

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE CITY CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER FINAL DRAFT - JUNE 2006

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the paper is to stimulate the debate about the key planning issues in the three local authority areas of Preston, Chorley and South Ribble and the options for dealing with them. It marks the start of the process of planning positively for the future of the area.

The three authorities have decided to work together in preparing this document because the three individual areas are in fact very closely related and have much in common.

All three authorities are committed to engaging with the public, businesses and with public and voluntary sector organisations across the whole area right at start of the process so your views can be heard and you can help shape the future.

BACKGROUND

Local Development Framework

Recent reforms to the planning system seek to make plan preparation faster, more responsive to change and place greater emphasis on community involvement. All three authorities are required to produce a Local Development Framework (known as a LDF). This will be made up of individual documents known as Local Development Documents (LDDs). An early LDD to be produced will be the Core Strategy and this will set the framework for the production of subsequent LDDs.

The LDFs will replace the local plans for Preston, Chorley and South Ribble and guide development up to 2021. Whilst this paper relates to the Core Strategy, each authority has set out its timescales for producing other LDDs in its Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Core Strategy

In the case of all three authorities, the Core Strategy is the first main non-topic specific document of each LDF to be produced. It will set out the vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the whole area which draws upon the Community Strategies and Corporate Plans for each authority and other strategies which have implications for the development and use of land.

The three authorities have agreed to work together in producing a Core Strategy as the individual areas are strongly inter-connected in terms of:

- The local housing market
- The local economy
- The role of Preston City Centre.

It therefore makes sense to plan positively at the strategic level for the whole area rather than three areas in isolation.

The Core Strategy is likely to contain policies which will cover key strategic matters relevant to the following Themes:

- Locating new development
- Meeting housing needs
- Fulfilling economic growth
- Improving accessibility
- Protecting the environment
- Improving the quality of life
- Sustaining rural areas
- Thriving centres

These themes have been the subject of initial consultation with the Government Office for the North West, North West Regional Assembly, North West Development Agency, Lancashire County Council and the Local Strategic Partnerships in Chorley, Preston and South Ribble. However depending on the responses received to the paper during the wider consultation stages, it may prove appropriate to present future policies in a different way to this.

The Core Strategy will be accompanied by a key diagram which illustrates the policies. It will also contain a monitoring and implementation framework.

NEXT STAGES

The publication of this paper marks the start of wide ranging community involvement. The creation of the Core Strategy will go through a number of stages of preparation after this initial stage of identifying issues and possible options for solving them. The intention is that at each stage the content of the Strategy becomes more established until it is finalised at the adoption stage.

Preferred Options – preferred ways forward without ruling out alternatives -
September 2007

Submission of preferred strategy to Government April 2008

Examination including possible public inquiry October 2008

Adoption of finalised strategy July 2009

CONTEXT

The LDF is being prepared by each authority in consultation with its partners and the residents and businesses of the area. The LDFs cannot be prepared in isolation and must take account of the following:

National and Regional Planning Policy

Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements

(PPSs): These set out government priorities across a wide range of planning issues.

Northern Way Growth Strategy:

The Northern Way is a government strategy for the three regions of the North of England drawn up in an attempt to address the significant difference in economic performance between the north and London and the south east. It has a two pronged

approach; one, traditional, with a focus on dealing with areas of need/deprivation, the other a recognition that to deliver the transformation required, areas of natural economic growth should be fully utilised to fuel growth throughout the northern regions. This second part of the approach has been focussed on making maximum use of the opportunities that exist in the city regions of the north. In the north-west, Central Lancashire, along with Manchester and Liverpool, is identified as a result of its strong economic performance particularly in recent times.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):

The Regional Spatial Strategy for North West England is currently being reviewed. The new draft RSS was submitted to the Government in January 2006 and was the subject of consultation between March and June. It will be examined in October/November this year before being approved and issued in its final form in the autumn of 2007 when it will replace County Structure Plans. The RSS is part of the development plan covering the three districts. The Core Strategy for Preston, Chorley and South Ribble – the Central Lancashire City - has to be in general conformity with it. The RSS needs to be aligned with the Northern Way Growth Strategy which identifies Central Lancashire as one of the City Regions to generate growth in the North of England. The RSS includes a regional transport strategy and takes account of the Regional Housing Strategy.

Regional Economic Strategy:

The Northwest Development Agency's (NWDA) revised Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is a 20 year rolling strategy to shape the future economic direction of the Northwest region. The region has a £98 billion economy, and contains 6.8 million people and 230,000 firms. The strategy is geared towards reducing the region's £13 billion output gap (compared with the average for England) and creating and maintaining the conditions for sustainable growth and private sector investment.

The objective of the RES is to address three major drivers for growth to achieve the strategy's vision and to close the output gap with the average for England. The drivers are to:

- Improve productivity and grow the market (which accounts for £10 billion of the output gap).
- Grow the size and capability of the workforce (£3 billion of the output gap is due to fewer people working).
- Create and maintain the conditions for sustainable growth.

These are supported by a range of Transformational Actions, comprising a prioritised list of major projects.

The RES is being taken forward more locally through a Lancashire Economic Strategy and Sub-Regional Action Plan 2006 / 07(LEP)

Sub-regional and Local Policies and Strategies

Central Lancashire City Sub Regional Strategy:

The Central Lancashire City Region (CLCR) as defined in the Northern Way covers all of Lancashire except for Lancaster and West Lancashire Districts. The RSS will include a sub regional strategy for the CLCR. Chorley, Preston and South Ribble comprise the city 'core' of Central Lancashire, and the three councils are concerned that these proposals to date do not adequately embrace the opportunity for economic growth in the Central Lancashire City Region. They have therefore commissioned a Central Lancashire City Sub Regional Study which will be put forward to the regional planning body as evidence of the special role that the city of Central Lancashire has now and will have in the future in implementing the growth agenda set out in Northern Way. Consequently there is some uncertainty as to the eventual form and content of that part of the RSS relating to the core of Central Lancashire. The final content of the sub regional policies will of course be of vital importance to the Core Strategy and the extent of development in the three districts.

Central Lancashire City Vision:

A new Vision for the City has been developed by the three Councils based on independent evidence about the area's growth potential. This will ~~form the~~ be a key influence for the Core Strategy.

This Vision includes:

- The development, such as proposed in the Tithebarn Regeneration Area of Preston City Centre into a more vibrant place to shop, live and work. New development will enable it to function as an alternative to Manchester and Liverpool for shopping and leisure. Chorley and Leyland town centres will develop to provide a complementary range of services.
- New jobs in Preston City Centre, at major new developments throughout Central Lancashire City, and associated with the potential of the University of Central Lancashire. Many of these jobs will be in new and growing sectors of the economy.
- Investment in public transport services, including park and ride, and improvements to the road system to relieve congestion and improve access to the City and town centres.
- New housing to support the regeneration of Central Lancashire City, to provide a mix of house types to meet everyone's needs.
- Making better use of the River Ribble, Riversway Docklands, and the Lancaster Canal, with the possibility of new schemes in the longer term Identified in the "Riverworks" study.¹
- Investment in major heritage and cultural assets, including parks and museums.
- Helping the more deprived areas, including investment to improve peoples' skills so that they can take advantage of the new jobs.

