



Chichester City Council

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 4 July 2023

Time 2.00pm – 4.06pm

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

PRESENT: Councillors Butler, C Gershter, McHale, Scicluna and Squire

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Acting Property Manager, Council Services and Support Manager

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR 2023-2024

The Mayor in the chair for this item.

The Mayor opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chairman of the Sub-Committee for 2023-2024.

Councillor Scicluna, whose nomination had previously been made at the Annual Meeting of Council on 17 May 2023, was seconded by Councillor Butler.

Councillor Maill was nominated by Councillor Squire and seconded by Councillor McHale.

The vote was tied at two votes each.

The Mayor used his casting vote as Chairman of the City Council, and it was RESOLVED that Councillor Miall be elected as Chairman of the Property Sub-Committee for 2023-2024.

In the absence of the Sub-Committee Chairman, the Mayor remained in the Chair for the rest of the meeting.

2. SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Members discussed the appointment of Councillor Quail to the Property Sub-Committee.

It was duly proposed by Councillor Scicluna, seconded by Councillor Butler and RESOLVED that Councillor Quail be appointed to the Property Sub-Committee.

Councillor Squire voted against.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from Councillors Miall and Quail.

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

Councillor Scicluna declared an interest as a member of the Murray Club.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 APRIL 2023**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 April 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

6. **COUNCIL HOUSE**

a) **Artefacts and records**

The Town Clerk advised the Sub-Committee that the Selsby family had offered the loan of a portrait of the former Mayor of Chichester, John Selsby, as well as a collection of his documents.

She also advised that she had contacted the Novium Museum and the West Sussex County Records Office to ask whether they would be interested in taking the collection.

Members were informed that the Town Clerk was discussing transferring some of the City Council's documents, artefacts and paintings to the Novium and Records Office as the current storage arrangements in the Council House were not suitable.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the City Council had a responsibility to ensure the correct management of its documents and artefacts and asked the Deputy Town Clerk to confirm the insurance position if items were moved to other locations.

As no formal proposal had been made, the Sub-Committee asked for the issue to be discussed at the Finance Committee once clearer details were known.

b) **Redecoration works**

The Acting Property Manager advised that the main concern was the cracking to the ceiling which had been caused largely by temperature fluctuations.

He informed Members that quotes would be sought for the necessary work.

The Town Clerk informed the Sub-Committee that she felt that investigations in to replacing the carpet should be undertaken as it was starting to look tatty and threadbare in places.

Members agreed that quotations should also be obtained for a replacement carpet.

c) **Battery storage of solar energy**

Members were informed that Officers had been seeking quotes for a battery storage system for some time with little success.

The Acting Property Manager advised that he had received one proposal for the battery storage system and that he was now working to understand the power requirements of the building during the hours of darkness to better inform his recommendations.

It was agreed that a further report, together with the quote(s) received would be brought back to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

d) **CCTV**

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information in his report and confirmed that his recommendation would be to accept the middle priced proposal for the upgrade of the Council House CCTV system.

It was RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on Tuesday 5 September 2023 that an order for the CCTV system upgrade be placed with CIA Ltd in the amount of £3.932.09 + VAT (exc.service contract) to be paid from Council House Reserve.

e) **Portico enclosure**

Members were informed that the purpose of this project was to make a usable, enclosed space at the front of the Council House as well as help to insulate the Council Chamber above and improve the energy efficiency of the building.

The were advised that a feasibility study would be required to gauge public support for such a project as well as identify the options available for the project.

Councillor Scicluna identified Brackley Town Hall as a good example of where a similar project had been undertaken.

The Sub-Committee agreed that the project would need to be treated sensitively, particularly in view of residents and visitors who currently used the portico as a thoroughfare.

After a short discussion, Members AGREED that the proposal for the feasibility study should be taken to the Finance Committee meeting on 5 September 2023 for a decision on how to proceed.

f) **Old Courtroom roof light**

Members were informed that the replacement of the Old Courtroom roof light had previously been agreed as part of the City Council's energy efficiency project.

They were further informed that the architect Richard Meynell had been approached for advice due to his extensive experience with working on listed buildings.

g) **Murray cabinet**

Members were informed that the lock on the cabinet was currently broken, meaning that the Murray artefacts could not be displayed.

It was also reported that the original cabinet supplier was based in Scotland so call-out charges to make repairs were likely to be prohibitive.

In response to a suggestion from the Acting Property Manager to install a simpler bolting system, the Sub-Committee asked Officers to seek advice from a local locksmith and action an appropriate solution.

h) **Council Chamber acoustics**

The Member Services Support Officer advised that three contractors had been contacted about providing a hearing loop solution in the Council Chamber and Old Courtroom as well as investigating the existing hearing loop in the Assembly Room.

