



Local Plan 2021-2037

**Statement of Common Ground with
adjoining Local Authorities and other
relevant parties**

Regulation 22

(July 2022)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document is a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) and is required to support the preparation of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan. It supports the Council's pre-Submission 'Publication' (Regulation 19¹) version Local Plan.
- 1.2. The SoCG has been prepared to meet the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities:

'... are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.' (para. 24)

'... should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans. They should also engage with their local communities and relevant bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships ... county councils, infrastructure providers' (para. 25)

'In order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policymaking authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance, and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.' (para. 27)
- 1.3. The 'Plan-making' section of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that:

'A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters².'
- 1.4. The NPPF/NPPG are both clear in indicating that a SoCG should focus on 'strategic' issues rather than seeking to consider every potential cross boundary impact. The term 'strategic' is interpreted in this context as meaning having a significant impact on at least two local planning authority areas³.
- 1.5. This SoCG is a written record of the progress made during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters in Blackburn with Darwen. The cross-boundary issues involve neighbouring local authority areas, including authorities in Lancashire and parts of Greater Manchester. Further details on the strategic geography are set out in Section 3.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 61-010-20190315

³ Based on the definition of "strategic matter" in Section 33A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2. Parties Involved

- 2.1 The authorities with local plan making responsibilities (excluding Hyndburn BC who are subject to a separate SoCG) that directly adjoin Blackburn with Darwen and they are therefore signatories to this statement are:
- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (BolMBC)
 - Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (BurMBC)
 - Chorley Borough Council (CBC)
 - Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC)
 - Rossendale Borough Council (RBC)
 - South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC)
- 2.2 Additional strategic policy-making authorities who are considered relevant signatories to this statement include:
- Preston City Council (PCC)
 - Lancashire County Council (LCC)
- 2.3 Further details on the geography of these signatories are set out in Section 4 of this statement.
- 2.4 Due to the particular strong links between Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn, which both share a Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Area, a separate Statement of Common Ground has been prepared between these parties.
- 2.5 Finally, the Council has also worked with the following bodies on strategic matters of relevance to the plan and therefore they are requested additional signatories:
- National Highways (a separate Statement of Common Ground being prepared – see Strategic Matter 5 under Section 5); and
 - United Utilities (see Strategic Matter 4 under Section 5 only)

3. Signatories

- 3.1. This section sets out for each signatory organisation the name of the organisation and the name, position and signature of that organisations representative.
- 3.2. Unless otherwise stated each local planning authority is a full signatory to the statement. For each of the additional signatories the strategic matters that are agreed are identified in their respective sections below.

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (BoIMBC)

<p>On behalf of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	13th May 2022
Name:	Paul Whittingham
Position:	Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (BurMBC)

<p>On behalf of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	13 th May 2022
Name:	Geoff Little
Position:	Chief Executive

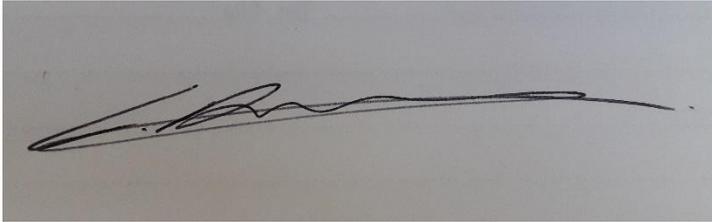
Chorley Borough Council (CBC)

<p>On behalf of Chorley Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	6 th May 2022
Name:	Zoe Whiteside
Position:	Service Lead - Spatial Planning

Lancashire County Council (LCC)

<p>On behalf of Lancashire County Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement, other than the specific point covered under Strategic Matter 5 - Transport.	
Signed:	
Date:	6 July 2022
Name:	Marcus Hudson
Position:	Planning Service Manager

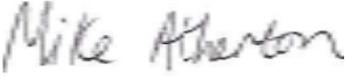
Preston City Council (PCC)

<p>On behalf of Preston City Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	3 rd May 2022
Name:	Chris Blackburn
Position:	Planning Policy Team Leader

Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC)

<p>On behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	5 th May 2022
Name:	Colin Hirst
Position:	Head of Regeneration and Housing

Rossendale Borough Council (RBC)

<p>On behalf of Rossendale Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	4 th May 2022
Name:	Mike Atherton
Position:	Head of Planning & Building Control

