



Chichester City Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 11 April 2023

Time 2.00pm – 3.24pm

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

PRESENT: Councillor Scicluna (Chairman), Councillor Barrie (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Chant and Dignum

EX-OFFICIO: Deputy Mayor (Councillor Plowman) and Councillor Apel (Chairman of Community Affairs Committee)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Corfield and Gershater, Town Clerk Designate, Deputy Town Clerk (Responsible Financial Officer), Member Services Support Officer, Acting Property Manager, West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley

116. 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 Quail.

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

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

118. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2023, having been circulated; be approved and signed as a correct record.

119. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Charter dinner (minute 99a refers)

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members on the expected numbers who would be attending the Charter Dinner. She informed the Committee that the total now expected was 20 guests.

b) Annual Awards criteria (minute 99c refers)

Councillor Chant, as Chairman of the Annual Awards Working Group, summarised the recommendations that had been agreed at their meeting held on 6 April 2023 (*Working Group minutes attached*).

The Committee agreed that changing the age range for the Young Persons Award was a positive move as including those up to the age of 21 would mean university and college students would become eligible for nomination.

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.

Members thanked the Working Group for their efforts.

c) Woolstaplers Section 106 funding for public art (minute 99d refers)

Councillors noted that the prints and frames had now been delivered to Chichester Railway Station and that they were currently awaiting installation of the photographer's inscriptions before being mounted on the waiting room walls.

The Deputy Town Clerk was thanked for her efforts in getting the project completed.

d) Bus shelters (minute 104 refers)

The Members Services Support Officer updated the Committee on the current situation regarding the City Council's bus shelters.

He informed Members that it was expected that the agreement to purchase the land on Swanfield Drive would be signed imminently and that the new shelter on Bognor Road would be installed towards the end of May 2023.

He further informed Members that the vandalised glass panels in the Broyle Road shelters had now been replaced with new metal panels.

e) City Centre Task Force update (minute 106 refers)

The Deputy Mayor updated the Committee on the progress of the City Centre Task Force to date.

He expressed the opinion that the initial work had been a success and that feedback from the community had been very positive. He also advised that it was hoped that a one-off community day be arranged for Monday 8 May 2023 to tackle outstanding tasks and thank the volunteers as part of the Coronation celebrations.

The West Walls Residents Association was given special thanks and the Acting Property Manager was also thanked for his involvement.

Councillor Dignum, as Chichester District Council Chairman of the City Centre Task Force Group, agreed with the comments being made and expressed the hope that the work would continue with the new Council after the elections in May 2023.

f) Whitehouse Farm – phase 2 planning application and the Southern Access Route (SAR) (minute 107 refers)

In the absence of the Chairman of the Planning and Conservation Committee, the Vice Chairman, Councillor Gershater, gave a verbal update.

Members were advised that, as agreed by the Planning and Conservation Committee, a response from the City Council was being prepared for submission

to Chichester District Council to accompany the report commissioned from PJA Traffic Consultants.

Members were further advised that the phase 2 application was no likely to be delayed until July 2023 with a possibility the delay would extend to September 2023.

g) Civic regalia audit (minute 111 refers)

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the civic regalia audit would be taking place during the summer of 2023.

120. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO DECEMBER 2022

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

Members were informed that, as at the end of January 2023, the accounts were showing a surplus of £26,007 for the year 2022/2023. They were further informed that the surplus for the full financial year was expected to be of the order of £30,000 once the accounts for 2022/2023 were completed.

The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted and explained some of the larger variances that had been noted in her report. These included the costs of recruiting the new Town Clerk, a substantial increase in the income from the City Council's investments as well as an increase in the Custodian costs but that this had been offset by a larger than anticipated increase in income from room bookings.

In response to a question about cemetery costs, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that the cost estimates received to date were in line with the projected budget but that this could change.

Members expressed concerns about the likely impact of increasing energy prices but agreed that the City Council was in a good financial position as outlined in the Deputy Town Clerk's report.

121. EARMARKED RESERVES

The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the Earmarked Reserves report that had been circulated with the agenda and informed Members that it only mentioned the Council House Reserve as this was the only reserve that had had money spent from it.

She advised that it was anticipated that the Council House Reserve would increase to approximately £130,000 once underspends on the Cyclical Maintenance and Council House budgets as well as the money set aside for the boiler replacement; were transferred in to the reserve at the end of the financial year.

122. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced her report that had been circulated with the agenda and summarised the information it contained, highlighting the City Council's contribution to the Chichester BID Rangers as well as potential upcoming public realm projects such as the Murray Sculpture, bike racks and the City Centre Task Force.

