

CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2014 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT : Councillors Campling, T Dignum, French, Plowman, Rankin and Scicluna

EX OFFICIO : The Mayor (Councillor Hughes)
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Siggs)
Councillor Woolley

ALSO PRESENT : Councillor Apel

APOLOGIES : Councillor Bell

IN ATTENDANCE : Administration Manager, Finance Manager and Property Manager

70 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 22 January 2014 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

71 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2014

A copy of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 28 February 2014 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Report showed a surplus of £49,283 against the budget to the end of February 2014.

72 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2013/2014

A copy of the Capital Monitoring Report and a 5-year forecast on Capital Projects was circulated with the Agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Capital Monitoring Report be noted.

The Committee were advised that tenders had now been received for the MUGA Lighting at Whyke and the contract awarded to D&M Electrical in the sum of £22,978.01.

73 INVESTMENT REPORT

The Finance Manager's Investment Report had been circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The City Council's fixed term investment matured on 28 February 2014 and the Finance Manager had been actively investigating other investment opportunities for the forthcoming 12-months. Currently two potential investors had been identified namely Royal Bank of Scotland offering an interest rate of 1.1% and Santander offering a rate of 1%. Another alternative was to continue receiving the 0.5% offered on the City Councils accounts with Barclays.

Due to the planned expenditure for the 2014/2015 financial year, it was being recommended that only £500,000 be invested for a 12-month period.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the City Council invest £500,000 in Santander for a 12-month period at an interest rate of 1%.

74 ASSEMBLY ROOM AIR CONDITIONING INVESTIGATIONS

Further to the discussions that had taken place at the recently held Property Sub-Committee meeting, consultant costs had now been received to carry out investigations to ascertain whether the proposed new air conditioning system, being considered for implementation when the Assembly Room refurbishment was carried out, would be acceptable and efficient. The investigations would include temporary fans being fitted in the chimney flues to monitor air flow and sound.

It was to be noted that this item was not included in the 2014/2015 Budget.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Assembly Room Air Conditioning Investigation work be carried out in the sum of £3,450 plus VAT.

75 CAR PARK POSTS

Property Sub-Committee Minute 27(i) refers

To consider the Recommendation of Property Sub-Committee to allocate £6,800 plus VAT for the installation of 7 Nr mechanical drop type bollards for the Car Park at the Council House

The Chairman advised that as the Property Manager would be leaving within the next month, it was being suggested that the Recommendation from Property Sub-Committee for the installation of replacement car park posts at the rear of the Council House be put on hold until a Property Manager had been appointed.

The Committee were asked to note that the recommended expenditure of £6,800 for this project was not included in the 2014/2015 budget. The Chairman stressed that any deferment did not mean that the project would go ahead, just that it would not happen immediately.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the replacement car park posts in the Council House Car Park be deferred until a more suitable time.

76 WAR MEMORIAL

Property Sub-Committee Minute 27(iii) refers

To consider the Recommendation of the Property Sub-Committee that in principle a 'Reflective and Reconciliation Garden' at Litten Gardens be supported

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the 'Reflective and Reconciliation Garden' at Litten Gardens be supported in principle. The Administration Manager added that this could be undertaken during the proposed 4-years of commemoration for the First World War and that funding from other sources would be investigated.

77 ST PAUL'S FLINT WALL

Property Sub-Committee Minute 27(iv) refers

To consider the Recommendation of the Property Sub-Committee to allocate £480 plus VAT to enable vegetation growth to be removed from the South Wall for a full and complete inspection to be undertaken

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the work required to remove the vegetation from the South Wall to enable further inspections to be undertaken be carried out at a cost of £480 plus VAT.

78 MARKET CROSS

Property Sub-Committee Minute 27(v) refers

To consider the Recommendation of the Property Sub-Committee that the stonework at the top of the Market Cross be removed immediately

The Property Manager explained briefly that the weathervane had been removed from the Market Cross as the recent bad weather had jammed the weathervane in one position. On removing the weathervane it was discovered that further work would need to be carried out to make the top of the Market Cross safe as cracks had been found in the stone finial.

English Heritage and Chichester District Council's Building Conservation Officer were aware of the findings and had been advised that the City Council would be taken immediate action to remove part of the stonework at the top of the Market Cross. A quote of £4,196 plus VAT had been received from Nolan Davis Constructing Ltd. The damaged removed stonework would be stored at the Council House until such time it would be repaired; this would be following advice from appropriate parties.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the immediate planned work for the Market Cross be undertaken.

79 NEW HOMES BONUS

The Administration Manager explained that three of the five successful New Homes Bonus applicants had been in contact with the City Council, namely New Park Centre, Chichester Community Development Trust (Graylingwell community space) and Regnum District Guides. These projects were in the early progressive stages and would be monitored accordingly by City Council Officers. The original application from Graylingwell had now been amended and the amendments were being considered by Chichester District Council's Grants and Concessions Panel to ascertain whether the amendments were acceptable and within the criteria of the New Homes Bonus.

80 RESIGNATION OF PROPERTY MANAGER

The Committee were advised that the advert for the vacancy of the Property Manager would appear in the 'Observer' newspaper on Thursday 20 March and would also be available on-line via their website. The advertisement would also be placed on a website specifically designed for public sector jobs. The closing date for applications was Monday 31 March 2014 and interview would take place on Tuesday 15 April 2014. The Chairman also proposed that a provisional sum of £5,000 be available to address some of the costs that may be incurred during the departure of the current Property Manager and the appointment of a new Property Manager.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that a provisional sum of £5,000 be made available for any costs incurred during the departure and new appointment of the Property Manager.

It was further RESOLVED that a further £500 be incurred to advertise the Property Manager's vacancy on a website specifically designed for public sector jobs.

81 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT

The Committee were advised that Sevenoaks Town Council were seeking the support of other Parish Councils for submitting a proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act *'for a return of a system to provide a percentage of the Business (Non-Domestic) Rates to Town and Parish Councils to be used for the benefit of economic growth in the locality.'*

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Chichester City Council would support the submission proposed by Sevenoaks Town Council.

82 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- (a) List of Cheques paid for December 2013, January and February 2014

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for December 2013, January and February 2014.

- (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for December 2013, January and February 2014

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for December 2013, January and February 2014.

- (c) Finance Round-up

The Finance Manager reported that on 12 March 2014 Section 150 of the Local Government Act 1972 that required two signatures on cheques had been repealed. This would enable all local authorities to undertake banking electronically if desired. The City Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would need to be reviewed to incorporate the repeal and the Finance Manager was currently seeking advice from the Internal Auditor and the City Council's Business Banking Manager on how this change, if taken up by the City Council, would affect the day-to-day running of the accounts.

The External Auditors, PFK Littlejohn, had advised the City Council of dates for the closedown of accounts, however this was being challenged as the dates suggested did not align with the City Council's Finance Committee and Council Meetings.

83 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- (a) Property Sub-Committee

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2014 having been circulated be approved.

84 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 10 June 2014.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.