

DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT

17 MAR 2023

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (phone)
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16th March, 2023

Chichester District Council,
1 East Pallant,
Chichester PO19 1TY

re Chichester Local Plan 2021-39

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to read the Chichester Local Plan and for the opportunity to comment.

Please find attached my observations while reading the document today.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

JN Thoughts on Chichester Local Plan, 2021-39

1.7 I welcome the idea of neighbourhood plans, which I consider very democratic.

2.29 I agree with your identification of issues and opportunities and am especially pleased to see environmental issues having such prominence – I hope that this will really mean some effective action. I also think that, when I compare the housing opportunities for my (senior citizen) generation, things are so much harder for young people now, and it is very important both *per se* and also to attract and retain young people in the area, that this must seriously be tackled, not least a viable rental market and a proper supply of affordable housing.

2.36 I am very pleased to see this paragraph included, and I agree with the vision that you set out in para 2.37.

2.39 I think that you need to think further about the Southern Gateway. I think that it is very important to preserve a transport hub close to the station, and I am far from convinced that what I have read suggested about bus stops is adequate. What, for instance, am I supposed to do if I arrive at Chichester station with a certain amount of luggage and am trying to get to Summersdale? Is no longer having a public transport hub going to persuade more or fewer people to use public transport? I note that today, (16/3/23), there are three letters on this in the Chichester Observer, where the three authors clearly agree with me!

2.42 Good – and I hope that this happens. Polluted water is clearly a significant aspect of this.

2.52 Looking at Objective 1, are you really going to be able to reduce reliance on the private car? I think of all the complaints I hear about the state of pavements, for instance. Living in Summersdale as I do, would you expect me to think that there is adequate public transport? And the trouble with this is that the paucity of supply leads fewer people to use the [very limited] bus service, which generates a vicious circle.

I am in fact a regular cyclist (and have cycled 1700 miles locally in the last twelve months). I know that the state of roads is not your direct responsibility, but the state of the roads at the moment is a disgrace, not least Summersdale Road, Winterbourne Road, and Wellington Road – I had to take rapid evasive action to avoid a new pothole yesterday and also at the moment only feel safe cycling at night on roads where I know the location of the potholes. Would a motorist accept such restraints? And I write as an experienced cyclist – by contrast I think of people who have not done much if any cycling in years who tell me that they are now scared to get back on a bike. Someone has a lot of work to do to get people back on bikes, even though I think that Chichester is potentially as natural a place for cycling as Cambridge. I would like to see someone from the appropriate authority go and cycle in Holland for three days and learn how really to cater for cyclists – though in writing this I fully recognise that what I am seeking lies well beyond the ambit of CDC. It also does not help that I read in yesterday's newspaper that central government are reducing funding for active travel from £3.8bn to £3bn. But let me finish this paragraph with one compliment – I think that provision for cycle parking is very good (and indeed also good reason not to use a car to come into the city).

In the context of seeking to make the use of the private car less damaging, I think that serious consideration needs to be given to Park and Ride (as, for instance, in Cambridge). This would be

good for reducing harmful emissions. It would also hopefully reduce the dreadful congestion one encounters nowadays within the city, for instance along Westhampnett Road.

Looking at Objective 5, this contrasts rather obviously with present proposals for Havenstock Park, which should be binned as rapidly as possible, as they are the denial of what is in this objective.

Objective 5 is so necessary, and should be a *sine qua non* of any development. That is certainly true of walking and cycling networks, and indeed the new route through Graylingwell is a good example of getting this right. You will know better than me of all the legitimate fuss and water supplies and polluted water. Locally I think that I can see the impact of a significantly expanded local population on my local surgery at Lavant Road.

3.9 What I have already written about the Southern Gateway also applies here

I am not going to comment on other proposed developments on this page as I do not feel that I have any relevant expertise. In writing this I am well aware that there are massive local concerns, especially along the A259 west of Chichester, and the article in today's Chichester Observer well illustrates the point.

4.4 I agree with Policy NE1

4.9/13/18/24/32/42/59 I agree with Policies NE2, NE3, NE4, NE5, NE6, NE7, NE8, and NE10

4.72/79/83/96/107/122/126 I agree with Policies NE11, NE12, NE13 (where I would like to see more emphasis on resolving the problems of effluent), NE15, NE16 (where you do now tackle the issue of waste water), NE19, and NE20.

4.128/132/135/138 I agree with Policy NE21, NE22, NE23, and N24. Re NE23 I feel this especially strongly, having suffered from the selfish noise sometimes generated by Goodwood, who are able occasionally to get away with non-silenced vehicles and obtrusive loudspeakers in a manner that would be criminal were I to behave in that manner. Indeed I think that CDC is too indulgent towards Goodwood – is this a relic of Chichester's [ongoing] feudalism?

Where I have not commented on other policies, it is simply that I think that I do not know enough validly to comment.

