

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 8 June 2010
title: Review of Citizens' Charter
submitted by: Chief Executive
principal author: Becky Midgley – Assistant Policy & Performance Officer

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval to the update of the Citizens' Charter.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions: The Citizens' Charter outlines all of the services provided by the Council, and more importantly, it informs citizens of the standards that they can expect from each service provided.
- Community Objectives: This document ensures accountability and so contributes to the overarching ambition 'to be a well-managed council providing efficient services'.
- Corporate Priorities:
- Other Considerations:

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council's Citizens' Charter was re-introduced in 2005 at the request of the Chief Executive. The first edition was approved by Policy and Finance committee on 26th July 2005 and was reviewed in 2007, being approved by Policy and Finance committee on 31st July 2007. It was decided that this document should be reviewed on an annual basis.

2.2 This report summarises the changes made to the Charter during the recent update and presents the draft Charter for approval.

3 SUMMARY OF CHANGES

3.1 Members are asked to note that the process has focused on updating the Charter, with only minor amendments made to improve the format of the report. The main focus of the revision has been the updating of the Service Standards to reflect recent changes to service delivery, and to ensure that all standards are measurable (where possible). All amendments to service standards have been highlighted for the purposes of this report, to enable easy identification.

3.2 Key changes to service delivery include the changed enforcement responsibilities for parking, the development of a visitor website to enhance the Council's tourism provision, and an increased focus on providing energy efficiency information and advice to all residents. Furthermore, the time taken to process new claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit has been reduced from 23 days to 13 days.

3.3 Other alterations include a revised foreword to the document from the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, and the provision of updated information relating to the area, such as population figures and house prices. The remaining standards are largely unchanged from the previous document.

4 FUTURE REVISIONS

- 4.1 It is suggested that this document continues to be reviewed but on a two-yearly basis in order to ensure that it provides up-to-date information on all of our services, and more importantly, on the standards that our customers can expect. Therefore the next review of this document will be due in July 2012.

5 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Council's Citizens' Charter has been updated to reflect the changes to services that have occurred over the last year, and also to the standards that our customers can expect from these services.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

- Resources: (i) Financial – None. (ii) Staff – None.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal: None
- Political: None
- Reputation: The Citizens' Charter provides information about what services the Council provides, and what standards these services operate to. It ensures accountability in the provision of services to all of our customers.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that Committee approve the proposed amendments to the Council's Citizens' Charter 2010.

Becky Midgley
Assistant Policy & Performance Officer

For further information please ask for Becky Midgley, Assistant Policy & Performance Officer, tel 01200 414592

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FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This Charter sets out the standards by which Ribble Valley Borough Council delivers its services to people in the Ribble Valley.

The Council prides itself on the services it provides to the residents, workers and visitors of the Ribble Valley. In the Council's Corporate Performance Assessment report in 2008, the Audit Commission stated that 'public satisfaction with the Council and its services is high'. We are working hard to maintain this reputation, and we constantly strive to achieve high standards across all of our services.

This Charter lists the Service Standards for each area of service delivery. Please feel free to contact us if you feel that the Council is not providing a particular service to the given standard (contact details are provided at the back of this document).

Thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ranson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Michael Ranson - Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. H. Scott". The signature is written in a simple, blocky style.

Marshal Scott – Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

This is Ribble Valley Borough Council's fifth Citizens' Charter.

Our Mission Statement and Vision

The Council's MISSION STATEMENT which was adopted in 1988, and last revised in 2006, states:

“The Council will provide high quality, affordable and responsive public services that develop the social and economic well-being of the Borough whilst safeguarding the rural nature of the area”

Our VISION, which is shared with the Local Strategic Partnership, remains constant. By no later than 2016 we aim to ensure that Ribble Valley will be:

“An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.”

We believe that this VISION reflects our shared aim for the Borough, which has the highest quality of environment for those who live here and those who visit the area. It recognises that people must have a high quality of life, that suitable homes are available to meet their diverse needs and that they should be safe and feel safe. People should also be able to access the best services without having to travel long distances to receive them.

