

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 5

meeting date: TUESDAY, 28 MARCH 2017
title: RESPONSE TO CLITHEROE MARKET AREA CONSULTATION
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive the findings from the extended consultation work in relation to the market area re-development project.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To encourage economic development and sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Corporate Priorities – To identify options to deliver re-development of the market site and appoint an appropriate development partner.
- Other Considerations – To ensure the Council is a well-managed and efficient authority.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will recall a key ambition for the Council is to sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley as reflected in the Corporate Strategy for the Council. The Council has identified the Market re-development site as a key opportunity to support the local economy and deliver sustainable growth to support the future of Clitheroe Town Centre. Members agreed at the meeting of this Committee in September 2014 to promote the market site as a redevelopment opportunity and at a Special meeting of Policy and Finance Committee held on 30 November, resolved to appoint Barnfield Construction as the Council's development partner for the scheme, (minute 452 refers).

2.2 Following the decision to appoint Barnfield Construction, work was undertaken to develop the scheme in more detail. The purpose of this stage is to ensure the council can consider the details of the scheme, undertake detailed valuation appraisal against the finalised scheme and to reach a point where a Developer Agreement can be completed between the Council and Barnfield Construction. In addition as the scheme is being detailed a parallel pre-planning process was implemented with a view to developing the scheme for submission as a planning application. As part of the pre- planning work developers are expected to undertake public consultation on a scheme.

2.3 Barnfield Construction launched their draft scheme at a Public Exhibition in July. This exhibition was the first opportunity to test the scheme following the preparation of the bid and the work to develop the design. The exhibition was attended by Barnfield Construction representatives and Officers of the Council and received widespread publicity and interest with comments being invited to be submitted to Barnfield. The exhibition was held on a Friday and Saturday at the Council Chamber. To extend the opportunity for people to view the scheme and comment, the exhibition

was placed in the Council Offices, with extended opportunities to view the scheme available over a two-week period, including later evening openings.

- 2.4 The publication of the draft proposals generated a lot of interest and public response. Members will recall that a report on the scheme was presented to the meeting of this committee on 6 September 2016 (minute 213 refers). At that meeting, in response to the outcome of the publication of the draft scheme Members resolved to undertake a wider period of public consultation to help inform the Council's decisions on the scheme.

3 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.1 The Council appointed INFUSION, its partnership organisation to undertake Public Consultation and prepare a report for the Council. Consultation took the form of a questionnaire. This was

- sent to 2000 randomly selected residents in the Borough;
- issued to the citizen's panel;
- available to complete on-line; and
- paper copies were also made available for people to complete and return with pre-paid envelopes to Infusion.

In addition, Infusion carried out street surveys in Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley centres. A separate form was developed for businesses and those representing organisations.

- 3.2 Infusion carried out the consultation over a six-week period between 8 November and 23 December 2016. The consultation report was published on the Council's web site on Monday, 6 March following detailed consideration of its findings by the Member Working Group. The report also includes an analysis of an additional survey undertaken by local councillors, the responses from which were provided to Infusion to inform the findings. The report can be viewed using the following link. https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/10952/final_consultation_report_march_17.pdf. A copy of the Executive Summary is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 In addition to the Infusion consultation the Council also held a series of focus group meetings to give an opportunity for the views of interest groups to be taken and explored further through a series of discussions. Meetings were held with Clitheroe Civic Society, The Chamber of Trade and local Businesses, Market Traders and a series of groups comprising students from the local High Schools. A summary of the focus group work is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.
- 3.4 It was also considered by the Member working group that near neighbours should be given an opportunity to discuss concerns held in view of their particular relationship to the site, knowledge of existing issues and the immediate impact that any development would have upon them. Consequently, a surgery event was arranged using the Blueberries Café, venue on the market. This was a twilight meeting between 4:30pm and 6:30pm. Immediate residential neighbours were delivered an invite to attend and discuss issues with officers. Business that were near neighbours were also visited by officers to discuss any operational issues that they anticipated or had concerns about as well as any views on the scheme. Several people attended the surgery, although general feedback was that people and business had already taken the opportunity to feed comments and raise concerns through the consultation process.

