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# Central Lancashire **Rural Development** Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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**Final Version October 2012**



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## A: Introduction

1. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as part of the reforms to the planning system. Although not forming part of the statutory development plan, one of the functions of an SPD is to provide further detail on policies and proposals within the development plan. SPDs must be consistent with national and regional planning policies as well as the policies set out in the development plan.
2. The Central Lancashire SPDs have been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Regulations (SI 2004.2204) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), conforming and responding to all relevant local and national policies and is based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base. They form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Central Lancashire authorities of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble. SPDs do not seek to allocate land but are to be considered alongside Policy in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Their guidance should therefore be taken into consideration from the earliest stages of the development process of any site, including any purchase negotiations and in the preparation of development schemes.
3. The purpose of this Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to set out the Councils' approach to development in the rural areas of Central Lancashire. The SPD clarifies the Councils' support for specific initiatives to sustain and encourage appropriate growth in the rural economy, and it aims to ensure that:
  - rural communities thrive as mixed communities where people young and old, on high and lower incomes are able to live in rural settlements;
  - rural economic development is supported and encouraged within clearly defined parameters;
  - development takes place in a way which helps places become more sustainable;
  - existing services in rural areas are supported and maintained.
4. Once adopted, this document should be afforded significant weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

## B: Planning Policy

### National Policy

5. Guidance on planning policy is issued by central Government in the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF: March 2012). Local Planning Authorities have to take the contents of the NPPF into account when determining planning applications and preparing documents for the Local Development Framework.
6. The sections of the NPPF relevant to the Rural Development SPD are as follows:
  - **(paragraph 14)** At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that:
    - local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
    - Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
      - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or
      - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted...
  - **(paragraph 17, fifth bullet point)**....recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.
  - **(paragraph 28)** Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:
    - support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
    - promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.
- **(paragraph 81)**... local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
- **(paragraph 89)** A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
  - buildings for agriculture and forestry;
  - provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
  - limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
- **(paragraph 109)** The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
  - recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
  - minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;...





## Regional Policy

7. **The North West Plan Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) 2008** is the Regional Plan for the North West to the period 2021 and covers the Central Lancashire area. The Government has made a policy commitment in the Localism Act to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy.

## Local Policy

8. **The Local Development Framework** is a suite of documents which will, when complete, replace the existing old-style Local Plans as the spatial planning policy documents for the three Central Lancashire councils. The **Core Strategy** is the key document as it sets the overarching vision for the area. It will be underpinned by **Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** for each of the three Local Authorities. These documents will include policies and proposals allocating some land for development whilst protecting other areas from inappropriate development. The Site Allocations DPDs will conform to the Core Strategy and, when adopted, will supersede the adopted Preston Local Plan 2004, South Ribble Local Plan 2000 and Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003.

9. The Central Lancashire Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012. The particular Core Strategy policies which relate to this SPD are:

Policy 1: Locating Growth

Policy 4: Housing Delivery

Policy 8: Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation

Policy 10: Employment Premises and Sites

Policy 13: Rural Economy

Policy 16: Heritage Assets

Policy 17: Design of New Buildings

Policy 18: Green Infrastructure

Policy 21: Landscape Character Areas

Policy 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy 25: Community Facilities

Policy 31: Agricultural Land



10. A fundamental objective of the Core Strategy is to concentrate the bulk of sustainable development within the urban areas of Central Lancashire in order to restrict encroachment into the open countryside. However, the Councils will also support the economic vitality and viability of rural areas by ensuring that development is appropriate to the different types of settlement in the countryside. Policy 1 of the Core Strategy sets out the key areas where growth and investment will be concentrated. Rural areas are defined as those settlements outside of the Preston/South Ribble Urban Area, the Key Service Centres of Leyland, Chorley and Longridge, and the Urban Local Service Centres of Adlington, Clayton Brook/Green, Clayton-le-Woods (Lancaster Lane), Coppull, Euxton and Whittle-le-Woods. In the rural areas, the Core Strategy identifies the following hierarchy of settlements:

- Rural Local Service Centres identified as Brinscall/Withnell, Eccleston and Longton, where growth and investment will be encouraged to help meet local housing and employment needs and to support the provision of services to the wider area.
- Smaller villages, substantially built up frontages and Major Developed Sites, where development will typically be small scale and limited to appropriate infilling, conversion of buildings and proposals to meet local need, unless there are exceptional reasons for larger scale redevelopment schemes.

