

SPECIAL COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER 2014, 6.30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, CHORLEY

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1 **MINUTES OF MEETING TUESDAY, 22 JULY 2014 OF COUNCIL**

(Pages 3 - 8)

2 **DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.

If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

3 **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

4 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Members of the public who have requested the opportunity to ask question(s) on any item(s) on the agenda will have three minutes to put their question(s) to the relevant Councillor. Members of the public will be allowed to ask one short supplementary question.

It has been agreed that for this Special Council meeting a period of up to one hour will be permitted for public questions.

5 **CHORLEY LOCAL PLAN 2012-2026: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE : PROPOSED ALLOCATION**

(Pages 9 - 104)

Report of the Chief Executive (enclosed).

6 **DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL FOR UNITARY STATUS**

(Pages 105 -
112)

Report of the Chief Executive (enclosed).

7 **PROPOSED CONSULTATION ON A CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL
TAX LOCAL DISCOUNTS & EXEMPTIONS POLICY**

(Pages 113 -
134)

Report of the Chief Executive (enclosed).

8 **CHANGES TO COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

To approve the following change in Council appointments:

Councillor H Khan to replace Councillor J Berry as representative on the LCC Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee.

9 **ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT**

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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MINUTES OF COUNCIL

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 22 July 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Roy Lees (Mayor), Councillor Marion Lowe (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Eric Bell, Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Charlie Bromilow, Terry Brown, Henry Caunce, Jean Cronshaw, Matthew Crow, John Dalton, Doreen Dickinson, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Christopher France, Gordon France, Margaret France, Anthony Gee, Danny Gee, Mike Handley, Steve Holgate, Keith Iddon, Mark Jarnell, Hasina Khan, Paul Leadbetter, Adrian Lowe, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood, Mick Muncaster, Steve Murfitt, Beverley Murray, Mark Perks, Pauline Phipps, Dave Rogerson, Joyce Snape, Kim Snape, Ralph Snape, Richard Toon, John Walker, Paul Walmsley, Alan Whittaker and Peter Wilson

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Jamie Carson (Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community), Chris Moister (Head of Governance) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Dickinson and Peter Goldsworthy

14.C.154 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 3 June 2014 of Council

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last Council meeting held on 3 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.

14.C.155 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

14.C.156 Mayoral Announcements

On behalf of the Council the Mayor expressed sympathy to the family of Donald Simkin who had passed away in June. Mr Simkin had been Mayor of the Borough in 1993/4.

The Mayor then gave an update on forthcoming fundraising events, in particular a charity golf day to be held on 2 September at Duxbury Park Golf Course.

14.C.157 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

14.C.158 Chorley Council Annual Report 2013/14

Members received the Annual Report for 2013/14. Councillor Alistair Bradley highlighted several key achievements, including the Working Together With Families Programme, the Chorley Time Credits Programme and connecting communities through food pilot. A range of improvements to the town centre have been made and local businesses have benefitted from grants for improvements and expansion. The development of the inward investment plan had promoted economic growth in the borough and helped to create jobs.

The Council was proactively working with partners to deliver the Friday Street Health Centre and had taken steps to become a Dementia Friendly Community. The Council had delivered 129 affordable homes and put Chorley on the national map with the entry to Britain in Bloom. The success of the high street Credit Union was proving an alternative to pay day lenders. The recent Peer Challenge Review highlighted what the Council was doing well and identified where the Council could improve.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council proposed and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the Chorley Council Annual Report be noted.**

14.C.159 Fleet Street/Gillibrand Street Masterplan

Members considered the Fleet Street/Gillibrand Street Masterplan which had been subject to a five week consultation.

Over 100 responses had been received and following this, the Masterplan had been revised. The key points raised by the consultation included concerns over the loss of West Street Car Park, the protection of the St Johns Ambulance Hall and the former hospital building. Other comments were generally about car parking and support for the potential provision of an extra care facility.

Members supported the revision of the Masterplan and thanked the Council for acting on the consultation received. Councillor Peter Wilson gave assurances that West Street Car Park would not be built on, that discussions would take place for the St Johns Ambulance Hall to remain or be replaced, and that the hospital building façade would be retained.

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources proposed and Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council seconded and it was **RESOLVED –**

- 1. That the results of public consultation on the Fleet Street/Gillibrand Street Masterplan be noted,**
- 2. That approval be granted to the revised Fleet Street/Gillibrand Street Masterplan being used to inform the delivery of housing/extra care facility,**
- 3. That the revised Fleet Street/Gillibrand Street Masterplan be adopted for Development Control purposes.**

14.C.160 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document

Members considered the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). SPDs offered local planning authorities the opportunity to add guidance in specific policy areas. The document had been prepared in consultation with interested parties.

The SPD provided an overview of the various renewable and low carbon energy technologies available such as wind turbines and solar power, and identified the planning issues associated with each technology. The SPD also provided further advice and guidance for applicants on the requirements of the relevant Core Strategy policies.

18 representations had been received in relation to the consultation and a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues had been addressed were included in Appendix 2 of the report. Approximately 1,500 people and organisations had been consulted including statutory consultees, other organisations and members of the public that had asked to be kept informed of work on the Local Plan.

Councillor Paul Walmsey, Executive Member for Public Protection proposed and Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD be adopted as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.**

14.C.161 Executive Cabinet

Members considered a general report of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 26 June 2014.

Members raised issues relating to the Croston Flood Management Scheme, the Select Move Overview and Scrutiny Task Group report, the Friday Street Health Centre, the Youth Zone and Young Peoples' Champion post.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader proposed and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

14.C.162 Scrutiny Reporting Back 2013/14

Members considered the Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny in 2013/14 and noted the achievements of the Committee during the last Municipal Year.

Councillor Steve Holgate, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2013/14, proposed and Councillor Mark Perks, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2013/14, seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

14.C.163 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members considered a general report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 10 April and 19 June, including updates on the work of scrutiny task groups.

Councillor Mark Perks, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee proposed and Councillor June Molyneaux, Vice Chair seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

14.C.164 Governance Committee

Members considered a general report of the meeting of Governance Committee held on 25 June 2014.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter, Chair of the Governance Committee proposed and Councillor Julia Berry, Vice Chair, seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

14.C.165 Members Code of Conduct: Amendment to Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints

Members considered a report seeking approval to an amended procedure for the dealing of complaints made under the code of conduct for Members. This included the provision of guidance on the role of the Independent Member.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter, Chair of the Governance Committee proposed and Councillor Julia Berry, Vice Chair, seconded and it was **RESOLVED – That approval be granted to the proposed amendments to the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about the Conduct of Existing Members in accordance with the report and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to finalise the wording and incorporate those changes into the Council's Constitution.**

14.C.166 Proposed Changes to the Members Allowances Scheme and Constitution

Members considered a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel with recommendations about the Members Allowances Scheme and some consequential changes required to the Constitution.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader proposed and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was **RESOLVED –**

- 1. That approval be granted to the allowance paid to the role of Member Responsible (formally Portfolio Champions) at £714.27.**
- 2. That approval be granted to the creation of a role for Council Champions with an allowance of £314.44.**
- 3. That approval be granted to the definition of a Portfolio Champion being maintained and renamed as Member Responsible and the consequential Constitutional changes be approved.**
- 4. That approval be granted to the definition of a Council Champion, as set out in the report, and the consequential Constitutional changes; and**
- 5. That approval be granted to the proposals of the IRP in relation to reviewing support for Councillors with disabilities/health issues.**

14.C.167 Changes to Council Appointments

Members were asked to approve the following Conservative Group changes to Council Appointments for 2014/15.

Councillor Mark Perks, Leader of the Conservative Group proposed and Councillor Paul Leadbetter, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group seconded and it was **RESOLVED –**

1. **Councillor John Walker be appointed as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel.**
2. **Councillor Mark Perks to replace Councillor Greg Morgan as a member of the General Purposes Committee; the Market Walk Steering Group; the Appointments Panel; and the Chief Executive's Performance Review.**
3. **Councillor Greg Morgan to replace Councillor Mark Perks as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Performance Panel and as a substitute member of Development Control Committee.**
4. **Councillor Mick Muncaster to replace Councillor Henry Counce as a member of the Governance Committee.**
5. **Councillor John Dalton be appointed to the Equality Forum.**
6. **Councillor Kevin Joyce be appointed as a full member of the Market Walk Steering Committee rather than a substitute.**
7. **Councillor John Walker to replace Councillor Mick Muncaster on Chorley and District Sports Forum.**

14.C.168 Questions Asked under Council Procedure Rule 8

There were no questions under Procedure Rule 8.

14.C.169 To consider a Notice of Motion given in accordance with Council procedure Rule 10

The following Motion was submitted by Councillor Bev Murray:

Chorley Council supports the residents of Buckshaw Village and the patient participate group in their efforts to oppose the termination of the contract for Doctor Nimal at Buckshaw Village surgery. The Council believes that an excellent service is provided at the surgery and the decision by NHS England to terminate the contract and tender out the service undermines the good work that has been done.

The Council condemns the Tory led government putting dogma before common sense insisting that all NHS contracts go out to tender. The Council will continue to support the work of the MP, elected representatives and local residents to protect the current service in the interests of local users.

Councillor Mark Perks expressed concerns. He proposed, and Councillor Paul Leadbetter seconded, the following amendment to the second paragraph of the motion:

“To consult with and act in the best interests of the patients of Buckshaw Village Surgery. The Patient Participation Group at Buckshaw Village Surgery is deeply concerned to hear that the contract for Dr Muttucumar and his team is to be terminated in 12 months and put out to tender. As patients of the surgery, we do not believe this is in our best interests and we are distressed that it has been done without any patient consultation”.

On being put to the vote, Councillors cast their vote for the amended motion as follows:

FOR: Councillors Eric Bell, Henry Caunce, John Dalton, Doreen Dickinson, Keith Iddon, Paul Leadbetter, Greg Morgan, Michael Muncaster, Mark Perks, John Walker.

AGAINST: Councillors Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Charlie Bromilow, Terry Brown, Jean Cronshaw, Matthew Crow, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Christopher France, Gordon France, Margaret France, Anthony Gee, Danny Gee, Mike Handley, Steve Holgate, Mark Jarnell, Hasina Khan, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood, Steve Murfitt, Bev Murray, Pauline Phipps, Dave Rogerson, Joyce Snape, Kim Snape, Ralph Snape, Richard Toon, Paul Walmsley, Alan Whittaker, Peter Wilson, Roy Lees.

The vote was therefore LOST.

Councillor Bev Murray, then proposed, and Councillor Steve Holgate, seconded, that the motion as circulated to all Councillors be approved.

On being put to the vote, Councillors cast their vote as follows:

FOR: Councillors Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Charlie Bromilow, Terry Brown, Jean Cronshaw, Matthew Crow, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Christopher France, Gordon France, Margaret France, Anthony Gee, Danny Gee, Mike Handley, Steve Holgate, Mark Jarnell, Hasina Khan, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood, Steve Murfitt, Bev Murray, Pauline Phipps, Dave Rogerson, Joyce Snape, Kim Snape, Ralph Snape, Richard Toon, Paul Walmsley, Alan Whittaker, Peter Wilson, Roy Lees.

AGAINST: Councillors Eric Bell, Henry Caunce, John Dalton, Doreen Dickinson, Keith Iddon, Paul Leadbetter, Greg Morgan, Michael Muncaster, Mark Perks, John Walker.

The vote was therefore CARRIED and the motion approved.

Mayor

Date



Report of	Meeting	Date
Executive Leader	Special Council	04 September 2014

CHORLEY LOCAL PLAN 2012-26 - GYPSY AND TRAVELLER AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE – PROPOSED ALLOCATION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To report the results of consultation on the Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options document and approve the attached Proposed Allocation version for submission to the Local Plan Inspector. Members should note that a hard copy of a database report summarising all consultation responses is available to view in the members room. An electronic copy will also be made available on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Members are recommended to:
 - (i) Note the results of public consultation on the Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options – June 2014.
 - (ii) Approve the Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Proposed Allocation – September 2014 for submission to the Local Plan Inspector; and to give delegated authority to the Leader & Chief Executive to make minor changes to that document;
 - (iii) To delegate sign-off of the supporting documents to the Chief Executive and Executive Member for Economic Development and Partnerships: Sustainability Appraisal Supplement, Habitats Regulations Supplement, Statement of Consultation Supplement and Duty to Co-operate Supplement and a resolution to respond to the Inspectors Issues and Matters.
 - (iv) To delegate authority to officers to prepare a schedule of formal responses to those who have made comments, for consideration by the inspector.
 - (v) Request the s151 Officer to make suitable budget provision for the future delivery of the site.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Members will be aware that in order for the Local Plan to be found sound in relation to Gypsy and Traveller matters by the Local Plan Inspector, a site must be allocated for a minimum of five pitches, and a number of modifications must be made to the plan. Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options was endorsed for public consultation at Full Council on Tuesday 3 June 14.
4. 314 representations (including petitions, which are counted as one submission) were received and these have now been compiled and considered and have informed a revised version of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Proposed Allocation. It is intended that this 'submission' version will be submitted to the Local Plan Inspector for her consideration in advance of a re-opened Examination Hearing on 23rd and 24th September 2014.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason Please bold as appropriate	1, a change in service provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	2, a contract worth £100,000 or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- 5. The endorsement of a proposed site for allocation will enable the Local Plan examination to be re-convened and the Local Plan to be progressed to adoption.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 6. A total of nine sites have been considered for allocation, and consulted upon. This report and the appended document for submission to the inspector detail the consideration and rejection of those alternative sites.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	✓
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

- 7. At the Local Plan examination hearings, which took place in April 2013, the Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) of May 2007 was not considered sufficiently robust nor up-to date by the examining inspector. The inspector requested that further work be undertaken to address Gypsy and Traveller matters, to be followed by reconvened examination hearings. In October 2013 the Local Plan Inspector produced a Partial Report on the Local Plan. This concluded that, with a number of modifications, the Local Plan satisfied legal requirements and met the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in all regards, except for its provision for Gypsies and Travellers, and the Local Plan has been changed in accordance with the modifications.
- 8. The Central Lancashire authorities of Chorley, Preston City and South Ribble commissioned Arc4 to undertake a GTAA in July 2013 to identify the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, and the GTAA was published in January 2014. This identified a need for five permanent pitches for Gypsies/Travellers in

Chorley, fifteen in Preston, none in South Ribble and a Central Lancashire wide need for fifteen transit pitches to 2026. It found no need for Travelling Showpeople accommodation.

9. However, in considering this work, the examining inspector wrote to the Council on 7th February 2014, setting out concerns that it may under-estimate the level of need and that further detailed work was needed on this matter. However, in order to avoid further delay to the Local Plan, the Inspector asked the Council to consider putting forward further main modifications to ensure soundness. The Inspector suggested that the modifications should incorporate a number of points including:
 - The allocation of site(s) in the Local Plan sufficient to make provision for a minimum of five permanent residential pitches.
 - A commitment to undertake further work on the GTAA at the earliest opportunity within 12 months, with a view to resolving outstanding concerns.
 - A commitment to produce a separate Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Plan, to include the provision of Transit and Travelling Showpeople's sites within a prescribed, expeditious timescale that is set out in the Local Development Scheme.

10. Accordingly, the Council assessed a number of sites in order to come to a view on which site(s) should be allocated for a minimum of 5 pitches. Further work is continuing on the GTAA and the Council has committed to producing a separate Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD), scheduled to start in December 2014, with adoption scheduled for March 2016.

11. The 5 pitches is expressed as a minimum in view of the absence of information to quantify the final need. The Local Plan Inspector has determined that the matter of more specific need will be addressed through additional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) study work and this is to be considered in a separate Development Plan Document (DPD).

12. In June 2014, the Council resolved to consult on a 'preferred option' and proposed modifications to the plan. Nine potential sites were considered:

Site 1	Cowling Farm, Chorley
Site 2	Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley
Site 3	Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley
Site 4	Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock
Site 5	Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley
Site 6	Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley
Site 7	Haworth Road (previously named Crosse Hall Lane), Chorley
Site 8	Harrisons Farm, Adlington
Site 9	Hut Lane, Heath Charnock

13. Cowling Farm was considered to be the preferred site for allocation. The site is allocated for a mix of housing and employment (Policy HS1.5/EP1.6) in the Chorley Local Plan (2012 – 2026) comprising 9.5 hectares. Land for the gypsy and traveller site will be discounted from the allocated area. Positive attributes of the site were identified as follows;
 - The land is owned by the Council and is deliverable and developable;
 - A dedicated access is achievable;
 - The land is within the settlement of Chorley and is accessible to services and facilities;
 - It has the potential to meet the needs of the existing traveller community at Hut Lane providing a suitable and safe environment and the location will avoid their children having to change schools.
 - The site has the potential to meet the criteria as set out in PPTS.
 - It is sustainable, scoring Band B and would be compliant with Core Strategy Policy 1 and satisfy the criteria as set out in Core Strategy Policy 8.

14. It was suggested that the proposed site access could be from the southern side of the site to the south of Cowling Farm, off Cowling Road/Weavers Brow. There were a number of access solutions to be explored including the potential to create a permanent or temporary access across the green belt land adjacent to the settlement boundary of Chorley, which is also in the ownership of the Council. This was considered potentially to require the access road to be removed from the green belt designation and designated as part of the gypsy and traveller site and within Chorley settlement. Cowling Farm is a grade II listed building, however, it is located to the west of the proposed site and utilising land levels and securing an appropriate boundary treatment can ensure that there is no adverse impact on the setting of this listed building.
15. The public consultation ran from 4th June to 16th July 2014.

OVERVIEW OF CONSULTATION REPRESENTATIONS

16. A summary of the representations received are detailed in Appendix 2. A schedule summarising the full representations has been made available by hyperlink and as a hard copy in the member's room. In addition, officer met with representatives of the Cowling Farm Residents Group (at their request) and received a number of FOI requests and follow up requests for information and clarification.
17. In total 315 representations were received. 294 related to the specific sites considered and the remaining 21 related to general comments on the document as a whole.
18. Of the representations relating to sites, the majority (100) related to the preferred option, Cowling Farm. Most of these representations (89, one of which is a petition signed by 327 people) were objecting to the selection of this site as the preferred option. Two other petitions were also received, one for Northgate Drive signed by 187 people and one for Crosse Hall Lane (now named Haworth Road) signed by 419 people. A summary of the main reasons for objection is set out in Appendix 2. There was also some support for the selection of Cowling Farm as the preferred option. Eight representations were received in support and an additional 23 respondents who used the representation form to submit comments, but whose comments related to another site, answered 'yes' to Question 2 which asked 'Do you agree that the Council's preferred site at Cowling Farm should be taken forward as a formal allocation?'
19. A significant number of representations objecting to the other sites considered were also received with the exception of Land at Ackhurst Road and Hut Lane which received few representations.
20. A small number of the representations relating to the sites were neither supporting nor objecting to the site, they were mainly from statutory bodies such as English Heritage and the Highways Agency and provided advice on information that would need to be submitted if a planning application were received for that particular site. These are identified under the 'other' column in the table in Appendix 2.
21. Of the representations relating to general comments on the document, the majority were objecting to the consultation process as, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, properties neighbouring Cowling Farm and the other sites considered were not individually notified unless they had previously been involved in the Local Plan process or had asked to be kept informed of planning policy documents. A summary of these representations is also included in Appendix 2.
22. While the majority of representations were from residents, representations were also received from statutory consultees, neighbouring councils, three ward councillors (a joint submission) and a few Parish/Town Councils.
23. Cllrs Bradley, Murray and Walmsley jointly submitted a representation on behalf of those who had made known their concerns about the proposed Yarrow Bridge Site.
24. Adlington Town Council, Astley Village Parish Council, Euxton Parish Council and Heath Charnock Parish Council supported the selection of Cowling Farm. Adlington Town Council also considered the document to be well prepared and to explain the issues clearly.

25. Although not formerly recorded as a representation, Lindsay Hoyle MP also wrote to the Council seeking that the consultation was suspended due to the premise on which the requirement for a permanent site was established being flawed. This letter was forwarded to the Inspector.
26. Objections were also received from the settled community in terms of engagement on Gypsy and Traveller issues and sites before the Preferred Options consultation as the Preferred Options paper included a list of sites that had been put forward by the Gypsy and Traveller community.
27. The neighbouring Councils of Bolton, and West Lancs who previously objected to the Local Plan now support the plan. This matter is addressed and summarised in the Duty to Cooperate section of this report. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council did not make representations on the Preferred Options document but covered this issue in their response to the Duty to Cooperate consultation.
28. Representations were also made on the wording of the proposed modifications. Many respondents took issue with the requirement expressed as a 'minimum' of five pitches but did not suggest alternative wording. In particular Mr Hargreaves on behalf of the Linfoot family suggested changes to the wording and the detail of this is addressed later in this report.

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS AND PROPOSED RESPONSE

29. Representations were received on general matters and site specific matters. Appendix 2 details a summary of matters raised in representations. The following section of the report deals with the scope of comments and the Council's proposed response.

General Comments

Consultation

30. Representations were received in relation to 'general' matters. The majority of 'general' comments were objecting to the consultation process as, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement/Localism Act, properties neighbouring any of the nine sites were not individually notified unless they had previously been involved in the Local Plan process or had asked to be kept informed of planning policy documents. Requests were also made for the Council to suspend the consultation in the light of a perceived flaw in the process, for example, an inaccurate calculation in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Yarrow Bridge site where the distance to further/higher education was incorrect.
31. Although not formerly recorded as a representation, the MP also wrote to the Council seeking that the consultation was suspended due to the premise on which the requirement for a permanent site was established being flawed. This letter was forwarded to the Inspector.
32. Objections were also received from the settled community in terms of engagement on Gypsy and Traveller issues and sites before the Preferred Options consultation as the Preferred Options paper included a list of sites that had been put forward by the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Council's Response

33. The approach taken is in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the approach to consultation on planning policy documents. It does not require residents/businesses that are in the vicinity of a proposed allocation (or rejected alternatives) to be consulted on an individual basis. Such policy proposals are publicised by other means such as press releases, updates to the Council website, informing local Councillors, and parish Councils where they exist. In addition, for Local Plan consultations, the Council consults directly with everybody that is listed on our Local Plan consultation database. Individuals or interested groups received a Preferred Options consultation letter if they had requested their names to be added to the Local Plan consultation database. Others notified about the Preferred Options consultation were those who made representations to the Local Plan at an earlier stage (for example, a number of

residents living in the vicinity of Cowling Farm received letters because they had made comments at earlier stages of the Local Plan process and were therefore on the database). The Statement of Consultation Supplement identifies the consultation which has been undertaken during the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options which forms part of the Chorley local Plan 2012-2026.

34. References by some objectors to a lack of compliance with the Localism Act 2011 referred, in turn, to a duty to consult – this is considered to be in relation to the provision in section 122, whereby provision is made for mandatory pre-application consultation by an applicant before submission of a planning application. This provision, yet to be brought into force, is not relevant to publicity for, and consultation upon, a proposed modification to a development plan document.
35. In terms of inaccuracies in the evidence base or consultation documents, it is considered that the purpose of consultation is to allow an opportunity for such concerns to be brought to the attention of the Council, to enable the Council to correct such matters and reconsider the approach to &/or selection of a site. The Council has corrected the inaccurate distance for further/higher education in the Sustainability Appraisal for Yarrow Bridge, this does not affect the overall band of the site.
36. The representation form and guidance notes provide information and questions which cover the legal requirements required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition to this form the Council has accepted comments by letter and email. A direct link was placed on the homepage of the Council's website when concerns were raised about the accessibility of the information. The Council also made an online consultation form available through Survey Monkey. The Council considers the process of arriving at an allocation to be legally compliant and sound.
37. The letter received from the MP was forwarded to the Inspector.
38. The Preferred Options consultation was a continuation of the Local Plan Examination. As part of preparation of the Local Plan a 'call for sites' was undertaken which included potential sites for Gypsies and Travellers.

Sustainability Appraisal – Approach to & Explanation of preferred site – Scope of Sites for Consideration – transparency of process

39. Representations were also made on the accuracy and/or appropriateness of the sustainability assessment/appraisal. These included lack of explanation of the SA to inform the preferred site and the lack of justification for the preferred site.
40. Chris Weetman on behalf of Cowling residents provided an alternative assessment of sites using weighting for the indicators falling within SA objectives S1, S2, ENE3 and ENE5. These objectives are as follows:
 - S1: To reduce the need to travel and improve transport accessibility in sustainable ways.
 - S2: To improve health and wellbeing and/or improve access to health care, sport and recreation, culture, community and education facilities and services, particularly in deprived areas.
 - ENE3: To tackle climate change and enable sustainable use of the earth's resources.
 - ENE5: To protect and enhance water resources and minimise pollution of water, air and soil.
41. He recommended that on sustainability grounds using this methodology the best locations for a Gypsy and Traveller site are either a combination of Crosse Hall Lane and Northgate Drive, Northgate Drive by itself or Cabbage Hall Fields by itself.
42. Representations were also made about the transparency and accuracy of the approach to site selection, and the dismissal of Green Belt sites put forward by the Traveller community when the Council have suggested several Green Belt sites.

43. An additional site was also suggested adjacent to the Hartwood/M61 roundabout. This has been identified as Gale Moss. Reference to this is included in the Statement of Consultation.

