

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.4

meeting date: WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2020
 title: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – THE PLANNING WHITE PAPER –
 CONSULTATION PROCESS
 submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS – DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider and agree the Council response to the consultation proposals set out in the Planning White Paper.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – To ensure planning policy is up to date to help protect the local environment
- Corporate Priorities – To ensure the Council's views are adequately represented on behalf of the local community
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Government has recently published its White Paper for consultation. The White Paper is available using the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

The closing date for comments is the 29 October 2020. In parallel the Government has also published for consultation a separate series of proposed changes to the existing planning system, a separate report dealing with this consultation is included on the agenda to this Committee. The two consultations differ insofar as the change to the current system deals with revisions to the existing policy framework and could be more readily introduced. The White Paper represents a much more fundamental change to the wider planning system and would require new primary and secondary legislation.

2.2 Described by the Government as radical reforms unlike anything since the planning system was first introduced post-war and the intention is to make the system that has evolved less bureaucratic, more "efficient, effective and equitable". As Members are aware the existing planning system is a plan-led system. The White Paper proposes that the plan-led system will remain however the proposals set out significant changes as to how plans will determine planned use using a zonal form of planning. The White Paper also looks to introduce a number of changes to the plan making process, stripping away a number of the existing requirements for supporting work such as detailed sustainability appraisals, form and extent of other supporting evidence and assessments that currently have to accompany plans (and planning applications) and does away with the test of

soundness currently applied opting instead for a single “sustainable development” test with plans being considered against its contribution to achieving sustainable development.

- 2.3 The White Paper also seeks to make changes to the process from making decisions on planning applications, with the 8-week and 13-week timeframes being applied as firm deadlines to be adhered to. This will be assisted by the way policies dealing with principles of development are set out (proposals will either satisfy or not, the relevant policy) in parallel with a series of design codes which will set the parameters of what is acceptable or not applying in effect a series of rules.
- 2.4 Other measures include a new approach to a new infrastructure levy to consolidate and simplify contributions, possibly based on a nationally set levy in place of current planning obligations and the CIL process with a view to reducing what are often lengthy negotiations that may delay the grant of planning permission. There is a strong direction towards using greater digital technology for preparing, consulting and producing development plans and in handling planning applications.
- 2.5 There are 24 key proposals in the White Paper. These proposals are broadly summarised for ease of reference in Appendix 1, whilst the main issues are discussed below in more detail. The proposed changes to the planning system are extensive, and if introduced will have a significant impact upon the way the Council will have to undertake its statutory planning functions.

3 SUMMARY OF WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The introduction to the White Paper sets out the bases for the proposals, with the view expressed that the current plan system in place since 1947 is no longer considered fit for purpose. It is viewed as a discretionary system rather than rule based which provides too great a scope for uncertainty and challenge. It is seen as complex, costly, and not well placed to encourage innovation and bringing forward land for development in a timely manner. As a system it is criticised for being too lengthy, a process where local decision making can result in delay as proposals are turned down only often to be granted at appeal. It favours those who have significant resource and time to invest in the process which is not considered by Government to be sufficiently inclusive in effect.
- 3.2 The Government is concerned at the length of time and resources it takes to put a local plan in place, there are also concerns about the complexity of evidence assessment which are drawn into the process often very specialised and difficult to understand for the wider public. It is also seen as a system which due to the cost and complexity does not offer a meaningful process for many groups.
- 3.3 The main elements of the White Paper are set out in more details at Appendix 2 with the Government’s specific questions for the consultation being set out at Appendix 3 together with the proposed response. Members are invited to discuss the proposals, consider and endorse the proposed response making any additional comments that are considered important.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – There are no direct resource implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The consultation is inviting comments on changes to the national planning system. There a defined date to make responses.
- Political – There is considerable interest in the implications of planning policy.
- Reputation – By making a response the Council is demonstrating its role in contributing to national policy and representing the views of the local community.
- Equality & Diversity – The consultation has been published having regard to needs of Equality and Diversity

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the proposed response set out at Appendix 3 to this report and that the Director of Economic Development and Planning be instructed to submit the response to the consultation.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning for the Future – White Paper August 2020

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

REF: CH/CMS/PLANNING/24 SEPTEMBER 2020



Planning for the Future

The Planning White Paper on a single page

The government are consulting on a 'new vision for England's planning system' with proposals grouped under three pillars. This briefing sets out some of the key changes.

