

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 7

meeting date: THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2020
title: STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – UPDATE AND REVISIONS
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS – DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
principal authors: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING
RACHEL HORTON – SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the updated and revised Statement of Community Involvement and agree its publication for consultation.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The revision of this document will have a bearing on our future ability to adopt planning policy documents and could influence future development within the borough. The Statement of Community Involvement will also have relevance the Council ambitions that relate to environmental enhancement, economic development and the determination of planning applications.
- Community Objectives – Through the planning system, to maintain, protect and enhance the natural and built features that contribute to the quality of the environment.
- Corporate Priorities – To provide a high-quality environment to conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment.
- Other Considerations – The SCI contributes towards demonstrating the Council is a well-run authority.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has previously adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in 2013 prepared under the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires all Local Planning Authorities to produce an SCI. The SCI sets out how the Council proposes to engage and involve the local community, stakeholders and relevant organisations in the preparation of planning documents and the determination of planning applications. The document sets out both the wider statutory processes and the points at which people can be involved, together with the Council's approach to ensuring engagement is as comprehensive as possible.

2.2 The SCI itself is not a planning policy document but it is a statutory Local Development Document and as such it is required to be consulted on, formally adopted, reviewed and kept up to date.

2.3 Given the age of the current Statement of Community Involvement and the recently published new guidance, which was introduced to address the consultation implications of Covid19, the SCI has been updated to reflect the changes and guidance.

2.3 Members will be aware that the Council is in in the early stages of reviewing its Development Plan with the preparation of an updated local plan for the borough. In this

context this is an ideal opportunity to review the consultation processes that will be used to support that review and to take account of current consideration around the wider Covid pandemic.

3 THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

3.1 In brief a Statement of Community Involvement should:

- explain clearly the process and methods for community involvement for different types of planning policy documents and for the different stages of plan preparation, with particular emphasis on engaging diverse sections of the community;
- explain the process and appropriate methods for effective community involvement in the determination of planning applications, including the authority's approach to pre-application discussions;
- include details of where community groups can get more information on the planning process;
- identify how landowner or developer interests will be engaged.

3.2 The SCI has been revised to reflect the need to take account of the implications of ongoing Covid pandemic restrictions, which amongst other things will lead to greater use and development of digital consultation platforms and the need to find new ways to share information in an environment where traditional meetings and exhibitions will be challenging. The SCI has also been revised to provide more comprehensive information on the differing planning processes to help clarify the points at which engagement opportunities will be available.

3.3 Members will also be familiar with the current consultation proposals from Government on changes to the planning system a key element of which is to promote and develop the use of digital technologies. However, until any of the legislative changes are introduced, the Council will need to continue its approach to planning consultations, plan-making and determining applications, in line with existing statutory frameworks which at present still require an up to date SCI to be in place. Any future changes that arise will need to be considered of course and the SCI revised as necessary. Whilst it is important that we have an up to date SCI in place as the plan-making progress processes (hence the proposed revisions set out in this report) the need to integrate the Covid guidance also provides a good opportunity to test suitable consultation processes which take into account the restrictions and will enable consideration of the most suitable forms of consultation for future local plan documents.

3.4 Subject to Members endorsing the review, the SCI will be published for a 6-week period of consultation; the responses received will be considered before finalising and adopting the SCI. The publication of the SCI will also be used as an opportunity to invite the public and wider stakeholders to register an interest in the new plan-making project which will assist with future consultations on the emerging Local Plan.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – The preparation of the SCI and this consultation will be resourced from existing revenue budgets. Any consultation costs arising from the SCI measures will be considered within specific project or revenue budgets.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Local Planning Authority is required to review and update and have in place an adopted SCI.
- Political – There are no direct political implications.
- Reputation – The SCI helps promote the Council’s approach to consultation and community engagement.
- Equality & Diversity – The SCI encourages engagement across all communities.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Endorse the revised SCI and agree that it is published for a 6-week period of consultation, the outcome of which be reported back to this Committee as appropriate.

COLIN HIRST
HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

NICOLA HOPKINS
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst extension 4503

REF: CH/CMS/P&D/29 OCT 2020

SCI 2020

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT

CONSULTATION DRAFT

OCTOBER 2020

REGENERATION AND HOUSING



Ribble Valley
Borough Council

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Contents

Executive Summary

1. Ribble Valley Borough Council is responsible for producing planning policy documents (including the Local Plan) and making a decision on a wide range of planning applications in the Borough.
2. This document details how the community can get involved in the planning process.
3. The Council is committed to ensuring that members of the public and community organisations can have their say in the preparation of local plans and guidance and in the decisions made on planning applications.
4. To do this we propose to:
 - Seek people's views as early as possible.
 - Have consultations and information easily available online and in hard copy documents where appropriate.
 - Involve all members of the community regardless of gender, faith, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age, social deprivation or rural isolation.
 - Keep people informed of future stages of consultation in respect of the Local Plan.
 - Produce clear, concise and accessible documents that avoid jargon wherever possible.
 - Hold public meetings exhibitions or workshops where appropriate subject to relevant Covid restrictions and use where possible digital means of promoting, discussing and sharing information regarding the Local Plan process.
5. This document will describe the background and context for the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and will set out specifically:
 - **What** will be consulted upon
 - **Who** could be consulted
 - **How** the Authority will carry out consultation, and
 - **When** we will consult

INTRODUCTION

1. What is a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)?

1.1 Planning for land use and development in the Borough is one of the Council’s key responsibilities, impacting directly and indirectly on residents and communities. The Council is committed to engaging as much as possible with local people, organisations, businesses and other interested parties, including those who are traditionally under-represented to get their views on different aspects of its planning service.

1.2 This document is our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It sets out how and when we will provide opportunities for you to contribute in the planning process. The local planning authority (LPA) will involve local communities, businesses and other stakeholders in the preparation and review of planning policy and the consideration of planning applications.

1.3 The aim of the SCI is to ensure that all sections of the public and community, including local groups and organisations, are actively involved in the planning process and are notified of plans that may affect them.

The Aim of an SCI
An SCI states: WHO the Council will consult with, WHEN and HOW

1.4 There may be some circumstances, which are beyond the Council’s control such as a time of national lock-down during the COVID19 pandemic, which may result in a variation to the consultation and involvement methods set out therein. In such circumstances the Council will at all times remain committed to involving the community as much as practicable, whilst also complying with national legislation and guidance outlined by MHCLG.

2. What is the Legal Requirement?

2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires the Authority to prepare and maintain the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). An SCI, must set out how the Council intends to achieve community involvement, public participation and co-operation in the preparation of their Local Plan, including any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), as well as setting out how they intend to involve the public when consulting on planning applications.

