

COUNCIL

A Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District: Preparation of 'Draft Preferred Options' Land Allocation, Development Management and Morecambe Area Action Plan DPDs

12 September 2012

(Deferred from the meeting of Council held on 18 July)

Report of Head of Regeneration and Planning

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek a resolution from Council to publish and consult on a Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District comprising a Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), Development Management (DPD) and an Area Action Plan for Morecambe (MAAP).

This report highlights the key issues which arise from these documents, and advises on how the documents will be progressed through to the formal Publication and Submission stages, commencing with an extensive period of public consultation beginning, provisionally, on Monday 22 October 2012 and concluding on Friday 14 December 2012.

(1) RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to publish and consult on a Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District comprising a Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), Development Management (DPD) and an Area Action Plan for Morecambe (MAAP). An extensive period of public consultation will commence, provisionally, on Monday 22 October 2012 and conclude on Friday 14 December 2012.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following the adoption of the Lancaster District Core Strategy in 2008 intensive work has been ongoing to prepare three key documents which will form the most significant elements of the future planning framework for Lancaster District. The Head of Regeneration and Planning has prepared advanced drafts of a;

- 1) Development Management (Policies) Development Plan Document (DPD);
- 2) A Land Allocations DPD, accompanied by a Proposal Map,
- 3) A Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP).

- 1.2 Advanced drafts of these documents accompany this report; Council is asked to approve these drafts for publication and consultation. Following approval of the recommendation the Head of Regeneration and Planning would then prepare the draft documents for consultation, along with publicity and exhibition material, and then commence a lengthy and extensive period of public consultation, provisionally arranged for the period commencing on Monday 22 October and concluding on Friday 14 December.
- 1.3 Following presentation of the completed drafts to Council further work will be undertaken to prepare publishable editions of the Draft Local Plan documents (the three draft DPDs); including updates and corrections to the text, the inclusion of photographs, illustrative plans, and captions.

The component Development Plan Documents of the Draft Local Plan

The Development Management DPD

- 1.4 The Development Management DPD will contain a series of generic development management policies which will be applicable to all forms of development across the District (unless directed otherwise by other plans, policies or strategies). These policies will cover a wide range of planning issues and will be used by Planning Committee to determine planning applications in light of recommendations from the Head of Regeneration and Planning Services, or directly via the scheme of delegation. Upon adoption the Development Management DPD will supplement the policies in the Core Strategy and replace all the remaining "Saved" policies within the Lancaster District Local Plan of 2004.
- 1.5 The document contains a range of policies relating to a variety of economic, environmental and social issues which will be applied to all development in any area of the District, unless other guidance within the wider Development Plan directs otherwise.
- 1.6 Currently the Development Management DPD contains 16 policy areas, containing 50 detailed policies. This report identifies some of the key issues which will be of interest and will generate debate in future consultation exercises.

The Land Allocations DPD

- 1.7 The Land Allocations DPD will identify land to meet future development needs for residential, employment, commercial and recreational purposes. The document will also seek to protect sites which are recognised to be of an environmental, social or economic value. The DPD is accompanied by a Proposal Maps, with insets for the urban area and town centres. Upon the adoption of the Land Allocations DPD the document will replace the policies which allocate land within the Lancaster District Local Plan and the existing Proposals Map which accompanies the Lancaster District Local Plan.
- 1.8 The Land Allocations DPD should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Proposals Map, which will spatially identify sites which have been designated for either their development potential or in order to be protected due to their value as environmental, social or economic asset.

- 1.9 The Land Allocations document will contain specific policies relating to some of the more significant, major and complex sites which have been identified for future development, the table below summarises the sites which have specific policies. These policies will identify the Council’s position in relation to these sites, setting out the potential proposed uses for the site which the Council will consider to be acceptable and the issues that need to be addressed through any future planning application process. In relation to some of the policies in the Land Allocations DPD further guidance may be provided through specific site briefs.

Sites which have Specific Policies within the Land Allocation DPD	
Land at Whinney Carr, Lancaster	Land at Bulk Road, Lancaster
Land at Bailrigg Lane, Lancaster	Former TDG Site, Warton Road, Carnforth
Lancaster Science Park	Former Pontins Holiday Camp, Middleton
Grab Lane, Lancaster	Galgate Mill, Galgate
Lancaster Canal Corridor	Halton Mills
Lancaster Moor Hospital	Land at Luneside, Lancaster
Land at Nightingale Hall Farm	Lancaster Castle and Lancaster Quay
Ridge Lea Hospital	Lancaster University
Land at Lancaster Leisure Park	University of Cumbria
Land at Lundsfield Quarry, Carnforth	Land at Barton Road, Lancaster
Land at Keer Bridge, Carnforth	Lancaster and Morecambe College
Lune Industrial Estate, Lancaster	Heysham Nuclear Power Station
White Lund Employment Area	Heysham Energy Coast
Port of Heysham	Willow Lane/Coronation Field, Lancaster

Table 1: Sites which have specific policies within the Land Allocations DPD

- 1.10 Whilst the Land Allocations DPD will provide specific guidance for some sites, the sites in Table 1 do not represent all the sites identified for future development. Other sites are identified on the Proposals Maps for development and the Council will expect that any development proposals submitted for these sites to be considered against the policies contained within the Development Management DPD.
- 1.11 As with the Development Management DPD, whilst the whole Land Allocations DPD accompanies this report it would be useful to draw out some of the key issues which will be of interest and will generate debate in future consultation exercises, these are discussed in Section 6 “Key Issues”.

Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP)

- 1.12 The MAAP will provide detailed policies and proposals for central Morecambe. These include all development management policies and land allocations proposed specific to central Morecambe. The adopted Core Strategy identifies central Morecambe as the District’s main regeneration

priority. Work to date identifies a dearth of demand to invest in central Morecambe yet regenerating the town means making central Morecambe a place that is attractive to investors. Consequently the draft MAAP focuses on addressing economic underperformance and getting the conditions for investment right so that, among many things, social functioning and the town's ability to attract visitors is improved. Therefore, the draft MAAP contains a range of approaches and proposals primarily to encourage, guide and facilitate regeneration. The document seeks to promote development and change, uniting the seafront with the town and stitching together the many quite fragmented parts of central Morecambe.

1.13 In the current era of restrained public finances many of the actions proposed are about public interventions to facilitate private sector investment. The MAAP will therefore propose a significant role for the local councils, but this would be subject to the organisations being able to resource it. Any related investment proposals would need to be considered as part of future years' budget and planning rounds, should they not be catered for within existing resources. Certain actions proposed in due course will require the city council to make certain investment decisions.

