

CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 15 MARCH 2016 AT 5.30PM

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

79 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 19 January 2016 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

80 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2016

A copy of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report to 31 January 2016 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Report showed a surplus of £28,690 against the budget to the end of January 2016; the variances listed in the report were cumulative from the start of the financial year 2015/2016.

The Chairman asked that the budget for Grants - Power of Wellbeing (4260/103) be split in the 2016/2017 financial year to show the contingency amount of £20,000 set aside for public realm projects.

81 CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2015/2016

A copy of the Capital Monitoring Report 2015/2016 was circulated with the Agenda.

The Finance Manager explained that the costs stated on the Report relating to the surveys of the Council House and Market Cross would be transferred to Revenue. The latest Capital expenditure was the purchase of the City Council's vehicle.

The Finance Manager updated the Committee on the New Homes Bonus allocations and advised that the New Park Centre had forwarded their latest costings for various projects that related to their 2013/2014 New Homes Bonus allocation. However New Park Centre had requested money allocated for some elements of their application be transferred to fund other projects included in their application. This request would be transferred to Chichester District Council to consider whether funds should be reallocated.

82 BANK CHARGES

The Finance Manager's Report was circulated with the Agenda. The report explained that the City Council's bank, Barclays, would be introducing bank charges with effect from 13 May 2016. If the Council were to consider electronic banking then no charges would apply. Members discussed this matter generally and the advantages and disadvantages of electronic and on-line banking.

It was RESOLVED that the Finance Manager

- (i) carry out a cost comparison exercise with other banks;
- (ii) introduce phasing out cheques internally and accept only personal cheques;
- (iii) gradually introduce electronic banking; and
- (iv) report all findings back to the next Finance Committee meeting

83 POLICY ON RESERVES AND BALANCES

The Finance Manager's report was circulated with the Agenda.

It was RESOLVED to formally adopt the Policy on Reserves and Balances for the year ending 31 March 2016 and that the Policy would be reviewed every financial year. In summary this policy provides that six months' Precept be held in General Reserve.

The Chairman asked and the Finance Manager confirmed that the City Council was conforming to the Policy.

84 NEW HOMES BONUS 2013/2014

The Committee were asked to consider a request from the Chichester Runners and Athletics Club requesting £2,000 be taken from their £30,000 New Homes Bonus 2013/2014 allocation to establish a Junior Park Run. The Club were no longer able to use the New Homes Bonus 2013/2014 allocation for its designated purpose.

The Committee suggested referring this allocation back to Chichester District Council for the £2,000 to be paid from their Grant budget rather than the New Homes Bonus allocation.

85 COUNCIL HOUSE - FACADE AND BRICKWORK CLEANING

The Property Manager advised that Listed Building Consent was still awaited from Chichester District Council before any work could be carried out.

86 MARKET CROSS

The Committee were advised that Scheduled Monument Consent application had been submitted to Historic England in February 2016. The aim of carrying out works to the Cross before the end of June 2016 was now unlikely to happen and therefore any works would not start until after 9 July 2016, ie. after the Gala. Works to the Market Cross would also include replacing the pennants that were missing.

87 SEATS IN THE CITY CENTRE

The Property Manager explained that Chichester District Council's Historic Buildings Officer had confirmed that the proposed seat design was acceptable but the seats consisting of brown recycled plastic slats (selected for vandalism resistance, long life and low maintenance) was not acceptable.

It was RESOLVED that the seats in the City Centre should be of a recyclable material and that contact would be made again with the District Council's Historic Buildings Officer.

88 MARKET CROSS CLOCK

A letter from the City Council's Cross Clock horologist (who was retiring at the end of the year) had been circulated with the Agenda which suggested that the City Council may wish to consider replacing the present mechanical clock movement with a modern electrical alternative. The letter outlined the pros and cons of keeping the original clock movement and replacing it with new.

The Committee felt that any work to the Cross Clock should be integrated with the proposed works to the Market Cross.

The Property Manager advised that Historic England would have to be consulted on any works to the Cross Clock, however it was agreed that the Property Manager investigate all options and report back to the next Property Sub-Committee meeting.

89 ALLOTMENT POLICY, REVISED TENANCY AGREEMENT AND RULES & GUIDELINES

A copy of the Allotment Policy, Revised Tenancy Agreement and Rules & Guidelines had been emailed to all members for consideration.

