

Chichester City Council – Wednesday 19th January 2025
District Councillor's Report
Jonathan Brown

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

These two (distinct, but linked) proposals by the government have been taking up a huge amount of time. As per the Government's 'devolution' plan, the whole of Sussex will directly elect a mayor in May 2026. The Government expects 'Local Government Reorganisation' to be far enough advanced to hold elections to a new unitary authority (i.e. one that will replace both the District and County Councils) in May 2027. A Q&A page will be added to the CDC website as more becomes known.

New Budget & Corporate Plan

The devolution & LGR proposals, coming out of leftfield just before Christmas have required us to refresh work on the almost-ready draft budget which will come to Full Council in March as well as to the Corporate Plan which sets out the projects we are hoping to deliver (some work will need to be brought forward while other items will likely be cancelled). Will go into more detail next time!

Local Plan Examination

The Planning Inspectorate has written to us to say that they are happy that we move forward towards adoption of the Local Plan, subject to a number of modifications being made. We will need to conduct a six-week consultation on these before the Plan can be 'made' (but the results only have to be passed to the Inspectorate rather than responded to before we can finally get this over the line).

Consultation on New Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

We are currently consulting on the new Housing, Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 and we would be grateful if you would take part in the consultation. People can have their say by visiting: <https://letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/housing/participate> before 3rd March.

Consultation on Refurbishment of Play Areas

We will also shortly be launching our play areas consultation, where we will be consulting on the designs for refurbishing six play areas in Chichester. We are looking forward to being able to deliver something really exciting in partnership with Chichester City Council.

Evening and Nighttime Economy (ENTE) Survey

Specialists were commissioned to undertake a survey on behalf of CDC to better understand the experiences and perceptions of both users and non-users of Chichester city centre in the evening and at night (5pm – 5am). It was created as one of the actions following the original ENTE baseline audit and study commissioned by the council and partners. The survey was initially promoted over the summer of 2024 with a renewed Autumn term-time campaign targeting the 18 – 24 age group to ensure their views were fully represented. The survey attracted over 3,000 responses from a broad spectrum of the local community. All survey responses were assessed for authenticity via IP address analysis where appropriate. A full report is being prepared. The results provide a powerful indication of user and non-user behaviour and preferences about the city centre after 5pm and should be positively considered in future policy and decision making going forward in recognition of the

potential economic, social, and cultural benefits a diverse and vibrant ENTE can bring. The survey results will also feed into the evidence base for the live performance and music venue study as part of the council's wider regeneration work.

Supporting You Update

The Supporting You Team continues to make a real difference to residents and the success of this team is very evident. See: www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyoucampaign. A **budgeting calculator** is available for residents here: www.chichester.gov.uk/benefitsandbudgetingcalculator. This can be used by residents to self-serve or to work with a Supporting You Officer to identify budget changes and quick wins such as applying for discounts and benefits or accessing social tariffs. The **Pension Credit campaign** has so far seen 32 of the residents contacted receive an award of Pension Credit. The average weekly award is over £59. It also means they are eligible for other support such as the Winter Fuel Payment.

Events & Activities

Laser light shows are returning to Chichester at 6pm and 7.30pm on Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd February. The first will be a modern Disney show with music and projections, while the second show will be based around movie blockbusters. This year two shows were also held at Petworth House (on the 15th Feb).

The Novium's latest exhibition, '**Out & Proud in Chichester**' opened on Saturday 1 February. This free-to-visit exhibition has been co-curated in partnership with Chichester PRIDE UK and celebrates the vibrant history of Pride in Chichester, alongside the remarkable stories of our local LGBTQ+ community. This exhibition has been made possible with thanks to the generous support of Barratt David Wilson Homes and Chichester City Council. See: www.thenovium.org/pride. On Thursday, 6 March at 6pm, Helena Berry, Heritage and Archive Manager at Chichester Festival Theatre, will present a **35-minute talk followed by a Q&A session**, tracing queer narratives through Chichester Festival Theatre's history. From groundbreaking productions to avant-garde performances, Helena will also reflect on key milestones in the broader theatre landscape. Whether you're a theatre enthusiast or simply curious, this engaging session promises fresh insights into the intersection of pride and performance. Tickets cost £5 per person. Booking is essential.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

CDC have been directly delivering the following:

- **Choose Work** - 102 people have received support to gain employment with 23 people in employment and 10 in work placement. Six engagement days are scheduled for January to March.
- Business Network Building – **The Sussex Six** project have already beaten the target for hospitality & retail businesses pledging to take on six or more new Sussex products - with 34 sign ups (against a target of 30). All of these have been featured on the Sussex Six pages of the website and Natural Partnerships have continued to put out social media posts to promote them.

Pallant House Gallery – Conservation Repairs

In December, the scaffolding was removed from Pallant House Gallery concluding six months' worth of conservation repairs to the gallery. Both the front and rear elevations have had extensive conservation timber repairs to twenty-two sash windows, five dormer windows and a balcony door, prior to a full external redecoration schedule carried out to the property. This comprehensive schedule of works ensures the preservation and enhancement of Pallant House Gallery's Grade 1 listed status.