

One of the main reasons for initially proposing a Neighbourhood Plan for Ripon was concerns about the local economy and a belief that more could be done to support it. That is why the draft Ripon City Plan talks about planning for the growth of the city in a sustainable way and without putting at risk the quality of life of those that already live here.

Recently, Harrogate Borough Council published its "Draft Economic Growth Strategy for the Harrogate District 2017 – 2035". Further details can be found at: [www.harrogate.gov.uk/economicgrowthstrategy](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk/economicgrowthstrategy) although the consultation is now closed.

The summary states this strategy is "... all about providing a framework which builds on our strengths, addresses our challenges and, through positive, focused intervention, raises the game of public sector and private partnerships."

We believe that the proposals in the Ripon City Plan can contribute to a number of the key themes in the draft Harrogate strategy particularly: "securing and developing land and buildings for business growth and investment" and "creating the right conditions for growth: digital, telecoms, transport and quality of place."

Harrogate's growth strategy proposes a focus on the key sectors of: creative & digital, financial & professional services, logistics and scientific research & development. Whilst it would be a huge economic boost to attract more businesses in those sectors, the City Plan also seeks to support other sectors that are important to the city's economy, most notably the growth of the tourism and city centre economy.

We believe that much can be achieved by encouraging the regeneration and redevelopment of key areas of the city which have vacant, derelict and under-utilised land and premises. Perhaps even creating new business space for those in the high-growth sectors. Therefore, we are proposing the provision of business space as part of the barracks redevelopment; mixed use redevelopment of Bondgate Green including business workspace and leisure development and; improvements at Ure Bank to create new business opportunities.

We also know that the city centre plays an important economic role. As our vision says by 2030 it will be "... a meeting place of choice for culture, leisure and tourism for residents and visitors." This recognises that the city centre serves a wide hinterland and that attracting this spending power already supports the Ripon economy. There are opportunities to attract more spend from the catchment by expanding the retail and leisure offer.

The part of the draft Ripon City Plan called "supporting the economy" seeks to ensure that existing business parks and industrial estates are protected and supports the growth of the tourism economy by protecting current and encouraging the provision of a new hotel. We propose 3 different sites to reflect the business model of distinct types of operators. The importance of transport and connectivity are also recognised as being an important set of proposals within the Plan.

In our summary draft Ripon City Plan we said that together these proposals could deliver economic growth which could create more than 700 new jobs over the next 15 years.

We know that a considerable number of businesses within the key growth sectors, which Harrogate Borough Council have identified, already operate in and around Ripon and that the quality of life on offer in the city makes us a desirable location. However, unless we can provide appropriate land, premises and infrastructure we are simply not going to be able to achieve that growth. This is a contribution the Ripon City Plan can make presenting key local opportunities where the public and private sectors can work together to deliver "good growth" for the city benefitting those that live here and in the wider district. After all, a strong Ripon economy contributes to a strong rural economy in the District.