4.0 Eastern Parishes

Wards: Newburgh, Parbold, Wrightington
Parishes: Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale, Newburgh, Parbold, Wrightington

4.0.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview at a local level of the Eastern Parishes, summarising much of the evidence available to date (Spring 2017), for the West Lancashire Local Plan Review. Borough-wide data can be found in the relevant topic-based Thematic papers.

The Eastern Parishes area comprises the parishes of Bispham, Dalton, Hilldale, Newburgh, Parbold, and Wrightington\(^1\). However, much of the readily available population and socio-economic data is given at ward rather than parish level. In terms of wards, the ‘Eastern Parishes’ area approximately comprises Newburgh, Parbold and Wrightington wards. Tables in this evidence paper are provided at either parish or ward level, depending on ease of access to information. The term ‘Eastern Wards’ is used when describing ward-based data; ‘Eastern Parishes’ is used when describing parish-based data.

Parbold

The name Parbold is drawn from Old English and means ‘Pear Orchard’ and the area retains this rural character and atmosphere despite significant 20\(^{th}\) Century residential expansion. The village of Parbold is in the valley of the River Douglas and the Leeds Liverpool canal passes close to the centre. It contains two Conservation Areas – Lancaster Lane and Mill Lane. Parbold station is located on the railway line which runs between Wigan and Southport.

Parbold Hill is one of the most striking natural features of the area, providing expansive views across the Lancashire plain from the summit. The area contains a wealth of other natural features including five Biological Heritage Sites. One of these is Fairy Glen (located on the border with Wrightington Parish) which follows Sprodley Brook valley and features waterfalls, cliff faces and ancient broadleaved woodland.

\(^{1}\) For the purposes of the Local Plan Review, West Lancashire is divided into six spatial areas, including Burscough with Rufford (which includes the Parish of Lathom), and the Eastern Parishes, which includes Newburgh.

Much data tends to be available (or readily available) at ward level. The Burscough – Rufford Spatial Evidence Paper reports on data for Burscough West, Burscough East and Rufford Wards. However, it does not include data for Newburgh Ward - which includes Lathom Parish – or for Bickerstaffe Ward – which includes Lathom South Parish. (Newburgh Ward data is included in this Eastern Parishes Spatial Evidence Paper. Bickerstaffe Ward data is included in the Skelmersdale and South Eastern Parishes Spatial Evidence Paper.) Hence, whilst Lathom is included within the Burscough – Rufford spatial area, data for Lathom Parish is included within the aggregate ward-based data for the Eastern Parishes area (effectively the ‘Eastern Wards’ area), and data for Lathom South Parish is included within the aggregate ward-based figures for the Skelmersdale and South Eastern Parishes ['Wards'] area.
Newburgh
Newburgh village is located around five miles from Ormskirk and is bounded by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the River Tawd and the River Douglas. The heart of the village is a Conservation Area, including the village green – the site of an ancient fair – and a mixture of 17th, 18th and 19th century buildings. This historic core has expanded significantly during the late 20th century with the addition of residential estates.

Wrightington
Wrightington contains the settlement of Appley Bridge and is set on northern side of the largely pastoral landscape that characterises the Douglas Valley and consists of a mixture of tree-lined cloughs and open fields. The development of the settlement has been strongly influenced by the development of quarrying and mining in the local area. Many of the historic workings are now re-vegetated.

Wrightington Hospital was developed in the early 20th century on the Wrightington Hall estate. The Grade 2 listed 18th century Wrightington Hall now forms part of the Hospital site. The fish ponds, visible either side of Hall Lane are the remnants of the Hall’s former landscaped estate.
4.1.0 Current baseline

4.1.1 Demographics

Table 4.1 Population and population density – Eastern Parishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</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>Bispham</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalton</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilldale</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newburgh</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbold</td>
<td>2,582</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrightington</td>
<td>2,886</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1,307</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1,220</td>
<td>2.6</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>

There is a considerable variety in the population density of the Eastern Parishes – from less than 1 person per hectare in the scattered rural areas of Bispham and Dalton, to a density of over 5 people per hectare in Parbold. The Eastern Parishes in total, however, contain only 7.3% of West Lancashire's population and 7.4% of the Borough's households.

