

CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2013 AT 5.30PM

- PRESENT : Councillors Bell, Campling, T Dignum, French, Plowman, Rankin and Scicluna
- EX OFFICIO : Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hughes)
Councillor Woolley
- APOLOGIES : The Mayor (Councillor Chaplin)
- ABSENT : Councillor Siggs
- IN ATTENDANCE : Town Clerk, Finance Manager and Administration Manager

43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 13 August 2013 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013

A copy of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 30 September 2013 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Report showed a surplus of £20,095 against the budget to the end of September 2013 which was similar to the last quarter.

45 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 Chairman suggested that it may be beneficial to invite those involved with the proposed Whyke Community Centre to give a presentation to members to keep them updated on the project, this suggestion was supported by members.

46 CAPITAL ACCOUNTS AND BALANCES

The Finance Manager had prepared a report on Capital Assets, Useable Capital Assets and Earmarked Reserves at the request of Councillor French and this had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Chairman commented that as the return on the City Council's investment was low it would be favourable to invest in the City Council's assets. This would include the redecoration of the Assembly Room and conservation of the Council Chamber.

The Finance Manager reminded the Committee that Capital Receipts could be used for :

- (i) the purchase or significant enhancement of fixed assets
- (ii) the repayment of Loan Capital (but not interest)

- (iii) the making of a grant to a third party for the purposes of expenditure which (if it were the Council's own expenditure would comply with (i) above.

47 BUDGET 2014/2015

The Chairman advised that the draft 2014/2015 Budget report circulated with the Agenda was only for preliminary discussions at this meeting. The Finance Committee Meeting on Tuesday 26 November 2013 would determine the Budget for the forthcoming year.

The Chairman went through the report and the following comments were made by Members.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The current amount of £16,835 had been included in the 2014/2015 Budget as a reserve to counteract any reduction in the Council Tax grant from Chichester District Council in future years. Consideration would be given at the next meeting to allocating an amount, whether wholly or in part from this reserve and this, in turn, would impact on the level of Precept increase (if any).

Conservation/Restoration of Paintings

There were concerns raised over the budget of £8,000 for the Conservation/Restoration of Paintings being allocated towards the redecoration of the Assembly Room. Definitive costs for the redecoration project was still to be obtained and that if the figure quoted for the works included improvement to the lighting in the Assembly Room, this part of the work could be funded from Capital Reserves therefore decreasing the amount of revenue needed for the redecoration project and enabling the painting conservation programme to continue unhindered.

Twinning Budgets

The Committee discussed the difference between Twinning and Friendship Links and it was agreed that anything connected with the Friendship Links with Valletta and Kursk be funded from the International Relations Budget and that there was not a requirement to introduce a separate budget for all Friendship links.

Chichester in Bloom

The Budget had been increased due to the uncertainty of the amount of funding that Chichester District Council may contribute to Chichester in Bloom. It was hoped this would be known before the next Finance Committee in November. An 'Income' code for Chichester in Bloom would be introduced into the 2014/2015 Budget.

Professional Subscriptions

The Committee discussed officer's professional qualifications and the sum of money involved in paying these fees. It was suggested that the City Council only pay for one membership of an affiliated body for each officer with a professional qualification.

Legal Fees for the Market House

The Legal Fees budget for the Market House had been reduced from £5,000 to £2,500, however it was felt to be prudent to keep the budget at £5,000.

Capital Schemes

It was suggested that a preliminary costing for the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre to the Council House be included in the Capital Schemes. The formal position of Chichester District Council on this matter would be established by the Town Clerk.

The Chairman added that the current reserves for the Town Plan and Power of General Competence could be put together and help towards any initiatives for localism and this would also be used to assist with the potential Tourist Information Centre project.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted in connection with staffing matters listed below.

Staffing Report

It was noted that the Planning Advisor would be retiring at 31 March 2014 and that his replacement would commence working with City Council in the New Year.

The position of Property Manager continuing would be recommended as a permanent post with effective from June 2014 when the current 12-month Property Manager contract ends.

The role of the Property Manager's Assistant would be determined at the next meeting of the Finance Committee in November.

The meeting resumed in Public Session.

48 STREET LIGHTING REPLACEMENT FOR CHICHESTER CITY (HERITAGE LAMPOSTS)

The Chairman explained that progress was being made with West Sussex County Council and Southern Scottish Electric on the replacement of street lighting to Heritage Lamp Posts. The costs for replacing the lamp post within in the Walls was in the region of £30,000, however costings for the replacement scheme in the Old Somerstown area and Westgate to Parklands were still awaited.

The new street lighting in North, South, East and West Streets would be LED lighting and there would be no cost to the City Council for installing LED lights in these areas.

It was suggested that the Town Clerk write to West Sussex County Council about the timing of the lights being on in residential areas, sighting light pollution and the inconvenience caused to residents by lights shining in to their properties.

49 CORPORATION MACE

A report of the Administration Manager was circulated with the Agenda. The report asked members to consider whether the Mace should only be used on City Council's civic occasions and Council Meetings and that a carrying case be produced so that it could accompany the Mayor on Civic events outside the City. These matters had been raised following the extensive repair works that had recently been carried out to the Mace.

The basic usage of the Mace in a calendar year was seven internal Council Meetings and two external civic events (Annual Procession to the Cathedral and Remembrance Sunday) although other external civic events, such as the Judges' Service, could arise from time to time.

A quote of £800 had been received for the production of a carrying case that could also be used as a Mace Stand.

It was RESOLVED that a carrying case be produced for the Corporation Mace.

50 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Committee noted the Memorandum of Understanding between Chichester City Council and Chichester District Council had been signed.

51 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- (a) List of Cheques paid for July, August and September 2013

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for July, August and September 2013.

- (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for July, August and September 2013

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for July, August and September 2013.

52 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- (a) Property Sub-Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2013 having been circulated be approved.

53 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 26 November 2013 - Budget 2014/2015

The Town Clerk advised that this meeting may need to be rescheduled if information on the Council Tax and Pensions has not been received as both items were critical in the final calculations of the Budget and Precept demand.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.