



Chichester City Council

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 7 November 2022

Time 10.30am – 12.25pm

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

PRESENT: Councillor Scicluna (Chairman) and Councillors J Hughes, Plowman and Quail

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Corfield, Helen Marshall (Chairman of Chichester BID), Town Clerk, Acting Property Manager, Member Services Support Officer

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from Councillor Dignum.

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

Councillors Plowman and Scicluna declared an interest as members of the Murray Club.

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

Councillor J Hughes declared an interest in the Swanfield bus shelter item.

Councillors Corfield, J Hughes, Quail and Plowman declared an interest as City Council allotment holders.

Councillor Corfield declared an interest as member of the Friends of Oakland Park.

30. MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 22 August 2022

At this point the Chairman welcomed the Chairman of Chichester BID, Helen Marshall.

She also welcomed the Acting Property Manager to his first Committee meeting.

31. **COUNCIL HOUSE**

a) **Boiler replacement**

The Acting Property Manager reminded Members about what had been happening under the boiler replacement project.

He advised Members that work had proceeded well and that the new system was expected to be fully commissioned later in the day on Monday 7 November 2022.

b) **Air handling unit/aircon**

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information in his report.

He advised Members that the changes to the control system now meant that it could provide both warmed and cooled air as required and that the filtration system had been improved to deliver better air quality in the areas it served.

Members were also informed that the next stage of works on the air handling system would involve overhauling the system in the back office to improve the supply of fresh air in that area.

c) **Windows**

The outline details in the Acting Property Manager's report were highlighted.

The Acting Property Manager expressed the opinion that, in view of the changes being made to the heating and air handling systems, the Sub-Committee should wait for these projects to be completed so that a proper assessment could be made of the efficiencies delivered before looking at changes to the windows in the building. He further expressed the opinion that the cost of undertaking works to the windows would take a significant period of time to recoup.

The Members agreed that any changes to the windows must be sympathetic to the building and that, as guardians of such an important asset in the city, they should consider carefully how to proceed.

The Sub-Committee discussed the possible materials that could be used for any secondary glazing installation and their relative merits.

Councillor Plowman suggested that further work be undertaken to assess the cost effectiveness of installing changes to the windows and the Town Clerk proposed asking the Chichester District Council Historic Building Officer to give Councillors a briefing on expectations in respect of stewardship of the building and making energy efficiency changes.

d) **Insulation**

The Acting Property Manager informed Members that work had been commissioned to install and/or improve the existing insulation in the roof spaces above the Council Chamber, main landing, Assembly Room ante room and plant room areas.

He further informed Members that the expectation was that this would improve the energy efficiency of the building by cutting heat loss in these areas.

e) Battery storage of solar energy

Members were reminded that an additional solar panel array had recently been installed on the eastern half of the south facing Assembly Room roof.

They were informed that, unlike the original array, this one did not benefit from a Feed in Tariff so it would be beneficial to be able to store any excess electricity generated during the day to provide power to the building over night.

The Acting Property Manager advised Members that he had so far asked three contractors to quote for the work but that no response had been received. He further advised Members that he would also be contacting Save Money Cut Carbon, who had previously undertaken energy efficiency consultancy for the City Council; and would report back to the Sub-Committee at the next meeting.

f) External lighting timing

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information in his report.

Members were informed that there had been a concerted campaign on social media about the external lighting on the Council House and Market Cross and the costs and light pollution that this created.

The Sub-Committee were updated on the current on and off times of the lighting and the occasions, such as when evening events were taking place in the building, when the timers would be overridden.

The Acting Property Manager then showed Members some photographs he had taken during a late night walk through the city centre. It was noted how many properties were still illuminated at night and also that the City Council properties were in darkness at that time.

Councillors discussed the issues being raised and strongly agreed that the lighting was necessary for users of the building in the evening and also for the general security of the building itself and those using the covered portico area after dark.

The Chairman of Chichester BID, Helen Marshall, informed Members that, in addition to the issue of security, the retailers in the city centre used lighting of their windows as a relatively inexpensive way of advertising their businesses after dark, when they were closed.

She further informed Members that BID would be looking to work with retailers to ensure that appropriate low energy bulbs were in use and that timers were put in place to control when the lights were powered on.

Councillor Corfield advised Members that she had been in discussion with one of the social media users in question and had been working with them to put across the City Council's viewpoint. She also thanked the Property Maintenance team for their efforts in changes to the lighting scheme.