He informed Members that only one contractor had returned proposals, both of which suggested portable systems to allow them to be used in either the Council Chamber or the Courtroom.

Members were advised that both systems were based on a portable transmitter with the meeting attendees needing a receiver box connected to either headphones or a small loop that would retransmit the signal to a suitable hearing aid.

It was recommended that the system based on infra-red transmission be considered as this would limit signal "leak" outside the room.

Due to the cost of the system, the Member Services Support Officer suggested trying to obtain a test system to check on it's suitability.

Further to testing of the suggested solution, it was RESOLVED to recommend to the Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 that up to £2,900 be made available for the purchase of a portable hearing loop solution.

The Sub-Committee was also informed that, during the contractor visits, basic tests had been undertaken on the Assembly Room hearing loop and that it had been found to be working correctly, although it was recommended that those needing to use it sit towards the side walls where the signal would be strongest.

i) **Paintings**

Members noted the amount of artwork owned or cared for by the City Council and the responsibility for the proper maintenance of these pieces.

Councillor Scicluna made special note of the Charles Collins painting of East Street, currently on loan to the City Council and on display in the main corridor; and expressed the opinion that it was in need of a clean.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed there was a budget for painting conservation and it was AGREED that she would seek quotes for the cleaning of the Charles Collins painting and report back to the next Sub-Committee.

Councillor Scicluna also mentioned the current positioning of some of the paintings and suggested that consideration should be given to moving them.

The Sub-Committee RESOLVED to reconvene the Painting and Conservation Working Group which would report to the Finance Committee. Initial membership of the working group would be Councillors Scicluna and Quail with up to two

further members, possibly including an external expert, being added at a later date.

7. **LITTEN GARDENS**

a) **War Memorial**

Members were advised that damage had occurred to some of the stone kerbing around the War Memorial and that it would be necessary to have repairs completed before Remembrance Sunday in November.

Members were further advised that three quotes had been requested for the necessary works, with prices from two contractors having been included in the Property Manager's report. The Acting Property Manager advised that a further quote had been received for £1,141.68 and that he was recommending this last quote to the Sub-Committee.

After a short discussion it was RESOLVED to recommend to the Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 that an order be placed with Traditional Stone for the repairs to the War Memorial in the amount of £1,141.68 to be paid from the War Memorial Repairs budget.

b) **Garden of Reflection and Reconciliation bench**

The Acting Property Manager explained the background to the request to remove one of the benches from the Garden of Reflection and Reconciliation.

After a short discussion it was AGREED not to approve the removal of the bench.

8. **ALLOTMENTS**

a) **Update**

The Town Clerk summarised the information that had been included in the Property Manager's report.

She advised Members that a request had been received regarding allowing residents from the Shopwhyke Lakes development to take allotments within the Chichester parish as no provision had been made at the new development and Oving parish was not able to accommodate this service.

It was suggested that discussions could be had with Oving Parish Council regarding the City Council being compensated for allowing Shopwhyke residents to use City Council allotments.

Members discussed the issues raised, including the current "churn" of allotment tenants on sites in the east of the city, the possibility of splitting larger plots to increase the available capacity and the possibility of the City Council purchasing land for the provision of additional allotments.

The Mayor suggested that an allotment policy could be created and the Town Clerk expressed the opinion this should be linked to provisions within the Chichester Neighbourhood Plan.

The Sub-Committee agreed that no further action was required at this time.

b) **Water leaks**

The Acting Property Manager gave Members a brief summary of the problems being experienced with leaking pipes and highlighted Roman Amphitheatre and Kingsham Avenue as being of particular concern.

He recommended that the Property Team replaced the pipes at these locations over the winter months, noting that this would result in a significant cost saving.

Members were further advised that there were currently sufficient funds in the Allotment Reserve to cover the likely materials costs.

Members discussed the proposal and highlighted the opportunity to redistribute the taps around the sites to a more balanced and fairer pattern.

In response to a concern expressed by the Mayor about other work being put on hold while these works were undertaken, Members were reminded that it was hoped that the new Officers would have been recruited to the Property Team by this time which would help with the ongoing workload.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 that the replacement pipeworks be installed by the City Council's Property Team and that the costs be funded from the Allotment Reserve.

c) **Electric ride on mower**

Members noted the update.

d) **Portfield Cemetery Gate**

The Town Clerk outlined the background to the request as given in the Property Manager's report.

Members discussed the issue and the Acting Property Manager recommended that the City Council's Property Team fit a replacement gate as specified.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Finance Committee that a replacement be purchased at a cost of £1,725 + VAT to be paid from the Allotment Reserve with the work being undertaken by the City Council's Property Team.

e) **St James compound electrical supply**

The Town Clerk summarised the information that had been given in the Property Manager's report.

The Acting Property Manager gave further background and explained why the current solar installation was insufficient for the increased use of electrically powered tools and the electric van.

