

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2010
title: BARROW BUSINESS PARK
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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1 MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1 To receive information on progress with developments at Barrow Business Park.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The proposals would support the Council's ambition to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of the area.
- Community Objectives – The matters covered in this report will contribute to the objectives of a sustainable economy, thriving market towns and environmental quality.
- Corporate Priorities – The matters covered in this report will support objective of acquiring land for economic development and securing development at Barrow Business Park.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 INFORMATION

2.1 Lancashire County Developments Limited and Ribble Valley Borough Council jointly funded the Ribble Valley Employment Land and Retail Study (October 2008) to provide the County and Borough Council, with an up-to-date assessment of Ribble Valley's local economy, highlighting its industrial, office and retail sector needs, prioritising development opportunities. This Study concluded that Barrow Brook represents the best location for expanding office space in Ribble Valley, and has particular relevance across the sub-region as employment sites that can deliver high quality office accommodation are increasingly developed upon.

2.2 This would support the economic development strategies of the County Council, Ribble Valley Borough Council and Pennine Lancashire and contribute to fulfilling the shared ambitions for high quality business space in the area. Members considered the outcomes of the BE report and agreed that officers should progress a joint project with LCDL to examine how development could be delivered through a joint approach with Lancashire County Developments Ltd. The project reached a stage where there was a suggested proposal; members have previously considered a capital scheme for this project and opted to seek funding through the Pennine Lancashire Partnership.

2.3 The PLACE Partnership previously agreed a proposed Joint Investment Plan (JIP) for the sub region that included the Barrow Brook scheme. Actions were taken to secure the funding through further discussions and formal application to the North West Development Agency. Whilst the project is included in the JIP, funding was not guaranteed and following the coalition announcements in relation to the Regional Development Agencies the route indicated by the Agency representatives to utilise capacity funding made available to Regenerate Pennine Lancashire to fund

the early requirement for the £25000 sought by ourselves to match the LCDL funding for project development has been progressed. Early indications are that up to £50000 could be drawn down and information has been provided to Regenerate to enable the money to be released. We are awaiting the outcome of this application.

- 2.4 Movement on bringing forward a site-specific scheme has been somewhat frustrated by changing priorities and aspirations amongst landowners which is increasing the likely pressure for alternative forms of commercial development and uses on the site. The Council will need to maintain a robust approach to such uses where they would serve to weaken the underlying commercial develop ability of the site. It is important that the site maintains a degree of scale if it is to attract commercial investment and is to fulfil its role in providing jobs to support the local economy. Due to changes in the Regional funding position it is likely that the original concept of public sector support previously considered to bring development forward will have to be remodelled and work is progressing with partners at LCDL to determine the most appropriate approach including options for site assembly and joint marketing.
- 2.5 Members will recall that Total Foods who own part of the site secured planning permission for new head office and distribution centre. The company have recently commenced construction. This will deliver commercial development at Barrow and it is hoped that this development activity will help push interest in the location. The Council has supported the company through the process of site finding, obtaining planning permission and directing them to our Partners at LCDL for business support. Housing developer Roland Homes has taken part of the former Briery homes site and is due to commence construction shortly.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503.