11. Policy 13 of the Core Strategy sets out a number of specific ways in which the local planning authorities may help to achieve economic and social improvement in rural areas. The policy concludes by stating:

*In all cases, proposals will be required to show good siting and design in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape without undermining the purposes of the Green Belt, the functioning of the Green Infrastructure and the functioning of the ecological frameworks. Development should also be of an appropriate scale and be located where the environment and infrastructure can accommodate the impacts of expansion.*

12. The Green Belt is extensive in South Ribble and Chorley where it washes over the smaller villages, substantially built up frontages and Major Developed Sites. Any development proposals in those areas will be subject to Green Belt policy. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Proposals Maps of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for each Council area (under preparation).

13. Chorley Council has designated part of the West Pennine Moors as an Area of Other Open Countryside, and part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies within Preston City Council's administrative boundary. These areas are excluded from the Green Belt but are protected from unacceptable development which would harm their open countryside and rural character (see above references to the Proposals Maps).

14. As at October 2012, five SPDs have been prepared for Affordable Housing, Design, Controlling the Re-use of Employment Premises, Rural Development, and Access to Healthy Food. This SPD will fit into the LDF by setting out guidance to ensure the Core Strategy policies and objectives for rural development are clearly articulated.

## C: General guidance

15. All planning proposals for rural development will be assessed against the policy framework above, including Policy 13 of the Core Strategy. Consideration will be given to the following general aspects of any proposal, as appropriate:

- the layout, massing, scale, materials and landscaping;
- highway access, safety and traffic generation;
- the potential impact on local amenities and the environment.

A landscape character assessment may be required, depending on the scale of the proposal, in accordance with Core Strategy policy 21 and The Landscape Strategy for Lancashire – Landscape Character Assessment (2000).

16. In addition, this guidance sets out specific considerations relevant to particular land uses as follows:

- employment (paragraphs 16 and 17);
- small business units (paragraphs 18 and 19);
- live/work units (paragraphs 20 and 21);
- garden centres (paragraphs 22, 23 and 27);
- horticultural nurseries (paragraphs 24, 25 and 27);
- farm shops (paragraphs 28 and 29);
- tourism (paragraphs 30 to 33);
- equestrian development (paragraphs 34 to 38);
- community uses (paragraphs 39 to 42);
- recreational development (paragraphs 43 to 45);
- re-use, replacement or extension to buildings in the countryside (paragraphs 46 to 54).





## D: Employment

17. It is important that employment opportunities exist in rural areas firstly, to enable local people to access employment close to where they live, secondly, to help avoid excessive levels of commuting to urban areas and thirdly to ensure that local communities remain vibrant and sustainable. The rural areas in Central Lancashire no longer rely on agriculture as a major source of employment. There is now a much more diverse economic profile and it is important that this is encouraged and supported within the area. The economic activity in the countryside differs from urban areas in that:

- businesses tend to be smaller;
- many businesses are home based;
- smaller businesses usually require premises, rather than land, to start operating or to expand;
- growing businesses in need of larger premises often have to move longer distances to find suitable premises due to a lack of choice;
- it is often harder to attract a skilled workforce to rural areas.

18. Employment development proposals should be conveniently located in relation to the surrounding road network, provide a safe access, be adequately serviced or can be serviced at a reasonable cost. Applicants seeking planning permission should also demonstrate that the proposed use would not be detrimental to local amenities and the use of neighbouring land. In order to protect visual amenity, signage should be kept to a minimum. The use of large and/or illuminated signs will not be appropriate in the countryside. Uses that involve outside storage or large numbers of parked vehicles are also unlikely to be acceptable, as again these are likely to be visually intrusive in the countryside.

### Small business units

19. The Councils will support the development of small business units in rural areas (mainly use class B1), including farm diversification enterprises, in buildings that are no longer required for their original purpose. This may also include business 'hubs' which encourage the use of shared space such as meeting rooms and offices. Noise impact assessments may be required for proposals for general industrial development (B2 use) or the storage and distribution of goods (B8 use) in certain circumstances. Detailed design guidance on the re-use of rural buildings is contained in the Central Lancashire Design SPD.

