To whom it may concern,

Please see attached our Representations Report detailing our formal response to the Regulation 19 Consultation Draft of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy. This Report is submitted on behalf of a number of our clients, and we have therefore attached separate Response Forms for each client, namely:

Beck Developments
Clitheroe Royal Grammar School
Fort Vale Engineering
Leehand Properties
The Clitheroe Royal Grammar School Foundation
W Monks (Longridge) Ltd

This Representation Report follows on from our previous consultation responses to the Core Strategy and we would also wish for the previous representations to be appended to the Representations Report attached to this e-mail. If you require further copies of these previous representations submitted in October 2010 and June 2011 please let me know.

There are a number of issues raised within our representations where we have sought further clarification and we would be happy to meet with you to discuss these matters with you either prior to submission or during the examination process.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this e-mail and attachments.

Regards

[Signature]

Also at Oxford and London

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Ribble Valley Core Strategy
Regulation 19 Comments Form

Before using this form to make any comments please ensure that you have read the Core Strategy document and the Guidance Notes, which can be found on Ribble Valley Borough Council's website - www.ribblevalley.gov.uk and follow the Core Strategy link. If after reading the Guidance Notes you should have any queries in completing the form please telephone 01200 425111.

This form has two parts:
- Part A - Personal Details (you need only complete one copy of Part A)
- Part B - Your comment(s) (Please complete a separate Part B for each comment you wish to make.)

All completed comments forms must be received by the Council no later than 5:00pm on Friday 15th June 2012.

Please return paper copies marked 'CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION' to Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA

Part A

Q1 Please can you provide the following information which will assist us in contacting you if we need to discuss any of your comments further.

Name
Name of Organisation (if you are responding on behalf of an organisation)
Database Reference number (if you have one)

Address
Post Code
Email address
Phone number

Copies of all comments made in Part B of the form will be put in the public domain and are not confidential, apart from any personal information. All personal information within Parts A and B will only be used by the Council in connection with the Local Development Framework and not for any other purpose and will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Council will summarise the comments and all representations will be made available to the Planning Inspectorate.
Please use a separate form for each individual comment.

Q2 Name / Name of Organisation (if you are responding on behalf of an organisation)

Q3 To which part of the Core Strategy does this comment relate?
Part of document eg Key statement reference, 'Vision' section etc...
Paragraph No.

Q4 As a consequence do you consider the Core Strategy is:

   i) Legally compliant

   ii) Sound *

   Yes  No

* The considerations in relation to the Core Strategy being sound are explained in the Guidance Notes

Q5 If you consider the Core Strategy is unsound, is this because it is not... (please tick the appropriate box)

Justified  Consistent with national policy
Effective  Positively prepared

Q6 Please give details of why you consider that the Core Strategy is not legally compliant or sound. Please be as precise as possible.

If you wish to support the legal compliance or soundness of the Core Strategy, please also use this box to set out your comments. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

See REPRESENTATION REPORT
Q7 Please set out what change(s) you consider necessary to make the Core Strategy legally compliant or sound, having regard to the test you have identified at 5 above where this relates to soundness.

You will need to say why this change will make the Core Strategy legally compliant or sound. It will be helpful if you are able to put forward your suggested revised wording of any policy or text. Please be precise as possible. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Please note: your comment should cover succinctly all the information, evidence, and supporting information necessary to support/justify the comment and the suggested change, as there will not normally be another opportunity to make further comments based on the original comment made at the publication stage.

After this stage, further submissions will only be at the request of the Inspector, based on the matters and issues he/she identifies for examination in the forthcoming Examination in Public. Please note also that the Inspector is not obliged to consider any previous comments that have been made in respect of the Core Strategy. You are urged, therefore, to re-submit on this form any previously submitted comments that, in your view, remain valid and that you wish the Inspector to consider.

Q8 If your representation is seeking change, do you consider it necessary to participate at the oral part of the examination?

No, I do not wish to participate at the oral examination

Yes, I do wish to participate at the oral examination
Q9  If you wish to participate at the oral part of the examination, please outline why you consider this to be necessary. (Please note that the Inspector will determine who participates.) Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Q10  If you wish to be kept informed as the Core Strategy progresses through to adoption, please indicate which of the following stages you wish to be informed of by ticking the box(es) below.

   Submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for independent Examination

   The publication of the Inspector’s report following the Examination

   The formal adoption of the Core Strategy

Q11  If you have any other comments to make on the Core Strategy that have not been covered elsewhere, please use the box below. Please continue on a separate sheet if required.