1.14 Sites to have specific policies within the MAAP -

- The Battery – for Leisure Uses
- Morecambe Main Seafront and Promenade – to protect and enhance for informal recreation and enjoyment
- Seafront Headland, central promenade – strategic opportunity for leisure development
- Arndale and Area – Development Opportunity Site for main town centre uses
- Entertainment hub – Development Opportunity Site for main town centre uses (west Northumberland Road and including through to the Festival Market and area),
- Former Frontierland Site - Development Opportunity Site - predominantly for housing

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 Stages in the preparation of both the Land Allocations DPD and Development Management DPD have been reported to the council's Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group (PPCLG) over the past couple of years. Table 2 below describes the stages which have already undertaken in the preparation process to date.

Date	Stage
July 2008	Lancaster District Core Strategy is adopted <i>(Final document published February 2009)</i>
2009 - 2011	Key evidence base is prepared including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2009) • PPG17 Open Space and Recreation Study (2010) • Affordable Housing Viability Assessment (2010) • Housing Needs Study (2011)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Call for Sites’ (2011)
Summer 2010	Combined Scoping Consultation for both Land Allocations and Development Management DPDs.
Autumn 2010 – Spring 2011	<p>Extensive Informal Engagement on the Land Allocations and Development Management DPDs featuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Discussion Workshops • Rural Engagement • Spatial Exercises
Summer 2011	‘Developing the Options’ Consultation on Land Allocations and Development Management DPDs. Outcomes of the consultation were published on the Council’s Website in February 2012.

Table 2: Work already undertaken on the Development Plan Process

- 2.2 Similarly, work to prepare the MAAP has involved very extensive engagement and consultations over some two years commencing spring 2010 in: scoping the plan; “debating the issues” and “developing options”.
- 2.3 The level of work that has been undertaken to inform the Land Allocations DPD, Development Management DPD and Morecambe Area Action Plan, is significant; the priority has been to build up a robust evidence base to provide understanding of how policies and allocations should be identified and to ensure that the public and other stakeholders have had sufficient opportunity to ensure and shape the future planning system in the District.
- 2.4 The implications of the content of key evidence base documents are very significant. To be found sound Local Plans must be based on facts and not assumptions or aspirations that cannot be evidenced; in the recent words of a Planning Inspector “Assertion is not the same thing as Evidence”. In particular the SHLAA, supplemented by the later “Call for Sites” permitted ample opportunity for development options to be made known to the Council. Accordingly there are not thought to be any significant opportunities for housing development that have not by now been made known to the Council. The options have been made known to the community, and described and explored, through the “Developing the Options” Consultation work. The time to move forward and make decisions on draft allocations is now.
- 2.5 Whilst significant work has already been undertaken to prepare the draft documents there is still some ongoing work which will be finalised in July. This includes completing evidence base work on Landscape Assessment and Viability Studies. The outcomes of this ongoing work, which is being advanced with the assistance of external professional consultancies, will be incorporated into the refining process for all documents during the course of 2012.

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREPARATION

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government in March 2012 and provides flexibility in terms of how the local planning authority will be able to approach Development Plan preparation in the future.

- 3.2 The NPPF seek to minimise the use of terminology such as Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) which, since 2004, has been used to describe the suite of planning documents that have been a statutory requirement of local planning authorities to prepare. The NPPF encourages authorities to use more simple and easily understood terms and advocates that local authorities should use the term 'Local Plan' as a preferred description.
- 3.3 Accordingly, Council is advised the Council prepares a 'Local Plan' for Lancaster District which, for now, will comprise the following documents:
- Lancaster District Core Strategy (already adopted);
 - Land Allocations DPD and accompanying Proposals Map;
 - Development Management DPD; and,
 - Morecambe Area Action Plan.
- 3.4 The above documents will represent the core documents within the forthcoming 'Local Plan for Lancaster District'; however, these core documents will be supplemented by other guidance and policy notes which will include:
- Other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (such as investigating the potential for a Community Infrastructure Levy [CIL]);
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Practice Notes; and
 - Specific Site Briefs.
- 3.5 The use of the Local Plan terminology will provide improved clarity and greater understanding to the general public and wider stakeholders.

4. PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 Council is advised that as part of the preparation of the 'Local Plan' some elements of the Lancaster District Core Strategy are reviewed. Given the significant changes in the economic climate and a contemporary understanding of the development requirements in the District there is a need to re-visit some elements of the Core Strategy. This includes:
- The need to re-visit the approach to 'Urban Concentration': Changes to the economy and the challenges to deliver on brownfield sites has resulted in development on these sites not coming forward as quickly as anticipated in the more buoyant economic circumstances prevalent at the time which the Core Strategy was prepared. Members will be aware that in recent years only a proportion of the annualised housing requirement has been delivered. Therefore it is now felt that it is unavoidable that the Council considers the early phasing of delivering Urban Extension/Greenfield sites in order to address the acute need to deliver homes to meet the community's housing requirements;
 - The need to re-visit the approach to 'Sustainable Villages': Eight 'sustainable' villages were identified in Core Strategy Policy SC3. These villages were identified based on the assumptions that these settlements contained a specific number of key services which would benefit the community. It was expected through Core Strategy Policy SC3 that development would be directed to these settlement areas. However, few

development proposals have come forward in these identified settlements to meet rural needs, whilst potentially proposals that could meet such needs have been put forward in other settlements, settlements which have some service provision or have good access to neighbouring settlements. Thus the delivery of further development opportunities to meet local needs in rural areas could be enhanced by a more flexible approach that takes account of local services in a more informed and flexible manner.

- As already discussed, the Core Strategy seeks to deliver a policy of urban concentration, Policy SC2 states that such a policy approach would mean 90% of development would be achieved within Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham and Carnforth. Consequently the rural areas would only accommodate 10% of the overall volume of development. Whilst this would of course deliver a very significant degree of urban concentration it does not necessarily reflect what we know about the actual housing demand, and more particularly need for housing in the rural areas which are currently home to more than 30% of the district's population.

- 4.2 The 'Draft Preferred Option' documents for both Development Management and Land Allocations DPD incorporate consideration of the changes identified above.

