



Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Planning and Property (Chorley and South Ribble)	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	26/09/2024

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note contents of this report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

2. This paper provides a general update on the progress of the Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP) which is a collaboration between Preston, Chorley and South Ribble Councils, with the support of Lancashire County Council, to develop a development plan comprising of all strategic and local planning policies for adoption in 2026.
3. The plan making work is being delivered by officers working across the three Councils' Planning Policy functions supported by some shared officer resources and external consultancy support. A suite of evidence is required to support the preparation of the plan, and this paper provides a succinct update on the evidence base along with other key steps in the programme.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

4. None, for information only.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND

6. Work on the CLLP is progressing in accordance with the published Local Development Scheme and this paper provides an overview of activity across the programme covering site selection, evidence gathering and policy preparation.
7. The implications of the consultation on Planning reform on the CLLP are addressed in a separate agenda item and the key message is that the Councils do not consider there to be a need to revise the published LDS at this time.

8. The three Council's position is subject to change dependent on ongoing internal discussions and our need to respond to further information and guidance coming from Government.

SITE SELECTION

9. The assessments of the sites being considered for housing and employment allocation are nearing completion, with the exception of a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of a proportion of the sites (to be agreed). The following site assessments are significantly progressed:
 - Heritage impact
 - Highways access
 - Transport – high level assessment
 - Flood risk Level 1
 - Utilities
 - Sustainability
 - Employment suitability
10. Each local authority is reviewing the findings of the assessments and identifying sites that are to be discounted based on the findings of the assessments.
11. In addition to the evidence above, site selection must also take account of other factors including the deliverability and availability of a site. This includes matters around land ownership, any legal restrictions and also the landowner's ambitions and expectations in terms of the site coming forward and for what land use and outputs. To collect this key data, a survey has been sent out to site promoters and landowners.
12. The questionnaire is to be completed by the site promoter/landowner responsible for the submission of a site for consideration for allocation in the new Central Lancashire Local Plan and it has been made clear that by requesting and collecting this data, it is not a confirmation that the site will be proposed for allocation, rather is to assist in the process of site assessment only.
13. The survey went live in August and to date, 66 responses have been received from site promoters, 29 from Chorley, 32 from Preston and 19 from South Ribble.
14. The outcome of this emerging site work has been shared in each Council with the appropriate Elected Members and upon conclusion of the site work, Elected Member engagement with regards proposed site allocations will be determined locally.
15. An audit trail of all the site assessment work and the rationale for a site to be retained for allocation or discounted is required as part of the plan making process and will be made available as part of the evidence base.

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

16. A draft Central Lancashire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was provided to the three Councils in March 2024 by its consultants, JBA. The draft report assesses the extent of flood risk of each of the sites being considered for allocation for housing and/or employment in the Central Lancashire Local Plan. It assesses flood risk from a range of sources including fluvial (from main rivers and ordinary watercourses), tidal (from the sea), surface water, groundwater and sewers.

17. Each site was given a strategic recommendation based on the extent of flood risk on the site in line with the categories below..

Recommendation A - withdrawal of site as it falls within Flood Zone 3b unless the site boundary can be redrawn, or the functional floodplain can be incorporated into site layout and design as open greenspace. A Level 2 SFRA may be required to inform this process.

Recommendation B - withdrawal of the site from allocation or carry out a Level 2 SFRA to confirm surface water flood risk.

Recommendation C - site can be allocated subject to the developer submitting a Flood Risk Assessment with any planning application.

Recommendation D - sites could be allocated for development as there are no flood risk issues.

18. A Level 2 SFRA will be required where the Council is considering allocating land for development in areas of medium to high flood risk i.e. those given Recommendation A or B.
19. We are awaiting further information from JBA and the Environment Agency on whether they consider a Level 2 SFRA of these sites is required and upon final agreement, across all three Council areas, the next stage of the work will be undertaken, and a firm indication of the cost and timeframe will be provided by the consultant.

POLICY PREPARATION

20. Officers across the partnership along with Richard Wood Consultancy, are engaged in drafting the Local Plan policies, including the Spatial Strategy and development management policies, to enable progress to the publication of the pre-submission local plan (Regulation 19).
21. At this time, the policy structure of the Local Plan comprises of sixty-four policies and more than half of these have been drafted and reviewed through a series of workshops involving officers across a range of disciplines. A small proportion of policies are being developed as we are working on some essential key evidence updates to be produced to inform them.
22. The Local Plan policy content will consist of ten chapters, including Spatial Strategy, Balanced Housing Market, Prosperous Economy, Healthy and Inclusive communities, High Quality Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Energy, Sustainable Travel and Infrastructure Delivery, in addition to a performance monitoring chapter and ancillary sections such as the preface, glossary etc.
23. Upon final amendments following the workshops, the draft policies will be agreed in principle for sharing with statutory consultees under the Duty to Cooperate provisions. Whilst this is not a requirement, it will provide an opportunity for consultees such as the Environment Agency and National Highways to provide early constructive feedback of the policies and enable these to be addressed prior to the publication of the Local Plan ahead

of submission. This will save time later in the process and avoids unnecessary objections or representations which would need to be addressed.

