

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 20 November 2012  
title: Corporate Strategy Review 2012  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES  
principal author: MICHELLE HAWORTH – PRINCIPAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE OFFICER

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval of the Council's reviewed Corporate Strategy 2011-2015.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – The Council's Corporate Strategy's purpose is to set out the Council's vision and priorities, to outline how we propose to deliver them and how progress will be measured.
- Corporate Priorities –
- Other Considerations -

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Our Corporate Strategy, attached at Appendix A, sets out the strategic direction of the Council for the period 2011-2015, providing a focus to ensure that the services we deliver meets the needs of our communities. The Strategy has a four-year scope, but it has been agreed to review it annually to ensure that it continues to reflect changes to our priorities that occur over time. Following the next local elections taking place in 2015, we will develop a new Strategy.

2.2 The Strategy contains:

- Five corporate priorities to address issues that matter most to the borough. Our priorities are deliberately limited to focus our attention over the lifespan of the strategy.
- Each priority has a number of objectives – things that will help us achieve our priorities.
- Objectives are supported by key actions – the things we will do to achieve our objectives.
- Key measures of success are also outlined, which should allow progress towards the achievement of the priority and objective to be monitored.

2.3 Actions and measures of success will be developed in detail in the 2013/2014 Service plans, which we will ensure are robust and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based). Service plans will detail how each service will plan to deliver the key actions.

2.4 Performance against our priorities will be regularly published, in accordance with good practice, on our web site. Performance is also reported to our citizens in the Annual Report.

- 2.5 The priorities and objectives were developed in 2011 based on the following:
- The Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy
  - The Leaders Objectives for the year
  - Consultation with our Communities through our Citizens' Panel
- 2.6 There are a number of unknowns and changes in the external environment which may impact on the Council and how it carries out its business, examples include the Localism Act, the 'Big Society' and health arrangements following the dissolution of PCTs. What is known for certain is that there will be ever decreasing resources available for the Council to deliver its priorities. The Strategy has been written to clearly identify priorities, whilst allowing for flexibility as national policy evolves.
- 2.7 A short review has been carried out to ensure the Strategy is still relevant and reflects the Council's priorities. Reference has been made to the Leaders Objectives outlined to Council in the summer and each Head of Service has been consulted where appropriate
- 2.8 A Corporate Strategy 2011–2015 - Progress Report is attached at Appendix B. The report details the progress that has been made during 2011/2012 with the Actions contained within the Strategy. Data has also been provided against our key measures of success.

### **3 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources - Paper copies of the Corporate Strategy are printed in-house and therefore from within existing budgets. Financial implications of delivering the strategy will be met from within existing budgets.
  - Technical, Environmental and Legal – None identified.
  - Political – None identified.
  - Reputation – It is important that the priorities reflect the concerns and needs of our communities. The Council has undertaken consultation throughout the year which has informed our priority setting.
  - Equality & Diversity - In line with the Council's approach to equalities, individual equality impact assessments will be carried out as appropriate for actions/projects within the Strategy.

### **4 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE / CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Considers and approves the reviewed Corporate Strategy 2011-2015.

**Michelle Haworth**  
PRINCIPAL POLICY AND  
PERFORMANCE OFFICER

**Jane Pearson**  
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

REF: Michelle Haworth/Policy and Finance Committee/20 November 2012

For further information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421



## Ribble Valley Borough Council

Providing high quality, affordable and responsive public services that develop the social and economic well-being of the Borough whilst safeguarding the rural nature of the area

# CORPORATE STRATEGY 2011 – 2015

## 2012 REVIEW

### Foreword

Welcome to Ribble Valley Borough Council's Corporate Strategy for 2011 - 2015.

This document sets out the strategic direction of the Council over the period 2011 - 2015, providing a focus to ensure that the services we deliver meet the needs of our communities. The Strategy has a four-year scope, but is reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to reflect changes to our priorities that occur over time. Following the next local elections taking place in 2015, we will develop a new Strategy.