¹ Riverworks is a series of studies looking at ways of enhancing the natural water-based assets of the City. Work is ongoing to identify projects that can realistically be accomplished.

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2016:

Adopted in March 2005, the structure plan will remain part of the development plan for the area until it is replaced by the RSS.

Lancashire Local Transport Plan 2006-2010:

Prepared by the County Council, in association with District Councils, this Plan's proposals cover the whole of Lancashire and include specific local programmes in Chorley, Preston and South Ribble. The Plan has 7 key objectives:

- reduce road casualties
- improve access to jobs and services
- improve air quality
- improve the condition of transport infrastructure
- reduce delays on journeys
- increase journeys by bus and rail
- increase active travel.

Potential Major Schemes in Central Lancashire City are:

- A59 Penwortham Bypass
- Preston Access Improvements

Other initiatives specific to the City are:

South Ribble

- Leyland Town Centre Regeneration
- Tardy Gate Air Quality Management Area Action Plan
- Bamber Bridge Public Transport Initiatives
- Accessibility Improvements to Employment Areas and Hospitals
- School Travel plan Package

Chorley

- Eaves Green Link Road
- Chorley Connect – Kickstart Bus Project
- Buckshaw Railway Station and Park & Ride
- Chorley Pedestrian Priority, Access and Parking
- Accessibility Study of Chorley Borough

Preston

- Preston North Park & Ride Schemes
- CiVITAS Sustainable Transport Project
- Preston Guild Wheel Cycle Route and Cycle Hub
- Preston Air Quality Junction Improvements
- Preston Bus Station

Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework:

The preparation of planning policy relating to mineral extraction and waste disposal is the responsibility of the County Council who are currently preparing a Mineral and Waste LDF to replace the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Lancashire West Sub-Regional Housing Strategy Framework:

The Sub Regional Housing Strategy Framework was completed in July 2005. It provides an overview of the housing market in the following local authority areas:

- Blackpool
- Chorley
- Fylde
- Lancaster
- Preston
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Wyre

The strategy framework identifies a range of key housing issues and challenges facing the area including:

- Inter-relationships between economic growth and diversification, specifically looking as higher value housing to attract and retain professionals and managers, and affordable housing to accommodate lower paid employees and key workers.
- Scale and distribution of new housing.
- Social housing.
- Stock condition, specifically in the public and private rented sectors and mobile homes.
- Demand issues, specifically looking at the impacts of an ageing population, household growth, reduction in household size, BME communities, and student housing.
- Affordability.
- Homelessness.

Community Strategies:

Each of the three authorities has its own Community Strategy produced by the respective local strategic partnership. The County Council has also produced its own Community Strategy; "Ambition Lancashire". The LDF is a key component in delivering the spatial aspects of the community strategies. Working with a wide range of stakeholders, the community strategies draw on a wide range of other strategies (such as housing, neighbourhood renewal, and open space strategies) to develop a vision and priorities for the areas.

Ambition Lancashire:

This sets out the strategic vision for the future for Lancashire for the next 20 years. It has been prepared by the Lancashire Partnership and the vision has the following themes for the County to achieve:

- Economic prosperity through business growth and workforce skills.
- First class travel accessibility and modern communication links.
- Dynamic rural economy that is financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Where people choose to live, work and enjoy life.
- Everyone enjoys learning and gains success.
- Care, growth and development of children and young people is a top priority.
- People are enabled to make good choices about their lifestyle and life expectancy is not related to income or social class.
- Diversity is celebrated; tolerance and pride is embedded.
- Strong sense of community responsibility and involvement.
- Choice of good quality housing in successful, secure and sustainable communities.
- Cultures that are rich, diverse and belong to all.
- Cherished landscapes and urban areas playing their part to protect the global environment.

The visions and priorities from the three district Community Strategies are:

Preston

Preston's community strategy (2003-12) has a "Big Vision" which is: "To make Preston the Third City of the North West by 2012". Supporting this there are seven visions around the themes of culture, the environment, health and wellbeing, housing, learning, prosperity, and community safety. Its three top priorities are:

- the regeneration of the City Centre;
- the reduction of crime; and
- supporting and working with young people.

There is an Action Plan which sets out how the Strategy will be implemented by the organisations in strategic partnership.

Chorley

Chorley Borough's Community Strategy vision is :

By 2025 Chorley will be recognised as the most sought after place to live and work in the North West, offering an excellent quality of life to all its residents, and will be at the heart of regional developments whilst retaining its character.

The Priorities for the Future are:

- Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic developments in the Central Lancashire sub-region
- Reducing 'Pockets Of Inequality'
- Getting people involved in their communities
- Improving access to and take-up of public services
- To develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live

The first priority is being taken forward in Chorley's Economic Regeneration Strategy and an accompanying Chorley Town Centre Strategy.

South Ribble

The South Ribble's Community Strategy vision is:

South Ribble – a great place to live, work, visit and play.

- A place to be proud to belong to and which goes from strength to strength
- A place with a strong identity, making a major contribution to the wider sub-region.
- A place with diverse, dynamic communities, which work together for a better future.

South Ribble – a place which has/is:

- Safer communities
- Healthy communities with decent affordable housing and ample cultural and leisure opportunities for all
- A clean, green and sustainable environment.
- Sustainable integrated transport for all.
- A thriving and prosperous borough with education, learning and employment opportunities for all.
- Supporting people with differing needs.

VISION

The Vision for the Core Strategy is influenced by the strategies mentioned in the previous section. A suggested Vision is:

The Central Lancashire City - comprising Preston, Chorley and South Ribble - will be recognised as Lancashire's economic driver where opportunities will be maximised. It will be a centre of learning, have a varied cultural and historic landscape and be known for its sustainable communities, innovative and creative businesses, retail and leisure opportunities, and fine parks and open spaces. The City will have a range of high quality and affordable housing to meet the needs of both existing residents and the new residents required to fulfil the City's economic growth potential.

Question: Is the Vision the correct one for the LDF?

Question: Are there any omissions from the Vision?

Question: Does this Vision accurately portray the aspirations of the Community Strategies?

Key spatial planning issues facing Chorley, Preston and South Ribble are presented on the following pages under 8 themes. Some issues are relevant to more than one theme. Each theme is introduced with some background information leading to an objective to be achieved by 2021. Each objective aims to contribute to realising the Vision. Issues – phrased as questions – are then set out with possible answers – suggested options for solving them. Some of the options can be combined; others are alternatives. Some initial sustainability appraisal work has been done to assess the likely social, economic and environmental impacts of the options. A summary of these impacts is set out to help respondents decide what options to support.

