

Older People's Council Meeting 5.11.24 Minutes

Present: Mary Davies (chair) Michael Creedy (Treasurer) Sara Fulford (joint secretary) Bernadette Kent (joint secretary) Executive members: Theresa Mackay, (cllr) Ty Galvin (cllr) Doug Thomson, Angela Stretton. OPC members and attendees: Jaccqeline Yeates, Nigel Spall. M. Adler, Cathy Payne. Lina Talbot, Nina Moore, Ali Clarke, Jerry Thomas, Jude Davies, Derek Wright, Maureen Winder (cllr), Jo Clarke (age U.k), Nigel McCutcheon, Jennifer Wheeler, Malcolm Cambell, Charles Foley, Gaynor Lewis-Smith, Peter Huntback (Brighton council lead senior Housing) Lina Talbot.

Apologies: Joyce Gould, Davina De Lazlo, Ali Mohammed, Jen Murray, Kerry Picket (cllr executive member) Val Cane (executive member) Mo Marsh (executive member) John Lewry, George Vaz (executive member) Julia Ingle, David Holland, Cllr Mohammed Asaduzzaman

Attendees via zoom included: Brigit Miller (cllr) Valarie Mainstone, Maxine Thomas, Martin Britain (Horsham District OPC)

Introductions were made all round,

1. City Plan Key Issues engagement

Helen Pennington, **Senior Planning Officer** and her colleague Paula Goncalves from BHCC gave a presentation on the Key Issues for the Brighton and Hove City Plan for the next 15 years to 2041. The Key Issues document is open for people to submit views during the consultation period until Jan 20th 2025. Public engagement and **people's views are welcomed**. People need to respond individually and there will also be a response from the OPC (Part 1 of the plan 2016-2030 was adopted in 2022).

There are paper copies of the Key Issues document in libraries and a PDF of the plan can be found on line. The consultation comments can be submitted by post or respond to :

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/city-plan-2041-key-issues

It is also accessible on the council website under 'your voice'

Many themes raised at previous OPC meetings will be relevant to submit as comments, and will be submitted by the OPC as an organisation but individual responses are also important.

Helen's presentation, including the link to the consultation, is attached.

The City plan covers 9 areas

1. Spatial Strategy- including
Where development should go
2. Homes for everyone,
3. Design and Place making (what makes Brighton and Hove good as a Place.)
4. Culture and Tourism,
5. Sustainability and Climate Change
6. Healthy City and Communities

7. Thriving Diverse economy
8. Biodiversity and Green Infra Structure
9. Transport & Infrastructure

The city plan 2041 is reviewing the city plan part 1 and looking at key issues. The speaker and colleague together ran through the identified areas raising the overall question of what makes a city good. **On Housing** the council are using the government method for setting a housing target. The city plan 2041 includes the development of brownfield sites looking at allocating more sites and allocating them on existing transport links for accessibility. In relation to housing generally it was outlined that the city plan is looking at housing potential: looking at what sites are available with a view to a mix of types of housing with an emphasis on the need for family sized homes; maximising affordability which includes housing to rent and addressing the issue of second homes and air B& B's in the city. The existing limits to multi-occupation of housing will continue.

In speaking on the area of **sustainability and climate change** managing flood risk was highlighted together with design for heating and cooling and the carbon footprint. Reducing waste by re-using materials and retro-fitting existing buildings for greater energy efficiency thus reducing carbon footprint. Attendees raised questions concerning if new builds would be fitted with solar panels and heatpumps and were informed that the council cannot over-ride national guidelines. Ty Galvin(cllr) emphasised the need for fully insulated eco-friendly homes.

The focus of discussion following presentation was particularly around Housing

Attendees agreed this should be mixed, accessible and the speaker emphasised a need for more family size homes. Developers are generally more interested in developing 1-2 bed apartments. Attendees were concerned this might over ride the needs of the elderly and affirmed **Mixed housing is needed in communities so older people can downsize** within their own community early enough, (it was agreed there is lack of support and information) prior to housing becoming unsuitable. **Discussion around the continuing move towards high density housing-& high rise** taking development upwards rather than into green spaces with concern expressed over high rise, particularly the design being architecturally poor affecting the look of the city as well as views -with the ugliness of some new builds being discussed. **Design is critical** it was agreed. Theresa Mackay(cll) referenced an architect attending one of her surgeries commenting on how shabby Brighton now looks. Attendees were concerned about issues around degrading the overall environment of the city and agreed **design and overall design optics and some continuity of design is critical.**

Concern was raised (MD) around isolation of older people in high rise and how small ground floor units are preferable for a number of reasons: attendees raising concerns about the negative impacts on health from some developments. A **robust Equalities Impact**

Assessment of the City Plan was agreed to be essential. OPC are happy to be consulted on the EIA.

Enough proportions in the City of **cheaper, central , sheltered accommodation are needed.**

Identifying and using **unused empty buildings and brownfield sites** as an attendee exemplified properties empty in one instance for over thirty years but it was noted that councils can't force owners to act.

Attendees, while acknowledging the need for affordable housing, commented the **City feels 'full' without enough infrastructure** to support an ever increasing population eg GP's. Others commented on the immense need for affordable housing to keep younger people and key workers in the city.

It was a moot point attendees discussed and agreed on that **publicised monitoring and reviews were crucial and need to be thoroughly carried out to see if objectives of plans have been met** – moreover to see if objectives are actually achieved and that this is then **fed into future plans.** Attendees emphasised the **dissonance that can exist between the developer's vision or proposals** (circus street being given as an example) **and the outcome.** The reality that is experienced by the residents .The proposal of **circus street** showed a hub of activity and the reality is the very opposite of what was promised as was made clear in responses residents have given to councillors that **people do not enjoy living there.** Another attendee citing the Portslade Plan to increase space and the regeneration of the harbour wanted to know that **existing plans** like the harbour area document would not be forgotten- as such things can - and would be **fed into** the new city plan **if monitoring and review structures were robust** to ensure this.

