



## Chichester City Council

# MEETING OF COUNCIL

## Minutes

**Date** 28 June 2023

**Time** 7.00pm – 9.08pm

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

**PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor C Gershater, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Corfield and Councillors Butler, Chant, J Gershater, Hitchman, Knight, Loxton, McHale, Miall, Pramas, Quail, Scicluna, Squire and Vivian

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Member Services Support Officer, West Sussex County Councillor Simon Oakley, Chichester District Councillor Jonathan Brown

### PRAYERS

Members were advised that apologies had been received from the Mayor's Chaplain.

The Mayor asked Councillors for their views on whether prayers before Council meetings should continue or whether they would prefer a more secular "thought for the day".

Councillor Scicluna expressed the opinion that prayers should continue as they helped set the right tone for the meeting.

### 15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to receive and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from Councillors Apel, Kondabeka and Moore

### 16. DISPENSATION REQUESTS

Councillors were advised that dispensation requests had been received as follows:

- Councillor Chant – as a Member of Chichester District Council: any matters relating to the business of the District Council for the period 2023-2027.
- Councillor Corfield – as a Member of Chichester District Council: any matters relating to the business of the District Council for the period 2023-2027.
- Councillor Hitchman – as a member of the Labour Party and resident in Chichester South ward for the period 2023-2027.
- Councillor Knight – as a committee member of and Wellbeing Officer for the Friends of Oaklands park for the period 2023-2027.
- Councillor Kondabeka – as Trustee of Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester and employee of Chichester District Food Bank, any matters relating to the two organisations for the period 2023-2027.
- Councillor Vivian - as a Member of Chichester District Council: any matters relating to the business of the District Council for the period 2023-2027.

RESOLVED to approve the dispensation requests as listed.

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL IN MATTERS ARISING ON THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING**

No further declarations of interest were given.

18. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL**

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the City Council held on 17 May 2023.

19. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor C Gershater reported that, being elected as Mayor had given him greater opportunity to have conversations with people he wouldn't normally have spoken to.

He informed Members that he felt this was a very positive development and he urged his fellow Councillors to be open to conversations with their constituents whether through attendance at public events, through surgeries or other channels open to them.

20. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No questions pursuant, to Appendix 1 of Chichester City Council's Standing Orders (September 2020), had been received.

A brief discussion followed about how the Council could better engage with residents to ensure that they were aware of their rights to raise questions and attend meetings.

21. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

a) **Planning and Conservation Committee**

Councillor Butler, Chairman of the Committee, moved that the minutes of the meetings held on 25 May 2023 and 22 June 2023 be approved and adopted.

She then highlighted some of the key issues that had been noted in the minutes of the two meetings.

While reviewing the minutes as presented, the following corrections were requested:

- 25 May 2023
  - Councillor Chant noted that the Mayor's initial had been incorrectly added as J, not C Gershater.
- 22 June 2023
  - Councillor Scicluna asked for District Councillor Adrian Moss to be added to the attendance record as well as her declaration of interest as a member of the Chichester Conservation Area Advisory Committee.
  - West Sussex County Councillor Oakley (via email) noted an error in his attendance record where the word County had been replaced with District.

Members were advised that the corrections would be made by the Committee Chairman at the next meeting on 20 July 2023.

Council also discussed the attendance of the Chichester Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group at the forthcoming Chichester Gala and strongly agreed that it

would not be appropriate for the proposed “What If” exercise to be run at the event as it included issues that were out of scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillors did agree that the extensive work undertaken for the PLACE studies would be appropriate for inclusion at the Gala consultation.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning and Conservation Committee held on 25 May 2023 and 22 June 2023 be approved and adopted.

b) **Community Affairs Committee**

In the absence of Councillor Apel, Councillor Loxton (Vice-Chairman of the Committee) moved that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2023 be approved and adopted.

He summarised some of the main points that had been included in the meeting minutes and noted the vacancy that existed in the Outside Bodies representative list. He advised that this would likely be filled at the next meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Chant gave a brief update on the Hygiene Bank item. They advised that contact had been made with the Hygiene Bank and it was hoped that a meeting could be arranged shortly to discuss how it might work at the Council House

Councillor Scicluna asked that an addition be made to the minutes noting her declaration as the City Council representative on all four twinning associations.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Affairs Committee held on 5 June 2023 be approved and adopted.

c) **Finance Committee**

Councillor Scicluna, Chairman of the Committee, moved that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 be approved and adopted with the exception of minutes 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 with the exception of minutes 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14, which would be considered separately.

i) Minute 9 – Statement of Accounts 2022-2023

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Statement of Accounts 2022/2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor and RFO.

