

# CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2015 AT 5.30PM

- PRESENT : Councillors Bell, Dignum, M Evans, T French, Keyworth and Scicluna
- EX OFFICIO : The Mayor (Councillor P Budge)  
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Tupper)  
Councillor P Evans
- APOLOGIES : Councillor Kilby
- ALSO PRESENT : Councillor Plowman
- IN ATTENDANCE : Town Clerk, Finance Manager and Administration Manager

### 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Councillor Dignum be appointed Chairman of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the Council Year. There were no other nominations.

It was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED that Councillor M Evans be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the Council Year. There were no other nominations.

### 2 TO DETERMINE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FOLLOWING SUB-COMMITTEES

#### Personnel Sub-Committee

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman indicated that they wished to be members of the Personnel Sub-Committee and it was RESOLVED that the membership of the Personnel Sub-Committee be Councillors Dignum, M Evans, T French and Plowman; the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are Ex-Officio members of all Sub-Committees.

#### Property Sub-Committee

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman indicated that they wished to be members of the Property Sub-Committee and it was RESOLVED that the membership of the Personnel Sub-Committee be Councillors Dignum, M Evans, T French and Scicluna; the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are Ex-Officio members of all Sub-Committees.

### 3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 17 March 2015 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 4 MAYORAL MATTERS

#### (a) Murray Club

Councillors Plowman and Scicluna declared Personal Interests in this item as members of the Murray Club.



Council House		
- Council House Maintenance	£36,528	4278/501
- Offset reduction in Tax Base	£ 7,840	4277/501
City Cross		
- Clock Maintenance	£ 5,060	4302/504
- City Cross	£ 2,000	4300/504
St James Obelisk		
- Repairs	£ 100	4236/505

## 6 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/2015

A copy of the Statement of Accounts 2014/2015 produced by DCK Beavers Ltd had been circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The Finance Manager explained that £77,118 would be carried forward to the 2015/2016 Budget and that the overall surplus for 2014/2015 was £6,701 which would be put into General Reserves.

The total balances held by the City Council at the end of the 2014/2015 financial year totalled £1,053,799. The Finance Manager explained that this balance comprises of £423,023 Usable Capital Receipts, £300,729 Earmarked Reserves and £330,047 General Reserves. The Committee noted that the General Reserves balance was at the recommended level.

The Chairman wished a Vote of Thanks to the Finance Manager be minuted.

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 24 June 2015 that the Statement of Accounts 2014/2015 be approved and signed.

## 7 AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2015

A copy of the Audit Commission Annual Return for Year Ended 31 March 2015 was circulated to all members with the Agenda.

The Committee were advised that the end of year figures had been extrapolated from the accounts. The Annual Return has to be received by the Auditors by 30 June 2015.

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 24 June 2015 that the Audit Commission Annual Return for Year Ended 31 March 2015 be approved and signed.

## 8 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee noted that both these items were an External Audit requirement.

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 24 June 2015 that the following be approved :

- (a) the appointment of Mr Stephen James as the City Council's Internal Auditor continue for the financial year ending 31 March 2016; and
- (b) the Audit Plan 2015/2016 and Audit Terms of reference which had been circulated with the Agenda.

## 9 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS

The Committee were advised that the Town Clerk and Finance Manager were drafting new Financial Regulations.

## 10 REVIEW OF INVESTMENT POLICY

The Finance Manager advised the Committee of the current City Council's Investment Policy which prioritised the liquidity of funds and the security of funds over a high rate of return. She queried whether consideration was to be given to investing in the Local Authority Property Fund. The Finance Manager explained that conflicting advice had been received regarding investing beyond 12 months and was recommending a presentation from CCLA (who manage the Local Authority Property Fund) to explain how the fund operated. Scepticism was expressed by some members about the wisdom of investing in a Property fund, given the relatively small sums available and the need to maintain liquidity without the risk of capital loss.

It was RESOLVED that CCLA be invited to give a brief presentation to the City Council on the Local Authority Property Fund and that a Finance Training Session be given to all members by Derek Kemp of DCK Beavers.

The Chairman also suggested that the Finance Manager contact CIPFA for more advice.

## 11 BUDGET POLICY

The Chairman was recommending a 0% increase in the Precept for the next 4 years and that this would give a framework for the Officers to work with over the 4 year administration, subject of course to no material adverse change in circumstances. Projects such as Chichester in Bloom and Community Wardens would continue to be supported.

## 12 PAYROLL ADMINISTRATION

The Town Clerk explained that there had been two meetings between Officers of the City Council and West Sussex County Council/Capita on the administration of the City Council's payroll due to various incorrect payments being made to staff. Following the last meeting an Action Plan had been drawn up by West Sussex County Council/Capita addressing some of the issues raised by the City Council and other Parish Councils. If there was no improvement in the payroll service being given to the City Council, a further meeting with senior County Council Officers/Members would be arranged.

## 13 LITTEN GARDEN WORLD WAR ONE SCULPTURE/KEATS BENCH

### Litten Garden Sculpture

The Town Clerk explained that a £10,000 New Homes Bonus application had been successful and in the region of £2,000 had already been expended on moving the fallen oak tree from St Paul's allotment site to the Woodland Centre. The project cost for the production of the sculpture would be £11,500 but the landscaping/groundworks required would be an extra cost (currently unknown but being investigated). Other funding sources would be investigated and another New Homes Bonus application would be submitted. When all other sources had been explored consideration would be given to a topping up from council reserves if the Council then agreed the amount of shortfall was not excessive.

### Keats Sculpture

The Committee were advised that a launch of the John Keats Sculpture proposal would be held at the Oxmarket Centre on Saturday 20 June 2015. There would be no 'up-front' subscription from the City Council and it was noted that the timescale set by the Earl of March for raising the funds for the sculpture through public subscription was 18 months. If the public subscription target was not met, monies donated would be given back to the donor (if known) otherwise monies would go towards the Mayor's Charity. It was therefore RESOLVED that

- (i) two notices be displayed on the collection box explaining that anonymous donations will be given to the Mayor's Charity if the total funding required is not met while any donations with an address attached would be returned to the donor;
- (ii) the collection be open for 18 months;
- (iii) the City Council are seen as publicly supporting the public subscription appeal for the Keats Sculpture; and
- (iv) if after 18 months the public subscription had not raised the full £30,000 required, consideration would be given to a topping up from Council Reserves if the City Council then agreed the amount of the shortfall was not excessive.

**Post Meeting Note :** The Administration Manager had identified some procedural issues with the public subscription and would be investigating further.

#### 14 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

- (a) List of Cheques paid for February and March 2015

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for February and March 2015.

- (b) List of Barclaycard Payments for February and March 2015

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for February and March 2015.

- (c) Finance Round Up

The Finance Manager advised that savings had been made by transferring the fire alarm contact to a new contractor and on the Ill-Health Insurance.

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

- Henty Field
- Litten Gardens Sculpture
- Investment Policy Presentation
- Review of Reserves
- Remembrance Sunday Service
- Christmas Office Closing
- Items for Information

#### 16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11 August 2015

The meeting closed at 6.34pm.