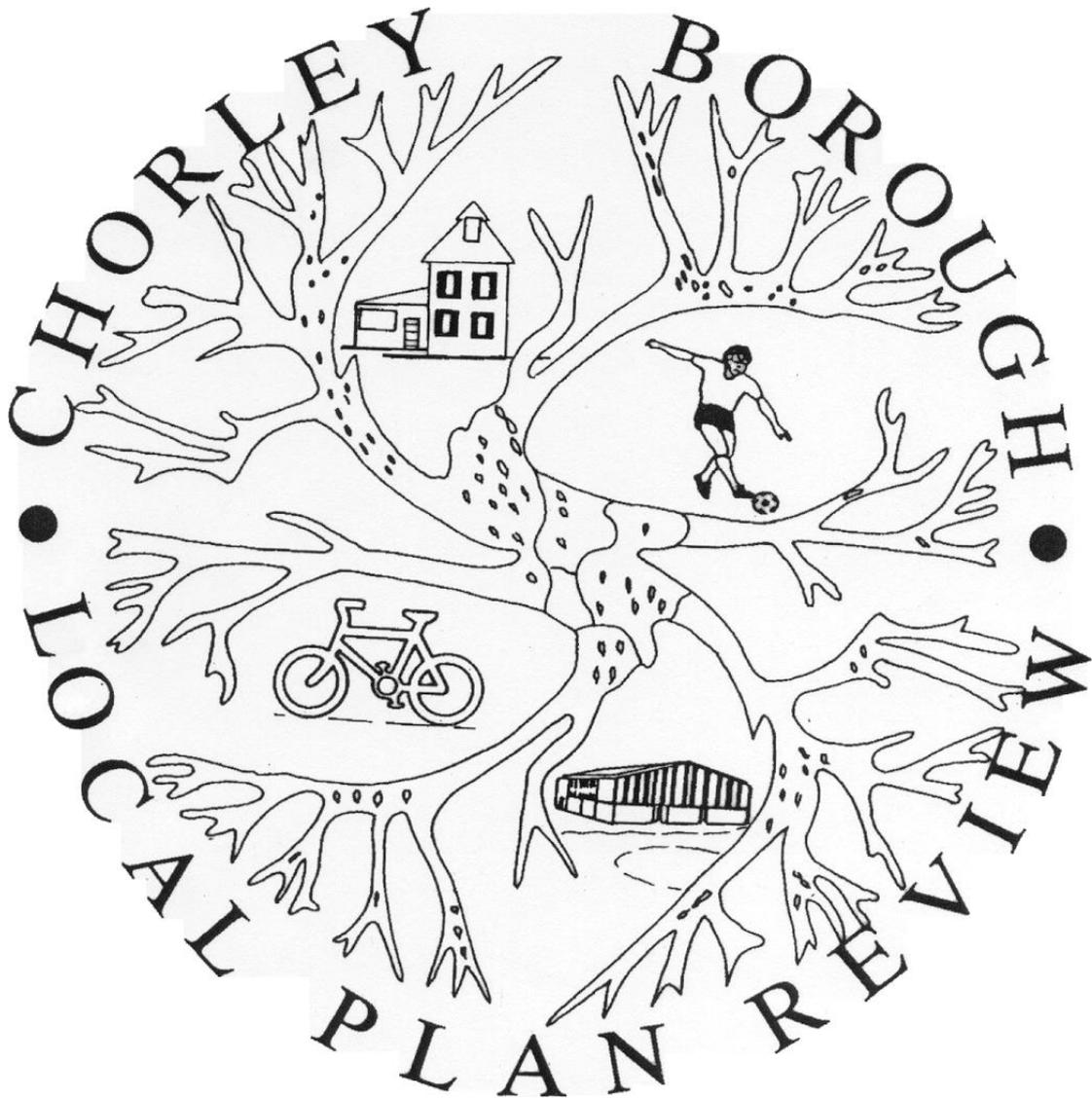


Written Statement

Adopted Edition

August 2003



1.

