

## CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2014 AT 5.30PM

PRESENT : Councillors Bell, Campling, French, Plowman and Scicluna

EX OFFICIO : Councillors Apel and Woolley

ALSO PRESENT : Councillor Budge

APOLOGIES : The Mayor (Councillor Hughes)  
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Siggs)  
Councillors T Dignum and Rankin

IN ATTENDANCE : Town Clerk, Finance Manager, Property Manager and Administration Manager

#### 30 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2014 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### 31 HENTY FIELD - UPDATE

The Town Clerk advised that since the last meeting of the Committee where it was resolved to accept in principle the 25-year lease with a 15-year break clause from West Sussex County Council for Henty Field, officers had met with the County Council and were continuing to negotiate with them on increasing their offer of £5,000. To date, no information had been received on an increased figure, City Council officers had suggested that a contribution be made not just for the tree works, but the on-going stewardship costs of managing the land.

The Committee expressed disappointment in the offer being proposed compared with other working/financial partnerships that had been established between the City Council and West Sussex County Council, eg. benches.

Councillor Apel suggested that local residents in the area lobby their West Sussex County Ward Councillor for a more realistic figure.

The Committee noted that if an increased offer from West Sussex County Council was received this could be discussed at the Full Council Meeting on 3 December 2014.

#### 32 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2014

A copy of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 31 August 2014 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Report showed a surplus of £23,253 against the budget to the end of August 2014.

The Finance Manager advised that there was not much difference in the variances since the last quarter and that the variances listed were cumulative of the last 5 months.

#### 33 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.

There had been no expenditure since the last Capital Monitoring Report.

The Finance Manager advised that the breakdown of the New Homes Bonus Allocation 2013/2014 to the end of August 2014 indicated that the Regnum Guide Hall and the South Downs Planetarium had received their full allocation.

It was RESOLVED that the Capital Monitoring Report be noted.

The Finance Manager also advised that the 2013/2014 Accounts had now been approved and signed off by the external auditors, Littlejohn.

#### 34 DRAFT BUDGET 2015/2016

A copy of the Draft Budget 2015/2016 had been circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The Chairman advised that this draft budget was a discussion document for members to comment upon. It was currently showing a 2.8% increase in the Precept, however once finalised and taking into account an increase in the tax base, the draft budget might result in a lower increase or no increase at all.

The Town Clerk reported that the Property Manager had attended a City Centre Partnership meeting where it had been discussed as to whether the City Council would be contributing £15,000 towards Christmas Lights. The City Council's stance was reiterated by the Committee that there would be no budget allocation for Christmas Lights whilst the BID levy was in operation. Therefore the City Council's allocation remained at 1% of the Business Rate of the Council House.

The Chairman asked members to consider works for Capital Projects and suggested allocating between £5,000 and £10,000 for a Capital Project such as the proposed Keats Sculpture in Eastgate Square which could act as a pump-priming exercise to start off the project.

The next meeting of the Committee on Tuesday 25 November 2014 would be solely for discussing the 2015/2016 Budget.

#### 35 BUSINESS PLAN

The Chairman said that at the recent Business Review Committee, the draft Business Plan had been discussed and agreed that the new format was easy to read and set-out the City Council's aims and objectives. The Business Plan would have amendments incorporated that were discussed at the Business Review Committee and that the Plan would be adopted and approved at the next Full Council Meeting.

#### 36 LOCALPLAN - POSSIBLE FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

The Chairman reported that the Examination of the Local Plan had been discussed by the Business Review Committee and had been recommended to the Finance Committee that £1,000 be allocated for a consultant's fee to represent Chichester City Council's view on supporting the lower number of housing proposed in Chichester.

Members briefly discussed the housing numbers and the Examination of the Local Plan.

It was RESOLVED that £1,000 be allocated for a Consultant's fee in representing Chichester City Council at the next meetings of the Local Plan and that the consultant be also briefed to identify issues arising from development in adjacent Parishes.

37 PRIORY PARK PUBLIC CONVENIENCES :  
PROVISION OF BABY CHANGING FACILITIES

The Town Clerk advised that Chichester District Council had confirmed that the annual £11,000 contribution from the City Council for the upkeep of the public conveniences in Priory Park did not include providing provisions such as baby changing facilities in the conveniences.

It was RESOLVED that a one-off payment of £500 be allocated for the provision of baby changing facilities in the public conveniences in Priory Park. However Chichester District Council would be advised that a baby changing facility in the male public conveniences should be provided at the District Councils' expense.

38 TENDERS FOR REDECORATION OF ASSEMBLY ROOM

The Committee noted that six tenders had been requested for the redecoration works of the Assembly Room and that three had had been received, and three had declined to tender. The three tenders were in the sums of £43,742.00, £48,389.00 and £56,526.77.

The tenders were opened on Tuesday 14 October 2014 in the presence of the Town Clerk, Chairman of the Finance Committee and the Property and Finance Managers.

It was RESOLVED that the lowest tender in the sum of £43,742 from E A Chiverton Ltd be accepted. This figure was within the budget allocated for the works; the budget provision for this work was £44,000.

The Property Manager advised that work to the curtains and the repainting of the high level Coat of Arms were not included in the budget but would be carried out during the redecoration works.

39 GUILDHALL, PRIORY PARK

The Town Clerk said that he had had a meeting with James Cameron of Chichester District Council and Councillor Budge about the Guildhall in Priory Park and how its profile could be raised particularly in connection with the City Council's history with the building. One possibility was to hold the City Council's Annual Meeting of the Council (Mayor Making) in the Guildhall, perhaps during the new Council's administration.

40 QUALITY PARISH SCHEME

The Committee noted that the Quality Parish Scheme was to be updated and would include three levels namely Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold. The Town Clerk gave a brief description of the levels and explained that councils with Quality Parish Status would be automatically transferred to the Foundation level. The General Power of Competence would only be available with the Quality and Quality Gold levels.

This matter would be discussed further at the Committee's meeting in January 2015 when the Town Clerk would produce a report on the subject.

41 OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY - ACCESS TO MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTS OF  
PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

This item was related to the matter discussed at Full Council in September about the recording and filming of Council meetings.

The Town Clerk explained that many of the requirements were already in place and available to the public but it was noted that decision made by Officers would need to be minuted.

42 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- (a) List of Cheques paid for July and August 2014

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for July and August 2014.

- (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for July and August 2014

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for July and August 2014.

43 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS

- (a) Property Sub-Committee

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2014 having been circulated be approved.

44 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

- Quality Parish Status

45 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 25 November 2014 (Budget Meeting)

The meeting closed at 6.35pm.