



Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023-2041

Statement of Common Ground Between the Central Lancashire Authorities (Chorley Council, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council) and Lancashire County Council on the matters of Highways and Transport

Fourth Edition
January 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been developed in order to address Strategic Planning matters between the parties consisting of the Central Lancashire Authorities (CLAs) of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble, and Lancashire County Council (LCC).
- 1.2 The SoCG has been prepared to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requirements. Paragraph 24 to 27 of the NPPF1 state that “Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries”. Moreover, the “strategic policy-making authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statement of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these”. Paragraphs 20 to 23 set out how the duty to cooperate works and how strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries require effective and on-going cooperation. These matters include:
- Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure, and other commercial development.
 - Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat).
 - Community facilities (such as health, education, and cultural infrastructure); and
 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built, and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 1.3 According to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)², a SoCG is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary matters. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. It forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate compliance with the duty to cooperate.
- 1.4 Both NPPF and PPG make it clear that a SoCG should primarily be produced to document the strategic cross-boundary matters. Therefore, this SoCG is the written record account of the progress achieved in the planning process for strategic matters in Central Lancashire and how the CLAs have worked effectively to fulfil

¹ NPPF Version December 2023

² [Plan-making - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making)

their duty to cooperate. The approach taken in writing this statement is in accordance with the requirements of the PPG.

2. Background of Central Lancashire

- 2.1 Central Lancashire covers the geographical areas of Preston City Council, Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council, which functions as one integrated local economy and commuting area. It is a single housing market area with high levels of self-containment, or families moving within the area. It is therefore appropriate to work strategically in collaboration to ensure our policy is joined up and complementary.
- 2.2 The joint working on planning-related matters began in 2008, when the three councils came together and produced a Central Lancashire Core Strategy. The three councils collaborated to produce the Local Development Framework and adopted the first Core Strategy in July 2012, which sets out the strategic planning policies for Central Lancashire. In 2018, a review of the Core Strategy and individual local plans began with a view to deliver a single Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP), reflecting both the shared strategic policy objectives and more detailed non-strategic policies.
- 2.3 A Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has been established, made-up of elected members from each authority. This Committee has the responsibility to consider proposals, open them up to debate and move to endorse or challenge them at their discretion. Members from LCC also attend the JAC.

3. Strategic Geography

- 3.1 Central Lancashire is in the heart of Lancashire within the North West Region and covers the three local authority districts of South Ribble, Chorley, and Preston. It comprises an urban core surrounded by attractive scenery ranging from the Pennine foothills / West Pennine Moors in the East, to the Lancashire Plain and the Ribble and Alt Estuary in the West. The area is bounded by Fylde and West Lancashire to the West, Ribble Valley, and Blackburn with Darwen to the East, Wyre to the North and Greater Manchester to the South.
- 3.2 The Central Lancashire area is a diverse mix of urban and rural including towns, villages, and sparsely populated countryside. Some of the main landscape attractions and protected wildlife habitats in the area include the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the West Pennine Moors SSSI, and the Ribble and Alt estuaries. There are also significant areas of open space and attractive public parks for sport, leisure, and recreation. Grid-iron pattern streets typify the urban areas of Preston, Chorley, and Leyland, as workers housing was built tightly around the mills and industrial complexes.
- 3.3 The area covered by the Central Lancashire Local Plan is shown in the map below.



4. Joint Working: Central Lancashire Authorities and Lancashire County Council

- 4.1 The purpose of the SOCG is to inform the Inspector appointed for the Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination and other parties about the areas of agreement and areas where there is ongoing work underway to address outstanding matters between the CLAs and Lancashire County Council in relation to key strategic matters contained in the Central Lancashire Local Plan (2023-2041). Duty to cooperate engagement has been a consideration in the development of the policies, supporting explanatory text and Infrastructure Delivery Plan for the draft Local Plan.
- 4.2 Chorley, Preston, and South Ribble councils are the Local Planning Authorities for each of their administrative areas. Lancashire County Council is the Local Planning Authority in relation to Minerals and Waste for Lancashire including Central Lancashire and is also the Local Education Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority and Local Highway Authority. Both parties are Prescribed Bodies for the purposes of the Duty to Cooperate.
- 4.3 This SOCG pertains only to Highways and Transport and reflects the agreed position the Central Lancashire Authorities and Lancashire County Council in its role as the Local Highway Authority for submission to the Inspector of the Central Lancashire Local Plan Examination.