5. KEY ISSUES FROM 'LOCAL PLAN' PREPARATION

Meeting the Housing Requirements of the District

- 5.1 Both the Development Management DPD and Land Allocations DPD (or 'Local Plan') will seek to address the issues of providing for sufficient housing through the life of the plan period. With regard to the Development Management DPD, this will involve the preparation of a series of policies encouraging proposals for residential development to meet identified needs in suitable and appropriate locations; in terms of the Land Allocations DPD this will involve the identification and allocation of site across the District on both Previously Developed Land (Brownfield) and Greenfield sites.

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that;

"To boost significantly the supply of housing, local planning authorities should: use their evidence base to ensure that their Local Plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF, including identifying key sites which are critical to the delivery of housing strategy over the plan period."

- 5.3 As part of the preparation of both documents your officers have sought to ensure that that an appropriate balance has been achieved on the need to meet the objectively assessed requirements whilst remaining within the parameters of consistency with sustainable development objectives within the emerging plan period. Criticism is fully anticipated about the extent to which the Local Plan intends to address the objectively assessed housing requirement, and conversely criticism is anticipated about the extent to which this intention impacts on the capacity of the local environment to accommodate development. In short, it is expected that many members of the

local community will feel that too much development is being proposed on Greenfield sites and urban extensions; whilst, conversely, it is expected that the development industry, quoting the Council's own evidence base, will argue that the Council is not going far enough and not moving fast enough to satisfy the clear direction given by the NPPF.

What are the Housing Needs for Lancaster District?

- 5.4 In terms of the quantities of housing to be provided through the course of the plan period a requirement has already been set within Policy SC4 of the Lancaster District Core Strategy. Policy SC4 seeks to deliver housing within the District at a rate of 400 dwellings per year (which would cumulatively deliver 6,000 dwellings over 15 years or 7,200 dwellings over 18 years).
- 5.5 In 2011 the Council prepared a Housing Need Report, commissioned from professional consultants David Coultie Associates, which has provided an up-to-date and objective assessment of the actual needs for both market and affordable housing. The findings of the Housing Needs Report, which have been extensively reported to elected members and other stakeholders, concluded that the actual demand for housing in the district was for the development of 476 Market Homes per year and a need for 339 Affordable Homes per year (generating a cumulative need for the local authority to provide 815 dwellings per year).
- 5.6 It has recommended that preparing a Land Allocations DPD which seeks to meet the delivery of this scale of requirement is neither a feasible nor reasonable objective to seek to achieve. Should a Land Allocations DPD seek to identify sufficient land to meet such a need it is highly unlikely that the local housing market could support the delivery of such a high annual development rate. But it is important to recognise that based on these objective assessments that the need for housing in the District is both high, acute, and, importantly is currently, simply, not being achieved.
- 5.7 Therefore it is recommended that retaining the requirements of Policy SC4, in delivering 400 dwellings per year, represents a reasonable and viable approach to future housing delivery through the plan period and represents an accurate reflection of past take-up rates within the District which have historically trended over recent decades at approximately 400 dwellings per year.

How should the Development Plan seek to meet these Needs?

- 5.8 The proposed approach to addressing the housing needs in the District is therefore to prepare 'Local Plan' documents which make a balanced judgement between addressing the full housing need requirement against the realistic prospects for delivery. This needs to be undertaken against the backdrop of a challenging economic environment where development rates over recent years since 2003 have been suppressed and the 400 dwellings per year requirement has not in reality been achieved.
- 5.9 Therefore the approach of the 'Local Plan' will be in effect to deduct from the housing requirement both the under achievement that has taken place in housing delivery since 2003 and the anticipated under achievement that will inevitably continue as both national and local economies recover. This 'writing off' of housing numbers is presented here as taking a realistic position on the

prospects for housing delivery in the District, recognising that it would be impractical and unrealistic to expect the housing market to recover overnight and start building out at increased rates, even if the housing land supply is supplemented, at a rate that could redress the recent historic shortfalls.

- 5.10 The realistic position being recommended is that the local housing market will be gradual, reflecting national and regional trends, and, that slowly housing completions will rise in the District returning to the historic trend rate of approximately 400 dwellings per year. It is anticipated that the housing market will not have recovered to normal delivery levels before about 2018. In short, the draft Local Plan seeks to allocate land to provide for around 4,800 dwellings and not 6,000 dwellings in the period to 2023/24.
- 5.11 To meet this moderated housing requirement the Land Allocations DPD needs to consider both how and where such a requirement will be met. Whilst the Core Strategy suggest that there should be a focus on 'Urban Concentration' and the regeneration of Brownfield sites the reality of developing such sites in the current economic climate has been significantly challenged. The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2008 within a period where the economy appeared to be strong and stable. Since 2008 there has been significant economic contraction and the financial viability of regenerating constrained brownfield sites has been reduced greatly.
- 5.12 Every Brownfield site has a series of constraints which challenge financial viability. Therefore the 'Local Plan', and in particular the Land Allocations DPD, needs to be realistic in terms of how and when such Brownfield sites will deliver new housing. The reality is that the regeneration of many of the Brownfield sites in the District are significantly longer-term visions than previously thought during the preparation of the Core Strategy in 2008.
- 5.13 Therefore there would be significant danger in the Council preparing a 'Local Plan' which placed an over-reliance on the delivery of challenged brownfield sites, on the basis of an un-evidenced optimism, to meet housing demand, which from the evidence is seen to be acute.
- 5.14 The approach in the 'Local Plan', and in particular the Land Allocations DPD, is to identify a range of sites to meet current and future housing needs, identifying Greenfield sites which have greater viability and can be delivered to meet housing needs in the short to medium term whilst retaining encouragement, through being judiciously cautious about the scale of new Greenfield allocations, toward the regeneration of Brownfield sites which are currently challenged due to their viability but, following economic recovery, will become more deliverable again.
- 5.15 This approach, continuing the encouragement for the regeneration of brownfield sites (whilst recognising the constraints they face) but also seeking to allocate Greenfield sites which have greater viability at this challenging time, can assist in the delivery of housing in the shorter term and deliver improvements to local infrastructure.

The Regeneration of Brownfield Sites to meet Housing Requirements

- 5.16 Despite these challenges, the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites, such as Lancaster Moor Hospital, Nightingale Hall Farm and

Luneside in Lancaster will remain a priority within the Land Allocations DPD, and the Council will continue their efforts to deliver regeneration to such sites.

