drinking establishments									
A5	Hot food takeaways										

Class	Broad Land use	Specific Land Use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)		Disable parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
B1	Business	Office, business parks, research and development	1 per 32 sqm	1 per 30 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 300 sqm (min 2)	1 per 750 sqm (min 2)	-	-	
		Call centres	1 per 32sqm (starting point for all discussions)	1 per 30sqm (starting point for all discussions)	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 300 sqm (min 2)	1 per 750 sqm (min 2)	-	-	-
B2	General Industry	General Industry	1 per 48 sqm	1 per 45 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 450 sqm (min 2)	1 per 100 sqm (min 2)	-	-	
B8	Storage and distribution	Storage and distribution	1 per 100 sqm	1 per 100 sqm	1 per disabled employee + 2 or 5% of total	6 + 2% of total capacity	1 per 850 sqm (min 2)	1 per 2000 sqm (min 2)	-	-	

Class	Broad land use	Specific land use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)		Disabled parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	>200 bays	<200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
C1	Hotels	Hotels, boarding and guest houses	1 per bedroom including staff parking provision	1 per bedroom including staff parking provision	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 10 guest rooms (min 2)	1 per 25 guest rooms (min 2)	Negotiated on a case by case basis	1 (Hotels only)	
		Residential care homes / nursing homes	1 per 5 beds	1 per 5 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 40 beds (min 2)	1 per 100 beds (min 2)	-	-	
C2	Residential Institutions	University halls of residence and purpose built student accommodation (off-campus)	1 per 2 beds	1 per 2 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 10 beds (min 4)	1 per 50 beds (min 2)	-	-	
		Sheltered accommodation	1 per 3 beds	1 per 3 beds	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 beds (min 2)	1 per 50 beds (min 2)	-	-	

Class	Broad land use	Specific land use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)		Disabled parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
D1	Non residential institutions	Clinic and health centres (excluding hospitals)	1 per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room	1 per 2 staff + 4 per consulting room	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	2 per consulting room (min)	1 per 2 consulting rooms (min)	-	-	
		Creches, day nurseries and day centres	1 per member of staff	1 per member of staff	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 4 staff = 1 per 200sqm (min)	1 per 10 staff	Negotiated on a case by case basis	Negotiated on a case by case basis	
		Schools (primary and secondary)	2 per classroom	2 per classroom	Case by case	Case by case	1 per 5 staff + 1 per 3 students	1 per 10 staff	Case by case based on demand for school buses	1	
		Art galleries, museums, libraries	1 per 25 sqm	1 per 20 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 200 sqm (min 2)	1 per 500 sqm (min 2)	Case by case	1	
		Halls and places of worship	1 per 6 sqm	1 per 5 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 50 sqm (min 2)	1 per 125 sqm (min 2)			
D2	Assembly and leisure	Higher and further education	1 per 2 staff + 1 per 15 students	1 per 2 staff + 1 per 15 students	Case by case	Case by case	1 per 5 staff + 1 per 3 students	1 per 10 staff + 1 per 10 students	Case by case	1	
		Cinemas, bingo and casinos, conference centres, music and concert halls	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	

Class	Broad land use	Specific land use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)		Disabled parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	<200 bays	>200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
		General leisure, dance halls (not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums	1 per 23 sqm	1 per 22 sqm	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays +4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2 seats)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	

Class	Broad land use	Specific land use	Spaces per gross floor area (unless indicated)		Disabled parking		Bicycles	Motorcycles	Coaches		Comments
			A	B	>200 bays	<200 bays			Parking minimum	Drop off minimum	
	Miscellaneous Sui Generis	Theatres	1 per 6 seats	1 per 5 seats	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 20 seats (min 2)	1 per 50 seats (min 2)	Case by case	1	
		Motor car showrooms	1 per 52sqm internal showroom	1 per 50sqm internal showroom	3 bays or 6% of total	4 bays + 4% of total	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of 2 spaces	-	-	
		Petrol filling stations	1 space per pump	1 space per pump	1 space minimum	-	1 per 5 staff	Minimum of 2 spaces	-	-	

Accessibility Area Categories (to be used in conjunction with table F1-F4)	
Accessibility Area	Location
A	Non-metropolitan key service centres (Skelmersdale and Up Holland, Ormskirk with Aughton and Burscough)
B	All other areas, including key sustainable villages, rural sustainable villages and small rural villages as defined in SP1

Table F.1



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