

<b>Name of the activity being assessed</b>	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Local Plan 2021-2037 Adoption Version				
<b>Directorate / Department</b>	PLACE: Growth & Development	<b>Service</b>	Strategic Planning	<b>Assessment Author</b>	Laura Ainscow-Gorst
<b>Is this a new or existing activity?</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Existing	<b>Responsible manager / director for the assessment</b>		Helen Holland	
<b>Date EIA started</b>	27/11/2023	<b>Implementation date of the activity</b>		25/01/2024	

**SECTION 1 - ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITY**

<p><b>How was the need for this activity identified?</b>  i.e. Why are we doing this activity?</p>	<p>Local Planning Authorities have a statutory requirement to produce a Local Development Plan, as described by the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Practice Guidance, the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the Planning &amp; Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p> <p>The Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan’s main purpose is to set out and deliver the strategic planning priorities for Blackburn with Darwen. It includes policies that will deliver sustainable development to meet the Borough’s identified development needs and objectives up to 2037, including policies for the delivery of new housing, employment, mixed use and gypsy and traveller sites. The Plan identifies where development should be located and how and when it will be delivered.</p> <p>The plan has been prepared in consideration of the evidence base, National Planning Policy and guidance, feedback from previous public consultations, a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.</p> <p>Once the Local Plan is adopted (scheduled for January 2024), it will replace the Blackburn with Darwen Core Strategy 2011 (Local Plan Part 1) and Site Allocations &amp; Development Management Policies (Local Plan Part 2). It will form the overall development plan alongside the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and following adoption, will be the ‘starting point’ for considering whether planning applications can be approved.</p>
<p><b>What is the activity looking to achieve?</b></p> <p><b>What are the aims and objectives?</b></p>	<p>The Local Plan sets out how much land should be provided for development in the Borough during the plan period from 2021 to 2037. The Plan allocates individual pieces of land for future development that will deliver the required amount of development to meet the Borough’s identified needs. In addition, the plan identifies improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities that are required to support new development, for example, schools and open space, as well as planning for their delivery. It also includes policies to help the council determine planning applications.</p> <p>A key aim of the plan is to encourage development in the Borough that achieves the Council’s aspirations for sustainable growth and regeneration. The strategic objectives and subsequent policy framework set out in the plan seek to address the inherent conflicts of development: the Council’s strong ambitions for growth and regeneration; challenging carbon neutral goals and environmental net gains; and improving people’s quality of life and well-being.</p>

<b>Services currently provided</b> (if applicable)	The plan will be used to support delivery of the Council's planning service; the service provides advice and guidance on development opportunities and has a decision making role on planning applications.
<b>Type of activity</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Budget changes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change to existing activity <input type="checkbox"/> Decommissioning <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioning <input type="checkbox"/> New activity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other [ <b>new planning policy</b> ]

**SECTION 2 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR CUSTOMER****What resources will support in undertaking the equality analysis and impact assessment?**

*Please identify additional sources of information you have used to complete the EIA, e.g. reports; journals; legislation etc.*

- The Local Plan is prepared in accordance with the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) and relevant legislation, regulations and national policy set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#).
- Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which should explain how they will engage local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement can be viewed at [Statement of community involvement | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#).

**Who are you consulting with? How are you consulting with them? (Please insert any information around surveys and consultations undertaken)**

During the preparation of the Local Plan there has been ongoing consultation with the community, professional/interest groups and other stakeholders.