Council's Response

44. National Planning Practice Guidance states "The sustainability appraisal should only focus on what is needed to assess the likely significant effects of the Local Plan. It should focus on the environmental, economic and social impacts that are likely to be significant. It does not need to be done in any more detail, or using more resources, than is considered to be appropriate for the content and level of detail in the Local Plan."
45. The SA scoring is not weighted as it is not considered that some indicators have more importance. The purpose of the SA is to give a general overview of the sustainability of sites to be able to compare their sustainability, but it is not the only factor taken into consideration when deciding allocations. A number of other factors such as deliverability need to be taken into consideration.
46. The Council considers that the methodology for Sustainability Appraisal/Assessment has already been considered by the Inspector, and has been found sound in her partial report.
47. Further analysis of the merits of each site has been undertaken. This has considered the information provided from residents and stakeholders, including consultees and has reviewed the Sustainability Indicators for each site. Where considered necessary the actual premises measured to are included.
48. The Council has also examined sites put forward by the Gypsy and Traveller community as identified at Appendix 2 of the Preferred Options Document. All are in private ownership therefore the Council has no control over the land and cannot ensure deliverability; a number have been granted planning permission; a number are in the Green Belt and are deemed inappropriate development in the Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites; and a number lie within a high risk flood zone. The Council endeavoured to find the location of all sites identified but were not able to identify the exact location of one site as not enough information or exact site details were provided by the gypsy and traveller community despite providing plans of the borough and having a meeting. The Council has assessed land in its ownership, over which it has control and therefore can ensure deliverability. The Council has also asked other stakeholders with major landholdings whether they have any suitable land available and they have confirmed that they do not have any suitable sites. In addition the Council has looked at sites suggested through its "call for sites" for the Local Plan in 2005 and 2007. Yarrow Bridge and Westhoughton Road have been included as they are previously developed sites in the Green Belt. The Hut Lane site has been included because it received temporary permission in July 2013 for 2 years and Planning Policy for Traveller sites states that the merits of using it permanently should be assessed against the new sites.
49. The site suggested, Gale Moss, is a prime employment allocation adjacent to the M61 junction catering for all employment uses. It forms an important site for employment land supply in the Borough and has therefore not been considered as an allocation for Gypsy and Traveller provision.

Financial Considerations

50. Several comments were made about the impact upon property values, and that prospective house sales had 'fallen through' due to the consultation. Questions were raised as to whether the Council would compensate for a loss in property values &/or in relation to sales that had 'fallen through'
51. Comments were also received on the financial merits of permitting the Linfoot family to remain on the Heath Paddock site, in that there would be no further cost in doing so, and that the 'opportunity cost' in allocating another site would not be lost. Other comments were made in relation to specific sites (e.g. the relative costs of each site; that Cowling Farm was the most expensive option; the potential impact on land value for the wider allocation at Cowling Farm) and these are addressed later in the report.

Council's Response

52. The Council considers that actual or perceived impact on property value is not a material planning consideration.
53. In terms of the impact upon the public purse or taxpayer in allocating a site, the Council is charged with assessing the objectively met needs of its area, which includes the needs of Gypsies & Travellers. The model for delivery could be a Council owned and managed site, or a private site.
54. The Council may be eligible for grant funding. However, the prospect of achieving funding of a site per se by the Council or any party, including the potential for grant funding, is a matter that may be relevant to the deliverability of a proposed allocation in a development plan document.

Representations from Statutory Consultees

55. Some statutory agencies submitted information on what would be required if a planning application were submitted.
56. English Heritage and The Coal Authority provided comments on specific sites.
57. United Utilities gave information on connections for foul and surface water for all sites and the Environment Agency provided further comments on all of the sites considered.

Council's Response

58. Site specific comments from English Heritage and The Coal Authority have been included in the 'representations submitted in relation to specific sites' section of this report.
59. Comments from United Utilities and the Environment Agency have been addressed in the review of the assessment of each site.

Representations from the existing Gypsy and Traveller Community

60. Members may wish to note that Council officers met with the Linfoot family and their consultant on 8th July 2014, with the primary objective of establishing detailed need requirements in order to inform the design and layout of the final allocated site. At that meeting, the Linfoot family indicated that they were prepared to consider Cowling Farm.
61. The only person identifying themselves as a Gypsy/Traveller who made representations was Mr Linfoot. Representations were also made on behalf of the Hut Lane Travellers by their consultant Mr Hargreaves.
62. A response was submitted from a consultant representing the Traveller community at Hut Lane. Whilst the 'current' need at Hut Lane is 2 pitches (as established in the draft GTAA), they have expressed a need for 5 pitches now in order to accommodate immediate relatives with the potential for further expansion over the plan period.
63. They have a strong preference for a site in their own ownership and control, if possible through freehold ownership. They support the proposal for a 0.4 ha site. If they were able to acquire it they would wish to see it developed as an extended family site, rather than divided into discrete pitches.
64. They have current needs for two mobile homes, three touring caravans, of which one would only be in storage while on site, a double utility block, plus parking for three vans and two cars. They would also welcome incorporating a play area/garden for the children. Factoring in the needs of the extended family, they would want the site to be able to accommodate an additional two touring caravans and parking for two vans and one car.
65. Their first preference is to remain at their existing site, particularly if they were able to acquire the other half of the original Hut Lane site. In terms of alternative sites, the family's strong preference is for the Council preferred site at Cowling Farm. A key objective for the family would be to enable the site to be delivered quickly without substantial disruption from the subsequent development of the rest of the site. They consider the most satisfactory way of achieving this would be to locate the Traveller site in the bottom south-west corner of the larger site with its own access from Cowling Road/Weavers Brow. The other site that could

be attractive to the family would be Harrison's Farm, Adlington, but only the area south east of the farm-house with access from Old School Lane. All the other sites have been discounted for reasons similar to those put forward in the Preferred Options Report.

66. A separate response from Mr Linfoot expressed a desire to remain at Hut Lane and did not support the allocation of Cowling Farm due to issues around accessing the site through the Green Belt.

Representations on Proposed Modifications

67. Many representations were received objecting to the requirement being expressed as a 'minimum' of five pitches. They are concerned that this means that more pitches will be provided at Cowling Farm due to the site being 9.5ha.
68. Mr Hargreaves on behalf of the Linfoot family suggested changes to the proposed modification to paragraph 5.7 of the Local Plan. He stated that the serious accommodation shortage should be recognised and suggested the following text is added "There is a critical shortage of accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople nationally, regionally and locally within Central Lancashire."

Council's Response

69. The Council is tasked with allocating a site for a minimum of 5 pitches as directed by the Local Plan Inspector. The figure of 5 is expressed as a minimum in the context of ongoing research. This figure is largely based on the needs of the existing Traveller community at Hut Lane. A final Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Needs Assessment will inform definitive need figures which will be progressed through a separate Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan.
70. No change is proposed to the proposed modification MMEC66 para 5.7 text because the Council are making provision for a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site in the Borough within the Local Plan. Para 5.10 of the proposed modifications is explicit that there may be a need resulting from overcrowding on existing sites, concealed households or those living in bricks and mortar which the current GTAA has been unable to identify. Para 5.11 of the proposed modifications confirms the Council now commits to undertake further work on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), this work has now started. Para 5.11 of the proposed modifications also indicates the Council will prepare a joint Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Local Plan in line with the outcomes of the further GTAA work , to include transit site provision.

Other matters

71. Other non-site specific objections were received relating to failure by the Council to follow a transparent, fair and proper process, in particular that the whole matter should be restarted and also that the report to Full Council was a part 2 item.

Council's Response

72. The local plan examination has been effectively suspended while the Council considers the allocation of a suitable site for a minimum of five pitches. As such, the formal stages for plan preparation are not restarted. The Council is following the direction and timetable set by the examining inspector.
73. The reasons for the report to Full Council on 3 June 2014 being a part 2 report were that firstly it contained personal information relating to the children of potential occupants of the site. Secondly the fact that a particular site could potentially be allocated might have had an effect on the value of neighbouring land. In the event that certain sites considered in the report were not approved by members for consultation there would be no public interest in this information being published. However consultation for all sites mentioned in the report was approved on 3 June which meant that the report could then be published.
74. The Council released the part 2 report on 3rd July 2014 shortly after the Full Council meeting.

Representations submitted in relation to specific sites

75. This section summarises the site specific objections, and in response, the Council has reviewed the sustainability assessments, and reviewed the relative merits of each site to inform the conclusion on the recommended site for proposed allocation.
76. It includes reference to general matters such as property values, for which the Council response is not repeated.

Site 1 - Cowling Farm, Chorley – Proposed Allocation*Objections*

77. The main reasons for objection include issues such as road access, use of Green Belt land for the access which is the subject of a restrictive covenant, topography of the site, the impact on property prices and local businesses and concerns that the size of the site will attract more Gypsies and Travellers and grow out of control.

Council's Response

78. The access to the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site has yet to be finalised. LCC Highways have provided an updated response. They identify that there are three potential accesses to the site with access off Moorland Gate being the preferred access route from a highways perspective. Moorland Gate is an adopted public highway to the turning head end of the road and there is scope for the sort of improvements that they would wish to see to enable access between the site and local facilities on foot and by bus (for example a formal footway along the eastern side of the road). Current access made off the road by the businesses served off Moorland Gate would not be impeded by the projected use of the site, although there would be an inevitable loss of on-street parking at the junction should a new access be taken off Moorland Gate. Details of how the access will be designed, laid out and constructed will be submitted as part of any future planning application for an allocated site which is when more thorough highways assessments will be undertaken by Lancashire County Council.
79. Under Para 90 of the Framework, certain forms of development are 'not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purpose of including land in the Green Belt'. These include 'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.' In a case where access is required through the Green Belt, this would not affect the openness of the Green Belt and the site would be wholly situated within an area allocated for a mix of housing and employment use. However, in light of more detailed comments from LCC Highways it is not necessary to pursue this access and it will not be necessary to seek the agreement to release the covenants for the specific area of land at Cowling Farm.
80. The undulating topography of the site will be taken account of as part of the masterplanning process for the site. It is considered that some contouring will be required to facilitate the development of the Gypsy and Traveller pitches and the allocation as a whole.
81. The Preferred Options document is explicit and refers that the site area required for Cowling Farm is estimated at 0.4 hectares. The site will be located within the 9.5 hectare site allocated in the Chorley Local Plan for a mix of employment and housing. If a specific part of the allocation is identified now for the Gypsy and Traveller element it will prejudice:
- Community engagement between the settled and Traveller community.
 - The masterplanning process.
 - Highways options in relation to the delivery of the mixed use site.
82. As with any other development, the Council will liaise with the police authority in order to arrive at an appropriate design and layout and ensure that the site is fit for purpose. Measures will be implemented in order to help prevent crime and promote community safety. In relation to the fear of an illegal encampment on the adjacent land, if this were to occur the Council has enforcement powers and risk can be mitigated by security measures.

83. English Heritage submitted representations identifying the need for a heritage impact assessment to be undertaken for Cowling Farm as it is located in close proximity to a listed building. They agreed that if this work was undertaken they would withdraw their objection. The Council have now prepared a heritage impact assessment for this site in co-operation with English Heritage and they have agreed that mitigation will secure an acceptable relationship between development on the proposed site and the designated heritage asset.
84. The Environment Agency support the preferred option for Gypsy and Traveller provision at Cowling Farm, Chorley.
85. United Utilities position remains as per their historic comments and they would seek the disposal of surface water to be directed to the local river and foul effluent to be discharged into the Croston Trunk sewer, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Access to a clean water supply is also possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree.

Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley – Not Proposed

Objections

86. The main reasons for objection include the site is in the Green Belt, impact on the River Yarrow and adjacent woodland, impact on the pub and hotel and property prices, road safety issues, contamination issues and potential flood risk.

Council's Response

87. Yarrow Bridge has been considered and discounted because it falls within the Green Belt and there are no 'exceptional' circumstances which would warrant its allocation as the Council has identified other potential sites that do not fall within the Green Belt.
88. Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 29: Water Management seeks to improve water quality, water management and reduce the risk of flooding. Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Policy BNE1 - Design Criteria for New Development (criteria f) protects important natural habitats and landscape features such as mature trees and hedgerows. Policy BNE9: - Trees also protects trees. Any planning application for development of this site would have to conform to these policies. Spring Woods is an ancient woodland but the ancient woodland buffer zone is outside the Yarrow Bridge site boundary.
89. Lancashire County Council Highways have considered relevant highways issues including the bus stop and stated that there may need to be localised widening and/or right turn provision to facilitate such an allocation. Suitable local safety improvements will also be expected to be carried out within close proximity of the site access to mitigate any adverse impact on the safety of road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. This should include appropriate surface level crossings such as pedestrian refuges, zebra crossings etc.
90. The Preferred Options report states that there are no known contamination issues and a low likelihood of contamination, however further checks are needed to confirm this. The nature of contamination would be verified through ground investigation works that would be undertaken as part of any proposed allocation and appropriate mitigation measures undertaken.
91. Advice in relation to flooding and water issues has been provided by the Environment Agency and United Utilities and this has contributed to detailed site assessments. The Environment Agency has confirmed the site boundary of Yarrow Bridge is not located in Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding), although the access road to the site from Bolton Road (A6) would be. Therefore the Environment Agency advise that no vulnerable part of the development, which in this case would be caravans, should be located in Flood Zone 2. Provided that this is adhered to, the Environment Agency are satisfied that the intended use of the site would not be an unacceptable level of flood risk.

Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley – Not Proposed*Representations*

92. The main reasons for objection include loss of privacy and noise and disturbance from the site, impact on house prices, loss of the only greenspace in the area and access.

Council's Response

93. The Council has discounted this site as a Gypsy and Traveller site because of the changes in the levels on site which are likely to restrict the number of pitches that could be accommodated.
94. Chorley Local Plan 2012-26 Policy BNE1 - Design Criteria for New Development criteria g) seeks to ensure that any new development will not cause 'an unacceptable degree of noise disturbance to surrounding land uses'. This issue can be addressed at the planning application stage, however in the Council's judgement there is no evidence that the requirements of this policy cannot be met.
95. The site is not allocated as a children's playspace, rather it is allocated for housing in the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026, therefore the principle of residential development is accepted.
96. Lancashire County Council has no highway objections to this proposal and has no concerns for the capacity of Millennium Way/Drumhead Road to cope with the proposed site. It is not proposed that Cowslip Way and Drumhead Road are connected and opened for vehicular traffic.

Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock – Not Proposed*Representations*

97. The main reasons for objection include the site is in the Green Belt, potential contamination of the site, site is not available, it is not a safe site for children due to it being between the A6 and canal and the impact in the canoe club.

Council's Response

98. Westhoughton Road has been considered and discounted because it falls within the Green Belt and there are no 'exceptional' circumstances which would warrant its allocation as the Council has identified other potential sites that do not fall within the Green Belt.
99. As stated in the Preferred Options report there are several historic land uses that could potentially have caused ground contamination. The Coal Authority has made comments on this site and require that if this site were to be developed then a site investigation should be undertaken and locate and assess the recorded mine entry to establish its current condition and the remedial works required to ensure that any development activity within the vicinity will not be at risk from this existing feature.
100. The Environment Agency has confirmed this site is located on top of a historic tip and would require an appropriate ground investigation report that will assess any potential impacts on controlled waters.
101. The Council is aware that Lancashire County Council use this land for storage and that there may be issues around site ownership. Only if the site was taken forward would issues around safety, services and utilities be explored further.
102. Lancashire County Council Highways has commented for the proposal to be acceptable the following measures will be required; extension of the existing footway on the west side of the road past the site access to the existing layby; speed reduction measures either through road markings and coloured surfacing or extension of the 40mph speed restriction past the site towards north and measures to allow safe crossing of the road.
103. The canoe club has a separate access which would not impact on the allocation.

104. The Coal Authority submitted representations requesting some changes to be made to the document. They identified that this site has been subject to coal mining which has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation. The requested additional text has been added to the site assessment.

Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley – Not Proposed

Representations

105. There was one objection to the site due to issues with Travellers setting up camp illegally on the industrial estate in the past.

Council's Response

106. The Council acknowledges use of the site for unauthorised encampment in the past. The Council has a protocol in place to deal with unauthorised encampments and has enforcement powers to deal with such sites. The presence of unauthorised encampments has not been material in selecting a site. Data on unauthorised encampments has been taken account of in the GTAA.
107. The Coal Authority submitted representations requesting some changes to be made to the document. They identified that this site has been subject to coal mining which has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation. The requested additional text has been added to the site assessment.

Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley – Not Proposed

Representations

108. The main reasons for objection include impact on house prices, access, loss of the only greenspace in the area and loss of trees on the site.

Council's Response

109. The proposed access is from Chorley North Industrial Estate. Lancashire County Council has stated that it has no highways objections in principle provided measures can be taken to limit the use of the residential access by large vehicles and caravans.
110. This site is allocated for housing in the emerging Chorley Local Plan 2012-26. The adjacent open space is not allocated as open space in the Chorley Local Plan but it is an area of amenity greenspace that is protected in accordance with Policy HW2 (Protection of Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities). The site was not assessed by the Open Space Study because it is below the 0.2 hectare threshold but is considered to provide amenity value.
111. Any application for development on the site would have to satisfy Local Plan Policy BNE1: Design Criteria for New Development which protects general amenity and covers noise and landscaping/tree issues. The proposed allocation for housing has already been considered sound.

Haworth Road (previously named Crosse Hall Lane), Chorley – Not Proposed

Representations

112. The main reasons for objection include the site is not big enough to accommodate five pitches, traffic problems, impact on house prices, site could be used for St James' Primary School to expand and it is not in-keeping with the Rivington View estate.

Council's Response

113. The Council has discounted this site as a Gypsy and Traveller site because the site is too small to accommodate the minimum 5 permanent pitches required. The Council acknowledges that the site's size would restrict the number of plots and the provision of any

amenity space. It is on a main access road and is highly visible. It would not satisfy Core Strategy Policy 8.

114. Highways issues have been considered by Lancashire County Council Highways, who have stated that the junction of Eaves Lane and Crosse Hall Lane could safely allow passage of caravans and that although the junction can get congested during school pick up and drop off periods, there would be no highway objections to the location of this site.
115. Lancashire County Council Education Department contributed to the process of additional school places in Chorley and did not raise any such issues in respect of the expansion of St James' Primary School.
116. Local Plan Policies are in place to protect the general amenity of an area.

Harrison's Farm, Adlington – Not Proposed

Representations

117. The main reasons for objection include access, loss of use of the site for recreation and wildlife, rainwater drainage, loss of productive farmland, impact on house prices and ownership issues.

Council's Response

118. Harrison's Farm is designated as an area of land safeguarded for future development needs and for allotments and a cemetery extension in the Chorley Local Plan 2012-26, therefore the principal of future development is established.
119. Lancashire County Council highways have stated that local safety improvements could be made to deliver this proposal. It is recognised that the canal bridge is a Grade II listed structure and an impact assessment has been undertaken. It is considered that this bridge would not be a suitable access.
120. Local Plan Policy BNE11 gives priority to the insitu conservation of protected species which can often be achieved through careful design, landscaping, timing and method of development.
121. United Utilities have provided further information on this site and state 'Foul and clean water pipes run through the site, therefore access to our infrastructure may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree. We would seek the disposal of surface water via the nearest watercourse (or should this be demonstrated as not feasible, through other sustainable means). The location of our existing assets within the site may restrict the layout of the development and/or make the site unviable as protection measures will need to be agreed for our infrastructure.'
122. It is recognised that not all of the land is in Council ownership. The site is 11.8ha in total. Part of the site is allocated for allotments and a cemetery extension. Of the remaining land the Council own 7.9ha, therefore the site could be delivered on Council owned land.
123. English Heritage submitted representations identifying the need for a heritage impact assessment to be undertaken for Harrison's Farm as it is located in close proximity to a listed building. They agreed that if this work was undertaken they would withdraw their objection. The Council have now prepared a heritage impact assessment for the site in co-operation with English Heritage and they have agreed that mitigation will secure an acceptable relationship between development on the proposed site and the designated heritage asset.
124. The Coal Authority submitted representations requesting some changes to be made to the document. They identified that this site has been subject to coal mining which has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation. The requested additional text has been added to the site assessment.

Hut Lane, Heath Charnock – Not Proposed

Representations

- 125. There was one objection to the site due to the long history of conflict between the residents of the site and the adjacent settled community, the site is in the Green Belt and it is unsustainable.

Council's Response

- 126. Although in the Green Belt the Hut Lane site has been included in the Council's assessment because it received temporary permission in July 2013 for 2 years and Planning Policy for Traveller sites states that the merits of using it permanently should be assessed against the new sites.
- 127. It is acknowledged the site is adjacent to a residential area where there have been continued objections to the use of the site to accommodate Travellers.
- 128. The Hut Lane site has a poor sustainability score - Band D.
- 129. The Coal Authority submitted representations requesting some changes to be made to the document. They identified that this site has been subject to coal mining which has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation. The requested additional text has been added to the site assessment.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT COSTS

- 130. The detailed cost information has been updated and included as Appendix 5 of the Proposed Allocation document. A summary of the estimated cost of development and opportunity value of each site is set out below. All estimates are exclusive of Vat and no allowance has been made for payment of professional fees, planning application fees, associated costs for surveys and site investigations, developers profit, project management fees, contingencies etc.
- 131. As with any site allocated for development it is the developer that will be faced with the cost of development. In this regard, the Council as landowner is the likely developer.

Site	Estimated Cost of Development	Estimated Opportunity Value
1. Cowling Farm	£480,000*	£300,000
2. Yarrow Bridge	£590,000	£150,000 (commercial use) £6,000 (Green Belt land)
3. Cabbage Hall Fields	£520,000	£230,000 (low cost housing)
4. Westhoughton Road	£480,000	£96,000 (commercial use) £6,000 (Green Belt land)
5. Ackhurst Road	£480,000	£ Negative (reduction of rental income to the Council)
6. Northgate Drive	£480,000	£200,000 (low cost housing)
7. Haworth Road (previously named Crosse Hall Lane)	£380,000	£160,000 (residential)
8. Harrison's Farm	£600,000	£10,000 (Safeguarded Land)
9. Hut Lane	£300,000	£3,000 (Green Belt land)

*Does not include access road. This could increase costs by £10,000 to £500,000 depending on the location.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION AFTER CONSULTATION

- 132. Following consultation, further analysis of the merits of each site was undertaken. This analysis is included in section 8 of the Proposed Allocation document and summarised below.
- 133. The analysis and comparison looked at the information that was provided from residents and stakeholders, including statutory consultees, and reviewed the sustainability indicators for each site. It also assessed each site against Core Strategy Policies 1: Locating Growth and 8: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation as well as specific criterion set out in Planning Policy for Traveller sites.

134. It concluded that Cowling Farm is the Council's proposed allocation and is a suitable, available, achievable and sustainable site which accords with national policy on Gypsy and Travellers and Core Strategy Policies 1 and 8.
135. Hut Lane, Yarrow Bridge and Westhoughton Road are all in the Green Belt and were discounted because there are no very special circumstances to warrant selection of a site in the Green Belt.
136. Harrison's Farm was discounted because it is located in Adlington which has fewer services and facilities than Chorley Town which is a Key Service Centre where growth and investment should be concentrated in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 1. It is also a less sustainable site than those located in Chorley Town and scores a band C in the Sustainability Appraisal whereas all of the sites in Chorley Town score a band B.
137. All of the sites in Chorley Town have the potential to satisfy the criteria set out in Planning Policy for Traveller sites. They are all also considered to be sustainable as they fall within band B. Other factors were taken into account when deciding which of the sites in Chorley Town should be allocated.
138. Land at Ackhurst Road is an existing car park serving adjacent employment uses and is leased from the Council on a long-term basis. Its allocation would require the legal issues to be addressed and would cause significant parking problems for the businesses that currently use the land for parking and would potentially result in parking issues in the local area. Therefore, it has not been selected as the proposed allocation.
139. Cabbage Hall Fields has the most challenging topography in terms of steep changes in levels which would mean that 5+ pitches could not be accommodated there. Therefore, it is not proposed for allocation.
140. Crosse Hall Lane is also likely to be too small, and being on the brow of a hill may be unacceptably visually intrusive. Therefore, it is not proposed for allocation.
141. Northgate Drive is a slightly larger site, but it is a linear site, that is narrow in places, which may restrict its suitability for Gypsy pitches and which may hinder the manoeuvrability of caravans and other vehicles. Therefore, it is not proposed for allocation.
142. The Cowling Farm site has an undulating topography, but is a far larger site that is flat in part and is not subject to the constraints that affect the other Chorley Town sites. The masterplanning process itself would ensure that residents are able to fully participate in the delivery of a Traveller site and the allocated housing and employment. Working with key stakeholders, including the local residences and businesses, the Travelling community and the police architectural liaison officer, an appropriate access, location, design and layout could be arrived at. This process would contribute to a 'cohesive' community.

DRAFT DUTY TO COOPERATE

143. The Draft Duty to Cooperate Statement and Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options Document was sent at the start of the consultation to all the local planning authorities, county councils and "prescribed" bodies that are relevant in the context of the Duty to Cooperate Supplement. Six specific responses have been received in respect of the Duty to Cooperate. Bolton Council confirms that the Council have satisfied the Duty to Cooperate with them and they support the proposed changes being made and withdraw their original objections. West Lancashire Borough Council considers the Council has engaged adequately and appropriately with them throughout the preparation of the Traveller Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options thus far. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council confirm that the Council have satisfied the Duty to Cooperate with them and withdraw their original objections. Natural England are satisfied that the Council have fulfilled the strategic duty to cooperate with them in relation to this consultation. English Heritage do not consider there are any strategic matters as set out in S33a(4) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory purchase Act which affect the historic environment. The Environment Agency are satisfied their involvement has appropriately been recorded in relation to the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026.

