Ribble Valley Borough Council  
CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION  
Council Offices  
Church Walk  
Clitheroe  
BB7 2RA  

Dear Sir  

I write regarding my concerns about the “Core Strategy” for future planning and development in the Ribble Valley. Since we seem to have been ignored by all who may have any authority or voice to get the plans re-examined – I would like to outline some serious omissions within the plans.

Before I go any further detailing my concerns for the Ribble Valley, should the huge number of houses be authorised, I would like to draw your attention to The Localism Act which was passed in November 2011. This Act was introduced in order to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and local councils. Below is an extract taken from the Act which outlines what the Government (a Conservative & Lib Dem Coalition Government) is committed to:

“We are committed to this because over time central government has become too big, too interfering, too controlling and too bureaucratic. This has undermined local democracy and individual responsibility, and stifled innovation and enterprise within public services.

We want to see a radical shift in the balance of power and to decentralise power as far as possible. Localism isn’t simply about giving power back to local government. This Government trusts people to take charge of their lives and we will push power downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level, including individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions.

For services which are used individually, this means putting power in the hands of individuals themselves where services are enjoyed collectively, they should be delivered by accountable community groups where the scale is too large or those using a service are too dispersed, they should be delivered by local institutions, subject to democratic checks and balances, enabled by full transparency.

The Localism Bill includes five key measures that underpin the Government’s approach to decentralisation.

1. **Community rights**  
2. **Neighbourhood planning**  
3. **Housing**  
4. **General power of competence**  
5. **Empowering cities and other local areas**
Having stood on the sidelines looking in on the “LOCAL” Planning Committee and their total lack of disregard for what LOCAL people want for our town and the wider Ribble Valley, I am astounded that they hold such offices.

The lone voice of Councillor Sue Knox standing up for the residents of Clitheroe was the only sensible and true voice to be heard. To reiterate my concerns about the Core Strategy, in particular the number of new houses planned to be built in the Ribble Valley and in Clitheroe in particular:

The Ribble Valley is an area of outstanding beauty. Clitheroe itself is advertised on the “Visit Ribble Valley Website” (http://www.visitribblevalley.co.uk) as:

“Nestling between Pendle Hill and the grandeur of the Forest of Bowland, is the bustling historic market town of Clitheroe. Hear the echoes of the chiming Town Clock as you amble through the undulating pebbled streets seeing that traditional customs and local charm really do still exist in these modern times”.

Clitheroe is a Market Town with customs and local charm and it should remain so. If residents wanted to live in a large urban sprawl then they would move to towns in the surrounding area. Clitheroe has a magic and beauty that no other town has. We have a long and fantastic history dating back hundreds of years. Would you like to add “The destruction of Clitheroe” to your glittering CVs?

I have heard the reason for building so many homes in the Valley is to provide “affordable” homes. As the Planning Committee members did not know the meaning of “affordable” I feel the need to provide this for them:

“In the United Kingdom affordable housing includes “social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.”

Housing choice is a response to an extremely complex set of economic, social, and psychological impulses. For example, some households may choose to spend more on housing because they feel they can afford to, while others may not have a choice. In the USA and Canada a commonly accepted guideline for housing affordability is a housing cost that does not exceed 30% of a household’s gross income. When the monthly carrying costs of a home exceed 30-35% of household income, then the housing is considered unaffordable for that household. Determining housing affordability is complex and the commonly used housing-expenditure-to-income-ratio tool has been challenged”.

I can only assume the UK has a similar standard based on this calculation. Therefore, I can assure you that I am living in “unaffordable housing” as my personal housing-expenditure-to-income-ratio is far greater than 30%. However, I choose to pay more to live in Clitheroe for the following reasons:

- Low crime rate
- A sense of Community
- Fantastic Schools
- Infrastructure - including local amenities, parking facilities and roads

I adjust the amount I spend on food and groceries, going out, clothes and holidays in order to pay for the privilege of this – perhaps some of the people bemoaning affordable homes should apply the same approach to income and expenditure?
The 25% for 25% fair and equitable petitions were established to bring attention to this hugely biased Core Strategy. If we adopt a more realistic approach to housing in the Valley then the following example may address what is believed to be the needs (based on a developers view):

- 4000 new homes in the Valley without plans for the necessary infrastructure will be a huge burden on the area – this would also be contrary to The Localism Act.
- However, no massive sprawling estates would actually needed if 120 houses were to be built each year for the next 16 years (1920 houses) 60% affordable 40% Open Market
- This provides **1,152 affordable** and 768 Open Market houses
- Using the plans for 4000 houses would only provide **1200 affordable homes (please note this is only 48 less than the 120 per year approach)** using the current 30% Affordable 70% Open Market rule

If we applied the 25% for 25% fair and equitable statement, then Clitheroe should be taking 25% of the total (480) - this amount of new homes has already been built or is in the planning process in Clitheroe.

Just as an aside – the e-petition and paper petitions which are in your possession currently stand at 2074 signatures. I do hope that these are not ignored!

Please act now before it is too late for the Ribble Valley.

Yours sincerely

13/6/12