4 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Without doubt the consultation on the proposals has generated significant interest. There are also mixed views on different aspects of the scheme, however there are clearly some aspects of the scheme that are not favoured by many as they are presented in the draft proposal. It is fair to conclude however that overall there is support for investing in the area but a scheme that must be right for the town.
- 4.2 In summary a series of formative issues can be highlighted from the consultation, namely:
- The right development is needed. Development needs to have regard to tradition, character, individuality and quirkiness of Clitheroe as a Market Town, fitting in with the wider Town Centre vision with reflective, yet innovative architecture.
 - Any hotel needs to be justified, of the appropriate scale and probably away from this central site.
 - The Market should be out-door in character, revitalised and offer the opportunity to attract more visits drawing a wider shopping and leisure audience.
 - It is important to balance the Independent retail offer of the town whilst attracting shopping visits from those seeking a wider traditional High Street choice.
 - Car parking is viewed as a major issue.
- 4.3 Consultation with near neighbours raised detailed concerns around overlooking and immediate impact, car parking and the general increase in activity close to their homes. Business and residents raised concerns around construction disturbance, access to premises and the need to ensure that they could operate effectively whilst any construction was undertaken.
- 4.4 The extended consultation work has provided a wide range of additional views and comments to take into account. The consultation has provided the opportunity for detailed consideration by the member working group who will be providing recommendations to the Committee under a separate report.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – there are no direct cost implications resulting from this report.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – There are elements of the scheme that will remain commercially sensitive and will be subject to contractual arrangements with the development partner. Any revisions to the scheme as a result of seeking to address the consultation findings must have regard to the procurement process and its limitations to undertake substantive changes.
 - Political – The Council has made a commitment to bring forward a scheme for the redevelopment of the market area and to consider views from the consultation in that process.

- Reputation –The report highlights the council's responsibility and desire to ensure the views of the public can be taken into account.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Endorse the publication of the Infusion report and note the findings of the extended public consultation process.

COLIN HIRST
HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

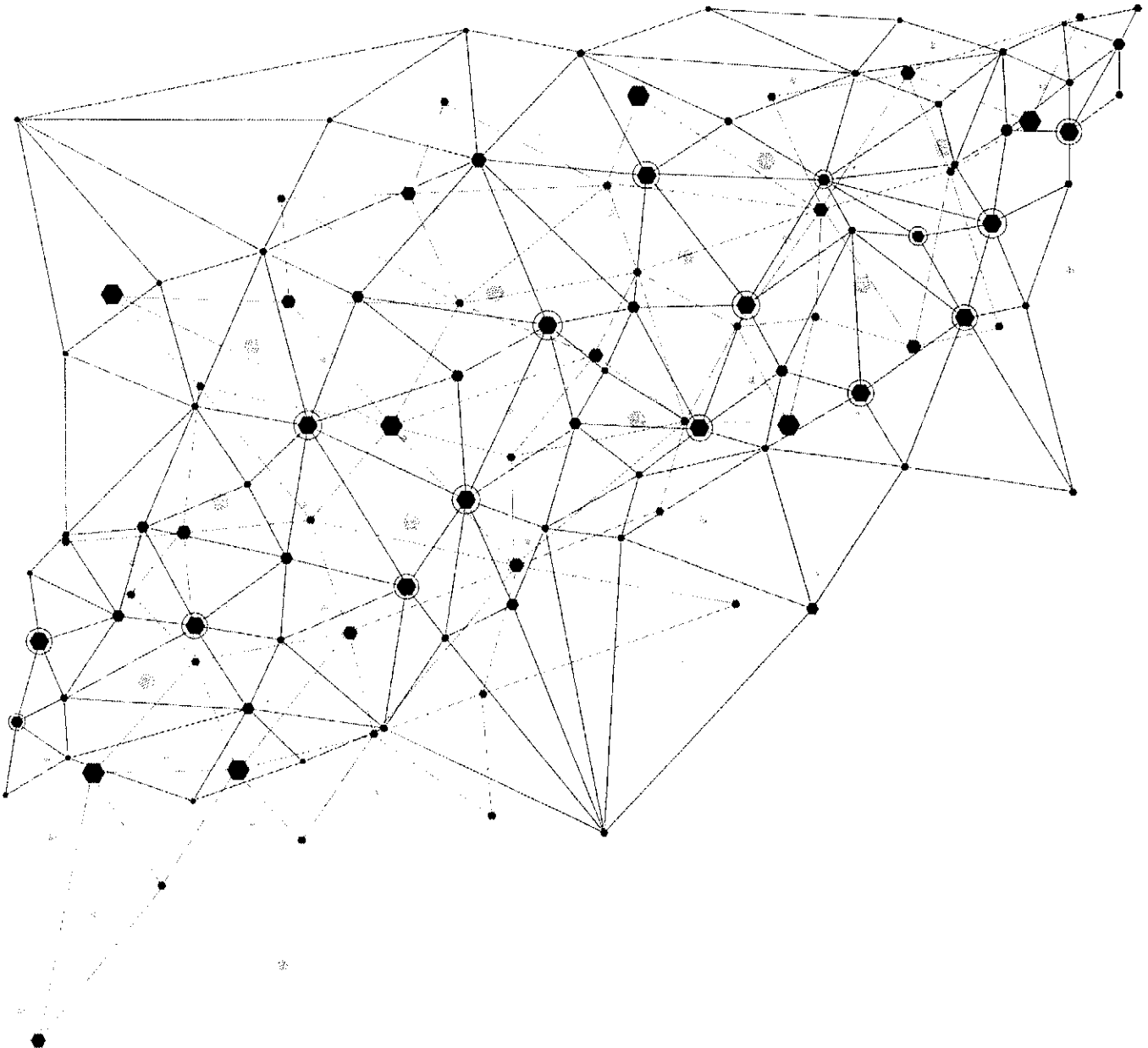
BACKGROUND PAPERS

Clitheroe Market Redevelopment Consultation 2016 – Infusion
Committee reports and minutes.
File notes from Focus Group meetings

