5.0 **Northern Parishes**

Wards: Tarleton, Hesketh-with-Becconsall and North Meols

5.0.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview at a local level, here examining the Northern Parishes (or ‘Northern Wards’) area, consisting of Tarleton, Hesketh-with-Becconsall and North Meols. Mere Brow (parish) is included as part of the Tarleton ward. This paper summarises much of the evidence available to date (autumn 2016), for the West Lancashire Local Plan Review. Borough-wide data can be found in the relevant topic-based ‘Thematic papers’.

Tarleton is the most sustainable settlement located in the Northern Wards with a number of services, not only serving Tarleton but also the adjoining wards of North Meols and Hesketh-with-Becconsall.

Hesketh-with-Becconsall ward lies in the north of the Borough adjacent to the River Ribble while North Meols lies adjacent to the Sefton Boundary in the far north west of the Borough. Both Hesketh and Becconsall and North Meols contain large areas of marsh land. The ‘Northern Wards’ area is shown below.

Chart 5.1 Location of the ‘Northern Wards’

1 Whilst the area is referred to as the Northern Parishes, it is effectively comprised of wards, and much of the readily available data, especially for comparison purposes, is at ward level. The terms Northern Parishes and Northern Wards are used interchangeably here.
5.1.0 Current baseline

5.1.1 Demographics

The Northern Wards area contains some of the less populated settlement areas within West Lancashire with approximately 12% of the population residing there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% of West Lancs. population</th>
<th>Area / hectares</th>
<th>Density (no. of persons per hectare)</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
<th>% of West Lancs. households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hesketh-with-Becconsall</td>
<td>4,041</td>
<td>3.65%</td>
<td>1,862.76</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1,564</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Meols</td>
<td>4,146</td>
<td>3.74%</td>
<td>3,077.80</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>4.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarleton</td>
<td>5,625</td>
<td>5.08%</td>
<td>2239.27</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2,015</td>
<td>4.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Wards Total</td>
<td>13,812</td>
<td>12.47%</td>
<td>7,180</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>5,426</td>
<td>11.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lancashire</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34,679</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>45,381</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census, ONS

Chart 5.2 Population densities (number of persons per hectare) by ward

Source: 2011 Census, ONS
12.5% of the Borough’s population lives in the Northern Wards. As predominately rural areas, each of the wards has a lower population density than the Borough average, which includes urban populations. As can be seen with many of the rural areas of the Borough, there is a relatively higher proportion of persons aged over 65 living in the Northern Wards than that of the West Lancashire average. This could be down to the locations’ attractiveness to retirees.
Health

Residents in the Northern Wards generally rate their health as average within the West Lancashire Borough; however those in North Meols rate their health poorer than Hesketh-with-Becconsall and Tarleton.

Chart 5.4 West Lancashire residents’ description of health

Source: 2011 Census, ONS
**Education and skills**

26% of West Lancashire’s workforce has a degree (or equivalent) or higher (Level 4). This compares to a regional figure of 24% and a national figure of 27%, placing it roughly on par with its counterparts. The highest proportion of people with Level 4 qualifications (degree level) or higher are found at Aughton, Parbold, Newburgh and Wrightington – these are dormer settlements used predominately by commuters to other areas. 23% of West Lancashire’s workforce has no qualifications.

Of the Northern Wards, Tarleton has the highest proportion of residents with Level 4 qualifications and this is higher than the West Lancashire average. North Meols has a higher proportion of people with no qualifications, and this again is just above the West Lancashire average.