This Vision will help us achieve what is expected of a modern, progressive, local authority over the next three years to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Ribble Valley.

Core Values

In pursuing our priority actions, the Council will continue to deliver the services people want in a fair and consistent manner. Our core values guide and influence our actions as we continuously improve the services we deliver, and so we feel it is important that we explain exactly what our values are. We will:

- Lead the community
- Strive to achieve excellence
- Ensure that access to services is available to all
- Treat everyone equally
- Respect all individuals and their views
- Appreciate and invest in our staff

A Plan For The Future

The three Ambitions which the Council will achieve for our communities over the next three years are:

- To help make people's lives SAFER AND HEALTHIER
 - especially to ensure that we have safe and trouble-free communities with healthy lifestyles

- To PROTECT AND ENHANCE the existing ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY of our area
 - especially to protect the natural and built environment and ensure that we provide clean streets and open spaces
- To MATCH the SUPPLY OF HOMES in our area with the IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEED
 - especially to ensure that there are sufficient affordable homes for local people who are in need

As we work to meet these ambitions, we also recognise the importance of securing a diverse, sustainable economic base for the Borough, and being a well-managed Council underlies all of our Ambitions.

Our Area

The Locality

Ribble Valley is in the county of Lancashire bordering neighbouring councils in East Lancashire, Craven District Council in North Yorkshire, South Ribble, Preston, Wyre and Lancaster Borough Councils. The administrative centre for the district is the historic market town of Clitheroe. The industrial and commercial centre for the west of the borough is the town of Longridge. The remaining area is mainly rural, ranging from large villages to small hamlets. Some settlements are accessible along the A59 corridor; others are more remote from services and public transport. Along with ancient woodland, biological heritage sites, conservation areas and sites of special scientific interest, two thirds of Ribble Valley is designated as part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Population and Demographics

According to the 2001 census, the population of the district is 53,960 (although it is now estimated at 58,500 – ONS 2008 mid-year projection), living in 24,707 households (March 2010), of which approximately 25% are in the town of Clitheroe. Ribble Valley has the largest geographical area within Lancashire, covering 226 square miles (583 square kilometres), but the smallest population. Sparsity of population is, therefore, a key feature – on average 100 people per square kilometre, compared with 380 nationally. There has been an estimated increase of 8.4% in the overall population of the district since 2001, and it is predicted to rise by 10.4% over the next 10 years.

A relatively small proportion of the population (less than 2%) is from ethnic minority backgrounds. The resident population is relatively old, with a greater than average number of residents over the age of 65 (over 20% compared with a national average of 18%) and consequently a below average number of young people aged 24 and under. Population projections suggest that this imbalance will increase in future.

Deprivation and the Local Economy

Ribble Valley is a relatively affluent area and is ranked 302 out of 354 in the 2007 indices of deprivation for local authority areas in England (with one being the most disadvantaged). No wards figure in the 25% most deprived, but 6 wards do figure within the worst 10% of all English wards under the Access to Services Index, and 1 ward is ranked in the worst 10% of all English wards under the Living Environment Index. However, 13 wards are ranked in the best 5% of all English wards under the Crime Index, with a further 6 in the top 5% for Income, 4 in the top 5% for education, 2 in the top 5% for Living Environment, and 1 in the top 5% under Access to Services. In addition, 8 wards were ranked in the top 5% of all English wards for Income deprivation Affecting Children, and 5 wards were ranked in the top 5% for Income Deprivation Affecting Older People.

