

Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041

Statement of Common Ground Between the Central Lancashire Authorities (Chorley Council, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council) and Lancashire County Council

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been developed in order to address Strategic Planning matters between the parties consisting of the Central Lancashire Authorities (CLAs) of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble, and Lancashire County Council.

1.2 The SoCG has been prepared to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements. Paragraph 24 to 27 of the NPPF¹ state that “Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries”. Moreover, the “strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statement of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these”. Paragraphs 20 to 23 set out how the duty to cooperate works and how strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries require effective and on-going cooperation. These matters include:

- Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development.
- Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

1.3 According to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)², a SoCG is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. It forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with the duty to cooperate.

1.4 Both NPPF and PPG make it clear that a SoCG should primarily be produced to document the strategic cross-boundary matters. Therefore, this SoCG is the

¹ NPPF Version December 2023

² [Plan-making - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67221/plan-making-2012.pdf)

written record account of the progress achieved in the planning process for strategic matters in Central Lancashire and how the CLAs have worked effectively to fulfil their duty to cooperate. The approach taken in writing this statement is in accordance with the requirements of the PPG.

2. Background of Central Lancashire

- 2.1 Central Lancashire covers the geographical areas of Preston City Council, Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council, which functions as one integrated local economy and commuting area. It is a single housing market area with high levels of self-containment, or families moving within the area. It is therefore appropriate to work strategically in collaboration to ensure our policy is joined up and complementary.
- 2.2 The joint working on planning-related matters began in 2008, when the three councils came together and produced a Central Lancashire Core Strategy. The three councils collaborated to produce the Local Development Framework and adopted the first Core Strategy in July 2012, which sets out the strategic planning policies for Central Lancashire. In 2018, a review of the Core Strategy and individual local plans began with a view to deliver a single Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP), reflecting both the shared strategic policy objectives and more detailed non-strategic policies.
- 2.3 A Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has been established, made-up of elected members from each authority. This Committee has the responsibility to consider proposals, open them up to debate and move to endorse or challenge them at their discretion. Members from LCC also attend the JAC.
- 2.4 A Central Lancashire Local Plan Team (Local Plan Team) has been created and jointly funded by the three local authorities specifically to undertake the work required to deliver the review of the local plan. The team is accountable to all three local authorities, reporting back to each home team and guiding the process forward.

3. Strategic Geography

- 3.1 Central Lancashire is in the heart of Lancashire within the North West Region and covers the three local authority districts of South Ribble, Chorley and Preston. It comprises an urban core surrounded by attractive scenery ranging from the Pennine foothills / West Pennine Moors in the East, to the Lancashire Plain and the Ribble and Alt Estuary in the West. The area is bounded by Fylde and West

Lancashire to the West, Ribble Valley and Blackburn with Darwen to the East, Wyre to the North and Greater Manchester to the South.

3.2 The Central Lancashire area is a diverse mix of urban and rural including towns, villages, and sparsely populated countryside. Some of the main landscape attractions and protected wildlife habitats in the area include the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the West Pennine Moors SSSI, and the Ribble and Alt estuaries. There are also significant areas of open space and attractive public parks for sport, leisure, and recreation. Grid-iron pattern streets typify the urban areas of Preston, Chorley, and Leyland, as workers housing was built tightly around the mills and industrial complexes.

3.3 The area covered by the Central Lancashire Local Plan is shown in the map below.



4. Joint Working: Central Lancashire Authorities and Lancashire County Council

- 4.1 The purpose of the SOCG is to inform the Inspector appointed for the Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination and other parties about the areas of agreement between the CLAs and Lancashire County Council in relation to key strategic matters contained in the Central Lancashire Local Plan (2023-2041). Duty to cooperate engagement has been a consideration in the development of the policies, supporting explanatory text and Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the draft Local Plan.
- 4.2 Chorley, Preston and South Ribble councils are the Local Planning Authorities for each of their administrative areas. Lancashire County Council is the Local Planning Authority in relation to Minerals and Waste for Lancashire including Central Lancashire and is also the Local Education Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority and Local Highway Authority. Both parties are Prescribed Bodies for the purposes of the Duty to Cooperate.
- 4.3 Meetings have been held between the councils throughout the plan making process, to discuss and resolve issues arising through the production of the draft Plan. This SOCG reflects the agreed position the Central Lancashire Authorities and Lancashire County Council for submission to the Inspector of the Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination.
- 4.4 This Statement sets out the confirmed points of agreement between the parties with regard to:
- Transport.
 - Education.
 - Economic Development and Strategic Sites.
 - Flood Risk Management.
 - Public Health Matters; and
 - Minerals and Waste.

