

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2011
title: CHIPPING VILLAGE PLAN
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

1 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

1.1 The Chipping Village Plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Council Ambitions – The matters covered in this report relate to the ambition to protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area.
- Community Objectives – To ensure vibrant villages.
- Corporate Priorities – To be a well run Council.
- Other Considerations – None.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Chipping and Bowland-with-Leagram Parish Councils have prepared and published a new village plan. A copy of the Chipping Village Plan 2011 has been placed in the Members Room and an electronic copy has been e-mailed to Members of this Committee.

2.2 The Plan was prepared by a local stakeholder group led by the Parish Councils. The Head of Regeneration and Housing provided advice in relation to the status of the plan within the statutory planning system and consultation and community engagement. The group undertook research, canvassed views through discussion groups and then issued the draft plan to a range of local interest groups for comment. The material was drawn together into a revised plan and was then the subject of an open day, drop in event where the general public could view the plan and make comments. A final version of the plan was produced and agreed by the Parish Councils.

2.3 As Members will see from the document, the plan covers a range of issues in a proactive approach that seeks to articulate a collective view about identified key issues in the village. It deals with regeneration issues, including tourism, housing, transport, infrastructure, employment together with local, social and environmental concerns.

2.4 Chipping, as a village, identified in particular key concerns arising from the closure of the former H J Berry site, a recognition of potential development pressures and a strong desire to seek to influence how the future of the village should be shaped. In this regard, the document sets out a number of parameters which the village plan would anticipate taking place with regard to the nature of the reuse of sites and the extent and type of

development that would be viewed as acceptable. The document is intended by the Parishes to inform decisions by Ribble Valley Borough Council and as a reference tool, for the Parishes with the intention of a focused action list being derived to help direct their own areas of interest and ongoing workloads.

- 2.5 The plan sits very comfortably with the emerging approach to neighbourhood planning. A recent note from the CLG is attached as Appendix 1 which gives further information to the concept and principles envisaged in a neighbourhood planning approach. It is important to note that the Chipping village plan itself does not form part of any statutory planning system and does not carry statutory weight. Similarly, at present, it falls outside the scope of the emerging neighbourhood plans framework which are still subject to regulations being published. It does however provide a valuable contribution to the work being undertaken on the Council's Core Strategy and Local Development Framework, especially given the manner in which it has been prepared which reflects in the main the principles of community development.
- 2.6 The plan does contain some very specific proposals and thoughts with regard to future developments and how they should be considered within either plan making or reflected in response to future planning applications. It is suggested that the document is viewed as part of the Council's LDF evidence base but it must be recognised that in determining planning applications, each case will need to be looked at upon its merit with the context of relevant material considerations where the Council would have to consider and apply relevant weight within that decision making process.
- 2.7 The work that has been undertaken by the Parish Councils has provided a valuable insight into the way in which local parishes can take the opportunity of neighbourhood planning forward. Although a number of parishes have previously prepared village plans or appraisals under previous measures, many of them supported by The Countryside Agency, in most cases they have not been recently updated. A number of Parishes are beginning to see the potential of preparing a village plan, especially where there are concerns about future development pressures highlighted through the Core Strategy work and of course through the promotion of localism through the coalitions current proposals. A number of our local parishes are considering whether to take forward a village plan along the lines of Chipping. Of significance, as the appendix highlights, is the duty for District Councils to support parishes in undertaking this work when the Bill is enacted. Whilst there are advantages to the Council's work, the net effect anticipated is a potentially considerable additional burden on the resources of the Council to support that process.
- 2.8 With regard to the Chipping Plan, it could be useful to explore with the Parishes to what extent the plan could be taken forward, effectively as a pilot within the Neighbourhood Planning concept to establish what may be involved and the implications from the Council's viewpoint in addressing this issue. It is possible that some government funding may be available to support such pilots, subject to a bidding process.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Overall, the Chipping Village Plan has taken forward the neighbourhood planning and localism concept (as far as this is understood) and produced a community led plan that articulates as far as possible a collective view. It can be usefully used to inform the

Council's work in relation to the Core Strategy and should be incorporated as part of the evidence base as local information.

- 3.2 There is an opportunity to develop the work as a pilot subject to resourcing and of course the agreement of the Parishes to be involved, as part of that pilot. It would be useful to explore the extent to which consultation for example needs to be developed, to ensure any resultant plan is robust within the proposed statutory framework. In any event, it should be anticipated that as the Localism Bill progresses, more demands may be placed on the Council to support its delivery.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The matters dealt with in this report may have the following implications

- Resources – to progress the Chipping Plan as a pilot would initially require additional resources and would be subject in the first instance to the receipt of additional government funding. Limited resources could be directed from the existing budgets to help support some work.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – any work would have to have regard to the pilot process and avoid any risk of being considered ultra vires.
- Political – there is an opportunity to enhance local community working.
- Reputation – the Council could be seen as being proactive in this area.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Agree to consider the Village Plan as part of the LDF evidence base and to take account of its findings within the Plan making process, but that the relevant weight to be attached to any planning application be considered on a case by case basis.
- 5.2 Support the proposal to pilot the Plan within the concept of neighbourhood planning subject to resources being identified.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Chipping Village Plan 2011 – Chipping and Bowland-with-Leagram Parish Councils.
- 2 An Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning CLG, October 2011

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