2.2 Local planning authorities are required to update their SCI every five years and prior to the consultation of any development plan document.

3. The Duty to Co-operate

3.1 In addition to public consultation on plans, local planning authorities are required to co-operate with each other, and other statutory bodies to consider joint approaches to plan-making when preparing, or supporting the preparation of policies which address strategic matters.

3.2 This “duty to co-operate” is set out in the Localism Act (2011) and is reiterated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires LPA’s to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in individual local plans, and to deliver sustainable development.

3.3 In addition, the NPPF sets out in paragraphs 24-27 ‘Maintaining effective cooperation’ that on cross-boundary matters neighbouring local authorities and the county council should maintain Statements of Common Ground to address cross boundary matters.

3.4 In accordance with regulations and in the later stages of plan preparation, the Council will publish Statements of Common Ground, in conjunction with relevant partners, which clearly set out compliance with the duty and define any necessary outputs.

4. Our Approach

4.1 This Statement sets out how the Borough Council will involve all elements of the community in the planning process, both in the preparation of planning policy and involvement in planning applications. It shows how we will consult on the development of the various documents that will eventually make up the Local Plan that will replace the current Ribble Valley Core Strategy adopted in December 2014.

4.2 It describes who the Council will consult, when they will be consulted and about which documents and issues we need opinions on. Through this process we hope to give local people information as to how they will be consulted and what tools are available to help them shape their future environment through informed and active participation.

4.3 Tapping into the community’s expertise and insight on local issues produces better planning. We will strive to provide opportunities and make it as simple as possible for all individuals to become involved, regardless of their circumstances. In turn, meaningful community involvement helps create a wider sense of public ownership of planning policy and greater pride in a locality.

4.4 The SCI will also align with the Council’s vision and objectives as outlined in the ‘Corporate Strategy’ 2019-2023¹ which outlines the authorities ‘Core Values’ and our approach to Equality and Diversity.

The Council’s Vision

An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors

¹ Link to the Ribble Valley Corporate Strategy – Available to view at: https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200396/performance_and_statistics/301/ribble_valley_borough_council_corporate_strategy

4.5 Ribble Valley Borough is made up of socially diverse communities. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010² the Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity and to valuing diversity. To demonstrate that our approach to equality is being realised, we collect equalities information. This helps to establish whether all members of the community are accessing our services. This feeds into our monitoring and review process.

4.6 Consistent with the above, we will apply the following general principles to planning consultations. We will also expect the consultations done by others (for example developers, site promoters and neighbourhood planning groups) to apply the same principles:

- involvement will be open to all, regardless of gender, faith, race, disability, sexuality, age, rural isolation and social deprivation;
- we will seek views from interested and affected parties early in the process when comments can have the greatest influence;
- publications will be clear and concise and will not include avoidable “jargon”, as far as possible unless there is a legal or technical requirement to address.
- we will give sufficient information and reasoning to allow for an informed response and we will give sufficient time for responses to be made, taking into account any statutory time requirements.
- all responses will be considered conscientiously and as appropriate published in a redacted format;
- consultation exercises will be monitored to help identify groups within the community that are under represented and highlight any barriers which may prevent responses.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLAN-MAKING

5. The Emerging Ribble Valley Local Plan

5.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) for the borough currently comprises the Core Strategy (adopted December 2014), the recently adopted Housing and Economic Development Plan Document (HED DPD – adopted November 2019) which sits alongside the Core Strategy and the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan (adopted May 2019).

5.2 Now that the Local Development Framework (LDF) is complete, the Council is moving from the LDF to a Local Plan. The Local Plan will be a key Development Plan Document (DPD) produced in the context of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and any future amendments, as well as associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Council has a statutory duty to have in

² Link to the Equality Act 2010 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

place up to date Local Plan coverage that reflects both National legislation and National planning policy.

5.3 The new Local Plan which will replace the existing Local Development Framework (LDF), will set out the planning strategy, policies, proposals and key principles that will guide future development needs of the Ribble Valley to 2033.

5.4 The Local Plan will be used to help decide on planning applications and other planning related decisions. In effect, it is the local guide to what can be built where, determining the future pattern of development in the Borough. Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and s38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan (which includes the Local Plan) unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.5 The Local Plan will cover a period of 15 years and will generally include:

- a development strategy
- development management policies
- a Policies Map to illustrate how policies and plans will apply in different locations
- site allocations (employment and housing)
- any Neighbourhood Plans produced locally

It should be noted that the government, is currently considering proposals to review the planning system which will need to be taken into account and may lead to full revision to this SCI. Pending any changes in the legislation the existing planning system will remain the relevant framework.

5.6 The above process involves a review of which documents will comprise the Local Plan itself and which evidence base documents will be required to underpin the details contained within the plan. The detail of which, and timetable for the production of the Local Plan is set out in the Councils Local Development Scheme (LDS).

5.7 The LDS is intended to set out the approach and timetable of policy preparation. It specifies the documents which when prepared will comprise the Local Plan and should enable consultees to establish when to expect consultation throughout the plan-making process. It is required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The LDS will be reviewed and re-published when there are changes to the timetable, and subject to approval by members at committee. The LDS is made publicly available on the Ribble Valley Borough Council website. Hard copies can be made available if required.

6. Plan Preparation and Key Stages

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with individuals in the community and differing consultation bodies. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area.

6.2 The process for delivering a Development Plan Document (DPD) also requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Their role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.

6.3 As a minimum, statutory bodies will be consulted on the scope of the SA/SEA. Consultation bodies and other parties who, in its opinion, are affected or likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, the decisions involved in the assessment and adoption or making of the plan will also be consulted. The SA/SEA report, including the non-technical summary, needs to be published alongside the draft plan at key stages for a minimum of 6 weeks.