5. Strategic Matters

Strategic Matter 1: Transport

- 5.1 LCC is the Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authority for the CLAs and as such, has contributed to the transport evidence gathering, modelling and assessment of the Plan's development strategy and its site allocations for the CLLP. The County Council's published transport policy and delivery context for the CLLP provides a basis for Local Plan-making, including Local Transport Plan 3, Highways and Transport Master Plan (including ongoing development activity to review and roll forward these plans), Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal, Highways and Transport Strategy 2023-2025, Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and other relevant documents.
- 5.2 The transport policies contained in the draft CLLP have been produced jointly by officers from the CLAs. The parties agree that LCC shall be consulted on all matters related to transport for the CLLP. The CLAs and County Council are currently working on further evidence and analysis relating to strategic and site-level transport impacts, need and mitigation, in order to determine a 'vision-led' approach to transport provision in the CLLP. The CLAs and County Council will continue to engage in the Plan/policy writing process.

Strategic Matter 2: Education

- 5.3 There are 628 schools in Lancashire which provide mainstream school places across the County of which 482 are primaries and 82 are secondaries. Lancashire has a 'mixed-economy' of schools (academy, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, foundation, grammar etc.) where many determine their own admission arrangements.
- 5.4 However, LCC has the statutory responsibility for ensuring sufficiency of places at any of these schools and this relies on effective collaboration with and between maintained schools and academies in the county to ensure sufficiency of places.
- 5.5 There is a single national measure to assess the net capacity of schools specified by the Department for Education (DfE), which should ensure a robust and consistent method of assessing the capacity of schools. The measure is used to identify a surplus or shortage of school places within schools and assess the need for new school place arising from development.
- 5.6 LCC takes an evidence-based approach to forecasting the need for school places to produce 5-year pupil projections. Forecasts are updated twice a year, in December and April, using data which includes:
- » Current and previous years' school census numbers

- » Inward and outward migration (or movement) of pupils between areas and schools
- » School net capacity assessment of buildings
- » Schools' published admission numbers (PAN)
- » Birth data
- » Local authority supplied planned housing data for the next 5 years.

5.7 On this basis, the latest assessment of school place requirements related to the new CLLP in conjunction with the Lancashire School Planning Team has identified a need for the future school capacity shown in Table 1. The size of primary and secondary schools varies by form entry (FE), which is the number of classes in each year group.

Table 1: Estimated School Demand in Central Lancashire

Region	Area	Type of School	Scale of Demand (FE)
Preston	Preston East	Primary	1.5
	Preston North	Primary	1
	Preston Rural	Primary	4
	Preston West	Primary	7.5
	Goosnargh & Grimsnargh	Primary	1.5
	Preston	Secondary	9
South Ribble	Leyland	Primary	3.5
	Penwortham	Primary	3.5
	Rural South Ribble	Primary	1
	Walton le Dale	Primary	3.5
	South Ribble	Secondary	6
Chorley	Chorley Central	Primary	4
	Chorley Rural North	Primary	0.5
	Chorley Rural West	Primary	1
	Clayton-le-Woods	Primary	2
	Coppull	Primary	2
	Euxton	Primary	1
	Rivington & Adlington	Primary	0.5
	Chorley	Secondary	6

5.8 The parties agree that the housing development proposed in the CLLP will require growth in the local schools. The provision of education facilities can be helped to be delivered through financial contributions to increase capacity at existing facilities or provision of new school infrastructure.

5.9 Education officers at LCC were consulted throughout the plan preparation process and have provided an assessment of the impact of the planned growth on school

place provision. This identified need has been fed into the development of the infrastructure funding plan and the CLAs and LCC will work collaboratively as the CLLP progresses to develop a strategy for addressing this need.