144. Natural England has noted that agricultural classification is included in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) environmental objectives but that there is no differentiation between grades 3a and 3b which is the difference between good and moderate quality agricultural land. Natural England advise that in order to ensure that the most sustainable option is selected it would be advisable to provide some more detail on land quality and to evidence the Council's consideration of the issue as part of the SA. Natural England has no comment to make in relation to the Habitats Regulations Assessment.
145. United Utilities has undertaken a high level desk-top assessment of the sites in the Preferred Options document and has provided a general response with regards to the water and wastewater infrastructure that exists within these specific areas. For all sites, United Utilities would expect (unless it can be robustly demonstrated otherwise) sustainable, water-efficient, surface water management systems [SuDS] to be incorporated into the development design.

CHANGES TO THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT

146. Further information on viability has been gathered and included in the Proposed Allocation document. It includes the approximate cost for each site of providing five permanent pitches and associated works and the opportunity value of each site if sold for an alternative use. The Proposed Allocation document is set out in Appendix 1.

NEXT STEPS

147. The Council will submit its proposed site for allocation together with any related Local Plan proposed modifications to the Inspector for examination. A schedule of representations, together with the Council's response will be published. The Examination will reconvene on 23rd and 24th September. Consultation on the Inspector's Minded Modifications is expected October/November 2014 and the results of the consultation are expected to be submitted to the Inspector in December 2014. The Inspector's report is due January 2015 with adoption of the Local Plan in February 2015.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

148. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

149. The provision of a site may involve expenditure of £300-560k, but the over-riding issue is that the site should be suitably located in planning terms. The costs of site provision may be supported by funding from the HCA. The costs of provision may be funded from either retained capital receipts or borrowing or a combination of both. Every £500k of borrowing would require circa £25k annually to service the debt. In addition to the actual costs, the report sets out the opportunity cost for each site based upon it's allocated use. The opportunity costs represent the potential sale value for the site based upon that use. The total cost to the Council would therefore be the expenditure to be incurred to create a site plus the loss of the potential receipt.
150. At present there is no budget provision. It is recognised that from a planning perspective, a funding commitment is helpful in assessing deliverability in planning terms, notwithstanding the Council's duties in relation to planning, housing and equalities legislation. The final allocated site is likely to require Council funding, even if a grant from the HCA is awarded.
151. I am satisfied given the Council's financial position that adequate budgetary provision could be made, subject to the endorsement of Executive Cabinet/Full Council, and a report can be prepared for the next Full Council 23 September if the Council endorses this report and its recommendations.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 152. The report demonstrates consideration of the material planning considerations in coming to a recommendation. It also demonstrates consideration of the Council’s Equalities duties. The Council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 which prohibits direct and indirect discrimination because of a relevant ‘protected characteristic’ - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as a racial group and therefore have a protected characteristic.
- 153. Assessment of representations about the health circumstances of potential occupants of any allocated site has properly formed part of this assessment.
- 154. This matter engages Article 1, Protocol 1 and Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. A failure to allocate a site would give rise to an interference with the Gypsy and Travellers’ rights under Article 1 of the first Protocol and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Without certainty of alternative and suitable accommodation, the occupants could be required to vacate their homes and the site, which would interfere with their homes, their private and family lives. The allocation of a site would be justified as a proportionate interference and reasonable in the circumstances.
- 155. The Human Rights Act is engaged by this matter. The existence of the temporary site does not prevent members allocating a different preferred option site. The allocation of a different preferred option site is likely to impact upon the existing site at Hut Lane as the temporary grant was on the basis in part of no alternative provision. The Human Rights legislation does not prevent the allocation of a different site, consideration of the existing communities needs must be considered in order to make any final decision robust.
- 156. The previous report was not made available in advance to the press and public for two reasons. Firstly it contained personal information relating to the children of potential occupants of the site. Secondly the fact that a particular site could potentially be allocated might have had an effect on the value of neighbouring land. In the event that certain sites considered in the report were not approved by members for consultation there would be no public interest in this information be published. However consultation for all sites mentioned in the report was approved on 3 June which meant that the report could then be published.
- 157. The Council conducted a screening exercise of representations to exclude any statement which could be perceived as stereotypical of a particular community, and which if published on the Council’s external website might put the Council in breach of its public sector equality duty to foster good community relations contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council had regard to e-mailed guidance from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission when excluding those statements.

COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BRADLEY - EXECUTIVE LEADER

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 – Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options	June 2014		Council website
Full Council Report – Chorley Local Plan 2012-26: Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options	3 June 2014		Council website
Schedule of Preferred Options Representations	26 August 2014		Members Room and will be made available on the Council’s website, and at Council Offices, Union Street

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Gary Hall – Chief Executive	5104	26 August 2014	***
Jennifer Moore – Head of Planning	5571		
Peter McAnespie & Planning Policy Team	5286		

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Chorley Local Plan

2012-2026

**Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Proposed
Allocation**

September 2014



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report forms part of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 (the Local Plan). It has been produced to address the need for the provision of a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site for at least 5 pitches within the Borough. Such an allocation, if found sound, will allow the Chorley Local Plan to be progressed to adoption. The 5 pitches is expressed as a minimum in view of the absence of information to quantify the final need. The Local Plan Inspector has determined that the matter of more specific need will be addressed through additional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) study work and this is to be considered in a separate Development Plan Document (DPD). **Therefore this report does not cover the issue of whether this number of pitches is sufficient to meet the permanent and transit needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Community.**
- 1.2 The report sets out the Council's proposed allocation for the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller site. The Council has also considered and discounted a number of alternative sites which are set out in Appendix 2 of this document.
- 1.3 A Schedule of Proposed Further Modifications to the Local Plan relating to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites **was consulted on from 4th June to 16th July 2014 which has been amended to specify the Proposed Allocation: Cowling Farm, Chorley and is included in Appendix 1.**

2. Proposed Allocation

- 2.1 Taking into account all of the site selection criteria and the results of consultation, the Council proposes to allocate land at **Cowling Farm, Chorley** for the provision of five permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches. It is considered that this site is suitable, available and achievable.

3. Background

- 3.1 In May 2007 a Lancashire wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published, but at the Local Plan Examination Hearings, which took place in April 2013, this evidence was not considered to be up-to-date. The Inspector requested that further work be undertaken to address Gypsy and Traveller matters, to be followed by reconvened Examination Hearing sessions. However, the Inspector also indicated that she would be able to produce a Partial Report on her findings into the soundness of the Local Plan, on all matters other than those relating to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, in October 2013.
- 3.2 Following the Examination Hearings, the Central Lancashire authorities of Chorley, Preston City and South Ribble commissioned Arc4 to undertake a [Gypsy and Traveller](#)

[Accommodation Assessment \(GTAA\)](#) in July 2013 to identify the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

3.3 In October 2013 the Local Plan Inspector produced a [Partial Report on the Local Plan](#) This concluded that, with a number of modifications, the Local Plan satisfies legal requirements and meets the criteria for soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in all regards, except for its provision for Gypsies and Travellers. The Local Plan has been changed in accordance with the modifications. However, the Inspector stated that the Local Plan may not be formally adopted unless it is also found sound regarding its provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

3.4 The GTAA was published in January 2014. This identified a need for five permanent pitches for Gypsies/Travellers in Chorley, fifteen in Preston, none in South Ribble and a Central Lancashire wide need for fifteen transit pitches to 2026. It found no need for Travelling Showpeople accommodation.

3.5 The GTAA was considered by the Inspector, but in her letter to the Council on 7th February 2014, she set out that she had concerns that it may under-estimate the level of need and that further detailed work was needed on this matter. However, in order to avoid further delay to the Local Plan, she asked the Council to consider putting forward further main modifications to ensure soundness.

3.6 She suggested that the modifications (as attached at Appendix 1) should incorporate a number of points including:

- The allocation of site(s) in the Local Plan sufficient to make provision for a minimum of five permanent residential pitches.
- A commitment to undertake further work on the GTAA at the earliest opportunity within 12 months, with a view to resolving outstanding concerns.
- A commitment to produce a separate Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Plan, to include the provision of Transit and Travelling Showpeople's sites within a prescribed, expeditious timescale that is set out in the Local Development Scheme.

3.7 In addition further work has started on the Central Lancashire GTAA and the Council has committed to producing a separate Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (DPD) that relates to any additional permanent traveller need as well as Transit and Travelling Showpeople's needs. Preparation of this DPD is scheduled to start in December 2014, with adoption scheduled for March 2016.

4. Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options

4.1 The Council undertook, a public consultation on the preferred options between June 4 and 16 July 2014. inviting views on its preferred site – Site 1, Cowling Farm, Chorley, and

the sites that were discounted. Respondents were also able to suggest alternative sites for the provision of a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site and were required to include evidence with these sites to demonstrate that they are deliverable and/or developable.

4.2 Following consideration of all of the consultation responses received, the Council produced a summary of the consultation responses and a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Proposed Allocation Document. These consultation responses are being considered at the 4th September 2014 Council after which these documents and supporting documents will be submitted to the Local Plan Inspector for her consideration in advance of the reconvened Local Plan Examination Hearing.

4.3 The further hearings for the examination are scheduled to take place on the 23rd and 24th September 2014 and will be concerned with two separate matters:

- Legal requirements: whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate, and with the Local Development Scheme, Statement of Community Involvement and Regulations, has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal, and has regard to national policy and the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- Soundness: whether the plan has been positively prepared, and whether it is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. Positively prepared means the plan should be based on a strategy which meets the objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from surrounding areas where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development. Justified means the plan should be the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence. Effective means the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities. To be consistent with national policy, the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in line with policies in the Framework.

4.4 The process of examining plans produced under the Local Development Framework system is very different from the previous process of considering objections to an “old-style” plan:

- The Examination starts from the assumption that the Council has submitted a plan for examination which it considers is legally compliant and sound;
- The plan is subject to an Examination, with hearing sessions, rather than a formal local plan inquiry;
- The Examination is into the soundness of the plan, not into individual objections. In examining compliance with the legal requirements and soundness under the LDF system, the Inspector considers the representations made to the published plan, but only insofar as they relate to the legal requirements and soundness of the plan;

- The Inspector is not required to consider each and every point made in every representation or to report on them, but to use the representations in considering whether the plan complies with the legal requirements and is sound;
- The plan and the Examination should be “front-loaded”, with all the material and evidence available and submitted well before the hearings commence.

5. Definition of Gypsies and Travellers

- 5.1 This report adopts the definition of ‘Gypsies and Travellers’ set out within the Government’s ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ (March 2012) as:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.”

- 5.2 The following definitions also apply:

A “pitch” means a pitch on a “Gypsy and Traveller” site and “plot” means a pitch on a “Travelling Showpeople” site (often called a “yard”). This terminology differentiates between residential pitches for “Gypsies and Travellers” and mixed use plots for “Travelling Showpeople”, which may/will need to incorporate space or to be split to allow the storage of equipment.

Future Government Policy

- 5.3 Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis issued a statement on 17 Jan 2014, on Green Belt, specifically in relation to Gypsy & Traveller Matters. He re-emphasises permanent & temporary sites are inappropriate development in the green belt, and re-iterates that unmet Gypsy & Traveller need itself is not very special circumstances to justify Green Belt. Ministers are also “considering the case” for improvements to planning policy/practice guidance to strengthen green belt protection; and changing the definition of traveller to address mobility v transitory lifestyles. At the time of preparing this report, no further information on any proposed consultation is available on the DCLG website.

6. Approach to Site Selection

National Policy

- 6.1 [The National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012](#) (the Framework) introduced, at the heart of national policy, a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should be seen as a, 'Golden Thread' running through both plan making and decision making.
- 6.2 The Framework indicates the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.3 The Framework is explicit that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's planning policy for traveller sites. Local planning authorities preparing plans for and taking decisions on travellers sites should also have regard to the policies in this Framework so far as relevant.
- 6.4 In relation to housing the Framework say the planning policy for traveller sites sets out how travellers' accommodation needs should also be assessed.
- 6.5 The Government is clear that the current position of Gypsy and Traveller site delivery remains unsatisfactory and local planning authorities have not addressed under provision or increased the number of sites in appropriate locations.
- 6.6 In March 2012, the Government published [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) (PPTS), alongside the Framework. The PPTS Policy B: Planning for Traveller Sites states Local Plans must be prepared with the objectives of contributing to the achievements of sustainable development. To this end they should be consistent with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of the specific policies in the Framework and this planning policy for traveller sites.
- 6.7 The overarching aim of Government policy is to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers, in a way that facilitates their traditional and nomadic way of life, while respecting the interests of the settled community. The main aims of the policy include:

- Local planning authorities making their own assessment of need as long as it is based on robust evidence, includes engagement and cooperation with Traveller and settled communities, and involves working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities.
- Local planning authorities setting their own pitch and plot targets.
- Local planning authorities:
- Identifying and updating annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets.
- Identifying a supply of specific developable sites or broad locations for growth, for 6 to 10 years and where possible, for years 11-15.
- Using criteria to guide land supply allocations and help determine planning applications.
- Ensuring Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally.
- Protecting the Green Belt from inappropriate development and strictly limiting new Traveller sites in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the local plan.
- Considering sites suitable for mixed use residential and business use wherever possible.

6.8 Local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and ensure that their policies:

- Promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community.
- Promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services.
- Ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis.
- Provide a settled base that reduces the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment.
- Provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any Travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development.
- Avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services.
- Do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans.
- Reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some Travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability

6.9 Policy E: Traveller sites in Green Belt states inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. If a local planning authority wishes to make an exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt

boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific identified need for a traveller site, it should do so only through the plan-making process and not in response to a planning application. If land is removed from the Green Belt in this way, it should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a traveller site only. (See paragraph 5.3 – which refers to Ministerial Statement of January 2014 which reinforces the position on Green Belt).

Local Policy

6.10 The Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 1: Locating Growth sets out where development should be located in the Borough. It favours well located brownfield sites and sets out the following hierarchy of settlements where development and growth should be located.

- Chorley Town
- Buckshaw Village
- Adlington, Clayton Brook/Green, Clayton-le-Woods, Coppull, Euxton and Whittle-le-Woods.
- Brinscall/Withnell and Eccleston

6.11 These settlements are the most suitable locations in the Borough, with the widest range of services and facilities. In accordance with Core Strategy Policy 1 they are the preferred locations for a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site and this is where the site search has focussed. This approach is also in accordance with the PPTS which states that one of the Government's aims in respect of Traveller sites is to enable provision of suitable accommodation from which Travellers can access education, health, welfare and employment infrastructure.

6.12 Policy 8 on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy sets out criteria to be applied to applications for any proposals for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites. Any future planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation will be assessed against the criteria in this policy, or any subsequent national policy. Policy 8 states that:

“The following criteria, as relevant to the types of pitches sought, should be applied to applications for any proposals for Gypsy and Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites:

- *Location in respect of proximity to services including GP and other health care provision, education facilities, shops and public transport as well as the overall need to reduce long distance travelling.*
- *Suitable road access and sufficient space within the site for parking and turning of vehicles as well as the storage of equipment.*

- *Avoidance of residential use on contaminated and otherwise unsuitable land although such areas may be suitable for business use and in any event taking account of the opportunities for mixed use.*
- *No unacceptable impact on the immediate surrounding areas and the wider landscape.”*

Historic Environment

- 6.13 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, which need to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Conservation of the historic environment can bring wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. The historic environment has been considered in site selection and heritage impact assessments have been produced where sites are in proximity to listed buildings, to ensure that the plan avoids allocating sites which are likely to result in harm to the significance of these assets.

7. Preferred Site Selection

- 7.1 Gypsy and Traveller sites vary in terms of size and there is no one size fits all measurement for a Gypsy and Traveller pitch. Good practice guidance suggests that Gypsy and Traveller sites should provide enough land per household for a mobile home, touring caravan and a utility building, together with space for the parking of two vehicles. The average trailer size is around 15 metres, whilst some mobile homes can be up to 25 metres in length. There needs to be manoeuvrability to allow for this on each site, using the 15 metres length as a guide, with one or two pitches designed to accommodate the larger size mobile homes. A minimum of six metres is required between every trailer, caravan or park home that is separately occupied on a site. In accordance with the Inspector's wishes, the Council has looked for sites where five or more households could be accommodated. **The site area required is estimated at 0.4 hectares.**
- 7.2 When identifying suitable sites a range of factors need to be taken into consideration. PPTS states that sites for the short term (first five years of a plan period) should be deliverable and that sites, or broad locations, for the medium and longer term (years six to ten and years eleven to fifteen) should be developable.
- 7.3 For a site to be considered deliverable, it should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that development will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.
- 7.4 For a site to be considered developable, it should be in a suitable location for development and there should be a reasonable prospect that that the site is available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.
- 7.5 In order to ensure that sites are deliverable/developable, the Council has assessed land in its ownership, over which it has control, for suitability as a permanent Gypsy and Traveller

site. In addition, the Council has asked other stakeholders with major landholdings whether they have any suitable land available. This has included Lancashire County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, Network Rail and United Utilities. In addition the Council has also looked at any sites suggested through its 'call for sites' for the Local Plan in 2005 and 2007 and sites put forward by the Gypsy and Traveller community. All sites put forward by the Gypsy and Traveller community are identified in Appendix 2 along with the Council's response as to whether each site has been considered further.

7.6 Taking all of these factors into consideration, a number of potential sites have been identified and are included in Table 1:

Site 1	Cowling Farm, Chorley
Site 2	Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley
Site 3	Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley
Site 4	Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock
Site 5	Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley
Site 6	Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley
Site 7	Haworth Road *, Chorley
Site 8	Harrisons Farm, Adlington
Site 9	Hut Lane, Heath Charnock

*Formerly known as Crosse Hall Lane

7.7 Whilst the priority has been to look for sites in settlements, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 1 growth locations, three sites in the Green Belt have also been included. Two are previously developed sites within the Green Belt that are owned by the Council. One lies just outside of Chorley Town and the other lies just outside of Adlington. These sites have been included because they are under-used brownfield sites, in the control of the Council, that have good sustainability credentials and which lie in the southern part of the Borough in relative geographical proximity to the existing Gypsy and Traveller Site that has temporary permission at Hut Lane. The third site included is the existing privately owned site that has temporary permission for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation that lies in the Green Belt between Chorley and Adlington. The PPTS states that Traveller sites in the Green Belt are inappropriate development and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

7.8 As with all sites assessed for allocation in the Chorley Local Plan, a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was undertaken for each of the potential Gypsy and Traveller sites. This has looked at the social, environmental and economic sustainability of each site and each site has been given an overall sustainability banding ranging from A (most sustainable) to E (least sustainable). This approach is consistent with the requirements of the PPTS.

7.9 In addition, respondents to the Gypsy and Traveller GTAA were asked if they felt being near to a range of amenities was important, slightly important or not important to them. These

survey results have been taken account of when assessing sites. In Chorley proximity to primary schools, secondary schools, doctors, post offices/cashpoints, public transport and main roads were considered important. Proximity to shops and pubs were less important. Sites were also considered against the criteria in Core Strategy Policy 8.

- 7.10 In accordance with national guidance, the needs of the existing Traveller community have also been taken into consideration. Council officers met with the Linfoot family and their consultant on 8th July 2014, with the primary objective of establishing detailed need requirements in order to inform the design and layout of the final allocated site. At that meeting, the Linfoot family indicated that they were prepared to consider Cowling Farm.
- 7.11 A response was submitted from the same consultant representing the Traveller community at Hut Lane. The consultant notes that “Whilst the ‘current’ need at Hut Lane is 2 pitches (as established in the draft GTAA), they have expressed a need for 5 pitches now in order to accommodate immediate relatives with the potential for further expansion over the plan period. They have a strong preference for a site in their own ownership and control, if possible through freehold ownership. They support the proposal for a 0.4 ha site. If they were able to acquire it they would wish to see it developed as an extended family site, rather than divided into discrete pitches. They have current needs for two mobile homes, three touring caravans, of which one would only be in storage while on site, a double utility block, plus parking for three vans and two cars. They would also welcome incorporating a play area/garden for the children. Factoring in the needs of the extended family, they would want the site to be able to accommodate an additional two touring caravans and parking for two vans and one car.
- 7.12 Their first preference is to remain at their existing site, particularly if they were able to acquire the other half of the original Hut Lane site. In terms of alternative sites, the family’s strong preference is for the Council preferred site at Cowling Farm. A key objective for the family would be to enable the site to be delivered quickly without substantial disruption from the subsequent development of the rest of the site. They consider the most satisfactory way of achieving this would be to locate the Traveller site in the bottom south-west corner of the larger site with its own access from Cowling Road/Weavers Brow. The other site that could be attractive to the family would be Harrison’s Farm, Adlington, but only the area south east of the farm-house with access from Old School Lane. All the other sites have been discounted for reasons similar to those put forward in the Preferred Options Report.”
- 7.13 A separate response from Mr Linfoot expressed a desire to remain at Hut Lane and did not support the allocation of Cowling Farm due to issues around accessing the site through the Green Belt.

8. Proposed Site Allocation

Following consultation, further analysis of the merits of each of the nine sites was undertaken. This looked at the information that was provided from residents and stakeholders, including consultees. It also looked more closely at the sustainability indicators of each site.

Central Lancashire Core Strategy

Policy 1 – Locating Growth

Under Core Strategy Policy 1 – Chorley Town is a Key Service Centre and therefore a sustainable location for a traveller site. Of the nine sites, five fall within Chorley Town and all have an overall sustainability score band B. Three of those (Cowling Farm, Cabbage Hall Fields, and land adjacent Northgate Drive) are on existing allocations for housing or a mixed use of housing and employment in the Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026. The remaining two fall within settlement where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable growth (Chorley Local Plan Policy V1 – Settlement Areas). Harrison's Farm is further down the settlement hierarchy and would be located within Adlington Town settlement boundary if it were allocated. It would be a less sustainable option scoring band C.

Policy 8 – Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

All the Criteria listed under this policy could be satisfied at Cowling Farm, Yarrow Bridge, and Cabbage Hall Fields.

In relation to Westhoughton Road, a detailed investigation would be required under criterion (c) due to ground contamination issues. Hut Lane would fall foul of criterion (a) as it does not have good access to a number of services. Developing Land at Ackhurst Road would have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding employment uses/ the surrounding area and wider landscape – criterion (d) as the site is used for car parking. Northgate Drive, as a linear site may not be able to accommodate 5 pitches and there may not be sufficient land to provide an adequate landscaping buffer, which could result in a detrimental impact on the immediate surrounding area and therefore fail to satisfy criterion (d). Haworth Road is also too small to accommodate 5 pitches, although could be suitable for fewer pitches. However, allocating this site could have a detrimental impact on adjacent residential areas due to its prominent location on the brow of a hill on a main residential access road.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

Green Belt Issues

Policy E: Traveller sites in Green Belt states inappropriate development is harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances

In terms of the three Green Belt sites, both Yarrow Bridge and Land at Westhoughton Road are previously developed land (PDL), while Hut Lane is a greenfield site, lying between Chorley Town and Adlington.

The Hut Lane site received temporary permission in July 2013 for two years. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites states that the merits of using it permanently should be assessed against the new sites.

Both of the PDL sites within the Green Belt are owned by the Council, while Hut Lane is privately owned by the Traveller community. In the sustainability assessment, Yarrow Bridge scores band B, Westhoughton Road scores band C and Hut Lane scores band D. Yarrow Bridge lies just outside of Chorley Town;

Westhoughton Road lies just outside of Adlington, and Hut Lane lies in a more isolated location away from any settlement.

Yarrow Bridge and Westhoughton Road are under-used previously developed sites that lie in the southern part of the Borough, relatively close to the existing temporary Traveller site at Hut Lane. Westhoughton Road has some issues with land ownership that may affect its availability. The Hut Lane site is not considered suitable for allocation primarily because it has a poor sustainability score (Band D) representing the least sustainable site considered, and is a greenfield site.

National policy states that the redevelopment of previously developed sites in the Green Belt, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development, is not inappropriate. Such development should be assessed against criteria as set out in Chorley Local Plan (2012-2026) Policy BNE5: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites in the Greenbelt. The Green Belt sites have therefore been assessed against this policy and it is considered that as other sites are deliverable, there are no 'very special circumstances' to warrant selection of a site within the Green Belt.

Specific criterion set out in Planning Policy for Travellers Sites

Planning Policy for Travellers states that Local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and ensure that their policies:

- **Promote peaceful and integrated co-existence between the site and the local community.**

All of the 9 sites assessed have the potential to satisfy this criterion. The Council will continue to work with settled and gypsy and traveller community, police, Equality Commission and National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and other relevant stakeholders. Any application would have to satisfy Local Plan Policies such as BNE1: Design Criteria for New Development - to cover design, layout, and noise and general amenity issues to protect the users and the settled community.

- **Promote, in collaboration with commissioners of health services, access to appropriate health services.**

The sites have been assessed in terms of proximity to health services.

Land adjacent to Northgate Drive and Cabbage Hall Fields perform best in terms of access to a general practitioner. Both are between 0.41 and 0.8km from a GP surgery, so fall within Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Band B in relation to this indicator.