It must be emphasised that this paper has been done as a way of encouraging involvement. There may well be other issues not referred to here that should also be considered and other options for solving these issues than those that appear in this paper. At this stage nothing has been ruled out or in. Representations on all matters to do with strategic, spatial planning are sought. To help you decide what representations to make you are asked to take account of the following questions.

Question – Are there other topics not included in any theme which ought to be considered?

Question – Is there a better way of presenting issues rather than in themes?

Question – Are there other issues which have not been included in the paper that are of sufficient strategic importance to merit inclusion in the future Core Strategy?

Question – Of the issues in the paper what options for solving them would you prefer?

THEME 1. LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT.

Background

- 1.1 There is an extensive central urban belt in the plan area from Adlington, Chorley and the developing Buckshaw Village in the south, Leyland and Bamber Bridge in the centre through to the city of Preston in the north. To the east, west and north are rural areas with villages and hamlets of various sizes. Most of the open countryside between these urban and rural settlements has long been designated as Green Belt.

Settlement Policy

- 1.2 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy identifies Preston as one of around 30 Regional Centres/Cities/Towns in the North West where most new development will be concentrated. What is not clear however is the role the Regional Strategy intends for places immediately adjoining Preston such as Penwortham and Walton-le- Dale and connecting settlements as far south as Clayton Brook and Whittle-le-Woods as there is no policy reference to them. Adlington, Chorley and Leyland are designated as Key Service Centres where development in 'rural areas' should be concentrated. These are in fact urban centres in their own right and there are other such settlements in the plan area that similarly act as key service centres. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy also recognises that some villages act as local service centres and proposes that these be designated in Local Development Frameworks.

Green Belt

- 1.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy expects that the general extent of the Region's Green Belt will be maintained but that it may be necessary for substantial changes to its boundaries in Lancashire, and other parts of the North West, after 2011. Before then the Strategy acknowledges there may be a need to pursue localised small scale Green Belt boundary changes through Local Development Frameworks. The Green Belt in the Central Lancashire City is long established and has served the area well. However, in order to meet the development needs of the City in the most sustainable way, the review of Green Belt boundaries should be considered as an option.

Previously Developed and Greenfield Land

- 1.4 A key development principle of the Regional Spatial Strategy is making better use of land, buildings and infrastructure. The first priority is the use and re-use of existing buildings within settlements; secondly the use of previously developed land within built-up areas; and thirdly the development of other land that is well located in relation to houses, jobs, other services and infrastructure in settlements.

- 1.5 This last option could include greenfield sites on the edges of urban areas, such as on land that has been safeguarded for possible development in the longer term. The Regional Spatial Strategy does not anticipate new settlements or major urban extensions but neither are they ruled out. The identified broad locations for regionally significant economic development are referred to later in this Issues and Options document, in the Fulfilling Economic Growth Theme.
- 1.6 The Regional Spatial Strategy, in line with national planning guidance, expects most retail, leisure, office and other service development to be located within city and town centres. This is picked up in the Thriving Centres Theme (Theme 8) of this Issues and Options paper.

Objective by 2021

To have a sustainable network of urban and rural settlements, which meets development and service demands yet minimises the need to travel, particularly by car, and the use of greenfield land.

Issue 1A – How can urban development requirements best be satisfied?

- a) Concentrate most if not all development within Preston (including a definition of where this extends to) and the Key Service Centres of Leyland, Chorley and Adlington.
- b) Identify other Key Service Centres and promote significant development here; or
- c) Encourage further development at Buckshaw Village; or
- d) Identify new urban extensions and new settlements; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) Other locations?

A brief summary of the Sustainability Appraisal work could be included after each issue

Issue 1B – How can rural development needs best be met?

- a) Designate larger villages as Local Service Centres and only allow development in and adjoining these settlements; or
- b) Allow development to meet local needs in each rural settlement not covered by Green Belt; or
- c) Allow single plot infilling in villages and hamlets covered by Green Belt; or
- d) A combination of the above; or
- e) In some other way?

Issue 1C – When greenfield land is required for development what is the most appropriate type of site to develop?

- a) Unused greenfield sites within built-up areas; or
- b) Accessible non-Green Belt sites (such as safeguarded land) on the edge of settlements; or
- c) Land removed from the Green Belt; or
- d) A combination of the above; or
- e) Somewhere else?

THEME 2: MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

Background

- 2.1 A central theme of delivering sustainable communities is to ensure that everyone is able to access and afford decent housing suitable for their needs. In such a situation, the housing market could be described as “balanced”. Whilst a balanced housing market depends on a wide range of economic factors, the planning system has a key role in contributing to this overall aim.

Overall Housing Requirements

- 2.2 The Central Lancashire City area has been a popular area to live over recent decades. Rates of new housing development have been high (over 7,300 dwellings in the last 5 years - *could insert a graph to illustrate the info*) with a corresponding growth in population (*another graph*). The population of the area is forecast to increase by 18 thousand from 2006 up to 2021. More significantly for housing requirements, the number of households is expected to increase by 21 thousand over the same period. Average household size is expected to further decline but in some black and minority ethnic communities larger extended families will still be the norm.
- 2.3 Recent house building rates have exceeded requirements set out in the current Lancashire Structure Plan which were derived from RPG13. The RPG restricted housing growth in Lancashire to encourage regeneration in the major metropolitan areas of Liverpool and Manchester and other regeneration priority areas in the region.
- 2.4 By contrast, the Northern Way and the emerging replacement Regional Spatial Strategy (to which the LDFs must conform) recognise the role of the Central Lancashire City region in delivering economic growth. An essential aspect of delivering this is providing an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of both existing residents and new residents who are key in delivering economic growth. To enable this the submission RSS indicates significantly higher housing targets for the Central Lancashire City than those in the current structure plan which have been exceeded.
- 2.5 A key challenge for the Core Strategy is that it delivers the right type of housing to meet these needs whilst managing the supply of housing land to ensure that strategic targets are met, in accordance with national and regional planning policies.. Consideration will need to be given to what extent sites for housing can be identified and ‘allocated’ for development and what reliance can be placed on other ‘windfall’ sites coming forward. The rate at which sites are developed will also need to be taken into account as the phasing of land release may be necessary.

