



Chichester City Council

MEETING OF COUNCIL

Minutes

Date 22 February 2023

Time 2.00pm – 3.43pm

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

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Joy), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman) and Councillors Apel, Carter, Chant, Corfield, Dignum, Gaskin, Gershater, C Hughes, Quail, Scicluna and Sharp

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Acting Property Manager, Member Services Support Officer, Macebearer, West Sussex County Councillor Oakley

In lieu of prayers and the Mayor's Chaplain's enforced absence due to injury, the Mayor asked all present to stand for a one minute silence to mark the anniversary of the conflict in Ukraine and the suffering of the peoples of Syria and Turkey following the recent earthquake in the region.

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from Councillors Barrie, Bell, J Hughes and Lishman.

One vacancy.

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

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

In response to a question from Councillor Dignum, the Mayor advised that it was necessary to declare interests due to the changing subjects being discussed on the agenda.

Post meeting note: At the request of the Mayor, the Town Clerk emailed all Councillors on 6 September 2022 asking them to send their standing declarations to the Member Services Support Officer. Only two responses were received.

69. MINUTES OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 14 December 2022.

70. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

At the request of the Mayor, the Town Clerk updated Members regarding the arrangements for the upcoming events linked to the Twinning with Speyer.

Councillors were reminded that there would be a meeting to discuss the creation of a Friends of Speyer association in Chichester and that this would take place in the Assembly Room on Tuesday 28 February 2023.

In response to a question from Councillor Quail, the Town Clerk confirmed that the meeting would start at 7.00pm

The Town Clerk also outlined for Councillors the programme of events that had been arranged for the visit from Speyer taking place from Sunday 5 March 2023 and culminating in a meal on Tuesday 7 March 2023.

Members were reminded that the formal Twinning ceremony would take place in the Assembly Room on Monday 6 March 2023 at 6pm and that it would be followed by a Mayoral reception.

Referring to the recent City Council Annual Awards ceremony, the Mayor expressed his thanks to the Town Clerk and Officers for their work in making the ceremony such an enjoyable, feel good event.

He also informed the Council that his partner, the Mayoress, was expecting a baby and that the birth was due in April.

71. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions had been received from members of the public being residents of the City pursuant to Appendix 1 of Chichester City Council's Standing Orders (September 2020).

72. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

a) Planning and Conservation Committee

It was moved by Councillor Quail, as the Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2022, 26 January 2023 (Special Meeting) and 2 February 2023 be approved and adopted with the exception of minute 126.

Minute 105(c), 15 December 2022 - Planning application regarding Havenstoke Park.

The Deputy Mayor informed Members that the residents of Havenstoke Park had expressed strong concerns about this application and were in the process of putting together a campaign against the proposed development. He advised Members that the situation was complicated by Section 106 projects that had been approved for the area.

Minute 117, 2 February 2023 – Apologies

Councillor Gershater asked it to be noted that he had sent his apologies for this meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 15 December 2022, 26 January 2023 (Special Meeting) and 2 February 2023 be approved and adopted with the exception of minute 126.

Council was asked to consider the following recommendation:

20MPH default speed limit for Chichester (Minute 126, 2 February 2023, refers)

After a short further debate, the Committee RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 22 February 2023 that Councillor Corfield's request to form a 20MPH Default Speed Limit Working Group, reporting to the Planning and Conservation Committee, be approved and that an exploratory meeting of interested parties be called with the intention of forming a Working Group for the development of a City Council 20MPH Default Speed limit policy and action plan.

The Mayor highlighted the new West Sussex County Council policy that aimed to make implementing 20MPH speed limits easier to implement. He also advised Councillors that West Sussex County Council Highways looked to make 20MPH limits apply to an area rather than a single road and that they were usually dealt with through Community Highways Schemes.

Councillor Gershater informed Members that he would shortly be calling a meeting of the Business Plan Working Group and emphasised the strong links between the Business Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan and the 20MPH default speed limit project.

Councillors RESOLVED unanimously to accept the recommendation from the Planning and Conservation Committee as given above and asked Councillor Corfield to proceed with the creation of the Working Group.

The Deputy Mayor expressed his thanks for the work Councillor Corfield had put in to the 20MPH project to date.

b) Community Affairs Committee

It was moved by Councillor Apel, Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 be approved and adopted.

Minute 61(c) – West Sussex Police

Councillor Apel, as Chairman of the Committee, expressed concerns that there had not been a Police presence at the Community Affairs Committee meetings for some time and asked for suggestions about how the situation might be improved.