She advised Members that she was expecting an increase in the Rangers contribution and that this sum was paid at the beginning of each financial year.

Members referred to a recent incident involving the Rangers that had taken place in the city centre and agreed that the matter of the Rangers should be discussed at the Community Affairs meeting once the full facts of the East Street incident were known.

In response to a question from Councillor Chant, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that Chichester BID had previously issued a refund on the Rangers charge when they had been stood down during COVID.

The Deputy Mayor suggested that the ongoing 20MPH Wide Area Speed Limit project should come under the umbrella of the Public Realm budget.

123. **PAVEMENTS AND CHICHESTER CITY CENTRE DESIGN BRIEF**

Members were advised that the Officers from WSCC had sent their apologies and, instead, submitted a written update for the Committee to consider.

The Committee considered the report and agreed that it did not contain enough detail or specific commitments to tackle the more serious issues already affecting North and East Street pedestrian precincts.

Committee Members expressed the opinion that North and East Street should be separated out from the project and dealt with first before additional projects focusing on the other aspects of the city centre streetscape and public realm were undertaken.

In response to a question from Councillor Chant, the Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that the £100,000 financial contribution that the City Council had offered to the pavements project would only be payable for that aspect of the works. She further reminded Members that the funds being made available were solely for the renewal of the pavements that were in bad condition and would not be for expenses such as consultancy fees.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that WSCC was setting up a working group consisting of the main interested party and that it was expected that the City Council would be asked to nominate Councillor and Officer representatives.

Further to a suggestion from Councillor Dignum, it was RESOLVED that City Council Officers should arrange a face to face meeting with the relevant Officers at Chichester District Council and WSCC and that the outcomes should be reported back to the Finance Committee for further consideration.

124. **PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES – 23 FEBRUARY 2023 AND 3 APRIL 2023**

Members noted the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meetings that had been held on 23 February 2023 and 3 April 2023.

The Committee was asked to consider a number of recommendations made by the Sub-Committee.

a) **Mayor's carpark (minute 43a, 23 February 2023 refers)**

After a short further debate, it was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 11 April 2023 that an order be placed with Crown Civil Engineering for the relandscaping of the rear section of the Mayor's carpark in the sum of £5,760+VAT to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

RESOLVED that an order be placed with Crown Civil Engineering in the sum of £5,760+VAT, for the relandscaping of the rear section of the Mayor's carpark, to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

In response to a comment from Members, the Town Clerk Designate advised that the work had commenced due to safety concerns about the condition of the surface in the carpark.

b) Electrical Installation Condition Report (minute 43f, 23 February 2023 refers)

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 11 April 2023 that an order be placed for £2840.00+VAT with Aspect Electrical Contractors for a full Electrical Condition Report at the Council House, paid from the Council House Maintenance Budget.

Councillors noted that, through necessity, the work had been undertaken and the Acting Property Manager confirmed that he was currently awaiting receipt of the report.

The Committee ratified the recommendation from the Property Sub-Committee and agreed that the work had been a priority.

c) Crush Bar ceiling (minute 53c, 3 April 2023 refers)

Further to the discussion at the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 April 2023, to approve delegated Officer decision on the quote accepted for the replacement of a section of the Crush Bar ceiling.

The Acting Property Manager advised that he received no further quotes and that he was confident that the contractor that had provided the quote was capable of undertaking the necessary work.

RESOLVED to place an order with Suspended Ceiling Solutions to replace the Crush Bar ceiling from the back stairs end to the uplift in front of the bar serving area in the amount of £1,224+VAT to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

d) Fire alarm control panel (minute 53n, 3 April 2023 refers)

Further to the discussion at the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 April, to approve the delegated Officer decision on the urgent requirement to replace the fire alarm control panel.

The Acting Property Manager advised Members that, while the fire alarm system was fully functional, the age of the installation meant that he was recommending the replacement of the fire alarm control panel as well as the smoke detector sensors throughout the building.

He further advised that he had requested quotes from six contractors but had not received responses from all of them.

Members were informed that the quotes received to date had been between £3,600 and £4,000, both exclusive of VAT.

Due to the necessity to begin the upgrade, the Committee RESOLVED to delegate the decision about the chosen contractor to Officers with the amount and contractor being reported to the next meeting. The upgrade to be paid for from the Council House Reserve.

e) Electric ride on mower (minute 54c, 3 April 2023 refers)

After a short further discussion, it was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 11 April 2023 that an electric ride on mower be purchased as

specified for the sum of £10,503.00 to be paid from the City Council's CIL allocation.

