

MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

HELD ON TUESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2019 AT 2.30PM

- PRESENT: Councillors Apel and Scicluna
- EX-OFFICIO: The Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes)
- ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Sharp
- IN ATTENDANCE: The Deputy Town Clerk, Property Manager and Member Services Support Officer
- APOLOGIES: The Mayor (Councillor Plowman), Councillors Dignum and K Hughes
- ABSENT: Councillor Joy

15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Property Sub-Committee held on 15 July 2019, having been printed and circulated, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16 SWAP & REPAIR SHOP – PROPOSAL TO OFFER PREFERENTIAL ROOM RATES

The Chairman advised that, as the Swap and Repair shop came under the Transition Chichester umbrella, it qualified for the preferential charity room hire rates and that this had already been confirmed by the Finance Committee.

17 TERMS & CONDITIONS OF HIRE – PROPOSAL TO AMEND TO ENCOURAGE HIRERS TO ADOPT THE GREEN AGENDA

The Property Manager had circulated an amended set of terms and conditions of room hire which included the following additional term in support of the City Council's declared climate emergency:

In support of Chichester City Council's commitment to eliminate the single-use plastics, hirers are requested to use re-usable plates, glasses, cutlery etc or recyclable/compostable alternatives to single-use plastics.

In addition, a request to recycle as much as possible of any rubbish generated had been added.

The Sub-Committee agreed that these additions were common sense and further it was **RESOLVED** that the new room hire terms and conditions be used from now on.

The Property Manager's report had been circulated to all Members with the Agenda in connection with the Agenda items.

18 COUNCIL HOUSE

(a) Roof Lantern

The Property Manager reported that Listed Building Consent had finally been granted on the basis of thermally efficient glazing with an overall thickness of 24mm. The Property Manager therefore recommended that the quotation of £7,444.12 plus VAT submitted by Medina Joinery be accepted and that they be instructed to undertake the installation as soon as possible.

After some discussion about the positive step forward the awarding of consent represented, it was RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that an order be placed to the value of £7,444,12 plus VAT with Medina Joinery for the replacement of the lantern as specified. This to be funded from the Council House Reserve.

(b) Exterior Building Survey

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that Fuller Associates had identified a significant amount of repair work that would be needed to maintain the fabric of the building. He further advised that Chichester District Council Planning had stipulated that a Listed Building Consent (LBC) application would be required for all the works, despite the proposed works being repairs using traditional materials on existing features of the building.

The Property Manager reported that in order to comply with the requirements of the LBC process, Fuller Associates would need to provide Chichester District Council with marked up elevation drawings and details of all materials and methods to be used.

This would entail a significant time input and therefore had a cost implication. Fuller Associates had quoted £3,600 + VAT to undertake the following additional work to obtain Listed Building Consent:

- (i) Existing and Proposed elevations, annotated with all required repairs
- (ii) A further site visit to further inspect and take additional photos for inclusion within the information
- (iii) Detailed drawings of the proposed new windows
- (iv) Details of the existing and proposed chimney pots
- (v) Details of the proposed stainless-steel pins for stone repairs
- (vi) Details of existing and proposed guttering, soffits, fascia and barge boards
- (vii) Annotated photos of areas to be repaired
- (viii) Details of proposed mortar mix
- (ix) Details of existing and proposed roof tiles
- (x) Design and Access Statement
- (xi) Heritage Statement

The items of work listed would need to be carried out before a meaningful tender process could start. The Property Manager advised that this would be the largest and most in-depth external maintenance and repair project for several decades and should be considered essential to ensure weatherproofing and prevent decay to the fabric of the building.

The Sub-Committee was further advised that, as the Council House carries a Grade 2* listing there would be additional costs involved in getting Listed Building Consent and using traditional materials and techniques, but this should be balanced against the intrinsic value of such an iconic and historic landmark.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the City Council bore responsibility for the care of the Council House as an iconic part of Chichester and it was therefore RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that Fuller Associates be commissioned to undertake the additional work as outlined at a cost of £3,600 plus VAT to be funded from the Council House Reserve.