Affordable Housing and Special Needs Housing

- 2.6 A particular issue in the Central Lancashire City area is the continuing and increasing demand for affordable housing. Average house prices across the area are above the County average. Further, prices for terraced properties, traditional the realm of first time buyers, are considerably above Lancashire as a whole. It is also recognised that the housing needs of everyone will not be met through owner occupation and housing of other tenures must be provided to meet those needs. This is particularly difficult as government derived funding for rented and shared ownership accommodation is limited so the scope to cross-subsidise affordable housing from market housing schemes may need to be extended.
- 2.7 In addition to affordable housing requirements there are also special housing needs that require different solutions, private developers can profitably meet some of these. With an aging population there will be more elderly people requiring care of one form or another. Traditionally this has been provided in sheltered housing and elderly persons homes with varying degrees of nursing care. Now a new hybrid type of housing – ‘extra care’ is being proposed to meet some of this need. Account also needs to be paid to the needs of gypsies and other travellers.
- 2.8 The joint Housing Needs Study was completed in 2004 and subsequent detailed surveys of specific areas further quantify the demand for affordable housing. Since then the situation appears to be worsening and requires further research including on the issue of extra care housing. Whilst it is recognised that the Local Development Framework cannot meet all identified housing need, it has a key role to play in the delivery of new affordable housing. A key challenge is therefore to ensure that the Local Development Framework delivers the maximum amount of new affordable housing.

Decent and Adaptable Homes

- 2.9 Although the area is typified by generally good quality housing stock, there are pockets of unfitness that require concentrated action. The government is promoting a standard by which all homes can be assessed as to whether they are ‘Decent’ or not. Progress on this is being made but there are particularly acute and extensive problems in some privately rented housing where grant aid may be insufficient or inappropriate. The worst properties are considered ‘Unfit’, the proportion of the housing stock in this category varies across the area, but there are particularly high levels in Preston, where 6.7% of private sector stock is unfit. Another initiative is to increase the proportion of accommodation that is suitable, without major adaptation to ‘lifetime’ living, so enabling people as they become more elderly and infirm to stay longer in their homes.

Brownfield Targets

2.10 In order to make the most efficient use of land, the government has set a target that 60% of new homes should be built on “brownfield” or Previously Developed Land (PDL). The consultation draft of the RSS indicates a target of 80% for the City area but the three authorities consider this a little ambitious so have suggested a 75% target. The achievement of a brownfield target is seldom the sole consideration in determining applications for development. In seeking to deliver sustainable communities and economic growth, other factors could include; whether the site is in a sustainable location; whether there is an impact on overall housing land supply; and whether the development would result in the loss of a viable employment use.

Objective by 2021

To provide a managed level of new housing in line with RSS targets which facilitates economic growth, meets PDL targets and contributes towards a balanced housing market in Central Lancashire City where everyone is able to access decent housing suitable for their needs.

Issue 2A: How can the release of land be best managed to achieve overall housing targets?

- a) Allow development on allocated sites only (*i.e. no windfall sites*); or
- b) Consider applications for development of windfall sites in the light of current supply and relative merits over allocated sites; or
- c) Establish clear criteria for the release of windfall sites
- d) Seek to phase the timing of the release of sites; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) By some other means?

Issue 2B: How can the Local Development Framework best deliver an appropriate range of housing to facilitate economic growth?

- a) Set general targets for the types of dwellings to be provided across the area which would be taken into account in dealing with all applications; or
- b) Set targets for the types of dwellings to be provided on individual allocated sites; or
- c) For different areas, identify the range of dwelling types which would be acceptable; or
- d) Allow dwelling types which would reflect and complement those of the locality; or
- e) Allow the development industry to determine the types of dwellings to be provided; or
- f) A combination of the above; or
- g) In some other way?

Issue 2C: How can affordable and special housing needs best be met?

- a) Require an element of affordable housing on all new developments of 15 or more dwellings; or
- b) Develop specific targets for individual sites based on evidence of need, site suitability and economic viability; or
- c) Require all housing developments to make a contribution, either on site or in lieu, to meeting affordable housing needs; or
- d) Identifying sites particularly suitable for meeting special housing needs; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) By some other approach?

Issue 2D: How can PDL targets best be met?

- a) In managing supply, always give prime consideration to PDL; or
- b) In addition to allocated sites, only allow further development on unidentified (windfall) sites which are PDL; or
- c) Only all further release of unidentified (windfall) sites which are PDL where the site is in a sustainable location and would not result in the loss of a viable employment use; or
- d) In some other way?

Issue 2E: How can the state of repair and adaptability of housing be tackled through the Local Development Framework??

- a) Pursue an Action Area approach targeting housing improvements in those areas of greatest need; or
- b) Encourage smaller housing improvement schemes elsewhere; or
- c) Promote clearance of substandard housing; or
- d) Require developers of market housing schemes to cross-subsidise nearby housing improvements; or
- e) Encourage re-use and conversion of housing, particularly vacant stock, to provide needed accommodation; or
- f) Require new residential developments to provide a proportion of 'lifetime' homes; or
- g) A combination of these; or
- h) Through other means?

THEME 3 – FULFILLING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Background

- 3.1. It is acknowledged in both the Northern Way Growth Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) that the Central Lancashire City economy has performed well. Its rate of economic growth is well above the regional average and close to the national average, whilst the growth in the number of jobs exceeds the national and regional rates. This rate of growth is projected to continue. The area's industrial mix of advanced manufacturing and engineering, biomedical and environmental technologies, and creative industries is growth-oriented so these trends are expected to continue and have the potential expand further given the right opportunities and stimulation.
- 3.2. In line with the Northern Way and the RES, the emerging RSS seeks to build on the region's economic strengths, particularly the opportunities that exist in the city regions. To this end, RSS includes a sub-regional strategy for the Central Lancashire Sub-Region (Policy CLCR1 – Central Lancashire City Region Priorities). It recognises that Central Lancashire provides a significant economic focus for the wider sub-region. It states that economic performance is to be raised through a range of plans and strategies including:
 - the development and implementation of the “*Central Lancashire City Vision*”
 - the provision of regional investment sites and knowledge nuclei sites
 - the development of sub-regional employment opportunities.

Employment Land Requirements

- 3.3. From this, it can be seen that the principal means by which the LDFs can promote economic growth is to ensure that there is enough land available for new businesses, and to meet the expansion needs of existing firms.
- 3.4. Central Lancashire has two defined Regional Investment Sites (RIS's): these are at the former Royal Ordnance Factory at Euxton and at Cuerden Regional Business Park. They are identified in the Lancashire Structure Plan and current Local Plans. Central Preston is identified as a location for a “knowledge nuclei site” to develop knowledge-based sectors requiring specific links to the University of Central Lancashire. It will be the role of the Preston Site Allocations DPD to identify a knowledge nuclei site.
- 3.5. In addition to the RIS's, there needs to be a range of sub-regional and local employment sites in Central Lancashire City. These portfolios of land should be balanced in terms of market attractiveness and sustainability. Account must be taken of the types of employment development to be promoted given the changing nature of the economy – the trend is towards less manufacturing industry and more office/light industry. It is likely that additional development sites will be required up

to 2021, although draft RSS does not specify a detailed figure for each district. Instead, sub-regional figures are given (i.e. for Lancashire) and it is suggested that the distribution of new development must be agreed by Local Authorities, in accordance with local labour market areas. Chorley, South Ribble and Preston together comprise a local labour market area, with the majority (84%) of travel to work journeys contained within it. It makes sense, therefore, for the Central Lancashire authorities to consider their employment land needs collectively. The Core Strategy must set out the broad approach as to where new employment development should be located taking account of access for deliveries as well as the journeys to work for employees. The detailed definition of these sites will be the job of each Council's Site Allocations DPD.

