

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 6

meeting date: THURSDAY, 13 JUNE 2019
title: THE ECONOMIC PLAN 2019-2022
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the draft Economic Plan and the arrangements for consultation.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To deliver a sustainable local economy.
- Corporate Priorities – To undertake relevant economic activities to ensure economic growth and to sustain a healthy local economy.
- Other Considerations – The Economic Plan will support a range of Council activities and assist in financial planning for the local authority.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council places a strong local economy as a key area of activity to support the wellbeing of the area and its local economy. It has placed a strong emphasis upon driving activities that will provide the best conditions for the local economy to remain strong, maximise growth opportunities in a sustainable way, and provide a wide range of employment opportunities. The Council has sought to work more closely with the local business communities across the borough and in doing so, seeks to bring forward a plan which focuses Council activities on those areas where the Council can take steps to support the economy of the local area in a relevant way and strengthen its position from an economic viewpoint.

2.2 The Council has undertaken a number of pieces of work to ensure its plan is fully informed and these are referenced in the discussion draft. The Council has also recently formed the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership as a means to improve the Council's connections with the local business community that sits at the heart of delivering a strong and vibrant economy to the widest possible benefit. Formative meetings of the partnership have helped shape the draft plan so far and it is intended the partnership will provide a valuable vehicle to help finalise the Council's Economic Plan and support delivery.

3 THE DRAFT PLAN

3.1 A copy of the discussion draft is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

3.2 The draft plan is initially intended to cover a 3 year period from 2019-2022 as this will ensure it can remain flexible to changing circumstances and priorities, whilst providing a

reasonable timeframe for the Council to plan investment and delivery against the identified key activities. Whilst the Council has previously had economic strategies in place, this plan is intended to be a more business friendly and concise series of actions that the Council can take. It will of course link with other areas of the Council's roles and responsibilities such as housing and planning policy that often deal with issues over a longer timeframe.

- 3.3 The plan is intended to establish a framework of actions that are considered will support the local economy and that can be implemented in a timely fashion. It is not written to reiterate the background research and information that exist, rather it is intended to provide a vehicle to focus the discussion and delivery against the key themes identified as important in conjunction with the Economic Partnership.
- 3.4 Subject to Members' consideration, it is intended to publish the discussion draft for a period of consultation to inform the final plan. Subject to any comments from Members during the consideration of the draft, authority is sought to produce a publication version using graphic design support which will be sourced using the Council's procurement process. It is considered that given the nature of the plan and the audience, it is important to ensure its style and format reflects the intended profile. The costs will be contained within the economic development promotions budget.
- 3.5 It is also intended to utilise the next meeting of the Economic Partnership at the end of June (26 June) to discuss the approach set out in the plan and to test proposals with the local business community for its support. The outcome of that discussion and feedback from the wider consultation will be used to prepare a final plan to be brought back to Members for further consideration. On this basis it is anticipated that the plan will be in place and fully operational by the Autumn.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The preparation of the document and the consultation proposed will be resourced from existing revenue budgets.

The Council also has in place an approved capital scheme project for Economic Development Initiatives which is the subject of a separate report on this Committee's agenda. This has been established to provide a general pump-priming and pre-investment fund to support the delivery of Council economic priorities. The capital bid particularly seeks to support our high growth sectors in the provision of land and premises or tourism infrastructure where applicable.

Members will note that the draft plan sets out a number of actions that will have budget implications, all of which will be the subject of individual reports to the relevant Council Committees in due course as part of the Council's budgetary process. The plan will also provide a vehicle to inform bidding rounds for external funding where relevant, which will also be subject to future reports as projects come forward.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council is expected to monitor the local economy and identify any actions required. A number of related areas of legislation

will provide the basis for delivery on differing aspects of the plan where there will be cross over with statutory duties and functions under housing and planning legislation for example using appropriate powers.

- Political – The Council has identified economic development as a key political priority.
- Reputation – This report will assist the Council in demonstrating it is a well-run Council that seeks to identify local economic aspirations.
- Equality & Diversity – The work in relation to this report supports the Council's aim in delivering a sustainable local economy to the benefit of all its community.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Consider and agree the draft Economic Plan be published for a 4 week period of consultation, the outcome of which is reported back to this Committee and that the Chief Executive be authorised to prepare a publication version of the draft.

