



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT 2.00PM ON THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022

- PRESENT:** Councillors Quail (Chairman), Corfield and Gershater
- EX-OFFICIO:** The Mayor (Councillor J Joy), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman), Councillor Scicluna (Chairman of Finance)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Sharp, Carter
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Member Services Support Officer, Committee and Communities Officer, West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Apel, Planning Advisor
VIA ZOOM

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Gaskin.

18. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2022.

AGREED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 26 May 2022, having been printed and circulated, be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as the City Council representative on the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Councillor Quail declared an interest as Chair of Westgate Residents Association.

Councillor Plowman declared an interest as a Member of Chichester District Council and as a Member of the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

The Mayor declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council for Chichester West.

Councillor Sharp declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council.

Councillor Apel declared an interest as a Member of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Gershater declared an interest as a Public Governor of Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust.

20. APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

CC/21/03417/FUL - Case Officer: Calum Thomas

Land South of Mainline 35 Whyke Road Chichester West Sussex
Provision of 2 no. three bedroom semi-detached dwellings, with associated parking, EV points and boundary treatment.

Strong objection.

The proposal's size, position and proximity to the former Mainline Tavern would block significant light to the Tavern's south facing windows, resulting in significant harm to the occupants' amenity and significantly restricting the building's current use and potential for future use and development. The proposal would also result in the loss of any outdoor amenity space associated with the former Mainline Tavern building and would leave it under served with only two parking spaces, limiting the potential nature and quality of any future redevelopment as well as its current use.

Concern is raised over the amenity of the potential future occupants of the proposed two dwellings. The rear yard/garden space may not be sufficient to serve the intended occupants of these family homes, both of which effectively offer 4-bedrooms (or 3 with first floor lounge). The noise and vibration from the adjacent railway line would be very significant, even if it can be brought within the margins of technical acceptability defined within WHO guidelines, as set out in the noise assessment. The occupants of these dwellings would also be likely to suffer from the effects of air pollution due to cars idling at the train crossing, which can be closed for significant periods of time when a number of trains pass one after another.

It would be preferable to consider the use of the whole site in one application, as this would give greater certainty regarding the relative impacts of each part of the site as well as overall access and parking provision.

Nitrate mitigation: The City Council reiterates its previous request for Chichester District Council to urgently address the issue of nitrate mitigation alongside higher levels of government. There are two converging issues, the unacceptably high levels of nitrates in the protected Chichester Harbour, contributed to principally by agricultural practices, and the number of new houses which the government requires the District to approve, which also add to nitrate levels. To address this problem, "nitrate mitigation" requires that either new houses are built on agricultural land (because residential use produces lower nitrate levels than agricultural use), or brownfield site applicants enter an arrangement with a nearby farm to permanently remove some agricultural land from productive use on their behalf. This perpetual loss of agricultural land in favour of housing is unsustainable. Food production for the population must continue to be provided. The City Council would again urge the District to address this issue strategically, and not at the stage and scale of individual planning applications.

21. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Plowman informed Members that the City Council's website had been updated and the latest minutes of the meetings of the Steering Group were available to read.

Post meeting note:

Minutes are available here: <https://chichestercity.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan-meeting-details-and-terms-of-reference/>

He also informed them that Neighbourhood Plans in Hunston and Southbourne had recently been rejected by the Inspector due to lack of engagement with residents and non-alignment of the housing numbers in the plan with the Local Plan respectively.

Members were advised that, following the Steering Committee meeting held on Monday 30th May it was decided that the Neighbourhood Plan process needed to align with the Chichester District Council Local Plan process to avoid the issues experienced in Southbourne.

Councillor Plowman informed Members that some of the studies undertaken in support of the Chichester City Neighbourhood Plan were being used to inform the Levelling Up bid currently being developed by the District Council.

In response to a question about public engagement from Councillor Sharp, Members were advised that the issue experienced in Hunston was due to the engagement being one way with little feedback and response from residents to the publicity material that had been issued.

