INFORMATION

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 31 MAY 2012
title: GENERAL REPORT
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: JAMES RUSSELL, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of relevant issues which have arisen since the last meeting.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The following reports generally relate to the Council's ambitions to make people's lives healthier and safer.

2 FLOOD PROTECTION GRANT UPDATE - RIBCHESTER

2.1 Further to my report to the last meeting of Committee, I am pleased to report that the 2011/12 Property Flood Protection scheme should be finished. Contractors commenced work in the last week of April, however completion has been delayed due to extended lead-in times for the flood protection doors.

3 CLITHEROE MARKET - UPDATE

3.1 Further to my report to the previous meeting of Committee, I am pleased to report that Robert Watson (no relation to Frank) has been appointed at the end of April as the new Market Officer and has commenced working the new reduced hours arrangement. 'Bob' had been assisting with the market in a 'relief' capacity for the past 4 years and is therefore familiar with the workings of the market.

4 HANSON CEMENT LIAISON MEETING

4.1 A liaison meeting was held on 22 March 2012. A copy of the minutes are attached as Appendix A to this report.

5 REQUEST FOR UPDATE ON INCIDENCE OF RADON

5.1 At the last meeting, a request was made for an update on the incidence of Radon in the Ribble Valley. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas which is formed by a small amounts of uranium present in all rocks and soils. Outdoors, radon becomes diluted to very low levels and is of little concern. However, indoors radon can be drawn in through cracks and gaps in the ground floor of properties and levels of gas can build up to a higher concentration. In such cases, radon can pose a serious risk to health.

5.2 I can confirm that nothing has fundamentally changed since the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and British Geological Survey (BGS) issued their updated map in 2007. The map which has grouped Radon Affected Areas into 1km squares following extensive national sampling programme which resulted in a large increase in the number of Radon Affected Areas. Significantly, over 90% of Ribble Valley is now designated as a Radon Affected Area.

5.3 As a result, considerable guidance has been produced and is available on the Ribble Valley website to inform residents about the risks of radon and available searches and sampling. Information is given to prospective purchasers of properties in Radon Affected Areas where enquires are made. In addition, Building Control undertake a 'radon potential' search using the BGS dataset for Ribble Valley on all building regulation applications, where work involves new build or an extension, and categorise the radon potential and protective measures required to meet Building Regulations.

5.4 A copy of the Ribble Valley radon web information is attached as Appendix B to this report for your information. A copy of the radon map is available as a free download from the HPA website;

www.hpa.org.uk/radiation

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

JAMES RUSSELL
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Hanson Cement Liaison Meeting – 22 March 2012.
Appendix B – Radon in the Ribble Valley.

For further information please ask for James Russell on 01200 414466.

H&H/310512/JAR/EL

APPENDIX A

HANSON CEMENT LIAISON COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE – THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2012

PRESENT:	G Young	-	Hanson Cement
	S Wrathall	-	Hanson Cement
	J Haine	-	Lancashire County Council
	L England	-	Bellman Committee
	S Booth	-	Chatburn PC
	D Sharp	-	West Bradford PC
	Cty Cllr A Atkinson	-	LCC
	Cllr I Sayers	-	RVBC
	J Russell	-	RVBC
	O Heap	-	RVBC

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Knox, R Sherras, J Alcock (RVBC) and Mary Gysbers.

2 MINUTES

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2011 were circulated and approved as a correct record.

3. OPERATIONAL PLAN – PADESWOOD & RIBBLESDALE

3.1 Gary gave a brief update on operations at both Ribblesdale and Padeswood. The European Trading scheme meant that the rules for allocation had changed substantially which had had an impact on jobs. Each site has to operate and produce a specified amount of clinker and all three sites need to operate to be viable.

3.2 Gary now oversees both Ribblesdale and Padeswood. The changes have meant 30 people losing their jobs at Ribblesdale (most by voluntary redundancy but 6 compulsory) and very disappointingly no jobs for the apprentices once they have finished their apprenticeship.

