R.V.B.C.
Forward Planning Dept.,
Council Offices,
Church Walk,
Clitheroe.

June 8th 2012.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Enclosed are my comments on the Proposed Local Housing Plan. I will be grateful if you will give these some consideration.

With many thanks.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

CORE STRATEGY
CONSULTATION
Core Strategy Consultation.

The Proposed Local Housing Plan for the Ribble Valley and the Lack of a Sound Infrastructure Plan.

Introduction.

The Core Strategy document relating to the forecasted housing needs for the Ribble Valley has now been published. It is forecast 4000 new houses will be needed by 2028, towards 2000 of these are to be built in Clitheroe, but the lack of suitable facilities to support such a housing increase in the town is alarming.

Sites.

Approximately 1400 of these houses are to be built around the periphery of the town i.e. Standen Estate, Henthorn, and the area adjoining Milton Ave.

Transport.

Neither the Lancashire County Council nor The Ribble Valley appears to have any plans to improve or upgrade the existing roads in the area. Considering the increase in traffic of approximately 2269 new vehicles on already overstretched and inadequate roads this is likely to cause problems in a number of areas.

The entrance and exit off Whalley Road to the Standen Estate which is situated on a very bad bend at Littlemoor, with the two new sites adjacent to the Rugby field and in what used to be Barkers Market Garden. It is likely to cause problems in Whalley Rd and Littlemoor especially at peak times and particularly when Ribblesdale School is in operation.

The other exit and entrance to this proposed estate is by a small roundabout on Pendle Road, already very busy indeed at peak times, this leads traffic up to a very dangerous exit onto the Clitheroe bypass, which has been the scene of several accidents. This has resulted in no access from the bypass to Pendle Road for traffic travelling from the North. This traffic will have to come in through the small lanes at the next junction off the bypass.

The increase in the volume of traffic coming from the 270 houses to be built at the bottom of Henthorne will not only increase the danger on Henthorne Rd itself but will cause problems however it chooses to come through the town to find an exit onto the bypass from Pendle Rd or Whalley Rd.
The increase in traffic will cause the mild problem of parking to become a serious problem in the future as Clitheroe's relatively small car parks try to cope with a large increase in demand.

As for cycling in the town and on Whalley Rd., and Pendle Rd., all the roads in the town are too narrow for cycle lanes and have too many parked cars or other traffic calming obstructions to make cycling a safe option particularly for young people.

Utilities.

There does not appear to be any plans for upgrading the existing water and wastewater facilities when new provision is created to cope with the extra housing nor are there any assurances that the present facilities will cope with the extra demand.

Health Services.

Although well over 4000 extra people will be living in Clitheroe, and living between half a mile and a mile away from the existing health services. No plans exist for new facilities in the Town, so most of these new people will be expected to find Health Services in nearby towns. The money put on one side for upgrading Clitheroe Hospital has disappeared and now that plan is unlikely to ever take place. To continue with these housing plans in the face of such inadequacy does appear to be playing Russian roulette with the health of a large number of people.

Education.

The existing secondary schools in Clitheroe are full. The Primary schools have some places available but not sufficient to meet the expected demand. At present students are being bussed into Clitheroe from nearby towns to attend the two senior schools. There are expected to be over 300 new students of secondary school age living in the town if these plans go ahead.

Are we therefore to expect, students to be bussed out of town to nearby schools and other students to be bussed into town to attend the schools in town. To make any comment on this is to pursue the obvious.

Although land at Standen estate will be available for a primary school there are no plans to build one. Bussing 15 and 16 year olds out of town to school is one thing, but bussing 5, 6 and 7 year olds out of town to school is quite another thing. As the government have not released plans for funding after 2014, it is not known whether any money will be available for the building of new primary schools. Nor is it known whether Lancashire County Council will release money to Clitheroe even if some were available. Education therefore will be in a very parlous state if these housing plans were to go ahead as proposed.
Leisure.

There is no money and therefore no plans to expand the existing leisure facilities so people are expected to use the facilities in nearby towns - really!

Conclusion.

The apparent lack of essential facilities gives rise to only one conclusion. Without answers to the above questions it is the utmost folly to continue with these plans in their present state.

That isn’t to conclude that the Ribble Valley could not absorb 4000 new homes, it can, but not with so many in one place. The serious lack of money that the Government has at its disposal, or is likely to have for several generations, will preclude the fulfilling of all these necessary facilities for many, many years.

If we are to fulfil our commitment, the Town Council may use the opportunity to do some good. For example:

Some of our villages are becoming dormitory villages, there is now an opportunity to inject new life into them, some village schools are near to closing down, village shops are disappearing and the pub is a struggling institution in a number of villages. If family homes were to be built in tasteful developments in each of these villages they would rejuvenate those villages to everyone’s advantage.

The bulk of the housing will still have to be shared between the larger centres but a greater sharing of the burden will bring benefits to all residents throughout the Ribble Valley, and will not make the quality of life significantly poorer for existing residents and those that are buying new houses full of hope and excitement.

This is not a panacea and it does have some of the same drawbacks as the proposed plan, but it may work with some more thought, and it may be a lot better than the present proposal. There is still time.

To build upwards of 2000 new house with no plans for essential support facilities is not an option and should be rethought before we live to regret it. We must always remember future generations are dependent on us making the right decisions now. For them it will be too late, if we get it wrong, but they will have to live with our mistakes.