



Chichester City Council

## MEETING OF COUNCIL

### Minutes

**Date** 19 April 2023

**Time** 6.00pm – 7.07pm

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

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk, Town Clerk Designate, Deputy Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, Mayor's Chaplain, West Sussex County Councillors Hunt and Oakley

#### 85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Mayor, Councillor Joy, and Councillors J Hughes and Lishman.

One vacancy.

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

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

Councillor Sharp declared an interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council.

The Deputy Mayor and Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as members of the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

#### 87. MINUTES OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED to approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 22 February 2023 and the Special Meeting of the Council held on 11 April 2023.

**Noted:** The agenda incorrectly gave the date of the Special Meeting as 6 April 2023

#### 88. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were advised that the Mayor had sent apologies and that he was currently on paternity leave, awaiting the birth of the new baby.

The Deputy Mayor also informed Members that the Mayor had recently had eye surgery and was expected to have fully recovered in the next couple of weeks.

The Deputy Mayor, on behalf of the Council, sent good wishes to the Mayor and Mayoress.

Members were reminded about the Mayor's Charities fun casino night that would be taking place on Friday 21 April 2023. The Deputy Mayor extended an invitation to all Councillors and Officers and informed them that they were welcome to attend after 8.00PM.

#### 89. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members were advised that a question had been received via email from a resident regarding the City Council's plans for the cathedral flower beds.

Members were further advised that a response had been sent directly to the resident.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members about the outline proposals that had been discussed at previous meetings and advised that, while a budget limit had been agreed, there were no firm proposals and that discussions were ongoing with interested organisations such as the Cathedral and West Sussex County Council and contractors about the potential scope of the project.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Councillors that planting schemes had been suggested, including the possibility of extending the flowerbeds, and that there was no consideration being given to further concreting of the area.

#### 90. 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 2 March 2023 and 30 March 2023 be approved and adopted.

- **Minute 80 (30 March 2023)** – Councillor Scicluna asked that a declaration of interest for the Deputy Mayor and herself be noted due to them being members of the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.
- **Minute 83 (30 March 2023)** – Councillor Sharp asked that it be noted that cyclist safety should be considered a more important factor in discussions than weather conditions.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 2 March 2023 and 30 March 2023 be approved and adopted.

##### b) Community Affairs Committee

It was moved by Councillor Apel, Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2023 and 6 April 2023 (Grants) be approved and adopted.

- **Minute 61a (13 March 2023)** – Councillor Apel and the Deputy Mayor congratulated all involved on the success of the recent Chichester-Speyer Twinning ceremony.
- **Minute 64 (13 March 2023)** – Councillor Sharp advised that Highways England would need to be consulted before any work commenced in the A27 underpass.

- **Minute 65 (13 March 2023)** – Councillor Sharp asked that it be noted that she respected the decision not to create direct links between the City Council and local care homes. She expressed the opinion that it was important for Councillors to reach out to care home residents to help address their concerns.

The Deputy Mayor explained that it had been felt that the City Council should not duplicate the efforts of others and that the Rotary Clubs in Chichester were already building links of this nature.

- **Minute 75iv (6 April 2023)** – Councillor Chant asked that it be noted that the Ragtime Priory Theatre had been renamed as Kitchen Sink Productions.
- **Minute 75vi (6 April 2023)** – Councillor Gaskin noted a typing error and clarified that the Grant applicant was called **Words Out Loud**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2023 and 6 April 2023 (Grants) be approved and adopted.

c) Finance Committee

**Noted:** a typing error in the agenda gave the wrong meeting date. Correct date was 11 April 2023

It was moved by Councillor Scicluna, Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2023 be approved and adopted with the exception of minute 119b.

- **Minute 106** - Councillor Scicluna noted that the matter of the Councillor laptops would be discussed later in the meeting under agenda item 7.
- **Property Sub-Committee – 3 April 2023 (minute 119b)** - Councillor Sharp expressed concerns about the suggested moving of the bike racks to the city centre entrance points and the impact that this would have on cycle users, and visitors and shoppers in the city centre.

The Deputy Mayor confirmed that this was an early suggestion and that full consultation would take place before any project of this nature went ahead.

Councillor Scicluna commented on the broken and vandalised racks and confirmed that it was likely that the planned replacement of these damaged racks would be phased and start with those outside the Council House.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2023 be approved and adopted with the exception of minute 119b.

Council was asked to consider the following recommendation:

**Annual Awards Criteria (minute 119b, 11 April 2023 refers)**

*After a short discussion, it was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 19 April 2023 that the revised Annual Award categories, process and eligibilities as put forward by the Annual Award Working Group be adopted for the Annual Award process going forward.*

Councillor Chant, as Chairman of the Working Group, summarised the recommended changes to the Annual Awards criteria, categories and processes.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell, the Town Clerk confirmed that the eligibility of Members to vote on the Annual Award nominations depended on the format of the meeting held for this purpose.