20. Where there is a small home based business, the Councils will where appropriate consider sensitively designed applications for the extension of residential premises for appropriately scaled office or storage space to support existing home working.

### Live/work units

21. Live/work units are buildings where parts of the floor space are designed as a small work unit, while the remainder of the space is devoted to living accommodation. The Councils' definition of a live/work unit is a work space that is integrated with a dwelling unit occupied by the proprietor of the work space, with at least 50% of the floorspace being dedicated to the work unit. There are two ways that this type of unit can be provided:

- conversion of existing buildings such as farm buildings;
- new buildings designed specifically for live/work uses.

22. This type of development should have close access to classified roads, and space for parking/deliveries. Someone who lives in the residential part of the unit should be employed wholly or primarily in the workspace provided in the development. Live/work units will be controlled by suitable conditions to ensure they are used in accordance with the original consent. Conditions will include occupation restrictions to prevent use as a residential dwelling and a requirement that the property is to be inspected to ensure that the layout as a live/work unit has been implemented.



## Garden centres and horticultural nurseries

23. The primary activity of a garden centre is the retail sale of goods. They fall within a “sui generis” use, which is outside the more common land uses (including Use Class A1: retail shop) defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended. Most of the stock at a garden centre will be imported for immediate retail sale. There will often be a wide range of other goods sold, which for the most part are related to gardening activity. Garden centres are characterised by significant areas of outdoor storage, display and car parking.

24. Proposals for the erection of buildings for use as a garden centre or for the change of use of existing buildings and land from nursery to garden centre will not normally be considered appropriate development in the open countryside, but may be more suited to locations on the urban fringe. This is because garden centres require significant areas of land and buildings for the storage and display of plants and goods which have been imported in a “sale-ready” or “near sale-ready” condition. This type of development is contrary to the principle of keeping the countryside open. Conditions may be imposed on garden centre applications to restrict the physical extent of any retail activity proposed.

25. In contrast to garden centres, the primary activity of a horticultural nursery is the propagation and nurture of plants, which falls within an agricultural use. Horticultural produce is nurtured until ready for distribution, either wholesale or retail. There may be some directly related ancillary sales, although the range of goods to be sold and the scale of retail activity will be much less significant than in garden centres.

26. Proposals for the erection of new buildings or other forms of development to form new nurseries will normally be appropriate development in the countryside, providing that such proposals are reasonably necessary for the purposes of horticulture. An applicant would need to provide support and justification for such a proposal.

27. A limited amount of retail sales may be appropriate at new nurseries provided that the goods to be sold are directly related to the propagation and nurture of garden plants and shrubs (eg grow bags, seeds, pots, canes and twine) and that the area used for the display of goods for sale (excluding plants and shrubs grown on site) is small in relation to the area used for horticultural activity. Since the Councils’ approach is intended primarily to contain the use of buildings to the essential requirements of agriculture, sales activities should be restricted to a small proportion of the overall floorspace. Conditions will be imposed on any permission granted to restrict the type of goods to be sold at horticultural nurseries and the physical extent of any retail activity proposed.

28. For all garden centre and horticultural nursery applications, account will also be taken of other impacts such as increased traffic movement along country lanes, parking and deliveries, noise from air cooling systems, additional lighting (e.g. car park lighting) and visual impacts of open storage and car parking.

## Farm shops

29. Farm shops are one means of increasing the commercial success of the rural economy. The Councils will seek to avoid the establishment of shops or road-side sales which may result in danger to road users. The Councils will consider applications for a farm shop where:

- the produce sold is mainly grown or reared on the existing farm holding;
- it involves the conversion of existing farm buildings;
- adequate access and parking arrangements are provided.

30. Where permission is granted for the development of a farm shop conditions may be applied to:

- limit goods to those mainly produced on the holding;
- limit the overall scale of development;
- require that the shop is not run independently of the farm; and
- ensure adequate car parking and landscaping.

## Farm Buildings

31. Farming is the most dominant land use in the countryside. New agricultural buildings will be required to meet operational agricultural needs and protect the visual character of the landscape. This will include a consideration of the siting, design, choice of colour materials and any additional planting sympathetic to the surroundings of the development.