Chart 4.1 Population Density (persons per hectare) – Eastern Parishes
The age structure is similar across most of the Eastern Parishes; however Bispham and Parbold contain more young people, i.e. children (under 14 year olds). The proportion of working age adults in the Eastern Parishes is close to the West Lancashire average.

However, when compared to West Lancashire as a whole, it is clear that most of the Eastern Parishes have a higher proportion of over 65 year olds, particularly compared to the proportion of children in these areas. Combined with the rural nature of the area, this may have implications for issues such as social isolation as this group ages and may be unable to drive to access facilities and services. This may also influence the kind of housing which may be appropriate in such locations – i.e. it may be suitable to provide smaller units and potentially extra care or supported housing.
Residents from the Eastern Parishes generally rate their health as better than the average for West Lancashire. Over 80% of residents in all the Parishes, apart from Lathom South, rate their health as either ‘very good’ or ‘good’. The results for Lathom South could be explained by its proximity to Skelmersdale whose residents experience health inequalities.
Life expectancy in the Eastern Parishes is amongst the longest in West Lancashire. Newburgh ward (which includes the parishes of Newburgh and Lathom) has around the highest life expectancy at birth - for females it is 85 years, while for men it is 80 years. (Bickerstaffe ward is only marginally behind this with female life expectancy at birth of 83 years, while for men it is 82 years.)

Wrightington ward (which includes the parish of Wrightington, and part of Up Holland) has a life expectancy at birth for women of 82 years, while for men this is 80 years. Parbold ward (which includes the parishes of Parbold, Dalton, Hilldale and Bispham) has the lowest male and female life expectancy at birth of 78 years.

**Education and skills**

*Chart 4.6 Educational attainment: highest level of qualification by Parish (Eastern Parishes)*

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 dormitory settlements used predominately by commuters to other areas. 45.5% of residents of Parbold have a degree level qualification.
23% of West Lancashire’s workforce has no qualifications. The percentage in the Eastern Wards is on the whole much lower – for instance only 9.9% of residents in Dalton have no qualifications. The Eastern Wards area has the highest proportion (by some considerable margin) with Level 4 qualifications.

Deprivation

The indices of multiple deprivation (IMDs) measure deprivation across seven ‘domains’ (these are considered individually below). Data is provided at ‘Lower Super Output Area’ (LSOA) level (LSOAs are smaller than wards, typically having one third the population of a ward in West Lancashire). Whilst deprivation is stereotypically expected to be greatest in urban and inner-city areas, rural areas can also experience high levels of deprivation. For example, rural residents often find it harder to access services, and, as those areas often attract more people of a retirement age, they may have a greater proportion of an aged population in less good health finding it difficult to access health care.

Overall, in the 2015 IMDs, West Lancashire was ranked 164th out of 326 local authorities in England. This places it right in the middle nationally. 21 of the Borough’s 73 LSOAs (29%) fall within the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods nationally. However there is a polarisation within the Borough between those areas in the highest and lowest two deciles (20%) of deprivation.

All of the Eastern Parishes fall within the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods nationally. Parbold ward is amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country.
Table 4.2  Deprivation in West Lancashire (Lower Super Output Areas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cumulative LSOA’s</th>
<th>Remaining LSOAs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Lancashire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SOAs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of SOAs</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015, CLG

Chart 4.8 Overall rank of Lower Super Output Areas across West Lancashire

Chart 4.8 above shows that the Eastern Parishes area is amongst the least deprived in West Lancashire, with generally lighter shades (less deprivation) for each LSOA.

In terms of the seven individual measures of deprivation:

**Income**

The income deprivation domain measures the proportion of people in an area who are living on low incomes, including both those that are out of work and those that are in work but who have low earnings. This is done by looking at people who are on means-tested benefits such as Income Support and Working Families Tax Credit.

