

## **The Ripon City Plan: A plan that works for Ripon**

### **The Plan so far:**

This week has seen the publication of the draft Ripon City Plan which proposes a set of planning policies devised to shape the development of Ripon between now and 2030. This strategy could significantly improve the City's profile as a place to live, work and visit, in a way that complements and enriches its unique built and environmental heritage.

As the word 'draft' indicates, the plan is a working document that marks the latest stage in an ongoing consultation process in the City that began more than three years ago. Ultimately the plan must be approved by you, the residents of Ripon. That's why we want to bring you up to date with the map of where we are today with the Ripon City Plan, how we got here, and where do we go to from here.

### **How we got here:**

The starting point for any Neighbourhood Plan, however large or small the city, has to be the community it serves. So that's exactly where we started in 2013 when we set up the City Plan Team, comprising of ourselves as a small group of volunteer planning specialists and the City Development Manager, and we asked for your views about Ripon in the future.

We listened to local residents at two community consultations where we asked "How could Ripon be better for you?" This identified a wide range of issues and opportunities that you wanted the Plan to address. It also highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the City and the team spent time coordinating and analysing your views and comments in order to identify the key objectives for the Ripon City Plan. This enabled us to publish a *preliminary* draft Ripon City Plan in 2014, which set out our emerging thinking on the priorities for future growth and regeneration in the city.

Your feedback on that preliminary plan told us you were very supportive of our proposals and subsequent work has produced the draft Ripon City Plan, a more detailed version of that preliminary plan, based once again on your feedback. The draft Ripon City Plan contains our planning policies to achieve the vision and objectives and also number of proposed projects that would complement these, all with supporting documentation. If the Plan is adopted it could revitalise the city through a comprehensive programme of new development, redevelopment and general improvement strategies.

### **Unpacking the Plan:**

The Ripon City Plan is a Neighbourhood Plan which gives, you, the local residents more control over where development should go and how it can benefit the community within the Parish of Ripon.

As a Neighbourhood Plan it has a specific remit to comply with Neighbourhood Planning legislation, and relates mainly to the way in which land, buildings and infrastructure are used. Our approach is to create a coherent plan for the future development of the City over the next fifteen years.

Growth is a good word; especially if you consider its opposite. We believe that the proposals set out in the Plan would allow Ripon to grow without compromising its unique character and its traditions which we all value.

The plan proposes strategies for the city in the following areas:

- Economic growth with the creation of up to 700 new jobs
- City centre growth with a new retail development and varied offering of retail and food and drink
- Tourism growth including the building of a new hotel and investment in existing hotels
- Housing growth with up to 1,500 new homes to be developed in regenerated areas
- Community and facilities growth which includes the development of new sports and recreation facilities

Central to all the proposed strategies in the Plan is the preservation of the city's distinctive heritage and environment.

### **A quick guide to the draft Ripon City Plan:**

You will see that our proposals are outlined in seven separate themes, each including the planning policies and some of the projects which could help to achieve them.

#### *Sustainable Ripon*

This part of the Plan ensures that any growth in the city happens in the right places and in an appropriate way that will not create future problems. In this section our policies focus on some of the constraints on development in the city with a view to protecting the character of the city's natural environment and managing risks of flooding and unstable land.

#### *Growth and Regenerating the City*

Here we look at promoting significant change with the city's existing built environment and redeveloping parts of the city which are vacant or derelict and under-utilised land and premises. In

this section our strategy proposes a comprehensive redevelopment plan in Ripon which includes new urban villages in the Bondgate Green area and Clothierholme (the former military estate). These developments will provide new homes, new business workspace and shopping and community facilities. At Ure Bank we propose there are opportunities for redevelopment to support the economy.

#### *Strengthening the City Centre*

Ripon's City Centre is an attractive built environment and it plays an important role for residents and visitors. Our vision sees the city centre as the "meeting place of choice" and we identify opportunities for redevelopment to improve the retail, leisure and cultural mix and increase the vitality and viability of the centre. Here our planning policies focus on the Market Square, the Northern Quarter of the city centre (North Street/Allhallowgate) and the Spa Quarter including the hospital, the Swimming baths and the Spa Park and Spa Gardens.

#### *Supporting the Ripon Economy*

We are keen to build upon the economic strength of the city centre, the tourism sector and the business parks and industrial areas within the City. With policies in place to create more and better business workspace in our designated regeneration areas, and plans to revitalise the city centre, we also seek to enable the growth of businesses in the designated employment areas in the city and invest in the growth of the tourism sector by ensuring that there are appropriate levels of accommodation for tourists to stay in the city.

#### *Providing new homes*

Ripon is a desirable and attractive place to live and there is strong demand for housing in the city. Our proposals have planning policies in place to build up to 1,500 new homes mainly from the mixed-use redevelopment in the designated regeneration areas of the city.

#### *Open Space and Community Facilities*

Part of the special attraction of Ripon is the quality of life provided by its open spaces, school playing fields, parks, playgrounds and riverside locations. Our policies are aimed at protecting these sites and absorbing the impact of growth in the population by providing new education and community facilities including expanding the existing facilities of the Camp Close Leisure Centre to include a new swimming pool and to developing sports facilities at the new Clothierholme Village site.

### *Connecting Ripon*

We believe that Ripon would greatly benefit from better connectivity both within the city and its immediate surrounding area. The Plan seeks to improve accessibility within the city by road, on foot and for cyclists, as well as providing better facilities for the mobility impaired. We also seek to address traffic congestion problems in the city and suggest practical additions to the highway network and the reopening the railway.

### *Protecting the Environment and Heritage*

Planning for a viable and vibrant future of Ripon is not to be at all costs and in this section we seek to protect Ripon's natural and built environment assets. The Plan encourages investment and revitalisation of a number of landmark buildings in the city bringing them back into active use and it proposes better protection for the riverbank habitats.

### **The importance of your feedback:**

You will see all of these planning and project proposals in detail together with the relevant maps in the Ripon City Plan documents that we have produced. The City Plan team have dedicated a great deal of time and effort into ensuring that this plan reflects your ideas and views. We believe that the proposals could deliver a buoyant future in Ripon for residents and their families.

It's now up to you. This is your Plan and we are now handing it over to you to read and review. This week every household in Ripon should receive a copy of the Draft Ripon City Plan Summary and we would like you to give us your thoughts and feedback before October 30<sup>th</sup> which is when the consultation period ends. There are a number of ways you can do this which you will see listed at the end of the Plan. Or you can come to one of our drop-in sessions at the Town Hall over the next weeks and talk to members of the City Plan team. Details of the drop-in times and dates are listed on the website at [www.riponcityplan.com/draftplanconsultation](http://www.riponcityplan.com/draftplanconsultation)

### **The next step:**

The purpose of the consultation is to see whether you support our proposals because ultimately the Ripon City Plan will only become a Neighbourhood Plan for our City if you support it when a community referendum is held.

Once the consultation period ends we will analyse your responses and consider modifications to the draft Plan, before formally submitting it to Harrogate Borough Council (as the local planning

authority) for further consultation and for review by an independent examiner. If the examiner approves the Ripon City Plan it could go to a referendum of Ripon residents later in 2017.

We look forward to hearing from you over the next six weeks and answering any queries you may have about the Plan.