- 3.6. Town centres are the focus of much economic activity, particularly in the office, retail and leisure sectors. This is considered in Theme 8 – Thriving Centres. Issues relating to the development of the rural economy are considered in Theme 7 – Sustaining Rural Areas.

Regeneration

- 3.7. There are areas within each of the main urban areas which experience high levels of deprivation (including high unemployment, low levels of economic activity, and low levels of educational achievement – see also Theme 6 – Improving the Quality of Life). It will be important to harness Central Lancashire City's potential for economic growth in a sustainable way which meets the needs of all communities. This means that access to jobs is a crucial consideration when making decisions about the location of employment land.
- 3.8. Central Lancashire City's urban areas have a legacy of older industrial areas and buildings. These are often situated adjacent to town centres, in the deprived inner areas described above. Whilst these areas still provide accommodation for many businesses, and opportunities for new enterprises the changing nature of industry and employment means that many buildings are no longer suitable for employment uses. Evidence can be seen of a trend away from employment use in these areas to other uses, particularly housing. The future of these older industrial areas needs careful consideration given the need for employment in the more deprived communities, and the requirement to provide more housing on previously developed sites (see Theme 2 Meeting Housing Needs).

Tourism and Culture/Leisure

- 3.9. Tourism in the Central Lancashire context includes day visitors and also "business tourism" associated with conferences and business meetings. Central Lancashire City is home to a range of high quality heritage and tourism assets, including museums and art galleries, theatres, conference venues, and historic parks. Facilities for leisure in all its guises are an important part of the attractiveness of an area both built sports facilities and outdoor play provision. Much more could be made of

these assets particularly if linked to general public realm improvements in Preston City Centre, and the town centres of Leyland and Chorley.

Objective by 2021

To maximise Central Lancashire City's potential for economic growth in a manner which adheres to the principles of sustainable development and which brings benefits to all communities.

Issue 3A) Where should new employment-related development be located?

- a) In areas most attractive to the market i.e. adjacent motorway junctions; or
 - b) Within the main urban areas (Chorley, Leyland and Preston), on previously-developed land; or
 - c) Distributed more evenly between the urban areas and the smaller towns and key service centres; or
 - d) Adjacent to any new housing allocations; or
 - e) A combination of the above; or
 - f) Somewhere else?
- Depending on the above
- g) Should specific types of employment use (manufacturing, for example) be steered towards certain locations?
 - h) Should some existing employment sites be de-allocated?
 - i) Should the emphasis be on providing for new and growing businesses?

Issue 3B) To what extent should existing employment areas be protected?

- a) Should they be protected in their entirety, with all proposals for change of use or redevelopment to non-employment uses resisted; or
- b) Should change of use or redevelopment to non-industrial uses be allowed in line with market pressures; or
- c) Should each area be assessed with a view to its suitability for modern industrial and business uses; or
- d) Should there be no protection.

Issue 3C) How can the Local Development Framework help to ensure that jobs are created in the areas of greatest need?

- a) By allowing or encouraging the expansion of successful businesses in these areas; or
- b) Through helping to improve access to jobs in other areas; or
- c) A combination of the above; or
- d) By some other means?

Issue 3D) How can the plan help to promote economic development through tourism and leisure/culture?

- a) By encouraging improved facilities for visitors, such as hotels: or
- b) Through encouraging the expansion of existing successful visitor attractions; or
- c) By promoting appropriate tourism-related development in the countryside; or
- d) Through improved sports and play provision; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) In some other way?

THEME 4 – IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

Background

- 4.1 Accessibility in spatial terms is about physical access to jobs, services and other facilities either through travelling or by locating ‘customers’ and ‘suppliers’ close to one another so as to reduce the need to travel. This Theme concentrates on the issues affecting the more urbanised parts of the area. Transport issues are also covered in Theme 7 – Sustaining Rural Areas where accessibility is equally important. The three authorities plus the County Council have major role to play in fully exposing accessibility issues facing all communities and taking forward solutions combining initiatives in the Local Transport Plan with LDF work.
- 4.2 To grow, businesses need to be able to access markets and customers need to be able to access business and services. Employers need access to competent and qualified staff, and employees need to be able to get to work quickly and easily. Vibrant, successful city and town centres need easy access from broad catchment areas to remain competitive.
- 4.3 Currently, Preston city centre and the major employment areas attract many employees who commute from within the city area or in from other areas. A large number of residents commute out from the city, largely to access jobs in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. Whilst public transport is used, many of these journeys are by car. Accessibility within the city and out to other places is beginning to be constrained by insufficient public transport services and congestion on roads, river crossings, and motorways.

Reducing the need to travel

- 4.4 Working patterns are changing. Many people commute long distances to jobs, whilst others are able to adopt more flexible working practices such as home working. The location of many jobs is fixed by the building and infrastructure requirements of the employer.
- 4.5 Depending on their circumstances, people have greater or lesser choice over where they access health and educational services, and leisure facilities. The choices made may involve travelling some distance.
- 4.6 The role and form of city and town centres is changing and specialising. Large supermarkets and retail parks are located and designed for ease of access by car, whilst accessibility to traditional city and town centres is often constrained. Internet shopping and banking is reducing the need for businesses to have a “High Street” presence.

- 4.7 Currently, most jobs, services and facilities are accessible from all parts of the city by car but this is being constrained by increased congestion, lack of parking, and tougher parking controls. Accessibility by public transport is less convenient, especially away from main routes and at certain times of the day.

Promoting more sustainable means of travel and reducing dependency on cars

- 4.8 The City generally has a very high proportion of car ownership and car use. Public transport systems are in place but often do not meet the needs of the travelling public. New roads and motorways built over the last 40 years are reaching capacity, especially at peak times. In some parts of the city, it is difficult to move from A to B without being delayed by having to travel through congested or constrained area.
- 4.9 Over recent years, new development has largely been located on previously developed land within existing urban areas. This allows for new road infrastructure and public transport facilities to be planned, and for quality footpaths and cycle routes to be built and extended.
- 4.10 Currently, it is quite easy to travel around the city by car and the main public transport routes, which makes all jobs, services and facilities readily accessible. Travel by walking and cycling is easy within local areas, and cycling longer distances may become more viable as more, safer routes are implemented. Growing car ownership and use, and further travel demand generated through population increases and new development in locations such as the city and town centres is likely to make travel more difficult as congestion will increase.

