

## The Ripon City Plan – What it is all about

**Welcome to the new regular monthly column from the Ripon City Plan team. Following your comments during our preliminary draft consultation and as we continue to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the City, we want to keep you informed of our progress. In, this our first column, we thought we'd remind you what the City Plan is all about.**

A Neighbourhood Plan is a means of the local community having a greater input into managing the long-term change in an area in relation to land, buildings and infrastructure. Traditionally, strategic plans for managing long-term change have been produced by local planning authorities and in the case of Ripon this means a plan for the whole of the Harrogate Borough. These strategic plans are subject to consultation and independent examination but ultimately participation is usually limited, except by those with a particular interest.

Neighbourhood Plans are a different approach to strategic planning, they focus on the needs of a much smaller area, which in our case is the Parish of Ripon (hence we called it the Ripon City Plan), and means that policies can be included to address specific local needs and problems.

Also critically, Neighbourhood Plans are different because the people that live in that area get to vote on the proposed Plan, in a referendum. This means that people that live in Ripon Parish have a greater say in the future of the City.

This is the reason why a number of organisations supported the concept of a Neighbourhood Plan for Ripon and we are committing our time as volunteers, with the support of the City Development Manager, to develop the Ripon City Plan.

As required by legislation, the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Ripon is led by the City Council, but membership of both the working group and committee is not limited to just Councillors. There are more of us on the team who are just residents of the City, using our knowledge and expertise to help produce a strategic blueprint for the management of change in our City between 2015 and 2029, to create the Ripon you want to see in the future.

However, the Ripon City Plan is not the solution to everything, as a Neighbourhood Plan it has a very clear purpose and role, but we know from our consultations with you, that there are projects and actions that would make the City a better place. That is why when we published our preliminary draft Ripon City Plan we identified complementary work, a long-term work programme, to be delivered by the City Development Initiative.

Nonetheless, providing a strategic plan for managing long-term change in Ripon is important. As we've been developing the Neighbourhood Plan, the environment in which we've been working has changed. The issues with Harrogate Borough Council's Sites and Policies DPD, which is part of their strategic plans, has put significant housing development pressure on the district and we are seeing that with a number of proposals around Ripon. The Ripon City Plan proposes a strategic approach to housing development within the City which would seek to limit significant housing development to preferred sites.

A significant challenge for us is that we recognise that many of these proposals are on sites outside of the "Neighbourhood" and therefore are not within the scope of the Ripon City Plan. They cannot

be included without redefining the “Neighbourhood” and going right back to the beginning of the process we started over 2 years ago. We are however, mindful of the implications for the City if these proposals are ultimately granted planning permission, and the role of the Ripon City Plan is to strategically plan for the implications upon the City’s infrastructure, for example, is more land needed for schools, health provision and would the City Centre able to capitalise upon the additional potential customers.

Also since work began on the Plan, the MOD initially announced the closure of Claro Barracks and latterly the closure of Deverall Barracks too. Whilst the timescales for relocation may be far from clear currently, we know that in the lifetime of the plan that relocation will take place leaving a large derelict site and it is important that the MOD, the local planning authority and the Ripon City Plan team work together on the regeneration of this site.

Given current Government priorities, it is apparent that they are likely to seek to maximise the value of the site and the also the contribution it can make to national housebuilding targets. However, the Neighbourhood Plan is the best and quickest opportunity to outline a policy which would ensure the redevelopment of the site was in the best interest of the city overall and potentially utilise the existing assets of the sports fields and workshop facilities.

As a team we are currently utilising your feedback from the preliminary draft consultation and producing the detailed draft Ripon City Plan. As required by the Neighbourhood Planning legislation this needs to be subject to a 6 week consultation and we are working towards this taking place in late Spring / early Summer.

If you require any further information, or wish to discuss any aspect of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals with the Ripon City Plan Team please contact: [cityplan@riponcity.gov.uk](mailto:cityplan@riponcity.gov.uk) or call (01765) 604097.