5. Duty to Co-Operate

- 5.1 The Duty to Co-operate was created in the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation.

6. Highways and Transport

- 6.1 Lancashire County Council (LCC) is the Local Transport Authority and Local Highway Authority (LHA) for the three CLAs. From 1 April 2026, Lancashire Combined County Authority will become the Local Transport Authority for the Lancashire Combined County Authority area, covering the Constituent Council areas of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council. Jacobs Consultants were commissioned by LCC to support the CLAs to produce the strategic transport evidence. Appendix One illustrates the key deliverables achieved and timeline.

Statutory Duties of the Local Highway Authority

- 6.2 The LHA has statutory responsibilities under the **Highways Act 1980** and the **Traffic Management Act 2004**, including:
- Maintaining and managing the public highway network.
 - Securing safe and suitable movement of all users on the local highway network.
 - Ensuring highway safety and protecting the interests of all highway users.
 - Supporting sustainable transport objectives consistent with national and local policy.

The CLAs acknowledge these duties and recognise the need for Local Plan policies to align with the LHA's statutory functions.

Alignment with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.3 It is agreed that the Local Plan must be consistent with the latest NPPF (December 2024), which includes relevant provisions for:
- **Presumption in favour of suitably located development**
 - **Transport-led growth**
 - **Urban densification**
 - **Sustainable transport integration**
 - **Climate commitments**
 - **Vision-led development**

It is agreed that these provisions are directly relevant to Central Lancashire, and growth must be sustainable.

Alignment with Transport and Highway Guidance

6.4 The LHA and CLAs agree that transport policies and infrastructure delivery will be guided by the following key documents:

- **Decide and Provide: Transport Assessments in Lancashire Guidance (LCC, 2025):** Ensuring transport planning is proactive, shaping places around sustainable travel choices with a greater focus on vision, different scenarios, and measuring success of interventions. An approach to transport planning based on setting outcomes for a development based on achieving well-designed, sustainable and popular places, and providing the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes.
- **Manual for Streets (DfT, 2007; MfS2, 2010):** Applying design principles that prioritise people, place-making, and safety in street design, particularly in residential and mixed-use areas.
- **Inclusive Mobility (DfT, 2021):** Ensuring accessibility for all, including disabled people, older people, and those with mobility impairments, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 – Cycle Infrastructure Design (DfT, 2020):** Providing a national standard for high-quality, safe, and coherent cycling infrastructure.
- **Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking (DfT, 2020):** Embedding active travel as a core component of transport planning.
- **Traffic Management Act 2004 – Network Management Duty:** Ensuring the expeditious movement of traffic while balancing environmental and safety considerations.

It is agreed that the above provide the framework for delivering transport policies that are consistent with national best practice.

The Central Lancashire Local Plan will be underpinned by the Local Transport Plan 4. This has been through consultation and was prepared in tandem with the Central Lancashire Local Plan. The principles of LTP4 have been integrated into the approach to transport.

