

Chichester City Council – Wednesday 18th December 2024
District Councillor's Report
Jonathan Brown

Local Plan Examination

The hearings have finished. The Examiner wanted to wait for the outcome of two significant planning appeals, which may have had a bearing on the Plan, but happily CDC won both of them. We now expect the Examiner to provide further feedback in January. This is likely to include 'suggestions' that we make some amendments to the Plan. These will require some further work and public consultation before they can be incorporated into the Plan so we are now looking at the Plan being 'made' in Spring 2024. The 'vibe' has been positive and it is almost unheard of not to have to make some amendments so – so far, so good!

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Clarifications of certain points are being sought, but initial thoughts are that the new NPPF will not impact the Local Plan examination, but will impact planning decisions being made now and will have a very substantial impact only a year after the new Local Plan comes in to force. In summary, housing targets are being raised dramatically, but no new powers are being granted to Councils to achieve them. There is widespread understanding in the industry that the capacity to build at the rate required does not exist. My conclusion is that local government is being set up to fail.

Economic Growth / Inward Investment

The council has recently processed and issued several **Pavement Licences** authorising tables and chairs and other furniture to be placed on the public highway immediately outside of pubs, cafes, restaurants and other similar premises. In accordance with the decision of General Licensing Committee, no fee is payable for an application for a Pavement Licence which would have effect up until the 30 of September 2025. This decision was taken not only to support the regeneration of the city and the transformation of our high streets, but also to aid an improved evening and night-time economy offer for everyone.

Creative England – Filming in England: CDC has recently signed the council up as a member of the Filming in England Partnership, working with Creative England's national team and welcoming filming to Chichester District, ensuring cooperation and commitment to assist film and TV productions on location. As we are already responsible for permitting and dealing with enquiries for filming on council owned land, we thought this was a great opportunity to raise the profile of the district and hopefully increase exposure to a huge potential market, plus potentially helping to connect talented professionals, suppliers, and businesses through the various Filming in England directories. We are promoting this fabulous opportunity to different locations, event organiser and places of interest across the district. If you know of anyone or anywhere that might be interested to sign up for free with Filming in England please make them aware of the Filming in England Partnership. For more information please visit – <https://www.filminginengland.co.uk/>

High street vacancy rates across the district have dropped this year and are significantly lower than comparator towns. (The vacancy rate has dropped from 10% to 8% in Chichester. The national average is 14%.)

Toilet Refurbishment

Refurbishment of the public toilets in Market Avenue in Chichester has been completed. This follows similar work carried out over the summer to refurbish sites in Chichester's Priory Park and in Bosham, while works at East Beach toilets are now almost complete too. The next stage of works for the demolition and re-build of Tower Street public conveniences, with associated public realm enhancements, is progressing well and the works are programmed to complete by the end of March.

Chichester Parking – Christmas Offer & Inflationary Rises to Charges

CDC are offering a range of **parking offers over the Christmas period**. Customers using the MiPermit app will be able to take advantage of a weekend offer — if they select two hours during weekends in December, they will receive a third hour for free. This will apply across the majority of council car parks except the Avenue de Chartres car park in Chichester (where the app does not work). In addition, there will be free Sunday parking in Avenue de Chartres car park in Chichester during December.

The annual review of parking charges has also been undertaken, and an **inflation increase will be applied to parking charges** which will come into force from 1 April 2025. The inflation increase will also apply to the heavily discounted season tickets which are in place across several of the council's car parks. Free parking periods will remain in the council's rural and coastal car parks of between one and two hours, depending on location.

Christmas Festivities

The CDC team have been working hard to bring a range of Christmas attractions and events this year. The Christmas market in North Street and East Street ran from 7 December until 15 December, featuring a range of entertainment and food stalls, plus a Santa's Grotto. The Guildhall in Priory Park has hosted Christmas Storytelling, a festive Jazz Cafe, a Family Pantomime and Silent Disco (I can personally vouch that this was great fun!). The Novium Museum launched its 'I Grew Up in the 80s' exhibition, which runs until Saturday 8th June 2025. See: www.thenovium.org/1980s

Chichester District Council App

Please do what you can to raise awareness of the CDC app. Around this time of year, and on the run up to Christmas, we often experience severe weather, which can sometimes disrupt our waste and recycling services. If residents turn their notifications on, they can receive personalised updates on their waste and recycling collections. This means that we can let them know if our crews are running late, and it allows us to notify them of planned changes to collections – such as any changes to collection dates over the Christmas period.

The app also allows people to view their personalised waste and recycling dates and provides recycling advice and helps you to identify which items should go in which bins. The app allows you to complete 'Report It' forms for issues such as street cleaning and fly tipping, or even to request a new bin. You can also view local food hygiene ratings for restaurants and cafes - which will be especially useful over the festive period. It also allows you to find your nearest facilities, such as recycling centres, car parks and public toilets. Find out more: www.chichester.gov.uk/chichesterdcapp