Members were informed that there had been further discussion between the Officers since the Property Sub-Committee meeting and that it had been suggested that, because of the size of the area, parts of Brewery Field could be "wilded" to reduce the mowing area and save additional time for Officers.

RESOLVED to place an order for an electric ride-on mower as specified by the Property Maintenance Team in the amount of no more than £10,503, supplier to be confirmed and to be paid from the City Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation.

125. BUSINESS PLAN WORKING GROUP MEETING – 31 MARCH 2023

Councillor Gershater, as Chairman of the Business Plan Working Group, summarised the discussions that had taken place at the Working Group's meeting held on 31 March 2023. He reported that he had given a presentation discussing the development of a Business Plan framework discussion document that would be passed to the next Council administration.

The Committee was also advised that there was an intention to call a meeting of the Working Group after the elections for a decision to be made on next steps.

Members were advised that contact attempts with West Sussex Association of Local Councils for advice were ongoing.

The Working Group was thanked for their efforts and the Deputy Mayor suggested there should be a strong link between the Business Plan and the CIL Sub-Committee that would be discussed later in the meeting.

126. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SUB-COMMITTEE

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members that the City Council had been in receipt of significant CIL funds in the current financial year.

Members agreed that the CIL Sub-Committee should be reconstituted under the new administration to best manage CIL funded projects and that many of these projects should be identified during the creation of the Business Plan.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that it was her intention to transfer £900,000 of CIL funds in to the City Council's Public Sector Deposit Fund account meaning the money would earn a higher interest rate (4.1% at the time of the meeting) with quick access should the funds be required.

127. SPEYER TWINNING VISIT

Members discussed the recent visit from representatives of the City of Speyer as part of the Twinning between their city and Chichester and the support that had been given by local organisations.

The Committee agreed that a gesture of thanks to these organisations be given and it was RESOLVED that this would be as follows:

- Contact88 – a donation of £250
- University of Chichester Orchestra – a donation of £250

Members also discussed the visit to Goodwood house and agreed that the most appropriate gesture of thanks to the Duke of Richmond would be a letter from the City

Council, authored by Councillor Apel who had arranged the visit; thanking him for his hospitality.

Councillor Chant asked that the funds being given to the orchestra be directed directly to that group rather than being absorbed in to wider University budgets. The Chairman suggested that the money be recommended towards a specific project for the orchestra, such as instruments or other needs and that it should be for members of the orchestra to decide.

128. PROVISION OF TABLETS FOR MEMBERS' USE DURING THEIR TIME IN OFFICE

The Town Clerk Designate outlined her proposal for providing the new Council administration with City Council owned devices and the reasons for the proposal.

She informed Members that she was making the proposal to strengthen the City Council's Data Protection and GDPR processes as well as streamlining the provision of Council papers, agendas and minutes which in turn would free up the Member Services Support Officer for other duties.

She further informed the Committee that the intention was to provide flexible touch screen laptops that would be able to function as tablets or traditional laptops and confirmed that Councillors would be able to connect to their home printers should they need to.

Members were advised that the City Council would pay for ink and paper for Councillors to use as well as any assistive peripherals (e.g. mouse), within reason, that the Councillors might need to use their devices.

The Member Services Support Officer answered questions from Councillors and assured them that the current network infrastructure in the Council House would be able to cope with the additional devices connecting to the network. He also agreed to work with the Acting Property Manager to provide additional WiFi capacity in the Council Chamber.

In response to comments made about the lack of gigabit fibre availability in the city centre, the Member Services Support Officer assured Members that he had been investigating the issue and was in contact with the City Council's broadband provider, Vodafone, as they were a reseller for CityFibre who were currently laying a fibre network around the city.

The Town Clerk Designate also assured Members that training would be provided as part of the package and that all the devices would be secured and asset tagged as City Council property.

RESOLVED to ask the Town Clerk Designate to take the proposal to Full Council on 19 April 2023 for a decision so that, subject to agreement, the placing of an order could proceed in time for the devices to be ready early in the new Council administration.

129. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

a) MONTHLY RECONCILIATION WITH EVIDENCE OF BANK STATEMENTS TO END OF JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED to note the monthly reconciliations with evidence of bank statements until end of January 2023.

b) LIST OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED to note the list of receipts and payments made for January 2023.

c) **LIST OF BARCLAYCARD PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY 2023**

RESOLVED to note the list of Barclaycard payments for January 2023

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

- Request for WSCC to send a representative to present to and answer questions from City Councillors regarding the precinct pavement replacement and other public realm improvements as mentioned in their written report (see minute 123).

131. **DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY 13 JUNE 2023

The meeting closed at 3.24pm