



West Lancashire

Highways and Transport Masterplan

Consultation Draft

November 2013



Foreword

West Lancashire has a character all of its own. The green belt has protected it against urban sprawl and now its agriculture and horticulture give it a very productive and attractive bloom. It is a hive for lifelong learning with a commercial and industrial base that is bountiful. Skelmersdale is a town ripe for redevelopment, to build upon its current diverse and developing industries. Ormskirk is one of Lancashire's finest market towns while Burscough is home to Martin Mere and at the heart of the district's ecological distinctiveness, attracting visitors from far and wide.

What all of West Lancashire has in common are highways and transport networks that are nearly right, but have significant outstanding issues; we need to get the right solutions that will enable it to grow in keeping with its heritage. Skelmersdale needs a rail connection, while Burscough needs a better rail connection. Ormskirk has a road network that should be able to cope, but urgently needs extra work to do so. West Lancashire needs its walking and cycling networks enhanced, supporting its developing tourist trails and bringing the bicycle back to the future, as an economical alternative form of transport for getting to work.

There is no single answer to the changes and challenges that will shape the future of highways and transport in West Lancashire, but an amalgamation of opportunities that will deliver a synchronised system of sustainable solutions.

Changes to how funding is provided also mean that opportunities are available now that we haven't had before. This masterplan is taking shape at a time when we have the real possibility of significant investment in West Lancashire through the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. This is why we believe we need to act quickly to put in place a programme of investment and of further work to make sure that we take every opportunity we can to support West Lancashire's development.

The delivery of the vision presented in this masterplan will take 10 years or more. It will need public and private money. It will need the backing of partners including the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership through their Growth Deal negotiations, neighbouring authorities, the rail industry and government agencies, as well as the private sector. Choosing which options to pursue will need care and will need a conversation that involves everyone, for this will affect us all, residents or visitors, young and old alike.

The consultation I am launching is key to the success of West Lancashire in the future. I want to hear as wide a range of opinions as possible so that we can listen to all points of view and look at ideas that are put forward. We need to be sure that there is broad agreement with our vision and what we want to do next. That agreement will give us the confidence to move forward and make West Lancashire's highways and transport networks fit for whatever the coming years bring, to be something that every part of the district can be proud of.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Fillis', written over a white background.

County Councillor John Fillis
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Lancashire County Council

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Executive Summary

This document presents the draft Highways and Transport Masterplan for West Lancashire.

The County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out our transport priorities until 2021. It shows our commitment to support Lancashire's economy and to tackle deep-seated inequalities in its people's life chances, bring new life to our communities and provide safe, high-quality neighbourhoods.

We are therefore producing five Highways and Transport Masterplans that reflect the county's economic areas:

- Central Lancashire, covering Preston, South Ribble and Chorley
- East Lancashire, produced in cooperation with Blackburn with Darwen Council and covering Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale and Ribble Valley
- West Lancashire
- Fylde Coast, produced in cooperation with Blackpool Council and covering Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre and
- Lancaster

Once completed, these masterplans will set out a cohesive highways and transport strategy for the whole county, linking economic development, spatial planning and public health priorities to the wider policy objectives of the County Council.

The first of these masterplans has now been completed. The Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan was approved in March 2013 and work is already underway to deliver the transport improvements set out within it.

The masterplan presented here sets out our vision for travel and transport in West Lancashire. It seeks a consensus on the validity of that vision and on options that could be implemented and developed to achieve it.

West Lancashire Now

West Lancashire had an estimated population of over 110,000 people in 2011. The borough covers an area of 347 square kilometres, giving West Lancashire a relatively low population density of 318 people per square kilometre and in fact boasts the greatest amount of Green Belt in one district in England. It has some of the highest quality agricultural land in the county and is home to internationally important areas for wildlife.

The majority of people live in the boroughs three main settlements; the historic market town of Ormskirk (including Aughton); the New Town of Skelmersdale (including Up Holland); and the small town of Burscough. However, the rural nature of the borough means that settlements are unevenly arranged and some areas suffer from rural isolation whilst some of the larger settlements have grown around the road network and now suffer in parts from congestion

The location of the district, next to Central Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester, gives it significant economic opportunity to grow and develop. This is particularly the case for Skelmersdale, which already benefits from excellent links to the strategic road network.

The borough is home to a number of international and nationally recognised companies including Pilkington Group Ltd, ASDA, Co-operative Bank PLC, Matalan PLC and Walkers Snack Foods Ltd. Edge Hill University is an important asset which also brings significant benefits to the local economy.

Looking to the future

A key driver for West Lancashire's economic development is the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), of which Lancashire County Council is a member. The Partnership's Lancashire Growth Plan for 2013/14 has been approved and sets out how strong and sustainable economic growth can be achieved in the county.

The LEP brings together businesses, councils and universities to develop a strategy for economic growth. The LEP's main aim for West Lancashire is to work with stakeholders to encourage inward investment to the region and expand on existing business. West Lancashire Borough Council also has economic aspirations expressed in their Local Plan.

West Lancashire will also be the focus of significant housing development with 4,860 homes planned to 2027. Delivery of much of this housing growth will be through strategic locations and sites, including Skelmersdale with Up Holland, Burscough, and Ormskirk with Aughton.

Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LCR LEP) is intending to create a 'Superport' on the back of Peel Port's proposals for a new deepwater container terminal at the Port of and the reopening of the Manchester Ship Canal to freight vessels.

While West Lancashire is not within the LCR LEP, the key settlements of Skelmersdale and Ormskirk are less than a 30 minute drive from the Port of Liverpool, with the access to Skelmersdale (via the M58) being especially good for movements to the north of England and Scotland. As such, there is a significant opportunity for Skelmersdale and the wider West Lancashire area to benefit from the LCR Superport project.

Funding

The cost of delivering the package of measures identified in the masterplan, and those that will come out of the work we propose to do, cannot be borne entirely by public sector funding. We have shown that, in areas where we can come to rely on the development industry to contribute funding to new infrastructure, we can increase investor confidence and our ability to attract other sources of funding, and in turn improve the prospects of delivery, and delivering to earlier timescales.

Moving forward, investment in major new infrastructure will, increasingly, need to demonstrate an economic justification. In practice, this means a clear strategy that brings forward integrated development proposals for new development and economic growth alongside the infrastructure to support it.

New procedures have been put in place for collecting and investing developer contributions. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a key mechanism to delivering major new infrastructure to stimulate and support major house building and business development. The speed and certainty with which we will be able to implement new infrastructure will be directly linked to developer contributions.

West Lancashire Borough Council is intending to bring in a CIL charging schedule from April 2014, subject to statutory process.

Our Vision

Because of West Lancashire's unique character, our vision is not based on how or why people travel, as in other masterplans, but on where people travel.

We believe that each area of the district has a specific set of issues which we can only resolve by looking at them in the geographical context they occur in:

- Ormskirk and Aughton's problems stem from their position on the major routes across West Lancashire.
- Skelmersdale is a New Town that didn't develop as planned, which has severely limited it and its neighbour Up Holland
- Burscough's ties are to Ormskirk and to the south and yet the transport network doesn't support this.
- The Rural Parishes rely on agriculture and tourism, but their road networks haven't kept pace with modern vehicles or with changes to public transport.

By understanding what each area needs we have been able to set out interventions that, taken together, will provide an integrated highways and transport network for West Lancashire that will be able to support the people and businesses of the borough for many years to come.

Skelmersdale and Up Holland

The masterplanning exercise has concluded that Skelmersdale and Up Holland's highways and transport networks are not fit for purpose. The legacy of New Town development plans that did not come to fruition means that the highways network was designed to cope with many more cars than it does, the public realm is inhospitable and many features act as barriers to local travel, particularly the underpasses. Without a functional highways and transport network, Skelmersdale cannot fulfil its potential for economic growth.

We therefore propose a package of four measures to address the fundamental disjoint between economic growth and the travel networks that currently serve the town, its businesses, its residents. These measures will not only ensure that Skelmersdale and Up Holland can prosper in the future, but will provide vital connections for the wider West Lancashire area:

1) We will work with Network Rail to bring forward a business case for a new rail station adjacent to the town centre. The station would see direct services to both Liverpool and Manchester (including the airport) and would have 'parkway' facilities to serve the wider West Lancashire area. Network Rail support this approach and with a successful business case will look to implementation in 2019 – 2024 (Control Period 6)

2) To take full advantage of a new station, we will work with all interested stakeholders, including the residents of Skelmersdale, to take forward a large scale public realm improvement programme that will transform the town, making access to the town and local centres, and to employment and lifelong learning, easy and attractive for all.

3) Again with an eye to the new rail station, we will look at how public transport is provided in Skelmersdale, including a new bus interchange and service provision, particularly with respect to employment and lifelong learning, ensuring that interchange between all modes is easy.

4) Lastly, we will work with West Lancashire Borough Council to provide a Skelmersdale to Ormskirk cycling and walking route. As well as providing access between the towns, the route will ultimately allow Ormskirk's residents to access the rail services from the new station.

Ormskirk and Aughton

Ormskirk suffers from significant traffic congestion. The main route through the town centre is the A570 which currently carries traffic accessing Southport from the M58 and there has been a long standing proposal for a bypass of Ormskirk to carry this traffic around the town. However, a study commissioned into the M58 to Southport corridor has suggested that with the opening of the Thornton to Switch Island link, traffic reductions will mean that a bypass will no longer be the most cost effective way to solve Ormskirk's congestion issues, particularly as much of the traffic in Ormskirk is not in fact through traffic.

We therefore propose a package of three measures to ensure that town centre congestion is reduced as far as possible and that the gyratory system offers an effective route through the town:

1) A Movement Strategy for Ormskirk, building on the congestion measures as proposed in the M58 to Southport Corridor Study and also including an innovative bicycle hire scheme centred on the University. The Strategy will focus on how removing longer distance traffic from the town can be a catalyst for making public transport, cycling and walking the modes of choice in the town.

2) The replacement of the Derby Street rail bridge, with full public consultation as designs are drawn up and the business case developed.

3) In conjunction with the Highways Agency and Sefton Council, we will implement a route management strategy to ensure that the full benefits of the Thornton to Switch Island link are felt by West Lancashire and by Ormskirk in particular.

These measures will be complemented by the new station facilities at Skelmersdale which will include public transport interchange facilities, car parking and the dedicated cycle facilities.

Burscough

Burscough's connections to Ormskirk and, beyond that, to Liverpool could be far better. With the scale of development proposed for Burscough by the West Lancashire Local Plan, improving these connections has taken on a greater significance.

We therefore propose two interlinked measures to improve connectivity:

1) The electrification of the Ormskirk to Preston rail line. This would be achieved through either the extension of the existing third rail system or through overhead electrification.

2) The creation of a dedicated walking and cycling link between Burscough and Ormskirk which will bypass narrow sections of road in Burscough and take walkers and cyclists away from high speed sections of road. This will also facilitate access to the new station at Skelmersdale.

The Rural Parishes

The rural parishes suffer from 2 specific problems. Inappropriate traffic and buy roads blight many villages, whilst for non car owners, rural isolation and access to employment and lifelong learning can be a real problem.

We therefore propose three measures to address these issues:

1) The construction of the Green Lane Link at Tarleton that will remove significant numbers of heavy goods vehicles from the inappropriate roads in the village centre and other surrounding routes.

2) In conjunction with the Highways Agency and Sefton Council, we will implement a route management strategy to consider how traffic can be removed from routes in the Eastern parishes, particularly the A5209 and the A577.

3) Based on work to be undertaken as a part of other masterplans, we will identify options for providing access to services in our remote and rural areas, whether by conventional bus services or other means, particularly for access to employment, lifelong learning and health.

Next Steps

This consultation masterplan represents the beginning of a programme of infrastructure delivery to serve West Lancashire over the next 13 years and beyond.

There is much to do and it will need the commitment and efforts of a variety of service providers to see it through – County, District and Metropolitan Councils, Lancashire's Local Enterprise Partnership, the Highways Agency, Network Rail – and the support of private business and house builders as well.

The first task is to make sure we have widespread agreement for the highway and transport improvements that are taken forward. Then, to stand the best chance of delivering these improvements, we must make sure they are 'ready to roll' as soon as we can, so that we can make use of all opportunities to get funding for schemes that are ready to be delivered. That will mean committing time and funding now to working out detailed plans for these ideas and preparing the economic case for them.

Let us know what you think

From the 2nd December 2013 until 24th January 2014, there will be a public consultation on the Highways and Transport Masterplan for West Lancashire.

As part of the consultation it is important that we get your views on the vision presented in the masterplan.

A leaflet with a questionnaire accompanies the masterplan and this is your opportunity to let us know what you think. Copies of the leaflet are available from public libraries and council offices.

We will also be holding events in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale where you can come and talk to us about our proposals. We will publicise the details of these when we have finalised arrangements for them.

The masterplan can also be viewed or downloaded from our website. To access the documents paste the following link into your browser www.lancashire.gov.uk and then search for Local Transport Plan on the A-Z list. You can also fill in the questionnaire online.

You can also write to us at:

Highways and Transport Masterplan for West Lancashire
Consultation
Environment Directorate
Room C4
County Hall
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 0LD

or by email: enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk

Introduction ~ Lancashire's Highways and Transport Masterplans

The County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) sets out our transport priorities until 2021. It establishes our commitment to support Lancashire's economy and to tackle deep-seated inequalities in its people's life chances, revitalising our communities and providing safe, high-quality neighbourhoods.

We will:

- Improve access into areas of economic growth and regeneration
- Provide better access to lifelong learning and employment
- Improve people's quality of life and wellbeing
- Improve the safety of our streets
- Provide safe, reliable, convenient and affordable transport alternatives to the car
- Maintain our assets and
- Reduce carbon emissions and their effects

As part of this, as the highways and transport authority for Lancashire, we are producing a set of Highways and Transport Masterplans that will cover all 12 districts of the county.

Once completed, these masterplans will set out a cohesive highways and transport strategy for the whole county, linking economic development, spatial planning and public health priorities to the wider policy objectives of the County Council. Each masterplan will:

- Outline current issues affecting our highways and transport networks
- Look at the impact of plans and policies in future years, including the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's Plan for Growth and approved Local Development Framework Core Strategies
- Put forward the measures that the County Council considers are needed to support future growth and development and improve our communities
- Outline funding mechanisms and delivery programmes and associated risks.

Future funding allocations from central government will be devolved to the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which covers the local authority areas of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. It is therefore vital that there is a coherent highways and transport strategy for the whole county, rooted in approved and adopted strategies and plans. Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool Councils are therefore cooperating with us to produce this strategy. More detail on future funding is provided later in this masterplan.

Rather than produce a masterplan for each district, we have chosen to create five masterplans that reflect the travel areas identified in the Local Transport Plan:

- Central Lancashire, covering Preston, South Ribble and Chorley
- East Lancashire, produced in cooperation with Blackburn with Darwen Council and covering Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Rossendale and Ribble Valley
- West Lancashire
- Fylde Coast, produced in cooperation with Blackpool Council and covering Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre and
- Lancaster

Whilst the majority of districts fall within one area, Ribble Valley is more complex. In travel terms, those ties are principally to central and east Lancashire and it is therefore included in 2 masterplan areas.

The first of these masterplans has now been completed. The Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan was approved in March 2013 and work is already underway to deliver it.

All five masterplans will need to integrate to ensure that the whole of Lancashire sees economic and housing growth that will maximise its potential. With the Central Lancashire Masterplan now in place, the other masterplans need to compliment it, identifying the highways and transport improvements that will be needed to maximise both economic growth across Lancashire and meet the local visions identified in each area.



Figure 1: Masterplan Areas

Introduction ~ West Lancashire's Masterplan

This masterplan, the technical evidence and public consultation underpinning it, represents the County Council's considered position of the transport infrastructure needed to support the delivery of West Lancashire's development strategy.

The fundamental purpose of transport is to enable economic and social activity. It allows people to get to work, to access services and to see friends and visit places. It also allows businesses, suppliers and customers to come together. However, transport also impacts on people, on places, and on our environment. Traffic congestion brings delay and disrupts communities; road accidents cause injury and suffering; vehicle emissions affect local people's health and contribute to global environmental problems and so on.

Balancing the positive and negative impacts of transport is vital in providing sustainable highways and transport networks for the future. However, we can only do this if we consider the consequences that changing these networks will have not just on the users, but on the people, environment and economy of West Lancashire, both now and in the future.

To do this, we must make sure that we take full account of other strategies that shape the county:

- The West Lancashire Local Plan, adopted in October 2013, will guide future development within West Lancashire over the 15 year period 2012 ~ 2027. The Local Plan sets out where development will take place and indicates what strategic investment is necessary to deliver it.
- The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership is a Government endorsed partnership between the private and public sectors established to provide leadership for the county's economy and be a catalyst for job creation and economic growth. The Partnership has its own agreed Priorities and Programmes as set out in the Lancashire Growth Plan (2013/14).

This masterplan therefore:

- Considers current patterns of land use and transport use in West Lancashire.
- Links economic development strategies and adopted spatial planning priorities to the wider strategic policy objectives of the County Council.
- Considers the impact of future plans and priorities on our existing transport networks.
- Puts forward a vision for West Lancashire's highways and transport networks that support the district's future aspirations.
- Sets out options for the highway and transport measures that will be needed to support this vision and
- Outlines funding mechanisms and a delivery programme.

In consulting on our vision of what West Lancashire's highway, rail, bus, cycling and walking networks need to be able to do and what options we have for fulfilling that vision, we want to involve everyone affected by these decisions. By seeking agreement on the best way forward, we will be sure that when we adopt this masterplan, we are committing resources in the way that will support economic growth and improve the health and wellbeing of the people in the area.



West Lancashire Now

West Lancashire had an estimated population of over 110,000 people in 2011. The borough covers an area of 347 square kilometres, giving West Lancashire a relatively low population density of 318 people per square kilometre and in fact boasts the greatest amount of Green Belt in one district in England. It has some of the highest quality agricultural land in the county and is home to internationally important areas for wildlife.

The majority of people live in the borough's three main settlements; the historic market town of Ormskirk (including Aughton); the New Town of Skelmersdale (including Up Holland); and the small town of Burscough. However, the rural nature of the borough means that settlements are unevenly arranged and some areas suffer from rural isolation whilst some of the larger settlements have grown around the road network and now suffer in parts from congestion.

Despite its fundamentally rural nature, the borough is home to a number of international and nationally recognised companies including Pilkington Group Ltd, ASDA, Co-operative Bank PLC, Matalan PLC and Walkers Snack Foods Ltd. Edge Hill University also brings significant benefits to the local economy.

The borough's neighbouring districts and regions offer significant economic opportunities.

Figure 2 shows the area that this masterplan covers and the surrounding areas that have strong cultural, physical and economic links with West Lancashire – Preston and Central Lancashire to the north, Wigan and Greater Manchester to the east, and the Liverpool City Region to the south. Although not part of West Lancashire, these areas are key to the masterplan due to their influence.

