

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 28 OCTOBER 2014
title: RIBBLE VALLEY COMMUNITY STRATEGY
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: DAVID INGHAM, PARTNERSHIP OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report provides committee with an update on the development of a Community Strategy for Ribble Valley and the delivery of Partnership Priorities

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – The Community Strategy and its associated action plans form the basis of the sense of place and common vision of the communities in the Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities – To be a well managed authority
- Other Considerations – None

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Local Strategic Partnership for Ribble Valley was formed in 2002 and developed its first community plan that year. A new Sustainable Community Strategy was developed through 2007 and published in December 2007. The Partnership Board underwent a restructuring in 2008 to ensure that it was fit for purpose to deliver the objectives of the SCS. The Strategic Partnership Board was stood down in the summer of 2012 and its functions absorbed into Council activities. The Partnership Officer role has continued to deliver against the SCS with work now delivered by two officers on a job share basis. The current SCS finished in 2013.

2.2 Widespread consultation has been undertaken over the last three months with members, communities and partners to review the major issues that affect Ribble Valley and prepare this Community Strategy for 2014-2019.

3 INFORMATION

3.1 Attached to this report at Appendix 1 is the final version of the Ribble Valley Community Strategy for 2014-2019.

3.2 The next steps are to work with partners to create initiatives to support these priority areas and report back to members with associated action plans, outcomes and time scales.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The support and monitoring of the Ribble Valley Community Strategy will be continued within existing resources or through bidding for external funding as appropriate.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Policy and Finance Committee has the role of endorsing the Ribble Valley Community Strategy.
- Political – Endorsement of the Community Strategy offers the Council the opportunity to have a major influence on projects which address issues of community concern and service delivery including those beyond its direct control.
- Reputation – The Council in endorsing this Strategy will be associated with projects which will enhance the Council's reputation.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Endorses the Ribble Valley Community Strategy 2014-2019 and Actions proposed.

5.2 Requests that the Chief Executive reports back to this committee as programmes and projects are developed.

DAVID INGHAM
PARTNERSHIP OFFICER

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS (1)

For further information please ask for David Ingham, extension 4549

REF: Author/typist/committee/date



Ribble Valley
Borough Council
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Ribble Valley Community Strategy 2014-2019

In the six months to September 2014, a number of consultation events have been held amongst community partners including community groups, parishes, councillors and statutory bodies to gauge the reaction to the proposed strategy for the next five years.

All comments were documented, and have been considered within the context of the strategy to produce the final document which aims to address the issues of concern to the Ribble Valley community.

This document highlights the strategy that will be followed, and the actions required to make the changes.

The Council is working together with partners in seven core areas to:

- *Support our Communities in articulating their hopes, needs and priorities*
- *Focus the actions of all public, private, voluntary and community organisations operating locally*
- *Create a working document that sets objectives and allows reports on 'direction of travel'*
- *Help the Council identify its corporate priorities*
- *Encourage partnership working*



The 8 core areas:

- 1. Education & Economy***
- 2. Community Safety***
- 3. Local democracy***
- 4. Environment***
- 5. Housing***
- 6. Vulnerable people & families***
- 7. Health & older people***
- 8. Facilities***

Education and the Economy

Whilst the education resources and results in the Ribble Valley Schools are excellent, and a high proportion of students move on to further education, there is still a lack of vocational training provision for 16-19 year olds in the Borough.

Opportunities must still be available for businesses to develop in the area, through continued business support and the encouragement of entrepreneurship and enterprise.

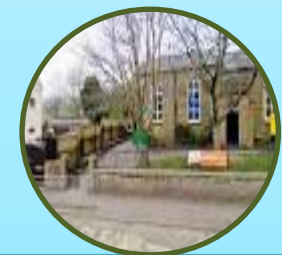
Tourism, and in particular food, heritage and green tourism initiatives need to be developed

The existence of a successful culture of social enterprise in Ribble Valley will also lead to further opportunities which may in turn support the sustainability of the local communities.

Despite the area's perceived affluence, there are pockets of deprivation, resulting in the need for a food bank and credit union

Actions required

- Develop opportunities with schools and appropriate agencies
- Support these initiatives.