Unemployment is well below the national and regional averages and the lowest in the North West (at 3.6% compared with the national average of 6.2%). Earnings are above the national average. However, this masks the structural threat to the area's employment opportunities: the type of jobs available (low skill jobs in declining sectors) and their relatively low pay. Given the rural nature of the area, it is not surprising that agriculture and tourism are important employers. However, recent years have seen major restructuring, within the agricultural/land-based sector in particular. The tourism sector accounts for over 10% of employment, and the total spent by tourists in Ribble Valley in 2008 was in excess of £106million. Additionally there are estimated to be around 2,900 jobs in tourism-related businesses. One of the largest employment sectors in Ribble Valley is manufacturing, which accounts for 27.1% of employment within the borough, and is represented by major national and multi-national companies such as Castle Cement, Johnson Matthey, and BAe Systems. The relatively small number of large employers is complemented by an above average presence of small companies employing 1-4 employees.

A survey undertaken in 2001 showed that Ribble Valley has the second most skilled population in the country after the City of London. However, the survey masks the fact that many of these well-qualified people in high-earning, senior positions commute daily out of the borough, and live in the area because of the high quality environment and the quality of life it offers. This has had the effect of forcing up the price of houses within the borough, putting them well out of the reach of young people/first time buyers. The mean house price in Ribble Valley for the final quarter of 2009 was £223,318 with a lower quartile house price of £135,000 for the same time period.

In terms of housing tenure, 81.2% of dwellings are owner occupied, 11.2 % are privately rented and 7.6% are public sector rented. There are currently approximately 322 long-term vacant dwellings (i.e. those that have been empty for 6 months or more), a figure that we are taking action to reduce. The Council transferred its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord in April 2008.

Financial Context

For 2009/10 the Council set a General Fund budget of £8.2m. This included modest growth of £225,050, the main item being £180,040 towards the additional operating costs of the Clitheroe Castle Museum. Furthermore, £20,000 was included for the cost of the reintroduction of four modern apprentice posts. The Council received £3.9m (Formula Grant) in 2009/10 from the Government to support our revenue expenditure. The net spend per head of population for 2009/10 is £140.65. The Band D Council Tax for 2009/10 was set at £137.26 (an increase of 2.9% on the previous year, still one of the lowest in Lancashire.)

A five year Capital Programme for years 2006 to 2011 was approved, totalling £10.2m. Expenditure is planned for 2009/10 amounting to £108,500, which comprises £68,500 to replace the CCTV data storage/voice recording system, and £40,000 for the regeneration of Clitheroe town centre.

Political Structure, Management and Human Resources

Ribble Valley Borough Council has 40 councillors. There are 29 conservatives, 10 liberal democrats and 1 independent. The Council is a '4th option' local authority and operates a committee system. There are 6 service committees, an Overview and Scrutiny committee, an Accounts and Audit committee and a Standards committee. There is also a Parish Council Liaison committee. The Standards committee meets 3 times per year, the Accounts and Audit committee and the Licensing committee each meet 4 times per year, and the other committee meetings and the Full Council meeting are held 6 times per year. There is also a cross-party budget-working group, which advises the Council on budget preparation. The Council employs 270 staff, and services are delivered by 4 departments:

- Chief Executive, responsible for corporate services, legal services, human resources, member services, health and safety, and strategic housing services

- Development, responsible for environmental health, forward planning (including regeneration and countryside), and development and building control
- Community Services, responsible for street scene services (including engineering, parking, CCTV, grounds maintenance, waste management and street cleansing), and community development (including crime and disorder, culture, recreation and tourism)
- Resources, which includes ICT, finance, revenues and benefits

The Chief Executive and the three departmental directors form the Corporate Management Team, which meets weekly.

Partnerships

We work with a wide range of partners in order to achieve our priorities. As a relatively small authority, it is important that we continue to punch above our weight, and we are very proactive in this respect, working in partnership to lead on a wide range of issues on behalf of others in the region and sub-region. Our partnerships are also challenging from a geographical perspective as a result of the size and complexity of the county.