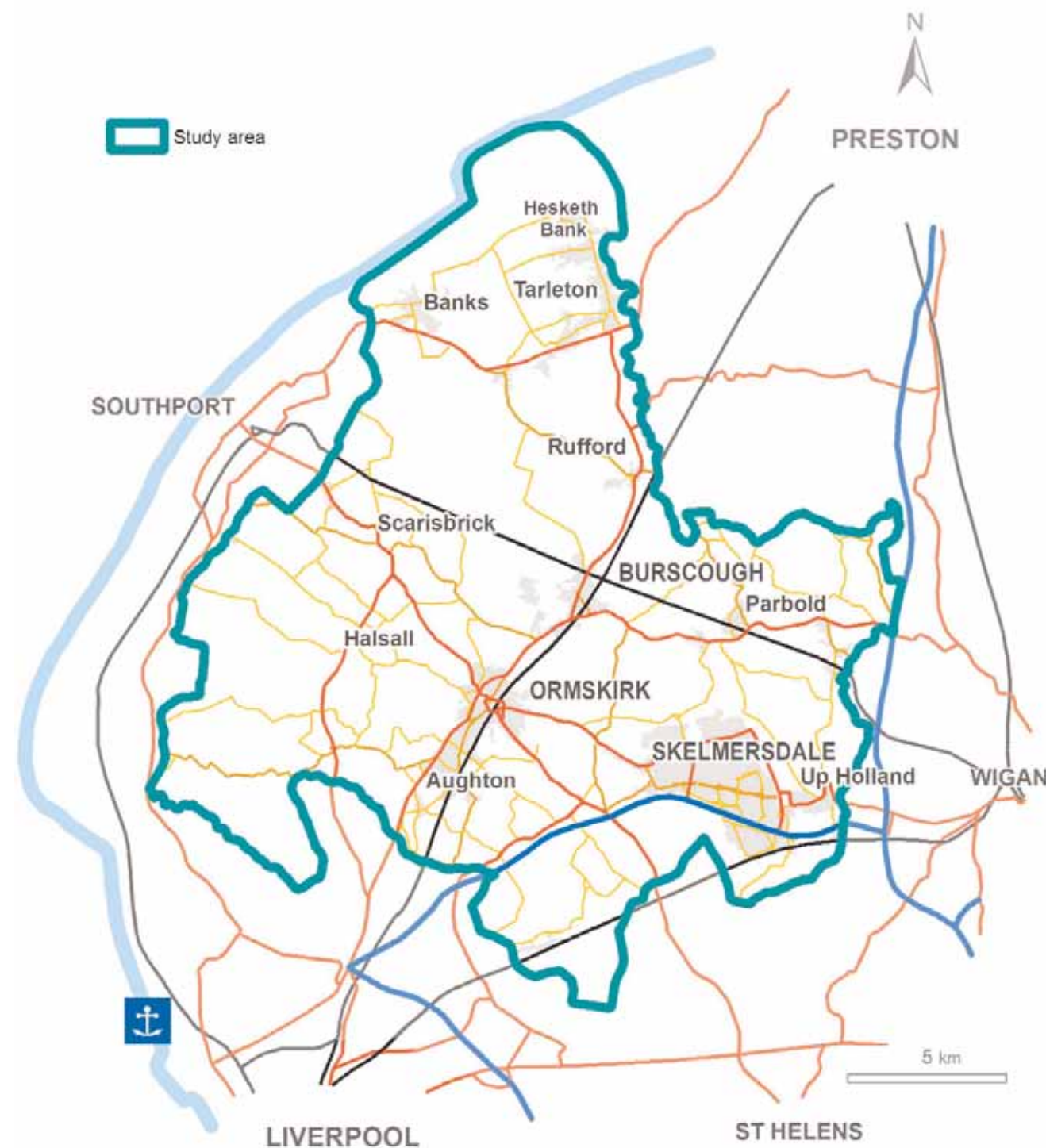


Figure 2: West Lancashire's Geography

Skelmersdale and Up Holland

Skelmersdale was a small mining town until the establishment of the New Town in 1961 when it accommodated population overspill from the conurbation of Liverpool and wider Merseyside. It has grown considerably since this time and is now the largest and most densely populated settlement in the borough, with a population of almost 41,000 in 2011. However, the town has not reached its originally planned capacity of 80,000.

The New Towns were heavily influenced by the design principles of the time, which have left their legacy in the layout, form and functioning of the town. In particular, the New Town was designed to keep walkers and cyclists away from motorised traffic, which has led to issues as the town developed. Although key services, such as the library and shops are situated in the middle of Skelmersdale, the town centre lacks many of the usual features normally expected of a town centre.

With two junctions on the M58 which are within easy reach of the M6, the town has provided the perfect location for logistics and distribution companies at locations such as Pimbo and White Moss.

Up Holland, adjoining Skelmersdale to the east, is, in contrast, a more traditional settlement. With a population of 6,175, it provides a range of local services, although its residents arguably look more towards Wigan than they do to West Lancashire to meet their needs.



Ormskirk and Aughton

Ormskirk, together with Aughton and the Western Parishes, has the second largest population in the borough with 35,000 people in 2011. Ormskirk provides a full range of facilities and benefits including a hospital, magistrate's court, civic centre and a university. The town is located in a strategic transport corridor with both the A59 (Liverpool ~ Preston) and A570 (St. Helens ~ Southport) passing through the town.

Employment in the town is predominantly provided through the town centre businesses, the public sector, the hospital, West Lancashire College and Edge Hill University. There are also business parks at Burscough Street and Southport Road.

Aughton is located to the south of Ormskirk and is viewed with Ormskirk as a single settlement in planning terms. Although it covers a large suburban area and has a relatively high population, it has no town centre, and relies upon Ormskirk for all facilities, except for some local services.



Burscough

Burscough is the borough's third largest settlement with a population of just over 9,000 people.

A small retail and leisure development known as Burscough Wharf, consisting of approximately thirty units available for retail, leisure and office space, provides a focal point for the town centre, although shopping is however dominated by a large Tesco supermarket. In addition, a Booths food store is planned for the south of the town at Pippin Street.

Close to Burscough is the internationally important Martin Mere Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserve.

The Rural Parishes

Other than these three settlements, all of West Lancashire's geographical area lies within the rural parishes. These fall into three distinct groups ~ Northern, Western and Eastern.

These parishes contain some of the best agricultural land in Lancashire and are mostly green belt. Surrounding the central coastal plain, there are mosslands to the north, west and south of the area, whilst to the east the parishes climb to farmed ridges. The area has more local wildlife sites than any other District in the county and has the Ribble Estuary to the north, as well as hosting the Wildlife and Wetlands Martin Mere centre.

The Northern parishes lie across the A565 corridor and include the towns of Tarleton and Hesketh with Becconsall. Tarleton has a population of just over 5,500 people. It has a good variety of services located in the centre and around St. Mark's Square. Tarleton is also home to the area's secondary school.

Hesketh with Becconsall is located to the north of Tarleton with a population of around 4,000 people. It has provision for basic services. Although this provision has recently been enhanced by the development of a Booths food store, it still looks to Tarleton for some of its local and community services, such as the secondary school, library and other retail provision.

As with the surrounding settlements in the Northern Parishes, employment in Tarleton and Hesketh with Becconsall is largely based upon agriculture, horticulture and produce packing industries.

The Eastern parishes include Parbold, Newburgh and Wrightington and have a combined population of around 10,000 according to the 2011 census. These areas are geographically closer to Wigan than they are to Ormskirk, particularly in terms of public transport. Located along the Southport to Wigan rail line, the parishes do have some public transport provision for travel through and out of the borough. The Eastern Parishes also include areas to the south of Skelmersdale such as Simonswood.

The Western parishes consist of those villages and areas that lie to the west of Ormskirk and the A59, including Halsall (with a population of just over 2,000) and Scarisbrick with a population of over 3,800 according to the 2011 census. These areas have a split affiliation, with Ormskirk and Burscough to the east and with Southport to the west. The parishes contain some of the most remote and rural parts of West Lancashire.

West Lancashire Now ~ People and Places

People

West Lancashire as a whole has low levels of deprivation and is a relatively affluent district. Of the borough's population, 54,700 are in employment.

Skelmersdale is the exception to that picture, however, and has significant areas of deprivation. Over half of the town's residents live in areas that are among the 20% most deprived areas of the country, with a significant number among the most deprived 10% in the country. This deprivation is the result of a combination of factors including low income levels, unemployment, low education levels and poor housing, coupled with community factors such as a lack of community cohesion and higher crime levels.

At the opposite end of the scale, Parbold, Aughton Park and Tarleton have some of the lowest levels of deprivation in the country. This illustrates the stark contrast between Skelmersdale and the majority of the borough in terms of deprivation and the need to reduce the gap between them.

Average earnings in West Lancashire as a whole are comfortably higher when measured by place of residence than by place of work. This is an indicator of both the quality of West Lancashire as a place from which commute to work (with the exception, once again, of Skelmersdale) and the relative low value, low wage economy of West Lancashire.

Projected demographic changes within West Lancashire show an expected increase in the population of 7% between 2006 and 2031. Like much of the county, West Lancashire has an ageing population. The number of people over 75 years of age has increased and is projected to continue to do so. However, at the same time, the numbers of young people in the area is higher than average due to the student community attracted by Edge Hill University

In general, the rural areas of West Lancashire are more attractive to people of middle or retirement age, whilst Skelmersdale and Ormskirk ~the latter as a result of Edge Hill University ~ have younger, more varied population structures.

Rural isolation is a concern within parts of West Lancashire. Links to mental health problems and suicide suggest that the implications of rural isolation and the knock-on effects of poor accessibility to employment and services cannot be ignored. With an ageing population, the issue of rural isolation will become a greater concern in the future.

There are many small rural areas within West Lancashire that have a minimal impact on the transport network. These communities have only a very limited impact on travel patterns on the highway because, individually, the numbers of journeys are small.

Where people live determines where many journeys start and end, so the more people in an area, the greater the demands on the network. This is particularly true of commuting. Commuting currently places by far the biggest strain on our transport systems as most workers try to travel in a relatively short period of time of just a few hours in the morning and late afternoon.

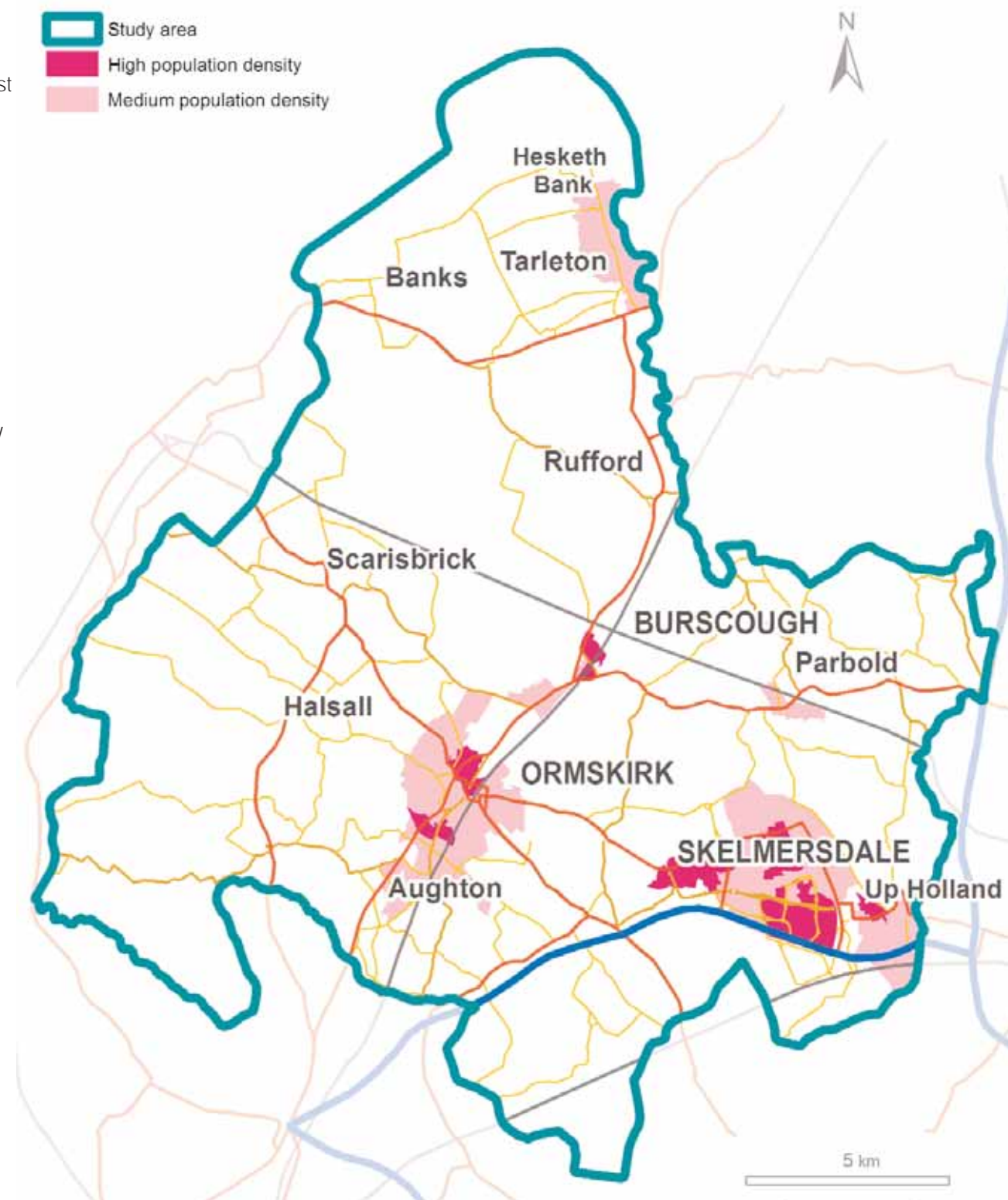


Figure 3: West Lancashire's People

Places

The places that people want to travel to have a major influence on our transport systems. Certain destinations attract a lot of people, whether through choice, such as leisure and shopping or through necessity, such as health or education.

As well as our traditional city/town centres, many journeys centre on the principal employment locations, both for workers and for goods movements. Large numbers of other journeys centre on education establishments such as Edge Hill University and West Lancashire College.

Retail and leisure opportunities outside West Lancashire are big attractions whilst also providing great employment opportunities.

However, just as many of Skelmersdale's people don't share the relative affluence of their neighbour's in the borough, Skelmersdale itself does not have the characteristics seen in other towns of a similar size and therefore is a less attractive destination and sees less outward travel than other areas of West Lancashire.

Figure 4 shows the places that large numbers of people are likely to visit in West Lancashire and its surrounding area. It also includes employment areas, as this gives a more general picture of where journeys are more likely.

As well as acting as destinations for visitors, these locations often have large numbers of workers and therefore have a major impact on commuting.

Together, people and places shape the demand for travel to and from and inside West Lancashire. The next section looks at our highway and transport network and how this demand impacts upon it.

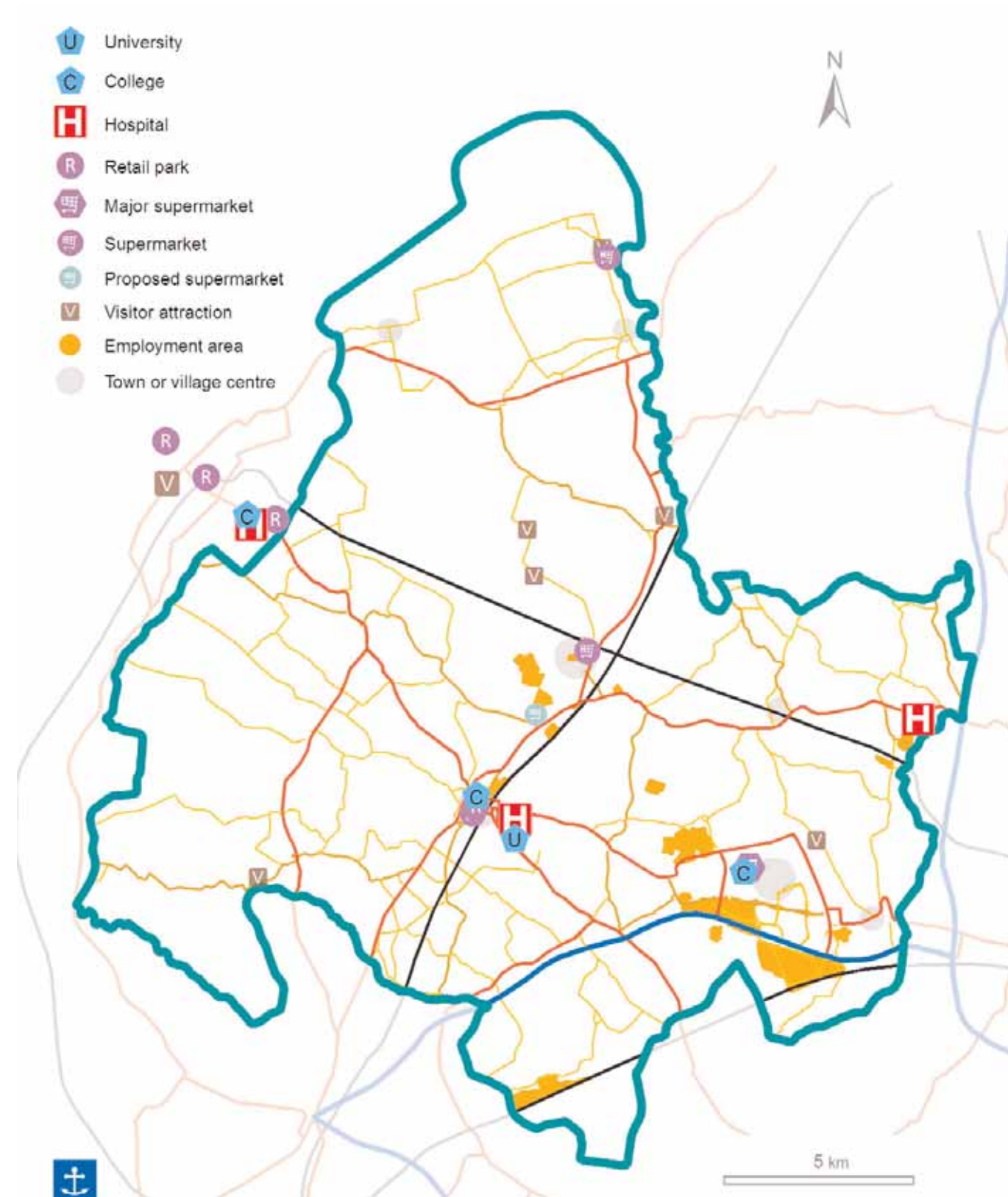


Figure 4: West Lancashire's Places

West Lancashire Now ~ Transport and Travel

As the southernmost district in Lancashire, West Lancashire's strategic location boasts some strong road and rail links with both Central Lancashire and Merseyside. The borough is also well connected to Manchester (via Wigan) and therefore to the comprehensive network of motorways and railways that link with much of the UK.

Longer Distance Travel

Rail links to Wigan, Liverpool and Preston provide access to the West Coast Main Line, enabling fast and frequent train services to London, Birmingham, Manchester, Manchester Airport, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the impending electrification of the lines between Manchester and Preston via Wigan and Bolton will strengthen this strategic connectivity further, as will the proposed High Speed Rail link from London to Birmingham and the North.

To the east of West Lancashire, the M6 links the borough to the rest of the country. The highway network within West Lancashire includes the M58, A59, A570, and A565, enabling easy access to the Central Lancashire, Merseyside and Manchester conurbations.

The challenge will be to ensure that the transport network locally can accommodate new development and support economic growth in the most sustainable way.

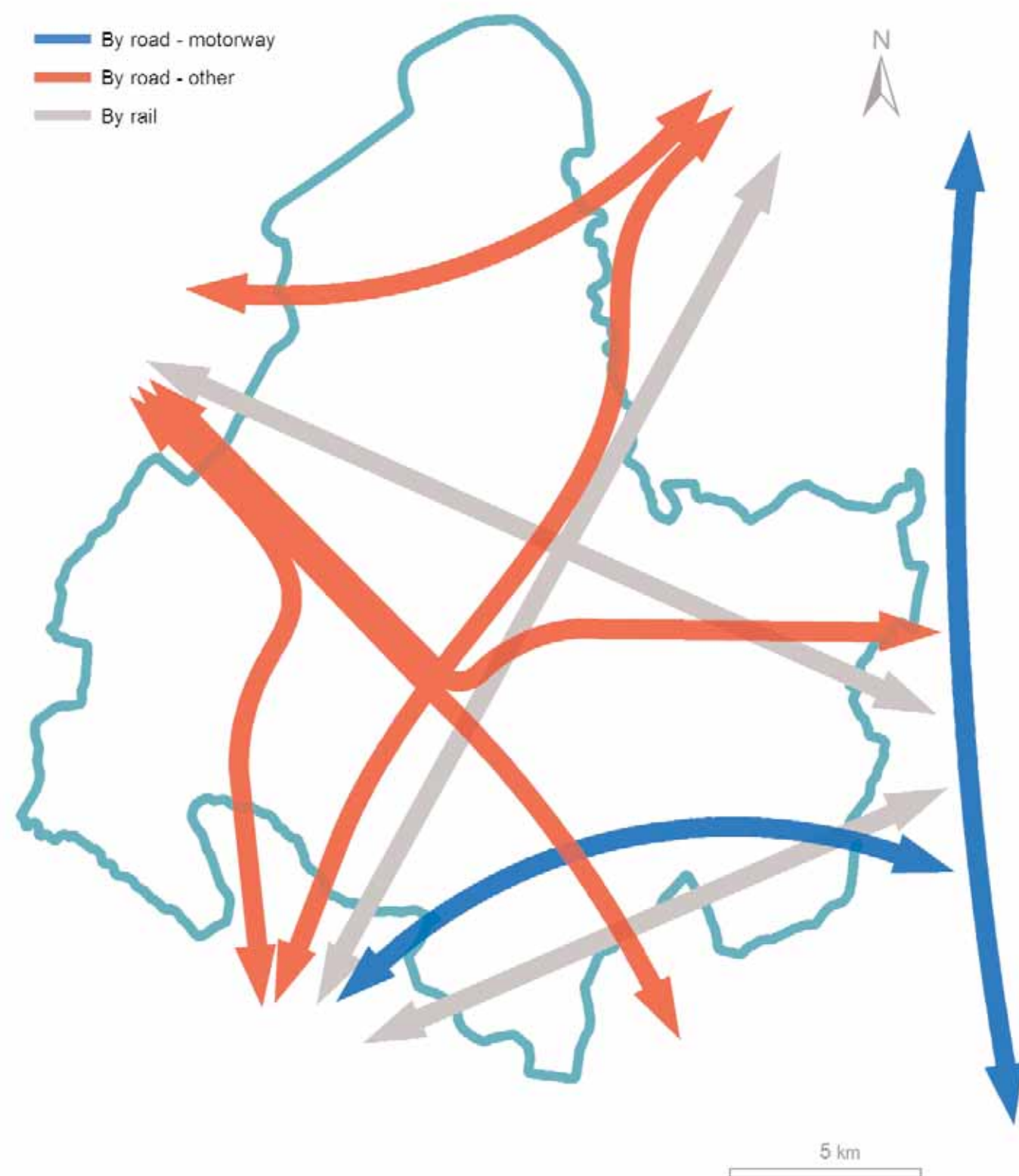


Figure 5: Longer Distance Journeys

Travel within West Lancashire

Information on where people live and travel to in West Lancashire, together with an understanding of the longer distance journeys in the area, provides a basis to understanding the main travel patterns in the area.