4 BELLMAN AND LANEHEAD QUARRIES

4.1 Gary reported that work continues at Bellman although there have been some issues with clay deposits. De-watering was continuing into Worston Brook in compliance with EA permit conditions. Tarmac stone swap development was ongoing as was the building of the causeway down one side. Development was ongoing in the Horrocksford area. The application was still awaited for the deepening of the operation at Lanehead.

4.2 Gary presented blasting data for both Bellman and Lanehead along with the outflow data which confirmed excellent compliance with quarry planning conditions.

4.3 De-watering undertaken by Ribblesdale to maintain current levels was costing £1/4m.

5 RIBBLE CATCHMENT CONSERVATION TRUST

5.1 Hanson now provide an office base for the Trust that are expanding (12 people on site). The plan is to incorporate facilities with theirs to improve a joint educational facility.

6 SUBSTITUTE FUELS

6.1 Gary reported that compared to last year use of substitute fuels was down – 56.3% compared to 70%. Gary showed a bar chart of the substitute fuel replacement rates.

6.2 Application has been made for use of SRF – Solid Recovered Fuel and Waste Oil plus Recovered Fuel Oils. Trails commenced today with SRF to the main burner. Application had been made for capital to also enable burning of SRF to the calciner (approx £3m). They were still looking for a long term contract with companies for provision.

6.3 Transport issues

- Delivery by 'moving floor' trucks.

<u>3 Stages of Implementation</u>

- Main burner – Feb/Mar 2012 – 2 tonnes per hour
- Calciner Phase 1 - 7 tonnes per hour
- Calciner Phase 2 end 2012 - 15 tonnes per hour

<u>Lorry Movements – absolute maximum</u>

- Stage 1 – 32 per week
- Stage 2 - 144 per week
- Stage 3 – 240 per week

But these increases will be balanced off by reduced numbers of tyres, MBM and cement in general due to continued use of rail transport.

7 COMMUNITY CONCERNS (COMPLAINTS)

7.1 Hanson had received a total of 5 complaints in 2011 - 2 noise relating to rail loading of cement (for which the system had now been improved) and 3 dust / odour. There had been none received so far this year.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

8.1 Hanson are having ongoing discussions with the EA regarding improvements to:

- Reduce particulate emissions from Kiln 7 main stack
- Reduce oxides of nitrogen emissions from Kiln 7 main stack
- Reduce particulate emissions from cement mills 7 & 8 stacks.

These reductions would be phased in over next 4 year period. There would be a cost v benefit analysis.

8.2 Gary showed the position of dust gauges on Google Earth that were placed all around the site and had been in operation since 2007 (single kiln operation). The results showed correlation between all the gauges (North, South, East and West) and the general trend of deposits was continuing to decrease.

9. PUBLIC HEALTH WALES REPORT

9.1 Gary showed the presentation that had been made to Padeswood of the results of the Public Health Wales Inquiry. Following health concerns, an investigation had been undertaken surrounding the problems around Padeswood. The investigation had been in depth and very thorough.

9.2 The report conclusion was that " no convincing evidence that Hanson Cement was harmful to health". Gary did, however, acknowledge that communication needed to be improved along the lines of what happens at Ribblesdale. The report would be available on the public register in April.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Next meeting
Gary suggested that at the next meeting in September there would be a tour of the works before the meeting.

10.2 Housing development
Gary mentioned the planning application that had been submitted and subsequently refused by RVBC at Old Road, Chatburn. An appeal had now been lodged. He was due to meet with planners to discuss the issues surrounding potential problems for Hanson should this development go ahead.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting of the Hanson Cement Liaison Committee will be held on Thursday 20 September 2012.

APPENDIX B

RADON IN THE RIBBLE VALLEY

1. BACKGROUND

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas which is formed by the decay of small amounts of uranium present in all rocks and soils. It has no taste, smell or colour.

Outdoors, radon becomes diluted to very low levels and is of little concern. However, indoors radon can be drawn in through cracks and gaps in the ground floor of properties and levels of the gas can build up to a higher concentration. In such cases, radon can pose a serious risk to health.

People who are exposed to higher (elevated) levels of radon are more likely to get lung cancer (much more if they are smokers as well). This is because radon decays to minute radioactive particles which can be breathed in, thus damaging the lining of the lungs and irradiating the surrounding tissue.

