Work has started on an extension to Canalside Business Park in Ripon after planning permission was granted on the four-acre site adjacent to the B6265 Boroughbridge Road.

The new development will be key to the retention of jobs in the city. Bill Plant School of Motoring is one of Ripon’s fastest growing businesses and is already based at the business park. Paul Kittrick, operations director at Bill Plant said that the company would have been forced to look at relocating the business out of Ripon if the extension had not been given the go ahead.

“We have grown from 20 to 27 staff here in the office since January and our fleet of cars is also expanding all the time too. The new site means that we can store around 50 of our 800-strong fleet there and, crucially, it enables us to keep our business here in Ripon, rather than look elsewhere, as we undergo further growth.”
For gritter and snow plough vehicle manufacturer Econ Engineering, which owns Canalside Business Park, the new site will be key to the expansion of the firm’s hire division, enabling Econ to store more than 400 vehicles close to its Ripon factory, which employs over 200 staff.

Jonathan Lupton, operations director at Econ Engineering, said: “The fact that we were granted planning permission to develop this site means that we will be able to further expand our growing gritter hire business, which supplies local authorities up and down the country with winter maintenance vehicles. We currently have to store vehicles at a number of different sites but this new, landscaped site will enable us to store our entire hire fleet close to the factory.”

He added: “Along with the jobs that have been secured in Ripon at Bill Plant, we’re hopeful the business park extension will be a boost to the city’s economy.”

The new site is undergoing landscaping works by Harrogate-based Oaks Landscaping, which has already planted over 2,000 trees and shrubs around the periphery. “We have used native species including silver birch, blackthorn and hawthorn, which will both add to the site’s biodiversity and effectively screen it from view once the saplings have grown to a good size, said Andrew Spedding, managing director of Oaks Landscaping.

Work on the new site at Canalside Business Park is due for completion in late summer.

Photography: (L to R) Jonathan Lupton, operations director, Econ Engineering; Andrew Spedding, Oaks Landscaping