## E: Tourism

32. Tourism is an important component of the Central Lancashire economy, and there are many existing tourism destinations in the countryside. Policy 13 of the Core Strategy (Rural Economy) supports proposals for tourism and economic development, including farm diversification, providing they do not undermine the purposes of the Green Belt and the functioning of the network of green infrastructure. Camping, caravanning, bed and breakfast, and holiday cottages provide a variety of accommodation options. Where the Councils permit tourist accommodation, they will expect it to be retained as such and will impose suitable planning conditions to control the use. Occupation will be restricted to prevent use as a residential dwelling. Farm diversification can also include activity centres, arts and crafts shops and wildlife attractions, and these will be treated on their merits by applying planning policies and the principles contained in this guidance.

33. Camping, caravan and chalet sites usually require planning permission. Applicants will need to show that this type of development can be sited unobtrusively and landscaped to minimise impact. Consideration must be given to the impact on neighbouring properties including traffic movement, noise and safety. The provision of services, including fire safety, water supply and sewerage facilities, must also be taken into account. Where planning permission is granted for such a use, it is likely that conditions will be imposed relating to the occupation of the site.

34. Bed and breakfast accommodation may consist of rooms to let within existing occupied dwellings or within previously redundant buildings. Planning permission is only usually required if the essential residential nature of the building is altered, constituting a material change of use. If permission is required the Councils will need to be assured that the essential character of the building and the local environment will be preserved. Adequate vehicular access and off-street car-parking facilities for visitors will be required. Where proposals are at a farm, account should be taken of potential health and safety conflicts with the existing farm business.

35. New hotel buildings and other new tourist accommodation should be concentrated within existing settlements in close proximity to existing services and facilities.





## F: Equestrian development

36. Horse riding and other equestrian activities are popular forms of recreation in the countryside that can fit in well with farming activities and help diversify rural economies. There are a number of livery yards within the area, and there may be further opportunities for the development of supporting businesses selling feed, tack or providing facilities for farriers or vets, preferably re-using existing buildings.

37. Most development involving horses requires planning permission. Generally, planning permission is not required for the grazing of horses which are pets, working farm animals or for breeding. If land is used for the keeping of horses for recreation/leisure purposes which do not fall into these categories then planning permission is required. The erection of stables and associated facilities on open land also requires planning permission. Stables erected within the curtilage of a dwelling house (ie within a garden but not in a separate paddock) for horses kept as "pet animals .... for the domestic needs or personal enjoyment of the dwelling house" have permitted development rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and planning permission is not required.

38. Commercial equestrian developments include livery uses, riding schools and indoor riding arenas. Large-scale developments of this type can rarely be located satisfactorily in open countryside. They are best located within an existing building complex and as part of a farm diversification scheme. Farm buildings which are no longer required for their original purposes are often suitable for conversion to commercial equestrian use, to avoid the need for new buildings which may be intrusive in the countryside. New buildings will only be considered favourably if the proposal relates to the site's main use and if the building is essential to the operation of the business.

39. In assessing the acceptability of equestrian development the Councils will take the following matters into account:

- Scale: a small private development will involve no more than three horses. For development proposals involving more than three horses, the applicant should submit a statement with the planning application detailing why accommodation of the size proposed is required.

- Siting: new buildings should not harm the landscape character of the surrounding area. They should be well related to existing trees, hedges or landscape features, avoiding prominent positions, and generally at least 30 metres away from neighbouring residential properties. There should be proper screening for car and horse-box parking and appropriate arrangements for manure storage and/or management.
- Design/materials: traditional designs will generally be the most appropriate, clad externally in timber and with an internal timber frame, with a maximum ridge height of 3.5 metres for stables. Tack rooms and hay stores should be part of the same building, and each should be of a similar size to an individual stable.
- Site treatment: hard-standing areas, access tracks and sand paddocks should be of the minimum size necessary and should not encroach on the open countryside. Careful consideration will be required for the design of storage or parking of horse boxes on site, and fencing should be appropriate to the local vernacular and not suburban in appearance. Sand paddocks should utilise existing ground levels unless absolutely necessary and should not appear built out of the ground and thus alien to the natural contours of the land. Where a sand paddock needs to be above ground level an assessment of its visual impact would be required and appropriate mitigation incorporated into the design. Floodlighting of sand paddocks and yards is generally inappropriate in the open countryside or near to neighbouring residents. Where floodlighting is proposed, it should be designed to minimise light spillage from the lit area.
- Highway safety/bridleway use: the movement of horses or vehicles resulting from the siting of stables should not create danger to horses and riders, or to other road users. Stables are best sited to have safe and convenient access to the bridleway network or minor roads, although existing bridleways should not become over-intensively used as a result of the development. Wherever possible there should be a designated turning area within the site so that lorries, horse-boxes or towed trailers do not have to be reversed either on or off the highway.
- Re-instatement: in order to protect the appearance of the countryside, stables and associated development which are unused for a period of at least six months within 10 years of their completion will be required to be removed from the site (by a condition attached to the planning permission) and the land restored to its former condition.