General Matters

6.5 Notwithstanding the above, the Local Plan utilises published transport plans including Local Transport Plan 3, the Highways and Transport Masterplan (including ongoing development activity to review and refresh these plans), the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal, Highways and Transport Strategy 2023-2025, and the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

- 6.6 A Transport Working Group (TWG) comprising of consultants, Jacobs and officers from the CLAs, LCC (including the Local Highway Authority) and National Highways (who are the highway authority for the Strategic Road Network), have discussed transport matters for the Local Plan.
- 6.7 A vision-led approach (as required by the National Planning Policy Framework) was agreed with LCC. LCC also published the Decide and Provide: Transport Assessments in Lancashire Guidance and directed the appointed transport consultants Jacobs to this to assist with the process.
- 6.8 The transport study and associated transport evidence base that has been prepared has assessed the impact of the CLLP upon the highway network and proposes sustainable mitigation solutions, where necessary. LCC as LHA has reviewed the transport evidence as set out in the Jacob's transport work. This work consists of the suite of documents including the following:
- Stage 0 Site RAG Assessment;
 - Stage 1A CLTM Base Model Re-Validation Report;
 - Stage 1b Appendices;
 - Stage 1B Technical Note of Model Data Gaps;
 - Stage 1B Technical Note on Trip Rates;
 - Stage 1B Transport Evidence Stage 1B Report;
 - Stage 2 Trip Rate and Modal Shift Methodology Note;
 - Stage 2A Central Lancashire Local Plan Transport Evidence (IT06);
 - Stage 2A Appendices A to I (IT06); and
 - Stage 2B CLLP Transport Evidence Stage 2B Report (IT07).
- 6.9 Jacob's work has also generated a series of proposed highway infrastructure interventions (description only) at the local highway network which are included within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) of the CLLP as well as the following documents:
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update (IDP) (IT08); and
 - Updated Infrastructure Schedule (IDS) (IT09) (now superseded)
- This work has been supplemented by additional work led by the Local Highway Authority, and where required supported by Jacobs during December 2025 and January 2026, including a number of detailed clarifications (for example trip rates, rail impacts, assessed development, influence of cycling, network operation, delivery of the IDP/IDS etc.)
- This culminated in the preparation of an updated IDP/IDS. It is considered by the LHA that these are necessary and proportionate to support the Local Plan.
- 6.10 Given the strategic nature of the Central Lancashire Local Plan, and the geographic extent of the local highway network affected by the Plan, it is understood and accepted by all parties that there is a need to commit to continued collaboration throughout the planning process to ensure the safe, efficient and reliable operation of the local highway network (including adjacent strategic highway authority network

where appropriate). It is agreed by all parties the Local Plan with its IDP/IDS and supporting analysis (where appropriate) should be kept up to date to facilitate development through the Local Plan period.

- 6.11 The parties agree the proposed transport mitigation measures support the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, and do not undermine the statutory duties of the LHA, as referenced in Paragraph 6.2.
- 6.12 It is agreed in the main statement of common ground (September 2025) that:
- All parties must be satisfied with the completed Transport Assessment.
 - The completed Transport Assessment will need to be provided to parties incorporating modelled highway mitigation measures.
 - The required infrastructure must be agreed by all parties (including the Local Highway Authority)
 - A final* agreed iteration of the IDP/IDS will need to be prepared

**Refers to the IDP/IDS at that moment in time being agreed. It is a live document, required to be updated as considered necessary.*

- 6.13 LCC as LHA confirms that it is not seeking any modifications to the proposed site allocations, in terms of scale and location, as set out in Chapter 3 of the CLLP.
- 6.14 It is further noted that as part of this step change in approach to transport, ongoing monitoring will be undertaken where required, and the five-year review of Central Lancashire Local Plan presents an important opportunity to assess its progress. It is agreed that the transport assessment for the CLLP will be revisited where required to assess progress and that transport evidence will be updated, if required by the LHA. The agreement set out in clause 6.12 is agreed to be followed as part of the five-year review of the CLLP.
- 6.15 The parties agree that a long-term ambition is the River Ribble Crossing, which will not form part of the proposals within this Local Plan but remains important for strategic long-term planning and transport in Central Lancashire.