(c) Minerva Stone – request to copy

The Property Manager reported that the University of Warwick had recently had a change of personnel that had delayed the start of the project. They had indicated that they are still keen to undertake the scanning of the Minerva Stone to create a 3D model and had accepted the City Council's terms for the project.

The Property Manager advised that he was awaiting further contact from the University.

(d) Portico – proposal to enclose with glass to create an internal flexible space

The Property Manager referred Members to the outline proposal that had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the proposal had been commissioned from Richard Glover MRICS a few years previously with the intention of creating a flexible internal space for exhibitions, tourist information, charity sales etc. It was felt that this would also have a side benefit of reducing anti-social behaviour under the Portico.

The Property Manager outlined the previous history of the project including indicative costs of £3,200 to undertake Listed Building Consent and £3,000 to prepare detailed construction drawings and manage the tender process.

The Sub-Committee discussed the various merits of the project including the community space and the benefit of insulating the Council Chamber floor and also concerns about attaching new structures to the fabric of the building.

The Property Manager reported that an approach had been made to the Historic Buildings Officer at Chichester District Council who had indicated that she was open to an application for work to the Portico if it was sympathetic to the rest of the building.

The Sub-Committee RESOLVED that the Property Manager should continue to investigate the options available and any requirements from the Historic Buildings Officer and that a progress report be presented to the next Property Sub-Committee meeting.

(e) Old Court Room

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Old Court Room had now been fully redecorated, including sanding and refinishing the floor.

The Property Manager advised that, by undertaking all the work in house, the work on the floor had cost approximately £985.00 instead of the nearest quote of £1,750.00.

The redecoration had utilised colours from the Dulux Heritage range and had already attracted very positive feedback from regular hirers of the room.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the work had been completed to a very high standard that had significantly improved the appearance of the room.

(f) Notice boards either end of Portico

The Property Manager reported that the noticeboards displayed at each end of the Portico had now reached the end of their life. He advised that, as part of the original consent, the noticeboards could not be displayed permanently and had to be removed at the end of every day.

A quote had been obtained from Acorn Workshop for £965.00 to provide two new hardwood noticeboards of almost identical design, green painted and traditionally sign-written.

The Planning Adviser had confirmed that, as the replacements would be of almost identical design and made with traditional materials; further Listed Building Consent would not be necessary as long as the terms of the original consent were observed.

It was RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that an order be placed with Acorn Workshop to the value of £965.00 to provide two new hardwood noticeboards of identical design to the current boards, green painted and traditionally sign written to be paid from Public Realm.

19 ALLOTMENTS

(a) Update

The allotment waiting list currently stands at 55 applicants and there are no vacant allotments.

(b) Rotovator

The Property Manager reported that the rotovator had now been purchased and had already been put to good use preparing overgrown plots for re-letting.

(c) St Pauls – urgent tree works

The Property Manager informed the Sub-Committee that a number of Ash trees on the northern boundary of St Pauls allotments were suffering from Ash Die-Back disease and were in urgent need of attention.

He further advised that, as some of these trees overhang the neighbouring St Anthony's School playing fields, there was a health and safety risk that needed attending to.

The Sub-Committee were informed that the whole of the northern treeline and two large oak trees at the top of the access track were in need of reducing and rebalancing work as shadow and falling deadwood were causing additional problems for allotment holders.

The Property Manager reported that he had asked for quotes from Chichester Tree Services and S&P Tree Specialists. He also advised the Sub-Committee that, once this work had been completed, it would be feasible for the Property team to undertake maintenance on a regular basis to keep the treeline in order and minimise future tree surgery costs.

After some discussion about the merits of the proposed work, the Sub-Committee RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that orders be placed with S&P Tree Services to the value of £4,640.00 for the work on the northern treeline at St Pauls allotments and that an order to the value of £900.00 be placed with Chichester Tree Services for the work on the Oak trees on the same site to be funded from the Allotment Improvement Fund.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Property Manager has revisited the S&P Tree Services quote to cover work on the northern tree-line only. The revised quote is £2,840. Therefore the recommendation to the Finance Committee will be revised at the meeting to reflect an overall total spend of £3,740 to be paid from the Allotment Improvement Fund.