Planning legislation requires local authorities to have a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in place to support plan preparation. The SCI outlines how the Council will involve all sections of the community, including the use of targeted community involvement methods in appropriate cases, in the planning process, including in the preparation of local plans. It includes information and guidance on:

- Consultation techniques – these cover a range of recognised consultation methods that will present information and invite involvement via a range of different media;
- The importance of an inclusive approach that offers an opportunity for all groups to engage;
- Consultees - the SCI identifies a range of groups: specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies that should be included in the consultation. The document recognises that some groups may reorganise and new ones establish; it therefore includes a commitment to amend the list to include successor bodies. The Council has an element of discretion regarding the general consultation bodies involved depending on the nature and scope of each document
- How community feedback will be taken into account and be used to inform the content of the document in preparation;
- Contact information for the Council

The Blackburn with Darwen SCI is available to view on the Council's website at [Statement of community involvement | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](#) and is used to inform every consultation undertaken within Strategic Planning, including the Local Plan consultations.

The Local Plan has been developed following several rounds of public consultation; an initial Issues and Options Consultation in February 2019 followed by a public consultation on a Draft Local Plan in January 2021 (Regulation 18) and Regulation 19 consultation on a Publication Version Local Plan in February 2022. A further consultation on the draft Main Modifications was also undertaken in August 2023. As part of these consultations, the Council consulted directly with a wide a range of stakeholders including:

- Local Plan database contacts
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Voluntary and community groups
- Residents and business owners

A wide variety of methods to ensure public consultation was as effective as possible were used which went above and beyond the commitments made in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. General methods of engagement included:

- Local Plan webpage providing the draft Local Plan, supporting documents (Sustainability Appraisal, evidence base portfolio), and consultation material (e.g. Local Plan video, electronic copy of the exhibition boards, leaflet etc.);
- Email/letter notification of the consultation and how to submit comments, including link to 'How to Respond Guidance Note'
- Letters sent to every resident and business within the locality of a proposed development allocation summarising the Local Plan and how they could view the documents and submit comments;
- Two public consultation events at Blackburn Library and Darwen Youth Centre;
- Exhibition Boards – online and in Blackburn and Darwen Market Halls throughout the consultation periods;
- Vinyl banners outside Blackburn and Darwen Market Halls;
- Billboards;
- Digital display boards;
- An extensive social media and PR campaign.

It is considered that this range of consultation opportunities and methods has afforded the widest possible group of people the chance to influence both the process and outcome of the consultation i.e. the plan. Further details on the consultations undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan are included within the [Regulation 22 Consultation Statement](#), available to view on the Local Plan examination webpage.

The Localism Act 2011 places a legal duty (duty to cooperate) on local planning authorities such as Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and other identified bodies to cooperate with each other to address strategic cross boundary matters in the preparation of their development plan. The intention is that Councils engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis throughout the preparation of their local plan/development plan documents and other matters. As part of the Local Plan examination, the Council prepared a supporting statement to explain how the Council considers it has met the duty to cooperate. A copy of this statement – 'Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate (November 2022)' has been published on the Council's website: [Statement-of-Compliance-with-Duty-to-Cooperate.pdf \(blackburn-darwen.org.uk\)](#).

The Planning Inspectors have confirmed that the Council has met the relevant legal requirements for consultation during the preparation of the Local Plan.

<b>Who does the activity impact upon?*</b>	Service users	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly	The Local Plan will provide a planning framework for the Borough to 2037. It sets out potential development opportunities (site allocations) and the policies that will be used to inform development in the Borough including decisions on planning applications. The framework has been structured to support the achievement of the Council's corporate agenda for economic and housing growth. As and when landowners, developers and other stakeholders are interested in developing sites, further consultation as well as EIAs (as necessary) that are site
	Members of staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly	
	General public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly	
	Carers or families	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly	
	Partner organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Indirectly	

