

Summary of consultation responses

Responses mainly came from business owners and residents from the Whalley Range/Victoria Street area. Appendix B of the interim planning policy lists all the comments made through consultation and the Council's response to them. Major issues and actions are as follows:-

Issue 1: Parking constraints

Parking was recognised as an obstacle to development prior to preparation of the interim planning policy. However consultation highlighted that the situation has recently become worse to the point where parking constraints now pose a barrier to growth.

Parking was the only issue raised through consultation which poses a risk to the further growth supported by the interim planning policy. Therefore changes have been made which provide parking solutions to mitigate for the growth proposed.

The following development sites and future opportunities stated in paragraph 7.9 of the interim planning policy have been amended to show greater appreciation for traffic and parking constraints: -

- Watford Street Industrial Estate - Any development that comes forward should make appropriate provision for 'dual-use' parking which serves not only the site but also a wider neighbourhood need. The Council will also insist on the submission of a Green Travel Plan alongside planning applications for the site.
- Vacant land adjacent to Empire Works - Identified as a development opportunity for a formalised car park.
- Links with Tontine Street, Regent Street and Blackburn town centre - Parking facilities in these locations have been emphasised to ease parking congestion in Whalley Range/Victoria Street.

A new section on Travel Plans (Appendix C) has been included in the interim planning policy to mitigate the negative impacts of development without compromising growth. The requirement to meet parking standards will be replaced by a requirement to submit Travel Plans alongside planning applications for developments in the following areas: -

- Watford Street Industrial Estate
- Randal Street
- Victoria Street north of Barbara Castle Way
- Whalley Range west of Earl Street/Brookhouse Lane.

In the longer term there is scope for sustainable transport measures to reference a wider area where parking standards may not be the appropriate mechanism to accommodate vehicles attracted to a site and where sustainable transport solutions should be sought.

Issue 2: Traffic

Comments were made that the one way systems on Randal Street and Victoria Street should be reverted back to the original two way systems which existed prior to the 2006 environmental improvement works for the area. Whilst it is not within the remit of the interim planning policy to deal with traffic gyratory, these comments have been passed on to the Council's Highways Section to highlight the issue.

Issue 3: Frontages

The Council should allow double (front to back) frontages onto Victoria Street for properties which have an existing frontage at the eastern end of Randal Street and back directly onto Victoria Street. The Council's saved Local Plan sets out sufficient policy guidance to deal with applications for double frontages.

Issue 4: Further extension to the Whalley Range/Victoria Street district centre

The district centre boundary should be further extended to include residential properties at the western end of the district centre on Limbrick and at the eastern end, on Whalley Range. These extensions have been discounted as they represent random extensions into mainly residential blocks. There is no rationale for including into the district centre single units in terrace blocks. Furthermore the proposed extensions are contrary to the identified need to focus growth towards the town centre and not away from it.

Issue 5: Environmental improvements

The condition of back streets should be improved through lighting, cleaning and paving. These comments have been noted although ongoing resource constraints mean that any future investment and changes to cleaning frequencies will be subject to usual Council budget and decision-making processes. .

Following resolution of the issues that came out of consultation it is attested that the interim planning policy put forward for approval satisfactorily responds to the planning issues identified for Whalley Range/Victoria Street. Furthermore the changes made have now satisfied the requirements of the Council's Highways and Transportations Section.

Summary of Proposed Actions

Issue 1: Local Plan MNC boundaries do not reflect the retail growth potential of the area.

Proposal: Combine and extend the Whalley Range/Victoria Street Neighbourhood Centre policy boundaries.

Issue 2: Implement a suitable approach to deal with development pressures.

Proposal: i. Support retail development which will not have an impact on Blackburn Town centre;

ii. Identify suitable development opportunities:

- Watford Street Industrial Estate
- Victoria Cross Junction
- Empire works and adjacent land
- Apex Mill
- Randal Street

iii. Strengthen links between Whalley Range/Victoria Street and Blackburn town centre; in particular with regards to any redevelopment proposals and parking opportunities along Tontine Street/Regent Street.

Issue 3: Need for design guidance to deal with development proposals.

Proposal: Establish design principles including in relation to glazing on upper floors, architectural features, signs / fascias.

Issue 4: Balance between retail and non retail uses, and upper floor uses.

Proposal: i. Establish primary and secondary retail frontages.
ii. Support commercial uses on upper floors.

Issue 5: Saved Local Plan policy for MNCs does not refer to the current Use Classes Order

Proposal: Provide an updated Policy referring to current Use Classes Order.