

Reflecting on the Progress Made and the Next Steps

Many of us start the New Year with hopes and aspirations and as a City Plan Team we are no different. This is the year that we want to see you the people of Ripon given a greater say about the future of development in your city with the opportunity to vote on the Ripon City Plan at a community referendum.

When we started the process I don't think any of us realised how much work was involved, how complex it was going to be or how long it was going to take. In addition a number of things have changed in the outside world while we have been carrying out the consultations, doing the research, preparing our evidence and putting the plan together. At the start, we couldn't have predicted that the MOD would decide to close and plan to dispose of Claro and Deverall Barracks, creating a large brownfield regeneration site. We didn't know that Harrogate Borough Council were going to withdraw their sites and policies development plan document and begin to produce a new local plan. Both of these things have had a major impact on the focus of the plan and the list could go on.

All of this change made it even more important to have a strategic development plan for Ripon, a Ripon City Plan, to address the concerns that local residents have about the future of our city and support the delivery of opportunities that local people see. Overall, you told us you wanted a Plan produced by Ripon for Ripon.

Months of work culminated in all of our proposed policies and projects being published both in a summary document and in a lengthy proposed submission draft document. This draft Neighbourhood Plan was then put out for consultation in September of 2016.

Since the consultation period officially closed we have begun a rigorous analysis of the comments we have received from three different groups : residents who will have a vote in the community referendum; landowners or interested parties or their representatives, (who have an interest in the city plan because it proposes a different approach to their aspirations); and those from organisations that we have a statutory duty to consult under Neighbourhood Planning regulations (local authorities, Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency)

Overall, we are delighted that there were many supportive responses from the public consultation, as we have said before this is about Ripon producing our plan for our city. Of course as we expected there are a small number of issues that you've highlighted and that we need to consider thoroughly. We also received a number of comments from those with a direct interest in development of land across the city and will need to consider in detail these requests for changes to the plan. Finally, we are working through the comments supplied by the statutory consultees.

Once completed, all of this analysis will enable the City Plan Committee, which comprises both Councillors and non-Council members, to consider where changes to the draft Ripon City Plan are necessary. As a City Plan Team, our focus will then switch to amending, updating and finalising all of the supporting documents which underpin the draft Ripon City Plan so that we can submit this to Harrogate Borough Council as the local planning authority.

There are many key milestones to come this year and many more hours of work to do, but we look forward to achieving our objective of giving you the chance to vote on our proposals and implementing our plan for our city.