6.4 In preparing the Local Plan, there are a number of key stages which present opportunities for the Council to engage with interested parties on the emerging Ribble Valley Local Plan. A summary of the key consultation stages and methods that will be used are provided below:

Table 1: Process for preparing a Development Plan Document (including the Local Plan)

Key Stage	Process and Requirements	Opportunities for Engagement
1: Evidence Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather evidence in order to identify the issues and opportunities for development in the Borough - Establish scope of the SA/SEA - Carry out the 'duty to co-operate' requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only if required for any specific study
2: Scoping (Regulation 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notify individuals/groups of the DPD and invite them to make representations about what the DPD should contain. - Comments received will inform the preparation of the next stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out informal consultation and early engagement with relevant stakeholders and the local community. The nature/extent of this will be determined by the subject matter and scope of the consultation.
3: Issues and Options (Regulation 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect evidence and establish wider policy framework. - Consider issues and alternatives. - Establish scope of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) /SEA. - Carry out the 'duty to co-operate' requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out informal consultation and early engagement with relevant stakeholders and the local community. The nature/extent of this will be determined by the evidence gathered, subject matter and scope of the consultation. Consult with statutory bodies on the scope of the SA/SEA

<p>4: Preferred Options (Regulation 18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare and publish 'Preferred Options' Draft Document. - Prepare interim SA/SEA. - Consult for a minimum statutory period of six weeks. - Prepare Consultation Statement. - Council members considers the comments made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write to specific, general and all other consultees who the Council consider may have an interest, including everyone on the planning policy consultation database. - Make consultation documents available for inspection including on the Council's website, planning offices and other locations as considered appropriate. - Hold public exhibitions, events and workshops or more focused meetings where appropriate and in strict accordance with current legislation and Covid guidance. - Use social media and/or local media to raise awareness. -
<p>5: Publication of Proposed Submission Document (Regulations 19 & 20)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having considered the comments and evidence gathered, the Publication/ Proposed Submission Document and SEA/SA Report is prepared. - Statutory consultation for a minimum of six weeks to comment on the Plan, the SA/SEA and supporting evidence. - Comments will be considered by the Inspector at the Examination. - Prepare Consultation Statement. - Council considers the comments and may propose further amendments to be considered by the Inspector. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write to specific, general and all other consultees who the Council consider may have an interest, including everyone on the planning policy consultation database. - Make consultation documents available for inspection including on the Council's website, planning offices and other locations as considered appropriate. - Hold public exhibitions, events and workshops or more focused meetings where appropriate and in strict accordance with current legislation and Covid guidance. - Use social media and/or local media to raise awareness.
<p>6: Examination (Regulation 22)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan submitted to Secretary of State for independent examination. - Independent Examination likely to involve hearing sessions (6 weeks prior notice to people who have requested to appear at the hearings). - Inspector considers the representations made and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the RVBC website and social and/or local media to raise awareness of the Examination and make documents available to view. - Notice of Examination is given six weeks in advance to people who have requested to appear at hearing sessions. - Hearing sessions are generally open to the public. - Examination documents are published on the Council's website

	issues recommendations in a report.	
7: Adoption (Regulation 26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan adopted by the Council if found 'sound' by Inspector. - Six week period for legal challenge to the High Court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish the Plan, adoption statement and other relevant evidence base documents on the Council's website, and make available at Planning offices and other locations as considered appropriate. - Send Adoption Statement to consultees on the Planning Policy Consultation Database and others who have asked to be notified. - Use social media and/or local media to advertise adoption of the Plan.

7. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

7.1 Where it is deemed necessary, the Council will produce Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). These are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as '*Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Development Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues , such as design....*'.

7.2 SPDs can be topic or area based and provide more detailed guidance on how the policies in the Local Plan are applied. They are not independently tested and consequently do not have development plan status but are material considerations in the planning application process.

7.3 The key stages in the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document are detailed in the table below:

Table 2: Process for preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Key Stage	Process and Requirements	Opportunities for Engagement
1: Evidence Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather evidence to inform the preparation of the SPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority will carry out informal consultation and engagement with relevant stakeholders and the local community. The nature/extent of this will be determined by the evidence gathered, subject matter and scope of the consultation.
2: Scoping / Issues (Regulation 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To set the scope of the SPD ,and to identify issues the SPD will cover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority will consult with those individuals, groups and organisations that have expressed an interest or the Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will consider any representations made which will inform the preparation of the draft SPD. A Consultation Statement will be produced (Reg. 12 (a)). 	<p>considers are relevant to the subject.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will use a variety of methods to consult such as leaflets, presentations, public displays, questionnaires and meetings where appropriate We will advertise the consultation in the local press, on the Councils website and social and/or local media.
3: Public Participation on the Draft SPD (Regulation 12 (b) & Regulation 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare the draft SPD. A Consultation Statement will be produced (Reg. 12 (a)) and the Authority will invite representations on the draft SPD. The consultation period will be between 4-6 weeks. Comments received at this stage will inform the preparation of the final SPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will invite representations by placing the draft SPD on the Councils website, advertise this in the local press, social and/or local media. We will endeavour to consult with interested parties via emails or letter informing them of the consultation and where to access the document. We will make hard copies available at 'Planning Reception' in the Council Offices and at appropriate locations.
4: Adoption (Regulation 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will consider comments that have been made to the Draft Consultation and make any appropriate changes. The SPD will be published alongside a Consultation Statement and an Adoption Statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send Adoption Statement to consultees on the Planning Policy Consultation Database and others who have asked to be notified Upload the SPD onto the Councils website and use social media and/or local press to advertise adoption of the SPD.

7.4 Not all consultation methods will be used at the same time, as this will be dependent on the document being produced and the resources available to the Council at the time. The Council will consider the benefits of all consultation methods during each key stage, and will explore different and other consultation opportunities to address circumstances that may be out of their control.

7.5 All consultation responses will be made publicly available in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and presented at Planning Committee.

8. Neighbourhood Planning

8.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers that give communities greater influence over how their area is developed. Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to:

- Make a Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- Make a Neighbourhood Development Order;
- Make a Community Right to Build Order;

8.2 Where a community wants to take up the opportunities offered by neighbourhood planning, the legislation enables 3 types of organisation, known as qualifying bodies, to lead it:

- A Parish or Town Council
- A Neighbourhood Forum – A group or organisation must apply to the local planning authority to be designated as a neighbourhood forum.
- A community organisation

In Ribble Valley the borough is fully parished and therefore the relevant body would be a Town or Parish Council.

8.3 Neighbourhood Plans, once adopted, are statutory plans which carry equal weight to any Local Plan. Unlike DPDs, Neighbourhood Plans are produced by local communities themselves with the support of the Council. These plans must be in general conformity with the strategic needs and priorities of the Ribble Valley as outlined within the Core Strategy or the emerging Local Plan and be in compliance with national planning policy. More information about neighbourhood planning is available on the Council's website.

8.4 Plans should be prepared positively, in a way that is aspirational but deliverable.

The role of the wider community in neighbourhood planning

8.5 A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan or Order and ensure that the wider community:

- Is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
- Is able to make their views known throughout the process
- Has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging neighbourhood plan or Order
- Is made aware of how their views have informed the draft neighbourhood plan or Order

9. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

9.1 A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a statutory planning document and a community-led framework for guiding the future development of an area. It is about the use and development of land and may contain a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for improving the area or providing new facilities.

