

# Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley Parish Council

## A Proposal for a Neighbourhood Plan

### 1. Introduction

At its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2013, the Parish Council agreed a proposal for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan covering all three wards of the Parish.

This paper sets out that proposal with appropriate amendments as agreed in discussion at the PC meeting.

It therefore addresses why we need a Neighbourhood Plan and how we will go about producing it.

### 2. Context

2.1 Government Policy The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England.

It states that the purpose of planning is sustainable development.

Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves do not mean worse lives for future generations.

It defines that development means growth and that development that is sustainable must go ahead without delay.

2.2 RVBC Core Strategy The revised RVBC Core Strategy as submitted to HM Inspector contains 9 Strategic Objectives, which are listed as Appendix 1. These are interpreted in 14 Key Statements, supported by a further 24 Development Management Policies identifying the mechanisms for delivery.

Amongst other things, the Strategy includes provision for 5000 new houses in the Borough in the period 2008 to 2028. Of these, 3560 are to be built in the main townships of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley with the remainder allocated between 32 'other settlements' including Bolton by Bowland, Holden, Sawley and Tosside.

When adjusted for houses already built and other factors, the number remaining to be built in these other settlements reduces to 732.

Alongside the public examination for the Core Strategy, RVBC will draw up an Allocations Document identifying more closely where the 732 houses will be built. This process will probably begin in early 2014 and could last for a period of 12 months or more.

It will draw upon the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which identifies several sites in Bolton by Bowland and Holden where houses could theoretically be built.

The Neighbourhood Plan, if it is to be approved, must show compliance with the policies set out in NPPF and RVBC Core Strategy.

### 3. What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Localism Act 2011 introduced rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.

The Neighbourhood Plan we are contemplating will look at a 15 year timescale and seek to define what we want our community to look like in 2028.

In doing so, it will need to produce hard evidence of what exists now and from that to agree

- what is good about what we have now and therefore we wish to protect/conservate/enhance, and how we propose to do that
- what can be better about what we have now and therefore we wish to change, and how we propose to do that.

The Plan cannot be used as a vehicle to block development but rather to interpret the policies for growth contained in NPPF and RVBC Strategy in a way which recognises the particular circumstances and character of our Parish Community

For example, it could not be used to block the building of any new houses but could be a significant determinant of how many, of what type, and where.

### 4. Approval Process

#### 4.1 Requirements

For approval, the Plan will need to demonstrate

- compliance with National and Borough policies and other laws
- a robust evidence base to support policies designed to address our particular circumstances and special character

- a comprehensive consultation process with residents and interested parties

#### 4.2 Designation of Area NP will cover.

This needs to be submitted to RVBC for approval. They will put the proposal out for a period of public consultation lasting a minimum of 6 weeks.

The Parish Council is the proposing body and the designated area we are applying for will cover all three wards in the Parish area, ie Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest and Sawley.

#### 4.3 Approval and Adoption of final NP

When the final draft is submitted, it will be subject to formal External Examination by an agreed 3<sup>rd</sup> party.

A sound base of evidence, compliance with National and Borough policies and a full consultation process will need to be demonstrated.

Subject to any comments/amendments from this, it will be put to a referendum, organised by RVBC, of all Parish residents.

A simple majority of 51% of those voting is required for adoption of the plan.

Once adopted it has statutory force ie must be taken into account in any planning decisions.

#### 5. Proposed Consultation Process

The consultation process needs to cover all stages in the development of the Plan and include all residents and interested parties.

It will need to be fully documented and to show, not only that consultation events have taken place, but that the outcomes have been recorded and taken into account in the production of the Plan.

Careful thought will need to be given, therefore, as to how events are best organised and what structuring of them can best identify issues/concerns and lead to the generation of constructive ideas and proposals.

### Stage 1

This will take place prior to the application for designated area status being submitted to RVBC. Its prime purpose is to explain what a Neighbourhood Plan is, why we need one, and how we propose to go about its production. It will also serve as a vehicle for identifying volunteers to help with the work.

A leaflet is being produced and will be distributed to all households in the Parish and open meetings will be held in each of the village halls.

This is likely to take place in January 2014.

### Stage 2

This is the main part of the consultation process. Its purpose is to collect evidence, identify issues/concerns and gather ideas and suggestions.

- Village Hall meetings
- 'drop in' sessions/ surgeries
- questionnaires
- working docs on website and elsewhere, seeking comments
- meetings with interested groups, inc all organised bodies/institutions in Parish and with all relevant external organisations. A initial list is attached as Appendix 2.

### Stage 3

When a final draft is available a second series of consultations could take place before the Plan is submitted for inspection and put to referendum.

- final document published widely within Parish
- meetings with key groups in Village Halls etc

## 6 Proposed Committee Structure

6.1 Parish Council      The Parish Council is the final decision maker on all issues and the content of the final Plan.

### 6.2 Steering Group

This is the main body to drive production of the Plan and to manage the consultation process and timetable.

