

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 10 APRIL 2014
title: CORE STRATEGY UPDATE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive a progress update on the Core Strategy.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – the Core Strategy is the central strategy of the Local Development Framework (LDF). 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 20 years. As a tool for delivering spatial policy, the Core Strategy 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 LDF system.

2 INFORMATION

2.1 Members will be aware that the Council has been progressing the Core Strategy through its Examination stage since the Council's plan was formally submitted in September 2012 and an Inspector appointed to hold the Examination. On 14 January 2014, the Inspector commenced the formal hearings which sat for 5½ days. The hearings took the form of structured discussion around a published list of matters arising from the Inspector's scrutiny of the plan and relevant representations from the development industry, landowners, local community and private and public sector organisations.

2.2 As a result of the hearings, amendments to wording to provide further clarification and explanation of the Plan explored during the discussions were identified, together with a request from the Inspector for additional information and matters to support his consideration of the Plan in relation to a number of topics. The Inspector indicated on closing the hearings that these matters would need to be drawn together and would also need to be published for public consultation in due course.

2.3 On 31 January 2014, the Inspector issued an interim letter stating his view that the Council needed to make a modification to address his concern following the hearings that the proposed housing requirement was too low, and that the settlement strategy

needed to identify from within the second tier of 'other settlements' those more sustainable settlements where growth could be directed. The Inspector also raised as an issue that the distribution of the adjustment made in the housing distribution model relative to Longridge needed to be focused towards the remaining larger settlements or the more sustainable settlements rather than distributed across the borough.

- 2.4 Work in relation to these matters has been ongoing in conjunction with the Committee's Core Strategy Working Group. The outcome of this work will be presented for consideration by Members most likely at a special meeting of the Planning and Development Committee when the outstanding matters from the hearings can be consolidated and reviewed.
- 2.5 Members have previously received reports relating to the costs of the LDF and within that, the costs of the Core Strategy, as well as receiving updates on relevant budget and specific costs for pieces of work as the process has been undertaken. Given the Council is now moving towards the end of the Examination stage, a cost summary is attached at Appendix A for information. This includes annual costs (table 1) and a breakdown against key stages (table 2).
- 2.6 It should be borne in mind that some costs reflect pieces of work undertaken that are shared across a number of functions and service areas including economic development and strategic housing and will not just be in support of the Core Strategy. Similarly, some staffing costs included the figures will reflect staff who work on other areas than the Core Strategy.
- 2.7 The breakdown in table 2 shows the following three key stages:
 - Start of work to submission
 - Submission to the Inspector's publication of his list of matters to be examined and notice of hearings
 - Notice of hearings to current date
- 2.8 This breakdown provides the figures for the work required to take the Council to the point of submission of the Plan formally to the Secretary of State, which is the start of the Examination period. The second stage reflects the period from formal submission to the point at which the Inspector confirms he is happy to move to the hearing stage within the Examination and the dates and matters to be examined are formally published. This period includes the suspension period when the Inspector asked for updated evidence to be provided. Members will recall that following submission in September 2012, the Inspector wrote in January 2013 confirming to the Council he would suspend the Examination for six months to allow evidence to be updated. He later wrote and confirmed to suspend the Examination to September 2013.
- 2.9 In November 2013 the Inspector published his list of matters and confirmed the dates for the hearings with sitting days to commence on 14 January 2014. The hearings closed formally on 22 January 2014, and the Council is still in the Examination phase.
- 2.10 In response to the Inspector it was indicated that the necessary work following the hearings would be undertaken with a view to enabling Members to consider the proposed modifications by the end of April/early May, with the aim of commencing the

six week consultation stage by the later part of May concluding at the end of June. The Inspector has so far indicated that he is content with that timeframe.

- 2.11 It is anticipated that the responses to the consultation would be passed directly to the Inspector to inform his Examination of the Plan. Whilst it was indicated at the close of the sitting days by the Inspector that matters would be dealt with most likely through the written representations process, it cannot be ruled out that the consultation process may raise matters where the Inspector considers that further hearing days are needed. However, if matters can be dealt with through written procedures and there are no substantive issues going forward, it is possible that the Inspector could issue his report to the Council and conclude the Examination by the end of July at the earliest depending upon his workloads and commitments.
- 2.12 Once the Council has received the report and its findings are favourable, the Council will be able to move into the adoption process. The Council will need to formally consider the Inspector's report, endorse any modifications and following recent legislation changes, consult and then confirm the adoption of the Plan.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Office files.

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503.

REF: CH/EL/P&D/100414

APPENDIX 1

Table 1 – Core Strategy Costs by Key Stage

| Start To Submission Up to 28 Sept 2012 £ | Submission to Notice of Hearing 1st Oct 2012 to 31 Oct 2013 £ | Notice of Hearing to Present 1st Nov 2013 to 28 Mar 2014 £ | Total Cost £ |
|--|---|--|-----------------|
| 1,255.25 | | | 1,255.25 |
| 19,607.49 | | | 19,607.49 |
| 32,082.97 | | | 32,082.97 |
| 33,687.24 | | | 33,687.24 |
| 70,237.36 | | | 70,237.36 |
| 56,481.65 | | | 56,481.65 |
| 34,516.97 | | | 34,516.97 |
| 67,545.61 | | | 67,545.61 |
| 24,940.92 | 25,160.33 | | 50,101.25 |
| | 63,332.39 | 14,518.21 | 77,850.60 |

Table 2 – Core Strategy Costs by Year

| | £ | £ |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 2004/05 | 1,255.25 | |
| 2005/06 | 19,607.49 | |
| 2006/07 | 32,082.97 | |
| 2007/08 | 33,687.24 | |
| 2008/09 | 70,237.36 | |
| 2009/10 | 56,481.65 | |
| 2010/11 | 34,516.97 | |
| 2011/12 | 67,545.61 | |
| 2012/13 | 50,101.25 | |
| 2013/14 | 77,850.60 | |
| Total @ 28 March 2014 | | 443,366.39 |