Journeys are made for many purposes, but the purpose that dominates the busiest times of the working week is the journey from home to work. This is also the journey about which most information exists.

Questions about travel to work were asked in the 2011 National Census. Some of this information has been published and has been used in this masterplan. Other information, including the numbers of people commuting between different towns and districts, will be included as it becomes available.

A key aspect of travel in West Lancashire is the influence of areas outside the borough. These areas include:

- Sefton ~ The seaside town of Southport is a key destination from the west of the borough for employment, educational opportunities and social activities.
- Greater Manchester ~ Wigan has strong ties with the east of the borough, particularly the eastern parishes and Skelmersdale and Up Holland.
- Liverpool ~ Much of the south of the district looks to the city, and to Sefton, for employment and leisure activities. With three universities and a number of colleges in the city, there are huge educational opportunities.
- Central Lancashire ~ Preston provides employment and educational opportunities, in particular to communities in the north and east of the area.

Patterns of movement illustrate that around 60% of West Lancashire residents travel to work within the borough, with the most popular outward destinations being Sefton and the Liverpool City Region and more than a thousand movements heading towards Wigan, Preston and Blackburn with Darwen.

However, these are district wide figures and therefore do not show local variations. Where car ownership is low and public transport is limited, commuting opportunities are limited, which can lead to a circle of decline where lack of travel opportunity results in unemployment and lower inward investment, which reduces employment opportunity further and so on.

These district travel patterns therefore cannot be assumed to apply to Skelmersdale.

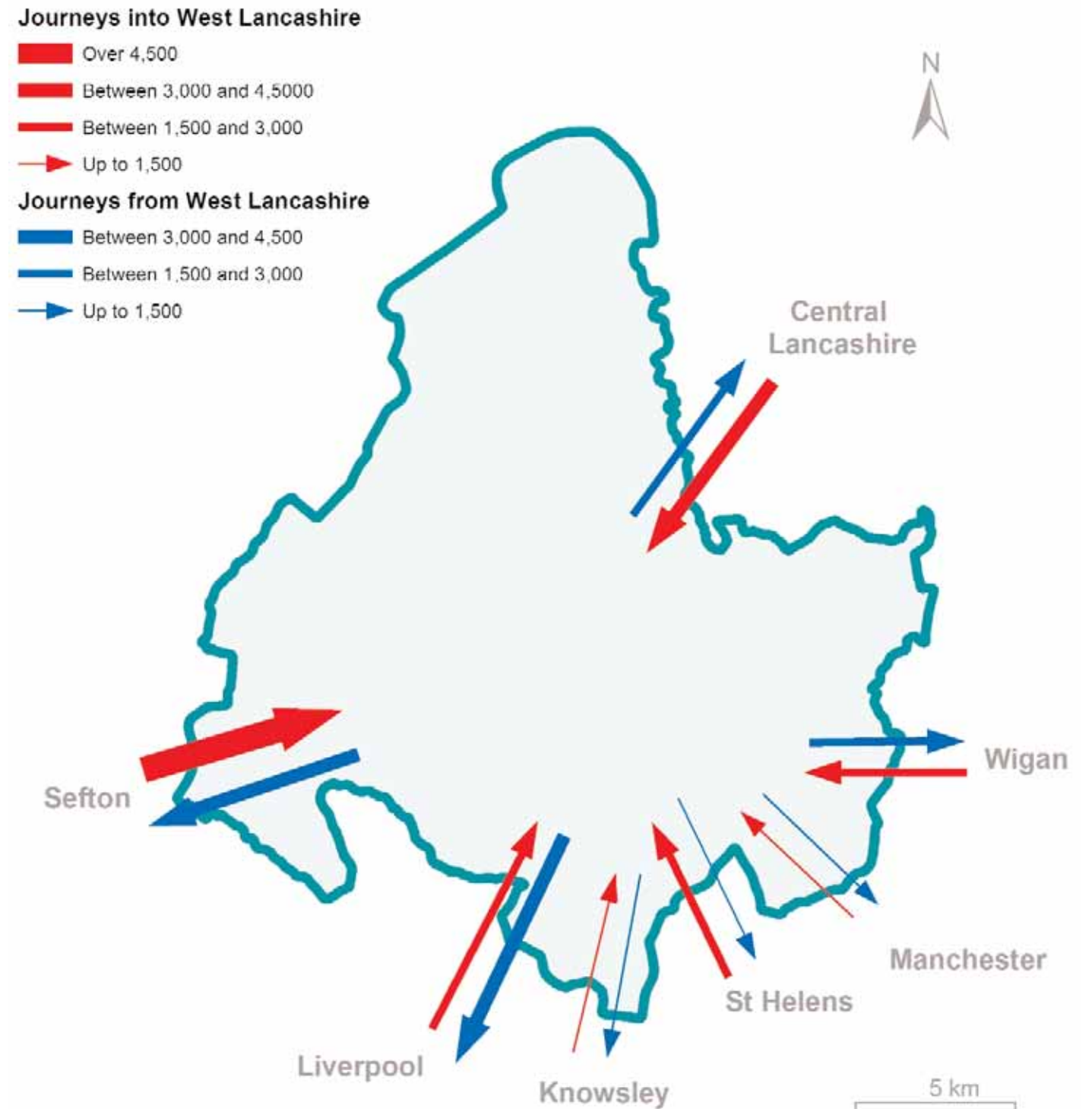


Figure 6: Commuting into West Lancashire

Having looked at where people are travelling to and from, what impact do these journeys have?

Due to the boroughs predominantly rural nature, it is little surprise that West Lancashire has a higher proportion of residents commuting by car than the regional and national averages. Although the main settlements are reasonably well-served by public transport, the rural areas are less so. 21% of the working population use public transport (bus, train, cycle or on foot) to travel to work with a slightly higher than average number of people choosing to work from home, 11.5% compared to 9.4% in the North West and 10.6% in England.

The most obvious effect of these patterns on our roads is the amount of traffic those roads carry, not just in the peak hours but through the whole day.

Figure 7 shows the number of motor vehicles that use our major roads during a typical day. The highest flows are on the motorway network, as would be expected, but there are also some very high volumes of traffic on the roads that are shared by other users for other purposes than simply getting from A to B.

These high levels of traffic on the roads in our communities clearly have impacts beyond those that may be felt by vehicle occupants.

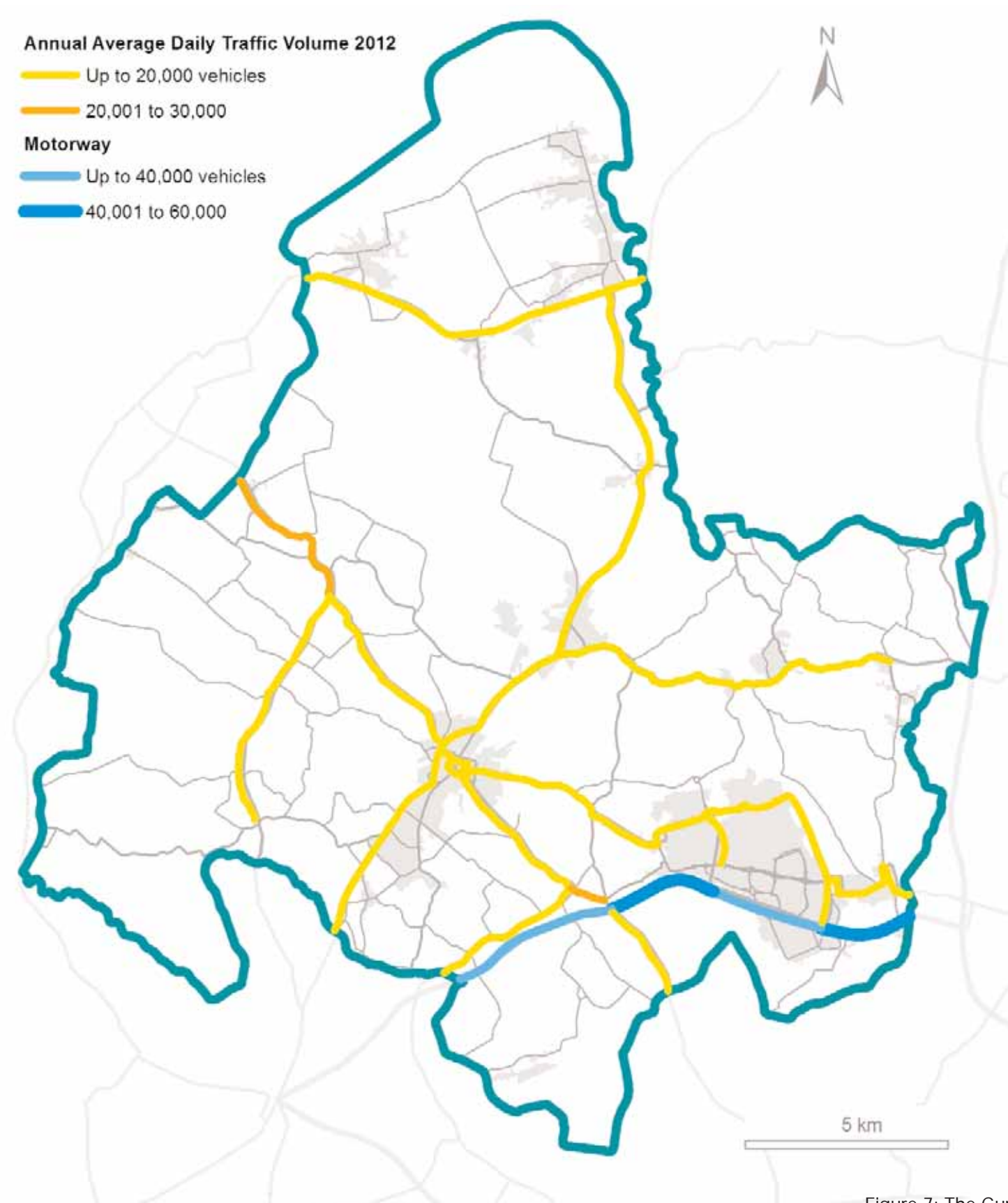


Figure 7: The Current Road Network

The previous map shows the volume of traffic on our major roads. This traffic of course includes buses, which suffer the same delays as other road users unless there are dedicated bus lanes etc, and whilst bicycles may not be counted in the traffic totals, cyclists also have to share this road space unless they have dedicated cycle provision.

Figure 8 shows the major bus routes and also the specific provision for cyclists. Comparing these to the traffic volumes shown in figure 7 indicates where these high levels of traffic may be impacting on more sustainable modes.

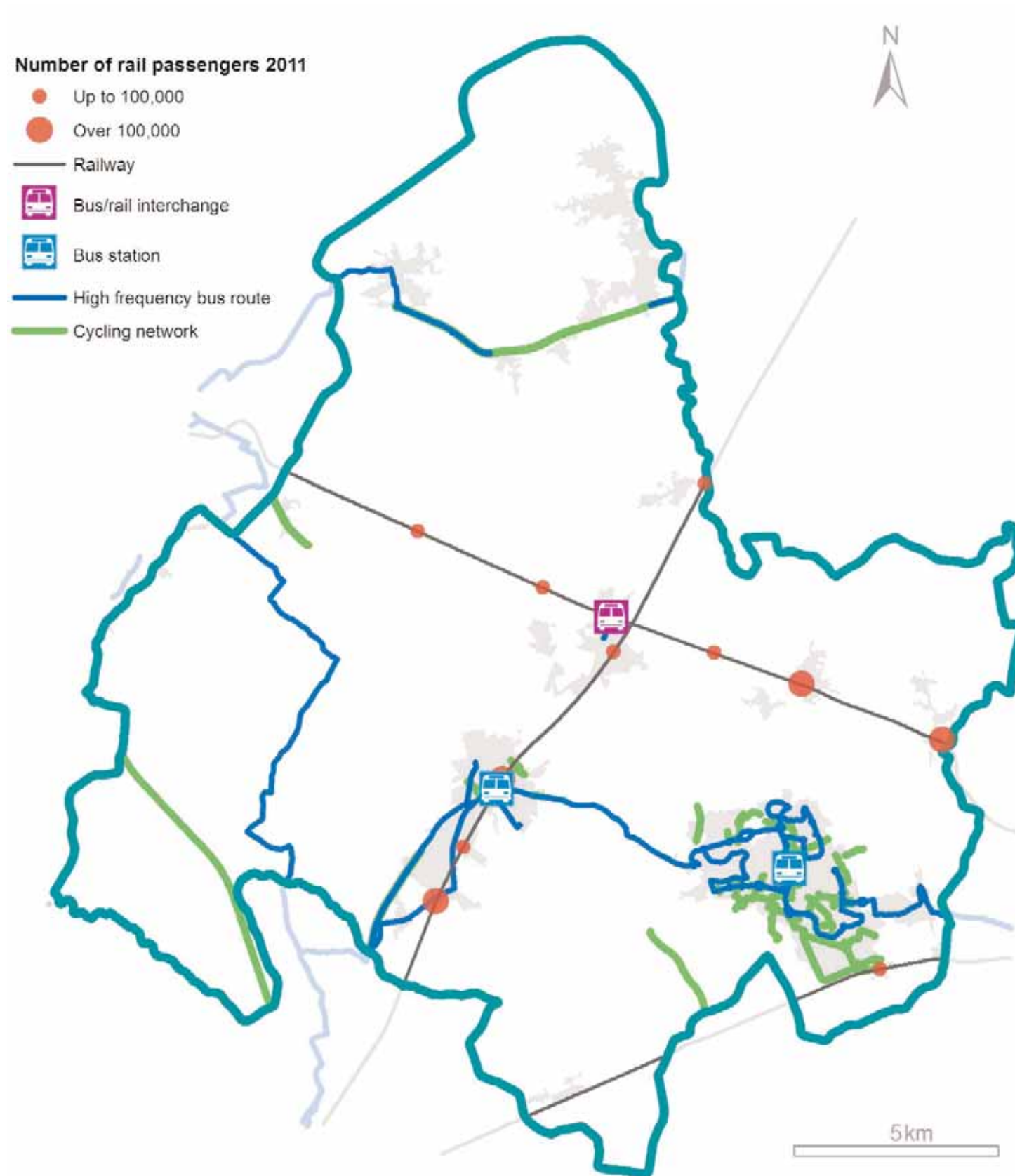


Figure 8: Our current sustainable transport network

So far we have looked at the demands on the network from where people live, where they want to travel to and how they choose to travel.

We now want to look at the impact these journeys have on us as we travel about in our daily lives, because anyone who travels in West Lancashire knows that our roads are under pressure now, without adding any more traffic.

The most obvious symptom of trouble, that we all see, is congestion. In most of West Lancashire, this is at peak times, but the peak times are getting longer as more and more people change their travel arrangements to try and avoid the 'rush hour'.

But congestion is only part of the problem – the extra traffic can have a wide range of unwelcome side effects.

The most obvious effects are on road safety and local air quality, but where the roads are busy with motor traffic, the roads themselves may become barriers to local movement. Busy roads can make people worry about safety and about how difficult travel may be. For instance:

- People are far less likely to want to cycle or walk any distance due to fears about safety and pollution.
- Communities suffer if the roads that run through them are busy and difficult to cross other than at particular places.
- Local centres cannot become sustainable if busy roads make the area unattractive and potential visitors go elsewhere as a result.

As well as these local impacts, there are the wider environmental and social impacts that affect our ability to meet our commitments to:

- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Improve personal health and well-being in Lancashire.
- Support economic development.
- Increase community cohesion; and
- Provide affordable travel options in the future.

Ormskirk sees heavy congestion, particularly at peak times, both in the town centre around the A570 gyratory and on the A59 with its junction with the A570.

Current rail provision in Ormskirk is of a mixed standard. A peculiarity of the station is that the single platform is served by two different lines, one diesel and the other electric, with buffers between them; through travellers must therefore change trains, which is not made easy by the difference between the services on the two lines. The diesel Ormskirk to Preston line provides an infrequent, irregular and unattractive service, which is reflected in its low patronage. At the other end of the platform, the Ormskirk to Liverpool line has trains running every 15 minutes on more attractive rail, reliable units and sees constant high usage particularly around the rush hours.

The rail station and bus interchange are less than 300 meters apart along a direct path, but this path is less well used than it should be due to its poor standard and perceptions of crime. The current bus station and rail interchange facilities are not ideal. The bus station is dated and buses only serve 5 of the 8 bus stops.

The town would also benefit from improved pedestrian and cycle linkages, particularly between the bus and rail stations and Edge Hill University.

Skelmersdale is one of the largest towns in the country without a railway station. Upholland, the nearest station, is outside walking distance, even from the village of Up Holland itself. The station has no bus service from Skelmersdale and minimal parking provision. Trains run to Kirkby and Wigan Wallgate but are infrequent and the line is not always reliable. Direct bus services to Liverpool are unattractive with journey times in excess of 90 minutes. Direct services to Southport and Wigan take 50 and 40 minutes respectively.

Without any nearby rail connections, the Concourse Bus Interchange plays a pivotal public transport role in linking Skelmersdale to Ormskirk, Southport, Liverpool and Wigan.

The road network was designed for a much larger, car dependent town. However, car ownership levels are low and whilst this means that there is little congestion, it also means that for the many people who have no car, travel opportunities are restricted. Even worse, the roads act as barriers to non-car travel.

Pedestrian and cycle connectivity in Skelmersdale are supposed to be made easier by a series of underpasses. Designed to improve safety by removing potential conflicts with vehicles, in recent years the underpasses have suffered from anti-social behaviour and maintenance issues such as flooding and general detritus. Crossing at street level is hazardous however, as there are no designated crossing points; as a result, the roads have themselves become barriers to local travel.

The current lack of transport opportunities around Skelmersdale means that many in the local community are discouraged from using local services in the town. These conditions, coupled with a remote network of footways and cycleways, underpasses and large areas of landscaping, combine to create a local public realm that alienates the local community, raises perceptions over public safety and discourages walking and cycling in the town.

Burscough straddles the A59, which is busy and often congested in the town centre. Public transport in the town is rather disjointed. Whilst Burscough has two rail stations, each is on a different, separate line. Burscough Bridge is on the Southport – Wigan Wallgate line, whilst Burscough Junction is on the Ormskirk to Preston line. There is currently no rail connection between the two lines. As the two stations are situated a 10 to 15 minute walk apart, rail interchange is difficult, even though the stations are served by bus services.

Whilst the Wigan to Southport Line provides regular and reliable services, the Ormskirk to Preston line is an irregular and unattractive service with no distinctive pattern. Currently, there are 12 trains per day, Monday to Saturday, and no Sunday service, between Ormskirk and Preston; scheduling improvements to increase capacity to 13 trains per day from May 2014 and 14 trains per day from May 2015 are currently being investigated.

A key challenge to the Rural Parishes is that of providing accessibility to services for those who have no personal transport, particularly for an ageing population. Rural areas are typically poorly served by buses, whilst distances are often too great to walk or cycle.

However, the parishes also have busy major routes running through them, where the volume of traffic presents issues of noise, air quality and severance. The transport impacts of the thriving farming industry include increasing movements of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). In particular, salad crops grown in the area lead to congestion and disruption caused by HGVs in and around the parish and the surrounding road network.