- 5.17 The Land Allocations DPD, as can be noted from Table 1 of this report, identifies a series of Brownfield sites across the District where regeneration and redevelopment is encouraged.
- 5.18 Each site mentioned in Table 1 has its own specific policy within the Land Allocations DPD which will set out the Council's approach to potential uses on the site and sets out the issues that must be addressed through any future proposals for the site. Policies for these specific locations will be used as a material consideration in determining any development proposals, these site specific policies will accompany the more generic policies contained within the Development Management DPD.

Allocating Greenfield Land to Meet Housing Requirements

- 5.19 In view of the above considerations the Land Allocations DPD will seek to identify a series of Greenfield sites which are believed to be in more suitable and sustainable locations and which can assist in delivering wider benefits within the locality and the District as a whole. The Greenfield sites which have been identified in the Land Allocations DPD include:
- Land at Whinney Carr, off Scotforth Road, South Lancaster;
 - Land at Bailrigg, South Lancaster; and,
 - Land at Grab Lane, East Lancaster.
- 5.20 The rationale behind the identification of these three sites is that they will seek to deliver for the long term housing requirements of the District and supplement the delivery of the largely previously identified Brownfield sites.
- 5.21 Whilst the identification of Greenfield sites will be a controversial decision for the Council to take, and represent the first expansion of the urban settlement of Lancaster for a generation, there is strong evidence to support such a decision, there is a strong latent demand for housing within the District based on the Housing Need Report of 2011 which the Local Plan needs to address. It would be questionable whether an Urban Concentration approach of purely relying on Brownfield sites would meet such a need. Current economic climate means that the viability of Brownfield sites is severely challenged.
- 5.22 There would be significant dangers in preparing a 'Local Plan' which placed an over-reliance on constrained Brownfield sites to meet the District's current and future housing needs. Such a position would almost certainly be challenged by developers and landowners of Greenfield sites, challenging the deliverability of these brownfield sites based on the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that through plan-preparation, local authorities should meet their full and objectively assessed needs. The Council would be challenged on the basis that the only way to meet such needs would be through the development of Greenfield sites.
- 5.23 The consequence of such a challenge could lead to the development of Greenfield sites in places which are not considered to be inappropriate and which seriously undermine the aims and objectives of the Council's 'Local Plan'. Such inappropriate development could well gain planning consent solely because the Council will have failed in its requirement to provide a

range of truly deliverable housing sites and cannot demonstrate an achievable five year housing supply.

- 5.24 The above scenario needs to be avoided, and therefore it is necessary and pertinent for the Council, through the preparation of the 'Local Plan', to identify a range of suitable and deliverable housing sites for the short, medium and long term which include a range of Brownfield and Greenfield sites. Members are advised that recent Examinations of Development Plan documents at two north of England local authorities, Wigan and Hull, have been suspended on the basis that Inspectors had significant doubts about the respective Council's attempts to demonstrate that they had identified an adequate supply of deliverable housing. Also at a recent appeal decision, a proposal for 1,150 new homes in Fylde Borough, has been approved by the Secretary of State as he placed significant emphasis on the need for authorities to meet evidenced housing requirements. It is therefore advised that a Local Plan document which fails to properly acknowledge and adequately address evidenced housing requirements is unlikely to be capable of being found sound at the independent examination stage.

The Strategic Sites

- 5.25 Within the Land Allocations DPD a series of Strategic Sites have been identified, these have been defined as 'Strategic' based on their contribution towards meeting the strategic aims of the Lancaster District Core Strategy – whether this be through providing a considerable and reliable level of dwelling completions to meet both housing demands and housing needs, the expansion of town centres or, otherwise, playing a key role in the District's economy. These strategic sites include:

- Land at Whinney Carr, South Lancaster (largely to meet housing demand and needs);
- Land at Bailrigg, South Lancaster (largely to meet housing demand and needs);
- Lancaster Canal Corridor (to provide Lancaster City Centre with an expanded retail role in both the District and wider Sub-Region);
- Lancaster Science Park (to secure future economic growth of knowledge based jobs and investment tied to the university); and
- Port of Heysham/Heysham Energy Coast (for its ongoing economic importance).

- 5.26 It should be noted that the 'Local Plan' for the District places a significant importance on these sites to achieve its aims. Set out below are some of the key issues which must be addressed in order to deliver these Strategic Sites.

Land at Whinney Carr, South Lancaster

- 5.27 The site at Whinney Carr measures approximately 37 hectares and once fully developed could accommodate in the region of 900 dwellings. Whinney Carr consists of agricultural land between the A6 West Coast Main Line (WCML) and agricultural land between the WCML and the Lancaster Canal, south of Ashford Road. This area of land was identified in the deposit draft of the Lancaster District Local Plan and the Council resolved around 2001 to approve a planning application for an Urban Extension which was made by the landowner in partnership with Countryside Homes. This proposal was

“Called In” by the then Secretary of State, and planning permission was not granted on the basis that the proposed homes were not needed to meet the local housing requirements in the pertinent new Regional Spatial Strategy. The site was deleted from the Lancaster District Local Plan by the City Council, prior to the adoption of the Plan. The current Local Plan Proposals Map shows the site as “white land”, that is, there is no specific policy designation.

- 5.28 The significant issue relating to the delivery of this site is the issue of road access and highways capacity, this is the same issue for Bailrigg Lane which is discussed in paragraphs 5.32 to 5.35 of this report. The existing capacity on the A6 Corridor from the City Centre through to Galgate is significantly constrained and therefore a strategic solution is needed to improve capacity. It has been agreed with Lancashire County Council that this strategic solution would be the creation of a link road between the A6 and A588 (Ashton Road) which would create a second southern approach to the City and reduce traffic flows on the existing A6 corridor. This would provide an opportunity to introduce a circular bus route and improve the prospects for the increased use of public transport. A similar proposal was sought through the initial allocation of the Whinney Carr site through the previous Lancaster District Local Plan.
- 5.29 Whilst the solution is clear and agreed, the delivery of such a piece of infrastructure will be complex and costly, particularly in relation to the crossing of the West Coast Main Line. The proposed road link will benefit a number of development proposals in the South of Lancaster, including the Strategic Site of Bailrigg Lane and the Lancaster Science Park (which already has a planning consent), therefore a number of different landowners are expected to contribute to the funding of the road link and bridge, not just the Whinney Carr proposal itself.
- 5.30 These parties will need to come to an agreement over who pays and how / when the infrastructure is delivered. Whilst officers have a broad understanding about how this might be achieved significant further work with parties with different landownership and development interests is required to evidence a mechanism for the delivery of this key infrastructure.
- 5.31 The Land Allocations DPD contains a specific policy relating to developing land at Whinney Carr, the policy includes a requirement that a comprehensive masterplan is prepared for the whole site which addresses wide range of issues, further details can be found within Policy STR1 of the Land Allocations DPD.

