

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive (Introduced by Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Council	Tuesday, 13 December 2022

Central Lancashire Local Plan Preferred Options

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Yes
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	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to seek approval to consult upon Part One of a two stage Preferred Options version of the Central Lancashire Local Plan together with its associated documents and evidence base.

Recommendations

2. To approve the Part One Central Lancashire Local Plan Consultation document (Appendix One) for consultation purposes
3. To note the supporting document The Site Selection Process; Housing and Employment Land Paper for publication (Appendix Two)
4. To approve the refreshed Local Development Scheme (Appendix Three) for publication
5. To note the draft Schedule of Consultation Events (Appendix Four)
6. To approve the process of consultation being undertaken for a period of ten weeks starting on Monday 19th December 2022 and closing on Friday 24th February 2023
7. To note this is the next steps in an emerging new Central Lancashire Local Plan and is therefore a material consideration for Development Management purposes to be afforded weight such as that determined by the decision maker.

Reasons for recommendations

8. The current development plan comprising the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and the three Local Plans for Chorley, Preston and South Ribble need replacing to meet national planning policy and guidance requirements. The Core Strategy is now over 10 years old and the individual Local Plans are over 7 years old.
9. National Government policy requires all local planning authorities to have an up to date local planning policy in place. It also requires it to be reviewed every 5 years. National legislation, policy and guidance sets out a prescriptive process for developing a new Local Plan.
10. There is a very well established strategic partnership of plan-making between the three Central Lancashire Authorities of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble. There is an existing Central Lancashire Core Strategy in place and the decision was therefore made in 2018 that the three councils collaborate in a single joint Local Plan for Central Lancashire.
11. It has been reported previously that due to circumstances beyond the Councils control, there has been some delay in the programme, however significant progress has been made in 2022 and therefore it is considered that this Part One Preferred Options Consultation can be a meaningful process of engagement, with a key benefit being that it enables a deeper consultation to take place, with a second Part due in Summer 2023, and gives stakeholders and communities an early opportunity to feed into the emerging plan.

Other options considered and rejected

12. An alternative option would be to delay the consultation until a full Preferred Options version of the new Local Plan has been prepared. This was discounted on the basis that it misses an opportunity to seek views early about the emerging plan.
13. The other option considered is to not produce a Local Plan. This would, however, be against Government policy, placing the Councils at risk of Government intervention but also places the Councils at risk of speculative development. The benefits of having an update to date local plan include the ability to place-make and shape the strategic growth of an area and also to provide certainty both to local communities and also key stakeholders including landowners, developers, and infrastructure providers.

Executive summary

14. The first formal stage of Issues and Options was undertaken from November 2019 to February 2020 and a detailed evidence base has been developed on a range of topics, in addition to the assessment of sites submitted for consideration.
15. The Councils are now at a point where the drafting of the plan including the site options is at an advanced stage to reach the next stage, Regulation 18, where consultation on Preferred Options can take place.
16. The preferred Options consultation is being undertaken in two stages, this initial Part One version is focused on the strategic components of the plan including the overall vision and objectives. It also includes site allocation proposals for housing and employment, which are advanced in site assessment, although may still be subject to change as the plan progresses.

17. A Part Two Preferred Options Consultation which will comprise of a full draft Local Plan, will be undertaken in Summer 2023.

Corporate priorities

The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe, and engaged communities

Background to the report

18. The Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP) will replace Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012), The Chorley Local Plan (2015), The Preston Local Plan (2015) and the South Ribble Local Plan (2015). It will include both strategic and local (development management policies) and will bring all these policies into one plan.
19. The stage reached now is Preferred Options. This stage, however, is being undertaken in 2 stages to manage what is a complex and resource intensive process. The scope of this Part One of the Preferred Options provides for the following:
- A spatial vision, strategic objectives, and sustainable growth principles - setting out the plan's ambition for our economy, our communities, and our environment
 - A spatial strategy - directing where future development is located and overall spatial priorities for accommodating growth
 - An overview of development needs – explaining the amount of housing and economic growth that we need to plan
 - The distribution and allocation of proposed site allocation options
 - Development policy directions for:
 - a. a balanced housing markets
 - b. a prosperous economy
 - c. healthy and inclusive communities
 - d. a high-quality environment
 - e. sustainable energy
 - The approach to infrastructure delivery
20. This Part One Preferred Options is not a draft Local Plan and therefore does not include detailed proposed or draft policies. There are 'policy directions' identified which illustrate the direction of travel for policy making but we are seeking view on these, prior to drafting very detailed policy.
21. For proposed sites for development, there are site allocations proposed for housing and employment uses only. All other land uses will be included in the Part Two Preferred Options.
22. A second stage will occur in mid-2023 which will provide detailed policy wording for development management policies and put forward more definitive decisions on sites.
23. A summary of the Preferred Options document is provided below.

Section 1 - Introduction

24. Section 1 of the Stage One Preferred Options document provides an introductory statement about what the Local Plan process is about, work undertaken on it to date and how people can respond to the consultation.