**Chart 5.5 Educational Achievement**

*Source: 2011 Census, ONS*

**Guide to the levels:**

Level 1: Includes 1-4 O-Levels/GCSEs, NVQ level 1, Foundation GNVQ

Level 2: Includes 5+ O-levels/GCSEs, 1 A-Level, Intermediate/Higher Diploma, NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ

Level 3: Includes 2+ A-Levels, Advanced Diploma, NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, ONC, ONS, BTEC National

Level 4: Degree, Higher Degree, NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, BTEC Higher, Higher diploma, Foundation degree
Approximated social grade

27% of Tarleton residents are employed in higher & intermediate managerial, administrative, professional occupations, compared to 16% of North Meols residents. This compares to a Borough average for A/B social grades of 21%. Conversely, 16% of Tarleton residents are employed in semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, compared to 24% in North Meols. This suggests there is a difference in the skill levels and employment opportunities between the residents of the different wards.

Chart 5.6 Approximated social grade
Source: 2011 Census, ONS

**Approximated social grade**
- **Approximated social grade AB** occupations: Higher & intermediate managerial, administrative, professional
- **Approximated social grade C1** occupations: Supervisory, clerical & junior managerial, admin, professional
- **Approximated social grade C2** occupations: Skilled manual occupations
- **Approximated social grade DE** lowest grade occupations: Semi-skilled & unskilled manual occupations, unemployed and
Deprivation

Overall, in the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, West Lancashire was ranked 164th out of 326 local authorities in England. This places it right in the middle nationally. However, varying levels of deprivation can be found within the Borough.

Skelmersdale has 14 of its 23 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) featuring in the top 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally, and one within the 1% most deprived. Conversely, 21 of the Borough’s 73 LSOAs (29%) fall within the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods nationally. There is therefore a polarisation within the Borough.

Chart 5.7 illustrates each of the LSOAs within West Lancashire, with the most deprived LSOAs in the darkest colour and the least deprived LSOAs in the lightest colour. It can clearly be seen that North Meols has higher levels of deprivation compared to other areas of the Borough, but Hesketh Bank is amongst the least deprived areas.

Chart 5.7 Overall rank of LSOAs across West Lancashire

Source: WLBC 2016 (IMD 2015, CLG)
By examining the deprivation levels at an individual domain level, we can identify how different areas are affected. At each of the individual deprivation domains:

**Income**

Income deprivation is at its worst in Skelmersdale where jobs are less skilled, wages lower and a greater proportion of residents claim benefits and job seekers allowance. After Skelmersdale, the levels of deprivation are high in North Meols, predominately an agricultural/horticultural business area, and in Ormskirk and Burscough.

**Employment**

The employment deprivation domain measures the involuntary exclusion of the working age population to employment by looking at people who claim benefits. It includes those people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities.

Families experiencing employment deprivation are very likely to also experience income deprivation, and so patterns between employment and income deprivation often broadly mirror each other.

In comparison to other neighbourhoods, employment deprivation has worsened in north and western rural areas – including North Meols and the Western Parishes area.

**Health**

The health deprivation domain looks at the population for high rates of premature death, or whose quality of life is impaired by poor physical or mental health.

The Borough has an increasing, ageing population and this is likely to play a key contributing factor in the Borough’s comparative health rankings, as a greater number of elderly people spend longer periods in ill health. In addition, rural areas typically have more difficulty accessing health care due to their remote nature. Generally health deprivation has worsened across the whole of the Borough since 2010.

**Education**

The education deprivation domain measures the lack of attainment and skills in the local population and has two sub-domains it uses to capture deprivation. The first looks at education deprivation for children and young people in the area, and the second looks at lack of skills and qualifications among working-age adults.

Education deprivation levels are worst in Skelmersdale. This is followed by pockets in the urban areas in Ormskirk and Burscough and in the rural areas in the north within Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, North Meols and Aughton and Downholland.
Living environment
The living environment domain looks at deprivation in the local environment in two ways: the inside environment, which looks at the quality of housing, and the outside environment which looks at the two measures of air quality and road traffic accidents.

In 2015, living environment deprivation levels are worst in the rural areas of Bickerstaffe, Lathom, Aughton and Downholland, Scarisbrick, Tarleton and North Meols.

Crime
The crime deprivation domain measures the risk of personal and material victimisation at a local level, using Police Force data including indicators on burglary, theft, criminal damage and violence.

