

## CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 12 AUGUST 2014 AT 5.30PM

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

#### 16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 10 June 2014 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 17 HENTY FIELD - UPDATE

The Chairman reminded members of the recommendations made by the Finance Committee at their last meeting. The Town Clerk had prepared a report on the matter and this had been circulated to all members. The report highlighted five points that had developed since the last meeting following the recommendation that City Council meet with West Sussex County Council to discuss the matter further. The points were :

1. There is no possibility of an 'in perpetuity' deal for the City other than a sale to reflect the true value of the site see 2 below.
2. Notwithstanding there being no intention of West Sussex County Council developing Henty Field in the short to medium term, the possibility cannot be wholly ruled out at some unknown time in the future. City Councillors should think in terms of a seven figure amount for land purchase as a development value would have to be factored in.
3. The former Heads of Term – formerly 25 years with break clauses at 10 and 20 years would be replaced by Heads of Term still of 25 years, but with a single break clause at 15 years.
4. The site access paragraph in the former the Heads of Term would be redrafted by WSCC to reflect the revised arrangement created by the planning application for residential development of the former school kitchen site – see my report to last meeting of Finance Committee for precise detail.
5. An offer of £5000 would be made by West Sussex County Council towards tree work on the site previously identified by City Council consultants. The Town Clerk considered there may be an opportunity to discuss this amount further with West Sussex County Council.

The Chairman invited Mr Tim Rooth and Ms Joan Wibley to address the meeting and they handed over a petition to the Chairman which had been signed by over 200 residents from the Parklands Residents' Association and Orchard Street and Old Somerstown Area Residents' Association siting that '*Chichester City Council take over responsibility for the land known as Henty Field behind Central School thereby ensuring that it remains fully accessible to the public for informal recreational use*'.

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman (Councillor Campling) the Chairman read out Councillor Campling's view.

The Committee were advised that costs would include £2,500 per annum for grass cutting, dog bins, litter bins, collections, etc. Over the suggested 15 years lease period it would cost the City Council in the region of £5,000 per annum.

The Chairman added that if the City Council took on the lease of Henty Field there was no guarantee what would happen after 15 years.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that the City Council accept in principle the 25 year lease with a 15-year break clause from West Sussex County Council for Henty Field but that officers continue to negotiate with County Council officers about the extent of financial contribution being offered by West Sussex County Council.

The Leader of West Sussex County Council, Councillor Louise Goldsmith, was invited to comment.

It had been suggested that a 'Friends of Henty Field' be created to ensure the green open space, although kept as an open space, was used to benefit the residents. Councillor Woolley suggested to the residents 'use it or lose it'.

#### 18 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2014

A copy of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 30 June 2014 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Report showed a surplus of £20,070 against the budget to the end of June 2014.

The variances were discussed and the Finance Manager advised that as the Allotment Reserve had been spent already in the financial year due to the fencing works, a sum of £3,000 could be vired from the Disused Burial Grounds earmarked reserve to the Allotment Reserve budget. This was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED.

#### 19 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2014/2015

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

The Report now included a breakdown of the Capital balance available for the financial year taking into account the Capital already committed. A breakdown of the New Homes Bonus allocation 2013 outlining how much had been paid to each applicant was also included in the report.

It was RESOLVED that the Capital Monitoring Report be noted.

#### 20 WHITEHOUSE FARM UPDATE ON CONCEPT STATEMENTS Planning & Conservation Committee Minute 27 refers

The Committee were asked to consider the Recommendation of the Planning & Conservation Committee that an independent study be carried out on behalf of the City Council on the feasibility of long-term sustainability of an on-site water treatment works at Whitehouse Farm.

The Chairman reported that he had contacted the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) and had been advised that a consultant in the area could be asked to carry out an independent study. The consultant, Mr Tim Evans, had been approached and his charges would be £608 per day (8 hours). The study would be undertaken in two stages, firstly to undertake a general view of the site using the information currently available and secondly, to look at in detail and review the proposed water treatment works at Whitehouse Farm. It was anticipated that the stages would both take 3 days each to complete.

Members were in agreement that an independent study should be carried out in order for the City Council and residents affected by the proposed development to understand fully what was being proposed by the developer. It was essential that the consultant be briefed to understand the scale of the development.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that £8,000 be allocated from the General Power of Competence budget to fund this independent study.

21 PRIORY PARK PUBLIC CONVENIENCES :  
PROVISION OF BABY CHANGING FACILITIES

The Chairman advised that Chichester District Council had approached the City Council for funding to provide baby changing facilities in the public conveniences in Priory Park. Members felt that such a provision was essential and should be installed in both the male and female conveniences.

However, members were reminded that the City Council had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Chichester District Council to pay £11,000 towards the upkeep of the public conveniences in Priory Park and considered that this sort of facility should be funded out of that money.

The Town Clerk was advised to inform the District Council that the idea of providing baby changing facilities in the public conveniences in Priory Park was supported by the City Council but should be funded by District Council if not able to be taken out of the City Council's contribution.

22 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT : FRONT OF HOUSE – CASH COLLECTION

A copy of the Internal Audit Report : Front of House - Cash Collection had been circulated with the Agenda.

It was RESOLVED to accept the Report's Recommendation to introduce a directory for the retention of documents, in particular the inclusion of the retention period for credit card receipts for payments made at the front desk.

23 'BECOMING A COUNCILLOR'

The Town Clerk reported on the Chichester District Council's campaign to encourage people to become Councillors in the area, however the promotional leaflet from the District Council had a passing reference to Parish Councils. The Surrey & Sussex Association of Local Councils (SSALC) were producing promotional literature aimed solely for Parish Councils on the same topic.

24 CHURCHYARD AT ALL SAINTS, PORTFIELD

The Town Clerk advised that since the last Finance Committee meeting, the grass had been cut at the churchyard and the Property Manager had visited the site and confirmed that there was no more space for burials and that boundaries consisted of mainly of shrubs.

Therefore, question B4 of the 'Notice of Intention to apply to transfer maintenance responsibility (Part B(ii))' had been completed and the Form forwarded to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St George's Whyke. The question of formal service of notice by the PCC upon the City Council would undoubtedly now follow.

## 25 CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE

It was RESOLVED that the City Council offices would close to the public at noon on 24 December 2014 and reopen on Monday 5 January 2015. However, the Council House would be open whilst the Assembly Room refurbishment works were being carried out.

## 26 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

### (a) List of Cheques paid for April, May and June 2014

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for April, May and June 2014.

### (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for April, May and June 2014

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for April, May and June 2014.

### (c) Finance Round Up

The Finance Manager reported that she and Councillors Plowman and Dignum had attended the Annual Meeting of Pension Funds in July 2014 and said that the investment was performing well with interest rates increasing in Europe. The pension fund was currently 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Country.

## 27 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

### (a) Property Sub-Committee

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2014 having been circulated be approved.

Councillor Bell commented on the Assembly Room refurbishment project (Minute 4(i) refers) and asked if opinions/views had been obtained from users of the Assembly Room, for example the Chichester Chamber Concerts who had views on lighting in the room.

Although all users of the Assembly Room would have their preferences, it had to be borne in mind that the room was used for a wide variety of uses by many users and therefore no particular view could be catered for. However, the Property Manager would be asked to find out information on the conversations that had taken place between the Chichester Chamber Concerts and the former Property Manager earlier in the year.

## 28 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

- Henty Field
- Draft Budget 2015/2016

## 29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21 October 2014

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.