



Chichester City Council

PROPERTY REPORT

PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING – 2 NOVEMBER 2023

UPDATES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1) Council House

- a. **Artefacts and records** – Officers from the Novium have recently started looking through City Council materials for possible loan to their collections. It is hoped that the Records Office will also visit shortly. Once this has been completed, the Town Clerk and Council Services Support Manager will review the remaining documents with a view to disposal of unnecessary records and an update to the City Council's retention policy.

NOTE: A request to investigate grant funding for an archiving project was taken to the Finance Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023. The meeting resolved to authorise the Town Clerk to seek support for and advice on such a project from the Novium and County Council Records Office as well as obtaining quotes for the work further to exploring possible funding sources with a view to securing grant funding.

- b. **Council Chamber redecoration works and carpet replacement** – this has not been progressed at this time. However, the District Council's Historic Building Officer has indicated that no consent would be required to undertake repairs to the cracks in the ceiling on condition that the materials, colours and techniques are in keeping with the current scheme.

Officers request direction from Members on how they would like to proceed with this.

- c. **Solar power array and battery storage** – Work has been undertaken to assess the overnight energy consumption of the building and Officers are in the process of obtaining quotes for the upgrade to the solar array. It is recommended that as much of the south facing roof as possible should have panels installed and that a suitable three-phase storage system is installed that is capable of catering for the buildings needs.

The Historic Buildings Officer has indicated that Listed Building and Planning consents would be required but that he would be unlikely to raise any objections. He further agreed that the initial proposal should allow for as many panels as possible which could be negotiated with the Planning Authority if concerns were raised.

A potential issue has also been identified during the last inspection of the existing solar panels whereby birds are roosting and nesting under the panels which presents a potential fire hazard.

Officer recommendations – (1) continue to obtain sufficient quotes and take the best value quote to the Finance Committee for approval before commencing Planning and Listed Building consent applications. (2) delegate authority to the Town Clerk to investigate/commission the removal of debris under the solar arrays and arrange the installation of safety skirting around the existing solar panel arrays to prevent future nesting or roosting.

- d. **CCTV upgrade** – this was approved at the Finance Committee meeting on 5 September 2023 and an order placed. Work was undertaken during the week beginning

9 October 2023 with the staff training and commissioning taking place on 11 October 2023.

- e. **Portico enclosure** – the initial concept work has been ordered from Richard Meynell Architects and Tom Hayes from Meynell-Hayes Architects will be presenting the initial scoping document at the meeting.

The District Council's Historic Buildings Officer has strongly suggested that this project would be a hard sell to both him and the Planning Authority due to its contentious nature. A very strong business case would need to be in place.

- f. **Old Courtroom rooflight/lantern** – the Historic Buildings Officer has indicated that no consent would be required if a like for like replacement, but including double or triple glazed panels, were to be installed.

An indicative quote has been received with two options.

- Retain and refurbish the current metal framework and install double glazed units (£16,800 + VAT)
- As above plus install a new, slimmer framework (£21,350 + VAT)

The contractor was also asked to estimate the cost of replacing the current, very noisy, extractor fans with electrically opening glazed panels. A ballpark amount would be £3,000 + VAT.

Officer recommendation – continue to obtain further quotes for like-for-like works with the Sub-Committee giving in-principle approval for Officers to take a recommendation to the Finance Committee in November 2023 for up to £25,000 for the replacement of the Old Courtroom roof light, to be funded from the City Council's CIL allocation.

- g. **Murray cabinet** – to note that the lock has now been successfully repaired and the Murray artefacts put back on display.
- h. **Council Chamber acoustics** – awaiting an update from the contractor about a loan unit for the infrared hearing aid loop system.

Officers have successfully tested a standalone hearing loop receiver and headphones in the Assembly Room.

Officer recommendation – purchase four additional standalone receivers and headphones, at approximately £30 each, for loan to groups hiring the Assembly Room where issues are experienced with hearing aids.

