
Report to: Planning Committee **Date of Meeting:** 8 February 2012

Subject: West Lancashire Local Plan 'Preferred Options'

Report of: Head of Planning Services **Wards Affected:** Kew, Birkdale

Is this a Key Decision? No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?**
No

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

To request Members' views on West Lancashire's Preferred Options document.

Recommendation

That **Planning Committee** support the proposals contained in the West Lancashire Preferred Options document, subject to any detailed views on the sites proposed as safeguarded land next to the borough boundary.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Jobs and Prosperity		✓	
3	Environmental Sustainability		✓	
4	Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Children and Young People		✓	
6	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
7	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		✓	

Reason for the Recommendation:

To enable a response to be made to West Lancashire's consultation by their deadline.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Legal None
Human Resources N/a
Equality 1. No Equality Implication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Equality Implications identified and mitigated <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equality Implication identified and risk remains <input type="checkbox"/>

Impact on Service Delivery:

None

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Head of Corporate Finance (FD1312/11) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD LD670/12) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Are there any other options available for consideration?

No

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the meeting of the Planning Committee.

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Background Papers:

West Lancashire's Local Plan Preferred Options document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Lancashire Borough Council consulted on their Preferred Options for the Core Strategy in May 2011. The current document includes a number of changes to reflect comments made and is available for consultation until 17 February 2012.
- 1.2 Taking advantage of new draft regulations, West Lancashire has rebranded their emerging Core Strategy document. This will now be called a Local Plan. This approach offers the opportunity to amalgamate three different documents - the Core Strategy, site allocations and development management policies - into one comprehensive document. It is also a simpler concept for people to understand.

2. Key changes

2.1 The key changes from the earlier Preferred Options document are:

- A slightly higher housing target of 4,650 new homes (was 4,500) and fewer homes in Skelmersdale
- A lower target of 75 hectares (was 87 ha) for employment land
- A Strategic Development Site at Yew Tree Farm, Burscough
- Site allocations for housing, employment and mixed-use developments
- Development Management policies
- A new and more robust 'Plan B' for housing development, including Green Belt sites

2.2 The previous Preferred Options document was criticised for relying too heavily on Skelmersdale to help meet the Borough's housing target. West Lancashire propose a more balanced distribution of sites for development, including sites in the Green Belt adjoining Ormskirk and Burscough.

2.3 The earlier Preferred Options included a long term support for reinstating the Burscough Curves and building the Ormskirk bypass. This remains in the current Preferred Options.

3. Safeguarded land

3.1 There is one new aspect of the revised document which is directly relevant to Sefton. The Preferred Options include provision for safeguarded land. This comprises two different types.

- 'Plan B' sites, or reserve sites, in case development does not come forward on the main allocated sites as quickly as expected. This comprises extra sites to meet an additional 15% over and above their existing target. Plan B will come into effect if less than 80% of the planned housing has been built after 5 and 10 years.
- Other land safeguarded to meet needs after the end of the plan, i.e. after 2027.

3.2 If the Plan B sites are not needed to meet any shortfall in the other sites coming forward, they would also be safeguarded to meet needs after 2027.

- 3.3 Both Plan B sites and sites safeguarded to meet needs beyond 2027 have been selected following a full appraisal of a number of potential sites in the West Lancashire Green Belt Study, which was carried out following a similar methodology to that used in Sefton.
- 3.4 Four of these sites are in the Green Belt close to the Sefton boundary, adjoining the eastern edge of Southport, and are shown on the plan. The first three are Plan B sites, the last is safeguarded until beyond 2027. The sites are at:
- 1 Fine Jane's Farm, Moss Road
 - 2 New Cut Lane [rear of Guildford Road]
 - 3 Moss Road (west) [this adjoins Benthams Way and lies opposite Dobbies garden centre]
 - 4 Moss Road (east) [next to Southport Business Park]
- 3.5 The sites at Fine Jane's Farm and New Cut Lane are currently in the Green Belt. The former site is bordered by development on two sides. The latter site is covered by buildings. The Moss Road sites are designated as 'open land' and are not in the Green Belt.
- 3.6 Sefton Council owns allotments within the Moss Road (east) site. This is the site which is safeguarded until after 2027. Any proposed development which may be considered after 2027 would have to be with the co-operation of this Council.

4. Implications

- 4.1 All the sites are next to existing areas of development within West Lancashire and would not result in any significant incursion into the Green Belt. They generally adjoin built up areas within Sefton, apart from the greenspace between Christ the King School and Dobbies, and greenspace adjoining Southport Business Park.
- 4.2 Development of land at Moss Road west would close off limited views from Bentham's Way, but this area is surrounded by the Southport Business Park and existing housing on Moss Lane (in West Lancashire) and hence would not have a major impact. Further, it is not in West Lancashire's Green Belt, so is the preferred location for new development after land in their urban areas.
- 4.3 None of these sites is directly next to any of the sites identified as being potentially suitable for development as part of the draft Sefton Green Belt study.
- 4.4 While the Plan B sites, if developed, would technically contribute to West Lancashire's housing requirement, they would in reality meet some of Southport's housing need. However, they would not be able to be counted against Sefton's housing requirement.
- 4.5 Being so close to the Sefton boundary, these sites would also rely on services and facilities within Sefton. This point is acknowledged in the West Lancashire Green Belt Study.

- 4.6 Like Sefton, West Lancashire Borough faces the challenge that they are running out of room for new development within their built-up areas. It has identified sites in the Green Belt to accommodate up to 750 dwellings in total, mainly around Ormskirk and Burscough. The Green Belt sites adjoining the Sefton borough boundary are small by comparison.
- 4.7 It is recommended that Members broadly support West Lancashire's Local Plan Preferred Option document, in particular the continuing support for the Ormskirk Bypass and the re-instatement of the Burscough Curves. Members' views are specifically requested on the proposal to allocate the four sites referred to above and shown on the attached plan as safeguarded land.

West Lancashire Local Plan Preferred Options: Land Safeguarded for Future Development