Housing & Services
The housing and services deprivation domain looks at barriers that local people have in obtaining suitable housing, and in accessing local services in terms of distance. It measures the physical and financial accessibility, using two sub-domains: ‘geographical barriers’ which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and ‘wider barriers’ which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability and homelessness.

In 2015, the most deprived areas of the Borough in relation to this domain are found in the rural areas of Bickerstaffe, Aughton and Downholland, Scarisbrick and Tarleton. The lowest levels of deprivation are found in LSOAs within Parbold, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank, Ormskirk and Burscough. There has been a relative decrease in the deprivation rankings of many areas since 2010, which may be as a result of fluctuations in house prices since 2010, or a result of improved availability of housing.
5.1.2 Housing

Household numbers

Table 5.3 Number of households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>West Lancs</th>
<th>Skelmersdale and SE Parishes/ Wards</th>
<th>Ormskirk / Aughton</th>
<th>Burscough and Ruford</th>
<th>Northern Wards (N Meols, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank)</th>
<th>W Wards (Halsall, Scarisbrick)</th>
<th>E Wards (Parbold, Newburgh, Wrightington)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households in West Lancashire</td>
<td>45,381</td>
<td>17,606</td>
<td>10,787</td>
<td>4,551</td>
<td>5,828</td>
<td>2,513</td>
<td>4,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of housing in West Lancashire</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 Census, ONS (Figures may not sum due to rounding)

The Northern Wards contain the third highest proportion of the Borough’s housing stock (12.8%). Between the 2001 Census and 2011 Census, a total of 1,800 net additional dwellings have been built in West Lancashire. The Northern Wards have experienced a significant amount of development although this has been distributed across the three ward areas and has largely been focused on allocated sites, particularly in Banks and Tarleton. The West Lancashire Local Plan encourages development to be located in the main settlements.

Housing Tenure

Chart 5.8 Housing Tenure in the Northern Wards

Source: 2011 Census, ONS
There is considerable variation between different parts of the Borough and areas are characterised by the type of tenure that predominates. In the Northern Wards there is a higher level of home ownership than the average for West Lancashire particularly the settlement of Skelmersdale.

The highest proportions of social rented housing within the Northern Wards are found in North Meols (7%); however there isn’t a significant difference with the lowest Hesketh-with-Becconsall and Tarleton (4%). Therefore, there is a relatively low availability of social rented properties within the Northern Wards of the Borough.

Across the Borough, less than 1% of the housing stock comprises shared ownership properties and most of these properties are located in the affluent urban areas to assist with affordability. By contrast, the Northern Wards have the highest rates of shared ownership in the Borough (5%); in part as a result of planning policies assisting the delivery of affordable housing in those areas.

Across the Borough, semi-detached homes are most prevalent with a rate higher than the national average and slightly above that of the North West. Within the Northern Wards, North Meols has the highest percentage of semi-detached dwellings within the settlement, whilst Tarleton’s housing stock is predominantly detached.

**Distribution of housing stock by Council tax band**

![Chart 5.9 Distribution of housing stock by Council tax band in West Lancashire](source:image)

Source: WLBC 2016 (Stock of properties, VOA, 2015)

Council Tax banding information is a useful way of highlighting areas of the borough where particular bands of housing are concentrated, thus implying a less mixed and balanced community. Similarly it also shows those areas of the area where there is a more mixed range of council tax bands. Of the 48,350 dwellings registered as stock in West Lancashire in 2015, 30% are classed within Band A; 7% of which can be found within the Northern Wards. Within the Northern Wards the main council tax band is C (24%) which follows a similar trend throughout the Borough with the exception of Skelmersdale.
**Housing affordability**

The average house price in 2012 in West Lancashire stood at £180,985. This is higher than the county and regional average prices but lower than that of England (which will be skewed by London prices). Average house prices were highest in West Lancashire in 2010 (£194,899, and a peak of a 106% increase on the 2001 average). Using a 2001 base, house prices in West Lancashire have grown quicker than those of England.