Yarrow Bridge, Haworth Road and Harrison's Farm are 0.81 to 1.6km from a GP surgery, and fall within SA Band C in relation to this indicator.

Cowling Farm, Westhoughton Road, Land at Ackhurst Road and Hut Lane are 1.61-3km from a GP surgery and fall within SA Band D in relation to this indicator.

In terms of proximity to an NHS general hospital, Land adjacent to Northgate Drive and Cabbage Hall Fields are up to 2km from a hospital and fall within SA Band A in relation to this indicator.

Haworth Road, Cowling Farm, Land at Ackhurst Road and Yarrow Bridge are 2.1 – 5km from a hospital and fall within SA Band B in relation to this indicator. Harrison’s Farm, Westthoughton Road and Hut Lane are 5.1 to 10km from a hospital and fall within SA Band C in relation to this indicator.

Overall Land adjacent to Northgate Drive and Cabbage Hall Fields perform best in terms of health indicators. Westthoughton Road and Hut Lane perform worst in terms of these health indicators.

- **Ensure that children can attend school on a regular basis.**

In terms of proximity to a primary school, Haworth Road, Land adjacent to Northgate Drive, Yarrow Bridge and Cabbage Hall Fields are up to 0.4 km from a primary school and fall within SA Band A in relation to this indicator.

Harrison’s Farm and Cowling Farm are 0.41 to 0.8km from a primary school and fall within SA Band B in relation to this indicator. Westthoughton Road and Land at Ackhurst Road are 0.81 to 1.6km from a primary school and fall within SA band C in relation to this indicator.

Hut Lane is 1.61 – 3km from a primary school and falls within SA Band D in relation to this indicator.

In terms of proximity to a secondary school, Yarrow Bridge is up to 0.8km from a secondary school and falls within SA Band A in relation to this indicator.

Land at Ackhurst Road, Land adjacent to Northgate Drive, Haworth Road, Cabbage Hall Fields and Cowling Farm are between 0.81 and 1.6km from a secondary school and fall within SA Band B in relation to this indicator.

Westthoughton Road is 1.61 – 3.2km from a secondary school and falls within SA Band C in relation to this indicator. Harrison’s Farm and Hut Lane are between 3.21 and 5km from a secondary school and fall within SA Band D in relation to this indicator.

Overall, with the exception of Westthoughton Road, Land at Ackhurst Road and Hut Lane, all of the sites have good proximity to a primary school. There are no secondary schools in the Adlington area, so all of the Chorley Town sites perform better than the Adlington sites in terms of proximity to a secondary school. The Yarrow Bridge site performs best in relation to the educational indicators and Hut Lane performs worst.

- **Provide a settled base that reduces the need for long-distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment.**

Allocation of any of these sites would provide a settled base, but some sites are better located for public transport provision than others.

Haworth Road, Cabbage Hall Fields, Yarrow Bridge, Westthoughton Road and Harrisons Farm are 0.81 to 1.6km from a railway station and fall within SA Band B in relation to this indicator.

Land at Ackhurst Road, Cowling Farm and Land adjacent to Northgate Drive are 1.61 – 2.4km from a railway station and fall within SA Band C in relation to this indicator.

Hut Lane is over 3km from a railway station and falls within SA Band E in relation to this indicator.

In terms of frequency of rail services, Haworth Road, Land at Ackhurst Road, Land adjacent to Northgate Drive, Cowling Farm, Cabbage Hall Fields and Yarrow Bridge are nearest to a station (Chorley) where there are four or more rail services per hour, so fall within Band A in relation to this indicator.

Harrisons Farm, Westhoughton Road and Hut Lane are nearest to a station (Adlington) that has an hourly rail service, so fall within Band C in relation to this SA indicator.

Overall the Chorley Town sites perform well in terms of access to rail services, because services to Chorley Railway Station are more frequent than those to Adlington Station. Haworth Road, Cabbage Hall Fields and Yarrow Bridge perform best overall in terms of these indicators. Westhoughton Road and Harrison's Farm in Adlington are well located for Adlington Station, but services at this station are less frequent than those to Chorley.

In terms of proximity to a bus stop all of the sites are within 0.4km of a bus stop, so all fall within SA Band A in relation to this indicator.

However, there are differences in terms of frequency of bus services.

Yarrow Bridge has a frequency of 6 or more services per hour, so falls within SA Band A in relation to this SA indicator. Land adjacent to Northgate Drive and Cabbage Hall Fields have a bus service frequency of 2 – 5 per hour, so fall within SA Band B in relation to this indicator. Harrison's Farm has a bus service frequency of 1 per hour in relation to this indicator, so falls within SA Band C.

Westhoughton Road, Land at Ackhurst Road, Cowling Farm and Hut Lane have services of less than 1 per hour, so fall within SA Band D in relation to this indicator.

Therefore, all sites have good proximity to a bus stop, but Yarrow Bridge scores best in relation to the frequency of services. Westhoughton Road, Land at Ackhurst Road, Cowling Farm and Hut Lane score worst in relation to bus service frequency.

- **Provide for proper consideration of the effect of local environmental quality (such as noise and air quality) on the health and well-being of any Travellers that may locate there or on others as a result of new development.**

No evidence has been supplied by consultees to indicate that local environmental quality in relation to any of the sites would have a negative effect on the health and well-being of any Travellers that may locate there. Local Plan policy BNE1 includes criteria to address these issues and the Council is confident that all sites, except Northgate, have sufficient land to create an adequate buffer to protect environmental quality. Northgate Drive is a linear site which is narrow in places which may prevent the incorporation of an adequate buffer

- **Avoid placing undue pressure on local infrastructure and services.**

All nine sites have the potential to access sewer systems, water, gas, electricity and highways. United Utilities comments have been provided for all sites giving advice on potential sewer and water drainage issues.

- **Do not locate sites in areas at high risk of flooding, including functional floodplains, given the particular vulnerability of caravans.**

All sites are located within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low probability of flooding. The Environment Agency support the preferred allocation in as far as it is in their remit to do so.

The Yarrow Bridge site is located in Flood Zone 1, but the access road to the site from the A6 Bolton Road would be in Flood Zone 2. The Environment Agency state that providing no caravans are located in Flood Zone 2 they would be satisfied that if this site was selected, the use would not be at an unacceptable level of flood risk.

- **Reflect the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some Travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability**

It is acknowledged that traditional lifestyles can contribute to sustainability. In relation to the Chorley Local Plan, no representations have been received from the Traveller community, or others acting on their behalf, that have made specific comments on traditional lifestyles and sustainability in relation to any of the sites.

Other Matters

Highways

Detailed highways comments were received from Lancashire County Council Highways. Within these are measures that would need to be undertaken in respect of each site in order to ensure that a satisfactory highways solution could be arrived at. Subject to these, there would be no highways objections to any of the sites coming forward.

Contamination

In terms of contamination, Cowling Farm, Harrison's Farm, Westhoughton Road, Haworth Road and Hut Lane are identified as having no or low risk of contamination in the Sustainability Appraisal. Further information received from the Environment Agency indicates that the Westhoughton Road site is on top of a historic landfill, so they would require an appropriate ground investigation report to assess any potential impacts on controlled waters, if this site were selected.

Yarrow Bridge, Cabbage Hall Fields, Land at Ackhurst and Northgate are all identified as having a medium risk of contamination in the Sustainability Appraisal. This would require further investigation and potential remediation before the site could be developed.

The Coal Authority

No risk has been identified by the Coal authority in relation to Cowling Farm, Yarrow Bridge, Cabbage Hall Fields, Haworth Road or Land adjacent to Northgate Drive.

The Coal Authority state that Westhoughton Road, Land at Ackhurst Road, Harrison's Farm and Hut Lane are locations that have been subject to coal mining that has left a legacy. There is a recorded mine entry at Westhoughton Road and probable shallow coal mining at the other locations.

The Coal Authority would require a detailed site investigation in advance of any development of Westhoughton Road and a remediation strategy on how the mine entry would be treated to avoid any risks from this feature.

In relation to Land at Ackhurst Road, Harrison's Farm and Hut Lane, former coal mining activity has left a legacy of unstable land and the Coal Authority state that this would need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation.

Legal Covenants/ Leases

There are no known leasing/legal covenant issues in relation to Yarrow Bridge, Cabbage Hall Fields, Land at Northgate, Haworth Road, or Hut Lane.

Cowling Farm

In relation to Cowling Farm, there are 2 leases relating to the Spinners Arms: Lease 1 granted in 1980 for a term of 99 years - now forms part of the extended public house. Lease 2 granted in May 2002 for a term of 15 years relating to the public house car park.

In terms of land to the south of Cowling Farm site, the conveyance of Gillett Playing Fields, to Chorley Council, 11 September 1980 includes covenants limiting the use of the land to agricultural & recreational purposes. There is also a Licence Agreement with a tenant and Chorley Council dated 1 February 1996 in relation to land to the south of the site. The Council is not proposing an access to the site using the land to the south, so these covenants do not affect the proposed allocation.

Westhoughton Road

This land is owned by Chorley Council , but is subject to longstanding issues between Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council over ownership. Adlington Canoe Club have facilities on northern part of site with separate access.

Land at Ackhurst

This land is owned by Chorley Council , but leased to a local business for parking to 31st May 2077.

Harrison's Farm

There are some rights of access that run through the site.

Topography

In terms of topography, of the nine sites, Yarrow Bridge, Ackhurst Road, Northgate Drive, Westhoughton Road, Harrison's Farm, Haworth Road, and Hut Lane are considered to be relatively flat. However, despite being flat, land at Haworth Road was considered potentially problematic due to its high visibility at the brow of a hill on the main access road into Rivington View estate. Cowling Farm has a more undulating topography that would require contouring works in order to deliver the mixed use allocation. Cabbage Hall Fields has a more 'challenging' topography due to the steep changes in levels which would restrict the number of pitches that could be accommodated.

Conclusion

Of the nine sites, Hut Lane, Yarrow Bridge and Westhoughton Road are all located in the Green Belt. In accordance with national policy, they have been discounted because there are no 'very special circumstances' to warrant selection of a site within the Green Belt.

The remaining sites are located in Chorley Town or Adlington. Core Strategy Policy 1 identifies Chorley Town as a Key Service Centre, where growth and investment should be concentrated. Chorley Town has the widest range of services and facilities and this is reflected in the site sustainability scores. All of the identified Chorley Town sites fall within SA Band B. Adlington has fewer services and facilities and is further down the Core Strategy Policy 1 settlement hierarchy. Harrison's Farm falls within SA Band C and is a less sustainable option than the Chorley Town sites, so is not proposed for allocation. Allocation of a site in Chorley Town is in full accordance with Core Strategy Policy 1.

It has been demonstrated that, with the exception of Northgate, all of the Chorley Town sites have the potential to satisfy the criteria set out in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. The sites differ in terms of proximity to health services, schools, access to good public transport and land contamination, with some sites scoring well in terms of one aspect, but less well in respect of others. However, all of these sites fall within SA band B and are considered to be sustainable.

As well as sustainability and accordance with the criteria in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, other factors need to be taken into account.

Whilst, subject to a number of highways improvements, there would be no highways objections to any of the sites coming forward, there are a wide range of highways improvements to the existing network that would be required to deliver all of the sites (with the exception of Hut Lane). Cowling Farm access would not be via a residential estate road, rather, it would be delivered through a masterplanning process.

Land at Ackhurst Road is an existing car park, serving adjacent employment uses and is leased from the Council on a long-term basis. Its allocation would require the legal issues to be addressed and would cause significant parking problems for the businesses that currently use the land for parking and would potentially result in parking issues in the local area. Therefore, it has not been taken forward.

Cabbage Hall Fields has the most challenging topography in terms of steep changes in levels which would mean that five plus pitches could not be accommodated there. Therefore, it is not proposed for allocation. Haworth Road is also likely to be too small, and being on the brow of a hill may be unacceptably visually intrusive. Northgate Drive is a slightly larger site, but it is a linear site, that is narrow in places, which may restrict its suitability for Traveller pitches and which may hinder the manoeuvrability of caravans and other vehicles. Therefore, these sites are not proposed for allocation.

The Cowling Farm site has an undulating topography, but is a far larger site that is flat in part and is not subject to the constraints that affect the other Chorley Town sites. The masterplanning process itself would ensure that residents are able to fully participate in the delivery of a Traveller site and the allocated housing and employment. Working with key stakeholders, including the local residences and businesses,

the Travelling community and the police architectural liaison officer, an appropriate access, location, design and layout could be arrived at. This process would contribute to a 'cohesive' community.

In relation to leases, access to deliver a Traveller site towards the south of Cowling Farm would have necessitated legal agreement to lift restrictive covenants on the land and it would have required an access through the Green Belt. However, further engagement with Lancashire County Council Highways has confirmed that there are a number of opportunities to gain an appropriate access to develop this land and this access is no longer being pursued.

In terms of assessing the suitability of sites, there was an objection from English Heritage in relation to Cowling Farm and Harrison's Farm and the impact an allocation for a Traveller site would have on adjacent listed buildings. However, in cooperation with English Heritage, Heritage Impact Assessments relating to these assets were undertaken. These demonstrated that suitable mitigation measures could be put in place in order to protect these assets and English Heritage have removed their initial objection.

In conclusion, Cowling Farm is a suitable, available and achievable site. It is sustainable and its allocation would accord with national policy on Gypsy and Travellers and Core Strategy Policies 1 and 8. As such it is the Council's proposed allocation.

Schedule of Council's Proposed Further Modifications in relation to Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites
(Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026)

Ref	Page Number	Policy/Section of Publication Document	Proposed Amendment
MMEC66	14	Paragraph 5.7	<p>Amend the text from paragraph 5.7 as follows: 5.7 National planning policy 'Planning policy for Traveller sites' (March 2012) highlights that the traditional and nomadic way of life of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople should be facilitated while respecting the interests of the settled community.</p> <p>5.8. Working with Preston and South Ribble a Central Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Assessment (GTAA) was commissioned in July 2013 and finalised in December 2013. The purpose of the study was to assess overall accommodation need and distribution for each participating local authority, undertaken in a manner which conforms to national policy. It found a need for 5 permanent pitches in Chorley and a transit need of 15 pitches across Central Lancashire (If provided individually Chorley's specific need is for 3 transit pitches). No need for a Travelling Showpeople site was found.</p> <p>5.9 In light of this the Council has allocated a site for a minimum of 5 permanent residential pitches at Cowling Farm, Chorley.</p> <p>5.10 The Council recognises that the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople population can be hard to reach when undertaking GTAAs and that there may be a need resulting from overcrowding on existing sites, concealed households or those living in bricks and mortar which the current GTAA has been unable to identify.</p> <p>5.11 In light of this the Council now commits to undertake further work on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) within 12 months (from February 2014), with a view to resolving the outstanding concerns as highlighted in the annex to</p>

Ref	Page Number	Policy/Section of Publication Document	Proposed Amendment
			<p>the Inspector's letters dated 7 February and 3 March 2014. The Council also makes the commitment to produce jointly with the neighbouring authorities of South Ribble and Preston a separate Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Local Plan, in line with the outcomes of the further GTAA work, to include transit site provision. The timescales for this work are documented within the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS).</p> <p>5.12 In carrying out this work and in the assessment of any future planning applications that may come forward, the Council recognises the need to ensure fair and equal treatment for the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities, and the need to facilitate the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.</p> <p>5.13 Any future planning applications submitted to the Council relating to Gypsy and Traveller and travelling show people sites will be assessed on the basis of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy Policy 8 and the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, or any subsequent national policy.</p>
MMEC67	14	Paragraph 5.7	<p>Add the following policy after paragraph 5.13 (above):</p> <p>Policy HS11: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople</p> <p>The following site HS11.1 - Cowling Farm, Chorleyon the policies map is allocated and protected for the provision of Traveller pitches.</p>

Ref	Page Number	Policy/Section of Publication Document	Proposed Amendment														
MMEC68	88	Appendix 4	<p>Add the following indicator to the Key Indicators and Targets table:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="801 336 2045 624"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="801 336 943 408">Ref</th> <th data-bbox="943 336 1227 408">Indicator</th> <th data-bbox="1227 336 1509 408">Relevant Policy</th> <th data-bbox="1509 336 1809 408">Measure</th> <th data-bbox="1809 336 2045 408">Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="801 408 943 624">13</td> <td data-bbox="943 408 1227 624">Production of the Transit and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan</td> <td data-bbox="1227 408 1509 624">HS11: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople</td> <td data-bbox="1509 408 1809 624">Progress against the milestones in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)</td> <td data-bbox="1809 408 2045 624">To meet milestones in the LDS</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Ref	Indicator	Relevant Policy	Measure	Target	13	Production of the Transit and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan	HS11: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople	Progress against the milestones in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)	To meet milestones in the LDS
Ref	Indicator	Relevant Policy	Measure	Target													
13	Production of the Transit and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan	HS11: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople	Progress against the milestones in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)	To meet milestones in the LDS													
MMMEC18		Policy HS11	Amend the Policies Map to include allocation of siteHS11.1 Cowling Farm, Chorley for permanent pitches for Travellers.														

Assessment of Sites Considered for Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Provision

Site No	Location	Area (Ha)	Capacity	Conformity with Core Strategy	Sustainability Appraisal Banding	Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Funding	Ownership	Estimated Cost	Comments
1	Cowling Farm, Chorley HS1.5/EP1.6 PROPOSED ALLOCATION	9.5	5+	Policy 1 – In conformity with policy, within Key Service Centre of Chorley Town (criterion b) Policy 8 -All of the criteria could be satisfied	B	Potentially	Chorley Council	£560,000	Suitable: Yes, Local Plan housing and employment allocation. Available: Yes Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years subject to an appropriate access being achieved
2	Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley	0.63	5+	Policy 1 – Not in conformity with policy, outside Key Service Centre of Chorley Town. Brownfield site within Green Belt. Policy 8 – All of the criteria could be satisfied	B	Potentially If site is taken out of Green Belt	Chorley Council	£550,000	Suitable: Yes if site taken out of Green Belt. Re-use of Brownfield Land Available: Yes Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years
3	Cabbage Hall Fields HS1.17	0.6	5+	Policy 1 –In conformity with policy, within Key Service Centre of Chorley Town (criterion b) Policy 8 – all of criteria could be satisfied.	B	Potentially	Chorley Council	£480,000	Suitable: Yes, Local Plan housing allocation Available: Yes Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years

Site No	Location	Area (Ha)	Capacity	Conformity with Core Strategy	Sustainability Appraisal Banding	Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Funding	Ownership	Estimated Cost	Comments
4	Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock	0.39	5+	<p>Policy 1 – Not in conformity with policy, outside Urban Local Service Centre of Adlington. Brownfield site within Green Belt.</p> <p>Policy 8 – A detailed site investigation is required under criterion (c) as there is potential ground contamination due to the historic land uses on the site.</p> <p>This site also has recorded coal mining legacy and the site investigation will need to locate and assess the recorded mine entry to establish its current condition and the remedial works required to ensure that any development activity within the vicinity will not be at risk from this existing feature.</p>	C	Potentially if site is taken out of Green Belt	Chorley Council Lancashire County Council	£440,000	<p>Suitable: Yes if site taken out of Green Belt. Re-use of Brownfield Land</p> <p>Available: Site is subject to longstanding issues between Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council over ownership</p> <p>Achievable: Yes if ownership issues can be resolved with Lancashire County Council</p>

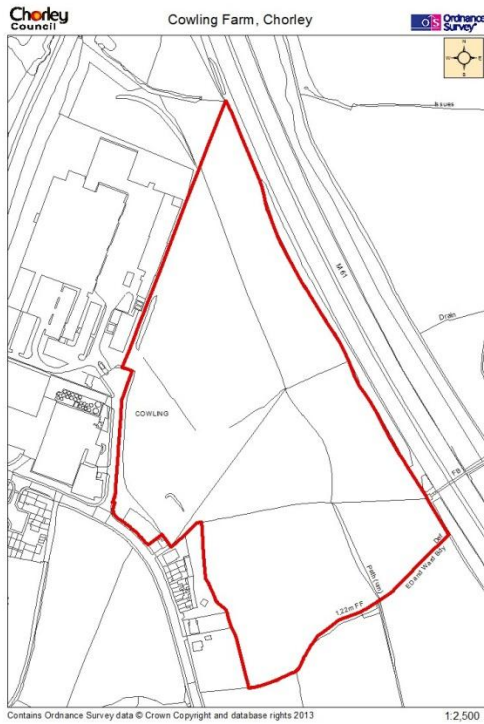
Site No	Location	Area (Ha)	Capacity	Conformity with Core Strategy	Sustainability Appraisal Banding	Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Funding	Ownership	Estimated Cost	Comments
5	Land at Ackhurst Road Chorley	0.49	5+	<p>Policy 1 – In conformity with policy within Key Service Centre of Chorley Town (criterion b)</p> <p>Policy 8 – The site does not have very good access to a number of services under criterion (a). Development of this site could also have an unacceptable impact on the surrounding employment uses under criterion (d) as they use this site for parking.</p>	B	Potentially	Chorley Council	£440,000	<p>Suitable: Yes, although site is on edge of employment area and serves parking needs</p> <p>Available: In Council ownership, but leased to local business for parking</p> <p>Achievable: Yes, if leasing/parking situation was resolved</p>
6	Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive HS1.19	0.8	5+	<p>Policy 1 – In conformity with policy, within Key Service Centre of Chorley Town (criterion b)</p> <p>Policy 8 – The linear nature of the site means that there may not be sufficient space under criterion (b) for 5 pitches but may be suitable for fewer pitches. Development of this site could also have a detrimental impact on an area of open space adjacent to the site in conflict with criterion (d).</p>	B	Potentially	Chorley Council	£440,000	<p>Suitable: Yes, Local Plan housing allocation, however, the linear nature of the site may make providing a sufficient landscaping buffer problematic.</p> <p>Available: Yes</p> <p>Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years</p>

Site No	Location	Area (Ha)	Capacity	Conformity with Core Strategy	Sustainability Appraisal Banding	Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Funding	Ownership	Estimated Cost	Comments
7	Haworth Road, Chorley	0.23	Less than 5	<p>Policy 1 – In conformity with policy, within Key Service Centre of Chorley Town (criterion b)</p> <p>Policy 8 – There is not sufficient space under criterion (b) for 5 pitches but the site could be suitable for fewer pitches. Development of this site could also have an unacceptable impact on the adjacent residential area. Criterion (d) of the policy says no unacceptable impact on the immediate surrounding areas and the wider landscape.</p>	B	Potentially	Chorley Council	£300,000	<p>Suitable: May be too small for more than 5 pitches or for larger mobile homes and in a very visible position</p> <p>Available: Yes</p> <p>Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years</p>
8	Harrisons Farm, Adlington	11.78	5+	<p>Policy 1 - In conformity with policy, Safeguarded Land adjacent to Urban Local Service Centre of Adlington (criterion d).</p> <p>Policy 8 – There may be issues with road access to the site under criterion (b).</p>	C	Potentially	Chorley Council/ Private Ownership	£560,000	<p>Suitable: Yes, currently Safeguarded Land</p> <p>Available: Yes</p> <p>Achievable: Yes could be delivered within five years</p>

Site No	Location	Area (Ha)	Capacity	Conformity with Core Strategy	Sustainability Appraisal Banding	Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Funding	Ownership	Estimated Cost	Comments
9	Hut Lane, Heath Charnock	0.13	4	<p>Policy 1 – Not in conformity with policy, not within Key Service Centre or Urban Local Service Centre. Greenfield site within Green Belt.</p> <p>Policy 8 – Not in conformity. The site does not have good access to services under criterion (a). Site has an unacceptable impact on the surrounding area and wider landscape contrary to criteria (d).</p>	D	Potentially If site is taken out of Green Belt	Private Ownership	N/A Site in private ownership	<p>Suitable: No, greenfield site in greenbelt</p> <p>Available: Yes</p> <p>Achievable: Yes the site has temporary permission for Gypsy and Traveller use</p>

Site Information and Sustainability Appraisal

1) Cowling Farm, Chorley, X:359931; Y:416864



View of Site from M61



Moorland Gate (above and below)



View from Cowling Road





Cowling Farm – listed building



Cowling Road /Weavers Brow



Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	9.5ha (0.4ha required for allocation)	5+	Housing/Employment - HS1.5/EP1.6. HS1.5 = 6ha for 158 dwellings based upon a net developable area of 75% and a density of 35 dph. EP1.6 = 3.5 ha of employment land.

Lease/Land Covenants:

2 leases relating to the Spinners Arms: Lease 1 granted 1980 for a term of 99 years - now forms part of the extended public house. Lease 2 granted May 2002 for a term of 15 years used as the public house car park.

Land to the south of the site: Conveyance of Gillett Playing Fields, Limbrick to Chorley Borough Council, 11 September 1980 with covenants limiting the use of the land to agricultural & recreational purposes.

Land to the south of the site: Licence Agreement with tenant and Chorley Council dated 1 February 1996. **Comment:** The Site is within the key service Centre of Chorley Town. It is bounded to the east by the M61 motorway. To the north west are employment uses/industrial units. To the southwest are farm buildings, Cowling farm being a grade II listed building. Its allocation would therefore accord with Core Strategy Policy 1. It is a Council owned site and is allocated as a housing/employment site in the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026. Parts of the site are relatively flat and the site is within close proximity to open space. The site is Greenfield which would allow for the grazing of animals and is within close proximity to a small number of housing and industrial units. This site scored Band B in the Sustainability Appraisal being reasonably close to a range of services and facilities, but it is not in close proximity to medical services, a

post office or a local centre. There may be the opportunity to have a dedicated access to a Traveller allocation to the south of the allocation with the employment and housing allocation being served off Moorland Gate to the north.