After a short further discussion, the Town Clerk recommended, and the Members agreed, that this discussion was now closed and no further changes would be made to the lighting on City Council properties.

g) **Mayor's carpark**

The information that had been provided in his report was summarised by the Acting Property Manager.

He advised Members that the objective was to tidy up the car park area and provide a more flexible space and that the end product would be sympathetic to the existing surroundings.

Members were also advised that he had obtained one quote for the work and was in the process of obtaining additional quotes for comparison.

Councillor J Hughes proposed that provision should be made for a bookable space marked and reserved for Councillors with disabilities or mobility issues.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED that the project should proceed subject to the additional quotes being obtained.

32. **ALLOTMENTS**

a) **Update**

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information that had been provided in his report.

The Chairman asked whether the waiting list numbers included people who were already ploholders who were looking for a second plot.

Members were informed that priority was being given to new allotment holders and that the Property Maintenance Team had also created some smaller plots for new tenants and those with less time to maintain them.

b) **Roman Amphitheatre**

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information in his report.

Members asked the Acting Property Manager to ascertain the ownership of the fence before proceeding with any work. They agreed that, if the fence was City Council property, then quotes for the work should be obtained and brought to the next Sub-Committee meeting.

33. **BUS STOPS/SHELTERS**

a) **Swanfield Drive**

Members were given a brief history of what had happened, to date, with regards to the proposed bus shelter at Swanfield Drive.

The Member Services Support Officer updated Members and advised that he had now drawn a line under the extensive email trail relating to this project and asked those involved to state where they thought they were with the proposed shelter.

Members were further advised that Chichester District Council had agreed that they would not pursue changes to the relevant sections of the covenant established when the management company, currently A2 Dominion, had taken over management of the Swanfield Estate.

Councillors were informed that West Sussex County Council Highways had confirmed they were happy with the proposed location of the bus shelter and that a formal Section 115 application should be submitted once agreement had been reached with A2 Dominion. They were also informed that the promised Section 106 monies for the installation of the bus shelter would be chased up with West Sussex County Council.

Councillor J Hughes expressed his frustration that this particular project had been going on for so long.

The Town Clerk assured Members that the City Council Officers would be pushing ahead with the process as quickly as possible.

Post meeting note: Further to a meeting with West Sussex County Council Highways on Wednesday 9 November 2022, it was agreed that the City Council would undertake an informal consultation with the residents on the Swanfield Estate by displaying posters near the proposed site and at the Community Centre and asking for comments. These posters were displayed on Friday 11 November 2022.

On Thursday 10 November 2022, the City Council again supplied details of the proposed location of the bus shelter to A2 Dominion. At the time of writing a response is still awaited.

b) **Bognor Road**

Members were updated on the proposed location of the bus shelter in Bognor Road, near the junction with York Road.

The Acting Property Manager advised Members that he felt that the installation of a Sedum roof on this shelter would not be appropriate due to the ongoing maintenance requirements and the potential issues with the load bearing capabilities of the bus shelter design.

The Member Services Support Officer advised Members that he had been requesting updates on this project as well and that he was also chasing the Section 106 funds from the Bartholomews site that had been due to be transferred in July 2022.

Post meeting note: Further to the same meeting mention in minute 33(a), West Sussex County Highways have issued the formal Public Notice for the Section 115 licence application for the installation of the bus shelter on Bognor Road.

The notices were put up on Friday 11 November 2022 with a 28 day expiry. Letters were also hand delivered to properties in the immediate vicinity inviting comments from residents on the proposal.

34. **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

a) **Murray sculpture**

i) **Transfer of ownership from the Murray Club to Chichester City Council**

The Councillor Plowman reminded Councillors about the history of the Murray Sculpture.

He advised that, at a recent meeting of the Murray Club, it had been decided that an agreement be reached for the formal transfer of ownership of the sculpture to the City Council.

He also suggested that it would be appropriate to liaise with Vincent Gray, who was the sculptor responsible for the Murray sculpture.

Councillor Quail asked for more background regarding the sculpture and requested the minutes of the Murray Club meeting where the decision had been made.

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.

Councillor Plowman agreed to submit a report to the Finance Committee in support of this recommendation.

ii) **Installation of the Sussex Heritage Trust award plaque**

The Acting Property Manager advised Members that he had received a quote from the contractors Traditional Stone to install the recently awarded Sussex Heritage Trust plaque in a newly created recess on the plinth of the Murray Statue.

Members agreed that, while the statue was not currently City Council property, the plinth was and therefore it was a decision for the Council on whether to proceed.