INTRODUCTION**ABOUT THIS PLAN**

- 1.1 Now that it has reached its final stage of statutory adoption, this Local Plan has replaced the Chorley Borough Local Plan which was adopted in January 1997. The new Plan has a timescale to 2006. This corresponds with the end date of the adopted Lancashire County Structure Plan, with which the reviewed Local Plan must conform. The two Plans, together with the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, make up the development plan covering the Borough. Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG 13), published in 2003, provides an overview.
- 1.2 This Local Plan was first published in September 1999 and the Revised Deposit Edition a year later. Outstanding objections to the Plan were considered by an Inspector who presided over a Public Inquiry in 2001. The Plan was adopted on 22 August 2003.
- 1.3 The overall approach taken in preparing the Review Plan has been to adapt the content of the previously adopted Plan. Some of the policies are unchanged, many have been amended and there are some completely new policies. Similarly there are some site-specific proposals which, because they have not yet happened but are still appropriate, have been carried over from the adopted Plan. Newly identified sites have been added where appropriate.
- 1.4 A key feature of the 1997 adopted Plan is that for the first time, it established precise Green Belt boundaries. It was the intention that the overall extent of the Green Belt in Chorley Borough will not be changed until at least the year 2016. To help achieve this Areas of Safeguarded Land were identified in the 1997 Plan, and are with one exception retained in this Plan, to accommodate development pressures in the period up to 2016 if necessary. Following objections to this Plan and support from the Inquiry Inspector the extent of Green Belt in the Yarrow Valley west of Chorley town has been increased.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 1.5 The overall guiding principle for the Local Plan Review is ‘sustainable development’. Sustainable development is defined as ‘development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ and has become enshrined in government policy. A key government statement was contained in “A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK” 1999. Seven priorities were set for the future:
- more investment in people and equipment for a competitive economy;
 - reducing the level of social exclusion;
 - promoting a transport system which provides choice, and also minimises environmental harm and reduces congestion;
 - improving the larger towns and cities to make them better places to live and work;
 - directing development and promoting agricultural practices to protect and enhance the countryside and wildlife;
 - improving energy efficiency and tackling waste;
 - working with others to achieve sustainable development internationally.

This was the starting point for the work on this Plan.

- 1.6 This government strategy was built on the experience and achievements from previous strategies and introduced a set of headline indicators by which progress can be measured. Of particular relevance to the Review Plan is the indicator measuring the number of new homes built on previously developed land. Other indicators on which the Plan Policies will have some effect are: the emissions of greenhouse gases, the amount of road traffic, the number of days when air pollution is moderate or high, the rivers of good or fair quality, and the population of wild birds.

3. DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

OVERALL AIM

- To maintain, and where possible enhance, the distinctive character of the countryside in Chorley Borough and to promote rural sustainability.

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure the permanence of the Green Belt until at least 2016.
- To retain the openness of the Green Belt.
- To protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.
- To ensure that the special character of the West Pennine Moors is protected from development which would harm its open and rural character.
- To encourage economic and social diversity in the countryside.
- To use the Landscape Character Tracts identified in the Structure Plan as a guide to development in the countryside so that local distinctiveness can be retained and enhanced.
- To promote sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Well over half/about three quarters of Chorley Borough is made up of open countryside and agriculture is still the dominant rural land use. There are two major issues facing the countryside that need to be addressed through this Local Plan. The first is that agriculture is under pressure to change its pattern and practices and the number of people employed in agriculture is continuing to decline. The viability of farming and horticultural units is being tested by factors such as changing technology, European agricultural policy and changing markets. Consequently farmers are seeking ways in which to diversify their income and make financially better use of their land which can have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the countryside, especially when viewed cumulatively. Also many people who could previously have expected to be employed locally in agriculture are now having to seek alternative employment, often not within their local community.
- 3.2 The second issue is that Chorley's countryside is attractive and very accessible from many of the larger towns in the north-west and is seen as a desirable place to live. This can have many repercussions including pressure to build new houses, the conversion of barns, the re-use of commercial premises as dwellings and an increase in property prices so that some local people are unable to afford houses and may be forced to live with relatives or move away. Although new people moving into an area can bring many positive benefits, new residents are sometimes not as tolerant of the inconveniences of living in the countryside and seek changes which can affect its character and appearance. Also many of the incoming residents travel outside the area to work and to shop which can reduce patronage of local services to the extent that they may have to close. These services are then not available to those residents who are not so mobile.
- 3.3 The issues of changing agriculture and a more transient and mobile residential population are interrelated. The countryside around Chorley makes a valuable contribution to the prosperity of the Borough and needs to be protected from inappropriate development. Change is inevitable, however, and the countryside cannot be treated as a museum piece. The aim of the policies in this Plan is to strike a balance between resisting development and allowing change which will ensure the future viability of the countryside. Promoting a more sustainable pattern of development should ensure that the quality of life for everyone should be enhanced.
- 3.4 This chapter sets out the type of development which will be permitted in all areas of the countryside, including that designated as Green Belt. A number of environmental issues are also important throughout the rural areas and these are considered in Chapter 4.

3. DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

- 3.5 Government advice on the countryside is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 7: The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development (PPG7, 1997) as amended following publication of the Rural White Paper ‘Our Countryside: The Future’ in November 2000. Sustainable development is the cornerstone of the government’s rural policies. Emphasis is given to the need to achieve good quality development that respects the distinctive character of the countryside, safeguarding its natural resources and protecting the best agricultural land. In view of the decline in rural services and the increase in commuting to urban centres, the guidance encourages policies which improve the viability of villages by allowing greater discrimination in favour of re-use of buildings for employment rather than residential uses. Development allowed under agricultural permitted development rights is referred to by PPG7 and local planning authorities are advised to take care that the concessions made for agricultural users are not abused.
- 3.6 Guidance specific to the Green Belt is contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts (PPG2, 1995). The five purposes of a Green Belt are:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3.7 The general policies controlling development in the countryside contained in PPG7 apply with equal force in Green Belts with an additional requirement to retain their open character and introduce a presumption against inappropriate development. PPG2 gives a clear definition of the type of development which is appropriate in Green Belts. The considerations relating to a more sustainable pattern of development contained in PPG7 are, however, relevant to all countryside, including that covered by Green Belt policies. Preference will be given to employment generating uses in redundant rural buildings and services and facilities in the villages will be protected wherever possible.
- 3.8 Annex B of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3, 2000) and Circular 6/98 “Planning and Affordable Housing” describe how, even in the Green Belt, planning permission may be given in exceptional circumstances to provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs. Land which is located adjacent to the existing built-up extent of a village may be released for housing providing it is for small scale low cost accommodation restricted in perpetuity to local people who could not otherwise afford to live in their rural community.

LANCASHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN

- 3.9 The general extent of the Lancashire Green Belt is set out in the Structure Plan. Following government guidance, the Structure Plan also sets out the restrictions on development which apply both in the Green Belt and in the countryside outside the Green Belt which have been termed the Area of Other Open Countryside and Areas of Safeguarded Land in this Local Plan.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

- 3.10 The general extent of the Green Belt is shown in diagrammatic form on the Lancashire Structure Plan Key Diagram and is part of that which encircles Greater Manchester and Merseyside extending north to Preston and Blackburn. Within Chorley Borough the detailed, on-the-ground boundaries were established in the previous Chorley Borough Local Plan when it was adopted in 1997. The Structure Plan envisages that the boundaries of the Green Belt should endure until at least 2006 and, at the Public Local Inquiry for the previous Local Plan, the Inspector recommended that the boundaries should not be reviewed until at least 2016. Government guidance on Green Belts has not changed since then and it is still the case that boundaries should not be changed until there is a review of the Structure Plan or in exceptional circumstances. In response to objections

the Inspector who presided over the Public Inquiry into the Local Plan did, however, recommend that changes should be made to the Green Belt in a minor way at Flash Green Acre, Higher Wheelton, and in a more major way in the Yarrow Valley west of Chorley Town. The Council decided to accept these recommendations, in part, which have resulted in a net increase in the Green Belt of approximately 72 hectares.