Achieving transport improvements

- 4.11 Many parts of the city's road network suffer from peak time traffic congestion. There are major pinch points on the entrances to Preston city centre, especially from the motorway network and at the crossing points over the River Ribble. The national motorway network that serves the wider City and allows access to other towns and cities (the M6, M61, M65 and M55) regularly becomes congested. However, these motorways and the railways running through the area are an integral part of national networks and also provide direct access to air and sea ports for international passenger travel and freight. Local congestion often occurs around city and town centres, schools, and hospitals.
- 4.12 Currently, transport improvements aimed at cutting congestion by reducing car use include park and ride facilities, parking controls, and bus routes. Public transport reduces some congestion impacts but the general preference for car use is likely to cause increased congestion in the future.

Objective by 2001

To have a level of accessibility to and within the Central Lancashire City that promotes economic growth; brings jobs, services and facilities within easy reach; enables ease of travel through reduced congestion.

Issue 4A - What can be done to reduce the need to travel?

- a) Locate all new development in easily accessible areas; or
- b) Ensure that all new developments are mixed and balanced to include new or relate to existing services and facilities such as schools, health facilities, shops and parks; or
- c) Provide people with the choice to access a range of jobs in their locality; or
- d) Ensure the availability of high quality new business premises for companies that could employ more local people and reduce the need to commute to other towns and cities; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) Pursue other ways?

Issue 4B - What can be done to encourage more sustainable means of travel?

- a) Encourage the provision of new public transport services; or
- b) Seek a range of public transport services that more effectively meets the needs of potential users (e.g. by introducing new routes and extended operating hours); or
- c) Develop more park and ride facilities; or
- d) Create more and better cycle paths and facilities; or
- e) Create new railway stations and bus facilities within new developments; or
- f) Locate new jobs, services, and facilities within walking distance of main city and town centres; or
- g) Increase traffic management and parking controls in city and town centres; or
- h) Reduce the availability of parking spaces; or
- i) Require travel generating employers and services to prepare and adhere to a Travel Plan (e.g. to promote car sharing); or
- j) Introduce road congestion charging or tolls ; or
- k) A combination of the above; or
- l) Through other means?

Issue 4C - What are the priorities for transport infrastructure improvements?

- a) Create new dedicated bus routes linking the main residential, business and shopping centres; or

- b) Create an orbital bus / interchange route around the urban area; or
- c) Create new railway stations and better routes and services; or
- d) Electrify the the Blackpool to Manchester Railway; or
- e) Promote rapid transport/light rail solutions; or
- f) Provide an integrated network of cycling and walking routes; or
- g) Provide new road crossings over the River Ribble; or
- h) Complete the motorway network round the city (e.g. a new junction on the M6 to serve Chorley and a link from the M65 to the M55); or
- i) Create more direct links to Manchester and Blackpool airports; or
- j) A combination of the above; or
- k) Pursue other improvements?

THEME 5 – PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Background

- 5.1. So as to create a place where people choose to live and work, the Local Development Framework must seek to protect and enhance Central Lancashire City's most valued environments, both natural and man-made. For a long time planning authorities have sought to safeguard the countryside from unnecessary development so as to keep it open and unspoilt. An additional benefit of this is that the most important landscapes and habitats are protected from urban development. However they can still be harmed by farming practices and other rural pursuits. In these days of global food sourcing there is less reliance on local agricultural produce and less protection of good agricultural land, this trend may prove short sighted. The role of the Green Belt is explained in Theme1 – Locating New Development. Within rural and urban areas, the most important historic buildings, environments and open spaces must continue to be protected because of the contribution they make to the quality of life.
- 5.2. There is increasing concern about climate change and its impact on our environment. There are a number of ways in which the planning system can limit the impact of climate change, and also to tackle its causes. These include encouraging the development of sources of renewable energy, and seeking to reduce the risk of flooding.
- 5.3 New development often has some negative impacts. Where the benefits of the development out weigh the harm caused the aim should be to minimise these through well sited and well designed proposals. In addition environmental losses can be made good through requiring developers to do or pay for environmental improvement works nearby. The most important features of the environment are protected by law, although in many cases the upkeep and enhancement of these sites and structures could be better. Features of only local importance are not protected in the same way so their future often relies on the approach to these taken by local councils.

The Natural Environment

- 5.4. National planning policy advocates a top down approach to the protection of wildlife habitats. The Core Strategy will need to respect and seek to protect the key environmental designations i.e. those which have national or international significance. These include the Ribble Estuary (which is a "Ramsar" site as well as a National Nature Reserve), and six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) important for their ecological or land form significance. In addition, sites of local or sub-regional importance have been identified – these are known as Biological and

Geological Heritage Sites. Many of these are within the urban areas. Policies in the LDF ought to implement the Lancashire-wide Biodiversity Action Plan as this aims to improve the variety of natural species. Open spaces, watercourses and woodlands within urban areas are also a valuable asset in terms of recreation and nature conservation and contribute greatly to the quality of life.

5.5 Central Lancashire contains areas of distinctive and attractive countryside, including part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to the north of Preston and the West Pennine Moors to the east of Chorley. There are other areas of landscape value identified in landscape character assessment work carried out by Lancashire County Council (Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape and Heritage). There are a number of initiatives (e.g. REMADE) currently in operation to improve degraded landscapes through tree planting and other works.

5.6 Pollution of the environment needs to be minimised if it cannot be avoided. This particularly applies to maintaining, if not improving, both air and water quality. Carbon emissions into the atmosphere are covered under Renewable Energy below. In toxic emissions from traffic and industrial processes clearly require close control through both planning and environmental legislation. Similarly toxic outflows and runoff from developments into the ground, water courses and ultimately the sea are to be prevented wherever possible.

The Built Environment

5.7. Central Lancashire City retains areas of significant historic and architectural interest, some stemming from its industrial past. The historic environment makes a valuable contribution to the area's economic and social well being, and can provide a focus for regeneration initiatives. Collectively, the area boasts over 1300 Listed Buildings, 26 Conservation Areas, and a number of registered parks and gardens of historic interest. There are also a variety of archaeological sites ranging from 17 Scheduled Ancient Monuments to sites of more local importance.

5.8. The Core Strategy can set out guiding principles on design quality to ensure that all new development improves townscapes and contributes towards an accessible, safe and attractive environment. This particularly needs to take account of the efficient use of land taken up by new buildings in terms of the density of development. These guiding principles could be expanded upon in development control policies and supplementary planning documents.

