Dear Colin

Core Strategy – Simonstone Parish Council response

Please find below the response to the Core strategy Consultation

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KEY STATEMENT EC3: VISITOR ECONOMY
Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.

Parish Council Comment
This policy should be of assistance in re-establishing T5 Former Railway Line protection as in the Parish Council’s opinion the re-establishment would play a vital role in transport, environmental and tourist infrastructure once developed. This residual link still forms a valuable asset for the development of a green link into Ribble Valley from both the east and west network cycleway as already planned. Existing leisure industry developers can see the potential of the Route being completed as envisaged in 2004-5.

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KEY STATEMENT DMI2: TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS
New development should be located to minimise the need to travel. Also it should incorporate good access by foot and cycle and have convenient links to public transport to reduce the need for travel by private car.
In general, schemes offering opportunities for more sustainable means of transport will be supported. Sites for potential future railway stations at Chatburn and Gisburn will be protected from inappropriate development.

The Parish Council’s case is that there is a case for retaining the former Great Harwood to Padiham railway line which enjoyed the protection the Bye-pass route gave. That protection has been removed (policy T5) for the following reason.

The north west corner of Burnley (Shuttleworth Link Estate), the north east corner of Hyndburn (Altham Industrial Estate) along with the south eastern area of Ribble Valley (Calder business Park, Grenville/Time Business Park), forms major employment in the region of East Lancashire. There is a need for a safer route to work to be completed as originally intended by SUSTRANS and the County Council in place of the Read and Simonstone Bye-pass which was abandoned. Hence there is a danger that if the protection is not reinstated the green route to work will be lost.
The Barrow estate which is a site identified as a major site for the development of a Business Park (one of two site) as identified in this Core Strategy, is only a relatively short way from the former railway line which would contribute to an environmentally friendly route for workers and tourists alike.

Major applications should always be accompanied by a comprehensive travel plan.

As a component of a travel plan the environmental concerns play an important part. It would seem somewhat remiss if the opportunity to protect a major component for the necessary infrastructure was missed.

Footpaths and cycle-ways however were highlighted as an issue for further attention with the majority stating that these should be provided with new development.

Nearly all respondents felt that public transport (and access to this) should be improved as part of new development and nearly half of respondents stated that new business development should only be permitted along public transport corridors.

The old railway line appears not to feature in the Core Strategy at all apart from the protection being removed.

(Below is an extract from Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 26th November 2004)

"A Cycleway to run from Martholme viaduct to East of Simonstone to Burnley to be included in the 2006/7 programme of works and West of Simonstone Business Park is in the programme for the year 2007/8 subject to resolving possible ownership issues."

This route became part of the proposed National Cycle network Route 6 (Sustrans) which appears to have been dropped due to the inability of LCC to resolve the issue of access to the land at Martholm. This has been to the detriment of both the National Cycleway users and the Lancashire Employees who wish a safer route to Work and School. Especially when one considers that the Route has been developed to the Martholm viaduct in Hyndburn and into Padiham just short of the Shuttleworth Business estate leaving only 2.6 miles in Read and Simonstone to complete the link.

A failure to reserve and ultimately develop the national objective to provide safer environmentally friendly routes to work or school as well as enhancing the National network of cycle routes should not be missed.

Businesses in the leisure industry support the retention of the protection and have registered an interest as they see the advantages of preserving this asset in the hope that the East West SUSTRANS Proposal will come to fruition.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Clerk to the Parish Council