This is especially true in Tarleton and Hesketh Bank, where, particularly along the main Hesketh Lane/Station Road route, HGVs accessing agricultural and produce packing facilities combine with local traffic, particularly at peak times, and cause significant problems.

Some of these problems are already being addressed. However, addressing all the problems and challenges that we now face in order to provide a sustainable future for West Lancashire, one that leaves as few problems for future generations as possible, will require a fundamental change in how our current problems are dealt with.

Figure 9 shows where the most urgent and significant problems in West Lancashire are, not just the congestion, but also where air quality is being affected and where we know that the sheer amount of traffic causes barriers to movement or limits travel choices.

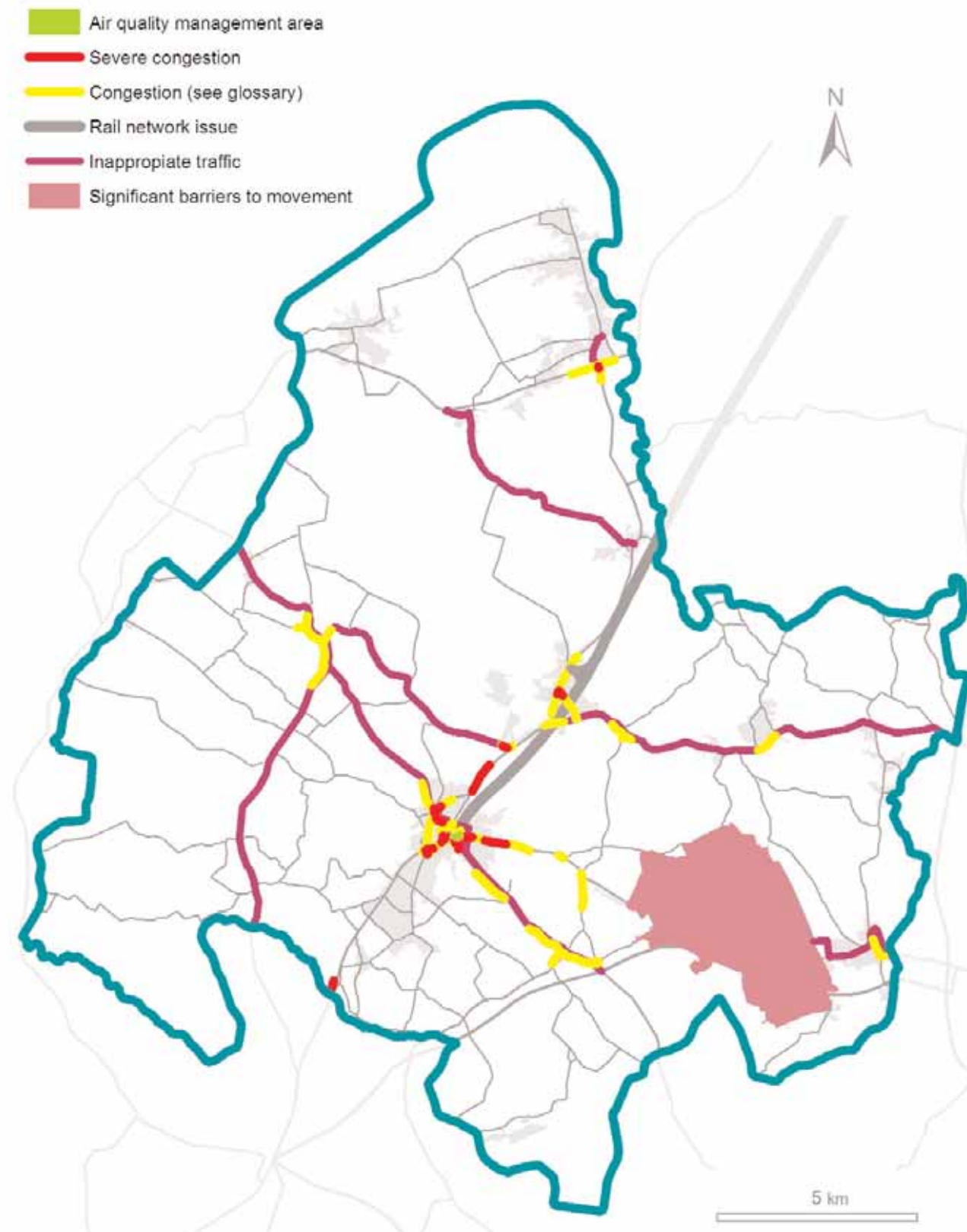


Figure 9: Traffic problems today

West Lancashire Now ~ Managing Our Transport In The Short Term

The Local Transport Plan for Lancashire has already been mentioned. It sets out a strategy for how our transport and the way we travel will change moving forward to 2021.

Specific schemes already programmed are set out in our Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan (IP). In West Lancashire, these schemes contribute directly to our proposals set out later in this masterplan. Where the IP sets out preparatory work that is already underway, this is discussed as part of our proposals.

Urban Traffic Management & Control (UTMC) System upgrade, Ormskirk
Upgrades to the traffic signals along the Ormskirk gyratory system will ease current pressure on the network in both the immediate and surrounding areas. Improvements to the software used by the signal system will result in greater flexibility and reliability, enabling the most efficient use of available road space to reduce congestion and improve journey times.

Ormskirk Bus Station

A package of measures to improve facilities at Ormskirk bus station, including the pedestrian link to the railway station, will enhance transport accessibility to the town centre and to Edge Hill University. This will help provide viable alternative transport to the private car, helping to reduce the congestion in Ormskirk town centre.

However, we are not the only organisation working to improve West Lancashire's transport networks.

The VISIT project

Currently 2 years into delivery, LSTF funding has been given for a 4-year project which involves the creation of off road cycling routes, quiet on road routes and low mobility walking routes linking heritage destinations in western West Lancashire and Sefton. The bid is a joint venture by WLBC and Sefton, with match funding from a number of partners.

Among the improvements planned in West Lancashire that have implications for this masterplan are:

- Work within Ormskirk and Burscough town centres to enhance access to the public transport system, with improved links to the Lancashire Cycleway and better cycle parking facilities within the centres
- Providing three links between the Sefton Coastal Path and the Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) eastwards to join the Lancashire Cycleway (RR91) which crosses West Lancashire about 5 miles inland from the Sefton Coastal Path.
- The cycleway links many of the West Lancashire visitor attractions, including caravan parks, canal-side marinas, Burscough Wharf, Martin Mere, Mere Sands Wood and Rufford Old Hall. It is proposed to provide three links, one between the TPT at Lydiate and RR91 at Aughton, one directly eastwards from Southport Town Centre to RR91 on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal at New Lane, upgrading the Canal Towpath between there and Burscough Wharf and a route east from the north end of Southport to RR91 at Mere Brow.

Upgrading of the canal towpath in particular will improve access to Martin Mere from Burscough for pedestrians and cyclists and enhance access to the rail network for visitors. It also provides opportunities to develop an off road cycle route between Southport and Wigan utilising the Leeds and Liverpool canal. These links will predominately be signed routes along quiet country roads and canal towpaths, providing a cost effective network linking the majority of visitor attractions across the area.

Looking to the Future ~ Our Priorities

Having looked at the state of West Lancashire now, what is planned for the area next?

Economy

A key driver for West Lancashire's economic development is the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), of which Lancashire County Council is a member. The Partnership's Lancashire Growth Plan for 2013/14 has been approved and sets out how strong and sustainable economic growth can be achieved in the county.

The LEP brings together businesses, councils and universities to develop a strategy for economic growth and both bid for and allocate funding to support local businesses. The LEP has a 17-person board, made up of leading business executives, council leaders and academics.

The LEP's focus for West Lancashire is to work with stakeholders to encourage inward investment to the region and expand on existing business. Sector growth plans for both tourism and agriculture will set out specific ambitions.

West Lancashire is also scheduled to have significant housing development. Projected housing growth over the Local Plan period (2012 ~ 2027), suggests a need for 4,860 new dwellings in the borough as a minimum. Skelmersdale with Up Holland is expected to see the bulk of this growth (2,100 dwellings), whilst Burscough (850 dwellings) and Ormskirk with Aughton (750 dwellings) are also outlined for potential expansion. The parishes also see proposed development, with 800 houses in the north and 100 and 260 houses in the east and west respectively.

The district's location within the triangle of Manchester, Liverpool and Preston, the three most significant regional economic centres, coupled with effective road and public transport links with these centres, makes this future housing growth an attractive and likely proposition.

In addition, projected growth of employment areas over the same period focuses on Skelmersdale with Up Holland (52ha), Burscough (13ha), and Ormskirk with Aughton (10ha). Skelmersdale Town Centre will play a role in this as its planned redevelopment goes ahead.

West Lancashire's rural economy consists of horticulture, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism, which means that outside of the three main towns of Skelmersdale, Ormskirk and Burscough, the rural economy provides 40% of employment in the borough.

Shale gas extraction could also impact on West Lancashire if extraction were to go ahead. As well as economic and social impacts, the sites would generate traffic, much of it in the initial drilling phase. Whilst this would present traffic management issues wherever it occurred, West Lancashire's moss roads would be particularly susceptible to damage by the heavy vehicles required in the drilling and operation of the site. The road maintenance implications of this are something that the County Council will bear in mind if shale gas extraction does go ahead.

The Liverpool Superport

Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LCR LEP) is intending to create a 'Superport' on the back of Peel Port's proposals for a new deepwater container terminal at the Port of Liverpool (known as Liverpool2) and the reopening of the Manchester Ship Canal to freight vessels.

The opening of the Liverpool2 container terminal (anticipated in 2015) will open the Port of Liverpool up to receive some of the largest container vessels in the world, vessels that can currently only dock at Southampton and Felixstowe in the UK, and will tie-in with the opening of the new deepwater Panama Canal (also anticipated in 2015), allowing a more direct route for sea freight from Asia and the West Coast of the US to Europe. As such, it presents a tremendous opportunity to provide access to sea-freight directly into the north of England.

It will offer companies based in the Midlands, North of England and in Scotland a much cheaper alternative to Southampton and Felixstowe given the need for less road haulage within the UK (which is far more economically and environmentally expensive per mile than transporting goods by sea). This could result in up to 50% of the UK's sea freight passing through the Port of Liverpool in due course.

There are obvious cost benefits for logistic and manufacturing companies to locate close to such a port, and both Peel Ports and the LCR LEP anticipate a significant demand for, in particular, modern logistics space within an hour's drive time of the Port of Liverpool in the coming years.

The project sees the entire City Region as part of a wider 'Superport' offering:

- a range of appropriate space to businesses that use the Port of Liverpool,
- appropriate infrastructure to enable these businesses to link from the City Region to the rest of the UK and Europe (i.e. motorway access, rail freight access and air freight access via Liverpool John Lennon Airport) and
- a population with a broad skill-base, and one that will develop with the right training.

This concept of seeing the whole City Region as a Superport reflects the modern way in which ports function, with not all services and businesses needing to be dockside and associated businesses being able to locate up to 40 miles away from the port and still utilise its facilities.

While West Lancashire is not within the LCR LEP, the key settlements of Skelmersdale and Ormskirk are less than a 30 minute drive from the Port of Liverpool, with the access to Skelmersdale (via the M58) being especially good for movements to the north of England and Scotland. As such, there is a significant opportunity for Skelmersdale and the wider West Lancashire area to benefit from the LCR Superport project:

- Development of the logistics and manufacturing sectors in West Lancashire and particularly in Skelmersdale
- Economic opportunities, especially for Skelmersdale's residents, both locally and in the Liverpool City Region, in jobs across a range of skill levels.
- Opportunities for West Lancashire College to offer relevant training to the local workforce.
- Indirect job creation as a result of improved employment linked to the Superport and
- A reduction in levels of deprivation in Skelmersdale.

The masterplan needs to recognise these opportunities and ensure that highways and transport links support West Lancashire in becoming a key location for the Superport.

Health and Wellbeing

In April 2013, the County Council took responsibility for some work that was previously carried out by the NHS.

The County Council and the NHS will now work together to tackle some of the key issues that affect people's health and wellbeing, helping people to stay healthy and prevent illness. The changes will make sure that public health experts have a greater input to many of the different council services, county and district, that impact on people's health including education, housing, transport and the local environment.

We already know there are health and social issues of real significance in West Lancashire and that our transport networks could do more to address them. Among the work that the County Council will take responsibility for are a number of strands that have a bearing on the masterplan:

- tackling obesity
- increasing levels of physical activity;
- public mental health;
- cancer and long-term conditions prevention through behavioural and lifestyle campaigns;
- accidental injury prevention;
- community safety promotion, violence prevention and response(public health aspects);
- tackling social exclusion through local initiatives (public health aspects);
- public health services for children and young people aged 5-19, including:
 - ~ Healthy Child programme 5-19;
 - ~ in the longer term all public health services for children and young people;

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of health inequalities carried out in 2009 pinpoints the impact of deprivation on health and well being:

- People in the most deprived areas are 70% more likely to be hospitalised by, and twice as likely to die from, an accident as those living in the least deprived areas.
- People living in Lancashire's most deprived areas are nearly twice as likely to die from coronary heart disease and more than twice as likely to die from a stroke as those living in the least deprived areas
- Children living in the most deprived areas have twice the risk of dying as those living in the least deprived areas.
- Less than two thirds of the population in the most deprived areas reported good overall health and wellbeing, compared to almost 80% in the least deprived areas.
- Quality of life indicators display strong social gradients with those further down the scale likely to have lower quality of life.
- Approximately one in five people across Lancashire experience problems walking or difficulties in performing usual activities, rising to more than a quarter of those in the most deprived areas.

These statistics are all relevant to how we plan for future travel. Among the recommendations of the JSNA are a number that the masterplan seeks to address:

- Address material deprivation:
 - ~ Increase Income/reduce child poverty
 - ~ Reduce unemployment/worklessness
- Promote resilience to the health effects of inequality and deprivation
 - ~ Improve community safety
 - ~ Improve the environment/green space
 - ~ Improve skills, lifelong learning and educational attainment
- Improve health behaviour
 - ~ Improve the design of the built environment
 - ~ Reduce overweight and obesity
 - ~ Increase physical activity

Above all, the masterplan will 'maximise the health effects of transport planning/policy', a specific goal of the JSNA

Sustainability

From the National Planning Policy Framework to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, sustainability has become a key factor in all plans and policies. For a highways and transport masterplan, it presents several key challenges to what we want to achieve. Lancashire's transport infrastructure assets are the most valuable publicly owned asset managed by the County Council, with a combined estimated gross replacement cost of about £9 billion.

Without this infrastructure, Lancashire would not be able to function as a place to live, work or visit. Given the importance that Lancashire's transport infrastructure plays in our everyday lives and in our economic future, it is vital that we maintain and manage this asset as sustainably as possible, maximising benefits and opportunities and reducing negative impacts as far as possible to provide best value for the people of Lancashire.

In West Lancashire, heavy traffic on the moss roads presents a particular challenge to maintenance.

- The roll out of superfast broadband across the county will have a fundamental impact on how many of us do business on a day to day basis. It will allow many people to reduce the amount they have to travel – we can shop from home, download films and games and, of course, work from home. For businesses, it will offer far greater access to customers and digital media, also with less need to travel.

We need to maximise the benefits of reduced car traffic for our highways and transport networks while also taking account of the negative impacts, such as greater delivery traffic. We also need to ensure that those who cannot or do not adopt superfast broadband are not forgotten.

- There are many rural areas of West Lancashire that are remote from employment and services. These areas have come to rely on the car, making it very difficult for those without their own transport. However, increasing car use is unlikely to be sustainable in the future. Providing alternatives both for residents and for visitors will therefore be vital for economic development.
- There is now little argument that we need lifestyles that generate a smaller carbon footprint. 'Low carbon' transport has the potential to allow individuals to make a genuine difference to the world around them. However, the evidence of travel choices made at the moment shows that what is on offer now is not what people are prepared to switch to. This suggests that we need to do more to provide low carbon options that more people want to use.

- As a Highways Authority the County Council has had a duty to manage roads to ensure that flooding does not represent a nuisance to road users. However, under The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) the County Council has now also been designated as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The FWMA places a range of new powers, duties and responsibilities on the LLFA and its partner Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). Each LLFA has to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (a 'Local Strategy').

For West Lancashire, the Local Strategy has a specific focus on seawater flooding. In Lancashire's lowest areas near the coast, which includes much of West Lancashire's prime agricultural land, high tides and storm surges can increase water levels in channels and cause drainage systems to stop discharging to the sea. In order to reduce this risk, there are a number of pumping stations throughout the lowland areas, particularly near the coast, to ensure that water will discharge when sea levels are high. If pumping stops, sizeable areas could flood, including urban and rural locations.

As LLFA, the County Council is therefore working with our RMA partners to develop options for water management in rural areas, with a view to balancing the needs of agricultural productivity, flood risk management and sustainable drainage practices.

We will therefore make sure that proposals put forward under this masterplan fit with our Local Strategy and that issues of flooding and drainage that could affect a proposal are taken into account in the development of schemes and business cases.

As well as future development, Figure 10 also shows how the environment of West Lancashire impacts on development :

- the areas of outstanding natural beauty
- the green belt, put in place to prevent the merging of neighbouring towns and to direct investment to the older parts of the urban areas.
- the high quality agricultural land.
- the areas at risk of flooding and
- the areas of nature conservation value.

These constraints, together with the people, land and economy of West Lancashire today, have shaped the proposals agreed in the Local Plan.

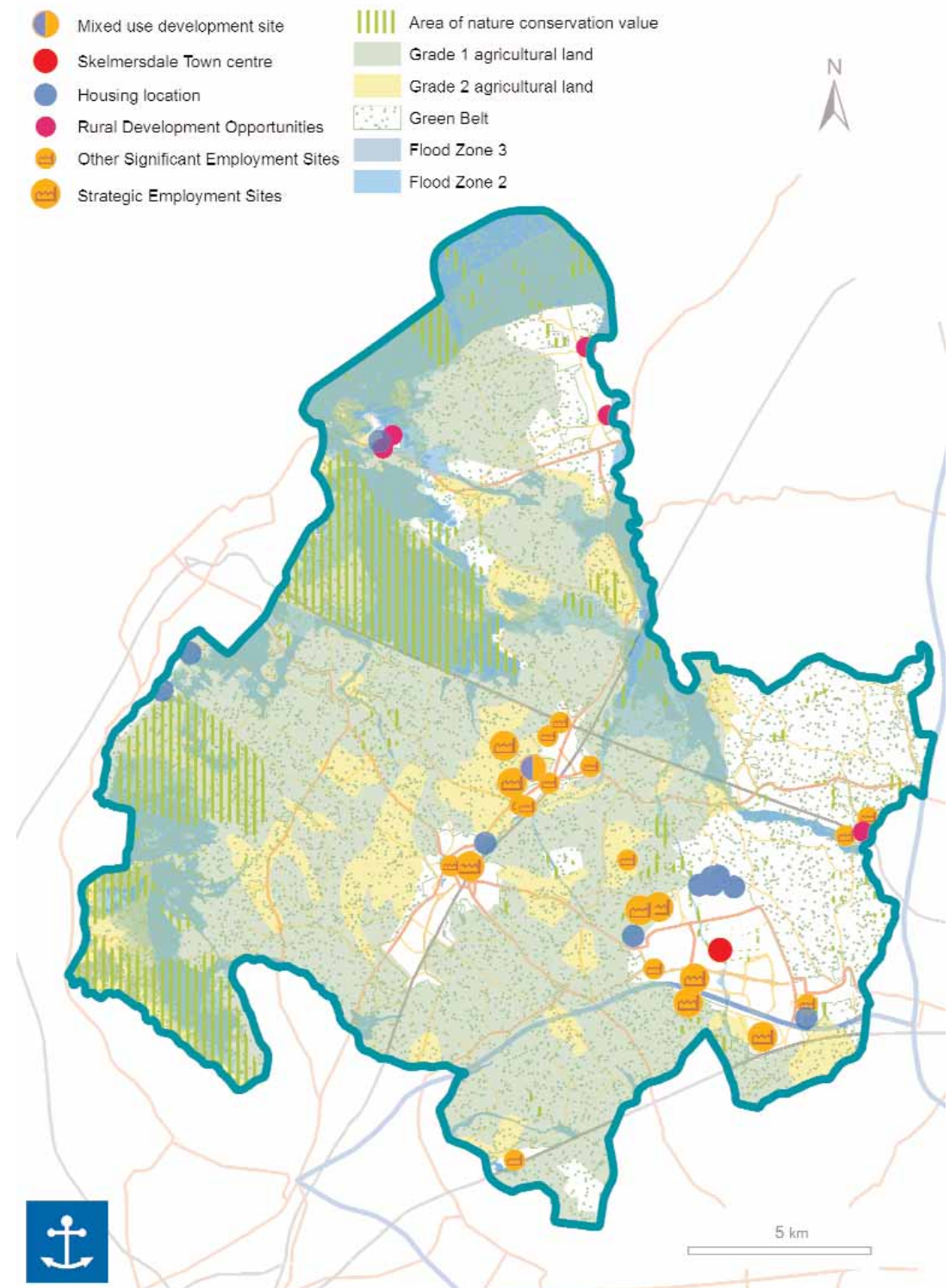


Figure 10: Development and Constraints

Looking to the Future ~ Funding

Funding for transport infrastructure is changing. These changes are already happening, as the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal shows. The City Deal's £334m Infrastructure Delivery Programme includes four major highway schemes and local community infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities. The Delivery Programme is funded through pooling local and national resources, including funds from the DfT (including the Local Major Scheme Programme), from local government and from private sector investment through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

We now need to be ready to take advantage of these changes, set out below, for the benefit of the rest of Lancashire.