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

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Clitheroe Market Redevelopment Consultation 2016



in:fusion



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www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

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1. Executive Summary

Consultation approach

A wide ranging programme of consultation was undertaken between 7 November and 23 December 2016 to provide the opportunity for people to feed back on the market area redevelopment plans in Clitheroe town centre, understand how people feel about the different additions proposed and any impact the scheme might have.

The consultation was supported by a range of promotion and engagement, including press releases, newsletter articles, social media updates and engagement sessions,

1415 responses were received to the consultation, comprising of 1352 public responses via online, postal and street survey returns and 63 responses from local businesses, organisations and market traders.

Views on Clitheroe town centre

- People are most likely to visit independent shops (87%) when they visit Clitheroe town centre, followed by supermarkets (79%) and the market (73%)
- People interviewed on the street were more likely to visit high street brands than other respondents (68% versus 41%)
- 82% are very or quite satisfied with Clitheroe town centre as a place to visit, rising to 89% amongst people who live outside of the Ribble Valley
- Satisfaction levels were supported by comments that the town centre has 'everything they need' and a good range of shops/ amenities
- Independent shops are most important to people in the Clitheroe town centre offer (82%), followed by restaurants and cafes (57%)
- More shops and places to eat were the most common suggestions when people were asked what would make them more likely to visit Clitheroe town centre, followed by more affordable and available parking
- 49 of 63 local businesses and organisations are satisfied with the town centre as a place to operate in, with a general view that its independent market town identity is important
- Half of local business and organisation respondents feel the town centre needs some improvement and a further quarter feel it needs a lot of improvement – comments indicate that the main area of improvement from their perspective is car parking provision for visitors and staff

Views on market area redevelopment plans

- 34% of public respondents agree that the market area redevelopment site is important for Clitheroe town centre, whilst 50% disagree (61% of respondents who live in Clitheroe disagree)

- Reasons for the public agreeing with the proposed redevelopment centred on a general view that the town centre would benefit from redevelopment and improvements, particularly bringing in a wider offer to attract visitors and businesses
- The main reason for the public disagreeing appears to be a view that any redevelopment would impact on the character and independent 'feel' of Clitheroe town centre, whilst some respondents also feel that the market does not need to be redeveloped or only requires small improvements
- 30 of 62 local businesses and organisations agree with the importance of the redevelopment with comments suggesting it would attract more visitors and keep Clitheroe 'up with the times', whilst 26 disagree with the majority worried that Clitheroe could lose its market town identity and adversely impact on existing independent shops
- People were more positive than negative about proposed new shops and restaurants and a car park, but were more negative about an indoor market and particularly a hotel, and this view was shared by local businesses
- The indication is that people are more likely than not to visit new shops and restaurants, particularly those under the age of 35, but three quarters of respondents feel it is very unlikely that they will use a hotel
- Both the public and local businesses share a similar view on new shops/ restaurants (either not needed or should be 'in keeping' with current independent offer) and a hotel (simply not needed)
- Comments from local businesses and organisations on an indoor market facility were mixed, with some seeing benefits of moving it indoors while others feel an outdoor market is important to retain the market town character of Clitheroe
- Car parking was regularly commented on by both the public and businesses, with the consensus that more parking is needed at reduced rates or free

Overall observations across both the public and businesses

- The independent market town 'feel' is clearly important, with many stressing the need for any redevelopment to be 'in keeping' with the existing Clitheroe town centre offer
- There is more positivity than negativity for new retail spaces with some caveats around attracting establishments that fit with the existing independent offer
- Some can see the positives of an indoor market facility whilst others feel retaining an outdoor market is important for the character of Clitheroe
- Generally both the public and businesses want to see the parking offer in the town improved, both in terms of capacity and cost
- The majority of respondents do not feel the town centre needs a hotel

MARKET DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP 9 FEBRUARY 2017
CLITHEROE MARKET RE-DEVELOPMENT AREA
NOTE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS

Following the decision by the Council to undertake a period of further public consultation in relation to the published proposals for the market re-development area it was agreed to hold a series of focus group meetings to provide an opportunity to broaden the scope of the engagement in parallel with the public questionnaire/survey being undertaken through Infusion.