South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC)

<p>On behalf of South Ribble Borough Council I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out in Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	1 st July 2022
Name:	Jonathan Noad
Position:	Director of Planning and Development

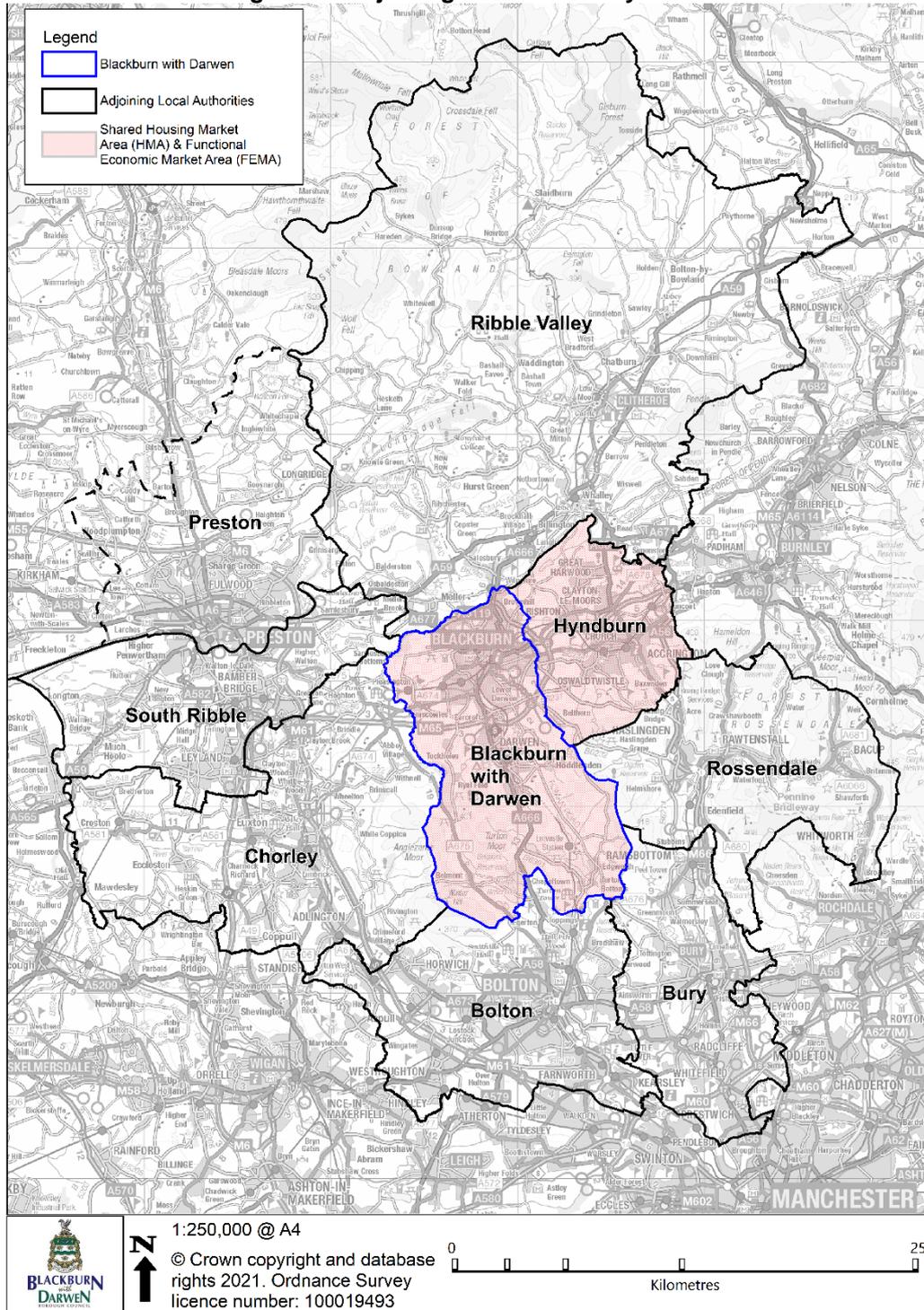
United Utilities

<p>On behalf of United Utilities I confirm that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is common ground on the draft planning policies set out in the emerging Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan (2021-2037); and• that there are no unresolved strategic issues in relation to matters set out under Strategic Matter 4 of Section 5 of this statement.	
Signed:	
Date:	15 th June 2022
Name:	Paula Steer
Position:	Director of Health, Safety and Wellbeing & Estate Services

