

4. ENVIRONMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The natural environment of the Borough is one of its greatest assets. It is composed of many different parts which have evolved and changed over the years. Pressures for change still exist and it is the function of this plan to control and guide these pressures. In doing so environmental protection will be a primary consideration.
- 4.1.2 This will enable growth and necessary development to take place in a way that is sustainable and as sensitive as possible.
- 4.1.3 The natural Ribble Valley environment is characterised by attractive open countryside. Over 70% of the Borough is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.1.4 The built environment of the Borough also has special qualities. There are 16 designated conservation areas and more than 1000 listed buildings throughout the district. In addition to these there are many sites of archaeological, geological and wildlife importance in the Borough which should receive appropriate protection from this plan.
- 4.1.5 There is a balance to be struck between environmental protection and the economic well being and needs of the Borough. In preparing this plan it is accepted that the Borough is a working environment. This applies equally to the towns and the countryside. The council recognises the need to sustain the Borough's economy, however this should not be at the expense of those features which give the area its character and make it such an attractive place to live and work.
- 4.1.6 The environmental policies of this plan cover a number of distinct topic areas. To reflect these, this chapter is split into a number of sub-sections each covering an individual topic area.

4.2 THE COUNTRYSIDE

- 4.2.1 Much of the land area of the Ribble Valley is included within the Forest of Bowland area of outstanding natural beauty. The main purpose of this designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
- 4.2.2 The local plan includes many of the varied elements of Bowland's beauty: the upland core; the narrow clough valleys; the major valleys of the Hodder and Ribble; the pasturelands dotted with stone walls and broad-leaved woodlands; and many attractive villages and hamlets.
- 4.2.3 Farming is the activity which has contributed most to the formation of the landscape. There is very limited arable farming. Land classifications for the area, particularly the upland core, shows a predominance of grades 4 and 5. Indeed less than 1% of the whole Borough lies within class 2. This is reflected by the main farming uses which are cattle and sheep rearing.
- 4.2.4 The pattern of farming is changing with substantial farm amalgamation and the need for alternative farm enterprises to supplement overall farm income.

4.2.5 AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

POLICY ENV1

The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. In addition development will also need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. The environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications (see Policy G1). The protection, conservation and

enhancement of the natural environment will be the most important considerations in the assessment of any development proposal. Regard will also be had to the economic and social well-being of the area.

4.2.6 The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is of recognised national landscape value. The principal duties of the local planning authorities that administer this area are the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty. This does not mean that no development will be allowed in the area. Where possible new development will be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Indeed other policies in this plan accept that there is a need for development to allow for appropriate employment generating facilities, countryside recreation opportunities and housing for those in need. However this should not be at the expense of those qualities which make the area special. This policy will be used to ensure that development which does take place is both appropriate and actually enriches the landscape character of the area. In support of this a landscape assessment had been undertaken which is included in Appendix 2.

4.2.7 The Borough Council will work with the Forest of Bowland AONB Countryside Management Service and government bodies to protect, conserve and enhance key landscape areas/features throughout the AONB. The Council will protect threatened landscapes/landscape features through representation at the Technical Officer Group and through the joint advisory committee of the Forest of Bowland AONB. It will ensure that specific landscape schemes identified in the Forest of Bowland AONB Management Plan are implemented in accordance with the aims and objectives of that management plan. The Council will support better practice in the conservation and traditional management of:

- Moorland/upland areas
- Woodlands
- Hedgerows/hedgerow trees
- Dry Stone Walls

In terms of nature conservation, the Council will also protect and conserve rare species/habitats and enhance the native biological diversity of the AONB.

4.2.8 This policy will be implemented by the use of development control powers.

4.2.9 POLICY ENV2

The landscape and character of those areas immediately adjacent to the Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and wherever possible enhanced. The environmental effects of proposals will be a major consideration and the design, materials, scale, massing and landscaping of development will be important factors in deciding planning applications (see Policy G1). The protection, conservation and compatibility with policies to enhance the natural beauty of the adjacent Forest of Bowland AONB will be the most important considerations in the assessment of any development proposal. Regard will also be had to the economic and social well being of the

4.2.12 POLICY ENV3

In the open countryside outside the AONB and areas immediately adjacent to it, development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape area and should reflect local vernacular, scale, style, features and building materials. Proposals to conserve, renew and enhance landscape features, will be permitted, providing regard has been given for the characteristic landscape features of the area.

- 4.2.13 Although the Bowland area has received national recognition the adjacent area of countryside is also of high quality, in places matching that of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This policy recognises that the open countryside is all worthy of conservation and enhancement. The detailed landscape assessment included in Appendix 2 will be used in the determination of any planning application. Whilst the Borough Council has no wish to unnecessarily restrict development it is essential that only development which has benefits to the area is allowed. Even when such development is accepted it must acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting.
- 4.2.14 The Council will ensure the protection and enhancement of those areas outside both the AONB and areas immediately adjacent to it with an approach to conservation which gives a high priority to the protection and conservation of natural habitats and traditional landscape features. It will protect statutory designated areas and sites of biological interest and ancient woodland sites throughout open countryside areas. It will continue to improve the extent and quality of the tree cover and associated flora/fauna throughout the open countryside. It will determine and identify landscape character in relationship to the future landscape potential and will act to enhance landscape character of the open countryside. The Borough Council is also committed to protecting key elements of the landscape character of any site affected by proposed development and would make the siting, scale and form of any landscape proposal that forms part of any planning application a priority.
- 4.2.15 Open recreational uses will be assessed in terms of their impact on the site and on the wider value of the landscape, together with any social benefits arising.
- 4.2.16 This policy will be implemented through the development control process.
- 4.2.17 **GREEN BELT**

POLICY ENV4

Within the green belt, as shown on the proposals map, planning permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the erection of new buildings other than for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of the designation.

