



Chichester City Council

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes

- Date** 21 November 2022
- Time** 2.00pm – 3.40pm
- Location** The Council Chamber - The Council House • North Street • CHICHESTER • West Sussex • PO19 1LQ
- PRESENT:** Councillor Scicluna (Chairman), Councillors Chant, Dignum and J Hughes
- EX-OFFICIO:** Councillor Quail (Chairman of Planning & Conservation), Councillor Apel (Chairman of Community Affairs Committee)
- ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Corfield, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk (Responsible Financial Officer), Member Services Support Officer, Acting Property Manager, Jackie Sumner (Chief Executive, Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester – VAAC), Sharon Westcott (Head of Operations – VAAC), West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley
- IN ATTENDANCE:** The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman), Ash Pal (Chairman of the Chichester Neighbourhood Plan Working Group)
- VIA ZOOM:**

#### 75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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

The Deputy Mayor and Councillor Apel declared an interest as Members of Chichester District Council.

Councillor Scicluna and the Deputy Mayor declared an interest as members of the Murray Club.

The Deputy Mayor declared an interest in the Section 106 public art (Woolstaplers) funding item.

#### 77. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 OCTOBER 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

*At this point the Chairman took agenda item 13*

#### **78. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Chairman of the Chichester Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, Mr Ash Pal, summarised the purpose of the Working Group and outlined their progress to date.

Members were advised that, as part of the process and to legitimise the proposals being put forward in the plan, the Working Group would have to engage more widely with the Chichester community. Members were further advised that it had been proposed that this would start in the new year with the organising of a Community Collaboration Day as well as a series of workshops to revisit the PLACE (Planning, Landscape, Architecture, Culture and Engineering) exercises that had been undertaken by residents.

Mr Pal informed the Committee that the proposal was that these events should be enabled by the City Council's consultants, Feria Urbanism, and that the cost proposal that had been included with the agenda gave an indicative cost for this of £6,400 plus VAT and reasonable expenses.

The Committee were asked to approve the sum from the currently allocated CIL funds.

In response to questions from Members, the Deputy Town Clerk summarised the current commitments on the Neighbourhood Plan CIL allocation and informed Members that, of the current approved amount of £100,000, £82,046.65 had been committed. Members were further informed that this included £3,600 that had previously been allocated for Working Group administration but that this had not been used so would potentially be available to put towards the cost of the community consultations.

After a short further discussion, it was RESOLVED to approve the recommendation from the Planning Committee (minute 95, 10 November 2022 refers) for £6,400 + VAT to be released from the Neighbourhood Plan CIL allocation for the purpose of commissioning Feria Urbanism to enable the proposed events.

*At this point the Chairman took agenda item 10*

#### **79. VOLUNTARY ACTION ARUN AND CHICHESTER (VAAC)**

The Chairman introduced Jackie Sumner and Sharon Westcott (Chief Executive and Head of Operations respectively) from Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC).

Ms Sumner and Ms Westcott gave the Committee a brief outline of the work undertaken by VAAC in support of new and existing charities and community groups in the Chichester area, included assisting Chichester Pride with its marketing and social media campaigns.

Using VAAC's annual accounts, the Deputy Town Clerk outlined the amounts being given to the organisation by other local authorities in the area including, in 2020-2021, £75,950 from Arun District Council and £221,070 from West Sussex County Council.

Ms Sumner confirmed that VAAC were seeking additional core funding for the organisation rather than for a specific project they were supporting.

The Chairman thanked Ms Sumner and Ms Westcott who then left the meeting.

Members were advised that, further to a request from the Mayor, an allocation of £2,000 had been included in the draft City Council budget for 2023 that had been presented at the 18 October 2022 meeting of the Finance Committee.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that, previously, the City Council had included funds for a selection of organisations in its core budget but that this had been deemed to be unfair to other charities and groups in the city so the current Discretionary Grants system had been put in place.

Members discussed the positive and negative aspects of the proposal and, after a short further debate, RESOLVED not to add a contribution to VAAC to the core City Council budget as this could be seen to create a precedent for other organisations; and asked the Deputy Town Clerk to remove the amount from the budget.

**Post meeting note:** Further to this decision, the Deputy Town Clerk recalculated the City Council budget for 2023-2024. The adjusted figures can be seen in the post meeting note under minute 83.

*The meeting returned to the published agenda order*

#### **80. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

She explained that the large surplus of £82,102 currently showing on the accounts was the result of unspent balances on the Discretionary Grants and Public Realm budgets as well as an underspend on the Cemetery budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk then summarised some of the variances that were showing in the budget to end September 2022. These included the recently announced pay award of £1,925 that had been made to all Officers, higher spending on allotments, increased spending on Custodians in line with increased room bookings and the purchase of the new boilers that would now be funded from the City Council's CIL receipts.

Members were also advised that a further £402,681 in CIL funds had been received in April 2022.

#### **81. EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the only spending on reserves had been £2,220 for the Lion Street corridor carpet and £1,185.60 for the replacement downpipe and hopper for the Assembly Room guttering; both of which had been funded from the Council House Reserve.