4. Strategic Geography

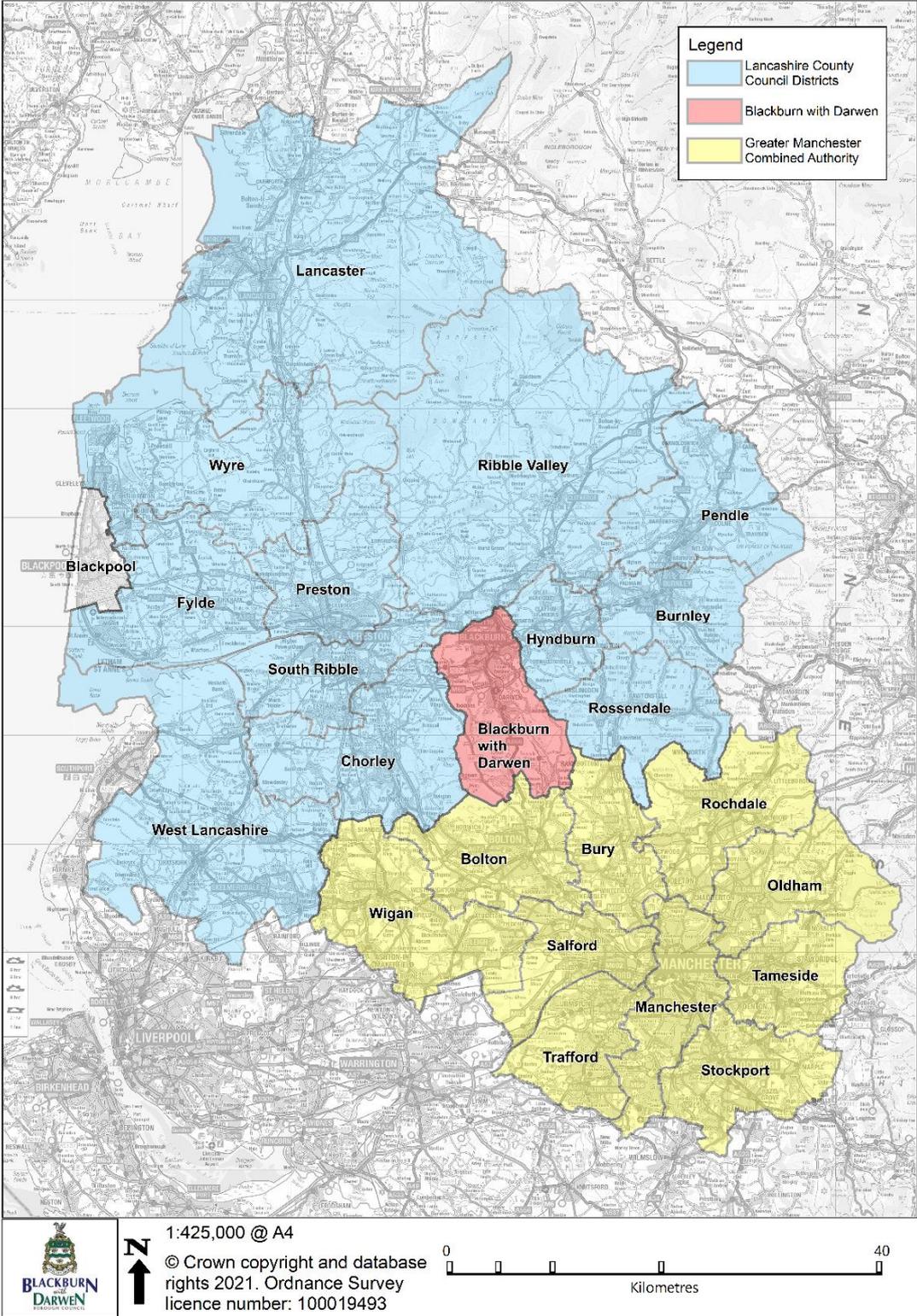
- 4.1. The geographical extent of adjoining local plan making authorities to which this Statement of Common Ground applies is set out in Figure 1 below. It also highlights the particular strong links between Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn, which share both a Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area. A separate SoCG has been prepared between Blackburn with Darwen BC and Hyndburn BC.