40. The Councils will require the following criteria to be met in considering applications for developments involving horses:

- in the case of indoor facilities or commercial stables, the development is within an existing building or forms part of a farm diversification scheme;
- in the case of small, private developments the site should be close to existing buildings and well screened by existing trees or local landscape features;
- the development would not result in the over-intensive use of the local bridleway network;
- the movement of either horses or vehicles as a result of the development would not prejudice road safety;
- provision for removing any equipment and re-instating the site once its use for horses is no longer required.



## G: Community facilities

41. Policy 25 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that local communities have sufficient community facilities and this includes resisting the loss of existing facilities. If rural settlements are to retain an element of self-sufficiency and remain active communities, it is important that spatial planning policy and practice helps to minimise the loss of commercial, public sector or social facilities. These facilities include:

- Public house
- Post Office
- Shop
- Doctor's/dentist's surgery
- Children's nursery
- Public and private halls/meeting rooms
- Community centre
- Place of worship
- Garage/petrol station
- Library

42. Where a Parish Plan, Neighbourhood Plan or another supporting document has evidenced a local need for community facilities, the Councils will support the principle of providing them, and consider sympathetically the conversion of suitable buildings. The Councils support the ownership and control of community facilities by the local community, using mechanisms as, for example, a Community Land Trust. The Councils will support the provision of community facilities by considering wider the uses of other venues and buildings.

43. When proposals are being considered to change the use of any local community facility the Councils will need to be convinced that it is no longer required, or that adequate alternative arrangements can be made, or the property is in an isolated location remote from public transport routes. The Councils will encourage flexible multi-use of buildings like village halls for training, post offices, doctor's surgeries, and computer-based communication centres.

44. The Councils will require any application for planning permission for a proposed change from a community use in a rural area to be accompanied by the submission of a report demonstrating that the community facility is no longer financially viable, is surplus to local needs, is available elsewhere in the settlement, or where there is an amenity or environmental reason why a community use is not acceptable.

## H: Recreational development

45. The Councils will give preference to town centre locations for leisure and the more intensive sport and recreation developments such as cinemas, restaurants, bowling centres and bingo halls, including the extension of existing facilities. All planning applications for such recreation and leisure developments outside of the town centre and over 2,500 square metres should show evidence of sequential testing showing that all town centre options have been thoroughly addressed before considering less central sites. Once it has been demonstrated that there are no suitable town centre sites, preference will then be given first to edge of centre and then to out of centre sites and these should be examined before sites outside the urban area are considered. Similarly, rural recreational development that involves the reuse or restoration of existing buildings or the restoration of damaged land, and would not require new buildings in the countryside, should be considered prior to the development of new facilities. Applicants should consider the scale and intensity of use of a proposed scheme, ensuring that activities which attract relatively large numbers of people are readily accessible by public transport, and located within or as close to existing settlements as possible.

46. With evidence of an appropriate sequential test, the Councils will, in principle, support the construction of new essential small scale facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation in the countryside. A sequential test is not required for small scale outdoor sport and recreational facilities such as play areas or football pitches or for recreational facilities such as golf courses or driving ranges which require extensive areas of open space. Buildings should be clustered together to reduce their impact on the openness and character of the countryside and any built features should avoid harm to the local environment or residential amenity (particularly through noise). Proposals should not include any additional associated development above that which is reasonably required for its operation unless existing redundant buildings on the site are capable of providing associated facilities.