The most readily available data on house prices by ward level dates back to 2010. Prices vary dependent on the location and the house type. The highest house prices (shown by the darkest colours on Chart 5.8) are found in the Eastern and Western Parishes areas. The cheapest houses (lighter areas) are located in Skelmersdale. Prices within the Northern Wards are average / above average but not extreme.

Chart 5.10 Housing affordability across West Lancashire

![Chart 5.10 Housing affordability across West Lancashire](image)

*Source: WLBC 2010 (Hometrack)*
5.1.3 Employment and Economy

Economic Activity

At the 2011 Census:

- 55,680 people in West Lancashire were economically active (68%)
  - 11,504 people were economically active and employed part time (14%)
  - 29,658 people were economically active and employed full time (36%)
  - 7,807 people were economically active and self-employed (9.6%)
  - 3,180 people were economically active and unemployed (4%)
  - 3,531 people were economically active and in full time study (4%)

- 25,921 people in West Lancashire were economically inactive (32%)
  - 13,888 people were economically inactive and retired (17%)
  - 4,688 people were economically active and in full time study (5.7%)
  - 3,515 people were economically active and sick or disabled (4%)
  - 2,673 people were economically active and looking after home or family (3%)

Economic activity varies across the Borough, but levels can be attributed to different reasons. For example, economic activity is shown in Chart 5.11 as low (dark colour) in Ormskirk due to the high proportion of students registered in the town as economically inactive: full time students. Economic activity is also low in those areas that have a high proportion of the local population registered as economically inactive: retired.

Chart 5.11 Rates of economic activity (2011 census)  
(The darker the area, the lower the economic activity)

Chart 5.12 Rates of unemployment in West Lancashire (2011 census)  
(The darker the area, the higher the unemployment levels)
The proportion of people who are economically inactive: retired is lower in Skelmersdale than anywhere else in the Borough. Tarleton has the highest proportion of retired persons, representing 72% of those economically inactive in the ward.

Chart 5.13   Economic inactivity: retired (2011 census)
(The darker the area, the higher the proportion of retired persons)

Chart 5.14   Economic inactivity: sick or disabled (2011 census)
(The darker the area, the higher the proportion of sick or disabled persons)

Source: WLBC 2016 (2011 Census, ONS)

Occupational Structure

The occupational structure of residents of West Lancashire is provided in Table 5.4. This includes data on the occupations of those residents commuting outside of the borough for job opportunities. Those accessing these jobs are not spread evenly across the borough. Significantly higher proportions of residents in the rural wards, Burscough, Ormskirk and Aughton areas were employed within higher level occupations. In contrast, more residents of Skelmersdale and Up Holland are employed in lower skilled occupations; more than double that of other areas. Bickerstaffe and the Eastern wards have the highest proportions of people employed in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations.

The Northern Wards has a significant horticultural and agricultural produce packing sector.
Table 5.4 Occupational structure by areas of West Lancashire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Lancashire</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skelmersdale &amp; Up Holland</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bickerstaffe</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormskirk with Aughton</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burscough with Rufford</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Wards</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Wards</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Wards</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WLBC 2016 (2011 Census, ONS)

Chart 5.15 Occupational structure by area of West Lancashire

Source: WLBC 2016 (2011 Census, ONS)
Industry groups

In 2011, the largest proportion of West Lancashire residents were employed in the wholesale and retail trade, education, human health and social work activities and manufacturing.

In the Northern Wards, the greatest proportions of residents were employed in human health/social work, education and construction which is broadly in keeping with the trends found across all areas of the Borough. However, 7% of Northern Wards residents are employed in agricultural (including horticultural) industries. This is the highest proportion of all the spatial areas. By comparison, just 1% of Skelmersdale and 2% of Ormskirk and Aughton residents are employed in agriculture. This is reflective of the important horticultural and agricultural industry base in the Northern Wards.