RESOLVED that the Statement of Accounts be approved and signed by the Mayor and the RFO.

ii) Minute 11 – Internal Control Policy

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Internal Control Policy be adopted and signed by the Mayor and the RFO.

RESOLVED to adopt that the Internal Control Policy be adopted and signed by the Mayor and the RFO.

iii) Minute 12 – Internal Audit – Appointment of Internal Auditor – 2023-2024

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the renewal of the appointment of the Internal Auditor be agreed for the year 2023-2024

RESOLVED that the renewal of the appointment of the Internal Auditor be agreed for the year 2023-2024.

iv) Minute 12 – Internal Audit – Internal Audit Plan – 2023-2024

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2024 be approved.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2024 be approved.

v) Minute 12 – Internal Audit – Draft Internal Audit report – 2022-2023

RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Draft Internal Audit report for 2022-2023 be noted and approved.

RESOLVED that the Draft Internal Audit report for 2022-2023 be approved.

vi) Minute 13 – Annual Governance Statement (Part 1 of the Annual Return)

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Annual Governance Statement (Part 1 of the Annual Return) 2022/2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk

RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement (Part 1 of the Annual Return) 2022/2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

vii) Minute 14 – Annual Statements (Part 2 of the Annual Return)

It was RECOMMENDED to Full Council on 28 June 2023 that the Accounting Statements (Part 2 of the Annual Return) 2022/2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor and the Responsible Finance Officer.

RESOLVED that the Accounting Statements (Part 2 of the Annual Return) 2022/2023 be approved and signed by the Mayor and Responsible Finance Officer.

## 22. **JOHN SELSBY PORTRAIT**

The Town Clerk informed Members that the City Council had been approached by the Selsby family who had offered the loan of a portrait of John Selsby, Mayor of Chichester 1961-1963, as well as a collection of his documents.

She advised Members that, as there was not much space at the Council House and what was available was not suitable for long term storage of such items; she had approached both the Novium Museum and West Sussex County Records Office to discuss options for transferring some items and documents to them.

Councillor Chant asked about the possibility of pictures being moved to different positions around the Council House.

In response to a suggestion that the Painting Conservation Working Group should be reestablished, Councillor Quail reminded Members of her background in museums and archives management and offered to help if needed.

### **23. CITY COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Town Clerk summarised what was being asked at this point and reminded Members that the revision to the City Council's Standing Orders approved at the Annual Meeting of Council on 17 May 2023 (minute 9 refers) meant that the Council was required to review various aspects of its policies and procedures at various points through the years.

She advised that the implementation of the policies listed was a start and that further policies would be introduced over the coming months to ensure that the City Council was fully compliant in the appropriate areas.

Councillors were reminded that the Council had previously resolved to adopt the Civility and Respect policy and that Councillors would need to sign this document shortly.

After a short discussion it was RESOLVED that the policies as outlined by the Town Clerk be adopted by the City Council.

### **24. CHICHESTER CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN**

The Mayor summarised the work that had taken place on the Business Plan to date and outlined the next steps using a set of papers that had been given to Members at the start of the meeting. These included:

- The Business Plan to become a standing item on Committee agendas.
- The development of a communications strategy to increase exposure of the Business Plan

He also advised that the aim was to have a draft plan ready by September 2023.

Following a proposal that the existing Business Plan Working Group be dissolved to allow for the creation of a new Business Plan Oversight Committee (BPOC), Members agreed that, as most of the members of the Working Group were no longer Councillors, it had been effectively dissolved already.

Members discussed the proposed BPOC and the Town Clerk stressed that it was important that coherent and appropriate terms of reference be developed for the Committee that allowed it to function under the supervision of the Full Council and were within the legislative and governance framework of the law.

Councillor Miall expressed concerns about the proposed scope and powers of the BPOC.

After a short further discussion, it was AGREED that membership of the BPOC would be discussed at a Special Meeting of the City Council and that this Special Meeting would also approve the terms of reference for the BPOC.

### **25. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Vivian advised that he had been unable to attend the recent meeting of the Chichester Vision group but that Councillor Quail had been in attendance.

He also advised that another of the bodies he had been appointed to, Chichester in Partnership, had been dissolved some time ago.

Councillor Quail updated Members about the discussions that had taken place at the Chichester Vision meeting.

She expressed concerns that issues like the pavements may not now be progressed due to budgetary concerns, particularly at West Sussex County Council.

Members expressed serious disappointment that it appeared that the urgent issue of the city centre pavements was being delayed again.

Councillor Quail also expressed the opinion that she felt that the “vision” being focussed on was not sufficiently ambitious.

