



Chichester City Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date 5 September 2023

Time 5.30pm – 7.04pm

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

PRESENT: Councillors Kondabeka, Loxton, Miall, Moore, Pramas, Scicluna, Vivian

EX-OFFICIO: Councillor Apel (Chairman of the Community Affairs Committee), Councillor Butler (Chairman of the Planning and Conservation Committee), The Mayor, Councillor Gershater

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk (Responsible Financial Officer), Councillor Squire

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence from the meeting from the Deputy Mayor Cllr Corfield.

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

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

28. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Quail to the Finance Committee.

30. UPDATES ON ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

a) Bus shelters (minute 8b refers)

i) *Bognor Road*

An order for a battery operated RTPI and solar powered roof to power the lighting has been placed and an installation date is now awaited. Costs will be covered from S106 monies held by WSCC.

ii) *Swanfield Drive*

An order has been placed for a bus shelter with solar powered roof for the lighting and battery operated RTPi. An installation date is now awaited. Costs will be covered from S106 monies held at WSCC.

Councillor Moore joined the meeting at 5.36pm

b) City Centre pavements (minute 8c refers)

WSCC have requested money to put towards the WSP feasibility study. We have advised them that the City Council resolved in February 2022 that the City Council would only fund street works, not studies. We are awaiting a further update from WSCC.

Councillor Pramas added that she has submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to WSCC to provide information on the number of feasibility studies that have been completed and monies spent on this issue since the year 2000.

The Committee requested that when this information is available a press release be sent to local media highlighting residents' frustrations with this long running and unresolved issue.

c) Chichester City Council Business Plan (minute 4 refers)

The group has met twice, with three more meetings planned over the next two weeks. This will allow the group to complete a review of all the projects proposed in the initial workshops. The groups is working at pace to develop a draft list of projects that will have budget implications for the next financial year, followed by a list of projects that will have resource implications for CIL spending over the next 3-5 years.

The Working Group hope to have a draft plan ready for community consultation by the end of the year.

31. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING TO JULY 2023

We are currently showing a budget surplus of £105K.

This is largely due to the following factors:

- The staff budget is underspent, but a pay award and new staff appointments are pending which will even this out over the whole year.
- Interest earned on investments is higher than expected.
- The current underspend in Discretionary Grant funding which will be allocated in a second round of funding in October 2023.
- The Public Realm budget is underspent due to the temporary suspension of the BID rangers service which we co-fund, although this is re-launching in mid-September as the City Ambassador scheme.
- The Council House budget is underspent, but there are a number of potentially serious issues that need to be looked at. The Deputy Clerk recommended that some of the Council Chamber redecoration budget should be spent on a full structural survey of the Council House building to enable these issues to be better understood and addressed.

RESOLVED to use a proportion of the Council Chamber redecoration budget to fund a full structural and condition survey of the Council House building.

Councillor Apel joined the meeting at 5.50pm

Councillor Moore asked if there was any allowance in our reporting of reserves to account for the erosion real-term value caused by increasing inflation and project costs?

The Deputy Clerk advised that there was no specific requirement to account for this, but it was an issue that Council should be aware of.

32. EARMARKED RESERVES

The report on reserves and balances was noted.

33. PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

A trial cycle rack is on order and will be installed outside the Council House where it can be monitored for durability and vandal resistance. If it proves successful, we will roll out a replacement programme throughout the City Centre.

34. PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members noted the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 27 June 2023 and 26 July 2023.

They further noted that the minutes had already been resolved at a Special Meeting of Council held on 31 July 2023.

35. PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

Members noted the minutes of the Property Sub-Committee meeting held on 4 July 2023 and considered the following recommendations:

a) *Council House CCTV* (minute 6d refers)

RESOLVED to place an order for the CCTV system upgrade with CIA Ltd in the amount of £3,932.09 + VAT (exc. service contract) to be paid from Council House Reserve.

b) *Portico enclosure* (minute 6e refers)

RESOLVED to place an order with Meynell Architects in the amount of £1,250 (no VAT) for a concept layout, a one page summary of the proposals and a presentation to Members.

RESOLVED to spend a further £400 (no VAT) for an initial artists impression of the street view of the concept. Both items to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

The Committee agreed that the project would require considerable community consultation and input to develop an acceptable scheme.

c) *Council Chamber acoustics* (minute 6h refers)

RESOLVED to accept the Officer recommendation and defer the matter while further investigation was undertaken into sourcing a suitable trial system.

