

Policy DE 1

Residential Development

The housing requirement for West Lancashire, set out in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016, of 3,390 dwellings for 2001 - 2016, will be met from the following sources:-

1. Completions between April 2001 - March 2004 and existing commitments (excluding replacement dwellings) as set out below:-

| | No. Dwellings |
|---|---------------|
| (i) Completions April 2001 - March 2004 | 1,280 |
| (ii) Dwellings with planning permission @31/3/04 | 1,403 |
| (iii) Dwellings on windfall sites granted permission 1/4/04 to 2/8/04 | 41 |
| (iv) Dwellings on windfall sites - applications delegated by Committee, awaiting completion of S106 agreements @ 2/8/04 | 53 |
| TOTAL | 2,777 |

2. Due to the large number of existing commitments, new residential development, including the renewal of existing planning consents, will only be granted for:-

- a. the conversion of buildings within the main urban areas of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk /Aughton and Burscough, provided that they are not allocated for, currently used for, or their last use was for, employment uses, and the conversion would have significant urban regeneration benefits;
- b. housing which forms a key element within a mixed use regeneration project within Skelmersdale, or within, or directly adjacent to, Ormskirk and Burscough Town Centres;
- c. residential development within the priority regeneration area of Skelmersdale, provided that the land is not allocated for, currently used for, or previously used for, employment use, and the land can be demonstrated to be not needed for community or public open space use. It must be demonstrated that the development will contribute to the wider regeneration of the Town itself. This may include the replacement of dwellings lost through demolition, where redevelopment may necessitate a lower density. Residential development on the greenfield site at Whalleys will need to conform to Policy DE2;
- d. agricultural workers dwellings where there is a proven need and where they need to be located in a specific location;
- e. replacement dwellings in situ where there is no more than a one-for-one replacement;
- f. schemes which provide 100% affordable housing, or accommodation to meet the specific needs of a section of the community, within the settlements identified on the Proposals Map to meet the identified needs of the local area;



- g. the conversion of a rural building in the Green Belt for residential use will be considered where it meets a specific local need, or an identified local housing need in less remote locations, or where it can be demonstrated that the building is inherently unsuitable for any other use.**

Other residential development not covered by the above criteria will only be permitted on brownfield sites within Skelmersdale, Burscough and Ormskirk /Aughton if it would not result in an oversupply of housing land in the District.

In addition to the design criteria in Policy GD1, development on all sites should conform to the following criteria:-

- 1. the density of development should be a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare, rising to at least 50 dwellings per hectare at sites with access to good public transport facilities;**
- 2. any affordable housing required by Policy DE3 shall be provided on the same site; and**
- 3. recreational facilities and/or public open space shall be provided to meet the needs of the residents of the new housing and arrangement should be made for their maintenance.**

Justification of Policy DE1

5.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West identifies Skelmersdale as an area within the North West Metropolitan Area where wide-ranging regeneration and environmental enhancement should be secured.

5.5 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan concentrates development in Skelmersdale to support its role as a key centre for public transport, employment and services and to allow for regeneration.

5.6 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan identifies Ormskirk (including Aughton) and Burscough as market towns where development should be allowed. The aim is to support and enhance their role as service centres and public transport hubs for the surrounding villages.

5.7 Government guidance (PPG3 - Housing), the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West, and the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan emphasise the need to ensure that the majority of new development avoids the use of greenfield sites, and sites which are poorly located in terms of services and transport. Therefore, a major aim of this Plan is to ensure that the majority of development takes place at high densities within the three towns of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough. Research shows that there is sufficient potential to accommodate all the District's future housing requirements by using previously developed sites and the conversion of buildings in these three towns and by building all the houses which already have planning permission. However it is recognised that further housing may be required in Skelmersdale to assist in efforts to regenerate the town and help balance the housing market.

5.8 The restriction of new permissions will be used to limit residential development in order to avoid creating an oversupply of housing land and to ensure that the rate of house building is kept in line with strategic guidance. An oversupply will be judged having regard to an assessment of completion rates at that time, and for the purposes of this policy will be defined as anything over a six year supply having regard to the need to conform to the annualised housing target set by the Lancashire Structure Plan. This will also need to take account of

oversupply which has occurred in previous years, as future years' annualised targets will need to be adjusted downwards accordingly to compensate for this.

5.9 The housing potential of brownfield sites (including conversion opportunities) within Skelmersdale, Ormskirk /Aughton, and Burscough, which become available for housing development, will be monitored and taken into account in planning for any shortfall in housing provision. The granting of further permissions will be based upon the housing land supply situation and the accessibility level of the site. Completions will be monitored on an annual basis and the District Council will either allow or refuse development of sites as appropriate to conform to the annual rate of completions. Reviews of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance will be used to assess the sites by the criteria laid down in paragraph 31 of PPG3 and by their accessibility level.

5.10 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West anticipates that the greatest need for affordable housing will be in villages in remoter rural areas and parts of South Lancashire within commuting distance of Liverpool. This must include most of West Lancashire. In addition to allowing affordable housing where there is a proven need, there will also be circumstances where accommodation to meet the specific needs of a section of the community will be needed. Accommodation to meet the specific needs of a section of the community includes agricultural workers dwellings, or specialist provision for the frail elderly, the disabled or people with a mental health problem, vulnerable people (including children leaving care), or students (where the student accommodation involves shared living facilities). Such housing will only be taken to be 'special needs' housing where it is specifically designed and operated to house one of the groups described. For the avoidance of doubt, age restricted retirement homes and sheltered housing with a warden who offers assistance only intermittently, or in an emergency, would not constitute special needs housing and therefore would not be permitted under Policy DE1.