We have developed innovative partnerships more locally with Lancashire County Council (LCC), with neighbouring authorities, and with other agencies, on a broad range of issues to progress community leadership, service delivery and crosscutting matters:

- As an active member of the Lancashire Waste Partnership (LWP) since its formation, the Council has helped to lead the environmental revolution that has seen recycling performance increase dramatically across the county
- We are one of seven partners in the County Council-led Lancashire Shared Services Contact Centre (SSCC) project, that has procured a shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that will transform the quality of customer service across the County over the next 12 months
- We were a founder member of the East Lancashire e-Partnership (ELeP), which was recognised nationally for its work on both procurement and electronic forms of consultation. We are now part of the Lancashire-wide Procurement Hub and a member of the East Lancashire Collaborative Research and Consultation Service (CRACS).
- We play a key role in the Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership and its themed groups
- The Council is involved in the Community Safety Partnership on a range of activities to reduce crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, and to encourage community engagement to achieve this reduction
- The Pennine Lancashire Multi-Area Agreement (MAA) includes Ribble Valley, the neighbouring five East Lancashire councils, and the Lancashire County Council. The MAA provides a framework for ongoing strategic collaboration between the 6 local authorities in key areas where a sub-regional approach makes sense. This is 1 of only 13 partnerships throughout the country which has recently been supported by the Government's Department for Communities and Local Government

We also recognise that, as a small district council, our capacity is limited and others are sometimes better placed than ourselves to meet the needs of our local communities. We therefore work with a wide range of organisations to build capacity and deliver services, including the voluntary and community sector and local communities themselves.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Ribble Valley Borough Council provides services for over 58,000 residents, 3,095 VAT registered businesses, and for the thousands of visitors to the area. The main services we provide are:

- emptying the bins
- kerbside collection of recyclable materials
- local recycling centres
- cleaning the streets
- managing CCTV systems in Clitheroe and Whalley
- maintenance of parks, open spaces, Ribblesdale Pool and sports facilities
- support to town and parish councils
- grants to sporting and voluntary groups
- supporting the arts and encouraging tourism in our area
- collecting council tax and business rates
- assessing and paying benefit claims
- developing long term plans for the Ribble Valley
- determining planning and building regulation applications
- cemetery services, including a woodland burial area
- public toilets
- enforcing food safety and health and safety standards
- controlling fly tipping, graffiti and dog fouling
- pest control and dealing with stray dogs
- licensing of taxis, food premises, pubs and clubs, street traders and public entertainment
- making sure that everyone can vote if they are entitled to do so
- meeting the identified housing needs across the Borough
- providing local land charge searches and maintenance of the local land charge register
- enforcing off-street car parking regulations
- provision of Clitheroe Market
- provision of emergency planning guidance and advice to local businesses and residents

STATISTICS



We collect refuse from **OVER 24,500** domestic properties every week

We dealt with **178** complaints relating to dog fouling, **83** complaints about noise from barking, **26** dangerous dogs and **29** stray dogs in 2009/10

Our Revenues section collects **OVER £31million** in Council Tax and **£12million** in Business Rates, and our Benefits section pays out **£5.7million** in Housing Benefit and **£2.2million** in Council Tax Benefit annually

We inspected **283** **FOOD PREMISES** in 2009/10 – **88%** of our programme for the year



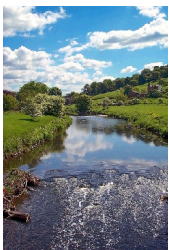
We provide and maintain **81** **DOG WASTE BINS** within the borough

We answered **OVER 63,000** **TELEPHONE CALLS** in our contact centre in 2009/10

There were **OVER 142,000** **VISITS** to Ribblesdale Swimming Pool and **ALMOST 8,000** **USERS** of Longridge Civic Hall Gym in 2009/10



We license **53** **TAXIS** and **OVER 100** **PRIVATE HIRE CARS**



Our Tourist Information Centre dealt with **OVER 36,000** **VISITORS** AND **ENQUIRIES** in 2009/10