9.2 A Neighbourhood Plan should be a positive planning document, developed to help guide development in the local area, rather than prevent it. It should set a vision for an area and contain planning policies for the use and development of land. Policies should cover local issues rather than strategic issues.

9.3 The process should be led by a neighbourhood plan group that wishes to produce the plan. However, the Council will provide support in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (2012). Once adopted by the Council, Neighbourhood Development Plans become part of the council's statutory development plan.

Neighbourhood Plans should be developed in partnership with:

- **Parish Councils;**
- **Local Community Groups;**
- **Local Authorities;**
- **Statutory Consultees;**
- **Local Residents and Businesses.**

9.4 The local community will be expected to lead on the preparation of the plan and consultation initiatives, but will be assisted by the council wherever possible, for example through the facilitation of workshops where possible, the sharing of evidence base and use of the councils website.

9.5 We will seek to support all communities undertaking a Neighbourhood Development Plan within available resources. An appointed officer(s) will be a point of contact for any neighbourhood planning group and will assist the group throughout the process. They will also direct you to any relevant resources and will be a contact to provide guidance in relation to consultations and the potential scope of the plan.

9.6 Once a Neighbourhood plan has been finalised and submitted to the local planning authority, the local planning authority will check the plan for legal compliance and carry out a statutory consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. It will then be subject to an Independent Examination and a local referendum before it can be adopted. The referendum allows the community in the Designated Neighbourhood Area to vote on whether the Neighbourhood Plan should be adopted or not. A simple majority of votes is required before Ribble Valley Borough Council can formally 'make' the Plan so that it becomes part of the Development Plan. before it is examined by an independent Inspector, which can suggest changes , and a referendum will then take place.

9.7 Where appropriate, the Council will publish copies of any Neighbourhood Plans and updates on the progress of Plan preparation on its website.

9.8 The link below provides an update on the status of Neighbourhood Plans in the borough:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200364/planning_policy/1623/neighbourhood_planning

9.9 Table 3 below sets out the key stages involved in producing a Neighbourhood Plan / Order.

Table 3: Process for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan / Order

Key Stage	Parish / Neighbourhood Forum role	Ribble Valley Borough Council role
<p>1: Designation of Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum (where appropriate) (Reg 6)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before submitting an application to designate the neighbourhood area the Parish Council / Neighbourhood Forum may decide to consult with the local community about preparing a neighbourhood plan/order. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will formally publicise and consult on applications to designate a neighbourhood area (minimum 6 weeks). • Written/e-mail consultations with relevant consultation bodies, (in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regs 2012) including individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted. • Make documentation available on the Councils website, planning offices and other locations as appropriate and make use of social media to raise awareness.
<p>2: Preparing the Draft Neighbourhood Plan/Order & Pre-submission Publicity and Consultation (Reg. 9 & 14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the draft Neighbourhood Plan or Order and invite representations (minimum of 6 weeks). • Consider the comments and amend the plan/order if appropriate. • Prepare Consultation Statement. • Consult relevant bodies as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide informal advice and support and a formal response to the consultation.
<p>3: Submission of Neighbourhood Plan/Order to the Council (Reg. 15 & 16)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit plan or order and supporting documents to the Council including the Consultation Statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Council finds that the plan or order meets the legal requirements, it will formally publicise and consult (for a minimum of 6 weeks) as follows:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write to all consultees referred to in the Consultation Statement. - Make documents available to view on the Council website and social media, planning offices and other locations as considered appropriate. - Collate the representations to send to the examiner.
4: Independent Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Examiner issues a report to the local planning authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements for the independent examination of the neighbourhood plan. • Submit the plan or order, relevant documentation and representations to the examiner. • Publish the Examiners report on the website. • If the Council is satisfied that the plan/order meets the 'basic conditions' as outlined within the Regulations the neighbourhood plan proceeds to referendum.
5: Referendum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of the referendum through publication material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make arrangements and publish information statement and notice of referendum on the Councils website. • Publish referendum results on the website and issue news release.
6: Making the neighbourhood plan/order		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If more than 50% vote in favour, the Council 'makes' the plan via Full Council resolution. • Publish the Neighbourhood Plan and adoption statement on the Councils website and make publicly available to view at the council offices and other locations as considered appropriate.

10. What is a Neighbourhood Development Order?

10.1 A Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) can grant planning permission for specific types of development in a specific neighbourhood area. A Neighbourhood Development Order can therefore:

- Apply to a specific site, sites, or wider geographical area;
- Grant planning permission for a certain type or types of development
- Grant planning permission outright or subject to conditions

10.2 Once established, there would be no need for anyone to apply to the local planning authority for planning permission if it is for the type of development covered by the order. Neighbourhood Development Orders can therefore speed up the process of development in certain areas, however the Order must meet any legal requirements and be in general conformity with national and local planning policy.

10.3 More information on the key stages, process and regulations can be found via the following link:

[\(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents>\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents)

11. What is a Community Right to Build Order?

11.1 A Community Right to Build Order is a form of Neighbourhood Development Order which can be created by a local community organisation, and so not restricted to a town or parish council or neighbourhood forum, and can be used to grant planning permission for small scale development for community benefit on a specific site or sites in a neighbourhood area.

11.2 A Community Right to Build Order can be used for example to approve the building of homes, shops, businesses, affordable housing for rent or sale, community facilities or playgrounds. Where the community organisation wishes to develop the land itself (subject to acquiring the land if appropriate), then the resulting assets can only be disposed of, improved or developed in a manner which the organisation considers benefits the local community or a section of it.

11.3 An Order must meet the basic conditions for neighbourhood planning and it cannot include certain development as defined in section 61K of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

11.4 Community Right to Build Orders, follows similar key stages and regulations to Neighbourhood Plans and must be subject to an independent examination, and then approved by the community in a referendum, before they can come into force.

11.5 More information on the key stages, process and regulations for a Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order can be found via the following link:

[\(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents>\)](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/637/contents)

11.6 The Government has provided updated guidance on Neighbourhood Planning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in particular around the way in which local groups should consider engagement and county involvement. In particular it is recognised that face to face methods, often used at a community level will be difficult. The guidance indicates that it is still necessary to ensure the community have had the opportunity to be consulted and this will need to be demonstrated.

Particularly where internet access may be restricted the Council will help support and advise on appropriate methods of consultation including the use of digital documents linked to the Council's website where possible. We would encourage early discussion with the Planning Policy team to ensure the process used will address the requirements of the legislation.

Want to find out more?