All of the Eastern Parishes are within the 30% least deprived neighbourhoods in terms of income deprivation.
Employment
The employment deprivation domain measures the involuntary exclusion of the working age population from 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, disability or caring responsibilities.

The Eastern Parishes rank within the 50% least deprived neighbourhoods in terms of employment deprivation.

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.

Many of the Eastern Parishes are located within the 50% most deprived areas in relation to health.

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.

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.

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.

In 2015 areas of Newburgh, Parbold and Wrightington are some of the least deprived areas.

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.
4.1.2 Housing

Household numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Lancashire</th>
<th>E Wards (Parbold, Newburgh, Wrightington)</th>
<th>Skelmersdale and SE Wards</th>
<th>Ormskirk / Aughton</th>
<th>Burscough</th>
<th>N Wards (North Meols, Tarleton, Hesketh-with-Becconsall)</th>
<th>W Wards (Parbold, Newburgh, Wrightington)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households in West Lancashire</td>
<td>45,381</td>
<td>4,096</td>
<td>17,606</td>
<td>10,787</td>
<td>9,551</td>
<td>5,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of housing in West Lancashire</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The Eastern Parishes contain only a small proportion of the Borough’s housing stock (9%). Between the 2001 Census and 2011 Census, a total of 1,800 net additional dwellings have been built in West Lancashire. A total of 1,266 new dwellings have been built since 2011 (WLBC AMR 2016) and the majority of these have been in the main settlement areas. Within the ‘Eastern Wards’ of Parbold, Newburgh, and Wrightington 14 houses were completed during the period 2015-2016. Over the period 2012 – 2016, just 3% of the total housing completions took place in this area. (WLBC AMR 2016)

Housing Tenure

Chart 4.9 Housing Tenure in the Eastern Parishes

Source: 2011 Census (ONS)

Tenure within the Eastern Parishes is very similar – there is only a variation of around 8% in the number of owner-occupied properties. Around 90% of properties are owner occupied – a much higher figure than the West Lancashire average (75%).
The occupancy rating (bedrooms) provides a measure of whether a household's accommodation is overcrowded or under occupied. The number of bedrooms required (based on a standard formula) is subtracted from the number of bedrooms present to obtain the occupancy rating. An occupancy rating of -1 implies that a household has one less bedroom than required, whereas +1 implies that they have one more bedroom than the standard requirement.

These figures show that the majority of properties within the Eastern Parishes are under-occupied with 2 or more spare bedrooms. Dalton has the highest proportion of under-occupied properties, indirectly indicating affluence. There are a small number of recorded incidences of overcrowding in the Eastern Parishes – this on average runs at 1% of households.
From Chart 4.11, the Eastern Wards area has the lowest proportion of Band ‘A’ homes (5% compared with 30% in West Lancashire as a whole, and 65% in Skelmersdale and the South-Eastern ‘wards’ area), and the greatest proportion of Band ‘F’, ‘G’ and ‘H’ homes compared with the other spatial areas of the Borough (20% in the Eastern Wards compared with 9% in West Lancashire as a whole). This implies an above-average general standard of housing.
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). The most readily available data on house prices by ward level dates back to 2010. Prices vary depending on the location and the house type. Figure 6.2 below shows house prices in West Lancashire wards, represented by colour (darker colours for higher prices). The Eastern Parishes lie within the darkest shaded areas, meaning that properties in these areas have some of the highest prices in West Lancashire.

Chart 4.12 Housing affordability across West Lancashire

Source: WLBC 2010 (Hometrack)
4.1.3 Employment and Economy

Economic Activity

At the time of 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. Economic activity is also low in those areas that have a high proportion of the local population registered as economically inactive: retired. Charts 4.13-4.16 below show that the Wards containing the Eastern Parishes have a relatively high proportion of economically inactive persons, that the Eastern Parishes / Wards area has amongst the highest proportions of retired people, and that the Western Parishes area has amongst the lowest proportion of sick / disabled economically inactive people. Unemployment is highest in Skelmersdale wards.