Chichester District Councillor Brown spoke about the Chichester Vision and informed Members that it was his understanding that different groups would lead in different areas and that the Vision would monitor progress as appropriate.

## **26. WARD REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER CITY COUNCILLORS**

The Mayor asked that Members submitting reports under this and the external Councillors agenda items should do so in a timely fashion to allow for them to be circulated with the meeting agenda.

He also asked that the reports be kept short and to the point.

Councillor Scicluna reminded Members about an email that she had circulated prior to the meeting regarding residents’ and Central Ward Members’ concerns about the traffic issues where Tower Street and North Walls met Orchard Street where it came under the city wall.

She expressed the opinion that this particular junction was very dangerous and asked that the Council support the sending of a letter to the local residents association in support of a Road Traffic Order to try and alleviate the problems at this junction.

After a short debate, it was RESOLVED that the City Council’s Planning Adviser would write a letter from the City Council to be sent to the local residents association in support of their Road Traffic Order application.

Councillor Chant gave Members an update about their involvement with the proposed development of a community café.

They reported that they had had a meeting with Officers at Chichester District Council to develop a plan for how this could be delivered and that UK Harvest were keen to be involved.

In response to a request from Councillor Chant requesting permission to write to UK Harvest to explore setting up a project in partnership with the City Council, Members asked Councillor Chant to submit a written proposal about the project for Council to consider before agreeing to the partnership project with UK Harvest.

The Mayor asked that, in the future, brief impact statements in support of similar proposals would be useful as part of Members’ considerations.

Members agreed that projects of this type would be a useful addition to the Business Plan.

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

West Sussex County Councillor Oakley summarised his report that had been circulated prior to the meeting as well as highlighting the comments in the report from West Sussex County Councillor Sharp regarding the city centre pavements.

He explained the processes involved with the pavement project and advised that, if the works were to go ahead, it would provide the opportunity for fibre optic cabling to be laid through the city centre.

Councillor Oakley also highlighted the continued funding of Operation Watershed and noted that he was not aware that the City Council had taken advantage of this funding assistance to tackle flooding issues.

He asked that Councillors and members of the public use the reporting tools available to them to raise issues and concerns with the County Council and reminded Members that the authorities could not react to things they did not know about.

Members were reminded that it was very important that evidence was provided to County Councillors in support of business or project proposals that required actions from the County Council.

City Councillors expressed concerns about the lack of knowledge about the reporting tools that had been mentioned.

In response to the Mayor emphasising the importance of all the Council's maintaining contact and awareness of what each was doing, Members were reminded about the availability of the regular bulletins and updates from the County and District Councils.

The Town Clerk asked District Councillor Brown whether it would be possible for the District Council bulletin to Members to be circulated to City Councillors once any business confidential information had been removed.

## **28. QUESTIONS**

After advising that he had not received any questions from City Councillors, the Mayor asked if there were any questions that Members in attendance wished to raise.

Councillor Chant asked why Councillor Quail did not have a position on any of the City Council's Committees or Sub-Committees.

They proposed that Councillor Quail be appointed to the Finance Committee and the Property Sub-Committee.

Councillor Scicluna seconded the proposal.

The Mayor did not move the motion to a vote.

Members then discussed the matter at length.

In response to a request for clarification on the issue, the Town Clerk advised that, as the Mayor invited questions from the floor, Councillor Chant had been entitled to speak.

She also advised that, under the City Council's Standing Orders, the appointment of a Councillor to a Committee or Sub-Committee did not require written notice prior to the meeting, unlike most items on the published agenda.

Some Members expressed strong concerns about the motion and how it had been introduced to the meeting.

The Town Clerk reiterated her earlier point that the process had been conducted according to Standing Orders.

After further discussion, it was AGREED that the appointment of Councillor Quail be added as an agenda item for the next meetings of the Property Sub-Committee (4 July 2023) and the Finance Committee (5 September 2023).

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

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from this meeting for agenda item 16 due to the nature of the business to be transacted, namely confidential personnel matters.

**30. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 JUNE 2023**

Councillor McHale, as Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee, introduced the minutes of the meeting that had been held on 27 June 2023 and that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

He noted that there would need to be a correction to the minutes as the recruitment of a full time Property Maintenance Assistant had not been agreed at that time and that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Property Sub-Committee.

The Town Clerk summarised the changes that had been proposed to Officer contracts.

After a short discussion, it was RESOLVED that the recommendation numbers 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 under minute 6 be approved and implemented.

Councillors noted that recommendation 3 under minute 6 as well as the "items for further consideration" would be considered by the Personnel Sub-Committee at their next meeting.

**31. 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 27 September 2023 at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.08pm