

Ken Yumoto

From: dcplanning shared
To: Louise Brace
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Local Plan

From: Keith Tunstall <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 16 March 2023 15:06
To: PlanningPolicy <planningpolicy@chichester.gov.uk>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Local Plan

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My thoughts on the Plan are general and difficult to fit into boxes. So, if I may, I send them as a whole.....

I'm particularly interested in Objective 4. Employment and Economy. Though the Plan talks about "a strong, thriving and diverse economy" and "job opportunities for all skill levels" there is no detail on how we get there, so an air of complacency is engendered as everyone knows these things don't just happen. The Plan says there will be support by allocating "employment sites", but that is all. Suitable sites are only one ingredient for a thriving economy.

Again, asserting that "Chichester city will have a key role as a vibrant sustainable city with a good range of business, leisure and retail uses based on the aims of the Chichester Vision". A Vision is fine, but it needs a detailed Plan of where the money is coming from and who is going to be responsible for delivery, otherwise it sounds like wishful thinking.

Asserting that "Local industries such as horticulture, agriculture, fishing and tourism will flourish" and proclaiming also that "The dynamic local knowledge-based economy will excel in innovation and continue to diversify" sounds overly optimistic when we know there are real challenges ahead. Reference needs to be made to credible plans for future investment and initiative in these areas. As for diversity of jobs, we have some way to go as we are oriented very much towards the public sector. How exactly are we going to boost the private sector? Who is going to be responsible?

For new growth initiatives the Plan is decidedly down-beat with an emphasis on the hurdles to be negotiated before any planning permission is given - ten of them for horticulture for example. We need to give a genuine welcome if we are to succeed in attracting investment.

I could not find any financial data in the Plan and, if there is none, that would make it a most unusual Plan. Talk about the Southern Gateway yet again, for example, must surely be tempered by acknowledgement that there is no money, so it won't happen in the foreseeable future. And, incidentally, bus stops along Avenue de Chartres do not help constitute a sensible public transport hub.

The Local Plan should surely not ignore the national context. The economy as a whole is sluggish so it needs extra effort if Chichester is to buck the trend. High interest rates currently will mean businesses put investment on hold. The recent government announcement that there are going to be special incentives for business in 12 new enterprise zones, makes attracting investment more difficult for those parts of the country, like Chichester, which are outside.

With little money available for new initiatives, more use must be made of volunteers and more emphasis will be needed to nurture businesses which are already in the area. A positive attitude towards business should be proclaimed while obviously preserving the ambience of an attractive city.

Altogether the Plan has an air of unreality about it. It strikes an optimistic note on the economy when it is obvious that the outlook for the foreseeable future is not rosy. That is fine and we must aim to buck the trend, but the Plan needs to recognise that there are a whole host of requirements needed to get a strong diverse economy and provision must be made to put them in place. Simply leaving things to "market forces" does not achieve an optimum result. Chichester is in a competitive environment to attract inward investment and well-paid jobs. We are in a competitive environment to attract visitors and tourists. The Plan should be more specific in itemising the ways we are reacting to the challenges we face.

Keith Tunstall, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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