5.1 I am not going to try to comment on the proposed numbers, as I do not know enough. All I will do at this point is to repeat what I have already said about the need for sufficient housing for those living in the district or coming into the district, not least for young people, and in particular the need for affordable housing and a well-maintained and affordable rental market.

It should also be borne in mind that there is an ever-expanding number of senior citizens who opt for the gentle climate south of the Downs. In this context it is surely predictable, for instance, that more rather than fewer care homes will be needed in the next decade as my baby-boomer generation ages even more!

I also think it very noticeable how few bungalows there are in Chichester and would add that, if you would to persuade people like me to leave my long-time family home, there is not the supply of

bungalows, which would be my obvious next step, all the more so as I do not fancy living in a flat (and have no idea how typical I am in that).

5.12 I agree with this paragraph.

5.15 I am very pleased to see this paragraph included and hope that it really will mean appropriate action.

5.16 This paragraph is so true – so what are you going to do in consequence?

5.18 I fully agree.

I have not sought to comment on the next paragraphs, as I do not feel that I know enough meaningfully to comment.

5.41ff I am very pleased to see this section, and I would repeat the point I made earlier. I am one of the baby-boomer generation, and there are a lot of us – an extra form had to be put on to my grammar school when I arrived there in 1957. We are now in our early or mid 70s, and the potential impact of our hitting first retirement and then moving further into retirement has been so predictable. The planners need to prepare now for the impact of most of us attaining our 80s!

5.44 I take the point that is made, but, if you really want the university to flourish and attract students, their housing needs have to be anticipated too, all the more so when I think of the financial pressures they now face as students compared with my time nearly 60 years ago – I think that my first term's rent (in digs) was £25!

5.47 Please see my earlier comments about an ageing population, which apply here so forcefully.

5.48 I agree with Policy H8 and indeed think that this is what older people would want too (even if they were perhaps more sensitive to noise than some!)

5.58 I agree with the sentiment of what is written here, though I do not know enough to know if you have got your numbers right.

I agree with paras 6.1 to 6.6, and also with Policy P1.

I agree with Policies P2, P3 (not least point 4), P4 (not least point 2), P5, P6, P7 (though, having had an extension to our house that did project in front of the original building line, as have also my immediate neighbours, I would not want to preclude this possibility where it makes sense and is not deleterious to others), P9, P10, P11, P13, P14, P15 (the recent case of Lavant comes to mind), and P16 (not least point 3).

7.2 I think that this paragraph is very important.

7.12 Ditto

I agree with Policy E2. I would, though, add that at some point this plan needs to address the concern about city centre shops disappearing and the implications of this for the use of city centre businesses. I think it has to be accepted that out of town shopping is likely to increase rather than diminish, not least because of parking issues (though hopefully these could be ameliorated with a

proper park and ride system). I also know that my late wife preferred to do any serious shopping in Worthing, because she thought that the choice was much better there, and I can also think of a friend whom I know to prefer Southampton for the same reason. I can surely also not be the only person to detest shopping, so I want to go somewhere where access is easy and I can get the horrible experience over and done with as expeditiously and painlessly as possible. I use four city centre shops and that is all that I am likely to use either now or in the future. It is also inevitable that shopping on line will increase – I see this change as irrevocable, all the more so as it is often cheaper and takes up less time. I therefore think it inevitable that town centre shopping in a city like Chichester will continue to diminish and that therefore our planners have to allow for this and be thinking of alternative uses.

I therefore think that you are being extremely optimistic in your policy P5 and in particular your statement that “the vitality and viability of the city and local centres will be maintained and enhanced” – a lot of realistic thought is needed about this. I wonder if the city centre will become more residential. Given what I see, hear and read about, I think that your paragraph 7.45 is simplistic, not very accurate, and arguably complacent.

Paragraph 7.57 is very important.

I agree with Policy E9 and would stress that relevant provision is very important. I am well aware, for instance, that there were several years when this was the only way I could seriously consider tourism, and I am sure that there will be many who are faced with the same situation. This may well be an issue where CDC needs to be careful not excessively to listen to the NIMBies.

8.2 I agree with this paragraph. We all know the problems of the Chichester by-pass only too well. I in fact cycled to Bognor and back this morning –the queue of cars on the A259 aiming for the roundabout connection with the A27 stretched back beyond Brick Kiln Farm while I was cycling both ways, and this is not unusual. If I am driving back from Bognor, I always turn right at the Drayton roundabout and come home via Shopwhyke Lakes – much easier! If I have been to Sainsbury’s, I will often return either via Bradshaw Road or via Lavant, and I am well aware that I am not the only “rat” using these alternatives, which must annoy some people considerably. But at least one thing the authorities have got right is the new traffic lights south of the Drayton roundabout, which makes the journey for a cyclist so much safer – thank you.

I like Policy T1 – I wish that I could believe it will really happen!