Constraints: The site is allocated for housing and employment uses in the emerging Local Plan. 158 dwellings are allocated on 6 hectares at a density of 35 dwellings per hectare at a net developable area of 75%. The figure of 75% is used because evidence suggests that not all of the land on larger sites is developable for housing due to constraints such as the need to provide access roads, open space, natural features on site such as trees/ponds and landscaping/screening. For example, Cowling Farm borders the M61 to the east and Moorland Gate employment area to the north (there is open countryside to the south) so buffers would be required between housing and these uses. Its topography is also undulating. Sensitive boundary treatment will also be required between Gypsy/Traveller and Travelling Showpeople uses and employment and residential uses.

Any proposed development needs to minimise harm to the significance of the historic environment. The Cowling Farm site is located to the east of the existing curtilage to Cowling Farmhouse, which is a Grade II listed building. A heritage impact assessment has been undertaken (Appendix 3) which considers:

- the contribution that the Cowling Farm site makes to the significance of Cowling Farmhouse
- the impact that the loss of the Cowling Farm site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of the Farmhouse
- how any harm might be removed or reduced
- the impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of Cowling Farmhouse with mitigation measures in place.

The heritage impact assessment concludes that mitigation will result in an acceptable relationship between development on the proposed site and the designated heritage asset such that the significance embodied therein will be sustained.

Any development of this site needs to be sensitively designed so that it will have a positive impact on the setting of Cowling Farmhouse. Applications for the development of this site will be assessed against Policy 16 (Heritage Assets) in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, BNE1 (Design Criteria for New Development) and BNE8 (Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets) in the Local Plan and policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment in the Framework. An application will need to demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the site to the significance of Cowling Farmhouse, the impact of developing the site upon it, and specifically how the proposed development will impact upon its setting.

In relation to the southern access that was originally being explored towards the south of Cowling Farm, these would have necessitated legal agreement to lift restrictive covenants on the land and it would have required an access through the Green Belt. Further engagement with Lancashire County Council Highways have confirmed that there are a number of other opportunities to gain an appropriate access to develop this land and this Green Belt access is no longer being pursued.

The Local Plan requires the remainder of the site to be to be masterplanned, or a development brief prepared, to ensure the delivery of the allocated housing and employment uses.

Contamination: There are no known contamination issues. There is a low likelihood of any potential contamination.

Coal Authority Comments: The site is not within the defined Development High Risk Area and is instead located within the Low Risk Area. The Coal Authority indicate as such there are no recorded risks within the site that new development will need to take into account.

United Utilities Comments: We would seek the disposal of surface water to be directed to the local river and foul effluent to be discharged into the Croston Trunk sewer, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Access to a clean water supply is also possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree.

Environment Agency Comments: In so far as it relates to our remit, we support the preferred option for Gypsy and Traveller provision at Site 1: Cowling Farm, Chorley.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: a) Access off Moorland Gate to this potential development site would be the preferred access route from a highways perspective, although I recognise that there may be level difficulties within the site. Moorland Gate is adopted public highway to the turning head end of the road. There is scope for the sort of improvements that we would wish to see to enable access between the site and local facilities on foot and by bus (for example a formal footway along the eastern side of the road). Current access made off the road by the businesses served off Moorland Gate would not be impeded by the projected use of the site, although there would be an inevitable loss of on-street parking at the junction should a new access be taken off Moorland Gate. Visibility to and from Cowling Brow is satisfactory for safety needs, and use of Cowling Road by large vehicles servicing local properties is sufficient demonstration in this strategic overview that a further site could be served equally well by the larger vehicles typically used by the Gypsy/Travelling/Showpeople communities that may need to be accommodated on the site. Details of bus service improvement needs and impact on existing road safety issues nearby should properly be assessed and addressed by a planning application – I cannot anticipate that there would be any insurmountable practical problems, although I recognise that these would be subject to the wider issues matters of economic viability at the time.

b) Access through the pub car park at the Spinners Arms – this should provide an acceptable access route in physical terms although it is of course a little further out from the local facilities and services around the Eaves Lane area than would be access via Moorland Gate, which impacts on sustainable travel options. However this is not an overwhelming difficulty. Again visibility onto Cowling Road is satisfactory for safety needs and use of Cowling Road by large vehicles servicing local properties is sufficient demonstration in this strategic overview that a further site could be served equally well by the larger vehicles typically used by the Gypsy/Travelling/Showpeople communities that may need to be accommodated on the site. Again specific details of any highway/transport improvements that might be needed to accommodate a changed use of the site should properly be addressed through a planning application.

c) Access through the field hedge boundary on Weavers Brow – this should also provide an acceptable access route for the site although it is even further away from local facilities and services for any journeys on foot or cycle than either of the 2 previous options. Visibility onto Cowling Road is satisfactory for safety needs and use of Cowling Road by large vehicles servicing local properties is sufficient demonstration in this strategic overview that a further site could be served equally well by the larger vehicles typically used by the Gypsy/Travelling/Showpeople communities that may need to be

accommodated on the site. Specific details of any highway/transport improvements that might be needed to accommodate a changed use of the site should properly be addressed through a planning application.

In response to a query raised recently by a local resident, I should explain that reference to access to a bus route in regard to this potential site is because Cowling Brow/Cowling Road/Weavers Brow is accessible by bus as demonstrated by the existing bus stops and the existing bus service along the road, even though this is not currently a very frequent service. If it becomes necessary to deliver a bus service improvement for any reason associated with new development, you will appreciate that existing mechanisms are available to us as Local Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority to achieve the improvement without having to establish any new routes.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	1
Address	Cowling Farm, Chorley

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	1.61 to 2.4km	<u>Social</u> This site has poor access to public transport with bus services less than hourly. The railway station is 1.61 to 2.4km away although there are frequent rail services. The site has reasonable access to local services and facilities.
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	Less than 1/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to A Road junction	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to convenience store (Cowling Stores)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Post Office (Bagganley Lane)	1.21 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Primary School (St James')	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albany Academy)	0.81 to 1.6km	
On a cycle route	No	<u>Environmental</u> The only identified negative environmental effect in developing this site is that it is a Greenfield site.	
Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km		
Distance to GP surgery (Eaves Lane Surgerv)	1.61 to 3km		
Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	2.1 to 5km		
Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km		
Distance to local centre (Eaves Lane)	1.21 to 1.6km		
Designation of land	Key Service Centre		
Area of Separation	Outside		
AONB	Outside		
SSSI	Outside		
Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside		
Agricultural classification	3		<u>Economic</u> There are no identified negative economic effects in developing this site.
Conservation Area	Outside		
Ancient Monument on site	No		
Registered Park or Garden	Outside		
Listed Building on site	No		
Locally Listed Building on site	No		
EN3	Current/former land use	Greenfield	
EN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	
EN5	Contaminated land	No risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	Yes	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Moorland Gate)	Up to 0.8km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road)	1.61 to 3.2km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system	Yes	Is the site deliverable: Yes
	Access to water		
	Access to gas		
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations		

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

Additional Comments

Whilst no heritage assets are within the site, proximity to a Grade II listed building has been noted and a heritage impact statement has been undertaken in co-operation with English Heritage which identifies necessary mitigation measures to protect this asset.

2) Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley, X: 359330; Y: 416189



View from A6 Bolton Road

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	0.63ha	5+	Green Belt

Lease/Land Covenants: None

Comments: This site is located to the south of Chorley Town settlement boundary and is considered previously developed land in the greenbelt. It has a sustainability score of Band B and there is good access into the site from the A6 Bolton Road. To the east and west is Yarrow Valley country park. To the north and south are some residential dwellings. The site has very good access to local services and facilities, public transport and road networks. The site is owned by Chorley Council and currently used as a depot.

Constraints: The site is located in the Green Belt. Government guidance in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to allocate this site.

'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' states that Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. However, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development on previously developed land in the Green Belt subject to a number of criteria as set out in Chorley Local Plan Policy BNE5: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites in the Greenbelt. If the Council wishes to make an exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a Traveller site, it would be specifically allocated in the development plan as a Traveller site only. Access to the site is in Flood Zone 2, however, the Environment Agency has confirmed that it would not object to such development providing no caravans were located within the flood zone.

Contamination: No known contamination issues. Representations have been made citing previous contamination issues from illegal tipping etc. therefore. Detailed site investigation would be required in advance of any development.

The Coal Authority: No comments

United Utilities Comments: Foul and surface water pipes run through the site, a water main is located nearby. Therefore access to our infrastructure may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree this when/if necessary. The location of our existing assets within the site may restrict the layout of the development and/or make the site unviable as protection measures will need to be agreed for our infrastructure.

Environment Agency Comments: Whilst the red-edged boundary in the above document shows that Site 2: Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley, is not located in Flood Zone 2 (medium probability of flooding), the access road to the site from Bolton Road (A6) would be. Therefore, we would advise that no vulnerable part of the development, which in this case would be caravans, should be located in Flood Zone 2. Provided that this is adhered to, we are satisfied that the intended use for this site, if selected, would not be at an unacceptable level of flood risk.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: The possibility of locating the site access away from the bus stop should first be explored. However, if this cannot be avoided, then for the existing field access to be used, the required visibility splay for a 40mph road will be expected to be met due to the presence of the bus stop. The 2.4m in this case should be measured from the back of the bus stop layby.

Bolton Road has footways on both sides and there is a public footpath within close proximity of the site. St Georges CE Primary School is a few metres away. There are cycle lanes close to the site on Yarrow Gate and Myles Standish Way, but the cycle lanes only ends at the junctions of these roads with Bolton Road. There

are currently proposals for extension of the lanes to link each other on both sides of Bolton Road. For sustainability and improved accessibility of the site, developer funding will be required towards implementation of this scheme.

This section of Bolton Road is heavily-trafficked and often experiences queuing during peak hours. However, despite the existence of footways along both sides of the road, there are no facilities for crossing from one side to the other. Apart from the need to safely cross over the road, there is also need for pedestrian networks to connect with one another. Suitable local safety improvements will therefore be expected to be carried out within close proximity of the site access to mitigate any adverse impact on the safety of road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. This should include appropriate surface level crossings such as pedestrian refuges, zebra crossings etc.

If buses are present in the layby, any vehicles/caravans turning into the site would have to wait in the lane until the buses move away. In the process, free flow of traffic would be disrupted resulting in traffic queuing back and delays. Therefore, for this section of road to operate efficiently, there may be a need for localised widening and/or preferably right turn provision to allow for vehicles/caravans to safely turn into the site. Highways would have no objections to the proposal, once these issues are addressed.

Additional Comments. Sustainability assessments have been verified since the Preferred Options. One inaccuracy has been changed in relation to Yarrow Bridge SA Objective EC2 to show distance to further/higher education at Woodlands/Lancashire College, Southport Road. However this does not affect the overall sustainability banding.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	2
Address	Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	0.81 to 1.6km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>This site has very good access to public transport, road networks and local services and facilities, particularly schools.</p> <p><u>Environmental</u></p>
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	6 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to A Road junction	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to convenience store (One Stop Shop, Carr Ln)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Post Office (Devonshire Road)	1.21 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Primary School (St George's)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albany Academy)	Up to 0.8km	
S2	On a cycle route	No	<p>The site is on Grade 3 agricultural land, but is previously developed. However, it is located in the Green Belt.</p> <p><u>Economic</u></p>
	Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to GP surgery (Library House Surgery)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	2.1 to 5km	
EN1	Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km	<p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
	Distance to local centre (Bolton Street)	0.81 to 1.2km	
	Designation of land	Green Belt	
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
EN2	SSSI	Outside	<p><u>Economic</u></p>
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
	Agricultural classification	Grade 3	
	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
EN3	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	<p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
	Listed Building on site	No	
	Locally Listed Building on site	No	
	Current/former land use	Part Brownfield/Part Greenfield	
EN4	Flood Zone area	Part Zone 2	<p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
EN5	Contaminated land	Medium Risk	
EC1	Within 3km of a congestion spot	No	<p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
	Distance to employment site (Chorley Town Centre)	1.21 to 1.6km	
EC2	Access to Broadband	Yes	<p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/Lancashire College, Southport Road)	1.61 to 3.2km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system		<p>Potentially deliverable</p>
	Access to water		
	Access to gas	Yes	
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations	No	

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

3) **Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley, X: 358848; Y: 418858**



Views from Cowslip Way

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	0.6ha	5+	Housing - HS1.17 for 11 dwellings based upon a net developable area of 50% and a density of 35 dph.

Lease/Land Covenants: None

Comment: This site lies within Chorley town Centre settlement boundary. Residential dwellings lie to the south and east with Chorley North Industrial Park to the west and north. It has very good access to all local services and facilities and good access to public transport and road networks. It is owned by Chorley Council and is an allocated housing site. The site has a sustainability band of B having very good access to all local services and facilities, public transport, and road networks and can be accessed via Cowslip Way or Chorley North Industrial Park.

Constraints: The site is allocated for housing uses in the emerging Chorley Local Plan therefore allocation would result in the replacement of 11 dwellings with 5 Traveller pitches.

This site is a relatively small site, but could accommodate a number of permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches. The developable site area is significantly reduced due to steeply sloping topography. There are changes in the levels on site, which are likely to restrict the number of pitches. The site is at a different level to the adjacent housing.

Access to the site could be from Chorley North Industrial Park, rather than Cowslip Way which would avoid additional traffic through the residential area. In the past, there have been illegal encampments on the adjacent employment land which has given rise to conflict with local businesses.

Contamination: No known contamination issues. There is infilled ground to south of the site and also immediately adjacent to Chorley North Industrial Estate; moderate risk of potential contamination.

The Coal Authority: No comments**United Utilities Comments:** We would seek the disposal of surface water via the nearest watercourse (or should this be demonstrated as not feasible, through other sustainable means). Access to our infrastructure for foul and clean water services may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree. : No network issues. No water Issues.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: Drumhead Road has two lanes, however, this is often reduced to one as a result of on-street parking mostly by heavy goods vehicles waiting to load and unload. This is likely to affect safe manoeuvrability of vehicles/caravans accessing and egressing the site. At some sections of the road, large vehicles would have to use part of the footway/verge to the detriment highway safety to be able to safely pass parked vehicles. Nonetheless it should be possible for vehicles to pass each other with utmost caution.

The nearest primary school, St Joseph's Catholic School is within walking distance of the school, however, the nearest bus stops in Botany Brow, Harpers Lane and Preston Road, though outside the recommended distance are within reasonable walking distance of the site. Public Right of Way (FP25) runs in front of the site where it connects Public Right of Way (FP24) towards west of the site up to an existing footpath (Footpath Laburnum Road to Spring Road). From this point, a new cycle link/footpath is proposed along the River Chor to link Drumhead Road. The possibility of providing funding towards the proposed link should be explored. I have no concerns for the capacity of Millennium Way/Drumhead Road to cope with the proposed site. There are no highway objections to this proposal.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	3
Address	Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	0.81 to 1.6km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>This site has very good access to all local services and facilities and has very good access to public transport and road networks. There are no identified negative social effects in developing this site.</p>
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	2-5/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to A Road junction	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Up to 1.6km	
	Distance to supermarket (Aldi)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to convenience store (Costcutter, Harpers Ln)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Post Office (Bagganley Lane)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Primary School (St Joseph's)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Secondary School (St Michael's)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	On a cycle route	Yes	
Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km		
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Eaves Lane Surgery)	0.41 to 0.8km	<p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Greenfield, has a medium risk of contamination and is within 3km of a congestion spot.</p>
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	Up to 2km	
	Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to local centre (Eaves Lane)	0.41 to 0.8km	
EN1	Designation of land	Key Service Centre	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>There are no identified negative economic effects in developing this site.</p>
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
EN2	Agricultural classification	None	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
EN3	Listed Building on site	No	<p><u>Greenfield</u></p>
	Locally Listed Building on site	No	
EN4	Current/former land use	Greenfield	<p><u>All Zone 1</u></p>
EN5	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	
EC1	Contaminated land	Medium risk	<p><u>Yes</u></p>
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	Yes	
EC2	Distance to employment site (Chorley North Ind Estate)	Up to 0.8km	<p><u>Yes</u></p>
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
Deliverability Indicators	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Rd)	1.61 to 3.2km	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
	Access to sewer system		
	Access to water		
	Access to gas	Yes	
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
At risk from hazardous installations	No		

Overall Site Performance

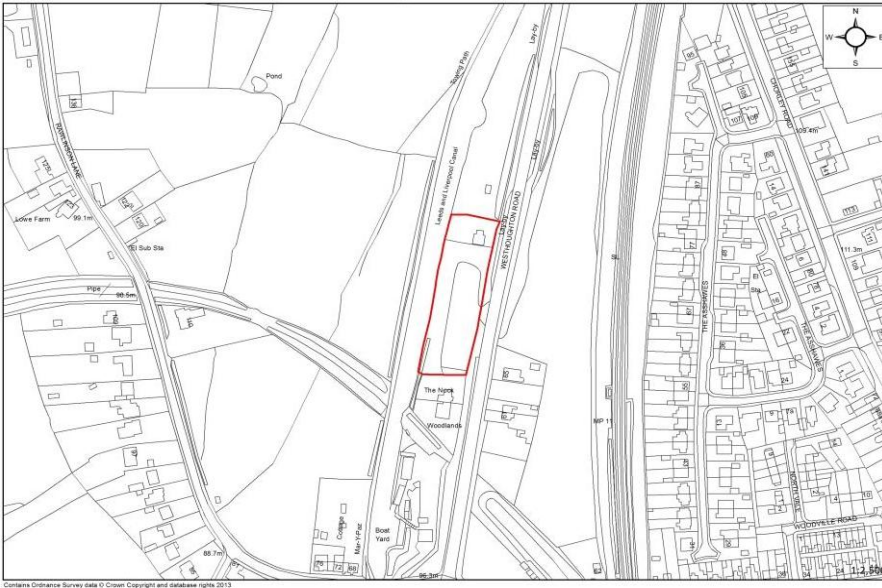
Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

4) Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock, X: 359649; Y: 414389



Views of the Site



Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council/ Lancashire County Council	0.39ha	5+	Green Belt

Lease/Land Covenants:

Land Ownership: Chorley Council but subject to longstanding issues between Chorley Council and Lancashire County Council over ownership.

Adlington Canoe Club has storage facilities on the northern part of the site with a separate dedicated access.

Comment: The site is owned by Chorley Council and is previously developed land. It is not located in or adjacent to a settlement, although it is close to Heath Charnock/Adlington. It is bounded by the canal to the west and there are some residential dwellings to the east and south. It is adjacent to the A6 Westhoughton Road from where it could be accessed. It has a sustainability score of Band C which is largely due to its distance to Chorley Town Centre, other shops and facilities, and the infrequency of local public transport. Records indicate that Travellers used the site as an illegal encampment in 2004.

Constraints: The site was last used by Lancashire County Council as a yard to store highway material, but appears under-utilised. There are longstanding ownership issues and it is unclear whether these can be resolved. It is located in the Green Belt. Government guidance in 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', which should be read in conjunction with the Framework states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to allocate this site.

'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' states that Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. However, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development on previously developed land in the Green Belt subject to a number of criteria as set out in Chorley Local Plan Policy BNE5: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites in the Greenbelt. If the Council wishes to make an exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a Traveller site, it would be specifically allocated in the development plan as a Traveller site only.

Contamination: Although only a relatively small site, there are several historical land uses that could potentially be affected by ground contamination, including:

- an historic landfill across the northern half of the site, with little information known about its contents (infilled prior to 1974 so not licenced);
- sawmilling/timber treatment
- Metal casting/foundry
- factory/works (use not specified)
- former highways/engineering depot
- infilled/made ground

There is also another landfill site located within 250m of the site.

Detailed site investigation would be required in advance of any development.

The Coal Authority comments: This site has a recorded mine entry, the current condition is unknown. If this site were to be developed then a site investigation should include the need to locate and assess the recorded mine entry to establish its current condition and the remedial works required to ensure that any development activity within the vicinity will not be at risk from this existing feature.

United Utilities Comments: Access to our infrastructure for foul and clean water services may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree.

We would seek the disposal of surface water via the nearest watercourse (or should this be demonstrated as not feasible, through other sustainable means).

Environment Agency Comments: Site 4: Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock, is located on top of a historic landfill named Westhoughton Road, therefore any planning application submitted for development on this site, if selected, should be accompanied by an appropriate ground investigation report that will assess any potential impacts on controlled waters.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: It seems the existing access would be retained for use to access the site. This access is directly onto a section of Westhoughton Road where there is prevailing national speed limit.

The road has footways on both sides but which is terminated on one side on the approach to the site access. There are footpaths and a cycle lane in the area and there are about three primary schools in the area, but none of which are within walking distance of the school.

There are no facilities available within close proximity of the site access to assist crossing of the road. For the proposal to be acceptable to Highways, the following measures will be required.

- Extension of the existing footway on the west side of the road past the site access to the existing layby.
- Speed reduction measures either through road markings and coloured surfacing or extension of the 40mph speed limit restriction past the site towards north.
- Measures to allow safe crossing of the road.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	4
Address	Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock

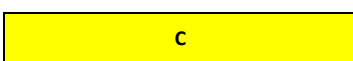
SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Adlington)	0.81 to 1.6km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>This site has good access to public transport links although rail services are hourly and bus services are less than hourly. The site is over 3km away from the key service centre of Chorley Town Centre however there are many facilities, services and employment opportunities within Adlington.</p>
	Rail service frequency	Hourly service	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	Less than 1/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	Over 3km	
	Distance to A Road junction	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	Over 3km	
	Distance to convenience store (Tesco Express, Chorley Rd, Adlington))	Over 1.2km	
	Distance to Post Office (Market Place, Adlington)	1.21 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Primary School (St Paul's, Adlington))	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albany Academy)	1.61 to 3.2km	
	On a cycle route	No	
Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km		
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Adlington Medical Centre)	1.61 to 3km	<p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Grade 3 agricultural land and located in the Green Belt.</p>
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	5.1 to 10km	
	Distance to public open space/park	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to local centre (Bolton Road, Adlington)	1.21 to 1.6km	
EN1	Designation of land	Green Belt	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>The only identified negative economic effect in developing this site is that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities.</p>
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
EN2	Agricultural classification	3	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
	Listed Building on site	No	
EN3	Locally Listed Building on site	No	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
	Current/former land use	Brownfield	
EN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
EN5	Contaminated land	Low risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	No	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Adlington South Business Park)	1.21 to 1.6km	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road, Chorley)	Over 5km	<p><u>Potentially deliverable</u></p>
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system	Yes	
	Access to water	Yes	
	Access to gas	Yes	
	Access to electricity	Yes	
	Existing road access	Yes	
	At risk from hazardous installations	No	

Overall Site Performance

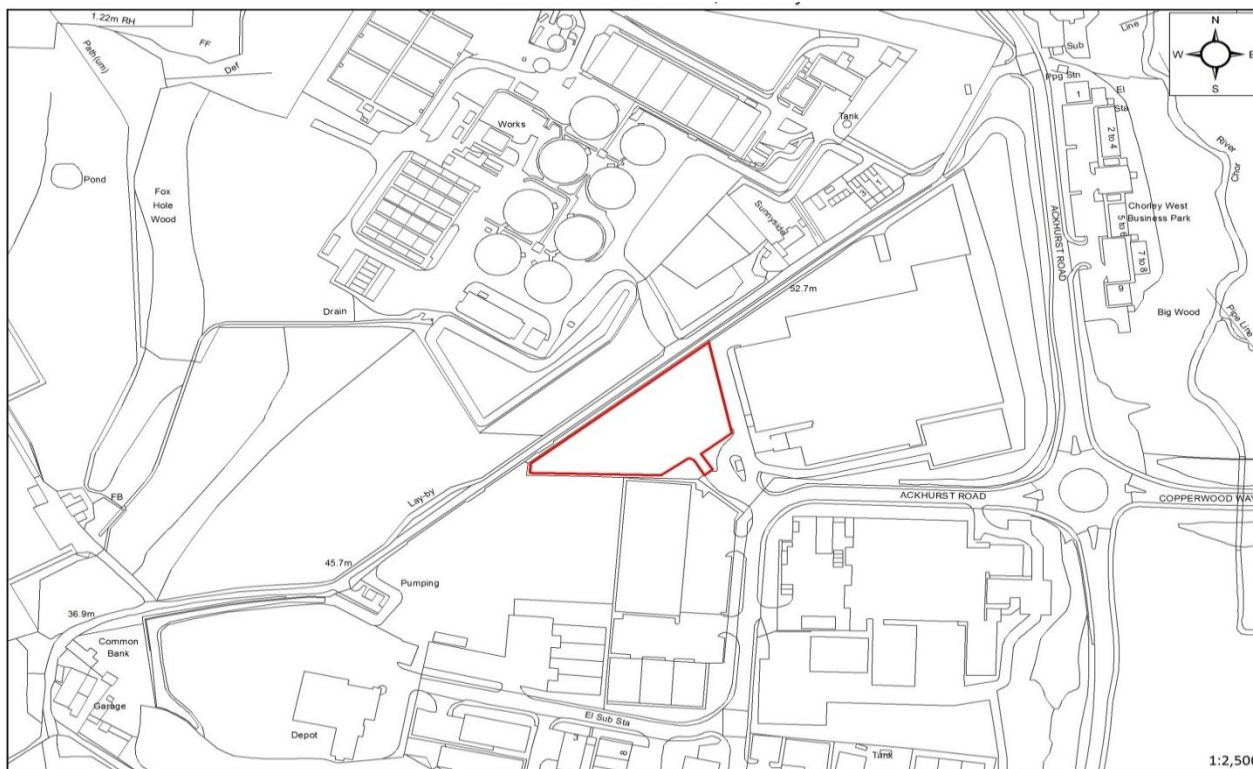
Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:



5) Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley, X: 356674; Y: 417515



View of the site from Ackhurst Road

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	0.49ha	5+	Existing Industrial Site in Chorley

Lease/Land Covenants: Leased to local business for parking to 31 May 2077.