Members were informed that this left a balance in the Council House Reserve of £95,449.25. The Chairman explained that, while this was appeared to be a large figure, there were repairs and redecorations likely to be needed in the near future that needed to be taken in to account in the reserves held.

#### **82. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the figures in her report that had been circulated with the agenda and noted that £15,834 had been used to pay the City Council's contribution to Chichester BID Rangers; leaving a balance in the budget of £19,687.57 after the other items had been taken in to account.

In response to a question from Councillor Apel, Councillor Quail, as the City Council's representative on Chichester BID, advised Members that it was her understanding that the shops in the city centre appreciated the presence of the Rangers and felt reassured about the additional support this gave them.

Members were reminded that the Chairman of BID presented a report and update at every Community Affairs Committee meeting and so they could pose questions directly about the Rangers at those meetings.

The Deputy Mayor queried whether the remit of the BID Rangers was too narrow and could be broadened beyond just supporting the city centre shops.

### **83. CITY COUNCIL BUDGET 2023/24**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented the proposed City Council budget for the year 2023-2024 which had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were reminded that the budget as proposed in at the 18 October 2022 meeting of the Finance Committee meeting had included a 4.34% rise in the precept but that this had been calculated pending the update on the applicable tax base.

The Deputy Town Clerk gave a brief background of the tax base and informed Members that, due to a larger than expected rise of 4.16% in the tax base, the City Council's precept demand now showed an increase 0.17% or 11p per annum for a band D property.

She then summarised the changes that had arisen since the draft budget discussed at the Finance Committee meeting held on 18 October 2022, which included:

- An increased International Relations budget of £2,000 to accommodate the Speyer twinning costs.
- A Cemetery budget of £40,100 further to advice from Chichester District Council.
- An increase in the Office Equipment budget of £670.

Members discussed the revised figures and offered their thanks to the Deputy Town Clerk for successful management of the City Council's budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk then advised Members that, following the decision not to add VAAC funding to the core City Council budget (minute 79 of this meeting refers), she would need to revise the over all budget figures and that this would likely result in a small drop in the band D precept demand.

After a short further debate, it was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 14 December 2022 that the City Council's budget for 2023-2024 be agreed providing the tax base remains unchanged from the draft figure, supplied by Chichester District Council, of 11,990.60; with this budget being £907,265, resulting in a precept demand of £769,615 and a band D precept of £64.18, an increase of 0.17%.

### **POST MEETING NOTE FOR RATIFICATION AT COUNCIL ON 14 DECEMBER 2022:**

Further to the Finance Committee's decision to remove from the City Council's core budget the proposed £2,000 per annum funding for VAAC; the recommendation from the Committee is modified to propose that the budget for 2023-2024 be £907,265 with a precept demand of £767,615 and a band D precept of £64.02, a decrease of 0.081%.

### **84. MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022**

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 7 November 2022 and to note the following recommendation:

a) **Minute 34.a.i refers – Transfer of ownership of the Murray sculpture from the Murray Club to Chichester City Council**

*After a short further discussion it was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 21 November 2022 that the City Council seek agreement with the Murray Club in order to take formal ownership of the Murray Statue.*

The Deputy Mayor summarised his report that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were reminded that Murray statue plinth was already owned by the City Council and the proposal was to transfer ownership of the resin statue to the City Council with it then being covered by the City Council's insurance policy.

The Committee was informed that it was still the intention of the Murray Club to continue to raise funds for a bronze casting of the statue. Members were further informed that when the bronze was produced the resin original, once it had been used to cast the bronze, would be transferred to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth with the bronze taking its place on the plinth in North Street.

The Deputy Mayor also reminded Members that the Sussex Heritage Trust Award plaque needed to be affixed to the plinth and the Town Clerk confirmed that planning permission was not required for this to proceed.

The Acting Property Manager confirmed that he had received a quote from Traditional Stone in the sum of £650 plus VAT for the recessing of the plaque in the south elevation of the plinth.

Councillor Chant asked for clarification of the benefits of taking ownership of the statue and what the potential costs to the City Council might be.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that she had enquired about the insurance situation and was currently awaiting a response.

The Deputy Mayor reminded the Committee that a similar situation had arisen when the City Council had taken responsibility for the Keats statue and that, in taking ownership of the Murray statue, the City Council would be acquiring a new asset.

After a short further discussion, it was RESOLVED that an order be placed with Traditional Stone for the recessing of the Sussex Heritage Trust Award in the plinth in the sum of £650 plus VAT to be paid from the Public Realm budget.

It was then RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 14 December 2022 that the City Council proceed with transferring ownership of the Murray statue from the Murray Club to the City Council, noting that the resin statue would be transferred to the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth when the final bronze casting was installed outside the Council House.

85. **MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2022**

Members noted the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 12 October 2022. They further noted that the contents of the minutes had been verbally presented to the Finance Committee at the meeting held on 13 October 2022.