Proposals for the change of use of existing buildings other than for the purposes outlined above will be determined subject to Policies H15, H16, H17, EMP9 and RT3 of this plan.

- 4.2.18 The designation of green belt is a well-established planning policy. Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 is specifically related to green belts. This lists 4 main functions of the green belt:
- to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - to preserve the special character of historic towns; and

- to assist in urban regeneration.

- 4.2.19 The essential characteristic of the green belt is seen as its permanence. Government guidance calls for their protection to be maintained as far as can be seen ahead. The longevity of the designation was an important consideration in the preparation of the Southern Fringe Local Plan, which originally defined the bulk of the green belt in the Borough. This stressed that the designation would not be altered until at least the turn of the century.
- 4.2.20 In preparing this plan, boundaries have been reviewed on the basis of no, or only limited change. Where slight boundary modifications have occurred this is in response to exceptional circumstances. The green belt boundary in this plan will be maintained beyond the timescale of this document.
- 4.2.21 The identification of the green belt set out in this plan will help to achieve the strategic aims of the structure plan. Indeed, it is the structure plan which draws the broad extent of the designation. There is a real danger of villages which currently enjoy an individual character, for instance Mellor and Mellor Brook, merging together. This may lead to a loss of community identity and damage to the attractive setting many villages currently enjoy. Particular dangers exist of the urban area of Blackburn extending to take in Langho and Mellor, and that of Great Harwood extending towards Whalley/Billington and Read. It is also important to ensure that the villages of Wilpshire, Langho and Billington do not merge to form continuous urban development along the A666.
- 4.2.22 Proposals for conversion of rural buildings will be determined on the basis of policies H15 and H16 and H17 in respect of residential uses, policy EMP9 for employment generating uses and RT3 for tourism uses. In assessing residential applications the need to accommodate local commerce and industry may well be a material consideration in determining applications. In addition the location of residential conversions will also be an important factor, with strict controls over proposals in the open countryside.
- 4.2.23 It is equally important that even in the case of land uses held to be acceptable in a green belt, that development takes full account of the sensitivity of the site and does not damage any of the main functions of the designation.
- 4.2.24 The only exceptions to this policy are developments which show overwhelming reasons of local need. Such reasons will include developments essential to provide or improve essential local services where these cannot be met elsewhere in more suitable locations.
- 4.2.25 This policy will be implemented via the development control process.

4.2.26 OPEN LAND

POLICY ENV 5

Until such time as those areas defined on the proposals map as open land at Billington and Wilpshire may be allocated for development in a review of, or alteration to this plan, planning permission will be refused for the erection of new buildings other than for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

- 4.2.27 This policy is intended to protect open land, which is not subject to other protective designations (which are expected to last beyond the plan period) from inappropriate development. The policy acknowledges that there may be a need for further land release after the plan period, but seeks to secure boundaries that can endure in the long term.
- 4.2.28 Sufficient land is allocated in this plan for development needs up to 2006; consequently this land can be protected from development.

4.2.29 There are two areas covered by this designation on the proposals map, at Billington and Wilpshire.

4.2.30 **AGRICULTURAL LAND**

POLICY ENV 6

The Borough Council will safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land (as classified by the Ministry of Agriculture) unless it can be shown that the need for development overrides agricultural considerations:

- (a) any agricultural land taken should be the minimum required to meet essential needs; and
- (b) land of a higher quality will not be taken for development where suitable land of a lower quality is available; and
- (c) In upland areas proposals involving the loss of agricultural land of Grades 3b, 4 and 5 will be assessed on the value of the land on the rural economy and the management of individual farms; and

	Built Development	Improved Or arable	Unimproved	Moor/ Heath	Coniferous Woodland	Broad-leaved Woodland	Marsh/ Sand	Water	Total
Area (Hectares)	1,403	16,725	12,690	21,520	2,807	2,398	644	291	58478

Source: Lancashire County Council

4.2.32 The Borough can be seen to be dominated by agricultural activity, although changes in agricultural practices and subsidies mean that farming is reducing in importance as an employer.

4.2.33 The Ministry of Fisheries and Food (MAFF) identify and classify farmland into six classes.

Grade 1 - excellent quality agricultural land. Grade 2 - very good quality agricultural land. Grade 3a - good quality agricultural land. Grade 3b - moderate quality agricultural land. Grade 4 - poor quality agricultural land. Grade 5 - very poor quality agricultural land.

4.2.34 The plan area has no identified Grade 1 land and only 28 hectares of Grade 2 land. Grade 4 is the dominant type in the Borough with 24,277 hectares whilst the combined Grade 3a and 3b have 15,217 hectares and Grade 5 15,996 hectares respectively.

4.2.36 This policy will be implemented by the scrutiny of planning applications.

4.3 NATURAL HISTORY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

4.3.1 Government Guidance on this topic emphasises the need to ensure effective conservation of wildlife and natural features while making adequate provision for development and economic growth.