Comment: The site is owned by Chorley Council but is leased to two companies and used as a car park for the adjacent employment premises. It is relatively flat and there are no residential properties in close proximity. The site scores sustainability Band B and does not have very good access to public transport or local services and facilities but is in quite close proximity to a supermarket and secondary school.

Constraints: The site is in use as a car park and is leased from the Council to 31 May 2077. **Allocation of this site would therefore have a detrimental impact on the operation of this business.** Alternative car parking would need to be provided if this site were progressed.

Contamination: The site is historically classified as part of the sewage works. There is a potential for ground contamination. **The Coal Authority comments:** Former coal mining activity has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation.

United Utilities Comments: Foul and surface water pipes run through the site, a water main is located nearby. Therefore access to our infrastructure may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree. The location of our existing assets within the site may restrict the layout of the development and/or make the site unviable as protection measures will need to be agreed for our infrastructure. We therefore suggest that, should this site be considered for development, pre-application discussions take place with all parties as soon as possible.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: Ackhurst Road has standard footways and there are footpaths and a cycle route in the area. St Marys Primary School is also within walking distance of the site and there is a bus stop within 400m of the site. It is however felt that accessibility of the site could be further enhanced if there is a cycle/pedestrian link provided from the site to Common Bank Lane. This would reduce the need for residents having to use the busy roundabout when heading north of Ackhurst Road. It should however, be noted that Common Bank Lane is currently un-adopted and is privately maintained. As the size of the site seems small, there may be the need to reduce the width of the existing access to that of a more conventional access to reduce any safety risks to pedestrians and cyclists

There are no major highway implications for the location of this site; as such, there would be no objections to the proposal.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	5
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Address	Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley
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SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	1.61 to 2.4km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>The site does not have very good access to public transport or local services and facilities but is in quite close proximity to a supermarket and secondary school.</p> <p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Grade 3 agricultural land and at medium risk of contamination.</p> <p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>There are no identified negative economic effects in developing this site.</p>
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	Less than 1/hr/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	1.61 to 2.4km	
	Distance to A Road junction	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Tesco)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to convenience store (Collingwood News)	Over 1.2km	
	Distance to Post Office (Talbot Drive, Fuxton)	1.21 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Primary School (St Marv's)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Parklands)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	On a cycle route	No	
	Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km	
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Collison Avenue)	1.61 to 3km	
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	2.1 to 5km	
	Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to local centre (Collingwood Road)	1.21 to 1.6km	
EN1	Designation of land	Key Service Centre	
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
EN2	Agricultural classification	Grade 3	
	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
EN3	Listed Building on site	No	
	Locally Listed Building on site	No	
	Current/former land use	Brownfield	
FN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	
EN5	Contaminated land	Medium risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	No	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Ackhurst Ind Estate)	Up to 0.8km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road)	Up to 1.6km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system		
	Access to water		
	Access to gas	Yes	
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations	No	

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

6) Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley, X: 359130; Y: 418897



Site from Northgate Drive



View of site



Northgate Drive

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	0.8ha	5+	Housing - HS1.19 for 21 dwellings based upon a net developable area of 80% and a density of 35 dph.

Lease/Land Covenants: None

Comment: The site has a sustainability band of B, having good access to all local services and facilities, buses and road networks. It is owned by Chorley Council and is an allocated housing site. It is bounded to the east by the M61. To the south and west are residential dwellings and Chorley North Industrial Park lies to the north.

Constraints: The site is allocated for housing uses in the emerging Chorley Local Plan. Allocation would result in the replacement of 21 dwellings with 5 Traveller pitches. The linear nature of the site could prove problematic in terms of accommodating 5 pitches. Access to this site would be via residential estate roads. There may be issues around the potential negative impact on the designated open space to the south east of the site. There could also be noise issues in relation to its proximity to the M61 motorway if it is considered that caravans are more susceptible to noise issues than residential dwellings.

Contamination: No known contamination issues on site. Former railways land across north of site; moderate risk of potential contamination.

The Coal Authority: no comments

United Utilities Comments: Some issues in terms of overloading. Some issues with flooding in Merefield/Long Copse. Any input into this system will affect Botany Bay Pumping Station, this will have to be considered when establishing the impact upon the station.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: It is highly likely that the residential access roads in the area would be used to access the site. Some of these roads e.g. the westerly arm of Northgate Drive is narrow with parked vehicles on both sides and would not easily lend itself to the transport of large vehicles and caravans. Some of these roads are widely used by school children walking to St Joseph's Catholic Primary School; therefore an increased vehicular use of the residential roads, especially by caravans may be at the expense of pedestrian safety.

The site appears to be in a sustainable location, as there are facilities such as cycle lanes, footways, footpaths and bus stops and a school within walking distance. However, although there are no highway objections in principle, unless measures can be taken to limit the use of the residential access by large vehicles and caravans, Highways would seek to object to the proposal.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	6
Address	Land Adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	1.61 to 2.4km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>The site has good access to local services except a supermarket and railway station. It is not serviced by a cycle route.</p> <p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Greenfield with a medium risk of contamination and within 3km of a congestion spot.</p> <p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>There are no identified negative economic effects in developing this site.</p>
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	2-5/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to A Road junction	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	1.6 to 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Aldi)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to convenience store (Costcutter, Harpers Ln)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Post Office (Bagganley Lane)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Primary School (St Joseph's)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Secondary School (St Michael's)	0.8 to 1.6km	
On a cycle route	No		
Distance to cycle route	0.41 to 0.8km		
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Eaves Lane Surgerv)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	Up to 2km	
	Distance to public open space/park	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to local centre (Eaves Lane)	0.41 to 0.8km	
EN1	Designation of land	Key service centre	
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
EN2	Agricultural classification	None	
	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
	Listed Building on site	No	
EN3	Locally Listed Building on site	No	
	Current/former land use	Greenfield	
EN4	Flood Zone area	All zone 1	
EN5	Contaminated land	Medium risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	Yes	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Chorley North Ind Estate)	0.81 to 1.2km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road)	1.61 to 3.2km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system	Yes	Potentially deliverable
	Access to water		
	Access to gas		
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations		

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

7) **Haworth Road *, Chorley, X: 359495; Y: 417447**

* Formerly known as Crose Hall Lane



Views of site

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Chorley Council	0.23 ha	Less than 5 pitches	Within settlement of Chorley

Lease/Land Covenants: None

Comment: The site is owned by Chorley Council and is located within the Chorley settlement. It lies east of school playing fields and north of some landscaped open space and allotments. Further north and beyond the canal are residential dwellings. The site has a sustainability score Band B. It is site has good access to public transport with frequent b and rail services and is in close proximity to all local services and facilities

with the exception of a GP surgery and Post Office. The site has poor access to a motorway junction which is over 3km away.

Constraints: The site's size would restrict the number of plots and the provision of any amenity space. It is also adjacent to existing residential areas and is on a main road access. The site has been partially landscaped and lies on the main approach to the Crosse Hall housing development which is currently under construction by Morris Homes. Being at the brow of a hill, it is highly visible.

Contamination: There are currently no known or suspected contamination issues at this site.

The Coal Authority: no comments

United Utilities Comments: Foul, clean and surface water infrastructure is located in close proximity to the site. Therefore access to our infrastructure may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree.

Existing assets are located within the site which may restrict the layout of the development and/or make the site unviable as protection measures will need to be agreed for our infrastructure. We therefore suggest that, should this site be considered for development, pre-application discussions take place with all parties as soon as possible.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: It appears this site could be accessed from Haworth Road and not Crosse Hall Lane. The site seems to be in a sustainable location with most facilities and amenities within walking distance. The junction of Eaves Lane and Crosse Hall Lane seems narrow, but could safely allow passage of caravans. I should point out however that the junction can be congested during school pick up and drop off periods. There would be no highway objections to the location of this site.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	7
Address	Haworth Road, Chorley

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Chorley)	0.81 to 1.6km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>This site has good access to public transport with frequent bus and rail services. The site is in close proximity to all local services and facilities with the exception of a GP surgery and Post Office which are 0.81 to 1.6km away. The site has poor access to a motorway junction which is over 3km away.</p>
	Rail service frequency	4 or more/hour/direction	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	2-5/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to A Road junction	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to convenience store (Cowling Stores)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Post Office (Bagganley Lane)	0.81 to 1.2km	
	Distance to Primary School (St James')	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albanv Academy)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	On a cycle route	Yes	
Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km		
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Faves Lane Surgery)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	2.1 to 5km	
	Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to local centre (Faves Lane)	0.41 to 0.8km	
EN1	Designation of land	Key Service Centre	<p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Greenfield and within 3km of a congestion spot.</p>
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
	Agricultural classification	None	
EN2	Conservation Area	Outside	<p><u>Economic</u></p>
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
	Listed Building on site	No	
Locally Listed Building on site	No		
EN3	Current/former land use	Greenfield	<p>There are no identified negative economic effects in developing this site.</p>
EN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	
EN5	Contaminated land	Low risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	Yes	
EC1	Distance to employment site (East Chorley Business Centre)	Up to 0.8km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road)	1.61 to 3.2km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system		<p>Potentially deliverable</p>
	Access to water		
	Access to gas	Yes	
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations	No	

Overall Site Performance

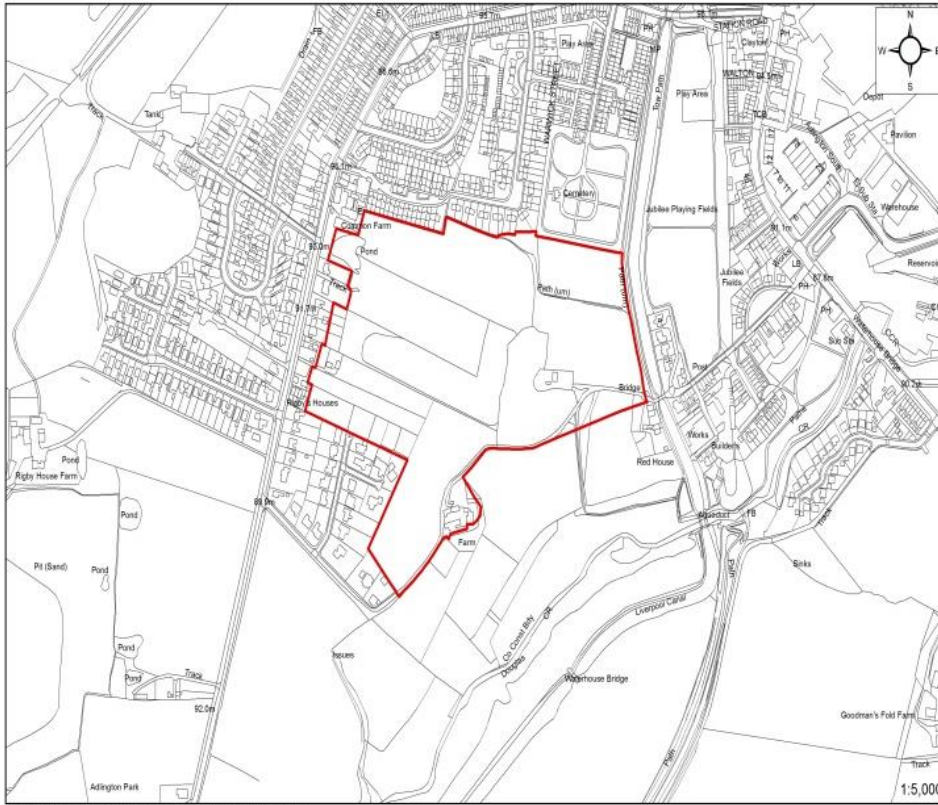
Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:

B

8) Safeguarded Land BNE3.2 Harrison's Farm, Adlington, X: 359644; Y: 412591



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Views of site

Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Predominantly in Chorley Council ownership.	Total site size 11.78ha. Area in Chorley Council ownership that is not allocated for the cemetery extension or allotments is approximately 6.6 ha.	5+	Safeguarded land, an extension to the cemetery and allotments – Policies BNE3.2, HW7.1, HW5.3

Lease/Land Covenants: Rights of access

Comment: The site is largely flat and bounded by housing and a cemetery to the north, and housing to the west and south west. Further south the land is greenbelt. It is allocated as Safeguarded Land and for allotments and a cemetery extension in the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026. There are two access roads, one from Harrison Road over a small humped bridge that spans the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the other from Old School Lane, accessed via Park Road. It has a sustainability score Band C due to its distance from the main key service centre, a supermarket and a secondary school. It is, however, close to local services and facilities and has hourly bus and train services within walking distance.

Constraints: This site is a large Greenfield site at the southern end of Adlington, there is an existing farm on part of the site and most of the site will be without services.

Any proposed development needs to minimise harm to the significance of the historic environment. The Harrisons Farm site is located to the north east of Old School House, and to the west of Red House Bridge, which are both Grade II listed. A heritage impact assessment (Appendix 3) has been undertaken, which considers:

- the contribution that the Harrisons Farm site makes to the significance of Old School House and Red House Bridge
- the impact that the loss of the Harrison Farm site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of Old School House and Red House Bridge
- how any harm might be removed or reduced
- the impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of Old School House and Red House Bridge with mitigation measures in place

The heritage impact assessment concludes that the proposed mitigation would allow the significance of the designated heritage asset to be retained.

Any development of this site needs to be sensitively designed so that it will have a positive impact on the setting of Old School House and Red House Bridge. Applications will be assessed against Policy 16 (Heritage Assets) in the Core Strategy, BNE1 (Design Criteria for New Development and BNE8 (Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets) in the Local Plan and policy on conserving and enhancing the historic environment in the Framework. An application will need to demonstrate an understanding of the contribution of the site to the significance of the heritage assets, the impact of developing the site upon them, and specifically how the proposed development will impact upon their settings.

Contamination: No known contamination issues. There is low likelihood of any potential contamination.

The Coal Authority comments: Former coal mining activity has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation.

United Utilities Comments: Foul and clean water pipes run through the site, therefore access to our infrastructure may be possible but will require further detailed discussions with United Utilities to agree.

We would seek the disposal of surface water via the nearest watercourse (or should this be demonstrated as not feasible, through other sustainable means).

The location of our existing assets within the site may restrict the layout of the development and/or make the site unviable as protection measures will need to be agreed for our infrastructure. We therefore suggest that, should this site be considered for development, pre-application discussions take place with all parties as soon as possible.

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: Sections of Old School Lane, particularly the bend round the Old School House are very narrow with limited visibility. The adjacent grass verge appears to be within the adopted highway which could allow local safety improvements to be made by widening the bend up to the boundary of no. 7 and 9 with centre line markings to ensure that vehicles use the appropriate lanes when negotiating the bend due to lack of forward visibility.

For improved accessibility of the site, the possibility of providing funding for implementing the proposed pedestrian/cycle link along the Leeds Liverpool Canal tow path from where footpaths 8 and 9 meets up to Park Road should be considered to encourage school journeys by sustainable modes of transport. Highways would seek to object to the proposal if these measures cannot be delivered.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	8
Address	Harrisons Farm, Adlington

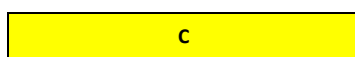
SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Adlington)	0.81 to 1.6km	<u>Social</u> This site has good access to public transport networks although the rail services and bus services are hourly. The site is over 3km from the main key service centre of Chorley. The site has good access to a local convenience store and there are employment opportunities within Adlington. Adlington does not have a secondary school within the settlement.
	Rail service frequency	Hourly service	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	1/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	Over 3km	
	Distance to A Road iunction	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to motorway iunction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	Over 3km	
	Distance to convenience store (Co-op, Bolton Road)	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to Post Office (Market Place)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Primary School (Adlington)	0.41 to 0.8km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albany Academy)	3.21 to 5km	
	On a cycle route	No	
	Distance to cycle route	Up to 0.4km	
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Granville House)	0.81 to 1.6km	
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	5.1 to 10km	
	Distance to public open space/park	Up to 0.4km	
	Distance to local centre (Market Place)	0.41 to 0.8km	
EN1	Designation of land	Safeguarded Land	<u>Environmental</u> The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site is that it is Greenfield with a current designation of Safeguarded land.
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
Agricultural classification	3		
EN2	Conservation Area	Outside	
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
	Listed Building on site	No	
EN3	Locally Listed Building on site	No	
	Current/former land use	Greenfield	
EN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	<u>Economic</u> There are no identified negative economic effects in developing the site.
EN5	Contaminated land	No risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	No	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Adlington South Business Park)	0.81 to 1.2km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road)	Over 5km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system	Yes	Is the site deliverable: Yes
	Access to water		
	Access to gas		
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
	At risk from hazardous installations		

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:



Additional Comments

Whilst no heritage assets are within the site, proximity to the Old School House, and to the west of Red House Bridge, which are both Grade II listed has been noted and a heritage impact statement has been undertaken in co-operation with English Heritage which identifies necessary mitigation measures to protect these assets.

9) Hut Lane, Heath Charnock, X: 360845; Y: 415526



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Site Owner	Site Size	Potential number of Pitches:	Local Plan Allocation
Private Ownership	0.13ha	2	Green Belt

Comment: The site is bounded by the M61 to the south/west, and there is housing to the north. To the east and south are open fields of greenbelt land. Temporary (2 year) permission for a Traveller site was granted and expires in July 2015. It currently has some hard standing with caravans, two mobile homes and a utility structure on site. PPTS requires that existing sites with temporary planning permission be assessed for their suitability for allocation. The site has a poor sustainability score, Band D, due largely to its designation as Green Belt land and its distance to a service centre, supermarket, convenience store and post office. The site is 0.13ha therefore it would not be large enough to accommodate a 5 pitch allocation using the design and layout guidance as set out in the governments good practice guide ‘Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites’ (DCLG 2008).

Constraints: The site is a greenfield site in the Green Belt. Government guidance in ‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to allocate this site.

‘Planning Policy for Traveller Sites’ states that Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If a local planning authority wishes to make an exceptional limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a Traveller site, it should do so only through the plan-making process. If land is removed from the Green Belt in this way, it should be specifically allocated in the development plan as a Traveller site only.

Contamination: There are currently no known or suspected contamination issues at this site. **The Coal Authority comments:** Former coal mining activity has left a legacy of unstable land which will need to be assessed and appropriate remedial works undertaken prior to site occupation.

United Utilities Comments: The initial desk-top appraisal has not identified any existing public wastewater infrastructure in the area; however should it be deemed necessary, this must be confirmed. There is access to a clean water supply.

We would seek the disposal of surface water via the nearest watercourse (or should this be demonstrated as not feasible, through other sustainable means).

Lancashire County Council Highways Comments: There are no local amenities near the site. There are no regular bus routes, footways and cycle lanes and no schools are close to the site. Despite there being footpaths and a bridleway, these provide no immediate access to local amenities. Vehicle access to the site is however good and the access road is lit. The site does not seem to be in a sustainable location, however, given that it was previously granted approval for similar use, Highways would not object to its continual use as a Gypsy site.

Sustainability Appraisal

Site Ref	9
Address	Hut Lane, Heath Charnock

SA Obj	Indicator	Site Performance	SA Comments
S1	Distance to railway station (Adlington)	Over 3km	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>This site has good access to bus links although bus services are less than hourly. The site is over 3km away from the key service centre of Chorley Town however there are many facilities, services and employment opportunities within Adlington.</p>
	Rail service frequency	Hourly service	
	Distance to nearest bus stop	Up to 0.4km	
	Bus service frequency	Less than 1/hour/direction	
	Distance to service centre (Chorley Town Centre)	Over 3km	
	Distance to A Road junction	1.61 to 3km	
	Distance to motorway junction (M61, Chorley)	Over 3km	
	Distance to supermarket (Morrisons)	Over 3km	
	Distance to convenience store (Tesco Express, Bolton Road, Adlington)	Over 1.2km	
	Distance to Post Office (Market Place, Adlington)	Over 1.6km	
	Distance to Primary School (Anderton)	1.61 to 3km	
	Distance to Secondary School (Albany Academy)	3.21 to 5km	
	On a cycle route	No	
Distance to cycle route	1.21 to 1.6km		
S2	Distance to GP surgery (Adlington Medical Centre)	1.61 to 3km	<p><u>Environmental</u></p> <p>The only identified negative environmental effects in developing this site are that it is Grade 3 agricultural land and located in the Green Belt.</p>
	Distance to NHS general hospital (Chorley)	5.1 to 10km	
	Distance to public open space/park	Over 1.6km	
	Distance to local centre (Bplton Road, Adlington)	Over 1.6km	
EN1	Designation of land	Green Belt	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>The identified negative economic effects in developing this site are that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities and over 1.6km away from an employment site.</p>
	Area of Separation	Outside	
	AONB	Outside	
	SSSI	Outside	
	Biological/ Geological Heritage Site	Outside	
Agricultural classification	3		
EN2	Conservation Area	Outside	<p><u>Economic</u></p> <p>The identified negative economic effects in developing this site are that it is over 5km away from further/higher education facilities and over 1.6km away from an employment site.</p>
	Ancient Monument on site	No	
	Registered Park or Garden	Outside	
	Listed Building on site	No	
EN3	Current/former land use	Greenfield	<p>Is the site deliverable: Yes</p>
EN4	Flood Zone area	All Zone 1	
EN5	Contaminated land	Low risk	
	Within 3km of a congestion spot	No	
EC1	Distance to employment site (Moorland Gate, Chorley)	Over 1.6km	
	Access to Broadband	Yes	
EC2	Distance to further/higher education (Woodlands/ Lancashire College, Southport Road, Chorley)	Over 5km	
Deliverability Indicators	Access to sewer system	Yes	<p>Is the site deliverable: Yes</p>
	Access to water		
	Access to gas		
	Access to electricity		
	Existing road access		
At risk from hazardous installations	No		

Overall Site Performance

Band Spectrum:



Overall Band:



Heritage Impact Assessments of Sites Considered

Heritage Asset	Contribution that this site makes to the significance of the heritage asset	Impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of the asset	How might any harm be removed or reduced?	Impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of the asset with mitigation measures in place	Conclusions
Site 1 Cowling Farm Chorley					
Cowling Farmhouse (Grade II)	Cowling Farm site is located on the eastern side of Weavers Brow, to the east of the existing curtilage to Cowling Farmhouse and not less than 35 metres to the east of the Farmhouse building itself. The barn to the farmhouse is situated to the north of the listed building and to the north of that are a row of terraced properties. As such the setting of Cowling Farmhouse is already seen within close proximity of a number of domestic dwellings such that its original agrarian setting has already been largely lost. Only a small proportion of the proposed site will be seen in the context of the Farmhouse in views to the east from Weavers Brow. Views are restricted generally by a high, dense evergreen hedge to the eastern side of Weavers Brow. Whilst the site does make some contribution to the setting of the designated heritage asset the majority of what remains of the original agricultural holding is to be found further to the east and south of the site.	The physical aspects of new development could adversely affect the setting of the designated heritage asset, depending upon their proximity to the proposed site boundary.	A development buffer zone that provides adequate screen planting between the listed building and the development site.	Given the separation distances between the proposed development and the designated heritage asset, plus the proposed mitigation, it is considered that any impact upon the significance of the setting of the designated heritage asset will be minimal.	Mitigation will result in an acceptable relationship between development on the proposed site and the designated heritage asset such that the significance embodied therein will be sustained.

Heritage Asset	Contribution that this site makes to the significance of the heritage asset	Impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of the asset	How might any harm be removed or reduced?	Impact that the loss of this site and its subsequent development might have upon the significance of the asset with mitigation measures in place	Conclusions
Site 8 Harrison's Farm, Adlington					
Old School House (Grade II)	The site is north east of the curtilage to Old School. Old School itself is located at the extreme south western corner of that curtilage. An outbuilding and a detached dwelling – 9 Old School Lane effectively block views of the designated heritage asset from the proposed site such that it proposed site contributes very little to the setting of Old School.	There is considered to be the potential for minimal impact from development upon the setting of Old School.	Restricting development to a more northerly part of the proposed site, i.e. north of Harrison's Farm and to west of a property known as Astley.	Minimal impact.	The proposed mitigation would allow the significance of the designated heritage asset to be sustained.
Red House Bridge (no.88) (Grade II)	The site is to the west of Red House Bridge, set to the west of the towpath to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Views from east of the canal towards the proposed site are restricted by built development on the eastern side of the canal at this point that includes residential properties on 'The'Poplars', on the southern side of Harrison Road and the industrial building on the right angle bend within Hatton Street. Views of the bridge are therefore generally along the length of the canal or from the towpath on the western side of the canal. As such the proposed site contributes little to the setting of the designated heritage asset.	There is considered to be minimal impact from development upon the setting of Red House Bridge.	Restricting development to a more northerly part of the proposed site, i.e. north of Harrison's Farm and to west of a property known as Astley.	Minimal impact	The proposed mitigation would allow the significance of the designated heritage asset to be sustained.