## **86. SPEED INDICATOR DEVICES**

Councillor Corfield summarised her report and confirmed that she was seeking approval for the installation of four additional posts for the City Council's Speed Indicator Device (SID) with the locations being in St Paul's Road (on opposite sides of the road near to the Rainbow pub) and in Broyle Road. It was also noted that the posts in Broyle Road would be replacing two existing road signs that were the property of West Sussex County Council but that were now deemed too corroded to support the weight of the SID.

Members discussed the need to move the SIDs regularly and only leave them in a position for a short period to maintain their effectiveness and avoid sign blindness.

Councillor Quail, as Chairman of the Westgate Residents' Association (WGRA), reported that her Association had been investigating the installation of SID posts in the Westgate area and asked that this be considered when future post locations were being discussed.

The Committee agreed that the SID had been having a positive effect on vehicle speed during its use in St Pancras and it was RESOLVED that an order be placed with Crown Civil Engineering in the sum of £1,630 plus VAT for the installation of four additional SID posts (two in St Pauls Road and two in Broyle Road), to be paid from the Public Realm budget.

## **87. CHARTER DINNER 2023**

The Committee was given a short history of and an update on arrangements for the Charter Dinner due to be held in April 2023.

Costings had been received from several caterers for this 'self-pay' formal event which marked the end of the current administration and recognised the strong local campaign to retain both the City Council and the ancient office of Mayor that had been mounted when local government was reorganised in 1974.

The Committee recognised the reality of the present economic situation and for the need for an acceptable costing to be achieved for attendees. A number of suggestions were put forward about a solution.

It was confirmed that the Charter Dinner could not practically be held in a venue outside the Council House as an important part of the evening was the display of civic silver and other regalia in the Council Chamber. It was felt, however, that in recasting the format of the event, there was no longer a requirement for a formal dress code to be observed.

It was agreed that caterers would be approached to provide costings for a self-service hot meal (with vegetarian option) followed by a dessert course. Wine and soft drinks could be provided, within reason, from in house stocks.

## **88. ANNUAL AWARDS 2022 – PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

Councillors noted that the ceremony for the presentation of the Chichester City Council Annual Awards 2022 would take place in the Assembly Room on evening of Tuesday 7 February 2023.

## **89. ANNUAL AWARDS CRITERIA**

The Chairman gave a brief background of the criteria currently in place for the assessment of the Annual Award nominations.

Members discussed the criteria and some of the difficulties that could arise when they were applied to the nominations that were received.

In response to a proposal from the Deputy Mayor regarding Awards for long serving City Councillors, the Town Clerk and others reminded the Committee that former Councillor Leonard Eyles had been a Civic Award recipient as had former Town Clerk, the late Eric Banks.

After a short further discussion, it was RESOLVED that a Working Group be set up to review the current Annual Awards criteria and that the membership of the Working Group would be Councillors Scicluna, Apel and Chant. It was further RESOLVED that the Working Group would report to the Finance Committee meeting being held on 31 January 2023.

90. **WOOLSTAPLERS SECTION 106 FUNDING FOR PUBLIC ART**

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that a Section 106 allocation from the Woolstaplers development was available for public art projects in the amount of £3,836.66 with a deadline for spending it of March 2023.

She advised the Committee that, to date, only one proposal had been forthcoming, from the Deputy Mayor, although she had had indications that the University of Chichester may also be interested.

The Deputy Mayor outlined his proposal for the installation of a series of large photographic prints at Chichester Railway Station. The prints would be produced by local photographer Benjamin Graham and would show 16 scenes around Chichester, including Priory Park. The costs would include the prints and vandal-proof frames as part of the installation. Members were advised that the Station Manager had indicated support for the proposal.

Members expressed support for the proposal and also suggested that a plaque be installed remembering the late Trevor Tupper, a former City Councillor and enthusiastic supporter of railways and the railway station.

Councillor Chant suggested that a series of location specific arts events could be a possible use of the funds, with University of Chichester students using the funds to purchase props and other materials that they would normally be expected to provide from their own resources.

After a short further discussion, it was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on Wednesday 14 December 2022 that the Woolstaplers Section 106 funding be used for the Railway Station photographic exhibition project.

91. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

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

RESOLVED to note the monthly reconciliations with evidence of bank statements until end of September 2022.

b) **LIST OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2022**

RESOLVED to note the list of receipts and payments made for August and September 2022.

c) **LIST OF BARCLAYCARD PAYMENTS FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER 2022**

RESOLVED to note the list of Barclaycard payments for August and September 2022.

92. **ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

No items were submitted.

93. **DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: 31 JANUARY 2023

94. **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from this meeting for agenda item 21 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential personnel matters

95. **MATERNITY COVER**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that, further to the advertisement of the maternity cover vacancy for the Committee and Communities Officer, only one application had been received.

Members were further advised that, despite the interview being very positive, the applicant had since withdrawn her application.

The Committee were informed that the advert would be republished.

The meeting closed at 3.40pm