Government Funding

The changes to the way transport infrastructure is funded will come into effect from 2015/16. From that time, Transport for Lancashire (TfL) will be responsible for a multi-million budget devolved from the Department for Transport. TfL will decide which local major transport schemes to prioritise for funding, review and approve individual major scheme business cases, and ensure effective delivery of the programme.

Through the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal, TfL has secured a ten year local major transport scheme allocation from the Department for Transport, something only achieved by four other local transport bodies nationally (Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and York, the Sheffield City region and South Yorkshire and the West of England).

As TfL is a committee of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP), this creates for the first time the opportunity to integrate key economic and transport priorities and plans. TfL is therefore able to make robust and binding decisions that transcend complex local economic relationships, transport patterns and local government administrative boundaries.

In June 2013, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed the establishment of the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF). The SLGF will amount to over £2bn in 2015/16 and will include a significant amount of local transport funding. In addition to funding for local major transport schemes, from 2015/16 the SLGF will include over 40% of the Integrated Transport Block (IT Block) funding currently received directly from the Department for Transport by local transport authorities. The Government has committed to maintain the SLGF at a total of at least £2bn each year in the next Parliament.

IT Block funding is capital funding used by local transport authorities for small transport improvement schemes costing less than £5 million.

Schemes include ~ small road projects, road safety schemes, bus priority schemes, walking and cycling schemes and transport information schemes. The reduction in the amount of IT Block from 2015/16 will mean that the County Council will have less direct guaranteed funding for local transport schemes going forward.

The SLGF will be a single pot with no internal ring fencing. Access to the fund will be through a 'Growth Deal'. This will be a process of negotiation, with areas making their case to the Government in much the same way as for City Deals, leading to bespoke decisions on the amount and flexibilities that each area will receive, subject to robust governance arrangements. Positive negotiations with the Government regarding the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal indicate the overarching governance arrangements of the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership are considered fit for purpose.

The amount of funding unlocked through a Growth Deal will depend on the strength of the Strategic Economic Plan prepared by the LEP, which will cover the period 2015/16 to 2020/21, and which must be submitted to the Government by March 2014. Local Enterprise Partnerships with the strongest Strategic Economic Plans that can demonstrate their ability to deliver growth will gain the greatest share of the SLGF.

Strategic Partners

Our strategic partners are also seeing changes that will impact on what we can achieve through this masterplan.

The rail industry is complex, with operation of the infrastructure separate to the operation of passenger and freight train services.

Network Rail is the private sector monopoly owner and operator of the national rail network, including track, signalling, bridges and tunnels. It operates in 5 year 'Control Periods' (CP), for which delivery plans are produced. CP5 will start in April 2014, with CP6 in April 2019.

However, the Government's High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) determine what is delivered in these control periods. These set out what the Government wants achieved by the rail industry during that control period and the amount of money available.

The HLOS and SoFA for CP5 have been published. In order to achieve infrastructure improvements in Lancashire in the next CP, we therefore need to be in a position to influence the development of the HLOS that will determine activity in CP6.

Many rail services in the county carry people making relatively short journeys and are a key part of an area's local public transport network. They have seen substantial growth in demand in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue.

At the moment the franchise contracts underlying most train services in England are specified, funded and managed centrally by the DfT based in London. The Government is currently looking at whether decisions relating to local rail services should be made closer to the communities they serve, a process called 'Rail devolution'.

Rail devolution recognises that local decision makers may be best placed to recognise trends in usage and demand and to identify how transport networks can adapt to new housing and/or employment patterns and to therefore determine how the transport network can develop in a way that contributes to achieving the wider economic objectives of an area. They are also able to compare the benefits of expenditure on different types of transport provision and make decisions on priorities for expenditure on investment and subsidies, recognising the interests of different groups of users.

Away from the rail industry, the Highways Agency (HA) is an Executive Agency of the DfT and is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England, which includes major trunk roads and most motorways.

Route based strategies are currently being taken forward by the HA, including one covering Lancashire. The strategy initially will identify performance issues on routes and also future challenges, taking account of local growth challenges and priorities. This stage is expected to be complete by April 2014. The HA, working with the DfT, will then use this evidence to identify and prioritise possible solutions to inform investment plans for the next full government spending review in 2015 and beyond.

Throughout the process, we will work with the HA both to understand the issues on Lancashire's strategic roads now and in the future and to ensure that the resultant investment plan meets our needs.

Developer contributions

When a development is proposed, Section 106 agreements can be put in place to make it possible to approve a planning proposal that might not otherwise be acceptable in planning terms. For example, a section 106 agreement might require a developer to fund improving the access road to a site, to ensure that access will be safe once the development is completed. They are specific to the site that is proposed for development.

Since April 2010, local authorities have been able to charge a 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) on any new development above a certain size. CIL is a general levy on all development, designed to raise funds for infrastructure needed generally as a result of an increase in development in an area. We are now in a transitional period where both CIL and section 106 agreements can apply. However, at some point, currently set at April 2014, local planning authorities will be limited in their ability to use section 106 agreements for transport infrastructure.

In preparation for CIL, local planning authorities are preparing 'charging schedules' as part of their local development frameworks. The schedule sets out what, if anything, the charge will be per dwelling for residential development, or per square metre for all other development. In setting the charges, planning authorities need to balance the desire for CIL funding to support infrastructure with the potential impact of CIL charges on the economic viability of development.

West Lancashire Borough Council is intending to bring in a CIL charging schedule from April 2014, subject to statutory process.

Looking to the Future ~ What are the Challenges?

We have already looked at current problems on the highways and transport networks. We now need to look at what effect the plans and priorities we have outlined will have.

Skelmersdale with Up Holland

Whilst Skelmersdale currently boasts an excellent road network with congestion-free links to the motorway network, the road network does not serve the purpose for which it was built and does not support current economic growth aspirations. This is largely due to the low levels of car ownership in Skelmersdale compared to what was originally envisaged for the town.

However, the town also has an inadequate sustainable transport network with no rail link to the town and a poor bus service in terms of frequency and journey time. Walking and cycling are not well provided for, as Skelmersdale's streets and public spaces are often inhospitable.

Housing developments in this area could see over 2,100 homes built at three sites. In addition, 52 ha of land are to be newly developed for employment uses. There is also the need to take advantage of the Liverpool 'Superport' and benefit from the jobs and growth that it could bring.

The highways and transport networks in Skelmersdale are not fit for current purposes, let alone to support extensive economic growth. This is not going to change without significant alterations to Skelmersdale transport infrastructure. Planned development will not bring economic growth if the networks are not brought up to date.

Ormskirk with Aughton

The highway network in Ormskirk is already congested in places, with local journeys known to be a significant contributor to congestion. Proposals for 750 new houses in the area will see additional traffic on these already busy roads.

Edge Hill University is a key economic driver for West Lancashire as a whole, with its expansion pivotal to achieving economic growth. However, particularly in term time, the University generates high volumes of traffic and expansion will only serve to increase the impact on the network. Car parking facilities and a new access road have been built as part of the expansion.

Improving Ormskirk's highway network to ensure that it not only functions effectively now, but can cope with development is therefore a key challenge. However, that challenge extends beyond the highway network and includes making realistic alternatives to car use as attractive as possible as well as removing traffic that does not need to be there.

Burscough

The A59 in Burscough runs through the town centre. Because of this, the main street becomes congested both at peak times and as bottlenecks occur, which is far from ideal for pedestrians and cyclists. Further out from the town centre, towards Ormskirk, the A59 narrows and is even more unpleasant for cyclists in particular. Cycling and walking should be viable modes for travel from Burscough to Ormskirk as the towns are not far apart.

Proposed developments of 850 new homes and 13 ha of employment land will lead to increases in traffic volumes on a highway network that is already under pressure.

Burscough's rail connections could be expected to make a significant difference to the number of car journeys from the town, but currently, rail travel to Liverpool requires a change at Ormskirk with an erratic and infrequent timetable from Burscough. Improving rail connectivity to Ormskirk itself and to both Liverpool (currently the dominant commuter journey) and to Manchester and the airport will be vital to Burscough's future development.

Travelling north to Central Lancashire may not require a change of trains, but the same timetable issues affect the journey as they do southwards to Ormskirk. With the growth planned in Central Lancashire, it is vital that the line is improved so that opportunities in all three major regional growth areas are available.

The Rural Parishes

Across the parishes, a total of 1,160 new homes and 10ha of employment land are proposed. However, public transport provision is generally poor, with a number of rural areas having infrequent services to a limited range of destinations. At a time when money for bus subsidisation is becoming more difficult to find, the issues of rural isolation present a key challenge for travel in the future.

Traffic in the rural parishes also presents issues. Heavy vehicles serving the agricultural and horticultural sectors often travel down roads that were not designed for them, a particular issue in village centres. High volumes of traffic also have to be accommodated on main roads in the rural areas, which can also lead to problems with noise, vibration and severance.

As the previous pages show, West Lancashire faces challenges in developing its economic potential in the future without compromising its distinctive character. However, it has many strengths working in its favour.

These positive and negative influences are summarised here to show the strengths and opportunities in the area and also the potential weaknesses and threats. Appreciating these provides us with the understanding of what will influence and shape our highways and transport network in the future.

Strengths

- Strong Local Enterprise Partnership
- West Lancashire Local Plan published
- Transport links and connectivity to major regional growth centres
- Strong agricultural and horticultural sectors
- Outstanding natural/wildlife assets
- Edge Hill University
- Skelmersdale's proximity to M58/M6
- Strong business base, including presence of national employers
- Largest proportion of green belt in the country

Opportunities

- Developer Contributions ~ CIL & S106
- Redevelopment of Skelmersdale Town Centre
- HS2
- Liverpool 'Superport'
- Economic growth in Liverpool, Manchester and Lancashire city-regions
- Position on strategic road network, especially for attracting employees and new business, especially logistics
- 'Green' Tourism

Weaknesses

- Limited retail opportunities
- High car dependency
- High levels of deprivation in Skelmersdale
- Congestion along Ormskirk gyratory
- Poor access to opportunities in Skelmersdale
- Disjointed rail network
- Rural Isolation

Threats

- Ageing population
- Congestion in key centres
- Volumes of traffic on rural routes
- Growing car ownership and use in most areas
- Sluggish economic climate
- Uncertainty amongst private investors
- Reluctance to change travel behaviour
- AQMA/Air quality issues in Ormskirk and Tarleton
- Flawed concept and design weaknesses of the New Town

Developing Our Vision

The transport network in West Lancashire is already facing challenges. There are congestion issues, the public transport networks are far from ideal and there is both rural and urban isolation in different parts of the borough.

Developments identified in the Local Plan over the life of the plan (2012 – 2027) will aggravate these issues and our existing highways and transport networks will not be able to cope. This will have a significant impact on the ability of West Lancashire to benefit from economic growth.

Even without extra development, the growth in traffic that is likely to occur over time anyway will mean that the levels of congestion that we currently see in the morning rush hour will have become common for more of the working day and across a wider area.

The evidence presented in this masterplan shows rather than the networks needing radical overhaul to accommodate development and allow growth, it is more appropriate to solve existing problems before development makes them worse.

However, particularly for a largely rural district in which the environment plays a key role, issues of sustainability must be at the forefront of any plans brought forward. We must work to ensure that West Lancashire retains its character for future generations, while making sure that no parts of the district miss out on the economic growth they need to thrive.

We must therefore focus on how we can deliver effective solutions to the following core issues that are pivotal to the way in which the transport network will operate in the future:

- Significant barriers to growth affecting Skelmersdale
- Congestion in Ormskirk and key service centres
- Current limitations to rail services and access to rail services
- Better options for active travel
- Rural access to services
- Traffic on inappropriate routes

The options put forward must not only support West Lancashire's economic aspirations, but must remain in-keeping with the County Council's strategic vision of a sustainable future, where transport is fully integrated and where walking, cycling and public transport are an effective and obvious alternative to the car.

We believe that each area of the district has a specific set of issues which we can only resolve by looking at them in the geographical context they occur in:

- Skelmersdale is a New Town that didn't develop as planned and has fundamental design flaws that have severely limited it and its neighbour Up Holland.
- Ormskirk and Aughton's problems stem from their position on the major routes across West Lancashire.
- Burscough's ties are to Ormskirk and to the south and yet the transport network doesn't support this.
- The Rural Parishes rely on agriculture and tourism, but their road networks haven't kept pace with modern vehicles or with changes to public transport.

By understanding what each area needs we have been able to set out interventions that, taken together, will provide an integrated highways and transport network for West Lancashire that will be able to support the people and businesses of the borough for many years to come.

The interventions we have proposed include some that are ambitious. However, changes to how funding is provided mean that opportunities are available now as never before. This masterplan is taking shape at a time when we have the real possibility of significant investment in West Lancashire through the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership. If ever there was a time to be ambitious and to plan for all of West Lancashire's future prosperity, this is it.

Our Vision

Because of West Lancashire's unique character, our vision is not based on how or why people travel, as in other masterplans, but on the towns and parishes of West Lancashire.

This masterplan sets out the highways and transport interventions we need to put in place for a future where:

Skelmersdale is the development and transport hub of West Lancashire, with living standards across the town that everyone shares in.

Ormskirk is the vibrant market town at the heart of West Lancashire's education and tourism sectors, with a town centre that is no longer dominated by the car.

Burscough is a thriving small town where there is plenty of transport choice and commuters don't need to own a car.

The Rural Parishes are free of unnecessary traffic and everyone knows that travel options are there if they cannot use a car.

-  Rail infrastructure improvement
-  Highway infrastructure improvement
-  Pedestrian and cycle improvements
-  Route management
-  Skelmersdale Public Realm reconfiguration
-  Ormskirk Movement Strategy
-  Rural connections study area



Figure 11: Our Proposals

Skelmersdale with Up Holland

Skelmersdale's highways and transport networks need to be reconfigured to meet both current and future needs, not just for the residents and businesses of Skelmersdale and Up Holland, but for West Lancashire as a whole.

Key proposal 1: A new Skelmersdale Town Centre Rail Station

The issue

West Lancashire's rail connectivity is good in some places, but very poor in others. Whilst rail services link to Liverpool and Greater Manchester, access to these services tends to be limited at the moment by station location, availability of car parking and availability of bus services from the surrounding area.

Skelmersdale itself is the second largest town in the north west of England without a railway station. The nearest station, Up Holland, is not easily accessible without a car, although there is only a limited amount of parking available at the station. The line is only served hourly between Kirkby (Liverpool) and Wigan.

The absence of an effective link to the rail network obviously limits access to both Merseyside and Manchester, particularly as bus travel times are slow. Given the low car ownership and high unemployment in Skelmersdale, access to both lifelong learning and employment is a major issue.

The Proposals

A new rail station next to Skelmersdale town centre, with integration into the public transport network and cycling and walking provision, as well as car parking. We would wish the rail infrastructure and station to be part of Network Rail's programme for Control Period 6 (2019-2024).

The new rail link and station would be served by services to both Kirby and Wigan, providing direct access to growth opportunities in both Liverpool (including the Superport) and Greater Manchester, including the Enterprise Zone at Manchester Airport.

A pre-feasibility study in 2002 set out a range of options. Of these, the provision of a new station in the centre of Skelmersdale was the preferred, given the synergy with the proposed redevelopment of the town centre.

Opportunities

- Network Rail, Merseyrail and Merseytravel are all interested in the proposal, subject to a business case being made for the station.
- By making the station a 'Parkway', the station will become a rail hub for the wider West Lancashire area.
- Potential funding through the SLGF would allow a major scheme to be taken forward encompassing the majority of the key proposals for Skelmersdale.
- With the need to encourage economic growth, railway links to areas of economic opportunity are vital for West Lancashire and should increasingly become so for Skelmersdale itself.
- Inwards investment to Skelmersdale would be assisted by the ability to access a wider rail network from either Liverpool, Wigan or Manchester.
- The development of the Liverpool 'Superport' provides opportunities for Skelmersdale that the new rail link could facilitate.
- The station has the potential to reduce traffic in Ormskirk, particularly coupled with Key Proposals 3 and 4 of this section.

Challenges

- The perception that, at the moment, rail fares are relatively expensive. The level of fares will be a key issue for many of those living in Skelmersdale who need access to jobs.
- Implementation will take time and interim solutions may need to be developed.
- Providing the infrastructure for the station and for other proposals in this masterplan will require major changes to Skelmersdale and therefore extensive public consultation.
- Whilst the rail infrastructure would be funded through the HLOS that will determine activity in CP6, the new station is just one part of the wider reconfiguration of Skelmersdale's highways and transport networks, so significant funding will be needed from the SLGF.

Conclusion

In different circumstances, the proposal would not be viable due to the complexity, scale and costs of the project.

However, as the masterplan has shown, Skelmersdale's current highways and transport provision are not simply inadequate, but completely inappropriate for current and future needs. There is therefore no single scheme that can solve all of Skelmersdale's problems and neither will a piecemeal approach that only looks to implement small schemes.

Much of West Lancashire's future growth can and will be focussed on Skelmersdale with Up Holland, so resolving the wide ranging travel issues is critical for the borough as a whole. The need of Skelmersdale's residents and businesses for dramatic intervention to encourage economic growth and prosperity speaks for itself.

Changes to funding already outlined mean that at the moment we have an opportunity to invest significant amounts in West Lancashire's future. The SLGF gives the LEP the chance to negotiate for funding on a scale that would not have been possible previously, which allows us to work with partners to put in place unprecedented changes.

We therefore believe that we should make preparing the business case for rail investment and working with Network Rail and the train operators on the detailed design of the proposals a priority, before the opportunity is missed.



Key proposal 2: Reconfigure Skelmersdale's public realm 'Public Realm' is a phrase that is often used by planners and engineers. In general terms, it is all the areas that, as members of the general public, we have access to as we go about our lives. Public realm shapes the image of a place; it creates identity and distinctiveness. It influences how others see us. Public realm comprises the roads, footpaths, underpasses, green spaces and other outdoor places that require no key to access them and are available for everyone to use.

The impact of the public realm on our day-to-day lives is huge and travel and transport are a large part of this impact. From overall impressions created by the amount and type of traffic on a road, specifics such as the design of individual junctions and walking links and down to details like the choice of signs, street lights and other 'street furniture', the impression that an area makes depends on how the public realm appears.

A safe and attractive public realm gives economic benefits as footfall increases, whether in local shops or town centres. A safe and attractive public realm is also fundamental to making local travel viable. The better our public realm looks and the more safe and pleasant it is to use, the more people will be prepared to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Skelmersdale's public realm is therefore vital to the development of the town.

The Issue

Skelmersdale is a New Town, designed at a time when it was assumed that everyone would own a car and that the only safe place for pedestrians and cyclists was on their own network of paths that kept them clear of the motorised traffic. A dedicated network to link housing and employment was therefore built, with underpasses to make travel safer.

However, the expected development did not happen; Skelmersdale has low car ownership that leaves the roads well below capacity. Cyclists and pedestrians are therefore left with a network of paths that go through the housing estates on convoluted routes that are difficult to follow and give the feeling of intruding into private property. In industrial estates, paths tend to be at the back of the factories, with no access to the factories and with the paths being in a semi derelict condition.

However, the biggest barrier to travel is Skelmersdale's underpasses. Intended to improve road safety, they are still often the only safe way of crossing a highway. Whilst they might be safer in that way, though, they have become undesirable places, associated with anti-social behaviour and difficult for the less mobile to use. Often dirty, poorly drained and poorly lit and where personal safety is compromised, the underpasses limit travel and therefore access to lifelong learning and employment.