We deal with **OVER 1,800** **BUILDING REGULATION APPLICATIONS** every year

We processed **1,984** **LOCAL LAND CHARGE SEARCHES** in 2009/10



We determined **OVER 800** **PLANNING APPLICATIONS** in 2009/10

SERVICE STANDARDS

Emptying the bins

We will:

- Collect household waste from domestic properties on a weekly basis
- Provide an assisted collection service to residents subject to their personal circumstances
- Collect, free of charge, and within 10 working days of being asked, any bulky items of household waste such as settees, tables, beds etc, but excluding any waste arising from building or property renovation works
- Empty all litter bins at least once a week, with those in busy areas being emptied more frequently
- Empty all dog waste bins at least once a week, with those used heavily being emptied more frequently
- Collect, on request, trade waste from commercial properties on a weekly basis at charges set annually by the Council



Kerbside collection of recyclables

We will:



- Collect mixed, dry recyclables (glass, plastic bottles and cans) from domestic properties on an alternate weekly basis
- Collect garden waste suitable for composting on an alternate weekly basis
- Collect waste paper from domestic properties on a fortnightly basis

Local recycling centres

We will:

- Empty the containers on the local recycling centres as needed



Cleaning the streets

We will:

- Litter-pick the streets in the town centre of Clitheroe and Longridge on a daily basis
- Mechanically sweep the streets in town centres and high density residential areas on a 6-weekly cycle
- Mechanically sweep all other streets and main roads on a 13 week cycle
- Remove fly tipped waste and large accumulations of litter within 2 working days of being notified
- Prosecute people who fly-tip where there is sufficient evidence to do so

Public conveniences

We will:

- Clean all of our public conveniences on a daily basis



Parking enforcement

We will:

- Carry out enforcement of pay and display car parks on a daily basis

Managing CCTV systems in Clitheroe and Whalley



We will:

- Monitor the camera system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year
- Use the information gained to help the Police in the execution of their duties as requested

Parks and open spaces

We will:

- Cut the grass in our parks and open spaces regularly
- Maintain children's play areas so they are safe to use



Ribblesdale Pool and sports facilities



We will:

- Consult with those who use our facilities and sports development programmes, on a 6 monthly basis, in order to identify service improvements
- Operate a cleaning programme in our centres which ensures good levels of cleanliness at all times
- Provide secure and clean changing facilities for all of our customers
- Maintain or improve current satisfaction levels across all areas of the service
- Achieve our target of increasing participation amongst adults by 1% each year

Grants to sporting and voluntary groups

We will:

- Provide recreational, cultural and sports excellence grants to help both individuals, organisations and communities with the costs of training and competing

Supporting the arts

We will:

- Organise at least 3, public, arts workshops each year
- Encourage arts activity and appreciation throughout the borough via our education scheme, providing at least 4 workshops per year to local schools
- Arrange a minimum of 8 exhibitions each year at the Platform Gallery
- Meet the annual targets and conditions placed on us within key partnerships in order to ensure funding for all schemes



Encouraging tourism in our area



We will:

- Operate a local Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at least 6 days a week, providing accommodation, attraction and theatre booking services for visitors and local residents
- Ensure that our annual Visitor Britain/NWDA VIC inspection grade will be the same or higher than the previous year, guaranteeing customer satisfaction across all aspects of our service
- Produce an annual visitor and accommodation guide to raise awareness of the Ribble Valley area and all it has to offer

- Conduct annual marketing and promotional activity, which includes both local and national campaigns
- Continue to work in partnership with Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board to ensure effective promotion of the area at both a regional and national level
- Develop and maintain a visitor website encouraging further exploration of the district, with up-to-date information on events, products and activities
- Work closely with Ribble Valley Tourism Association to help to promote the area and to provide support to local tourism providers

Collecting council tax and business rates

We will:

- Process applications for Council Tax exemptions and discounts within 20 days
- Process applications for Business Rate exemptions and discounts within 7 days
- Process applications for Business Rate relief within 7 days
- Apply all changes in circumstances within 7 days
- Issue new and amended bills within 4 days of processing a change