20 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL

(a) Pesticides

The Property Manager reminded the Sub-Committee that the Property Team had suspended use of glyphosate based pesticides and weed-killers and that trials were under way with organic weed-killers, such as Richard Jackson's Double Action and RHS Weedkiller RTU. He reported that, so far, these haven't proved very effective, but further trials are ongoing.

(b) Wild Flowers

The Property Manager advised the Sub-Committee that, while he was supportive of the wild flower initiative, care would have to be taken as to where they were planted. He suggested that the allotments were not ideal as seeds from the flowers could be blown over plots with the resultant complaints from allotment holders.

The Sub-Committee were supportive of investigating planting wild flowers at Brewery field as they could be planted to complement the existing tree-line around the edge of the field.

Members generally agreed that, as it is a formal area, Litten Gardens was not a suitable place for wild planting as it would detract from the overall look of the area. Members also noted that the disused burial grounds at St Pauls church and St Bartholomew's church already have areas of wild planting.

(c) Trees

The Property Manager noted that the City Council had very limited scope to plant additional trees as Litten Gardens is almost full and Brewery Field is not City Council property and the land owner (West Sussex County Council) has indicated that no additional trees should be planted. He further noted that the allotment sites were generally unsuitable as the trees cast too much shade over the allotments as they matured and that there would be a cost implication for the maintenance of any additional trees on City Council land.

It was suggested to Members that the contaminated plots on some allotment sites may be suitable for additional fruit trees or willow and hazel that could be coppiced and used by the allotment holders.

The Sub-Committee RESOLVED to ask the Property Manager and his team to remain aware and on the lookout for additional opportunities for tree planting in appropriate locations.

(d) Electricity supplies – renewable sources

The Property Manager advised that he had recently reviewed the electricity supply contracts with a view to balancing the green credentials with the overall cost to the City Council. This had resulted in contracts being signed with Haven Energy who specialised in supplying energy from renewable sources. As part of their service, Haven Energy had provided certificates for display in public areas to promote their customers' credentials.

Members noted that all the City Council properties and street lights were now being supplied with electricity generated from renewable resources.

(e) Green roofs for bus shelters

The Property Manager reported that he would be meeting with Clear Channel on 16 October 2019 to see a presentation of their new green bus shelter roofing which would be available on new shelters only.

The Chairman expressed concerns that, as the City Council do not own bus shelters it should be Chichester District Council taking responsibility for this initiative.

Members were supportive of the Property Manager gathering additional information to pass to Chichester District Council for the purpose of encouraging them to work towards green bus shelter roofs.

(f) Maintenance truck

The Property Manager advised that he had investigated electric options and retrospective vehicle conversions in order to reduce emissions from the City Council's tipper truck. Members noted that currently there are no viable options for the type of vehicle needed for the City Council's grounds maintenance operations.

The Property Manager reported that Ford had just released an electric version of the standard Transit van at a cost of £57,000 which indicated that the options available were expanding.

While this type of van was unsuitable for City Council operations, The Property Manager advised Members that he would review the market regularly and alert the Sub-Committee if any viable options become available.

21 LITTEN GARDENS

(a) Lighting

The Property Manager reported that Scottish and Southern Electricity had completed the installation of the lighting columns in Litten Gardens and that they were now operational.

He further reported that numerous positive comments had been received from the public about the lighting columns.

(b) War Memorial

The Property Manager updated Members about the delay to the work to add a further name to the war memorial (Hopkyns, T.G – South Africa). The stonemason had now recovered from his illness and had promised that the additional name would be added in time for Remembrance Sunday.

(c) Maurice Patten Statue

The Sub-Committee was advised that the carving on the plinth for the Maurice Patten statue had started and that arrangements had been put in place to install the plinth and statue ready for Remembrance Sunday.

There was a discussion about the need to provide security for the statue between the installation and unveiling on Remembrance Sunday and Members agreed that, as similar installations had been vandalised elsewhere it would be a price worth paying to ensure the unveiling went smoothly.

(d) Litter bins

Members noted that the three new litter bins bearing the City Council coat of arms had been installed in Litten Gardens. The Property Manager advised that the old bins had been installed on one of the allotment sites for use by the allotment tenants.