If you are interested and want to find out more on all aspects of Neighbourhood Planning please visit the following links:

- **Locality: Neighbourhood planning**

An advisory group for communities
(neighbourhoodplanning.org)

- **GOV.UK: Neighbourhood planning**

The official government website which explains the process and statutory requirements
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#history>)

12. Who We Will Consult

12.1 Paragraph 16 of the NPPF states that plans should be ‘shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees’.

12.2 The Council recognises that communities are made up of many different interest groups, and effective involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of the make-up, needs and interests of these different groups and their capacity to engage in community involvement. It is important to identify the key target groups to be involved in plan preparation so that consultation arrangements can be tailored accordingly, for example, ensuring people are consulted on topics where they may have a particular interest and locating events in accessible locations.

12.3 The ‘Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy’ has been compiled following consultation and feedback from community groups, organisations and residents in the Ribble Valley and provides further detail with regards to local partnerships and the Councils priorities.

12.4 The Council will therefore engage, as necessary, with the following groups during development plan consultations:

- specific and general consultation bodies (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, listed in Appendix 1);
- residents;
- councillors;
- town and parish councils;
- businesses;
- local voluntary/interest groups;

-
- community groups and organisations
 - hard to reach groups (including young people, elderly residents, ethnic minority groups, Gypsies and Travellers, those with disabilities and rural communities; and
 - agents and developers

12.5 To help us engage effectively with the many different parts of the Ribble Valley community we will maintain a Local Plan database comprising of local individuals and organisations who wish to be consulted and the statutory bodies designated by Government who have to be consulted, and managed under the relevant GNDPR and data protection requisition.

12.6 The database is divided into broad categories which provides a useful tool to check that we use the most appropriate and cost-effective ways of reaching all in the community, recognising that different groups will respond best to different techniques and that some groups have overlapping interests and memberships.

13. Hard to Reach Groups

13.1 It is recognised that some parts of the community are not always adequately represented, particularly those in 'hard to reach groups'. The needs of "hard to reach" groups such as the young and disabled will be considered thoroughly, so that they have the best opportunity to have their voice heard. We will continue to review our consultation techniques to ensure that the most effective means are used to seek views to help access these groups in particular.

13.2 To ensure that every reasonable effort has been made to engage the whole community the Council will use a variety of consultation tools and techniques to inform, consult and involve. We also plan to continue our consultation work with the large rural community, through the parish councils. Help is also available to individuals and community groups through the Planning Aid Service (PAS), which is an independent service that can provide help and advice on the planning system and how you can get involved in planning matters. Information about PAS can be found using the following link:
.....

14. How We Will Consult

14.1 The Council considers wide engagement particularly at the initial stages of preparation to be important so suitable methods to engage and consult need to be considered in order to meet and build on the statutory regulations.

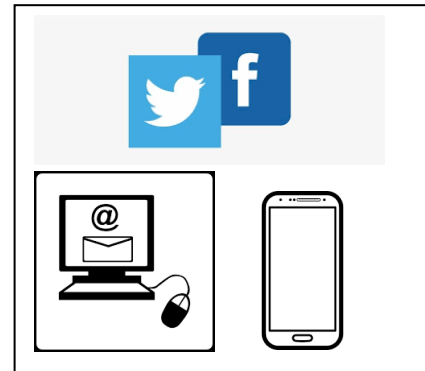
14.2 We will carefully consider how consultations are run in order to ensure that communities and the wide range of groups active in the Borough are made aware of relevant planning proposals and have opportunities to comment on them. Different methods will be used according to the scope of the consultation, the target audience and the resources available, and with full regard to any relevant Covid restrictions.

14.3 Results from the ‘Ribble Valley Council Perception Survey 2018’³ which gathered residents views on the local area, public services, specific council services and the local community confirmed that residents still prefer the local newspaper as their source of communication about the Council, closely followed by the Council e-newsletter, the Councils free newspaper ‘Ribble Valley News’ and the Council website.

14.4 The following outlines some of the different methods of consultation which will be utilised:

14.41 Online Engagement – Website, Social Media and E-mail Alerts

This method includes the use of the Councils website, online questionnaires / consultation documents, social media and e-mail alerts which will all be key for publicising consultation events to all users. The Councils website will be regularly updated with information about the Local Plan and other planning documents. The Council will advertise all consultations on its website with documents available to view on dedicated pages and will make use of social media, posting information on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, where deemed appropriate, to promote consultations.



The Authority will continue to explore online engagement methods to their full potential and will also take reasonable steps to ensure sections of the community that don’t have internet access are involved and consider alternative and creative ways to achieve this such as through representative groups rather than directly.

14.42 Public Engagement

Meetings: Depending on the issues involved, this can include drop-in events, exhibitions, meetings with relevant groups or organisations, and presentations at public meetings such as committee meetings. Meetings and exhibitions will be held at accessible and appropriate locations.

In cases where face-to-face meetings are not possible, due to government measures and legislation for example, other means of consultation will be explored. In addition, where particular special needs are not being met through the above means of engagement, the Council will, where possible respond on request in order to facilitate individuals’ involvement in consultation. The Council will carefully monitor its engagement work to ensure that it provides the fullest opportunity to capture the views of stakeholders.

³ Ribble Valley Council Perception Survey 2018 – Accessible via the following link: https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11673/perception_survey_2018.pdf

14.43 Written Notifications: For all all statutory consultations, the Council will directly contact by e-mail or letter all known consultation bodies, along with anyone who has asked to be notified when consultation is taking place. Recipients will be notified of what documents are under consultation, how they can access them and comment on proposals. Details of consultation and the availability of documents will be set out in this communication in plain English. Documents are also available in languages other than English, in large print and braille upon request.

Any organisation or individual who wishes to be added to the consultation database may do so by telephoning the Forward Planning team on 01200 425111 or emailing planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

14.44 Publicising Consultations

The Council will publicise consultations through a variety of means, including advertisements in the local press, public notices, media releases, newsletters, posters and site notices (for planning applications). Consultations will also be publicised in the Councils free newspaper “Ribble Valley News” , which is delivered to all households quarterly. Due to its timescales, it may not always be possible to include the prompt for a formal consultation requesting representations, however the Council will nonetheless use it to draw attention to a forthcoming formal stage of consultation wherever possible. Public notices will be published in local newspapers when appropriate and press releases and/or briefings to convey information to wider audiences will also be displayed in prominent locations within the Council Offices and in other locations where appropriate.

14.45 Making Consultation Documents Available

Documents and consultation material will be published online, hard copies will be made available for inspection at the Councils main offices on the main reception, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe BB7 2RA, or can be purchased in hard copy form and posted upon request. Also when appropriate documents will be available to view at the local libraries subject to any local covid restrictions.