Pillar 1: planning for development	Pillar 2: planning for beautiful and sustainable places	Pillar 3: planning for infrastructure and connected places	Delivering change
<p>A nationally set target of 300,000 homes per annum, with 'binding' targets for local authorities which factor in land constraints</p> <p>Five year land supply and Duty to Cooperate removed</p> <p>Interactive map-based Local Plans produced on a statutory 30-month timeframe, identifying Growth, Renewal and Protected land over a minimum 10-yr period</p> <p>NPPF as the primary source of development management policies</p> <p>Emphasis on engagement at the plan making stage</p> <p>A single statutory 'sustainable development' test to replace the existing tests of soundness</p> <p>A digital-first approach</p>	<p>A new National Model Design Code and a revised Manual for Streets, to complement the existing National Design Guide</p> <p>Local design codes and guides to be prepared with community involvement by Local Planning Authorities</p> <p>A national design body to support the use of design codes and guides, and exploration of a new role for Homes England in delivering beautiful places</p> <p>The introduction of a 'fast track process for beauty'</p> <p>NPPF changes to require all new streets to be tree-lined</p> <p>A chief officer for design and place-making in each local authority</p>	<p>A new fixed rate Infrastructure Levy to replace S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, based on the final value of development</p> <p>Increased flexibility for Local Authorities on how the Levy is spent</p> <p>Extending the Levy to capture changes of use through some permitted development rights</p> <p>Local authorities able to borrow against the new Levy to forward fund infrastructure</p> <p>Affordable housing can be used to offset the levy</p>	<p>A comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector</p> <p>Cost of operating the planning system to be principally funded by the beneficiaries of planning gain (landowners and developers) rather than the taxpayer</p> <p>Strengthened planning enforcement powers and sanctions</p> <p>A focus on digital planning and freeing up development management resources</p> <p>A new performance framework for Local Planning Authorities</p> <p>A regulatory review to identify and eliminate outdated regulations which increase costs for Local Planning Authorities</p>
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Next steps: [Read the RTPI's initial analysis](#) | [Contribute to the RTPI's response](#)

**SUMMARY OF KEY PROPOSALS
THE 3 PILLARS**

Pillar 1 – Planning for Development	
<p>Proposal 1: The role of land use plans should be simplified. Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected.</p>	<p>All land within an area will be designated under one of these principles. Growth areas would imply comprehensive development – new settlements, urban extensions, re-development or regeneration sites. Land in this designation would have outline approval for pre-determined uses.</p> <p>Renewal areas – targeted at existing built areas including rural areas, such as small sites on the edge of villages. There would be a presumption in favour of sustainable development.</p> <p>Areas that are protected would incorporate areas such as green belt, AONB, conservation areas, flood risk and areas of green space.</p> <p>All of these options will generate a patchwork of designations, and will be difficult to define in a rural area.</p>
<p>Proposal 2: Development management policies established at national scale and an altered role for Local Plans.</p>	<p>Local plans would focus on designating areas and site-specific detail. DM policies would be nationally set. Many DM policies require more local consideration. There is a risk of a one size fits no-one approach.</p>
<p>Proposal 3: Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test, replacing the existing tests of soundness.</p>	<p>A different test to be introduced that in effect is likely to combine the current sustainability tests. The policy test will be prescribed nationally – the interpretation will still be argued over locally.</p>
<p>Proposal 4: A standard method for establishing housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in the areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most</p>	<p>A new Standard Methodology. Subject to a separate consultation, and designed to lift housing targets to reflect governments housing policy and aspirations.</p>