Infrastructure Works

- 6.16 The Central Lancashire Local Plan Transport Evidence Base provides an indication of locations where enhancement may be required to mitigate highway impacts on the local highway network. Where indicative schemes / interventions have been identified these are set out in the updated IDP/IDS.
- 6.17 It is agreed that the IDP/IDS will be updated with changes to/further highway mitigation as part of ongoing collaboration. This may require network monitoring and updating of models in line with that delivered/detailed. Any such enhancements derived from this analysis will seek to mitigate potential cumulative adverse impacts of traffic generated by the Local Plan on the safe, efficient, and reliable operation of the local highway network whilst meeting the NPPF objectives of promoting vision-led growth. It is agreed that individual allocations when considered as part of the

Planning process will have their own local requirements which may not be included in the IDP/IDS.

6.18 It is agreed that Masterplans, Supplementary Planning Documents and/or Supplementary Plans or Highway Strategies may be necessary in areas where planned development is expected to impact on the highway network to a degree the LHA consider the cumulative impacts may be unacceptable, with regard for the latest up to date evidence on network operation. This may include:

- An update to the North West Preston Masterplan
- Preston City Centre
- North East Preston (Planning For Employment)
- Development around M61 J8 and the A674/Blackburn Road

Future Collaboration Between LCC as LHA and the CLA's

6.19 It is agreed that further work is required to confirm the details and phasing of enhancements to the local highway network in the short, medium, and longer term to support the Local Plans delivery.

6.20 All parties agree to work collaboratively to understand such requirements with future workstreams potentially including but not limited to:

- Masterplanning (including phasing) of the larger sites to better understand the timescales within the plan period when significant impacts are expected as a result of the allocations;
- Further, more detailed studies/strategies to develop the detail of schemes that may be required to mitigate the potential impacts of the allocations (with due consideration for timeframes/likely delivery of development) on the local highway network, broadly in accordance with when those sites come forward in the planning process (building on masterplanning work where appropriate); and
- Use of the most appropriate traffic modelling tools supported by observed traffic data that is reflective of prevailing traffic conditions of the local highway and strategic network being considered.

Funding

6.21 Whilst the IDP/IDS highlights funding sources where known, it is agreed that all sources of funding for infrastructure works will continue to be explored. The CLA's are committed to continue funding infrastructure works through CIL and S106 contributions. It is agreed by the parties that new connections, sustainable provision, capacity enhancements (all modes), and network efficiencies to the Local Highway Network may be required. Those which are necessary to deliver growth should be identified as part of the plan-making process, as this provides the best opportunity to consider the cumulative impacts of development and to identify appropriate mechanisms for the delivery of highway infrastructure. Other likely transport

changes (such as the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans) build upon that identified in the IDS.

- 6.22 LCC as LHA will work together with CLA's to identify whether there are realistic alternative funding mechanisms and opportunities (if appropriate with regard to scope and cost) to include other public funding programmes and developer contribution strategies to be secured by policy ID2 in the CLLP.

7. Other Matters

- 7.1 There are no matters to be concluded.
- 7.2 Regular workshops between Jacobs and LCC as LHA have taken place between the 8th December 2025, and the 8th of January 2026.
- 7.3 CLLP work has been supplemented by additional work led by the Local Highway Authority, and where required supported by Jacobs including a number of detailed clarifications (for example trip rates, rail impacts, assessed development, influence of cycling, network operation, delivery of the IDS etc.)
- 7.4 This culminated in the preparation of an updated IDP/IDS, with supporting information. It is considered by the LHA that these are necessary and proportionate to support the Local Plan.
- 7.5 The Jacobs Transport Assessment utilises a Strategic Model, to understand the cumulative impacts of development. Jacobs' assessment is not suitable for individual applications to rely upon (either in part or in whole) for their own assessments. Developers should refer to *LCC's Decide and Provide: Transport Assessment in Lancashire Guidance* and prepare their own assessment using up-to-date information and more discreet modelling (where appropriate).

