

## Providing New Homes and Employment Land in Ripon

A key principle of Neighbourhood Plans, like the Ripon City Plan, is that they cannot be used to stop development and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan.

In this column we have previously written about the challenges faced in developing the Neighbourhood Plan whilst Harrogate Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, is developing its Local Plan. One of the biggest issues this creates for the City Plan is proposing where to provide new homes and new employment land because this is an area where general conformity is a very important issue.

In last week's Gazette there was an article about the publication by Harrogate Borough Council of two important documents. These have the technical names of Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The SHMA's overall assessment of housing need is 557 dwellings per year across the District or almost 11,700 during the period to 2035 and the Harrogate District Local Plan will need to allocate sites to achieve this level of new build. At the moment there is no information about how many of these dwellings Ripon will be expected to provide or indeed how this will be divided between the principle settlements, the villages and other locations. This information will only be known when the draft Local Plan is published for consultation, which is currently expected in October.

The SHELAA is an assessment of all of the sites that have been put forward to Harrogate Borough Council by land owners, developers and other interested parties as potential sites for either housing, employment or mixed use development. There were 29 sites put forward in Ripon of which 23 were suggested for residential development and six were put forward for mixed development. Of these sites, two already have been granted planning permission: the former Doublegates Quarry and Red House on Palace Road.

Of the remaining sites, 14 are identified as being 'deliverable'. Within the Ripon City Plan area, the three sites at the barracks (Claro, Deverell and Laver Banks) are shown as having a potential for 900 dwellings together with 4.2ha of employment land. Two other sites which we are proposing in the draft Ripon City Plan and are also identified in the HBC assessment are the former Ripon Cathedral School site (potential for 98 dwellings) and the former Police Station (potential for 11 dwellings).

There are a further five greenfield sites which the SHELAA considers deliverable for housing and one site which is considered deliverable for 0.76 Ha of employment land. The SHELAA considers the Auction Mart site to be deliverable for housing as well as land between Kirkby Road and Palace Road. These sites have been assessed as being able to deliver 669 dwellings. We will need to review whether any of these sites might be proposed in the draft City Plan and if not provide reasons as to why we have formed a different view.

The Harrogate Borough Council definition of Ripon is not the same as the City Plan. Outside the Parish Council boundary there are two sites that the SHELAA considers deliverable: land at Tanglewood, Hutton Bank (potential for 163 dwellings) and West Lane (potential for 430 dwellings). There are also four other similar sites outside of the Parish which are considered not to be

deliverable. West Lane is in Littlethorpe parish and there is potential for a further 88 dwellings in the parish. There is a potential for a further 340 dwellings in Sharow parish.

One of the key objectives of the Ripon City Plan was to address the lack of employment land in Ripon. The preliminary draft City Plan published in September 2014, therefore suggested additional sites for employment use, whilst we still believe these are deliverable and can contribute to the City's economy they have not been assessed as part of the SHELAA.

It is apparent from our initial analysis of both the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment that there is significantly more housing land available in and around Ripon than is likely to be needed. Whilst there is further work to do, our view remains as it did in January - to encourage the development of new housing in sustainable and appropriate locations within the City. We believe that the rigorous and well evidenced approach that we will set out in the draft City Plan enables this to be achieved as will be seen in our forthcoming 6-week consultation.