I feel the same about Policy T2. What follows may involve some repetition, but it may help to put my thoughts on all of this in one place. I should like, please to develop some issues as follows:-

- I think that you need seriously to look again at Park and Ride, which I think would be a good way of reducing city centre car traffic and in particular be good concerning both pollution and congestion.
- I think that it is surely a matter of (not too far distant) time before 20mph becomes the standard inner city speed limit. It is already present in other towns in Sussex, it reduces pollution, it makes cycling safer, and the reality is that you probably cannot in reality do more than 20 on most city roads anyway! I think that CDC should be promoting this.

- Public transport is very patchy – it is good along the 700 route, but for people living, like me, in Summersdale, it is in all honesty a joke.
- I think that maintaining a public transport hub adjacent to the railway station is essential if public transport is to be taken seriously. I have already alluded to the situation were I to return by train to Chichester with luggage.
- Am I allowed to laugh at point f? You have to be a very experienced cyclist to feel safe on the Northgate Gyratory, and even I avoid passing the exit into St Paul's Road fairly often, as cars are so often accelerating at that point. I actually think this requires national legislation to amend priorities – and what the Dutch do would be so instructive were our authorities to take the trouble to go there and cycle for two or three days.
- Similarly, College Lane is a joke, all the more so when it is shared with buses too. The speed limit is routinely ignored. I was once overtaken, while cycling north, by a car that was doing 42mph.
- This leads me to suggest that we need many more of the signs like the one presently at Singleton, which shows motorists the speed they are actually doing. Broyle Road and College Lane would be a good start here.
- If you want people to cycle, they also have to be safe from brambles and other protruding vegetation. The track by St Paul's Church is a bad example of this within Chichester, and I have spent hours clearing dangerous foliage intruding over the cycle track from Chichester to Bognor; I routinely carry secateurs in my bicycle bag to deal with this. Fortnightly inspections (and consequent action) are needed here during the growing season.
- If the authorities really want people to cycle, the road surface has to be safe. Summersdale Road, Wellington Road, and Winterbourne Road are presently horribly dangerous because of lumps, bumps, and potholes, especially at night.
- There are so many small things that could be put right. One example is the bridge on Centurion Way just before you get to Bishop Luffa School. The present crossing of tracks is in effect blind, and it is just waiting for a bad accident to happen. The path over the bridge urgently needs a proper surface, which would solve the problem so simply!

I wish that I could believe that Policy T3 will happen, all the more so now that central government has cut the relevant funding. All that I have just written above applies. I would, though, repeat the point that cycle parking within Chichester is good, though I think we need similar rails at the station.

8.29 This is so important.

9.2/3 So is this.

9.4 Great care must be taken to ensure that this is not a convenient get-out.

I agree with Policy I1, which I think very important. I would want national regulations to require the compulsory incorporation of solar panels into any new building, and indeed would urge CDC to require this as far as is legally possible. I have had solar panels on my house for nearly ten years now and was told that I would get my money back in seven years – I have. Were the same personal economics to apply to adding a battery, I would go for this too, but sadly they do not. I would also want to make electric vehicle charging facilities mandatory in any new garage.

I agree with Policy A1, subject to the reservation I expressed earlier concerning the inevitability of the continued disappearance of city centre shops and the consequent need to think seriously about alternatives. I would also add the need to resolve the complaints I hear about the state of some pavements, and repeat the point I have made several times already about park and ride.

I agree with Policy I2 and hope that I can really believe that the sustainable transport options will really happen.

Re Southern Gateway, please may I repeat the point (even though I have made it twice already) that to abolish the transport hub will be a disaster and makes a sad joke of any claim about integrated transport policies.

Re West Chichester, you will probably know that members of the Chichester and District Cycling Forum are very concerned at some of the suggestions that have been put forward about West Street and are especially concerned at the likely growth of traffic along Sherborne Road, thanks to Minerva Heights, and what that will mean for the roundabout at the southern end.

The cycling forum is also very concerned about the prospects concerning the cycle route between Chichester and Emsworth and the bodged solution that appears to be too horribly likely. I will leave this comment at that, as I imagine they will have contacted you directly, all the more so as that route is part of a National Cycling route network.

Re Policy A16, I write as a resident of Summersdale who finds the behaviour of Goodwood the one blighting factor of living there. Fortunately it is only really bad for a few weekends each year (and otherwise the grass mound built on their border opposite to us does really help), but on those occasions the noise from unsilenced cars that would otherwise be illegal and also of the tannoy system is intolerable. I know of people who feel driven from their homes on those weekends. It also occurs to me to ask what an authority that purports to care for the environment is doing to allow such high levels of noise and air pollution. I think that it should be looking after its citizens better than that rather than arguably being obsequious to the aristocracy. At least, mercifully, the latter means that a northern bypass will never be built!!!

I am not going to comment on the other areas of Chichester, as I do not have sufficient knowledge.

I apologise for the length of what is written above and for some inevitable repetition (even if the latter is to some degree shaped by the nature of the way the Local Plan is written. Please may I finish with my thanks for the opportunity to comment, which is entirely right in a democracy?

John Newman

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