

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: THURSDAY, 15 JULY 2010
title: CORE STRATEGY
submitted by: STEWART BAILEY - DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
principal author: COLIN HIRST- FORWARD PLANNING AND REGENERATION MANAGER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To agree the Regulation 25 stage Core Strategy consultation.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The Core Strategy is the central strategy of the Local Development Framework. It will help in the delivery of housing, employment and the protection and enhancement of the environment, ultimately presenting the delivery strategy for implementing the vision for the Ribble Valley for the next 15 years.
- Community Objectives – As a tool for delivering spatial policy, it identifies how a range of issues relating to the objectives of a sustainable economy, thriving market towns and housing provision will be addressed through the planning system.
- Corporate Priorities - The Core Strategy is the central document of the LDF and sets the overall vision and approach to future planning policy, which will aid performance and consistency.
- Other Considerations – The Council has a duty to prepare spatial policy under the Local Development Framework system.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The current approach to development plans introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to develop a new suite of documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF) that will replace the adopted Districtwide Local Plan. The policies within the LDF must be informed by a strong, robust evidence base and therefore over the past few years, Officers have been working on creating the LDF baseline. Work continues on keeping this up to date however the central document of the LDF, the Core Strategy, has now been formulated from this baseline.

2.2 Members will recall the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Strategy that took place between October and December 2007, which received a high level of positive public response. This was the first stage in formulating the Core Strategy, however in 2008, Government Regulations were amended relating to how the LDF (and therefore the Core Strategy) should be produced. As a result, this Issues and Options stage was abolished and instead Local Planning Authorities must produce a 'draft', (regulation 25 stage) Core Strategy for consultation. The document attached at Appendix 1 is the proposed Core Strategy consultation document.

3. THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS

- 3.1 This consultation is the first stage of the amended document production process. As well as setting out the context of the strategy it is the key stage in forming the development strategy for the area from which subsequent proposals will follow. It presents three potential development strategy options. An aim of the consultation is to highlight which of the three options should be taken forward to the next stage of the process as the chosen development strategy.
- 3.2 A six-week public consultation will be undertaken. Following this, testing of the sustainability of the Core Strategy options will take place and then the preferred development strategy option will be taken forward in the next stage when there will be a further round of consultation.
- 3.3 Once the Council has tested and finalised its approach the Submission stage, which will involve the formal submission of the Core Strategy to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The Core Strategy will then be subject to an independent Examination in Public (EiP). Subject to the Inspectors report the Core Strategy will then be adopted. The Districtwide Local Plan will continue to be used as the adopted Development Plan for the borough, against which planning applications will be determined. Any policies superseded by the submission stage Core Strategy will be made clear in a schedule incorporated into the strategy as appropriate.
- 3.4 As Members are aware, the recent change in Government has implications on the current approach to planning policy formulation. The abolition of the Regional Strategy, which formed part of the development plan, has important implications in terms of determining planning applications and forming policy. This has given rise to a number of issues to address in the preparation of the consultation document, hence its late availability. However, the approach taken is to continue making progress, taking account of the existing Regional evidence base.
- 3.5 Members attention is also drawn to the proposed inclusion of generic development management policies within the delivery section of the document. This has arisen from the changes to Regional Strategy and the need to have in place policies that will enable the Core Strategy to be delivered. The specific policies are being drawn up in the light of national policy changes but to avoid delay in the process will be presented to the August committee for consideration and if agreed incorporation into the consultation document. A consolidated consultation exercise is then programmed to commence at the end of August.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation period will be for a six-week period with key stakeholders and other interested parties. As a statutory stage it will follow the prescribed regulations. The Core Strategy report will be available on the Councils website along with a comments form for making representations, and copies will also be made available at Planning reception at level D of the Council Offices and at Clitheroe, Mellor, Whalley, Read, Chatburn and Longridge libraries during normal opening hours. Local advertisements will be placed in newspapers and posters distributed across the Parishes. Parish Clerks will be asked to hold reference copies to make available on loan to local residents.

4.2 As members will note the strategy includes a number of options for the distribution of development with illustrative diagrams showing areas of search. Other areas of search may be identified in the course of the consultation and ongoing work. The option of growth points through large site release (option 3) does not identify areas of search although indicative information is contained in the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment). If the consultation shows support for option 3 then it is likely that a further consultation round on that option would be required, identifying site options.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Financial implications relating to the costs of the public consultation, are contained within existing budgets.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Core Strategy is a statutory requirement of the LDF. It is the central document of the LDF and contains future planning policy considerations.
- Political – None.
- Reputation – The Council's desire on how to proceed may affect its reputation. Without approval, the Core Strategy would not meet the requirements of legislation.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Agree the consultation document be published for a statutory 6 week consultation the outcome of which be reported back to members

6.2 Authorise the Director of Development Services to prepare the necessary material for the consultation and to undertake any amendments for technical accuracy as required

6.3 Note the intention at the next committee meeting to consider proposed Development Management policies for inclusion in the consultation Core Strategy document.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning, www.communities.gov.uk
Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503.