Without significant improvement to public realm in Skelmersdale, there is a very real risk that other highways and transport initiatives will fail.

The Proposal

Evidence from around the country suggests that there are some limited interventions that could be made to improve at least a few of the underpasses. However, the only effective solution to removing the barrier that the underpasses present is to remove the need for the underpasses themselves.

Providing a better public realm for Skelmersdale is not as simple as 'doing something about the underpasses' though, but has to start with a review of what routes need to be provided, now and in the future. That has to be done in the context of other infrastructure investment, as a railway station with dedicated provision for interchange to other modes of transport will have a fundamental impact on where and how people want to travel.

Removing the need for the underpasses will of course alter how we use the highway network, as well as how the existing walking and cycling networks are used. The impact of public realm change therefore goes beyond basic interventions and will fundamentally change travel in Skelmersdale and how the road network looks and functions.

We will radically reshape Skelmersdale's public realm and highways network through a single programme of works spread over a number of years. The improvements will ensure that Skelmersdale functions far better than now and has a sustainable, integrated transport network to support growth in the future.

Opportunities

- For the first time since the town was built, we have a realistic chance to make Skelmersdale's highways and transport networks fit for purpose and able to function for the benefit of its residents and businesses as well as the wider West Lancashire area.
- Provides an opportunity to fundamentally change perceptions of Skelmersdale at a time when the town centre is expected to undergo significant redevelopment.
- Provides opportunity to accommodate new development stemming from the 'Superport'.
- Will support wider economic growth, making Skelmersdale the transport hub of West Lancashire.
- Funding opportunities currently exist that could make significant sums of public money available.
- To use redundant infrastructure, including underpasses, for other purposes, such as supporting wildlife corridors or specific leisure or fitness uses.

Challenges

- The costs of a transformation of Skelmersdale's public realm would be huge
- Gaining complete consensus on the changes that are needed.
- Disruption to the town while works were carried out, potentially over a number of years.

Conclusion

The challenges that face Skelmersdale in economic and social terms are great. We now have an opportunity to not only address these challenges now, but to allow Skelmersdale to grow and prosper in the future.

We believe that we cannot allow this opportunity to pass.

We will therefore begin work on a Movement Strategy for the town that will include all key proposals in this masterplan. That strategy will require extensive public consultation and will involve public and private sector partners. We will prioritise work that supports the new rail station and the town centre redevelopment with a view to seeking the first funding from the LEP for works to start in 2015/16.

Key proposal 3: Reshape Skelmersdale's Public Transport

The Issue ~ Infrastructure

Users of the new town centre rail station will need to be able to interchange with other public transport. At the moment, the bus station is part of The Concourse shopping centre. There are plans to move it however, but that would be to a point more remote from the likely station location.

The Proposal

A new purpose built bus station that provides a dedicated interchange with the rail station. The facilities will include secure cycle storage to encourage cycling as part of longer distance travel.

The new interchange will be at the heart of Skelmersdale's new public realm and will act as a hub to serve the wider West Lancashire area.

Opportunities

- Improved bus facilities in the town centre are needed.
- The redevelopment of the town centre gives the opportunity to site the bus station in the most appropriate place for the town and for the rail station.
- With the rail station, good public transport facilities will be needed to encourage travellers to use the bus and not the car
- The Linear Park/Link will encourage cycling as part of longer journeys if good interchange facilities exist.
- Potential funding through the SLGF would allow a major scheme to be taken forward encompassing the majority of the key proposals for Skelmersdale.

Challenges

- Providing the infrastructure for the station and for other proposals in this masterplan will require major changes to Skelmersdale and therefore extensive public consultation.
- Gaining consensus on the package of changes that the new bus interchange would be part of.

Conclusion

We will work with our partners and with the residents of Skelmersdale to draw up plans for a new bus station to provide interchange facilities with the rail station and then to produce a business case to seek funding through the Growth Deal to be negotiated by the LEP.

The Issue ~ Services

Conventional public transport tends to be unable to provide for small numbers of travellers without subsidisation from the public purse. However, such subsidisation may not be the most cost effective way of ensuring access to employment or to lifelong learning.

Although it finished in 2005, the original 'Skelmersdale Roundabout' service provided over 36,000 passenger trips in that year. Supported through the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB5) and the Department for Transport's Urban Challenge Fund, the service, run by West Lancashire Dial-a-Ride, involved four vehicles running from 5.30 in the morning to 11.00 at night to meet work shift patterns. However, even then, the cost was over £200,000 pounds a year to run.

Currently, a pilot scheme involving a local private hire company is being funded through developer contributions and provides a commuter service between Pimbo and Skelmersdale/Up Holland for residents proposed by their employer, the job centre or a local recruitment agency. However, as with previous schemes, there is no certainty of continuation once funding runs out.

The Proposal

We will build on the work already being carried out in Skelmersdale and in other parts of the county to establish how we can best meet the needs of employers and employees in providing cheap and cost effective transport that has a long term future and is not dependent on short term revenue funding.

Opportunities

- To provide a financially viable long term solution to the needs of Skelmersdale's residents for cheap access to employment.
- Enable emerging employment opportunities to be taken up without the need for a car.

Challenges

- The likely need to provide some form of revenue funding at a time when such funding is uncertain. It will not be easy to find a solution that offers cheap transport to the user, whilst at the same time being cost effective to provide.
- Effective solutions will require extensive partnership working
- Current solutions have eligibility criteria. Any intervention would need to ensure that such criteria did not limit the usefulness of the service.

Conclusion

Current financial, demographic and economic circumstances make it imperative that we use our resources to best effect. We will therefore extend work already being carried out under other masterplans to consider how the transport needs of Skelmersdale's residents can best be met if commercial public transport cannot meet the need.

Key proposal 4: The Skelmersdale to Ormskirk Linear Park

The Issue

Skelmersdale and Up Holland have limited walking and cycling links with Ormskirk. The A577 is busy; in places, the footway is narrow and is often on one side of the road only. For cyclists, the relatively narrow width of the road makes them more vulnerable and makes the route unattractive.

The new rail station in Skelmersdale makes the provision of a safe all year round route from Ormskirk even more important in order to reduce the number of car journeys to the new station.

The Proposals

Provide a safe, high quality, direct route between Skelmersdale and Ormskirk.

One option would be to widen the existing footway on the A577 to provide adequate pedestrian and cycling 'shared space'. This would have advantages in terms of personal security, as the A577 is lit and the busyness of the road, coupled with the number of properties along it, ensures that there are usually people about.

However, West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) has a proposal for a linear park along the route of the former Ormskirk to Skelmersdale railway. The line is straight but approaches Ormskirk from the north-east. A consultation on the proposal demonstrated there was significant public support for it. There are a number of issues to be considered with such a route, though, not least questions of year round usage and personal safety.

Both routes are roughly 5.5km in length.

Opportunities

- Either route would provide an alternative, safer option for travel, particularly for non-car owners.
- The linear park would encourage more people to use the link for leisure travel
- The linear park would have extra benefits in providing a wildlife corridors and encouraging access to the countryside.
- Either route provides a key link towards the creation of a comprehensive cycle network in West Lancashire.
- Both routes provide a link to public transport, particularly the new Skelmersdale transport hub.

Challenges

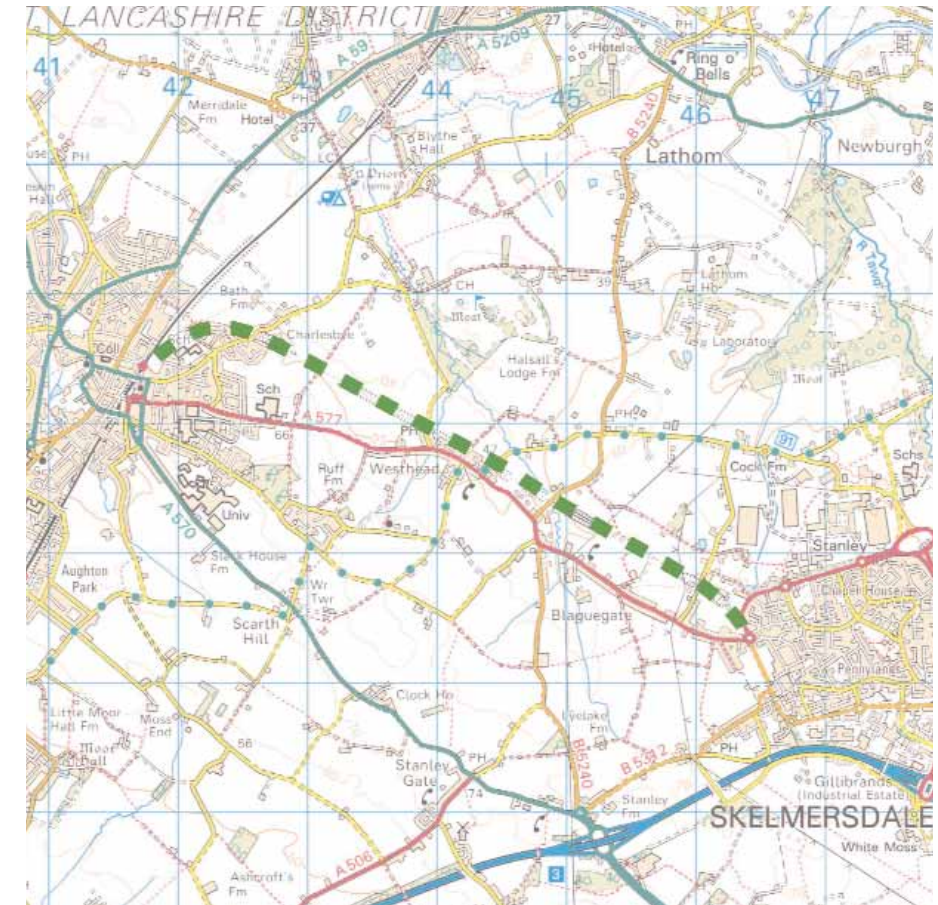
The use of either route could be weather dependent, particularly for the linear park which might not be lit.

- Personal safety considerations would need to be addressed, particularly for the linear park
- Cost and complexity of delivery, particularly of A577 improvements

Conclusion

Providing safe and effective walking and cycling infrastructure alongside the A577 would be difficult to achieve and time consuming. The linear park would provide a direct link of the same length for commuters and students, whilst having extra benefits for the environment and for active travel.

We will therefore work with WLBC to progress the linear park providing issues of personal safety and of year round usefulness can be addressed.



Ormskirk with Aughton

Ormskirk needs to have a town centre that is not clogged by traffic, allowing it to function as West Lancashire's market town and principal service centre.

Key proposal 1: Ormskirk congestion reduction

The Issue

Congestion in the town is significant. The town lies on what is currently the main route from the M58 to Southport, as well as having the major junction between the A570 and the A59. The current one way gyratory system struggles to cope with the volume of traffic, particularly in the rush hours. The congestion increases travel time, pollution and makes the town centre an undesirable place to travel to or through.

There are a number of long standing road schemes across the county. In order to decide if these schemes still offer benefits, or if there are now more effective alternatives that could be put in place, the County Council has made a commitment in the LTP to revisit each scheme. The schemes were to be compared to current policy criteria and evaluated using current traffic information.

In 2012 Jacobs completed the M58 to Southport Corridor Study, presenting options for the corridor including the bypass of Ormskirk and an alternative set of measures that could be put in place in Ormskirk itself.

Option 1 ~ Bypass the town

The bypass scheme includes 4 new roundabout junctions along its length that link to existing roads around Ormskirk. The cost was thought likely to be £39m in 2007 but has been estimated to be at least £54m if inflation and full costs are taken into account.

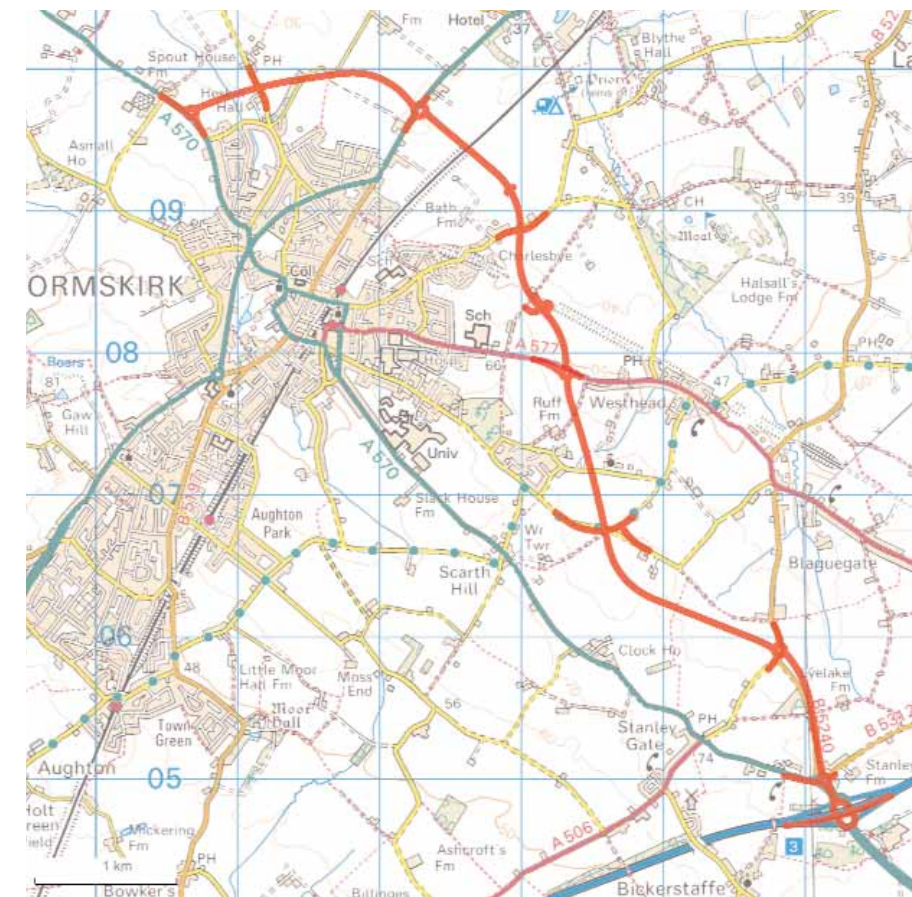
The proposed bypass would run along the protected route from Four Lane Ends roundabout north of the M58 Junction 3 passing to the east and north of Ormskirk to re-join the existing A570 at Hurlston Lane west of the town.

Opportunities

The bypass would divert through traffic from the town centre, reducing traffic on the gyratory system.

Challenges

- The cost of the new bypass relative to the benefits gained.
- As the majority of traffic within Ormskirk is not through traffic, the bypass would have a more limited impact on congestion than was previously thought.
- The environmental impact of the scheme, which runs through high quality agricultural green belt land.
- Whilst the line remains protected, the scheme is unfunded.
- The scheme contributes poorly to LTP priorities.



Option 2 ~ Alternative measures within Ormskirk

A number of alternative measures instead of a bypass were proposed by the corridor study:

- Improve pedestrian & cycle links between Ormskirk town centre and the university
- Improve school bus facilities
- A570 Derby Street / Stanley Street junction improvements
- Modernise the SCOOT (traffic signal) system for Ormskirk town centre
- Provide a second entrance to Edge Hill University
- Improve the link between Ormskirk bus and railway stations
- Improve pedestrian crossing facilities on the Ormskirk town centre gyratory

A number of these measures are already in place or planned. The LTP includes modernisation of the signal system and improved links between the bus and railway stations. A new entrance to Edge Hill University has been already constructed further away from the town centre.

The study showed the importance of access to other railway stations as a way of taking traffic from Ormskirk town centre. The new railway station at Skelmersdale will be key to this, providing new and direct links to Wigan and Manchester from a dedicated 'Parkway' facility that is also linked to bus and cycle networks. The electrification of the railway between Ormskirk and Burscough will likewise remove traffic from Ormskirk.

The other key element of the studies proposals was improving walking and cycling in Ormskirk. As well as improving our streets and public spaces, we will also look at how we can encourage cycling, particularly to and from the University by other, more innovative means.

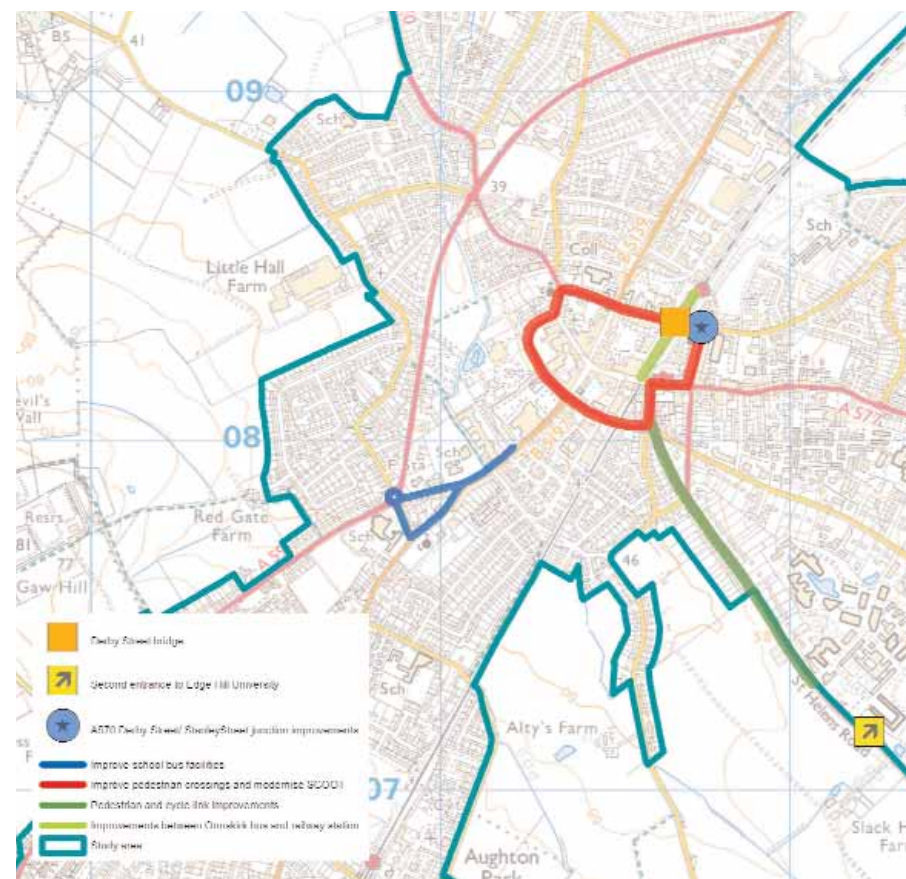
Opportunities

- The Alternatives will provide congestion relief in Ormskirk in a more sustainable way than a new road would.
- The measures are relatively low in cost and should have a short implementation timescale. The maximum cost of these options collectively is £12.75m, with most of the funding coming from the LTP.
- Due to the wide scope of the measures, many other issues will be resolved, through improvements to the public realm and improving the links between rail and bus stations.
- The combination of small scale improvements scored more highly within the study would provide a higher ratio of benefits to cost.

- The study report, coupled with other elements of this masterplan provides the opportunity to review how traffic of all types is accommodated in Ormskirk
- The potential for further innovative measures to be included in a Movement Strategy for Ormskirk

Challenges

- To ensure that alternative measures provide the same degree of benefit to through traffic as the bypass.
- The collective benefits of wide ranging options can be difficult to quantify in standard traffic analysis and therefore it could be difficult to quantify the total impact of the strategy.
- Securing a genuine change in travel culture that ends reliance on the private car.
- Ensuring that businesses are not adversely affected by changes to Ormskirk's highways network.



Conclusion

Although the bypass offers greater benefit to through traffic, much of the traffic in Ormskirk either starts or ends its journey there, either in the town centre or at the University. More benefits will therefore be gained by improving traffic flow in the town centre rather than providing a bypass. By making sure that what we do also improves public transport and makes walking and cycling more attractive, we can reduce traffic at the same time.

The cost of the bypass is far higher, with no funding as yet available. Once the timescale for scheme delivery is taken into account and the environmental impact of the bypass, we believe that the case for delivering alternative measures is overwhelming.

As a solution to the congestion issues within Ormskirk, the bypass provides insufficient benefits for the level of investment needed to construct it when there are viable, cheaper alternatives.

We therefore propose to remove the current protection of the existing bypass scheme and instead focus on measures to reduce traffic in Ormskirk and to better manage traffic that cannot be removed. This will require two main strands of work

- We will work with our partners to produce an Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy that will build on the alternative measures put forward in the study and also provide better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. The Movement Strategy will take into account the other key proposals in this masterplan, both for Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.
- To complement the Movement Strategy and to start a process of travel culture change, we will pilot a new cycle hire scheme in Ormskirk. The UniCycle programme is a new and innovative version of more traditional cycle hire schemes that area already in operation around the county.