COLIN HIRST

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Association Peer Challenge Position Statement – Ribble Valley Borough Council - November 2017

Economic Evidence Base – Baseline Report Ribble Valley Borough Council - May 2008

Ribble Valley Borough Council Service Centre Health Checks – August 2018

Ribble Valley Business Survey Research Report – August 2018

Ribble Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan – September 2018

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



Ribble Valley
Borough Council

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

ECONOMIC PLAN 2019–2022

DISCUSSION DRAFT

FOREWORD

The Council has prepared this discussion draft for its Economic Plan to provide an opportunity for all those with an interest in a strong local economy in Ribble Valley to contribute.

This plan is different from our previous strategies. It is being prepared with much closer working with our business community through the newly formed Ribble Valley Economic Partnership. It has been clear from our wide ranging discussions so far that business is looking for clear actions, leadership and support to help the economy grow.

The Economic Plan seeks to drive the economy forward with a series of clearly defined actions focusing on those issues which we believe will be key to our economic success and the wellbeing of all our communities. Although a great deal of preparatory work has already been undertaken and published in shaping this plan it is clear that the kind of document which our stakeholders wish to see is a concise and focused business friendly plan which allows us all to understand what our collective aspirations are and the specific actions the council will take to achieve them.

This plan is aimed at focusing on those key actions we believe will make a difference. Actions that will help the Council in its role of '*getting on with business*'.

I hope you will take this opportunity to contribute.

Stuart Hirst
Chairman – Economic Development Committee

June 2019

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has produced a number of previous economic strategies which have helped shape the local economy, guide investment and informed the work of the Council. They have been very traditional in their approach and have helped to coordinate activities with a number of partners. More recently the Council targeted its actions towards a series of key objectives contained within the Council's Corporate Strategy, which has given direction and helped steer the Council's work.
- 1.2 Supporting the local economy has always played a key role for the Council. However, it has been recognised that the economic challenges facing the borough are changing. Whilst the borough has always reflected an entrepreneurial spirit with many key sectors represented in the area, it is important to ensure the best opportunities are available for business growth and that a strong, vibrant economy lies at the heart of a wider sustainable community. With this in mind, the Council decided to create its Economic Development Committee that would bring a focus on this key area of Council activity. A key action for the Council is to put in place an Economic Plan that brings together the Council's aspirations of a strong economy and the needs of our business community to help deliver the economic success for the area.
- 1.3 The Council is keen to take forward a concise clear plan of actions. This plan has been shaped to reflect this approach which has been drawn out of consultations with the business community. This draft is presented as a vehicle for discussion where it is intended to develop the issues identified further before the final plan is agreed and implemented.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has always sought to work in partnership, working with many groups and organisations, however it was keen to provide an opportunity for greater communication and stronger partnerships by bringing the many wide ranging interests together. This has been achieved by bringing partners together under the umbrella of the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership which it is anticipated will help shape and allow the local economy to grow even stronger.
- 2.2 The Council has a number of roles it has to undertake through community leadership, regulatory functions and as an investor in delivering its services to the local area. There will be occasions where it will have to mitigate across the these differing roles, however it is hoped through the development of this plan and the expressed support to build collaboration with the business community and work more closely towards economic growth, that our approach will deliver successful outcomes.

3. THE JOURNEY SO FAR

- 3.1 It is fair to say that many of the key themes considered in previous strategies remain relevant today. the Council has looked at issues relating to land availability, strategic communications, broadband, tourism and the health of our main service centres to name but a few. These have tended to be considered against headline activities such as planning functions, lobbying partners and through other related interventions. The Council's regular monitoring work has demonstrated progress in many of these areas, however there is a view that there is still a need to keep these issues as key actions, but to make greater progress by way of a plan such as this to maintain activity to ensure our local economy is supported.