Renewable Energy

5.9. To combat our reliance on fossil fuels, the Government is urging local authorities to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources, including wind, water and solar power. Whilst wind

turbines are a common site in the upland areas of the north –west England, there is now an increasing emphasis on “micro-generation” and the promotion of energy efficiency. Micro-generation is where new development is built incorporating features to generate a proportion of the building’s energy requirements from renewable sources (existing buildings can be adapted to achieve this too). The Core Strategy can set out general guidance for this, whilst detailed policy guidance would appear in other LDF documents. Chorley Borough Council had made considerable progress on this, and is bringing forward policy documents and guidance on sustainable resources ahead of the Core Strategy.

Flood Risk

- 5.10. Climate change brings with it an increased risk of flooding. The Central Lancashire City authorities have commissioned research to identify those areas most at risk from flooding in the future. The Core Strategy will identify these broad areas, whilst the results of the study will feed into decisions about site allocations. The ideas generated by the Riverworks study may help to manage the River Ribble through the urban area.

Objective by 2021

To protect and enhance Central Lancashire City’s environmental assets, to make them the focus of urban and rural regeneration, and to promote the efficient use of resources.

Issue 5A – What protection and enhancement should be given to sites of local biodiversity and geological importance?

- a) Protect all sites of local biodiversity or geological importance from development; or
- b) Allow some development provided that the developer compensates for any losses; or
- c) Some other approach?

Issue 5B – How can landscape character be best protected and enhanced?

- a) Protect landscapes based on their amenity and recreational value and national designations; or
- b) Protect landscapes which have high agricultural value; or
- c) Both of the above; or
- d) By a different approach?

Issue 5C – How can the design quality of new buildings be improved and the efficient use of land achieved?

- a) Identify and define a local built-environment character in villages and neighbourhoods and require this to be respected in all new development; or
- b) Allow a more flexible approach to development based on general best practice, and promoting high quality, modern design; or
- c) By requiring developments to be built at as high a density as can be achieved without compromising good design; or
- d) Through some combination of the above; or
- e) In other ways?

Issue 5D – What is the most appropriate way of conserving and enhancing the historic environment?

- a) Designate additional Conservation Areas; or
- b) Concentrate resources on improving existing Conservation Areas;
- c) Both of the above; and/or
- d) Give more protection to buildings listed for their local importance; or
- e) Pursue other approaches?

Issue 5E – How can an increase in sourcing renewable energy be feasibly achieved?

- a) Encourage large scale renewable energy schemes only; or
- b) Encourage small-scale renewable energy schemes only, provided they are in harmony with surroundings; or
- c) Both of the above; and/or
- d) Set targets for renewable energy capture in all new development of at least a minimum threshold size ; or
- e) Promote other ways?

Issue 5F – What are the most appropriate ways of avoiding flooding of developments?

- a) Avoid any new development in areas vulnerable to flooding; or
- b) Assess flood risk as one of a number of factors in a sustainability appraisal and allow development in low risk areas; or
- c) Promote major schemes such as Riverworks to manage river flooding to such an extent that otherwise unsuitable land could be made available for development; or
- d) A combination of the above; or
- e) By other ways?

THEME 6. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Background

6.1 The quality of life people have depends on many things. Living in a decent and affordable home, a good environment, being in employment, ability to travel and to otherwise access services all contribute to quality of life. These are all dealt with elsewhere in this document. This Theme concentrates on other aspects of quality of life such as incidents and perceptions of crime, as well as deprivation in terms of educational attainment, vocational skills and health.

Crime

6.2 A widespread concern in local communities is crime. Actual levels of recorded crime are generally falling but a perceived fear of crime remains a worry for many people. Much is being done by various agencies to tackle crime and give re-assurance to local people. The design and layout of buildings can reduce the opportunities for criminal activity and it being undetected. The causes of crime are varied but providing scope to engage in constructive behaviour – such as play, sport and other community activities – can help reduce crime levels. Government and local authority funding for such facilities and services is limited but there is scope for new housing developments in particular, to help pay for provision and cover future operating costs.

Deprivation

6.3 Pockets of deprivation occur in several places across the plan area. The combined occurrence of low educational attainment, the lack of work-related skills and poor health in some neighbourhoods across the North West is recognised in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy. This combination of deprivation is present in some places in the Central Lancashire City area. It is a situation likely to get worse as people live longer and have more health care needs and/or find they have to work longer through insufficient pension provision. Numerous agencies working together can help tackle these problems but spatial planning can help by enabling new and improved service facilities to be located and made accessible to the local communities that need them.

Objective by 2021

That the levels of crime are very low and the fear of being a victim of crime is similarly reduced from present day levels. Also that access to a wide range of community and service facilities has assisted in removing pockets of deprivation.

Issue 6A – What spatial planning proposals can best contribute to reducing levels of crime and provide opportunities for constructive community activity?

- a) Pursue improvements in the design and layout of buildings to make it harder for criminal activity to occur undetected; or
- b) Seek developer funding for a range of community facilities and related initiatives; or
- c) Ensure existing community facilities that are still needed are not lost to other uses and are improved where necessary; or
- d) A combination of these; or
- e) Some other approach?

Issue 6B – How can spatial planning most appropriately help reduce pockets of deprivation?

- a) Identify and reserve sites for new educational, training and health facilities; or
- b) Allow the redevelopment of existing facilities that are no longer required to help enable the rationalisation and relocation of facilities to where they are most needed; or
- c) Seek developer funding for educational, training and health facilities; or
- d) Pursue transport improvements that allow better access to facilities; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) An other initiative?

THEME 7. SUSTAINING RURAL AREAS

Background

7.1 Agriculture remains the main economic activity in rural areas but it is experiencing continual change in terms of economic regulation and market globalisation. None of the rural parts of the plan area are far from urban populations. This represents a threat and an opportunity to rural communities and the countryside.

7.2 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy recognises the inter-related pressures on rural areas such as the need to diversify economies, protect the countryside, provide affordable housing and access to local employment and other services. The Lancashire Rural Action Plan also aims to tackle these issues.

Rural Economy

7.3 Traditional agriculture is being partially replaced by horticulture aimed at providing plants for domestic gardens and uses associated with horse riding. The demand for recreation and tourism from urban dwellers provides much needed expenditure in rural areas but catering for that demand in a ways that do not spoil the attractiveness of the countryside raises significant challenges.

Affordable Housing and Local Services

7.4 Many people living in rural areas do not work there and so commute to often high paid jobs elsewhere. This causes transport related problems and can raise house prices to levels beyond the economic means of rural based workers. Similarly affluent mobile incomers are less dependent on local services so use of these can fall leading to closures. A way of minimising this is to restrict what service buildings can alternatively be used for and to target this protection on local service centres as referred to in Theme 1 – Locating New Development.

Objective by 2021

To have thriving and sustainable rural areas that are not spoilt by urban demands, and villages that are economically viable communities where local needs are met.