Members were informed that SSE had provided an estimate cost for connecting the site to the mains supply in the sum of £9723+VAT with an additional estimated cost of £1500 for additional equipment and wiring once the supply had been installed.

The Member Services Support Officer explained that this was a desktop estimate, that the final figure could be much higher and that once the contract was signed the City Council would be tied in to pay the final amount, no matter what it was.

During the discussion, Members expressed concerns about the welfare of the Property Team member based at the site.

The Deputy Town Clerk assured the Sub-Committee that the Property Maintenance Officer concerned was regularly asked about his welfare and about provisions made at the site for this and he had not expressed dissatisfaction.

Members discussed alternatives to the cabling proposal, including a wind turbine, upgrading the existing solar installation and leasing a unit on the nearby Chichester District Council St James light industrial site.

Officers were asked to investigate the possibility of a unit on the St James site and report back to the Sub-Committee.

Post meeting note: The Town Clerk reported that only one unit remained on the St James site which was 58m² with a yearly cost of £9,750 plus business rates and associated services.

After further discussion, it was RECOMMENDED to Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 that an indicative amount of £10,000 for SSE to install a hard wired electrical supply to the St James allotment compound be approved subject to the alternatives mentioned being investigated.

9. **BUS STOPS/SHELTERS**

a) **Swanfield Drive**

Members noted that completion of the purchase of the necessary land was still being awaited.

b) **Bognor Road**

The Sub-Committee noted that negotiations were still ongoing with regards to installing a power supply to the new bus shelter in Bognor Road.

10. **PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS**

a) **Murray sculpture**

Members were informed that the Murray sculpture had suffered further damage, in particular to the swords and other extremities.

Members were further informed that the sculptor, Vincent Gray, had advised that these parts could be replaced with replicas cast in bronze and that this would cost £1,958.33.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 to commission the replacement of the damaged parts with bronze replicas at a cost of £1,958.33 to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

b) **Cycle racks**

The Acting Property Manager summarised the information in his report.

He advised that a suitable, more robust, solution for the existing cycle racks had been identified but that the delivery costs were prohibitive.

Members were informed that contact was being made with local fabricators with the aim of obtaining quotes which would be reported back to a future meeting.

c) **Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)**

The Acting Property Manager advised Members that the SID was currently installed in St Pancras for outbound traffic.

He further advised that the necessary S115 licence had been issued by West Sussex County Council Highways for the installation of SID post sockets in Westgate.

Members were informed that the cost of the installation would be £920+VAT and that the poles already owned by the City Council could be used at this location as it was not permitted to leave them installed when not in use.

Members were also asked to consider the future use of the SID as it was currently being moved around by the City Council Property Team with data extracts being undertaken by Officers which meant it was a drain on resources.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee on 5 September 2023 that an order be placed with Crown Civil in the sum of £920 + VAT for the installation of the SID post sockets in Westgate, to be paid from the City Council's CIL allocation.

d) **Parish Boundary Signs**

Members noted that the entrance to the city on Terminus Road at the Fishbourne roundabout end did not currently include a Parish boundary sign.

They were advised that the City Council had a spare sign and that it had been agreed to refresh this sign with the new boundary sign design and install it at that location.

The Acting Property Manager reported that he had received favourable feedback from West Sussex County Council Highways about the proposed installation and that he had had a quote of £350 from SuperSigns to refresh the graphics on a spare boundary sign.

He also advised that the sign would be installed in-house.

RECOMMENDED to the Finance Committee that an order be placed with SuperSigns to refresh the graphics on the spare boundary sign in the sum of £350 to be paid from Public Realm.

11. **BREWERY FIELD**

The Town Clerk summarised the proposal for part rewilding of the Brewery Field for the purpose of encouraging pollinators as well as reducing the area that would require regular mowing.

She noted that this would save £2,970 per annum on the bill for the mower contractor and that plans to start preparing and planting the area would commence during winter/spring 2023/2024.

Members were advised that the football field itself would be left as grass with a number of paths being mown in to the wilded areas. They were further advised that investigations would take place in to planting a pollinator friendly hedge along the current fence line between Brewery Field and the neighbouring school playing field.

12. WESTS MEMORIAL GARDEN

The Town Clerk advised that the City Council's Officers and solicitor were currently in discussion with the new freeholders of the Duke and Rye pub with a view to transferring the memorial garden to the City Council on a 99 year lease subject to a peppercorn rent.

Members agreed that this was a very positive step and that the West Walls Residents Association would be very pleased with the news.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she would look at setting up a maintenance budget for the garden once agreement on ownership had been confirmed.

13. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

- Updates on the ongoing items on from this meeting
- Property Team staff skills and training requirements
- Vandalism of City Council property

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed

The meeting closed at 4.06pm