- 5.10 Education Officers have also been consulted on the draft of Policy HC3: Community, Health and Education Facilities. The parties agree that the wording contained within the policy is robust.
- 5.11 Policy HC3 sets out the following list of sites as safeguarded for the expansion or provision of new education facilities
- HC3.1 Land to the East of Wigan Road, Clayton-le-Woods
 - HC3.2 Cottam Hall (Merry Trees Lane/Tom Benson Way)
 - HC3.3 Higher Bartle (Maxy Lane/Sandy Lane/Tabley Lane)
 - HC3.4 Tabley Lane (Northwest Preston Masterplan)
 - HC3.5 Former Whittingham Hospital
 - HC3.6 Land to the south of William Young Way
 - HC3.7 Land at Bartle
 - HC3.8 Pickerings Farm, Flag Lane
 - HC3.9 Aston Way, Leyland
- 5.12 The Parties agree that the above listed sites will be safeguarded for education uses.

Strategic Matter 3: Economic Development

- 5.13 Throughout the years that the CLLP has been prepared, there has been cooperation and discussion between the CLAs and LCC over strategic employment need and sites within the Plan. Through detailed conversations, Central Lancashire has been identified as an area for significant employment growth by LCC. This ambition reflects the significance of the area in terms of taking forward Lancashire's overall growth ambitions, as identified in the forthcoming Lancashire Growth Plan. Lancashire's growth ambitions seek to support and deliver the Government's aims and priorities. In particular, the Central Lancashire area hosts significant sector strengths which have the potential to grow and develop new, nationally significant high-value capabilities in digital, cyber, technology, knowledge-based industries and advanced engineering and manufacturing. In order to realise these opportunities, site allocation and assembly is critical in providing a strategic pipeline to respond to demand.
- 5.14 The CLAs commissioned an Employment Land Study to review the potential future employment land supply of the three local authorities, in the light of changing market conditions. The study also provides an Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) for the CLLP. The Study separates need by industry, providing requirements for office land and industrial and warehouse uses. The combined OAN for the CLAs as per the most recent Employment Land Study is outlined in the table below:

Table 2: Combined Employment OAN for the CLAs

Authority	Combined Employment Use OAN
Chorley	41.45 ha
Preston	74.43 ha
South Ribble	56.99 ha
Total	172.87 a

- 5.15 The CLAs are confident that the Plan’s employment need will be met within the borders of Central Lancashire, with more land than required to meet the OAN being allocated. The table below outlines the supply that will be delivered during the Plan period:

Table 3: CLLP Employment Supply

	Chorley (ha)	Preston (ha)	South Ribble (ha)
Requirement			
Local Plan requirement 2023-2041	41.45	74.43	56.99
Supply			
Completions 2023/24	3.82	7.77	2.11
Allocations	20.34	136.50	71.06
Non-allocated existing commitments at 1 st April 2024	17.95	55.69	10.03
TOTAL Supply	42.11	199.96	83.20
NET SUPPLY/ CONTINGENCY	+0.66	+125.53	+26.21

- 5.16 LCC has expressed a desire for the CLAs to allocate specific strategic sites to meet the growth needs they foresee in the area. The proposed allocations in the plan provide for significantly above the OAN for the area, however, do not include any new strategic employment sites over those identified in the extant plans (Central Lancashire Core Strategy, Chorley Local Plans 2015, Preston Local Plan 2015, and South Ribble Local Plan 2015) as there is sufficient supply available to meet the identified need, supported by robust evidence, and the Cuerden Site in South Ribble previously identified as a strategic site is no longer given this designation. LCC considers that in addition to meeting the total need in numerical terms there is a need to provide sites of the right kind in the right place including those which are suitable for supporting specialised sector growth and innovation in the medium to longer term. LCC is working on evidence for this position which is likely to be unveiled in the coming months/years.
- 5.17 LCC believes that the Enterprise Zone in Samlesbury is likely to reach capacity early in the plan period and suggest that they are aware of significant demand from specialised businesses looking to co-locate with existing businesses in the area. Through the Preferred Options consultation and later Duty to Cooperate meetings, LCC requested the CLAs maintain existing strategic allocations and consider the

allocation of new strategic employment sites and to take into account the lead in time for preparing new strategic sites for development. The CLAs considered this, however, were of the view it is not required at this stage given the available supply of employment land and the principles of the Spatial Strategy and Strategic Objective 2 to support growth in the existing main urban areas to regenerate the City and Town centres and make the best use of existing land.