- 3.2 The message from partners has been clear insofar as they believe the Council needs to keep a focus on core areas that will make a difference and to ensure it develops a plan that can help achieve that. This is how this plan is starting to shape.
- 3.3 The Council has undertaken a number of pieces of work to ensure it has a good understanding of the existing position with regard to the local economy, to identify the threats and opportunities that should be addressed and to ensure that the areas on which to focus are relevant to the overall aims of supporting economic growth.
- 3.4 There are a number of reports and documents that are available as background to the Council's work which can be viewed on the Council's website. As indicated it is not our intention to reproduce this material as part of this plan. These documents include the report on the Council's Peer Challenge published in November 2017, which was a starting point of reviewing the economic picture for the area. This document sets a picture of activities being undertaken and highlights a portrait of the area's economic position. It has to be acknowledged that compared to many, the Council's position of the economy in the local area appears healthy but there is a concern that this masks underlying challenges that if they are not identified and addressed now, could lead to issues in the future.
- 3.5 The Council also commissioned its consultants Turley Associates to undertake review of the economic evidence base, which was published in May 2018. This document highlighted the key characteristics of the local economy and also undertakes a SWOT analysis. Key messages from this evidence review are included as Appendix 1 to this Plan. The full report is available to view on the Council's website.
- 3.6 As indicated a number of documents provide background to the current position, in particular those listed below which can be viewed via the links to the Council's website:
1. Local Government Association Peer Challenge Feedback Report, LGA – November 2017.
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/info/200396/performance_and_statistics/490/performance/4
 2. Economic Evidence Base – Baseline report, Ribble Valley Borough Council – May 2018 – Turley Economics.
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/6623/agenda_item_5_-_economic_evidence_base_-_consultants_report
 3. Ribble Valley Borough Council Service Centre Health Checks August 2018
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/downloads/download/7789/town_centre_reports.
 4. Ribble Valley Business Survey Research report – August 2018.
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/6883/agenda_item_9_-_ribble_valley_business_survey
 5. Ribble Valley Tourism Destination Management Plan – September 2018.
https://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/6753/agenda_item_6_-_rv_tourism_destination_management_plan

- 3.7 These reports highlight issues that need to be taken into account when progressing the economic plan. One of the key issues is that the area is not dealing with perhaps more traditional concerns around unemployment or job creation or a lack of investment and entrepreneurial will. Businesses are developing but are likely to be hindered by such issues as the availability of premises, ready availability of workforce to support their growth and competition from other areas who are also seeking skilled staff. Communication is a clear issue as more pressure is placed on strategic networks and delivery of broadband access is clearly a challenge for businesses to gain across the area, more so in the wider rural parts of the borough.
- 3.8 Not surprisingly these issues are being reiterated in the Council's business survey which was commissioned in August 2018 to gain an insight into business views. Similarly the full report is available to view as part of the background documents to this Plan. Whilst it reflects much of the sentiments expressed above, it also provides information relating to other key areas such as local retailing and the health of the high street going forward. This latter aspect is of interest as it highlights the overriding position of a relatively healthy high street by outward appearance, yet this can mask ongoing changes in how the high street is vulnerable to change in the next few years.
- 3.9 In addition to the commissioned reports which provide an extensive and valuable background to the Plan, there has also been consultation events through the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership which has helped reinforce findings of those reports and highlighted other aspects which are of relevance to the local business community and which the Council is seeking to reflect in this Plan.
- 3.10 What is key is that the partnership has provided an opportunity for a very broad spectrum of sections to input so far from manufacturing to service industries: tourism to retailing, large employers to smaller and individual business proprietors. It has embraced long established firms to new start-ups, what has been noticeable however across these differing operations, is the extent to which many concerns are common.

4. WHY A DRAFT PLAN

- 4.1 The Council wants to ensure that the Plan put in place reflects the character of the area; is aspirational and is supported by the business community. This document is provided as the vehicle to develop that Plan further through consultation and debate. It is recognised there is a need to get the Plan in place and for it to become a key part of delivering economic growth. Following the opportunity to contribute over the next few weeks, it is anticipated that a final Plan will be in place by autumn and become the operational tool by which the Council will help the business community and develop the local economy.

5. THE PLAN

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 This plan identifies those actions and activities that the Council will seek to implement with its partners in order to support the local economy. The Plan is set out by themes, however it is recognised some of these themes are cross-cutting and may not be confined to any particular area. It is also recognised that the proposals will need to be kept under review and that whilst there is a timeframe for the Plan, the local economy is dynamic and there may be a

need to update, amend or introduce new elements as challenges and priorities change.

