



CHICHESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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MINUTES: ONLINE MEETING OF THE CHICHESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP HELD ON FRIDAY 26 JUNE 2020

Present: Mayor Cllr Richard Plowman (Chairman), Anna Whitty (City Planning Adviser), Paula Chatfield, Kate Cook, Austen Hindman, Julian Joy, Keith Tunstall, Andrew Strong
Non-members present: Richard Eastham (Planning Consultant)
Apologies: Bob Moulsey, Martin Trundle, The Dean Stephen Waine

The Chairman spoke about the need for recovery of the city centre post-lockdown, which is also being prioritised by CDC alongside new cycling and sustainability opportunities. This work will feed into the Neighbourhood Plan in due course. The Chairman suggested that a city centre taskforce get going on looking into the city centre issues and options ASAP and report back by the end of July.

Richard Eastham outlined the training for the working groups which is almost ready to go. Residents will be informed about Neighbourhood Plans via a video slideshow with commentary, which they will access online, and following this, small groups of residents will meet and be guided on producing an assessment of the area from the perspective of one of the PLACE aspects:

Planning: Land use(s), activities, interactions, who is using the spaces, what for?

Landscape: Green spaces, parks, countryside, agriculture. Urban/rural/mixed? Is the place defined more by its buildings or by the spaces in between them?

Architecture: Buildings, design, heritage, is there a “built character” contributed to by shared features of the buildings eg design, age, materials, size, use? Do some buildings not “fit”? Does this add to or detract from your overall perception of the place’s character?

Culture and community: (people, activities, traditions, historic assets, what brings together or divides the people? Are there clues about people’s values, interests, or backgrounds? What is/looks important to people here?)

Engineering: Street layout, traffic, cars, getting around, walking. Who/what is this area prioritising? How is the space allocated e.g. road vs pavement width, cycle lanes, tram? Does one transport method more strongly impact the others, or the space or people there? How?
Richard Eastham and Anna Whitty to finalise dates after the meeting.

Anna Whitty described the studies being undertaken or proposed to provide supporting evidence for the Plan, and the relevant issues around these in each case:

Trees and Green Spaces: The study is already approved and going ahead. The public have been contributing, with comments passed to the consultant to include consideration in the study. A grant has been applied for to cover the work, but the outcome of the grant application will not affect whether or how the work is done.

Carbon Reduction Study: Completed and is published on our website but is not very Chichester-focussed, and mainly leans towards carbon offsetting.

Summersdale Character Appraisal: Already approved, costed at £2,750 and getting underway. This will assess and evidence suitably worded policies to protect the area's special character.

Railway underpass study: Costed at £1,550 to cover the issue of physical feasibility of providing an underpass. Members considered that the previous work done on behalf of CDC, which concluded that a bridge should not be considered further, did not adequately cover the underpass possibility. However, members felt that, in addition to the study looking at whether it could be done, it is important to then establish what the effect of implementing it would be on the traffic locally and what other measures could be taken (as well as or without an underpass) to improve the traffic issues in the city centre. It is important to follow up with a study looking at the wider road network and how all the potential road changes (including pedestrianisation of West Street etc) would work together. Members voted to proceed on this basis.

Zero Carbon viability study: Cost TBC, estimate in the region of £5,000. The study would seek to provide evidence to underpin a planning policy for all new housing to be zero carbon, if this would be viable for developers taking into account land values and other variables and costs such as affordable housing. A vote was taken and members voted to proceed with the study. It was also noted that CDC have a new Sustainability Officer, Dr Andrea Smith, who is highly qualified and has huge experience in climate change and sustainability issues. It may be possible to get some guidance from her on sustainability in our Neighbourhood Plan.

Call for Sites: Consultant support £1,750. Housing site allocations were not originally envisaged to form part of the Neighbourhood Plan as this was dealt with in the Local Plan. The situation has now changed in that the adopted Local Plan is out of date with respect to housing sites and its update, the Local Plan Review, which was expected to be consulted on in Spring 2020 at preferred option stage is now delayed by a year to spring 2021. The problem with this is that, with no 5 year housing supply and no up to date Local Plan, we are considered to be an area in significant "housing need", and this is so heavily weighted in decision making that housing applications can then only be refused if the harm caused by it would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its the benefits.

It is therefore suggested that we allocate sites within the Neighbourhood Plan. This enables us to bring back some balance to decision making, get some local input (not on numbers but on location), and reduces the freedom of developers to use the "housing need" argument to put poorly designed housing on undesirable sites.

CDC will advise on our required housing numbers, based on the government's standard calculation of housing need. The process would involve a "call for sites", inviting suggestions from landowners or members of the public as to land where housing can be built. We then assess each site against our criteria (e.g. flood risk, ecology, brownfield/greenfield, proximity to the existing settlement, etc), and allocate the best sites on that basis, alongside any necessary requirements or restrictions on what that particular site must deliver or how it should be developed (e.g. density, buffer zones). It was noted that, as with any aspect of the plan, if it became apparent at any point that a general consensus on sites could not be reached, we could exclude allocations from the plan, in order to ensure the content put to residents in the referendum would reflect what residents wanted to see. A vote was taken, and members voted to proceed on this basis.

Public Realm Improvement Schemes: Costed at £4,500. Local landscape architect and urban designer John Pegg is to take the principles and aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan and The Vision, and influence from residents and the working groups, and translate this into deliverable projects for physical changes to improve the public realm. This will initially involve four discrete projects, but will evolve to include more, including the city centre, as themes and aspirations emerge from the working groups. This work falls under infrastructure projects and aspirations, which Neighbourhood Plans can include along with planning policies. It is important to note that infrastructure projects and aspirations cannot be delivered solely through a Neighbourhood Plan, therefore there will be engagement with landowners and other

relevant parties throughout the process, in order to ensure that the outcome is a genuinely deliverable project in each case which the relevant landowners will hopefully choose to implement.

The initial projects are:

1. Northgate car park and theatre approach – link the theatre to the city centre by giving the theatre visitors a high-quality approach experience (noting that maximum parking must be retained as spaces are well used and are income generating).
2. Wall walks – Bring forward a concept to enhance the walls as a heritage asset.
3. Amphitheatre park – enhance the cultural and community benefits of the heritage asset.
4. Lavant trail – integration of the river into the city as a pedestrian route and an ecological asset.

A vote was taken and members voted to proceed with this work.

To progress the Neighbourhood Plan in as timely a manner as possible, some taskforce work will take place concurrently with the working group work. This includes a city centre taskforce to be led by Richard Plowman, and a taskforce to look into becoming a plastic bag-free city.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: No next meeting date was set. This is to be confirmed in due course by email.