

The Ripon City Plan - What Can Be Delivered

Since our last consultation, and whilst we have been writing the Ripon City Plan, one member of our team has been tasked with keeping an eye on other Neighbourhood Plans that are being developed and adopted around the country, and identify anything we can learn from them. With over 100 Neighbourhood Plans now having been passed at referendum there is substantial experience from which we can learn. We also monitor the newsletters and various guidance notes which are published about Neighbourhood Planning, in order to help identify any key issues experienced elsewhere that may have relevance for us.

One of the guidance documents, which has recently been published, struck a chord with the team. The article contained a number of “top tips” for those developing a Neighbourhood Plan and in particular one of the people offering advice highlighted the need to “... condense the principles of the plan into a few bullet points, which are clear and easy to understand.”

This is something that as a team, we have discussed and identified that we needed to do. Undoubtedly, our Ripon City Plan is a comprehensive planning document because during our first consultation we asked “How could Ripon be better for you?” you gave us a wide range of answers. This is why our approach proposes a way to address key issues such as the economy, the city centre, derelict and under-utilised land and premises, housing, open space, community facilities, transport infrastructure, the environment, heritage and planning obligations and agreements.

So, one of our challenges is to try to explain succinctly and easily what the City Plan will deliver and if the City Plan is supported by you, the people of Ripon, in the Community Referendum, how it will make Ripon better for you. We believe that our comprehensive package of Ripon City Plan policies will, over the next 15 years:

- Support the local economy by providing more land for businesses to grow and expand,
- Strengthen the City Centre by facilitating and encouraging investment and developments that will improve the attractiveness of the offer to shoppers, visitors and tourists,
- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant and under-utilised land and buildings to provide new homes and new workspace for businesses,
- Enable a comprehensive redevelopment of the barracks site (when this is vacated) to provide new homes, new workspace for businesses, new sports facilities and other facilities for the community,
- Encourage the development of new housing in sustainable and appropriate locations anticipating what Ripon may be expected to contribute to Local Plan growth targets,
- Protect the open spaces which you value and enjoy and encourage the provision of new community facilities needed to service the new homes,
- Improve how people can get around the City and transport facilities,
- Protect the environment and heritage assets of the city,
- Get funding for projects which complement the City Plan from developer contributions.

The draft Ripon City Plan with its comprehensive set of policies were agreed at our most recent Committee meeting in November and consequently this has meant that we have been able to begin the detailed preparatory work to enable us to begin our pre-submission consultation.

There is still some work to do to design and produce the documents and materials that we need for the consultation, finalise our consultation programme including our events and activities, and meet with a number of individuals, businesses and organisations to discuss our approach to some key

issues. We are currently in the midst of bringing all of this together and we expect that we will begin our consultation during the first few weeks of 2016.

Our approach to the consultation will be wide-ranging and comprehensive because we want to hear your views and opinions. From previous consultations you overwhelmingly supported what we are trying to achieve and the vision for the future that we think the City Plan can help to deliver. This has been the basis on which we have been working over the last months to produce the detailed Ripon City Plan.

This consultation will be a crucial stage for the Ripon City Plan, if from your responses we still have your overwhelming support for the City Plan then we will formally submit it to Harrogate Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority and begin the formal processes which will ultimately lead to you having the opportunity to vote on the Plan at referendum.