

The Local Plan Transport proposals

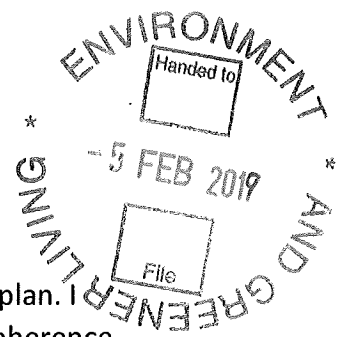
I was disappointed to read the transport and road proposals included in the local plan. I found the Peter Brett document both obscure and contradictory, and lacking in coherence.

Here was the ideal opportunity to place air quality and the environment at the centre of any new proposals for our city. Low or ultra-low emission zones are being adopted by forward thinking authorities across the country; Why not Chichester? Not something that can be achieved overnight perhaps, but there is no reason why these ambitions cannot be applied to all new developments proposed in the local plan.

Walking, Cycling and public transport, which should be central components when planning our future, only attract vague and general references in the plan. The proposed 'upgrading' of various junctions across Chichester seem to have been designed simply to improve vehicular traffic flow. Making it easier for motorists to cross the town will only encourage more drivers to do so.

Increased traffic flow will create more pollution. Peter Brett (pba) have suggested that this will be offset by advances in vehicle technology? Only true if every motorist is able to afford, and willing to invest in a new low emission vehicle.

Predictions of traffic increase are imprecise guesswork, and to predict pollution levels on this basis is equally imprecise. Some air quality monitoring has been carried out, but none in the vicinity of our schools. Do we not have a duty of care for our children? Particularly now that medical research is finding increasing links between pollution and respiratory disease. Pba have stated that a worsening of air quality due to the implementation of the local plan is 'unlikely'. Our existing air quality is poor, and regularly exceeds the Government's safe levels of NOx and particulate levels. Why does the local plan not admit that our current air quality is unacceptable, prioritise this as a major health risk and be seeking to improve our air, rather than quoting vague 'assurances' that it will not get worse.



A27 restrictions in local plan.

Although there are no large scale building developments proposed within the Whyke area, there is a probability that traffic will increase through Whyke as a result of population growth in the surrounding areas.

The proposals for the A27 are a cause for concern because alterations to the junctions at both Whyke and Stockbridge roundabouts include 'no right turn' limitations.

This will cause considerable inconvenience to westbound traffic from the A27 accessing the town, and eastbound traffic accessing Donnington and The Witterings and also Hunston and Manhood.

There will also be a serious risk that cars unable to make these manoeuvres will seek alternative 'rat runs' through our narrow and speed restricted streets.

Alternatively more mileage will be added to each journey, worsening the air quality in the surrounding areas which is currently close to the Government's stated 'safe' limit.

Housing.

This policy is weak in its sustainability requirements. It doesn't acknowledge the need for new buildings to be carbon neutral in order to combat climate change. Some areas such as Manchester have committed to all new buildings being carbon neutral. CDC should do the same.

Second homes should not be allowed. As in St Ives there should be a second homes policy in place to make sure that all affordable homes are for local people, and a majority to be for social rent, the area where there is greatest need. An audit of empty and potentially habitable properties should also be a key factor in deciding how many new homes need to be provided.

Small developments of affordable and social housing are essential, particularly in those more rural communities where people are unable to stay close to families in their local areas due to lack of suitable properties at prices or rents that are not beyond their means.

Hunston.

Another 200 houses in Hunston will make the overused B2145 even worse. It is the only route to the Selsey area and is already badly congested. The Chichester Free School has compounded the problem. More housing along this route will exacerbate what is an already critical situation.

Bus fares are too expensive. Subsidies should be given to these routes to encourage bus use instead of private cars. All housing should only be allowed for definite local need for local people. This could be for older people, young families, single people, but should not include large expensive houses which are not in short supply. And for which there is no demonstrable need.

The number of new houses in Hunston should be 50 at most, directed at local need, affordable, some to rent, and at least half designated for those on council waiting lists.

Bus fares should be reduced to encourage bus use by those travelling to work in Chichester, all along the 51bus route.

The nearby Free School should be required to amend their travel plans to restrict private car use for pupil transport.

Developments should only be permitted where a thorough investigation has been undertaken to show that the benefits outweigh any adverse impact on biodiversity.

Proposed link road and development of land at Apuldram.

This area, with its flooding potential, and proximity to Chichester Harbour, should not be developed further. 100 new dwellings are not sustainable, a new link road will generate more traffic close to a sensitive area and make it harder to refuse future development plans when the area is served by the 'new road'. The area is now fairly inaccessible and should be left as an

important link in the North-South wildlife corridor, rather than opened up to dog walkers etc. Keep the inaccessible area as it is.

Wildlife corridors

This policy should be made statutory so that wildlife from the Harbour area can reach that in the National Park, despite all the building along the A27. The corridors designated are most important, but others should be established around all new building developments to ensure that wildlife does not exist only in isolated pockets.

Biodiversity and environment

This is the responsibility of all departments of WSCC.

The wording of the environment policy is hopelessly weak. Vague terms such as "is not unduly compromised", "significant harm", "may be occasions..." are all open to interpretation, and could easily be navigated through by a determined developer. Whitehouse Farm 'compromises' and causes 'significant harm' to biodiversity; but presumably overcomes these restrictions using the 'may be on occasions' get out.

"Unduly" and "significant", need to be taken out, and 'may be on occasions' needs to be specific. What are these 'occasions'? The proposals need to be much more robust. It should be stated that valuable and productive agricultural land will not be sacrificed for development.

All proposals in the local plan need to demonstrate that they will have a net zero impact on climate change. This is in line with the government's commitment in the 2008 Climate Change Act as a signatory to the COP21 Paris Agreement and the IPCC's report published autumn 2018.

Alan Carn.