Chart 5.16 Proportion of residents employed in each industry

Source: WLBC 2016 (2011 Census, ONS)
5.1.4 Transport

Infrastructure

The Northern Wards has relatively good access to the A59 (Preston – Liverpool) with Tarleton sitting on the edge of the A59.

The Northern Wards has no direct rail links, the nearest stations are at Rufford or Croston which provide a limited service between Ormskirk-Preston. There are a number of bus routes that run through the settlement direct to Southport, Preston, Rufford, Burscough and Ormskirk although the services can be infrequent. As with most settlements, a number of school bus services operate to nearby schools and colleges.

Vehicle ownership

In West Lancashire, 41% of households own 1 car/van, followed by 30% with two vehicles and 9% with three or more vehicles. Tarleton has the one of the highest levels of households owning 4 or more vehicles. 20% of the Borough’s households do not own a car or van. In Tanhouse, 46% of households own no vehicle, although this rate is just 8% in Hesketh-with-Becconsall. (Source: 2011 Census, ONS).

Journey to work by usual mode of travel

Chart 5.17 Methods of travel to work

Source: 2011 Census, ONS

Of those in employment, the most popular way of travelling to work is by car or van, and this is highest in Hesketh-with-Becconsall and Wrightington, which are rural areas affected by a lack of public transport services.
The lowest users of cars are in Skelmersdale, though it should be borne in mind that fewer people in Skelmersdale actually own cars. Bike and foot methods are used the most by residents of Ormskirk, Skelmersdale and Burscough where a range of employment opportunities exist in those areas thereby reducing the need to commute long distances.

**Distance travelled to work**

The largest proportion of workers commuting less than 2 miles to work are located around the main employment hubs in the settlement areas of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk, Burscough and Tarleton. This is also in keeping with the evidence that Skelmersdale has the most people without access to a vehicle, and the most people commuting to work by bike, foot and bus. Commutes are therefore generally localised.

The commuting patterns in relation to distance travelled to work also often mirrors occupation types of West Lancashire. Elementary occupations are highest in Skelmersdale, which has the highest proportion of people travelling less than 2 miles to work. This illustrates that Skelmersdale has a high proportion of low skilled workers, low skilled employment opportunities and reflects the low proportion of residents that own a vehicle and instead travel to work using public transport, bike or foot.

The northern and western wards have some of the largest proportions of residents working from home with no travel. As before, this is suggestive of its rural character – with many residents employed locally in agricultural and horticultural industries or working from home.
5.1.5 Land resources

Like most of the settlements in West Lancashire, the Northern Wards are surrounded by Green Belt. A large proportion of Green Belt land is designated as prime agricultural land. Some of the best and most versatile agricultural land is located in the Northern Wards.

5.1.6 Cultural heritage and landscape

Listed buildings and Conservation Areas

There are a number of small conservation areas within the Northern Wards. There are also a number of listed buildings located throughout the settlements.

Landscape of West Lancashire

The Northern Wards contains large areas of moss land which contributes not only to the local landscape but also the biodiversity and ecology assets of West Lancashire.

5.1.7 Climate change, energy and flooding

Some areas of Banks, Hesketh Bank and Mere Brow are located within Flood Zone 3. This has the potential to affect areas of development and create development pressures in the built up areas.
5.1.8 Water Quality and Resources

Within West Lancashire there are several water systems including the River Douglas which passes through Hesketh Bank and Tarleton. The quality of these rivers should be protected and their benefits (e.g. recreation, biodiversity, water source) supported.

Within West Lancashire, there are a number of areas where sources of groundwater are protected through ‘Groundwater Source Protection Zones’ (GSPZs). These zones help to monitor the risk of contamination from any activities that might cause pollution in the area.