The Mayor commented about a recent all parishes online meeting that had included the Police and advised that he had been the only City Councillor present.

Post meeting note: The Town Clerk forwarded the original Teams meeting invitation, received from Inspector Ross Wickings, on the 30 January 2023 to all City Councillors.

The Deputy Mayor expressed the opinion that having the Police report to the Committee provided an important context for discussions in parallel with the reports from the Community Wardens and BID Rangers: as well as giving them the opportunity to announce new initiatives that were being launched.

In response to a comment from the Town Clerk about efforts made to invite the Police to the meetings, the Member Services Support Officer confirmed that

invitations to the Committee meetings were sent to several Police representatives each time with no responses being received.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 be approved and adopted.

c) Finance Committee

It was moved by Councillor Scicluna, Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2023 be approved and adopted.

Minute 99(a) – Charter Dinner

Councillor Scicluna noted that the cost per head for the Charter Dinner had risen to £25.00.

Minute 109 – Adoption of the Murray-Nelson statue by the City Council

In response to a question from Councillor Chant, the Deputy Mayor confirmed that paperwork transferring the ownership to the City Council would be issued shortly by the Murray Club.

Councillor Scicluna also noted that the Annual Awards Working Group proceedings had been referred back to the Finance Committee and that the Property Sub-Committee meeting scheduled for the 18 January 2023 had not taken place as it had been inquorate.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2023 be approved and adopted.

Members noted the contents of the minutes of the Annual Awards Working Group meeting held on 12 December 2022 and the notes of the inquorate Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 18 January 2023.

73. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-2024

The Town Clerk gave a short summary of the report on the Calendar of Meetings 2023-2024 that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members were advised that, with 2023 being an election year, the timetable of meetings was slightly different and that there was a need to hold a number of meetings in quick succession to enable the Council to meet its legal obligations.

He informed Members that his recommendations for the Calendar were as follows:

1. That the dates in the timetable of meetings for 2023/24 be approved;
2. That a survey be undertaken, as soon as possible, of candidates standing for election to the City Council about their preferences about meeting timings and that the relevant factors set out in this report (and issues raised in the forthcoming discussion by Council) form part of a briefing paper;
3. That the meeting dealing with the Selection of Mayor on Wednesday 10th May and Annual Meeting of the City Council on Wednesday 17th May both be held at 6pm
4. That the meeting on 10th May to select the Mayor be no longer titled 'Council in Committee' and the Council determine the title and format of this meeting. Note – consideration will need to be given to the Civic Awards Council in Committee in October, which will need to have the formal status of a Council Meeting where executive decisions may be made.

Referring to the 10 May 2023 meeting, the Town Clerk advised Members that the “Council-in-Committee” meeting was a historic but invalid term to try to exempt it from being open to the public. He further advised that it should have its name changed and either be a formal, public, Meeting of the Council or take place more informally, dealing with the selection process of key appointments. i.e. the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Bailiff together with Committee memberships for 2023-2024.

Members agreed that a more casual style of meeting would be appropriate and would help any new Councillors to start to get a feel for how the City Council operated.

Councillors discussed the issues raised and agreed that, as the new Council was likely to be very different to the current administration; only the dates of the meetings should be agreed at this time, with the decision on meeting timings being made by the new Council after the May 2023 elections.

Councillors also discussed the relative merits of evening versus daytime meetings and whether these timings would discourage some people from standing as Councillors.

Councillor Corfield expressed concerns that if a large number of new Councillors were elected, they may struggle to grasp all the issues and requirements they would be presented with in the early days of their time in office.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the procedural requirements at the beginning of the new administration/Council year and advised Councillors that Officers would make support available to those that needed it.

In response to a question from Councillor Chant, the Town Clerk also reminded Members about the problems posed by the inability of Councils in England to hold formal meetings remotely or in a hybrid form. He reported that an email had recently been received listing suggested inclusions in the Levelling Up legislation which would make the holding of such meetings legal and, he hoped, help overcome such concerns in the future.

After a short further discussion, the following resolutions were agreed:

- RESOLVED to approve the Calendar of Meetings dates for 2023-2024 with the meeting timings being decided by the next administration after the May 2023 elections.
- RESOLVED that a survey be undertaken of potential candidates standing for election to the City Council in May 2023 about their meeting time preferences and that a briefing paper setting out the relevant issues be included in the pre-election letter to candidates.
- RESOLVED that the meetings being held on 10 May 2023 (Selection of Mayor) and 17 May 2023 (Annual Meeting of Council) be held at 6.00pm.
- RESOLVED that the meeting to determine the selection of the Mayor for 2023-2024 be a more informal format and therefore not be open to the public.

74. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL 2023

The Town Clerk advised Members that the Mayor had asked that the final Full Council Meeting for the 2019-2023 administration be moved to 6.00pm.

Councillor Scicluna reported that she would not be able to attend a 6.00pm meeting and that her preference would be for a meeting starting at either 2.00pm or 7.00pm.

Councillor Gershater expressed strong opposition to the meeting starting at 2.00pm but indicated he agreed with a 6.00pm start time.

The Deputy Mayor reminded Members that, prior to the pandemic, Council meetings had always been held at 6pm. He also reminded Members that starting later in the evenings put additional pressure on the Officers who were facilitating the meetings.

After a short further discussion, it was RESOLVED that the Meeting of Council being held on 19 April 2023 have a start time of 6.00pm.

Councillor Scicluna voted against and Councillor Chant abstained.

75. CITY FLORAL PLANTING – CATHEDRAL BEDS

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that the City Council was currently responsible for maintaining the Cathedral beds and that, at the moment, they were not looking their best.

Councillors were advised that, recently, attempts had been made to use volunteers to keep the beds looking their best but that, despite their efforts, the current condition of the area was not as good as it should be.

The Deputy Town Clerk expressed the opinion that the whole area, including the stone walls, needed to be reworked and suggested that contact be made with a selection of contractors to obtain quotes to get the work done.

The Deputy Town Clerk further suggested an amount up to £12,000 of the City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds be used for this project.

Councillor Quail expressed strong support for the proposal.

Members discussed the ownership of the beds, why the City Council was now responsible and whether this would be an appropriate use of CIL funds given the current cost-of-living crisis.

Post meeting note: To confirm, the Cathedral beds are maintained under an agreement with West Sussex County Council (**Finance Committee, 24 November 2015, minute 59(vi) refers**):

In connection with the replanting of the Cathedral Beds in West Street, the Town Clerk advised that West Sussex County Council had confirmed they were happy for the beds to become the responsibility of the City Council and that a one-off payment of £300 and an on-going offer of £50 per year for maintenance would be available.

The Deputy Mayor supported the proposal and expressed the opinion that the look of the area being discussed was important for tourism and the many visitors to the Cathedral.

Councillor Scicluna, as a Central Ward Councillor, also supported the proposal and expressed the hope that the work would help improve the look of the city for residents and visitors.

Members sought clarity on the extent of the works being proposed and discussed possible organisations that might be able to undertake the landscaping and maintenance of the area.

The Acting Property Manager asked that consideration be given to reducing the grassed areas and the subsequent need for mowing.

Councillor Corfield gave her support but expressed concern about large amounts of money being spent in the current climate and suggested that the future responsibility for the Cathedral Beds should be brought back to the next Council administration.

In response to a question from Councillor Chant, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the figure of £12,000 had not been based on any formal estimates and the figures would be reported to the Finance Committee in April once they had been received.

After further debate, it was RESOLVED that the Officers should proceed with obtaining plans and quotes from contractors for the relandscaping of the Cathedral Beds and the immediately surrounding area and that the issue of responsibility for and maintenance of the Cathedral beds be brought back to a future meeting.
Councillors Sharp and Carter voted against and Councillors Chant and Gaskin abstained.

76. CITY CENTRE PAVEMENTS – CITY COUNCIL CIL FUNDING

Councillor Scicluna advised Members that the reason for the need to revisit the original resolution to commit City Council CIL funds to the City Centre Pavements project was that the Levelling Up Fund bid had failed and therefore Councillors needed to reconsider any conditions attached to the offer of funding.

Members agreed that this was a disappointment and expressed frustration that a Plan B would not be implemented faster than the 2024-2025 period recently proposed by West Sussex County Council.

The Mayor advised that at a recent meeting he had attended involving West Sussex County Councillor Oakley and County Highways, he had been informed that a Plan B was being sought. He also advised that the meeting had heard about the City Council's wishes for the work to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Councillor Sharp informed Members that the recent work on the Levelling Up Fund bid had highlighted the importance of the project to the West Sussex County Council Cabinet and that the Cabinet Members for Finance and Highways were indicating their support for the work being undertaken.

She also highlighted the need for a phased approach to the project and for funding of the necessary design work but expressed concerns about the expense of the design work if the project expanded to include South and West Streets when the priority should be North and East Streets.