Assessing and paying benefit claims

We will:

- Process all changes in circumstances and new claims within 13 days
- Process all appeals within 4 weeks

Determining Building Regulation applications

We will:

- Offer pre-submission advice on means of escape in case of fire and access/facilities for the disabled, identifying problem areas if plans do not comply with regulations
- Review and suggest minor amendments to plans
- Provide a 24 hour answering service, with enquiries to be dealt with on the next working day
- Acknowledge all building regulations applications within 4 working days of receipt
- Issue a decision on applications within 5 weeks of acceptance, or 8 weeks where agreed
- Respond to all reports of dangerous buildings and structures within 24 hours, and ensure owners make them safe. In appropriate cases, we will authorise work to remove dangerous conditions and take necessary follow up action
- Respond to building notice submissions within 4 working days of starting work
- Guarantee a same day response to all requests for an inspection received before 10:00am



- Accept telephone calls asking for an inspection of work, except for commencement and completion stages
- Issue a completion certificate within 7 days of a satisfactory completion, on request

Determining planning applications

We will:

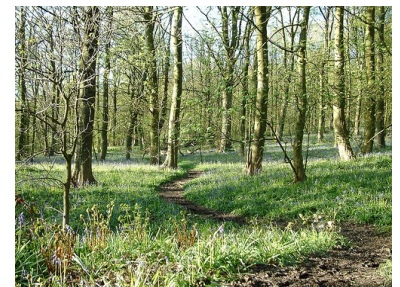
- Advertise appropriate planning applications in the local newspapers within 2 weeks of registration
- Inform applicants and objectors about the progress of planning applications when requested, and aim to make details available on our website
- Provide a duty planning officer to give planning advice to the general public without the need for an appointment
- Acknowledge all comments on planning applications within 48 hours of receipt
- Ensure parish councils receive copies of all planning applications within their parish
- Publicise planning applications using national guidelines as a minimum standard
- Send out decision notices within 3 working days after the relevant Planning and Development Committee
- Reply to and investigate enforcement complaints within 3 working days and continue to keep the complainant informed
- Deal with requests for copy decision notices within one week of receipt of payment



Development planning, regeneration, and countryside management

We will:

- Acknowledge enquiries and correspondence, as appropriate, within 48 hours of receipt
- Provide a range of opportunities to involve residents and interest groups in the formulation of planning policy
- Respond to requests for advice on planning policy within 10 working days
- Respond to all land use enquiries within 5 working days of their receipt and deal with enquiries about development plans, population and housing statistics in 10 working days
- Respond to all non-emergency countryside and tree management enquiries within 10 working days
- Send an initial response to 'high hedge' complaints within 3 working days
- Respond to all regeneration and economic development enquiries within 10 working days



Cemetery services - including the woodland burial area



We will:

- Provide a sympathetic and confidential service for the bereaved, offering the option of woodland burial
 - Carry out burials according to statutory requirements
 - Take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and welfare of visitors to the cemetery
 - Adopt environmentally-sensitive practices where possible
- Offer the chance to buy a limited number of commemorative trees in the cemetery arboretum
 - Offer guidance on memorials allowed at the cemetery and give sympathetic consideration to individual requests
 - Maintain the grounds to a high standard
 - Oversee the upkeep of 'closed' churchyards which are our responsibility

Enforcing food safety, licensed premise, and health and safety standards

We will:

- Periodically monitor the 800 food premises in the borough according to the degree of risk
- Respond to public complaints about poor food hygiene practices or unfit food within 2 working days
- Investigate outbreaks of food borne disease immediately to identify possible cause and prevent further spread
- Periodically assess and monitor the 1,100 work places within the borough according to the degree of risk for health and safety in the workplace
- Respond immediately to notified major accidents reported in the workplace
- Respond to complaints relating to health and safety in the workplace within 2 working days
- Periodically assess and regulate 2,500 premises and employees in relation to smoke-free workplace legislation
- Periodically assess and monitor the 300 'alcohol' licensed premises within the borough according to the degree of risk
- Respond to complaints relating to licensed premises within 2 working days