47. Where an application does not meet the above criteria an exception may be made if it can be demonstrated that there is a specific proven recreational need in Central Lancashire for the proposed facility and that the proposal cannot be accommodated in a more sequentially favourable location.

## I: Re-Use, Replacement or Extension to Buildings in the Countryside

48. Many rural buildings in Central Lancashire that are no longer required for their original purpose could be converted to other uses. Changes in agricultural practices have rendered many traditional farm buildings redundant to their original use. Re-use or adaptation can help reduce demands for new buildings in the countryside and can help conserve traditional buildings that are distinctive features in the rural landscape.

49. For a rural building to be appropriate for re-use, it must be permanent and substantial and should not require significant extension, rebuilding or extensive alteration to accommodate the proposal. The new use should not result in the need to provide an otherwise unnecessary replacement building. Examples of buildings suitable for conversion range from agricultural structures to old mills and pump houses and animal shelters including shippens, stables and cattle pens. These are more likely to have windows and internal subdivision. Modern agricultural buildings are generally not suitable for residential re-use. The same can be said for granaries, large threshing barns, tithe barns and isolated field barns. This is due to their lack of openings and large internal volumes. However redundant modern agricultural buildings could, in principle, be re-used as stabling or exercise areas for horses, or for workshop or storage use.

50. Re-use for business, community or tourism purposes will usually be preferable to residential use because they typically require less alteration. Where business, community or tourism uses are not feasible, residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations and for some types of building. In these instances, the Councils will require the submission of a report demonstrating that it is not practical or financially viable to use the building for business, community or tourism purposes or where there is an amenity or environmental reason why these uses are not acceptable.

51. The conversion of traditional rural buildings to residential use has the potential to fundamentally alter the character of the building (through the insertion of domestic features such as doors, chimneys, porches and windows) and their appearance in the landscape (through the creation of domestic gardens and erection of outbuildings such as garages). Good design can be difficult to achieve and will require a sympathetic approach combined with specialist design and craft skills. Further guidance is available from the Councils' Planning Officers.





52. As a general principle, the Councils will support the replacement of or extensions to dwellings of permanent design and construction in the countryside, but this will be subject to the criteria set out in paragraphs 53-56 and summarised in the table and map, below.

53. Proposals for replacements of or extensions to dwellings in the open countryside to the west, north and east of the Preston built-up area, which have an increase of over 50% of the volume of the original building or the building that stood in 1948, will not be considered favourably.

54. Proposals for replacements of or extensions to dwellings in the Forest of Bowland AONB, which have an increase of over 30% of the volume of the original building or the building that stood in 1948, will not be considered favourably.