It was RESOLVED that the Allotment Policy, Revised Tenancy Agreement and Rules & Guidelines be adopted and that the Policy and Rules & Guidelines be reviewed by the Property Manager in conjunction with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee as required.

The Property Manager briefly advised that consideration was being given to increasing the allotment charges and perhaps introducing a deposit fee for all new allotment tenants and a charge for water usage. All these matters would be discussed further at the next Property Sub-Committee meeting.

90 ST MARTIN'S LIGHTING

The Town Clerk's Report on this matter was circulated with the Agenda. Residents in St Martin's were requesting that the City Council fund 50% of the works proposed to provide a heritage lantern on No 9 St Martin's; the request was for £375.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that this request be refused.

91 FLORENCE ROAD/FLORENCE PARK ACCESS ROAD

The Committee were advised that Chichester District Council had requested a 'goodwill' contribution from the City Council of £3,700 towards the cost of providing another soak away at the site.

It was RESOLVED that, exceptionally, £3,000 be given as a goodwill contribution and that this is a one-off payment with no on-going liabilities.

92 HIRE OF ASSEMBLY ROOM

The Committee were asked to consider a request from Councillor Sharp for the Assembly Room to be hired free of charge for a public meeting to take place to discuss the proposed A27 improvements; the loss of income to the City Council would be £289 + VAT for an evening booking.

Since this request, the consultation on the proposed A27 improvements had been rescheduled for later in the year.

Members discussed this matter and it was felt that members of the public and organisations should apply for free hiring of the Assembly Room for public meetings on a prominent subject that would affect the City and not City Councillors and that, if approved, the City Council would host such meetings so that all parties with an interest could make their views known. This would happen in respect of a recent approach about the closure of the City Courts.

It was RESOLVED that the Mayor, Chairman of the Finance Committee and the Town Clerk would on behalf of the City Council determine any such requests. Another factor that would be considered when determining requests was that any public meeting would only be allowed if no other public meetings on the same subject were taking place elsewhere in the City.

93 WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SUPPORT TEAMS CONSULTATION AND FUTURE PARTNERSHIP WORKING (FORMERLY HIGHWAY RANGERS)

The Town Clerk explained that he had contacted Jonathan Ullmer, Head of Highway Operations, West Sussex County Council and had suggested that the City Council meet up and discuss this further particularly as the City Council were currently working with the County Council on projects. However, the Town Clerk had been advised that this would take place after the consultation period with all the parishes had ended.

The Chairman said that this consultation fitted well with the public realm projects the City Council were getting involved with, for example, smartening up areas at Westgate and Northgate. It had been suggested that the Property Manager contact the Environment Agency about the River Lavant that runs near to the Avenue de Chartres car park and Waitrose and also establish its ownership. The Property Manager would report back to the next Property Sub-Committee meeting on this matter.

94 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2016 AND BEYOND - UPDATE

The Administration Manager explained that recipients of the City Council's Discretionary Grants and New Homes Bonus would be invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and give a brief presentation on how the money was used. Promotional stands of organisations that had received grant money would be encouraged.

An approach had been made to the City Council from St Wilfrid's Hospice to give a presentation on their new proposed development in Bosham, however members felt this would not be appropriate as the Hospice intended to submit a grant application to the City Council.

95 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(a) List of Cheques paid for December 2015 and January 2016

RESOLVED to note the cheques paid for December 2015 and January 2016.

(b) List of Barclaycard Payments for December 2015 and January 2016

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for December 2015 and January 2016

(c) Finance Round Up

The Finance Manager advised on the following :

(i) Local Council Risk System

The Local Council Risk System needed to be reviewed each year by officers to ascertain the level of risk on the services offered by the City Council. The document was available for any members to view.

(ii) Purchase of City Council Vehicle

The City Council had purchased a white 2008 Renault Kangoo Van for £2,750 plus costs for road tax, insurance and breakdown recovery.

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

- Bank Charges
- Budget to be carried forward from 2015/2016
- Transfer to Reserves
- Statement of Accounts 2015/2016
- Audit Commission Annual Return 31 March 2016

97 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14 June 2016

The meeting closed at 7.13pm.