(e) Fence and footpath alteration to create new entrance

The Property Manager reported that Crown Civil Engineering had completed the work to remove the damaged section of fence and make good the surface underneath to create an additional entrance to Litten Gardens approximately half way down the boundary with New Park recreation ground.

22 BUS STOPS/SHELTERS

(a) RTPI Bus Shelters

The Property Manager outlined the details of the additional bus shelters the City Council was commissioning. He advised that, following the collapse of Queensbury Shelters, Clear Channel had provided updated quotations for the shelter to be installed in Broyle Road outside Roussillon Park and the additional shelter outside Wellington Grange. The costs that had been quoted were £9,558.54 each for the shelters plus approximately £2000 each for the SSE electrical connection for the RTPI system. He advised that West Sussex County Council had confirmed that they will provide additional Section 106 funding to cover the increase in cost over the orders placed with Queensbury Shelters, who went into liquidation.

Members were advised that an order would be placed with Clear Channel as soon as the connection charges had been confirmed and the Section 106 money had been transferred to Chichester City Council.

The Chairman expressed concern that the City Council should not be made responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the new bus shelters and asked the Property Manager to get an undertaking that this would not be the case.

(b) Whyke Road bus stop – request from residents for a seat.

The Sub-Committee was updated on the progress of the installation of the bench at Whyke Road. The Property Manager reported that the bench had been delivered and installation was under way. Members were advised that the original position had been deemed unsuitable due to an unmarked gas main which had necessitated a change of location and installation of a new concrete pad for the bench to sit on.

(c) Lavant Road – request from residents for a shelter

The Property Manager advised Members that, following receipt of a petition from residents, a request had been received to install a bus shelter on Lavant Road southbound near the Avenue. The existing bench at this bus stop being unusable frequently as it is unsheltered and gets wet.

Members were further advised that West Sussex County Council would fund an additional bus shelter from Section 106 money and that the Property Manager had received a quote from Clear Channel of £8,237.15 for a twin bay bus shelter with LED lighting. An electrical connection would be an additional cost but solar lighting options were available.

The Property Manager advised Members that West Sussex County Council had asked the City Council to be a delivery partner and that Section 106 money could only be used with a limited geographical radius from the new development where the funds had come from.

The Chairman expressed further concern that the City Council should not be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the new bus shelters and asked that the work should not go ahead unless an undertaking was received from Chichester District Council that they would take ownership of the bus shelter following installation.

(d) Swanfield Drive – sale of land by a2 Dominion HA to provide a bus shelter for residents.

Members were informed that a further request for an additional bus shelter had been received from residents of Swanfield Drive. The Sub-Committee was advised that the land owners, a2 Dominion, had agreed to sell the necessary land for £500. The Property Manager reported that, in addition to this cost, the total installation including the shelter, electrical connection and alteration of the existing palisade fence would be in the region of £10,000 to £12,000.

The Deputy Mayor queried the resolution passed by the Finance Committee held on 15 January 2019 (**minute 74 refers**). Members discussed the resolution and also available avenues within Chichester District Council to get the issue of the bus shelter raised.

Members suggested that the correct course of action was to discuss the matter with the relevant Chichester District Councillors as it was not the City Council's responsibility to fund bus shelters in the absence of Section 106 money.

It was RESOLVED that the Property Manager would put together quotes and costs to present to Chichester District Council as part of the case for the addition of a bus shelter in Swanfield Drive.

23 PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

(a) City Boundary Sign, Whyke Road

The Property Manager reported that the replacement boundary sign incorporating a speed safety message had been received and was ready for installation.

Members expressed disappointment that, despite the amount of debris, the Police had been unable to find those responsible for the destruction of the previous sign.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the property team would be installing the sign at the earliest opportunity to keep costs as low as possible.

(b) Wayfinding (finger posts)

The Property Manager reported that the Chichester Vision Look & Feel group had agreed that the existing finger posts would be refurbished and the directional information updated.

He further advised that he would be liaising with Chichester District Council and Chichester BID on the required updates and would obtain a detailed quotation from Leander Architectural for the work.