Q12  Date of completion

Q13  Signature

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this comments form, your comments are very much appreciated.

If after reading the Guidance Notes you should have any queries in completing this form please telephone 01200 425111
Representations to Ribble Valley Core Strategy:
Regulation 19 Publication Draft – June 2012

1. The Ribble Valley Core Strategy (CS) document was published in May 2012 under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The following document details our response to the Core Strategy itself and the issues raised within it and the supporting documents. In accordance with the Regulations, and the Council’s responses form, the report seeks to present each issue separately and outlines where and why we consider the document unsound, or where we have specific questions on which we seek further clarification.

2. These representations are made on behalf of a number of our clients within the Ribble Valley, and separate response forms have been completed in each case.

3. Regulation 8 of the above Planning Regulations sets out that a local plan must contain a reasoned justification of the policies contained within it. In this regard, much of our representations relate to what we consider a lack of detailed justification to the ‘policies’, and we therefore seek further clarification on a number of issues and wish to reserve a right to respond further in due course should more details become available.

4. That said, our initial comment concerns the proposed status of the numerous ‘Key Statements’ set out within the Core Strategy document. Paragraph 1.4 of the Core Strategy explains that the document incorporates key statements and development management policies that will be used to implement the plans. These Key Statements are highlighted throughout the document with specific numbers and coloured text boxes, which would generally imply that they are specific planning policies under which future development proposals would be accessed. However, the level of detail included within them varies throughout the document and some appear to merely state intent rather than outline a policy approach or strategy. The development management
section also refers to Key Statements rather than policies, contrary to what is written at Section 1.4. We would hope that the Council can clarify this matter throughout the examination process and wish to reserve the right to make further comments in due course.

5. Section 3 of the Core Strategy sets the vision and strategic objectives for the Borough, including amongst other things, ensuring a suitable proportion of housing meets local needs and that overall housing need is matched with the supply of affordable housing. Section 4 sets the overall approach to development through ‘Key Statement DS1: Development Strategy’. There are several issues in relation to housing that we wish to make representations on, along with the supporting housing Key Statements in Section 6. These are set out below.

**Setting a New Housing Target**

6. Chapter 6 of the Core Strategy sets out the overall housing strategy and details in Key Statement H1: Housing Provision that:

   *Land for residential development will be made available to deliver 4,000 dwellings, estimated at an average annual completion rate of at least 200 dwellings per year over the period 2008-2028 in accordance with baseline.*

7. Beyond this statement, the Council provides no details within the text as to why this figure of 200 dwellings per year has been set. Paragraph 6.3 states that it is determined by reference to the evidence base work and the recent review of housing requirements and acknowledges that it is lower than nationally projected requirements to reflect the impacts of economic slowdown. It is assumed that the evidence base work relating to housing requirements is the HEaDROOM report prepared by Nathaniel Litchfield in July 2011. This report concluded that a housing requirement of between 190 and 220 would be required as a minimum, which to some degree reflected realistic build rates of housing and constraints to delivery in the Borough, but also acknowledged that this figure range was lower than the household projections and employment-led growth forecasts for the Borough. The report also concluded that further research was needed and it is unclear whether this has occurred as the Council have provided no evidence as to how the figure of 200 dwellings per annum has been derived following the HEaDROOM report.

8. The approach to planning applications for housing developments in the Ribble Valley has changed significantly over the last 5 years, from a period of housing moratorium based on over supply, to one of under supply against the regional target whereby new consents have been approved. In the past twelve months particularly, the Council has approved several large housing schemes across the Borough in an attempt to increase supply consistent with the five-year supply requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This period has also
seen at least two large scale housing developments approved on appeal. It is therefore an indication that once the economy in general, and the housing market particularly, sees signs of improvement in the coming years, the Ribble Valley will most likely be the area within Lancashire where construction rates increase first due to the general strength of the local housing market and draw of the Ribble Valley. On this basis, and the Council’s strategic vision to increase both the supply and availability of affordable housing, more consideration should be given to the need to increase the overall level of housing requirement and set a more aspirational target for housing delivery.

9. Further to our previous representations to the Core Strategy at Regulation 25 stage with regarding the Fort Vale Engineering site at Simonstone, a masterplan has recently been granted planning consent, subject to referral to the Secretary of State. This gives planning consent for in excess of 200,000 square foot of new industrial buildings within the Borough, which obviously would have an increase on available jobs and therefore housing demand. In addition, the BAE site at Samlesbury has been confirmed as a strategically important Enterprise Zone with a Local Development Order potentially increased the speed for new development to come forward. This will deliver a major boost to the jobs market and again increase the demand for new housing within the Ribble Valley.

