

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 12 MARCH 2013
title: FACILITIES STRATEGY
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: CHRIS HUGHES, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To bring members up to date with progress on producing a facilities strategy.

1.2 Relevance to the Council Ambitions and Priorities:

- **Corporate Priorities:**
 - to make people's lives safer and healthier;
 - to be a well-managed Council, providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
- **Corporate Objectives:**
 - to finalise the core strategy;
 - to improve the health of people living and working in the area;
 - to improve the opportunity for young people to participate in recreation and sporting activities.

2 BACKGROUND

At the last Committee meeting, members were given information for the basis of a facilities strategy that would identify future facility needs, based on existing participation levels and future demand, based on population trends identified in the Core Strategy.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 The working group has met twice since the last Committee meeting, to identify what additional work would be required in order to have a fully evidenced strategy that could stand up to scrutiny.

3.2 The work has therefore focussed on the following areas:

- Testing the robustness of the data and including any additional supporting information;
- Identifying future facility needs and associated costs;
- Identifying strategic sites, tied with the Borough's three main population centres;
- Developing a funding plan, including the contribution from future housing developments

4 ISSUES

4.1 Much of the content of the strategy is completed, so the main focus of the work is on establishing the investment element.

4.2 At the most recent meeting of the steering group, members were informed of future facility requirements and the likely capital costs. A formula had also been worked out to determine the percentage of external grant funding that future building projects were likely to attract.

4.3 Mechanisms by which future housing development would be expected to contribute to future infrastructure, based on additional facilities to meet future participation demands, were also discussed.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It is clear that both the strategy, as the key evidence-base, and any funding proposals, will have to demonstrate a clear connection between population increase and facility needs, in order to justify developer contributions.

5.2 Current practice was recently challenged by a planning inspector for the Milton Avenue development, resulting in the Council's request for a contribution to offsite provision being refused, based on a lack of evidence for why it was needed, and how the sum was calculated.

5.3 With this in mind, the working group has asked officers to establish stakeholder groups to test the principles contained in both the strategy and proposed investment plan.

5.4 A final report of the findings will be presented to the relevant committees at the next cycle.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – there are no specific financial implications associated with this report, but the success, or otherwise, of an agreed investment plan will have serious implications for future facility development.
- **Legal and Technical** – Any future plans must, as much as possible, have a clear evidence-base that can stand up to scrutiny.
- **Political** – it is important that investment is received from future housing development as the associated population increase will impact on existing facility infrastructure.
- **Reputation** – Given the high profile of housing development in the Ribble Valley, the Council's leadership role will be vital in shaping future facility provisions.

7 CONCLUSION

Members will be informed of future developments.

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Background papers:

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Ref: Chris Hughes/IW/Community Services 12.3.13