

## City Plan and the Local Plan

The consultation on the draft Ripon City Plan is now well underway. Over the past 4 or so weeks you have been letting us have your feedback and views on the draft plan and some of you have taken the opportunity to speak directly to members of the City Plan Team at the drop-in sessions in the Town Hall.

However you have chosen to respond, and whatever your views, we appreciate your feedback because it is vital to the consultation process. We want to know that you support the draft Ripon City Plan as the development strategy for the future of the City, or if not we want your feedback and any changes you would like to see made. We want to ensure the Ripon City Plan is supported as Our Plan for Our City as this is chance of a lifetime for Ripon to control its future.

One of the most frequently asked questions at City Plan consultation events has been about the relationship between the Ripon City Plan and the Harrogate District Local Plan. We have previously highlighted that one of the challenges in relation to developing the Ripon City Plan is the lack of an up to date local plan for the Harrogate District.

The Government's planning practice guidance in relation to Neighbourhood Planning is very clear in saying that, *"Neighbourhood plans, when brought into force, become part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area. They can be developed before or at the same time as the local planning authority is producing its Local Plan."*

The guidance also refers to the need for a draft neighbourhood plan to be in *"general conformity with the strategic policies of the local planning authority's development plan."* This means, for example, that we cannot propose to build less homes than that suggested by the Local Plan but we can suggest alternative locations. Whilst the aspirations and approach of the City Plan have been clear since we published our preliminary draft in September 2014, the draft Local Plan has yet to see the light of day so trying to ensure compliance with this has been challenging.

Furthermore, planning practice guidance encourages the local planning authority to work collaboratively with Neighbourhood Planning teams. *"The local planning authority should take a proactive and positive approach, working collaboratively with a qualifying body particularly sharing evidence and seeking to resolve any issues to ensure the draft neighbourhood plan has the greatest chance of success at independent examination."*

*The local planning authority should work with the qualifying body to produce complementary neighbourhood and Local Plans. It is important to minimise any conflicts between policies in the neighbourhood plan and those in the emerging Local Plan, including housing supply policies."*

However, the approach being proposed by Harrogate Borough Council in its draft Local Plan will become clear very soon. Next week a pop-up café event takes place at the Harrogate International Centre to preview the draft Local Plan. This is a prelude to consultation beginning on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November and ending on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

Whilst the City Plan Team are awaiting the final details of the draft Local Plan, information available from recent reports to the Council's Committees give us reason to believe that there will be some key policy areas where the Harrogate Borough Council led Local Plan and the community led Ripon

City Plan will suggest different approaches. We will provide a more detailed analysis of this in next month's update when we have had chance to analyse the draft Local Plan in its entirety.

So what does all this mean for the Ripon City Plan? As outlined elsewhere in the government's planning practice guidance, *"A neighbourhood plan attains the same legal status as the Local Plan once it has been agreed at a referendum and is made (brought into legal force) by the local planning authority. At this point it becomes part of the statutory development plan. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

In effect the Ripon City Plan can take a different approach to that taken by the Harrogate District Local Plan (providing that it is in general conformity with the strategic policies as outlined above) and providing that the majority of people vote for the Ripon City Plan as Our Plan for Our City then it becomes the development strategy for the city.

We believe that the Ripon City Plan is the development strategy that our community would like to see delivered in the City and so we will be responding to the Harrogate Local Plan consultation, and urging for further weight of consideration to be given to this where policies conflict rather than complement.

So please let us know what you think about the Ripon City Plan. The more feedback we have will not only help to ensure that we develop the best plan we can for the city but also enables us to better represent your views in responding to the Harrogate Borough Council about the Local Plan.

For more information about the draft Ripon City Plan please visit: [www.riponcityplan.com](http://www.riponcityplan.com)