The Chairman advised that good engagement was being achieved through the involvement of the Residents Associations in the PLACE Studies that had been undertaken.

Councillor Plowman emphasised that two way engagement would be essential and that a strategy was being worked on by the Steering Group's Communications and Public Engagement Group looking at arranging such things as exhibitions and public meetings for this purpose.

Members agreed that the Steering Group should use the City Council consultant's expertise in this area in order to make sure the best outcomes were achieved.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Gershater about the inclusion of medical facility provision in the Neighbourhood Plan, Members were advised that the Neighbourhood and Local Plans were aimed at land use and that specific NHS provision was out of scope. Councillor Sharp suggested that the Infrastructure Business Plan might be a more appropriate avenue for this.

After further discussion about the importance of addressing the issue of access to health facilities of all types, Councillor Plowman agreed to take this as an action to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

He expressed the opinion that it would be useful for the Steering Group to engage with the public meeting that Councillor Apel had been trying to set up so that views could be taken and questions asked of the wider public about their thoughts on this issue.

Councillor Gershater, as a Public Governor of the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, offered to give a presentation at the public meeting to help support the discussion around the issues being considered.

22. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Plowman reported that a majority of policies, with the exception of, among others, housing allocation policies; had been circulated to District Councillors for comment and that a workshop for District Councillors would be held on 30 June 2022 to develop these policies.

He reiterated his point that, due to the likely delaying of the Local Plan deadlines, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group could make good use of the time to align its discussions with policies coming out of the Local Plan development.

23. WHITEHOUSE FARM UPDATE

a) General update

Councillor Plowman advised that the planning application for phase 2 had not yet been received.

He also advised that the East Broyle Residents Association had reported significantly increased traffic along St Pauls Road and that the junctions with Sherbourne Road and Norwich Road had become significantly more dangerous as a result.

Councillor Apel gave the Committee some background surrounding concerns that had been raised with West Sussex County Council about the expected volume of traffic in that area resulting from the Whitehouse Farm development

The Committee was advised that, now that the Whitehouse Farm development was becoming more established, monitoring of the traffic along St Pauls Road had recently been undertaken and that solutions would be proposed shortly for mitigating any issues that were identified.

The Mayor informed Members that this could include using Section 106 funds to install a roundabout as well as other mitigating measures.

b) Medical facilities update

Councillor Apel advised that a second meeting with the NHS Lead Primary Care Director for the area had been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and there was no update at this time.

She further advised that she had passed a number of questions to the Primary Care Director and was currently awaiting responses, including concerns about GP numbers.

Members were informed that statistics showed that the ratio of GPs to patients in Chichester was higher than the rest of the District.

Councillor Apel also reported that the Primary Care Director had indicated that the system of delivery of Primary Care could be looked at. This could include looking at the current system of appointments with Doctors and Nurses and possibly expanding the points of contact to Paramedics and other qualified staff.

24. RESIDENTS AGAINST VEHICLE EXCESSIVE NOISE (RAVEN) GROUP UPDATE

Councillor Sharp advised that there was little to report at this time. She also advised that the core group within RAVEN were compiling a presentation that could be given to invited outside organisations to better explain the aims of the group.

25. PAVEMENTS IN THE CITY CENTRE UPDATE

The Committee was advised that a discussion had taken place with the West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport who had reported that

there were no funds to undertake the necessary work on the pavements and city centre precinct.

Councillor Scicluna expressed the strong opinion that something had to be done and that the status quo was not acceptable.

The Mayor reported that the County Council was monitoring the Levelling Up bid currently being put together by Chichester District Council which included an allocation for undertaking the resurfacing work.

He also informed Members that, if this bid was unsuccessful, the County Council did not currently have a plan B.

Councillor Sharp advised Members that she had had a discussion with the County Council's Growth Team about possible ways forward. She reported that a possibility would be for the pavements project to be placed on the Capital Projects list and that a meeting about this was due to be held on 28 July 2022.

