

Chichester North Neighbourhood Plan Workshop – Report to GPRA

Jonathan Brown

Intro

On 2nd March representatives of various 'Chichester North' groups met at the Chichester Rugby Club for a ward-specific Neighbourhood Plan Workshop. They included City and District Councillors as well as representatives of the Rugby Club, Chichester Festival Theatre, Transition Chichester, the Women's Institute, Rousillon Park Residents' Association, Summersdale Residents' Association and Kathy Sykes and myself for Graylingwell Park Residents' Association.

What is Chichester North?

Chichester City is divided into five 'wards' for electoral purposes. It includes the Northern Gyatory, Somerstown, Broyle Road, Brandy Hole Lane, the CFT, Hospital and University, the new development to the west of Keeper's Green, Graylingwell and everything north to the edge of the city. (See Appendix 1 for map.)

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans compliment the District's development plan, or 'Local Plan'. They are focussed and community-driven. Having one results in a higher proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) paid by developers going to the parish (i.e. the City Council) to spend on infrastructure priorities identified within the NP (and which are not the responsibility of other Councils like roads, schools, etc.). NPs have 'weight' in planning law / determining planning applications. The NP will contain an evidence base, policies and projects. The production of a NP is meant to be inclusive and democratic.

What was the Purpose of the Workshop?

For the organisations which work in or represent diverse communities within the area to meet each other, to share ideas with the NP team to take away and to feed back to their organisations what is going on. The aim is to make the area the "best place possible to live, work and play". To think about what in our area we value, what we want to reduce and what we want to improve.

Once we were done with introductions, much of the meeting was taken up with brainstorming and sharing ideas which can be summarised as follows:

1. What do we value most? What should we keep, look after, treasure?

Green spaces and walkability; Parks and green / wild spaces; gardens; allotments; Brandhole Copse; North Lodge; Graylingwell Chapel (about to open at time of meeting); some very distinctive architecture; ease of access (can get to city and South Downs National Park); CFT; Oaklands Park; sports facilities; the Hospital; the University; all the sub-communities and organisations doing things for their members and wider community...

2. What do we value least? What should we update, replace or dispose of altogether?

Metro House / Northgate Roundabout; congested / speeding traffic; parking problems; speed bumps (alternative traffic calming measures preferable); pollution; poor housing; poor road surfaces...

3. What would we like more of? What should we grow or introduce?

More / safer cycle lanes; more walking routes; integrated public transport (bus/train); more trees; keep the strategic gap between Chichester and Lavant; more for young people (a music venue, night club); late opening shops and cafes; a pedestrian crossing at the Northgate Gyratory; Anna Sewell's Cottage (on Graylingwell) could be a good project; direct pedestrian access between North Street and CFT; car clubs; better post office; better lit paths around parks; more e-charging points; more connections with the University; more wild spaces...

4. What 'Big Ideas' do we have for our Planet, our City, our Ward, our Organisations?

Sustainable water use (perhaps provision for each house or community use lake?); more live music / festivals; natural planting on verges, roundabouts, etc.; more events to bring the community together; stop discharging sewage into the sea; zero carbon housing; 'ten/fifteen minute city' concept (i.e. daily requirements all walkable); renewed focus on next generation (jobs and homes to keep young people here); become an entrepreneurial hub; zero carbon city; sustainable energy city (solar, wind, etc.); World Heritage Status for Chichester...

(My thoughts on this were: Chichester for all (the) ages. Riff off history and culture / identity... But also reconfigure economy for all age groups. What makes easier for aging population to stay here but also attractive for young people - housing, job opportunities...)

5. How could Chichester City Council be more inclusive, engage better with Young People, Minority Groups, Under-represented Groups?

Find out what groups young people are engaged in (e.g. mothers' groups, sports associations, etc.); engage in bite-sized chunks; via Student Union; debates in Uni / at schools / social clubs...

What Next?

The NP team will make efforts to try to engage with the under-represented, especially younger people and minority groups – and would welcome any ideas on how to do this.

Twenty 'Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Culture, Engineering' (PLACE) Assessments being carried out. See: <https://chichestercity.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/> for more info on these.

A Steering Committee is looking at policies, and at some stage there will be a public exhibition to give everyone an opportunity to consider ideas that have been fed into the process from all over the city.

Any ideas or questions can be emailed to Cllr Maureen Corfield: m.corfield@chichestercity.gov.uk.

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(As I've worked on Southbourne's Neighbourhood Plans I can also offer to help in any way I can.)

Appendix 1: Map of Chichester District Wards