appropriate areas and housing targets are met.	
Proposal 5: Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.	This is a key premise of the new system that land identified in plans will have a default Outline Planning permission.
Proposal 6: Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology	Intention to introduce measures to try and speed planning decisions
Proposal 7: Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new template.	Promotes a style change to the format of local plans, using a standard template and promoting greater application of digital tools and media
Proposal 8: Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable for key stages of the process, and we will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so.	Intention is to make timetables statutory and enforceable
Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means of community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools	Aims to encourage the take-up of neighbourhood plans by simplifying process and nature of what can be included.
Proposal 10: A stronger emphasis on build out through planning	To encourage an uplift in building out permissions on large developments by promoting differing development types to enable development levels to be maintained.
Pillar 2 – Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places	
Proposal 11: To make design expectations more visual and predictable, we will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement, and ensure that codes are more binding on decisions about development.	A key part of the new process, and a significant change requiring extensive resource investment.
Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, we will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making.	Emphasises the intention to strengthen design considerations.
Proposal 13: To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, we will consider how Homes England’s strategic	A review of the role of the Government’s agency in delivering the new system.

objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.	
Proposal 14: We intend to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.	This is intended to encourage better design outcomes; however local character will need to be identified and preferences agreed. The scope for differing views is huge.
Proposal 15: Amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits.	This would look to drive local policies that protect important views, public access and promote renewable energy, forestry creation, avoiding generic development management policies, this would reduce local influence in policy setting.
Proposal 16: Design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and species in England.	This would review the application of strategic environmental assessments, sustainability appraisals and Environmental Impact Assessments to avoid over complicated assessments and duplication. Much of this falls under other areas of legislation that will need to be amended in parallel.
Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st century	Identifies a role for local plans to identify assets. It includes options for removing listed building consent applications with development being agreed through self-certification.
Proposal 18: To facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver our world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.	Energy efficiency will become a more significant factor, with new standards being introduced.
Pillar 3 – Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Places	
Proposal 19: The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of the development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished.	CIL would be the only mechanism to secure infrastructure. No locally set rates, which is currently a complex process. Planning obligations often reflect local considerations which this will remove.
Proposal 20: The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights	Development delivered by way of PD doesn't attract contributions at present. This would increase opportunity to secure funding and is particularly relevant where significant developments such as residential conversions permitted under PD which otherwise would not be required to contribute as mitigation for their impact.
Proposal 21: The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provision	This will link with the Government's proposal to fund affordable housing initiatives through developer contributions. This is an issue for areas like Ribble Valley where affordable

	housing delivered by way of Section 106 Agreements is widespread and would remove the opportunity for the Council to influence affordable housing delivery to meet local needs.
Proposal 22: More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy	In effect a budget pool would be created but it needs to be clear which authority is responsible.
Proposal 23: Develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of the reforms.	This does recognise a step change in skill sets and resource requirements that will be necessary with the cost of the new system paid for by landowners and developers. There would still be significant resource requirements for the LA to deliver through taxation general. More detail of this would be required to determine how well it would work.
Proposal 24: We will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions	This recognises that enforcement will have a role to play in delivering the new system, recognition of this should be welcomed.

APPENDIX 3

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – PROPOSED RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1	What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?
	MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO COMMENT
2(a)	Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? [Yes / No]
	N/A
2(b)	If no, why not? [Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]
	N/A
3	Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future? [Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other – please specify]
	N/A
4	What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]
	MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO NOMINATE A TOP THREE
5	Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals?
Not Sure/In Part	There is significant scope for streamlining the local plan process. Certainly there are procedural elements that do not benefit plan making and often the scale of background evidence can be disproportionate. Much of this could be achieved by amending regulations and national guidance rather than a wholesale re-invention of the system. Local Plans should be a focus for local planning and not overly effectively nationalised under a standard template.