Land at Bailrigg, South Lancaster

- 5.32 The site at Bailrigg measures approximately 32 hectares and once fully developed could accommodate in the region of 500 dwellings. This site lies to the south of Hala and to the north and east of Bailrigg Village. The site has the M6 to its east and the A6 to its west. The primary access would be from the A6. The site has a shared boundary with the Lancaster Science Park.
- 5.33 It should be noted that the close proximity to the Whinney Carr site means that similar issues relating to highways capacity on the A6 corridor arise. Therefore, the development of the Bailrigg site relies greatly on the provision of the road link described in paragraphs 5.28 above.

- 5.34 Further to the issue of highway capacity along the A6 Corridor access to the site will be an issue. The main access to the development site will be through the Lancaster Science Park; however, to satisfy the requirements of Lancashire County Council a secondary access will be expected to be provided to the North of the site across Burrow Beck, which is a Biological Heritage Site. Whilst this is not expected to pose significant issue, careful assessment will be required of any proposed impacts of an access road across Burrow Beck. Investigation on a suitable solution to provide the secondary access is on-going.
- 5.35 The Land Allocations DPD contains a specific policy relating to developing land at Bailrigg, the policy includes a requirement that a comprehensive masterplan is prepared for the whole site which addresses wide range of issues, further details can be found within Policy STR2 of the Land Allocations DPD.

Other Strategic and Significant Sites

Land at Grab Lane, East Lancaster

- 5.36 The site at Grab Lane measures approximately 20 hectares and once fully developed could accommodate in the region of 400-450 dwellings. The site occupies agricultural land that sits between the foot of the hill of Williamson's Park and the M6. The now complete residential redevelopment of the Lancaster Moor South site sits just to the north of this land; the Lancaster Leisure Park and Abattoir, also identified in the Local Allocations DPD as housing sites, are to the south of the land at Grab Lane. A high pressure ethylene pipeline runs parallel to the M6 on the eastern part of the, clearly, this part of the site is therefore not developable. The site is currently identified as part of the Key Urban Landscape area which lies between the east of Lancaster and the M6 and runs from junction 34 down to Lancaster University. Development of the site raises a self-evident visual sensitivity because of its proximity to Williamson's Park. A decision to allocate this site for development is one which well illustrates the challenge of achieving the complex balance that must be made in ensuring that an adequate supply of housing land is identified within the parameters of seeking to adhere to a policy of urban concentration if possible in the context of a limited range of realistically developable opportunities within the environmentally and visually sensitive environment that typifies and positively distinguishes Lancaster district. Effectively, given the limited options for development available to the Council, these decisions, and their implications for the district's future well being, are as significant as they are unavoidable.
- 5.37 This site was first identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) of 2009. It was determined to be developable in principle by the Council's external consultants on the basis that, at the time of the assessment it would contribute to meeting the housing requirement in the latter part of the Core Strategy period. As part of the ongoing consultation work initiated by the Developing the Options Consultation in Summer 2011, a developer has submitted extensive representations intended to illustrate how the site be developed in an acceptable form to provide dwelling completions much sooner than anticipated at the time that the SHLAA was prepared. Whilst the outcome of ongoing Landscape Assessment work will very shortly advise on the implications of the existing Local Plan designations on the

principle of the site, and potentially the developable area of the allocation, it is recommended that Grab Lane be identified as a development sites within the draft Local Plan. The outcomes of the Landscape Assessment will be known prior to the making of a formal decision on publication by the City Council.

- 5.38 Development of this site is relatively unconstrained by the need for new infrastructure and it is anticipated that proposals for the development of this site are likely to emerge in any event.

Economic Growth in the Heysham Peninsula

- 5.39 The area in and around the Port of Heysham is seen as a major focus of economic activity in the District, with significant concentrations of employment generating uses in / adjacent to the Port itself and within the industrial / business parks of Lancaster West Business Park, Heysham Industrial Estate and Major Industrial Estate.
- 5.40 The Core Strategy Policy ER2 supports the regeneration of the South of Heysham through providing for port related development, this theme and support has been continued through the preparation of the 'Local Plan' documents recognising the significant economic asset that the Port represents, both in terms of jobs created and investment within the District. Through previous stakeholder consultation Peel Ports (owners of the Port of Heysham) have submitted representations suggesting that further expansion of the Port facility is required to secure its long term future and allow for growth and expansion of the existing facilities that take place at the Port.
- 5.41 Therefore the 'Local Plan', through the Land Allocations DPD, has recognised the need for a sympathetic approach toward the growth of the Port Facility and identified land at the Port of Heysham Industrial Estate as an area for potential growth for the Port Facility.
- 5.42 Such a policy has only been put forward on the basis that the existing uses and businesses on the Port of Heysham Industrial Estate are provided within alternative premises, to an appropriate scale and size and in an appropriate location which is satisfactory to them. Whilst the sustainable growth of the Port should be welcomed this should not be a detrimental to the business which in-directly relate to the Port.
- 5.43 Elsewhere in the Heysham area the existing employment areas will be retained and in places expanded to provide alternative sites to the Port of Heysham Industrial Estate and to allow for growth of the waste treatment sector in line with proposals emerging within the Lancashire County Council Waste and Minerals Plan.
- 5.44 Equally, further expansion of employment uses in the Heysham Peninsula will assist in providing employment sites for future employment growth as a direct result of increased accessibility from the M6 motorway and linkages to the Port. Whilst the challenges of the economy currently restrict employment growth it is anticipated that once recovery is underway available and sustainable sites will be required to meet increased demand.
- 5.45 The Land Allocations DPD contains a specific policy (Policy STR6) which relates to future growth at the Port and the key issues that must be addressed as part of any development proposals.