This approach consisted of forum/discussion meetings in the Council chamber to enable the groups to discuss issues and feed comments into the consultation. Three groups were arranged. Meetings were held with Clitheroe Civic Society members (23 November 2016). A meeting comprising commercial interests in the town centre made up of people from the Clitheroe Traders Including Chamber of Trade members and Market Traders, held on the 24 November, and a further separate meeting with the Market Traders (5 January) aimed at discussing issues more related to the market element specifically.

A series of meetings were held with local high schools in order to access views of younger people from the community. Students from St. Augustine's High School, Bowland High School, Ribblesdale High School and Clitheroe Grammar School attended a series of workshops held in school where students' views on how they see and use and what they would want from the centre were discussed together with the draft scheme. St Augustine's included all school years; Ribblesdale year 9, Bowland were year 10 and 6th Form students from the Grammar School.

Civic Society and Trade Groups

The Council has collated the comments taken from the two core meetings held with the Civic Society and the Trade groups. The comments are those made by people in their discussion groups and set out peoples' views as expressed.

Comments were wide ranging from issues around the wider Town Vision, and concerns about the impact of the development on the character of the town with a need to ensure historic feel and character is protected and taken into account. Questions around the basis of need for the development were raised, including the Hotel, and that shops should not result in a clone town feel. Car parking was an issue highlighted. Scale and design of the scheme proposed featured as a regular comment. A refurbishment and improvement to the market was identified with concerns about protecting the outdoor character. If it was to be indoor it should be on one level, providing a covered market was identified as an option. Concerns regarding the wider town centre condition of pavements and parking were identified. The comments include suggestions on what may be acceptable to consider as appropriate development, scale and sympathetic development are highlighted in the comments. Comments also highlight a need to look at wider issues of signage and promotion.

In reviewing the comments essentially the matters to highlight are: does the proposed development fit with the site and the nature and character of Clitheroe? Is the intended offer appropriate? (Hotel), proposed 2 floor indoor market not welcomed. Car parking considered inadequate. General concern about promotion, quality of wider townscape and signage features. A lack of clarity on need for the scheme is a theme and need to understand the town centre vision. There are comments that want to see development that is appropriate, and reflects the nature of the area and protects the individuality and quirkiness of the town.

Market Traders

Market Traders were invited to attend a meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss more market specific issues in relation to the scheme. All traders were invited to attend the meeting as an opportunity to comment further on the proposals, in particular to discuss operational issues to be considered in any future design and management arrangements.

At the meeting traders reiterated concerns previously expressed around the treatment of the market in the scheme, that an open market should be retained. A market hall, single or two storey was not acceptable and there was a need to invest in the market. There were a range of views expressed about how that should be achieved. The option of providing a canopy to the existing market cabins was highlighted and that consideration be given to the removal of the outside stalls or at least rationalise the layout. This could provide for more parking. Parking was highlighted as a concern to be addressed whatever happened.

There was a call for more joint and joined up working with other groups to ensure the town could progress and remain strong. Some traders raised issues around the operation of the market, fees and what may happen to fees in the future. A number of traders were concerned about all the uncertainty that was being generated by the proposed redevelopment.

Operational matters were discussed in relation to the success of the Christmas Market event that had taken place in December. A discussion took place on ways to promote the market in general, types of events that could be put on and a request to look at what other areas were doing to promote their markets.

In relation to the scheme it was summarized that the scheme was out of scale and trying to deliver too much. It did not provide an acceptable market solution with a strong preference expressed to retain an outdoor market feel, with weather protection. Car parking in general needed to be addressed.

High Schools

The student discussions were undertaken in a formal to suit the school. At St Augustine's officers met with the whole school council giving a wide age spread. Bowland High organised a group from the upper school who split into two groups contributing to a round table discussion. At The Grammar School and Ribblesdale the discussion groups were arranged around small table discussions of mixed groups from the sixth form and some Ribblesdale year 9 business project students. In all cases students were keen to be involved in the discussions. As may be expected older age students were more likely to use Clitheroe (and other centres) more independently and had clearer views on the type of other they would like. There were, in some cases, some strong views about the design, some wanting to be modern others wanting to see tradition protected. It was also interesting to see comments made about traffic and car parking in the centre. There tended to be a view of needing a wider range of shops that were of appeal to younger people. However again interesting to hear that students didn't expect to see the development replacing the offer at other centres, but bringing something extra to Clitheroe. Overall the market was not widely used, but a vibrant market was held to be an important feature for the town that could be an attraction. Hotel was not highlighted overall, however there were some strongly held views by some of the older groups that scale of hotel in the scheme was out of place and was it right for the middle of Clitheroe?