5.2 The Key Themes

5.2.1 The Plan reflects the key themes which have been chosen and then discussed with the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership to create a framework within which to develop the Plan and explore ideas. They are not intended to be exhaustive nor do they preclude new issues being considered. The core themes reflect the following:

- People
- Places
- Business Support and Growth
- Connectivity
- Tourism

5.2.2 All of these themes sit within the Council's overarching corporate objective namely, to sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.

5.2.3 People - The main elements of this theme relate to skills, education and training, employment opportunities, health and demographic mix. There are clear linkages between all these elements and there are important relationships between the Council's aspiration to see business growth, more local employment opportunities and the need to secure through education and training, the skills to support aspirational growth. There are also important demographic issues such as an ageing population and significantly the identified tendency for many younger people and graduates to move away from the area which may be due to costs of living, graduate opportunities or simply the attraction of moving to areas with a stronger, social night-time offer.

5.2.4 These issues and relationships are complex and fall across areas that the Council can only seek to influence as opposed to direct change itself.

5.2.5 Places - Within this theme is reflected the nature and characteristics of the area, the role of the main centres and their offer together with the extensive rurality of the borough that has an influence on so many factors. It relates to practical issues of ensuring the right land and premises are available as well as the impact housing policy can have upon the availability of accessible, affordable housing for people wanting to live and work in the area. The very nature of the area as an attractive environment brings issues, together with opportunities to place the attractive environment at the heart of key sectors such as tourism and hospitality. The nature of the place also creates challenges around accessibility either for longer distance commuting by way of rail services or more localised transport challenges resulting from less strategic role investment in recent times and dealing with local congestion.

5.2.6 Business Support and Growth - In a similar way as connectivity, this cross-cutting theme is an aspect that can make a real difference to businesses seeking to grow or simply consolidate or sustain their position in the borough. Good business support will help underpin all other themes. It is often specialised, however the critical thing is that it has to be accessible. A common theme from our businesses is that they are not always aware of what is available or how to access it. There is also an important role in

business support around funding and its availability. However for many businesses it is the opportunity to share experiences, learn from each other and very often join up and do business together that is a key aspect of business support. Appropriate events and networking opportunities can be a key element of this support and is a recognised strength of the nature of the business community across Ribble Valley.

- 5.2.7 Connectivity - Connectivity is one of cross-cutting themes. For business there are clearly issues around the quality and availability of reliable broadband connections, together with that of mobile telecommunications. Transport links seem increasingly challenging with growing traffic movements, not just placing strains on local highway networks but also on wider strategic corridors upon which many businesses rely upon for their clients and staff. Similarly opportunities to make greater use of established rail linkages as well as developing new travel routes that could assist with role networks, are being viewed as an opportunity explore. Connectivity is a vital theme, that will influence across all of the identified themes and a prime example of an area where wider partners such as the highway authority and rail authorities will need to be engaged.
- 5.2.8 Tourism - Our tourism theme highlights a key sector for the Council in terms of its own investment and activities. Like many local Councils tourism is an area where there is strategic investment, whether it is through supporting tourism activity or marketing or simply ensuring it operates through its approach to street cleansing, looking after open space and maintenance of an attractive street scene together with the delivery of facilities and attractions. Promoting the development of accommodation and improving hospitality, supporting events and encouraged by the attraction of the local area have been key elements of the Council's tourism work. There is of course a close relationship between this and the other key themes when you look at skills and training, employment opportunities, affordable housing, connectivity (in all its guises), the reliance of place and appropriate business support. This reflects the cross-cutting nature of the local economy.
- 5.2.9 As indicated in developing this Plan we have sought to choose themes that reflect key aspects of the local economy as headlined areas, each interconnect and each will have elements that fundamentally will contribute to the overarching Council objective to sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- 5.2.10 The following actions are intended to highlight a number of key activities upon which the Plan will focus. Once again it is emphasised that these are not exhaustive and do not preclude other aspects being brought into play should that be relevant. These actions are seen as a starting point to discuss and fine-tune areas of activity which the Council can implement with its partners to best support the local economy, which is the fundamental aim of this strategic plan.