- i. **Paintings** – To note that the Painting Conservation Working Group has reviewed the City Council's paintings and other artefacts and that the Finance Committee recently authorised the disposal of some items (5 September 2023, minute 34d refers).

Officers have re-catalogued all the paintings and wrapped them in appropriate materials for improved storage.

It is understood that the Working Group will call additional meetings to discuss repositioning some of the paintings and artefacts within the Council House.

- j. **Secondary glazing** – this has previously been discussed with the proposed solutions being rejected due to concerns about the bulk of the frames and the materials.

The District Council's Historic Buildings Officer has indicated that there are newer systems available that are much more flexible and discrete with aluminium frames that can be recessed inside the existing frame, attaching magnetically for easy removal.

He has also advised that anti-reflective glass is available which would make them practically impossible to see from the outside and that the units offered significant improvements in heat and sound insulation.

Listing building and planning consents would be required but he indicated he would be unlikely to object if a suitably unintrusive design were to be chosen and a staged approach was suggested.

Officer recommendation – the Sub-Committee approves the Town Clerk and Officers to proceed with contacting suppliers, including one recommended by the Historic Buildings Officer, and to put together a costed proposal to be brought back to the Sub-Committee at a later meeting. Further recommended that the project is put together in stages with the most inefficient windows being worked on first, giving an order of the Council Chamber then the Assembly Room.

2) Litten Gardens

- a. **War Memorial** - to note that the repairs to the stone surround have now been completed.

3) Allotments

- a. **Update** – There are now a total of 450 plots and currently no vacancies. 159 people are on the waiting list. 28 tenants have vacated their plots this financial year (19 tenants have left and 9 have been evicted). Total income received of £22,103 against £1,936 expenditure to date (excluding any water bills). Over £344 saved on digital invoices.
- b. **Allotment water supply** – further to previous discussion of this subject, the Allotments and Maintenance Officer has asked to postpone the replacement works until the winter of 2025-2026. This is to allow for proper planning of the pipework layouts, including more isolation taps and drain down points as well as increasing the number of double taps.

The allotment maps will be updated with the new pipe layouts.

It is proposed that the work is undertaken in house using a powered trenching tool to lay the pipes rather than using a mini-digger which would inconvenience allotment holders and create a lot of mess.

It should be noted that the allotment water supply is switched off when the clocks change in October and restored when the clocks change in the spring.

- c. **St James compound solar array** – this upgrade was ordered with installation completed on 24 October 2023. The contractor is expected back on site once the battery has fully charged to ensure the set up is working as expected.

4) Bus shelters

- a. **Swanfield Drive** – the bus shelter has been ordered and installation took place on 24 October 2023. The contractor will be returning to the site to complete installation of the solar light and battery pack once the concrete has fully set.
- b. **RTPI displays** – due to the issues with connecting the bus shelters at Bognor Road and Swanfield Drive to the power grid, battery operated RTPI displays will be ordered for both sites. A quote has been received from the County Council's supplier and we are currently awaiting transfer of the Section 106 funds before placing the order.

5) Public Realm projects

- a) **Murray-Nelson sculpture** - as previously reported, this has sadly been subjected to further vandalism with one of the swords being bent, cracking the resin. The sword has now been removed.

It has been previously proposed that the swords are cast in bronze as a more durable and vandal resistant material.

A quote of £1958.33 has previously been brought to the Sub-Committee. However, on re-examining the quote it has been found to be made up of two elements. Further, a recent requote has updated the sculptor's element of the cost.

The full quote is as follows:

- Cost of sculptor's works and supervision of foundry works	£2,850.00 (no VAT)
- Cost of foundry works and bronze casting	£2,619.08 + VAT
- TOTAL	£5,469.08 + partial VAT

Officers request direction on how Councillors wish to proceed.

- b. **Cycle racks** – a more robust test unit has been installed in North Street, outside the Council House. This version has three uprights solidly welded to cross bars which are bolted to the pavement. Comments have been received that the bolts are easily removable but it would require the potential thief to transport the entire rack with any attached bikes once the bolts had been removed.

