

Public Consultation - Public Launch Meeting 14 October 2019 at 7pm

The Council House, North Street, Chichester PO19 1LQ

Present:

Richard Plowman, Mayor

Julian Joy, Planning and Conservation Committee Chairman,

Anna Whitty, Planning Adviser to the City Council

113 guests were in attendance including residents, members of the public and representatives from a number of local organisations.

The Mayor, Richard Plowman, introduced the thinking behind a Neighbourhood Plan, it being a time for change in Chichester with changes to business, the high street and the climate change emergency recently declared by the City Council.

The Planning Adviser, Anna Whitty, outlined what a Neighbourhood Plan is, what it can include, the process and timescale (likely 18-24 months), and how to get involved, including completing the survey, joining the facebook group, keeping up to date through the web page, writing in, emailing, drop-in at the City Council office on Thursdays between 10am-1pm, arranging for the planning adviser to attend a meeting of their group or organisation, and by sharing this information with friends or anyone who may be interested in getting involved.

Julian Joy, the Planning and Conservation Committee Chairman, outlined the importance of sustainability given the level of development occurring and the climate change emergency.

Richard Plowman then outlined ten aspirations for the city:

- 1. *The City declared a climate change emergency in June 2019 which must be backed by real and effective action.***
- 2. *The City will be carbon neutral by 2030.***
- 3. *The City Centre to be free of all fossil fuelled powered vehicles, the use of electrical vehicles to be encouraged and all deliveries to be made by electrical vehicle transport.***
- 4. *The City to remain small and compact essentially a large historic market town in a rural setting and to position it to be a Unesco World Heritage site by 2032***
- 5. *The City parks and green open spaces to be protected and enhanced. Re-wilding of derelict areas and use of more trees in the urban to produce natural wildlife corridors and public spaces such as squares throughout the City and zoning of areas with different characteristics eg retail, restaurant and evening economy.***
- 6. *The City views are determined by the Cathedral and these views respected and all buildings to be subservient and generally no more than four stories high.***

7. ***The City economy needs revitalising particularly the City Centre and attracting more visitors to the City through Tourism, and the Meetings, Incentive and Conference industry (MICE).***
8. ***The City to maintain, enforce and expand areas of Conservation and preserve buildings of both historic, social cultural and architecturally.***
9. ***The plan to be holistic and inclusive for all people of Chichester (elderly, families, adults, young, students, disabled and disadvantaged)***
10. ***The Neighbourhood Plan will be made by the People for the People of Chichester and will be part of Planning Legislation.*** (It was clarified that the Plan would be subject to extensive community engagement and will be subject to a referendum. It will only be adopted if 50% or more of the votes are in favour of the Plan. Once adopted, it will become part of the "Development Plan" for the area, which means that, by law, it must be taken into account on all planning decisions. Decisions will have to be in accordance with the policies in our Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise).

Richard Plowman then spoke about the Vision and listed some infrastructure which could improve Chichester:

- Large international hotel of 200-250 beds (needs meeting and conference facilities)
- Large multi use events/ performance/ exhibition/ conference hall
- Removal of level crossings and replacement with low level underpass
- More train and bus services to and from Chichester and metro line to Bognor Regis and coast
- Concert/ Theatre Hall up to 550 capacity (possibly the Court Building)
- Large Nightclub
- Central Medical centre
- New Crematorium
- Hi Tec village for graduates/millenniums near Station .
- Zoning of areas in the City for better navigation eg North Street, East Street for Retail and service, Central Cross area for banks and jewellers. West Street – Cathedral and cultural. South street restaurant, bars and evening economy. East gate square and St Pancras village
- Improved public realm increased pedestrian areas and signage. Cathedral square, Public square for Farmers and special markets e g Christmas/ Ice rink.
- Cultural trail linking Galleries and Theatre

Members of the public were invited to make comments or suggestions, or ask questions:

Linda Boys – Southern Gateway Residents Association

Welcome the Plan. It was very ambitious.

Observed that in calling it “Chichester City” Neighbourhood Plan (to differentiate it from Chichester District – a much larger area) it could be misunderstood as relating only to the historic city centre/retail area. It should be made clear that this is a plan for the whole parish of Chichester including the centre and the residential surrounds.

Disagree with the use of Facebook and will not be using it. Can tend to be used negatively. May not be widely used by the older generation. Noted that some Residents Associations are not online, how are they to be engaged with.

BID should not be relied on to represent all retailers.

Richard Plowman stated that a steering committee/focus group will be set up and representatives of residents’ associations would be invited to join.

Anna Whitty stated that she was available to go to residents group meetings which could be arranged after the meeting or by email.

Paula Chatfield – Parklands Residents Association and Eco-Chi

Very pleased about Facebook as it can be a good way to engage a wide variety of people.

Neighbourhood Plan could build on the Vision for the city centre.

The Local Plan Review is very light on community facilities. We should identify which local areas identify as little neighbourhoods and what local shops/facilities they are served by or need.

Underpass doesn’t match with the “to not through” idea, or carbon neutrality. Maybe instead of moving infrastructure to accommodate the traffic, move the traffic and redirect it outside of the city centre.

Water environment – there are winter streams, springs, etc. It shapes our city, affects where/how we build. Let’s celebrate it, make it something people can enjoy.