10. These two examples outline that the Ribble Valley has significant prospects to be well placed when the economy recovers from the current slowdown, and the Core Strategy should be more reflective of a general positive approach to development. NPPF considers at Paragraph 154 that Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic, setting out opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted. Although the proposed housing development required is stated to be a minimum, there is a danger that completions and extant consents, including those granted in the past twelve months, could stifle the future development aspirations set out in the Core Strategy, particularly in the latter stages of the plan.

11. We consider the plan to be unsound as it is not sufficiently positively prepared and has the potential to be ineffective once revised housing information becomes available.

**Distribution of Housing**

12. Key Statement DS1 sets the principal approach to housing distribution to be for the majority of new housing development to be concentrated within an identified strategic site located to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59 and the main urban areas of the Borough.
13. Whilst the Core Strategy seeks to influence development within the Borough by distributing its housing requirement to particular areas, it must be recognised that any new housing units completed between 2008 and 2012 and those with extant planning consent have already been located and therefore the Core Strategy can have no direct influence over these. It is therefore important that the Core Strategy highlights that a proportion of the 4,000 houses has already been taken up, and adjusts its strategy and calculations accordingly.

The Strategic Site

14. The identified strategic site proposed is referred to in the supporting paragraphs to Key Statement DS1, but is outlined in more detail in Section 9, which states that:

A strategic site at Standen, to the south east of Clitheroe will be developed in a comprehensive and sustainable manner as a mixed site to meet a significant proportion of the Borough’s housing requirement in the Plan period. The range of uses will include housing (including affordable housing), employment, community uses, local retail and service provision to serve the site, open space and recreational uses.

15. The following paragraph in this Section states that the strategic site at Standen is central to the delivery of the Core Strategy, and it will make a significant contribution to meeting the Borough’s overall housing provision in the plan period with a total of 1040 dwellings proposed. It also states that the Core Strategy is seeking to identify the site in principle, with the precise details of development to be set out in subsequent plans.

16. There is reference to previous consultation detailed within the Core Strategy document that attempts to explain why the Council chose this option from those put forward previously; however, there is little evidence to explain why the need for such a strategic site was proposed to meet housing development requirements within Clitheroe. Whilst we support the need for the significant majority of new housing development across the Borough to be delivered within Clitheroe, and also support development within the town and at peripheral locations to the south, we consider that the level of development apportioned to the Standen site, at 1040 dwellings, is well in excess of what should be delivered on a single site within the town.

17. The Council state at paragraph 4.7 of the Core Strategy that the strategic site will deliver an average annual provision of 52 units. However, as we are currently four years in to the plan period and as the Council has outlined the need for masterplanning and development briefs to be prepared in due course, it is unlikely that any development will be forthcoming at Standen for the next three years at least. Therefore, it is unlikely that 1040 dwellings could be brought forward on this site between now and 2028, unless a delivery rate of 80 dwellings per year was achieved.
Not only is this unlikely, but it would also have a significant impact on the housing market within Clitheroe to put so many new houses on a single site at that rate.

18. Therefore, we question both the need for the strategic site of such a scale, and the deliverability of the site within the plan period. There is evidence within the SHLAA to indicate that sufficient sites can be found within and on the periphery of Clitheroe to successfully meet well in excess of the proposed number of dwellings, without the need for such a large proposal at Standen estates. The Council has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed strategic site would be effective in delivering the required housing development over the plan period, and is therefore unsound.

19. Further, from Key Statement DS1 and Section 9 it is unclear whether the Council is seeking to actually allocate the site within the Core Strategy as there is no defined boundary or reference to a new policy allocation. That said however, the Resultant Changes to the Proposals Map document highlights that the Council is seeking to extend the settlement boundary of Clitheroe to include this site. Nonetheless, it is an unclear approach.

20. In addition, we consider that given the Council's recognised importance of the strategic site to the overall delivery of new housing, should the proposals be adopted within the Core Strategy, the Council should incorporate a contingency into the document in the event of delays to the delivery of the proposals.

The Main Urban Area and Other Settlements

21. Key Statement DS1 refers to the delivery of new housing in the main urban areas, which it is assumed in this context refers to Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley.

Clitheroe

22. Throughout the Core Strategy consultation we have made representation supporting the principle of the majority of new housing being delivered within Clitheroe, based on its status as the main settlement with the largest population. Any consideration of Clitheroe must be made with a view to our representations above regarding the Standen strategic site.