Standard bolts are currently being used to allow for removal in the event of works starting on the city centre pavements. However, these will be changed to shear bolts if they are tampered with.

The new style rack will continue in test with a proposal on how to proceed being brought to the next Sub-Committee meeting.

- c. **Speed Indicator Devices (SID)** – to note that the additional sockets have been installed in Westgate and the locations added to the schedule for the SID.
- d. **Parish boundary sign** – to note that the parish boundary sign has now been installed at the junction of Terminus Road with the A27/Fishbourne roundabout.
- e. **Brewery field** - no update at this time. The re-wilding work will commence over the winter/early spring.
- f. **West's memorial garden** - no update at this time.
- g. **Cathedral beds and neighbouring areas** – the Allotments and Maintenance Officer has indicated that the box hedging should be removed as soon as possible as it is diseased and dying. He has also suggested suitable replacement plants and requested that we gain consent to plant the areas left when two trees were removed a number of years ago.

At the time of writing, the Deputy Town Clerk is awaiting confirmation from West Sussex County Council regarding the proposal that on these areas could be included as part of a social value project managed by the County Council.

NEW PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS

6) Council House

- a. Mayor’s Parlour facilities** – the toilet and washbasin area next to the small kitchen area are very dated, shabby and in need of renewal/redecoration.

Officer recommendation – obtain three quotes for the replacement of the sanitaryware and redecoration of the space, including any necessary repairs/improvements to the plumbing system to ensure compliance with building regulations. The quotes to be brought to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

- b. “Property Office” furniture** – the current Property Office has two pieces of furniture in it which Officers advise are no longer required due to changes in the staff structure and moving the new Property Maintenance Manager in to the back office.



Large wooden leather top desk, leather in poor condition, will not fit in rear office space or other building location
Insurance valuation in 2019 - £3000



Large bookcase, badly peeling veneer on top-left side panel. No alternative location and no requirement to retain.
Insurance valuation in 2019 - £3000

It should be noted that the 2023 insurance valuation was taking place at the time of writing and a verbal auction estimate of £200 each was given. This will be confirmed once the written valuation has been received.

Officer recommendation: The two items are sold with any resulting monies used to fund any setup costs for any change use of the room.

- c. Installation of a flagpole and hanging basket brackets on the front of the Council House** – It is proposed that a flagpole with a flag bearing the City Council crest and name be installed on the front of the building to help passers by and visitors identify the purpose and occupant of the building.

It has been further suggested that, as the City Council manages the hanging baskets within the city, it would be a positive move and help enhance the appeal of the Council House/streetscape; if hanging basket brackets were installed on the front of the building to allow participation in the annual hanging basket scheme.

The Historic Buildings Officer has indicated that, while Planning and Listed Buildings consent would be required, he would be unlikely to object to up to one flagpole and three hanging basket brackets. However, he suggested that the flying of a branded City Council flag may require additional consent as it might be considered as advertising.

Councillors should note that there have previously been window boxes installed on the window sills of the Council House/Chamber.

Officer recommendation: Proceed to Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for installation of a single flagpole and three hanging basket brackets in suitable locations on the front of the Council House. Installation to be completed if the necessary consents are agreed.

- d. Assembly Room projector screen** – the current, collapsible projector screen has been damaged through wear and tear. Parts are only available from the United States and are proving costly and difficult to source.

The size of the screen also makes it unwieldy to erect, ideally needing two members of staff to put up safely.

It is proposed that a ceiling mounted screen that could be lowered electrically be installed which could be lowered via a remote control and not require two staff to correctly erect and remove for bookings requiring the facility.

The Historic Buildings Officer has indicated that we would not require consent for installation, provided it was coloured to be sympathetic to the Assembly Room ceiling.

A suitable projector screen with remote control would cost approximately £2,100 + VAT. Given the height of the Assembly Room, professional installation would be required.

Councillors should note that, prior to the 2002 refurbishment of the Assembly Room, a theatre style lighting rig was installed in the ceiling space for use during productions on the fixed stage.

