

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 6

meeting date: THURSDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2020
title: UPDATE ON HOUSING REQUIREMENT - SHENA
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
principal author: COLIN HIRST, HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To receive further information on progress with regard to the Borough's housing need.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To deliver a coordinated approach to planning through up to date planning policies and to meet the housing needs of all sections of the community.
- Corporate Priorities - To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of the area and to match the supply of homes in our area with the identified housing needs.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that the need to undertake a Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (SHENA) was considered at a meeting of this Committee on 1st August (Minute 161 refers). The report set out the importance of progressing this work to inform the Local Plan and to provide an up to date housing requirement beyond the five-year anniversary date of the Core Strategy (14 December 2019).

2.2 Members considered a further report at the meeting of this Committee on 28 November 2019 (Minute 442 refers) which discussed the outcome of consultation on the draft SHENA. The detailed report set out the findings of the Consultant's work and the response to the consultation. However, a number of issues raised led to full consideration of the SHENA by Members to be deferred to enable further work with the consultants to be undertaken.

2.3 The consultants draft report can be viewed on the Council's website using the following

link:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200364/planning_policy/1732/evidence_updates_2019_onwards.

2.4 A number of issues have since been raised with the consultants following that meeting and they are currently undertaking further work to deal with the queries raised. This will be the subject of a further report to Committee once complete.

2.5 Members have also had the opportunity to attend the Member Local Plan training event, which gave the opportunity to raise a range of matters related to the Local Plan and housing requirements. In particular, the training addressed the relevance of setting a housing requirement figure for the Borough.

3 PROGRESSING THE HOUSING REQUIREMENT

3.1 It is clear from the response to the consultation and the wider deliberations being undertaken in relation to this issue that there still remain areas of concern that need to be addressed. This is function of the local plan process where the level of the Borough's housing need will be tested.

3.2 As indicated in the report to Members on 28 November 2019 the recommended approach was to establish a housing requirement to inform the review of the Local Plan and set a benchmark for developing the framework for the area. Further discussion with our consultants and consideration of the issues raised has led to the conclusion that an alternative approach, allowing a more holistic approach to housing requirements may be the most appropriate way forward in the current circumstances.

3.3 As indicated establishing the housing requirement is a key factor in the Local Plan process and this assists with identifying a direction of travel for the plan. Assisting with the understanding of how much development is likely to be required, the land implications, where it can be accommodated and the infrastructure requirements, for example, that need to accompany it. However, all of this process is a matter to be tested through the Local Plan itself.

3.4 Given the current position whereby our wider evidence base needs updating it is proposed to continue to develop options around a range of housing requirement options to help clarify the implications. Members are reminded that until a housing requirement figure has been tested through the Local Plan examination process the default position will be the standard methodology figure of 148 dwellings per annum as the Core Strategy is now past its 5-year anniversary.

3.5 Members who attended the training event, will recall that this was reinforced at the event and it is this figure that would be, for the time being used to determine the Council's position in relation to 5-year housing land supply and be the target for monitoring purposes. It is this figure that would be likely to be relied upon by an Inspector at any planning appeal.

3.6 It is important to note however that it is likely that the Council will need to support growth by promoting a higher housing requirement figure than the standard calculation based on current national guidance and policy.

3.7 As Members are aware the Council will be progressing work on the update to the Local Plan over the next 12 months. This will require further evidence to be developed and the opportunity to consider levels of economic growth that are judged to be appropriate and can be factored into the plan. The levels of housing growth will reflect not just demographic change (for example, the need to ensure adequate workforce is in place due to ageing population) but also the level of housing need generated by growth aspirations.

- 3.8 As Members will be aware there is a gap in evidence in relation to economic needs which is part of the proposed review work and discussions with our consultants have confirmed that it may be more appropriate to await this information to feed into the housing requirements to give more robust information upon which to base the requirements. This effectively results in a housing requirement not being established at this stage but further work on the Local Plan options to test and evaluate the most appropriate housing requirements will be undertaken.
- 3.9 A number of scenarios with differing housing requirements will be developed and assessed as part of the Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation. This enables a housing requirement to be objectively assessed based upon a more holistic approach. This will provide an opportunity to consider a range of scenarios and would provide the widest opportunity for views to be sought, not just in terms of housing, but a more holistic approach to plan-making and the choice of development options for the borough. This would also mean early testing of any challenges ahead of an Examination as this work progresses which ultimately should be of benefit at the Examination stage.
- 3.10 In addition the Government has previously announced that it is reviewing the standard methodology based on their concern that the levels of housing delivered through the standard methodology were unlikely to meet the Government's aspirations. Whilst there is no further information on this issue at this stage it is widely anticipated that there will be a revision to the approach consulted on and that in reality the Council will need to take account of this new methodology in due course.
- 3.11 The ongoing Local Plan process can be used to develop the most robust and appropriate housing requirements which will lead to a wider testing of options but this may extend the timeframe to establish the preferred plan options (Regulation 19 stages). However clearly there is significant merit in undertaking wider development work at this stage in order to be satisfied that the housing requirement alighted on is the most appropriate for the area.
- 3.12 For the purposes of monitoring it is proposed to apply the standard methodology-based figure as the benchmark. In addition, the current Core Strategy figure of 280 will also be compared to the supply side to enable any significant changes in development trends to be monitored. As Members will be aware, there are a number of approved unimplemented consents, details of which are set out in the Council's Housing Land Availability Study (HLAS). In addition, house building will continue to progress on existing sites and construction starts on approved sites. A summary table from the HLAS is included as Appendix 1 to this report. The full, current HLAS can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link:
- https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/12472/housing_land_availability_schedule_hlas_september_2019
- 3.13 What needs to be borne in mind however, is that the fact that the Council has a 5-year supply and has addressed the minimum housing requirements does not mean in itself that housing proposals should be refused. There is still a determination to be made against the issues of sustainable development and the proposals being consistent with the identified development plan. Fundamentally decisions will still need to be made based on the adopted Development Plan.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – There are no direct consequences as a result of this report, however testing the figure through both appeal and the Local Plan process may well be subject to additional resource requirements.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council is required to address the standard methodology by virtue of the Core Strategy reaching its five-year anniversary. The Council has been proactive in producing the SHENA to inform its position and provide a basis for ongoing work. The plan making process is the route by which the housing requirement for the area will be tested, ultimately through examination. Developing a wider range of scenarios at Regulation 18 stage may have an impact on the timeframe and may require earlier commitment to resources.
- Political – Housing matters have a high public profile.
- Reputation – The actions set out in this report demonstrate that the Council is well managed and is proactive in taking steps to ensure it can plan appropriately for housing in the borough in line with National policy.
- Equality & Diversity – No issues.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Note the current position with regard to establishing a housing requirement for the borough and that for the purposes of monitoring land supply the relevant standard methodology derived requirement figure is utilised.
- 5.2 Endorse the proposed approach that further development work be undertaken on requirement and development scenarios, informed by the emerging evidence base and that the options in relation to housing requirement are considered by the Local Plan working group before reporting back to this Committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Strategic Housing and Economic Needs Assessment – September 2019 – Turley

Consultation responses

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

HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY AT
30 SEPTEMBER 2019

All known sites	No. of Dwellings	No. Sites	Area Ha
1. Sites with full planning permission	817	32	34.40
2. Sites with outline planning permission	1126	15	52.63
3. Sites on which development has commenced	1491	70	99.50
4. Conversions to dwellings (not started)	65	29	3.05
5. Conversions to dwellings (commenced)	68	39	3.96
TOTAL	3567	185	193.54