Cllr Michael Ranson  
Leader of the Council

Marshal Scott  
Chief Executive

### Our vision for Ribble Valley

Our VISION continues to be that we aim to ensure that Ribble Valley will be:

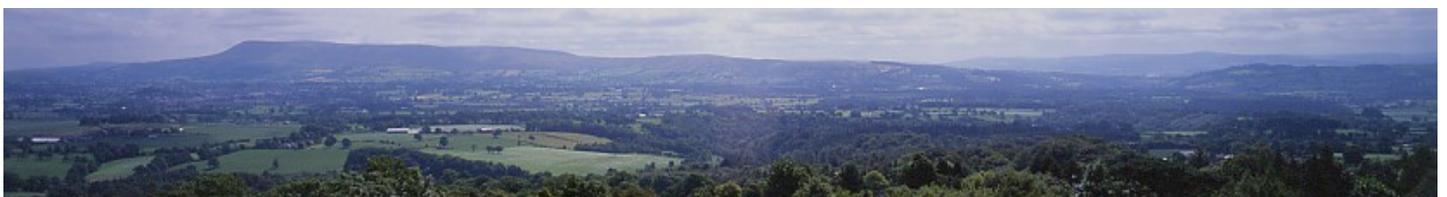
*"An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors."*

We believe that this VISION reflects the aim for the Borough, which has the highest quality of environment for those who live in and visit the area. It recognises that people must have a high quality of life; that suitable homes are available to meet their diverse needs and that they should be safe and feel safe. People should also be able to access the best services without having to travel long distances to receive them.

### What communities are telling us

Through participation in the Ribble Valley Citizens' Panel and the 2011 Perception Survey, we know that residents see the following issues as the most important in making somewhere a good place to live:

- Crime levels
- Health services
- Education provision
- Clean streets
- Access to nature



The following issues were scored highly by residents as both 'make the area a good place to live' and 'most need improving':

- Affordable, decent housing
- Road and pavement repairs
- The amount of dog fouling
- Activities for teenagers
- The level of traffic congestion
- Job prospects
- Street cleanliness

**Our partners' priorities and what they mean for Ribble Valley Borough Council**

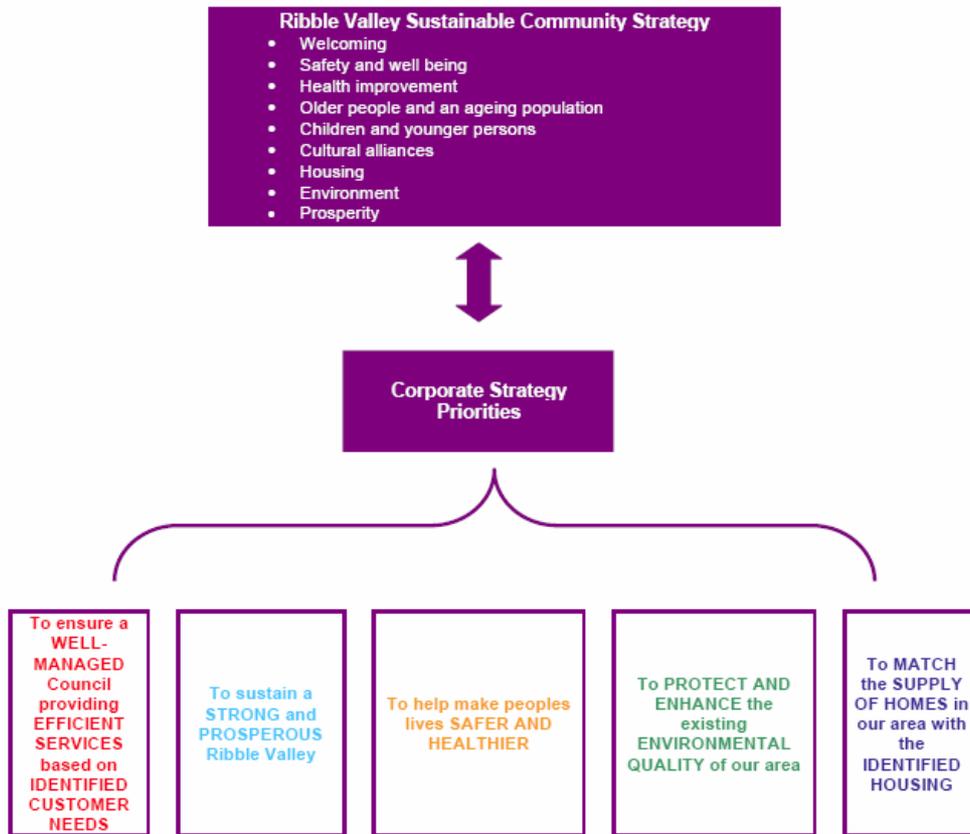
We have also had regard to the priorities of our partners, particularly where we have a role in delivering them.