Officer recommendation: Agree the installation of the screen in principle and proceed to obtain quotes for the installation. The costings to be taken to the next meeting of the Finance Committee for approval.

- e. Painting of East Street (att. Charles Collins) currently on display in the main corridor** - the painting, which is on loan to the City Council, has now been inspected by a picture restorer/conservator and an estimate obtained for the cleaning and restoration of the painting as well as the installation of low reflection conservation glass.

The cost is indicative only as the scale of the work will not be fully known until the picture is removed from the frame.

Indicative costs are £6,935 to £7,785 (no VAT is payable).

Consent to undertake the work has been obtained from the owner of the painting.

Officers request direction from Members on how to proceed.

- f. Mayor's carpark** – the newly enlarged carpark has proven to be a very useful upgrade to the asset. Additionally, Officers have planted climbing plants which will cover the new trellis whilst a variety of bulbs will be planted shortly to give a burst of seasonal colour.

The new surface is proving problematic as the gravel that has been laid is smaller than expected and very mobile. Investigations are ongoing in to possible use of binding agents or topping with larger gravel and the results will be reported back to a future meeting.

- g. Roof top security** – Councillors may be aware that Chichester suffers from issues related to “roof running”, where individuals climb on to building roofs and attempt to get as far along a street as possible without returning to ground level.

At the end of this report is included a copy of a letter from Sussex Police advising of this problem and also warning businesses about potential liability should the worst occur while these individuals are on our roof.

To this end, as part of the recent CCTV upgrade, an additional camera has been added to the roof giving a view of the party wall and roof section with the neighbouring White Company building. A sign is also being installed to advise of the camera's presence.

Other deterrents are proposed such as anti-climb paint and plastic anti-bird devices to deter scrambling up the party wall on to our roof.

- h. Introduction of automatic timers to control the water heaters** – Due to its layout and structure, the Council House has a distributed hot water system supplied by a number of electric hot water heaters. These heaters run 24/7/365 on the whole.

The heaters in the public hireable spaces can be switched off at night but if they are not switched on in the morning, it can take some time for hot water to become available.

It is proposed that a series of automatic timers are installed to switch the heaters off at night and back on again in the morning in plenty of time for any hirers or staff to use the hot water.

Officer recommendation – that the Sub-Committee delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Officers to investigate the viability of installing timer switches on the water heaters and to proceed subject to a cost limit. This to be funded from the City Council's energy efficiency CIL allocation.

- i. Air conditioning system** – the air conditioning (chiller) unit has failed and been declared beyond economic repair by the City Council's maintenance contractor.

The replacement of the unit represents a significant project as the failed unit would need to be removed by crane and the new unit lifted in to place by crane.

An indicative quote from the existing contractor has been received at £21,468.18+VAT (Total £25,761.82).

Officer recommendation – the Sub-Committee to authorise the Town Clerk and Officers to obtain an updated quote from the existing contractor and two additional quotes for comparison. The Sub-Committee to further authorise the Town Clerk to proceed to a tender process through the Government's contract finder service if the value of the project is over the threshold requiring this to happen. The results of the process to be reported to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

7) Litten Gardens

- a. War Memorial** – the City Council has received notification from a relative of one of the deceased named on the War Memorial that the name has been spelt incorrectly.

A request to proceed with the necessary work was taken to the Finance Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023 and the Committee resolved to authorise the necessary work to correct the error. The order was placed on 25 October 2023.

- b. Footpath** – the footpath surface was replaced in early 2021. Ongoing experience is showing that the installed surface is proving problematic with gravel being thrown up during strimming, causing a potential hazard for both maintenance staff and public. It is also proving to be prone to weeds and moss growth in shaded areas.

Various areas in the Gardens have been surfaced at different times which has led to inconsistent surface colours and textures.

Officer recommendation – the Sub-Committee delegates an action to Officers to investigate alternative surfaces for the paths and areas around the sculptures with the results and costs being reported back to a future meeting.

- c. **Interpretation board** – the original interpretation board, installed adjacent to the gravestones at the western end of the Gardens, is rotten and falling apart and in need of replacement.