3.11 The use of land in the Green Belt has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

3.12 Appropriate development is that which meets these objectives yet retains the openness of the Green Belt. For example, facilities that are considered essential for outdoor sport and recreation such as a sports pavilion or club house should be appropriately sized and carefully sited and designed so as not to visually intrude into the landscape. Clear guidance is given on appropriate development in PPG2. Horticultural uses, where all the plants and produce are grown on the holding, are considered to be agriculture and therefore generally acceptable in the countryside. However, garden centres, where the majority of the goods sold are bought in, are essentially retail uses. Whether such centres are appropriate in the countryside will depend on the extent to which individual proposals need to be located there. The applicant will be required to prove such a need exists.

3.13 There may be occasions where a development proposal comes forward which, whilst not falling within one of the specified categories of acceptable uses, for example, the extension of an existing rural business (Policy EM5), may justifiably be located in the countryside. Planning permission would only be granted for such in 'very special circumstances'. It is the responsibility of the applicant to prove that such circumstances exist.

DC1 In the Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will not be granted, except in very special circumstances, for development other than:

- (a) agriculture and forestry;**
- (b) essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries or other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with its purposes;**
- (c) limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings providing it is in accordance with Policy DC8A;**
- (d) the re-use of existing buildings providing it is in accordance with Policy DC7A;**
- (e) limited infilling in accordance with Policy DC4;**
- (f) to provide affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Policy DC5;**
- (g) the re-use, infilling or redevelopment of Major Developed Sites in accordance with policy DC6.**

DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA OF OTHER OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

3.14 Although most of the countryside in Chorley Borough is designated as Green Belt, the Structure Plan does not identify all rural areas of the Borough as being appropriate for Green Belt designation. The West Pennine Moors and the associated land to the east of the M61 are excluded from the Green Belt as it is unlikely Chorley town will merge with other settlements in an easterly direction. It is important, however, that this area is protected from unacceptable development which would harm its open and rural character. In the past there have been major previously developed sites that have been redeveloped for housing or leisure uses but there are no such brownfield sites

likely to come forward within the Plan period so none have been identified. The extension of an existing rural business as defined in Policy EM5 of this Plan may be permitted if the applicant can demonstrate special circumstances for doing so.

DC2 In the Area of Other Open Countryside, as shown on the Proposals Map, development will be limited to:

- (a) that needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry or other uses appropriate to a rural area;
- (b) the rehabilitation and re-use of existing rural buildings where their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with the character of the surrounding countryside;

AREAS OF SAFEGUARDED LAND

3.15 In order that the Green Belt boundaries should last for a long time, land between some major settlements and the Green Belt was safeguarded in the previous Plan for development needs which might arise beyond the plan period, ie after 2001. In line with guidance in PPG2 this land was to be treated as if it were Green Belt until such time as a need for it was identified in a future review of the Plan. Safeguarded Land in this Review Plan will remain protected until 2006.

3.16 Policy DC3 identifies Areas of Safeguarded Land and outlines the restrictions on development in such areas that will be pursued over the period of the Plan. Development such as the extension of, for example, an existing business as envisaged in Policy EM5 of this Plan, will need to take account of the provisions of Policy DC3.

DC3 Development other than that permissible in the countryside under Policies DC1 or DC2 will not be permitted on Safeguarded Land at:

1. Babylon Lane, Heath Charnock
2. South east of Belmont Road and Abbey Grove, Adlington
3. Harrison's Farm, Adlington
4. North of Bond's Lane, Adlington
5. West of Blackburn Road, Great Knowley, Chorley
6. Chorley Rugby Club, Chancery Road, Euxton
7. North of Euxton Lane, Chorley
8. East of A49, Clayton-le-Woods
9. Clancutt Lane, Coppull
10. Coppull Moor Lane/Chapel Lane, Coppull
11. Blainscough Hall, Coppull
12. North of Hewlett Avenue, Coppull
13. Between Bradley Lane and Parr Lane, Eccleston
14. East of Tincklers Lane, Eccleston
15. Pear Tree Lane, Euxton
16. South of Daisy Hill, Euxton
17. East of M61, Chorley
18. West of M61, Whittle-le-Woods
19. Gale Moss, Chorley
20. Eaves Green, Chorley

RURAL INFILLING

3.17 A number of settlements are either 'washed-over' (i.e. included in) by the Green Belt or are within the Area of Other Open Countryside and are, therefore, subject to Policies DC1 or DC2 above.