THEME ACTIONS

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
PEOPLE			
	Strengthen linkages with local schools and colleges to support opportunities for targeted employment skills to be developed and to raise awareness of training opportunities.	<p>Employers often identify a mismatch between their recruitment needs and available skill sets of school leavers. Some identify difficulties in attracting young people to their industry and business sector due to a lack of awareness amongst young people of alternatives to more traditional qualifications and the range of employment sectors available.</p> <p>Developing stronger links between business and our schools and colleges is aimed at improving employment prospects for young people as well as raising awareness of career opportunities and available training routes.</p>	<p>Ongoing Activity Ensure Schools and Colleges linked to RVEP. Review in December 2019</p>
	Promote and encourage access to training and development opportunities for local business with delivery partners.	A skilled and diverse workforce is seen as key to supporting business growth and it is important to encourage employers and employees to access the opportunities that exist.	Ongoing Programme Key event by December 2019

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	<p>Promote the delivery of Affordable Housing solutions through its Housing and Planning functions</p>	<p>The cost of housing in the Ribble Valley is comparatively high and it is recognised that access to affordable housing is a growing concern as house prices inflate. The opportunity to access affordable housing, (including starter and lower cost homes) is viewed as key to sustaining a local workforce.</p> <p>The Council will seek to address this issue through its statutory Housing and Planning functions. There is also the opportunity to consider direct delivery by the Council through its Registered Provider status which in turn can support the local construction industry and supply chain.</p>	<p>Ongoing activities. March 2020 in accord with local plan review.</p>
	<p>Encourage the delivery of starter homes as part of the mix of residential development.</p>	<p>It is important to ensure a broad mix of housing opportunities is available to meet the needs of the borough. Recent growth in housing has delivered a range of house types including affordable housing as well as larger homes but there is a concern that mid- range, starter homes and accommodation aimed at young people have been less prevalent. The Council will seek to address this issue through its statutory Housing and Planning functions.</p>	<p>Evidence and policy review by March 2020</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	Work to encourage a diverse employment market to increase local employment opportunities	Whilst it is important to support growth of business in the local area it also seen as important to ensure opportunities to diversify the business base are encouraged to ensure a mix of employment opportunities, with the aim of providing more local job opportunities for people in the Ribble Valley reducing the need to travel.	Ongoing Activities Review September 2020
PLACES			
	Encourage the delivery of suitable employment sites to ensure a choice of business location and requirements are planned for.	<p>The Council will use its statutory Planning Functions to ensure the availability of a choice of land and premises and will seek to ensure that the unjustified loss of employment sites to other uses is avoided.</p> <p>The Council will also keep under review opportunities for direct investment by the council in land or premises where appropriate to help facilitate economic growth.</p>	<p>Planning Policy Review December 2019</p> <p>Review of Council owned Assets by March 2020.</p> <p>Land Strategy in place by March 2020</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	Update the Town Centre Masterplan for Clitheroe	<p>As the main service centre for the Borough, the health and future of Clitheroe Town Centre has to be kept under review and appropriate plans developed to ensure its role and function is maintained with opportunities to support the local economy being maximised.</p> <p>The existing Masterplan is due for refresh and this presents the opportunity to undertake a holistic approach to the future of the centre in relation to recent investments, changing circumstances and new challenges around the High Street.</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Scoping stages by March 2020</p> <p>Draft and consultations by December 2020</p>
	Prepare main centre strategies for Longridge and Whalley	<p>Both Longridge and Whalley are identified as main centres. Each of these locations have experienced strong residential growth in and around their catchments and seen changing commercial offers.</p> <p>It is important to understand these changes and the potential consequences for these centres and to develop appropriate plans and strategies to strengthen and maintain their functions as attractive places to visit, shop and access services.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Consultation with local groups by March 2020</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
BUSINESS SUPPORT & GROWTH			
	<p>Create and implement a promotional strategy to increase awareness of Ribble Valley as a business location</p> <p>Continue to develop the Ribble Valley Economic Partnership to strengthen the relationship between the Council and the business community.</p>	<p>A marketing strategy will help focus promotional activity and improve the opportunity to secure additional investment and growth. It will help direct resources and partnership working.</p> <p>The Council is keen to develop its relationship with the business community and has always sought to work with a number of groups and organisations to support the local economy. The newly created, Ribble Valley Economic Partnership is seen as a key umbrella forum that encourages more joined up working, a better understanding of business needs and the role the Council can play as well as vehicle to draw the wealth of local economic activity together.</p>	<p>Strategy in place by December 2019</p> <p>Marketing and promotional brand in place by March 2020</p> <p>Ongoing. Series of events established by September 2019.</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
		<p>To be successful the partnership has to develop relationships and create a shared direction for the economy. It is recognised that the Partnership has to be more than a concept and needs to reflect both the needs of the business community and that of the Council in order to support the local economy in a relevant manner and provide a strong voice representing business in Ribble Valley.</p>	<p>Review by March 2021.</p>
	<p>Promote opportunities to access business support and growth advice through marketing and joint events with providers.</p>	<p>There is a wealth of training, development and business support that is available. It can be specialised and is generally delivered by partner agencies which can resource the necessary specialism. The aim is to seek to improve take up to help strengthen local business and support local growth.</p> <p>It has been identified that it can be difficult to identify the wide range of support available and the council working with delivery partners will put measures in place to promote and encourage take up.</p>	<p>Programme in place by December 2019</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	Create a packaged offer of business support in relation to Council Services to encourage take up.	The council provides a wide range of information and advice that can assist business. This action will seek to promote awareness and encourage greater contact.	March 2020
CONNECTIVITY			
	Engage with LCC and the LEP to ensure Broadband Services across Ribble Valley are improved.	The Council will undertake to increase its lobbying with the LEP and LCC on this issue which is seen as fundamental to ensuring competitiveness for the area. Good, reliable access to Broadband is essential to support the drive for growth with the needs of the wider rural area with its opportunities recognised.	Ongoing Contacts re affirmed by September 2019
	Engage with partner agencies to secure investment in the Strategic Highway network and reduce congestion at key junctions.	The strategic road network provides vital links across the borough and to neighbouring areas. Good efficient access to these areas and in particular the motorway network is key to offering an attractive area to invest and in supporting local business. There are some recognised pinch points on the network and it is seen as vital to ensure investment to deliver improvements is secured.	Ongoing Input to Local Industrial Strategy Re-affirm LCC contacts by September 2019