APPENDIX 4

Sites Suggested by Gypsy and Traveller Community at Hut Lane10th August 2012

Site	Councils Response
1. Caravan Storage site (former Discover Leisure), Coppull	This site has been granted planning permission for housing. NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION
2. Land at 241 Southport Road, Ulnes Walton	This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION
3. Scrap Yard, Whittle-le-Woods	A location plan or exact site address details have not been provided and it has not been possible to identify the exact location. IN ABSENCE OF FURTHER DETAILS NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION
4. Old Nursery – Wigan Lane, Chorley	This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Site	Councils Response
<p>5. Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley</p>	<p>This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.</p> <p>However, this site is previously developed and there is a presumption in favour of the sustainable development of previously developed land in the Green Belt subject to the criteria within Local Plan Policy BNE5.</p> <p>CONSIDER FURTHER – INCLUDED IN MAIN REPORT</p>
<p>6. Land Fill site – Blackburn Road, Chorley</p>	<p>This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>
<p>7. German Lane, Charnock Richard</p>	<p>This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, which should be read in conjunction with the Framework states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>
<p>8. Quarry, Whittle-le-Woods</p>	<p>This site has been granted planning permission for housing.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>
<p>9. Land at Common Bank Lane, Chorley</p>	<p>This area comprises a sewage works and industrial estate, access to the lower undeveloped part is poor and it lies within a high risk flood zone.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>

Site	Councils Response
10. Allanson Farm, Adlington	<p>This site is within the Green Belt and is deemed inappropriate development in the Framework. Government guidance in the document Planning Policy for Travellers Sites, which should be read in conjunction with the Framework states that Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>
11. Milton Road, Coppull	<p>This site has been granted planning permission for affordable housing.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>
12. Cowling Mill (adjacent to Chorley Van Hire), Chorley	<p>This site is located within the Settlement area of Chorley. The site currently has an employment use and within a high flood risk area. Land is not in Council ownership. It has recently been sold to a housing developer and therefore cannot be considered deliverable.</p> <p>NO FURTHER CONSIDERATION</p>

APPENDIX 5**Traveller Sites Financial Assessment**

Below are estimates for the cost of developing each individual site contained in the Preferred Options report.

For guidance these are based on the following estimates

- a) An amenity block of 36 sq m at a cost of approx. £45,000
- b) Utility supplies- a spot figure of £50,000 if G&T site is adjacent/close to highway
- c) Site fencing – figure of £25,000
- d) Play area- £15,000
- e) Creation of pitch base/off road space and internal access road £150,000 for up to 5 pitches
- f) Access road – approx. £2,000 per linear meter

For each site the following additional works are included in the estimate;

- 1) all sites to be securely fenced with palisade fencing
- 2) all pitches/road surfaces to be tarmac finish
- 3) utility supplies and connections to each pitch, including drainage
- 4) access roads to the site to be constructed to an adoptable standard including all utility supplies under the roadway

A site manager's office/accommodation has not been requested, or included in the estimates

This accommodation requirement however will not fit the proposed sites at Crosse Hall Lane and Hut Lane where fewer pitches have been applied.

Site layout, access roads and buildings to be designed in line with the Communities and Local Government Good Practice Guide for Designing Gypsy & Travellers Sites.

All estimates are exclusive of Vat and no allowance has been made for payment of professional fees, planning application fees, associated costs for surveys & site investigations, developers profit, project management fees, contingencies etc. The level of such costs and fees may vary dependant upon how the scheme is to be delivered and utilisation of internal CBC resources and external third party skills.

I would estimate that the delivery of the whole scheme by an external third party will result in additional costs in the region of 20% to 30% of the estimates provided.

Site 1; Cowling Farm- Capacity 5 pitches**Cost**

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches located adjacent to the public highway (assumed Moorland Gate) as set out above, and excluding an access road.

Estimate of cost of G&T site £480,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

This estimate will vary dependent upon the final location of the G&T site within the Cowling Farm site . The provision of an access road could increase costs by £10,000 to £500,000 plus VAT, Fees & contingencies

Opportunity Value

The proposed traveller site would occupy a portion of the overall site which is allocated for a mixed employment/residential development.

It is assumed the traveller site will be construction within the 6.0 Ha of the allocated residential land. Assumed a site area for the traveller site of 0.4 Ha (1.00 acre)

Opportunity Value £300,000

Site 2; Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley – Capacity 5 pitches**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, plus construction of an access road of approximately 45 meters, plus river contamination protection works

Estimate of cost of G&T site £590,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site is currently Green Belt, however it is previously developed land with an established planning use as a Depot/ commercial site.

Assumed a site area for the traveller site of 0.4 Ha (1.00 acres)

Opportunity Value £150,000 (commercial use) or £6,000 (Green Belt land)

Site 3; Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley- Capacity 5 pitches**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, plus construction of an access road of approximately 20 meters

Estimate of cost of G&T site £520,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site currently allocated as housing development

The site area is 0.6 Ha (1.48 acres)

Opportunity Value £230,000 (low cost housing)

Site 4; Land off Westhoughton Road, Heath Charnock, Chorley- Capacity 5 pitches**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, no access road required as G&T site to be accessed directly off highway

Estimate of cost of G&T site £480,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site is currently allocated as Greenbelt, however you have indicated that potential for planning use as a Depot/ commercial site.

The current site area is 0.39 Ha (0.96 acres)

Opportunity Value £96,000 (commercial use) or £6,000 (Green Belt land)

Site 5; Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley- Capacity 5 pitches

Cost:

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, no access road required as G&T site will be directly adjacent to highway

Estimate of cost for G&T site £480,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies.

Opportunity Value:

Site is currently leased by the council to a local business. To develop the site for the proposed traveller site, the council would have to renegotiate the current lease agreement resulting in either a payment to the local business or reduction in rental income received by the Council.

Site area assumed for the traveller site is 0.4 Ha (1.00 acre)

Opportunity Value – £ Negative –reduction of rental income to the council

Site 6; Land adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley- Capacity 5 pitches

Cost:

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, no access road required as G&T site will be directly adjacent to highway

Estimate of cost for G&T site £480,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site currently allocated as housing development

The current site area is 0.8 Ha (1.97 acres)

Opportunity Value £200,000 (low cost housing)

Site 7; Haworth Road, Chorley - Capacity below 5 pitches**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation as required above, but for only **4 pitches only**; no access road required as G&T site will be directly adjacent to highway

Estimate of cost for G&T site £380,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site currently allocated as within the settlement of Chorley, but I have presumed potential for small residential development.

The current site area 0.2Ha (0.5 acres)

Opportunity Value £160,000

Site 8; Harrison's Farm, Adlington, Chorley - Capacity 5 pitches**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation for 5 pitches as set out above, plus construction of an access road of approx 60 meters

Estimate of cost for G&T site £600,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

The proposed traveller site would occupy a portion of the overall site of 11.78 Ha (29.10 acres) which is allocated as Safeguarded land and an extension to the cemetery and allotments.

Assumed a site area for the traveller site of 0.4 Ha (1.00 acre)

Opportunity Value £10,000 (safeguarded land)

Site 9; Hut Lane, Heath Charnock - Capacity below 5 pitches – Private Ownership**Cost:**

Development to provide accommodation as required above, but for 3 pitches only; no access road required as G&T site will be directly adjacent to highway. Current buildings do not have planning consent for current use and it is assumed that the buildings will be demolished and the site cleared before any new G&T site is constructed.

Estimate of cost £300,000 plus Vat, Fees and contingencies

Opportunity Value:

Site currently allocated as greenbelt land.

Assumed a site area for the traveller site of 0.13 Ha (0.32 acres)

Opportunity Value £3,000 (greenbelt land)

Traveller pitch funding may be available from the Homes and Communities Agency as part of the Affordable Homes Programme. Funding for schemes on Green Belt sites will not be available however if a site is taken out of the Green Belt and allocated it may be eligible for funding.

Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Preferred Options

Summary of Site Specific Representations

Site	No of Reps in Support	No of Reps Objecting	Other	Total	Summary of Objections
1. Cowling Farm, Chorley	31*	89 (1 of which is a petition signed by 327 people)	3	123	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the most expensive option being considered. • Impact on The Spinners. • Impact on Cowling Farmhouse which is a Grade II listed building. • Few shops and services in the area and public transport is limited. • Road access is not suitable as they are narrow and winding and cannot cope with any extra traffic. • Negative impact on this area of beauty which is the gateway to Rivington and the West Pennine Moors. • Impact on house prices. • Use of Green Belt for access but Hut Lane is in Green Belt. This land is also subject to a restrictive covenant. • Value of remaining part of site allocated for housing and employment will diminish. • Impact on the Cowling community has not been considered. • Businesses on Moorland Gate Business Park will suffer. • The size of the site will attract more Gypsies and Travellers and would grow out of control. • Topography of the site makes it difficult and costly to develop. • Noise and disturbance from the site. • Site has poor drainage. • Improper use of taxpayers money.
2. Yarrow Bridge Depot, Chorley	0	47	2	49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on River Yarrow and adjacent woodland. • Impact on pub and hotel. • Impact on house prices. • Road safety issues – access is from the A6 which is already extremely busy and there is a bus stop in front of the site used by school children. • Contamination – the site has been used in the past to dump substances such as asbestos, fridge freezers and lamp posts. • There has been significant development in the area already e.g. Duxbury Manor, Myles Standish Way. • Site is in the Green Belt. • Potential flood risk. • Noise and disturbance from the site. • Lack of school places locally.

Site	No of Reps in Support	No of Reps Objecting	Other	Total	Summary of Objections
3. Cabbage Hall Fields, Chorley	0	30	0	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise and disturbance from the site. Loss of privacy as properties on Coltsfoot Drive back onto the site. Impact on house prices. It is the only green space in the area where children can play and acts as a buffer zone between Coltsfoot Drive and Chorley North Industrial Estate. It should be turned into a playground/park. There is only one access road into the estate and there are already issues with parking. Increased traffic will result in safety issues. Problems in the past with Travellers setting up camp illegally on the industrial estate.
4. Land off Westthoughton Road, Heath Charnock	1	5	2	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site is in the Green Belt. Potential contamination as the site has been used for storing chemicals and materials by LCC. Site is not available as used by LCC. Not a suitable site to have children on due to being between the A6 and the Leeds Liverpool canal and there is an approx. 20ft drop to the canal. Impact on the canoe club.
5. Land at Ackhurst Road, Chorley	1	1	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems in the past with Travellers setting up camp illegally on the industrial estate.
6. Land adjacent to Northgate Drive, Chorley	0	31 (1 of which is a petition signed by 187 people)	2	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on house prices. Access is unsuitable for large vehicles and caravans due to the road being narrow and congested with parked vehicles and it is a major route for children accessing St Joseph's primary school. It is the only green space in the area where children can play and acts as a buffer between Northgate Drive and the motorway. It should be turned into a play area. The trees on the site lessen the impact of noise from the motorway, if they are cut down noise would increase from the motorway and it would make the area unattractive.
7. Haworth Road (previously named Crosse Hall Lane), Chorley	0	32 (1 of which is a petition signed by 419 people)	0	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is named Crosse Hall Lane but the site is on Haworth Road. There are already traffic problems on Crosse Hall Lane due to the primary school and this will be made worse. Impact on house prices. The site is not big enough to accommodate five pitches. Will not be in-keeping with the Rivington View estate which has been landscaped and which residents pay a maintenance fee for. This site is ideal for St James' primary school to expand onto and seems a more useful purpose for the land. The road is unadopted and is being maintained by Morris Homes. Additional traffic will cause wear and tear and the expense of repairs would be borne by residents of the Morris Homes development.

Site	No of Reps in Support	No of Reps Objecting	Other	Total	Summary of Objections
8. Harrison's Farm, Adlington	0	33	2	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the site is poor either via the bridge on Harrison Road which is a narrow Grade II listed structure or via Park Road due to parked vehicles on both sides of the road. • The site is widely used by walkers and cyclists on route to the canal towpath. • Rainwater drains have historically been a problem in the area. • Loss of good productive farmland. • Impact on house prices. • The land outlined on the map is not all owned by the Council. • The fields are home to an extensive range of wildlife.
9. Hut Lane, Heath Charnock	0	1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site is not suitable for this use due to a long history of conflict between the residents of the site and the adjoining settled community. • The site is in the Green Belt. • The site is unsustainable.

*23 reps were in relation to other sites but stated that they agreed with the preferred option.

Summary of General Representations

- Consultation inadequate and a breach of Localism Act 2011 as residents living adjacent to any of the sites being considered were not consulted.
- Selection of the preferred option cannot be justified due to inconsistencies and errors in the examination of the sites.
- Representation form is difficult to use.
- The document is illegal and unsound.
- Failure by the Council to follow a transparent, fair and proper process.
- The best site would be adjacent to the Hartwood/M61 roundabout.
- Do not see the point of moving the Gypsies/Travellers from the site they are currently living at.
- Sites put forward by the Traveller community have been dismissed because they are in the Green Belt but several sites suggested by the Council in the Green Belt have been considered.
- Concerns about the robustness of the GTAA published in January 2014.
- Objection from settled community in terms of engagement on Gypsy and Traveller issues and sites before the Preferred Options consultation.

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Council	4 September 2014

DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL FOR UNITARY STATUS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present proposals for the development of a business case for Chorley borough moving to a single tier of local government, to seek approval for undertaking and resourcing the work. In addition, to seek in principle permission to hold a local poll next autumn and to establish arrangements to provide governance of the process and provide further recommendations to Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the council supports the case to investigate the business case and viability of developing a single tier authority for the borough.
3. That approval is given to the establishment of an all-party working group to oversee the development of a business case and to test the viability of proposals to establish a unitary authority for the borough, comprising seven Members of the Council.
4. To receive nominations for membership of the working-group and appoint Members to form the working group.
5. That approval is given in principle to hold a local poll in autumn 2015, subject to final approval of Council following recommendations from the all-party working group.
6. That approval is given to incurring expenditure of up to £80,000 to fund the development of a business case, including the creation of a fixed-term cost of Project Director post, the funding to come from the organisational change reserve.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

7. In the light of continuing change across the public sector and reductions in budgets, the council needs to review its own business model and the approach taken to the delivery of public services across the borough. A proposal for unitary status would support this work, as the council would be able to review how local government services in the borough could work with other parts of the public sector to deliver seamless public services which would be sustainable in the future.
8. The report sets out some of the key opportunities that a unitary council would provide for the borough. These would need to be fully tested during the development of a business case, but include:
 - Increasing strategic leadership and local accountability – so that decisions are made locally that benefit the borough rather than needing to be balanced against other areas in a large and diverse county.
 - Scale, growth, and comparable authorities – Chorley is already of a comparable size to other unitary authorities and is projected to be the fastest growing area

across Lancashire in the coming years. The borough’s demographics and cost base also means that it is likely that a unitary council for Chorley would have similar spending power to larger unitary areas.

- Budget reductions and savings – over the medium to long term a unitary council is likely to deliver significant budget savings. In addition, as public sector budgets continue to reduce, local decision making would be in place to determine how reductions would be managed.

9. The development of a business case will be overseen by an all-party working group which will make recommendations to full council about whether to undertake a local poll of residents next autumn. The development of a business case will cost £70k, which will be financed through the organisational change reserve already in place, and would be undertaken by a new Project Director post.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

11. It is fairly widely accepted that the two-tier system of local government is not ideal in terms of efficient service delivery or the public understanding of local decision-making.
12. Unprecedented change across the public sector, and the significant budget reductions still needed, mean that the council needs to consider radical options for how public services will be delivered in the future. Changing the structures of local government to create a single tier authority would provide a clear opportunity to reshape the way in which public services are delivered in Chorley to make them efficient, effective and sustainable.
13. A recent meeting has been held between the Executive Leader, the MP for Chorley and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government where the issue of Chorley becoming a unitary authority was discussed. In response, the Secretary of State indicated that the government would not block proposals that had a public mandate.
14. This paper presents the rationale for investigating the business case, and the proposals for work to be undertaken over the next year.

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

15. This section sets out the outline rationale for the proposal that the council should fully investigate the case for becoming a unitary authority and potentially seek a mandate from local residents.
16. The pace of change across the whole public sector and the likely impact of continued funding cuts mean that the council needs to consider its business model and how public services will continue to be delivered across the borough. Unitary status offers a potential option to tackle some of the key challenges that Chorley will face in the coming years.

Developing the business case presents an opportunity to examine how public services are delivered in the borough and the options for the future, with a unitary council potentially being the catalyst for change.

17. There are a number of factors and opportunities that mean that it is appropriate for Chorley to pursue the proposal. They are:

- a. **Strategic leadership and local accountability:** Chorley is well-placed to provide a good balance of strategic leadership while retaining local accountability. In recent years, the council has led the delivery of innovative and strong work across a number of areas, such as economic development, social isolation and community engagement. It has demonstrated that work can be effectively delivered at a local level that strategically targets areas of need.

Because of the nature of Chorley compared to other parts of Lancashire, particularly its demographics and location, the borough is often not prioritised for resources because the need is greater elsewhere in the county. A unitary council for Chorley would be better placed to tailor resource distribution to issues and areas of the borough in most need while still engaging across boundaries on issues such as economic development.

- b. **Sustainable public services:** public services will have to change fundamentally in the coming years – because of national policy changes (such as the integration of public health into local government and development of CCGs); reducing resources; and, increasing demand for services particularly with an ageing population.

The creation of the Chorley Public Service Reform Board and a strong track record of strategic partnerships with other organisations, means that the council has already started the process of working with others to reshape public services in the borough.

The focus of the workstreams for the public service reform board that have already been agreed (data and intelligence sharing, joint commissioning, sharing assets and a well-being and resilience service). If successful, these workstreams would transform public services to make them more seamless for the public and more sustainable in the future. However, competing organisational priorities and boundaries will be the biggest risk to the programme. Creating a unitary council for the borough would create a unique opportunity to build public services that would be fit to meet the challenges of the future.

- c. **Scale and growth:** Chorley’s population is 110,505. As demonstrated in the table below, this is comparable to other single-tier authority areas already in existence, and that the projected population increases shows Chorley growing faster than most of the other areas.

Authority	Population (2013 mid-year estimate)	2037 projected population
Torbay	132,075	145,000
Halton	125,970	130,000
Bracknell Forest	116,567	139,000
Chorley	110,505	125,000
Darlington	105,396	109,000
Hartlepool	92,665	98,000
Rutland	37,606	41,000

- d. **Resource base:** while Chorley has a comparable population size to other unitary councils, it is likely that Chorley’s resource base would be comparable to other

larger unitary authorities, and would potentially have a smaller demand on services. This will need to be tested through the development of the business case, but would potentially mean that the authority would be more financially sustainable.

- e. **Budget reductions:** all of the public sector will face continued reductions in budgets in the coming years. The county council will need to make savings of over £300 million. A unitary council could mean that the borough would have far more influence over how public services would be shaped and delivered to meet the challenges. In the current structures, it is likely that the delivery of public services will have to be further prioritised based on need across the county, and mean that Chorley receives even less resource.
- f. **Cost savings.** At this point it is not possible to identify exact savings in costs. However, every reorganisation of local government undertaken in the recent past has delivered significant cost savings, as duplication is reduced and efficiencies generated in the establishment of new authorities.

18. The rationale set out above demonstrate that in principle, there are potential benefits in developing a single tier of local government for Chorley, and that the authority would be financially viable. However, they are currently set out at a high level, and further work is needed to properly understand the implications of move to unitary status. This will be done in the development of a full business case.

TESTING VIABILITY AND DEVELOPING A BUSINESS CASE

19. In advance of taking the final decision about whether to seek a mandate through a local poll, the council will need to develop and consider a full business case for a unitary council. This will need to include:
- a. the financial case: examining the likely cost base of the proposed authority – looking at income streams and modelling an expenditure range.
 - b. resident and stakeholder support: gauging the views and understanding of residents and their concerns. In addition, working with key stakeholders, such as neighbouring authorities and other partners to establish support and agreement for the proposed authority.
 - c. sub-regional and regional partnerships: establishing how Chorley would engage with other work with partnerships such as local enterprise partnerships and how it would undertake a role in strategic influence of the local area.
 - d. developing a business model: principles would need to be developed for how the proposed council would be structured and deliver services, to demonstrate that public services would be delivered effectively and efficiently.
20. An outline timeline for the work to be undertaken is set out at Appendix A.

RESOURCING

21. The intention is to undertake the majority of the work in developing a business case internally. The overall cost of the work excluding the local poll is expected to be £80k, with the details about the planned resourcing set out below.
22. A new fixed-term post will be created to lead the work. The post will be a Project Director, and will be on the Chief Officer terms and conditions. The salary will be set on a spot rate of £57,744, which is the equivalent of the top of Head of Service pay scales. The post will report to the Chief Executive. The intention is to advertise the post internally and, if the vacancy is successfully filled, backfilling of posts will take place as appropriate.
23. The exact cost of internal staffing resource will depend on the appointment and backfilling, but is estimated to be a maximum of £40k.

- 24. Some additional specialist work will be undertaken using external support as necessary. This will include specialist financial modelling and undertaking surveys of residents. This work is not expected to cost more than £40k.
- 25. The costs of this work can be met from the ringfenced reserve which was established to meet the costs of organisational change over the coming years.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

- 26. To provide an oversight of the work, it is proposed that an all-party working group is established. The working group will include seven Members (four from the administration, two from the opposition and one from the Independent group).
- 27. The terms of reference for the group are attached at Appendix B. The group will consider the business case and viability of developing a unitary council during the development, and will then make a recommendation to full Council in early spring 2015 about whether to proceed to hold a local poll.

LOCAL POLL

- 28. The council can undertake a local advisory poll using powers under s. 116 of the Local Government Act 2003. The management and running of the poll is the council's responsibility, and the results are advisory.
- 29. At this stage, the proposal is to commit to undertaking a local poll in principle next autumn, subject to the council being satisfied that the business case for a change in local government structures has been established.
- 30. The arrangements for the local poll would be finalised and agreed at that point, but it is likely that the poll would be undertaken as a postal poll. Every elector on the register would be sent a postal voting pack, which would include a ballot paper and a declaration of identity. They would then be able to return their vote by post, or drop it off at locations across the borough.
- 31. This approach has been used elsewhere. For example, it was used across Greater Manchester in 2008 to gather views about a proposed congestion charge. The turnout across Greater Manchester in that poll was 53%.
- 32. Once the views of residents were understood through the local poll, the council will then be able to work with the government to determine the best local government structures for the borough.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

- 33. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources	✓	Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

34. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan identified that business growth was one of the strategies to be adopted to mitigate the ongoing impact of reduction in government grant. Any proposal to develop a unitary bid would fit with this approach and be of benefit. Sustainability of this organisation and its ability to influence what happens in the local area would be some of the benefits of becoming unitary, albeit any new organisation would also be subject to resource constraints.
35. In terms of financing the proposal, this can be financed from resources already available and set aside for work of this nature.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

35. There are no defined legislative requirements to follow in putting together a business case of this type. The appropriate matters are to be considered. The governance arrangements addressing the oversight of this work are appropriate.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HR AND OD

36. Subject to approval the Project Director post will be created on Chief Officer terms and conditions. The spot point salary of £57,744 will be inclusive of lease car. It will be advertised internally as a secondment opportunity and selection will be through a member appointment panel.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Gary Hall	5104	15 August 2014	Unitary proposal council report

Appendix A**OUTLINE TIMELINE**

The timing of the work to be undertaken will be dependent upon the decision about when to undertake a local poll. The potential timeline is based on working towards a local poll in autumn 2015.

Gather initial public and stakeholder opinion**September**

It may be useful to undertake an initial statistically valid consultation exercise to understand the initial views of residents. This would be useful because it would help to establish the key issues that any business case should address and the level of local understanding.

Gathering stakeholder views (particularly of key partner organisations such as the health sector) will help to engage them in the process and to take into consideration their organisational views.

Establish initial business case**September – December**

The council will need to undertake some work to establish a high-level financial case for unitary status. This will need to be based on the existing councils' budgets and service provision and then use assumptions to produce a model for a unitary council.

At this point, outline proposals for principles of the business model for the unitary council would need to be developed

This business case will need to continue to be refined and developed with more detailed information and to respond to feedback from residents and stakeholders.

Gather public opinion and engage stakeholders**January**

Once the initial outline case has been established, it would be useful to undertake another consultation to understand residents' opinions once information about the potential unitary has been presented.

Develop outline business model for the unitary council**November – March**

The council would need to provide initial proposals for how a unitary council for Chorley would deliver services, particularly those which are currently undertaken at a county level. It would also need to demonstrate how critical services (particularly children's services, adult social care and public health) would be delivered and sustainable on a smaller scale.

These documents are likely to be lengthy. For example, the proposals developed as part of the development of a unitary council for Cornwall are here: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-background/unitary-bid/>

Decision by full Council**April**

The Council would be presented with information about the business case to take a decision about whether to proceed with the local poll.

Information provision**November - March**

As the council develops an outline financial case, a proposed business model and undertakes public consultation, it will be necessary to provide information to residents about the proposals and the poll.

Purdah**March – May**

The council will be in purdah for the run-up to the election.