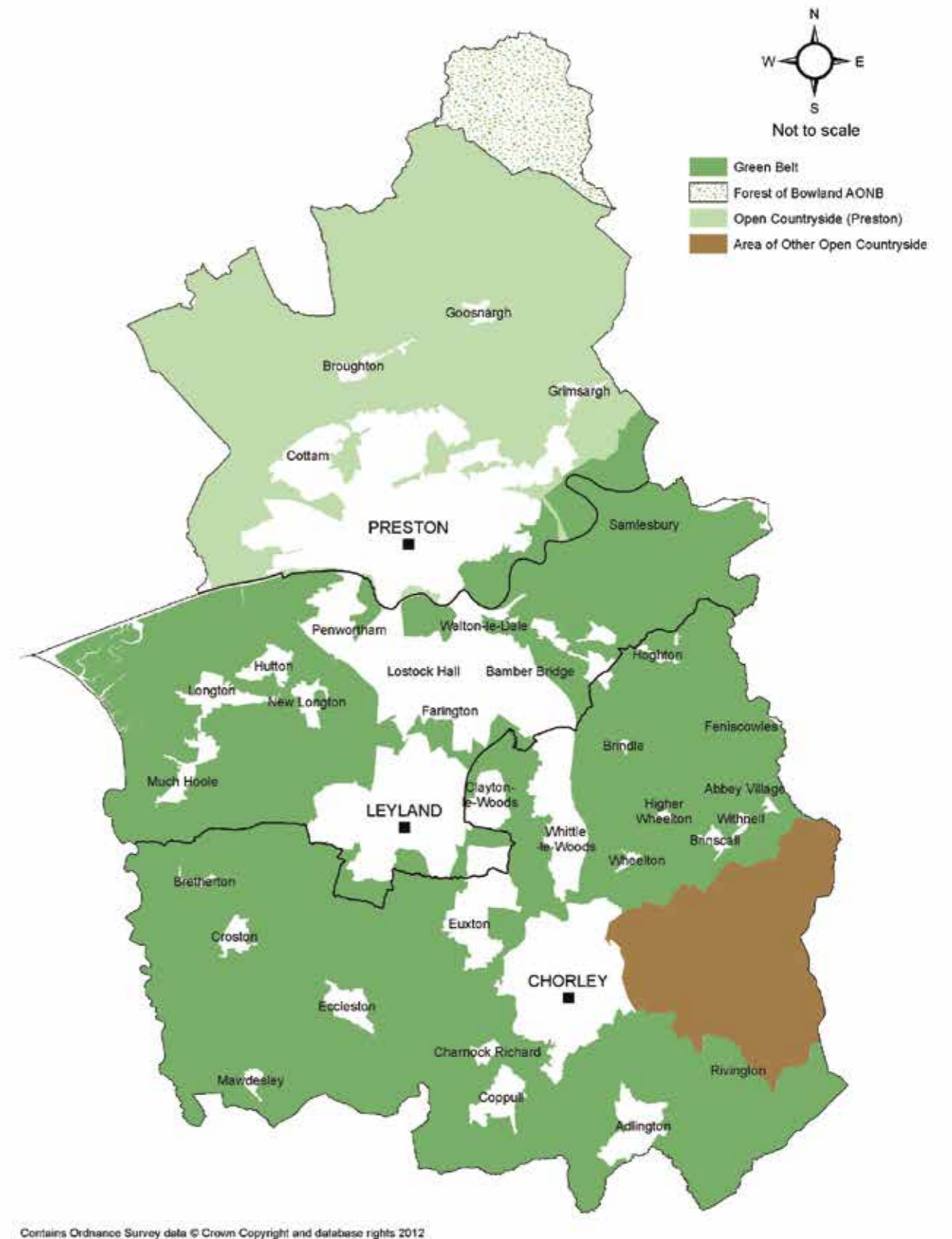
55. The extension or alteration of dwellings may not be inappropriate in the Green Belt and the West Pennine Moors Area of Other Open Countryside, providing it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Proposals for extensions to dwellings in the Green Belt and the Area of Other Open Countryside, which have an increase of over 50% of the volume of the original building that stood in 1948, will be considered inappropriate.

56. The replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate in the Green Belt and the West Pennine Moors Area of Other Open Countryside, providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces. Proposals for the replacement of dwellings in the Green Belt or Other Open Countryside, which have an increase of over 30% of the volume of the building that it replaces, will be considered inappropriate.

Area of Open Countryside within Central Lancashire	Extensions Increase up to (by volume)	Replacement Increase up to (by volume)
Open Countryside to the West, North and East of the Preston built up area	50%	50%
Forest of Bowland AONB	30%	30%
Green Belt/Area of Other Open Countryside	50%	30%

57. Replacements or extensions to dwellings up to these thresholds will be considered but will not necessarily be acceptable for all proposals as compliance with other policies will be required. Applicants seeking to replace or extend a dwelling by more than the above thresholds will need to demonstrate at the application stage why their proposals are acceptable, as exceptions will require special justification for planning permission to be granted. The Councils will treat the extension to, replacement of or the incorporation of outbuildings into living space on their merits. Councils may also remove permitted development rights where a new dwelling is larger than the one it replaces.

Map of Open Countryside designations in Central Lancashire



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58. Aside from dwellings, other buildings in the countryside may be put to a range of new uses. The replacement of other buildings is appropriate development in all areas of the countryside providing the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

59. Within all areas of the countryside the extension or alteration of a building is also appropriate development provided it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. The Councils will deal with these extensions on their merits, including extensions groups of buildings (e.g. industrial buildings), according to site considerations such as the impact of the proposal on the openness of the countryside.

60. Applicants seeking the extension or alteration of other buildings in the countryside will need to demonstrate that the proposal:

- will not harm the open character and appearance of the countryside;
- promotes a high level of sustainability including a high quality design that respects the scale, design and facing materials of the original building
- seeks to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of the land and building whilst protecting the amenity of nearby residents;
- respects any ecological, historic or archaeological interest the original building or area may have.