Issue 7A – How should the economy in rural areas be developed?

- a) Farmers should be encouraged to diversify to enable other rural based industries to be established; or
- b) Rural recreational and tourism pursuits should be promoted provided they do not spoil the appearance of the countryside nor have other negative impacts; or
- c) Small scale employment uses unconnected with rural activities should be encouraged in local service centre villages; or
- d) A combination of the above; or
- e) In some other way?

Issue 7B – How can villages continue to meet the day to day needs of local communities?

- a) Protect existing shops and community buildings from uses that would not provide services local people need; or
- b) Allow the dual use of buildings or sites that help provide or retain local services; or
- c) Allow appropriate scale market housing and commercial developments in local service centres provided they financially support local services; or
- d) Link outlying small villages and hamlets with bus services to local service centres; or
- e) A combination of the above; or
- f) By other means?

Issue 7C – In what way can rural affordable housing needs best be met?

- a) Through only allowing schemes in or adjoining villages where all the units are affordable as an exception to Green Belt and other policies; or
- b) Reserving sites at rural settlements only for affordable housing; or
- c) Allow appropriate scale market housing in local service centre villages only where these cross-subsidise a substantial proportion of affordable units; or
- d) A combination of the above; or
- e) In an other way?

THEME 8: THRIVING CENTRES

Background

- 8.1 City, town, district and local neighbourhood centres are crucial to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Central Lancashire City. They are the life blood of the local economy. The role and function of the centres must meet the needs of our community, help to reduce social exclusion and create economic opportunities for everybody. They also provide a sense of place and involvement which can help to foster local identity.
- 8.2 Government policy is to ensure the continuing vitality and viability of town centres through focusing development in the centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them. The government requires local councils to actively promote growth and manage change in town centres and to identify a hierarchy of centres each performing their appropriate function within the area.
- 8.3 The Central Lancashire City area has wide-range of different sized centres each of which performs its own important function.
- 8.4 Preston city centre is the largest of the three main centres in the plan area and, in terms of non-food shopping, is ranked first in the whole of Lancashire. It is also the centre of commercial and administrative activity within the county and is the seat of Lancashire County Council. It is the principal office location within the county. Despite this there is clear evidence that, in the face of competing attractions, Preston city centre requires further investment, such as that for the Tithebarn Regeneration Area, to ensure that its overall health is enhanced and sustained into the future.
- 8.5 Chorley town centre provides the greatest concentration of shops, services and entertainment facilities in the southern part of the Central Lancashire City area. It is trading relatively well, but could be improved and its evening economy tends to be dominated by young people visiting pubs and bars. Chorley town centre is well-known for its markets, which include the open and covered markets. However, both have recently experienced a downturn in stall occupancy rates. Vacant shop units can also give the town centre a run-down appearance.
- 8.6 Leyland is located between Preston and Chorley and is the main town centre serving the South Ribble area. Recently there has been considerable development in the food retail sector and the town has a market. However, the town is overshadowed particularly in comparison goods terms by Preston to the north and to lesser extent, Chorley to the south. A retail study undertaken in 2004 concluded that the town centre was weak and fragmented with a poor environment and public realm.

The northern part of the town centre is the focus of a pilot regeneration area and the Council is about to commission a masterplan to provide a framework for improvement and investment in the town centre. District centres at Bamber Bridge, Penwortham and Tardy Gate are also pilot regeneration areas and have significant potential to improve quality of life, built environment and economic prosperity.

- 8.7 Government policy is opposed to new 'out of town' shopping developments and, as such, there is no consideration of this issue in this section.

Establishing a Hierarchy of Centres

- 8.8 Different types of centres perform different functions. Provided this is properly recognised in policies which control the types and sizes of new development each centre can better meet the needs of customers in complementary rather than competing ways. The new draft RSS does not fully reflect the need to have a policy hierarchy for different centres. Only Preston city centre is specifically named with the area.

Trading Performance of Centres

- 8.9 The government has identified key indicators for measuring centre trading performance such as the number of different retailers, the proportion of vacant street level property, pedestrian flows, the perception of safety, the state of the environment and customers' views.
- 8.10 Where there is evidence that there are centres in decline with, for example an increasing number of vacant shop units, it may be necessary to assess the scope for consolidating and strengthening those centres. This can be done by seeking to focus on a wider range of services, promoting diversification and improvements to the environment. Better use of existing land and buildings may be achieved by promoting and developing a specialist or new role and encouraging specific types of use in some centres.

Evening and Night-time Economy

- 8.13 Government guidance states that local planning authorities should prepare planning policies to help manage the evening and night-time economy of city and town centres. These policies should encourage a range of complementary evening and night-time uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups, ensuring that provision is made where appropriate for a variety of leisure and cultural activities.

- 8.14 If there is going to be support for a night-time economy, consideration needs to be given to the scale of developments and their likely impact, including the cumulative impact on the character and function of town centres, anti-social behaviour, crime and the amenity of nearby residents

Objective by 2021

To have a thriving city, town, district and local neighbourhood centres providing a full range of services and, collectively, the Central Lancashire City area will provide a viable alternative sub-regional shopping and leisure destination to Manchester and Liverpool.

Issue 8A – What policy hierarchy for centres is needed?

- a) Leave Preston as the only named centre where most retail, office and leisure development should go; or
- b) Identify a full range of city, town, district and local neighbourhood centres or
- c) Use some other approach?

Issue 8B – How should the number of vacant shops in our centres be reduced?

- a) Resist the loss of shops or other services to other uses; or
- b) Allow the loss of shops and services where it can be shown that there is no longer a demand for the unit; or
- c) Relax restrictions on the amount of non-retail uses allowed in some areas; or
- d) Allow more community uses; or
- e) Allow more office uses; or
- f) Allow residential uses; or
- g) A combination of the above
- h) Let market forces to determine the mix of uses in our centres; or
- i) Through some other approach?

Issue 8C – How can the City and Town Centres become attractive to a wider cross-section of people?

- a) Try to restrict further development of pubs and clubs in the city and town centres to discourage more alcohol-related uses; or
- b) Assess the potential for other non alcohol related leisure uses and identify city and town centre sites for such uses; or
- c) Improvements in lighting; or
- d) Increased partnerships with the police; or
- e) Designation of 'alcohol free zones' and specific 'drinking areas'; or
- f) A combination of the above; or
- g) By other means?

Issue 8d - How can the Core Strategy support the regeneration of town and district centres?

- a) identify sites for appropriate new town centre development; or
- b) restrict the amount of non retail uses in main shopping areas; or
- c) implement improvements to the physical environment; or
- d) encourage town centre living; or
- e) resist out of centre developments; or
- f) a combination of the above; or
- g) some other measure(s)?

CONCLUSION

Include how to comment, response form, what happens next.