The Council recognises that a significant proportion of the borough’s residents live in rural areas, and therefore they may have limited access to public transport and other services. The Council will endeavor to fully engage rural communities in the consultation process. Engagement could include community workshops in a rural village hall in the evening, or an event with a community forum on an evening or weekend. To keep costs within reasonable limits, notification will be by e-mail wherever possible but in an area where many still do not have access to the internet postal methods are likely to remain important.

Consultations will also develop the use social media and communication by electronic means.

Consultation exercises will be monitored to help identify groups within the community that are under represented and highlight any barriers which may prevent responses being received.

Having Trouble Accessing or Viewing a Document?

If you are having any trouble accessing or viewing a consultation document or require further explanation please contact the Council by phone in order to speak to someone who can help on:

Council Offices Contact Centre: 01200 414500

All documentation will also be made available online and can be viewed by following the links on the Councils website which can be accessed via the following link:

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

15. What happens to your views and comments?

15.1 All comments received on planning policy documents including the person/organisation's name and contact details will be recorded. The personal information that you provide will only be used by the Council for the purposes of notifying you of progress with the document that you have made comments on and any subsequent planning policy consultations.

15.2 At the draft document stage for DPD's (Regulation 18) or following consultation on a draft SPD, comments will be reported to the decision-making body (such as the Planning Inspectorate). The comments received will be reported as summaries or summary reports **within a Consultation Statement which** details the consultation that has been undertaken and the responses received. All comments will be available to inspect in full upon request, however addresses and contact details will be redacted in order to comply with GDPR. Whilst responses received via e-mail will be acknowledged, ordinarily written responses to the comments received will not normally be sent.

15.3 For DPD's, representations made at the Publication Stage (Regulation 19) will be sent to and considered directly by a Government appointed Planning Inspector to examine the plan. The representations will be published on the Councils website in full but with addresses and contact details redacted.

15.4 All comments made during the preparation of planning policy documents will be fully considered and, where appropriate, the Council will make decisions or changes as a result. However, it is important to note that it may not always be possible or appropriate to decide the matter in accordance with the comment(s) received. Sometimes there may be other considerations to which the Council must adhere such as requirements of legislation or national/local policies.

COVID-19 Consultation

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic MHCLG have set out changes to Plan-making guidance. The guidance stipulates that Local Planning Authorities should make any temporary changes necessary to allow plan-making to progress, and that continue to promote effective community engagement by means which are reasonably practicable.

The guidance is available to view at:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making?utm_source=5b235a27-ad78-4a8d-af75-1e81bf0c9cd7&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate# covid19

The Council will continue to respond to updated regulations and explore means of maintaining public participation in the plan-making process during the current pandemic and for future consultations.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING APPLICATIONS

16. Planning Application Process

16.1 A planning application is submitted to the Council when development is proposed. Planning applications can range from modest extensions to existing dwellings and new agricultural buildings to major housing schemes. A summary of the key stages in the determination of a planning application is set out in the table below. Some types of development are not subject to planning permission (known as 'permitted development'). For a list of what type of development requires a planning application see the webpages below:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/when-is-permission-required>

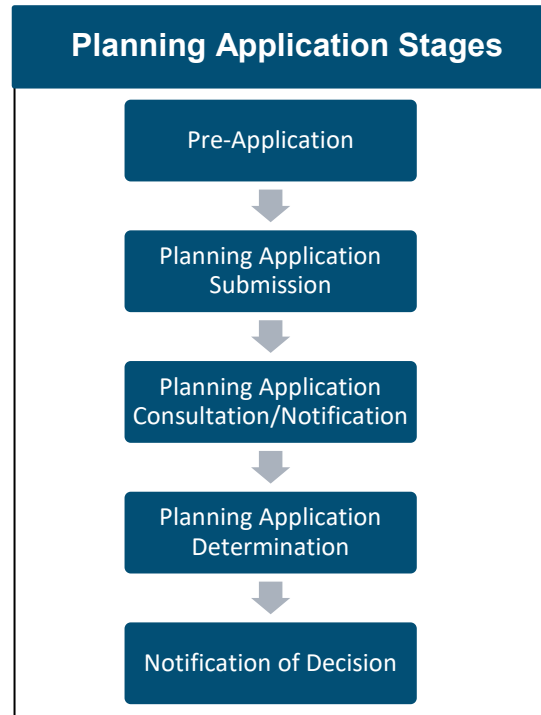
<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

16.2 Applicants and those affected by development proposals (third parties) have the opportunity to be involved and to express their opinions at various stages.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 sets out a minimum standard of publicity and notification of applications to the local community, depending on the nature of the application.

16.3 The objectives of the Ribble Valley Borough Council 'Development Management Protocol' (as amended) are:

- To ensure that the development management process is open and consistent;
- To ensure that Members, officers, applicants, agents and all other stakeholders are clear about their respective roles in the process;
- To ensure that the process accommodates community involvement in an open and accessible way;
- To ensure that the optimum balance is reached between the quality of the decision reached and the time taken to reach it.



The 'Development Management Protocol' can be accessed via the following link:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/download/7796/development_management_protocol

16.4 In respect to planning applications processed by Ribble Valley Borough Council, the protocols detailed below explain the level of service the Council will aim to provide to applicants, the expectations the Council has of applicants, and the opportunities for third parties to get involved.

17. Pre-Application Process

17.1 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paras. 39-46) Ribble Valley Borough Council encourages pre-application engagement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

17.2 A pre-application service is available on request, and there is a sliding scale of charges depending on the service required and scale/nature of the development proposed. Discussions can be arranged with a case officer to go through the proposal in more detail, however face to face meetings are currently not possible due to Covid restrictions. The Authority also provides a 'Fast Track Service' which accelerates the processing of the enquiry, offering a meeting with a planning officer within the first 7

working days and a written response 2 weeks earlier than normal⁴. Full details of the guidance notes and current fees for this service can be viewed at:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11487/guidance_notes_and_fees_for_requests_for_pre-application_advice_2020.pdf

17.3 The Council also encourages applicants to engage with both the Council and the community/third parties before an application is submitted. This will give an opportunity to address issues *before* the planning application is submitted, thus potentially avoiding an application being in-validated and reducing the time to determine an application. Depending on the scale of the proposed development and the issues involved, pre-application engagement may include some of the following:

- Discussions with Statutory Consultees, neighbours, Parish Councils and Members
- Public meetings with groups in the community;
- Exhibitions;
- Workshops;
- Leaflet drops to local residents outlining the proposal and inviting comments within a specified timescale;
- Making detailed plans available for public view on websites and social media

Developers are encouraged to submit a **consultation statement** with their planning application outlining who was consulted, the means by which they were consulted, the results of any consultation and how these have influenced the planning application proposals.