Councillor Sharp supported the proposed amendment to the original resolution but expressed the opinion that financing the design work was necessary and if the City Council CIL funding could help support this cost, it might help progress the project.

City Councillors expressed concern that the CIL funds would be used for this purpose rather than practical implementation and commented that the City Council had already partner-funded previous consultancy for proposals for the resurfacing project.

Councillors Apel, Scicluna and Gaskin reminded Members that the former Property Manager had undertaken a great deal of work on this, in conjunction with the District and County Councils, and had previously put forward proposals based on a scheme in Romsey and also one using a recycled, hard wearing composite material.

Councillors discussed the options available, including replacing the red brick centre panel and the bulk of the York stone and using tarmac on a wider path to try to overcome the damage issues experienced when large goods vehicles made deliveries to the businesses, parking on the York stone and destabilising the surface.

The Mayor reported that he had made efforts at the County Council, asking them to focus in on an affordable and achievable project that could be implemented quickly as a first step in a wider project within the city centre.

Members discussed the issue at length and further expressed frustration about how long the project was taking and that the County Council had, once again, proposed widening the project to include South and West Streets therefore making the project unwieldy and unaffordable.

They all agreed that any solution had to be attainable and affordable and that North Street and East Street were the priority.

Councillor Dignum suggested that any contribution from the City Council towards the design work should be conditional on a low cost solution being sought.

After further debate, two motions were proposed.

Councillor Scicluna proposed a modification to the wording of the original resolution which was accepted by Members and it was RESOLVED that the new offer of funding from the City Council's CIL monies be as follows:

*That the City Council supports the allocation of a sum not exceeding £100,000 from unallocated CIL funds towards the **pavement element** of the Public Realm project. However, the sum will only be payable if West Sussex County Council and Chichester District Council make commensurate and proportional funding commitments.*

The Deputy Mayor thanked the Chichester Ward County Councillors for their efforts in trying to push the project forward and then proposed an additional motion as follows:

Chichester City Council urges West Sussex County Council to recognise the urgency of the situation regarding the condition of the pavements in North and East Streets. The City Council further urges West Sussex County Council to come forward with a scheme to tackle the condition of the precinct pavements in North and East Streets as a priority and that scheme should be sustainable, affordable and durable.

In response to a suggestion from the Mayor that the resolution should include a specification regarding a City Council contribution to the design work, Councillor Apel seconded the wording suggested by the Deputy Mayor and argued that the issue of design costs could be agreed at a later date when a better idea of the costs had been put forward.

The Mayor further suggested that a Special Meeting of Council could be called once the design requirements and costings became clearer.

It was then RESOLVED that West Sussex County Council be informed of the City Council's views as per the Deputy Mayor's motion given above.

Councillors expressed strong support for the Mayor's suggestion that a joint meeting of all the stakeholders should be arranged as soon as possible to discuss the issues and to progress the project as soon as feasible.

77. **BOGNOR ROAD BUS SHELTER**

The Member Services Support Officer advised Members that, as requested by West Sussex County Council Highways, two public consultations had now been undertaken regarding the installation of a new bus shelter on Bognor Road, near the junction with York Road and adjacent to the existing bench.

He informed Councillors that, to his knowledge, no negative comments had been received by the County Council and that the only representation received by the City Council had been a letter expressing strong support for the bus shelter.

Members were advised that, given this outcome, it was expected that the County Council would issue the necessary S115 licence and that the installation could proceed imminently funded by Section 106 monies from the neighbouring Bartholomews development.

78. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports had been received.

79. WARD REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER CITY COUNCILLORS

Members noted the Chichester City South ward report that had been received from and summarised by Councillor Gaskin.

80. REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER DISTRICT AND WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S WARD MEMBERS

Members noted the reports from West Sussex County Councillors Joy and Oakley that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Oakley updated Members as follows:

- Tangmere to Chichester sustainable transport corridor – the intention was to complete two consultations during this year in the spring and autumn.
- Parking Control – proposed changes final draft, with particular attention to the North East corner of Swanfield Drive and at the Windsor Road and Florence Road junction..

81. QUESTIONS

No questions had been received from members of the public pursuant to Standing Order 8 of the City Council's Standing Orders (September 2020).

82. COMMON SEAL

RESOLVED that the Common Seal be affixed to any documents necessary to give effect to the resolutions passed at this meeting.

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: Wednesday 19 April 2023 at 6.00pm

The meeting closed at 3.43pm