Figure 1 – adjoining Local Authority areas



4.2. Additional signatories to this Statement of Common Ground include authorities involved with strategic planning at a scale larger than the individual local plan making authority. This includes Preston City Council (part of the Central Lancs Local Plan making authority), Lancashire County Council. Bolton and Bury also sit within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Figure 2 provides the geographical extent of these wider signatories and strategic planning authorities.

Figure 2 – additional strategic policy making authorities



5. Strategic Matters

- 5.1. The Council has been undertaking joint working with relevant bodies throughout the plan making process to address relevant strategic matters of the Plan. This has occurred through a wide range of mechanisms. Further details are set out in the Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Statements (published in August 2019 and July 2021) and in other relevant Local Plan evidence base documents. A summary of this work is set out in Appendix A: Evidence of Joint Working.
- 5.2. The joint working undertaken has identified a number of strategic issues that have the potential for cross boundary implications. These are:
- Housing development (need and distribution)
 - Economic development (need and distribution)
 - Blackburn Town Centre proposals
 - Environment (including flood risk)
 - Transport
 - Gypsy and Travellers
- 5.3. At the time of writing there are no unresolved strategic issues that have been highlighted to the Council. A more detailed position on each of the issues is outlined below. All evidence base documents referenced within this statement are available to view on the Council's Local Plan webpage at www.blackburn.gov.uk/localplan.

Strategic Matter 1: Housing development (need and distribution)

- 5.1 As shown in Figure 1, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council shares a housing market area with Hyndburn Borough Council. Both authorities prepared a joint Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) in 2018. The authorities have completed an update of this study in 2021 to take into account the effects of both Brexit and Covid-19.
- 5.2 The 2021 Economic Needs Update confirms that the minimum housing need figure for Blackburn with Darwen using the Government’s standard method is 153 dwellings per annum (dpa). Government Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is however clear that the standard method is a minimum figure. A local authority may wish to plan for higher levels of housing where this can include a growth strategy for the area that is likely to be deliverable. The 2021 HENA update considers a realistic ‘economic growth’ scenario for Blackburn with Darwen to 2037; further detail (from an economic needs perspective) is provided under Strategic Matter 2 below.
- 5.3 The housing requirement figure for Blackburn with Darwen that corresponds to the ‘economic growth’ scenario set out in the HENA is 447 dpa (2021-2037). This level of housing provision will ensure that an appropriate balance of new homes and jobs is provided. This will help to stem net out-migration and to ensure a sufficient working age population is resident in the Borough to support the planned economic growth. The average delivery of net new homes over the previous 3 years (2018-2021) has equated to 423 dpa.
- 5.4 Core Policy 4 (CP4): Housing Development of the Regulation 19 Local Plan confirms the Council’s intention to deliver a minimum of 447 net new dwellings per annum.
- 5.5 The requirement for 447 dpa equates to a total of 7,152 net new dwellings over the period 2021-2037. The supply of sites that already have planning permission for residential development is expected to bring forward 3,493 new homes⁴. A further 1,231 dwellings are predicted to be created through windfall sites and/or the reduction in the stock of long term vacant properties in the Borough. Land for a residual 2,428 dwellings is therefore required to be allocated for housing development over the plan period.
- 5.6 The new Local Plan identifies growth sites anticipated to provide up to 2,696 dwellings between 2021 and 2037. This meets the total housing requirement with a 4% buffer. The sites identified (or already permissioned) also provide additional capacity for a further 1,209 units beyond the plan period. None of the proposed housing growth sites impact on the Green Belt.
- 5.7 A range of site sizes and locations are set out in the Council’s Local Plan. This includes a strategic housing allocation in north-east Blackburn (Local Plan Site Ref: H195). This site has the potential to deliver up to 1,500 homes of which 750 are expected to come forward during the plan period to 2037. Sustainability appraisal has demonstrated this to be the most appropriate strategic site from the reasonable alternatives that are available.