Officer recommendation – delegate authority to the Town Clerk to seek a replacement board for installation up to a maximum cost of £1,000.

- d. **Memorial plaques** – some of the memorial plaques installed alongside specially planted trees are suffering from fading text and vandalism.

Officer recommendation – delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Officers to investigate more robust, longer lasting alternatives to replace the plaques, possibly including assessment of stone alternatives. The results to be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

- e. **External corner wall** – the wall on the corner of the junction of New Park Road and St Pancras has suffered serious cracking due to tree and hedge root growth as well as basal epicormic growth from the lime trees.

The wall is low level (four brick courses) and so doesn't not represent a hazard to the public from high level debris falling on to the footpath.

The Allotments and Maintenance Officer has proposed removing the wall at the corner and building a small terminating pillar to complete the run of low wall along the St Pancras side of the Gardens. Any resulting gaps under the hedge on the corner then to be made good with appropriate planting.

Officer recommendation: Authority is delegated to the Town Clerk to complete the works as proposed with the removed bricks being recycled where possible.

- f. **Dead or dying trees** – T37 (fruit tree) and T42 (Dwarf Weeping Willow) are both either dying or showing signs of disease.

Neither tree appears to have a Tree Preservation Order on it.

T37 has no connection to a memorial planting while T42 was planted by the Royal Naval Association (RNA) and has a memorial plaque installed next to it.

Officer recommendation: Authority is delegated to the Town Clerk as follows. T37 is replaced with a suitable alternative or the space is left open for a future memorial planting (Litten Gardens is considered otherwise fully planted at this time); and the RNA is contacted to discuss how they would like to proceed with the replacement of their memorial tree.

8) Allotments

- a. **Allotment holder seminar** – 119 allotment tenants have expressed an interest in attending a seminar to be held in the Assembly Room and run by a representative from Fittleworth House. Topics to be covered include water preservation and bio-diversity on allotments. There is a fee of approximately £100 for the speaker and, if successful, the intention would be to run the event annually.

Officer recommendation – the seminar proceeds and the speaker’s expenses are funded with a maximum allocation of £200. Any reasonable variation at the Town Clerk’s discretion.

b. Allotment fencing – Some repair works are need to allotment fencing as follows:

- i) Roman Amphitheatre – approximately 20 feet of 6 feet high chainlink fencing along the western side where large tree works have been undertaken by the neighbouring property owners. The fencing is in poor condition and has needed replacement for some time.
- ii) St Pauls/Little Breach – 6x8 foot fence panels at the end of Woodlands lane need replacing. These can be sourced from Goodrowes. No posts required as they can be slotted in to the existing posts and footed on gravel boards.
- iii) Whyke Lane – 10-15 metres of wood panel fencing is collapsing at the rear of the site. The Allotments and Maintenance Officer is currently assessing the requirements which may include installing chainlink fencing as an alternative.

Officer recommendation: The Sub-Committee is asked to delegate decisions on these allotment fencing repairs to the Town Clerk, subject to a per-site cost limit, so that work can be undertaken as soon as possible. Work to be funded from the allotment reserve.

c. Blackberry Lane vehicle access issues – this has been an ongoing issue for some time with local residents parking across the rear access gate to the site and preventing tenants bring vehicles on site to deliver compost, materials etc. A few years ago, the ground in front of the gate was bollarded off with drop-bollards and lock access only for allotment tenants.

Local residents and other people parking continue to regularly ignore the no parking signs and in some instances the Police have been called.

Officer recommendation: Chichester District Council and West Sussex County Council Highways be approached for advice on adding statutory no parking limitations/double yellow lines, across the entrance to try to prevent unsociable parking in the area.

d. St Pauls allotments – northern tree line reduction/removal – the northern tree line of the St Pauls allotments is due for its regular reduction to prevent excessive growth over the allotments and neighbouring school grounds.

An indicative quote has been received from a tree surgeon for the regular maintenance of £3,450+VAT.

Members should note that Ash trees suffering from Ash die-back have previously been removed from this tree line.