Growth at Lancaster University

- 5.46 As with the Port of Heysham, Lancaster University is of considerable importance to the District's economy, and support for its sustainable growth through the Development Plan process should be encouraged.
- 5.47 Given the University's position as a 'campus' which is detached from the existing urban area of Lancaster and set within the countryside the way that growth is catered for should be carefully considered. The 'Local Plan' approach must balance the economic benefits that growth of the University can bring against the potential that growth may have on the locality – in particular the local landscape and the amenity of local people.
- 5.48 Therefore the Local Plan will dissuade growth of the University Campus to the South towards Galgate, focusing any future growth to the existing campus itself or on land to the North, looking at the Lancaster Science Park and land on the Strategic Site of Bailrigg Lane. Work to ensuring that adequate consideration is given to existing landscape policy designations in the Bailrigg and University areas in on-going and should be concluded prior to any formal approval of the emerging draft Local Plan.
- 5.49 The 'Local Plan' will encourage greater interaction between the University campus and these proposed development sites and will encourage any future growth, either for educational facilities or accommodation for students to be located in this area.
- 5.50 The Land Allocations DPD contains a specific policy (Policy EDC1) which relates to the future growth of the University and the key issues that must be addressed as part of any development proposals

Lancaster City Centre (Lancaster Canal Corridor)

- 5.51 The Lancaster District Core Strategy Policy ER5 states that new comparison retailing in the District will be focused on the expansion of Lancaster City Centre. This expansion involves the regeneration of land to the East of the existing town centre including land at Lancaster Canal Corridor North.
- 5.52 The planned expansion of Lancaster City Centre through the Local Plan recognises Lancaster's importance as a retail centre, not just of importance to the District but also within the North Lancashire / South Cumbria region.
- 5.53 The proposals for regeneration of the Lancaster Canal Corridor will be required to pay close attention to the protection of the historic fabric of some of the buildings within the locality, learning from previous proposals which failed to do so. It is expected that proposals for the site will come forward as part of a comprehensive masterplan for the site and, whilst primarily retail led, should involve a mixture of uses which include residential and cultural / community uses to compliment those which already exist at the Dukes and Grand Theatre. Given its central location it is also expected that proposals for the Canal Corridor site should involve the provision of a new foodstore.
- 5.54 The regeneration of the Canal Corridor site represents just part of the wider regeneration and improvement proposals for Lancaster City Centre and combined within the suitable re-use of Lancaster Castle and the achievement

of wider aims within the Cultural Heritage Strategy should see Lancaster evolve further as a destination for both local residents and visitors to the District.

- 5.55 The Land Allocations DPD contains a specific policy (Policy STR5) which relates the regeneration of Lancaster Canal Corridor and Policy OPP1 which relates to the regeneration of Lancaster Castle and Quay. These policies set out the key issues which must be addressed as part of any future development proposals.

Central Morecambe Regeneration Priority Area

- 5.56 Central Morecambe is identified as the district's main regeneration priority area within the Core Strategy. This recognises that Central Morecambe is underperforming in economic terms with this impacting negatively on its social function and attraction to visitors. The fundamental issues are under investment and lack of demand.
- 5.57 The first Area Action Plan recognises that the plan must create the right conditions for investment with this likely to be generated from the private sector, especially in an era of restrained public finance. The public sector can however play an important role in creating the conditions to achieve this with a number of public sector interventions possible to aid regeneration.
- 5.58 The Area Action Plan identifies the key assets that should be protected and enhanced including the promenade and main beach, establishes a network of key routes and spaces to which new development in key locations can be structured, identifies improved connections for pedestrians, identifies potential changes to transportation and parking arrangements, encourages incentives for business investment including possible exemption from certain planning requirements and considers relaxing certain controls and support initiatives within the community for and by local businesses.
- 5.59 There are potential financial implications for the council. These include potential for development of certain landholdings, potential for loss of certain existing car parking capacity and associated revenue, proposals for some additional capital expenditure to reconfigure public realm and the likely need for the council to facilitate investment and change in certain locations via drawing in a developer partner(s).
- 5.60 Specific site proposals within the Area Action Plan area are identified under paragraph 1.13 of this report.

Development Management Issues

Approaches to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

- 5.61 Adapting and mitigating against the impacts of climate change represent two of the main challenges facing the UK planning system. Local Planning Authorities are charged with ensuring that communities are prepared for this challenge with the promotion of sustainable development at the forefront of all planning decisions. The increased deployment of renewable energy together with improvements in energy efficiency are central to this, aiding the transition from a high to low carbon economy and providing the diversity needed to ensure long term security of energy supply.

- 5.62 Lancaster district has the potential to be at the forefront of this transition with its topography and natural assets creating opportunity for increased deployment across a range of renewable and low carbon energy technologies. This must however be balanced with the need to protect the district's high quality landscapes, many of which are protected by international and national designations.
- 5.63 The Development Management document aims to build on these opportunities providing a positive and enabling environment for further renewable deployment whilst also ensuring the protection of the district's landscape and environmental assets.
- 5.64 In addition to increasing renewable energy deployment the council through the Development Management document is also looking to reduce the overall energy use of new development and increase energy efficiency. It is intended that this will be achieved by requiring new developments to meet a certain sustainability level. Delivery of the sustainability performance of new development will be made via an assessment of the schemes performance against the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) where the scheme is for domestic dwellings or the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) where the proposal relates to non-residential development.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.65 The Development Management DPD sets out the Council's intention to investigate the use and role of the Community Infrastructure Levy as a way of securing financial contributions from development to pay for strategic pieces of infrastructure such as schools, roads or recreational spaces.
- 5.66 The Council have appointed consultants GVA to investigate the viability of applying CIL within the District both now (at a time of low growth in the economy) and in the future when it is economy has improved. Once these investigations over viability have been concluded the findings will be reported to the appropriate Council groups, however, it should be important to note that such opportunities are available and are being investigated by the Council through the 'Local Plan' process.
- 5.67 Should the Council be minded to use CIL in the future the relationship it has with the Council's priority of securing financial contributions for affordable housing will have to be closely managed. At this point CIL cannot be used for delivering affordable housing and therefore should the Council introduce a CIL charge in the future this may affect the Council's ability to recoup money for affordable housing as excessive financial demands on development may severely challenge its viability.

Caravan Development and Temporary Holiday Accommodation Occupancy

The Creation or Expansion of Caravan Sites

- 5.68 The pressures over caravan development and in particular the seasons of occupancy for caravan sites have been growing over recent years. In particular the creation or expansion of sites within or adjacent to the AONB's.