					<p>specific will be carried out in accordance with the Council's planning procedures.</p> <p>There may be a perception by some members of the community and/or partner organisations, particularly commercially driven organisations, that the plan gives advantage or preference to some sectors, for example, landowners and developers, over others. It is acknowledged that delivery of the plan including new housing/jobs/improvements to the town centres/infrastructure and local services will in the future be heavily dependent on private sector investment.</p> <p>The allocation of sites has been based on a robust, objectively based methodology, including a sustainability appraisal, which has considered a range of factors including community feedback, development viability, infrastructure requirements, highway capacity and location. However whilst acknowledging the reliance on private sector investment, the plan's main aim is to ensure that the delivery is undertaken within a framework (the development plan) that is based on the Council's intention to create opportunities/choice and an improved quality of life for all residents and stakeholders including all who are currently established in the Borough and those who may move into the area in the future.</p> <p>The plan's policies will be applied equitably to all proposals and to all groups and do not differentiate or discriminate between any of the protected characteristic groups. A future review of the SCI is part of the Council's on-going activity to ensure that it is using the most effective means of engaging with its residents and communities. This would include ensuring people who could not communicate in a standard way were still able to engage in the Local Plan process (perhaps someone who was blind or partially sighted and were unable to read the Plan). In such cases, more targeted community involvement methods (as included in the SCI) would be used to address ensure they could engage in the process.</p>		
<p><b>Does the activity impact positively or negatively on any of the protected characteristics as stated</b></p>	<p>Positive impact</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Age</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy &amp; maternity</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable groups</p>
		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Race</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sex</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Deprived communities</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Carers</p>




<b>within the Equality Act (2010)?*</b>  <b>The groups in blue are not protected characteristics</b> <i>(please refer to p. 3 of the guidance notes)</i>	Negative impact	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Vulnerable groups</b>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Deprived communities</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Carers</b>
	Neutral impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy & maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Vulnerable groups</b>
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Deprived communities</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Carers</b>

\*If no impact is identified on any of the protected characteristics a full EIA may not be required. Please contact your departmental Corporate Equality & Diversity representative for further information.

Does the activity contribute towards meeting the Equality Act's general Public Sector Equality Duty? <i>Refer to p.3 of the guidance for more information</i> <b><i>A public authority must have 'due regard' (i.e. consciously consider) to the following:</i></b>	
DUTY	DOES THE ACTIVITY MEET THIS DUTY? EXPLAIN
<p><b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act</b> <i>(i.e. the activity removes or minimises disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic)</i></p>	<p><b>Yes:</b> The Local Plan aims to ensure the sustainable development of Blackburn with Darwen over a 16 year period (2021-2037). The promotion of balanced and inclusive communities that benefit all is integral to achieving this. The policies set out within the plan guide development and promote opportunities, for example they include policies for the allocation of housing and gypsy and traveller sites to meet identified needs (Policies CP4, DM03, DM04, DM05, Housing Growth Site Allocation Policies and Gypsy &amp; Traveller Growth Site Allocation Policies), allocation of strategic employment sites and spaces for commercial development to boost and support the economy (Policies CP10 and Employment Growth Site Allocation Policies), as well as protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment (Policies CP6, CP7, CP8, DM12 – 28).</p> <p>Proposals and policies will apply equally to all persons and organisations that come forward with development proposals and/or are involved/considered as part of the consideration and decision-making relating to planning applications.</p>
<p><b>Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</b> <i>(i.e. the activity takes steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people)</i></p>	<p><b>Yes:</b> The Local Plan supports the three principal dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. It seeks to achieve net gains across all three for all persons. Policy CP1 sets out the overarching policy framework of a 'Balanced Growth Strategy'.</p> <p>The Local Plan's over-arching vision is to promote economic growth across the Borough for the benefit of all established people/organisations and to encourage newcomers to establish and invest in the Borough. The Plan sets the framework to achieve growth via the delivery of a neutral, complementary and viable choice of employment opportunities, housing mix (location/type/size and tenure), supporting infrastructure including school provision/attractive town and district centres and access to jobs and services. The Council considers that these improved choices will provide a greater range of prospects and promote an equality of opportunity for everyone.</p> <p>Whilst the plan does set the framework, it is recognised that delivery is market driven. However, the Council will monitor delivery outputs to ensure these align with the Local Plan's intentions and any emerging need within the Borough.</p>
<p><b>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</b> <i>(i.e. the function encourages people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low)</i></p>	<p>The Local Plan and the policies set out within it are inclusive and aim to foster good relations with all sections of the community; this includes those within the protected characteristics classifications. For example, Policies CP4, DM04 and Gypsy &amp; Traveller Growth Site Allocation Policies) ensure the identified needs of the Borough's Gypsy and Traveller population are met.</p>

