

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY 2020  
title: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN BUDGET REQUIREMENTS  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
principal author: COLIN HIRST, HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

## 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To consider the budget implications for progressing the update of the Local Plan.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To deliver a coordinated approach to planning through up to date planning policies.
- Corporate Priorities – To protect and enhance the existing environmental qualities of the area to match the supply of homes in our area through the identified housing needs.
- Other Considerations – To take actions that demonstrate the Council is a well-run authority.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will be familiar with the Council's statutory duties to have in place up to date Local Plan coverage that reflects both National legislation and National planning policy. The planning system is based upon a plan led system to ensure that the most sustainable forms of development possible are delivered and infrastructure can be planned for in the most effective way. Up to date Development Plans ensure that development and investment decisions are delivered effectively and development is directed to the most suitable locations and that the wider environment is protected with any effects of development mitigated as far as possible.

2.2 Local Plan policies are intended to assist in determining planning applications and to provide the opportunity for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to plan for the development of the area. It is not a function of the Local Plan to stop development rather it is the role of the plan to facilitate the National policy for delivering sustainable development.

2.3 The Local Development Framework (LDF) for the borough currently comprises the Core Strategy (adopted December 2014), the recently adopted Housing and Economic Development Plan Document (HEDDPD) which sits alongside the Core Strategy and the Longridge Neighbourhood Plan (adopted April 2019). Both the Core Strategy and the HEDDPD were produced using the relevant legislation of the time and both under the policy background of the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Core Strategy is approaching its five year anniversary. There is a commitment to review the housing requirements set out in the Core Strategy within five years of adoption which is consistent with the requirements of national policy and good practice.

2.4 Members considered a report dealing with the review of the Core Strategy at the meeting of this committee held on the 28 November 2019. Minute 443 refers. Prior to this, members also considered a report on the Local Development Scheme (LDS), the tool by which the

council sets out its plan making intentions and programme. This report was considered at the meeting of this committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2019, Minute 297 refers.

2.5 This report sets out details of the budget provision that will be necessary to take forward the Local Plan update in accordance with the committee’s previous resolutions with regard to the progressing a local plan update.

3 THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS

3.1 The initial LDS has identified the following broad timeframe in relation to the key stages of the process:

1. Regulation 18 - Evidence production and issues and options (Regulation 18) by September 2020.
2. Regulation 19 - Publication stage by February 2021
3. Regulation 22 - Submission stage by May 2021
4. Regulation 22 - Examination in Public by summer 2021
5. Anticipated receipt of Inspector’s report – February 2022
6. Adoption June 2022

3.2 These steps will need to be kept under regular review as experience has shown timeframes can readily be influenced by many factors including changing national policy, additional time to consider and respond to representations, or new evidence to be taken into account. Often these elements are outside the control of the Council. In general whilst the early stages can be programmed to reflect the timeframe, beyond Regulation 18 stage the process is more reactionary to the issues raised which may lead to additional work and expenditure.

3.3 To produce the plan the Council will need to ensure its evidence base is up to date. At present, the Council has undertaken work to establish its economic baseline, has undertaken town centre health checks and is currently progressing the Strategic Housing and Economic Needs study to establish a housing requirement. Evidence in relation to housing delivery has also been published and monitoring is undertaken on a regular basis. The preparation of an up to date and published evidence base is an ongoing process and whilst the wider evidence base will continue to be refreshed, a number of key areas will be focused upon to help inform the Regulation 18 issues and options stage as a starting point. The table below sets out those key areas of evidence to be produced together with the anticipated approach in terms of in-house or consultancy delivery.

Table 1 – Preparation of Key Evidence Base

<b>In-house resource</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Land Review</li> <li>• Strategic Housing and Employment Land Assessment (including call for sites)</li> <li>• Public open space</li> <li>• Housing Land Availability</li> <li>• Transport issues</li> <li>• Infrastructure Delivery Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Consultancy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Land Requirements</li> <li>• Sustainability Appraisal/SEA/HRA</li> <li>• Retail base data and requirements</li> <li>• Strategic Flood Risk Assessments</li> <li>• Landscape – visual impact assessments</li> <li>• Whole plan viability</li> <li>• Leisure Economy including Accommodation Needs</li> </ul>