The Allotments and Maintenance Officer and the tree surgeon have advised that additional trees in the treeline have fallen victim to Ash die-back and should be removed.

The quote for the regular maintenance and Ash tree removal is £5,000+VAT.

In both cases, chippings will be left under the treeline and large logs cut to manageable sizes and left on site.

Officer recommendation – Officers request direction from Councillors on which of the options to proceed with and, based on that, authority to obtain further quotes as required and to proceed with the works at a cost no higher than the indicative quotes given above.

9) Public realm projects

- a. **Bus stops and shelters** – it is proposed that lockable, City Council branded noticeboards are installed in the bus shelters owned by the City Council for the purposes of expanding the noticeboard display spaces beyond the existing ward boards.

The bus shelters are located in Bognor Road, Broyle Road (outside Wellington Grange and Rousillon Park), Lavant Road and Swanfield Drive.

The City Council's bus shelter contractor has advised that they do not supply suitable display boards so a third party solution would need to be sought.

Officer recommendation – authority is delegated to the Town Clerk and Officers to proceed to install suitable noticeboards with the “suitable use” being guided by the media and communications policy identified as a requirement by the Business Plan Working Group.

b. **Madge Turner Maquette**

The City Council has been asked to fund a maquette of the suffragist Madge Turner, currently being sculpted by Kate Viner.

Indicative cost is £1,000 to £1,500.

Madge Turner was recently celebrated with a City Council blue plaque now installed on the Market House.

The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the request, possible funding sources and where to locate the maquette on completion.

Gareth Bowen
Council Services and Support Manager



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**Chichester Neighbourhood policing Team
Chichester Police Station
Kingsham Road
PO19 8AD**

26th September 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

If you are receiving this letter, it is because you have an interest regarding, either a business or property within Chichester City Centre. You may be aware of ongoing issues around young people accessing the roofs and causing damage and/or distress to members of the public.

This issue is being treated seriously by Sussex police, and when reported units attend as quickly as possible to prevent incidents escalating. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the incidents and the numerous ways for them to escape this is difficult to police.

We are requesting that businesses or property owners look to secure their access points and help remove the possibilities of people to access/egress the roofs without permission. Helping to relieve some of the demand on limited resources.

The issues caused by young people accessing the roofs include but are not limited to; criminal damage, throwing things off the roof at members of the public and causing distress to shoppers.

Not only is there a concern for the public with this matter, but also the danger of having accidents, causing injury or death.

Please be aware that under current UK legislation as of 2008 a company or organisation could find themselves liable for corporate manslaughter should "serious failures in the management of health and safety result in a fatality."

More information can be read on this at [Corporate manslaughter - HSE](#)

Some means of precautions that could be taken are use of fences, netting, anti-climbing paint, ladder guards, CCTV signage, moving the bins away from low roof areas and chaining them so not to be moved. If you feel you require further guidance, please consider getting an accredited construction company to offer advice.

As several business owners have asked, if you are planning on using anti-climbing paint on private property this is perfectly fine however signage must be displayed (This could prove beneficial in itself).

Please keep reporting any incidents of youths on the roofs to Sussex police via 999 if the incident is currently happening or 101 retrospectively. This helps us build a picture of the severity of the problem, determine resource allocation and risk assess as required.



Sussex Police
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www.sussex.police.uk

We understand that anti-social behaviour can leave people feeling intimidated, angry and frightened, and we take it very seriously. We are increasing local patrols to try and prevent it and if you see any anti-social behaviour, please report it to us.

The information we receive from you plays a huge part in enabling us to fight crime and make your area a safer place to live. No information given is ignored; we use it to develop the bigger picture and when the time is right, we will take action.

If you can provide any information about criminals who live in your area, please call Sussex Police on **101**.

Thank you for your help. For more information about anti-social behaviour, the work of Sussex Police, and some useful advice on crime prevention, please visit our website:
www.sussex.police.uk

Yours sincerely,
PCSO LANGSTON
Chichester Prevention Team
Sussex Police

A message from Sussex Police