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	<p>Ensure opportunities are maximised for the development of digital telecommunications.</p>	<p>New technologies are bringing new opportunities for growth, diversity and strengthening of the local economy particularly in a rural setting where established communications can be constrained. As technologies develop the opportunities to position the area at the forefront of investment with delivery partners is key.</p>	<p>Review March 2020</p>
	<p>Work with relevant Rail agencies, LCC and the Community Rail Partnership to secure improved rail services to Manchester and Preston and the potential extension of services to Yorkshire.</p>	<p>The use of rail services has grown significantly in the Borough however services are constrained by issues in other parts of the network. Rail access has benefits for recruitment and more sustainable patterns of travel but relies on quality services. Working with the relevant agencies the Council will work to secure further improvements to services in particular half hourly services to and from Clitheroe.</p> <p>The lack of direct service to Preston with its access to principle main line destinations needs to be addressed. There are also opportunities to create access through to Yorkshire by extending services beyond Clitheroe.</p>	<p>Ongoing liaison Input to franchise review by March 2022</p>

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
TOURISM			
	Improve our understanding of accommodation needs and identify key gaps	This key information will assist with delivery of the Councils Destination Management Plan and ensure that the opportunity to grow visitor sectors by extending the supply of accommodation is appropriately matched to requirements.	Study December 2020.
	Promote the Ribble Valley as a destination through clear branding targeted marketing and collaborative working with partners.	This is a key activity to support the growth of the Tourism sector.	Ongoing Review by March 2022.
	Work to encourage the seasonal spread of visitors who stay longer and generate an increasing per capita spend.	It is important to ensure the pattern of trade is smoothed across the year to help sustain businesses and that visitors are encouraged to increase spend primarily from staying in the area longer. This help support a wide range of visitor based business, improve employment stability and longer term investment.	Ongoing

THEME	ACTION	WHY	WHEN
	Work to enhance skills development in the tourism and hospitality sector	There are concerns that availability of skilled staff in tourism and hospitality is a threat to the growth and development of the sector and needs to be addressed. There are a number of challenges facing business growth in terms of recruitment and retention and it is held to be vital to address this issue with relevant partners.	Ongoing