5.11 The 2005 West Lancashire Housing Needs Survey identified a need to provide a greater proportion of smaller low cost market housing throughout the District. The study showed that the rise in house prices since 1999 has created a substantial shortfall in affordable housing over the next few years. The Study recommends that the Local Plan should set a District target of 40% of the total of all units negotiated on all suitable sites. More explanation of this is included under Policy DE3 on Affordable Housing and the Residential Developments SPG.

5.12 National Planning Guidance advises that new housing developments should incorporate sufficient provision for the creation of open space and playing fields where such spaces are not already provided within easy access (PPG3, para 53). A Supplementary Planning Document is being prepared to explain how the Council will operate this policy.

5.13 PPG3 acknowledges that in areas where the housing land supply is in conformity with the County Structure Plan, and there is strong pressure for further development, some means of phasing the housing land supply may be necessary.

5.14 Clearly, West Lancashire is under great pressure for housing development. If the current rates of housing completions were to continue on identified and windfall sites, the Structure Plan allocation of 3,390 dwellings could be reached as early as 2009. At that point, either the Council would have to place severe restraint on further residential development, or accept that the number of dwellings built will exceed the planned provision by a large margin. Therefore, in the interests of a steady and sustainable level of development activity, and to avoid rapid growth in housing and employment needs at the expense of the environment, a measure of phased release of land for new housing is desirable. The recommended form of control in PPG3 is through the managed release of sites.

5.15 Through initial urban capacity work, the District Council has established that windfall rates are likely to continue to be high if a policy constraint is not put upon them.



5. Development and Economy

5.16 The above policy allows for the following number of dwellings being completed over the period to 2016 as follows (figures exclude replacement dwellings):-

| Supply in Period 2001 to 2016 | No. Dwellings | Running Total |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Dwellings with permission as at 31 March 2004 | 1,403 | 1,403 |
| Dwellings on windfall sites granted permission between 1 March 2004 - 20 August 2004 | 41 | 1,444 |
| Dwellings on windfall sites - applications awaiting the completion of Section 106 agreements as at 20 August 2004 | 53 | 1,497 |
| Completions 2001 - 04 | 1,280 | 2,777 |
| Conversions within main settlements (Estimate) | 100 | 2,877 |
| Dwellings linked to Regeneration of Skelmersdale (Estimate) | 350 | 3,227 |
| Agricultural Workers Dwellings (Estimate) | 13 | 3,240 |
| Affordable Housing in Rural Areas (Estimate) | 250 | 3,490 |

5.17 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan sets a target for the Local Plan to provide 305 dwellings a year for the period 2001 to 2006 (1,525 dwellings) and 185 dwellings a year for the period 2006-2016 (1,850 dwellings).

5.18 For the period to 2016 the Structure Plan target is for 3,390 completions, excluding replacement dwellings. The actual number provided for, just through existing commitments, as set out in the table above, is for 2,777 - this provides enough housing to meet the District's needs to beyond 2013. The Panel's Report, following the Examination in Public into the Joint Replacement Structure Plan, recommended an extra 350 dwellings be added to West Lancashire's figure in Policy 12 of the Structure Plan, specifically to allow for further development in Skelmersdale. This policy takes account of this recommendation and the proposed modifications to the Structure Plan. It is recognised that not all planning consents will necessarily be implemented and this will be monitored and taken into account through reviews of the Plan. In some cases houses may be demolished and not replaced in situ. Replacement dwellings for those demolished can be allowed for elsewhere in addition to the overall target. The number of demolitions will be monitored over the Plan period, so that these can be taken account of in the housing figures.

5.19 Unfortunately the Council is not in a position to influence those sites which already have planning consent, but has set fairly stringent criteria for any further sites to come forward. Skelmersdale is a town which is a regeneration priority area, and provided that a clear regeneration need for new development can be demonstrated, housing would be allowed. This recognises the unique position of Skelmersdale, which is located within the North West Metropolitan Area by the adopted RSS, and the fact that the Panel have recommended that housing as part of a mixed use regeneration project should be permitted where this meets the regeneration objectives of the local authority. The table above provides estimates of how housing, permitted by Policy DE1, will come forward over the Plan period to meet the Structure Plan target.

5.20 In addition, housing which forms a key element within a mixed use regeneration project will be permitted within, or adjacent to, Ormskirk and Burscough Town Centres. This recognises the priority accorded by the Council to regeneration schemes for these two centres. It will need to be demonstrated that the housing is required to enable the regeneration scheme to take place, and that the scheme is delivering improvements which accord with the Council's Regeneration Strategy and which are of significant benefit to the local community.

Background Documents for Policy DE1

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| Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 Housing | National |
| Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UR5 Existing Commitments in Development Plans • UR6 Existing Housing Stock and Housing Renewal • UR7 Regional Housing Provision | Regional |
| Joint Lancashire Structure Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 12 Housing Provision • Policy 13 Housing Renewal | Sub Regional |
| West Lancashire's Community Strategy 2003 - 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homes and People | Local |

