Planning Inspectorate

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5 November 2026

Chris Hayward - Director of Development and Housing, Preston City Council

Gayle Wootton – Director of Property and Planning, Chorley and South Ribble Councils.

Dear Sir and Madam

Examination of the Central Lancashire Local Plan 2023 – 2041
Response to Post Hearing Work and Related Matters

We have previously indicated that some outstanding matters with the Local Plan may be addressed through early preparation of a subsequent plan in the new system.

Since the hearings there have been several announcements in relation to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Lancashire, the most recent of which advises that all options for LGR in the County are to be reconsidered, with outcomes to be known by early next year.

Of the options to be reconsidered, only one would see the three authorities which make up the Central Lancashire Plan area forming part of a single local planning authority. We also note from the most recent announcement that the new successor Councils are to be established in 2029.

Furthermore, since the hearings were held, the Regulations bringing into force the new plan-making system provided by amendments to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the Act) have now been brought into place. Section 15C of the 2004 Act (the Act) makes clear that only one plan can be prepared at one time for each local planning authority in the new system.

In light of the fact that the three authorities which make up the Central Lancashire Plan area may not in future form part of a single local planning authority, and the requirement that only one plan can be prepared for each local planning authority, we would appreciate the Councils' views on what the implications of this might be for future plan-making for Chorley, South Ribble and Preston. Your response should outline your view as to whether a main modification that sought to secure early plan preparation in the new system would provide an effective mechanism to address any outstanding matters, in the context of LGR and the changes brought about by the 2026 Regs and the amended Act. The reasons for your views on these matters

should be clearly articulated and accompanied by a likely timetable for the preparation of any subsequent plan to cover the Central Lancashire area. In framing your response, you should refer the guidance on this matter set out in the government's Create or Update a Local Plan resource. This sets out that MHCLG intends to publish transitional regulations to deal with the complexities which may arise because of LGR, including the ability for more than one local plan to have effect during the transitional period.

We look forward to receiving your considered opinion on this matter within 14 days of the date of this letter.

Anne Jordan
Alison Partington

INSPECTORS