Strategic Matter 1 Agreement (Housing development)	<p>Local Planning authority signatories agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed level of housing growth in Blackburn with Darwen is appropriate in the context of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan;
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⁴ Housing Trajectory – list of sites (v13)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• there is no further unmet housing need in respective neighbouring authority areas required to be met in Blackburn with Darwen;• the strategic housing site in north-east Blackburn (site ref H195) is necessary to ensure that sufficient land, and a good mix of sites, is available for delivery of housing growth
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Strategic Matter 2: Economic development (need and distribution)

- 5.7 Blackburn with Darwen shares a functional economic market area (FEMA) with Hyndburn. It also forms part of the Pennine Lancashire group of authorities⁵ which have their own economic geography. Sub-regionally, it sits within the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) economic area.
- 5.8 A number of existing economic strategies support these varying economic geographies. The LEP published the [Strategic Economic Plan](#) (2015-2025), with the Pennine Lancashire authorities publishing a Pennine Lancashire Growth and Prosperity Plan (2016-2032). More recently economic challenges and opportunities were identified through work on the Lancashire [Local Industrial Strategy](#). Work on this is now being used to inform preparation of a Greater Lancashire Plan, expected to be completed in 2022.
- 5.9 Specific to the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan, economic evidence in order of completion date comprises:
- The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA), completed 2018;
 - An Employment Land Review (ELR), completed 2018;
 - An Economic Case for a new Strategic Employment Site, published in 2020; and
 - An Economic Needs Update (HENA update), completed in 2021.
- 5.10 The aims and objectives of the various strategic economic plans and portfolio of Local Plan evidence base set out above have informed the Council's economic growth strategy.
- 5.11 Over half (51%) of all employment in Blackburn with Darwen is currently concentrated in the healthcare, wholesale & retail and manufacturing sectors⁶ highlighting their importance. The 2021 HENA economic update confirms that under baseline economic forecasts (acquired from Oxford Economics and based on OBR economic outlook) a decline in overall employment would be expected over the plan period.
- 5.12 The HENA update models what is considered a realistic 'economic growth' scenario for Blackburn with Darwen – one that continues to align with the various economic growth strategies set out. This translates baseline economic decline into a more optimistic growth scenario of short-term economic recovery post-Covid to longer-term ambitions for improvements in productivity and social mobility.
- 5.13 The employment land requirement for Blackburn with Darwen that corresponds to the 'economic growth' scenario set out in the HENA update is 46.4ha of land (2021-2037). This is equivalent to an average of 2.9ha per annum. Delivery has averaged 4.4ha per annum over the last 3 years (2018-2021), in part due to the rapid development of

⁵ The Pennine Lancashire group of authorities include Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Rossendale

⁶ Table 7.1 of the Housing and Economic Needs Update (2021)

Frontier Park at Junction 6 of the M65. The economic growth scenario is expected to facilitate a net increase of 5,130 jobs over the plan period.

- 5.8 Core Policy 10 (CP10): The Economy and Skills of the Regulation 19 Local Plan confirms the Council's intention to deliver a minimum of 46.4ha of new employment land.
- 5.14 Translating these employment forecasts (2021-2037) into floorspace needs equates to approximately 39,000sqm of E(g) Use Class (office) and 160,000sqm of B Use Class (industrial/warehousing). The supply of sites that already have planning permission is expected to bring forward 31,000sqm of B Use Class floorspace⁷. Sufficient sites and land to accommodate the residual Class B floorspace and all the required Class E(g) floorspace is therefore required to be allocated for employment development over the plan period.
- 5.15 The new Local Plan identifies a combination of sites suitable for either mixed use or employment only use to meet this residual need. There is insufficient deliverable land available within the urban area and so a new strategic employment site off Junction 5 of the M65 is proposed (Local Plan site ref: E179). Site E179 is currently located within the green belt and will be expected to support around 72,000sqm of floorspace - around 43% of the total residual requirement.
- 5.16 A sustainability appraisal has demonstrated this to be the most appropriate strategic site from the reasonable alternatives that are available. A Planning Justification Statement has also been prepared setting out the case for the exceptional circumstances for release of this land from the green belt.