- 5.69 Therefore within the Development Management DPD Policy EC3.3 will set a policy presumption against the development or expansion of sites within or adjacent to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, recognising the impact that caravan sites have on both the local landscape but also local infrastructure.
- 5.70 Whilst there is a restrictive policy for caravan development in some areas of the District, the economic value that visitors bring to the District should not be ignored. Therefore the creation of, or expansion of, caravan sites which sit outside areas which have been designated for their landscape importance, have good access to the road network and local services and, where possible, link in with existing visitor facilities, will be encouraged subject to a number of criteria.

Duration of Opening of Caravan Sites

- 5.71 Past planning policy has created a policy presumption against allowing caravan sites to open for a 12 month period, however recent appeal decisions would lead to the conclusion that this position is no longer tenable.
- 5.72 Therefore the Development Management DPD will allow for the duration of opening for caravan sites to be extended to 12 months.
- 5.73 This relaxation of policy over the duration of opening has in-direct effects which will require careful management. Whilst the policy may allow for extension to opening it still restricts on the type of occupancy provided with the permanent residency in caravans being strictly controlled through planning enforcement measures.

6. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLING

The Timetable for Preparation of the 'Draft Preferred Options' Document

- 6.1 A proposed timetable has been set for the preparation of the Development Management, Land Allocations and MAAP DPDs. As the DPDs are policy matters resolution is required from Council to approve the documents for publication and public consultation.
- 6.2 The Development Management DPD, Land Allocation DPD and Morecambe Area Action Plan are presented to Members here to secure approval to publish and consult on the draft Local Plan documents. It is important to note that the three documents mentioned have specific and particular inter-relationships and form part of the Local Plan for the District. Therefore it will be beneficial that all three documents secure approval to be consulted on at the same time.
- 6.3 It should be noted that the draft timetable for consultation provided below could be subject to change; however it still provides an indication of how officers expect the documents to be delivered to the public consultation stage later in the year. The timetable below is intended to ensure that Members are provided with sufficient opportunity to have input and understand the content and implications of the documents

Date	Stage
3 rd July 2012	Opportunity for Cabinet to review and endorse emerging Local Plan Documents
4 th and 5 th July	Member Briefings
4 th July	Presentation to Overview and Scrutiny
12 ^h September	Full Council
September – October	Preparation of documents for Public Consultation
Monday 22 nd October	Public Consultation Commences
Friday 14 th December	Public Consultation Concludes

Table 3: Proposed timetable for 'Draft Preferred Options Stage (draft Local Plan) Preparation

- 6.4 It should be noted that this document remains a 'Draft Local Plan' [Preferred Option]'. Therefore the Council still have the opportunity to reflect and consider the comments received through the consultation period from the public, stakeholders, statutory consultees and other parties and agencies, and then revise the document where necessary prior to the publication of formal Publication and Submission Documents. It is advised however that the content of a draft publication will be seen to have some limited "weight" in the determination of planning proposals.

Future Timetabling and Next Steps

- 6.5 Following this 'Draft Preferred Option' stage the Council will prepare a 'Publication' version – this will be the final draft of both DPDs and will be the document which is submitted to the Secretary of State for a formal independent examination. Upon the completion of a 'Publication' version of

both the Development Management and Land Allocations DPD the Council will be acknowledging that both documents are, in their view, comprehensive and robust enough to be used for planning purposes in the District.

Date	Stage
October – December 2012	Draft Preferred Options Consultation
Early 2013	Consideration of Comments Received
Early 2013 – Spring 2013	Preparation of ‘Publication’ documents
Summer 2013	Consultation on ‘Publication’ documents
Autumn 2013	Submission to the Secretary of State
Winter 2013/Spring 2014	Public Examination
Summer 2014	Inspectors Report
Autumn 2014	Adoption for Planning Purposes by the Council

Table 4: Proposed timetable for the Production of a Development Management DPD and a Land Allocations DPD through to Formal Adoption.

- 6.6 Table 4 above sets out the intended timetable for continuing with the preparation of the Local Plan documents; whilst these can only be approximately they provide the most realistic estimation of how process which will have to be undertaken prior to any formal adoption by the Council for planning purposes.

7. Details of Consultation

- 7.1 Exceptionally extensive consultation and engagement has taken place to inform the preparation of the Draft Local Plan documents in the period 2010 to 2012. The details of the outcomes of consultation have been reported to PPCLG and published on the Council’s Website in February 2012. Following a Council resolution to publish and consult on the draft documents a further period of intensive consultation is planned for the period 22 October to 14 December 2012. This will involve officers of the Regeneration and Planning Service, in liaison with officers of the Community Engagement Service, preparing publicity and exhibition materials, and then attending a significant number of engagement sand events to ensure that there is wide knowledge about the content of the Local Plan documents amongst stakeholder and the wider community.

8. Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Approve the recommendation and thus publish and consult on the Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District Documents	Option 2: Do not approve the recommendation and do not publish and consult on the Draft Local Plan for Lancaster District Documents
Advantages	<p>The NPPF encourages local authorities to advance preparation of Local Plans in accordance with the principles established within the NPPF. The NPPF advises that plans may need to be revised to take into account the policies in the framework. This should be progressed as quickly as possible, either through a partial review or preparing a new Local Plan. For a period of 12 months, which commenced in March 2012 decision makers may continue to give full weight to plans adopted since 2004, there after due weight will be given to existing plans in accordance to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; thus in order to exert local influence upon planning decisions the Council is advised to make speedy progress on preparing its own Local Plan. Publishing a draft Local Plan Document will be an important step in identifying solutions to meeting the district's development needs over the next 15 years. Publishing the detailed documents in support of the spatial principles established in the Core Strategy means that the Council will be in stronger position to influence how and where growth occurs in the district and can secure better outcomes from the implementation of development proposals.</p>	<p>Delay means that more time is available to further investigate detailed solutions to issues such as traffic management before identifying sites in the plan. The ability to describe such solutions would mean that it would be easier to justify the plan's proposals, particularly in south Lancaster, to a potentially sceptical and unsupportive local community.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Identifying the sites which the Council wishes to direct development to may trigger planning applications in relation</p>	<p>Greater delay will mean that there is a longer period when an up-to-date Local Plan is not in place, thus the Council will find it increasingly</p>