Members expressed incredulity when Councillor Sharp informed them that, in order to get on to the Capital Projects list, evidence would need to be provided that the city centre pavements were a genuine problem and that she had been further informed that insufficient evidence had been provided to date.

Councillor Sharp stressed the importance of people contacting the County Council when they experienced problems such as trips and injuries when walking through the city centre. She also reported that the hospital would be unable to provide supporting injury data as they only recorded that a trip or injury had occurred and not where or why.

Members discussed the issue at length with many examples being given of when they had personally experienced problems on the precinct or when they had been witness to others falling or worse.

The Committee also discussed possible methods for increasing the amount of evidence being supplied to the County Council including online forms, writing to the respective Cabinet Member or teaming up with the Chichester Observer.

Councillor Scicluna reminded Members that the County Council, as well as the District Council, had been in discussion with the City Council about the issue for some time and strongly objected to the County Council now claiming that they did not have sufficient evidence to proceed.

Councillor Apel suggested that evidence could also be sought to measure whether the condition of the precinct paving was actively deterring people from coming in to the city centre.

As the City Council's representative at Chichester BID, the Chairman agreed with Councillor Carter's suggestion that the city centre businesses be asked if they could gather evidence that could be submitted to the County Council.

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 29 June 2022 that the City Council should support a campaign to address the unacceptable condition of the pavements in the city centre and that a Working Group be set up to support this campaign with the aim of bringing forward evidence to West Sussex County Council highlighting the condition of the pavements, the impact this is having on the residents of and visitors to the city and effecting a satisfactory resolution.

26. SOUTHERN GATEWAY AND CHICHESTER TRANSPORT HUB UPDATE

Councillor Plowman informed Members that large parts of the Southern Gateway project were not currently progressing but that work on the bus station, bus depot and adjacent car park was ongoing.

He also informed Members that the proposal to replace the bus station with a series of bus stops along Avenue De Chartres was being reconsidered following considerable negative reaction to the plan. It was explained that, further to this feedback, the plan would likely focus more on the users of the services rather than the priorities of the bus company.

Members agreed that the scheme, as outlined, did not appear to be logical and would create access problems for visitors and bus users as well as exposing bus stop users to high levels of pollution created by vehicles on the Avenue De Chartres itself.

Councillor Gershater advised Members that he had been looking at how other cities provided their transport infrastructure. He outlined an example he had found and expressed agreement with the approach that had seen the transport system in a new development designed first with the urban landscape being designed around that rather than the other way round.

Members also commented on the lack of communication and public consultation that had taken place around the plans for the bus station and transport hub.

After further discussion, it was AGREED that the Chairman of the Planning and Conservation Committee would write to Chichester District Council suggesting that greater transparency and more public consultation might be appropriate as the project moved forward.

27. CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Chairman highlighted the recommendation that had been passed at the Finance Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022.

The Member Services Support Officer outlined the process of all Standing Committees making similar recommendations to Council who would then action the recommendations if a majority were in agreement.

Members discussed the matter, including the need for the Business Plan to be clear and auditable and that the Working Group should accept suggestions from all Councillors.

It was agreed that the Working Group itself should not be solely responsible for populating the plan and that it could be appropriate for external support to be sought to help guide the process.

Members also agreed that the Business Plan should be created in a form that would be easy to pass on and acceptable to the new administration that would result from the elections taking place in May 2023.

The Member Services Support Officer advised the Committee that the Town Clerk would be giving his advice about the make up of the Working Group shortly.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 29 June 2022 that a Business Plan Working Group be set up to progress the development of the City Council's business plan.

28. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

- Pavements in the city centre update
- A-boards in the city
- Lack of outdoor seating and the general public realm in the city
- Access to healthcare provision
- Whitehouse Farm
- Local Plan
- Neighbourhood Plan

29. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: THURSDAY 21 JULY 2022

The meeting closed at 3:47pm