6	Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally?
Not sure	In some instances this would be acceptable but it would difficult to take account of local circumstances. If there are national policies to be applied to all areas and it would limit the ability to create innovative design solutions this may be undesirable.
7(a)	Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact?
Yes	This is a positive step; however clear guidance on the parameters of assessment would be necessary and the extent of supporting evidence to satisfy the test.
7(b)	How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?
	In the first instance the scope of key issues should be defined to enable the relevant agencies responsibilities to be identified. Extent of joint working could then be presented as part of the evidence base and sustainability testing.
8(a)	Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced?
Yes	A standard method has many advantages to provide a baseline, but the planning system must allow a process for the consideration of other factors, appropriately evidenced and not technically in-decipherable with the ability for local planning authorities to determine with their wider community what is appropriate and sustainable.
8(b)	Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated?
No	Affordability is a key factor, but basing the method on a process whereby growth is a perpetuating factor means that requirements will always increase where development is taking place this will lead to disproportionate growth. There has to be a mechanism to mitigate local circumstances.
9(a)	Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent?
Not sure.	It depends on how areas of growth are designated and whether there is flexibility to modify area of growth based on changing circumstances. The current system of determining applications is more democratic and allows more community engagement.

9(b)	Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas?
	Not sure.
9(c)	Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime?
No.	Whilst there is some merit in planning for new settlements at the national level, the issue has to be guided by scale. Proposals will generate different issues, for areas like Ribble Valley any new settlement would be best considered through a local process of plan making.
10	Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain?
Not sure	<p>The premise seems to be based on speeding up the decision making and offering greater clarity. Greater clarity to all is welcomed if such guidance could be given but speed of decision making should not be a consequence of quality. The paper implies that the planning process is slow as a result of LPA's but it is often the poor quality submissions, lack of willingness to engage in pre app that causes the delay .In the case of RVBC over 80% of applications are invalid and the request for additional information is burdensome on the LPA and often takes a considerable time for the additional information to arrive to make an application valid.</p> <p>I do not think the speed of decision making is problematic in most cases.</p> <p>Welcome digitisation but the idea of refunding planning fees if not determined in time may lead to less negotiation and either poorer quality approvals or more applications refused.</p>
11	Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans?
Yes	The opportunities for applying new technology have to be taken and invested in. Regard will need to be given to assisting access for those who may not have the ability to access the web, and of course it assumes all areas have good standards of broadband available to use. This can be a challenge in some rural parts.
12	Do you agree with our proposals for a 30-month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans?
Not sure	The plan making process can be subject to many influences beyond the control of the plan making authority. Clear targets and expectations are important but a statutory timescale would not be suitable for other than headline targets for having a plan in place.
13(a)	Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system?

Yes	Properly resourced and with a clearly understood objectives and awareness of their role, Neighbourhood Plans can provide a valuable local policy tool for the community.
13(b).	How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?
	More needs to be done to guide communities on what the purpose of the plan is. Wider facilitation of technical support would help. Local communities would need to have the resource available to make use of the digital tools, most Parishes and certainly where there are community-based groups they simply will not have access to the kit.
14	Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support?
	It is important that once approvals are in place that measures to support delivery are in place, whilst the planning system can be smoothed to assist that delays are often as much a product of the way the development and land industry works. Significant amounts of housing permissions are granted to the landowner as applicant. There is often then a lengthy process to translate that into a land sale, housebuilder and detail planning permission before any delivery starts.
15	What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/ or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]
Not sure or indifferent	There has been some high-quality individual schemes but on the whole major developers have been unwilling to create bespoke housing schemes due to their standard design and desire for high density, it is production line development for aimed at generating profits.
16	Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]
	MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO DISCUSS
17	Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes?
No	The resource implication is significant if the LPA is to provide meaningful clarity on design expectations for all growth, renewal and preservation areas within their districts. This has to reflect local preferences (i.e. consultation; design can be very subjective - who decides what is the local preference? It may limit individualism and quality if the architect or designer is stifled and has to follow standard

