

2C: Locations for Development

2C(i)

- 2.24 The evidence base for Table 7.1 is unsound in respect of Key Service Centres in that it lacks a consistent approach towards the identification of Key Service Centres. It is understood that NWRA are remedying this problem and will submit a Briefing Paper to the Panel based on further research. An alternative approach would be to remove Policy RDF2 and transfer the information in Table 7.1 on Key Service Centres to the relevant sub-regional policy frameworks in Part 4 of RSS.

2C(ii)

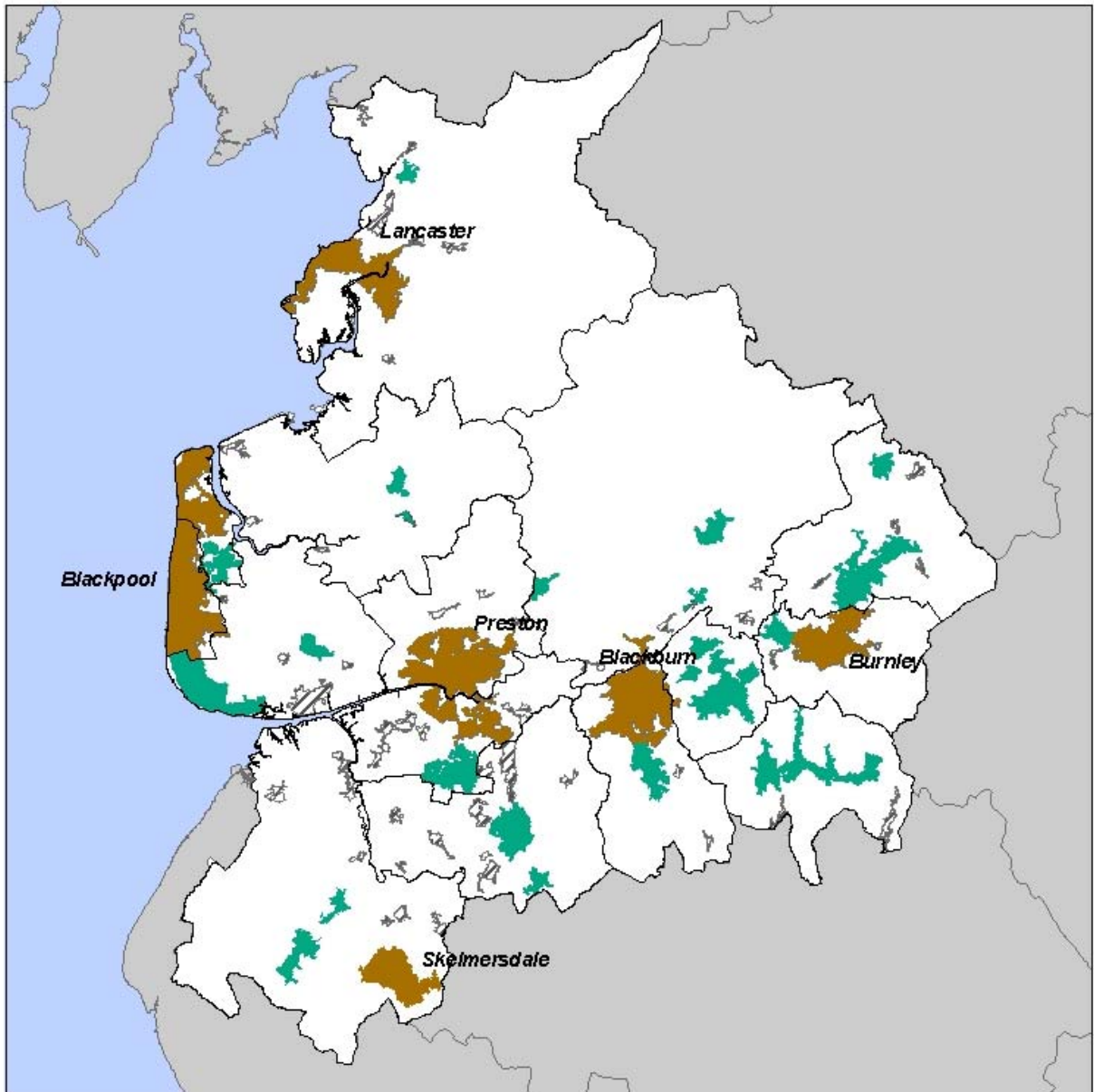
- 2.25 During the preparation of RSS none of the Lancashire planning authorities was asked to take part of a strategic review of green belt in the County. The County Council has not seen any evidence to support such a review.
- 2.26 The County Council agrees with Policy RDF5 and the clear statements within it that there is no need for significant change to green belts in Lancashire before 2011 and any need for such changes will be investigated post 2011. The County Council notes that green belt studies are not listed in RSS paragraph 17.16 and supports this position. Undertaking earlier studies, soon after RSS is issued by SoS in 2007, would create uncertainty during preparation of the current round of LDFs and would undermine the long-term certainty attached to green belts required by PPG2.
- 2.27 Some Lancashire Districts have a different position on this issue and may be seeking an early review of green belt boundaries in particular locations. Those Districts will be able to advise the Panel on their position during the debate on Matter 9. However, Policy RDF5 and its supporting text do need to clarify what is meant by 'strategic change' and 'small scale detailed boundary changes' so that Districts can ascertain with confidence whether a proposed change would depend on the outcome of a strategic review of green belt or could be examined through the LDF process.