It will collate evidence from Working Groups and elsewhere, and produce drafts and the final version of the Plan.

Membership will include those with expertise to offer and will not be limited to Parish Council members.

6.3 Working Groups      These will report to the Steering Group and are the main vehicle for getting the work done!

They will gather evidence and produce working papers for consultation and make recommendations on policies for inclusion in the Plan.

Groups will be needed to cover all policy areas in RVBC Core Strategy although some can be combined.

Possibly – Housing

- Employment/Tourism
- Travel/Transport
- Social and Community Facilities
- Environment ( inc consulting with AONB, Natural England etc)
- Communications, inc Broadband.
- Finance and Funding ( both for producing Plan and subsequent Projects)

- Publicity ( publicity material inc website)

There may also need to be separate sub groups from each village – Bolton by Bowland, Sawley Tosside, Holden and their related settlements/farmsteads, or, if not separate groups, at least an established contact/spokesperson for each one.

All Working Groups will have at least 1 PC member.

All Team Leaders from Working Groups will be members of Steering Group.

These Working Groups are intended to draw on the expertise and support available in the Community and much of the membership is expected to come from outside the Parish Council.

They are intended to work informally in whatever way gets the work done, but will produce regular progress reports and discussion papers to feed into the consultation process.

All parts of the Committee structure will be able to draw on help from RVBC and possibly other external organisations

No provision is proposed at this stage for commissioning paid work, although this could be considered if needed as the project unfolds.

## 7. Possible Timetable

It is difficult to judge at this stage, although other organisations seem to be taking at least 18 months/2 years.

An optimistic schedule is set out below but this will probably need to be adjusted in the light of what comes from the 1<sup>st</sup> round of discussions/consultations.

Phase 1      4 Nov 2013      Parish Council agrees to proceed

                 Dec 2013/Jan 2014      Leaflet produced and distributed  
and initial consultation meetings held in Village Halls.

Jan/ Feb 2014      Application submitted to RVBC for approval as a designated area and put out to public consultation for a period of 6 weeks.

Phase 2      Mar – Sept 2014      Working Groups develop discussion documents  
Consultation events take place.

Phase 3      Oct – Dec 2014      Draft NP produced

Phase 4      Jan – Apr 2015      Final version produced and submitted to RVBC

Phase 5      May 2015      Referendum of all Parish residents organised by RVBC

## 8. Finances

An initial provision of £2000 is included in this year's PC budget. This is to cover the first consultation period (documents, room hire etc, as well as additional secretarial work).

Once we have approval as a designated area further income and support could come from Government grants and also perhaps from other organisations.

Once the final Plan is adopted there are additional financial benefits to the Community through the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Finance and Funding Working Group will explore a wide range of other possible sources of funding for projects included in the final NP.

## 9. Decisions

The Parish Council has agreed that

9.1 A Neighbourhood Plan be produced under the auspices of the Parish Council

9.2 That all 3 wards in the Parish are included in the designated area to be covered by the Plan

9.3 That a Steering Group be appointed to drive the production of the Plan

9.4 That the first stage of the consultation process with residents be implemented.

9.5 That an initial budgetary provision of £2000 be allocated to the project.

RVBC Core Strategy

Strategic Objectives

1. Respect, protect and enhance the high quality environment and biodiversity in the borough.
2. To increase the supply of affordable and decent homes in the borough to help meet identified needs.
3. Ensure a suitable proportion of housing meets local needs.
4. Improve the competitiveness and productivity of local businesses by safeguarding and promoting local employment opportunities.
5. Ensure neighbourhoods are sought after locations by building cohesive communities and promoting community safety.
6. Support existing retail business whilst improving the retail offer by ensuring the vitality and viability of the retail areas are considered.
7. Coordinate, innovate and diversify sustainable tourism, building on our strengths and developing new initiatives.
8. Improve accessibility and service delivery to address rural isolation.
9. Contribute to local, regional and wider sustainable development, including addressing and mitigating against the impacts of climate change.

Groups/ Organisations to be Consulted

Consultations could take a variety of forms and are intended both to gather data and to discuss potential content.

Bolton by Bowland

Church Council  
School Governors and Head  
Young Farmers Club  
Village Hall Committee  
Cricket Club  
Drama Club  
Gardening Club  
Children's Committee  
F.O.B.B.S  
Bell Ringers  
Mothers' Union  
War Memorial Committee  
Monday Club  
FANS  
BxB Buddies

Sawley

Village Hall Committee  
Women's Institute  
Spinners and Weavers  
Art Group  
Tai Chi Group  
Snooker Club  
Society of Friends

Tosside

Community Link  
Parochial Church Council  
Bowls Club  
Art Group

Seniors Club  
Pool Club  
Gardening Club  
Youth Group

External Organisations

RVBC, LCC and our elected representatives on them  
Landowners, inc CLOA  
AONB  
Natural England  
English Heritage etc