

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2023
title: RIBBLE VALLEY LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To receive an update on progress with the replacement Ribble Valley Local Plan.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – To ensure that the borough remains a sustainable place to live and work.
 - Corporate Priorities – The authority has a legal duty to update its Local Plan for the area.
 - Other Considerations – None.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will be aware that work is progressing on the production of a new Local Plan for the borough. This intends to replace the adopted Core Strategy by setting out the strategic policies aimed at guiding development within the borough, integrating the provisions of the HED-DPD as well as including non-strategic policies to be used for development management purposes.
- 2.2 The last Local Plan update brought to this Committee in October set out the existing progress made to that point towards the several key stages of plan-making which are set out in detail in the Local Development Scheme. This included the aim of publishing a draft plan as part of a Regulation 19 consultation in late 2022 and submission of a final plan to the Secretary of State in early 2023. The most recent LDS can be viewed using the following link:

<https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/file/3075/local-development-scheme-may-2022>
- 2.3 Since the last update, members will be aware that work has continued towards the programme identified in the LDS as reported to meetings of the Local Plan Working Group. However, minutes of a discussion during the most recent Working Group on 11 January (as approved by the previous meeting of this Committee) identified that gaps remain in the Council's evidence base and further action was needed across certain areas of the plan in order fully ensure that the opportunities provided by the creation of a new Local Plan are fully realised, whilst also ensuring that the Plan is also ultimately found sound at examination.

As a result, it was resolved that the Council shall now work towards a more cautious but deliverable Local Plan programme in order to allow additional work to be completed, helped by the appointment of an Independent Town Planning Consultant on a temporary basis and the appointment of the new Head of Strategic Planning and Housing. This change to the Local Plan timetable has been communicated on the Council's website and through the department's database of contacts via email, and a new Local Development Scheme is expected to be published in early summer.

- 2.4 This notwithstanding, officers have continued to progress key elements of the plan and wider evidence base as outlined below:

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

- 2.5 As a critical part of the Local Plan's evidence base, the production of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prioritised and it is expected that this work will be undertaken externally as planned for within existing budgets. Having completed an invitation to tender exercise, a service provider can be appointed imminently pending an exemption granted from the Director of Resources and Head of Legal and Democratic Services and work will begin within the next 1-2 weeks. Given historic and recent flood events within the Borough this work is particularly important to ensuring new development is located within the most appropriate areas and is recognised as a key public interest.

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)

- 2.7 Members will be aware that the Council has already received approximately 100 site submissions which have been submitted through both a Call for Sites process and as part of representations made in response to the Council's Regulation 18 issues and options consultation. Assessing the sites submitted is now a key priority in order to determine the capacity of developable land within the borough, and the individual sites which may be appropriate for potential allocation as and when the spatial strategy and quantum of development within the new plan is decided.
- 2.8 Similarly to the SFRA, this work was initially included within the wider budget available as part of the plan's production and at this stage the intention is for this work to be done externally. A tender process is ongoing, and it is anticipated that a consultant will be appointed in the coming weeks.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- 2.9 Officers are also currently working in partnership with the County Council and external stakeholders including Jacobs and Philip Jones Associates to produce a cycling and walking infrastructure plan for the Ribble Valley. This is a central Government funded scheme which obligates every authority to produce a plan to encourage active travel and is part of the Government's wider levelling up agenda. When finished, the LCWIP for the borough will form part of the evidence underpinning the Local Plan whilst potentially providing the strategic case for new cycling and walking routes within the Ribble Valley. The next output as part of this work will be the draft infrastructure plan, published for consultation in the early summer.

Climate Change

- 2.10 Measures of adaptation and mitigation regarding Climate Change were raised by stakeholders within responses to the Council's Regulation 18 consultation, as previously outlined in a previous report to this Committee available to view using the following link:

<https://democracy.ribblevalley.gov.uk/documents/s4484/Final%20Committee%20report%20-%2016th%20Feb%202023.pdf>

- 2.11 In response, the Council is currently considering ways to address the challenge of Climate Change which are appropriate and feasible. Work is continuing through

channels including Local Plan and Climate Change Working Groups, the outcomes of which will be reported back to this Committee when this work is at an appropriate stage.

Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)

- 2.12 Finally, the Council is also looking to commission work jointly with Pendle Borough Council to produce a new Playing Pitch Strategy. The existing PPS for both authorities are over 5 years old and as such the Strategy and supply and demand information for outdoor leisure and sports pitches needs reviewing. The primary purpose of the Playing Pitch Strategy is to provide a strategic framework, for the next 10 years, but which can be easily updated within 3 years, which ensures that the provision of outdoor playing pitches meet the local needs of existing and future residents within the Study Area. The Strategy will be produced in accordance with national planning guidance and provide robust and objective justification for future playing pitch provision throughout the authority. Costs for the project will be shared between the two authorities, with the Head of Cultural and Leisure Services primarily leading on the scheme.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Members shall note the change in the timetable of the Local Plan programme and anticipate a new schedule to come forward within a revised Local Development Scheme published in the coming months. Work continues on the production of the new Local Plan and a further update on progress will be brought to a future Committee.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Plan Files and Publications.

For further information please ask for Mark Waleczek, extension 4581.