2D: Rural Issues

- 2.28 Overall the draft RSS demonstrates a sound understanding of rural issues with paragraph 4.2 of the supporting text identifying the development of rural communities as places to live, work and visit. The commitment to establishing sustainable rural communities needs to be made explicit in the rural policies. It is, therefore, proposed that the third bullet of Policy RDF3 is amended to read '*Strengthen and develop the rural economy in a way which contributes to establishing and maintaining sustainable rural communities*'.
- 2.29 The draft RSS also shows an understanding of the different, particularly economic, potentials of 'less sparse' and 'sparse' rural areas. This approach gives focus to rural regeneration objectives and supports the rural ambitions of the RES. Use of DEFRA nomenclature should be consistent. The fourth paragraph of Policy RDF3 should, therefore, be amended to begin:
'In less sparse rural areas adjacent to ...'

- 2.30 At sub-regional level the draft RSS overemphasises the economic contribution of agriculture and tourism to the rural economy. Growth within these sectors can be accommodated, principally, through diversification. The fastest growing sectors (2002-2004 VAT registered business stock) in rural Lancashire have been Real Estate and Business, Construction and Hotels and Restaurants, whilst the main decline has been in manufacturing, wholesale and retail and agriculture (Co-ordinating Action in Rural Lancashire – the Lancashire Rural Strategy).
- 2.31 Non land-based rural business growth requires employment land allocation to encourage employment diversity and reduce the unsustainable travel to work patterns exhibited by Key Service Centres and ‘less sparse’ rural areas. Analysis of higher value services and manufacturing serves to demonstrate that the market towns are hubs for higher value activity in their own right. They form an essential part of the Central Lancashire economy (Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme).
- 2.32 Research carried out by the NWDA (Audit of Rural Workspace, June 2003) and for the Lancashire Rural Delivery Pathfinder (Enterprise Research Project, June 2006) has established a demand for extra rural workspace. A lack of appropriate workspace provision is constraining rural employment growth particularly in knowledge-based business activity.
- 2.33 The focus on Key Service Centres for development activity offers the potential for sustainable solutions ‘within’ the settlement, but requires that consideration be given to:
- Developing a range of employment opportunities and service/facilities to reduce the Travel to Work exchange (Lancashire Rural Strategy); and
 - Matching housing, employment and enterprise opportunity (Enterprise Research Project).
- 2.34 The Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme requires a planning and funding environment that can proactively realise the economic potential of key market towns as a business generator, a base for enhanced employment diversity and as hubs for rural regeneration. Policy RDF3 recognises that Key Service Centres will be the principal locations for development in providing for housing, employment and services. This needs to be reflected in Policy RDF2. It is therefore proposed that the first bullet Policy RDF2 is amended to read:
‘Plans and strategies should identify and support the development of Key Service Centres to act as service centres for surrounding rural areas providing for housing, employment, retail, leisure, community, civic, health and education facilities and financial and professional services, and ...’

Definition of Settlements in Lancashire



- Regional Towns and Cities
- Key Service Centres
- Other Settlements
- District Boundaries



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