4.3.2 It is the function of this local plan to identify relevant national and local nature conservation interests and to ensure that the protection and enhancement of those interests is properly co-ordinated in development and land use policies.

4.3.3 Details of sites of conservation interest are given in the proposals map.

4.3.4 SPECIES PROTECTION

POLICY ENV7

Development proposals which would have an adverse effect on wildlife species protected by law will not be granted planning permission, unless arrangements can **be made through planning conditions or agreements to secure the protection of the species.**

4.3.5 The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is appraising a development proposal which if carried out would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Matters likely to be of concern to the Borough Council in implementing the policy, if development is considered possible, will be to facilitate the survival of individual members of the species, to reduce disturbance to a minimum, and to provide adequate habitats to sustain at least the current levels of populations.

4.3.6 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC

INTEREST POLICY ENV 8

Development proposals likely to adversely affect the nature conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that other material considerations outweigh the special interest of the site.

Designated or potential sites of international importance will be accorded the same protection as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Proposals likely to have a significant effect on such sites will only be permitted if there is no alternative and if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Where such a site hosts a priority habitat or species (as listed in the EC Habitats Directive) permission will only be granted for reasons of human health or safety or for beneficial environmental

9. New Ing Meadow
10. Salthill and Bellman Park Quarries
11. White Moss
12. Light Clough
13. Barn Gill Meadow

- 4.3.9 It should be noted that Salthill and Bellman Park Quarries together with Coplow Quarry were formally registered by the Minerals Planning Authority under Interim Development Order Procedures in 1992 as Dormant Quarries.
- 4.3.10 Bowland Fells is designated as a special protection area. It is designated under Article 4 of the European Communities Council Directive of April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds. The bird directive places special requirements on the UK in respect of this site.
- 4.3.11 In determining applications relating to these sites the Council appreciate that development beyond the boundary can have serious repercussions within the site. These may even destroy the scientific value of the site. Such indirect impacts may, for example result from alteration to water tables, from water pollution some distance from the site, or from the impact of recreational use resulting from a development in the vicinity.
- 4.3.12 This policy will be implemented through the development control process and through liaison with English Nature.

Note: Further sites may be designated during the plan period. Where this is the case they will become subject to this policy.

- 4.3.13 Salthill and Crosshill quarries are both designated as local nature reserves. The Borough Council will encourage their retention and continued public use as such. Any development proposals which would harm the main aims of this designation will be resisted.
- 4.3.14 In addition the council will create new local nature reserves in appropriate locations.
- 4.3.15 Local nature reserves are designated by local authorities with the agreement of English Nature. The two existing reserves in the Borough are owned and managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Local nature reserves are important because they not only protect and manage the sites of flora and fauna which frequent them, but also because they provide much needed public access. In addition to this the educational resource created has significant benefits.
- 4.3.16 The protection of these sites will be through the development control process. The creation of new sites will be undertaken by the Borough Council through negotiation with English Nature and local amenity and conservation groups.
- 4.3.17 The Council will keep a complete record of listed Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a register of plans. It will maintain records as and when notified by English Nature of any changes or new designations, it will consult with English Nature in considering an application for planning permission on Sites of Special Scientific Interest as well as sites outside and in the vicinity of a site of Special Scientific Interest, will follow any advice given by English Nature in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest affected by planning applications and will act in accordance with Article 4 of the European Communities Directive and Department of Environment's Circular 27/87 regarding the Bowland Fells Special Protection Areas when determining planning applications.

4.3.18 OTHER IMPORTANT WILDLIFE SITES

POLICY ENV9

Development proposals within or adjacent to a County Biological Heritage Site or other site of local nature conservation importance identified on the proposals map will be permitted, provided the development would not significantly harm the features

of interest which led to the identification of the site or other material factors outweigh the conservation interests of the site.

- 4.3.19 The County Biological Heritage Sites have been identified jointly by Lancashire County Council, English Nature and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. They are shown on the proposals map and listed in Appendix 3.
- 4.3.20 Wildlife corridors and links are shown on the proposals map. They are linear areas of countryside which are usually sandwiched between built-up areas, or follow geographical features such as rivers and streams, or man-made features such as railway lines. They provide important resources for wildlife; links that allow movement of wildlife between town and country and important educational and recreational resources. The Council recognises that other linear areas of countryside such as those associated with streams and rivers shown as wildlife corridors/links in Appendix 4 provide important resources for wildlife. It also recognises the need to protect wildlife corridors/links from any development which may cause harm or damage to a species/habitat. It will also protect against a reduction in the length of, against any new obstacles and against the contamination of any wildlife corridors/links.
- 4.3.21 These designations represent an important part of the Borough's heritage, which it is necessary to protect. They are valuable both as habitats for plants and animals. There is sufficient land available for all uses without the need to damage such sites.
- 4.3.22 There may be occasions where some development associated to these sites may be justified. This may be a reflection of a clear local need which can be identified and justified.
- 4.3.23 The designation of sites protected by this policy is not comprehensive, and it is possible that other sites will be discovered and possibly created in the plan period. The Borough Council will consult with the relevant organisations on all applications. Where new sites are identified they will be protected by this policy and incorporated into the plan at the earliest opportunity. This policy will be implemented through the development control process and by negotiation with English Nature and the Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

4.3.24 POLICY ENVIO

Where permission is granted for development affecting the nature conservation value of sites, including those referred to in Policies ENV8 and ENV9, conditions may be imposed or agreements sought:

- (a) to avoid damage to wildlife habitats or physical features of the nature conservation interest;
 - (b) to secure the retention or enhancement of wildlife habitats; and
 - (c) in appropriate cases, to require the re-creation of habitats once the development has ceased.
- 4.3.25 Where such development is allowed, damage to nature conservation interests must be kept to a minimum. The most sensitive areas of any site must be protected in the long term, and any valuable areas of habitat must be re-created elsewhere on site wherever possible. In cases where development proposals are considered to possibly affect such sites, the Council will require a full detailed flora and fauna survey. These bodies may be particularly useful; Lancashire County Council Ecology Unit; or bona fide professional landscape/wildlife consultants. The costs of survey works will be met by the applicants. There may be occasions where development of part of the whole of these sites may be justified and in such cases the Council will ensure that damage to the nature conservation interest of the site or feature be kept to a minimum. Where possible the Council will seek to negotiate with the developer to preserve the nature conservation interest, and will consider using conditions and/or planning agreements to provide appropriate compensatory measures.

4.3.26 **REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL SITES**

POLICY ENV11

Development proposals adversely affecting a regionally important geological/geomorphological site or other site of local geological/geomorphological importance identified on the proposals map will only be permitted where material factors outweigh the conservation considerations reflected in the designation or identification of the site.

- 4.3.27 There are 16 regionally important sites in the Borough. These are listed in appendix 5. RIGS are any geological or geomorphological sites, excluding SSSIs, in a county (or region in Scotland) that are considered worthy of protection for their educational, research, historical or aesthetic importance. RIGS are not regarded as 'understudy' SSSIs, but as sites of regional importance in their own right.
- 4.3.28 The Lancashire County Council is the Mineral and Waste Disposal Planning Authority and would determine applications in respect of proposals for minerals and waste disposal and set policies through the Structure Plan and the Minerals and Waste Disposal Local Plan.
- 4.3.29 Where policies are for other forms of development the Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority. The Borough Council recognises that there are a number of rock exposures and formations including naturally occurring crags, stream sections, quarries and geomorphological features which are important elements in the landscape and are potential geological/geomorphological sites worthy of protection.
- 4.3.30 Other sites of local importance may be suitable for protection from the potential adverse effects of development proposals. The Borough Council will consult with the Lancashire Wildlife Trust in respect of proposals affecting both regionally and locally important geological/geomorphological sites.
- 4.3.31 Implementation of the policy will be through the development control process.

4.4 **TREES AND WOODLANDS**

- 4.4.1 The Ribble Valley contains a wealth of trees and woodlands, including many of ancient origin. These add greatly to the quality of the environment in the countryside and the towns and villages of the borough.
- 4.4.2 The amount of tree cover in the Borough has however decreased over the centuries, and there is a generally ageing tree population. It is important therefore to protect the most important specimens whilst at the same time encouraging new tree planting. The Borough Council together with the Forestry Authority will seek to promote woodland management in order to stabilise and develop the existing resources within the borough.
- 4.4.3 Within this plan there will be a presumption against the clearance of broad-leaved woodlands for development purposes. The Council will make tree preservation orders where an important tree or group of trees appears to be under threat.
- 4.4.4 Threat includes change of ownership and suspicion of impending development. Where trees of a particularly high amenity value are under threat of felling or unsympathetic treatment the Borough Council will use tree preservation orders to protect them. Where possible the Council will also provide advice on existing trees and planting schemes. Before a tree preservation order is served, all trees must have been properly assessed to criteria of arboricultural/amenity value.
- 4.4.5 The Borough Council is empowered by Section 198 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to make tree preservation orders to protect trees which may be endangered.

- 4.4.6 Once a tree preservation order has been confirmed a tree cannot be lopped, topped or felled without the express consent of the Borough Council. There may be circumstances in which the felling or surgical pruning of trees protected by an order can be accepted. In these special circumstances replacement tree planting with indigenous trees of appropriate species and type will be required.

4.4.7 **ANCIENT WOODLANDS**

POLICY ENV12

Development proposals which would result in loss or damage to ancient woodlands will be refused unless it is demonstrated that the loss or damage is outweighed by other material factors, when the Borough Council will seek to mitigate them by measures including appropriate woodland planting and management to be ensured by planning conditions and agreements.

- 4.4.8 There are 114 ancient woodlands in the plan area. These cover a total of 720 hectares. These are listed in appendix 6. They are woodlands which have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and have only been cleared for underwood or timber production. The ancient woodlands have a fourfold importance:

- (i) the great majority are believed to be primary, that is they are surviving fragments of primeval forests. This is the climax vegetation type of this country;
- (ii) the characteristics of ancient but not primary woods (ancient secondary woods) are likely to resemble those of primary woods;
- (iii) ancient woodlands have had a long time to acquire species and to form stable floral and faunal communities;
- (iv) their soils have remained largely undisturbed.

- 4.4.9 There is clearly sufficient land available for various types of development without destroying the last remaining areas of ancient woodland.

- 4.4.10 The policy will be operated through the development control section and through the work of the Council's countryside officer to encourage management and enhancement and the promotion of available grants. In addition the council will promote the enhancement and appropriate management of ancient woodlands.

4.4.11 **FELLING LICENCES**

The Council will attempt to secure the following objectives when consulted on felling licence applications:

- (a) minimising the short-term adverse impact on the landscape;
- (b) ensuring replanting schemes contain an appropriate balance of species to safeguard and enhance the environment, landscape and timber production value of any woodland. .