**The Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy 2011/2013**

The Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership developed an agreed set of themes:

- A Welcoming Ribble Valley
- Safety and Well being
- Health Improvement
- Older People and an Ageing Population
- Children and Younger Persons
- Cultural Alliances
- Housing
- Environment
- Prosperity

*How our priorities are helping to deliver Ribble Valley's Sustainable Community Strategy*





To ensure a **WELL-MANAGED** Council providing **EFFICIENT SERVICES** based on **IDENTIFIED CUSTOMER NEEDS**

This is the Council's overarching corporate priority.

People living in, working in and visiting Ribble Valley expect to receive efficient and excellent Council services. The majority of our services are high quality, well regarded and perform well above the average. We aim to provide services that are amongst the best in the country. We will continue to do this by targeting improvement to services to ensure all our services are performing, and are rated by our customers, as above average.

#### Our objectives:

- To maintain critical financial management and controls, and ensure the authority provides council tax payers with value for money, within the current financial constraints
- To treat everyone equally and ensure that access to services is available to all, including our most vulnerable citizens
- To engage with all our communities to ensure we deliver services to meet customer needs and expectations

#### Our key actions:

- To explore all viable options for income generation and financial savings in order to deliver the Council's efficiency agenda whilst protecting front line services
- To meet the Equality Duty
- To seek to continually improve, ensuring that council services are fit for purpose and customer focused

#### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents that think the Council provides value for money
- Equality Duty met
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council



“ It is very well managed – a super place to live”



## To help make peoples lives SAFER AND HEALTHIER

Ribble Valley is a low crime area and a safe place to live. It is the safest place in the north west and second safest place in the country. This success is in part due to the excellent work of our Community Safety Partnership.

Baseline data, which has been collated in terms of health, presents a generally healthy picture, but health issues surrounding an aging population and access to services in isolated communities represent potential issues.

### Our objectives:

- To improve the health of people living and working in our area
- To improve the opportunity for young people to participate in recreational and sporting activity
- To ensure that Ribble Valley remains a safe place to live
- To take a leading role in working with partners on the emerging public health agenda
- To combat rural isolation

### Our key actions:

- To seek to improve Ribble Valley food businesses, to achieve a food hygiene rating of 3 star and above
- To tackle fuel poverty across the borough
- To continue to work with our Community Safety Partnership, ensuring that low crime levels are maintained, by tackling crime, anti social behaviour and fear of crime
- To emphasise, and re-establish if necessary, the alcohol free zones in Clitheroe and other parts of the Ribble Valley
- To work with Ribble Valley GP's and other partners on local health and wellbeing needs
- To ensure access to services in isolated communities

### Our key measures of success

- Number of Ribble Valley food businesses achieving 3 star and above in the National Food Hygiene rating system
- Percentage of residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities
- Percentage of people participating in sport on 3 or more occasions per week
- Percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area during the day and after dark
- Take up of support/services offered by STAN



## To PROTECT AND ENHANCE the existing ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY of our area

Our ambition is to protect the local environment, parts of which rank amongst the finest in England. The Council provides a high quality environment, including safe, clean parks and open spaces.

Ribble Valley faces increasing pressure to reduce the negative impact of waste on its environment. The Council wants to increase recycling, minimise waste generation and reduce waste disposed to landfill.

### Our objectives:

- To conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment
- To increase the recycling of waste material
- To provide a high quality environment, keeping land clear of litter and refuse, and reducing the incidents of dog fouling

### Our key actions:

- To finalise the Core Strategy in order to ensure that development in Ribble Valley for the next 20 years is proportionate.
- To deliver a co-ordinated approach to Planning through the Local Development Framework
- To increase the use of renewable energy sources
- To maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill
- To continue with our approach of zero tolerance of dog fouling, litter and fly tipping
- To deliver a waste and responsible dog ownership education and awareness programme

### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces
- Completion of planning documents in accordance with timetables
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the cleanliness of the borough
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the waste and recycling collection services
- Percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting



**To MATCH the SUPPLY OF HOMES in our area with the IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEEDS**

Like the rest of the country, Ribble Valley saw a rapid rise in house prices in recent years. A clear priority for local people has been identified as providing accommodation which is affordable for local people.