'UniCycle' will use a bicycle designed and built in Lancashire that is specific to the scheme. Initially aimed at students at the University to stop them needing to commute by car, the programme will see term long hire of bikes at modest cost. The scheme can then be rolled out to other groups of users who have a specific need for a bike for a fixed time, including job seekers, those entering employment for the first time and those prescribed exercise on prescription.

Key proposal 2: Derby Street Railway Bridge

Derby Street Railway Bridge is a three span masonry arch bridge built around 1847 to accommodate the railway. The bridge is located in the Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area and is Grade II listed. It carries the east bound A570 over the electrified Ormskirk to Liverpool railway.

Without the bridge, the railway would be a major obstacle to traffic movements. Traffic from the M58 travelling to Southport would have to re-route via Switch Island, whilst local traffic would face diversions of typically 4 miles.

The Issues

- The bridge is not wide enough for modern needs. Whilst cars and light vans can pass over the bridge side-by-side, large vehicles such as buses and HGVs need to straddle the lanes and pass over the bridge one at a time.
- The footways are narrow. Wheelchair users and people pushing prams have difficulty passing other pedestrians and people have been struck by vehicle wing mirrors due to the inadequate width.
- The bridge parapets do not meet current requirements for bridge parapets above railway. They are too low and their shape does not prevent people sitting, standing or walking on them. The construction also presents a risk of masonry dropping onto the railway if a vehicle hit the bridge parapets.
- Deterioration of the bridge could mean that weight restrictions may need to be placed on traffic crossing it in the future.

The Proposals

The current condition of the bridge requires either substantial maintenance work to preserve the structural integrity of the bridge or the delivery of a replacement bridge.

Improvements to the bridge would provide a footbridge along side the existing bridge, so that the carriageway can be widened, and for crash barriers to be installed where the footways were to protect the parapets.

However, a number of obstacles were encountered:

- Crash barriers absorb the energy of an impact by deflecting. They need space behind them to deflect into and so it would be necessary to reduce the road to a single traffic lane.
- Crash barriers would be very visually intrusive in the conservation area.
- Closing the bridge to pedestrians and providing a footbridge would mean pedestrians having to detour significantly to safely cross Derby Street, even if footbridges were provided on both sides.

The alternative to maintenance measures is to replace the bridge.

This would be by a design that not only meets modern safety requirements for both highway and rail, but in appearance fits the conservation area.

The delivery of a replacement bridge would be costly. Traffic would be required to detour during some phases of construction, but it would be possible to keep such traffic management to a minimum (probably over two bank holiday weekends). The railway could operate normally throughout.

The Conclusion

Substantial investment would be needed to stop further deterioration in its condition and untenable traffic restrictions would be required whilst the work was undertaken. There are major drawbacks to providing the footbridge and crash barriers that maintenance work would require and the end result would detract from the Ormskirk Town Centre Conservation Area.

We will therefore work towards a scheme to replace Derby Street Bridge. This will initially involve consultations with West Lancashire Borough Council and with Network Rail. Once we have reached agreement on the scheme to take forward and consulted further on the options, a business case will be developed with a view to seeking funding through the SLGF.

However, we will continue to review the need for replacement of the bridge as we develop Ormskirk's Town Centre Movement Strategy.



Key proposal 3: Route management opportunities (Ormskirk)

The Issue

Although much of the traffic in Ormskirk is local, there is still a sizeable through movement, including heavy lorries. At the moment, this is largely due to Ormskirk position on the main route between the M58 and Southport.

The Proposal

Sefton Council are currently in the final stage of the approval process to build the Thornton to Switch Island Link.

To be called the A5758 Broom's Cross Road, the link is a new single carriageway road connecting the A565 Southport Road at Thornton with the motorway junction at Switch Island. The road provides a local by-pass of the communities of Netherton and Thornton, especially the areas of Green Lane, Lydiate Lane and the Northern Perimeter Road.

The strategic objectives of the scheme are to:

- Relieve congestion on the local highway network in the Thornton to Switch Island corridor, providing a more direct alternative route for strategic traffic, thereby reducing delays and improving journey times.
- Improve strategic highway access between the North West's motorway system and Southport, the Port of Liverpool and the Atlantic Gateway Strategic Investment Area, providing more reliable journey times and reduced delays to strategic traffic.

In September 2013, Sefton Council's Cabinet gave approval for construction on the Thornton to Switch Island Link to start as soon as the final approvals from the Department for Transport (DfT) have been secured.

The opening of the Thornton to Switch Island link will provide the opportunity to review how traffic is routed from the M58. We will work therefore with Sefton Council and the HA to ensure that Ormskirk receives the maximum benefit from the scheme by designing and implementing a route management strategy that makes the new link road the obvious way to reach Southport from the motorway.

Opportunities

- Although longer, the Thornton to Switch Island link will offer an easier, faster connection to Southport than the A570.
- The link offers the potential to remove traffic from Ormskirk and the A570 to Southport corridor, including reducing heavy goods vehicle numbers.

Challenges

- Although longer, the Thornton to Switch Island link will offer an easier, faster connection to Southport than the A570.
- The link offers the potential to remove traffic from Ormskirk and the A570 to Southport corridor, including reducing heavy goods vehicle numbers.
- Route management through the corridor would also reduce congestion along the A570 as it runs through the Western Parishes.

The Conclusion

Once the link road is under construction, we will work to put in place a route management plan for West Lancashire that looks to divert M58 to Southport traffic to the new road and remove as much through traffic from the A570 corridor as is possible.

This will not only benefit Ormskirk, but the communities that lie on the route, particularly in the Western parishes.



Burscough

Burscough needs more effective connections to both local and regional growth opportunities.

Key proposal 1: Improved rail connectivity

Option 1 ~ Ormskirk to Preston electrification

The Issue

Rail travel between Preston, Burscough and Liverpool currently requires passengers to change trains at Ormskirk. This limits the usefulness of the service, as trains from Preston to Ormskirk are infrequent, which places a greater strain on the road network, particularly in Burscough, as commuters choose to travel by car instead.

With the proposed housing development in the area, increases in traffic volume over the plan period to 2027 will place even greater strain on the network in and around Burscough.

Connecting all of West Lancashire to Central Lancashire will become more important as economic growth occurs in the future. The current service on the line does not provide an adequate service for this purpose.

The Proposal

Electrify the Ormskirk to Preston line in two phases.

- Phase 1 ~ Extend line electrification from Ormskirk up to Burscough Junction station.
- Phase 2 ~ Electrify the remainder of the line to Preston.

This could be achieved through either the extension of the existing third rail system or through overhead electrification.

New rolling stock that is compatible with both systems ('dual voltage') would allow through trains. Merseytravel is looking to procure new trains for the Merseyrail network over the next few years and these could be dual voltage trains.

Phase 1 is likely to see the Merseyrail system extended to Burscough Bridge, providing a reliable, high frequency service to and from Liverpool via Ormskirk. Ormskirk would become a stop on the line rather than the termination point. Phase 2 would then see overhead electrification of the line from Burscough to Preston at some time in the future.

Opportunities

- Phase 1 ~ Electrification of the railway line between Ormskirk and Burscough would enable a more frequent train service.
- Phase 1 ~ In addition, commuters between Burscough and Liverpool would no longer need to change trains at Ormskirk which would also improve the attractiveness of rail as a travel option.
- Phase 1 ~ The resultant Burscough ~ Preston service would take less time, allowing a regular hourly service. This more regular service could therefore have stops at new stations, such as at Midge Hall (see Central Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan)
- Phase 2 ~ A faster and more attractive service will make commuting to Central Lancashire a more attractive option.

Challenges

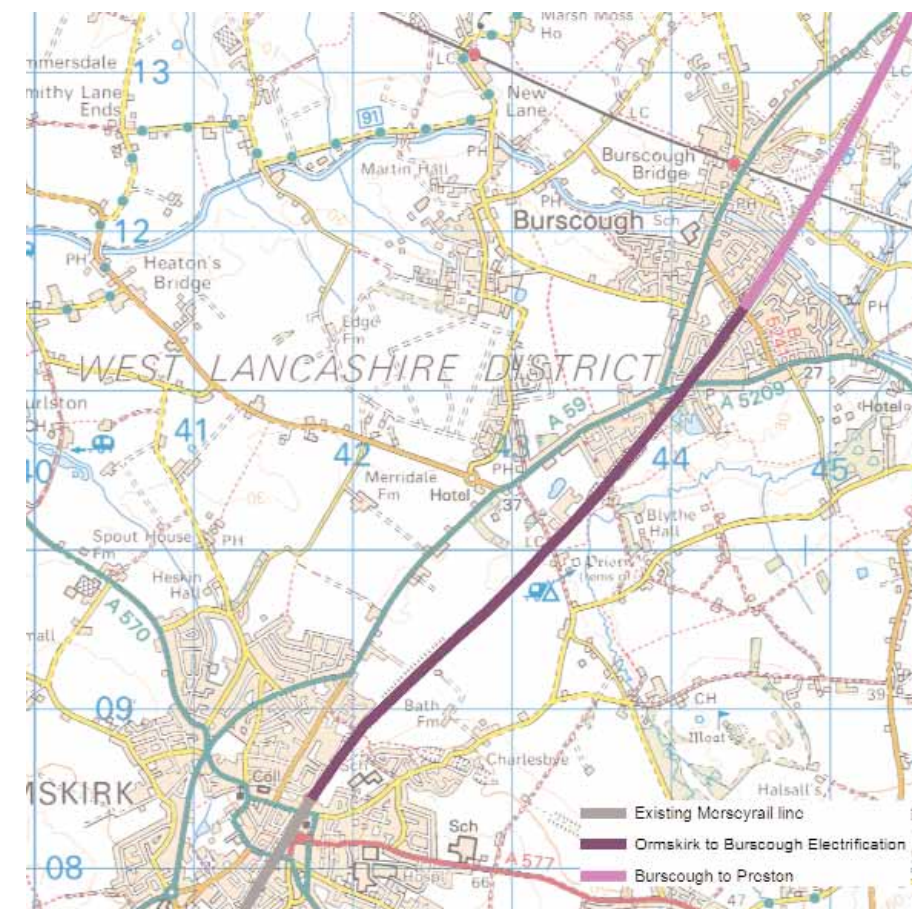
- The cost of the scheme
- The scheme will require the agreement of Merseytravel and Network Rail

Conclusion

There would appear to be significant benefits to bringing about the electrification sooner rather than later.

We will therefore continue our discussions with Merseytravel and Network Rail as to the most appropriate way of electrifying extensions to the Merseyrail system in general.

We also propose to investigate the options for this scheme in detail and then prepare a detailed business case. We will work with both Network Rail, Merseyrail and Merseytravel to take this proposal forward. Once we have completed this work, we will know whether the scheme brings enough benefits to seek funding through either the SLGF and/or by our partners.



Option 2 ~ Reinstatement the Burscough Curves

The Issue

Burscough currently has two railway stations, Burscough Bridge (Wigan ~ Southport Line) and Burscough Junction (Ormskirk ~ Preston Line). There is no connection between the stations and any passengers transferring between the two lines are required to walk roughly half a mile between the stations, which discourages interchange.

There has been a long standing aspiration to reinstate the 'Burscough Curves'. Policy IF2 in the West Lancashire Local Plan states that 'the Council will support the delivery of and not allow development which could prejudice the delivery' of the scheme.

The Proposal

The proposed scheme would include three sections at the point where the rail lines cross over. Two of the three sections would be constructed on land previously occupied by the south west and north west curves, with the south east curve constructed on land not previously occupied by railway.

Improvement options are summarised as follows:

- Reinstatement of the South West Burscough Curve (direct link between Ormskirk and Southport);
- Reinstatement of the North West Burscough Curve (direct link between Southport and Preston);
- Construction of a new South East Burscough Curve (direct link between Ormskirk and Wigan/Manchester).

Opportunities

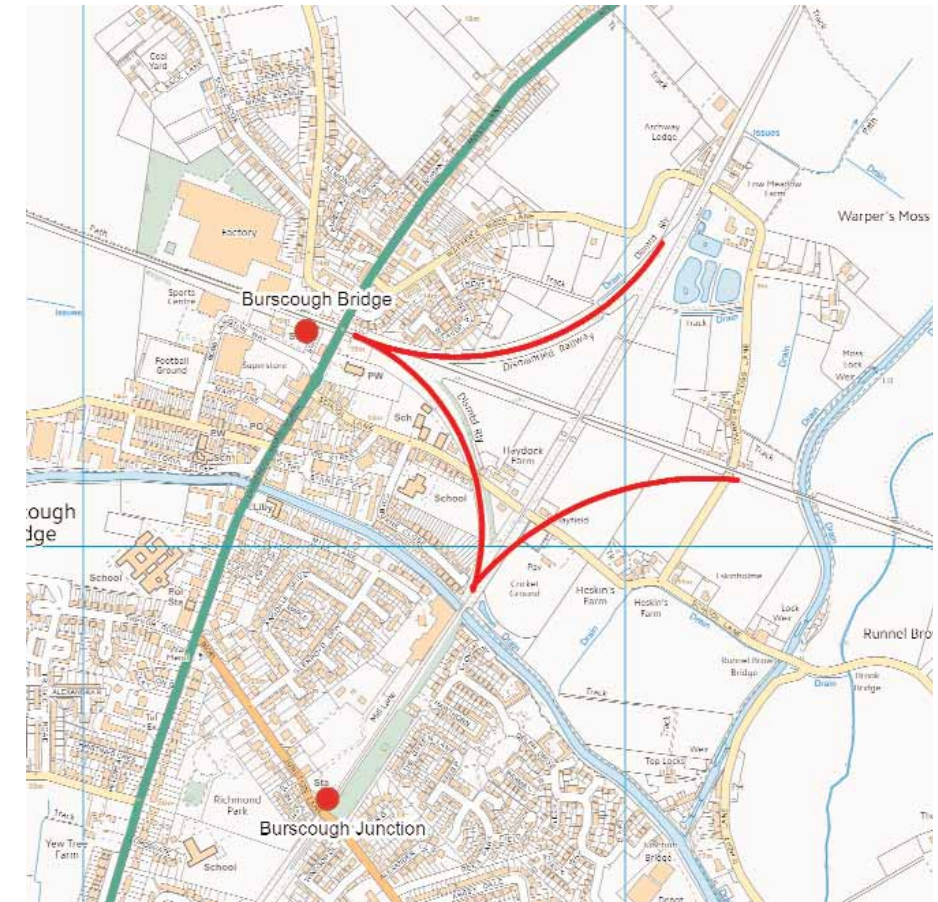
- The reinstatement of the curves would allow a direct rail link between the two Burscough stations.
- There would be a direct link between Ormskirk and Southport, Ormskirk and Wigan/Manchester as well as Preston and Southport.
- The direct link to Southport from Ormskirk and Preston could boost use of the line for tourism purposes and so improve the viability of the reinstatement of the curves.

Challenges

- A new rail station in Skelmersdale would offer more effective access to Wigan and Manchester for residents of Ormskirk and the western rural parishes.
- We have worked with our partners to investigate the viability, feasibility and deliverability of the curves. Unfortunately there is no business case for the reinstatement of any of the curve lines at the moment.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of a positive business case, we do not currently propose to work towards the reinstatement of the Burscough Curves. We will not however prejudice their reinstatement and will review our position if circumstances change.



Key proposal 2: The Burscough ~ Ormskirk Linear Link

The Issue

There is a lack of safe and direct provision for walking/cycling between Burscough and Ormskirk. The most direct route between Ormskirk and Burscough is along the A59. In places, the high speed of traffic is a deterrent to walkers and cyclists, whilst in other parts of the route, footways and road widths are narrow. The lack of provision will become more of an issue as development occurs in Burscough and as links are needed to the new station at Skelmersdale.

The Proposal

Provide a direct, dedicated cycling and walking link between Burscough and Ormskirk. West Lancashire Borough Council currently has plans in place for a Linear Park that could form the basis for the connection, which could be extended into Burscough by the provision of a dedicated A59 crossing and facilities through the Yew Tree Farm development.

Opportunities

- A new link route would provide an alternative, safer option for travel, particularly for non-car owners.
- An off road/quiet roads route would encourage more people to use the link for active travel
- The linear park would have extra benefits including providing a wildlife corridors and encouraging access to the countryside.
- The route provides a key link towards a strategic cycle network in West Lancashire and would complement work being done under the VISIT initiative.

Challenges

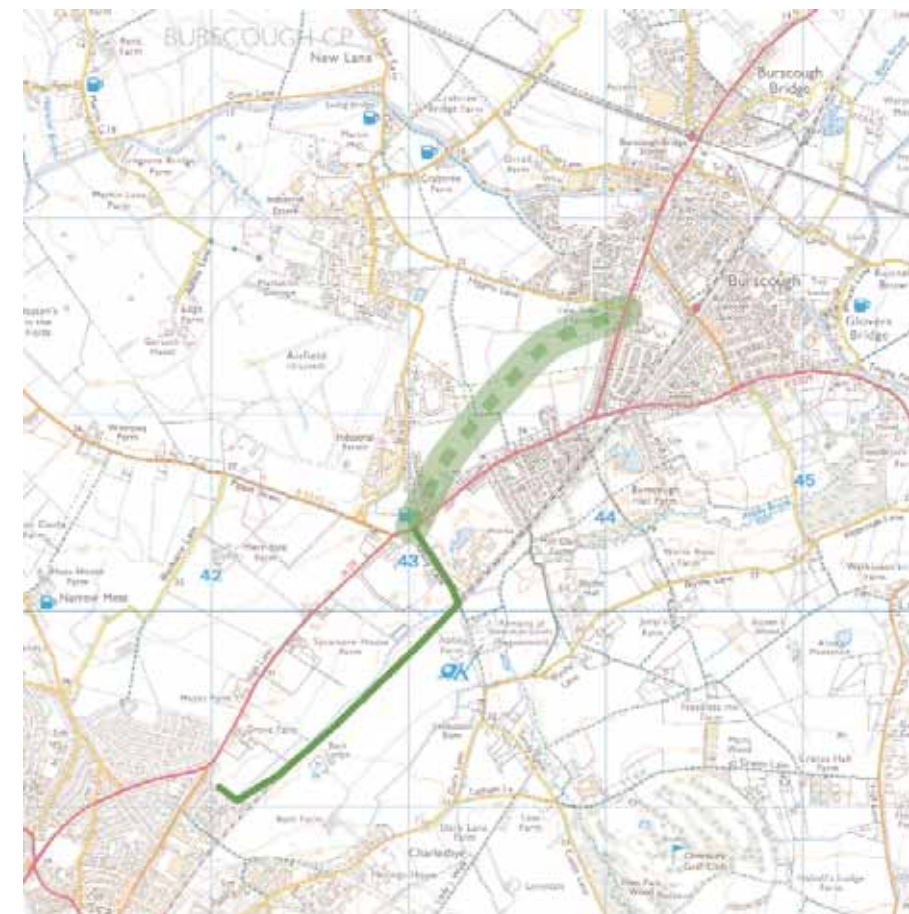
The use of the route could be weather dependent.

The route will need the county and borough councils to work with developers to make provision for the route, potentially including S106 monies.

Conclusion

Providing safe and effective walking and cycling infrastructure alongside the A59 would be difficult to achieve and time consuming. An off road route would provide a direct link for commuters and students, whilst having extra benefits for the environment and for active travel.

We will therefore work with WLBC to progress the local link through a linear park with a complementary section through the development, providing issues of personal safety and of year round usefulness can be addressed.



The Rural Parishes

Villages should not have inappropriate traffic using roads that not suitable. Residents need to be sure that they will be able to access services.

Key proposal 1: Tarleton Green Lane Link

The Issue

Tarleton is surrounded by the Lancashire Mosslands, which provide fertile soils that support the nearby agricultural, horticultural and produce packing related businesses.

At present, vehicles carrying produce from growers in Tarleton, Hesketh and Holmes Moss access the main road network primarily via Blackgate Lane, Church Road or Coe Lane. Most of the produce is transported using heavy goods vehicles (HGV). These vehicles are used to transport produce between rural businesses and to make numerous pick-ups before taking the produce to market or local warehouses.

These commercial vehicles contribute to congestion and environmental damage within Tarleton. The congestion problem is exacerbated by narrow carriageways in residential areas and by on street parking in residential/shopping areas.