Environmental protection and pollution prevention

We will:

- Respond to complaints which have an environmental health significance within 2 working days
- Respond to domestic environmental health complaints within 2 working days
- Regulate premises and processes registered with, permitted, or licensed by the Council, consistent with the degree of risk
- Periodically assess other regulatory bodies and local businesses in an effort to minimise emissions and impact on the environment and the local community
- Periodically assess and monitor local air quality, where necessary, in line with government guidance

Controlling graffiti and illegal tipping



We will:

- Remove graffiti from our buildings and street furniture within 5 working days of notification
- Take action to identify and prosecute all fly tipping offenders

Pest Control and dealing with stray dogs

We will:

- Respond to Pest Control complaints (infestations of rats, mice and other pests of public health significance) within 2 working days
- Respond to requests for Dog Warden services within 2 working days
- Make arrangements for the seizure and acceptance of stray dogs in accordance with national guidance, the dogs then being held for a maximum of 7 days (to be returned to owner on payment of a fee) prior to disposal
- Seek to minimise dog fouling throughout the borough by undertaking regular daytime, weekend and 'out of hours' enforcement patrols
- Promote responsible dog ownership through the production of educational literature, increasing awareness through delivering presentations to schools and supporting national campaigns and initiatives

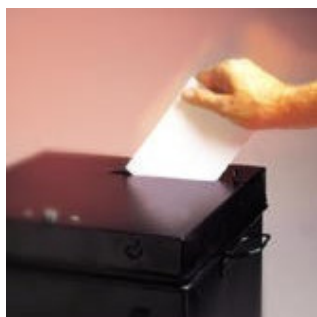


Licensing hackney and private hire vehicles, and also persons and premises, under the Licensing Act 2003 and gambling Act 2005

We will:

- Enforce the conditions under which hackney and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators are licensed on a regular basis
- Process applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 in accordance with the timescales laid down by the Act

Making sure that everyone can vote if they are entitled to do so



We will:

- Carry out an annual canvass for the register of electors
- Encourage people to apply under the rolling registration provisions when they move into the area
- Advertise the availability of postal and proxy votes at election time

Meeting the identified housing need across the Borough

We will:

- Aim to deliver 50 units of affordable housing across the Borough each year
- **Ensure any affordable housing developments meet the identified housing need in that parish**
- Provide grant assistance to landlords as requested to ensure affordable private rented properties are available
- Maintain an affordable housing register to ensure households are aware of any new affordable developments
- Maintain housing needs information for each parish in the Borough, which is no more than 3 years old
- Provide housing advice to all households at risk of becoming homeless and aim to prevent homelessness
- Provide disabled facilities grants to enable households to remain in their own home and enjoy reasonable use of their property
- Offer an equity release product to assist homeowners to maintain their property



- Work in partnership with the Council's planning department to maximise the number of affordable units on any new housing development
- Aim to bring 20 empty properties back into use each year
- Aim to assist all households improve the energy efficiency of their property and alleviate fuel poverty in the borough
- Encourage the use of renewable energy in the borough

Local land charge searches and maintenance of local land charge register

We will:

- Aim to process standard searches within 10 working days and personal searches promptly
- Receive searches electronically in addition to postal applications



Personnel Services

We will:

- Send out job application forms within 2 working days of a request
- Respond to all applications, whether successful or not, within 7 working days of the appointment being made

Payment of creditors

We will:

- Pay all of our undisputed invoices for commercial goods and services within 30 days of receiving the invoice or within the agreed payment terms

Committee Services

We will:

- Ensure that agendas for all committee meetings will be available on our website at least 5 working days before the meeting
- Publicise minutes of all committee meetings on our website within 7 working days of the meeting being held