5.1.9 Biodiversity

The Northern Wards contain one SSSI – Ribble Estuary. There are a number of Biological Heritage Sites in and around the Northern Wards listed below:

- Martin Mere Mosslands
- Brook Farm Bridge Drains
- The Sluice
- Marsh Farm Fields
- Banks Marsh Embankments
- Hesketh Old and New Marsh Fields
- Hesketh Old Marsh Embankment
- River Douglas Estuary
- River Douglas Embankment
- Manor Farm Pastures
- Camp Fields
- Hesketh Bank Brickworks North (Alty’s)
- Mere Brow (Leisure Lakes)
- Holmeswood Woodlands
- Nuck’s Wood
- Rufford Park (New)
- Mere Sands Wood
- Leeds/Liverpool Canal Rufford Branch
- Rufford Railway Hollows

5.1.10 Local Services and Community Infrastructure

The main settlements of West Lancashire, including Ormskirk, Burscough, Skelmersdale, Up Holland, Parbold, Tarleton, Hesketh Bank and Banks, are all within areas that are within 1km of 5 basic services. These are urban areas, with populations of 1000 people or over. Residential development policy directs most development to the main settlements which are the most sustainable and have the best access to services and public transport facilities.

Open Space and Recreation facilities

The majority of residents in West Lancashire have access to either a park or amenity green space. The Northern Wards has a number of smaller amenity spaces, recreation areas, sporting facilities and playing pitches.
Sustainable Settlement Study

Tarleton is the most sustainable settlement in the Northern Wards. Being smaller in population and size, Tarleton offers a narrower range of services and has less good public transport accessibility than Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough. There is a limited range of local employment opportunities at Tarleton meaning that many residents travel elsewhere to work. Tarleton is classed as a (relatively large) Local Service Centre.

Hesketh Bank is a small Local Service Centre, providing a few shops and basic services for its residents, with a very limited number of bus services and employment opportunities. At present, Hesketh Bank has restrictions on its infrastructure and transportation routes. Development in Hesketh Bank would be likely to have knock-on effects in terms of congestion in Tarleton.

Banks is a small Local Service Centre, providing a few shops and basic services for its residents. It has regular, if limited, bus services to larger settlements but has limited employment opportunities. Its potential for growth is limited by the flooding risk in and around the settlement.
5.2.0 Future Baseline

If current trends were to continue:

- Population will continue to increase in the Northern Wards;
- There will be a significant increase in the proportion of the population who are aged;
- Housing need will continue for older persons households, single households and multi-adult households;
- Development within parts of the Northern Wards (North Meols) will be continue to be restricted due to the issues arising from being located within Flood Zone 3.

5.3.0 Key issues for Northern Wards

- The Northern Wards contain some pockets of relative deprivation (North Meols);
- As with other parts of the Borough, there is a need to provide a wider, balanced housing stock and to provide affordable housing;
- There are three longstanding Traveller encampments on Flood Zone 3 land close to Banks; these Travellers need authorised, permanent accommodation;
- There is a need for a greater variety of employment and industries; higher skilled job opportunities, and relevant training;
- Public transport provision is relatively poor, with no access to rail services;
- Significant areas of the Northern Parishes (in particular North Meols) are at risk of flooding;
- Climate change may pose a threat to the area, either in terms of an increased likelihood of flooding, or a change to crop yields and growing patterns, which could have significant impacts upon the local horticultural industry;
- As with elsewhere, there is a need to protect biodiversity, including the Ribble Estuary and other sites;
- There is a need to provide more, and improve the quality of existing, open spaces and playing pitches.

5.4.0 Data Limitations

The more localised the data, the easier it is to pinpoint key issues for an area. Where available, localised data has been used. Some data may be unavailable at local level, i.e. towns or wards. Where localised data is unavailable, Borough-wide, regional or national trends have sometimes needed to be applied. Some data is still emerging through the Local Plan Review evidence base as studies and reports are still in progress.

This spatial paper should be read in conjunction with the topic-based thematic papers, which provide insight into those issues affecting the Borough as a whole, as well as the individual component areas of West Lancashire.