<p>Strategic Matter 2 Agreement (Economic Development)</p>	<p>Local Planning authority signatories agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed level of economic growth in Blackburn with Darwen is appropriate in the context of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan; • there is no further unmet economic need in respective neighbouring authority areas required to be met in Blackburn with Darwen; • the strategic employment site near Junction 5 of the M65 (site ref E179) is necessary to ensure that both sufficient land, and a good mix of sites, is available for delivery of economic growth
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⁷ Employment land balance – list of sites (v11)

Strategic Matter 3: Blackburn Town Centre

- 5.17 In 2019, the Council prepared a Retail and Leisure Study to support preparation of its new Local Plan and the Retail and Leisure Study has also been updated in 2021. The update reflects revised population growth forecasts and takes into account the effects of Brexit and Covid-19 on retail and leisure spending and forecasts.
- 5.18 The 2021 Retail and Leisure Study update confirms that there is no quantitative need for additional retail floorspace to be provided in Blackburn with Darwen. This assumes the retention of the existing market shares of spending. It also applies to both convenience and comparison goods retailing. The report does however caution against the uncertainties involved over projecting retail needs so far into the future and advises a significant degree of caution. The evidence base does highlight that there may be justification for qualitative improvements to retailing in the Borough in the future.
- 5.19 In terms of leisure requirements, the 2021 Retail and Leisure Study update identifies the need for potentially two new gyms and a need for between 31 and 36 new restaurant units in the Borough.
- 5.20 Blackburn town centre plays an important (sub-regional) role in east and central Lancashire. It functions as a key retail, leisure, transport and service centre hub. Key assets and attractors located within the town centre include Blackburn market, the Mall, Blackburn College, King George’s Hall, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery and Blackburn Cathedral.
- 5.21 The new Local Plan identifies two key strategic mixed-use re-development opportunities at the heart of the town centre: the former Thwaites site off Starkie Street (Local Plan site ref: MU210) and the former Markets site off Penny Street (Local Plan Site ref: MU211). In total both sites cover 4.5 hectares of brownfield land in the heart of the town centre, either within or immediately adjacent to the primary shopping area, and adjacent to the bus station.
- 5.22 Core Policy 11 (CP11): Town Centres and Commercial Development of the Regulation 19 Local Plan confirms the intention of the Council to develop these sites to play a key role in the future development of the town centre.
- 5.23 The plan proposes a mix of possible uses on these sites, including potentially those in Class C (residential), Class E (commercial, business and service) and Class F (Local Community and Learning). The sites provide a unique opportunity for town centre growth and transformation and form part of a wider area being referred to as the ‘Blackburn Town Centre East Investment Area’. Indicative masterplan framework documents⁸ for this area (subject to further consultation with relevant consultees and partners) are available alongside the Regulation 19 Local Plan evidence base material.

<p>Strategic Matter 3 Agreement (Blackburn Town Centre)</p>	<p>Local Planning authority signatories agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocation of the strategic mixed use sites in Blackburn Town Centre, and proposed masterplan based approach to re-development of the site, is appropriate in the context of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan
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⁸ A Development Framework document and a separate Concept Strategy and Character Study document

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no outstanding unresolved strategic issues relating to retail or town centre development
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Strategic Matter 4: Natural Environment

- 5.24 The Habitats Directive 1992 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 require plans such as the Local Plan to be agreed only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of internationally important nature conservation sites, through a process of Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). A number of European designated sites that lie within the potential sphere of influence of the Local Plan have been assessed including, but not limited to: Bowland Fells SPA; Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar; South Pennine Moors SAC/SPA; Rochdale Canal SAC and Manchester Mosses SAC.
- 5.25 The HRA screening report concludes that none of the policies in the Local Plan are considered likely to result in significant effects on the integrity of the European Sites. This is either due to a lack of impact pathway and/or suitably worded policies that aim to protect the environment, including designated and non-designated sites, and promote the sustainable and managed use of natural resources. An Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required.
- 5.26 The Council has completed a number of additional pieces of evidence base of strategic relevance to the more immediate natural environment of the Borough. These reports have been prepared with any relevant consultation or engagement with neighbouring authorities taking place during the course of their preparation. They include:
- Green Belt Assessment (2019)
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 1 (2020) and Level 2 (2021);
 - Landscape Character Appraisal of Three Sites within Blackburn (2020);
 - Climate Change and Natural Capital Study (2021);
 - Open Space Audit (2021);
 - Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment (2021); and
 - Potential Compensatory Improvements to the Green Belt at the Strategic Employment Site Junction 5 of the M65 (2021)
- 5.27 Core Policy 5 (CP5): Climate Change and Core Policy 6 (CP6): The Natural Environment of the Regulation 19 Local Plan provide the relevant strategic policy approach.
- 5.28 The relevant strategic environmental matters are detailed further through the following:
- Identification of areas potentially suitable for Wind Energy Development (Policy DM12);
 - Identification and protection of Environmental Opportunity Areas (Policy DM14);
 - Identification and protection of the Green Infrastructure network (Policy DM16);
 - Protection of landscapes and their key features (Policy DM22); and
 - A requirement for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining green belt land to offset the impact of removal of green belt at the Junction 5 Strategic Employment Site (Policy E179).
- 5.29 Whilst potential green belt improvements have been identified in the environs of the Junction 5 Strategic Employment Site the feasibility of options has not yet been investigated. Further consultation work will take place with the local community and Hyndburn Borough Council prior to any development taking place to ensure that suitable and appropriate improvements are taken forward to satisfy the requirements of Policy E179. These may include measures within the Borough of Hyndburn itself.