17.4 The details of pre-application consultations with the Council, local community and statutory consultees (depending on the type of development) should form the basis of a **Statement of Community Involvement** at Pre-Application stage, which is then submitted with the planning application. (Refer to the Validation Checklist):

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/12209/adopted_validation_checklist_27_june_2019

18. Planning Application Consultations

18.1 The Council exercises its development management functions in the public interest and is committed to publicising widely on planning applications that we receive.

18.2 Once the Authority is in receipt of an application it will be validated⁵, applicants will be informed that their application has been received and validated, and also provided with information about the

⁴ * Please note whilst the Planning Department will endeavour to provide a written response within the advertised time period occasionally it may take longer to provide written advice due to staff commitments and/or resources.

⁵ The validation checklist is available to view at:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/12209/adopted_validation_checklist_27_june_2019.pdf

procedures for assessment. It is important that all applications contain relevant documents so that they can be validated as soon as possible.

18.3 The nearest neighbours will be notified of the proposal and certain proposals such as Listed Buildings, development in Conservation Areas, and applications termed as “major developments” require a formal statutory notice to be placed on site and in the press. A period of 21 days is normally provided for responses to be made.

18.4 It is not possible to notify everyone who may have an opinion and therefore judgement is used by the case officer to determine how wide direct notification should be. However, details of all planning applications received are published on the Council’s website www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/planning and is updated weekly, and most applications are picked up by the local press. **All written representations (letter or e-mail), whether or not received as a result of direct consultation are taken into consideration before a recommendation or decision is reached.**

18.5 The Council will continue to accept all written comments until the decision has been made, irrespective of whether or not the statutory consultation period has elapsed. When an application is to be determined at Planning and Development Committee correspondence received on the day of the meeting may not always be reported in writing but where possible this will be reported verbally.

18.6 Depending on the complexity and nature of the scheme proposed we will also consult all **statutory consultees** such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and the Highways Authority **and non-statutory consultees** who are likely to have an interest in a proposed development such as the local civic society. The Town and Parish Councils are also notified and given 21 days to consider the scheme.

19. What happens to your views and comments?

19.1 Anyone can comment on a planning application. Any comments can only be made on the basis of material planning considerations. Material planning considerations are only those matters that can be considered within planning law in assessing and determining a planning application. For example, conformity with local planning policies, issues regarding traffic, impact upon residential amenity (loss of privacy/overlooking) and noise disturbance. All representations are available to view. Representations made during the assessment of the application will be summarised in the officers report which will state how the issues raised have been addressed in reaching their final recommendation.

19.2 Minor or uncontroversial applications will normally be determined by officers under delegated powers by the Council to the Director of Economic Development and Planning. Conversely major applications and where there is significant public interest, the Director of Economic Development and Planning and/or the Head of Planning may consider it appropriate for the application to be considered by Committee. Such applications, apart from those specifically excluded from the call in procedure, could also be called in if Members consider it appropriate.

19.3 More information on the Council's scheme of delegation for planning applications is available by accessing the following link to the Councils website:

https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200361/planning_applications/1591/delegation_scheme

20. Planning Committee

20.1 A planning committee is made up of elected members who usually meet once a month to make decisions on planning applications. Comments received from consultees or the public will be set out in the case officer's report which may form part of the discussions that take place at these meetings. The agenda and minutes of Planning Committee meetings are available to view on the Councils website via the following link:

<https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/meetings>

20.2 Members of the public can participate in these meetings by making a verbal representation about an application, and where objections are to be raised the applicant has the right to respond. Speakers are limited to three minutes during proceedings. In addition, applicants have a right to address the Planning Committee if officers have recommended refusal of their application.

20.3 Participants who wish to speak must contact the Committee Clerk well in advance of the meeting and if documents are to be circulated for view these should be submitted well in advance so Members are aware of the information and also to assist the smooth running of the meeting.

20.4 Once a decision has been issued, a decision notice will be sent to the applicant and/or agent to inform them of the decision. As part of the Councils commitment to community involvement, the Council makes Decision Notices available on the Councils website allowing interested persons to view the conditions placed on the development.

21. The Appeals Process

21.1 If the applicant(s) disagree with the decision that has been made, or if it is granted with conditions that are unacceptable to the applicant, they have the opportunity to make an appeal to the Secretary of State. There is also a right of appeal if an application is not determined within a specific time, and a right of appeal against the issuing of an Enforcement Notice. Appeals are formally made to the Planning Inspectorate or the appropriate Office who will appoint an independent Inspector.

21.2 We will notify in writing all those who made written comments upon the original application. Copies of their comments will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate and the Council will inform people how to make further representations to the Planning Inspectorate. However, if the appeal is regarding a householder application new comments on these types of appeal cannot be made at this stage. Further advice on the appeal process is available at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planninginspectorate>

21.3 For cases to be heard by way of hearing and public inquiry, we will also write to advise interested parties of the time and date of the meeting to invite them to come along and make their views known to the Inspector if they wish to do so. All comments received from the community in response to the consultation carried out on the original application will also be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. This ensures that regardless of whether or not people chose to engage in the appeal process, their views will be made known and taken into account.

22. Methods of Planning Engagement (Applications)

22.1 The Authority undertakes statutory publicity in accordance with current legislation and the level of consultation/notification carried out for planning applications will be proportionate to the type and scale of the planning application being determined. The government may change the statutory publicity requirements at any time and therefore the Councils future approach will reflect any changes that are made.

22.2 Depending on the type of application and the legislation pertaining to such an application, consultation/notification includes the following methods:

<p>Neighbour Letters and Notifications to Statutory Consultees and other bodies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letters are sent to all owners/occupiers of properties that immediately adjoin the boundary of the site. Where the Council is unsure of the owner of an adjoining site, for example where the application site adjoins open land, a site notice will be displayed. - Where a development has the potential for wider implications we will write to a wider range of neighbouring properties. - Statutory Consultees are consulted as a matter of course, with 21 days to respond. This is normally done electronically. - Borough councillors and the relevant parish council will also be notified.
<p>Site Notices</p>	<p>Site notices are displayed for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major Development (10 or more dwellings or development creating 1000 sq. metres of floor space or more). - Applications subject to an EIA - Applications, which if approved, would be a departure from the development plan - Development affecting a public right of way - Development affecting Listed Buildings, or their setting - Development within a Conservation Area - Instances when applications may be deemed to be of interest to the wider area
<p>Weekly Lists of Submitted Applications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A weekly list of applications received and decisions made is produced. - This is available to view on the Councils website and e-mailed to Parish Councils. - It will be sent to other bodies who have expressed an interest upon request.