Members were advised that they would be updated at the next meeting of the Property Sub-Committee.

(c) Ward Boards

Members were advised that the five new ward boards had been ordered and that delivery and installation were expected soon.

Members discussed how the boards were to be distributed in the new wards and were advised that the Market Road board would become the Central Ward board and the new South Ward board would be located at the Whyke estate shopping parade in Hay Road.

(d) Precinct Paving – resurfacing of City Centre shopping precinct

The Property Manager outlined to Members the options currently being considered to improve the precinct paving with the cheapest option being to remove the red brick areas and replace them with coloured tarmac which would provide a smoother, more stable surface at a cost of approximately £160,000. Members discussed the merits of this type of scheme and expressed concern that black tarmac might be used.

Members were informed that West Sussex County Council highways had previously put forward an estimate of £3.5million to refurbish the precinct area. They were further advised that the Department of Transport would be making available funding on a competitive basis for this kind of project.

West Sussex County Council highways had advised that the first stage of this type of project would be the creation of an Advance Delivery Programme which would involve instructing infrastructure consultants WSP to produce an Options Report at an estimated cost of £40,000. The Property Manager advised that West Sussex County Council had proposed evenly splitting this cost between themselves, Chichester District Council and the City Council.

Members expressed concern that the City Council was being asked to fund an equal proportion of the initial cost in partnership with the two other Councils who received significantly larger shares of the Council Tax income.

The Sub-Committee RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee that the City Council agree to participate in the initial Options Report with a funding contribution of no more than £8,000 in the first phase.

Councillor Apel left the meeting.

As the meeting was no longer Quorate the rest of the meeting was only for information with notes taken as appropriate.

24 ST JAMES OBELISK

The Property Manager informed Members that Traditional Stone had completed the specialist cleaning of the St James Obelisk and undertake minor mortar repairs.

He further informed Members that the inscription on the front of the Obelisk was now clearly legible and he was investigating the wording on the side of the Obelisk which is illegible.

Members agreed that this was a huge improvement to an overlooked monument in the City.

The Chairman agreed to undertake more research on this matter.

25 STREET SIGNS

(a) Roussillon Park – Victoria Cross interpretation signs

The Property Manager advised that the new signs with the Victoria Cross citations had been received and were awaiting installation.

Members agree that this was a good news story and the Member Services Support Officer confirmed that a post had been added to the City Council website and Facebook page announcing that these signs were being installed and why.

(b) Street Name sign audit

Members were advised that the annual audit of all street signs in Chichester had been undertaken with 32 requiring replacement due to wear, damage or theft. These would be replaced over the next few months and be funded from the Street Naming and Number budget.

Members were further advised that, as this audit takes in approximately 850 road signs, this is a significant piece of work for the City Council to undertake on an annual basis.

26 STREET FURNITURE

(a) Seats outside Library in Tower Street and in Woolstaplers.

The Property Manager advised that the new recycled plastic benches, funded from the West Sussex County Council Bench Maintenance Fund, had now arrived and were awaiting installation.

Members were further advised that the wooden benches would be installed on one of the allotment sites rather than being disposed of.

27 ST MARTIN'S GARDEN

The Sub-Committee were informed that the repair work on the flint wall in St Martins Garden had been completed during July 2019.

28 MAINTENANCE TEAM UPDATE

(a) Maintenance Compound – St James Road

The Property Manager advised that the mesh security fencing had been ordered and would be installed by the property team over the winter period to provide a more secure storage area for the City Council's grounds maintenance equipment.

(b) Mobile phones

Members were informed that the Property team had received their Tuff phones with SIM contracts through the EE network.

(c) Peter Carter

The Property Manager informed Members that, due to personal circumstances, Peter Carter had left the City Council.

He further informed Members that the process to find a replacement was under way although concerns were expressed about the level of the applications.

Members were advised that, in the interim, the casual staff would be utilised to support the existing Property Maintenance Officer.

29 Items to be included on Agenda for next meeting

- Portico
- Swanfield bus shelter
- Bus shelter ownership after installation
- Pavements and the precinct

30 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 16th December 2019 at 2.30pm

The meeting closed at 4.02pm