Chichester used to have an indoor market. We could have one in the empty House of Fraser department store.

Mark Record – Involved with the promotion of car-free day events

Very positive about carbon neutrality. The four sectors contributing most to carbon emissions are Industry, Domestic, Farming and Transport, with transport the biggest source. We need to make it easier to travel without cars. Cycleways should be provided across the city. Sainsbury’s is terrible to get to by cycle. Cars cannot be instantly banned

due to the economic impact. Outlying communities should be served by small local facilities to relieve pressure on travel into the centre. As a controversial suggestion, what about an electric tram? Tangmere expansion will lead to a lot of cars coming in to Chichester as Tangmere is not well served by public transport.

Richard Plowman agreed that connectivity is very important and we must look at connectivity across Chichester holistically.

Ollie English – Summerstown resident of 1 year

Chichester appears to be going downhill.

Ensuring we provide for older people, young people, students etc was mentioned, but I feel missed as a demographic as a mid-40s man. The Plan is a good idea but should include everyone. You can hear students everywhere in Chichester and they are noisy. Not everything needs to be by the station. What about a nightclub in Selsey or Bognor instead?

There should be more cycle routes into town. The cycle racks are not bolttable.

There should be more police presence, especially on foot, and more joined-up thinking between Councils, police etc.

Alan Green – Stockbridge Road resident and CCAAC chairman

Traffic should be redirected outside the city instead of being catered for by an underpass which would necessitate demolition of a large number of buildings. Why has park and ride, which was long discussed, been discounted?

Richard Plowman explained that park and ride had been looked into extensively and require specific parameters to work; only four in the country operate in a self-sustaining manner, however we will look at traffic movements and travel as part of a holistic approach.

Debbie Carter – resident of the Peacock Close area, Graylingwell

As a partially sighted non-driver, has serious concerns about the bus station going and bus services reducing. Could the bus station be relocated to Smith and Western, with a café and bike hire available there?

Richard Plowman said it was important to retain a transport hub around the station, and also to ensure the streets are safe and navigable for all residents.

Polly Gaskin – City Councillor

There is a big opportunity here to market Chichester (for tourism etc) as a “green city”. We could do something like Goldsmith Street in Norwich (there was a murmur of agreement at this from around the room). Going green shouldn’t be a political issue it’s just the right thing to do. We need an integrated transport hub.

Joe Hopkins – city centre shop owner “ZigZag”

Very excited by tonight’s ideas. There is so much scope to take the buses out of the city centre and to improve the cross/cathedral area, to have a piazza there and reduce pollution. It could offer street food, café seating, arts and entertainment.

Pallant House is not well known enough, we send a lot of people there. We have the Festival Theatre. We have so much but it all needs bringing together.

Uncomfortable with the very personal questions, for example on sexuality, on the survey; why ask this?

Anna Whitty apologized that such questions may feel intrusive, and although there is no obligation to answer them, their purpose is so that we can monitor the demographics of people answering the survey to make sure we are hearing from every part of the community and there isn’t any certain group which is not being represented.

Andrew Finnemore – Chichester resident of 55 years and worked on the Vision

Communication is everything. Engagement is very difficult. Impressed with tonight’s turn out given how difficult it can be to get people involved. We need to be ambitious, but not so ambitious that we don’t actually achieve anything in the plan. The Plan must have achievable aims.

We could remove small car parks within the city and make them green spaces.

Richard Plowman said that deliverability is very important but that we wouldn’t rule anything out at this stage just because it was ambitious or expensive, as sometimes these are the things that are needed the most or can be financed or agreed to more easily than smaller tasks.

Brian Dean – resident

Requested that the contact details be displayed on the screen; this was done.

Rosemarie Hebblethwaite – resident

Agree with Carbon Neutrality but it doesn’t have to wait until 2030, we can get electric buses now.

Philip Languish – resident

Make trains every 10 minutes and get a station at Tangmere.

Sarah Sharpe – City and District Councillor

Electricity generation should be considered in the city e.g. solar panels.

Safe cycling and safe routes in the city are very important.

Anthony Quail – Chichester Society and resident of 12 years

Everything electric and climate change is very important. Arras in France has electric minibuses running between residents' homes and services, we could do similar.

Alan Sutton – Works in St Richards Hospital but lives outside of city

We are a gateway to the South Downs National Park and Vice-versa. Would like to offer any help and support to the plan.

Adrian Moss – District Councillor

Very excited about the Plan's potential, it's very important to Chichester as evidenced by a number of Councillors attending tonight including the Chairman of the District Council. Recently went to Coast to Capital and the ideas there echo those of this evening; attracting young people to the city not just to study but to stay, work and live.

Richard Riley – Peacock Close, Graylingwell

Speaking up for millennials as they are not well catered for especially in housing. Recently a HMO of 7 bedrooms was allowed to be made from an ordinary 4-bed house. This is not good quality accommodation for young professionals. Can there be purpose-built affordable accommodation for young people.

Kevin Hughes – City and District Councillor

Inclusivity has been mentioned in respect of age, sexuality, ethnicity, etc but what hasn't been mentioned is socio-economic background, as we move forward as a city we can leave no resident behind. Inclusivity for all. We need Truly affordable housing.

Richard Plowman thanked the contributors and attendees and closed the meeting.