23. The Table at Paragraph 15.2 of Appendix 2 shows that of the 1,670 new dwellings proposed for Clitheroe, 282 have already been completed/consented and there are 1040 proposed at the
strategic site. This leaves a residual of 348 dwellings across Clitheroe in the next 20 years, less than 20 per annum.

24. Our objection to the size of the proposed Standen site is that it is an unnecessarily large urban extension to the Town. This is even more prevalent an argument when viewed in light of the completions and extent planning permission already present within the Town and on its periphery. The recent approvals in the past twelve months mentioned above will also go some considerable way to meeting development needs within the Town, and these should be taken into account fully before a decision is made to extend the settlement boundary so substantially by proposing in excess of 1,000 dwellings across a single site. We would argue that suitable and more sustainable sites already exist within the town itself and immediate adjacent the settlement to accommodate the majority of the proposed development for Clitheroe, even with an increase above 200 dwellings per annum.

25. Our clients have substantial development land available immediately and with potential in the short term to deliver some of this future housing growth within Clitheroe, on sites within and immediately adjacent the existing settlement boundary, to both the north and south of the Town, and we would wish to promote this during the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The Council has identified these sites in the SHLAA along with other potential sites across Clitheroe. Key Statement HS1 states the SHLAA's importance in assessing future housing sites. However, the presence of the proposed strategic site may effectively rule out any further development within Clitheroe above what already has consented.

26. As outlined above, we do not consider that the Council has fully assessed the development potential within Clitheroe to justify the need for the Standen strategic site and are concerned that the Development Strategy proposed would result in suitable, achievable and deliverable housing sites within the Clitheroe settlement being refused planning permission. Indeed, we suspect that the majority of the residual 348 dwellings will have already been consented in the past twelve months, for example 270 dwellings where granted on appeal at Henthorn Road (Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/A/11/2161186) in March 2012. On this basis, we consider the document unsound as it fails to justify the proposed approach.

Longridge

27. Throughout the Core Strategy consultation we have made representations in relation to increasing the proportion of new housing development to be delivered at Longridge, consistent with its size as the 2nd largest town in the Ribble Valley and the level of existing services and facilities within the town to support additional housing and development.
28. Although Key Statement DS1 does not refer to specific locations, paragraph 4.11 of the Core Strategy provides a residual figure of 560 dwellings within Longridge, some 14% of the total figure of 4,000, and paragraph 4.10 outlines that the amount of development proposed for Longridge has been reduced to address the 'key weakness' raised as part of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) options analysis.

29. No further reference to Longridge in this context is made within the document save the table at Paragraph 15.2 of Appendix 2. This highlights a 'Longridge Adjustment' reflecting anticipated development in Preston Borough at Longridge, resulting in 200 dwellings being taken from Longridge and reapportioned to the 'Other Settlements'.

30. A review of the preferred option in the SA highlights that 18.6% of housing growth is proposed in Longridge. However, this does not consider the existing commitments since 2008 as part of the calculation, so more accurately the proportion is 14% of the 4,000 total.

31. The SA states that there is good access to services and public transport links in Longridge and the centre of Longridge offers a number of amenities and basic services. It also mentions the town being well placed to benefit from existing employment infrastructure present e.g. Shay Lane Industrial Estate and continues that Longridge is potentially more outward looking given its location on the boundary of the Borough, so it is not clear if the economic benefits created there would all be realised within Ribble Valley.

32. The only reference to a key weakness regarding Longridge is through the Option B appraisal, which proposed 25% of development within Longridge. This states that the County Council identified the need for significant highways investment in Longridge to accommodate this level of growth. Beyond this brief reference however, there has been no specific details provided of that objection within the supporting documents to the Core Strategy or the submission documents, and it does not appear to feature at all within the Local Infrastructure Plan.

33. The proportion of houses based on settlement populations detailed in Appendix 2 of the Core Strategy is 29% for Longridge. However, a reduction in that figure down to 14% is what is effectively proposed within the supporting text of the Development Strategy. We therefore consider that this approach is unsound on the basis that it is unjustified and also contradicts the approach set out in the Development Strategy Key Statement regarding apportioning development according to existing population.
Other Settlements

34. Key Statement DS1 also considers that:

In general, the scale of planned housing growth will be managed to reflect existing population size, the availability of, or the opportunity to provide facilities to serve the development and the extent to which development can be accommodated within the local area. Specific allocations will be made through the preparation of a separate allocations DPD.

Development that has recognised regeneration benefits, is for identified local needs or satisfies neighbourhood planning legislation, will be considered in all the borough's settlements, including small-scale development in the smaller settlements that are appropriate for consolidation and expansion or rounding-off of the built-up area.