## J: Sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment

61. Given the relationship between this SPD, the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPDs and the level of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that these documents have undergone together with the anticipated absence of any significant environmental effects arising from this proposal, an independent SA of this Planning Framework SPD is not required. In addition, the Core Strategy has undergone a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment to determine the likely significant effects of the plan on sites of international nature conservation importance. As the SPD is in conformity with the policies contained within the Core Strategy, a full Screening Assessment of this SPD is not required.

## K: Monitoring and Review

62. The Councils will monitor the effectiveness of this guidance including Core Strategy key indicators and review as appropriate in the light of its performance and future changes in planning law and policy guidance.

## L: Status of SPDs

63. A Consultation Draft of this SPD was published under Regulation 17 of the Local Development Regulations 2004 (SI2004.2204) in April 2012. Responses to the Consultation Draft SPD were taken into consideration within this revised document.





## L: Further Information

64. The SPD will primarily be implemented through the development management process and the determination of planning applications. Charges may apply for pre-application consultations; please see websites for details. Planning Officers will be pleased to provide advice and guidance on rural development.

They can be contacted on:

Preston City Council  
[www.preston.gov.uk](http://www.preston.gov.uk)  
 01772 906949  
[devcon@preston.gov.uk](mailto:devcon@preston.gov.uk)

Chorley Council  
[www.chorley.gov.uk](http://www.chorley.gov.uk)  
 01257 515151  
[dcon@chorley.gov.uk](mailto:dcon@chorley.gov.uk)

South Ribble Borough Council  
[www.southribble.gov.uk](http://www.southribble.gov.uk)  
 01772 421491  
[planning@southribble.gov.uk](mailto:planning@southribble.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1: Glossary

**AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** An area with legal protection because of its natural beauty and high landscape quality.

**Brownfield Land** Land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure: excludes the gardens of houses and land that has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings.

**Central Lancashire** The collective name for the administrative area covered by Preston, Chorley and South Ribble, which is the area covered by this Core Strategy.

**Core Strategy** The key overarching policy document in the LDF to which other DPDs and SPDs must conform.

**DPD** Development Plan Document - A statutory policy document of the LDF, such as the Core Strategy, Area Action Plan and Site Specific Allocations.

**Garden Centre** A large shop, usually with an outdoor area, for the sale of garden plants, gardening tools and equipment, most of which have been imported for sale.

**Green Belt** Statutorily designated land around built-up areas intended to limit urban sprawl and prevent neighbouring settlements joining together. There is a strong presumption against inappropriate development. Not all Greenfield land is in the Green Belt. There is no Green Belt land around the north of Preston or east of Chorley Town.

**Greenfield Land** Land that is not built on, typically farm land but also playing fields, allotments and residential gardens.

**Green Infrastructure** Open land in both the natural and built environments, from countryside through to urban parks and play areas that provide a range of functions, such as contributing to biodiversity, alleviating flood risk and providing recreation.

**Horticultural Nurseries** Rural business primarily concerned with the propagation and nurture of plants, for wholesale or retail distribution.

**Infrastructure** Facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community, such as transportation and communications systems, water and power lines, and public institutions including schools and hospitals.

**LDF** Local Development Framework – a folder of all the documents that comprise the Local Development Plan and support it – replaces the Local Plan.

**Live/Work Units** Buildings where parts of the floor space are designed as a small work unit, while the remainder of the space is devoted to living accommodation.

**Major Developed Sites** Those designated in the Green Belt on the Chorley and South Ribble Local Plan Proposals Maps.

**Neighbourhood Plan** A community led development plan prepared by a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Forum, conforming to national planning policies and local policies as set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

**Parish Plan** A document that sets out how a community sees itself developing over the next ten or more years – often described as a ‘shared vision’ for the future.

**Sequential test** A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield land before greenfield sites and town centres before out of centre.

**Spatial Planning** Planning (used in preparing the LDF) which goes beyond traditional land uses to integrate policies for the development and use of land with other (non-planning) policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

**SPD** Supplementary Planning Document gives further guidance on specific policy topic areas such as affordable housing provision, that have been identified in core policy in the Local Development Framework or to give detailed guidance on the development of specific sites.