5.30 In respect of the identified Environmental Opportunity Areas (and Policy DM14), further work is also ongoing with regards to the delivery of these. The Council has begun exploring the implementation of this policy with key landowners, such as United Utilities. EOAs offer potential for habitat enhancements, biodiversity net gain, carbon management and/or flood risk mitigation. The Council is also part of a collective of local authorities involved in developing the concept of Authority Based Insetting (ABI) that links to the idea of EOAs set out in the Local Plan. ABI is a framework for helping to stimulate investment in local carbon offsetting projects and helping to measure the benefits in terms of local carbon reduction ambitions.

Strategic Matter 4 Agreement (Natural Environment)	Local Planning Authority signatories agree that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no outstanding unresolved strategic issues relating to the Green Infrastructure network; • There are no outstanding unresolved strategic issues relating to Environmental Opportunity Areas; • There are no outstanding unresolved strategic issues relating to the identification of Areas Suitable for Wind; and • Compensatory improvements for the loss of green belt land arising from site E179 will be considered further prior to any planning application being granted through further joint working with Hyndburn Borough Council and the local community.
	The United Utilities (UU) signatory agrees that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification of Environmental Opportunity Areas in the Local Plan (and associated Policy DM14) together with the commitments to Green and Blue Infrastructure (and associated Policy DM16) can help to stimulate future investment in local projects relating to: habitat enhancements; biodiversity net gain; recreation; green/blue infrastructure; carbon management; surface water management and flood risk mitigation within UU's land ownership; • United Utilities will continue working co-operatively with the Local Authority to identify and implement appropriate projects over the course of the Local Plan.

Strategic Matter 5: Transport

- 5.31 The Council has prepared a wide range of evidence base reports setting out the baseline position and potential impacts of proposed Local Plan growth on the transport network – this includes the local pedestrian, cycling, public transport and highway networks. Where appropriate, mitigation measures are set out.
- 5.32 In summary, the key reports include
- Connectivity Studies (2020) for North Blackburn, South East Blackburn, West Blackburn and Darwen;
 - Local Plan Transport Study: Volume 1 Baseline Report (2020);
 - Local Plan Transport Study: Volume 2 Assessment and Mitigation Report (2021);
 - Strategic Employment Site Transport Study (2021); and
 - South East Blackburn Transport Strategy (2021);
- 5.33 Where the need for highway mitigation schemes has been identified, the Council has undertaken further detailed feasibility work on these. In the case of Junction 5 of the M65, due to the strategic significance of the junction to Local Plan growth, a buildability report has also been prepared to demonstrate the delivery of an appropriate scheme.
- 5.34 Core Policy 9 (CP9): Transport and Accessibility of the Regulation 19 Local Plan provides the strategic policy overview with DM Policy 38 (DM38): Major Infrastructure Schemes providing some further detail in relation to proposed new link roads and major junction improvements. The Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan, provided alongside the Local Plan evidence base, directly supports Policy DM38 and provides a significantly larger list of schemes than are set out in the policy itself.
- 5.35 The Local Plan Transport Study examined potential impacts on sustainable modes of travel and existing networks. Relevant findings have informed the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for the Borough, and are also being fed into the ongoing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The Local Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) also includes these findings alongside all other forms of relevant infrastructure.
- 5.36 The Council has worked closely with National Highways throughout the undertaking of the Local Plan Transport Study and Strategic Employment Site Transport Study. The Council will be preparing a separate Statement of Common Ground to be signed by National Highways. This will take account of the findings set out in the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan evidence base, relevant findings from Hyndburn's Local Plan evidence base, and also further work commissioned by National Highways to model (through micro-simulation modelling) the operation of Junction 6 of the M65.
- 5.37 The Council is working jointly with Lancashire County Council and Blackpool Borough Council in preparing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for the combined authorities. The Key Challenges and Objectives for LTP4 have been agreed and been taken into account in the preparation of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan. The Council will continue to work collaboratively in 2022 and in consultation with relevant partners and stakeholders to finalise the LTP4.

