

## Ripon City Plan - Regeneration of the Barracks is a Defining Moment

**“A defining moment for the City and a great opportunity,” those were the words spoken by a Ripon resident, at the recent Summit organised by Julian Smith MP about the closure of Claro and Deverell Barracks.**

As the City Plan Team, we accepted the invitation to attend the summit and couldn't agree more with those comments. It will of course be a sad day when the closure happens severing the connection between the City and the military stretching back over 100 years, but there is a strong determination that the civic links with the Royal Engineers (and also with the Royal Air Force) will remain strong.

Looking ahead, the barracks sites and the existing premises and facilities present an exciting development opportunity for the future of the City, a solution to some of the key issues that the city faces: where to put new housing; where new land for businesses can be located; and how to address the shortage of sporting facilities. In doing so, there are also some key issues to address including what new services and facilities will be required to serve any new housing and what new infrastructure will be needed to access and connect the site to the City?

When we published our preliminary draft Ripon City Plan in September 2014, and despite the uncertainty about which barracks was being closed and when, we made our position very clear. We said:

“Should the Claro Barracks and technical area become available they include a range of premises that could be of business and community use. There may be large site requirements for community purposes that could be met. New housing on this part of the military estate depends upon a comprehensive master planning process to assess the competing demand for sites.

We suggest that if Deverell Barracks were also to close, then it is potentially well connected with the city and we are clear that it should be used for new housing. Affordable housing must be included as part of the redevelopment.

The military playing fields should be transferred or otherwise brought into use for the relocation of sports clubs and wider public use to meet the city's shortage of pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

There would be significant traffic relief to the west of the city and city centre through re-opening of Chatham Road and re-opening of the military highway to Galphay Lane.

Military activity beyond the Development Limit such as training grounds should not be used as justification for further urbanisation into the attractive yet vulnerable countryside west of Ripon.

Whatever outcome arises in the near future, more detailed planning will be needed to make sure the barracks becomes a new “urban village” for Ripon.”

Our approach was based upon what you, the people of Ripon said, because we analysed what you had told us about the redevelopment of the barracks site in our initial City Plan consultation in March 2013, which was just a few weeks after the announcement of the closure of the Claro site.

From your comments we know that you broadly support the approach we adopted. We have been developing the draft Ripon City Plan and in this column in June last year we provided an update in relation to our position in relation to the barracks. We said:

“A vacated military estate at Clotherholme will be the largest brownfield site in the Harrogate District and is likely to see huge housing pressure on this site to maximise the cash receipt and also to contribute to Government house-building targets. Our approach is that the regeneration of this site should offer a clear opportunity to assist in providing land and premises for business, schools and education, new homes and playing fields as well as housing. Importantly, the existing military road network provides an opportunity to enhance the road infrastructure of the city to improve connectivity and circulation.”

Following recent announcements, our stance in relation to the barracks has not changed, except we do now believe that there is some potential for development to the south of Clotherholme Road in the Laver Banks training area, providing that the defining special landscape area is protected and enhanced.

We still believe that a mixed-use redevelopment is the right use for the site and can be delivered. We recognise that a significant amount of housing is possible given investment in infrastructure so that the whole site of 64Ha (158 acres) will accommodate the necessary range of other facilities for the community and business.

How can we ensure that this is achieved? Well, as a Neighbourhood Plan, the Ripon City Plan, has to contain planning policies (which are the requirements which developers need to respect when putting forward proposals). Accordingly, our draft plan, which we will begin formally consulting upon very shortly, has a policy which sets out the necessary requirements for regeneration of the site and the creation of the new Clotherholme Village. It is a comprehensive policy because this is a complicated site.

We want to see a masterplan prepared at the earliest opportunity to address the comprehensive redevelopment of the military estate. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Harrogate Borough Council agree with this approach, which would need to explore the phasing of the development. Given the proposed timescales for the relocation of the Royal Engineers and the size and scale of the development, we think that development is unlikely to begin before 2020 and that house building could continue up to 2030 and possibly beyond.

Integral to our approach is that the masterplan needs to:

- include the retention of existing military premises that are assets that can be used for employment, community, education and recreational purposes,
- include the retention of the sport facilities,
- show the integration of the military roads between Kirkby Road, Clotherholme Road and Galphay Lane into the public highway network and other off site works that may be required,
- provide a mix of type, tenure and size of new dwellings appropriate to the need in Ripon,
- include provision of a site for a new primary school,

- include the allocation of a site for local shopping and associated community facilities, and
- seek to retain and find a productive use for one of the historic timber barrack blocks on Deverell

In advance of any master-planning it is difficult to quantify accurately what could be delivered through the comprehensive redevelopment of the site. Those present at the Barracks Summit will have heard the representative of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation suggest that the site could accommodate around 1300 dwellings.

Our preliminary work, building upon a consultant's report commissioned when the closure was announced, suggests that our approach could deliver a new Clothholme Village with all of the following:

- up to 1,000 new homes being developed over 10 years or more,
- business premises with the potential to create up to 500 new jobs,
- a new indoor / outdoor sporting facilities hub allowing expansion and increased participation,
- a new primary school to serve the village and west Ripon and prevent overcrowding in existing schools,
- new community facilities and a healthy, green, attractive environment, and
- better road links, cycleways and footpaths, joining up Clothholme Village with the rest of Ripon and providing new routes to help reduce City Centre traffic.

From what you've told us so far, we believe that this is the vision that you would want for the site, and for the wider benefits to the City, too.

The Ripon City Plan is an opportunity for you the residents of the City to have a major say in relation to what happens to the regeneration and redevelopment of the site. Ultimately, Harrogate Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority and will determine any planning applications which come forward in relation to the Barracks, but at the moment the current estimation is that they will not have their new strategic planning document – the Local Plan – adopted until Autumn 2018 at the earliest. This does not preclude a planning application for the site and it would limit the ability to look at how the development would affect the City overall.

As we head towards public consultation on the draft Ripon City Plan, our current timescales suggest that a public referendum on the City Plan could take place early in 2017. If supported by the majority, the Ripon City Plan would become part of the statutory development plan once it has been made (brought into legal force) by Harrogate Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority. This means that any planning application for the redevelopment of the Barracks would have to be determined in accordance with the approach laid out in the City Plan.

The resident who spoke at the summit was right. We are at a defining moment for the City and the barracks presents us with a major opportunity, although by no means the only one. It needs to be integrated with an approach to solving some of the other challenges that the City faces. This co-

ordinated, long-term, strategic approach is what we are proposing in the Ripon City Plan and that you have the opportunity to endorse.

In advance of our consultation on the draft Ripon City Plan, we have published the current draft wording of our policy in relation to the barracks on the Ripon City Plan website [www.riponcityplan.com](http://www.riponcityplan.com). If you require any further information, please contact the Ripon City Plan Team: [cityplan@riponcity.gov.uk](mailto:cityplan@riponcity.gov.uk) or call (01765) 604097.