Chart 4.13 Rates of economic activity (2011 census)
(The darker the area, the lower the economic activity)

Chart 4.14 Rates of unemployment in West Lancashire (2011 census)
(The darker the area, the higher the unemployment levels)
Occupational Structure

The occupational structure of residents of the Eastern Wards area compared to the other spatial areas of West Lancashire is provided in the table below. This includes data on the occupations of those residents commuting outside of the Borough for job opportunities. Those accessing such jobs are not spread evenly across the Borough; significantly higher proportions of residents in the rural wards, including the Eastern Wards area, are employed within higher level occupations.

Table 4.3 Occupational structure by areas of West Lancashire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Higher managerial, administrative and professional</th>
<th>Lower managerial, administrative and professional</th>
<th>Intermediate occupation</th>
<th>Small employers and own account workers</th>
<th>Lower supervisory and technical occupations</th>
<th>Semi-routine occupations</th>
<th>Routine occupations</th>
<th>Never worked and long-term unemployed</th>
<th>Full time students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skelmersdale and SE Wards</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</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>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burscough &amp; Rufford</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</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>2%</td>
<td>6%</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>
<td>6%</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>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2001 Census, ONS
The same data is shown in chart form below:

Chart 4.17 Occupational structure by ward-based spatial areas of West Lancashire

- 1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
- 2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations
- 3. Intermediate occupations
- 4. Small employers and own account workers
- 5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- 6. Semi-routine occupations
- 7. Routine occupations
- 8. Never worked and long-term unemployed

Source: WLBC 2016 (2011 Census, ONS)
Unsurprisingly, given the relatively scattered nature of settlements in the Eastern Parishes, the vast majority of residents travel to work by car or van. The small number travelling by bus reflects the comparatively infrequent services. The figure for those travelling to work by train is slightly higher in Parbold and Bispham – which is likely to be due to the presence of the train station in Parbold (on the Southport to Manchester line). These stations have an infrequent service. The Eastern Parishes also have a higher proportion of people who work from home than the West Lancashire average.
The largest proportions of workers commuting less than 2 kilometres to work are located around the main employment hubs in the settlement areas of Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. Those in the Eastern Parishes travel further to work than the West Lancashire average, and the highest proportion commuting 30-40km to work. Commuting distances are shown in chart form above, and in map form below (charts 4.20-4.24; source 2011 Census).
The Wards in the East of the Borough have far higher car ownership levels than in the rest of West Lancashire. The proportion with no access to a motor vehicle is more than half that of the West Lancashire average. The number of households with two or more cars is far higher in this part of the Borough. This reflects the relative affluence of these Parishes.
Cycle paths and footpaths
A number of Public Rights of Way criss-cross the Eastern Parishes – particularly around Parbold and Wrightington. Newburgh has fewer public footpaths, however it lies either side of the Leeds Liverpool Canal which provides a footpath and cycle route through Newburgh, Parbold and Wrightington.

4.1.5 Land resources
The majority of the Eastern Parishes area is designated Green Belt but is not prime agricultural land – apart from part of Newburgh and Lathom South, much is Grade 3.

4.1.6 Cultural heritage and landscape
West Lancashire has around 600 buildings on the statutory lists of buildings or architectural or historic interest in West Lancashire, as well as 28 Conservation Areas.

Listed buildings and Conservation Areas
The majority of Listed Buildings within the Eastern Parishes are unsurprisingly related to the area’s agricultural past – including cottages, farmhouses, barns and other farming related outbuildings. There are a number of significant 16th and 17th Century buildings in the area.

Other significant features are historic parkland at Wrightington, old farms and halls of Fairhurst and High Moor, Harrock Hall and windmill, earthworks and small quarries at Harrock Hill, tram roads in the Douglas Valley, the Leeds Liverpool Canal, Douglas Navigation and rail line. There is a Medieval settlement site at Stone Hall (Dalton). The Walthew Green and Douglas Valley Woodlands and cloughs hold significant industrial archaeology and medieval landscape significance. There is also a moated site in Spar Roughs (off Vale Lane).