Section 2 - Spatial Vision and Objectives

25. A Spatial Vision for Central Lancashire by 2038 has been developed which provides an umbrella for the Local Plan. The Spatial Vision aims to clearly articulate what the place-making priorities are for Central Lancashire, providing an overall sense of purpose and direction. This sets a clear context and common platform within which the Local Plan's spatial strategy; site allocations and detailed policies can be developed.
26. Section 2 also provides sustainable growth principles which aim to guide where our sustainable growth will be, where we will aim to provide opportunities for housing and employment in the most accessible locations or where new transport links can be provided, and enabling equal access for all to a good standard of housing and employment

Section 3 – Spatial Strategy

27. Section 3 of the document focuses on the Spatial Strategy for Central Lancashire. More specifically this is about strategic locations for growth and development. The focus is generally an evolution from the existing Central Lancashire Core Strategy with Preston remaining the main location for growth but as the plan time period progresses to years 10 and 15, the remaining balance of the growth shifting towards Chorley and South Ribble.
28. Strategic locations are also identified including the potential option for growth linked to the Enterprise Zone and National Cyber Force development at Samlesbury in South Ribble.

Section 4 – Development Needs

29. Section 4 looks at what the needs are for housing and employment development over the plan period. For both housing and employment, the Central Lancashire area has a strong identified market and functional economic area. It is therefore appropriate that it is considered on that geography.
30. The identification for housing need has a starting point of using the Government standard method which has been analysed further through an evidence base undertaken by DLP. This has looked at past delivery rates and applied economic forecasts. The final assumption used is that a 1:1 commuting ratio (for every new job created in a district there is a worker available to fill it) is applied. This equates to a need of 1,334 homes per annum across the Central Lancashire area. This requirement is distributed across the three councils for years 1-5, 5-10 and 10-15 informed by expected delivery of key sites. Therefore, the proposed pattern of housing need is as shown in the table below.

Authority	Annual Housing Requirement 2023-2027	Annual Housing Requirement 2028-2032	Annual Housing Requirement 2033-2038
Preston	600	500	400
South Ribble	400	450	500
Chorley	334	384	434
Total	1,334	1,334	1,334

31. In terms of employment land, the method applied in the Employment Land Study Update (2021) brings together all the forecasts and compares them with historic trends through sensitivity testing. The study utilised data prepared by the LEP through their Econometric model (summer 2021), produced by Cambridge Econometrics and has also fed into our work on housing need. This model provides a forecast of jobs growth by sector for each of the districts over the plan period. This translates as follows:
- Chorley – 20.06 ha further need
 - Preston – 11.46 ha surplus. (Minus 11.21 ha of Employment Land Review sites gives a surplus of 0.25 ha)
 - South Ribble – 25.68 ha further need.

Section 5 – Proposed Site Allocations

32. National Planning Policy requires strategic policy-making authorities to have a clear understanding of the land available in their area (for housing and economic development uses) through the preparation of a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This assessment has been undertaken for Central Lancashire to identify a future potential supply of land that is: suitable for housing or economic development uses; available for development now or at a point during the plan period; and achievable (i.e. likely to be viably developed during the plan period and at the point envisaged). A SHELAA methodology has been developed and applied for Central Lancashire.
33. The SHELAA process has acted as a “sieve” to discount sites to ensure that only the best and most sustainable sites come forward. Sites have been identified for housing and employment uses.

The Site Selection Process; Housing and Employment Land Paper (Appendix Two)

34. This paper sets out the process followed for the sifting of sites for housing and employment, steps taken to assess the sites for suitability for allocation and includes details of all sites that have been discounted from being allocated at the back of the document.
35. The site assessment work is ongoing and a Call for Sites Four will be opened as part of this consultation to provide a further opportunity for any NEW sites to be suggested for future allocation.

Local Development Scheme (Appendix Three)

36. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a document required under section 15 of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) which sets out the timetable for plan-making and must be published on Councils' websites.
37. This LDS is a refresh of previous versions (which is common practice) and includes key milestones, the next being Part Two Preferred Options in Summer 2023, with an anticipated adoption date of early 2025.

Draft Schedule of Consultation Events (Appendix Four)

38. This document sets out the schedule of consultation events planned for across the Central Lancashire Area over the ten week period. The vast majority of events will take place after the festive period.
39. These events are still being finalised and once all venues are booked, this schedule will be shared with all Elected Members and Parish Councils in addition to publication on the website. These events will be resourced from a combination of staff from the CLLP team and the three 'home' planning policy teams plus supporting steward staff. A risk assessment will be produced for all events and a zero tolerance approach taken for any person behaviour in an aggressive or threatening manner towards officers.

