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Sent: 25 April 2021 11:26
To: All City Councillors <allcitycouncillors@chichestercity.gov.uk>
Cc: Rodney Duggua <clerk@chichestercity.gov.uk>
Subject: Question for Item 11 pursuant to Standing Order 8

I feel this council was slow to even start thinking about creating a neighbourhood plan. So I would firstly like to thank Councillor Plowman for overcoming the inertia and kick starting the whole process.

But I feel we got off to a faltering start. And I'm concerned that unless we correct that, then, for all our hard work, the plan may not get passed by the inspector.

I am no greater expert in how Local Plans are supposed to be conducted than anyone else. We have all been learning as we've gone along. But, as I now understand how we were expected to proceed, I think one problem was that we ourselves were pushing a good number of ideas right from the start. But, precisely because we were excited by these ideas, we concentrated on them. And we started discussing specifics when we were supposed to **first** listen to the general principles of what our communities' priorities may be. That's how I now understand that neighbourhood plans are expected to build.

Complicating things even more, because of this enthusiasm, some of the questions ended up talking up the ideas, and making it difficult for respondents to point out any downsides. I think that this needs to be corrected if the inspector isn't going to consider it a major weakness of our early process.

So, to avoid the possibility of our plan being rejected, I am hoping for a change of emphasis which addresses the following concerns.

- 1) On the Steering Group, do we have a balance that would be acceptable to the Inspector in terms of men/women, young/old and geographical representation? At the moment 3 out of the 4 councillors live in the West of the City. Is there enough representation from the South and the East? Also I'd be keen to bring in fresh and younger voices.
- 2) Do we need to publish the names and biographies of the people on the Steering Group (for example, on the City Council website)? If so, at what stage do we do that?
- 3) PLACE surveys are the first key building block. But, as far as I'm aware, the need to carry out a PLACE survey hasn't been pointed out to some on the emailing list that the City Council put together, nor properly explained on the City Council Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page (which has nearly 700 followers). So a number of communities which could now be carrying out PLACE surveys are not yet doing one. Also, the PLACE **template** documents should be easily accessible on our website, which they don't yet seem to be.
- 4) The Website contains documentation about past Neighbourhood Plan consultations – such as the ideas about the Bishop Luffa Land Swap and the Bridge/Underpass. These documents do need to be retained - as the ideas may surface in the PLACE surveys which are carried out. But, as I understand it, the PLACE surveys do need to be done first. And we need to wait for the outcome of the surveys. So, in the meantime, these documents need putting to one side in reserve, as they aren't central to the work of the NP at its current stage. I also presume that it would be a good idea to have documentation lined up – including minutes of meetings - so that, when the time comes, it is clear to the Inspector how these ideas came to fit into the overall scheme of things.
- 5) The website should also, in my view, contain easy to find Minutes of the Steering Group meetings. I imagine any Inspector would consider full minutes of this kind to be more robust evidence underpinning our Neighbourhood Plan than our current practice of short-paragraph summaries placed in the Minutes of the Planning & Conservation Committee.
- 6) As I said, I'm no more an expert in how Local Plans should proceed than anyone else. Like everyone else here, I'm learning as we go. But I do think we need to check if any of the points I have just raised would cause concern to the Examiner. I don't want the Neighbourhood Plan to fail. And I also also feel that, simply to get the best possible Plan at the end of the day, we need to reach out to more of the residents of this

To summarise, I would be most grateful if we are doing things in the way we are expected to in terms of: putting the PLACE documents on the website; fuller communication through the channels we have set up; full Minutes of the Steering Group made available so we have a good record for the Examiner (and other interested parties); a good balance of members of the Steering Groups, and details of who is on the Steering Group made public. Kind regards, Sarah