

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011  
title: CLITHEROE TOWN TEAM UPDATE  
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
principal author: CRAIG MATTHEWS – RURAL REGENERATION OFFICER

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive an update on the Clitheroe Town Team and activities in connection with The Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions - In addition to Ribble Valley Borough Council striving to meet its three ambitions, it also recognises the importance of securing a diverse, sustainable economic base for the Borough. The work of the regeneration section seeks to promote this.
- Community Objectives – The issues highlighted in this report will contribute to objectives of a sustainable economy and thriving market towns.
- Corporate Priorities - Delivery of services to all
- Other Considerations - None

### 2 INFORMATION

#### 2.1 Background

2.1.1 The Clitheroe Town Team was formed following approval of the Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan by the RVBC Planning & Development Committee on 17 June 2010 to support the promotion and revitalisation of the Town Centre, helping it to fulfil its potential as an attractive, vibrant and successful location. Now 12 months on, representatives of the original consultation/steering group during the development of the Masterplan have been working as a committed partnership of individuals through the Town Team approach, identifying actions and giving direction to enable the priority and early individual projects to be driven forward towards the overall vision to maintain and enhance the town centres' environmental and economic vitality.

2.1.2 Ribble Valley Borough Council, Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership and Lancashire County Council as well as local businesses and the community such as Clitheroe Chamber of Trade and Clitheroe Civic Society bring together key delivery skills – such as economic development, property, design and project management, as well as developing links with stakeholders outside of the group, including key landowners, developers and businesses that can assist in the delivery, monitoring, reviewing and development of the plan. A copy of the Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan has been circulated to members along with this report and work is now progressing on a number of individual projects to help contribute to its wider aims.

## 2.2 Information

- 2.2.1 Whilst the Masterplan proposals overall aim to see improvements to key sites, such as pedestrian and vehicle routes as well as historic and green spaces to enhance the overall appeal and experience for people in and around the Town Centre, the document detailed a number of specific projects along with the actual formation of a Town Team described as 'Early Win' projects.
- 2.2.2 In revitalising the areas within the Masterplan, it is considered important to identify these small, but significant projects that are achievable in the short term with a view to long term changes when budgets and resources allow. Amongst these early wins that have or are being implemented, activities such as events, marketing and promotion, environmental assessments and small scale improvements are focussed that act as an important way to demonstrate commitment to Clitheroe Town Centre and the aspirations within the Masterplan.
- 2.2.3 The Clitheroe Fine Food and Craft Street Market, which attracted thousands of visitors in August 2010, was one such event as part of the early wins and following on from its success a new Clitheroe Food Festival is being staged on Saturday 13 August 2011 to showcase the best of Ribbles Valley and Lancashire food and drink producers. This will be a family focused event concentrated around the Market area and Castle Street, and will include a food and drink producers market, country market, live cookery demonstrations by local and top named chefs, children's food oriented activities, historical displays and entertainment. Additionally, this will take place on the same weekend as the Rock at the Castle and Clitheroe Castle Last Night of the Proms concerts on the Friday and Saturday evenings either side, and by coordinating events in this manner provides the additional potential to maximise visitor numbers and encourage overnight stays in the area, supporting another key aim of the Masterplan.
- 2.2.4 Complimenting this, a number of marketing, promotion and branding initiatives are being developed to emphasize Clitheroe's identity. Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board are now branding Clitheroe as 'Lancashire's Food Town' and increasing promotion and tourism activities in this area can trigger wider benefits for future investment and town centre developments. The food town accolade now provides a theme to further encapsulate the brand in addition to the landscape, heritage and independent shopping aspects.
- 2.2.5 Improving the connection between the town centre and the market area is also seen as a focus for this work in the short term and RVBC funding is enabling additional environmental enhancements, planting and landscaping this year leading to the longer term plans for the market in the form of a Development Brief for the Markets Area - a priority project in progress based on the development and design principles agreed through the masterplanning process. A capital scheme to facilitate this was approved and is within the current programme.
- 2.2.6 As well as the market area, further key sites have been identified for their development and enhancement opportunities for a variety of uses such as additional potential for retail, office and residential uses. Lowergate, for example, contains a number of empty and underused properties currently undergoing improvements to accommodate small retail or office functions, with similar examples along the fringe of the town and less used routes and spaces, this can enrich the existing variety of uses in the town centre area.
- 2.2.7 A number of zones to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly are being proposed that will improve safety and enhance the experience for people walking around the town's main shopping routes. These streets will interlink the other public

spaces to create a network of focal points and green spaces that guide people around the town. The existing green spaces additionally need to be enhanced with the potential to create new and improved footpaths, play areas for children and families, enhanced landscaping and planting to areas such as gateway entrances to the town centre, castle grounds and other pedestrian routes.

- 2.2.8 The town centre is characterised by roads interlaced with alleyways, courtyards and lanes leading to larger open spaces. Places where people can also stop, either to take a break or stop a while are also important and are also being identified. Various sites throughout the town centre have also been assessed to introduce new planting, improved landscaping and establishing additional trees to increase the overall attractiveness of the area. Improving signage is of primary importance to help orientate visitors in and around the town centre and various designs will be assessed in order to compliment the town's heritage assets.
- 2.2.9 In partnership with Lancashire County Council and Clitheroe Chamber of Trade, funding has been secured as part of the Revitalising Town Centres project to create a town centre website for Clitheroe: [www.visitclitheroe.co.uk](http://www.visitclitheroe.co.uk) Work has begun on the site and is scheduled for launch in August 2011. Alongside this, a new loyalty card scheme to promote shopping in the town centre is in development to be branded as 'Shop Clitheroe'. Clitheroe Chamber of Trade membership continues to grow steadily. Chamber members are regularly updated and involved during the development of the Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan and a number of members are on the Town Team. The continuing growth of the Chamber has also led to stronger partnership working with RVBC in activities to promote visitors.
- 2.2.10 Other Town Team projects that aim to enhance the street scene, environment and heritage assets in the town centre are moving forward also. As well as improving safety for people walking around the town's main shopping routes, areas have been identified where, cost permitting, new planting of trees and additional seating can be established to further enhance the pedestrian experience. Working with Clitheroe Civic Society also, enhancements around and refurbishment of the three medieval town wells to provide improved, publicly accessible and visible interpretation of them is seen as a project that will add to the town's historic attraction and remind local residents and visitors of their significance to the development of the town, focussing on Heald Well at the bottom of Wellgate as a first of such initiatives.
- 2.2.11 Finally, adequate car parking along with traffic flow and speed issues were highlighted as a major issues that needs attention as part of the original masterplan consultation exercise. These areas are being assessed in partnership with Lancashire County Council Highways where these can be improved, and as developments occur, further updates will be made to this committee.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS: -

Clitheroe Town Centre Masterplan & Vision

For further information please ask for Craig Matthews, extension 4531.