	<p>to both the sites which are identified and the sites which are not identified.</p>	<p>difficult to defend planning appeals if developers opt to pursue applications in advance of an update of the Local Plan, this report in paragraph 5.24 highlights the secretary of state's current stance in such cases. Delay also means that the local evidence base and the large range of studies which support the current draft policies will become out of date and would need to be undertaken again: this may include retailing studies, flood risk studies; housing needs, affordable housing viability studies, development viability appraisals, and open space & recreation studies. This would involve significant time, additional costs and the use of staff limited resources to re-establish an up-to-date evidence base position. Delay will hold back regeneration activity in central Morecambe.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	<p>The proposed approach, which suggests that sites are identified through this preferred options stage when investigative work has still to be undertaken, may encourage planning applications before satisfactory solutions are identified to development implications, particularly traffic management in south Lancaster. Planning Applications may therefore be submitted in advance of a decision on implementing CIL. The proposed approach suggests meeting a reduced housing requirement on the basis of assumptions about realistic levels of delivery. This may risk the Land Allocations Plan being found unsound on the basis that it does not provide sufficient opportunity for housing development to meet the locally evidenced requirement. This would delay the overall process of identifying sites and lead to a longer period when a local plan is in place.</p>	<p>Delay means the Council is exposed to a longer period at of risk when it is exposed to having to determine planning proposals without up to date policies in place, this increases the prospects of loss at appeal and hence development which may not best accord with the community's aspirations. The issues facing central Morecambe are pressing and the continuing lack of a plan risks further decline.</p>

9. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 9.1 The officer preferred option is option 1.
- 9.2 Advancing preparation of a Local Plan document for the district will ensure that an up to date planning framework for the district is in place. This is consistent with the Government's requirements to ensure up to date planning policies are in place taking into account the requirements of the newly published NPPF. Publishing the detailed documents in support of the spatial principles established in the Core Strategy means that the Council will be in stronger position to influence how and where growth occurs in the district and will ensure that the Council can secure better outcomes from the implementation of development proposals.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Preparation of the Land Allocations document, Development Management document and Area Action Plan for Central Morecambe will provide the detailed planning policies for the district implementing the strategic policies of the Core Strategy. Together these will provide the local planning policy framework for determining planning applications and directing development proposals and investment in the district for the next fifteen years.
- 10.2 Advanced drafts of the Development Management DPD, Land Allocations DPD and MAAP DPD are appended to this report. Council is advised that as work is ongoing there may be minor revisions to the documents prior to publication and consultation; including updates and corrections to the text, the introduction of additional photographs, illustrative plans, and captions.
- 10.3 Council is formally requested to approve the publication of, and consultation on, the draft Local Plan for Lancaster District.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (2012) – Requires all Local Authorities to prepare a Local Plan for their area setting out opportunities for development and clear planning policies on what will or will not be permitted.

Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) – Establishes the strategic planning policies for the district and describes how they will be supplemented by policies in subsequent Development Plan Documents.

Lancaster District Corporate Plan 2015-2016 – Policies within the draft Local Plan documents seek to deliver the council priorities described in the corporate plan.

Regeneration and Planning Business Plan – Commits the service to the preparation of additional Development Plan Documents.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural

Proofing)

The draft Local Plan documents contain policies to ensure that the development needs of the district are delivered whilst at the same time ensuring that the environmental, social and economic impacts are addressed. The draft Local Plan contains appropriate policies to ensure that this is the case.

Equality, Diversity and Sustainability implications have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the draft Local Plan documents. The document has been subject to the statutory requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment. Equality, diversity, human rights, community safety, sustainability and rural issues are all considered as part of this process. Officers are confident that this work provides an appropriate impact assessment of the document.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The preparation of the draft Local Plan is subject to statutory regulations for the preparation of Development Plan Documents. Failure to meet these requirements could result in the document being determined unsound at examination or subject to legal challenge by prospective developers and other interest groups. However there are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Plan will ultimately have financial bearing on the Council and this should be appreciated, although it is not possible to quantify what it may mean. There are some key areas to highlight, however:

Land Values

The publication of the draft Local Plan documents has implications for the future use of land across the district. This will have implications for the value of land in both private and public ownership. This could in cases be positive through the uplift in land value received from receiving positive planning consideration, or in some cases negatively where a new land use affects the value of adjacent land.

Local Tax Raising Capacity & Other Income Streams

The Local Plan will ultimately affect the amount of income that can be generated from both council tax (e.g. through increasing the number of homes in the area) and business rates (e.g. through other economic / commercial growth). Under the Local Government Finance Bill, the amount of business rates income collectable will have much more local significance.

Other existing funding streams such as the new homes bonus may be similarly affected by the Local Plan - assuming such funding continues in future.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is another potential initiative, being developed as part of the Local Government Finance Bill. Separately the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is referred to in the body of the report.

Such financial changes may provide opportunities for the Council to generate/retain more income in due course, but they will be affected by the detail of new arrangements, Government's assumptions on future growth, and Comprehensive Spending Reviews more generally.

In summary, whilst many of the proposals under the Finance Bill are designed to encourage local economic growth, they are also designed to reduce the country's financial deficit and it is not yet clear what their actual overall impact will be.

Service Demands and Investment

Housing or other economic growth in the area will ultimately increase demand for various council/public services. As a general principle, any increased costs of providing those services should be matched by additional income from specific charging, government funding, or through increased tax raising capacity as referred to above. In practice though, it is not so straightforward.

The draft Local Plan also has potential to impact on the economic regeneration objectives of the City Council with key projects promoted in the document. This may result in growth bids for consideration in future budget rounds.

Other General Comments

As outlined under legal implications failure to prepare and consult on the document correctly could result in failure at examination and/or legal challenges by perspective developers and other interest groups. This would have financial implications for the council in terms of legal costs and staff time spent on defending any challenge.

Failure to have an up to date development plan for the district reduces the authority's power to refuse planning permission and may make it vulnerable to planning appeals in the future. This will have financial implications for the Council with the Council vulnerable to cost applications from developers.

Overall, any implications of the Planning documents will be considered as part of the annual budget process as appropriate.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The Human Resource implications of this document can be accommodated within the existing resource structure of the Council.

Information Services:

None

Property:

[As a significant land owner within the district the Local Plan will have potential implications for land assets within the Council's ownership impacting on land values and future revenue streams.

Open Spaces:

The draft Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance areas of public open space across the district. This may have implications for land within the council's ownership. Future areas of open space may also be developed as a result of the Local Plan which may have future implications for the council.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The S151 Officer has been consulted and her comments reflected within the report.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and her comments reflected within the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft Development Management Document
Draft Land Allocations Document and
Proposal Map
Morecambe Area Action Plan (MAAP)

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