

CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 5.30PM

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

58 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 20 October 2015 having been circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

59 BUDGET 2016/2017

The Finance Manager explained that since the last draft Budget 2016/2017 report had been produced and discussed at the last Finance Committee, Chichester District Council had forwarded the actual figures for the Council Tax Base and the Council Tax Grant. The figures submitted had had an overall effect on the draft Budget as the Council Tax Base increase was lower than expected and the Council Tax Grant was higher than predicted. Therefore, the Budget needed to be amended and savings found to compensate for the discrepancies and to retain a 0% increase in the budget.

The Finance Manager advised that the budget for the Conservation of Paintings would be reduced from £6,000 to £4,000 and that the budget set aside to offset the reduction in the Council Tax Grant would be reduced from £7,840 to £3,540; this would create a saving of £6,300 which equated to the difference between the predicted and actual Council Tax Base and Council Tax Grant figures.

The Committee noted the following :

- (i) a sum of £10,000 had been added to the budget to be set aside for the Council House Reserve for future capital schemes at the Council House, such as the conservation project of the Council Chamber;
- (ii) a sum of £4,000 had been included in the budget for the sculpture at the proposed Garden of Reflection and Reconciliation at Litten Gardens and that external sources of funding would be explored;
- (iii) the Discretionary Grant budget would remain at £50,000 however a contingency amount of £20,000 would be available for public realm projects, for example replanting the Cathedral beds in West Street
- (iv) a provision of £3,000 be added to the Cemetery Maintenance budget to cover further maintenance costs for the closed churchyard, All Saints Portfield;
- (v) notice would be given to allotment tenants in 2016/2017 that the allotment charges would increase in 2017/2018;

- (vi) a small income would be achieved from the recently approved policy of charging for street name changes

The Finance Manager informed members that attached to the draft Budget 2016/2017 was a draft Planned Maintenance Schedule for 2016 to 2026 produced by the Property Manager and that this would be discussed through the appropriate Committee. Also attached was a Schedule of Fees and Charges that would be implemented in 2016/2017.

Various questions from Councillors about detail in the budget were answered.

Councillor Scicluna advised that the Walled Towns Friendship membership had now been reduced from £260 to £100; the Finance Manager noted this amendment.

The Chairman and members of the Committee thanked the Finance Manager for involvement in producing the Budget 2016/2017.

It was RECOMMENDED to full Council that the City Council's Budget for 2016/2017 be £725,000 resulting in a Precept Demand of £509,315 and a Band D Council Tax Payment of £48.30. After taking the tax base (10,545.40 Band D equivalent properties) into account there would be a zero percentage increase. Should there be any further changes to the Council Tax Grant or the Tax Base figures previously notified, then the deficit will be taken from the General Reserve budget.

In connection with the replanting of the Cathedral Beds in West Street, the Town Clerk advised that West Sussex County Council had confirmed they were happy for the beds to become the responsibility of the City Council and that a one-off payment of £300 and an on-going offer of £50 per year for maintenance would be available.

The Town Clerk advised that he had been contacted by Transition Chichester in connection with the Cathedral Beds, although a meeting had yet to take place. It was felt that much valuable work could be done by Transition Chichester in connection with the emergent Friends of Henty Field Group.

The Committee were advised that there was an underspend in the Chichester in Bloom 2015/2016 budget and that this money could be used towards planting up a Spring 2016 floral display in the Cathedral Beds immediately. West Sussex County Council had advised no objection to this happening. A quote had been received from Ferring Nurseries to carry out the work at a cost of £4,450.

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to the Community Affairs Committee that the underspend in the 2015/2016 Chichester in Bloom budget be used to plant up a spring display in the Cathedral Beds in West Street and that the Town Clerk liaise with West Sussex County Council about the City Council taking over the management and maintenance of the Cathedral Beds.

It was noted that the cost of planting a Summer 2016 and Winter 2017 floral display in the Cathedral beds would be under £8,000 although there were further negotiations to have with Ferring Nurseries on a display.

A matter raised by the Communar and Executive Director of Chichester Cathedral about the City Council having responsibility for planting the flowerbeds in St Richard's Walk would be the subject of further discussion and report.

60 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 19 January 2016

The meeting closed at 6.15pm