In response to a question about the requirement for Listed Building consent, it was agreed that advice should be sought from the City Council's Planning Adviser about whether this was required or not.

b) **Bike racks**

The Acting Property Manager, with the aid of some illustrative photographs, updated Members on the problems being experienced with the city centre bike racks. He also reminded Members about the history of the installation of the bike racks and the reasons for using surface mounted fixings.

He expressed the opinion that some of the racks had been inappropriately bolted to weak surfaces and that the preference would have been for concreted in racks to provide a more secure fixing. He further expressed the opinion that some of the issues had been created through acts of vandalism.

Going forward, the Acting Property Manager suggested two alternatives.

Firstly, there was the possibility of retrofitting the existing bike racks with extensions to allow them to be concreted in as required.

The second suggest, supported by the Committee, was to purchase so called "toast rack" bike racks that consisted of several "hoops" similar to the currently installed Sheffield models, all connected together. These would be bolted to the ground as one unit making it more difficult to remove them in the event of attempted theft.

The Chairman expressed concerns that cycle racks that had been fitted on private land at the request of the land owners were also being damaged and that the City Council was paying for this when it should be the land owners who covered the cost of repairs.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED that further investigations should be undertaken and options proposed to the next Property Sub-Committee.

It was also AGREED that Chichester and District Cycling Forum should be involved in the discussions going forward to ensure that an acceptable solution was proposed.

c) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)

The Acting Property Manager and the Member Services Support Officer summarised the current situation regarding the City Council's SID and the use being made of it in the St Pancras area.

Members were advised that the City Council had been approached about the installation of SID mounting posts in other areas of the city, namely St Pauls Road and Broyle Road.

The Sub-Committee was further advised that site surveys had been undertaken and suitable locations found. These are:

- Two new pavement sockets and posts, one on each side of St Pauls Road near the Rainbow public house.
- Two on Broyle Road near King George Gardens.

Councillors were informed that the Broyle Road location would involve the City Council paying to replace two existing West Sussex Highways posts that were deemed too corroded to support the weight of the SID.

Members discussed the relative merits of the SIDs but also expressed concern about the ongoing cost of installing the posts at locations around the city, particularly if this involved replacement of non-City Council assets. Concern was also expressed about the request to purchase an additional SID and the length of time the current device was being used in the St Pancras location.

Members also discussed whether, by installing the pavement sockets at various locations, the posts themselves could be moved around to save on that aspect of the cost. However, it was felt that the size and weight of the poles would make it very difficult for volunteers operating the SIDs to move them around safely.

The Town Clerk suggested that this would be a good opportunity to work with West Sussex County Council to identify suitable assets for mounting SIDs in the future.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED that the matter should be deferred to the Finance Committee and that Councillor Corfield would submit a paper on the subject to be discussed at that meeting.

35. ST JAMES PHONE LINE INSTALLATION

The Acting Property Manager and Member Services Support Officer summarised the issues, namely congested and inconsistent data connection to the St James Property Team compound office; and why a fixed phone line and associated broadband were needed on the site.

In response to a question from Councillor Plowman, it was clarified that the Property Maintenance Officer based at the site ran the allotment management package from St James and needed a robust and reliable broadband connection in order to do so.

Members were also informed that, at busy times of day at the school opposite, the data connection became very slow and unreliable which caused operational issues.

After a short discussion, it was AGREED that the installation of a fixed phone line to the St James Property Maintenance site should proceed.

36. LITTEN GARDENS CCTV

Members were advised that, in order to be able to fully monitor the CCTV cameras that had been installed in Litten Gardens, the contractor had proposed installing a new router with dedicated SIM card to provide the necessary data connection.

Members were further advised that the amount quoted in the report had already been approved in the original quote and that this was to update on progress.

In response to Member questions, the Acting Property Manager informed them that, in order to provide a fixed line for the data connection, it would be necessary to install an additional cabinet inside the main gate to the Gardens, as well as sink a trench across the Gardens to carry the necessary cabling and avoid the tree roots.

Members were assured that, while the cameras were not monitored 24/7, they were already working to discourage antisocial behaviour in the Gardens and that footage could be provided from the central recorder for the purposes of prosecution of offences.

Members were further assured that the privacy of residents in the area adjacent to the Gardens had been considered and that the cameras did not infringe on this.

37. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- City Centre Task Force
- Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and the 20 MPH speed limit
- Murray Sculpture

38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 10.30am

The meeting closed at 12.25pm