



Chichester City Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 18 October 2022

Time 2.00pm – 3.10pm

Location The Council Chamber - The Council House • North Street • CHICHESTER • West Sussex • PO19 1LQ

PRESENT: Councillor Scicluna (Chairman), Councillor J Hughes, Councillor Barrie

EX-OFFICIO: Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman), Councillor Quail (Chairman of Planning & Conservation), Councillor Apel (Chairman of Community Affairs Committee)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Committee and Communities Officer

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Mayor (Councillor Joy) and Councillor Harry.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN MATTERS ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING

Councillor Plowman declared an interest as a Member of Chichester District Council and the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

Councillor Apel declared an interest as a Member of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Barrie declared an interest as a Member of Chichester District Council.

67. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2022 AND MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2022 and the minutes of the Special Meeting of Finance Committee held on 13 October 2022, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

68. AUDITORS APPROVAL OF ANNUAL RETURN

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that the External Auditor (Moore UK) had signed off the City Council's accounts for 2021/22 with no items of concern being raised.

It was noted however as an unofficial matter of attention, that the City Council's standing orders were not reviewed during the year, and they had suggested that any reviews are clearly marked as best practice.

The Town Clerk advised Members that standing orders are reviewed once a term.

69. CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET – 2023 - 2024

The Deputy Town Clerk referred to the Draft Budget Report 2023/24 which had been previously circulated.

She noted that the largest considerations in this report were staffing. For 2022/23 a pay award of 2% was estimated however, this materialised closer to 7% so, additional pay had to be worked in to this years budget. The Town Clerks forum also estimated 8% pay award for next year due to the increase in inflation.

The Public Realm budget was unchanged at £23,000. A large portion of these funds were allocated to City Rangers. She further noted that the City Council pays for four days a week which equates to £15,000 of the Public Realm budget.

Gas and Electricity budgets have been doubled although it was noted the City Council's tariffs had been fixed until October 2023.

The Deputy Town Clerk noted the contribution to public conveniences, increased every year in line with inflation and currently stood at £15,232.

Members noted the poor conditions of public conveniences in Priory Park and that this issue needed to be reviewed urgently. It was noted that the contribution would be kept in the draft budget for the time being but it was agreed that a discussion with Chichester District Council was required before contributing any funds.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that cemetery charges were very difficult to predict and each quarter the charges were different to the next. She advised that she decided to reduce the Budget from £44,000 to £38,000.

Members noted how well the hanging baskets looked this year in the city. Members then agreed it could be a good idea to combine the budget for the hanging baskets with the Public Realm budget which would provide more flexibility with the costs, rather than increasing the budget for the hanging baskets.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that £2,000 had been added to the Budget for Vountary Action Arun and Chichester at the request of the Mayor due to the important work they carry out. After a brief discussion, it was proposed, seconded and RESOLVED to defer this issue and ask Vountary Action Arun and Chichester to present to the Committee for further understanding of what they do and how they would utilise these funds.

Members were informed that regards to income, nothing further appeared to be happening with the Market House so the Budget would remain unchanged.

The Deputy Town Clerk further noted that Council House bookings had increased in the last year. She advised that the Budget had increased from £17,500 to £36,500. The decision had been made to not increase the charges of hiring the building at this difficult time so as not to deter hirers.

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the report and advised that this Draft Budget would be monitored until the final report was produced in November 2022.

70. CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT CHICHESTER INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN

The Chairman noted the contents of the Draft Chichester Infrastructure Business Plan which were applicable to the City Council.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that the full document had previously been distributed and the consultation was open until 15 November 2022 should they wish to submit any comments.

**71. CHARLES I BUST LOAN TO NOVIUM MUSEUM
(SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA)**

The Chairman advised that the Charles I bust had been loaned to the Novium Museum and it was coming to the end of the three year agreement.

Members discussed the fact that it was a disappointment that the sculpture was hidden away in its place in the Novium Museum and that it should be displayed in its own case.

It was AGREED the loan agreement would be extended for a further three years and that it would be investigated again, the possibility of making the sculpture more prominent in its display.

**72. WHITEHOUSE FARM - BISHOP LUFFA SCHOOL LANDSWAP
(SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA)**

The Chairman read out an email from Karen Dower, Principle Planning Officer at Chichester District Council, which outlined reasons why the request for funds for a preplanning application would not be an appropriate use of the CIL funds.

Some Members voiced their disappointment with how the proposal was received and how they felt this request should be supported. After a discussion among Members, it was decided that if Bishop Luffa School came forward with the support of all Councillors of the West Ward, it would be reconsidered at the next Finance meeting on 21 November 2022.

73. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- **WHITEHOUSE FARM - BISHOP LUFFA SCHOOL LANDSWAP**

74. DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: 21 NOVEMBER 2022

The meeting closed at 3.10pm