Cllr Vivian joined the meeting at 6.19pm

d) *Painting and Conservation Working Group* (minute 6i refers)

RESOLVED to approve the sale of the items identified in the report at auction via Stride and Sons. Any funds raised to be allocated to the Painting Conservation Reserve.

RESOLVED to approve the donation of Twinning items to the relevant Friends Associations to distribute to their members. Any funds raised by this action to be kept by the relevant Friends Association.

Cllr Apel left the meeting at 6.20pm
Cllr Apel rejoined the meeting at 6.21pm

e) *War Memorial* (minute 7a refers)

RESOLVED to note the recommendation 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. Further noted that the works had been ordered due to the need to complete the works prior to Remembrance Sunday.

f) *Allotment water supply* (minute 8b refers)

RESOLVED to agree the replacement pipeworks during the winter period with the works being undertaken by the City Council's Property Team and with the costs being met from the Allotment Reserve.

g) *Portfield Cemetery gate* (minute 8d refers)

RESOLVED to replace the current gate at a cost of £1,725 + VAT to be paid from the Allotment Reserve and with the work being undertaken by the City Council's Property Team.

h) *St James compound electrical supply* (minute 8e refers)

RESOLVED to allocate a sum of no more than £13,000 for the installation of an upgraded off-grid electrical supply to the St James allotment compound with delegated authority to the Clerk for the appointment of the contractor pending receipt of additional quotations.

i) *Murray Sculpture* (minute 10a refers)

RESOLVED to commission the sculptor, Vincent Gray, to install bronze replicas of the damaged parts of the sculpture at a cost of £1,958.33 to be paid from the Council House Reserve.

j) *Speed Indicator Device posts* (minute 10c refers)

RESOLVED to place an order with Crown Civil for 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.

Councillor Pramas asked how to request the purchase of an additional SID device. The Clerk advised that this should be taken to the Traffic Issues Working Group to bring a recommendation through the Planning Committee for Council approval.

k) *Parish Boundary Sign (Terminus Road)* (minute 10d refers)

RESOLVED to place an order with SuperSigns to refresh the graphics on the spare boundary sign in the sum of £350 to be paid from the Public Realm budget.

36. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

RESOLVED to approve the reimbursement of the printing costs of £333.60 for the Gala consultation materials.

37. INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND POLICY

The Deputy Clerk gave a brief overview of the performance of the City Council Investments.

The Deputy Clerk had prepared a draft investment policy for consideration. Following a detailed discussion of the issues, the Committee agreed that further work was needed to ensure that the Council was making best use of the reserves whilst maintaining flexibility in their future use and accessibility.

The Committee RESOLVED to establish a small working group to review the current investments and make recommendations to the Committee on how best to invest the reserves. Membership of the Working Group to consist of Councillors Miall, Morgan and Loxton and the Deputy Clerk.

The Committee requested that the Deputy Clerk identify a suitably experienced financial advisor to provide assistance to the Working Group.

38. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

a) CIL income and expenditure to date

The Committee noted the current position on CIL monies. The committee agreed that work needed to commence swiftly to ensure that the significant funds currently held were spent before they expired.

b) CIL Sub-Committee

The Committee RESOLVED that the Sub-Committee would not be required as the work of bringing forward CIL projects would be completed via the Business Plan Oversight Working Group.

39. OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

RESOLVED that the Council House would close at 12 noon on Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

40. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

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

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

b) LIST OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR APRIL, MAY, JUNE and JULY 2023

RESOLVED to note the list of receipts and payments made for April, May, June and July 2023.

c) **LIST OF BARCLAYCARD PAYMENTS FOR APRIL, MAY, JUNE and JULY 2023**

RESOLVED to note the list of Barclaycard payments for April, May, June and July 2023

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

Hearing loop system for Council Chamber

42. **DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

DATE OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING: TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023

The meeting closed at 7.04pm

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Minute ref.	Agreed action	Assigned for action to
29b	Prepare press release for local media re. City Centre pavements once FOI request information has been provided by WSCC	Clerk
30	Seek quotations for a full structural survey of the Council House building	Deputy Clerk
34j	Traffic Issues Working Group to prepare a report and recommendation for the Planning Committee on the benefits of procuring a second SID device	Traffic Issues Working Group
35	£333.60 printing costs to be reimbursed to Parklands Residents Association for printing of Neighbourhood Plan materials	Deputy Clerk
36	Suitably experienced financial advisor to be found and appointed to Reserves Working Group	Deputy Clerk
38	Christmas closure dates to be advised to staff and public	Clerk