Local poll**Autumn 2015**

Working Group on unitary status**Purpose**

1. The working group on unitary status will oversee the development of a business case for unitary status and provide recommendations to full council on the basis of that work about whether or not to undertake a local poll on the unitary status

Membership

2. The group will consist of seven councillors, appointed by full council.
3. The administration may nominate up to four members of the group; the opposition group may nominate two members of the group and the Independent group may nominate one member.
4. At its first meeting, the group will appoint a Chair and vice Chair who will serve for the municipal year.
5. Observer councillors will be permitted to attend meetings of the working group at the discretion of the Chair (or in his/her absence, the vice-Chair).
6. In addition, relevant council officers may attend the meetings to present and advise the working group on their work and the development of the business case.

Business

7. The working group will meet to consider and discuss
 - a. drafts of the business case and supporting information.
 - b. to provide direction and challenge about the emerging business case and areas for investigation
 - c. to consider options for the managing and method of undertaking a local poll
 - d. to make a final recommendation to full council about whether a clear business case for a single tier of local government has been established
8. The group will work within the policies of the council, including relevant codes of conduct and procedures for declaring relevant interests.

Voting

9. When required, voting will be on a simple majority. In the event of a tied-vote, the Chair will have a casting vote (or in his/her absence, the vice-Chair).
10. Observer councillors do not have a vote.
11. Officers do not have a vote.

Calendar of meetings

12. The group will meet as required based on business that needs to be considered. It is the responsibility of the group to determine its meeting timetable.



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Advice Services	Council	4 September 2014

PROPOSED CONSULTATION ON A CHANGE TO THE COUNCIL TAX LOCAL DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS POLICY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To gain approval for consultation on a proposed change to the Council Tax Local Discounts and Exemptions Policy for some properties which have been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than 24 months.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Members are recommended to approve consultation on a change to the Council Tax Local Discount & Exemptions Policy effective from 1 April 2015, as follows:

Provide for an exception to the charge of a 25% premium for properties which have been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than 24 months where the new owner(s) inherits this charge **and** where the property is actively being marketed for sale in line with average prices within the local area.

3. The exception is effective from the date the property is marketed for sale for a maximum period of 6 month, after which the 25% premium would reapply.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. This report sets out a proposed change to the council tax local discounts and exemptions policy in a specific circumstance for some properties which have been empty and substantially unfurnished for more than 24 months.
5. A copy of the proposed policy is attached at Appendix A.
6. The proposed change will be effective from 1 April 2015 for properties that meet the criteria.
7. This report also includes why the proposed changes cannot take effect immediately and recommends a consultation exercise.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

- 9. From 1 April 2013 local authorities (LAs) have discretion to charge a premium of up to 50% for properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 24 months.
- 10. In January 2013, following a consultation exercise members agreed a charge of 25% in these circumstances. Further information is attached at Appendix B & C.
- 11. In May 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued council tax empty homes premium guidance to LAs for properties for sale or to let. The guidance suggested the state of the housing market should be reflected in LAs decision making process when administering the premium and is attached at Appendix D.
- 12. No further changes were agreed in view of the guidelines. However, in light of customer feedback a review of the policy has been undertaken and it is considered reasonable to make changes to remove the 25% premium for long term empty properties where the new owner is taking positive steps to sell the property.
- 13. The premium of 25% would not be charged for a maximum period of 6 months from the date the property is marketed for sale.
- 14. Changes to the Council Tax Local Discounts and Exemptions are prohibited during the financial year.
- 15. In line with previous changes to Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions it is recommended that a consultation exercise is completed to establish the views of a selection of Chorley's Council Tax payers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 16. It is difficult to estimate the financial implications of this change in policy. This is due largely to the absence of information in respect of properties currently marketed for sale where the long term empty premium applies.
- 17. On 1 August 2014, 214 properties were subject to the long term empty premium charge. Assuming 100% of this group of properties are currently for sale, which is unlikely, the potential annual loss based on the average Band D charge would be in the region of £39,049.14. This equates to £3,904.91 in revenue in respect of Chorley Council's precept.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	✓
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

19. There are no financial implications as the recommendation, at this stage, is to undertaking a consultation process in respect of amending the policy.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

20. The proposal is within the Council's powers contained in Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The DCLG Guidance referred to in the report is non-statutory and it is for Chorley Council to decide whether or not to make the policy change. However it is reasonable to have regard to the DCLG guidance and to conditions in the local housing market.
21. Under Section 11B of the 1992 Act the Council may make a determination varying or revoking a determination for a financial year, but only before the beginning of the year.
22. The Council must publish a notice in at least one newspaper circulating in its area and do so before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the date of the determination.

LESLEY-ANN FENTON
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND ADVICE SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Alison Wilding	5438	22 August 2014	Proposed consultation on a change to the council tax local discounts and exemptions policy

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Summary of the Council Tax Technical changes from 1st April 2013.

From April 2013 billing authorities have greater discretion over the reliefs from council tax available in respect of second homes and some empty properties.

CLASS A Empty Uninhabitable/Major works. This is currently a 100% Exemption available for up to 12 months in respect of a vacant property which requires, is undergoing, or has recently undergone major repair work to render it habitable, or structural alteration. From 1 April 2013 the 100% exemption will be replaced with a 50% discount

CLASS C – Empty, Unoccupied and Unfurnished 100% is currently given for 6 months after a dwelling becomes vacant. From 1 April 2013 the 100% exemption will be replaced with the following discounts:

- 50% discount for 0-6 months
- 25% discount 6-24 months
- Full charge plus 25% premium (125% charge) from 24 months*

*Following the sale of a property when the new owner would usually be charged a 25% premium and if the property is actively being marketed for sale, in line with average prices in the local area, the premium of 25% would not be charged for a maximum period of 6 months from the date the property is marketed for sale.

SECOND HOMES – these are homes that are empty but that remain furnished where the home owner has their main home elsewhere. There is currently a 50% discount. From 1 April 2013 there will be no discount so there will be a full Council Tax charge for anyone with a second home in Chorley.

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Council	8 January 2013

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT AND EXEMPTION SCHEME

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To present the proposed scheme for localised council tax support that will be implemented from 1 April 2013 for approval.
2. To present the proposed scheme for council tax discounts and exemption that will be implemented from 1 April 2013 for approval.
3. In addition, to present to Members the results of the consultation exercise undertaken on the proposals and an integrated impact assessment on the schemes.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

4. That Members consider the results of the consultation and impact assessment and approve the local council tax support scheme summarised at Appendix C for implementation from 1 April 2013.
5. That Members consider the results of the consultation and impact assessment and approve the scheme for council tax discounts and exemptions summarised at Appendix E for implementation from 1 April 2013.
6. Adopt the debt recovery policy set out at Appendix F for implementation from 1 April 2013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

7. The report sets out the proposed schemes for council tax support and discounts and exemptions for empty properties for approval. If approved, the schemes would be implemented from 1 April 2013. The proposed scheme of council tax support retains the same features as the current council tax benefit scheme, but includes a reduction of the final payment of 7.5% for claimants who are of working age. The proposed scheme for council tax discounts and exemptions makes changes and reductions to discounts and exemptions currently available for certain types of empty property. The full regulations to the schemes are available as background papers to this report.
8. The report also provides a summary of the responses received to the consultation on the draft proposals. These show a general support for the preferred option.
9. Impact assessments have also been undertaken on the two proposed schemes. These are included as appendices to the main report.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

11. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 requires local authorities to design and implement a local scheme to administer council tax support. These localised schemes have to be approved by 31 January 2013, and implemented from 1 April, and will replace the current system of council tax benefit.
12. In the Spending Review 2010, the government announced that the expenditure used to fund the support would be reduced by 10%. Councils need to consider this reduction in funding as part of the design of their new scheme.
13. The government have also set other requirements:
 - that people who are older than pensionable age cannot be affected by the new localised scheme.
 - that council's should have regard to their existing duties to protect vulnerable people; including, the public sector equality duty, the duty to mitigate the effects of child poverty and the duty to prevent homelessness.
14. The government have also indicated that they see the localisation of council tax support to form part of the wider welfare reforms, which aim to promote incentives to work and reduce worklessness and so have encouraged councils to consider this when designing their new schemes.
15. As the billing authority, Chorley Council is responsible for the design and implementation of the new scheme. However, as the council collects council tax on behalf of the other precepting organisations, they will be affected by any support scheme that is implemented. The relevant organisations are Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue and Lancashire Police Authority.
16. In addition, provision has also been made in the Local Government Finance Act to give local authorities greater flexibility when setting discounts and exemptions from council tax on different categories of empty properties. While this is a separate scheme to council tax support, it potentially provides an additional option in meeting the funding gap set out below.
17. The changes to council tax benefit are only part of the wider reforms of the welfare system which are being introduced over the coming years. Other changes include, for example, the introduction of the Universal Credit; changes to rules around under-occupancy in relation to Housing Benefit, the extension of the local housing allowance shared room rates to under 35 year olds, and the replacement of disability living allowance by personal independence payments. These changes all have the potential to have a significant impact on residents and particularly certain groups who currently receive support through the welfare system. Although these changes are driven at a national level, the local scheme of support proposed in this report attempts to recognise that the impact is uncertain and so introduces a smaller reduction in support for 2013/14.

REDUCTION IN FUNDING

18. The Government's announcements in the spending review referred to a 10% reduction in the grant available to fund council tax support scheme. However, it is anticipated that potential increases in caseload and the way in which the grant may be distributed between different areas means that the reduction may be a real-terms reduction of between 10% and 12%. The shortfall in the scheme could therefore be between £670,000 and £800,000.
19. It should be noted that the risk of a shortfall in funding will fall on each of the precepting authorities in proportion to their share of the council tax revenue.

POTENTIAL OPTIONS

20. At the full council meeting in September, council considered a number of options for the new support scheme. In summary, these were:
 - a. introduce a new scheme which introduced further means testing or requirements for working age claimants.
 - b. retaining the same approach as the current council tax benefit, but reducing the payment to working age claimants
 - c. retain the current council tax benefit scheme and cover the budget shortfall through other means (such as council tax increase, budget reductions, or a change to the scheme of exemptions and discounts on council tax).
21. These options are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and the approach taken could be a mixture of each.
22. The council indicated in September that its preferred approach was to retain the current scheme, but introduce a reduction of 7.5% for all claimants of working age. In addition, the scheme of exemptions and discounts would be changed to reduce the exemptions and discounts available for certain categories of empty property and second homes. It was estimated that this approach would cover the likely shortfall in funding.
23. Although the council decided on a preferred approach, it also asked that all the options should be included within the consultation that was undertaken between September and December. The approach taken in the consultation and results are outlined below.

TRANSITIONAL GRANT SUPPORT

24. During October, the Government announced the creation of a support fund of £100 million for authorities that implemented 'well-designed' schemes of support. Their intention in providing this funding to enable councils to explore more sustainable ways of managing the funding reduction that minimise the impact on vulnerable people. This funding would be available for one year.
25. To be eligible to apply for a share of the grant, councils must implement a scheme which meets the following criteria:
 - Those who would be entitled to 100% support under current council tax benefit arrangements pay between zero and no more than 8.5% of their net council tax liability;
 - The taper rate does not increase above 25%;
 - There is no sharp reduction in support for those entering work.
26. If the local scheme approved for Chorley is accepted as meeting the criteria, the funding for the borough would be £155,752. The funding would be split amongst the precepting authorities as follows:

- Chorley Council: £19,890
- Lancashire County Council: £113,910
- Lancashire Police: £15,410
- Lancashire Fire: £6,542

27. The scheme proposed in this report would meet with the criteria for receiving the grant. The council can only apply for the money after 31 January 2013, and must do so before 15 February. The funding payment would then be made in March 2013.

CONSULTATION

28. A large consultation exercise was undertaken on the proposals for a localised scheme of council tax support. The consultation commenced on the 1 October and ran until 3 December. As well as asking for respondents' views on which of the proposals they would support or not support, there was targeted questions to gather information about the potential impact of the proposals on different groups.
29. Those who were most likely to be affected by the proposed options were targeted through different surveys. Those groups were:
- **Working age benefit claimants.** All people of working age who are currently in receipt of council tax benefit were sent a postal survey to complete. This survey asked for views on the proposed options, but also the potential impact that a reduction in benefit level would have on claimants. This survey was sent to about 4,200 households.
 - **Owners of properties in receipt of an exemption or discount.** People who own properties that would be affected by the proposed options which would reduce the amount of discount or exemption available for certain types of empty property. Again, this survey asked for views on the options, and also asked about the potential impact of the proposals on the affected people. This survey was sent to 1,500 households.
 - **Council tax payers.** A final survey was sent to a random sample of council tax payers. This survey asked for respondents' views on the proposals, and the potential impact on different groups. This survey was sent to about 6,300 people.
30. The survey was also made available on the council website, and an invitation to respond was sent out the steering group on local advice (a group which is made up of local advice organisations that is examining the potential impact of welfare reforms).
31. The overall consultation (from the three surveys) received 1,205 responses. The responses have been weighted by age and gender to ensure they more accurately reflect the likely response from the wider population.
32. Please note, that where the term 'council tax payers' has been used in this summary, it is used to refer to the respondents drawn from a sample that did not include those people who are within the other two groups (that is, working age claimants of council tax benefit, or in receipt of a discount or exemption of an empty property).

Summary of results

33. While three surveys were undertaken to reflect the different impact the changes could have on different groups, each survey included a series of questions that were the same. This means it is possible to combine the responses to get an overall view. The overall results broadly show support for the proposal identified as the preferred option by the council in September:
- 71% agree that the protections within the current council tax benefit scheme should be retained.
 - 79% think that the proposals to reduce discounts and exemptions are fair.
 - 67% agree with the council's preferred option.

- 49% of working age benefit claimants agree with the council’s preferred option.

34. Every respondent was also asked if they agreed with other alternatives for covering the shortfall in funding for the new scheme. The table below shows the responses received, split between the different respondent groups:

Proposal	Responses - % in favour of option			
	Overall	Council Tax payers (not in receipt of benefits or discount or exemption)	Working age benefit claimants	People in receipt of a discount or exemption
Preferred option (7.5% reduction in benefit and changes to discounts and exemptions)	67%	82%	49%	24%
30% reduction in benefit for working age claimants	35%	45%	13%	52%
Increase Council Tax to cover the shortfall	23%	22%	20%	41%
Make additional savings from elsewhere	49%	48%	43%	68%

35. The table above illustrates the differences in response from different groups:

- Support for the council’s preferred option is highest amongst council tax payers who do not claim council tax benefit or received a discount or exemption.
- People who have a discount or exemption for an empty property are least in support of the preferred option, and instead support the option to make additional savings from elsewhere.
- Working age benefit claimants favour the council’s preferred options over the others, but this support is at 49%.

36. Other questions were asked in each of the surveys to gather more detailed responses about the impact and implications of the proposed changes on those people who would be directly affected.

37. Council tax payers and benefit claimants were asked to identify the extent to which they thought the proposals might impact upon different groups. The responses indicate that they believe that the biggest impact of the proposals to reduce benefit by 7.5% would be felt by disabled people and single parents. This response was considered in the impact assessment and dealt with under the proposed scheme at paragraph 51.

38. Amongst council tax payers and benefit claimants, there is a mixed opinion on whether the reduction of benefits will incentivise work – overall 47% think this will incentivise work while 42% believe it won’t encourage or could discourage people from finding work.

39. The council tax payers and people in receipt of discounts and exemptions were asked the extent to which they felt the changes proposed to the discount and exemption scheme was fair:

- For tax payers, the change regarded as the most fair was ending the discount on second homes (with 84% thinking it was a fair change). However, charging 125% on long term empty properties was seen to be least fair.
- For those who receive a discount or exemptions, removing the exemption on repossessions is seen as most fair, but the other proposals are all viewed as unfair.

40. Finally, the council tax payer respondents and people in receipt of an exemption or discount were asked if they thought the proposals would encourage empty homes to be brought back into use. Overall, 79% believed that they would. However, this reduced to 37% of those people who own empty properties.

INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

41. The council uses integrated impact assessments to identify potential impacts of implementing new policies, services or projects on; people from different equality strands; health; sustainability and reputational impact.
42. Undertaken an impact assessment is seen as good practice to ensure that any potentially adverse impact can be avoided or mitigated. Impact assessments have been undertaken on both the schemes that are now proposed.
43. The impact assessment for the new scheme of council tax support is included at Appendix A. The impact assessment for the discounts and exemptions scheme is at Appendix B.
44. The impact assessment for the council tax support scheme identified the following actions:
- Deliver the corporate strategy key project “Establish a process to deliver Working Together With Families”
 - Deliver the corporate strategy key project “Implement a joint employment initiative with Runshaw College”
 - Continue welfare reform meetings with partners to monitor and react to the impact of welfare reforms on residents
 - Include an exceptional hardship award within the council tax support scheme.
45. The impact assessment for the discount and exemptions scheme for empty properties identified the following actions:
- Monitor the corporate strategy key measure the number of long term empty properties, and take action is the target is not likely to be achieved.
 - Monitor the reasons given for properties being empty and any issues with ability to pay over the first 12 months, and consider cases where a resident finds it difficult to pay on an individual basis.

PROPOSED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

46. Taking the consultation, impact assessment and government announcement, the localised scheme of council tax support that is proposed is included as a background paper to this report, with the changes summarised at Appendix C. If approved, this scheme will come into effect from 1 April 2013, and operate for at least 12 months.
47. The scheme is based on the existing council tax benefit scheme. It retains the various safeguards and provisions that are made for disabled people, household with children and consideration of income. Once these calculations have been made, a 7.5% reduction will then be made to the payment for all working-age claimants.
48. It is estimated that this change will raise an additional income of £139,944. This is based on a 50% collection rate, which is the rate estimated for collection from a group of residents who have not previously paid.
49. This estimated collection amount is less than the shortfall that will be created by the 10% reduction in funding.

50. It is proposed that the remaining funding gap could be covered by changes to the exemptions and discount scheme for empty properties, which was also considered by the September Council meeting.

Exceptional Hardship Award

51. Within the consultation feedback and in the impact assessment undertaken, it was identified that some groups may be more adversely affected than others (for example, the consultation identified that disabled people and single parents may be significantly affected). As this reduction to working age benefits will reduce the benefit received by some households with a low income, some households may in some circumstances find it extremely difficult to pay.
52. Therefore, an exceptional hardship award has been included within the proposed council tax support scheme. This award would be available for households in a limited number of circumstances, and would provide a mechanism to give support for households. The cost of this award is shared amongst the precepting authorities.
53. A copy of the exceptional hardship policy, which would form part of the overall council tax support scheme, is set out at Appendix D. It should be noted that whilst the policy refers to a hardship fund it is not a separate cost; the award is made and funded through the overall council tax support scheme. It does not make the scheme any more expensive.

PROPOSED DISCOUNT AND EXEMPTIONS SCHEME

54. The report to Council in September outlined an additional proposal, which was to change the scheme relating to discounts and exemptions for categories of empty properties. This would raise additional revenue, which could be used to meet the expected budget shortfall. In addition, it would help incentivise owners of long term empty properties to bring them back into use.
55. Following the consultation results and the impact assessment, the revised scheme for council tax discounts and exemptions for empty properties is included as a background paper to this report, and summarised at appendix E.
56. The changes proposed are expected to raise an additional £695,646. This is based on a 90% collection rate, which is the rate that is expected for this scheme.

DEBT RECOVERY POLICY

57. The council's debt recovery policy has been updated to reflect the changes made to the two schemes set out above. The updated policy recognises that the changes may mean that more people may feel unable to pay their council tax, particularly as they have not previously paid. In addition, it recognises that some of the unpaid monies may be a relatively low amount. It therefore introduces some additional steps to encourage payment of outstanding debts.
58. In summary, the approach now includes steps to encourage payment before we move into the recovery stage. This includes a telephone call to discuss issues and make arrangements for payment, and a reminder letter before further action is taken.
59. The updated policy is attached at appendix F.

IMPLEMENTATION FOR 2013/2014

- 60. If approved, both the schemes will be implemented from the 1 April 2013. This will not be backdated, but any claimants or properties where there has been a relevant change will be affected from the beginning of 2013/14.
- 61. The scheme will be reviewed part way through the financial year to determine whether changes need to be made for future years. This review will also need to consider any further changes that may be made by the government to the welfare system or local government financing.
- 62. The review will also consider the effect that the work planned to support people into employment has had. For example, there are two projects within the Corporate Strategy which should have a direct impact on working age benefits claimants; 'Establish a process to deliver Working Together with Families'; and, 'Implement a joint employment support initiative with Runshaw College'.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

- 63. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	✓
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	✓
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

- 64. The final cost of the scheme to Chorley Council will ultimately depend upon the level of claims made. In other words the number of claimants will ultimately dictate the outcome. The Government expect the number of claimants to fall, but only time will tell if this proves to be the case. In the Local Government Finance Settlement recently announced, the Government announced that the Council would receive £752,000 of grant for the local scheme. This would allow the Council to grant up to £6.6m of support to Chorley residents. The Government has provided other precepting authorities with their own element of the grant (£6.6m – 0.752m) and the final cost will be distributed accordingly.
- 65. As the grant is cash limited, any support given over and above the £6.6m will have to be funded wholly by Chorley Council and our precepting authorities. As the risk is shared on the basis of the proportion of the total Council tax base, Chorley's element of the total bill represents approximately 12.77%. So for every £100k over the £6.6m, the Council have to find just short of £13k.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 65. The proposed scheme fulfils the statutory requirements by protecting those of pensionable age and having regard to the impact on groups categorised as vulnerable. The proposal is within the scope of the legislation and the consultation exercise is appropriate.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 66. The integrated impact assessments indicate that there are some areas where the proposed changes may have an uncertain impact on groups with a protected characteristic. This should be monitored over the next year as the schemes are implemented, and action taken to mitigate any adverse impact if necessary. The schemes as proposed should provide

adequate protection for people with protected characteristics, as they maintain the protections already developed for council tax benefit.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Report to September Council – Localisation of Council Tax Support 2013/14	25 September 2012	Localisation of Council Tax Support 2013/14	http://cbc-us-mod/documents/s28919/Localisation%20of%20Council%20Tax%20Benefit.pdf
Localising support for council tax – transitional grant scheme	18 October 2012	Website	http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/localtransitionalgrant
Local council tax support scheme – consultation findings	7 December 2012	Local council tax support scheme – consultation findings	Policy drive
Council Tax Support scheme regulations	20 December 2012	Chorley Borough Council Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Policy drive
Discounts and Exemptions scheme regulations	20 December 2012		Policy drive

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Chris Sinnott / Julie Riding	5337	18 December 2012	Council tax support January report

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Summary of the Council Tax Technical changes from 1st April 2013.

From April 2013 billing authorities have greater discretion over the reliefs from council tax available in respect of second homes and some empty properties.

CLASS A Empty Uninhabitable/Major works. This is currently a 100% Exemption available for up to 12 months in respect of a vacant property which requires, is undergoing, or has recently undergone major repair work to render it habitable, or structural alteration. From 1 April 2013 the 100% exemption will be replaced with a 50% discount

CLASS C – Empty, Unoccupied and Unfurnished 100% is currently given for 6 months after a dwelling becomes vacant. From 1 April 2013 the 100% exemption will be replaced with the following discounts:

- 50% discount for 0-6 mths
- 25% discount 6-24 mths
- Full charge plus 25% premium (125% charge) from 24 months

CLASS L – Exemption where a property has been re-possessed. This is currently given a 100% Exemption and this has been removed from 1 April 2013. If a property is repossessed but remains empty and unfurnished, the owner will be granted a class C discount.

SECOND HOMES – these are homes that are empty but that remain furnished where the home owner has their main home elsewhere. There is currently a 50% discount. From 1 April 2013 there will be no discount so there will be a full Council Tax charge for anyone with a second home in Chorley.

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Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Council Tax - Empty homes premium

Guidance for properties for sale and letting

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Council Tax - Empty homes premium

Guidance for properties for sale and letting

1. In its summary of responses report, *Technical Reforms to Council Tax: when dwellings should not be liable to the empty homes premium* (November 2012), the government made a commitment to issue guidance to help authorities to reflect the state of the housing market in their decision making process for administering the premium.
2. This guidance paper should not be treated as an interpretation of the legislation or as statutory guidance. Billing authorities are free to make their own decisions when administering the premium.
3. From 1 April 2013, billing authorities may charge a premium on a class of property that has been unoccupied and unfurnished for two years or more. The premium can be up to 50% of the council tax on the property.
4. Under the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003, the government has prescribed two classes of dwellings which are exempt from the premium. These are:
 - a dwelling which would otherwise be the sole or main residence of a member of the armed services , who is absent from the property as a result of such service
 - a dwelling, which forms part of a single property that is being treated by a resident of that property as part of the main dwelling
5. While the decision to make a determination under Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 is for billing authorities to make, the government would expect that due consideration is given to the health of the local housing market when making determinations.
6. The government's intention behind the decision to provide billing authorities with the power to charge a premium was not to penalise owners of property that is genuinely on the housing market for sale or rent.
7. The government expects billing authorities to consider the reasons why properties are unoccupied and unfurnished, including whether they are available for sale or rent, and decide whether they want such properties to be included in their determination. When considering the reasons an authority may want to take account of the following:
 - on average, how long are properties in their area been available for sale or rent before completion/occupation
 - what is the average price/rent in the local area?
8. The above list is not exhaustive and billing authorities will want to consider all factors they think are relevant before making a decision.

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