24. There continues to be an iterative relationship between policy development and the Sustainability Appraisal and the Viability Testing.

DUTY TO COOPERATE

25. Work is currently being undertaken to refresh discussions and produce a series of Statements of Common Ground under the statutory Duty to Cooperate with strategic stakeholders. It is the Central Lancashire Authorities' duty to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, and to set out Statements of Common Ground covering strategic cross-boundary matters with neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations.
26. Throughout plan-preparation, meetings have been held with relevant stakeholders to ensure strategic matters are understood and accounted for within the plan. With site assessment work and policy writing now well under way, an Action Plan has been developed which sets out the next steps for Duty to Cooperate work. Based on previous meetings, discussions, and consultation responses strategic cross-boundary matters to be agreed upon have been noted. Examples of cross-boundary matters include housing and employment distribution, cross-boundary transportation, and cross-boundary flood risk. Further meetings will be held over the coming months to discuss these matters and Statements of Common Ground will be created and signed to support the next stage of the plan.
27. These Statements of Common Ground will form a part of the evidence-base for the Local Plan, showing that the Central Lancashire authorities have met the statutory Duty to Cooperate.

EMPLOYMENT LAND STUDY

28. An updated Central Lancashire Employment Land Study (ELS) is under preparation which partially updates the ELS published in 2022.
29. The ELS Update reviews the potential future employment land supply of the three local authorities, in the light of changing market conditions. Potential sites were reviewed in terms of both their qualitative attractiveness to the market and their deliverability, including consideration of some of the practical barriers they may face to development. Additionally, each site was graded using a standard scoring system that consisted of ten objective measures, which further illustrate the site's market desirability and deliverability.

HOUSING EVIDENCE

30. Consultants, DLP, continue to prepare the Central Lancashire Housing Study Update, looking at a range of options for determining the objectively assessed need for the three Boroughs. Current national policy requires us to consider other factors which may mean we choose to plan for above the standard method figure (which for Central Lancashire collectively is 944 homes per year as a starting point). The Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation that the Councils undertook in 2022, proposed that the recommended scenario to be taken forward was an employment-led scenario.

31. Once the proposed housing requirement is confirmed, the next step is to compare this with the land supply (including commitments and proposed allocations) and where there may be any unmet need for housing. This will determine the final strategic housing policy for housing and the average annual housing requirement for each Council for the plan period.
32. ARC4 have been commissioned to produce an update to the Housing Needs and Demand Study in addition to a refresh of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Review. These are evidence-based documents to support our housing and gypsy and traveller policies, and a review is necessary to ensure they cover the revised local plan period of 2023 to 2041. The final outcome of these two pieces of evidence is expected in the coming months.

RETAIL EVIDENCE

33. A refresh to the retail evidence is being commissioned to support our retail policies.

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

34. The three Councils have commissioned a new Playing Pitch Strategy for Central Lancashire which will inform strategies in each Council which identifying the future need for infrastructure improvements during the plan period and justify the use of developer contributions. These strategies will replace existing strategies, such as the Open Space Sports and Recreation Strategy for Chorley Council, which includes provision for playing pitches, amenity, play, allotments, cemeteries and so forth.
35. The Playing Pitch Strategy looks at the existing provision across a range of typologies, assessing the quality and demand and also projects future demand based on population growth, proposed development and also stakeholder engagement with local sports etc.

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

36. Hydrock Consultants (formally FORE Consultancy) are collating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which is a key evidence-based document for our local plan. The IDP identifies the infrastructure needs across the Central Lancashire area over the revised Local Plan period, specifically outlining what infrastructure is needed, when it is needed, who is responsible for providing it, how much it will cost and how it will be funded.
37. As part of this work, the home teams are working closely with our internal teams (including leisure, parks and open spaces, street scene). The next step will then be to offer follow-up meetings with key sectors with the consultants, linking to the upcoming set of DtC meetings where necessary, to ensure the information is accurate and update the document accordingly. In terms of transport infrastructure requirements, we will be working closely with LCC as Strategic Transport work (undertaken by Jacobs) progresses to ensure this is included in addition to other key infrastructure requirements not least schools and blue and green infrastructure.

POLICY MAPPING

38. Plan-making authorities are required to prepare a policies map alongside the plan, and digital formats are becoming more standard, alongside the more traditional paper copies. Officers have been reviewing options for online mapping for the local plan (as which would be ready for the Regulation 19 consultation) and how these will be prepared/structured.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

39. The work noted in this report at this stage has no impact on the three Councils' Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Councils. An integrated assessment of the impacts of the proposals within the new Local Plan is being prepared and will be published alongside the Local Plan in 2025. This assessment will consider a broad range of factors not least environmental and will identify the negative and positive impacts and how these are being avoided/mitigated.

RISK

40. There is a comprehensive risk register in place for the Local Plan.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Zoe Whiteside Head of Spatial Planning (Chorley)	01257515711	13/9/24	