

# RVBC Core Strategy EIP: Technical Note



**Date** 23 April 2014  
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**From** D Hourd / RVBC  
**To** Simon Berkeley, Planning Inspector  
**Subject** Technical Note regarding assessment of additional houses

## Work to date

In August 2013, RVBC proposed to increase the overall housing supply figure for the plan period from 4,000 to 5,000 homes. This was to address an identified increase in housing needs and to reflect the number of housing completions in the previous two years. As part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process, an Addendum Report was produced to re-assess the preferred strategy in view of the overall 1,000 dwellings increase. This assumed the same proportional distribution of homes between the settlements within the borough as had previously been assessed. This approach enabled this new option (and also a 5,600 homes option) to be directly compared with the previous assessment of options.

The SA concluded<sup>1</sup> that the assessment of the 5,000 homes option would not be greatly different to that of the 4,000 homes option given the increase over the 4,000 unit option is relatively small, only an additional 233 units, or 16 per annum between now and 2028. 104 of these additional units would be in Clitheroe, which is identified as being a settlement capable of absorbing additional development. 149 additional units would be spread between the 32 identified other settlements. The proportional increase for these other settlements and Whalley was not considered to be significant over the lifetime of the plan. As with the SA of the 4,000 units option, it is assumed that development would only occur where this would be appropriate and sustainable in line with the supporting policy within the Core Strategy. The findings of the assessment therefore indicated that the housing increase would result in no significant differences and it was not considered necessary to explore an alternative development strategy. A summary of the differences between the number of residual units that would need to be completed between the 4,000 and 5,000 units options is presented below:

	Total number of houses required for each settlement (4000 units total)	Residual number of houses required for each settlement (4000 units total)	Total number of houses required for each settlement (5000 units total)	Residual number of houses required for each settlement (5000 units total)	Total increase in housing numbers per settlement	Residual increase per settlement
Clitheroe	1670	126	2065	230	395	104
Longridge	835	558	1032	550	197	-8
Whalley	375	227	463	215	88	-12
Other settlements	1120	583	1440	732	320	149
<i>Standen</i>	<i>(1040)</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>(1040)</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>2,534</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>2,767</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>233</b>

<sup>1</sup> See Post 5.16 Sustainability Appraisal Addendum report (August 2013)

<sup>2</sup> When the residual was calculated for 5,000 dwellings (31<sup>st</sup> March 2013), more commitments (planning permissions/ completions) have taken place since the residual was calculated for 4,000 dwellings (31<sup>st</sup> October 2011).

Given the relatively small increase in residual units up to 2028, it is not considered necessary or justified to identify additional spatial options and then subject them to the SA process as the appraisal of the 5,000 homes Spatial Strategy does not raise any significant differences in terms of the appraisal. Some minor concerns were identified with regard to additional pressure on Clitheroe including air quality, pressure on services, primary school places and cumulative landscape effects with the Standen proposal. However, these are only minor increases compared with the 4,000 unit option and have been identified here on a precautionary basis. Furthermore, many of these effects could be mitigated. With regard to rural settlements, the slight increase in units may further benefit rural services viability but may also add to cumulative erosion of the environment. However, as with the SA of the 4,000 unit option, the Core Strategy policy framework is in place to ensure against inappropriate development on a case-by-case basis.

Furthermore, the Council is satisfied that sufficient information has been generated from the appraisal of alternative spatial strategies to satisfactorily understand the relative merits of different settlement distributions whether 4,000 or 5,000 homes are proposed. By its nature the Core Strategy is a high-level and strategic document that will be supported by more site-specific analysis going forward. Similarly, the SA process for the Core Strategy is high-level. The processes combined have not identified significant enough issues between two growth quanta to justify or warrant the options process being repeated. The assessment of reasonable alternatives has considered an appropriate range of options to justify the chosen approach.

### **Further work**

Following the close of the hearing sessions of the EiP, the appointed Inspector for the Examination of the Ribble Valley wrote to Ribble Valley Council (31<sup>st</sup> January 2014) expressing concern that “a main modification increasing the level of housing growth to an annual average of at least 280 is necessary for soundness”. As a result, Ribble Valley intends to increase the proposed housing requirement within the Core Strategy from 5000 to 5600 over the whole plan period. This results in an annual average figure of 280 units.

As part of the SA Addendum report<sup>3</sup>, the implications of a housing requirement of 5,600 units has been assessed.

	Total number of houses required for each settlement (4000 units total)	Residual number of houses required for each settlement (4000 units total)	Total number of houses required for each settlement (5600 units total)	Residual number of houses required for each settlement (5600 <sup>4</sup> units total)	Total increase in housing numbers per settlement	Residual increase per settlement
Clitheroe	1670	126	2320	240	650	114
Longridge	835	558	1160	633	325	75
Whalley	375	227	520	0	145	-227 (0)
Other settlements	1120	583	1600	145	480	-438
<i>Standen</i>	<i>(1040)</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>(1040)</i>	<i>1040</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4000</b>	<b>2,534</b>	<b>5600</b>	<b>2058</b>	<b>1600</b>	<b>-476</b>

<sup>3</sup> See Post 5.16 Sustainability Appraisal Addendum report (August 2013)

<sup>4</sup> Residual figures calculated for 5,600 dwellings at 31st March 2014. More commitments (planning permissions/ completions) have taken place since the residual was calculated for 4,000 dwellings (31<sup>st</sup> October 2011).

The increase over the 5,600 units option is relatively small. 240 of these additional units would be in Clitheroe, which is identified as being a settlement capable of absorbing additional development. 145 units would be spread between the most sustainable of 32 other defined settlements. The proportional increase for these other settlements and Longridge was not considered to be significant over the lifetime of the plan and with Whalley, the units have already been committed, therefore there is no net increase. As with the SA of the 4,000 and 5,000 units option, it is assumed that development would only occur where this would be appropriate and sustainable in line with the supporting policy within the Core Strategy.

The SA of growth options (Addendum Report – Modifications June/July 2013 (008-UA003663-UE31R-01-F)) identified that the option to provide 5,600 homes over the 20 year plan period would result in more marked effects (some positive and some negative) than the previous 4,000 and 5,000 homes options in particular in terms of cumulative effects, on landscape, for example. However, the policy framework within the Core Strategy would provide some mitigation against such effects. In particular, since further guidance has been provided in DS1 to direct rural development towards the more sustainable settlements and away from the least sustainable settlements, the risk of adverse effects has been considerably reduced. As such it was not considered necessary to explore an alternative development strategy.