**Our objectives:**

- To meet the housing needs of all sections of the Community
- To provide additional affordable homes throughout the Ribble Valley

**Our key actions:**

- To maintain up to date housing needs surveys across the borough
- To bring empty properties back into use
- To work with partners to agree priorities and secure investment in housing
- To implement measures to address the specific housing needs of the elderly

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of properties brought back in to use
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Number of households, and length of time spent, in temporary accommodation
- Provision of elderly accommodation on all sites over 30 units



**How to contact us**

If you would like to know more, tell us what you think of this Corporate Strategy, or receive information about our current performance, please contact the Policy and Performance section at:

Post: Ribble Valley BC, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 2RA

Tel: 01200 425111

Email: [michelle.haworth@ribblevalley.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.haworth@ribblevalley.gov.uk)

Web: [www.ribblevalley.gov.uk](http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk)



## Ribble Valley Borough Council

Providing high quality, affordable and responsive public services that develop the social and economic well-being of the Borough whilst safeguarding the rural nature of the area

# CORPORATE STRATEGY 2011 – 2015 Progress Report

## Our Corporate Priorities, Objectives and Core Values 2011/15

The strategy contained five corporate priorities to address issues that matter most to the borough. The priorities were deliberately limited to focus our attention over the lifespan of the strategy. Each priority had a number of objectives, underlying actions, and key measures of success, which allowed progress towards the achievement of the priority to be monitored.

### Core Values

In pursuing our priority actions, the Council will continue to deliver the services people want, in a fair and consistent manner. It is important that we explain exactly what our values are. These values guide and influence our actions as we continuously improve the services we deliver. We will:

- Lead the Community
- Strive to achieve excellence
- Ensure that access to services is available to all
- Treat everyone equally
- Respect all individuals and their views, and
- Appreciate and invest in our staff.



## Our approach to Equality and Diversity

Ribble Valley Borough is made up of socially diverse communities. The Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity and to valuing diversity.

We aim to treat all customers fairly, with respect and professionalism regardless of their gender, race, nationality or ethnicity, age, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation.

To enable all residents to have access to information and equal access to our services, Ribble Valley Borough Council uses plain English in the information it publishes. Where a customer is experiencing any difficulties assistance suited to the person's needs is available. Information, on request and where appropriate, will be provided in different languages and formats and through a range of media. Feedback is also accepted through a variety of different routes taking account of individual customer's preferences or needs.

To demonstrate that our approach to equality is being realised, we collect equalities information. This helps to help establish whether all members of the community are accessing our services. This feeds into our monitoring and review process.

Full details of our approach are set out in our Comprehensive Equality Policy.

## Progress and Achievements

The Equality Duty came into force on 6 April 2011. Our response to the Duty has been published on our website. In order to comply with the general equality duty, a public authority must ensure that:

- Staff and leadership are aware of the duty's requirements. Compliance involves 'a conscious approach and state of mind'. This means that decision-makers must be fully aware of the implications of the duty when making decisions about their policies and practices. (Equality Impact Assessments.)
- The duty is complied with before and at the time that a particular policy is under consideration and a decision is taken. A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- Any third parties exercising public functions on its behalf are required to comply with the duty, and that they do so in practice.
- Regard is given to the need to advance equality when a policy is implemented and reviewed.

To ensure a **WELL-MANAGED** Council providing **EFFICIENT SERVICES** based on **IDENTIFIED CUSTOMER NEEDS**

#### Our objectives:

- To maintain critical financial management and controls, and ensure the authority provides council tax payers with value for money.
- To structure the Council to provide efficient and effective services within the current financial constraints.
- To treat everyone equally and ensure that access to services is available to all, including our most vulnerable citizens.
- To engage with all our communities to ensure we deliver services to meet customer needs and expectations.

#### Our key actions:

- To explore all viable options for income generation and financial savings in order to deliver the Council's efficiency agenda whilst protecting front line services.
- To effectively manage change and organisational development to sustain a flexible workforce.
- To meet the Equality Duty.
- To seek to continually improve, ensuring that council services are fit for purpose and customer focused.

#### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents that think the Council provides value for money.
- Percentage of staff satisfied with the Council as an employer.
- Equality Duty met.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council.

#### Progress:

- A full service review was completed in 2011 and the approved recommendations will achieve substantial savings of £635,160 in the 2012/13 financial year. This was the second phase of the review, with the first phase achieving savings averaging £108,000 per annum over five years. We continue to explore options in light of the remaining uncertainty around the level of future Government financial support for councils.
- The Council supported the re-structure exercise in November 2011, encouraging staff involvement and working closely with the unions to improve service delivery, capacity and performance. We have also effectively managed change to the 'contact centre' approach for customer enquiries.
- The requirements of the Equality Duty were met within the target dates set.
- A new Perception Survey is due to be carried out early in 2013 this will provide us with more up to date resident satisfaction and also allows us to track trends.
- The next Employee Survey is due to commence on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Analysis and report writing will take place in the New Year and will then be reported to Corporate Management Team and Personnel Committee.

#### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents that think the Council provides value for money – 54% (2010/11).
- Percentage of staff satisfied with the Council as an employer – 58% (2010).
- Equality Duty met – yes.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the Council – 68.3% (2010/11).

To sustain a **STRONG** and **PROSPEROUS**  
Ribble Valley

**Our objectives:**

- To promote stronger, confident and more active communities throughout the borough.
- To encourage economic development throughout the borough with a specific focus on tourism, the delivery of sufficient land for business development and supporting high growth business opportunities.
- To seek to improve the transport network, especially to our rural areas.
- To work with our partners to ensure that the infrastructure in the Ribble Valley is improved, in order to be fit for purpose.

**Our key actions:**

- To embrace the localism agenda and encourage parish councils and local communities to take more responsibility, wherever possible, for the local delivery of services.
- To develop an appropriate scheme for the future of the market development area.
- To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy.
- To identify options to deliver employment land.
- Work with the County Council and others providers to improve the local infrastructure.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of services delivered through Parish Councils
- Business start-ups and survival rates
- An increase in visitor numbers
- Percentage of residents satisfied overall with the local area as a good place to live

**Progress:**

- A village Amenities Grant Fund has been developed contributing over £100,000 to local community groups and Parish Councils.
- Some work has been carried out on the marketing and publicity of the current market site. Discussions with developers over future schemes are ongoing.
- The Ribble Valley Economic Strategy has been revised and consulted upon. The document will be presented to Policy and Finance Committee for approval.
- A new economy working group, made up of councillors and officers from the Council, has been established to identify economic priorities and actions for the area.
- A Tourism Strategy is currently being considered.
- Work continues on the Ribble Valley Food Trail supporting food tourism and the visitor economy. Plans for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Ribble Valley Food Festival are underway.
- The Core Strategy will help to identify and support option to deliver new and existing employment land.
- The Council has supported the development of the Barrow Brook Business Park and continues to assist in marketing the site as one of the areas key strategic employment sites.
- Work continues with the County Council on infrastructure matters.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of services delivered through Parish Councils – 7 concurrent functions – Burial Grounds, Bus Shelters, Footpaths, Footway Lighting, Litter Collection, Dog-waste Bins, and Park and Play Areas.
- Business start-ups and survival rates – currently unavailable.
- An increase in visitor numbers – 3,367,670 tourist numbers (STEAM report 2009) is an 8% drop from 2008.
- Percentage of residents satisfied overall with the local area as a good place to live – 96.1% (2010/11).

**To help make peoples lives SAFER AND HEALTHIER**

**Our objectives:**

- To improve the health of people living and working in our area.
- To improve the opportunity for young people to participate in recreational and sporting activity.
- To ensure that Ribble Valley remains a safe place to live.
- Take a leading role in working with partners on the emerging public health agenda.
- To combat rural isolation.

**Our key actions:**

- To seek to improve Ribble Valley food businesses, to achieve a food hygiene rating of 3 and above.
- To tackle fuel poverty across the borough.
- To continue to work with our Community Safety Partnership, ensuring that low crime levels are maintained, by tackling crime, anti social behaviour and fear of crime.
- To emphasise, and re-establish if necessary, the alcohol free zones in Clitheroe and other parts of the Ribble Valley.
- To work with Ribble Valley GP's and other partners on local health and wellbeing needs.
- To ensure access to services in isolated communities.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of Ribble Valley food businesses achieving 3 star and above in the National Food Hygiene rating system.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.
- Percentage of people participating in sport on 3 or more occasions per week.
- Percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area during the day and after dark.
- Take up of support/services offered by STAN.

