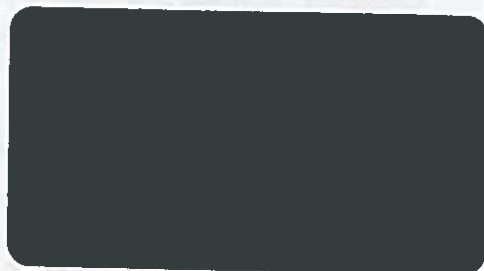




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Our ref:

Date: 14th June 2017

Dear Sir/madam

In response to the request from Ribble Valley Borough Council Planning Department consultation regarding the Housing and Economic Development – Development Plan Document (HED DPD) Regulation 19 (Publication Version).

Lancashire County Council (LCC) School Planning Team (SPT) would like to thank Ribble Valley planning department for the opportunity to respond to the consultation and provide an updated position of school provision and planning within the Ribble Valley.

Currently the updated draft School Place Provision Strategy 17/18 to 19/20 consultation has closed and, as part of this consultation, was sent to all Chief Executive Officers of each district in Lancashire to cascade to officers within their organisation.

The document sets out how we intend to review the educational provision in Lancashire to ensure the right number of school places are in the right areas, at the right time to meet demand.

The Cabinet will be responsible for approving the final version of the strategy. This approval will be sought over the next couple of months and will be available on the Lancashire County Council Website when approved. General points from the proposed Strategy are covered below:

General Summary

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 dictates that Lancashire County Council's statutory obligation is to ensure that every child living in Lancashire is able to access a mainstream school place in Lancashire. Some children have Special Educational Needs for which they access school provision outside of Lancashire. Special Educational Needs provision is managed by LCC's SEN Team and is not covered by this response. The Strategy provides the context and policy for school place provision and schools' capital strategy in Lancashire. Over the coming years, Lancashire County Council and

Its local authority partners will need to address a range of issues around school organisation in order to maintain a coherent system that is fit for purpose, stable, and delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people.

Pressure for additional school places can be created by an increase in the birth rate, new housing developments, greater inward migration and parental choice of one school over another. If local schools are unable to meet the demand of a new development there is the potential to have an adverse impact on the infrastructure of its local community, with children having to travel greater distances to access a school place.

In a letter from the DfE to all Chief Executives, the Minister of State for Housing and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools jointly stated that 'where major new housing developments create an additional need for school places, then the local authority should expect a substantial contribution from the developer towards the cost of meeting this requirement.'

The SPT produces an Education Methodology document which outlines the Lancashire County Council methodology for assessing the likely impact of new housing developments on school places, where necessary mitigating the impact, by securing education contributions from developers.

In order to assess the impact of a development the School Planning Team considers demand for places against the capacity of primary schools within 2 miles and secondary schools within 3 miles. These distances are in line with Lancashire County Councils Home to School Transport Policy.

Planning obligations will be sought for education places where Lancashire primary schools within 2 miles and/or Lancashire secondary schools within 3 miles of the development are:

- Already over-subscribed,
- Projected to become over-subscribed within 5 years, or
- A development results in demand for a school site to be provided.

Response to the consultation

The School Planning Team has reviewed and responded to previous consultations on Ribble Valley's local plan including the Issues and Options Housing and Economic Development DPD (regulation 18) September 2016.

School Planning received an invitation from Ribble Valley to attend a meeting of key infrastructure stakeholders to discuss specific issues relating to their specialist area. The timing and notice of the event resulted in there being no attendees from Lancashire County Council School Planning and, therefore, I am unable to make comment regarding the content of the meeting.

However, in the notes produced from this meeting there were no significant concerns regarding infrastructure provision and how this might influence the delivery of the HEDP. Stakeholders did reserve the right to make detailed, formal comments upon the

publication of the HEDP. School Planning Team also takes the position to reserve the right to make formal comments upon the publication of the HEDP.

Lancashire County Council considers the Ribble Valley to be a major contributor to significant housing and economic growth with a number of strategic housing developments included in their local plan. The infrastructure strategy adopted by RV through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is vital to successful delivery targeting the right infrastructure projects, with the appropriate lead time to support new housing developments, and delivery in accordance with the local plan and 5 year housing land supply.

School Planning Team respectfully asks to be consulted at the earliest opportunity of any changes to policies and delivery within the local plan or IDP and will, in return, advise Ribble Valley planning officers of the current status of school provision and planning across the Ribble Valley and the districts that share boundaries with the Ribble Valley that have the potential to affect inward or outward migration of school age children.