Conservation Areas in the Eastern Parishes are centred around the historic settlements of Parbold and Newburgh, with Maltklin Lane / Chorley Lane and Bispham Green representing smaller settlements or loose collections of agricultural and residential buildings.

Landscape
The Eastern Parishes are mostly within Landscape Character Area 4 (Wood / Pasture).

The landscape changes from flatter land in the west, rolling into hills which are low in regional terms, but prominent and significant in local terms. These afford long distance views from the high points. There is a dense network of winding roads, tracks and footpaths, including sunken lanes, hollow ways and green lanes. Farming is mixed but substantially pasture and therefore less intensive than in other parts of the Borough. This also provides a largely continuous green landscape which is well-wooded and well-treed in local terms. There are also many ancient woodlands. These are often sinuous in steep sided valleys with streams. The River Douglas and Leeds Liverpool Canal are major water features but there are also other scattered ponds and lakes. The landscape as a whole is indicative of historical processes of clearance of woodland in a piecemeal manner.
4.1.7 Climate change, energy and flooding

Parts of Parbold, Dalton, Bispham and Hilldale lie within Flood Zone 2 and 3 due to the presence of the River Douglas. However surface water flooding is more of an issue across a wider area – including a significant part of the urban area where its effects are felt more keenly.

The River Douglas Catchment Flood Management Plan provides an overview of the flood risk in the River Douglas catchment and sets out the Environment Agency’s preferred plan for sustainable flood risk management. Flooding in the River Douglas area can be due to rivers overtopping their banks or from surface water, particularly in built up areas. Serious flooding has been recorded in Appley Bridge, as well as in Croston.

4.1.8 Biodiversity

The Eastern Parishes contain a number of interlinked and distinct Biological Heritage Sites (BHSs). These include important ancient woodlands, banks, cloughs and pastures (including acid grass land at Wrightington Bar). Some former quarries also provide wildlife habitat. The BHSs in the Eastern Parishes are:

- Tawd Valley Woods (Newburgh)
- Rams Close Wood (Dalton)
- Harrock Hill and Hunter’s Hill Delf and Hawett Hill Delf (Hilldale)
- Chapel Lane Fields and Wood Lane Pasture (Parbold)
- Big Wood and Wrightington Hall Ponds (Wrightington)
- Fairy Glen and Delf House Wood (Parbold/Wrightington)
4.2.0 Future baseline

If current trends were to continue in the Eastern Parishes:

- The population will continue to increase slowly;
- There will be a significant increase in the proportion of the population who are aged;
- Housing prices will continue to increase, continuing to price many people out of the market;
- Under-occupation of many properties will continue, whereas some very localised areas may suffer from overcrowding;
- Social isolation may increase, particularly affecting the elderly and those who do not have access to a car;
- Facilities and services may be contracted, meaning residents in these areas have further to travel to access them;
- Surface water flooding may increasingly threaten land and property and inhibit development.

4.3.0 Key issues for the Eastern Parishes area

- There is an increasing and ageing population and a resultant need to ensure services, transport and housing are available;
- Much housing is unaffordable, making home ownership, including for first time buyers, increasingly difficult;
- The under-occupation of properties in some areas may suggest that different types of housing is needed in the area, e.g. smaller units;
- Some households in other areas are experiencing over-occupation (or over-crowding). This may be linked to housing affordability.
- There is likely to be an impact on the area from climate change; at present, its nature is uncertain;
- There is a likelihood of increased flooding events from the River Douglas;
- Access to key services and facilities is likely to become increasingly difficult;
- There is a continued need to protect heritage, including areas of archaeological and geological importance as well as historic areas and buildings.

4.4.0 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.

As explained earlier in the document, much of the most readily available data is at ward level, but this does not accurately reflect the geographical area of the Eastern Parishes. Parish-based data has been used where possible in this paper, but ward-based data has been used, particularly for comparison purposes with the rest of the Borough.

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.