Dealing with public enquiries

We will:

- Process Freedom of Information Act requests for information within 20 working days
- Aim to answer all telephone calls to our Contact Centre within 20 seconds; all other telephone calls within 10 seconds

- Reply to, or acknowledge, all letters within 5 working days
- Ensure that all personal callers will not have to wait more than 5 minutes to be seen

Clitheroe Market



We will:

- Provide a vibrant and balanced general retail market 3 days per week, and a flea/collector's market 1 day per week
- Encourage and promote the supply of local produce
- Ensure that our market is maintained to a high standard and cleaned after each market day
- Recover and recycle cardboard arising from the market

Emergency planning

We will:

- Co-ordinate and share information with appropriate national, regional and local agencies, utilities and organisations, to ensure an effective and integrated response
- Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency planning
- Put in place appropriate emergency plans
- Co-ordinate the authority's Business Continuity Management arrangements as necessary
- Make relevant information available to the public about civil protection matters as necessary
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management
- Actively encourage organisers of significant 'outdoor' events to be safe, considerate and successful

COMPLAINTS

The complaints procedure is aimed at making it easier to complain, and also to help provide better services. It is not intended to cover requests for services or information, or to deal with matters that have their own legal remedy, for example, housing benefit appeals. If you are unhappy with the service you receive, please contact the appropriate department, or the Chief Executive, using the contact details given below.

We will:

- Respond to all complaints made in person, by telephone, by letter, by email or via your councillor
- Provide a full written response within 10 working days
- If you remain unhappy following our response to your original complaint, we may refer you to a Complaints Appeal Panel to review your case. Alternatively, the authority reserves the right to direct the complainant to the Local Government Ombudsman

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED A SERVICE FROM US WHICH DOES NOT REACH OUR STANDARDS

- **Write to:**

The Chief Executive
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA



01200 425111



01200 414488



www.ribblevalley.gov.uk



contact@ribblevalley.gov.uk

- **Office opening hours:** Monday – Friday 8:45am – 5:00pm
- **Reception facilities are found on:**

Level B

General Enquiries

- Cashiers Desk
- Council Tax
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits
- Tourist Information Centre
- Three Stream Waste Collection enquiries

Level C Community, Corporate and Legal Services

- Strategic Housing
- Business Waste Collection enquiries
- Licensing
- Land Charges
- Elections and Electoral Registration
- Community Safety
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation
- Arts and Heritage
- Street Scene
- Corporate Services
- Forward Planning and Regeneration

Level D Development Services

- Development Control
- Building Control
- Environmental Health

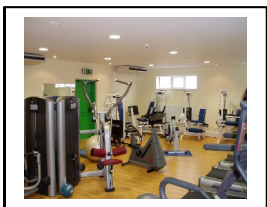
• **Out of hours services:**

The Council operates an out-of-hours service to deal with emergencies. The number to ring is: 01200 444448

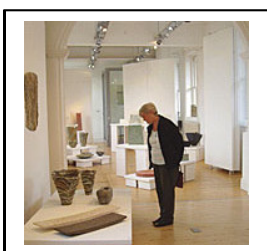
• **The Council's other facilities are:**



- Ribblesdale Pool - Edisford Road, Clitheroe
☎ 01200 424825



- Freedom Fitness Gym – Civic Hall, Calder Avenue, Longridge
☎ 01772 786669



- Platform Gallery - Station Road, Clitheroe
☎ 01200 443071



**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME
TO READ OUR CHARTER**

Let us know what you think

There may well be issues that concern you that we have not covered in detail in our Charter. These may be addressed in one of our related policy or strategy documents. These are available on our website, or via our Corporate Services Unit. Please contact the Corporate Services Unit on 01200 414421, and we will ensure that your queries are answered. The Council is very interested to hear your views/comments on any of its services.

This document is available in **large print** and other formats on request. Please contact the Corporate Services Unit on the above number if this is required.



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