Documents supporting the regulation 19 Publication Version consultation include the Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2017 included the most up to date review of school planning at the time and stated;

There are 32 primary schools and six secondary schools within Ribble Valley. LCC publishes expected demand for school places over a rolling five year period and the latest publication has recently been consulted on. The draft strategy identifies the key challenges across the county in forthcoming years:

"Lancashire County Council primary schools have been through a period of intense growth in pupil numbers since 2010, and the Council has responded by providing an additional 3449 places in primary schools. However the birth rate has now stabilised, but there will still be pockets of high demand largely due to unprecedented levels of house building in certain areas of Lancashire.

Generally, Lancashire County Council secondary schools have been experiencing falling pupil numbers between 2007 and 2015, but now the secondary aged population is expected to rise significantly over the next 7 years as the increased primary aged population works through to secondary schools. Across Lancashire up to 9000 additional pupils may need to be accommodated within 5 years. This rise in secondary pupil numbers is already being experienced in some areas of Lancashire."

Ribble Valley has had 15 places commissioned by the Council in primary schools in 2013, but there is significant demand coming due to population rises and significant housing development. The Council is working closely with Ribble Valley Borough Council to secure housing developer contributions to address the impact of their housing developments on education provision, and continue to monitor the area closely. A project is underway in Langho and Whalley to investigate the provision of additional primary school places within 5 years and the need for additional secondary places is being closely monitored."

Currently scoping is being undertaken at local primary and secondary schools in the Ribble Valley planning area to identify the potential for expansion which could permit an

increase in their admission numbers. A statutory consultation process would have to be followed if a significant expansion is a possibility.

Also we are investigating the possibility of increasing the admission number in a number of primary schools in the area to meet the demands of the housing developments in Langho and Whalley as previously mentioned in the IDP. It is expected that these additional places will be provided by 2019.

Discussions are also underway with a local secondary school to investigate the possibility of expansion.

Whilst the Strategy states that the preferred solution to the need for new school places is via the expansion of existing schools, this is not always possible. Therefore, it is essential that, where a housing development (or group of developments) is of sufficient scale to justify a need for a new school, the district works with LCC strategically to secure sites and contributions towards the provision of new schools, where appropriate.

Funding to achieve expansions and increase classrooms and associated facilities has partly come from developer contributions secured by Ribble Valley planning officers. Lancashire County Council continues to deal with significant financial challenges from central government budget constraints, used to provide statutory services to citizens of the county.

Ensuring there are available school places for every child in Lancashire is one of those statutory services. Financial challenges continue with potential changes to the way schools are directly funded putting additional constraints on schools and the education provider to meet basic need and this partnership working will continue to be invaluable to the delivery of sufficient, good quality school places.

LCC would like to take this opportunity to thank Ribble Valley planning officers for their commitment in securing financial contributions from developers through Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to enable future expansion of schools within the Ribble Valley.

Strategic and Master Planning

Whilst School Planning Team assesses planning applications of 10 dwellings or above in terms of seeking contributions from developers, the team monitors the overall impact of single or smaller developments alongside strategic sites, taking into consideration all dwellings contribute to the wider impact on local schools within a planning area.

School Planning Team advises local planning authorities to consider taking the same strategic view on all homes to be built and the impact on all areas of infrastructure. Master planning of strategic sites is crucial to the delivery the right infrastructure, at the right time to meet future demand.

School Planning Team welcomes the opportunity to discuss and input at the earliest stage of master planning with Ribble Valley planning officers, senior managers and

elected members through face to face meetings, and attending future stakeholder workshops.

Neighbourhood Planning

Within each district a number of parish councils have made representations to be considered and develop their own local plan providing local residents to have a greater say in developments affecting their area, these areas are generally classed as rural or of outstanding natural beauty.

In many occasions the schools situated in these rural areas are good or outstanding in performance. The planning applications in these areas may be small in scale, however the cumulative effect may have a greater impact on the local school(s) and, therefore, the strategic approach to development in such areas would be beneficial and LCC seeks Ribble Valley's assistance in this.

The IDP sets out in document DS1 the location and tiers of development, and names nine areas more suited to development than others areas. School Planning will continue to monitor applications relating to these particular areas and respond accordingly impact on the education provision.

School Planning Team welcomes the opportunity to discuss specific issues with local neighbourhood representatives and parish councillors regarding the impact housing development may have on education place provision, and will continue to respond to neighbourhood local plans accordingly.

School Planning Team once again like to thank Ribble Valley Borough Council for the opportunity to respond to the latest stage of their emerging local plan, and for the continued support to Lancashire County Council school planning and provision across the district.

Yours Faithfully



Infrastructure Planning Officer
School Planning Team
Lancashire County Council

