



CHICHESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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MINUTES OF THE CHICHESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2020 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Plowman, Planning Adviser Anna Whitty, Kate Cook, Alan Green, Martin Trundle, Greg Roberts, Bob Mousley, Austen Hindman, Peter Evans, Julian Joy, Paula Chatfield, Hugo Frey, Edward Cooke, Craig Gershater, Andrew Strong

- 1 Cllr Plowman as Chairman welcomed the attendees and read apologies for the Dean, Colin Hicks and Jeremy Hunt who were unable to attend.
- 2 The minutes of the last meeting were approved and there were no matters arising from the last meeting.
- 3 The Chairman reminded members that the Chichester Neighbourhood Plan is a “People’s Plan” to be put together for and by the people of Chichester, from the ground up. As a Steering Committee, our role is as facilitators in the production of a plan, not as decision makers; the content and direction of the Plan will be set by the people. The Chairman expressed the importance of public wellbeing and supporting this through the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman reminded members that the Steering Group is an independent group of residents and community volunteers, non-political and not answerable to the City Council but to the people of Chichester.
- 3 The planning advisor updated members on the results of the survey. In excess of 1660 responses were received and strong support was expressed for trees and green spaces, environmental measures, more events, a nightclub, a bridge/underpass solution to the Basin Road railway crossing, hand painted shop signage and Chichester’s public art. Residents also reported feeling there were too many cafes in the city centre, and were against informal advertisements and banners. Further work was in process to analyse the open questions (Questions 3 and 16) which invited the public to make their own suggestions about what Chichester needs and what to include on the Plan but popular suggestions related to entertainment, particularly provision for young people, housing and infrastructure, city centre shopping and the public realm, particularly the city’s paving/surfacing and transport particularly park and ride.
- 4 The planning advisor further detailed the breakdown of questions 3 and 16, and the issue that, particularly regarding housing, there was a division between people wanting more, and people wanting less, as well as other housing related issues such as homelessness and affordable homes. On question 3, Housing affordability was mentioned by 41%, tackling homelessness by 38%, less housing by 8%, more

housing by 5%. However at question 16, of those mentioning housing 34% mentioned affordability, 29% wanted less housing, 4% wanted more housing. Housing numbers are imposed by government and a Neighbourhood Plan cannot allocate less housing than the Local Plan. Chichester's housing allocation within the Local Plan has been carried out relatively recently and if the Neighbourhood Plan were to cover housing, it would not be able to reduce the required amount of new housing or remove any allocated sites. It would be able to allocate additional sites and thereby increase housing numbers should there be a public will to do so, but there was no consensus indicating this would be widely supported, therefore either housing numbers would not be an issue taken forward within the plan, or further consultation would need to be conducted making clear to residents the relevant limitations and options for housing provision policy within the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 5 The next steps were outlined as completing the analysis of the first survey results which would lead to further public consultation in due course to build on how people want to take forward the issues they have expressed opinions about, and to ascertain public opinion about the new issues and suggestions raised by respondents. Working parties would be set up to look into a number of issues and the potential options to address those issues, which would then be put to the residents. Members of the Steering Group would be invited to join one or more working groups. Some technical work would be required pursuant to the survey results, for example a feasibility assessment of a bridge/underpass, an assessment of trees and green spaces, and information relating to the city's carbon emissions. This would provide an evidence base and data to support potential policies, and the Planning Advisor would arrange for these.
- 6 Julian Joy introduced a suggestion of a single-issue Neighbourhood Plan focussing on climate change. This was accepted in principle, but we would need to come back to the practicalities of doing so at a later stage once more work was done. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general accordance with the Local Plan so we will need to know what the sustainability requirements within the Local Plan will be, and the new draft Local Plan is only due to be released around March. There is some work we can do in the meantime though; initial evidence and data gathering; following the establishment of support for green issues through the initial survey we are now in a position to have some technical work done to assess the current environmental impact Chichester is having, looking at how much our carbon emissions are at present and where these come from and how they can be reduced or mitigated. This work can take place alongside other Neighbourhood Plan work without any undue delay at this stage, and this can be kept under review as the plan progresses with the work split and a climate change Neighbourhood Plan fast-tracked if and when this work is ready to progress before other aspects of the Plan.
- 7 The Chairman introduced the concept of working groups, which would be made up of volunteers from the Steering Groups as well as from outside it. Each working group would look at one aspect of policy and collate information and evidence around the issues and problems we have in Chichester pertaining to their subject and come up with potential solutions and options for addressing those issues. The working groups would report back to the Steering Group 3 months from their first session. The issues and options they raised would be put to the public to assess support for taking any of the option forward within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8 The Steering Group then discussed the main subjects that a working group should be created to look into and the Chairman advised that he would put these together with a remit for each and this would be sent to members who would form the groups, volunteering for whichever they felt they could contribute to. Members of the public would be invited to join the groups as well, and members were asked to contact people they know within the community who may have something to contribute.

- 9 Some members expressed concern that, while they were happy to lead or chair a group, they would not have the time to put a formal report together. It was suggested that as long as the information could be obtained from the group and collated by the group “reporter”, into the form of notes, data (eg in excel/any table form) with sources, photographs etc, the Planning Advisor could put these together into a document, as secretary of the Steering Group.
- 10 Jane Hotchkiss, CDC’s Director of Growth and Place, and Tanya Murphy, CDC’s divisional manager for Place attended to talk to the Group about their work and the Chichester Vision document. The Vision relates to the city centre and not the residential surrounds but a lot of background work has already been undertaken which may be useful in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. Jane described the consultation strategy behind the Vision work and the background studies underpinning the projects such as extended pedestrianisation within the city centre.
- 11 Jane Hotchkiss advised Steering Group members how the Vision promotes opportunities within the city centre and job creation and economic development. The ambitions within the Vision are based on public consultation; there are different perspectives on the city’s issues, problems and successes, but people’s likes and dislikes about the city were subject to analysis and projects came out of this.
- 12 Some of the longer term projects from the Vision include the southern gateway and northern gateway projects lead by CDC, West Street lead by the Cathedral and the gigabyte project lead by WSCC. Short term projects involve public realm improvements such as street signage, wayfinding, map boards, planting, painting of the northgate underpass, replacing the cycle racks in the city centre, and improving parks and gardens. Reports were produced by working groups for each project.
- 13 Both Petworth and Selsey have Visions alongside Neighbourhood Plans.
- 14 Sources of funding vary depending on the nature of the project but can include funds from CDC, BID, the City Council, WSCC and potentially government grants.
- 15 Tanya Murphy would be happy to provide details of the Vision work undertaken and will liaise with the Planning Advisor.
- 16 The Planning Advisor stated that the Planning and Conservation Committee had suggested a change of name, such as for example “Neighbourhood Plan Oversight Committee”, because “Steering” Committee could be misinterpreted as setting the direction of the Plan which is in reality resident-lead. The Chairman countered that Oversight committee could equally be misinterpreted, the remit of the Steering Committee is clear and documented and the name is commonly used in Neighbourhood Plan production. The Group was unconvinced of any need to change the name at this stage.
- 17 The next meeting will be confirmed by Chairman in due course, but the date/time of Thursday 23rd April at 6pm was pencilled in.
- 18 Meeting closed.