- 3.4 These key pieces of the evidence base will be used to identify the broad issues and options to inform the plan review. Additional work in relation to specific topics will also need to be covered as information from the evidence base is translated into identifying the issues and relevant options to deal with them. The ability to deliver in-house will be governed by capacity and broader expertise, however seeking to undertake as much work as possible in-house will help keep overall costs of the process down. As members will be aware the core planning policy staff comprises a Senior Planning Officer and Assistant Planning Officer supported by a recently revised Planning Assistant post to support the policy function. As previously, it is anticipated that staff resources from other teams across the council will be required to provide support in key areas of expertise in addition to the core planning policy team. Some areas of the work however will require more specialist knowledge and with this in mind the proposed outsourcing of key elements of the evidence base are identified. Other areas of work may come forward as the process moves on and gaps in information are identified. Appendix A provides an overview of the anticipated costs that are likely and Members are asked to consider the resource implications of this.
- 3.5 In addition to the production of the evidence base there are pre-determined stages and requirements as part of the process itself that the Council would need to fund. These relate broadly to the consultation stages, including mailing, advertising and distribution of material, publicity, document production. Room hire and support costs to deliver these functions will also need to be addressed together with any additional consultancy identified as the process moves on. The indication of the baseline costs set out in Appendix A takes account particularly of savings where possible with efficiencies generated through increasing use of electronic communications, publishing more documents electronically and the use of in-house staff and facilities such as GIS. Costs will however need to be kept under review, as the programme has been developed to be as cost effective as possible. Some neighbouring authorities who are dealing with similar programmes have identified costs between £450,000 and £500,000.
- 3.6 As Members will see from Appendix A over the proposed plan programme it is estimated that a budget provision of some £300,000 will be necessary to progress and update the Local Plan. Costs will remain subject to review in the knowledge that some areas of the process and their related costs are governed by the response and challenges generated. The final costs are likely to change. A key cost of significance, is the extent and nature of the Examination in Public which is difficult to forecast at this stage and will be dependent on the nature of the Examination. An estimate has been included but this will need to be revisited as we get a clearer understanding of the challenges to be examined following the response to the consultation at Regulation 19 stage which provides the basis for the issues the Inspector will examine. As currently identified, the financial profile would be 2020/21 £190,000; 2021/22 £108,000; and 2022/23 £2000 giving a total of £300,000.

## 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – The Council has a duty to put in place up to date local planning policies. It is also required to review its Local Plan within five years of adoption and where it is identified that an update is required to put in place the measures to update its plans and policies as effectively and efficiently as possible. The report identifies that to address the programme as set-out a budget of £300,000 is estimated to be required over the three-year programme for the work identified at Appendix A. This relies on a significant element of the evidence work being carried out in-house and it should be noted that issues arising through the preparation of the plan may require additional funding. The report notes that initial stages of the plan will reflect the intended programme and are generally under the control of the Council. Future stages are

dependent upon the extent and nature of challenge that comes forward, any changes in national policy or a need to refresh evidence that may arise. This will need to be carefully monitored and may result in Members being asked to consider additional resource requirements throughout the process.

The proposed budgets for 2020/21 included in the budget reports for this Committee do not allow for any of the additional costs shown at Appendix A. At this stage the budget reports include only internal staffing costs in respect of the Local Plan. This growth request will need to be considered by Policy and Finance Committee.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council is required to review and keep up to date its planning policies. Where policies are out of date decisions on planning applications will be made in accord with the NPPF, thereby reducing the opportunity for the Council to influence planning decisions.
- Political – There is great public interest in planning issues.
- Reputation – None.
- Equality & Diversity – None.

## **5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Note the budget proposals set out in this report and at Appendix A and ask Policy and Finance Committee to consider this growth request as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

COLIN HIRST  
HEAD OF REGENERATION AND HOUSING

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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

National Planning Legislation, Planning Policy (NPPF February 2019) and Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG September 2019)

Ribble Valley Local Development Scheme, October 2019

Review of the Core Strategy, November 2019

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

## LOCAL PLAN BUDGET ESTIMATES

			£		
2020-2021	Regulation 18	Consultants	165,000		
		Consultation	4,000		
		Legal advice *	5,000		
		Print/miscellaneous	1,000		
			<b>175,000</b>		
	Regulation 19	Consultants	5,000		
		Consultation	4,000		
		Legal advice *	5,000		
		Print/miscellaneous	1,000		
			<b>15,000</b>		<b>190,000</b>
2021-2022	Regulation 22	Consultants	4,000		
		Publication	1,000		
			<b>5,000</b>		
		Examination fees **	85,000		
		Legal advice *	5,000		
		Examination costs	2,000		
		Miscellaneous	1,000		
		Consultancy support	10,000		
			<b>103,000</b>		<b>108,000</b>
2022-2023		Adoption costs (notices etc)	2,000		
			<b>2,000</b>		<b>2,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£295,000</b>		
			<u>Budget Summary</u>		
		2020-2021	190,000		
		2021-2022	108,000		
		2022-2023	2,000		
			<b>300,000</b>		

\* This item relates to ad-hoc legal advice on issues that may arise where specialist input is required

\*\* The estimate for Examination Fees will be subject to reconsideration once the extent of the Examination is known after Regulation 19 consultation.

The schedule excludes Programme Officer Costs as this role is usually filled through secondment. Costs for consultancy are based on best estimate and may be revised.