



CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE WORKING GROUP HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2022 AT 2.00PM

PRESENT: Councillors Scicluna (Chairman), Barrie (Vice-Chairman), Harry, Plowman, Dignum

EX-OFFICIO: The Mayor (Councillor John Hughes), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Julian Joy)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Corfield, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, Committee and Communities Officer, Front of House Supervisor

96. APOLOGIES AND RECORD OF ABSENCE

Apologies with a reason were received from Councillor Kevin Hughes.

97. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2022 AND THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE FINANCE WORKING GROUP HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2022.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 and the special meeting held on 10 February 2022, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councillors Plowman, Barry and Dignum declared an interest as Members of Chichester District Council.

99. UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Minute 86 – Civic Awards

The Chairman expressed to Members that the Civic Awards held at Chichester Cathedral on 1 March 2022 went very well. The Town Clerk, the Mayor and the Chairman thanked the Officers for their time spent preparing for the event and the work they put in.

b) Minute 93 (Special Meeting) – Platinum Jubilee Gala and Family Fun Day

The Town Clerk advised that there was good progress to report and handed the update over to the Front of House Supervisor.

The Front of House Supervisor explained the procession was going ahead with 13 organisations taking part. Approximately 245 people consisting of mainly walking groups.

The Front of House Supervisor recommended rerouting the procession due to the parade being a quarter of the size of the parade ten years ago. The new suggested route is along Priory Road, onto St. Peter's and on to North Street.

It was agreed that rerouting the procession would eliminate the traffic issue and bring down the associated cost of closing Oaklands Way.

Councillor Plowman queried if there was a band leading the procession. There was a short discussion about the lack of replies from the Military Band booking organisation and the significant cost of having them involved in a shorter procession. Another option discussed was Petworth Town Band which would involve a smaller fee.

The Chairman then suggested the Air Force Cadets Band and The Front of House Supervisor advised she would enquire about availability.

Members were advised that after the procession, there would be a Family Fun Day in Priory Park which would consist of various organisations such as the Scouts, activities for children, tea tent, barbeque, beer tent and a mini funfair.

The Town Clerk informed the Members that Tim Smith, Facilities Officer had produced a souvenir program for the event which had so far accumulated £1,400 in profit.

The Chairman asked about insurance for the event and the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the event was insured under the City Council's normal public liability with Zurich and that there was no additional cost.

The Town Clerk asked if the Council had received a reply from the Chichester Model Engineers about the model railway. The Front of House Supervisor advised she was still trying to contact them.

The Chairman expressed her thanks as the event was shaping up well.

100. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO FEBRUARY 2022

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised her report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were advised that the report was currently showing a surplus of £59,591 against the budget to the end of 28 February 2022.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that this surplus would likely decrease to £50,000 due to back dated pay to go through in March for salaries and several quarterly catch-up expenditures.

The main reason for the surplus was identified as additional income for the street naming and numbering of £7,337, Hall Bookings income of £14,000 and Market House income of £7,959 which were higher than budgeted.

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested the surplus be allocated to the Council house maintenance reserve. The Chairman agreed that this was sensible.

The Deputy Mayor reminded Members that the City Council had committed to carbon neutrality by 2030. The Deputy Town Clerk advised she tried to keep the council house reserve around £100,000 and when setting the budget for the next year, this would be considered and a specific reserve for sustainability and carbon neutrality allocated.

Councillor Plowman asked for reassurance regarding the increased electricity and gas costs. The Deputy Town Clerk referred to page 5 in the monitoring report and advised the electricity expenditure was below the budget, but the gas expenditure had reached the allocated budget so, Members would have to consider increasing those budgets in the new year.

The Deputy Town Clerk asked for the issue of gas and electricity costs to be added to the next agenda as it would be in a new financial year.

101. EARMARKED RESERVES

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised her report that had been circulated with the agenda.

It was advised that the carried forward balance was £73,984. The Deputy Town Clerk noted £15,130 was not picked up as expenditure so the balance was noted as £58,854.85 to be carried forward.

102. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the only additional item since the last report was Story Road twitten to Lidl and the aggregate that was laid to improve the surface The carried forward balance was £19,476.79 for Public Realm Projects.

103. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATES

- a. The Chairman thanked Councillor Plowman for the written report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Plowman advised the Neighbourhood Plan was back on track. Most of the initial work had been concentrated on PLACE studies. It was noted also that there was a lot of public engagement.

It was decided that it be recommended to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to consider possible housing sites in the Neighbourhood Plan as part of their remit but not a specific number although it was noted that the current indication was 300 houses.

The Mayor asked when this project would come to an end to which Councillor Plowman responded that December 2023 was the deadline.

- b. Councillor Plowman referred to his written report that had been circulated with the agenda and advised that the previous Steering Committee had agreed that a study be carried out by John Pegg of local landscape and design. Councillor Plowman advised Members that the Steering Group had agreed that this was a good piece of work. It had been agreed by the Planning and Conservation Committee that this invoice be paid, and the recommendation went through for this invoice to be paid for £4,500 + VAT.