The Proposal

A new link between local rural businesses and the A565 which will relieve the impact of through traffic, particularly heavy goods vehicles, in Tarleton.

The proposal will also address the concerns of local residents regarding their environment and improve access for the local agricultural, horticultural and produce packing industries.

Opportunities

The new link will provide a number of benefits to both the businesses in the area and to the villages, particularly Tarleton:

- An alternative route for goods vehicles associated with the horticultural business sector, reducing the weekday 12 hour HGV flow in Tarleton by up to 27%.
- A reduction in noise and vibration in Tarleton itself, together with an overall improvement in air quality in the village. Perceived road safety will also be improved if weight restrictions are correctly enforced.
- A reduction in congestion and other issues related to HGV and LGV using unsuitable local roads
- The upgrading an existing 'moss road' to one with an improved cross-section suitable for horticultural and agricultural traffic
- Improved access to the horticultural businesses to the west and north of Tarleton, thus contributing to their long-term viability and growth

Challenges

- The new link will need to be funded through the LTP rather than from a major scheme bid due to the nature of the business case for it.
- The scheme runs through green belt
- A new link could lead to an increased density of businesses, which would need to be managed to avoid environmental impacts
- Effects on the local flora and fauna will need to be managed, although the scheme is unlikely to have any significant impact on the local environment that cannot be mitigated.

Conclusion

Although there are challenges to be overcome, the positive impact the new link will have on Tarleton is considerable. The link will support businesses and any environmental impacts can be mitigated.

The scheme currently has funding allocated to it in the LTP. We will continue that funding with a view to the link being completed by the end of 2016.



Key proposal 2: Route management opportunities

The Issue

Many of the main roads in the rural parishes have levels of traffic that present issues for the communities that lie along them. Whilst to the west, roads tend to be more open, to the east and north, the roads are more narrow, hillier and have more bends, making them less appropriate for through traffic and more likely to see congestion. HGVs present a particular challenge.

The Proposal

As has been discussed in the Ormskirk with Aughton section of this masterplan, Sefton Council are currently in the final stage of the approval process to build the Thornton to Switch Island Link and Lancashire County Council remains committed to building the Green Lane Link at Tarleton.

The opening of the Thornton to Switch Island link has already been highlighted as providing the opportunity to review how traffic is routed from the M58. Likewise, we will be reviewing how we manage vehicle routing once the Green Lane Link is open. We therefore propose to extend this work to cover all the Rural Parishes, particularly around Tarleton, along the A5209 that runs from the M6 at junction 27 to Burscough and along the A577 through Up Holland.

Opportunities

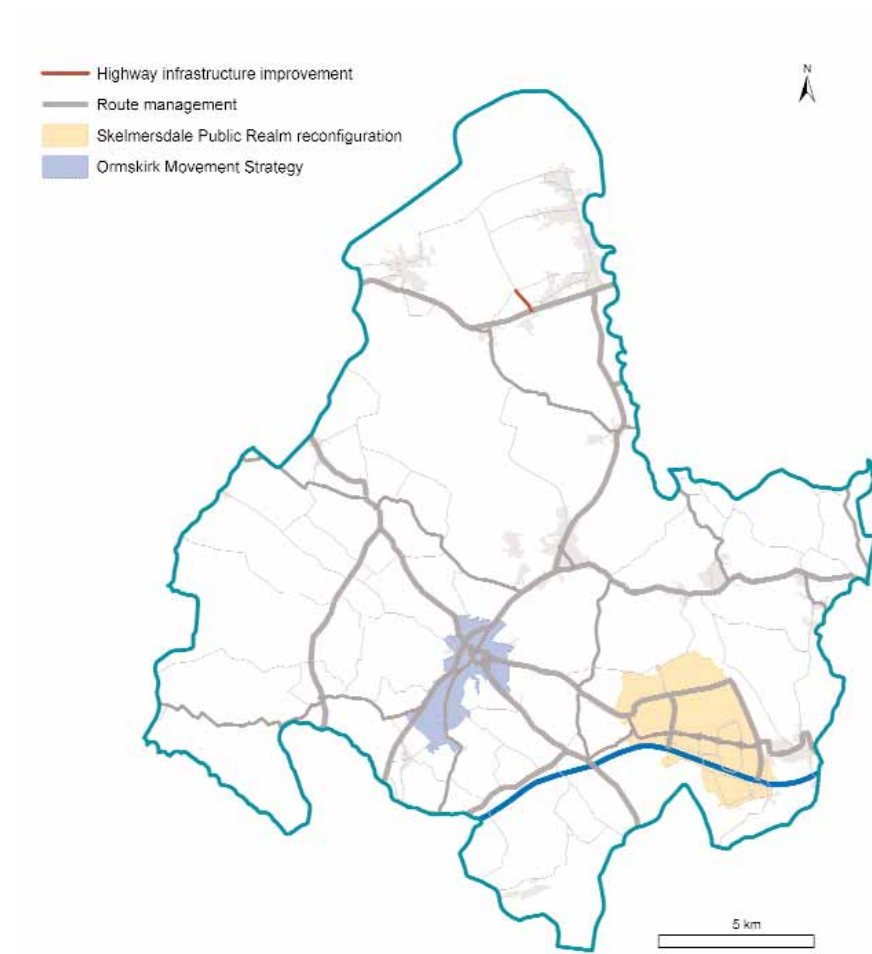
- Although longer, the Thornton to Switch Island link will offer an easier, faster connection to Southport than the A570. The Green Lane Link will allow traffic to reroute from the centre of Tarleton.
- Given the scope of route management work to be undertaken in Ormskirk and Tarleton, it would seem appropriate to extend the review to ensure that all benefits of the new roads are captured.
- Closure of the quarry at Up Holland will potentially allow route management measures to be used to divert heavy traffic away from the village.
- Other interventions proposed in this masterplan for Skelmersdale, particularly the new station, will have significant effects on travel in West Lancashire that will impact on route management.

Challenges

- The route management plan will have no legal status by itself, so traffic cannot be forced to divert. However, the plan can be strengthened by measures that are legally enforceable, such as weight limits.
- To ensure that other measures in this masterplan, particularly the Ormskirk Movement Strategy, support the Route Management Strategy.

The Conclusion

Once the Thornton to Switch Island link road is under construction, we will work to put in place a route management plan for West Lancashire that maximises the benefits of all new road construction and highways and transport improvements in the area.



Key proposal 3: Rural connections without a car.

The Issue

The rural parishes are very dependent on the car, which not only leads to local problems on the highways network, but makes life very difficult for those who, for whatever reason, do not have their own transport.

This car dependence is unlikely to be sustainable in the longer term, both on cost grounds and through the need for carbon reduction.

Visitors to the area also need to be able to travel without needing a car and there is a definite need to support a sustainable visitor economy to ensure that the natural environment is protected while its economic benefit is maximised.

However, funding for subsidised bus services is reducing so we need to find innovative ways to reduce rural isolation for non car owners, particularly with an ageing population.

The Proposal

Work is already proposed in the county to find the most cost effective methods of providing access to services in rural or remote areas. We will extend this work to serve similar areas within West Lancashire.

In line with likely future funding requirements, the study will focus on where the greatest benefits can be achieved by using public money to improve access to services.

Particular questions to be answered by the study include:

- How can public transport and cycling integrate to best connect towns and villages in rural areas?
- Are there alternatives to traditional public transport for rural areas?
- How can Community Transport best evolve to meet the diverse transport needs of West Lancashire?
- What is the best way for public transport to support the rural economy and the residents of and visitors to our rural areas?
- How can cycling be made more attractive in rural areas, given that distances are longer?

Opportunities

- Current bus subsidy systems are unlikely to be financially viable in the future, so we need to investigate our options now to find the most cost effective solutions to ensuring access to services.
- Rural isolation and an ageing population both present health and wellbeing issues for the health sector, so there is a real opportunity to share the benefits of reducing social isolation.
- 'Green tourism' is a growing market and West Lancashire is particularly suited to this, as the LSTF funding shows.

WLBC have proposals

- for more cycling infrastructure that could be integral to our proposals.
- Car ownership in rural areas is likely to become increasingly unsustainable, so alternatives need to be in place sooner rather than later.
- Work already featured in other masterplans can be readily expanded to cover West Lancashire.

Challenges

- Funding for any form of revenue intervention is likely to be limited
- Decisions about the priority that different journeys and needs are given will be difficult.

Conclusion

Current financial and demographic circumstances make it imperative that we use our resources to best effect. This study will provide key information to allow difficult decisions to be taken.

An early outcome under this proposal will be the designation of the footways along main roads outside the urban area as shared spaces. The provision will be piloted along the A59 and the A570.

These footways are not heavily used by pedestrians but do provide a direct route for cyclists, made more attractive, particularly for non-leisure use, by taking cyclists out of the traffic. The pilot will establish how the shared space can be made to work efficiently; we will work to resolve any issues as they come about, such as modifications to footways and kerbs etc.

Next Steps

This consultation masterplan represents the beginning of a programme of infrastructure delivery to serve West Lancashire over the next 15 years and beyond.

There is much to do and it will need the commitment and efforts of a variety of providers to see it through – county, borough and neighbouring councils, Lancashire's Local Enterprise Partnership, Highways Agency, Network Rail, Merseytravel – and the support of private business and house builders as well.

The first task is to make sure we have widespread agreement for the highway and transport improvements that are taken forward and delivered. Then, to stand the best chance of delivery, we must get these improvements 'ready to roll' as soon as we can, so that we can take all opportunities to get funding for schemes that are ready to deliver. That will mean committing time and funding 'upfront' to working up these ideas and preparing the economic case for them.

Once we have your views on the vision, schemes and proposals put forward in this masterplan, then over the next 2 years to 2015 we will need to:

- Progress with studies and other evidence gathering, working with our partners to ensure that we can make the case for the each part of the programme.
- For schemes we are already committed to, finalise designs, begin to assemble land, and start works.
- For proposals made in this masterplan, consult and work with communities, stakeholders and infrastructure providers to reach agreement on scheme specifics and secure funding for those proposals.
- Draw up and identify the proposals in more detail and protect routes and
- Begin the preparation of major scheme business cases where needed.

The highways and transport improvements proposed in this masterplan will affect us all. They will support and safeguard the area's economic ambitions, relieve the worst congestion, offer real choice in the way we travel, improve our health and enrich our experience in our town centres. That makes it all the more important that we listen to your ideas, incorporate the best, and achieve a broad consensus to deliver this masterplan.

Delivery and funding of the masterplan will rely on a number of infrastructure providers and a variety of funding sources, and we will be working closely with these partners to make sure there is the guarantee of their support and assistance, with funding to follow.

Crucial to all this will be the support of residents and businesses. Too often attempts to deliver growth and new development have failed without the buy in and full support of the communities affected. We have the opportunity to make significant and long-term improvements, backed by substantial investment, to West Lancashire's highways and transport system. We do not wish to waste it.

Securing Developer Contributions

The cost of delivering the package of measures identified in this masterplan, and those that will come out of the work we propose to do, cannot be borne entirely by public sector funding. We have shown that, in areas where we can come to rely on the development industry to contribute funding to new infrastructure, we can increase investor confidence and our ability to attract other sources of funding, and in turn improve the prospects of delivery, and delivering to earlier timescales.

Moving forward, investment in new infrastructure will, increasingly, need to demonstrate an economic justification. In practice, this means a clear strategy bringing forward integrated development proposals for new development and economic growth alongside the infrastructure to support it.

New procedures have been put in place for collecting and investing developer contributions. The Community Infrastructure Levy is already proving to be a key mechanism in other parts of Lancashire to delivering major new infrastructure to stimulate and support major house building and business development.

The speed and certainty with which we will be able to implement new infrastructure will be directly linked to developer contributions.

Let us know what you think

From the 2nd December 2013 until 24th January 2014, there will be a public consultation on the Highways and Transport Masterplan for West Lancashire.

As part of the consultation it is important that we get your views on the vision presented in the masterplan.

A leaflet with a questionnaire accompanies the masterplan and this is your opportunity to let us know what you think. Copies of the leaflet are available from public libraries and council offices.

We will also be holding events in Ormskirk and Skelmersdale where you can come and talk to us about our proposals. We will publicise the details of these when we have finalised arrangements for them.

The masterplan can also be viewed or downloaded from our website. To access the documents paste the following link into your browser www.lancashire.gov.uk and then search for Local Transport Plan on the A-Z list. You can also fill in the questionnaire online.

You can also write to us at:

Highways and Transport Masterplan for West Lancashire
Consultation
Environment Directorate
Room C4
County Hall
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 0LD

or by email: enquiries@lancashire.gov.uk

Milestones

Project	Delivery Agency	Current Status	Key Milestones						
			2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Skelmersdale Rail Link and Town Centre Rail Station	Network Rail/LCC	Pre-Programme	Feasibility Study/GRIP	Scheme Preparation GRIP and Business Case Development		Delivery in Rail Industry CP6			
Skelmersdale's Movement Strategy (Skelmersdale's Public Realm)	Many	Programmed	Strategy Development	Start of Works		Project Continuation			
Skelmersdale to Ormskirk Linear Park	LCC/WLBC	Pre-Programme							
Reshape Skelmersdale's Public Transport Infrastructure Services	LCC	Pre-Programme Programmed		Scheme and Business Case Development Study Completed (14/15)		Works timed to complete by rail station opening at latest			
Ormskirk Movement Strategy (alternative measures within Ormskirk)	LCC/WLBC	Programmed		Strategy Development	Project Completed				
Ormskirk Bus Station Refurbishment	LCC	Programmed		Start of Works	Project Completed				
Derby Street Railway Bridge	LCC	Programmed		Scheme preparation and Business Case Development		Project Completed			
Route Management Opportunities	LCC/HA/Sefton	Pre-Programme		Strategy Development		Thornton to Switch Island Link Open			
Ormskirk to Burscough Electrification	MR/Network Rail	Pre-Programme						Delivery in Rail Industry CP6	
Burscough ~ Ormskirk Linear Link	LCC/WLBC	Pre-Programme							
Tarelton Green Lane Link	LCC	Programmed	Scheme Preparation	Planning Application	Start of Works	Road Open			
Rural Connectivity	LCC	Programmed		Study Completed					

Funding All figures £m and indicative

Project	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	Comments
Skelmersdale Rail Link and Town Centre Rail Station	0.1						Rail Industry Funding in CP6		0.1					Delivery subject to securing Rail Industry Funding/Growth Deal
Skelmersdale's Movement Strategy (Skelmersdale's Public Realm)													tbc	Delivery subject to securing Growth Deal
Skelmersdale Public Transport Connectivity including New Interchange													tbc	Delivery subject to securing Growth Deal
Skelmersdale to Ormskirk Linear Park													tbc	Delivery subject to securing Growth Deal
Ormskirk Town Center Movement Strategy				2.2	2.2	2	2	2	2				12.4	
Ormskirk Rail Station/Bus Station/Town Centre /Edge Hill Pedestrian and Cycle Routes		0.35											0.35	Existing LTP Scheme
Ormskirk Bus Station Refurbishment	0.17	0.63	0.20										1	
Route Management Opportunities													tbc	LTP Project
Ormskirk to Preston Electrification							Rail Industry Funding in CP6		tbc					Delivery subject to securing Rail Industry Funding/Growth Deal
Burscough ~ Ormskirk Linear Link													tbc	Delivery subject to securing Developer Commitment
Tarelton Green Lane Link	0.10	0.25	3.9										4.25	
Rural Connectivity													tbc	LTP Project
Total	0.37	1.23	4.1	2.2	2.2	2	2	2	2				18.1	
LCC	0.37	1.23	4.1	2.2	2.2	2	2	2	2				18.1	

Appendix 1 ~ Glossary

Air Quality ~ the condition of the air around us. Pollution is often a cause of poor air quality.

Carbon Emissions ~ carbon dioxide (CO₂) and carbon monoxide (CO) produced by vehicles and industrial processes.

Central Business District (CBD) ~ the commercial centre of a city or large town, with the main concentration of offices and shops.

CIL/S106 Developer Funding ~ when new developments are planned, the developer may be required to make a payment towards facilities including transport schemes, flood defences, schools, health and social care facilities, green spaces and leisure centres. This was formerly through 'Section 106' agreements but is now through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) ~ compulsory purchase orders allow certain bodies to buy land or property even where a land owner does not want to sell it. A CPO is a last resort and only used where taking the land is necessary and it is in the public interest.

Congestion ~ the maps in this masterplan use the following definition based on average speeds during the peak hours compared to the average 'free-flow' speeds observed between 00:00 and 06:00

Severe Congestion	<30% of free-flow speed
Congestion	30%~60% free-flow speed

Core Strategy ~ the key compulsory local development document specified in United Kingdom planning law. It sets out the vision, objectives, strategy and policies that will manage development and use of land in an area. Every other local development document is built on the principles set out in the core strategy, regarding the development and use of land in a local planning authority's area.

Economic Development ~ long term actions to improve the standard of living and economic health of an area. Actions can involve many areas including education, infrastructure, competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and health.

Flood Zone 2 ~ the wider area of an extreme flood from rivers or the sea. These are areas which could be affected by a major flood, with up to a 0.1 per cent (1 in 1000) chance of occurring each year.

Flood Zone 3 ~ the area that could be affected by flooding, if there were no flood defences. This area could be flooded:

- From the sea by a flood that has a 0.5 per cent (1 in 200) or greater chance of happening each year;
- or from a river by a flood that has a 1 per cent (1 in 100) or greater chance of happening each year.

Green Belt ~ an area of open countryside or farmland between urban areas, where development is restricted to limit urban growth and prevent separate urban areas joining together over time.

High Speed Rail ~ High Speed 2 (HS2) will be the UK's new high speed rail network, built initially between London and Birmingham. Phase 2 of HS2 will extend the route to Manchester and Leeds.

Highway Authority ~ an organisation legally responsible for looking after the highway network (roads, footways and cycle ways) in an area and which has certain legal powers as a result. In Lancashire, the County Council is the highways authority for most roads in the county.

Independent Technical Assessment ~ a technical document produced by another organisation that gives an evidence-based, independent and objective view of a proposed policy or scheme.

Infrastructure ~ the basic facilities needed for society to function, such as roads, railways, communications systems, electricity, gas and water supplies, and public buildings including schools.

Integrated Transport (IT) Block ~ Government capital funding provided to County and Unitary Councils for support for small-scale transport improvement schemes.

Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone ~ the Enterprise Zone is made up of the two BAE Systems sites at Samlesbury and Warton. The Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP) worked with BAE Systems to launch the Zone in April 2012, and it is intended to become a world class location for advanced engineering and manufacturing.

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) ~ a public/private sector partnership which provides leadership for the county's economy and therefore has an important role in directing local economic development activity for job creation and growth.

Local Development Framework (LDF) ~ a set of documents setting out the policies and plans which will shape how an area develops and which make up the local plan for a local planning authority's area.

Local Sustainable Travel Fund ~ a government fund to support measures to encourage economic growth and reduce carbon emissions.

Local Transport Plan ~ a statutory document that sets out how the County Council will provide sustainable and accessible transport capable of supporting the county's economic growth over the next few years and beyond.

Nature Conservation Value ~ areas of the natural environment with valuable habitats or plant or animal species to be protected and enhanced that need to be considered by a planning authority when they are preparing their local plan and making decisions on planning applications.

Park and Ride ~ a system for reducing urban traffic congestion in which drivers leave their cars in parking areas on the outskirts of a town or city and travel to the city centre on public transport. Most park and ride is bus based; rail based sites are usually called 'Parkways'.

Pinch Point Programme Funding ~ part of the Government's growth scheme providing funding to tackle specific places on the national main road network where traffic congestion is at its worst.

Rolling Stock ~ the carriages and wagons that make up a train. The quality and capacity (the number of people or quantity of goods that can be carried) of rolling stock affects the level of service on a route.

Side Roads Order (SRO) ~ a legal order that allows a highway authority to make alterations to roads or other highways affected by a major road scheme including closing or diverting roads or private accesses affected by it.

Spatial Planning ~ how the public sector influences the distribution of people and activities in an area. It includes land use planning, urban planning, transport planning and environmental planning. Other related areas are also important, including economic development and community development. Spatial planning takes place on local, regional, national and international levels.

Strategic Location ~ a general location in a spatial plan where land has been allocated for major development, such as for housing or employment, but where there is as yet no detail of that development.

TEU ~ the twenty-foot equivalent unit (often TEU or teu) is an inexact unit of cargo capacity often used to describe the capacity of container ships and container terminals. It is based on the volume of a 20-foot-long (6.1 m) intermodal container, a standard-sized metal box which can be easily transferred between different modes of transportation, such as ships, trains and trucks"



Further Information

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