Duty to Cooperate

40. There is a Duty to Co-operate placed on local planning authorities which require engagement on an on-going basis with neighbouring boroughs and other prescribed public bodies in the preparation of development plan documents. The bodies with which we have a duty to co-operate include the Environment Agency; the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage), Natural England; the Civil Aviation Authority; (f)the Homes and Communities Agency, the Office of Rail Regulation, Integrated Transport Authority;, each highway authority , the Marine Management Organisation.
41. In addition to these, we must also engage with neighbouring Councils which include Fylde Borough Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Bolton Council, Wigan Council, Wyre Council, and Lancashire County Council. Others include Environment, Natural England, Highways England, Homes England, Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership, Lancashire, and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)
42. These consultees will be notified in writing upon the commencement of the Part One Preferred Options Consultation and offered a meeting to discuss any issues arising from the proposals. We are required to maintain a record of Duty To Cooperate engagement, prepare a Statement of Common Ground which sets out agreements (or areas of disagreement) between parties and to produce a statement of Duty To Cooperate Compliance to accompany the draft Local Plan at Publication Stage.

Next Steps

43. All three Councils will consider the same recommendations for approval and once approval is secured, printing of the necessary (minimum) documentation will be undertaken including maps of the proposed site allocations and the consultation will commence on Monday 19th December 2022.

44. Hard copies of the documents will be hand delivered at the designated deposit points across the three boroughs.
45. The main method of consultation online via the Citizen space portal and we would strongly encourage that representations are made online. The main reason for this is because it is quick and easy to access the information and the processing and analysis of representations is far more efficient than paper copies. As part of the test of 'soundness', we must demonstrate we have adequately assessed and considered to all representations made.
46. There are limited resources available and because we are committed to accelerating plan preparation and achieving the end goal of an adopted plan as early as we can, it is imperative best use of digital tools are used, to make the work as efficient as possible.
47. Help and support will be available to those who are unable to access the internet or who struggle, and paper responses will be accepted otherwise.

Implications for Chorley

48. The publication of the Preferred Options document provides an important stage in the Local Plan development and one which demonstrates a clear emerging development plan with a robust strategy to plan for, and meet the housing need for Central Lancashire, with a robust evidence base and supply which support the approach.
49. The supply of housing sites we have available means that we are able to meet the required housing requirement for Chorley *without* having to consider the release of green belt land (for the avoidance of doubt, there are sites proposed which are previously developed land in the greenbelt in which case, a principle of development is established.).
50. For employment land, we do have a shortfall in supply and therefore we will need to carefully consider our options following this consultation. These will include reviewing our available supply and considering any further sites that are submitted as part of Call for Sites 4 or requesting that our neighbouring authorities accept some of our 'unmet' employment need.
51. Alternatively, we may consider that the exceptional circumstances set out in national policy are met and that as part of the future Economic Development Strategy for Chorley, with objectives that include enabling inward investment, increasing access to jobs and apprenticeships and training, and also as part of a drive to reduce the levels of outward migration from the Borough, that there is justification for considering greenbelt release. There are some sites suggested for employment uses in the green belt however these are not yet proposed for allocation because of the level of work required to carefully consider all options.
52. The policy directions detailed in the report contribute to our Councils corporate objectives as well as those set out in local plans and strategies although there is much more work to be done before Summer 2023 to refine these and carefully consider other land uses and infrastructure needs not least for schools, transport, cemeteries, sport and recreation and health.

Climate change and air quality

53. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council

because at this stage these are only preferred options. As the plan progresses, more detailed assessment of the impact on climate change will need to be considered, linking to the detailed Integrated Assessment required for all development plans.

Equality and diversity

54. There are no implications of a result of this report because these are only options at this stage. The Local Plan itself is required to have an Integrated Appraisal of all policies undertaken and as the plan progresses, a comprehensive EIA will be produced. For the purposes of the consultation, there will be measures put in place to ensure no groups are disadvantaged or unable to take part in the consultation.

Risk

55. The key risks for the Local Plan are with regard to compliance with the legislative and national policy requirements for plan making. There is also the risk of challenge through a Judicial Review or sustained objections. This has been mitigated by undertaking a thorough process and methodology in line with Government legislation and guidance and strong evidence base. Rounds of consultation will enable feedback to be addressed where justified

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

56. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The costs associated with producing the Local plan are held within Chorley Council's accounts and then distributed appropriately within the three authorities. The financial implications of developments within the local plan are reported in the relevant financial reports presented to the council and through the budget setting process.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

57. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to go out to consultation on the appended Stage One Options document.
58. The process for updating local plans is lengthy and complicated. It is laid down in Statute and national guidance.
59. To do nothing here is not an option – the need to have an up to date Local Plan is obvious. Without such a plan we lose the ability to shape and direct the development in our area as we would wish. Our ability to resist undesirable development would be weakened.

Background documents

Local Plan Evidence Base (see Appendix Three within the Part One Preferred Options Consultation Document for a list)

Appendix One Part One Central Lancashire Local Plan Consultation

Appendix Two the Site Selection Process; Housing and Employment Land Paper

Appendix Three Local Development Scheme

Appendix Four Draft Schedule of Consultation Events

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