TG (cllr) suggested that the heritage organisation in Brighton could inform on quality when an attendee gave the example of another authority that had a pro-active monument society that would review plans with overall expertise and an optic on design and wanted to know if there was any equally active conservation advisory committee in Brighton .It was agreed **that heritage consultation was important.** Another attendee referenced the support given to the Hippodrome application.

All **new builds need to be accessible.** Attendees cited concerns raised from previous meetings such as power points not at ground level, storage for mobility scooters, accessible bathrooms.

Problems with eco proofing, and insulating some older style properties was raised by Cllr TG eg older properties made of bungaroosh and questions were asked if new builds would be eco-friendly- or how eco friendly and include solar power and heat pumps.

In relation to the plan to include more **food growing space, existing allotments** and waiting lists were discussed together with the issue of the need to reclaim neglected allotments, and have a much more efficient system for letting empty ones.

Concerns were raised in discussion over **the potential degradation** of the city if development is only concerned with fulfilling housing quotas at the cost of not giving due weight and consideration to **mixed housing that meets the needs in the city: of its residents whether elders, families or young ,supporting community, and overall design optics. Consistency of design, integrated planning and balancing this with the human need for a pleasing environment and respect for our green spaces and our natural environment is all agreed to be vital..**

Concerning bio-diversity and the natural environment the government target is a 10% net gain and the consultation is asking whether people would support a higher target, such as 20% This over and above the government target was welcomed by the attendees, On the broad question of how to improve the natural environment the speakers spoke of green structures and planting of trees. Attendees repeated comments made earlier on the importance of the downland and green spaces of the city and the overall optics of design and were sanguine that the diversity and natural environment section of the 2041 plan held the possibility of a consideration and protection for the environment .

4 Entertainment and tourism

Cinemas struggling and **need for continued Brighton Festival support** was raised;

Need to support entertainment venues, cinemas, hippodrome etc including through licencing

There was discussion and unanimous agreement among attendees on **limitation being needed on air B and Bs**- currently little control is possible if councils are unable to access registers and suggestions were made that the council could find locations on air B and B website or that there may need to be some changes in the law to support councils in accessing appropriate information in order for them to be unhindered in taking proper action which currently they are not able to do. Successful examples of opposition through referring back to the details in the terms of lease were given by attendees as some leases clearly excluded premises being used as a business so looking at clauses in leases may be useful in some instances to help limit the proliferation of air band b's Also cheaper, unlicensed Air B and Bs impact negatively on hotels in the city , tourism and residential areas.

5. Transport and Place- concerns were raised by members re: lack of access to central parts of the seafront by bus, too long gaps between some central bus stops. Inaccessibility to older people with the slightest mobility problems and those using mobility aids with problematic access to the beach for people with disability .

Leaves on pavements also impedes people with mobility difficulties.

Helen and Paula Were **thanked for very full presentation which prompted a lot of discussion.**

All are encouraged to submit responses to the consultation.

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/city-plan-2041-key-issues

6 Feedback from member attendance at other meetings.

Mary fed back from Health Overview Scrutiny Committee.

It was primarily concerned with closure of Brunswick Ward at Millview hospital- the only NHS inpatient beds for people with dementia in B&H. We opposed this move which is nevertheless going ahead, Brighton and Hove residents with dementia and their visitors will now have to go to Uckfield or Worthing.

7 Doug fed back from People Scrutiny Committee

Largely concerning rising homelessness in the City which has increased by 110%
Rising alcoholism.

Issues re: Air B and B's and short term lets, with lack of safety checks/ or being declared as businesses when in fact some are run as businesses.

Air quality and impact of burning non smoke free fuels.

7 Michael fed back from Better Buses for All meeting- issue of too big a distance between bus stops, and lack of bus access to seafront will be taken forward at future meetings.

Michael attended BHCC Equalities Team meeting- council engaging more through consultations. We need assurance they make a difference in genuine listening with some open ended responses needed in surveys.

8 Feedback on other issues and Current Campaigns

8.1.Funding Bid- Angela has submitted a bid to 'Fairness Find' for mobile phone and help to facilitate meetings and website. Should hear back in January. It was suggested that Brighton SOUP or Sussex Masons may also be a source of funding.

8.2.Age UK- New hub in Queens Rd at Community Base- drop in centre.

8.3.HOP at Palmeira Square run 2 digital support sessions per week.

a. Ongoing Campaigns:

8.4 Parking review consultation- Councillors agreed to contact Cllr Trevor Muten again re progress of Parking review consultations. Our issues are the need for cash or card alternatives to paying by phone to continue.

Need for shorter visitor permit to enable 'pop in' visits by friends and families to older people.

8.5 Toilets- several opened , in response to joint campaigning with acorn

8.6 Digital Exclusion- continue to press for more accessible council information and reception.

8.7 Officer Reports

Treasurer report- Michael- Increase in spending recently, including payment for venues. No current income so expenditure is a concern (donations welcome!)
£3, 346.81 in our OPC current fund. £6 donated at current meeting.

8.9 Website Development- Doug

We now have gmail e mail address BrightonhoveOPC@gmail.com, and Doug is still developing website, in process of migrating everything across so all existing info can be searched and accessed easily. Many thanks to Doug.

8.10 Age and Dementia Friendly City Consultation- really important people complete this Closing date is 6th January. Davina de Laslo from Public Health is overseeing the consultation and is a regular attender at our meetings
Please do respond to this important survey.

Next Meeting is 10th December at Tower House, Tower Gate. 2-4 pm.
Accessible by no 5 bus