Economic Evidence Base – Baseline Report

Key Messages

Employment and Productivity

Key Messages

- Although total employment in Ribble Valley fell by roughly 2,000 between 2009 and 2016, the most **recent data indicates rising employment**. The **rate of employment growth** in the borough was, however, **consistently slower than that recorded at wider comparator geographies** over this period;
- Between 2011 and 2016 the **fastest-growing sector of employment** in Ribble Valley was **accommodation & food services**. As of 2016, however, **manufacturing remained the largest sector of employment**, supporting the jobs of 7,000 workers, 25% of the workforce;
- Ribble Valley's **economic output**, measured in GVA, has **increased steadily** since 1997, and **at a faster rate than wider comparator geographies**;
- Again, the **manufacturing sector** makes the **largest contribution to the borough's economic output**, accounting for 38.2% of Ribble Valley's estimated £1.67 billion GVA in 2018. The sector's GVA output also grew by 37.2% in the 5 years to 2018;
- **Job density is higher in Ribble Valley than in all wider comparator geographies**, including the average national rate;
- **Local specialisms** in terms of employment levels include, manufacturing, accommodation & food services, agriculture, forestry & fishing;
- **Employment is clustered to the southern and eastern edges of the authority**, close to nearby major settlement and connecting transport links; and
- **The majority of employed residents live in rural areas.**

Business Base

Key Messages

- **Agriculture, forestry & fishing** is the sector with the **most individual businesses**, followed by the professional, scientific & technical sector;
- **The vast majority of businesses in Ribble Valley are micro-businesses**, with this businesses size being proportionally slightly more prominent in the authority than in wider comparator geographies;
- Between 2011 and 2016, the **number of businesses in Ribble Valley grew at a slower rate** than in all other comparator areas. However, if measuring the number of businesses against the size of the working-age population, **Ribble Valley has a higher business density** than these wider areas; and

- In addition, **the survival rate for new businesses has been consistently higher in Ribble Valley** than at these comparator geographies. Similarly, over the past five years, **Ribble Valley has seen lower closure rates amongst its overall business base.**

Population and Labour Force

Key Messages

- Whilst over the past decade Ribble Valley's population grew at a greater rate than in Pennine Lancashire and Lancashire LEP area, this rate of growth was slower than in the North and in England as a whole;
- In comparison with wider geographies, a lower proportion of Ribble Valley's population are of working age – over the past decade the authority has experienced strong growth in the number of residents over the age of 65s and a reduction in the number of 25-29 year olds;
- Ribble Valley records high economic activity and employment rates relative to wider areas. The number of people who are self-employed in the area also outstrips the sub-regional and Northern rates, broadly aligning with national rates;
- A Low proportion of people in Ribble Valley are claiming jobseekers allowance at latest count;
- The agriculture, forestry & fishing, information and communication, wholesale & retail trade and professional, scientific & technical activities sectors are those in which significant levels of workers work mainly from home;
- Ribble Valley residents are more likely to be educated to degree level and above than wider comparator authorities, with latest evidence suggesting that this position has further strengthened in recent years;
- Ribble Valley residents are more likely to be employed in typically higher- earning occupations than in comparator geographies, particularly in comparison with the wider sub-region; and

As such, resident earnings in Ribble Valley are higher on average than in the sub-region and North as a whole. Workplace-based earnings are higher still (and above the national average), indicating that people commute into the authority for higher-paid jobs.

Property Market and Employment Land

Key Messages

- Whilst Industrial uses account for the majority of total b-class floorspace in Ribble Valley, there is a fairly even split between the number of office and industrial premises;
- Roughly half of Ribble Valley's employment floorspace was constructed during the 1970s;
- Business floorspace availability is currently at a lower level than seen for a number of years, with a slightly higher proportion of the borough's industrial floorspace being available than its office floorspace;

- Take up of both office and industrial property has been particularly high over the past year;
- Past completion of employment floorspace has fluctuated, with the greatest annual total completion being recorded in 2007/08 (of which just under half was for industrial use);
- Over half of completed floorspace since 2007/08 has been for B1 uses;
- Industrial floorspace represents over half of the lost floorspace since 2007/08;
- No B-class floorspace has been lost over the past three years; and
- Despite the fact that the borough maintains a higher quantity of industrial than office floorspace, over half of employment land with planning permission is for B1a use, with this figure being over double than that coming forward for B2 uses.