After a discussion with The Deputy Town Clerk it was suggested that the CIL allocation be increased to £100,000 for the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Full Council on 20 April 2022 that the Neighbourhood Plan CIL funding allocation be increased to £100,000 from the current £70,000.

It was further AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Full Council on 20 April 2022 that the invoice for a Landscaping report compiled by John Pegg be paid in the sum of £4,500 + VAT to be paid from the Neighbourhood Plan CIL allocation.

104. IBABS COMMITTEE AND MINUTING

The Member Services Support Officer summarised his revised report that had been circulated with the agenda. He reminded Members that the software had been demonstrated at the last meeting.

He explained the two main reasons why this software was being requested were;

- The Officers would be able to generate the paperwork for meetings more efficiently which would save a lot of time
- The Councillors would have access to all minutes, reports and agendas all in one place

The Chairman noted she did have a short briefing about the system the previous week but found the process challenging to understand. She also raised concerns about the audit track and the idea that it was recorded which user read what document and at what time.

Councillor Plowman queried how robust the system was and if the system was backed up. The Member Support Officer explained that IBABS is owned by a large company called Euronext who are familiar with utilising the 'cloud' and included in their service level agreement, if the system failed, they guaranteed to get the system back up and running within a short period of time.

The Mayor advised that he was not overly familiar with Information Technology (IT) but he suggested they go with the decision of the Member Support Service Officer as he was qualified to advise on the matter.

There was a short discussion where some members queried the advantages of this system. The Member Support Officer explained in finer detail how many steps there were involved in the current process for an officer to produce Committee papers.

The Chairman said that some members preferred paper copies and the Member Support Officer advised this would continue.

The Chairman asked whether the system would show if she had read a document, and she found this rather unsettling. The Member Support Officer explained that this function would only be available to users of a particular level and that, just because the function was there it did not mean it would be used and there was a data trail on most systems which are used.

The Chairman asked about the possibility of having a year's trial and the Member Support Officer advised he would enquire of the supplier, however the setup fee would still be applicable.

The Deputy Mayor raised concerns over the City Council not having a formal data protection process. The Member Services Support Officer advised the council had a data protection statement and that all Councillors were issued with a data protection document on signing their declaration in May 2019. The Member Services Support Officer also reassured Members that he had been a data protection manager for a long time and there was an external Data Protection Officer from whom, he could seek advice.

Councillor Dignum reiterated the Chairman's concerns about a record being kept of which Councillor had read which document. He said this was unacceptable and the Chairman agreed with him. The Deputy Mayor advised he was happy for his data trail to be tracked.

The Member Services Support Officer explained that most software of this nature would have an audit track, but he would check if this function could be turned off.

The Chairman suggested including the useful aspects and the not so favourable aspects be omitted and having a trial period of the system. The Member Services Support Officer explained he would raise these queries with IBABS and that there would likely be a £1,000 set up fee in addition to the licence fee and that this could be cancelled on a 30-day notice period.

After a short further discussion, the Member Services Support Officer was asked to raise their questions and concerns with the supplier and report back to the next meeting.

105. SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE (SID)

The Town Clerk summarised the Property Manager's report which had been included with the agenda.

Members were advised that West Sussex Police and West Sussex County Council had now approved two locations on St Pancras, one eastbound and one westbound.

Members were further advised that no permission had been received to using existing posts, so a quote had been obtained for the installation of two pavement sockets. This would enable temporary posts to be installed when the SID would be in use. These posts were required as approval could not be obtained for the SID being fixed to a lamppost in St. Pancras. This problem would not necessarily apply to other places where the SID be used.

The Members were informed the quote by Crown Civil Engineering was £1,080 + VAT payable from the CIL fund.

It was AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Full Council on 20 April 2022 that an order be placed with Crown Civil Engineering to install two pavement sockets in St Pancras at a cost of £1,080 + VAT to be paid from CIL funds.

106. MODIFICATION TO STANDING ORDERS

After a short discussion, it was AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Full Council on 20 April 2022 that the following text be added to section 15 of the Chichester City Council Standing Orders as adopted on 23 September 2020.

"The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of the Finance, Community Affairs and Planning and Conservation Committees shall be ex-officio and voting members of every committee."

107. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

a) MONTHLY RECONCILIATION WITH EVIDENCE OF BANK STATEMENTS TO END OF FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED to note the monthly reconciliation with evidence of bank statements to the end of February 2022.

b) LIST OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED to note the payments made for January and February 2022.

c) LIST OF BARCLAYCARD PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2022

RESOLVED to note the Barclaycard payments for January and February 2022.

108. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON NEXT AGENDA

- Update on IBABS
- Sustainable costs to aim to get to carbon neutrality by 2030
- Murray Nelson sculpture and security for the stature
- Final accounts

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2022

The meeting closed at 3.02pm