35. Paragraph 4.11 contains a table setting out the how the residual number of houses are to be distributed for each settlement once existing completions and extant consents are taken into account. Further details are set out in Appendix 2 of the Core Strategy, using the Housing Land Availability information as at 1st October 2011. As set out above, it is known that significant levels of new housing have been granted consent in the last 12 months, some on appeal and some of which are subject to Section 106, so these have not yet been factored into the calculations.

36. Paragraph 15.1 of the Core Strategy states that the strategy model provides for a minimum of 1120 of the overall figure of 4,000 dwellings to be provided across other settlements (allowing an average of 35 houses across 32 settlements) which gives a residual 2880 dwellings to be provided across Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley. However, a further 200 have also been taken from Longridge, so that figure becomes 1320.

37. The proportion of new dwellings to other settlements is not referenced in the Key Statement DS1 itself, but is outlined in supporting paragraphs 4.9, which states that 33% (1320 dwellings) of the required development will be placed into the settlements of the Borough not classified as a service centre. There is however no evidence that these other settlements can accommodate an average of 35 houses each or any evidence as to why the 33% target was itself chosen. Paragraph 4.9 of the Core Strategy does refer back to Option B, which was contained within the Generation of Alternative Development Strategy Options document. This however refers to a requirement in 'Other Settlements' of just 20%, much less than the 33% proposed. No further evidence would therefore appear to have been presented to justify this approach.
38. The other settlements within the Borough vary substantially in size, as demonstrated in the Councils Settlement Hierarchy, for example Wilpshire with a population of approximately 2,300 and Worston with a population of approximately 109. Also, several of these villages are close to other Local Authorities and settlements, for example Mellor Brook and Wilpshire are closely related to Mellor and Ramsgreave/Blackburn respectively, and therefore these areas should be considered separately and in their wider context in terms of the level of housing distributed to them.

39. We consider that insufficient evidence has been demonstrated to justify both the percentage of development to be distributed across the other settlements and also how this will be distributed. The Key Statement of the Core Strategy is unsound as it fails to justify how the level of development will be met by not referring to the specific settlements in more detail.

40. This representation follows on from our previous response in June 2011 where we highlighted our belief that simply considering an appropriate scale of development in future policy documents, through a link to existing populations for each settlement would create significant levels of uncertainty in the planning process until future DPDs were adopted. This also highlighted that unless sufficient justification was provided at the Core Strategy stage to show how each settlement could readily support a certain percentage of development appropriate to its existing population, a future DPD would run the risk of being incompatible with the development strategy.

Other Housing Issues

41. Key Statement ‘H1: Housing Provision’ states that the Council will identify sites for residential development through the SHLAA document and adopt a plan-monitor-manage approach. This element of statement does not set out any strategic approach or policy to guide subsequent housing allocations or applications, but simply reiterates the approach to preparing plans set out in the NPPF. Further clarification is therefore sought regarding its status.

42. Key Statement ‘H2: Housing Balance’ provides a requirement that all development must accord with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). There is a danger that unless the SHMA is kept fully up to date and monitoring of new schemes and household formation/movements etc. is undertaken, suitable planning application may be contrary to policy. Further clarification is therefore sought regarding the status the Key Statement may have in future application decisions.
43. Key Statement H3: Affordable Housing allows for open book assessments to be made within its consideration of affordable housing provision, which we generally support. However, the policy seeks to set a minimum level of affordable housing at 20%, and only where sufficiently evidenced. No evidence has been provided within the supporting text to justify this minimum target, and setting this would potentially restrict a site's development from being permitted, even where an open book assessment may demonstrate the scheme unworkable, for example a site which required substantial remediation. We wish to reiterate our previous representations made in June 2011 in relation to Affordable Housing, which is appended to this representation.

Green Belt

44. Key Statement EN1: Green Belt states that the overall extent of the Green Belt will be maintained to safeguard the surrounding countryside from inappropriate encroachment. Previous versions of the draft Core Strategy referred to the potential need for minor changes to the Green Belt boundaries, but this has not been carried forward within the document. We will be making submissions to the subsequent Site Allocation DPD for a minor Green Belt amendment to be made following approval of recent planning applications for expansion of the industrial area at Simonstone. Such a proposal would be contrary to the Key Statement as current drafted and therefore we would request that mention is made, as in paragraph 5.2.2 of the Regulation 25 version of the Core Strategy, for minor changes to the Green Belt to be considered appropriate within subsequent DPDs.