	templates. This is not 'Localism' and will not produce distinctive and interesting local environments.–
18	Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making?
No	This has not worked previously and although the idea of design champions and dedicated officer may seem useful it is unlikely to be a priority and may result in delayed decision making and limit individualism.
19	Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England?
	No Comments.
20	Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty?
No	This could lead to less negotiation and a premise that if all design codes are met there is an automatic approval. The idea of one type of developments fits all does not accord with local choice and it would be difficult even in area of Renewal to have a standard type of development that is seen as appropriate to the locality.
21	When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify]
	The council's identified priorities are Affordable Housing, Education, Highways/Transport and Open spaces.
22(a)	Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold?
No	Section 106 provisions deliver successfully in areas like Ribble Valley. In effect the proposal introduces a form of development value tax, it is likely to drive funding more centrally away from local priorities and may delay delivery of necessary infrastructure necessary to mitigate the impacts of specific developments.
22(b)	Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally?
	Levy rates are best set locally to reflect circumstances.
22(c)	Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities?
	More value

22(d)	Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area?
Not sure	This would be borrowing at risk but it would be for the authority to make that judgement. It is important to recognise that often the implementation of infrastructure investment can be affected by the receipt of contributions that are based on trigger points.
23	Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights?
Yes	With increasing types of development to be delivered through Permitted Development rights this approach would ensure all developments made their appropriate contribution although development costs can differ in viability where conversions for example are undertaken so consideration would be required as to how this would impact on potential Regeneration projects including those involving Heritage assets.
24(a)	Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present?
Yes	Yes, but it is also important to ensure that regard is given not just to quantity but most crucially to the type of tenure. This is an important consideration for areas such as Ribble Valley where there are challenging shortages of affordable rented properties for example.
249b)	Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities?
Not sure	It is difficult to see how an in-kind payment system towards the infrastructure levy would be workable, consistent and concern that it is likely to lead to extensive negotiation on its extent. A right to purchase for the local authority is an interesting concept but we would need to understand the operation of this in relation to Housing Revenue Account restrictions, whether there would be a parallel shift towards local authorities becoming housing bodies how that would function. The current system of RP's securing properties at a discounted rate seems to operate reasonably. There would also remain a need for the right type of housing to be made available.
24(c)	If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk?
Yes	If it is going to be put in place there should not be a risk of overpayment to the LA this may be resolved by open book negotiations but would require an acceptance on the part of the sellers that they are not in an open market situation.
24(d)	If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality?

	<p>This should be covered by the design codes for what is to be built on the site but also a need for early commitment from the Local Authority or RP to the properties to be delivered. Not sure that existing development models are well placed to do this. There have been issues on some sites in Ribble Valley for example where the houses put forward for affordable have not met the requirements of the RP, for example are too small to attract occupiers and housebuilders have not been able to dispose of the affordable units seeking to amend what the offer is.</p>
25	<p>Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy?</p>
Not Sure	<p>The use of any Levy should be defined and applied for necessary infrastructure it should not risk being available for wider purposes or used to incentivise acceptance of development.</p>
25(a)	<p>If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed?</p>
	<p>If there are going to be flexibilities, it is vital that affordable housing contributions are ring fenced.</p>
26	<p>Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?</p>
	<p>Local Planning Authorities when implementing any legislation will have to have regard to their duties under the Equality Acts, and will need to evidence this for example in their plan making. One concern is the very strong emphasis on the use of digital technologies to underpin the planning system which certainly has its merits however in doing so this must not be at the expense of those who cannot use it, LPA may need to be innovative in how they take forward public engagement and make appropriate adjustments.</p>