<p>Advertisements in the Local Press</p>	<p>Advertisements are displayed for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major Development (10 or more dwellings or development creating 1000 sq. metres of floor space or more). - Applications subject to an EIA - Applications, which if approved, would be a departure from the development plan - Development affecting a public right of way - Development affecting Listed Buildings, or their setting - Development within a Conservation Area - Instances when applications may be deemed to be of interest to the wider area.
<p>Councils website and Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All applications, supporting documents and other relevant details are available online via the following webpage: https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/planningApplication/search - The Authority may also use social media such as Facebook and Twitter when deemed appropriate.

COVID-19 Consultations

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic MHCLG have introduced temporary regulations to supplement existing statutory publicity arrangements for planning applications. Under the regulations authorities have ‘flexibility’ to take ‘other reasonable steps’ to publicise applications and must be ‘proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development’.

Useful guidance can be viewed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consultation-and-pre-decision-matters# covid19>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/our-work/planning-covid-19>

The Council will continue to respond to updated regulations and explore means of maintaining public participation in the decision-making process during the current pandemic and for future consultations.

23. Resource Implications

23.1 The Council will endeavour to make sufficient resources available in order to meet its statutory requirements and responsibilities as well as to put in place procedures as outlined within this SCI.

23.2 This SCI seeks to achieve an acceptable balance between the importance of community engagement and keeping the costs within realistic limits. We are aware of the dangers of “consultation fatigue” and will endeavour, wherever possible, to co-ordinate consultation exercises with other parts

of the authority. We will also maximise the use of available resources such as the Planning Portal, Planning Aid , the Council's website and social media.

24. Monitoring and Review

24.1 The Councils SCI will be kept under review and be updated every 5 years, or earlier when necessary, to correct factual changes and/or further revisions of the regulations which govern publicity and involvement in the planning policy preparation and planning application processes.

24.2 In addition, the Authority produces an annual Authority monitoring Report (AMR). This document sets out how the Local Plan policies are performing. The SCI will be reviewed if the AMR Report or external changes indicates a need for a review.

24.3 Any necessary changes will be made following appropriate public consultation where deemed necessary, having regard to emerging best practice guidance and/or changes to legislation. We are always happy to discuss ideas for improving our consultation. Please email us at planningpolicy@ribblevalley.gov.uk.

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION BODIES

Specific Consultation Bodies

The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 specifies that the following bodies must be consulted if the council considers that body will be affected by what is proposed to be covered in the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). These include: -

- Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities
- Lancashire County Council (Highways and Education);
- Lancashire Constabulary;
- Parish and Town Councils within the Ribble Valley;
- The Coal Authority;
- Environment Agency;
- Historic England;
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England;
- Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd;
- Office of Rail Regulators;
- Highways England;
- The Secretary of State for Transport
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Mobile Operators Association (representing the four UK mobile operators);
- Clinical Commissioning Group and Local NHS (Public Health);
- Relevant utility companies, including United Utilities, National Grid, Electricity North West
- Homes England
- Lancashire Constabulary and Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service
- Lead Local Flood Authority (Lancashire County Council)
- Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

General Consultation Bodies

The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 indicate that general consultation bodies must be consulted where the council considers it appropriate. These include:

- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area;

Other Consultation Bodies

In addition to those identified as specific or general consultation bodies other consultees including the community, business and third sector groups will be consulted during planning policy consultations. These may include:

- Conservation Bodies
- Recreation Bodies
- Environmental Groups
- Schools
- Transport Bodies and Groups
- Nature Conservation / Countryside Bodies
- Planning consultants and Agents
- The Development Industry
- Local businesses
- Other miscellaneous bodies

APPENDIX 2: LOCAL PLAN DATABASE OF CONSULTEES

Individuals, organisations or bodies who wish to be regularly contacted when development plan documents (including the local plan) are under preparation and go out for consultation may request to be placed on the Councils database of consultees at any stage by contacting the planning policy team on 01200 425111 or emailing planningpolicy@ribblevalley.gov.uk

The database is made up of the following generic types of consultee with whom we will consult (including bodies outlined at Appendix 1):

- **Interested Members of the Public** – Individuals who have requested inclusion on the database;
- **Ribble Valley Borough Council Members;**
- **Ribble Valley Parish and Town Councils;**
- **Community Organisations:**
 - All schools in the Borough;
 - Churches & minority faith groups;
 - Groups representing the interests of disabled persons;
 - Youth groups, clubs, interest groups and societies;
- **Statutory & Development Control Consultees:**
 - National Interest Groups;
 - Government Agencies;
 - Infrastructure Providers
- **Neighbouring Local Authorities and Neighbouring Parish Councils**
- **Housing Associations**
- **Businesses, Consultants, Developers:**
 - Local and national businesses that have requested inclusion
 - Landowners, developers, and their agents
- **Other bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic, national or hard to reach groups**

APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION ON THE PLANNING PROCESS

Advice on the planning process is available from the Borough Council, Planning Aid, Government websites and private planning agents.

Council Advice

Planning officers are available to advise on Council policies and answer queries regarding individual planning applications. Please either visit the Planning Reception on Level D at our Clitheroe offices or e-mail us at:

Planning Policy Queries – 01200 425111 / planningpolicy@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Planning Application / Development Management Queries – 01200 425111 / planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Planning Aid England (PAE)

Planning Aid England (PAE) provides planning advice and support to help individuals and communities engage with the planning system and get involved in planning their local area.

Launched in 1973, PAE is built on the principle that that everyone should have access to the planning system, regardless of their ability to pay.

Planning Aids work is delivered by over 200 dedicated volunteers who are supported by a small staff team based at the RTPI offices at Botolph Lane. All of the volunteers are members of the RTPI and have a range of skills, interests and expertise. PAE is funded by the RTPI, a registered charity. It is separate from both central and local government and provides completely independent and impartial planning advice.

A **free web resource** for planning advice is available at – www.planningaid.co.uk

A **free email advice** service is accessible via - <https://planningaid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/requests/new>

For all **general queries** about the services they offer call – **020 7929 8338**

Government Policy / Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Government planning policy is contained within this document which covers all planning issues, such as planning for housing, shops, offices and good design. All planning policies and decisions on planning applications must take what the NPPF says about different types of land use into account. The NPPF is accessible via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Planning Practice Guidance – The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. NPPG guidance is accessible via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Planning Portal - A national web-based service which can be accessed to find information about planning and building regulations information. Planning applications can also be submitted to the Council via this website. The website can be accessed via: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

Planning Consultants and Agents

A number of independent planning consultants and agents operate locally who charge a fee for planning advice. To retain impartiality Council officers are unable to make individual recommendations. The RTPI hosts a webpage in which you can search for local accredited consultants and is available to view at:

<https://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk/#/>