- 4.4.12 Since 1945 very few new woodlands have been created within the Borough. The Council support the Lancashire Indicative Forest Strategy and will actively seek partnership together with the Forestry Authority, to increase the woodland planting within the Borough. With a tree cover of only 8% within the district, the Council will seek to promote new planting in appropriate areas to reach the national average of 10% and ultimately towards the European average of 20+%.

- 4.4.13 In 1986 it was recorded that 342 woods, covering 5 acres or more, existed within the Borough. The Council will seek to carry out a woodland inventory on the health and well-being of these woodlands. Resources permitting - we would seek to develop this inventory down to woodlands of one half hectare or greater, in order to identify where fragmentation can be halted by new planting.
- 4.4.14 To encourage woodland management and ensure that felling is done in a sympathetic manner; so as to protect the landscape and environment. The Council will seek to maintain existing broad-leaved cover and ensure woodland management enhances the environment for people within the Borough.

4.5 LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

POLICY ENV13

The Borough Council will refuse development proposals which harm important landscape features including traditional stone walls, ponds, characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures, woodlands, copses, hedgerows and individual trees other than in exceptional circumstances where satisfactory works of mitigation or enhancement would be achieved, including rebuilding, replanting and landscape management.

- 4.5.1 It is important to protect the existing landscape features which add to the character of the Borough. The woodland coverage of the borough whether large woods, small groups, or individual trees, together with hedgerow coverage forms an important part of the landscape quality. In addition valuable ecological, recreational and economic functions arise from these features.

4.6 THE BOROUGH'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC HERITAGE

4.6.1 POLICY ENV14

In considering development proposals, the Borough Council will apply a presumption in favour of the preservation of ancient monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings. The case for preservation of archaeological remains will be assessed having regard to the intrinsic importance of the remains which will be weighed against the need for the proposed development.

- 4.6.2 Archaeological remains cannot be replaced. PPG 16 clearly sets out government guidance on this issue. It stresses that where nationally important archaeological remains, or their settings, whether scheduled or not, are affected by a proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation.
- 4.6.3 There are 20 scheduled ancient monuments in the plan area. These range from easily identifiable castle and abbey ruins to prehistoric burial mounds. Details of these sites are provided in appendix 7.
- 4.6.4 Scheduled ancient monuments are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Any proposed development affecting them must receive ancient monument consent from the Secretary of State. The Borough Council will consult with English Heritage on any application which may affect such a site.
- 4.6.5 Not all valuable sites are scheduled. There are around 1300 archaeological hazard areas currently identified within the plan area and listed on the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record. The sites and monuments record, which is operated on behalf of the Council by the Lancashire County Council Archaeological Unit, will be consulted on all applications. Records of archaeological hazard sites can be obtained from Lancashire County Council Archaeological Unit. Not all sites will be of primary importance. Policy ENV1 5 below will be applied to potentially important sites. Developers are advised to undertake early consultation

with the Lancashire County Council Archaeological Unit before submission of an application in order to establish the archaeological sensitivity of a proposed development site.

4.6.6 POLICY ENV15

Development proposals in areas considered to be of high archaeological potential (see Policy ENV14) will be assessed on the level of damage caused to the site and its archaeological value. In determining applications the Borough Council may:

- i) **Request that an initial assessment of the archaeological value be submitted as part of any planning application.**
- ii) **Where as a result of the initial assessment, important archaeological remains are considered to exist, request the developer to arrange an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out prior to the determination of a planning application.**
- iii) **Where important archaeological remains are found to exist and preservation of the remains in situ is not justified, seek agreement for the full archaeological investigation of the site in accordance with a scheme of work, such scheme to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority prior to the granting of planning permission.**
- iv) **Where remains are to be left in situ, impose conditions or seek legal agreement (where appropriate) to this effect and ensure that damage to the remains is minimal or will be avoided.**

4.6.7 The areas defined as being of high archaeological potential are those where the Lancashire County Council Archaeological Unit has good reason to suspect that significant finds may be unearthed by any disturbance of the ground.

4.6.8 In areas of high archaeological potential a qualified archaeologist appointed by the developer should produce an initial assessment of the site which evaluates its archaeological value and what, if any, further field evaluation is required. Such an evaluation should include an assessment of the impact of the development upon the preservation of any archaeological remains. The Borough Council will impose conditions or seek legal agreements to this effect. Full archaeological excavation of the site should only be considered if there is an overriding case for the development of the site and destruction of any remains is unavoidable. The Borough Council will consult Lancashire County Council Archaeological Unit and English Heritage as appropriate on such matters and have regard to PPG 16 "Archaeology and Planning."

4.7 **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

4.7.1 **CONSERVATION AREAS**

There are 16 conservation areas currently designated in the plan area. The Borough Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. The Borough Council has prepared character appraisals for the following conservation areas:

Clitheroe, Ribchester, Whalley.

4.7.2 These will be treated as supplementary planning guidance in the determination of planning applications. In addition the Borough Council intends to prepare appraisals of the character of the remaining conservation areas in the following order of priority:

1	Chipping	7	Longridge
2	Pendleton	8	Bolton-by-Bowland
3	Wiswell	9	Chatburn
4	Downham	10	Grindleton
5	Slaidburn	11	Newton
6	Waddington	12	Sawley
		13	Gisburn

- 4.7.3 These will also be used as supplementary planning guidance when approved by the council. The council will also prepare appraisals of the character and appearance of the following locations within the district with the intention of designating new conservation areas:

Hurst Green
Sabden
Worston.

