

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

please ask for: COLIN HIRST
direct line: 01200 414503
e-mail: colin.hirst@ribblevalley.gov.uk
my ref: CH/CMS
your ref:
date: 1 July 2013

Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
Lancashire BB7 2RA

Switchboard: 01200 425111
Fax: 01200 414488
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dear Mr Berkeley

RE: RIBBLE VALLEY CORE STRATEGY – EXAMINATION

I write in regard to the Council's submitted Core Strategy and the work that has been undertaken by the Council during the agreed suspension period in response to your concerns.

The Council is currently in a position where it has completed the evidence refresh on housing issues in the following areas:

- Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

And as part of the economic evidence base an update of:

- the Employment Land Review (including non B use classes);
- Town Centre Health Checks;
- Retail survey; and
- Leisure survey.

A review of Housing Requirements has also been undertaken and identified additional work to be undertaken.

These reports have been published to Committee and are published on the website. Copies of the relevant reports are attached to this letter and submitted to you as part of the Council's updated evidence base.

For information and context I have also included the relevant Committee Reports which are also submitted as part of our evidence base.

As a result of the evidence refresh the Council has identified a small number of changes that are proposed to help clarify and reinforce the plan. These matters are set out in the attached Committee Report and Schedule and it is the intention to publish these changes for a six week period of statutory consultation with a view to providing the responses to yourself to inform the Examination.

At present the Council had also undertaken a review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment including a call for sites. The call for sites has generated a greater than expected number of new sites to review. In addition the Council is currently awaiting completion of the Viability Assessment which is needed to feed into the SHLAA review.

Consequently the SHLAA is not yet ready for submission. I expect this to be completed shortly to enable that information to be provided to you including the whole plan Viability Appraisal. You will recall from your original concerns that there was a need for additional information in relation to viability specifically, and the Council has commissioned specialist consultants to assist with this work.

In the light of both the latest available census data and the updated economic evidence, the Council has also undertaken a review of its Housing Requirements evidence as requested. These matters were set out in a report to a Special meeting of the Council's Planning and Development Committee held on 25 June 2013. A copy of the report is enclosed for your information which sets out the background to the Council's current position and includes the consultant's report. I can advise that Members endorsed the advice of the consultants and agreed that officers should undertake the additional work arising from the evidence review in relation to housing in order to take the issue forward. I consider that the Council will require some additional time to complete these outstanding matters and to be in a position to update the Examination process.

As indicated the Council would like to submit the results for the extensive refresh that has been completed to date and to commence consultation on the proposed changes, including the position in relation to housing requirements. The Council will facilitate this work over the next 2 months with a view to the Examination being formally re-opened on 1 September if you are agreeable.

I would anticipate that the consultation will commence in early August for a 6 week period closing mid-September. The Council would aim to provide a summary of responses within 2 weeks of the close depending upon the response received. Whilst it would be possible to commence consultation on the proposed changes already identified in July, I consider it would be better practice to undertake a single period of consultation that could incorporate the results from our Housing Requirements review. I would be grateful if you would advise if you are content for the Council to progress on this basis and that you are agreeable to additional time being allowed to complete the recently identified work which in effect revises the timetable to progress the Examination from 1 September.

I will be pleased to deal with any queries or clarifications that you may have and trust that the evidence submitted with this letter gives you an indication of the Council's commitment to making progress on its Core Strategy as quickly as possible. Housing requirements, as you have indicated, do go to the heart of the plan so the Council feel it is important to ensure its position arising from the housing requirements review is fully complete before progressing the Examination further at this stage.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

COLIN HIRST
HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

Mr Simon Berkeley – Inspector
Ribble Valley Core Strategy Examination
c/o Michelle Haworth – Programme Officer
Examination Office
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE Lancashire BB7 2RA