



# Our West Lancashire

Local Plan Preferred Options — UPDATE 1

**The loss of 1583 acres of prime agricultural land ?  
Tenant Farmers to lose homes and livelihoods to  
big developers?**

**1000 extra student beds built opposite Edge Hill  
University? On Green Belt?**

Hopefully you have heard about the new Local Plan Preferred Options paper— the “new” Local Plan.

This new proposal is the Council’s document that sets the direction for the Borough going forward. The current plan is working well and has stood up well to rigorous scrutiny in the Courts, and scheduled to run until 2027. We think it simply needs a light touch review.

This new Plan scraps that and creates a new plan lasting until 2050—there’s simply no need, and no benefits for West Lancs residents.

**Is all this  
coming  
our  
way?**

...AND IN RETURN:

- No significant new infrastructure included, and NO main roads;
- Nothing solid for a Skelmersdale train station;
- No new healthcare facilities;
- Nothing from United Utilities— yet to resolve issues in the rest of the West Lancs.

**We need your assistance to stop these plans.**



**Massive increase in congestion?  
No places at the Secondary School of your choice?  
Longer waits for HEALTH care treatment?**

**This update has been funded by donations collected at our Local Plan meetings.  
Please email [office@ourwestlancashire.com](mailto:office@ourwestlancashire.com) for e-mail updates.**



### PLANNING REASONS—not emotions

While you may wish to make representations about specific sites proposed for development, our advice is that you avoid suggesting alternative sites are better and instead **question the whole validity of the assumptions made** in this Preferred Options paper.

You may find it helpful to choose two or three of the topics here on which to make your representation but please use your own words.

### Flooding

National planning policy steers development away from the highest flood risk areas. Most of the proposed sites have low flood risk though the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment says: “It may be prudent for more consideration to be given to the impact that future development at Altys Lane could have on existing flood risk”. Surface water flooding is a concern at some proposed sites.

### Secondary Schools

Rainford High School and St Bede’s are already oversubscribed and Ormskirk School fills all its places. These are the schools located to serve most of the proposed new housing, yet the local plan document makes no mention of additional secondary school provision. While Education Authorities will be expected to provide necessary extra places, there are no identified land allocations in the draft plan for this. Spaces at popular schools will likely be even more difficult to secure.



### Housing Need

The new draft local plan simply extends the calculated trends in housing needs in a straight line to 2050 to reach almost 16,000 houses. In fact, only 212 houses per year are required to meet local need. However, the figures then add 1,100 houses that assume a Skelmersdale rail link has been built by 2027 even though the council’s own Sustainability Appraisal September 2018 states: “However, it has been concluded that there is currently no business case for this at present.”

1,656 houses are then included for people brought to live and work in the large warehouses planned by the M58 even though there is sufficient land available for these warehouses across the Liverpool City Region and no guarantee at all that some of these warehouses would come to West Lancashire irrespective of whether they are desirable.

3,496 new houses are then added to meet “unmet need” from Merseyside and particularly north Sefton from 2027. Yet, currently there is no unmet housing need anywhere in Merseyside and Sefton has a local plan to 2030 – that’s three years after the date West Lancashire is supposed to start building houses in its green belt for Sefton!

The Preferred Options document also plans 1000 extra bed spaces for Edge Hill, yet Edge Hill student numbers will be static at best, and likely fall. The housing numbers make no allowance for the c. 200 residential homes freed up as a result.

For more information see: [www.bit.ly/housingnumbers](http://www.bit.ly/housingnumbers)

## Impact on Health Services

A local West Lancashire doctor has raised grave concerns about the negative effects on the local health service of building 16,000 new homes in West Lancashire as contained in these proposals.

The doctor dismisses statements that the new houses will secure the future of our hospitals and predicts longer delays to see GPs and in community health.

Worryingly, the doctor comments that no one in the local NHS has even

contemplated the extra population when redesigning mental health services -something currently underway.

To read in full what the doctor says, see: [www.bit.ly/adoctorwrites](http://www.bit.ly/adoctorwrites)



## Traffic Congestion

The Council's Transport Assessment hasn't considered the impact of individual development sites nor the impact on Switch Island; nor the impact of new housing development planned in Rainford on traffic congestion on the A570.

Notwithstanding these serious shortcomings, the Transport Assessment says that if the proposed local plan goes ahead 23 out of 33 local road junctions will become overcapacity. It also says "All major routes are seen to experience delays at various intersections, including the A59 and A570 in Ormskirk, the A59 and A5209 through Burscough and on the M58 at J3 and J4." It concludes by saying "the operation of the [road] network is likely to be compromised as a result of future growth".

It predicts an extra 13,700 daily vehicle movements on St Helens Road, Ormskirk and 9,400 extra daily vehicle movements on Wigan Road, Ormskirk.

For more detailed information see: [www.bit.ly/westlancscongestion](http://www.bit.ly/westlancscongestion)

## More than 6000 new houses being built to accommodate Merseyside's needs on West Lancashire Green Belt?





# All gone?

## Sustainability

The Council's Sustainability Appraisal highlights that development within Skelmersdale has several advantages including plenty of open spaces and greenery, a good community spirit and a congestion free road system with excellent motorway connections. It is therefore logical to site most new development within the existing Skelmersdale development area without the loss of Green Belt Land.

The Sustainability Appraisal identifies that air pollution from traffic around Ormskirk town centre is already a problem and that it will worsen if the new local plan goes ahead.

National planning policy states that before proposing changes to Green Belt boundaries, the Council must demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development including making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and having discussions with neighbouring councils.

Background documents show that there is already enough suitable employment land available in the wider region (including 42 acres in Skelmersdale which has lain undeveloped for the past 13 years) to accommodate the large warehouses proposed without taking West Lancashire's green belt. To do so would also impede regeneration in Merseyside.

Furthermore, it is not 'sustainable' to remove green belt protection from more than 1500 acres in West Lancashire as early as 2020 to meet the possible housing need of north Sefton after 2030.

## Nature & Biodiversity

West Lancashire's designated nature reserves accommodate significant proportions of the world's population of certain species (e.g. pink footed geese) and along with the adjacent farmland, including proposed development sites, provide overwintering and feeding grounds for these migrating flocks.

The proposed developments would threaten linkage or 'networks' between important nature sites. The proposed Green Belt development areas are home to endangered species including bats, brown hare, and migrating and over wintering bird flocks. Perversely, proposed housing developments will impact negatively on the wildlife corridors that are supposed to be promoted e.g. at Ruff Wood.

## How Do I Make My Voice Heard?

The quickest way is at: [www.westlancs.gov.uk/lpr](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/lpr)

You may also email: [localplan@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@westlancs.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can complete a comments form (available online) and return it to:

**Local Plan Team, West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, L39 2DF.**

Space precludes us from commenting on other matters, but please get in touch for further assistance on any concern that you have or to be added to our email list for further updates.

[office@ourwestlancashire.com](mailto:office@ourwestlancashire.com) or leave a message on **01695 351361**