Conservation area boundaries are shown on the proposals map.

- 4.7.4 The Borough Council will require proposals for new buildings and the replacement, extension and alteration of existing buildings in conservation areas to be in keeping with the architectural and historic character of the area, as set out in the relevant appraisal statement.

4.7.5 **POLICY ENV16**

Within conservation areas development will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials. Trees, important open spaces and natural features will also be protected as appropriate. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area will also be a material consideration in deciding development proposals outside the designated area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

- 4.7.6 Conservation areas are designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)Act 1990. They are areas of special architectural or historic interest. The character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 4.7.7 The designation reflects not only the value of individual buildings but also their collective contribution to the overall character of the area as a whole. Trees and open spaces also contribute to this.
- 4.7.8 The main elements of Council policy are retention and enhancement. This normally places an emphasis on the reuse of existing buildings rather than replacement since this can bring economic benefits to the area as well as securing the retention and maintenance of the building. As such there are likely to be major development opportunities in these areas.

4.7.9 **POLICY ENV17**

Applications for planning permission within or affecting conservation areas will be required to be accompanied by sufficient additional information in the form of sketch elevations of the proposed buildings, means of access and (where appropriate) landscaping of the site.

- 4.7.10 In the majority of cases, these details will be considered necessary for the Borough Council to assess the impact of a proposal on the conservation area. Applicants are advised to enquire, at an early stage as to the Council's requirements in respect of each application for development. Outline planning applications will not normally be considered acceptable.

4.7.11 POLICY ENV18

There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Consent to demolish any building in a conservation area will not be granted unless a suitable detailed planning application for the re-use of the site has been approved and a contract let for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment.

- 4.7.12 This policy is intended to ensure that unlisted buildings which are important to the character of the conservation areas are not lost through demolition, or unsympathetically altered or repaired. This is a reflection that whilst a number of buildings in conservation areas do not have any individual qualities to render them listable they do, in many cases contribute to the overall attractiveness. This policy allows the continued protection of the built environment.

In the majority of cases the demolition of buildings within the conservation area will require the express consent of the local planning authority, in accordance to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4.7.13 LISTED BUILDINGS

The Borough Council will have special regard to the desirability of securing the retention, repair, maintenance and continued use of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are statutorily designated by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest. The buildings are classified in grades to show their relative importance, the grades are:

Grade 1

buildings of exceptional interest whose preservation is in the national interest;

Grade II*

particularly important buildings within grade II;

Grade II

buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

- 4.7.14 Listed buildings are largely classified as a reflection of their architectural importance. In addition, buildings and structures of any period which are particularly important illustrations of social economic history, for example, almshouses, schools, stations or buildings which show virtuosity or are associated with well known characters or events are normally regarded as listworthy.
- 4.7.15 There are 1019 listed buildings in the Borough. 18 are classed as Grade I, 57 are Grade II* and 944 are Grade II.
- 4.7.16 It is important that the listed buildings of the Borough are retained. The condition and state of repair are important considerations which also warrant protection. Grant aid is available from the Council to ensure that these buildings are properly maintained. An unsympathetic development adjacent to a listed building can have severely harmful effects. The following policies protect both listed buildings and their settings.
- 4.7.17 If it appears that a building is threatened, action can be taken by the local planning authority under Part 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in order to safeguard the building or enforce remedial works.

4.7.18 **POLICY ENV19**

Development proposals on sites within the setting of buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest which cause visual harm to the setting of the building will be resisted. In assessing the harm caused by any proposal the following factors will be taken into account:

- i) The desirability of preserving the setting of the building
- ii) The effect of the proposed development on the character of the listed building
- iii) Any effect on the economic viability of the listed building
- iv) The contribution which the listed building makes to the townscape or countryside
- v) The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits to the community including economic benefits and **enhancement of the environment.**

4.7.19 The setting may be limited to ancillary land, but may often include land some distance away from it. The setting may encompass a number of other properties. The setting of an individual listed building very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular grouping of buildings and to the quality of the spaces created between them. While a listed building forms an important visual element in a street, it would be correct to regard any development in the street as being within the setting of the building. In some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of a building's surroundings.

POLICY ENV20

4.7.20 **Proposals involving the demolition or partial demolition of listed buildings will be refused unless the demolition is unavoidable. In assessing such proposals the Borough Council will take the following factors into account:**

- 1. The condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use. Any assessment will be based on consistent and long term assumptions;
- 2. The adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use;
- 3. The merits of alternative proposals for the site.

Proposals for the alteration or repair of listed buildings should be sympathetic to their character and appearance. The most important features of any listed building will be preserved.

4.7.21 Listing covers the whole of the building both inside and out, including its curtilage. The features mentioned in the listing description provide a useful guide but are not an exclusive record of features of interest. The Council will seek to preserve all features which contribute to the special interest of the building.

Also, they may offer proven technical performance, physical attractiveness and functional spaces that, in an age of rapid change, may outlast the short-lived and inflexible technical specifications that have sometimes shaped new developments. Any assessment will also take account of the possibility of tax allowances and exemptions and of grants from public or charitable sources. In the rare cases where it is clear that a building has been deliberately neglected in the hope of obtaining consent for demolition, less weight will be given to the costs of repair.