8. Signatories

Lancashire County Council

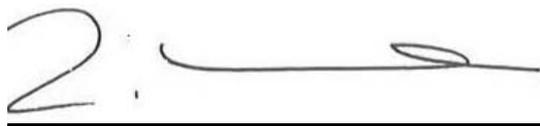


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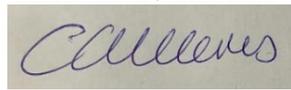
Chorley Council



Zoe Whiteside

Head of Spatial Planning

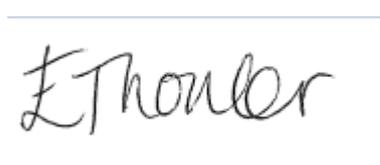
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Carolyn Williams

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South Ribble Borough Council



Elizabeth Hindle

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Appendix One – Key Deliverables and Timeline

Stage	Deliverable	Version Log	Date
Inception	Technical Note on Methodology for Transport Evidence for Local Plan Testing	v0 - First draft submitted to LCC	30/06/2023
		v1- Rev 1 after incorporating LCC comments	18/07/2023
		v1 - Rev 1 submitted to NH and LCC Highways	02/10/2023
		NH Transport Evidence Methodology Review 1	11/10/2023
		v2 - Rev 2 after incorporating Stage 0 assessment works submitted to LCC	13/11/2023
		v2 - Rev 2 after incorporating Stage 0 assessment works submitted to TWG	27/11/2023
		NH Transport Evidence Methodology Review 2	29/12/2023
		v3 - Rev 3 after incorporating Stage 0 assessment works submitted to TWG	11/01/2024
		NH Transport Evidence Methodology Review 3	30/01/2024
Stage 0	CLLP Stage 0 Preliminary Transport Assessment	v0 - First draft submitted to TWG	21/03/2024
Stage 1A	TN on Model Data Gaps	v0 - First draft submitted to TWG	02/04/2024
	CLTM Base re-validation Report	v0 -draft for TWG comments	02/08/2024
		v1 - revised report after addressing TWG comments (comments received LCC Neil Stevens -16/08/2024, NH/WSP - 13/09/2024)	22/10/2024
		v2 - final report submission (comments received NH/WSP 21/11/2024)	30/01/2025
Stage 1B	Technical Note on Future Year Trip Rate	v0 -draft for TWG comments.	22/10/2024
		NH/WSP comments received, responses provided.	21/11/2024
	CLLP Stage 1B Transport Baseline Report	v0 -draft for TWG comments.	20/12/2024
Stage 2A	Workshops	Sustainable Workshop 1 (In Person)	03/03/2025
		Sustainable Workshop 2 (In Person)	05/03/2025
		Sustainable Workshop 3 (In Person)	07/03/2025
	LP Stage 2 trip rate and modal shift methodology note	v0 -draft for TWG comments.	06/06/2025
	CLLP Stage 2A Strategic Transport Assessment Report	v0 -draft for TWG comments.	27/06/2025
NH/WSP comments received, responses provided.		15/07/2025	
Stage 2B	Stage 2B Transport Assessment	v0 -draft for TWG comments.	29/08/2025
		NH/WSP comments received, responses provided.	28/10/2025
		LCC Highways comments, responses provided	13/11/2025
	SOCG Map	Meeting discussing SOCG with CLAs, NH, LCC.	01/12/2025
	CLLP Workshops/Meetings	Transport Consultants (Jacobs) provide clarification on matters:	05/12/2025
			08/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed Development (Uncertainty Log) 	09/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenarios (Viewed Model Viewer) 	10/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Travel (Matrix Totals and Cycle Mode Shares provided) 	11/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular Highway Impacts (Viewed Model Viewer, Trip Rate clarification, Rail uptake information provided) 	12/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modelling and Microsimulation (Clarification via Model Viewer and discussion) 	16/12/2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified areas of mitigation (Updated IDS) 	18/12/2025
	23/12/2025		
	08/01/2026		