Community Safety

Maintain low levels of crime in the district

Improve awareness and education around road safety issues – particularly around the rural roads

Reduce the incidence and impact of drug and alcohol abuse amongst young people

The internet is now embedded into our daily lives, but there are concerns, particularly amongst younger people, who may increasingly rely on it for contact especially if they live in isolated locations, and who may be the victims of cyber bullying and 'grooming'.

Actions required

- Continue to work with the Community Safety Partnership which measures and targets the most critical areas.
- Work with schools to inform both young people and their families to raise awareness of the dangers, and how to deal with them.
- Workshop sessions around internet safety have been particularly well received in the past – work to develop more.
- Be aware of safeguarding issues

Local Democracy

Introduction of new mechanisms to strengthen local democracy and allow people to have a greater say in local decision making

Neighbourhood Planning

Actions required

- Continue to host a rural forum which presents opportunities for consultation amongst community groups
- Support where requested and relevant



Environment

Improved access to the countryside through footpaths, bridleways and organised walking, horse riding and mountain biking

Increase the opportunities for public transport through the communities and parishes

Promote waste reduction and recycling

Actions required

- Continue the walking programmes which encourage people to get out and utilise the countryside for social and fitness purposes.
- Continue to work with community transport initiatives which offer vital lifelines for those who find it difficult to get out via other means.



Housing

Provision of sufficient affordable Housing in the borough.

Lack of suitable housing for older people in the villages.

Actions required

- The Core Strategy aims to balance the housing needs for the borough. Detailed allocations and policy to be implemented
- Continue to prioritise addressing the housing needs of the borough through collaborative working with agencies and developing innovative housing solutions



Vulnerable people & families

It has been identified that there are around 200 'troubled families' in the borough

Ribble Valley features highly in the ranking for those who are experiencing fuel poverty – defined as spending 10% or more of household income on heating their homes.

Actions required

- Working in partnership, support those in need as appropriate
- Impart knowledge & support to those most in need through contact at key intervention points and through working with partners.



Health

Rural Isolation and loneliness is a significant issue in the area for young and old. Many of the Ribble Valley villages have limited or no bus service meaning that access to facilities can be difficult. This is often seen as a problem for older people, but youngsters are also suffering as it makes socialising and joining groups difficult unless they have access to transport.

The Council has a strong relationship with the Ribblesdale Locality of the East Lancs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and working closely with them, priorities have been aligned, to maximise effectiveness.

Actions required

- Develop services and facilities in villages for those target groups to reduce the incidence of isolation, including development of groups and transport
- Make contact with Blackburn and Central CCG localities to build the relationships in order to optimise services for residents covered by those localities.
- Identify initiatives and opportunities for joint working to fulfil identified CCG and Public Health priorities



Older People

Just under half of the Ribble Valley population is aged 50+, the third highest level in the county.

One in three of those also have a long term limiting illness.

The higher life expectancy in our locality together with higher than average growth in population, predicts that in 2025 the population aged over 50 will be significantly higher than neighbouring areas and the national average.

Rural isolation and loneliness is a significant issue. Many rely on local groups, good neighbours and volunteers and access to some transport

Actions required

- Services to support the ageing population are being developed, and this work will continue to be supported. This is being done in partnership with Public Health, the Seniors Forum and the Good Neighbours project.
- Build on the Dementia Friends initiative
- Continue to develop and support initiatives for community transport allowing residents to get out to the shops and to events. This also offers a check on wellbeing, and affords companionship.

Facilities

Rural Isolation impacts upon many of the issues highlighted within the Strategy and the provision of, and access to facilities and services, for young and old alike, remains a priority.



Limited access to services and facilities throughout the district means that a number of initiatives are necessarily being developed and supported by volunteers.

Ribble Valley has an abundance of outdoor play facilities, many of which are managed by their local communities. Whilst increasing tourism is a local economic objective, increasing visitor numbers will put additional strain on their upkeep, which in turn creates local concerns about maintenance.

Actions required

- Develop services and facilities in villages for those target groups to reduce the incidence of isolation, including development of groups and transport – including community transport.
- New initiatives resulting in increased outreach to the villages are needed.
- Work with the Village Halls Association to strengthen the work of individual halls to improve facilities and sustainability
- Further support the work of volunteers through assisting with Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and training
- Encourage young people to volunteer for projects in their communities

- Reinstate the Play Alliance which has the potential to be a vehicle that could collectively improve the sustainability and maintenance of existing play provision.