- 4.7.24 Consent for demolition will only be granted where the council is satisfied that real efforts have been made without success to continue the present use or to find comparative alternative uses for the building. This should include the offer of the unrestricted freehold of the building on the open market at a realistic price reflecting the buildings condition (the offer of a lease only, or the imposition of restrictive covenants, would normally reduce the chances of finding a new use for the building).
- 4.7.25 The merits of alternative proposals for the site will also be taken into account. Subjective claims for the architectural merits of proposed replacement buildings will not in themselves be held to justify the demolition of any listed buildings. There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works will bring substantial benefits for the community. These will have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation. Even here, it will often be feasible to incorporate listed buildings within new development, and this option will be carefully considered. The challenge presented by retaining listed buildings can be a stimulus to imaginative new design to accommodate them.
- 4.7.26 Where an important, but unlisted building appears to be under threat of demolition or alteration, that would seriously affect its character, the Borough Council will, in appropriate cases, make a building preservation notice.
- 4.7.27 Under Section 3 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 a building preservation notice can be served where a building is not listed, but appears in the view of the Borough Council to be of special architectural or historic interest, and may be under threat of demolition or alteration. Once served on the owner and occupier of the building the notice lasts for a maximum of six months and subjects the building to the same protection and provisions as if it were formally listed.

4.8 HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS

4.8.1 POLICY ENV21

Development proposals affecting a historic park or garden and its setting will be strictly controlled to ensure they do not harm the appearance or function of the area. Proposals will be assessed in terms of scale, size, design and materials.

- 4.8.2 There are currently three sites in the Borough contained in the English Heritage Register of historic parks and gardens of special historic interest in England. These are shown on the proposals map.

4.9 DERELICT LAND & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.9.1 The Borough Council will actively encourage the improvement of the environment and will prepare and implement environmental improvement measures. Areas where action should be taken include:

all Conservation Areas;
Clitheroe Castle and its grounds;
Chester Avenue car park; and the pedestrian route to Clitheroe town centre;
Taylor Street, Clitheroe;
Mitchell Street, Clitheroe;
Primrose Road to Woone Lane, Clitheroe.
Longworth Road, Billington;

Commercial Hotel, Gisburn; and
Chapel Hill, Longridge.

4.9.2 POLICY ENV22

Development proposals which result in the beneficial re-use of derelict, disused and obsolete land, buildings and waterbodies will be approved subject to the other policies of this plan.

Derelict and degraded land in the open countryside including that in the green belt will be reclaimed or re-used primarily for agriculture, nature conservation or appropriate recreational uses.

- 4.9.3** Parts of the plan area suffer as a result of dereliction and the presence of obsolete land and buildings. Derelict land represents a significant potential land resource, the development of which not only improves the immediate environment but also helps to safeguard greenfield sites in the long term. The Council maintains a list of derelict land in the Borough. This is provided as Appendix 8.

There are three main ways in which the aims of this policy will be achieved.

- 1** Public sector funding on capital programmes prior to private sector investment.
 - 2** Public sector funding in tandem with private sector investment, such as single regeneration budget initiatives.
 - 3** Private sector initiative without public sector involvement.
- 4.9.5** The Council will encourage the return of such land into beneficial use. In appropriate cases open land uses with a strong natural history importance will be considered appropriate.

4.10 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

POLICY ENV23

- 4.10.1** The Council will approve proposals for the development of telecommunications equipment subject to the following criteria:
- i)** Development will only be approved within the area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or which affects a site of Special Scientific Interest where it has been proved to be in the national interest and where no alternative site exists.
 - ii)** The proposal does not harm any wildlife habitat or area of historical or architectural importance.
 - iii)** The siting and design plus the use of materials and colours must minimise the impact of the development on the landscape.
 - iv)** Where possible shared use of an existing mast or the development of additional facilities at an existing site should be undertaken.
 - v)** The Council will expect applications for large masts to show evidence that the possibility of erecting antennas on existing buildings has been explored.
 - vi)** Proposals must incorporate appropriate landscaping and screening plans.

- 4.10.2 Modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and in the national economy. Much of the telephone network is, of course, long established. New communications technology is now spreading rapidly to meet the growing demand for better communications at work and at home, in business and in public services.
- 4.10.3 Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can attract business to the area and help firms remain competitive.
- 4.10.4 It is equally important for broadcasting and for small businesses, and for new methods of employment, such as home-working. Good communications can enrich life at home and offer new choices in education and entertainment, in shopping and banking.
- 4.10.5 In addition, modern telecommunications can benefit the environment through reducing the need to travel, and hence reducing vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants.
- 4.10.6 It is however, important for the Borough Council to ensure that siting and design is as environmentally sensitive as possible and that the use of appropriate materials and landscaping is incorporated in proposals. Landscaping requirements will have regard to the technical requirements of the equipment. The Council will seek the use of shared facilities where possible.
- 4.10.7 The council will ensure that telecommunications equipment installed on buildings under permitted development rights shall, as far as is practicable, be sited to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building.
- 4.10.8 It is a condition of the permitted development right to install an antenna on a building that the antenna shall, so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building on which it is installed. If, in the view of the Borough Council, an antenna has not been so sited, taking into account technical and safety requirements (for example, in the case of a satellite television antenna, line-of-site and picture quality requirements), a breach of condition notice requiring the resiting of the antenna will be served. The grounds for such a notice would be that the condition of the permitted development right has not been complied with, and that therefore the development itself did not enjoy permitted development rights. This constraint on the permitted development right does not allow the local planning authority to take away the right to install the antenna, only to control the details of the installation; therefore, in any such intervention, the authority will suggest their preferred siting to minimise the impact of the antenna.