He reminded Members that, currently in English Law, if the chosen format was a formal Council or Committee meeting then remote participation would not count as attendance and the Member concerned would not be permitted to vote.

The Town Clerk Designate advised that a possible alternative would be forming a Working Group with all Councillors as members and that this would allow remote attendance at the decision making.

She also advised that this would be something for the new Council to decide on once they took up office after the elections on 4 May 2023.

RESOLVED to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee as given above and to adopt the new Annual Award categories, criteria and processes as outlined in the minutes of the Annual Award Working Group meeting held on 6 April 2023.

Members noted the contents of the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 23 March 2023, the Business Plan Working Group meeting held on 31 March 2023, the Property Sub-Committee meetings held on 23 February 2023 and 3 April 2023 and the Annual Awards Working Group meeting held on 6 April 2023.

#### 91. PROVISION OF TABLETS FOR MEMBERS' USE DURING THEIR TERM IN OFFICE

The Town Clerk Designate summarised her report that had been circulated with the agenda and highlighted the two recommendations in the report.

In response to questions from Members, the Town Clerk Designate confirmed that costs for training provision had been included in the proposal. She also confirmed that a monthly allowance for external technical support had also been included but that it was anticipated that the need for this would drop off after the initial setup and that in house technical support would also be available.

Councillor Chant asked whether styluses would be provided and was advised that this was something that could be looked at.

Members were informed that the project would be expected to pay for itself over the four year term of the next Council administration and that it would free up approximately six weeks of Officer time each year.

Members were further informed that the expected life span of the devices was the four year term of the Council. They were advised that at the end of that period the devices would be assessed for fitness for purpose and distributed to the next administration if they were suitable. Members were assured that, if new devices were required, appropriate arrangements would be made to securely wipe the old devices and distribute them to a suitable charity or organisation.

In response to a question about access for Members with visual or other disabilities, the Town Clerk Designate advised that the devices included touchscreens and so would allow the user to zoom in on documents. Members were also advised that, further to the City Council's statutory responsibility to make reasonable adjustments, individual need would be assessed and suitable software and/or hardware provided as appropriate.

After a short further discussion, it was RESOLVED to accept the recommendations in the Town Clerk Designate's report, these being:

- 1) To purchase the laptops and agree to receive meeting summons and council papers electronically, and
- 2) To adopt the proposed laptop policy.

Councillor Sharp abstained from the vote.

#### 92. CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN

Councillor Gershater gave an overview of the work, to date, of the Business Plan Working Group using slides that had been included with the agenda papers.

He expressed the opinion that the incoming administration would want to think about the Committee structure and how the Council could best support the business plan and ensure objectives were being met.

Councillor Gershater referenced business plans from other Councils and highlighted the different approaches that had been taken.

He advised Members that the framework being produced would be a roadmap which would need to be fleshed out by the new administration and that a discussion document would be circulated.

Members were advised that it would be desirable for the City business plans of Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council and the City Council's to align to ensure a clear, joined up direction for their policies and activities.

Members were also advised that the business plan would be a living document, regularly updated, and that it should also aim to include input from community and other relevant groups around the city.

#### 93. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Scicluna, as the City Council's representative with the St John's Trust, informed Members that work to tidy up the forecourt had commenced and that the railings, removed during the Second World War, were being reinstated.

She also advised Members that the food bank behind St John's Chapel was running out of space and made a plea to those present to contact her if they had any suggestions for suitable alternative venues.

Councillor Sharp offered to contact Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council and other possible hosting venues on behalf of the food bank.

#### 94. WARD REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER CITY COUNCILLORS

Members noted the Chichester City South ward report that had been received from Councillor Sharp and circulated with the agenda.

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

Members noted the County Council report from Councillor Sharp, representing the Chichester South division, that had been circulated with the agenda.

Members also noted County Council the report from Councillor Simon Oakley, representing Chichester East division, that had been circulated electronically.

## 96. 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).

Prior to the Common Seal, the Deputy Mayor expressed his thanks to his fellow Councillors and the City Council Officers for their efforts and support during what had been, at times, a difficult four years.

The Deputy Mayor also expressed his thanks on behalf of the City Council to the retiring Town Clerk for his long and dedicated service and for providing a steady hand to guide the Councillors through the civic ceremonies, meetings, processes and challenges.

## 97. 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 MEETING: Annual Meeting of the City Council – 17 May 2023 - 6.00pm

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: 28 June 2023 (time to be confirmed)

The meeting closed at 7.07pm