ASSESSMENT	Is a full EIA required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Please explain how you have reached your conclusion ( <i>A lack of negative impacts must be justified with evidence and clear reasons, highlight how the activity negates or mitigates any possible negative impacts</i> )			
<p>This EIA has been completed with full consideration of the policies and proposals that are included in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Local Plan is a strategic planning document intended to guide and inform development and decision making on planning applications. The plan policies have been robustly prepared in consultation at various stages in plan preparation, with a wide range of residents and organisations, as set out in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement available to view on the Local Plan Examination webpage. This engagement has been consistent with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).</p> <p>The Local Plan policies will be applied equally and equitably to all development proposals and decision making on planning applications. As such, the Local Plan is not considered to impose any negative or adverse impacts on residents generally and/or those people with any of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. With regard to provisions for particular groups both in policy content and application, overall the plan's policies promote the Council's requirements for sustainable, high quality development that meets the needs of <b>all</b> residents: both established residents including the business community and newcomers to the Borough. The plan's policies equally act as safeguards to ensure that any possible negative impacts from development are mitigated or compensated for as far as is reasonable.</p> <p>The Local Plan benefits some landowners and developers whose land/ property is allocated for development purposes. It will also bring wider benefits to Blackburn with Darwen's residents by contributing towards future sustainability and vibrancy of the Borough's town centres and rural communities. It will contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents through the provision of new homes, new jobs, new/ improved community facilities and services and enhancement of the natural and built environment which will be accessible to all the community. The Plan makes provision to meet the housing needs of particular groups e.g. older people, people with disabilities, households on lower incomes and the gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople communities (Policy CP4: Housing Development). Through its policies it promotes equality and social inclusion, seeks to provide a mix of market housing that better meets the needs of Blackburn with Darwen residents (Policy DM3: Housing Mix, Standards and Densities) and seeks to increase the supply of affordable housing to assist those who cannot otherwise access the housing market (Policy DM5: Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites). The Local Plan sets out an overall approach to development of a balance of ensuring that development proposals consider their impact on people, place and the economy through Policy CP1: A Balanced Growth Strategy. Development is expected to demonstrate social, environmental and economic net gains against the strategic objectives of the plan.</p> <p>Overall, the Local Plan should therefore have a positive impact. In summary, it will bring more housing (including affordable and specialist housing), provide traveller sites to meet need, economic growth (providing more jobs), improve local facilities and services, promote social inclusion, as well as enhancing the natural environment and ensuring that Blackburn with Darwen remains a special place to live, work and invest. It is concluded that the Local Plan policies will not have a negative impact on those with protected characteristics, neither does it reflect the potential for discrimination. The opportunity to foster greater equality and positive impacts for protected groups has been sought and incorporated within policies where appropriate. Accordingly, it is considered that the Council is acting in accordance with the public sector equality duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Performance of the Local Plan will be measured against a series of key indicators which are set out in the Monitoring section of the Plan. Indicators include the size of homes by number of bedrooms, the number of affordable homes and the number of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's pitches that have been delivered. By monitoring the Plan, the Council will be able to ascertain whether or not it is providing adequately for the needs of these groups. If any groups needs are not being adequately met this will be raised at the five year Local Plan review.</p>			



<b>Author Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	<b>02/01/2024</b>
<b>Head of Service/Director Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	<b>03/01/2024</b>
<i>The above signatures signify acceptance of the ownership of the Initial EIA and the responsibility to publish the completed Initial EIA as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.</i>			
<b>Departmental E&amp;D Lead Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	<b>03/01/2024</b>