- 5.18 LCC is committed to supporting the CLLP through to adoption and will work with the CLAs to share any evidence, plans or strategies on which it is working.
- 5.19 The CLAs and LCC are currently working on further evidence relating to strategic and specialised need. This will then inform the position on potentially managing need through monitoring, and if necessary, through review earlier than the normal 5-year cycle.

Strategic Matter 4: Flood Risk Management

- 5.20 LCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority for the Plan area and as such, has been closely consulted throughout the plan preparation process. Officers from LCC have been involved in meetings with JBA, the flood risk consultant undertaking the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Plan. LCC has also been consulted during the site selection process to ensure that any known sites of concern were appropriately assessed.
- 5.21 The parties have agreed that the outcomes of the Level 1 SFRA are appropriate and sufficient to base the assessments of proposed site allocations, in relation to matters of surface water flood risk and surface water sustainable drainage. The parties agree that any sites which require a Level 2 SFRA will receive one and will have a site-specific flood risk policy if required.
- 5.22 It was agreed that LCC be consulted for comments on the draft flood risk policies in the Plan. The CLAs worked jointly to produce policy EN10: Development and Flood Risk, in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority on matters of surface water flood risk and surface water sustainable drainage.
- 5.23 The parties have agreed that the wording of policy EN10 is robust and appropriate for the Plan, insofar as it relates to matters of surface water flood risk and surface water sustainable drainage.

Strategic Matter 5: Public Health

- 5.24 The CLAs and LCC have worked collaboratively when drafting policies related to public health for the Plan. Several topics were discussed such as hot food take-aways, adaptable housing and active design.

- 5.25 Officers from LCC presented to members and officers at a JAC meeting in June 2023 to outline the evidence base for a hot food take-aways policy. It was agreed at that meeting that the CLAs would work closely with LCC to draft a policy for the Plan.
- 5.26 The CLAs and LCC agree that a policy related to hot food take-aways which supports LCCs ambitions should be in the CLLP.
- 5.27 There were in-depth discussions and meetings held between the parties. The draft hot food take-aways policy was amended and it was agreed that the CLAs will use most of the proposed wording provided by LCC. In doing so, it was also agreed that officers from LCC and the CLA's would jointly represent the CLLP at examination for matters related to the hot food take-aways policy. It was also agreed that LCC officers would present and defend the policy at any future planning appeals.

Strategic Matter 6: Minerals and Waste

- 5.28 LCC is the Minerals and Waste Authority for the Local Plan area and as such the responsibility for preparing minerals and waste specific policies rests with LCC.
- 5.29 The Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework Core Strategy DPD was adopted in February 2009. The Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Site Allocation and Development Management Policies was adopted in September 2013.
- 5.30 Work is underway to prepare a review of draft revised Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, with a consultation on a draft plan held in late 2018. A separate SoCG is being prepared to address the specific strategic issues associated with the review of the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.
- 5.31 When site allocations were considered the CLAs had regard to the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan; in particular the presence of mineral safeguarding areas underlying allocated sites. The potential impact of existing minerals and waste operations upon allocated sites, and vice versa the impact of those allocations upon the existing minerals and waste operations was also considered so as to protect future residents, and existing commercial operations.

Signatories to this Agreement

Signed – Chorley Council



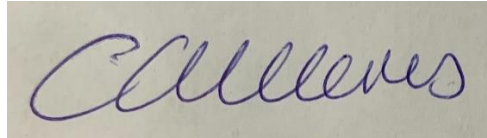
Zoe Whiteside
Head of Spatial Planning

Signed - Lancashire County Council



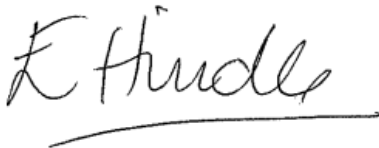
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