**Progress**

- Alcohol Signage - during the summer of 2012, the Council renewed all its signage in relation to drinking in public places across the whole borough. Additional signage was erected in the Clitheroe Castle grounds.
- Community Alcohol Networks - The Community Safety Partnership has funded a series of interventions called 'Community Alcohol Networks,' which uses Police and Trading Standards Officers who visit 'known hot spots' for underage drinking, drug taking and illicit tobacco. So far, 40 young people have been picked up and either returned home or had their parents collect them.
- We have been working with GP surgeries and Clinical teams to offer health and well-being programmes.
- Following the restructuring of Public Health there will potentially be greater involvement for district councils in shaping Health and Wellbeing services.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of Ribble Valley food businesses achieving a rating of 3 and above in the National Food Hygiene rating system – 516 premises out of a possible 624 - 83% (November 2012).
- Percentage of residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities – 46.6% (2010/11).
- Percentage of people participating in sport on 3 or more occasions per week – 22.2% (2010/11).
- Percentage of residents who feel safe in their local area during the day and after dark – 94.1% and 78.8% (2010/11).
- Take up of support/services offered by STAN – Football 241 people (2011/12).

## To PROTECT AND ENHANCE the existing ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY of our area

### Our objectives:

- To conserve our countryside, the natural beauty of the area and enhance our built environment.
- To increase the recycling of waste material.
- To provide a high quality environment, keeping land clear of litter and refuse, and reducing the incidents of dog fouling.

### Our key actions:

- To finalise our Core Strategy.
- To deliver a co-ordinated approach to Planning through the Local Development Framework.
- To increase the use of renewable energy sources.
- To maximise recycling and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.
- To continue with our approach of zero tolerance of dog fouling, litter and fly tipping.
- To deliver a waste and responsible dog ownership education and awareness programme.

### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces.
- Completion of planning documents in accordance with timetables.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the cleanliness of the borough.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the waste and recycling collection services.
- Percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

### Progress:

- The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012. We are awaiting the Inspector to set a date for the Examination in Public.
- The use of renewable energy sources is encouraged in new building through Planning.
- Changes have been made to the recycling collection service to include the collection of food waste in green bins.
- Selected on-street litter bins have recently been fitted with electronic tags enable the monitoring of frequency of them requiring emptying.
- The Council is continuing to undertake regular dog fouling patrols at appropriate times, issuing fixed penalties where we can (five fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling 2011/12).
- We have delivered a responsible dog ownership education and awareness programme to four schools (2011/12).
- In 2011/12 we produced an animated DVD encourages putting the correct materials into the right wheeled bin in order to reduce contamination levels. This has been circulated to all schools and is being supported by a seasonal edition of a fun newsletter/comic.
- To support schools in their recycling efforts we are supplying a blue wheeled bin to schools who currently employ the Council to collect their waste using wheeled bins. We are encouraging schools who currently use either sacks or employ private waste management companies to join this initiative.

### Our key measures of success

- Percentage of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces – 70.7% (2010/11).
- Completion of planning documents in accordance with timetables
  - The Local Development Scheme (LDS) was refreshed in October 2012. The LDS includes a timetable for the submission and approval of DPDs and this will be monitored.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the cleanliness of the borough – 65.6% (2010/11).
- Percentage of residents satisfied with the waste and recycling collection services –
  - Waste – 86.9% (2010/11)
  - Recycling – 78.4% (2010/11)
- Percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting – 43.10% (2011/12).

**To MATCH the SUPPLY OF HOMES in our area with the IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEEDS**

**Our objectives:**

- To meet the housing needs of all sections of the Community.
- To provide additional affordable homes throughout the Ribble Valley.

**Our key actions:**

- To maintain up to date housing needs surveys across the borough.
- To bring empty properties back into use.
- To work with partners to agree priorities and secure investment in housing.
- To implement measures to address the specific housing needs of the elderly.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of properties brought back in to use.
- Number of affordable homes delivered.
- Number of households, and length of time spent, in temporary accommodation.
- Provision of elderly accommodation on all sites over 30 units.

**Progress:**

- Five Housing Needs surveys have been conducted in 2011/2012 in Clitheroe, Billington, Whalley, Chipping and Wiswell and Barrow.
- We are continuing to concentrate on the Priority Empty Property List.
- There has been a significant investment of affordable housing supported in Sabden.
- Active negotiation for elderly provision has been undertaken for all relevant sites.

**Our key measures of success**

- Number of properties brought back in to use – 9 (2011/12).
- Number of affordable homes delivered – 50 (2011/12).
- Number of households, and length of time spent, in temporary accommodation –
  - Number of households (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March) – 6 (2011/12).
  - Time spent (average no. of weeks) – 14.67 (2011/12).
- Provision of elderly accommodation on all sites over 30 units – provision has been agreed on sites.