It is estimated that radon causes 1,000-2,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United Kingdom.

2. HOW IS RADON DETECTED AND MEASURED?

Radon is normally measured over a three month period, using two small pots provided by the Health Protection Agency (HPA). Its concentration is measured in becquerels per cubic metre of air (Bqm^{-3}) and the HPA recommends that radon levels should be reduced in homes where the annual average concentration is more than 200 $Bqm^{-3.}$ This figure is known as the Action Level and has been endorsed by the government. The average level in the UK is 20 Bqm^{3}.

A radon measurement kit (two detectors) costs £49.80 (including VAT) and can be ordered by telephone from the HPA (01235 822622). Payment can be made by major credit or debit card.

It is extremely difficult for a Local Authority to identify those properties which may have high concentrations of the gas, as levels can fluctuate significantly between adjoining dwellings. This may be due to a number of factors, including the geological characteristics of the ground beneath buildings, details of construction and the habits of the occupants.

Simple measures such as increasing ventilation within a property are often successful in reducing levels of the gas. However, in exceptional cases, a radon sump may be required (details of which can be obtained from the Building Research Establishment website www.bre.co.uk/rad).

3. RADON AFFECTED AREAS

On 12 November 2007 an updated Radon Atlas was published jointly by The Health Protection Agency (HPA) and The British Geological Survey (BGS). This document is available as a free download from the HPA website www.hpa.org.uk/radiation.

This updated Atlas differs significantly from its predecessors, as Radon Affected Areas are now grouped into 1km grid squares (the atlas shows the highest probability banding found in each 1km grid square). It combines the results of an

extensive national sampling programme with detailed geological maps, which has resulted in a large increase in the number of designated Radon Affected Areas (both locally and nationally). More significantly, over 90% of the Ribble Valley is now designated as a Radon Affected Area.

The main advantage of this advanced data set is that it provides a radon probability banding for each individual property in England and Wales, with a valid postcode.

Therefore, for a fee of £3.60 (inc VAT) any individual can carry out a search for a particular property on the UK radon website www.ukradon.org. The results of this search would reveal:

1. **Whether a property is located in a Radon Affected Area.**

2. **The estimated probability of the property being above the Action Level.**

3. **Whether radon protection is required for new buildings and extensions at the property location.**

4. ACTION TAKEN BY RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL (EVBC)

Since 1999, RVBC have surveyed a total of 198 properties for radon gas. The majority of these properties were selected either because of their location within a Radon Affected Area or due to the underlying geology.

The results are summarised below:

	Radon Concentration (Bqm^3)			Total number of dwellings
	0-99	100-199	>200	
Barrow	1	-	-	1
Billington	2	-	-	2
Bolton-by-Bowland	8	-	-	8
Chatburn	16	7	-	23
Chipping	1	-	-	1
Clitheroe	19	2	1	22
Downham	3	1	-	4
Grindleton	55	23	11	89
Holden	4	4	2	10
Horton	1	-	-	1
Langho	2	-	-	2
Longridge	2	-	-	2
Mellor	2	-	-	2
Mitton	3	-	-	3
Newton	2	2	2	6
Ramsgreave	1	-	-	1
Ribchester	1	-	-	1
Simonstone	1	-	-	1
Sawley	5	2	2	9
Slaidburn	1	-	-	1
Stonyhurst	1	-	-	1
Waddington	4	-	-	4
Whalley	2	-	-	2
Wilpshire	2	-	-	2
TOTAL	**139**	**41**	**18**	**198**

The significant findings of these results reveals that out of 89 dwellings surveyed within the Grindleton area, 11 exceeded the Action Level, whilst a further 23 had an elevated radon concentration of between 100 and 200Bqm^3.

The remaining 7 failures were observed in the villages of Holden (2); Newton (2); Sawley (2) and one in Clitheroe itself.

It may therefore be advisable, should you wish to consider purchasing a property in any of the above areas, for you to ask the vendor whether they have already had a radon gas test undertaken and ask them for a copy of the results. For any further information, please contact Matthew Riding, Environmental Health Officer (Housing) on 01200 414470.