

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 26 SEPTEMBER 2013
title: SHLAA – POSITION UPDATE
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide an update on the SHLAA and to confirm actions taken.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – To match the supply of homes in our area with identified housing needs and to progress the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is a 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 15-20 years.
- Community Objectives – As above.
- Corporate Priorities – To be a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer need.
- Other Considerations – None.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The SHLAA report was part of a consolidation report for the Special Planning and Development Committee arranged for the 6th August that drew together the remaining elements of the housing evidence for the Core Strategy. The SHLAA was presented as an appendix to the report.

2.2 The committee report included the updated SHLAA, Viability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal. The report also included the conclusions on matters raised in the housing requirements report from Nathaniel Lichfield and partners and the position in relation to Housing Requirement.

2.3 The updated SHLAA is an extensive report on a complex piece of work produced to a very tight timeframe. It has been prepared as a consultation draft and the committee report clarified that it was likely that the consultation process will highlight a need for fine-tuning, which can be addressed in the final report when further work to amend any detailed matters can be undertaken. The committee report also identified the imminent publication of new government guidance, which may require further consideration.

2.4 The recommendation to committee was that committee supported the publication of the SHLAA as part of the evidence base. As members are aware there was a need to make corrections to the document to correct inconsistencies in the report which would have meant the consultation document having incorrect information. In view of the timetable to meet the needs of the Core Strategy consultation dates the changes were made to enable the correct information to be published. These were treated as

technical/typing corrections to ensure that the correct document was published for consultation. These corrections were not brought to the attention of members at the committee meeting.

3 ROLE OF THE SHLAA

- 3.1 The SHLAA is intended as a tool to assist the Local Planning Authority in delivering housing sites in accord with National Guidance. The Council's first SHLAA was published in 2008 and together with its refresh followed the national guidance in terms of approach. The Council has used the recommended, standard methodology in producing the SHLAA; this lessens the likelihood of the SHLAA itself being tested at the Core Strategy Examination as it is accepted to be sound. Departures from that methodology and guidance would require justification and potential Examination. An up to date SHLAA is part of the key evidence required to support the Core Strategy process.
- 3.2 It is important to note that the Council is clear in its position that the SHLAA provides background evidence of the potential deliverability of land. It identifies potential housing sites but does not represent a statement of Council policy nor does it allocate land or grant planning permission. This is emphasised throughout the publication.
- 3.3 The first role of the SHLAA is to provide an assessment of the extent that housing requirements can be met in the Borough and that the Governments priority of delivering new homes is not constrained by the lack of available land. The SHLAA also enables the Council to assess whether the proposed Development Strategy can be delivered, that is, that there is the potential to meet the Development Strategy in terms of likely housing distribution.
- 3.4 The process of site selection for allocations is a separate process that is subject to several stages including identifying options, testing through consultation the differing options and then selecting the preferred sites. The allocations will be subject to an Examination process where an Inspector will have regard to the evidence, and soundness of the plan and its approach.
- 3.5 The SHLAA process follows a previously tested methodology; all sites are assessed according to that methodology. The publication of the evidence allows comments to be made but is not a process in itself to refine whether sites are to be preferred. Objections to particular sites can be noted for the future site selection process of allocations but would not mean that sites are taken out of the SHLAA study. Comments that identify technical matters or changes in details can be taken account of.

4 ISSUES

- 4.1 Responses to the current consultation will be passed to the Inspector appointed to hold the Examination into the Core Strategy. However they will also be considered as the SHLAA is reviewed and finalised, including assessing the implications of the new guidance that has recently been published as part of that process.
- 4.2 Where responses identify technical issues that need to be addressed the relevant records and schedules can be updated. A report on the consultation responses will also be made to committee as part of that process and responses will be able to inform the future allocations process.

4.3 It is clear that in the circumstances members should have been alerted to the need to correct the text of the report and it is regrettable that this did not occur. The published consultation report did correct the information for the public consultation and as indicated sought to correct a mis-match between pages that had been included in error. To have published the incorrect information would have given rise to potential delays in the Core Strategy process which were to be avoided to meet the Inspectors requirements and to enable the process to progress. The changes ultimately did not amend the agreed methodology which was the basis of the SHLAA assessments. In response to the situation that has arisen however internal processes are to be reviewed to avoid similar situations arising.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – There are no additional resource implications.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – There is considerable interest in the Core Strategy.
- Reputation – None.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

6.1 Note the contents of the report and confirm the corrective action taken in regard to the public consultation.

COLIN HIRST
HEAD OF REGENERATION & HOUSING

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503 or for detailed information on the SHLAA contact Joanne Macholc or Diane Cafferty 01200 425111.