4.11 **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

POLICY ENV24

In view of the general environmental benefits associated with harnessing renewable energy sources, the Borough Council will support the development of renewable energy schemes provided it can be shown that such developments would not cause unacceptable harm to interests of acknowledged importance in the local environment.

- 4.11.2 The Government's policy is to stimulate the development of new and renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically attractive and environmentally acceptable in order to contribute to:- diverse, secure and sustainable energy supplies; reduction in the emission of pollutants; and encouragement of internationally competitive industries. National planning policy guidance is set out in PPG22 together with technical annexes.
- 4.11.3 The Borough Council acknowledge that new and renewable energy sources can potentially contribute to energy needs in a significant and sustainable way. Renewable energy sources offer the hope of increasing diversity and security of supply, and of reducing harmful emissions to the environment.

POLICY ENV25

4.11.4 In assessing proposals for renewable energy schemes, the Borough Council will have particular regard to the following issues:

- (i) The immediate and wider impact of the proposed development on the landscape; and AONB in particular the need to protect features and areas of natural, cultural, historic and archaeological interest;**
- (ii) the measures that would be taken, during and after construction, to minimise the impact of the development on local land use and residential amenity;**
- (iii) the local and wider benefits the proposal may bring; and**
- (iv) the fact that certain renewable energy resources can only be harnessed where the resource occurs.**

4.11.5 The aim of the planning system is to secure economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land in the public interest. The Borough Council's policies towards developing renewable energy sources must be weighed carefully with its continuing commitment to policies for protecting the local environment. The Borough Council acknowledge the advice in PPG22 that proposals to harness renewable energy can display a variety of factors peculiar to the technology involved. Moreover, such schemes can have particular locational constraints since, in many cases, the resource can only be harnessed where it occurs. The Borough Council will need to consider both the immediate impact of renewable energy projects on the local environment and their wider contribution to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The Borough Council will have particular regard to proposals within the AONB. Proposals within the AONB will have to contribute to the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of landscape of the AONB.

4.11.6 WIND ENERGY

POLICY ENV26

The Borough Council will approve proposals for wind turbine generators providing:

- 1) About the Proposal**
 - i) the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape is justifiable;**
 - ii) the proposal does not harm any wildlife habitat or area of historical or architectural importance;**
 - iii) the degree of nuisance caused by noise and shadow flicker to nearby residential amenities, agricultural operations, recreational areas or the function of the countryside is minimal;**
 - iv) the proposal does not interfere with electromagnetic signals;**
 - v) the design, colour layout and scale of turbines and ancillary structures including access roads must be appropriate to the character of the area;**
 - vi) connections to electrical grids and sub stations etc. must be acceptable in the landscape setting;**
 - vii) adequate restoration and after use provision must be made;**
 - iii) suitable parking facilities should be provided where appropriate.**

2) Location

development proposals within or close to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, sites of special scientific interest, local nature reserves, or scheduled ancient monuments will not be allowed, unless:

- i) the proposal cannot be better located outside such statutory designated areas:**
- ii) the proposal is acceptable in environmental and landscape terms; and**
- iii) any adverse environmental impacts as far as practicable have been mitigated:**

4.11.7 Global warming is one of the biggest environmental challenges now facing the world. An important contribution towards reducing this threat can come from wind energy. This policy seeks to promote the beneficial effects of wind energy development, wherever it is economically attractive and environmentally acceptable. However, there are likely to be very few, if any, sites within or next to urban areas, rural settlements or recreational sites where wind farms can be accommodated because of unacceptable environmental and technical impacts.

4.11.8 Wind generators can have significant local environmental effects. In particular the upland locations, which are the most suitable for wind turbines because of their high wind speeds, tend to be of high landscape quality. Wind turbines should not normally be located on ridge top or summit locations where they would form prominent feature when viewed from the surrounding area.

4.11.9 The wider impact shall take into account the cumulative effect of any further development of a similar nature in locality.

4.11.10 Any parking facilities should be suitably located and sympathetically designed using appropriate materials and landscaping to minimise the visual intrusion.

4.11.11 Because of the potential nuisances that can arise from wind turbines, particularly from noise, shadow flicker or electromagnetic interference it is necessary that these are fully described in applications. Prediction calculations to show the levels of nuisance, particularly at the nearest habitations, will therefore be required to properly judge proposals and to allow for any mitigation measures.

4.12 UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY ENV27

4.12.1 Proposals for the provision of new utility facilities should be consistent with other policies of the local plan. They will need to demonstrate that:

- i) more suitable alternative sites, routes or systems are not available; and**
- ii) they satisfactorily respect the form, character and setting of any settlement involved and make provision for adequate landscaping.**

4.12.2 Utilities facilities can have a detrimental effect upon the landscape quality of the area, despite their clear importance to the population of the plan area. In all cases proposals for the siting of such facilities should be consistent with other policies of the plan. Policies ENV1 and ENV4 will be particularly relevant. The landscape quality of the AONB will be of primary importance and this may necessitate underground provision of facilities including powerlines.