Strategic Matter 5 Agreement (Transport)	Local Planning authority signatories agree that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no outstanding unresolved strategic issues relating to transport
	The Lancashire County Council signatory agrees that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the A6119 Whitebirk Drive / Peel Retail Park junctions will take place following the first year of adoption of the new Local Plan (unless it is agreed that traffic volumes and patterns are such that it is unnecessary to do so). BwDBC and LCC will continue to work closely following adoption of the Local Plan to understand whether mitigation will be necessary and to update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) should any mitigation be identified as necessary through post-adoption monitoring.

Strategic Matter 6: Gypsy and Travellers

- 5.38 In 2019 the Council published a Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). This analysed the latest available evidence to identify the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across the study area which included both boroughs of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn.
- 5.39 The GTAA highlighted a need for 17 additional permanent pitches and 5 transit gypsy and traveller pitches over the full plan period. Core Policy 4 (CP4): Housing Development confirms the Council’s intention to allocate specific, deliverable sites for at least five years’ supply, with broad locations for growth identified for years 6-15 of the plan. DM Policy 4 (DM4): Assessing Planning Applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites will be used to assess any future applications.
- 5.40 The evidence base demonstrated no requirement for travelling showperson plots.
- 5.41 Further to the GTAA, the Council has published additional evidence base documents to support the policy approach and demonstrate deliverability of the allocated gypsy and traveller sites in the Local Plan:
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Selection Methodology (2020);
 - Gypsy and Traveller Site Selection Outline Feasibility Study, Intack Bus Depot (2020);
 - Gypsy and Traveller Site Selection Outline Feasibility Study, HWRC George Street West (2020).

<p>Strategic Matter 6 Agreement (Gypsy and Travellers)</p>	<p>Local Planning authority signatories agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed level of gypsy and traveller pitches in Blackburn with Darwen is appropriate in the context of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan; • there is no further unmet gypsy and traveller need in respective neighbouring authority areas required to be met in Blackburn with Darwen;
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Appendix A – Summary of evidence of joint working

A.1 National Planning Practice Guidance makes clear that a Statement of Common Ground:

‘... is expected to be proportionate to the matters being addressed. It is expected to be concise and is not intended to document every occasion that strategic policy-making authorities meet, consult with each other, or for example contact prescribed bodies under the duty to cooperate’⁹.

A.2 A brief summary of the different mechanisms and forums for joint working in the preparation of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan is set out below. Further specific details are set out in the [Regulation 18 Consultation Statement](#) (July 2021) and the [Issues and Options Consultation Report](#) (August 2019) and the Council will prepare a further Consultation Statement following completion of the Regulation 19 consultation exercise, prior to Submission of the Plan.

A.3 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has co-operated with the relevant prescribed bodies throughout the course of preparing the Local Plan 2021-37 through a combination of:

1. Forums/meetings e.g.

- Lancashire Development Plan Officers Group;
- Lancashire Climate Officers Working Group;
- Lancashire Local Transport Plan Working Group;
- Specific ‘Duty to Co-operate’ meetings/presentations: led by Blackburn with Darwen during Regulation 18 consultation (February 2021) and earlier meetings in 2020; and attendance at other neighbouring authority requests relating to their own DtC activities.

2. Preparation of joint evidence base documents with other Local Authorities e.g.

- Housing and Economic Needs Assessment;
- Economic Needs Assessment update; and
- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

3. Consultation with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies on evidence base preparation e.g.

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Green Belt Study;
- Retail and Leisure Study;
- Transport Studies;
- Playing Pitch Strategy / Built Sports Facilities Strategy; and
- Heritage Impact Assessments.

⁹ Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 61-011-20190315 of [Plan-making - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)